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Sent: 26 September 2025 15:02:20 UTC+01:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Lullings Cottage DM/25/2066 and 2067

Hi Hamish

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

Lullings Cottage is a curtilage listed building, formerly ancillary to Lullings, a Grade II listed former farmhouse, later country residence, located in a rural position outside Ardingly. The current applications follow on from pre-application advice, and for the demolition of the cottage and an associated outbuilding and construction in their place of a new dwelling.

Lullings Cottage was constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century as an ancillary building, forming part of the group of buildings associated with the former Westhill Farm farmstead, but, it is suggested by the Heritage Statement accompanying this application, at the point when the principal farmhouse was converted for use as a country residence. The cottage is suggested to have formed staff accommodation for the main house. There is an adjacent timber framed outbuilding which appears to be of a similar date, which also forms part of the site, and would also be regarded as curtilage listed. The former farmhouse at Lullings, which is a Grade II listed building dating from the list description from the 15th century, is located a short distance to the south-west of the cottage. The listed building appears to have been substantially extended to the north during the early-mid 20th century, at which point its orientation may also have been altered, so that the east elevation became the principal entrance front, whereas previously this appears to have been to the south. This work, which appears to have coincided with the house being renamed as 'Lullings', was done at the time that the farmhouse ceased functioning as such and became instead a substantial country dwelling, so at a similar period as the construction of Lullings Cottage.

Map regression shows that from the 19th century at least the farm buildings to the farmstead were predominantly located in a yard arrangement to the south-east of the house, with some smaller buildings around a second small yard to the north east. The buildings to the south-east survive, and remain in ancillary use to the house, although the relationship of both these buildings and Lullings Cottage with the farmhouse was altered during the early-mid 20th century when the main house was extended and the entrance frontage moved to its eastern side. The farm buildings to the north-east of the farmhouse appear to have been lost, possibly at the time that it was extended.

Westhill Farm is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the Medieval period.

Lullings is considered to possess architectural interest based on its construction and craftsmanship- this includes the substantial early-mid 20th century addition to the north of the historic core, which appears to be of some quality and contributes to the narrative of the development of the site. It also possesses historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its period, which has been altered and extended over time in response to changing socio-economic circumstances and the needs and aspirations of successive owners. The evolution of the building from a farmhouse to a substantial country residence will be part of its historical narrative. The listed building also has aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn, as well as group value with the curtilage listed former farm buildings, and with the former staff cottage (Lullings Cottage) and its outbuilding.

On this basis, the surviving rural setting which surrounds Lullings will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to its special interest, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative value and aesthetic value. The surviving former farm buildings, including the farm courtyard to the south-east of the house, and Lullings Cottage and its outbuilding, also contribute positively to the setting and special interest of the listed former farmhouse, and in particular to the narrative of the farmstead, and the house's changing role within this. There is direct intervisibility between the Cottage and the farmhouse, which are in close proximity. Although this is currently limited by intervening planting, it should be noted that this planting could be removed or cut back without the need for any form of consent. The Cottage, its outbuilding, Lullings (the former farmhouse) and the farm courtyard are also clearly seen as a grouping in other short distance views from their immediate settings, for example from the open field directly to the east.

Lullings Cottage in itself is a relatively simple building, which has been subject to some unsympathetic alterations, but does retain features which are typical of a modest 19th century cottage. It is therefore of a limited degree of historical and architectural interest in its own right. The adjacent outbuilding, while somewhat dilapidated, is of some character and also possesses some interest as a typical rural Sussex outbuilding of the period.

Lullings, Lullings Cottage and its outbuilding are relatively well screened in public views from West Hill, but are visible as a grouping in longer distance views and vistas looking across the valley to the east of the farmstead, from the PROW which runs north-south through the South of England showground, and from the grassed area to the west of this at the top of the hill which appears to be well used on an informal basis for walking and dog-walking. The pair are also visible in similar vistas from the Ardingly Conservation Area where it includes the graveyard to St Peter's Church, to the northern side of Church Lane. In all these views, the buildings make a distant but attractive group within a largely undeveloped rural landscape.

