

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 December 2025 16:49:21 UTC+00:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: East Cottage, Town House Farm, Church Lane, Ardingly DM/25/2979

Hi Andrew

Comments on the above planning application.

The site, East Cottage, is one half of a semi-detached pair of former farm cottages dating from the mid 20th century, and associated with the historic farmstead of Townhouse Farm. This is located at the far southern end of Church Lane, in a semi-rural, edge of village position. The cottage pair are within the setting of Townhouse, which is the former farmhouse of the farmstead and is Grade II listed, and are within the western part of the Ardingly Conservation Area.

The cottage pair are of relatively recent construction, and are not of any particular historical or architectural merit, although they do make a limited contribution to the narrative of the later stages of the farmstead's development, and are of a broadly vernacular style which to an extent responds to the semi-rural context and to the traditional character of the other more historic buildings within the former farmstead. As is typical with semi-detached house pairs of this period one of their key features is symmetry- this original aspect of their design remains quite apparent despite some unfortunate alterations, as do a number of other features including half hipped roofs with a part mansard to the front and part catslide to the rear, and central and mirrored end chimney stacks.

Based on the information in front of us, which includes a heritage statement, Townhouse will 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 type and period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the context of the rural landscape from which they were drawn. It also has group value with the other surviving buildings within the historic farmstead, some of which will be regarded as curtilage listed. Whilst East and West Cottages are too modern in their construction to be eligible for consideration as curtilage listed buildings, I do consider that as former farm cottages, illustrative of the later phases of the farmstead's development, they have some group value with the farmhouse and other more historic buildings within the farmstead, and would be considered to make a modest positive contribution to their setting. They also make a modest positive contribution to the semi-rural, edge of village character of this part of the Ardingly Conservation Area, which is enhanced by their garden setting.

The current proposal is for the removal of a non original porch to the front of the house, a two storey extension to the side of the house, and a first floor addition above the existing catslide lean-to at the rear of the building. To consider these works in turn:

- The non-original porch detracts from the appearance of the building and its symmetry with West Cottage and its removal would be welcomed.
- Whilst it is considered that a two storey extension to the side of the property could be supported in principle, I continue to have concerns regarding the scale of the addition as shown, in particular its width, and its form in the manner in which this addition and the proposed rear extension wrap around the rear corner of the building. These aspects of the proposal do not appear to have been significantly amended following an adverse response at pre-application stage. As shown the extension is in my opinion not appropriately subordinate to the existing house, which will be contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, in particular Design Principle DG49 'General Principles for Extensions', which requires that: *'Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.'* In this respect the impact of the side extension will be cumulative with the addition proposed at the rear. Furthermore, the side extension because of its scale is also harmful to the characteristic symmetry of the cottage pair. The manner in which the extension in combination with the proposed rear addition wraps is also contrary to the Council's adopted guidance, which notes that *'Extensions that wrap around an existing dwelling can undermine the integrity of the original architecture.'*
- The first floor extension to the rear of the house adds further bulk to the proposed additions. However, this addition will be less visually prominent due to its rearward position. On balance, I would not consider this aspect of the proposal contentious in principle, subject to detail.

In summary the scale and form of the proposed side extension are considered harmful to the character and appearance of the house and the cottage pair of which it is part, to the wider Conservation Area and to the modest positive contribution which the site makes to the setting of Townhouse Farm. This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35. The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide as set out above. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal results in a low level of less than substantial harm to both the Conservation Area and to the Townhouse historic farmstead, including the farmhouse and curtilage listed buildings.

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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