

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 09 February 2026 16:14:56 UTC+00:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/25/1705 and 1706 Sunte House- Works to house and gardens

Hi Hamish

Further comments on the above applications following the receipt of revised plans and further information. For ease, I will add these further remarks **in red** to my previous comments on the outstanding matters, below.

In summary, although the proposal continues to move forwards, notably in the form of the pool house building, further amendments and/or further information are necessary in some areas to address concerns previously raised by ourselves and/or Historic England.

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.

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From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 September 2025 16:08

To: Hamish Evans <Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk>

Subject: DM/25/1705 and 1706 Sunte House- Works to house and gardens

Hi Hamish

Comments on the above applications.

Sunte House is a substantial Grade II* listed house located in a semi-rural position towards the northern edge of Haywards Heath. From the heritage statement submitted with a previous pre-application enquiry, it is understood that the earliest parts of the building were constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century, apparently replacing an earlier house on the site. The house was extended substantially to the north west around the mid 19th century; a further phase of extensive alteration occurred in the late 20th century, when internal alterations were made at ground floor within the later 19th century extension, and at first floor throughout the building.

The kitchen and formal gardens around the house, as well as the southern approach and circular driveway appear to date from the mid 19th century. The gardens contain a further two Grade II listed structures, an 18th century gardener's cottage and 18th century garden wall located a short distance to the north east of the house. There are also a trio of detached 19th century outbuildings directly to the north of the house known as the dairy, toolshed and garage, which would be regarded as curtilage listed, and contribute positively to the setting of the house.

The setting of the house also includes the former home farmstead of the estate, located to the north east of the house and adjacent to the above mentioned separately listed wall and gardener's bothy. The farmyard includes a large timber framed, weatherboarded barn dating from the late 17th- early/mid 18th century, a late 18th/early 19th century stables and cowshed, and a mid 19th century byre. A mid 19th century cottage forms the north west corner of the yard. These buildings are regarded as curtilage listed, and have group value with Sunte House and the Grade II listed garden buildings, contributing positively to their setting.

Sunte House would be considered to possess architectural interest based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative as a very good example of a late 17th/early 18th century country house of some pretension, altered and extended in response to changing socio-economic circumstances and the needs and desires of successive owners, historical associative value in connection with one of its 20th century residents, the noted anthropologist and writer Geoffrey Gorer (1905-1958), and aesthetic value. It also, as above, has group value with the listed structures within the garden, curtilage listed domestic buildings around the house, and the curtilage listed historic farmstead to the north-east.

The farm buildings within the farmyard, although altered, will possess architectural interest based on their construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as examples of buildings of their type and period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. They also possess group value with the house and associated ancillary garden and domestic outbuildings.

The current proposal follows on from pre-application advice. It relates to the house, ancillary domestic buildings and the gardens, however it should be noted, that concurrent applications have been submitted in relation to works to the farm courtyard and staff cottage, and that in some ways the impact of the proposals on the setting and special interests of the listed house and garden structures, and the various curtilage listed buildings may be cumulative. The proposal is for internal and external alterations including changes to the plan form at all levels, a rear (northern) courtyard extension to the house, a link extension between the dairy and toolshed, demolition of an existing canopy and external staircase to the garage and construction of a replacement timber stair, construction of a new pool house within the former walled garden, and associated hard and soft landscaping. To consider these works in turn:

Internal and external alterations to the main house:

In general, the proposed internal alterations to the house have been revised in accordance with advice given at pre-application stage, and are not considered contentious. However, the proposed formation of a new hallway to the north of the retained service stair remains part of the proposals, and although some of the partitions to be removed are now labelled as modern, there appears still be a loss of historic fabric from the wall between the existing guest WC and storeroom. Given the previous extent of removal of historic fabric from this area, and as there is an existing access parallel to this through the stairwell, this appears an unnecessary adverse impact, and should be omitted, as previously recommended.

This aspect of the proposal has not been amended, and no further justification for the adverse impact on historic fabric has been provided. I would reiterate that this work should be removed from the scheme- it results in further loss of fabric from an area where little remains, and is unnecessary given the existing parallel access noted above. The applicant should be mindful of NPPF paragraph 213 that any harm to a designated heritage asset should require '*clear and convincing justification*'.

Internally to the basement it is now proposed to tank the perimeter walls with a studed cavity drainage membrane. I don't recall discussing this at pre-application stage and I don't believe that we went down into the basement during our site visit. Could the applicant please provide further information including typical elevational and sectional drawings to show the tanking works in relation to the historic fabric of the basement walls, detailed drawings of the works affecting to what appears to be a historic brick floor covering, and further, more detailed photographs of the basement to show its current condition. It would also be helpful if a brief addendum to the Heritage Statement

could be provided which discusses the date and level of interest of the basement and of the fabric to the affected walls.

A robust justification for the proposed works should also be provided, beyond the one sentence contained within the DAS. Has a report by an appropriate specialist been obtained, to identify what problems the condition of the basement is resulting in within the wider house, and what the most appropriate, least interventional, conservation-based strategy to address these issues would be?

