

Planning Statement

Full planning application and application for listed building consent for amendments to hotel layout approved under DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201, new single storey extension to main building and erection of new detached two storey spa building, provision of relocated secondary access to Chownes Mead Lane, new parking area and landscaping of the site.

**Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane
Cuckfield, Haywards Heath**

March 2026

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At Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath

Planning Statement
on behalf of
RCM Partnership LLP

March 2026

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Details of previous planning history

Appendix 2 – Pre-Application Advice letter dated 17.11.2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DMH Stallard LLP on behalf of the applicant, RCM Partnership LLP to support applications for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent in relation to Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Cuckfield for the following proposed development:

"Amendments to hotel layout approved under DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201, new single storey extension to main building and erection of new detached two storey spa building, provision of relocated secondary access to Chownes Mead Lane, new parking area and landscaping of the site".

- 1.2 The applications have been submitted following the receipt of beneficial pre-application advice provided by Ms Joanne Fisher of Mid-Sussex District Council (MSDC) in November 2023 under reference DM/23/1480 in relation to the scheme as a whole, and subsequent, more focussed advice provided in November 2025 in specific reference to the impact of the scheme on Ancient Woodland under reference DM/25/0133.
- 1.3 More details of the advice provided, and the steps taken in response in finalising the scheme for submission are set out later in this Planning Statement and the separate Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects, but in summary officers considered the principle of the proposed development to be acceptable subject to making amendments to the scheme presented at pre-application stage in response to the comments provided.
- 1.4 In addition to this Planning Statement, the applications are supported by a suite of drawings and documentation as set out in the covering letter to the applications comprising the following:
- Covering letter prepared by DMH Stallard
 - Completed application forms and ownership certificates prepared by DMH Stallard

- Site Location Plan at 1:1,250 scale
- Block Plan at 1:500 scale
- Survey drawings of existing buildings prepared by ABIR Architects
- Removals / modification drawings prepared by ABIR Architects
- Proposed drawings prepared by ABIR Architects
- Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects
- Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage
- Landscape drawings and report prepared by Nicholas Dexter Landscape Design
- Transport Statement including Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Designers Response and Travel Plan Statement prepared by Motion Consultants
- Arboricultural Implications Assessment including Tree Constraints Plan and Tree Protection Plan prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Protected Species Surveys and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Metric prepared by Lizard Landscape Design & Ecology
- Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Acoustics South-East
- Air Quality Assessment and Emissions Mitigation Assessment prepared by Phlorum Limited
- Part L & Sustainability Report including Ventilation and Extraction Statement and External Lighting Assessment prepared by Tournay-Godfrey Ltd
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by GTA Civils and Transport

1.5 The structure of the remainder of this Planning Statement is as follows:

- Section 2 provides a description of the site.
- Section 3 summarises the relevant planning history.
- Section 4 summarises the pre-application advice received from MSDC.
- Section 5 describes the proposed scheme.
- Section 6 sets out the relevant planning policies and guidance.

- Section 7 sets out the planning considerations.
- Section 8 provides the conclusion and Planning Balance.

2. Description of the Site

- 2.1 Chownes Mead is located on the south-western side of Chownes Mead Lane, a no-through road that connects Tyler's Green and Isaac's Lane, both parts of the A272. The property is located in the defined countryside between the built-up area boundaries of Haywards Heath to the east and Cuckfield to the north-west.
- 2.2 The application property comprises a Grade II listed country house construction of which began just before the First World War and was completed in 1920 and first added to the statutory list in 2011. The detailed statutory list description is included at Appendix A in the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage together with further discussion in relation to the historic background to the property. Associated with the property and included in the list description are a separate former coach house (that is not part of the application site) and garden features including a paved terrace, gate piers and iron gates.
- 2.3 Also located within the curtilage of the property are a number of other buildings and structures comprising the following:
- a garage block with accommodation over to the north-east of the main building.
 - an open-air swimming pool with small pool house to the south-east of the main building.
 - A timber clad barn beyond the swimming pool.
 - a greenhouse, coop and shed to the immediate south-east of the main building.
 - A chicken coop located to the south of the main building.
 - A pavilion and store structure to the south of the chicken coop.
 - A hard and separate grass tennis court to the south of the pavilion.
 - A disused basketball court located adjacent to the hard tennis court.
 - A small garden room located to the west of the main building.

- Parking areas in proximity to the main building, the Coach House and the timber clad barn.

2.4 There are two access points into the site. The principal entrance to the site off Chownes Mead Lane is located to the north of the Coach House with a driveway that sweeps up to the main property and a spur off to the parking area in front of the Coach House. There is a secondary point of access located in the south-eastern corner of the site adjacent to 1 Crabtree Cottages.

3. Planning History of the Site

3.1 The full planning history of the application site, taken from MSDC's on-line planning register is presented in **Appendix 1** of this Planning Statement. Of particular note are the planning permission granted in 2012 (MSDC ref: 12/03605/FUL) for the detached garage, the planning permission granted in 2015 (MSDC ref: 14/04433/HOUS) for the building to enclose the swimming pool and most pertinently, the permissions for both planning permission and listed building consent granted in 2018 (MSDC refs: DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201) for the following described development:

"Change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel (Use Class C1) including installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building. Conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level. Extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS."

3.2 Following the approval of all pre-commencement conditions in 2019 (under MSDC refs: DM19/2794 and DM/19/2800), a Lawful Development Certificate was subsequently issued in 2021 (MSDC ref: DM/21/2630) confirming that the installation of the lift in the main building constituted the implementation of the

hotel permission granted in 2018. This permission can be built out without any further approvals from MSDC.

4. Pre-application Advice & Feedback from MSDC

- 4.1 The applicant has sought pre-application advice from MSDC for this scheme. A formal request for advice was submitted on 2 June 2023. A site meeting with the planning, conservation and environmental protection officers was held on 7th September 2023 and a formal letter of advice subsequently issued on 17th November 2023 (MSDC ref: DM/23/1480). A copy of the letter of advice received from MSDC is at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 Whilst the pre-application advice provided by MSDC was supportive in principle of the proposals presented, various comments were made to different aspects of the proposals and requests made for alterations to be made to the drawings for the scheme. The full details of the advice received and the responses to this are contained within Section 8 of the Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects and in particular relation to the alterations proposed to the heritage asset, Section 4 of the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage.
- 4.3 In view of the previous permissions that have been granted in relation to development within both the Ancient Woodland itself and the buffer to it, the design team were keen to understand the likely response of the local planning authority to the proposals as they impact on Ancient Woodland and so a further request for pre-application advice in relation to this particular issue was submitted to MSDC in January 2025 under reference DM/25/0133.
- 4.4 A site meeting was held at the beginning of May 2025 and advice provided by MSDC officers and their appointed consultants, Place Services in November 2025. A summary of the advice provided in relation to the impact on Ancient Woodland is contained within Section 9 of the Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects and a full copy of the advice received is at Appendix 1 of the

Arboricultural Implications Assessment prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd.

