

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 June 2026 15:25:36 UTC+01:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Arosa, Oldlands Avenue, Balcombe DM/26/1070

Hi Andrew

Further comments on the above planning application following the receipt of further information and plans.

As noted at pre-application stage, the existing bungalow is not of any great age or architectural interest, and its demolition and replacement are not considered contentious in principle.

The proposed replacement dwelling is placed against the same front building line as the existing, but with an enlarged footprint which sets the bulk of the house slightly further forward. The new house is also shown as being of 2½ storeys rather than one, with a hipped roof with a barn hip to the western side and a catslide to the east. To the east side, the existing attached flat roofed garage building is retained but extended to the rear.

The proposed replacement dwelling will be of a significantly greater height and bulk than the existing, and will consequently be more prominent in views from Oldlands Avenue. However, the neighbouring building to the west is of a similar height or slightly higher than the proposal. In terms of the impact on the street scene, this aspect of the scheme is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

A further consideration will however be the impact on views across the site from Oldlands Avenue towards the countryside beyond. Due to the single storey nature of the existing building, at present the woodlands beyond the property's garden are quite visible in these views. The greater scale of the proposed replacement will largely block this outlook, although the catslide to the east and the lower height of the garage will allow some continued views across this end of the site. This in my opinion amounts to a low level of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which in heritage terms would stand to be weighed against any benefit to the Area arising from other aspects of the scheme.

The proposed new dwelling is shown as noted above as a two and half storey dwelling with a hipped roof, including a side barn hip and catslide. It is loosely in the Sussex vernacular style, with tiled roofs, and elevations of brick and/or stone at ground floor, with tile hanging above. An oak framed porch, and casement windows are also shown. This is sympathetic to the context; there are many existing houses within this part of the Conservation Area which have a broadly vernacular/Arts and Crafts aesthetic. However, the submitted elevations indicate the use of uPVC windows and rainwater goods, which will not be acceptable in a Conservation Area context, and should be amended.

Windows should be of timber, with painted metal rainwater goods and external pipework.

At pre-application stage the garage was shown as remodelled with a hipped roof, which was considered a benefit of the scheme, as the existing flat-roofed structure is unattractive and does not relate well to the Conservation Area context. The hipped roof also tied the retained structure in with the rebuilt house, in architectural terms. As now submitted however the garage's flat roof is retained, but enlarged to the rear with the addition of a workshop. In my opinion this is unacceptable, as the retained and enlarged structure does not sit well with the 'vernacular' character of the rebuilt house, and appears as an ill-conceived addition to it, which detracts from the quality of the proposal. This in turn affects the balance of heritage gain versus harm in the context of the replacement of the bungalow with a building of potentially enhanced architectural quality vs the increased height and bulk and impact on the openness of views across the site. I would therefore strongly recommend that this aspect of the proposal is reconsidered.

The proposal shows solar PV panels to the rear roof slope of the building; this is not considered contentious in principle given the rearward aspect, however I would recommend that the applicant consider inline, colour matched panels to minimise their visual impact. No detail of the panels is given as part of the application, although the submitted 3D visualisation within the DAS suggests they are proud of the roof slope. Given that this is in effect a new build rather than a retrofitting exercise, I would expect that this situation could be avoided. It would be helpful if further detail including a typical section could be provided as part of this application, although this could possibly be dealt with by condition with the proviso that the applicant notes that panels mounted above the surface of the roof covering may not be favourably viewed.

With respect to the landscaping scheme associated with the proposal, I note that the existing unattractive (and possibly unauthorised) metal fencing to the front boundary is to be removed in favour of a more a native species hedgerow. This is welcomed, although given the uncertain status of the existing fence I am unsure that it can be considered a heritage benefit as suggested by the applicant.

The proposal also includes the enlargement of the existing hardstanding area to the front garden of the property to provide further parking. The partial loss of the soft landscaping to this part of the site will result in a level of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, to which garden spaces make an important contribution. This harm, in addition to that relating to the impact on views mentioned above, will stand to be weighed against the potential benefit of the scheme in replacing the bungalow with a building of a potentially higher architectural quality.

In summary although the principle of the scheme is not considered contentious, aspects of the detailed design, in particular the treatment of the existing garage and some aspects of the proposed materials, require reconsideration. This is to ensure that the balance between heritage benefit and harm falls favourably, and the character and

appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved. The increased height and bulk of the house result in some harm due to partial loss of the current relatively open views across the site, which would need to be mitigated by the improved architectural quality and detailing of the new building for the overall balance in heritage terms to be a neutral or (ideally) positive one.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services
Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385
emily.wade@midsussex.gov.uk <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk>



From: Emily Wade
Sent: 04 June 2026 15:33
To: Andrew Horrell <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Arosa, Oldlands Avenue, Balcombe DM/26/1070

Hi Andrew

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site, Arosa, is an unlisted detached bungalow located to the southern side of Oldlands Avenue within the Balcombe Conservation Area. The building, which dates from the second half of the 20th century, is not of any particular architectural or historical interest and makes at best a neutral contribution to the character and

appearance of the Area. The gardens in which it is set, however, are extensive and verdant and contribute positively to the Conservation Area, and to the transitional character of this side of Oldlands Avenue, which backs onto open countryside.

Although there is not an adopted character appraisal for the Balcombe Conservation Area, the Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' contains a brief high-level analysis of the Area's key features. These include the large, detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens, and the extensive grass verges bordering wide roads which contribute to the overall open character of the residential area of Stockcroft Road, Deanland Road and Oldlands Avenue. Arosa is not a particularly large building, being only of a single storey, but the gardens and grass verge to the front of the property fit this pattern of development exactly. The low level of the existing bungalow also allows views across the site to the woodlands beyond- countryside views of this nature are another positive characteristic of the Area which is highlighted in the Council's document.

As present, the front gardens to Arosa are bounded to the verge-side by a solid panelled metal fence of an industrial character, which detracts from the street scene of Oldlands Avenue. This seems to have recently replaced a lower close boarded fence, although there seems to be no record of a relevant planning permission. Depending on the date when the fence was constructed, it would therefore be regarded as unauthorised.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for demolition and replacement of the existing house, retaining the existing garage, with associated landscaping works.

Having reviewed the application documents, I have noticed the following issues which would need to be addressed to allow for a fully informed assessment of the proposal:

- An existing site plan to include the existing layout of the front garden, the location of the boundary fence and the extent of the hardstanding within it.
- The proposed plans do not appear entirely consistent with respect to the treatment of the front boundary- the submitted DAS suggests it is to be removed in favour of hedging, but the proposed street elevation is annotated '*Existing solid boundary fence to be replaced with mixed native species hedging to front*' which suggests both a new fence and hedging are proposed. This requires clarification.

On receipt of this information, I will be able to provide full comments on the proposal.

Thanks,

Emily

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Conservation Officer
Planning Services
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