



LONDON OFFICE

Ms Caroline Grist
Mid Sussex District Council
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

Our ref: L01606338; P1606335

19th August 2026

Dear Ms Grist

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**WYKEHURST HOUSE, WYKEHURST PARK, COLWOOD LANE, BOLNEY,
HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX RH17 5QQ
Application Nos DM/26/0694; DM/26/0695**

Thank you for your letters of 1st August 2026 regarding further amendments to the original applications for planning permission and listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Background

Historic England previously provided advice on the proposals related to the area historically occupied by a formal terraced garden to the west of the house in our letter dated 21st April 2026.

In that letter, we considered that the reinstatement of the historic garden arrangement would represent a positive enhancement to the significance and appreciation of the listed building. The introduction of a centrally positioned swimming pool was also considered acceptable in principle, provided it was designed and detailed as a formal water feature of the type traditionally associated with French château gardens.

However, we had concerns regarding the proposed Italianate planting scheme and the introduction of a pool house to the north of the new pool. Collectively, these elements had the potential to erode the historic design principles of the terraced garden, interrupt important views, and introduce built and planted forms at odds with



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its established character. As proposed, they failed to adequately reflect the geometry, openness and formal French-inspired composition that historically defined this part of the landscape.

Consequently, these aspects of the scheme were considered to give rise to some degree of harm to the significance of the listed building and its setting. We suggested reducing or avoiding the harm through revisions to the design and landscape strategy to more closely respond to the historic form, spatial qualities and character of the original terraced garden.

Historic England Position on the Amended Proposals

In response to our concerns regarding the visual impact of the pool house, this has now been relocated further north. We had advised that this should be a smaller building that would appear as a garden feature integrated within the reinstated garden wall, taking inspiration from the existing circular stepped bastions found throughout the grounds. We felt that this approach would allow the new structure to form part of the wider historic landscape framework, rather than appearing as an isolated contemporary addition.

However, while the revised scheme has beneficially relocated the new structure in line with previous advice, it largely retains the design approach of the earlier proposal, including a considerable building depth and a broad loggia accessed by a pair of circular staircases flanking the pool house. As a result, the proposal remains a substantial new structure rather than a more modest and recessive garden building.

Although the proposed staircases appear to draw inspiration from those associated with the existing bastions, they do not reflect the underlying design rationale of these historic structures, as they are not visually integrated within their established composition. A different approach should therefore be adopted, informed by the character and arrangement of historic steps elsewhere on the site.

We acknowledge that the increased separation between the pool house and the swimming pool is a positive change. However, this intervening space is proposed as a substantial hard-surfaced terrace. Combined with the hard landscaping retained around the pool and the paved seating area to its south-west, this significantly limits opportunities to introduce additional planting and create a more verdant setting. A landscape-led approach would better reflect the character of the formal historic garden, allowing the swimming pool to be experienced as one element within the wider garden composition, rather than as the dominant feature of a predominantly domestic space.

With regards to the planting strategy, we welcome the removal of the previously proposed mature Italianate tree planting. Its replacement with formal French-style parterres is considered a more appropriate approach, helping to preserve key views



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from the house towards the wider naturalistic landscape. Nevertheless, further detail on the landscape design should be provided to enable a full assessment of the proposals.

We are also satisfied that the existing curtilage-listed historic fountain is now shown on the proposed drawings. This indicates that this rare surviving garden feature would be retained and, where feasible, brought back into use as part of the restoration of the historic garden setting.

Recommendation

Historic England advises that your Council should seek the following amendments to these applications in order to limit the harm the proposals would cause to the significance of Wykehurst House, as required by paragraph HE4(1)(b) of the NPPF (17 August 2026):

- Reduce the depth of the pool house and redesign the staircases so that a more contextual design is provided that enables the new structure to be more successfully integrated within the reinstated northern wall.
- Reduce the extent of hard surfacing to better reflect the verdant character of the historic garden and thereby enhance the setting of the listed building.
- Provide a detailed landscape scheme to ensure the sympathetic reinstatement of the formal French-style garden, while retaining important views from the house to the wider landscape.

Should the proposals remain unchanged, it will be for your Council to assess whether the harm to Wykehurst House's significance would be outweighed by public benefits secured by the development. In doing so, great weight should be given to the conservation of this designated heritage asset.

If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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