5. The Proposed Scheme

- 5.1 These application proposals build upon the scheme that was previously granted both planning permission and listed building consent in 2018 to expand the hotel's facilities and have been further refined in the light of the pre-application advice received both in November 2023 and more recently in November 2025.

The following works are now proposed in these applications:

- (i) The refurbishment of the main house as a country house hotel. This includes the retention of the format and detail of the rooms to the main core of the original building.
- (ii) Erection of an extension to link the rear service wing of the main building to the existing garage structure and to provide kitchen and other back of house facilities for the hotel.
- (iii) Amendments to the internal layout of the main building including the creation of one additional bedroom to the scheme granted in 2018 meaning that 13 bedrooms are now proposed. These amendments are set out in more detail and are discussed in Section 4 of the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage as well as Section 8 of the Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects.
- (iv) A significantly modified design to the extant 2018 permission as it relates to the pool house enclosure including the provision of a new spa facility building that is linked to a new Member's lounge and gym to replace the existing timber barn structure.
- (v) The closure of the existing secondary access and provision of new secondary access to be located further away from the adjoining residential property.
- (vi) The provision of a new area of blue badge car parking served off the relocated secondary access together with parking for the spa facility.

- (vii) The creation of a freshwater pool in the existing natural dell to the south of the main building.

6. The Development Plan and Policy Guidance

- 6.1 The following development plan policies are considered relevant to the determination of these applications.

Mid-Sussex District Plan (Adopted March 2018)

- DP1 Sustainable Economic Development
- DP12 Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- DP14 Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy
- DP21 Transport
- DP26 Character and Design
- DP34 Listed Buildings and other Heritage Assets
- DP37 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- DP38 Biodiversity
- DP39 Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41 Flood Risk and Drainage
- DP42 Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

The policies and explanatory text are available to view here:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

Review of Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (Made in May 2014)

- CNP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
- CNP5 Protect and Enhance the Countryside
- CNP14 Business Development in the Countryside
- CNP16 Transport Impact of Development

The policies and supporting text are available to view here:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2776/cuckfield-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

6.2 Other relevant policy and guidance appears in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the most recent version published in December 2024 and the supporting Planning Practice Guidance as well as the MSDC produced 'Mid Sussex Design Guide'. The District Council is also in the process of updating its Local Plan with the Phase 1 of the Examination having been completed in October 2024. Following criticism made by the originally appointed Inspector over compliance with the then required 'Duty to Cooperate' and subsequent pause to the examination, a new Inspector has been appointed and the examination restarted in February 2026.

7. Planning Considerations

7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that 'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

7.2 The application is considered to raise the following key issues:

- Principle of development
- Impact on historic interest of the Listed Buildings and other structures
- The appropriateness of the design
- Noise impact of proposals
- Lighting impact of proposals
- Impact on highways / parking
- Sustainability
- Impact on Trees and Ancient Woodland
- Impact on Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Impact on Water Infrastructure

Principle of development

- 7.3 As set out earlier, planning permission and listed building consent have previously been granted under MSDC references DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201 for the change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel (Use Class C1) including the installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building; the conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level; and the extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS. A lawful development certificate was subsequently granted under reference DM/21/2630 to confirm that the change of use to a hotel permission has been implemented by the installation of a lift shaft. Accordingly, there exists on the site a permission that can be built out without the benefit of a further planning permission and this must therefore be considered as a realistic and achievable fall-back position for the applicant.
- 7.4 The proposals contained in this application as summarised in Section 5 of this Planning Statement seek to build upon the extant permission and create additional facilities and services that would be normally expected to be provided in a small boutique country-house hotel such as this. These facilities include a larger spa area with additional treatment, manicure and pedicure rooms, kitchen, members lounge area, yoga studio, gym, plant and stores.
- 7.5 Moreover there is policy support for this proposal in both the Mid-Sussex District Plan and Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan. Policy DP19 in the District Plan promotes sustainable tourism and states tourism related development in the countryside, defined as the area outside built up area boundaries as here, including visitor accommodation and the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided it supports the sustainable growth of the rural economy and it maintains or wherever possible, enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District. The proposal will enhance the rural economy by the provision of jobs for hotel employees and bringing spending power of visitors to the local area. The scheme

is complemented by a high-quality landscape scheme that will create a highly valued landscape around the site.

- 7.6 The proposal is also considered to comply with the relevant policies within the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan. Policy CNP3 seeks to prevent the coalescence between Cuckfield and Haywards Heath. The spa building is located primarily on the footprint of the previously permitted pool house and existing agricultural shed and therefore the proposal will not increase coalescence between the settlements. Policy CNP5 seeks to protect and enhance the countryside. The proposal is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the landscape setting of Cuckfield and would not impact any of the identified distinctive views. Moreover, Policy CNP14 deals with business development in the countryside outside the built-up area boundary and states proposals will be permitted for the change of use of a rural building to business or tourist uses, a well-designed new building for business or tourist uses and proportionate and well-designed extensions of an existing building in business or tourist use.
- 7.7 In view of the compliance with policy and given that there is an extant planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use to a hotel, the principle of the development cannot realistically be disputed subject to the other considerations set out hereafter.

Impact on historic interest of the Listed Buildings and other structures

- 7.8 Since pre-application advice was originally secured in 2023, the applicant has appointed Orion Heritage to advise on heritage matters in relation to the scheme and their detailed Heritage Statement is included in the package of application documentation.
- 7.9 Section 4 of the Heritage Statement assesses the proposed development and its potential impact on heritage assets and explains in some detail the historic interest

of the various rooms within the main house. The proposed alterations to the ground floor layout are covered in paragraphs 4.24 to 4.41 of the statement. The principal issue that arose from the pre-application process was the location for the proposed extension to accommodate the kitchen and other associated back of house areas. The LPA's preference was for the extension to be sited on the southeast elevation rather than the northwest elevation facing the rear service area.

7.10 Considerable effort by the design team has been given to considering the best location for the extension and paragraphs 4.28 to 4.36 of the Heritage Statement set out the reasoning for keeping to the proposal for the extension to the southeast elevation rather than relocate it as requested by the local planning authority. It is also confirmed at paragraph 4.40 that the proposal to change the library window to a door is now omitted from the scheme.

