

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1408	Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed detached single bay oak-framed garage		
Site:	Hillcrest, Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4LY, , ,		
Validation Date	30 May 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	25 Jun 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	22 Jul 2025
Target Date:	25 Jul 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Stefan Galyas</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	23 Jul 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1408

**Hillcrest, Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4LY, ,
Proposed detached single bay oak-framed garage
Mr Ian Wigglesworth**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

There were no letters of representation received in response to the proposed development.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Naturespace District Licensing:

No objection.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comment.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached car port to be sited to the front (north-east) of the exiting dwelling on site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

02/02403/FUL - Demolition of existing garage and pool equipment room. Construction of two storey extension and car port. Permission 12.12.02.

DM/21/4301 - Single storey side, rear extensions with internal alterations and proposed canopy to front elevation. Permission 10.02.22.

DM/21/3275 - Proposed construction of single storey side, rear extensions with canopy. Proposed canopy to front elevation. Permission 05.11.21.

DM/24/2369 - Proposed 3 bay detached oak framed garage to the front of the property. Refusal 11.11.24.

DM/24/2825 - Proposed single storey rear extension and alterations. Permission 09.01.25.

DM/25/0893 - Proposed detached oak-framed garage. Withdrawn 27.05.25.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Hillcrest is a large, detached dwelling located in the countryside as defined in the Mid Sussex District Plan and the High Weald National Landscapes (AONB). The dwelling benefits from a spacious plot, as do other neighbouring properties that line Coombe Hill Road. The existing dwelling has a hipped roof with two-storey gable roof projecting elements to the front and rear. The dwelling is constructed of external materials comprising red brick for ground floor and cream render first floor walls, brown roof tiles, white timber windows with white timber fascia and white uPVC guttering. There are existing roof lights on the rear elevation roof slope. There are a variety of property types with a mix of external materials used within the wider streetscene.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed development would feature a detached car port which would be composed of green oak and softwood feather edge cladding, a slate tiled roof and steel up and over garage doors. The outbuilding would be sited within the front driveway the sites front (northeast) boundary. The proposal would measure at approximately 6.5m in length, 4.1m wide, have an eaves height of 2.5m and a ridge height measuring at 3.4m.

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 East Grinstead 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

DP21: Transport

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.

Neighbourhood Plan

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (Made November 2016)

Relevant Policies:

Policy EG1 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy EG3 - Promoting Good Design

Policy EG12 - Car Parking

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 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:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

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.

National Design Guide (Published January 2021)

The High Weald National Landscape AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

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
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Impact on Neighbouring Properties
- Highways Impact
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and Character

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'*

Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote good design through the following measures:

- a) The form of the proposed development is proportionate and in keeping with the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the surrounding area;*

- b) The layout of the proposed development respects the topography and character of the site, protects important landscape features and does not harm adjoining amenity;*
- c) The proposal does not result in the loss of buildings or spaces that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area;*
- d) The proposal ensures satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provides adequate parking, cycle storage and refuse facilities on site;*
- e) The design of new buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking areas, should be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas;*
- f) New development must be inclusive and where appropriate make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access for those with mobility impairment; and*
- g) The design of new developments must result in the creation of a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour; and*
- h) Proposals make provision for green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement..*

Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide notes among other matters that:

Elsewhere new development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric

Additionally, Principle DG50 as set out within the Design Guide, relates to front extensions. Whilst the current proposal does not relate specifically to the extension of the existing dwelling, the principles are considered to be applicable to this current proposal. It states:

Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road. They are less likely to be acceptable in streets with a strong consistent building form as they risk disrupting the underlying order.

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).

It is noted that an application DM/24/2369 was previously refused which had a similar scope in its proposal. However, as opposed to proposing an outbuilding 6.5m in length, the previous scheme sought permission for a 9m long outbuilding with the same height and proposed materials. The previously refused proposal had a smaller width than the current scheme which measured at 3.5m when compared to 4.1m. In essence, the proposal has been revised from a three bay car port to a single bay.

The proposed development would be sited to the northeast of the existing dwelling, in front of the principal elevation within the existing front driveway. As such, the detached garage would be located between the dwelling and the roadside. At present the property is set back from the highway by a grass verge, a low brick-built boundary wall and a mature boundary hedge.

The property forms part of a cluster of detached dwellings positioned to the south-western side of the road where a strong building line can be observed with the only immediate departure from this coming at Hillcroft to the north-west which is sited within the junction between Coombe Hill Road and Turners Hill Road. As such, it is considered that the proposed garage would significantly break the building line within this cluster and reduce the integrity of the host building in presenting to the roadside. Whilst there are some existing detached outbuildings further to the south, these are not considered to form part of the site's immediate context.

At present, a mature boundary hedge assists in screening views from the roadside along Coombe Hill Road towards the original dwelling. The submitted Design and Access Statement notes that:

The height of the proposed garage will be shielded from the main road (Coombe Hill Road) due to an existing mature thick laurel holly hedge, that will be retained and maintained to be above the height of the proposed garage. The client has advised that if for any reason the hedge should die back it will be replaced to maintain privacy.

