

From: Anna Tidey
Sent: 16 May 2025 14:15:34 UTC+01:00
To: "kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk" <kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk>
Cc: "Emily Wade" <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/25/0873 - Blackbirds, Bramble Hill, Balcombe

Dear Kathy

Thank you for your emails. I am sorry I have a heavy workload following my week off, hence my delayed response.

I am not able to provide you with the preapplication advice as this is confidential, between your clients and the Local Planning Authority, unless it is made the subject of a FOI request.

May I suggest that the quickest route for you to view the advice, and the amended plans that were forthcoming from the discussions, would be for you to approach your clients to provide the plans and written advice, for your information.

The issues that I cannot support, and I suggest are addressed to accord with Emily Wade's advice, are as follows:

- The proposed second floor window in the front gable should be reduced in size, to relate to the existing fenestration in its proportions and glazing pattern.
- The width of the rear extension should not extend wider than the rear elevation of the house, and should ideally be inset. As proposed it is not subordinate to the host building. The facing material should also be amended to brickwork to match the remainder of the house at ground floor.
- The existing dormer at the rear of the building detracts from the appearance of the house. The pre-application proposal was for the removal of this feature in favour of two smaller dormers. I hope that your clients can show you the preapplication plans. The two dormers should accord with advice in the MSDC Design Guide, see page 132, via the following link:

[Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document SPD](#)

- It is preferable for painted timber, or possibly metal, to be used for new windows and doors.

Without these amendments I will recommend the application is refused on design grounds and upon the significant harm/impact on the Conservation Area.

I note that the Decision Target Date for the current application is 26.05.2025. To date there has been no agreement to extend this date to allow for the submission of Amended Plans.

Alternatively the application can be withdrawn and further preapplication advice sought. Please confirm your clients intentions.

Regards

Anna

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

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From: kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk <kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk>
Sent: 16 May 2025 11:01
To: Anna Tidey <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/25/0873 - Blackbirds, Bramble Hill, Balcombe

Dear Anna

Just following up on my email earlier this week. Are you able to send the pre-application advice and let me know if you have any further amendments to add?

Many thanks and kind regards

Kathy Victor

David Strudwick Design + Build
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From: kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk <kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk>
Sent: 13 May 2025 10:23
To: 'Anna Tidey' <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/25/0873 - Blackbirds, Bramble Hill, Balcombe

Hi Anna

Do you have any further amendments to suggest other than those outlined by Emily?

We have not had sight of the pre-application advice. We can of course request this from our client, but in the interest of speed, would you be happy to forward it to me directly?

Best regards

Kathy Victor

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From: Anna Tidey <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 May 2025 15:43
To: kathy@davidstrudwick.co.uk
Cc: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/0873 - Blackbirds, Bramble Hill, Balcombe

Dear Kathy

Following on from my recent site visit I have now received the comments from Balcombe Parish Council and from Emily Wade, Conservation Officer, regarding this application, see attached.

Your clients sought preapplication advice in 2023 for various extensions and alterations and both Emily and I provided advice in a written response at that time, under DM/23/2475.

Reference was made in the advice to the relevant District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policies, NPPF guidance and the MSDC Design Guide principles.

I am concerned that the proposed extensions and alterations that are now proposed under planning application DM/25/0873 do not take account of that preapplication advice and I concur with the comments that are made by Emily. I am particularly concerned that the rear addition does not represent a subordinate addition, as it extends to the each side of the original building footprint and does not accord with Design Guide Principle DG51: rear extensions, the rear dormer does not respect Design Guide Principle DG52: Loft conversions and roof extensions and that the front gable window is out of scale and poorly designed relative to the other fenestration on the front elevation. Please see the advice contained in the Design Guide, see [Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document SPD](#)

As the consultees have all replied and the consultation period has ended I shall be making my recommendation on this application. I am writing to advise you that as it has been submitted I shall be recommending the application is Refused. If your clients are willing to amend the scheme I can speak to you and suggest a number of amendments.

Regards
Anna

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From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 May 2025 14:43
To: Anna Tidey <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Blackbirds, Bramble Hill, Balcombe DM/25/0873

Hi Anna

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site, Blackbirds, is a detached modern house located within the Balcombe Conservation Area, built as an infill development between a run of mostly early 20th century houses to this western side of Bramble Hill. To the opposite side of the road is Victory Hall, the Grade II listed village hall, formerly the working men's club, which dates from c. 1901. The existing house on the site is intended to refer stylistically to the flanking early 20th century buildings, but is not a particularly successful composition, and makes at best a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Victory Hall.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for various alterations and extensions to the property including:

- Replacement of an existing open sided porch and covered walkway to the southern side of the building with an enclosed porch under a pitched tiled roof and enclosed lean to addition.
- Introduction of a new window to the front facing gable at second floor;
- Replacement of an existing rear single storey element with a flat roofed extension on an enlarged footprint;
- Enlargement of the existing dormer to the main rear roofslope;
- Replacement of tile hanging at first floor to all elevations with render; and
- A new window to the northern side elevation.

To consider these works in turn:

- The replacement porch lean-to addition to the southern side of the building are not considered contentious, subject to detail. As was discussed in relation to a more ambitious scheme seen at pre-app, although the slight increase in bulk will result in some impact on the existing visual gap between the house and the adjacent Victory Hall, this is not considered detrimental to the street scene.
- The principle of a new window at second floor to the front gable was also discussed at pre-application and is not considered contentious. However, as shown the window does not appear sympathetic to the existing fenestration in its proportions or glazing pattern. A smaller opening, with a window to reflect those to the elevation below would be more positively viewed.
- The principle of the replacement of the existing rear extension along the lines now applied for was considered at pre-application and found to be acceptable. However, the

current proposal is for an addition wider than the main rear elevation to the house- this will not be acceptable, as the extension does not appear appropriately subordinate to the host building, and with the proposed side extension wraps around the south western corner of the house. The sideways extent of the addition should be reduced to sit within the existing width of the main house, excluding the side extension now proposed. The facing material to the extension would also benefit from amendment to brickwork to match the remainder of the house at ground floor.

- The existing dormer to the rear of the building is in my opinion already overscaled, and detracts from the appearance of the house. The pre-application proposal was for the removal of this feature in favour of two smaller dormers, which was considered to be an improvement over the existing situation. It is regrettable that the current application is instead for the enlargement of the existing window, which would exacerbate its negative impact on the appearance of the building and detract from its contribution to the wider Conservation Area. This aspect of the proposal is therefore considered contentious.
- The proposal to remove the existing tile hanging to the first floor of the building in favour of render was considered at pre-application stage and found to be acceptable subject to detail on the basis that it reflects the palette of materials to other existing buildings along Bramble Hill.
- The new window to the side elevation is not considered contentious, subject to detail.
- As a general point, the use of uPVC is noted on the plans, e.g. to the external door to the new side extension. uPVC is not a material which is generally considered acceptable in a conservation area context, unless it is present throughout the existing building. This should be amended to painted timber or possibly metal, as appropriate.

In summary, although the majority of the proposals forming part of the application are acceptable in principle, amendments are required in some respects. The enlargement of the rear dormer is not acceptable, and should be omitted from the scheme.

As it stands, the proposal is for the reasons given above considered to detract from the character and appearance of the house and of the wider Conservation Area contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, specifically Design Principle DG49 (General Principles for Extensions) and paras. 6.3.5- 6.3.8 which relate to dormer windows. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, so that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

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.

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<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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