7.11 Discussion in relation to the first and second floors is at paragraphs 4.42 to 4.45 of the Heritage Statement. It is confirmed at paragraph 4.43 that the original pre-application proposal to provide a bathroom in room 5 has now been omitted from the scheme. Discussion in relation to the proposed new spa building to be located to the southeast of the main building and its impact on the main heritage asset is set out in paragraphs 4.48 to 4.75 of the Heritage Statement.

7.12 The conclusion to the Heritage Statement states:

"The subject site is located at Chownes Mead Lane, which is west of Haywards Heath. On a minor route, it is set alongside other larger properties set back from the lane (Plate 43). To the north is residential settlement and development in the form of an estate, to the southeast. West and southwest is largely agricultural land and wooded areas, interspersed with several farmhouses and cottages.

Chownes Mead is set beyond a wall and lodge (Plate 43). Built as a country house at the beginning of the 20th century, it reflects a late medieval house. The use of multiple materials suggests an evolution over several hundred years, despite its recent construction.

Begun just before the First World War and finished in 1920, by builders Norman and Burt of Burgess Hill for the Kleinwort family, there are some later alterations. The gardens include work by Gertrude Jekyll and is Listed Grade II, although the landscape is not referenced in the Listing.

The heritage asset is also included within the West Sussex Historic Environment Record, reference MWS132. It is described as 'Historic garden at Chownes Mead with Gertrude Jekyll connections'.

A more detailed description in Historic England's Listing is included in Appendix A. This Listing Description notes that its values are as a result of:

- *architectural interest: a handsome neo-Elizabethan-style house begun just before the outbreak of the First World War by local builders Norman and Burt;*
- *interiors: a richly-decorated neo-Jacobean interior complete with plasterwork ceilings, panelled walls, carved wood and stone fireplaces, and a grand open-well staircase;*
- *intactness: good survival of original fixtures and fittings in the servants' quarters, as well as in the principal rooms, and a coach house in the grounds*
- *landscape: a stone-paved terrace, gate piers topped with obelisks and iron gates all form part of the original design and create a suitably grand landscape setting for the house.*

These values have been carefully considered in the development of the scheme. The proposals are to refurbish the house and grounds as a small hotel. This includes the removal of inappropriate structures and replacement with ancillary buildings to support the main house.

Assessment of heritage assets within proximity has been carried out and it was found that none had intervisibility or other functional connections which suggested that the study site was in their setting. Thus, it was concluded that no assets beyond the study site boundaries had the potential to have their significance harmed by development within their setting.

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent has previously been granted under references DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201. A lawful development certificate ref. DM/21/2630 to confirm that the change of use to a hotel has been implemented through the installation of the lift shaft.

This application includes some of the works previously approved with several variations including changes to layout. Revisions are also proposed to ancillary buildings in the garden and landscape layouts.

Pre-application advice was provided in the response from Mid Sussex Council, ref. DM/23/1480 dated 17th November 2023. This advisory note stated that the 'principle of the proposals was considered acceptable', issues raised included the

- location of the small ground floor extension,*
- alteration of the library window to a door,*
- sub-division of a first-floor bedroom and*
- comment upon the ancillary buildings and landscape.*

The revised design responds to these comments.

The proposals for the main house have negligible impact upon the highly detailed ground floor interiors. Original room layouts are largely unaltered, part from re-opening a previously closed doorway.

The proposed ancillary buildings remain subservient to the main house but respond to both its architecture and landscape in a modern manner, creating their

own identity. They replace a currently uncoordinated group of structures. These do not respond to the architecture of the heritage asset and not all of which are in good condition.

The scheme is grounded within the landscape and reflects the involvement of Gertrude Jekyll. It is noted that many of the walls and gateways identified in archival images, have remained unchanged.

The works to the main house constitute extensive repair and retention of the historic building fabric. The buildings which replace the existing ancillary structures, whilst covering additional footprint, are both respectful to the heritage asset and create a new dimension within the study site.

These are both modern but also reflects vernacular scale and materials. The design also responds to the Jekyll works in the wider landscape.

The landscape is considered in more detail within the Landscape Architect's design and DAS, but the proposals retain the original concept whilst incorporating contemporary features.

In conclusion, it is considered that the works to refurbish the main house are at the level of less than substantial harm. However, in most respects, they constitute an enhancement of the architectural value, and therefore the significance, of the heritage asset.

The replacement of the existing ancillary structures might be considered at a level of less than substantial harm. However, they are carefully crafted buildings which embody architectural quality in their own right and constitute an improvement upon the ancillary structures on site at present. The development also facilitates the refurbishment of the Listed Building and the landscape."

- 7.13 We deal with the public benefits of the proposal given the less than substantial harm identified in Section 8 of this Planning Statement although it is important to highlight that works to the main house are considered to constitute an enhancement of the architectural value and therefore the significance of the heritage asset.
- 7.14 Likewise it is considered that the proposed new replacement buildings for the existing ancillary structures are carefully crafted buildings that have architectural quality in their own right and are an improvement on the ancillary structures on site at present, as well as what has previously been granted planning permission in 2018.

The appropriateness of the design

- 7.15 The Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects provides considerable detail on the proposed design of both the amendments to the previous approval for the conversion of the main property, Chownes Mead into a hotel and the proposed new build spa building. In addition, Section 4 of the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage sets out the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset.
- 7.16 The conclusion to the Design and Access Statement states: *“Chownes Mead, a grade 2 listed country house built between 1912 and 1920 is set in circa 21 acres of private landscaped gardens and located on Chownes Mead Lane near Cuckfield / Haywards Heath with a family owner-occupier.*

Both the Full Planning and Listed Building Consent applications follow the (now implemented) Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent for change of use from a residential dwelling (use class C3) to a hotel (use class C1) granted in 2018 (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201) by seeking to further develop the scheme for hotel with complementary facilities & relocated secondary entrance. The

proposals comprise the minor amendments to the layout of the listed building as the main hotel accommodation, with complementary facilities comprising pool & spa facilities and a members lounge & gym and detail a sensitively designed, considered sustainable development which enhances the heritage setting and preserves the listed building and gardens into the future.

The landscape-led contextual approach will integrate the historic with the contemporary and underpinned by craftsmanship, focuses on the quality of both internal and external spaces, their materiality and context.

