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Architecture & Surveying Ltd

Heritage and Planning statement

Demolition of existing side lean to porch, construction of a single storey rear extension, replacement single glazed windows to double glazed UPVC windows, alterations to fenestration and addition of two front facing skylights.

High Garth,
Stockcroft Road,
Balcombe,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex,
RH17 6LG

Submitted to Mid Sussex Borough Council
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application at High Garth, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6LG, for the demolition of existing side lean to porch, construction of a single storey rear extension, replacement single glazed windows to double glazed UPVC windows, alterations to fenestration and addition of two front facing skylights.

1.2 This statement describes the site and its surroundings. It then provides details of the proposed development and assesses the scheme against the relevant national and local planning policies.

2.0 Site and surroundings

2.1 The application site at High Garth, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe is an existing detached dwelling set within a generous residential plot. The property includes established front garden/driveway areas and a detached garage/store within the site. The existing house is a multi-level family dwelling with accommodation arranged over ground, first and second floor levels.

2.2 The dwelling occupies a well-defined plot on Stockcroft Road, a residential street characterised by detached houses set within their own grounds. The surrounding pattern of development is relatively spacious, with buildings typically benefiting from landscaped frontages, boundary planting and off-street parking. This established grain gives the area a verdant and low-density residential character.

2.3 The site is surrounded by established residential development and sits within a domestic setting where extensions, ancillary buildings and associated residential structures would be read in the context of the host dwelling and neighbouring houses. The immediate surroundings are therefore residential in character and appearance. The site is in a conservation area.

2.4 Overall, the site forms part of an established residential area with a spacious plot pattern and a strong landscape setting that contributes positively to local character.

3.0 Historical overview – Heritage statement

3.1 Balcombe sits on the High Weald of Mid Sussex within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its landscape of rolling countryside, valleys, fields, streams and woodlands reflects patterns established many centuries ago. Although the woodland has been coppiced, cleared and replanted repeatedly, woodland density has remained high compared with other parts of the Weald.

3.2 The modern landscape and many historic buildings are the result of long-term rural industry and cultivation. Balcombe developed as a working village whose economy included forestry, quarrying, iron smelting, agriculture and other crafts. Quarrying, smelting and tree felling scarred the land, and those former workings and clearings later became the rock outcrops, fields and scattered ponds that characterise the area today.

3.3 Historically the area was dominated by large forests and by land owned by farmsteads and the church. The village itself developed gradually around the convergence of two north-south arterial roads, with housing scattered along those routes.

3.4 During the Victorian period, previously scattered holdings were absorbed into two larger estates. Their influence shaped much of the Balcombe that survives today, including the Victory Hall, many domestic buildings, the field pattern and surviving woodland. Land ownership today remains largely divided between Paddockhurst Estate to the north and the Balcombe Estate across the rest of the parish.

3.5 A major turning point came with the construction of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and Balcombe Tunnel, which opened in 1841 and improved access to the village.

3.6 Historical development timeline:

Period	Historical point
Many centuries ago onward	Landscape shaped by woodland management, cultivation and the gradual development of rural industries.
Pre-Victorian Balcombe	Village life centred on forestry, quarrying, iron smelting, agriculture and crafts; settlement pattern was scattered along the main roads.
Victorian era	Small holdings were consolidated into two estates, greatly influencing domestic building, woodland, field pattern and civic buildings.
1841	Opening of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and Balcombe Tunnel improved access to the village.
Turn of the 20th century	Balcombe's internal street pattern became more clearly defined as farmland between and along the main roads was planned and infilled.
1920s-1940s	Steady infill continued between the earlier Victorian plan, generally with individual houses following the fashion of the time but retaining a Sussex character.
1950s-1970s	Development expanded into "closes" built on fields within the main-road triangle, with styles becoming more national than regional, although some Sussex-style schemes remained.
Since the 1980s	Development slowed again and returned mainly to infill, ranging from affordable Sussex-style homes to denser executive housing.

3.7 Traditional materials and architecture - early buildings in Balcombe would originally have been made from materials found close at hand. Foundation stone was dug locally, creating ponds; timber framing came from nearby woodland; and plasterwork was formed from practical mixtures such as cattle dung, straw and mud.

3.8 Roofs were commonly covered with Horsham stone or thatch. Timber cladding was widely used on houses, barns and outbuildings, while brick and tile arrived later as more expensive materials. Timber remained one of the defining traditional materials, particularly for utility buildings.

