

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Loft Conversion and Roof Extension Including Rooflights to Front and Dormer to Rear

At 7 Fairlawn Drive, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1NR

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This planning statement is submitted in support of a householder application for a loft conversion and associated roof alterations, including the installation of rooflights to the front elevation, dutch gables to the roof and a box-style double dormer to the rear. The objective is to enhance the usability and accommodation of the property by creating additional habitable space, including a bedroom, study and storage.

The site is within the built-up area and is not located in a conservation area, nor does it relate to a listed building. This statement demonstrates that the proposal complies with national and local planning policies and would preserve the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the wider area.

2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises a two-storey detached residential property set back from the road with off-street parking and a private rear garden. The surrounding area features a mix of dwelling types and roof forms, including gabled and hipped roofs, and properties with rear dormers of varying scale.



Arial view of the site

Notably, several nearby dwellings along the same street and within the vicinity exhibit dormer roof extensions and similar alterations carried out under planning permission or permitted development rights.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

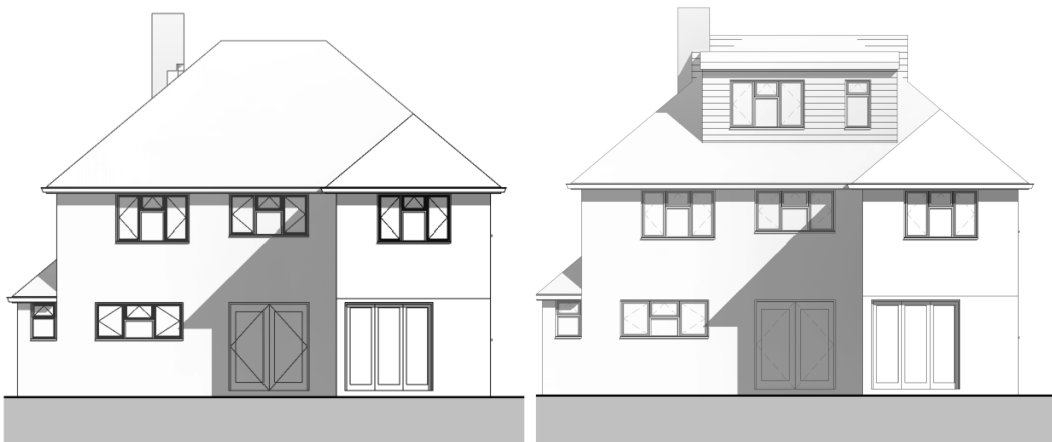
The proposed development includes:

- The introduction of dutch gables to the roof.
- A box dormer to the rear roof slope (approx. 4.6m wide, 2.8m deep, and 2m high).
- One rooflight to the front roof slope.
- External finishes to match and complement existing materials, including weatherboarded dormer cheeks and uPVC windows.

The loft conversion will increase the internal floor area by approximately 17 sqm, providing a bedroom, a study, and easier access to loft storage. The dormer will be set below the ridge and well in from the eaves, ensuring the existing roof slope remains visually prominent.



Existing and proposed Front Elevation (North)



Existing and proposed Rear Elevation (South)

4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Relevant policies include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) – Paragraph 135 supports well-designed development that is sympathetic to local character and adds to the quality of the area.
- Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) – Policy DP26 requires proposals to reflect local character, be of high-quality design, and avoid harm to amenity.
- East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (2016) – Policy EG3 promotes proportionate, well-designed development that respects surrounding character.
- Mid Sussex Design Guide (2020) – Principle DG52 advises that roof extensions should be sensitive to a building's original roof form but allows dormers where they remain subordinate and integrate into the character of the dwelling.

5.0 DESIGN AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The proposal has been designed to harmonise with the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. While the scheme includes the introduction of dutch gables to the roof and a rear dormer, the development remains subordinate to the main roof form and is positioned on the rear elevation, ensuring minimal visual impact from public viewpoints.

Nearby properties have undergone similar roof extensions (e.g. No. 5 and No. 9), demonstrating a local precedent and an established pattern of such alterations. Additionally, the presence of gabled and hipped roofs in the area shows an eclectic architectural mix, supporting the integration of this modest roof modification. The dutch gables are a common feature in the locality and have been designed to the same proportions as those on neighbouring properties.

