

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 July 2025 16:40:59 UTC+01:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <Caroline.Grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1413 Flagstones, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe

Hi Caroline

Comments on the above planning application.

Flagstones is an unlisted, detached 20th century house located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. It is a substantial two storey brick-built house in a vernacular style, with a tile hung upper floor and a hipped tiled roof with gablets and a side catslide. To the front elevation is a two storey hip-roofed projection, with an open porch beneath an upper storey supported on exposed timber posts. There is a flat roofed garage attached to the northern side, adjacent to the base of the catslide. The property is set back from the road behind a deep front garden, and there is a similarly generous garden to the rear.

This part of Stockcroft Road is characterised by substantial houses, in generous gardens. Notwithstanding the scale of some of the properties, the area has a generally open and verdant character, which due to the extensive front and rear gardens, grass verges, and presence of abundant trees, hedgerows and other planting. Although the spacing between the properties to this side of the road varies, and is in some places quite close-set, there are still views from many points along Stockcroft Road looking between and above the houses towards a line of mature trees beyond which marks the shared boundary between the rear of the houses to the east of Stockcroft Road, and those to the west of Deanland Road. These views contribute positively to the verdant character of the Area.

Although the Council does not have an adopted character appraisal for the Balcombe Conservation Area, the Council's document 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' contains a brief high level analysis of its key features, and notes with respect to Stockcroft Road and the surrounding roads (which were a later addition to the original Area):

'These roads are, for the most part, characterised by large detached houses of varying ages and styles with spacious gardens, set in attractive tree and hedge lined roads with wide grass verges. Although there has been some recent infill development these areas have retained an attractive character and appearance worthy of Conservation Area status.'

The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

- the large detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens, and the extensive grass verges bordering wide roads which contribute to the overall open*

character of the residential area of Stockcroft Road, Deanland Road and Oldlands Avenue;

• the number of hedgerows and fine trees, both deciduous and evergreen, in the area...'

The current proposal is for an extension to the side of Flagstones, to remove the existing catslide roof and create a further hipped roof with gablet above a first floor addition sitting over the existing garage. An existing two storey rear range would also be extended so that its northern side elevation would be brought out to match. Rooflights are proposed to the front and rear elevations.

In my opinion, the proposal raises concerns in terms of the scale of the proposed extension, in terms of the impact that this has on the street scene of Stockcroft Road, and in particular in terms of the reduction of the high level gap between this property and the neighbouring property to the north, which will partly block the existing attractive views between the buildings and over the catslide towards the mature trees to the rear. These views add to the verdant character of the Conservation Area, as discussed above. In my opinion, the scale of the building as extended would also be such as to create a potentially overbearing relationship in design terms with the neighbour to the north, which is a more modest 1½ storey dwelling. The loss of the catslide roof to the existing house is also regrettable, as this is an attractive feature of the house which contributes to its 'vernacular' character, and creates a more harmonious relationship of scale with its lower neighbour.

For these reasons I consider that the proposal results in a degree of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, such that paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply. I would place this harm at the lower end of that scale. The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35.

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.

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

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