3.9 Georgian architecture introduced a more formal and balanced style, but its influence in Balcombe was limited and tended to appear mainly in a small number of larger or grander houses.

3.10 The most visible stylistic change came in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, when red brick and tile, cast iron, decorative barge boarding, stone mullioned windows and stained glass became more prominent.

4.0 Settlement pattern and housing character

4.1 Balcombe's internal street pattern was largely established around the turn of the 20th century on former farmland between and along the main arterial roads. Stockcroft, Deanland, Haywards Heath Road, London Road and Mill Lane were gradually infilled, defined and planned by Victorian and Edwardian developers.

4.2 The interwar and immediate post-war decades continued this pattern of infill. Between the 1920s and 1940s, houses were inserted within the Victorian plan, usually with individual character and a recognisably Sussex edge.

4.3 From the 1950s to the 1970s, development increasingly took the form of "closes" built within the main-road triangle. Examples cited in the source include Newlands as Sussex-style social housing, Bramble Mead as a self-build area of varied architectural design, and Troymede and Coombers as more uniform 1970s housing.

4.4 Since the 1980s, the guide notes that new housing numbers dropped again and development returned mainly to gradual infill. It contrasts Barn Meadow, described as affordable small Sussex-style homes in spacious surroundings, with the Nurseries, described as denser executive housing.

5.0 Planning history

5.1 No planning history has been identified for the site. Nevertheless, it is possible that previous applications or works were submitted historically and are not reflected on the current online planning register.

6.0 Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012) sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development at para. 14. It states that: "For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."

6.2 Para. 49 confirms that “housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development”. As we set out in the next section, the proposal accords with the development plan and so should be approved.

6.3 Para. 17 sets out core planning principles, of which the following are relevant to this proposal:

- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

6.4 The proposal is of a high-quality design and will provide a good standard of amenity.

7.0 Proposals

7.1 This application seeks planning permission for a programme of domestic works at High Garth, comprising the demolition of existing side lean to porch, construction of a single storey rear extension, replacement single glazed windows to double glazed UPVC windows, alterations to fenestration and addition of two front facing skylights. The proposals have been developed to improve the functionality and overall usability of the property, whilst remaining appropriate to its residential setting.

7.2 The main element of the development is the proposed single-storey rear extension, which would extend the accommodation at ground floor level and provide additional floorspace to the rear (side of the existing rear extension) of the existing dwelling. As shown on the proposed floor plans, this element of the scheme would facilitate an enlarged kitchen arrangement together with an extension to the existing utility area, as well as associated pantry and storage space. These changes would create a more practical and efficient internal layout better suited to modern day living.

7.3 The proposal also includes internal reconfiguration of the existing dwelling at ground floor level in order to improve circulation and the relationship between the principal internal spaces. The submitted plans indicate that the works have been designed to rationalise the layout and improve connectivity between the existing and proposed parts of the dwelling, while retaining the property’s established residential use and character.

7.4 In design terms, the proposed development has been prepared to integrate with the existing dwelling. The submitted elevation drawings indicate that the proposed extension would utilise materials intended to match the host property, including matching brickwork and roof tiles, so as to achieve a coherent and sympathetic appearance. This approach helps ensure that the proposed built form would read as a natural addition to the site.

7.5 Overall, the proposal represents a modest and proportionate form of residential development that would enhance the quality and functionality of the accommodation at High Garth. The works would provide improved day-to-day living space, while maintaining a form, scale and material treatment that is consistent with the character of the existing dwelling

7.6 As part of the proposed works, all existing windows to the dwelling will be replaced. The replacement units have, however, been carefully selected to retain the established character and appearance of the property, with sash windows to be replaced with Rose Ultimate units and casement windows with Residence R9 units. In addition, the new doors to the existing kitchen extension and the proposed extension will be Origin Soho doors. Accordingly, whilst the windows and doors will be renewed, the overall appearance of the dwelling will remain coherent, sympathetic and in keeping with its existing character

8.0 Conclusion

The proposed development represents a modest and well-designed form of residential development that would improve the functionality of High Garth through a single-storey rear extension, internal alterations, and the alterations to fenestration. The scheme has been designed to remain sympathetic to the host dwelling in both form and materials, and it is therefore considered to be an appropriate and proportionate proposal for the site.

9.0 Photographic Evidence and Precedents



