

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 May 2024 15:51:49 UTC+01:00
To: "Stuart Malcolm" <Stuart.Malcolm@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/0446 Land off Scamps Hill, Lindfield

Hi Stuart

Comments on the above application.

The application site consists of a series of open fields to the northern side of Scamps Hill, to the eastern side of Lindfield village. There are a number of heritage assets (both designated and non designated) in the vicinity, the settings and significance of which may be affected by the proposed development:

- Lindfield Conservation Area is focussed on the historic centre of Lindfield village and the Common. Its boundary is a short distance to the north west of the western corner of the site. Although the two are separated by a small amount of built development, there is some limited intervisibility between the site and the Common in particular, and furthermore the site contributes significantly to the semi-rural character of the approach to the village centre, including the Conservation Area, along Scamps Hill and Lewes Road from the south east.

The Council does not have an adopted character appraisal for Lindfield Conservation Area, however its document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' provides a brief high level assessment, and states that: '*Lindfield has a strong individual village identity with a pond, a common, a church dating from the 13th century and a High Street...*' In my opinion, the significance of Lindfield Conservation Area lies in its nature as a historic Sussex village which has grown up over many centuries in close connection with the surrounding landscape.

The surviving tangible connections between the Conservation Area, which include open views from the northern part of the Area, glimpsed views from the Common (including of the site) and the proximity of open countryside in the approaches from the north and from the south east (again including the site) all in my opinion contribute to reinforcing the significance of the Conservation Area.

For these reasons the proposed development site is considered to make a positive contribution to the setting of the Lindfield Conservation Area.

- Greyfriars, Gravelye Lane is a Grade II listed building located just to the west of the site, on the opposite side of Scamps Hill. The house, which dates from c.1830, was formerly known as Spire Cottage is suggested to have formerly been a toll house or lodge house. The Heritage Statement suggests that it may have been the lodge to Gravelye House, an 1825-6 Grade II listed house located some distance to the south along Gravelye Lane, although this is not substantiated, and seems somewhat unlikely given the distance between the two, the seemingly public nature of the lane and the intervening farmsteads of Pesthouse and Gravelye Farms.

The building is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, as well as historical illustrative value as a good example of a

small rural dwelling of its type and period (this would also relate to its former toll or lodge house roll, if confirmed), and aesthetic value.

Historical map regression shows that when constructed, Greyfriars (then Spire Cottage) was situated in rural position outside Lindfield. More recently, the village has spread to the south and west so that the setting of the listed building is now semi-rural. The most significant remaining rural aspect of this setting is the application site, which affects both views from and of the listed building, and the character of the approaches to it along Lewes Road/Scamp Hill.

The potential (although speculative) former roll of the building as a toll or lodge house would mean that the adjacent roads would be a significant part of the setting of the listed building, relating to its former use. However, the surviving rural setting to the east is also significant in indicating the out-of-village context within which the building was originally constructed. It contributes positively to both its historical illustrative and aesthetic values, and the most important part of that rural setting is the application site, which is directly opposite the listed building.

- Tythe Cottage, Scaynes Hill Road is a Grade II listed 18th century rural dwelling located a short distance to the east of the site, and set back (although visible) from the road along an entrance track.

The Cottage is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex dwelling of its period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. As such, the rural setting within which the listed building is appreciated makes a strong positive contribution to its special interest at the manner in which this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The application site forms a significant element of the surviving rural setting of the Cottage, forming the greater part of the wider context to the west of the building, although separated from it by Walstead Grange (see below). Although direct intervisibility may be limited, the site in particular influences the character of the approach to Tythe Cottage from the direction of Lindfield and the entrance driveway. It also contributes positively to a sense of separation between the listed building, in its rural context, and the modern spread of Lindfield village.

- Little Walsted Farm is a Grade II* listed 16th century or earlier timber framed building, a former farmhouse, located in a rural position to the north east of the site. Although it is in relatively close proximity, it is separated from the site by Little Walstead Wood, and is therefore in my opinion unlikely to be affected by the current proposal. I have therefore not considered the impact on this asset in further detail at this time.
- Walstead Grange, Scaynes Hill Road is a former farmstead, previously known as Beadles Farm. The buildings are not listed, but are recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post Medieval period.

