


17 Estcots Drive
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 3DA

Date: 06.07.2025

Ref: application no DM/25/1218 land adjacent to 19 Estcots Drive, East Grinstead, West Sussex

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please kindly see my objection to the above planning application based on the following points:

1. The proposed development requires the replacement of an existing retaining wall bringing it more adjacent to the west boundary with my house and extending it further along the boundary. The construction of this retaining wall would require the excavation to come almost up to the boundary, which sits only 0.9 metres from the bungalow. It is well known that there are sink holes and fissures in the local geology (e.g. sinkholes previously by no 8 Estcots Drive). Along this boundary with the application site runs a continuation, from the conservation area, of the Listed Estcots Farmhouse historic wall (see appendix 2) which is part retaining and part free-standing. The planning application's Heritage statement referred to this is a "Flemish Garden Wall Bond" that is likely a remnant of the walled kitchen garden of the original farmhouse dating back to at least 1890. The wall is already out of plumb and in poor condition due to weathering and unrestrained ivy growth (on the side of the application site) and its foundations are likely to be to a standard unacceptable today. Placing the proposed houses near the boundary, thereby requiring a new retaining structure, not only unacceptably threatens our house foundations and the foul drain and manhole running adjacent to the boundary, but also jeopardises the historic wall. I believe there is a duty to protect this wall due to its historic significance, relationship to the Listed Farmhouse and because part of it stands in the conservation area.
2. One of the defining features of Estcots Drive is the open view across to the conservation area and the Grade II listed buildings of Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn, historically significant properties. The proposed development would block or severely compromise this view, replacing it with a built form. This contravenes Mid Sussex District Plan (DP 35) which states that "development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area". I note that the planning application included a Heritage Statement and I believe this report does not provide a fair reflection of the contribution of this view to the local area. I draw your attention to the following:
 - The listed buildings can be viewed from Estcots Drive very clearly (see appendix 1), which the photos captured in the Heritage Statement do not do justice to as they were taken before the felling of trees on the site.
 - It is, indeed, this view which allows the conservation area to be appreciated by the community, as the listed buildings can only otherwise be viewed by walking down the 'sunken lane', which one would not do if one was unaware of its presence, and a limited view from East Court that sadly does not reveal the stunning chimney stacks or frontage of the Farmhouse and windows, as does the view from Estcots Drive. The view from East Court is only of the roof of the former farm buildings, not of the listed buildings themselves.

- Contrary to Section 3.2.15 of the Heritage Statement, the view of the listed Estcots Farmhouse chimney stacks and roofline would not largely disappear in the summer months. The attached photo was taken in the summer month of June (see appendix 1) while the Acer tree is in full leaf, illustrating a clear view despite the summer foliage. In fact, with the Acer tree being a deciduous tree the view of the listed buildings in the winter months will be even greater than currently illustrated.
 - I suggest that that the view from Estcots Drive affords an ability to appreciate and experience the character, age, significance and appearance of the conservation area.
 - This part of Estcots Drive is a busy thoroughfare to the town centre, East Court park and a local primary and secondary school, therefore maximising the number of people who can appreciate and experience this.
3. The proposed 2 storey dwellings, with their high-pitched roofs, would negatively impact on the views into and out of the conservation area. Particularly views out of the conservation area from the south facing windows at Estcots Farmhouse and views into the conservation area from the large, floor-to-ceiling height, north-facing, openable casement windows from the upper storey of the proposed dwellings. This contravenes Mid Sussex District Plan (DP 35). A previous site inspection at Estcots Farmhouse, made by the planning office in November 2003, concluded “irrefutably” that the effect of development on the site would be felt when viewed from the centre of the rear elevation of the Farmhouse. The owner of the Farmhouse (Mr Cumpsty) has made his objections on these grounds clear in previous applications. Furthermore, should any loft conversions or roof extensions be added in the future (under permitted developments), the impact on the views into the conservation area would be magnified.
4. Development of the application site with two dwellings increases the sense of urban enclosure of the medieval farmhouse, eroding its setting and visually and historically disconnecting the farmhouse from its original landscape. The Mid Sussex District Plan (DP 34) states that special regard should be given to protecting the setting of listed buildings and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (Heritage Assets - 4.16) states that special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of conserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the local conservation areas. I suggest there is a ‘legible relationship’ between the conservation area/Listed buildings and the application site, within which this historic wall that used to form part of the Farmhouse garden is cited, and that might even be considered curtilage of the listed building. The Design & Access Statement from the architects of the planning application acknowledged the relationship of the application site to the listed Farmhouse and conservation area in statements such as, the “semi-circular niche with steps that once led to a higher garden level”, will be retained to “help preserve a sense of the site’s historical connection to the land behind” (Design & Access Statement, p. 11, paragraph 6). As the National Planning Policy (NPPF, para. 132) states, “as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification”.
5. Drawings of the height of the historic wall bordering both the application site and no. 17 Estcots Drive are inaccurate (Ascot Design, site section A-A). When the wall changes from the newer built wall (1980s) to the historic wall, the height increases significantly (see appendix 3 for an estimate of true height of the wall). This inaccuracy means that the significant height of the wall relative to the proposed new ground level at the rear of the proposed dwelling, cannot be fully appreciated by the viewer of the plans. I suggest that this significantly high wall in the garden of the proposed dwelling would create a dark and overborne garden, contravening the Mid Sussex District Plan (DP 26) by “causing harm to the