It was held under APP/D0840/W/23/3332927 that the length of a boundary hedge may have provided some screening between views from a neighbouring site. However, it was stated that the future condition and health of a hedge cannot be guaranteed and should this be lost, it would take a period of time to become re-established. Whilst this appeal relates to harm through overlooking and each application is assessed based on its own merits, it is considered that the assessment of the hedges retention to mitigate against harm is relevant in this circumstance.

The garage would measure at approximately 6.5m in length and a blank green oak, softwood feather edge cladding elevation would face towards the roadside. This elevation is considered to give rise to a utilitarian appearance which would appear discordant when viewed in the context of the undeveloped open frontages and driveways within the site's locality.

A low brick boundary wall would partly conceal views towards the blank elevation from the roadside, however, by way of the proposal's height, the elevation would likely still appear highly perceivable. With regard to the mature boundary planting which accompanies the low boundary wall as the sites front (north-eastern) boundary, there is no assurance that this hedge will be retained or suffer from dieback in the future. Furthermore, the garage's siting up against the hedge may restrict the growth and health of this well-established hedge, thus causing an adverse impact. Accordingly, the proposed garage's timber blank elevation will be revealed to the roadside as an incongruous feature.

The currently proposed scheme would include further hedge planting to the side of the outbuildings south-east elevations in order to provide further screening from the streetscene. It is considered that the plans do not provide sufficient detail in order for the hedge and associated landscaping to be carried out to a sufficiently accurate level. Furthermore, the planting would be directly adjacent to the proposed outbuilding, thus potentially restricting its growth. As such, it is not considered that the proposed side hedge would provide an appropriate screen against the harm inflicted to the character and appearance of the area.

Measuring at approximately 27m² in footprint, the development proposal is considered to be of a substantial size. Through the further use of more permanent materials to the roof such as slate tiles, it is considered that the proposal would not appear of a visually subservient appearance to the host dwelling when coupled with its siting.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would introduce a large and discordant feature to the site and the locality which would be detrimental to the character of the area due to its siting towards the sites front boundary and its size. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the provisions of DP26 of the District Plan, Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, DG11 and DG50 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and Paragraph 135 NPPF.

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.

Policy DP16 of the District Plan requires proposals in the AONB to conserve or enhance natural beauty.

Policy EG1 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan requires as follows:

Planning permission for other forms of development will be granted where the proposals are for the:

- (i) Conversion of redundant buildings;*
- (ii) Replacement, on a like for like basis, of existing buildings; or*
- (iii) Extension of an existing dwelling house, relate to agricultural development or some other minor recreational use;*

Provided that for each of the above (i, ii and iii) all of the following criteria are met:

- o The highest standards of Design are achieved;*
- o The natural and scenic beauty of the landscape is conserved or enhanced;*
- o The proposals do not result in an obtrusive feature in the landscape.*

The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the scheme would not negatively impact on the existing quality of the protected landscape and its setting taking account of locally important features. Proposal that have not fully considered and addressed the impact on the AONB will normally be refused

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.'

The application seeks to develop an outbuilding within the existing residential dwelling, sited within a cluster of residential dwellings, and therefore would not constitute an isolated development within the wider landscape of the AONB. It is considered that the proposal would not incur a significantly adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB due to it being viewed within the existing established residential curtilage.

As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy DP16 of the District Plan, Policy EG1 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, the requirements of the High Weald Management Plan and Paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals should not 'harm' adjoining neighbours amenity whereas policy DP26 of the MSDP states that development should 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. There is therefore some conflict between the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in this respect. 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. As such, policy DP26 of the MSDP is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes significant harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

The proposed garage would be contained to a single storey height and set away from the sites shared boundaries with an offset in excess of 5m to either side. The proposal would contain no elevated windows nor any windows throughout for that matter.

Therefore, the proposal complies with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of neighbouring amenities.

Highways Impact

Policy DP21 of the District Plan among other matters requires that:

The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable.

Furthermore, Policy EG12 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan notes:

Planning permission will only be granted where vehicle-parking provision, including cycle parking, is in accordance with West Sussex County Council adopted parking standards and it does not dominate the street scene..

The proposal would provide sufficient space for a single car and would maintain the current level of on site off road parking. The existing access to the roadside would remain unaltered as part of the development.

Accordingly, the proposed development is not considered to result in the net loss of an off-road parking space and would not be contrary to Policy DP21 of the District Plan nor Policy EG12 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Whilst the development is acceptable in principle, it is considered that the siting and size of the proposed garage is inappropriate for its setting, particularly with regard to its relationship to the host dwelling and its siting in front of the established building line. The proposal would introduce a discordant feature into the locality due to its siting in a prominent location and the size of the blank uninterrupted timber elevation which would project towards the roadside. There is no guarantee that the existing mature boundary hedge would be retained to obscure views towards this blank elevation from the roadside. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to the provisions of DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Council District Plan, Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, DG11 and DG50 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Stefan Galyas