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Sent: 09 September 2025 14:51:29 UTC+01:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <Caroline.Grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Lywood Barn, Lindfield Road, Ardingly DM/25/1804 and 1806

Hi Caroline

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you, which has been caused by pressure of other work and a period of leave.

Lywood Barn is a curtilage listed building forming part of the historic farmstead of Great Lywood Farm. The former farmhouse to the farmstead, Great Lywood Farmhouse, is a 16th century Grade II listed building located just to the north. A second substantial barn, now known as Great Lywood Barn, is located just to the west. A further Grade II listed building, Lywood House, is a short distance to the east. There are a number of other smaller surviving former farm buildings within the grouping which may also be regarded as curtilage listed, although none of these falls within the application site.

The submitted heritage statement suggests that Lywood Barn was originally a 3 bay structure dating from 1450-1500 with opposed central barn doors to the longer elevations, and an unusual framing pattern with long passing braces, which would have been expressed externally as the framed elevations were infilled with wattle and daub, rather than covered with weatherboarding as existing. The building probably originally had a hipped, thatched roof. These three original bays survive as the western end of the existing building, and good evidence for their original construction and appearance is present. A two bay extension was later added to the eastern end of the building, and the roof structure entirely replaced and extended- this work probably took place during the first half of the 19th century, and probably closer to c. 1800. The extension was constructed using timbers reclaimed from another barn building. At this time the south aisle was added, the barn doors re-sited to the western most of the two new bays. During the 19th or early 20th centuries the passing braces and wattle and daub were largely removed, with timber cladding added externally. The single storey wing to the eastern end of the barn was added during the late 19th century, and also contains a good deal of re-used timber. The building was converted to residential use during the 1980s, including digging out and lowering of the floor level to the western end bay of the main barn.

A modern garage building and loggia are located to the south east of the barn.

The current proposals, which follow on from pre-application advice, affect both the barn and the detached garage and comprise:

- Internal alterations to the main barn at ground and first floor;

- Reinstatement of a previously existing window above the barn doors to the northern elevation;
- Addition of an entrance porch set within the southern barn doors;
- Recladding of the barn and garage;
- Replacement of the existing windows to the barn, including enlargement of two windows; and
- Conversion of the garage to part garage/part home office, with an extension to the southern end of the building to replace the existing conservatory in this position.

To consider these works in turn:

- At ground floor the proposed alterations to the plan form affect only non-historic fabric and are not considered contentious. The removal and relocation of the stair between ground and first floor is also considered unlikely to be problematic, but it would be helpful if the applicant could confirm by means of a short addendum to the heritage statement that the mezzanine floor structure affected dates entirely from when the property was converted and contains no historic fabric. At first floor however the proposal to infill the existing retained opening in the truss to the western side of the mezzanine is unacceptable in principle, notwithstanding the inclusion of a glazed window. The partially open nature of this truss is important to a retained sense of the historical proportions of the barn- no further infilling of the truss will be supported for this reason. This aspect of the proposal therefore requires reconsideration.
- The submitted Design Statement includes images which show a window was previously (post-conversion) located above the barn doors to the northern elevation of the barn – in fact, the main door opening itself was also glazed, with doors extending to the full height of both openings retained and fixed open. These images and further photos contained within the Heritage Statement suggest that there is no historic fabric surviving between the rail sitting above the original main door opening and the wall plate. The existing barn doors, which would need to be replaced, are modern, and their replacement is therefore not problematic. Given the prior existence of a glazed opening in this position, this aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious in principle.
- The addition of a porch in the position now proposed was discussed at pre-application stage. At that time, the proposal was for a larger and more visually intrusive structure which was considered to harm the appearance and potentially the historic fabric of the building. The proposal has been amended to reduce the scale of the porch, so that as submitted it has the form of a fairly minimal structure inserted within the existing barn door opening to the 19th century addition to the barn, to its southern side. Externally, the structure does not project beyond the line of the catslide roof of the adjacent aisle which flanks the doors, and will have a relatively minor impact on the external appearance of the building. Although the set back of the external glazed doors will be reduced in relation to the existing doors, which are in the position of the original barn doors behind the aisle, the structure will continue to allow the form of the opening to be appreciated. In my opinion, as amended the external form of the proposed porch

is on balance acceptable. However, although it is understood (subject to detail) that there will now be no direct impact on the surrounding historic fabric of the barn door opening, the manner in which the porch enclosure projects into the internal space of the barn is in my opinion contentious, not only in terms of its impact on the original and characteristic proportions of the space, but of its awkward visual relationship with posts and curved braces to the adjacent trusses, which are significant features of the building's frame (particularly the double posts to the west of the doors). I would therefore suggest that the line of the porch enclosure is cut back so that it does not project into the internal space of the barn.

- The existing timber cladding to the barn and the garage is modern and its replacement is not considered contentious in principle. The proposed change from a black finish to a more natural colouration to match the adjacent barn to the west is unlikely to be problematic, subject to detail which could be reserved by condition.
- The existing windows to the barn are all modern and are not of any special interest- their replacement is therefore not considered problematic, subject to detail. However, as noted at pre-application stage the enlargement of window openings is considered contentious due to the domesticating impact that this will have on the appearance of the building and due to the likely associated loss of historic fabric (which is assumed, although impact on fabric is not specifically commented on in the submitted Heritage Statement). With respect to the roof window, further information would be required in terms of the associated impact on the historic roof structure- does the widening of the window result in loss of fabric, e.g. trimming of rafters?
- The conversion of the garage to part use as a home office and the associated internal and external alterations are not considered contentious, subject to detail. The replacement of the existing conservatory is not considered problematic in principle, and the replacement extension has been redesigned following pre-application consultation to include a pitched roof and Corten cladding as opposed to grey render. Although the asymmetric form of the extension and the narrow vertical proportions of the adjacent proposed new window do not in my opinion sit particularly comfortably in the context, given the modern nature of the garage, the distance from the barn and from the listed former farmhouse, and the amendments to the roof form and cladding which do relate the structure somewhat better to the host building and the rural/agricultural setting, on balance I consider that an objection to this aspect of the proposal would be difficult to sustain.

In summary therefore, whilst many aspects of the proposal are considered acceptable, subject to detail, others are unacceptable, or require revision and/or further information in order to ensure that the special interest of the curtilage listed barn, and the setting of the adjacent listed farmhouse are preserved, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

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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