amenities of future occupants of new dwellings”, specifically impact on “outlook, daylight and sunlight”.

This resultant lack of light into the proposed dwelling, whose important habitable rooms will be facing the embankment in the garden, has implications for future pressure that is likely to be brought to bear to raise the ground level in order to increase the amount of light penetrating the rooms served by the patio doors and downstairs windows. While I appreciate that an application cannot be refused based on potential further applications, were this to materialise it has significant implications for the pertinent issue of the protection of views into and out of the conservation area (DP 35).

6. Despite the proposed building being labelled 1.5 storeys, the head height of the second storey windows is the same as a 2-storey building, therefore this claim is disputable from an architectural point of view. The proposed development is higher than the rooflines of both no 17 and no 19, which is not in keeping with the topography of Estcots Drive, whose rooflines typically stagger in height as they go down the slope of the Drive. There is a risk that the development could tower over adjacent properties and this application should require fully dimensioned plans to be submitted confirming distances of the building from boundaries, the height of the building above ground level and the level of the ground floor of the house relative to Ordnance Survey Datum. I note that it is part of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (policy EG3) that developments are permitted when the form is “proportionate and in keeping with the scale, height...of the surrounding area”.
7. The property is not in keeping with the architecture/design of the surrounding properties because surrounding properties are detached and this proposed development would be the only semi-detached building on this stretch of Estcots Drive.
8. The proposed development appears oversized for the site. Two semi-detached properties on this plot are disproportionate, overdevelops this sensitive site abutting the conservation area, and does not align with the spacing, scale, or character of Estcots Drive.
9. The proposed design includes large, full height windows to the front of the property maximising the overlooking and loss of privacy to the properties opposite the application site.
10. The proposed development includes a west-facing window that would directly overlook no 17 and large floor-to ceiling front windows on the rear upper storey, leading to an unacceptable loss of privacy to the bathroom and garden (contravening Mid Sussex District Plan DP26). The west-facing window is particularly intrusive as it creates a view between the upper living area of the proposed new dwelling and the private area of no 17’s family bathroom. It is not clear from the plans whether this window is openable or obscured.
11. Previous applications for development on this site have been refused (approx. 1990 & 2004) and I do not see material enough difference to the grounds for previous refusal in this current application.