Although there is not an adopted character appraisal for the Ardingly Conservation Area (which is in two parts), the significance of which lies principally in its nature as the twin

historic centres of a rural Sussex village which has grown up over many centuries in close connection with the surrounding countryside, the Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' includes a brief high level analysis of its key features. These are noted to include views of the surrounding countryside- the views and vistas from the Area to the north of Church Lane towards the north west, which include the potential application site, are particularly wide reaching and attractive in their unspoilt rural nature, and will be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Area.

The current proposal is for the demolition of Lullings Cottage and the adjacent outbuilding and the construction of a two bedroom dwelling, with detached bike shed/store/plant room for an ASHP. The proposed replacement dwelling would be sited slightly further to the north than the existing. The design of the building has evolved during the pre-application process, and is for two linked pavilions under pitched roofs, with a flat roofed linking structure. The dwelling is shown with elevations of larch cladding with brick panels and plinth, and metal framed glazing which is full height to the linking structure, which has a flat sedum roof.

The current proposal is similar to the most recent iteration of the scheme seen at pre-application stage. Whilst we have further supporting information including a structural report, and an amended Design and Access Statement, there is nothing within the current application documents which would alter the position in terms of the impact on the affected heritage assets. The structural report, for example concludes that the building is in fair condition, and that there are no structural issues which would warrant its demolition. The DAS contains an assessment of works necessary for reconfiguration or extension of the existing Cottage, either of which would be a preferred option from a heritage perspective. This is purely speculative as there is no detailed scheme before us for these alternatives, but it does not appear to contain works which in principle would be regarded as so damaging to the special interest of the curtilage listed building that its total demolition would be an acceptable or justifiable alternative.

In my opinion, the proposal remains contentious in heritage terms:

- As above, although somewhat altered, Lullings Cottage is considered to be of a degree of historical and architectural interest as a curtilage listed building, and in particular is considered to contribute positively to the setting and special interest of Lullings. It has group value with the listed former farmhouse, and the former farm buildings around it, and contributes to the narrative of the development of the historic farmstead into a country residence.

A replacement building on the site would not have that same historical or architectural interest, and would not have the same historical relationship or group value with the farmhouse and former farm buildings. The proposed demolition of the Cottage would result in a total loss of its own significance, and would also cause a degree of less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to the special interests of the listed farmhouse and the remaining

curtilage listed buildings within the historic farmstead. In my opinion, therefore, the principle of the demolition is contentious, and would require a very robust justification which is not provided as part of the current submission, particularly as there seems to be no convincing reason why the existing building could not be adapted and/or extended to create an attractive, modern dwelling.

Similar issues would be raised by the demolition of the associated outbuilding, which is also of a degree of interest and also contributes positively to the settings of the other listed and curtilage listed buildings within the farmstead. Again, its loss is not justified by the information currently in front of us.

The loss of both buildings will also, in my opinion, have a small but noticeable negative impact on the character of the longer distance views across the valley to the east which are discussed above. This will detract from the manner in which the house and associated historic farmstead is appreciated as a grouping in these views, and will also detract from the positive contribution which these views make to the setting of the Ardingly Conservation Area.

- The design of the proposed replacement dwelling has been amended during the pre-application process, and now responds better to the context than the original scheme which was before us. However, I remain of the opinion that the new building as shown does not mitigate for the loss of the existing historic cottage, and does not make the same level of contribution to the setting of the listed farmhouse and farmstead, or to the wider views from the Ardingly Conservation Area. As was noted at pre-application stage, the extent of the glazing to the east facing elevation, although reduced in comparison to the original design, in my opinion remains of some concern in terms of potential undue visual prominence resulting from reflectivity and/or light spill. This may have a disruptive impact on the largely undeveloped, rural character of views from the east across the valley, and the positive contribution they make to the manner in which the former farmstead is appreciated, and to the setting of the Ardingly Conservation Area

In summary, therefore it is my opinion that both the principle of the loss of the existing buildings on the site and the design of the proposed replacement development are unfortunately contentious in heritage terms, and would result in the following harms in terms of the NPPF:

- A total loss of significance of the Cottage and its outbuilding, through their demolition.
- A level of less than substantial harm through loss of group value and impact on setting to the listed former farmhouse and the remaining curtilage listed former farm buildings, at around the low-mid level of that scale.

- A low level of less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to the Ardingly Conservation Area.

Under paragraph 215 of the NPPF these harms would stand to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

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

I would again suggest that a proposal to retain, refurbish, and potentially sympathetically extend the Cottage and outbuilding may be more favourably viewed.

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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