

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1623	Case Officer:	Catherine Cardin
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Installation of small ground mounted domestic solar array.		
Site:	Park Farm, Twineham Lane, Twineham, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5NP, ,		
Validation Date	30 Jun 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	1 Aug 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	9 Oct 2025
Target Date:	25 Aug 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Catherine Cardin</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	9 Oct 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1623

**Park Farm, Twineham Lane, Twineham, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5NP,
Installation of small ground mounted domestic solar array.
Mr And Mrs William Bunn**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of support was received regarding the application. This suggested that the proposal would contribute to reducing carbon emissions and supported the siting of the proposal so as to mitigate visual impact of the development.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

The application site, Park Farm is a historic farmstead located in a rural position to the south-east of Twineham. The former farmhouse, which dates from c.1600, is a Grade II listed building. There are two outbuildings to the west and south-west of the house, which from historical map regression appear to date from the 19th century or earlier, and would be regarded as curtilage listed. The majority of the former farmstead is however located just to the north, and although it has not been previously regarded as curtilage listed due to its separate ownership, would be considered a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), which has group value with, and contributes positively to the setting of the house.

The current application affects a field to the south-west of the house and farmstead, and is for the construction of a 60 panel solar array. It is also proposed to install a wall-mounted inverter and two free-standing batteries within one of the two curtilage listed outbuildings.

Based on the information in front of us, Park Farm house would 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 period, altered and extended in response to changing socio-economic circumstances and the evolving needs and aspirations of successive owners, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. It also has group value with the curtilage listed outbuildings, and as noted above with the historic farmstead to the house.

The historic farmstead buildings, which as above would be regarded as an NDHA, would be considered to possess similar interests as former farm buildings of their type and period, within the local context.

As such the surviving rural setting, which is all around the house and farm buildings, will be considered to make a strong positive contribution the special interests of the farmhouse and curtilage listed buildings, and to the significance of the farmstead as an NDHA. The application field is a close and relatively prominent part of that rural setting, and can be assumed to have a historical functional relationship with the buildings and part of the farmlands associated with the farmstead. It affects not only views from the buildings themselves and their close settings, but also the character of the approach to the along the farm track from Twineham Lane. It is also visible in glimpsed views and vistas from Twineham Lane, which include the farmstead, particularly in winter.

The position of the solar array is a short distance from the house occupying an area of the field against its southern edge. It is a fairly substantial array, but the field is extensive, and the panels will occupy a relatively small part of it. However, I do have some concerns regarding the impact on the character of this part of the setting of the farmstead. Notwithstanding the topography of the site and the statement to the contrary in the submitted Heritage Statement, I consider it likely that the array, which is of 60 panels each c. 2.5m in height, will be visible from the farmstead and its immediate setting, the farm driveway,

and Twineham Road. For this reason, although in the context of paragraph 167 of the NPPF I would not on balance have an in-principle objection to the proposal, I do consider that screening planting of appropriate native species hedgerow and trees will be required to mitigate the visual impact of the array. This planting should be to all side except the south (where is an existing hedgerow) and should be of an appropriate height and density to effectively screen the panels.

It is also noted that the proposal includes works to the curtilage listed outbuilding to the west of the house, including a wall mounted inverter and free-standing batteries. Whilst the batteries may not require listed building consent, if they are truly free-standing, the wall mounted inverter is likely to require consent. Further information of this aspect of the work should be provided, including appropriate plans and elevations, and manufacturer's specifications of the equipment. The Heritage Statement should also be revised to address the impact of the works on the fabric and appearance of the building. Based on this further information, an informed decision can also be made as to whether this aspect of the proposal will in fact also require an application for listed building consent.

In summary, although the proposal may be acceptable in principle, revisions and further information are required to ensure that the impact on the setting of the historic farmstead, and the direct impact on the curtilage listed building, are acceptable. Subject to this further information, an application for listed building consent may also be required.

Further comments received:

Firstly, with respect to the proposed solar PV array we have now received a revised site plan showing an informal arrangement of planted screening around the site of the array. Although we had previously suggested hedging, I would not have any objection in principle to this more naturalistic arrangement, but this would be subject to detail of planting numbers etc. to ensure that adequate depth and density of screening is provided. I would therefore suggest a condition requiring full details of the screening to include number, position and species of plants, including (if appropriate) details of temporary protection to be afforded while the plants establish (for example if the field is used for livestock grazing).

In relation to the works to the curtilage listed outbuilding, we now have details of the inverter and its installation, which involves a wall mounted bracket to which the inverter is attached. Fixing the bracket requires 6 screws into the wall of the building. This is a relatively minor impact on the historic fabric and internal appearance of the building. The associated batteries are described as free-standing. On the understanding that these therefore require no mounting or supporting structure, I would consider on balance that the works to the outbuilding will not affect its special architectural or historical interest and will not therefore require an application for listed building consent

Nature Space

No objection.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Twineham Parish Council confirms it has no objections to the application.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks permission for the installation of a ground mounted domestic solar array.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

TW/006/87- Insertion of a window and internal alterations to form cloakroom. Permission.
DM/16/1406- Amended description: Addition of second floor bathroom to existing store room in attic inside main house. Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Park Farm is a detached two storey dwelling of timber construction with a plain tile roof. It has white timber frame windows. The property benefits from an area open land to the west and south of the property and a pond to the south of the property. Park Farm is a Grade II Listed Building.

