

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 September 2026 14:55:00 UTC+01:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Cc: "Joanne Fisher" <Joanne.Fisher@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: St John's Lodge, High Street, HPP DM/26/1764 and 1765

Hi Andrew

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you, which has been caused by pressure of other work and a period of leave.

As you will be aware, this application is the latest in a series of formal applications and pre-application advice relating to this site, for variations on the same proposals. As I have previously given an assessment of the nature and context of the site and its significance in heritage terms as part of previous comments on the earlier iterations of this scheme, and these are a matter of public record, I will not repeat this assessment here.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for a similar scheme to those seen previously, including internal and external works to the Grade II listed house including a rear extension and side bay window extension, demolition of the existing garage to the southwest of the house and construction of a new larger garage within the gardens to the rear (northeast) of the building. Various repairs to the house and curtilage listed bothy are also proposed.

The proposal reflects the reduced scale and revised form of the rear extension seen as part of recent pre-application discussions, but appears to omit other considerations such as the potential to strip back to the original stone finish to internalised external walls within the existing 20th century two storey addition, and drainage works to protect the property (in particular the curtilage listed bothy) from a suggested flooding risk. This is unfortunate, as these aspects of the pre-application proposal were considered to result in potential heritage benefits, to be weighed against the harm which was identified from the scale of the rear addition when viewed cumulatively with the existing substantial two storey rear addition.

As noted in pre-application advice, relative to previous formal proposals the rear addition has been further reduced in size and amended to a simple rectangular shape, rather than the asymmetric footprint previously shown. The revised extension has glazing to two elevations (north and east) with solid masonry to the western side, sitting under a low-pitched lead roof.

The proposal is an improvement on the scheme which was recently refused in scale, form and detailed design, however as explained at pre-application stage I do continue to have concerns with respect to the scale of the addition, particularly in terms of its

cumulative impact on the character of the building when viewed alongside the existing 2 storey 1980s extension.

The applicant has previously noted positive aspects of the proposal in terms of removal of partitions within the existing ground floor addition, which has the potential to open out the space and better reveal, albeit internally, the original external configuration of this part of the building. The argument has also been made that the glazing to the eastern and northern sides of the building would allow external views towards these elevations which are blocked by the existing, solid rear wall of the 1980s addition, and that the glazing will better reveal the adjoining wall of the original rear lean-to structure.

I do see the validity of these points, although I remain of the opinion that the glazing and the day-to-day use of the extended dining and living room, with the furniture and fittings that this involves, will limit the extent to which the original ground floor building line will be perceived externally, notwithstanding the applicant's views on these matters. As noted above, a previously discussed proposal to remove the plaster finish to the internalised, originally external, walls of the building, which would have aided in the suggested improved appreciation of the original form of the house, does not appear to be included in the current proposals, despite our recommendation that this should be pursued. This also limits the benefit which will arise from the removal of internal partitions.

It should be noted that it is not possible to assess an appropriate relationship of scale based on measurements alone, as it is predominantly a visual matter, and will depend on context. It is also not correct to treat all parts of a listed building, at the time of its designation, as being of equal interest, as seems to be applicant's argument, for example when referring to it as a multi-phase building. Here, it is relatively straightforward to identify that the significance of St John's Lodge lies in its historic core. The existing addition detracts from that significance, in my professional opinion, and the further extension now proposed adds to that harm (although noting the mitigations identified above).

It is recognised good practice when considering the impact of works to a listed building, including extensions, to consider cumulative impact, and that must be a relevant consideration here. To quote the relevant Historic England Guidance GPA Note 2 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking': *'The cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change. Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development to the asset itself or its setting, consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset in order to accord with NPPF policies.'* N.B. that the guidance does not differentiate in this respect between development occurring before or after designation of an asset.

The remaining aspects of the scheme, which have been discussed in previous comments, are not on balance considered contentious, subject to detail which could be

reserved by condition. For clarity, as noted in previous advice, the positive aspects in heritage terms of the removal of the existing garage are noted, and are considered to balance the harm arising from the increased scale of the replacement garage within the rear garden of the property, which viewed in isolation has an adverse impact on the verdant nature of the setting of the building and this part of the Conservation Area. The heritage benefits of some of the other works to the listed house itself and to the bothy, including internal and external repairs, are also noted, but are not considered to outweigh the harms arising from the proposed rear extension, particularly as the one is not contingent on the other. However, I note that these external repairs, which according to the submitted DAS include replacement of rainwater goods on a differing alignment, are not shown on the proposed elevation, which should be amended accordingly.

In conclusion, in my opinion, the extension as amended unfortunately continues to result in a level of harm to the special interest of the building and to the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area, due to its scale and the cumulative impact with the existing substantial 2 storey rear addition, although this level will be reduced in comparison to the refused scheme. The heritage benefits arising from some other aspects of this scheme are unfortunately not sufficient, in my opinion, to outweigh this harm.

In relation to the current, updated NPPF, I would place this harm in both instances toward the lower end of the scale. The balancing exercise set out in paragraph HE6.4 will therefore apply. Paragraph HE9 will also be relevant in relation to the Conservation Area.

The proposal is also in my opinion contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35, although these currently attract very limited weight.

If on balance you are minded to approve the proposal, can we please ensure that the proposed elevations are updated to reflect all of the repair works indicated in the DAS (including the bothy elevations). Appropriate conditions relating to the detail of the scheme should also be added, which I can assist with.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services

Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385

emily.wade@midsussex.gov.uk

<http://www.midsussex.gov.uk>

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