

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2139	Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed first floor side extension and roof alterations, rear facing dormer window, front facing roof light window and removal of chimney		
Site:	Esmeralda Cottage, 43 West Common, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2AJ, ,		
Validation Date	13 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	13 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	24 Nov 2025
Target Date:	8 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Stefan Galyas</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	3
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	25 Nov 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2139

**Esmeralda Cottage, 43 West Common, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2AJ,
Proposed first floor side extension and roof alterations, rear facing dormer window, front facing
roof light window and removal of chimney
Mr Andrew Darby**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

There were three letters of representation received in response to the original scheme which was made invalid due to an incorrect block plan and incomplete elevations. All three representation letters objected to the proposal for the following reasons:

- The proposal resulting in an overbearing and unacceptable loss of privacy.
- A severe detrimental effect on the outlook of the neighbouring dwellings would be incurred.
- The submission containing inaccuracies such as stating that the proposal would not be visible from the public domain as well as the block plan being incorrect.
- The proposal directly contravening the Mid Sussex design Guide.
- The design not being in keeping with the established Turner Vernacular.

The application was subsequently amended to include full elevations and an updated block plan with the same design. An additional two letters of representation were received which objected quoting the same reasons as outlined above.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer: *'Esmerelda Cottage is an unlisted building located to the northern side of West Common, to the west of Lindfield. The house, which dates from the early 20th century, and is to a design by noted local architect Harold G Turner.*

Born in Ardingly in 1885, Turner was a successful architect, particularly after the completion of his well-regarded Gidea Park project in Essex. He came to Haywards Heath in 1920, and established his practice at Boltro Chambers. His surviving buildings locally include the 1920's redevelopment of Commercial Square and Clive Court in Sydney Road, Haywards Heath, but he is best remembered for the distinctive style of the houses he designed along the Haywards Heath and Lindfield borders. These properties, built in a version of the Sussex vernacular using high quality materials and great attention to detail, are attractive and characterful and often contribute positively to the street scene. Franklands Village, built to his designs between 1933 and 1939 to provide affordable local housing, is now a Conservation Area. More isolated examples of his houses have been previously regarded by the Council as non-designated heritage assets of special architectural or historical interest within the local context (NDHAs) (e.g. More House and Crossways, Tyler Green).

At West Common, there is a surviving grouping of Turner Houses apparently including nos. 32-38 to the south of the road, and 21-45 to the north, although more research would be required to be certain of the exact extent of the development. These houses share features characteristic of his Sussex vernacular style, and have a strong group value. Esmerelda Cottage is good example, having brick elevations with tile hanging at first floor, hipped tiled roofs with wide eaves supported on iron brackets, a prominent ridge top chimney stack, side cat-slide with dormer, and leaded windows including oriel windows at first floor. Architecturally the property is one half of a handed pair with its detached neighbour to the east, Linden.

I would consider based on its architectural and aesthetic values, group value with its neighbours (Linden in particular) and association with prominent local architect Harold G Turner, that Esmerelda Cottage should be regarded as an NDHA. This is likely also to apply to the remainder of the development along West Common, subject to further research.

The current proposal is for alterations and extensions to Esmerelda Cottage comprising an extension to the side of the house at first floor and roof level largely removing the catslide in favour of a hipped roof, removal of the chimney stack, and addition of a box dormer to the rear roof slope.

In my opinion, this proposal raises significant concerns in terms of the impact on the architectural and aesthetic values of the house, for the following reasons in particular:

- The proposed side extension will largely remove the existing, characteristic side catslide, and will entirely remove the original dormer window. As well as the direct harm this causes to the character of the property by adverse impact on original features, including the roof form, and the addition of undue bulk at high level to the side of the house, it also impacts significantly on the original, designed symmetry of this property with its neighbour Linden. This aspect of the proposal is in my opinion unacceptable for these reasons.*
- The proposed removal of the prominent ridge top chimney stack is also in my opinion unacceptable due to the loss of an original, and highly significant, feature of the house's design. This aspect of the proposal also adversely affects the intended symmetry with Linden, and detracts from the roofline interest of the wider group of Turner houses.*
- The proposed box dormer to the rear elevation is over scaled within the roof slope and of a highly unsympathetic design. Again, I am afraid that this aspect of the proposal is in my opinion unacceptable, although a significantly smaller dormer window of a more appropriate design, reflecting that of the original dormer to the side of the house, might be more favourably viewed.*

For these reasons, the proposal is in my opinion harmful to the significance of Esmerelda Cottage as an NDHA. In terms of paragraph 216 of the NPPF, I would place the level of harm caused as high to an NDHA of a mid level of interest within the local context.

