

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0272	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Retrospective application for installation of a new timber flat roof structure at a higher level to the existing lead-lined valley.		
Site:	St Marks Primary School, Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6EN, ,		
Validation Date	11 Feb 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	20 Mar 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	21 Apr 2026
Target Date:	8 Apr 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	21 Apr 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0272

St Marks Primary School, Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6EN, Retrospective application for installation of a new timber flat roof structure at a higher level to the existing lead-lined valley.

C/O Agent

REPRESENTATION RECEIVED

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer:

St Mark's School is a purpose-built Grade II listed mid-19th century school building located within the Staplefield Conservation Area. It is located just to the north of St Mark's Church, which is also Grade II listed building, and would be considered to be within its setting.

The current proposal which is retrospective is for works to the central roof gulley to the building, which has been a source of damp ingress, in order to address these issues and to provide safer access for ongoing maintenance. These works include:

- Alterations to the profile of the roof gulley and the lower part of the flanking slate roof slope to introduce a flat roof with cowl roof vents;
- A replacement roof light;
- Replacement of the roof covering to the existing flat roof above the kitchen; and
- Replacement of internal ceiling finishes where these have been damaged by water ingress.

The current applications follow on from a previous approval (DM/24/1052) for a similar scheme, and include modifications required following the opening up of the structure. The works as completed, which have discussed at pre-application stage, will have had some impact on historic fabric and on the profile of the lower part of the central roof gulley, however this impact is considered to be limited and acceptable when viewed in the context of the existing approval and the long term maintenance of the building.

The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comments received.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the retrospective installation of a new timber flat roof structure at a higher level than the existing lead lined valley.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/22/1999 - Damp proofing works to classroom and office space. Permission

DM/24/0694 - Installation of new flat roof and 3 layer felt warm build up, altering existing flat roof valley area. Upgrade of existing flat roof section from single ply system to 3 layer felt system. Ceiling Removals and reinstatement. Window replacement. Permission

DM/24/1052 - The proposed project is to undertake roofing works to include the replacement of associated window locally to the roof areas. Permission

DM/26/0273 - Retrospective application for installation of a new timber flat roof structure at a higher level to the existing lead-lined valley. Pending

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

St Mark's Primary School is a Grade II listed purpose built village school building dating from the mid 19th century. The school is located within the countryside, within the Staplefield Conservation Area and the High Weald AONB.

To the south is St Marks Church with Brantridge Lane beyond, 2 no detached dwellings, to the west is a field with dwellings beyond and to the north a field with dwellings beyond.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for the retrospective installation of a new timber flat roof structure at a higher level than the existing lead lined valley. The flat roof is to be installed along the central roof valley with a length of approximately 8.60 metres and width of approximately 1.40 metres and will include an aluminium multiplane skylight. An existing flat roof section is to be replaced with a new 3 layer felt and will cover an area of approximately 7.50 metres and 2.90 metres.

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) And 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 Ansty and Staplefield 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
- DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP26 - Character and Design
- DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
- DP35 - Conservation Areas

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.

Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan (ASNP). (Adopted February 2017)

Relevant policies:

- AS3 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- AS10 - Staplefield Conservation Area

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other Material Considerations

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 hearings were concluded on the 19th March 2026. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time 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:

- DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DPB1 - Character and Design
- DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
- DPB3 - Conservation Areas

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.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

National Planning Policy Guidance

ASSESSMENT

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

- Design and Impact on Character of Area
- Impact on Conservation Area and Heritage Assets
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and Impact on character of area

The site lies within countryside. Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, in part, states:

'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'.

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.'*

The proposed works have already been completed and are similar in design and form to previously approved DM/24/1052, which was considered to be acceptable. The alterations are at roof level and will not be visible from the public realm and uses acceptable and appropriate materials.

Due to the small scale nature of the alterations, they will not have a harmful impact on the character of the area. The proposal therefore is considered to comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the District Plan.

Impact on Conservation Area and Heritage Assets

The proposal is within the Staplefield Conservation Area and the building is a Grade II Listed Building.

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states '*In considering whether to grant planning permission (or 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.'*

The statutory duties set out in the (LBCA) Act 1990 are reflected in the District Plan Policy DP34 of the District Plan states in relation to the setting of listed buildings and other heritage assets:

'Listed Buildings

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

- *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,.....*
- *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;*
- *Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable; Other Heritage Assets.....*

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.'

In addition Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states *'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of conservation preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'*

This stance is reflected under policy DP35 of the District Plan which states in part that:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;'*

A similar ethos is found within policy AS10 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan.

The Conservation Officer has commented on the application and has advised that the proposal follows a previous approval (DM/24/1052) for a similar scheme with modifications required following works starting. The works had been completed following pre-application and whilst they will have some impacts on the historic fabric and on the profile of the lower part of the central roof gully, this impact is considered to be limited and acceptable when viewed in the context of the existing approval and the long-term maintenance of the building.

Taking into account the Conservation Officers comments and the relatively modest nature of the works the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of policies DP34 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy AS10 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on the High Weald 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 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.'

Footnote 66: English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

Policy DP16 in the District Plan seeks to conserve or enhance natural beauty and for proposals to have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

A similar ethos is found within policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan.

The application relates to alterations to the roof form of the building in the gulley and replacing a flat roof section of the building. As such the proposal would not form an isolated development within the wider landscape. Due to the development being external alterations, it is not considered to have an adverse impact on the overall landscape quality of the AONB, which would be conserved.

Impact on neighbouring properties

DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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);'*

It is not considered that the proposal would result in significant harm in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy. The proposed works involve alterations to the roof and a rooflight, with a similar proposal previously approved in 2024. Consequently, the proposal is considered to comply with the policy DP26 with regard to residential amenity.

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

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP12, DP16, DP26, DP34 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies AS3 and AS10 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Peter Davies