The DAS also mentions the installation of plant to the basement area, but no details of this appear to be shown on the plans or elsewhere- can these be provided, including details of any associated works? What use is it intended to put the remainder of the space to? It is always good practice to adapt the use of historic buildings or rooms within them to suit their character, rather than the reverse, and I have some concerns here that the primary aim is to modernise the basement to provide a more 'usable' residential space, at the expense of its historic character. This seems unjustified given the scale of the property and the other spaces available within the ancillary buildings forming part of the estate, however I will await with interest the further information requested above.

The proposed basement plan has been amended to remove mention of the tanking and lining to the walls, and of the works to the floor. Can the applicant also please confirm that the plant mentioned in the DAS is also no longer part of the scheme, as no drawings of this have been provided? Is this now to be housed in the tool shed? In which case further information of the works necessary to this part of the building will be required.

It is also proposed to replace windows throughout with double glazed units. I note that Historic England have picked up in their comments on a lack of information with respect to this work, which has not been addressed by the plans subsequently provided by the agent (email of 12th September). I will await the resolution of this issue prior to offering any comment on this aspect of the proposal.

The addendum to the Heritage Statement includes a discussion of the likely age and level of interest of the windows to the upper floors of the house. Although this is not the comprehensive window schedule and strategy which we would hope for, it does, alongside information in the original statement and schedule of condition, suggest that the windows throughout the building were either replaced or altered and repaired during the late 20th century. I would agree with the advice given by Historic England that a comprehensive strategy for the thermal upgrading and necessary repair, or replacement of the windows is required, and that this should make reference to the relevant guidance quoted in their response. On this basis, I am not happy that the wholesale replacement of the window sashes with new sashes incorporating slimline double glazing as currently indicated on the relevant plans and supporting documents is approved. A more nuanced approach is required, with further information on the date and condition of each window and an appropriate strategy for its thermal upgrading provided. This could

be required by condition, but the plans etc, accompanying the application would need to be revised accordingly.

Further information on the proposed new rooflights to the main roof has been previously requested. Can the applicant please detail in each case the relationship of the new rooflight with the adjoining roof structure? Will any rafters need to be cut or trimmed? The submitted structural report suggests that this is the case, but further information will be required to assess the extent of the impact on the historic fabric of the roof. The Heritage Statement should also be expanded from only considering the impact on the external appearance of the house to comment also on impact on fabric.

The further information received in this respect illustrates that the new rooflights would require trimming of rafters and consequent loss of presumed historic fabric, which is of concern. The addendum Heritage Statement admits that the date and condition of this fabric is currently unknown. Its level of interest and the impact on the historic roof structure of Sunte House resulting from its loss are also therefore also unknown, and we cannot be assured that the integrity of the historic roof structure and the special interest of the listed building will not be adversely affected. I would therefore recommend that these works are omitted from the scheme.

Annotations to the plans indicate a full upgrade of heating, lighting and plumbing services. More information on these works would be required, in the form of drawings and a detailed method statement, to ensure that there is no adverse impact on historic fabric. This will be particularly important where new bathrooms/ensuites are proposed. This information could potentially be reserved by a condition, if listed building consent is granted.

No further information has been received in this respect.

The plans also note potential repairs to structural steels, timbers and chimney stacks. Further information will be required in respect of this work- this could potentially be required by condition, however the applicant should note that if very extensive work becomes necessary a further application for listed building consent may be required.

Again, no further information has been received.

The submitted initial structural report includes a sectional drawing of the 19th century rear wing which suggests works may be proposed within the attic area to create a storage loft, including steel truss rods, a raised floor and dwarf walls. Can the applicant please confirm whether any part of this is new work and if so please provide further details including appropriately detailed plans, elevations and sections? The Heritage Statement should be amended as appropriate to comment on the impact of this work on the historic roof structure. Is a new loft access also required? If so, this should also be detailed.

No further information has been received- this requires a response from the applicant at this stage.

It is proposed to lift the existing roof covering to allow for the installation of insulation between the rafters and a ventilation zone above. Appropriate drawings including typical sections should be provided to show this work, and to illustrate any impact on the profile of the roof, eaves detail, and internal visibility of the rafters/other members of the roof frame.

We have received existing and proposed sections and a method statement, which show that the impact on the profile of the roof and the eaves detail will be limited, and that the existing visibility of the frame will not be affected. This aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious.

Details of the proposed cleaning method for the roof tiles, brick and stonework should be required by condition on any eventual permission granted.

Northern courtyard extension:

With respect to the link between the dairy building and the northern elevation of the house, I note that Historic England have raised an objection in respect of the extent of the glazing to the elevation and roof, on grounds that it is considered that this disrupts the coherence of the reinstated form of the dairy. In light of these comments, I would suggest that the glazing to the roof is omitted, and that to the elevation reduced to a pair of French windows set in brickwork.

