

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 November 2025 15:21:14 UTC+00:00
To: "Tracie Axford" <Tracie.Axford@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2374 7 College Close, East Grinstead

Hi Tracie

Initial comments on the above planning application.

7 College Close is an unlisted, detached late 20th century house forming part of a cul-de-sac development of similar properties located just to the south of the Estcots Conservation Area, the boundary of which runs along the eastern side of the garden. The site is also within the setting of a group of listed buildings forming part of the Estcots historic farmstead, which is located adjacent to the east of the site, and includes Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn (both Grade II listed), as well as a number of other buildings which would be regarded as curtilage listed or as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs), such as Estcots Cottage.

The current proposal, which is retrospective, is for the retention of a 1.8m high gabion retaining wall and surmounting 1.7m high close boarded fence, which has been constructed along the eastern boundary of the site, which is the party boundary with Estcots Farmhouse.

Firstly, I note that the application is not accompanied by a Heritage Statement, which is a validation requirement. A Statement should therefore be provided – this should be prepared according to the staged approach to assessment set out in the relevant Historic England guidance GPA Note 3 *'The Setting of Heritage Assets'*.

[The Setting of Heritage Assets | Historic England](#)

As we discussed on site, it would also be very useful to have photographs of the site prior to the commencement of work, if the applicant is able to provide these. In addition, to allow an informed assessment of the impact of the works, photographs taken from the opposite side of the boundary, within the gardens to Estcots Farmhouse should also be provided, if the applicant is able to gain access. Both sets of images could usefully be included in the Heritage Statement.

Based on the limited information in front of us, it is likely that Escots Farmhouse, which dates (from the list description) from the 16th to early 17th century, would be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its period, altered in response to changing socio-economic circumstances and the needs and expectations of successive owners, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials. It also possesses group value with the other historic buildings forming part of the former farmstead.

Estcots Barn, which is a substantial timber framed and weatherboarded barn now subject to a residential conversion, is likely to possess similar values as a good example of a former agricultural building of its type and period.

As such, the settings of these buildings to the extent to which they retain rural character are likely to be considered to contribute positively to their special interests, in particular those parts of those interests which are derived from historical illustrative and aesthetic values. To the north of the farmstead group is East Court, an extensive area of parkland centred on East Court Mansion, a Grade II listed 18th century house. The house and park were developed on the former farmlands of Estcots Farm, and although not agricultural in nature retain an open and verdant, semi-rural character which contributes positively to the settings and significances of the listed buildings within the farmstead.

Within the closer setting of the former farmstead, the gardens around the properties and the surrounding planting of hedges and trees, including that flanking the driveway approach from College Lane, also create a semi-rural character which contributes positively to the settings and special interests of the former farm buildings, as well as creating a sense of separation from the sub-urban sprawl of East Grinstead just to the south.

Although the Council does not have an adopted character appraisal for the Estcots Conservation Area, its document 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' contains a brief high-level analysis of the Area's key features. This states that:

'The area includes East Court mansion and its parkland, East Court Lodge at the entrance to East Court and the area of Estcots Farmhouse, Estcots Barn and Estcots Cottage. The following features in particular contribute to the character of this Conservation Area:

- Its open rural quality on the edge of the town*
- East Court, a Grade II listed building, its attractive and extensive grounds, landscaped gardens and extensive views across the High Weald*
- The attractive sunken lane leading to Estcots and*
- The attractive grouping of Estcots Farmhouse, Estcots Barn (both listed) and Estcots Cottage.'*

In terms of setting affecting the Estcots Farmstead, similar considerations as those set out above will apply- the planting around the boundaries of the Area contributes to its rural quality, and provides screening and a sense of separation from suburban East Grinstead.

Based on the information currently available, the current proposal raises potential concerns in this context, in relation to a possible adverse impact on the setting and significance of the farmhouse and Conservation Area due to loss of planting to the boundary of the site and introduction of urbanising features in the form of the gabion wall and surmounting close-boarded fencing, which as we noted on site are in an elevated position and fairly prominent in views looking across the front garden of Estcots Farmhouse from the south from the frontage to Estcots Barn. In addition to the loss of rural character, the work also appears to reduce the sense of separation

between the former farmstead and the Conservation Area and the surrounding suburbs of East Grinstead.

Although the proposal cannot be fully assessed without the Heritage Statement and further information mentioned above, for these reasons it is my opinion that the proposal may be considered to be harmful to the settings and special interests of Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn and through impact on setting to the character and appearance of the Estcots Conservation Area.

I can provide further comments on receipt of the Statement and photographs.

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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