The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, including DG49, DG50 and DG52.'

The Lindfield Society: *'The Lindfield Society object to these proposals. Although just outside the Lindfield Conservation Area Esmeralda Cottage, 43 West Common, sits in a prominent position on the main southern approach road to Lindfield and is part of a distinctive row of detached properties designed by the well-known local architect Harold Turner. These properties do much to reinforce the special townscape character of Lindfield and its immediate surroundings.*

The proposed 'dormer' extension at first floor level to the side of the property is completely out of scale with the existing roof with a large expanse of flat roof that would be in sharp contrast to the design of adjacent dormers. In the Society's opinion this would have a detrimental effect on the streetscape of West Common.

The second floor roof extension to the rear of the property is also not only out of scale with the existing roof but with the proposed large-scale windows and Juliet balcony create an aesthetic that does not sit well with the original building design.

Together with the removal of the central chimney, these proposals ignore the MSDC Design Guide for loft conversions/roof extensions which states that the original form of the roof should remain the dominant form.'

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Parish Council: *'Lindfield Parish Council objects to this application, considering that the proposed dormer is not sympathetic to the original form of this property. Further, it does not respect the street scene presented by the row of similar and unmodified neighbouring houses, within Lindfield's Area of Townscape Character, as detailed in the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.'*

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the development of a first floor side extension, associated roof alterations, a rear dormer, the removal of the chimney and the installation of a front rooflight.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/16/4957 - Proposed two storey side extension and 2 x single storey rear extensions (Amended description and plans dated 9 March 2017). Permission 14.03.2017.

DM/17/3475 - Non-Material Amendment to application DM/16/4957 - Minor amendment to ground floor rear walls to increase width of walls by circa 200mm towards central courtyard (away from neighbours). Permission 30.08.2017.

DM/17/3629 - Proposed single bay oak framed garage with side aisle incorporating a low roof height design. Refusal 06.11.2017.

DM/18/1841 - Proposed two storey side extension and 2x single storey rear extension. Permission 22.06.2018.

DM/18/1693 - Non Material Amendment to application DM/16/4957 - Reduction of the roof form from flat to hip. Various rooflights added. Refusal 09.05.2018.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application relates to Esmerelda Cottage, a two storey detached dwelling set to the north-western side of the highway. The existing dwelling is set back from the highway edge by a front gravel paved driveway with mature boundary planting and hedgerows abutting the highway edge to the front of the site. There is existing garden amenity space set to the rear of the dwelling with a single storey shed outbuilding set to the rear boundary. The existing dwelling has been previously extended through a two-storey side (south-western) extension in a hipped roof format. Furthermore, two single storey pitched roof extensions have been developed to the rear with a patio area between. In terms of existing materials, the dwelling is composed of brick at ground floor level, tile hanging at first floor level, concrete roof tiles and leaded windows and oriel windows at first floor level.

In terms of the site's locality, the application dwelling is set within a cluster of traditional Sussex vernacular dwellings built by Harold Turner. Each dwelling is set within a relatively generous plot size with a regular rhythm in gaps and separation distances between each property.

With regard to policy constraints, the site is located within the Haywards Heath and Lindfield Built Up Area. There is an existing tree-preservation order to the front of the site and is identified being set within an area of townscape character. The application dwelling has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposal would develop a first-floor side (north-eastern) elevation extension and would remove the existing cat slide roof pitch and match the existing ridge height with a hipped roof format. The proposed extension would have a maximum depth of circa 6.1m, have a width of 2.2m, measure at 4.9m high to the eaves and 8.1m high to the ridge. Proposed external materials would comprise brickwork at ground floor and tile hanging at first floor and matching roof tiles.

