

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 November 2025 10:42:48 UTC+00:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2311 Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Balcombe

Hi Anna

Comments on the above planning application.

Llain is an unlisted, attached dwelling located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. It appears to date from the mid-late 20th century, and is attached at its southeastern side to an apparently earlier (possibly 19th century) row of cottages. The house is of an L shaped footprint and is of two storeys, with yellow brick at ground floor and painted weatherboarding at first. It has a hipped roof with a projecting gable to the northwestern elevation. The existing windows, which are Georgian style multi-pane casements, appear to be largely timber. The property is set in a modest garden with thick hedging to the road frontages to the north and east.

In my opinion, the property as a whole makes a modest positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in particular in respect of the boundary hedging, which enhances the semi-rural character of this edge-of-village location. The house itself is perhaps neutral in this respect, although some aspects of its design including the facing materials and use of timber casement windows are sympathetic to the wider context of the centre of the village.

The current proposal is for the following works:

- Replacement of all windows with black aluminium framed windows with planted glazing bars;
- Conversion of an external door to window opening;
- Replacement of an existing uPVC French window with aluminium bifolding doors;
- Conversion of the existing attached garage to form part of the new kitchen, with replacement of the garage door with aluminium bifold doors;
- Removal of a section of hedge to allow for repositioning of parking bays; and
- Replacement of the front door with an aluminium framed door with glazed panels.

To consider these works in turn:

- The existing windows to the property appear to be largely timber framed, although some uPVC units are present. The presence of uPVC detracts from the traditional character of the Conservation Area, and its replacement with a more appropriate material would be welcomed in principle. The replacement of the existing timber windows is also not considered contentious in principle. However, in this instance the proposed use of aluminium throughout the property is a concern given the lack of other examples of the use of this material to windows

and doors to residential properties within the village centre. Unless the applicant is able to offer a robust justification for this aspect of the proposal it is my opinion that it should be amended to show replacement painted timber windows and doors. This material will be more appropriate to the 'traditional' style of the house and to the wider character of this part of the Conservation Area.

- The proposed alteration to the door opening to form a window is not considered contentious.
- The conversion of the garage and replacement of the garage door with bifolding doors is not contentious in principle, subject to detail of the doors.
- The proposed alterations to the access and parking arrangements affects the northern frontage of the property, which is currently largely enclosed by a mature hedgerow, with a vehicle access towards the western end. The proposal is for the removal of a section of this hedge to the east of the existing access, creating a more open frontage with off street parking in front of the house. Although the hedgerow removal would be partly mitigated by replacement hedging to the existing access, there will be a net loss of hedgerow, and the replacement planting will not have the same character as the existing mature hedge. The enlarged opening will also increase the visual prominence of the house in views from the street. This will have an adverse effect on the currently verdant and semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area, detracting from its significance. I would recommend that this aspect of the proposal is reconsidered to retain the existing access and hedgerow.
- The replacement of the front door is not considered contentious in principle, but please see above w.r.t. the material choice.

In summary, the proposal raises concerns in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Balcombe Conservation Area, arising from the proposed material for the replacement windows and doors, and the revised off street parking arrangements with associated loss of boundary hedging. This fails to meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, at around the low-mid point of that scale.

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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Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services
Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385

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