

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1973	Case Officer:	Rachel Richardson
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Loft conversion proposing 2 dormers windows on the rear elevation and velux windows on the front roof slope.		
Site:	11 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, , ,		
Validation Date	12 Aug 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	27 Oct 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	17 Nov 2025
Target Date:	7 Oct 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Rachel Richardson</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	7
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	17 Nov 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1973

**11 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, ,
Loft conversion proposing 2 dormers windows on the rear elevation and velux windows on the front roof slope.
Mr Carr**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

7 households have made representations including 4 objections and 3 in support. Comments have been summarised as follows:

Objections

- o The proposed dormers will be dominant in appearance appearing particularly oppressive in the outlook for the occupiers of Nos. 13 and 15, which are at a lower level.
- o Out of keeping with character and appearance of buildings and street scene within the vicinity
- o Will not conserve nor enhance the landscape character of the AONB
- o Conflicts with the original design of the proposed development which was to maintain a mix of different sized properties
- o Unacceptable impact on residential amenity (particularly Nos. 13 and 15) due to overlooking and loss of privacy (kitchen window of No.13 and bedroom, ground floor and front door windows of No.15)

Support

- o Its important for families to be able to extend their properties so they are not priced out of the village
- o In keeping and reasonable proposal

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

None.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection.

INTRODUCTION

Permission is sought for a loft conversion and includes the construction of 2 flat roofed dormer windows on the rear, and 2 rooflights on the front roof slope.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/18/4541 - 16 dwellings. Permission 17.12.2019

DM/23/0704 - Single storey rear extension. Permission 04.05.2023

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a large, detached dwelling located within a cul de sac of 16 houses which is located within the south-eastern corner of Balcombe built-up area boundary, as defined in the District Plan. The countryside, as defined in the District Plan, surrounds Barnfield to the north, east and southern

sides. The application site is located within National Landscape, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The property is of brick and tile construction and its rear garden to the north is enclosed by 2m high close boarded fencing. A road on its eastern boundary accesses two properties at the rear. The front gardens are of open plan landscaping. The site is flat.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application proposes a conversion of the roof void to provide a fourth bedroom with en-suite. The proposed external alterations include the provision of 2 rooflights on the front roof slope and two flat roofed dormer windows on the rear roof slope. This is an amended scheme.

Materials are proposed to match existing and include

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and Balcombe 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:

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26: Character and Design

Site Allocations DPD

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

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 made in September 2016.

Relevant policies:

Policy 1: Built Up Area Boundary

Policy 3: Design

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.

OTHER PLANNING GUIDANCE

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

Relevant policies:

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)

ASSESSMENT

The issues for consideration are design and character and impact on the surrounding landscape character of the AONB, and residential amenity.

Design and Character

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *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;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *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);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *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;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy 3 of the BNP states that:

'The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and to avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the significance and character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, where a building will command a view.'

DG52: Loft conversions and roof extensions

'A loft conversion is a space efficient means of extending the amount of living accommodation in a dwelling. Roof accommodation is normally reliant on dormer windows and rooflights to provide light and ventilation. However, if they are out of scale or out of character with the roofscape and proportions of a dwelling they can have an adverse impact on the character of both the dwelling and the streetscape.'

The roof pitch and form are intrinsic to a building's character and roof extensions should be sensitive to this. Roof extensions and dormer windows that alter the existing ridge of the roof or significantly alter the roof profile of a building will not normally be acceptable, particularly on the front roof slope, and where there is a strong established roofline.

Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows and / or doors.

Further guidance on dormer windows and rooflights is provided in chapter 6 under sections 6.3.5 to 6.3.8.'

'6.3.5 While dormer windows can sometimes be prominent features in the streetscene, care needs to be taken with their design, proportions and position on the roof. The choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular.'

6.3.6 Dormer windows should be visually subordinate to the roof slope, enabling a large proportion of the main roof to remain visible. Excessively wide dormers are likely to look unsatisfactory as they will often be out of proportion with the existing roof.'

6.3.7 Dormer windows should normally be positioned below the ridge-line, and above the eaves line.'

6.3.8 Rooflights that follow the roof profile can be an appropriate substitute for a dormer where it is important to retain the profile of the roof slope or avoid a dormer that break the eaves line. Care though needs to be taken to avoid them dominating the roof. Rooflights are best designed with a slender-profile that are flush with the roof slope.'

The design of the scheme has been amended to retain the roof profile as existing, and omit a dormer window on the rear so as to maintain the maximum area of uninterrupted roof slope. A rooflight has also been removed from the front roof slope compared to the original proposal. The agent has confirmed that, *'the width of the bedroom window has been matched to the window below and aligned with it. The window for the stairs dormer matches the size of the window in bedroom 2. The height of the dormers are as low as can be to provide 2m headroom internally.'*

The dormer roof was changed to flat to match other similar dormers in the development.'

In terms of design and character it is considered that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and existing dwellings within the vicinity and street scene. The proposed dormer windows have been reduced in size and will be at the rear of the property so not prominent in the street scene. The proposal is therefore compliant with the above relevant policies and principles in the DP, NP and MSDG.

AONB & National Landscapes

The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of*

the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CROW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs'. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads 66. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

The High Weald Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF are policies which seek to enhance the character of the settlement where viewpoints and spaces are preserved. The Dark Skies Technical Advice Note SPD has objectives to protect and maintain existing dark skies by minimising internal light spill and obtrusive external light pollution.

MSDP policy DP16 states in part that;

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan,

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.'

The proposed alterations to the roof of the application property is considered to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of this National Landscape. The dormer windows are of a design which is in keeping with the character of the property and locality and would be on an existing roof. The would be viewed against the existing property and amongst surrounding existing dwellinghouses.

In terms of landscape character, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and compliant with above relevant policies and national guidance contained within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Policy DP26 in part states:

'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);'

DP26 is the policy in the Plan most recently adopted and therefore the test is whether the proposed development would amount to significant harm for the occupants of nearby properties.

In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in significant harm to nearby properties. There are existing windows at first floor that would have a similar view to that proposed. This is a typical arrangement and relationship between dwellings in a built up residential area. It should also be noted that the back to front relationship between the application property and nearby dwellings is also less intrusive than back to back, in terms of privacy.

It is not considered that the proposed dormer windows would be dominant in their appearance. They have been reduced in size and of a similar appearance and form to others that exist on properties in Barnfield. They do not have wide cheeks and maintain the maximum area of uninterrupted roof slope around them. They also do not appear oppressive in the outlook from nearby properties, which are considered to have a spacious layout.

It is considered that the proposal would not result in significant harm to residential amenity and is compliant with policy DP26.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. As a householder application this development is exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Overall, and for the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the proposed loft conversion is acceptable and compliant with relevant policies and as such it is recommended that permission be granted.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Rachel Richardson