Your sincerely,



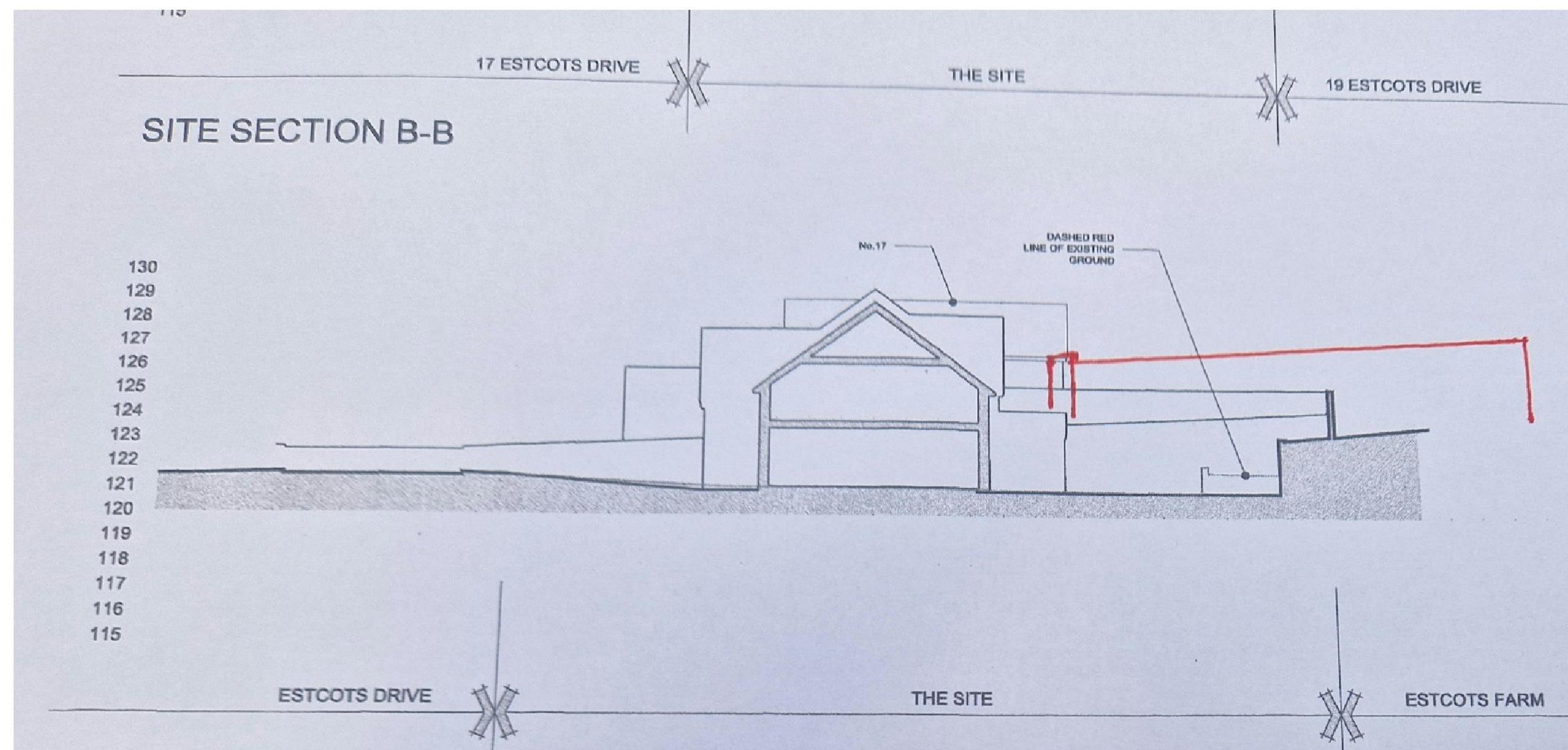
Appendices



Appendix 1 - View of the Listed Farmhouse and Barn in the conservation area, across the application site, from Estcots Drive pavement. Plus screenshot of the photograph with phone data to illustrate the date when the photo was taken i.e. in summer.



Appendix 2 – photo of garden area that extends into the conservatory and retains no 17's garden ground.



Appendix 3 – estimate of height of the historic wall which is not accurately illustrated on existing drawings provided in