

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 June 2026 10:35:32 UTC+01:00
To: "Jessica Szollosi" <Jessica.Szollosi@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/1033 Pickeridge Farm

Hi Jess

Comments on the above planning application.

Pickeridge Farm is a historic farmstead located in a rural position outside Ardingly. It includes the former farmhouse, which dates from the 16th century and is Grade II listed, and a number of ancillary buildings including a modern workshop adjacent to the house (the subject of the current proposal), a range of more historic former farm buildings dating from the 19th century or earlier to the south of this, and to the south again Pickeridge Cottage, which dates from the second half of the 20th century. Pickeridge is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the Medieval period. A public right of way (PROW) runs north-south past the eastern side of the house, farmstead and cottage, and onwards into the surrounding countryside. There are clear views of the farmstead from this pathway, including of the subject outbuilding, which is visible in views looking towards the grouping from the countryside to the south.

Based on the information in front of us, Pickeridge house would be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a 16th century Sussex farmhouse, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. The surviving historic farm buildings within the historic farmstead, which are likely to be regarded as curtilage listed, will have similar values as former agricultural buildings of their type and period. All of these buildings share group value as component parts of the historic farmstead.

The surviving rural, agricultural character of the settings of the farmhouse and curtilage listed buildings will make a strong positive contribution to the special interests of these buildings and how they are appreciated, in particular those parts of those interests which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The subject building appears to date from the late 20th century, and provides ancillary accommodation to the former farmhouse. Planning permission was granted in 2019 for renovation and alterations including external refurbishment. Care was taken in the consideration of this application, including seeking amendments to the original submission, to ensure that the rural, agricultural character of the setting of Pickeridge Farmhouse and its farmstead was preserved.

The current proposal, which is retrospective, is for the retention of a solar array which has been installed to the south facing roof slope of the outbuilding.

I have concerns in relation to this proposal due to the scale and visual prominence of the array within the setting of the listed farmhouse and curtilage listed farm buildings. It is an extensive array which occupies most of the south facing roof slope of the building, and being grey/black in colour, and reflective in terms of their surface, the panels stand out against what can be seen of the underlying red clay tile roof. Their material, colour and reflectivity also appear incongruous in the context of the traditional roofing materials of the farmhouse and wider farmstead generally.

Although the array is facing away from the farmhouse, and is not visible from the building itself, it is prominent in views and vistas looking towards the listed building and the historic farmstead from the gardens to the south and southwest. It is also relatively prominent in longer views looking from the fields to the south, including kinetic views from the PROW mentioned above, as illustrated in the photographs sent under a separate email. This is likely to be particularly the case in winter, due to seasonal variation in the hedgerow running along the western side of the footpath. This prominence is enhanced by the colouration and reflectivity of the array, which as noted above contrasts strongly with the traditional clay tiled roofs of the historic buildings within the farmstead.

In my opinion, this will result in a degree of less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to the special interests of the listed and curtilage listed buildings within the Pickeridge farmstead. I would place this harm at the low-mid level of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply. In carrying out this exercise, the Council must be mindful of the requirements of paragraph 212 of the NPPF that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, and that any harm to a designated asset should require clear and convincing justification (para 213).

Paragraph 208 of the Framework further requires that harm to heritage assets should be avoided or minimised. However, no evidence has been provided within the submitted application documents to suggest that alternative, less harmful locations for the solar array have been considered. For example, the Pickeridge Farmstead is set in extensive gardens and farmlands which are within the same ownership (ref. the submitted Location Plan), but no consideration appears to have been given to whether a ground mounted array within this extensive landholding could have provided similar benefits in terms of energy efficiency without harm arising to the setting of the historic farmstead.

The submitted documents suggest that the energy efficiency arising from the proposal would ensure the continuing beneficial use of the listed farmhouse. However, no evidence has been provided to substantiate this claim, which can therefore be afforded only minimal weight, particularly given that an alternative position for the solar array may be possible.

It therefore appears to me that no convincing argument has been made to demonstrate that any public benefit arising from the carbon reduction aspects of the proposal could not be achieved by an alternative scheme which would not result in harm to the special interests of the affected heritage assets. This is not in my opinion the clear and convincing justification required by paragraph 213 of the NPPF.

The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy D34.

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>

Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services
Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385
emily.wade@midsussex.gov.uk <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk>



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