

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 September 2026 16:15:49 UTC+01:00
To: "Andy Watt" <Andy.Watt@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/0764 Franc Jean Farm, The Street, Bolney

Hi Andy

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is a plot of land located directly to the west of the northern end of The Street, forming part of the farmstead of Franc Jean Farm, a relatively modern farmstead apparently dating from the early-mid 20th century, and possibly carved out of the far southern extremity of the former parkland associated with Wykehurst Park during the late 19th/early 20th century. Prior to this the area appears to have been an agricultural field. The site is not within the Bolney Conservation Area, but is within its close setting, forming part of the backdrop to views looking from within the Area northwards along The Street. It is also within the settings of a pair of listed buildings just to the south which were formerly part of Tithe Farm.

A public right of way (PROW) runs north-south from the countryside to the north of the village into the Conservation Area along the line of The Street, passing the site and the listed buildings at Tithe Farm.

To consider the affected heritage assets in turn:

- Bolney Conservation Area

Bolney Conservation Area is in two parts, the northern of which is centred on the historical development at Bolney Common and includes both of the above-mentioned listed buildings and their gardens. The boundary of the Area lies a short distance to the south of the application plot.

Although there is not an adopted character appraisal document for the Bolney Conservation Area, the Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' provides a brief high-level analysis of some of the key features of the Area. This suggests that the northern part of the Area is characterised by low density development, with trees, hedges and open spaces making an important contribution to its attractiveness. The document also highlights the importance of the rural setting of the Area, including countryside views, to its character.

As such the surviving rural setting of the northern part of the Area will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to its special character. The development to the western side of the northern end of The Street (including the proposed development site) retains a loose grained nature with undeveloped spaces, which lends a semi-rural character, and is complementary to the low density and verdant nature of the adjacent part of the Conservation Area. The site is particularly prominent in this context, and although it contains some built form and hardstanding, and appears to have been recently cleared, the continuing presence of trees and other planting within it lends a verdant backdrop to views looking northwards along The Street from and through the

Conservation Area. It also affects the character of the approach into the Conservation Area along the adjacent PROW.

- Yew Tree Cottage, The Street

Yew Tree Cottage is a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier timber framed building, located at the northern end of The Street. The building appears originally to have been part of the Tithe Farm farmstead, with the Thatched House (see below), although its exact function is unclear from historic map regression. Tithe Farm is recognised a historic farmstead in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment. There are a small number of outbuildings to the rear garden, one of which historical map regression suggests may be of an age to be part of the former farmstead, and curtilage listed.

Until the expansion of this northern part of Bolney village during the later 19th, and in particular the 20th century, the farmstead was in a relatively isolated rural position adjacent to Bolney Common. It seems likely that the fields around it, including those to the west and north, constituted its farmlands, which possibly included the site, although as noted above a historic map regression exercise suggests that during the latter part of the 19th century the site may have been incorporated into the southernmost extremity of the parklands associated with Wykehurst Park.

Yew Tree Cottage is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, as well as historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex building of its period, possibly a former farm building converted to residential use, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials which are still viewed against a semi-rural backdrop reminiscent of the landscape from which they were drawn. It also possesses potential group value with the possibly curtilage listed outbuilding to the rear, and definite group value with The Thatched House.

As such, the surviving rural setting of the building will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

Although immediately surrounded by development, the wider setting of the building to the north east, north west and south west is of open, undeveloped land including farm and woodland. The development immediately around the house is of a fairly loose grain, particularly that to the north, west and south, with parcels of open land remaining which retain a relatively verdant, semi-rural character. The proposed development site despite a current air of neglect is one such parcel, and has potential intervisibility with Yew Tree Cottage. It also contributes to the context within which the site is appreciated in views from The Street, including sequential views as one passes along the road or PROW.

- The Thatched House, The Street

The Thatched House is a Grade II listed 15th century timber framed building located just to the south west of Yew Tree Cottage. Historical map regression suggests that this was formerly the historic farmstead of Tithe Farm (see above). As with Yew Tree Cottage, there is one surviving outbuilding to the rear which would appear to be possibly part of

the former farmstead (from its footprint, likely a piggery), and potentially of an age to be curtilage listed.

The building is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, as well as historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex farmhouse of its period, , and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials which are still viewed against the landscape from which they were drawn. It also possesses group value with the curtilage listed outbuilding to the rear, and with The Thatched House.

As such, the surviving rural setting of the building will make a strong positive contribution to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The most significant part of that rural setting will be the open fields to the west and south west. However, as with Yew Tree Cottage, the surviving open parcels of land within the loose grained development to the north and north west also contribute positively to the semi-rural nature of that part of the setting of the listed building. The proposed development site constitutes one of those parcels. As with Yew Tree Cottage the site, despite recent clearance and the poor state of repair of the structures within it also contributes positively to the semi-rural character of the approach to the listed building along the adjacent road and PROW.

The current proposal is for the construction of a detached house with associated parking on the site.

In my opinion, the principle of new residential development on this site is contentious in terms of the impact on the surviving semi-rural character of this part of the settings of the various assets described above. Development of this nature, and of the footprint and scale indicated, will have a fundamental impact on the currently open and verdant character of the site, and will remove the positive contribution which it makes to the settings of the heritage assets. It will also result in intensification of the currently relatively open grained development to this western side of The Street. The impact through setting is likely to be predominantly in terms of the character of the context within which the assets are experienced, including in sequential views from the adjacent road and PROW, although there may be some limited intervisibility with the affected assets, in particular the Conservation Area and Yew Tree Cottage.

Aspects of the design of the scheme, including a lack of chimneys or other roofline interest, the materials of the windows and door as shown, and the landscaping to the frontage which is suburban in character, exacerbate the level of harm arising (see also below).

In my opinion the proposal for the reasons set out above results in harm, through impact on setting, to the significance of the designated heritage assets noted above. I would place this harm as lying within the spectrum below substantial harm or total loss of significance, at around the levels set out below:

- Bolney Conservation Area: low-mid level of harm.
- Yew Tree Cottage: low level of harm.
- The Thatched House: low level of harm.

As such, the balancing exercise set out in paragraph HE6.4 of the new NPPF will apply.

In undertaking this exercise, which is a matter for the Case Officer, it should be noted that the NPPF requires that substantial weight should be given to an asset's conservation (HE6.1), and that any harm to a designated asset shall be of considerable importance and weight (HE6.3).

Paragraphs HE4.1 and HE4.2 will also be relevant. HE4.1 requires that development proposals should avoid or minimise harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance. HE4.2 requires that any harm to, or loss of significance of a heritage asset should have a clear and convincing justification.

The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35.

If the principle of the application is on balance supported, I would strongly recommend amendments to some aspects of the detailed design, to ensure that the proposal relates more appropriately to the context:

- A chimney or chimneys should be included to add roofline interest and to reflect the preponderance of traditional features such as this within the village.
- The proposed window and door materials should be amended to painted timber. White and black uPVC respectively will not be acceptable in a semi-rural context within the setting of heritage assets of the nature described above.
- I would recommend that the landscaping is reconsidered to reduce the extent of hard landscaping and to better reflect the semi-rural context. The hard landscaped semi-circular driveway shown has a suburban character which is not appropriate in this context, and requires reconsideration. Appropriate boundary treatments should also be included, which should include native species hedging and tree planting.

Should the principle of the development be supported, these amendments will be required to ensure that the requirements of paragraph HE4.1 of the NPPF as set out above are met.

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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