

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 February 2025 13:22:59 UTC+00:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/2735 and 2887 North Hall Cottage, Mallions Lane, Staplefield

Hi Anna

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

The site, North Hall Cottage, is a Grade II listed cottage located in a rural position outside Staplefield. The list description suggests that the building was constructed in the 18th century or earlier; the submitted heritage statement suggests that the building in fact dates originally from the mid-late 16th century, starting life as a three bay cottage with a smoke bay. A brick chimney stack was inserted within the smoke bay during the 17th century, and a two storey rear wing was added during the late 18th or early 19th centuries. Further alterations were carried out during the 20th century including addition of a conservatory to the rear. There is also a substantial modern annexe building within the gardens to the north east of the house, which dates from the 1990s.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for external and internal works. Externally, the works include demolition of the modern annexe building and construction of a single storey linked extension to the rear of the house, attached to the rear of the 2 storey late 18th/early 19th century extension by a glazed link; demolition of the existing conservatory extension to the rear of the house and construction of a replacement glazed canopy; addition of double or vacuum glazed timber framed panels externally to a pair of original 16th century mullioned windows which would be exposed by the removal of the conservatory; and installation of a pair of French windows to the southern elevation of the rear wing. Internally, the proposed works include removal of a modern spiral staircase at ground floor, removal of a modern partition at ground floor, lifting and relaying of flooring, and removal of bathroom fittings.

Within the gardens to the house, further works are proposed comprising introduction of a patio to the rear of the house where the conservatory is to be removed, relaying of the brick path to the front garden area, further new pathways from a parking area to the north of the house (consented under a separate recent application), and a replacement oil tank.

To consider these works in turn:

- The existing modern annexe building is not of any particular age or architectural interest and has at best a neutral impact on the setting and significance of the Cottage. The proposed extension is substantial, and might in other circumstances be considered excessive in scale in the context of a building of such originally modest proportions. However the removal of the existing annexe building which is set in close proximity to the house, and its replacement with a structure of a more sympathetic design and in a less visually prominent position will have a positive impact on the setting of the cottage which must be weighed against this. The lightweight glazed link, which sets the extension off the existing rear elevation of the house, also aids in mitigating the impact of its bulk. On balance, this aspect of the proposal is considered generally acceptable, although I would like to see further information in respect of some aspects of the design:

- - a proposed roof plan (annotated) and sectional drawings of what appears to be a large solar PV installation to the southern roof slope of the extension. This is likely to be quite visually intrusive, but further information will be needed for informed comment.
- - proposed sections (annotated to show materials) to show the form of the proposed glazed link.
- The existing conservatory addition is unattractive and detracts from the appearance of the rear of the house. Its removal is therefore welcomed in principle. During previous discussions, it was suggested that the removal of this structure could be regarded as a heritage benefit which would, with the removal of the annexe building, stand to be weighed against the proposed new rear extension. However, the current proposal shows a glazed canopy introduced in place of the conservatory. Although I note the point that this is intended in part at least to protect the 16th century mullioned windows, given that these are also proposed to be enclosed behind glazed timber framed panels I would question whether this was really necessary. The canopy is not a particularly sympathetic feature which will add visual clutter to the elevation and reduce the benefit to be accrued by the removal of the conservatory. In my opinion, this aspect of the proposal requires reconsideration and/or further justification.
- The 16th century timber mullioned windows are an unusual survival and one of the most significant features contributing to the special interest of the cottage. Their protection following the removal of the unsympathetic conservatory addition must therefore be a priority. The addition of appropriately designed glazed external frames to protect the original fabric may be an appropriate solution, however I would like to see more detail at this stage of the design of the frames and how they will be attached to the elevation in order to avoid or minimise damage to the surrounding fabric, whilst providing adequate weathering. I would prefer to see this detail now, rather than requiring it by condition, due to the importance of this aspect of the proposal to preserving the special interest of the building, and its interconnectedness with the proposals for the replacement canopy. It would be useful if this detail could be seen and commented on by Joe Thompson, given his knowledge of the building and expertise in this field. This could take the form of a brief addendum to the submitted heritage statement. (N.B., I have read Mr Thompson's commentary on alternative proposals for the protection of the windows- one option is the external framing discussed above, but his preferred approach would be an extension continuing the existing lean-to along this part of the rear elevation. Whilst I can understand the logic of this in terms of preserving the fabric from a purely archaeological point of view, unfortunately I think that this would have other undesirable impacts on the special interest of the building, and as such I would not suggest that the applicant pursue this approach.) In terms of glazing to the frames I would suggest slimline double rather than vacuum units, as in my experience to date vacuum glazing has issues with visibility of spacers etc.- however, I would be happy to consider any product which the architect wishes to suggest as this is an evolving market and there may be newer systems of which I am unaware.
- The proposed French windows to the southern elevation of the rear wing replace existing double doors in the same position. This aspect of the proposal is therefore not considered contentious in principle, but I would suggest that the material and detailed design of the French windows could be amended to better reflect the existing fenestration to the building (timber, multi-pane casements).
- The proposed internal works affect only modern fabric and planform and are not considered to affect the special interest of the building.

Also within the garden setting of the building works to relocate the oil tank and replace an existing septic tank with a treatment plant. These works are not considered contentious subject to detail. Proposed works to create a patio and relay or introduce new pathways are also not considered contentious subject to details of materials.

In summary, although many aspects of the current proposal are considered uncontentious, others require further information and/or reconsideration to ensure that the special interest of the listed building is preserved.

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>

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