The new buildings will reflect and transcend some of the qualities of Chownes Mead. Bringing together users with context, landscape & heritage, the proposals will foster a sense of place whilst utilising & combining traditional building materials with modern detailing & construction techniques, both sympathetic to and appropriate for their unique setting & marrying all the elements of the site."

- 7.17 In light of the foregoing, we consider that the design of the proposals, both the extension to the existing main building and that of the proposed new spa building in the grounds are appropriate responses to the wider setting of the site in the countryside location between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield.

Noise impact of proposals

- 7.18 Acoustic South East have prepared an acoustic assessment which is included as part of the application submission package. The Executive Summary of this report provides the following:

"The site soundscape was measured between the 20th and 26th January 2026 with a class 1 sound level meter at a position representative of the nearest residential receptor to the East of the site. This is 1 Crabtree Cottages.

The survey position is dominated by fast flowing road traffic noise

Pre-Application advice has been sought with specialist comments received from the Mid Sussex District Council Environmental Protection department. The comments have been noted with the assessment covering multiple aspects of the site including the newly proposed car parking area, the newly generated vehicle access, proposed external Air Source Heat Pumps (x6), Weight drops from within the gym as well as gym noise breakout generally. The use of the cocktail terrace has also been considered.

The spa and newly generated vehicle access are only for the use in the daytime period and with a limited membership capacity. A transport assessment has used vehicle numbers from a same size membership at Bailiffscourt Spa to determine how the visitors to the site might impact the residential neighbours at 1 Crabtree Cottages.

The report concludes that for all of the aspects considered, the impact is not likely to be a concern for neighbouring residents.

On the basis of the information presented, planning permission should not be withheld on noise grounds. "

- 7.19 In light of the conclusions of the Noise Assessment set out above we conclude that the scheme will comply with the relevant requirements of District Plan Policy DP29.

Lighting impact of proposals

- 7.20 Tournay Godfrey Ltd have prepared an External Lighting Assessment which is included as part of the application submission. This document sets out the proposed lighting principles and strategy for the site which include the following:

- (i) Luminaire fixtures – Luminaires shall be placed to provide light where required with the minimum number of fixtures and positioned to avoid nuisance glare.
- (ii) Lit hours of operation - Lighting controls for the commercial and carpark lighting to restrict the hours of illumination during the night-time by time clock control and luminaires with a dimmed fall back level where security lighting is required.
- (iii) Colour temperature – The avoidance of using ‘white’ LEDs using colour temperature LEDs of 3000K or less shall be specified.

7.21 Having regard to the conclusions of the Lighting Assessment summarised above, we conclude that the scheme will comply with the relevant requirements of District Plan Policy DP29.

Impact on highways / parking

7.22 Motion Transport have prepared both a Transport Statement and Travel Plan Statement which are included as part of the application submission package. The Transport Statement which has been prepared having regard to pre-application advice provided by WSCC as Highway Authority demonstrates in summary that:
The proposals accord with national and local policies relevant to transport;

- The existing site access serving the approved hotel will be retained;
- Safe and suitable access to the new spa building can be achieved from Chownes Mead Lane, having regard to relevant design standards, and has been subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit that is included as Appendix 6 to the Transport Statement;
- No significant road safety issues associated with the local highway network have been identified that are detrimental to the existing standard of road safety;
- Appropriate provision is proposed to be made for parking and servicing in accordance with local design guidance and standards;

- The number of additional vehicle movements associated with the members spa is below the level whereby more detailed assessment is typically required, and on this basis it is considered that the proposals would not result in any capacity concerns on the adjacent local highway network; and
- A Travel Plan Statement has been prepared to accompany the application, which sets out measures designed to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour particularly among staff.

7.23 On the basis of the assessment set out in the Transport Statement it is considered that there is no reason why the proposals should be resisted on traffic or transportation grounds.

Sustainability

7.24 Tournay Godfrey Ltd have prepared a Part L and Sustainability Report that is included as part of the application documentation. This sets out a series of sustainability measures that will be applied to the scheme including measures to address overheating, water efficiency, the sustainable use of materials, minimising waste and maximisation of recycling.

7.25 Section 6.05 of the Design and Access Statement prepared by ABIR Architects summarises the scheme in relation to sustainability including the ambition to ensure that the new build spa building is as energy efficient and sustainable as it can be. The summary of this section states: *"In summary, the overall approach to the new buildings will be one of a high-quality sustainable build compromising high quality material specification throughout. All materials will be locally sourced where possible to limit carbon footprint with a focus on sustainable life-cycle elements which limit any environmental impact where possible as well as considering the utilisation of materials and construction that can be eventually recycled."*

- 7.26 The scheme as conceived and proposed to be fully developed to the next design phase is considered to meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP39 in relation to Sustainable Design and Construction.

Impact on Trees and Ancient Woodland

- 7.27 A full tree survey has been undertaken of the application site red line boundary and an Arboricultural Implications Assessment has been prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants and included as part of the application submission. The purpose of the inspection was to produce a base inventory of the tree stock, advise on any safety issues, calculate root protection areas and to produce a Tree Constraints Plan that can be used for advising potential redevelopment layouts and a subsequent Tree Protection Plan.
- 7.28 The results of the inspections are presented in section 6 of the report. Some 89 individual trees and 27 groups of trees were inspected, ranging from less than 15 years to 150 years of age with most representing phases of landscape planting undertaken primarily since the house was built. A diverse range of tree dimensions and evergreen/deciduous species are present with a broad spectrum of tree condition across the survey area. Tree works are recommended to 21 trees and six groups on safety grounds with those at risk of failure onto the lane considered the highest risk.
- 7.29 It is acknowledged that the application site includes land within it that is formally designated as Ancient Woodland. There is existing development located within the Ancient Woodland in the form of the agricultural shed that was granted planning permission in 2013. Furthermore, the 2018 planning permission for the use of the main house as a hotel and which is capable of being completed, includes the development of a pool house that has been approved to be built partly within the designated Ancient Woodland.

7.30 The report states that an assessment of the integrity and quality of this Ancient Woodland was undertaken as part of the preapplication advice by Place Services, dated 12th November 2025. A copy of their email report is included in Appendix 1 for reference purposes.

7.31 The report summary states: *"the proposals will require the removal of 9 individual trees and a "U" shaped Cypress screen. All are BS Category C or U and should not represent a significant constraint to the proposals, according to BS5837:2012. The landscaping proposals indicate 71 new trees will be planted to offset these losses.*

Robust tree protection measures are proposed, in accordance with BS5837:2012 recommendations, with disturbance to retained tree RPAs minimised through design and installation methodologies.