To the rear (north-western) roof slope, a box dormer would be developed in order to accommodate a loft conversion. The dormer would measure at approximately 2.3m deep, 5.5m wide and 2.3m in maximum height. Proposed materials to this element would include tile hanging to the walls, a single ply flat roof membrane roof, TECH copper flashing and black aluminium doors and windows.

The proposal would also include further alteration to the existing property, including the removal of the existing chimney stack. An additional rooflight would be installed to the principal (south-eastern) roof pitch and would utilise a conservation model.

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 Lindfield and Lindfield Rural 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:

DP26: Character and Design

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan (Made March 2016)

Policy 7 - Areas of Townscape Character

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

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 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

DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DPS2: Sustainable Design and Construction

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) 2024 is a material consideration.

Paragraphs 2, 8, 11, 39, 48, 131, 135, 139 & 216.

National Design Guide (Published January 2021)

ASSESSMENT

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

- Impact on Design and Character, Including Heritage Assets
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Impact on Design and Character, Including Heritage Assets

Policy DP34 of the District Plan states among other matters that:

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.

DP26 of the 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:

- 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 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'*

The application site is also identified as forming part of an Area of Townscape Character under Policy 7 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out:

'The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following areas as Areas of Townscape Character, as shown on the Proposals Map:

- i. Summerhill Lane/West Common*
- ii. Sunte Avenue/Hickmans Lane/Denmans Lane*
- iii. The Welkin*
- iv. The Wilderness*

v. Portsmouth Wood and Portsmouth Wood Close

Development proposals in an Area of Townscape Character will be supported, provided applicants can demonstrate they have had regard to their impact on the character and appearance of the area and have sought to retain features important to the character of the area, as defined in the Lindfield Village Design Statement. In particular, proposals should:

- i. retain trees, frontage hedgerows and walls which contribute to the character and appearance of the area;*
- ii. retain areas of open space, (including private gardens) which are open to public view and contribute to the character and appearance of the area; and*
- iii. avoid the demolition of existing buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the area'.*

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF notes:

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 judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Esmerelda Cottage, whilst undesignated is considered to possess architectural and aesthetic value within its local context. As a non-designated heritage asset, the dwelling is considered to possess a mid-level of interest within the local context.

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states:

'Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. The design approach may benefit from coordinating with the existing pattern of window and door openings as well as employing facing materials to match those of the existing dwelling. Otherwise, it should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternative approach.'

Principle DG50 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide elaborates further on what constitutes 'good design' in relation to side extensions:

Side extensions should normally be subservient to the original dwelling and typically be set-back from the front of the house to help define the original building.

The gaps between dwellings can sometimes positively contribute to articulating (for example, through the consistent rhythm of repeated houses) and adding interest in a street frontage or by providing views / visible connections to the surrounding countryside. Side extensions will therefore need to appropriately respond to the character of the street form and will not normally be accepted where they close an important gap and view.

With regard to loft conversions and roof extensions, Principle DG52 notes 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.

Section 6, Paragraph 6.3.6 states:

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.

The National Design Guide (2021) states in Paragraph 44 that:

"to communicate the benefits of a scheme, it is important to explain how the design of a development relates to context and local character." It adds that

"well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- o The history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;*
- o The significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;*
- o The local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of facades, characteristic materials and details" (Paragraph 46).*

The existing dwelling has previously been extended to the side elevation through a substantial side (south-western) elevation extension which utilises an inset from the original dwelling's principal elevation. As noted within the Conservation Officer's response, the application dwelling was likely designed with a degree of symmetry in mind to reflect the neighbouring dwelling at Linden immediately to the northeast.

Side Extension

The Conservation Officer considered that the proposed side extension would remove the characteristic side cat-slide roof as well as the original dormer window. It is considered that whilst the property has previously been extended at two storey level to the opposite side, the incremental increase would result in an adverse impact on the dwellings original features. Whilst matching materials would largely be used, it is considered that the first-floor extension would add an undue amount of bulk, size and massing to the existing dwelling. In turn, this would erode how the original dwelling would be perceived and would be bounded on either side by considerably large side extensions.

