

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 November 2025 17:10:56 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2139 Esmerelda Cottage, 43 West Common. Lindfield

Hi Stefan

Comments on the above planning application.

Esmerelda Cottage is an unlisted building located to the northern side of West Common, to the west of Lindfield. The house, which dates from the early 20th century, and is to a design by noted local architect Harold G Turner.

Born in Ardingly in 1885, Turner was a successful architect, particularly after the completion of his well-regarded Gidea Park project in Essex. He came to Haywards Heath in 1920, and established his practice at Boltro Chambers. His surviving buildings locally include the 1920's redevelopment of Commercial Square and Clive Court in Sydney Road, Haywards Heath, but he is best remembered for the distinctive style of the houses he designed along the Haywards Heath and Lindfield borders. These properties, built in a version of the Sussex vernacular using high quality materials and great attention to detail, are attractive and characterful and often contribute positively to the street scene. Franklands Village, built to his designs between 1933 and 1939 to provide affordable local housing, is now a Conservation Area. More isolated examples of his houses have been previously regarded by the Council as non-designated heritage assets of special architectural or historical interest within the local context (NDHAs) (e.g. More House and Crossways, Tyler Green).

At West Common, there is a surviving grouping of Turner Houses apparently including nos. 32-38 to the south of the road, and 21-45 to the north, although more research would be required to be certain of the exact extent of the development. These houses share features characteristic of his Sussex vernacular style, and have a strong group value. Esmerelda Cottage is a good example, having brick elevations with tile hanging at first floor, hipped tiled roofs with wide eaves supported on iron brackets, a prominent ridge top chimney stack, side cat-slide with dormer, and leaded windows including oriel windows at first floor. Architecturally the property is one half of a handed pair with its detached neighbour to the east, Linden.

I would consider based on its architectural and aesthetic values, group value with its neighbours (Linden in particular) and association with prominent local architect Harold G Turner, that Esmerelda Cottage should be regarded as an NDHA. This is likely also to apply to the remainder of the development along West Common, subject to further research.

The current proposal is for alterations and extensions to Esmerelda Cottage comprising an extension to the side of the house at first floor and roof level largely removing the

catslide in favour of a hipped roof, removal of the chimney stack, and addition of a box dormer to the rear roof slope.

In my opinion, this proposal raises significant concerns in terms of the impact on the architectural and aesthetic values of the house, for the following reasons in particular:

- The proposed side extension will largely remove the existing, characteristic side catslide, and will entirely remove the original dormer window. As well as the direct harm this causes to the character of the property by adverse impact on original features, including the roof form, and the addition of undue bulk at high level to the side of the house, it also impacts significantly on the original, designed symmetry of this property with its neighbour Linden. This aspect of the proposal is in my opinion unacceptable for these reasons.
- The proposed removal of the prominent ridge top chimney stack is also in my opinion unacceptable due to the loss of an original, and highly significant, feature of the house's design. This aspect of the proposal also adversely affects the intended symmetry with Linden, and detracts from the roofline interest of the wider group of Turner houses.
- The proposed box dormer to the rear elevation is over scaled within the roof slope and of a highly unsympathetic design. Again, I am afraid that this aspect of the proposal is in my opinion unacceptable, although a significantly smaller dormer window of a more appropriate design, reflecting that of the original dormer to the side of the house, might be more favourably viewed.

For these reasons, the proposal is in my opinion harmful to the significance of Esmerelda Cottage as an NDHA. In terms of paragraph 216 of the NPPF, I would place the level of harm caused as high to an NDHA of a mid level of interest within the local context.

The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, including DG49, DG50 and DG52

I would recommend that the application is withdrawn- following this the applicant could consider pre-application advice to discuss a much-reduced scheme for a loft conversion based only on a modest dormer to the rear, if this would be of interest.

Kind regards,

Emily Wade

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

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