

Design, Access and Planning Statement.

Proposal: Installation of a freestanding steel and timber pergola with integrated solar photovoltaic (PV) roof panels.

Site Location: Rear Garden of Fairfield House, Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex. RH19 4LY.

Designated Area: Within the countryside within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as defined in the Mid Sussex District and Neighbourhood Plan.

1. Introduction & Site Context.

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a Householder Planning Application for a freestanding steel and timber pergola featuring an integrated solar photovoltaic (PV) roof.

The application site is currently a private dwelling, in all 1650m², as shown on the site plan, all boundaries are clearly designated and have a variety of fencing, mature hedging etc, which will be retained and enhanced locally to the proposed structure.

The application site consists of a residential property located within the Mid Sussex District, falling within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The proposed structure is to be sited entirely within the residential curtilage, situated in the rear garden at approximately 40 metres from the rear elevation of the main dwelling house.

By virtue of this significant 40-metre setback, the pergola operates as a highly subordinate, detached garden feature. It remains entirely secondary to the primary dwelling and is visually contained within the domestic garden landscape.

There are no public rights of way within the property.

2. Proposed Design, Scale and Materials.

The proposed structure has been designed with careful regard to the rural character and high landscape quality of the surrounding AONB.

Dimensions: of the freestanding pergola are as follows:

- * Length: 6.4 metres x Width: 3.4 metres
- * Eaves Height: 2.5 metres
- * Ridge Height: 3.3 metres
- * Total Footprint: 21.76 square metres

Materials:

- * Framework: The main supporting structure will be formed via simple galvanised steel posts with an open rafter roof, to be constructed from high-quality, sustainably sourced natural softwood timber.

The Northwest elevation, facing the boundary, will be sustainably sourced natural softwood timber vertical boarding/ cladding on timber supporting rails secured to the steel frame.

Over time, this natural material will weather to a muted silver-grey tone, blending seamlessly with the surrounding garden foliage.

* Roof/Solar Infrastructure: The mono pitched (15°) roof structure, orientated to the Southeast, will seamlessly integrate dark, uniform, low-profile solar photovoltaic (PV) panels 27m² overall, (12 No @ 2.25m²). The panels are to be secured direct to the rafters to avoid any bulky external racking or highly reflective metallic frames, presenting a flush, clean, and architecturally integrated appearance.

3. Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policies, balancing the protection of designated landscapes with the proactive support for renewable energy generation.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

* The NPPF emphasizes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explicitly supports the transition to a low-carbon future and encourages the use of renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure at a domestic microgeneration scale.

* Paragraphs concerning valued landscapes mandate that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. This proposal meets both objectives by being of a small nature and generating green energy from a highly localized, well-screened, and low-impact footprint.

Mid Sussex District Plan:

* Policy DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of Countryside): The structure maintains the quality of the rural environment by remaining small-scale, domestic, and structurally subordinate.

* Policy DP15 (New Development in the AONB): The use of a simple supporting post arrangement with a natural timber mono pitched roof form respects the traditional rural character, ensuring the natural beauty of the AONB is conserved.

*Policy DP16 (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty): The small-scale proposal does not adversely affect the natural beauty and rural character of the AONB.

*Policy DP26 (Character and Design): The proposed simple open structure under a mono-pitch roof design is like other rural open cattle, cart barns, buildings found within the area.

The structures' location, to the very rear of the property, provides the neighbours with no loss of privacy, daylight or affects their visual outlook.

* Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction): The proposal directly supports local targets for carbon reduction and on-site renewable energy generation, helping the district meet its net-zero goals.

Neighbourhood Plan:

* Policy EG1 (Protection of the High Weald AONB): The small-scale proposal does not adversely affect the natural beauty and rural character of the AONB.

* Policy EG3 (Promoting Good Design): The proposal in its simple form is to an acceptable quality of practical design, it respects existing structures within the local countryside landscape and does not adversely affect the adjoining neighbour.

4. Landscape, Visual & Impact Assessment.

The site was once a substantial outdoor swimming pool and associated plant/ changing room building, demolished, re purposed C2010:

Siting the pergola, within this area, 40 metres away from the main dwelling allows it to nestle deeper into the established rear garden environment. It is partially screened by existing boundary treatments, fencing native hedgerows, and mature garden trees.

It is proposed to increase the boundary planting, screening with natural species to the area (Field maple, hazel, hawthorn, holly and blackthorn) As a result, the structure will not disrupt long-distance views across the wider landscape or compromise the open, scenic character of the AONB.

Glint and Glare:

The integrated solar PV roof panels, will face directly Southeast, will utilize modern, high-efficiency, anti-reflective glass. The pitch and orientation of the panels are designed to maximize solar absorption rather than reflection.

The low 15° roof pitch of the rafters minimizes reflection, ensuring no adverse glare impacts on adjacent residences or local wildlife/ fauna."

Ecology and Trees:

The freestanding structure relies on localized, low-impact pad footings for its supporting posts. No mature trees or significant root protection areas (RPAs) will be disturbed during installation, preserving the existing ecological fabric of the garden.

5. Conclusion

The proposed solar-roofed pergola represents a sensitive, sustainable addition to a domestic rear garden within the Mid Sussex AONB.

By positioning the structure 40 metres from the main house and utilizing a traditional open framework with integrated, non-reflective PV technology, the project successfully balances environmental microgeneration with landscape conservation. The proposal delivers clear climate benefits without causing harm to the visual amenities, character, or scenic beauty of the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Accordingly, the local planning authority is respectfully requested to grant planning permission.

M & J Design Services Ltd

13th August 2026