

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION DM/25/3095

40 Gander Hill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1QX

Proposal: First floor rear extension, garage conversion and new porch (amended description 05/12)

Introduction

This letter sets out a formal objection to the proposed development at 40 Gander Hill, with a principal focus on the adverse residential amenity impacts associated with the proposed first-floor rear extension. The cumulative impact of successive additions to this property, combined with its relationship to neighbouring dwellings, notably my property No. 42 Gander Hill, results in demonstrable harm to daylight and sunlight, as well as to outlook and the sense of enclosure. The proposal conflicts with adopted planning policy within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031, particularly Policy DP26 (Character and Design) and Policy DP29 (Noise, Air and Light Pollution), where relevant to daylight access and amenity protection.

Harm to Residential Amenity through Overshadowing and Daylight Loss

The principal concern relates to the material harm that would be caused by the proposed first-floor rear extension to the living conditions at my property, No. 42 Gander Hill. The development seeks to add a new first floor above the existing single-storey rear projection, creating a substantial two-storey flank wall facing directly towards my home. This new elevation would be approximately 7.2 metres high and sited just 7 metres from a side-facing ground floor window, which serves as the primary source of light to the main living room.

Given the height and proximity involved, the proposed extension would clearly breach the 25-degree vertical guidance line in relation to this window, indicating a significant deterioration in daylight levels to a primary habitable space—particularly during the darker winter months when natural light is most limited. The affected window faces south-west and plays a vital role in lighting the living room, which is otherwise enclosed to the south east by a porch. The introduction of a solid first-floor mass directly within the path of the sun would interrupt this important light source and result in demonstrable harm to the amenity currently enjoyed.

While some sunlight reaches the window earlier in the morning, it is not until around 11:00am that direct sunlight enters the living room in a meaningful way. The proposed extension would block this sunlight from approximately 12:30pm onwards, removing two of the most valuable hours of winter sun.

There is also a first-floor bedroom window located directly above the affected living room window. While the impact on this upper window would be less severe, it would still experience a measurable reduction in daylight, sunlight, and sky view, thereby compounding the overall loss of amenity to the property.

It is also relevant that the new bedroom window proposed within the extension would itself face south-west and would, by virtue of its position, receive the very sunlight that would be lost to the existing living room window at No. 42. This represents a direct displacement of benefit, whereby an established amenity is effectively transferred from one property to another. While there is no objection in principle to a new dwelling or extension gaining improved light, this cannot be justified where it comes at the direct and unmitigated expense of a longstanding neighbour's sole source of winter sunlight—particularly one in place since the house was constructed in the 1930s.

The Mid Sussex District Plan is clear in its requirement to protect such amenity. Policy DP26 requires that all development must avoid causing significant harm to the amenity of existing residents, including loss of daylight and sunlight and outlook. The proposed extension fails this test. There is no suggestion within the application documents that a daylight or sunlight assessment has been carried out. No overshadowing diagrams, 3D visuals, or contextual sections are included to assist in understanding or mitigating the proposal's impact. In the absence of such evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that Policy DP26 is not complied with.

Overbearing Impact and Cumulative Built Form

The proposed extension must also be assessed in the context of cumulative additions to the host property. The dwelling has already been significantly enlarged through a previous single-storey rear extension, likely implemented around 2008. This earlier extension already reduces openness and outlook from the affected window at No. 42. The current proposal would introduce a full additional storey above this footprint, creating a two-storey form that is both close to the boundary and unrelieved in its depth and height. The resulting mass would appear overbearing when viewed from both the neighbouring window and garden, particularly given the proximity and orientation of the properties.

This impact is further compounded by the fact that no other properties along this part of Gander Hill appear to have two-storey rear extensions. The proposal therefore represents a significant departure from the established pattern of development, which is characterised by single-storey rear projections and generally open rear garden aspects. By introducing an upper floor of this scale and depth, the development would introduce an uncharacteristic and intrusive mass that is at odds with the prevailing form and rhythm of the street. In this context, the extension would not only harm neighbouring amenity but would also fail to respect the spatial character of the area, resulting in an unduly dominant and visually discordant addition.

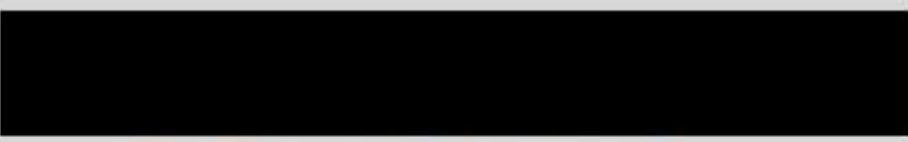
Policy DP26 also requires development to be sensitively designed in terms of scale, mass, and siting. It must be reflective of the prevailing character of the area and should not introduce unbalanced or intrusive built form. Gander Hill is characterised by well-spaced detached dwellings with generous gardens and clear gaps between upper floor elements. While extensions are common, they tend to be modest in scale or recessed from the boundary. A two-storey projection of this height and proximity does not respect the typical form of development and results in a visual imbalance that is incompatible with the character of the street.

Conclusion

The proposed first-floor rear extension at 40 Gander Hill would cause demonstrable harm to the amenity of the adjoining property at No. 42, principally through the loss of approximately two hours of direct winter sunlight to the main living room window. This window has enjoyed uninterrupted access to sunlight and sky views since the 1930s and remains the sole source of direct natural light to that space during the winter months. The proposed development would remove that benefit entirely, while introducing a new window within the extension that would receive the same sunlight at the direct expense of its neighbour.

The harm is compounded by the cumulative bulk of the existing and proposed additions, the overbearing proximity to the boundary, and the absence of any supporting technical evidence to demonstrate compliance with relevant planning policy. In particular, the proposal fails to satisfy the requirements of Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, which seeks to protect residential amenity and promote contextually appropriate design, as well as the broader amenity principles contained within Policy DP29.

In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that the application be refused. Should the Council be minded to approve the scheme, it is submitted that a full daylight and sunlight assessment must be provided in advance of any decision, and that the application should be referred to the Planning Committee for further scrutiny, given the significant neighbour impacts involved.


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