

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0308	Case Officer:	Caroline Grist
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Replacement of existing building with an estate office/cycle store with workshop and gym and associated works.		
Site:	Plummerden House, Park Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2QS, ,		
Validation Date	3 Mar 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	23 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	27 Aug 2026
Target Date:	28 Apr 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Caroline Grist</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
--	--	-------------------------------	---

Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	28 Aug 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0308

**Plummerden House, Park Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2QS,
Replacement of existing building with an estate office/cycle store with workshop and gym and
associated works.**

Mrs Maria Krajukhina

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Ecologist

No objection subject to condition.

Conservation Officer

No objection.

Tree Officer

No objection subject to condition.

Drainage Engineer

No objection subject to condition.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comment.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought to replace an existing building with an estate office/cycle store with workshop and gym and associated works.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

03/02167/FUL - Erection of garages, car ports and store. Permission.

04/01300/FUL - Retrospective application for the erection of 4 no security lighting masts. Refused.

05/00991/FUL - Retention of storage buildings and stables. Permission.

05/01964/FUL - Proposed equestrian sandschool for private stables. Permission.

06/00262/FUL - Construction of link between house and garage. Permission.

10/01808/FUL - Retrospective application for retention of 2m high close board fence to Plummerden Lane with proposed native planting screen. Refused.

10/03804/LDC - Erection of a 2m high closeboard fence. Permission.

DM/22/2057 - New entrance gates, formal entrance garden to main house, productive walled garden and landscape improvements. Permission.

DM/22/2058 - Construction of conservation pond in pastoral field. Please note amended address. Permission.

DM/25/0709 - Proposed construction of an American Barn (Stables), a Horse Walker, an Outdoor Arena and a Storage Barn. Pending Consideration.

DM/26/1988 - Retrospective application for a skills track and associated works. Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Plummerden House is a large detached house located within substantial grounds, to the south of the junction with Keysford Lane, Park Lane and Plummerden Lane. The dwellinghouse is well set back from the road and benefits from a large parking area to the front. The dwellinghouse has been extended over the years, with a large garage extension located to the north of the house, attached via a glazed link extension. A large garden area surrounds the house to the east and south. A group of timber outbuildings, including stables, are located to the west of the garden area with a riding arena located to the south west. Land levels slope gently to the south west.

The adjoining property at North Lodge lies to the north of the site with a field wrapping around the site to the east and south. Grade II listed buildings at Paxhill and The Coach House lie further to the south west.

An area of ancient woodland known as Plummerdean Copse lies to the north west of the dwellinghouse, with established woodland at Court Wood, lying further west.

In terms of planning policy, the site lies within the countryside and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is sought to replace an existing building with an estate office/cycle store with workshop and gym and associated works. The existing building is used as a stable.

The proposal seeks to retain the same 'C' shaped footprint but of a different size and height. The longest elevation is to be reduced in length from 19.8 metres to 17.6 metres, whereas the two projections are to increase from 9.2 metres to 10.0 metres. A pitched roof is again proposed with the eaves height increasing from some 2.4 metres to 2.7 metres and the ridge from 3.3 metres to 4.5 metres.

The building is to be finished in timber and have a slate roof.

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.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application, and*
- b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Document (DPD) and the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural 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 Wald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DP26 - Character and Design
DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DP38 - Biodiversity
DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The Site Allocations DPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan

The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan was made in March 2016.

There are no relevant policies.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

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 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time 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
DPS4 - Flood Risk and Drainage
DPS6 - Health and Wellbeing
DPN1 - Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPN4 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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) (August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England. Paragraph 15 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest. Paragraph 17 identifies the three overarching objectives of sustainable development, which are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across all three objectives. These are the economic, social and environmental objectives.

Paragraph 18 of the NPPF states:

'These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every development proposal can or should be judged. Development plans and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.'

Policy S3 of the NPPF relates to the presumption in favour of sustainable development and states:

'1. Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

- a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;*
- b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and*
- c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay'.*

With specific reference to decision-taking, paragraph 3 confirms that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the national decision-making policies of the Framework being an important material consideration in that process.

National Planning Practice Guidance

Legislation

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

ASSESSMENT

Design, impact on the character of the area

As the site falls outside of the built-up area (within the countryside) it is therefore necessary to consider the impact of the proposal in the local landscape in terms of the visual impact on the area. Policy DP12 of the District Plan relates to the protection of the countryside, however it is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should therefore be given to policies within the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF relates to improving the natural environment. Part 1a requires proposals to contribute positively to the natural environment and to *'Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced'*.

Policy S5 of the NPPF sets out the forms of development that should be approved outside of settlements. This includes the

'reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building²⁵. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces'.

The site falls within the High Weald National Landscape (previously known as the High Weald Area of outstanding Natural Beauty). 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 relates to the High Weald AONB and requires proposals to 'conserve or enhance natural beauty'. This is considered to be inconsistent with NPPF and therefore has very limited weight. Greater weight should therefore be given to the policies within the NPPF.

Policy N4 of the NPPF relates to protected landscapes states in part that:

'Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas'.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. However, these are considered to have very limited weight due to the publication of the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Policy DP3 of the NPPF sets out the key principles for well-designed places. This sets out in part that proposals should respond to their context, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

The application seeks to replace an existing building, with a structure of a similar footprint in the same location. The new building reflects the overall simple design and appearance of the original structure and would remain in proximity to main house. It is intended to retain the existing trees around the building that would provide a level of screening and, as such, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in design terms and would not result in a harmful impact to the character of the countryside or AONB. The proposal would therefore accord with policies DP12, DP16 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant policies of the NPPF.

