

Katherine Williams

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 March 2026 15:20
To: Katherine Williams
Subject: DM/26/0156 and DM/26/0213 - Heathfield House, High Street, Cuckfield

The Talbot Hotel and Cuckfield



Dear Katherine,

I hope you are well.

Thank you for your recent comments regarding the two non-original internal walls. I have considered these carefully and wanted to respond in more detail, as well as reiterate my commitment to achieving the best possible outcome for the building from a conservation perspective.

I had hoped that, by agreeing to retain the fireplace wall that the application might be viewed more favourably. However, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify why the two walls in question are demonstrably later insertions and do not contribute to the building's historic significance.

The rear stud wall, which runs along the back portion of the house to the rear door, is of notably lightweight construction, incorporating a sliding door and abutting the chimney breast in a way that partially obscures it. It has even been constructed over the timber draft cover to the chimney, suggesting it was added as a secondary, functional alteration rather than as part of the original layout. (I can provide images if required to show this) Its presence results in a very small, poorly lit internal room with no direct access to natural light, which is at odds with the proportions and qualities typically associated with the building's original plan form. On this basis, it is difficult to see how this partition contributes positively to the heritage value of the property.

Similarly, the wall to the left upon entering through the repositioned front door appears to be a later addition. Historic evidence (as shown in the attached image) indicates that the original entrance was centrally aligned with the upper windows. The relocation of the door to its current off-centre position likely occurred when the shopfront was introduced, necessitating internal reconfiguration. This wall therefore seems to have been inserted to accommodate those later changes, reducing the scale of what would originally have been a principal reception room. By removing this wall I am simply opening the room up to its original form.

Its construction further supports this conclusion: it produces a noticeably hollow sound when tapped compared to the surrounding original fabric, and the junction with the chimney breast is visibly expressed. In addition, the presence of a steel beam forming the adjacent opening to the later addition staircase indicates structural alteration consistent with the insertion of a new wall and hallway arrangement.

In light of the above, I would respectfully suggest that the removal of these elements would not result in the loss of historic fabric, but instead provide an opportunity to better reveal and restore the building's original spatial character. My intention throughout has been to enhance the property using appropriate materials and detailing, addressing past unsympathetic alterations and securing its long-term conservation.

I am naturally mindful of costs with such a lot of renovation work to do and would prefer to avoid commissioning what I believe may be an unnecessary additional report. However, I remain fully committed to working collaboratively to reach an outcome that satisfies conservation objectives.

I would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further at a convenient time.

Many thanks and have a lovely weekend

Rachel Bryant