The Tree Protection Plan can be referred to as an approved drawing or in a specifically worded condition to ensure that the retained trees are appropriately protected during the demolition and construction works."

7.32 As recommended by Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd, Lizard Landscape and Ecology has undertaken an assessment of the condition of the area of the designated Ancient Woodland located within the application site red line boundary and produced a report that was included as part of the pre-application advice request. The report was submitted together with drawn and photographic information prepared by ABIR Architects and covering letter prepared by DMH Stallard to MSDC in to seek bespoke pre-application advice from the Council and its specialist consultee in relation to the impact of the scheme on Ancient Woodland.

7.33 The outcome of the advice provided in the advice reference DM/25/0133 is reproduced in Appendix 1 to the Arboricultural Implications Assessment and set out in detail in Section 9.04 of the Design and Access Statement. In summary, the

design team acknowledge the remnant ancient woodland (location 3) and the proposals have been carefully and respectfully designed around this. For the most part, the new build pool and spa building adjacent to location 3 are positioned on the existing terrace / pool areas as well as the location of the pool house and local hardstanding/ paved areas. The landscape design also highlights that natural buffers are provided around this habitat and where existing are retained / enhanced where possible. Root protection areas are acknowledged and protected. Furthermore, invasive species are proposed to be removed to minimise potential encroachment to the ancient woodland and other local woodland habitats. Reference should be made to reports / drawings / documentation from Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, Broad Oak Tree Consultants and Nicholas Dexter Landscape Design.

Impact on Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.34 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology have been appointed to provide advice in relation to ecological matters and biodiversity net gain. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report is included in the application documentation. This report has the following conclusions:

"The entire site covers an area of 7.4ha, of which the red line boundary encompasses 1.72ha and is located to the west of Haywards Heath. The site consists of short, modified grassland, buildings, hardstanding and nonnative hedgerows / shrubs which are habitats of broad low ecological value. The greatest ecological interest at the site is associated with the woodland, mature trees and treelines which should be retained and protected throughout proposals, wherever practicable.

The habitats within and adjacent to the site were found suitable to support reptiles, bats and great crested newt therefore detailed surveys in relation to these species are required. As the presence, or potential presence, of protected species is a

material consideration in the planning process these surveys shall need to be undertaken before determination of the planning application.

Proposals have negligible potential to impact upon any statutory designations identified within a potential zone of influence of development. Therefore, further assessment in regard to the Habitat Regulations (2017) or site-specific mitigation would not be required.

Opportunities for ecological enhancement have been provided to allow the ecological value of the site to be maximised. Recommendations on how best to achieve BNG are detailed herein to try to ensure the layout of the scheme would comply with the +10% mandate in the Environment Act (2021). Given the presence of medium and high distinctiveness habitat on site, consideration shall need to be given to how these habitats can be compensated for within the scheme.

Subject to a sensitively designed scheme, which gives due consideration to the survey and mitigation requirements outlined herein, no major ecological constraints have been identified which would preclude the proposed development."

- 7.35 The Reptile Survey report is included in the application documentation. The report results and evaluation states: *"No reptiles of any species were found during the survey period.*

The results indicate the likely absence of reptiles on site. Works would stand a negligible chance of breaching the protection afforded reptiles under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

No further survey or mitigation measures regarding this species group are required. In the highly unlikely event that any reptile is found on site during site clearance or construction all works should cease while a suitably qualified ecologist is contacted for advice."

- 7.36 The report of Bat Emergence Surveys is included as part of the application documentation and the report summary states: *“A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on 20 May 2024 which noted a number of buildings on site as containing potential bat roost features and subsequent emergence surveys were undertaken in July and August 2024.*

The results of the survey suggest the presence of the following roosts within the main building (B1)

- *A day roost of common pipistrelle beneath south-facing hanging tile, supporting 4no. individual bats.*
- *A day roost of natterers beneath south-facing roof tile.*
- *A day roost of common pipistrelle supporting 2no individual common pipistrelle to the apex of the south-eastern gable.*
- *A day roost of serotine beneath a west facing roof tile.*

No bats were found to be roosting within any other surveyed building.

Proposals are yet to be finalised but are likely to involve external changes / refurbishment which may result in the killing or injuring of individual bats roosting within B1 and the damage, disturbance or destruction of day roosts, with impacts significant at the site / local level.

Should proposed works cause damage or destruction of a bat roost, a licence shall likely need to be obtained from Natural England to allow works to progress. Recommended mitigation measures which would form part of that licence are detailed in Section 5 of the report”.

- 7.37 The Great Crested Newt eDNA Report is included in the application documentation. The report contains the following conclusion and recommendations: *“Given the known population of GCN to the north, basic avoidance measures should be implemented on site during works. These should include the delivery of a toolbox*

talk, careful removal of any debris / spoil piles and checking of footings and trenches each morning before the start of works. Should any great crested newt be found on site during site clearance or construction all works should cease while a suitably qualified ecologist is contacted for advice.

Great crested newts were found to be likely absent locally, therefore works stand a negligible risk of contravening protection afforded GCN by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provided the above avoidance measures are followed.”

- 7.38 In terms of net gain in Biodiversity, the Metric has been completed and a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement has been prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology and both are included as part of the application documentation. The Statement has the following conclusion:

“Metric calculations have identified that the proposed scheme would result in over + 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, complying with the current Local Planning policy, subsequent to the provision of legal agreement / conservation covenant, to ensure that the proposed habitats are delivered for at least 30 years.

To ensure the above habitats are managed into the future, a suitable Habitat Creation Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be produced. This should include management prescriptions for new habitat areas including aspects such as mowing regimes, which shall ensure the target conditions are achieved. The HMMP should include details of monitoring intervals and methods for the 30-year period to ensure that the target conditions are achieved. These measures shall ensure that the scheme accords with The Environment Act 2021 and can be secured by the standard Biodiversity Gain pre-commencement planning condition”.

- 7.39 In view of the above, we conclude that provided the advice and recommendations in relation to mitigation is implemented, the scheme will not adversely impact on

the ecological interest of the site and therefore complies with the relevant planning policy.

Impact on Water Infrastructure

- 7.40 The pre-application advice indicated that as part of the submission of the application we are asked to confirm who will be supplying water to the development and forward any agreement in respect of the development to ensure compliance with the part of Policy DP42. We can confirm that Southern Water will supply water to the development.