The submitted Heritage Statement suggests that the house may in fact be of 16th century origin, but extended in the 19th century and later. It also states that a number of former farm buildings survive around the house.

On this basis the farmstead, or the older buildings within it, would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The Heritage Statement suggests a high level of significance within the local context, based presumably on the early date of construction of the house, and if the presumed dating is correct I would not disagree with this.

Given the former agricultural function of the farmstead, the surviving rural setting around it, which consists in large part of the application site, would be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the significance of the NDHA. The 1848 Tithe Map suggests that the farmlands associated with the tenancy at Beadles Farm consisted largely, if not entirely, of the fields forming the application site. This historical functional relationship will serve to strengthen the contribution made by the site to the setting and significance of the NDHA.

The application site will contribute to the setting of the farmstead not only through direct intervisibility, but also in terms of the character of the approach to the farmstead along Scamps Hill from the north. It also provides an important buffer of undeveloped, rural land between the farmstead and the modern development of Lindfield to the south and west.

I note in respect of the submitted Heritage Statement that both Tythe Cottage and the Lindfield Conservation Area have been scoped out for detailed assessment. Given their proximity to the site and the contribution it makes to their broader settings, as set out above, I do not agree with this approach and would suggest that the Statement is amended accordingly.

The currently proposed development, which is with all matters reserved except for access, is for a residential development of up to 90 new houses, with public open space, landscaping and SUDS. The illustrative master plan submitted with the application shows the new built form concentrated within the north western approx. 2/3rds of the site, with a public open space, or parkland area, to the south eastern 1/3rd.

The proposed development will fundamentally alter the existing character of the site, which will become suburban. Even where built form is not shown, the proposed public open space or parkland will not retain the historical rural, agricultural character of the site as existing, but will become suburbanised.

In my opinion, the loss of the existing rural, agricultural nature of the site would detract from or reverse the positive contribution which it currently makes to the settings of the heritage assets identified, for the reasons set out above.

In all cases the level harm caused to the significance of the designated assets is likely to be less than substantial, although the degree of harm within this spectrum will vary according to the specific nature of the significance of each asset and its physical, visual and in some cases historical relationship with the site:

Lindfield Conservation Area: As set out above, the significance of the Area is drawn fundamentally from its nature as a historic Sussex village which has grown up over many centuries in close connection with the surrounding rural landscape. The site forms one part of

that landscape, and is particularly important to placing the Area within a wider rural context in terms of the approach to it from the south east. The site is also visible in glimpsed views from the Common, again reinforcing the identity of the Conservation Area as the historic heart of a rural Sussex village.

Level of harm caused: Less than substantial, at the low-mid range of that scale.

Greyfriars, Gravelye Lane: The identification of this building as a lodge house appears somewhat tenuous, but historical map regression allows us to be certain that at its construction this cottage was in a rural setting. The application site forms the entirety of the surviving closer rural setting of the building, and is particularly important in terms of views from and to the building, and the context in which it is appreciated from Lewes Road and Scamps Hill. The new development would be prominent in all these views and vistas.

Level of harm caused: Less than substantial, mid-high.

Tythe Cottage, Scaynes Hill Road: The application site forms part of the wider rural setting of this listed building, and is particularly important in terms of the approach to it along Scamps Hill from the north west, and in providing a rural buffer between the building and the modern spread of Lindfield village.

Level of harm caused: Less than substantial, low-mid.

In all the above cases, paragraph 208 of the NPPF and the balancing exercise set out therein will apply, bearing in mind the great weight that must be given to the conservation of these assets.

In terms of the NDHA at Walstead Grange, paragraph 209 of the NPPF will be relevant. I would consider that by virtue of proximity, intervisibility, impact on the character of the approach to the asset, loss of the current sense of separation from Lindfield village, and loss of the agricultural character of the farmstead's historical farmlands, the proposal will result in a high level of harm to an asset of a high level of significance within the local context.

The proposal will also be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35.

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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