The property is located outside the built-up area of Twineham. Neighbouring properties are located to the north and east. Highway is located to the west.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is sought for two banks of 30 ground mounted solar panels in two rows, numbering 60 in total. These would be located over 88 metres to the southwest of the dwelling. The array would also be located some 6 metres north of the hedge boundary to the southern side of the curtilage of the property within a shallow dip. The area of the solar array would measure some 39 metres in width and some 4.5 metres in depth. The panels would have an approximate height of 2.4 metres from ground level.

The battery storage for the solar array would be located in the garage at the property. This would include a wall-mounted bracket to which the inverter is attached, and two free-standing batteries within one of the two curtilage listed outbuildings.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

DP26 - Character and Design

DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DP40 - Renewable Energy Schemes

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

No relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Twineham Neighbourhood Plan made in 2016.
TNP4 - Landscape and Environment

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DPS3 - Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Schemes
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states '*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.*'

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'*

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Design Guide/Code

Published in 2021, the National Design Guide illustrates how the government consider well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out that this national document, along with the National Model Design Code, should be used to guide decisions on application in the absence of locally design guides or design codes.

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows;

- Design, character and impact on the character of the surrounding area
- Impact on the Listed Buildings and their setting
- Neighbouring Amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

The application site is located within the countryside, as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan. Policy DP12 establishes that:

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- o it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- o it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan'.*

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to Character and Design and states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*

- o does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development'.*

Policy TNP4 of the Twineham Neighbourhood Plan relates to landscape and the environment and states that:

New development will be supported which is in accordance with other policies of the plan and:

TNP4.1 Respects local landscape quality ensuring that views and vistas are maintained wherever possible.

TNP4.2 Takes every opportunity, where practicable and viable, to incorporate features that improve its environmental performance thereby reducing carbon emissions. These can include both energy efficiency measures and sources of renewable energy.

TNP4.3 All development schemes submitted must be accompanied by a landscaping scheme which aims to retain amenity and historic trees and hedges. New tree and hedge planting of native species will be encouraged throughout Twineham Parish.

It is considered that the proposal has been sited to minimise the visual impact of the development on the local landscape quality. The proposed screening of native species is considered to retain local amenity and is considered to mitigate the visual impact of the array, ensuring that views would be maintained. A condition can be included as part of any consent to ensure that this is secured. As the proposal includes a source of renewable energy, it is considered that the proposal would reduce the carbon emissions of the application property. Given that the wall-mounted inverter and free-standing batteries would be located in an outbuilding, they are not considered to have an impact on the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies DP12 and DP26 of the District Plan, policy TNP4 of the Twineham Neighbourhood Plan and relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on the Listed Buildings and their setting

S. 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *In considering whether to grant planning permission [F1or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*

MSDC District Plan policy DP34 states:

'Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- o Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- o Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*

- o Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;
- o Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;
- o Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.

Other Heritage Assets

Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.'

Paragraphs 212 - 216 of the NPPF states:

'212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

214. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
- and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

The MSDC Conservation Officer was consulted on the application. They identified that the surviving rural setting around the house and farm buildings is considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the farmhouse and curtilage listed buildings, and to the significance of the farmstead as an NDHA. They further consider that the application field is a close and relatively prominent part of

that rural setting, and can be assumed to have a historical functional relationship with the buildings and part of the farmlands associated with the farmstead. The Conservation Officer has not raised any objections to the application and considers the works to be acceptable in principle. However, concerns were raised by them regarding the visibility of the development and the impact on the character of this part of the setting of the farmstead. The Conservation Officer also raised concerns regarding the lack of information provided regarding the wall mounted inverter and free-standing batteries and the impact upon the curtilage listed outbuilding.

Further information has been provided during the application regarding the inverter and the batteries. The proposal was considered again by the Conservation Officer who has advised that, on the understanding that associated batteries require no mounting or supporting structure, they do not consider that the works to the outbuilding will affect its special architectural or historical interest and will therefore not require an application for listed building consent. These views are shared and agreed upon from a planning perspective.

Furthermore, they have advised that, subject to a condition requiring full details of the screening, the proposal is now considered acceptable. Further information regarding the screening has subsequently been submitted which details the requested information from the Conservation Officer. This can be secured by a suitable worded condition.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy DP34 of the District Plan and relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Neighbouring amenities

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that development:

"does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);"

To the north is Park Farm Barns. As the development would be located some 56 metres from this neighbour, it is not considered that the proposal would be harmful to the amenities of this neighbour.

To the east is Park House. As the development would be located some 83 metres from this neighbour, it is not considered that the proposal would be harmful to the amenities of this neighbour.

Due to the domestic nature of the proposed development, it is considered that there would not be a harmful impact in terms of noise, air and light pollution.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore deemed to accord with the above part of policy DP26 of the District Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the NPPF. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.

Courts have confirmed that the Development Plan must be considered as a whole, not simply in relation to any one individual policy. It is therefore not the case that a proposal must accord with each and every policy within the Development Plan.

The proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size and scale to the building and locality, and would not cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings or to the amenities of neighbouring properties.

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP12, DP26, DP34, DP35 and DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy TNP4 of the Twineham Neighbourhood plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Catherine Cardin