8. Conclusions including Planning Balance

- 8.1 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for amendments to the previous scheme of conversion, to include an extension to Chownes Mead for a boutique country house hotel together with the erection of a new spa building within the grounds of the property. The application site lies beyond the urban area of both Haywards Heath and Cuckfield but comprises development for which there is policy support for economic development in rural areas.
- 8.2 The scheme has been carefully designed, and pre-application advice has been taken over an extended period to ensure that the scheme is appropriate in terms of the impact on the listed building and the spa building in terms of impact on the setting of the heritage asset as well as on the Ancient Woodland.
- 8.3 There are significant benefits arising from the scheme in ensuring a viable use to conserve the long-term future of the heritage asset, attracting visitors to the hotel and the local area thereby benefitting local businesses and services, the provision of employment both during the construction and operational phases of the development, and a high quality landscaping design that retains and responds to the works of original garden designed, Gertrude Jekyll but also interprets proposed additions in a contemporary manner.

- 8.4 Following the receipt of earlier pre-application process, the scheme design has been refined to take into account the vast majority of the issues previously raised by officers as possible.
- 8.5 Overall, for the reasons set out in this Planning Statement and the accompanying application documents we consider that the scheme complies with national, local and neighbourhood planning policies and therefore that planning permission and listed building consent should be granted.

Appendix 1 – Full Planning History of Site

MSDC Ref	Description of development	Decision	Date
02/00021/FUL	Erection of a 20 metre tapered wooden pole mounted with 3 panel antennas and 1 transmission dish together with one radio equipment cabinet and ancillary equipment located at the base of the tower.	Refused	06/03/2002
12/01441/LBC	Minor internal alterations and repairs including refitting kitchen and bathrooms, upgrading existing boiler room and store/workshop to form smaller boiler room and gym, removal of some internal ground floor walls to connect kitchen to breakfast area and to enlarge/laundry room. To adapt existing rear ground floor window to french doors and to insert 2 no. conservation rooflights. To form new en-suite bathroom to first floor rear bathroom.	Approved	21/06/2012
12/03605/FUL	Erection of detached garage building	Approved	06/12/2012
12/03605/NONMAT	Non-Material Amendment to application 12/03605/FUL for the garage to be handed.	No objection	18/07/2013
13/03362.FUL	Erection of a new agricultural building.	Approved	27/11/2013
14/04433/HOUS	Enclosure of existing swimming pool within a pool house building.	Approved	04/05/2015
DM/15/4436	Discharge of planning condition numbers 2, 3, 4 and 6 relating to planning reference 12/03605/FUL	Approved	07/11/2015
DM/15/5084	Conversion of the roof space above the garage to ancillary residential accommodation and insertion of roof lights	Approved	10/03/2016
DM/17/4086	Discharge of condition 2 relating to planning application 14/04433/HOUS.	Approved	27/11/2017
DM/18/2193	Change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel	Approved	29/08/2018

	(Use Class C1) including installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building. Conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level. Extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS.		
DM/18/2201	Change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel (Use Class C1) including installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building. Conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level. Extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS.	Approved	29/08/2018
DM19/2794	Discharge of planning Conditions No's 3, 4 and 6 relating to planning application DM 18/2201/LB	Approved	07/10/2019
DM/19/2800	Discharge of planning Conditions No's 3,4,6 and 7 relating to planning application DM/18/2193/FUL	Approved	07/10/2019
DM/21/2630	That by commencement of building works relating to the installation of a lift shaft, the Change of Use planning permissions DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201 (both dated 29 August 2018) from a Residential Dwelling to a Hotel use, have been implemented - with all pre-commencement planning conditions previously cleared under references DM/19/2800 & DM/19/2794.	Approved	27/08/2021

The Coach House

MSDC Ref	Description of development	Decision	Date
12/01197/FUL	Repairs and alterations to ancillary coach house to form 2 no self contained units for staff accommodation including modified/extended roof construction to west end including additional first floor space. Amended description received 07 June 2012	Approved	02/08/2012
12/01198/LBC	Repairs and alterations to ancillary coach house to form 2 no self contained units for staff accommodation including modified/extended roof construction to west end including additional first floor space. Amended description received 07 June 2012	Approved	02/08/2012
14/04533/HOUS	Single storey extension	Approved	06/02/2015
14/04536/LBC	Single storey extension	Approved	06/02/2015

Appendix 2 – Pre-Application Advice letter dated 17.11.2023



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CONTACT: Joanne Fisher
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DATE: 17th November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Pre-Application Advice

Reference: DM/23/1480

Proposal: Various Works to the Hotel

Location: Chownesmead Chownes Mead Lane Cuckfield Haywards Heath

I refer to our meeting on the 7th September concerning the above proposal and the further information you provided on the 10th October. Please find my comments and further thoughts on your proposal. I apologise for the delay in responding, however I have been awaiting the comments from the Conservation Officer on the proposal and the updates you had provided.

Planning permission and listed building consent has previously been granted under references DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201 for the change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel (Use Class C1) including installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building; the conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level; and the extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS. A lawful development certificate was granted under DM/21/2630 to confirm that the change of use to a hotel has been implemented through the installation of the lift shaft. No further works have since been carried out.

It is proposed to undertake various works to the hotel from that previously approved to include changes to the layout, the inclusion of a new single storey extension as well as changes to the previously approved pool enclosure building to include its re-positioning and enlargement to include a members lounge, gym and yoga studio and also a pool and spa at a lower ground floor level. In addition, an entrance into the site would be closed up and re-positioned with a further parking area for use by members of the spa and gym. A fresh water pond would also be re-established within an area of the garden to the south-west of the terrace and pool area.

As you are aware Chownesmead is a Grade II listed former country house dating from the 1920s. The former coach house and garden structures such as the terrace, retaining walls, garden walls and gate piers are included in the listing. The site is situated within the

PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION

Sally Blomfield
Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy

countryside and the land to the rear of the building (excluding the terrace area) but including the timber clad barn, hardstanding area and secondary entrance falls within Ancient Woodland. When considering whether such a proposal would be acceptable, the Council would consider the proposals against (amongst others) policies DP1, DP12, DP14, DP21, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP38, DP39, DP41 and DP42 of the District Plan; policies DP16, DP26, DP34, DP37 and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies CNP1, CNP5, CNP14 and CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan as well as the requirements of the NPPF.

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4483/mid-sussex_design_guide-supplementary-planning-document_2019.pdf.