A similar proposal was assessed at appeal, Appeal ref: APP/D3830/D/25/3360904, and whilst the Planning Inspector upheld the refusal, they determined that on balance the principle of a box dormer to the rear of No.7 was acceptable in the context, notwithstanding an element of conflict with the Council's SPD. At paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the appeal decision the Inspector stated:

- 3. The appeal scheme seeks to provide increased living space within the roof through a combination of a rear dormer and a side hip to gable extension. In respect of the proposed dormer the Council argues that this would be excessively wide for the existing roof plane and have a boxed appearance.*
- 4. However the dormer would be slightly lower than the ridge and significantly set up from the eaves. The windows would be of a matching design to those of the existing rear and appropriately spaced to break up the dormer face. Furthermore, the roof of No. 5 next door has a similarly sized dormer and the roof addition cannot be seen from the street scene or any other part of the public realm.*
- 5. The Officer's Report points out that the dormers at No. 5 and indeed those at No. 9 (with pitched roofs) were assessed under a different development plan and prior to the*

adoption of the Mid Sussex Design Guide ('the SPD'). Nonetheless, they are now part and parcel of the rearward context for the appeal scheme and in my view carry significant weight in the appraisal of those now proposed at No. 7. On balance I consider the dormer to be acceptable, notwithstanding an element of conflict with the Council's SPD.

Taking the above into consideration it is the applicant's case that the revised proposals submitted in this application harmonise with the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. The dutch gables are a common feature on nearby properties and it has been established that the box dormer considered at appeal was acceptable. The box dormer submitted in this proposal is smaller and should therefore be accepted under the same assessment criteria.

6.0 IMPACT ON AMENITY

The proposal respects neighbouring amenity. The dormer is to the rear and well set within the roof slope. The generous rear garden, mature landscaping, and separation from neighbouring dwellings ensures that issues of overlooking or overbearing impact are avoided. Rooflights to the front serve non-habitable areas and maintain privacy.

7.0 RELEVANT APPEAL DECISION

An appeal decision (Ref: APP/D3830/D/25/3360904) dated 1 April 2025, concerning 7 Fairlawn Drive, East Grinstead, provides a material precedent relevant to this proposal. The Inspector assessed a scheme with similar elements: a rear dormer and hip-to-gable roof extension to facilitate additional roof accommodation.

The Inspector concluded that:

- The proposed rear dormer was acceptable as it was set below the ridge, spaced appropriately, and not visible from the public realm.
- The dormer was considered proportionate and comparable to existing developments at Nos. 5 and 9 Fairlawn Drive.
- Although there was an element of conflict with the Mid Sussex Design Guide, the dormer was deemed appropriate given the rear context.

However, the Inspector found that:

- The hip-to-gable roof extension would significantly alter the roof form, leading to an unbalanced appearance of the host dwelling.
- The alteration would reduce openness between the property and its neighbour, especially given their close proximity.
- Examples of similar alterations in the vicinity were considered to demonstrate visual harm rather than justification for approval.

The Inspector upheld the Council's refusal on the basis that the hip-to-gable extension conflicted with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead

Neighbourhood Plan, Principle DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide, and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

This decision highlights the need to carefully consider roof form alterations in relation to existing symmetry, context, and established character. While dormers was deemed to be acceptable on merit, the hip-to-gable roof extension was not accepted.

The proposals in this application address the Inspector's concerns and remove the hip-to-gable roof extension and replace it with dutch gables that match the scale, proportion and design of dutch gables found on numerous neighbouring properties, namely No.1, No.2, No.3, No.8, No.10, No.11, No.12 and No.13 Fairlawn Drive, as well as many more on Fairlawn Drive, Gardenwood Road and other nearby roads on the Imberhorne Estate.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This proposal represents a sensitive and well-designed addition to the property. It responds positively to national and local planning guidance, is supported by contextual precedent, and maintains the character and appearance of the area.

Accordingly, the proposal is in accordance with:

- Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023)
- Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan
- Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan
- Principle DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide

It is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.