Rear Dormer

It is considered that the existing dwellings rear roof slope is largely uninterrupted, with the exception of two rear rooflights to the previous two storey side extension. The proposed rear dormer would measure at some 5.5m wide and utilise a boxed design. The proposed dormer size is not considered to be visually subordinate to the existing roof slope and would be of an awkward and bulky appearance.

It is acknowledged that the existing dwelling utilises a side dormer within the existing cat slide roof. This dormer is considered to be of a much more subservient and well-integrated appearance through the use of a hipped roof and its limited overall size. In absence of further local examples of box dormers of this proposed scale, it is considered that the addition of this feature would likely result in an incongruous appearance.

Accordingly, this element is considered to significantly alter the existing roof profile and would be in clear contravention to Principal DG52 of the Design Guide.

Other Alterations

Other associated alterations as part of the proposed development would include the removal of the existing chimney stack. This feature is considered to constitute a prominent feature as the property is observed from the street scene, and a number of other nearby dwellings reflect this ridge top chimney stack feature. It was considered by the Conservation Officer in their response that the loss of the chimney stack would adversely impact the symmetry with the neighbouring property at Linden. Moreover, it was highlighted that this alteration would also detract from the roofline interest of the wider

cluster of dwellings. It is therefore considered that this would not be a sympathetic alteration provided the sites local context.

A new rooflight would be added to the principal roof pitch in a central position within the original dwellings roof slope, albeit set towards the ridge. Whilst this rooflight would be set within a visually prominent position in terms of public vantage points, it is considered that the use of a conservation style unit would help mitigate the rooflights visual impact. It is therefore considered that the proposal could not be resisted in terms of this element in isolation.

In light of the above, the proposed quantum of works including an overlarge two storey side extension, the development of a rear box dormer and the removal of the prominent chimney stack would amount to a high level of harm towards the non-designated heritage asset. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the provisions of Policies DP26 and DP34 of the District Plan, Policy 7 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan, The Mid Sussex Design Guide, The National Design Guide and the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

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 DP29);'*

The immediate neighbouring property to the north-east at Linden features a side (south-west) dormer window at first floor as well as a number of ground floor windows to the same elevation. The neighbouring dormer window is considered to be limited in existing outlook and utilises glazing bars throughout.

Principle DG47 of the Design Guide states among other matters that all dwellings should benefit from daylight and sunlight levels that conform to BRE (Better Regulation Executive) standards. Further guidance is set out within the "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice" document. The "25 degree test" can be applied when the centre of the impacted window is measured in reference to the proposed development opposite. If the development falls within a 25-degree angle drawn from a horizontal line, it is likely that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the daylight and sunlight received by the window.

The aforementioned first floor side dormer window at the neighbouring property would likely pass the 25-degree test due to the extensions offset from the shared boundary and hipped roof form. With regard to the ground floor windows, these fail the 25 degree test in the existing arrangement and serve a non-habitable kitchen and dining room.

The rear dormer would feature a large window opening serving a bedroom and a Juliette balcony. The proposed dormer window and balcony would sit above the existing mature rear boundary hedge which would likely offer a degree of privacy screening. A distance in excess of 25m would remain between the proposed window and the neighbouring dwellings at 10 and 11 Summerhill Drive to the north. It is considered that the distance between these properties would help mitigate against a significant overlooking impact.

In terms of the loss of outlook and private views, these are not considered to be material planning considerations and accordingly will not form part of the assessment regarding neighbouring amenities.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of neighbouring amenities.

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 proposed quantum of works would likely result in an unacceptable and incongruous appearance towards the character and appearance of the area. A high level of harm would be inflicted towards the non-designated heritage asset. The proposed two storey side extension would likely appear overlarge whilst the dormer would introduce an alien feature to the site's locality. Furthermore, the loss of the visually prevalent chimney stack would be wholly out of keeping with the site's locality. As such, it is considered that the proposal would conflict with Policy DP26 and DP34 of the District Plan, Policy 7 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Stefan Galyas