Impact to Listed Building and setting

The Conservation Officer has provided the following comments in respect of your proposal:

'Chownesmead is a Grade II listed former country house dating from the 1920s in the neo-Elizabethan style. The former coach house and garden structures such as the terrace, retaining walls, garden walls and gate piers are included in the listing. The house, which is located in extensive gardens originally designed by Gertrude Jekyll, is located in a semi-rural position on the western side of Haywards Heath.

Planning permission was granted in 2015 for a pool house building enclosing an existing swimming pool to the south east of the house, and subsequently in 2018 for change of use of the building to a hotel, with associated alterations including internal alterations to the house, including a new lift shaft, conversion of an existing garage building to the north of the house to a yoga studio at ground floor with residential accommodation above, and an extension of the previously approved pool house building.

The current pre-application enquiry follows on from this recent planning history, in envisaging a hotel use for the house, but with more extensive works, in particular externally:

- To the house itself, at ground floor a new extension to the kitchen, 2 dining areas with links to the kitchen and to outdoor dining areas, and new doors from the library onto the external terrace. The proposed extension links to the garage to the north of the house.*
- At first floor, reworking of layouts to provide self-contained en-suite facilities to each bedroom.*
- At second floor, reworking of the manager's apartment to create 2 additional ensuite bedrooms, one involving a new roof extension, and amendments to the previously approved bedroom layout elsewhere.*
- Alterations to the proposals for the pool house and treatment suites, to position the built form further to the south and east, with the pool and spa facilities below the existing external terrace at lower ground floor level, opening onto a new fresh water pond in the natural dell.*
- A treatment room building at ground floor above this, with a bar and server area relating to the outdoor eating areas.*

- Further to east, an existing barn is proposed to be replaced with a members lounge, gym and yoga studio.

- The existing secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane is proposed to be relocated further to the west, away from Crabtree Cottages.

To consider these proposed works in turn:

- The proposed extension to the ground floor of the building is within the courtyard area to the north east of the building. This area is flanked to south and east by what appears to be the original service area/wing of the house, which while not as architecturally grand or imposing as the main part of the building containing the family rooms, is nonetheless of character and interest retaining original features such as leaded windows and doors onto the courtyard. The yard itself, with its herringbone brick pavers, is also an attractive feature of the setting of the house. Although towards the rear of the building, the yard area is visible in closer views from the main entrance drive to the house, and forms part of the context within which the main entrance façade is appreciated as one approaches the house along this drive. For these reasons I would question whether this is an appropriate position for an extension

In my opinion, a kitchen extension might be better positioned to the opposite side of the existing service wing (currently containing a gym), which although it would be visible from the terrace to the south east of the house, could if appropriately set back in relation to the main building (as the existing wing is), be appropriately subservient in views of the house from the terrace and gardens, and would allow the character of the courtyard facing elevation, which is in fact probably the more significant in terms of the context in which the house is appreciated, to remain largely intact, as well as the courtyard itself. In conjunction with this I would not object to a more modest extension to the northern end of the existing kitchen wing linking across to the modern garage building, providing this preserved the key features of the wing, and the character of the courtyard space.

During our site visit we noted that the existing windows to the library are original, and the original fabric beneath them both internally (wood panelling, part of the designed decoration of the room) and externally (a stone plinth). The existing window is also part of the designed composition of the elevation. For these reasons I consider that the proposal to remove the fabric below the window sill, and replace the existing windows with French doors, is contentious, and will detract from the special interest of the listed building. This aspect of the proposal should be omitted from the formal scheme.

- At first floor, the alterations to the existing floor plan are in general relatively minor in their impact, and are not considered contentious subject to detail in light of the existing permission. This is with the exception of the proposed works to bedroom 5, which involve bisecting the room by the insertion of an ensuite. This room is one of the principle family bedrooms, and the adverse impact on its original proportions which would result from the proposed work would in my opinion unacceptably impact on its character. This aspect of the proposal should be reconsidered- potentially the room, which is already linked with the adjacent master bedroom, could be incorporated into a suite with that room?

The proposal also shows the removal of wall enclosing the proposed 'reading nook'- this would result in an unacceptable loss of historic plan form and fabric and I would suggest should be omitted from the scheme.

- At second floor, the majority of works relate to the insertion of ensembles to the existing attic bedrooms. Although this will have some impact on their proportions, given the secondary importance of these spaces this aspect of the proposal is on balance considered acceptable. It is also proposed to alter the roof form above the existing kitchen and adjacent bathroom/ walk through cupboard space to create an area of flat roof which allows the formation of a link between the spaces, to provide an additional ensuite bathroom. Further detail including proposed sections, elevations and a roof plan would be needed for fully informed comment, however in principle this may be acceptable, provided that there is no adverse impact on the external appearance of the building, and that as discussed on site, the internal character of the adjacent corridor, with the angled intrusions revealing the shape of the original roof above, is preserved. The level of interest of the joinery within the walk through cupboard space should also be considered- it is proposed to partially remove this, which is work which should be assessed in an accompanying heritage statement, and if necessary amendments- such as the reuse of the joinery in question elsewhere in that room - considered.

- I will consider the proposed new built form to the south east of the house as one proposal, being mindful of the existing structures on the site, and the existing permission for the new pool house building, as extended by the most recent permission.

The proposed two storey pool and treatment room building is a more substantial structure than the approved pool house. However, the building is set further away from the listed house, creating greater separation between the two, and the additional storey is set below the terrace, taking advantage of the drop in the levels of the gardens to the south west of the house.

In my opinion, this approach is not necessarily contentious in principle, but the building and surrounding landscaping will require very careful planning and detailing, including the choice of materials, to minimise the bulk and visual prominence of the development in the context of the house, ensure that it complements rather than detracts from the house and its setting, and to preserve the character of the Jekyll designed gardens, including the existing listed terrace walls. The submitted visuals, which I appreciate are only conceptual, show for example a rather stark treatment of the retaining wall to the north west of the pool house itself, continuing along the house's garden frontage. We would expect a more sensitive treatment with appropriate detailing and planting to blend the built form into the landscape, and not to detract from or compete with the original listed terrace walls. I also wonder whether the cocktail bar and servery to the north west end of the ground floor of the building is necessary in this form and position, particularly given the proximity of the house, or could be omitted or relocated to reduce the bulk of the building.

The existing barn to the south east of the house is not of any special interest, and its replacement is not considered contentious in principle. I do have some concerns regarding the scale and visual prominence of the proposed replacement 2 storey building; although a new structure in this position and linked to the pool house may not be contentious in principle, care should be taken to minimise its scale (footprint and height) and its impact on views of the house and the character of the garden setting. As with the pool house, the detailing of the development and the surrounding landscaping will also be key, including the maintenance or implementation of appropriate planted screening.

