

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/3009	Case Officer:	Tracie Axford
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed loft conversion		
Site:	8 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, , ,		
Validation Date	24 Nov 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	17 Dec 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	19 Jan 2026
Target Date:	19 Jan 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Tracie Axford</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	19 Jan 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/3009

**8 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, ,
Proposed loft conversion
Mr R Atwell**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

None

BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council have no objection in principle.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a proposed loft conversion.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a detached dwelling located within a cul-de-sac of 16 houses, 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, formally called the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The property is of brick and dark grey weatherboard clad construction and its rear garden to the south is enclosed by 2m high close boarded fencing. A road on its eastern boundary accesses two properties at the rear. To the front there is a front garden and side access to the garage.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for a proposed loft conversion. A rear dormer is proposed with four velux windows to the front and rear. The rear dormer will measure 1.8metres wide and have a height of 2.1metres. Three velux windows will be added to the rear and there will be one velux window to the front.

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 the 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.

Balcombe 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.

Relevant policies:

DPS1 - Climate Change

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 is also a material consideration considered to be relevant to this application.

ASSESSMENT

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

- Design and Character
- Impact on neighbouring properties
- Impact on AONB
- Biodiversity Net Gain

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.'

Principle DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states that: '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 retains the roof profile as existing, on the front slope. One rooflight window will be added which at 1.1metres wide and 0.7metres in height, is modest in size.

On the rear slope, 3 rooflights are to be added. Two of these will measure approximately 0.7 by 0.8 metres. The third rooflight is slightly larger at 1.1m wide and 0.7 metres in height. In the centre of the roof slope there will be a dormer which will measure 1.8metres wide, a height of 2.1metres and a depth of 2.1 metres. The dormer will have a flat roof which will 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 proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the NPPF.

Impact on neighbouring properties

In terms of impact upon 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);'

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. It is not considered that the proposed dormer window would be dominant in their appearance. It is modest in size and of a similar appearance and form to others that exist on properties in Barnfield. It does not have wide cheeks and maintains the maximum area of uninterrupted roof slope around them.

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

Impact on AONB

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.'

'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 window is of a design which is in keeping with the character of the property and locality.

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

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

The proposal is appropriate in terms of design and will not negatively impact on the host dwelling nor its immediate setting and will not harm neighbouring amenities. Therefore, the proposal complies with policies DP16 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies 1 and 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF and is considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Tracie Axford