Impact on heritage assets

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states *'In considering whether to grant planning permission (or permission in principle) for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to listed buildings and other heritage assets. This is considered to be inconsistent with NPPF and therefore has very limited weight. Greater weight should therefore be given to policies within the NPPF.

Policy HE5 of the NPPF, in relation to assessing the effects on heritage assets, sets out

'2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

- a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or*
- b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or*
- c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or*
- d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.*

3. In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered'.

In relation to non-designated heritage assets policy HE7 of the NPPF states:

'1. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a non-designated heritage asset should be supported.

2. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

3. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset'.

Whilst the application property is not considered to be a heritage asset, the house and its grounds were constructed on part of the former parkland of Paxhill. Paxhill is a substantial Grade II listed building, dating from the 17th century, that is located to the south of the application site. The house also has group value with the associated stables, walling, and gazebo which form constituent parts of the late 19th century country estate centred on Paxhill House.

The Conservation Officer has advised that a further two buildings form part of this grouping, which although not listed, would be regarded as non-designated heritage assets. These are the former south and north lodges. The latter of these is located just to the north of Plummerden House, and sits next to the former entrance driveway to Paxhill from Park Lane.

With regards to the proposed development, the Conservation Officer has commented that the existing building is not of any particular age or interest and makes a neutral contribution to the settings of the adjacent heritage assets, this is in particular due to the degree of screening and lack of intervisibility

between the site and these assets. It is therefore advised that the demolition of this building is not considered contentious in principle and this view is shared.

In terms of the replacement building, the proposed footprint is broadly similar to the existing and would be slightly higher. The elevations are to be timber again but would now have a slate roof. The Conservation Officer has advised that, whilst the proposed building would appear more domestic than the existing stables, given the existing building present and screening the development would have a neutral impact on heritage assets.

The conclusion reached by the Conservation Officer is agreed with and it is therefore concluded that the development would comply with the requirements of policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the policy requirements of the NPPF.

Impact to amenity

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that new development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings. It is considered that this policy has very limited weight due to the publication of the NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Policy L2 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of land. Part L2(1dii) requires proposals to have *'acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space'*.

Due to the distance between the proposed building and other neighbouring houses, it is considered that the proposed extensions would not give rise to any concerns regarding a loss of light, outlook or privacy.

It is noted that the development would result in a sizable building that would have a range of functions, sited away from the host dwelling. As such it is considered reasonable and necessary to impose a condition that would restrict its use and tie it to the main house, to ensure that amenity would be protected.

Impact to trees

Policy DP37 of the District Plan relates to trees, woodland and hedgerows. Due to the publication of the NPPF this policy has very limited weight, and greater weight should be given to Policy N6 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF relates to improving the natural environment. Within this there is a requirement that proposals should conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings.

During the course of the application an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan, Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) were submitted. This was due to the proximity of the development to trees.

The submitted information has been reviewed by the Tree Officer who has raised no objections, providing the AIA, AMS and Tree Protection Plan are followed so that the trees are adequately protected during construction. A planning condition can be used to ensure adherence to the tree details and would be necessary to ensure that the development would not cause harm to surrounding trees and for the development to be in accordance with policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 relates to flood risk and drainage. This policy has very limited weight due to the publication of the NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies CC3 and F7 of the NPPF.

Policy CC3 of the NPPF relates to the adaptation to climate change and requires proposals to take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme. In part this

requires proposals to be located where the risk of flooding is minimised and incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water flow rates and reduce volume of runoff.

Policy F7 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that development is safe from flooding. It sets out that development should not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users or visitors and should not increase flood risk elsewhere. It goes on to set out that where development is to be sited in a location to be known at risk of any form of flooding, now or in the future, it should be refused unless certain matters apply including where development can be made safe throughout its lifetime.

Whilst the application site lies within flood zone 1, issues were raised by the Drainage Engineer with regards to how surface water drainage is to be dealt with. Following the submission of further information, including additional information relating to the proposed deep bore soakaway testing and revised Surface water drainage strategy, the Drainage Engineer has confirmed that this has satisfactorily addressed the outstanding matters. A pre-commencement condition has been recommended to secure the final drainage details, which has been agreed, and would ensure that the development would comply with the requirements of policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the policies of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to biodiversity. However, this policy is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to improve the natural environment. Part 1f of this policy requires proposals to minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Part 2 of this policy sets out that *'If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused'*.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, which has been reviewed by the Ecologist. No objection has been raised by the Ecologist to this document and conditions have been recommended to ensure that the mitigation and enhancements are secured as well as for a biodiversity enhancement layout to be provided. It is considered that with the inclusion of the recommended conditions, the development would be in accordance with policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the policies within the NPPF.

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

This application seeks planning permission to replace an existing building with an estate office/cycle store with workshop and gym, with associated works.

It is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of design, the impact on the wider area, amenity, trees, drainage and ecology. The development would therefore accord with the requirements of policies DP12, DP16, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP38 and DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan as well as the policies within the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Caroline Grist