- The reinstatement of the pond within the dell is not considered contentious, and may be considered beneficial, if this is shown to be part of the original Jekyll plans for the garden, and in particular if accompanied by other, appropriately informed, restoration of historic garden features/plantings.

- The relocation of the secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane is not considered contentious subject to detail including of the impact on any planting/trees to the boundary. Likewise the proposed parking area may be acceptable subject to detail, given the existing hard standing in this position. A detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme would be required to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on the garden setting of the house.

In summary, although the principle of the majority of the works is not considered contentious, amendments and/or further information may be required in some respects.

Any formal application would be assessed against District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF. Such an application should be accompanied by an appropriately detailed heritage statement which should be based on relevant Historic England guidance, including GPA Note 3 'The setting of heritage assets'.

I would agree with the above comments from the Conservation Officer and would suggest that the above should be taken into consideration and the proposal amended taking into account the above comments. As advised on site, concerns are raised on the revised secondary access onto Chownes Mead Lane due to its position and the possible loss of / impact on trees and the levels between the lane and site at the proposed point. The impact on the trees which forms part of the verdant character on the lane would need to be carefully considered. In addition, it is proposed to create a new car parking area close to the rear boundary with 1 Crabtree Cottages. Concerns would be raised on amenity to these residents thorough the additional parking and any associated noise and lighting required as well and the loss of trees and vegetation on this boundary.

Noise / Lighting / Pond

The Council's Environmental Protection Officer was in attendance at the site meeting and raised a number of comments which will need to be taken into consideration when determining a planning application for your proposal. I have set out their comments below for your information which will need to be addressed in any detailed proposal and submission:

'Firstly, I do have concerns about the potential noise generated by the plant associated with the spa and gym. To adequately assess this issue, we would require detailed information about the proposed plant, its location, whether it is internal or external, and any measures that will be implemented to mitigate noise. Depending on the expected noise breakout, we may need to request an acoustic report to ensure that the noise levels will not adversely affect the surrounding area.

Additionally, I am concerned about potential noise from people using the facilities, especially in the outside areas for food and drink, and from weight drops in the gym. It would be helpful to have more information on the operating hours and activities planned for these areas to better evaluate the potential noise impact on the neighbouring properties and whether any additional information is needed.

In regard to lighting, we would like to see a lighting plan that includes lux levels. This plan should adhere to the Institute for Lighting Professionals guidance to ensure that neighbouring properties are not adversely affected, particularly by the lights near the new entrance road. Ensuring appropriate lighting levels will contribute to minimising any disturbances to the nearby residents.

Another area of concern is the possibility of contaminated land, particularly with regard to the old pond. Our mapping suggests that the old pond was infilled with made ground. It is important to highlight that "made ground" refers to land that has been altered or disturbed by

human activities such as construction, excavation, or waste disposal. This type of land has the potential to contain pollutants, although it is currently unknown what contaminants, if any, might be present.

Upon visiting the site, it was apparent that the pond area still possesses considerable depth, so it is unclear how much made ground could have actually been placed. However, I would still advocate for a phased approach to address this concern. Given the planned redevelopment of the site, I would recommend, at the very least, conducting a desktop study to determine whether any further investigation or remediation efforts are necessary. This phased approach, including the need for a preliminary study, can be conditioned if there is a desire to obtain permission before commencing such an in-depth investigation.'

Sustainability

In the design of the proposed building and extension, sustainability, building plant and rainwater discharge would need to be considered fully. Information on this is set out under Design Principles DG37 and DG42 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide as well as Policy DP39 of the District Plan.

Ancient Woodland

As you may be aware, part of the site (the rear of the building, patio, pool area and land to the east incorporating the agricultural building, hardstanding area and additional access) falls within Ancient Woodland with the land beyond including part of the tennis court falling within the 15 metre buffer zone.

Whilst I appreciate the previous permission of the smaller pool building was to be built on part of the land within the Ancient Woodland buffer and there is existing hardstanding on parts of this, consideration would need to be given in any application in respect of the enlarged parts of the building and additional hardstanding created and the impact to the Ancient Woodland. As you are aware, Ancient woodland includes the soils. Regard would need to be made to para 174 of the NPPF.

Ecology

The site falls within a red zone for Great Crested Newts. You would need to set out how risks to great crested newts will be dealt with in respect of your proposals with the submission of any relevant reports and potentially entering into the District Licence scheme. The following webpage provides further information in respect of this:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/wildlife-and-planning/> .

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to planning and land management that leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was before. BNG will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by enhancing or creating new habitats in association with development. The requirement for BNG does not alter the existing legal requirements and protections for the natural environment such as protecting important habitats and species.

Biodiversity net gain is already referenced in the NPPF para 180 d) and opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of the design of the scheme especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

From January 2024, all planning permissions granted in England, with a few exemptions, will have to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under the Environment Act 2021. BNG is calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which measures the biodiversity value of habitats in 'biodiversity units' as a proxy for nature. The Biodiversity Metric is used to assess how a development might change the biodiversity value of a site. It can help to inform the design, layout and management of a site to support biodiversity. You are also advised to apply the mitigation hierarchy in your proposed development as set out in NPPF paragraph 180 a) and note the principle of additionality.

The Council will be issuing further guidance on its website over the coming months, but in the meantime, you are advised to see the government guidance at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain> .

Water Infrastructure

Policy DP42 of the District Plan relates to Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment and in part states:

*'Development proposals which increase the demand for off-site service infrastructure will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate;
o that sufficient capacity already exists off-site for foul and surface water provision. Where capacity off-site is not available, plans must set out how appropriate infrastructure improvements approved by the statutory undertaker will be completed ahead of the development's occupation; and
o that there is adequate water supply to serve the development.'* (my emphasis)

Within the submission of your application, please can you confirm who will be supplying water to the development and forward confirmation of any agreement in respect of the development. This is to ensure compliance with the relevant part of Policy DP42 of the District Plan.

Summary

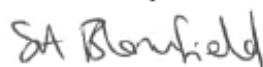
Whilst the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable, further consideration should be made to the above points and the plans amended to take into account the comments raised.

The views expressed in this letter are at officer level only and do not prejudice the Council from making whatever decision it considers appropriate on any application subsequently submitted.

The information contained in this email may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unless the information contained is legally exempt from disclosure, we cannot guarantee that we will not provide the whole or part of this advice to a third party making a request for information about the subject matter.

I hope these comments are helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours faithfully



Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy

ADPRE