No revised drawings have been received in this respect, and I note that Historic England, whilst concluding their comments note with no formal objection on heritage grounds, state that this lack of objection is '*subject to the issues identified in our advice being addressed in order to avoid or further reduce harm to the significance of the listed building...*' We must therefore take it that they expect that their previous advice that the extent of glazing to this element should be reduced should be adhered to in any eventually approved scheme. On this basis, I would repeat my previous suggestion that the glazing to the roof is omitted, and that to the elevation reduced to a pair of French windows set into brickwork.

Link extension between the dairy and toolshed:

The proposed link extension is not considered contentious, as discussed at pre-application. The internal works to the toolshed appear to be relatively minor and should not adversely impact its character, although we will need to see details of the insulated floor, including typical sectional drawings. These could potentially be reserved by condition on any eventual permission.

The internal works to the toolshed have been revised to include what appears to be a new plant area and revision to previously proposed new partitioning. See above and below.

Within the dairy, more extensive partitioning is proposed. More should be done here to work with the existing plan form- for example, it is unnecessary to relocate the door between the two ends of the building, with the associated loss of historic plan form and fabric. The internal layout of the building should be amended to allow this to be retained in its existing position, and new partitioning in general kept to a minimum. I do not agree with the (to my mind) rather illogical assessment within the heritage statement that while the partition wall (and presumably doorway) are possibly original they do not contribute to the building's special interest – I would consider that the plan form and fabric is of interest, even if the evolution of function of the building is not clearly understood at the present time.

Revised drawings have been received to show the door between the two ends of the building retained in situ. The addendum to the DAS also comments that the adjacent partitioning will not be full height. Although we have not received sections or internal elevations to illustrate this, these could be required by condition. This aspect of the proposal is therefore in my opinion now acceptable.

With respect to the dairy building can the applicant please provide typical sections to illustrate the proposed installation of insulation to the roof? In many circumstances, covering of previously exposed rafters will be considered as contentious, and I note that the interior of the roof as existing retains period character. In this context, insulating below the rafters may not be considered acceptable- we would expect instead that insulation should be installed between and/or above the rafters. Can the applicant please also provide further information with respect to the existing Horsham stone slate to the roof- I note the intention is to remove and then reinstate this, but is the applicant confident that the condition of the stone is such that it is re-usable in its entirety? If not, given the difficulty in obtaining new Horsham stone slate, what is the applicant's intention to make up any shortfall?

We do not appear to have the further information regarding the Horsham slate roof?

Can the applicant also please confirm that all necessary new external pipework, soil stacks, vents etc. associated with the new WCs to both buildings are shown on the elevations provided?

We do not appear to have received this confirmation?

Works to the garage:

The removal of existing modern canopy is not considered contentious, and nor is the replacement external stair, subject to detail. Details will also be required of the proposed ASHPs to be located adjacent to the garage, including of size, number, and any associated enclosure.

New pool building and associated hard and soft landscaping:

Historic England has raised concerns regarding the scale of the pool building and its impact on the character of the historic walled kitchen garden, including the extent to

which it conceals the surviving (albeit altered) part of the surrounding wall. I would echo these concerns, and would agree that although the footprint has been reduced from the initial pre-application scheme, the building remains over-scaled and over dominant within the context of the walled garden. HE has suggested that the size of the building is further reduced and that it is redesigned as a lightweight structure, and I would agree that this would be preferable. I also note that contrary to previous advice the opening in the garden wall to the northern side is retained as part of the current application. In my opinion, as previously stated, this further detracts from the character of the walled garden, which was designed to be self-contained and inward looking. This aspect of the proposal therefore requires further, significant reconsideration.

The pool house has been revised following draft proposals which were favourably received. In agreement with the formal comments of Historic England, I have no objection to the revised footprint or scale of the building, but I am concerned to see that the more detailed drawings now before us continue to show windows to the northern elevation of the building, where the existing garden wall is to be extended to the west. As repeatedly noted before, this is not in my opinion an acceptable detail, as it detracts from the enclosed and inward-looking character of the walled garden space. These openings should be omitted from the scheme.

In summary, although further amendments have been made to the scheme, and further information provided which address some aspects of the concerns previously raised, there remain issues which require further attention/amendment, notably some of the works internally and externally to the house and dairy building, and the proposed new pool house. The concerns raised by Historic England are also highly relevant and should be addressed.

Alterations to access and parking area

Both MSDC and HE objected at pre-application stage to the changes to the historic pattern of access around the house, and to the new parking area proposed to the north-west of it. These works remain part of the scheme as submitted, and the HE objection is reiterated in their recent comments. It is however, subject to confirmation by the case officer, my understanding that these works may fall under permitted development rights, and that they will be withdrawn from the current scheme to be submitted instead under an application for a Lawful Development Certificate. This being the case, I will not comment here on this aspect of the proposal as originally submitted, unless requested to do so.

As also noted by HE, it would be helpful to have clarification as to whether these works continue to form part of the proposal.

In summary, although the proposal continues to move forwards, notably in the form of the pool house building, further amendments and/or further information are necessary in some areas to address concerns previously raised by ourselves and/or Historic England.

Comments on the parallel applications affecting the farmyard buildings to follow shortly.

Thanks,

Emily

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