

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2140	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed replacement steps.		
Site:	Howdean, High Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5EL, ,		
Validation Date	22 Aug 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	26 Sep 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	17 Oct 2025
Target Date:	17 Oct 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Anna Tidey</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	17 Oct 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2140

**Howdean, High Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5EL,
Proposed replacement steps.
Ms Heather Greg**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

None.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Cuckfield Parish Council: No objection.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of a rear stepped access and platform at the rear of a residential house known as 'Howdean', which is located at the northern end of Cuckfield High Street.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/25/1690. Proposed replacement windows. Approved August 2025.
01/00572/FUL. Replace existing bay window with new PVCU window to match existing. Approved May 2001.
CU/052/95. Replace upstairs windows with pvcu double glazed windows of same design. Approved October 1995.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Howdean is a semi-detached house located in a prominent position on the junction of Leyton Lea, and opposite the entrance into Ledgers Meadow cul de sac, off the High Street. The house is constructed in brick with a plain tiled roof and a mix of white and grey windows.

The house is located within the northern section of Cuckfield Conservation Area, which extends along this part of the western side of the High Street. The Conservation Area was established in September 1969 and extended in March 1989 and in May 2008.

The house is also located within part of a larger area which extends around the centre of the village, which is the subject of a Direction under Article 4 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, under reference PR/00091/ART4.

There are various forms of 'permitted development' that are restricted by the wording of this Article 4(2) Direction, including:

'Class A of Part 1 of the Second Schedule hereto consisting of the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse where any part of the enlargement, improvement or alteration would front a

highway, waterway or open space'. Being to the rear of the property the proposal is not contrary to the Article 4 Direction.

APPLICATION DETAILS

This application seeks planning permission for a set of steps and an associated raised platform which are under construction at the rear of the house to serve a newly installed access doorway on the ground floor of the house, which is elevated above the height of the rear garden.

The submitted plans detail that a former doorway located in the north facing side elevation at the rear of the house allowed access down from the ground floor level in the house via a 1.1m wide by 2.9m deep set of steps, sited on the north western corner of the house.

The proposed plans show a new arrangement with the stepped access now located on the west facing rear projection of the house. The width of the raised platform, to serve the new steps, measures 3.95m wide by 1.1m deep, with the steps extending a further 0.7m deep from the rear wall of the house.

The works are under construction with the outer walls and steps having been constructed in a stock brick to match the house. Stone steps and coping stones are proposed to complete the surrounding walls, and steps, safety railings and a handrail are proposed in black painted metal. A small storage access hatch (to the cellar below) is constructed below the steps and this will also be enclosed with a black railing gate.

The application has been submitted with a Heritage Statement and a Design, Access and Planning Statement, which are available to view on the planning file.

The Heritage Statement includes the following points:

- The design of the replacement steps has been carefully considered to reflect the period character of Cuckfield.
- The materials selected—matching stock brick and bond and black iron railings commonly found within the conservation area.
- The steps will be discreetly located in a set-back part of the building where it will not affect the street view.

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and Site Allocations DPD.

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:

- DP26 Character and design
- DP35 Conservation Areas
- DP38 Biodiversity

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

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

There are no policies deemed relevant to this application.

Neighbourhood Plan

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, made 2014.

Policy CNP 1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

Policy CNP 10 - Building Extensions Within and Outside the Built Up Area Boundary

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, 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

DPS6 Health and Wellbeing

DPB1 Character and Design

DPB3 Conservation Areas

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) (December 2024)

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows:

Design

Impact upon the Conservation Area

Design

Policy DP26 of the District Plan seeks to promote well located and designed development, to protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities and support sustainable communities and create accessible environments. Policy DP26 states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- * is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- * contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- * creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- * protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- * protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- * does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- * creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- * incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- * positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- * take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- * optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Whilst Policy CNP 10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan refers to building extension works it is also relevant as it contains criteria which can be applied to this proposal. This states:

Policy CNP 10 - Building Extensions Within and Outside the Built Up Area Boundary

Building extension will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- a) The scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with the existing building and the character of the street scene.*
- b) Spacing between buildings would respect the character of the street scene.*
- c) Gaps which provide views out of the village to surrounding countryside are maintained.*
- d) Materials are compatible with the materials of the existing building.*
- e) The traditional boundary treatment of an area is retained and, where feasible, reinforced and*
- f) The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded.'*

The Design Guide contains principles relevant in the consideration of extensions to residential dwellings. Whilst an extension is not proposed it is considered that the following principle is relevant to the determination of this application. Principle DG49 states:

'Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicant will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allow the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.'

Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to complement and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. The design approach may benefit from coordinating with the existing pattern of window and door openings as well as employing facing materials to match those of the existing dwelling. Otherwise it should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternative approach.

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

There are two general approaches to extending a property:

*-designing in the style of the existing building by closely matching its facing materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions; and
-designing in a contemporary style that takes its cues from key aspects of the existing building that might include its underlying form and proportions, facing materials, window design and other specific architectural features. The success of this approach is particularly reliant on high quality facing materials and finishes, and this will normally need to be demonstrated through detailed elevations and section drawings.*

Both approaches can create successful, well designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area. All extensions and alterations should consider their impact on neighbouring properties (refer to Chapter 8 on residential amenity).'

Design Guide Principle DG51 refers to Rear extensions and states:

'Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including by adopting a contemporary architectural approach. With reference to DG49, they should nevertheless have consideration for the character of the existing building and the relationship of the extension with the side boundaries and adjacent buildings and gardens.'

The proposed replacement stepped access is sited on the rear of the house, which is largely obscured from public views by the presence of the detached single garage at Howdean. The proposed materials have been chosen to reflect the existing house brick and the addition is considered acceptable in design terms.

Overall the appearance of the proposed replacement stepped access will accord with the design aims of District Plan Policy DP26, Policy CNP 10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the Design Guide principles and therefore the proposal can be supported in design terms.

Impact upon the Conservation Area

This application needs to be considered with reference to guidance contained in the NPPF and with regard to the statutory duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of the Cuckfield Conservation Area, as set out in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Paragraphs 207 to 221 of the NPPF are relevant in the determination of this application. They seek to conserve and preserve Conservation Areas as heritage assets and their settings from harm as a result of new development.

The District Plan contains Policy DP35, which requires development to conserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Policy states:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- o Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- o Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- o Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- o Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- o New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.'*

The aims of this policy are reflected in Policy CNP 1 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan. This states:

'Policy CNP 1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

New development in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted where it:

- a) Is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character and reflects the identity of the local context of Cuckfield as defined on Map 3 - Conservation Areas and Character Areas, by way of;*
 - i. height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings,*
 - ii. the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape), and*
- b) Is sympathetic to the setting of any heritage asset and*
- c) Follows guidance in the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, the High Weald AONB Management Plan, and*
- d) Respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site, and*
- e) Creates safe, accessible and well-connected environments that meet the needs of users, and*
- f) Will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution, and*
- g) Makes best use of the site to accommodate development.'*

The rear addition represents a revised approach for access into the property and provides a safer and wider platform to access the garden from the revised doorway layout at the rear of the house. It is considered that the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the house and the Conservation Area.

The proposal will therefore meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35, Policy CNP 1 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the aims of the NPPF with regards to preserving the Conservation Area.

Impact on residential amenities

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed works upon the neighbouring amenities consideration needs to be given to District Plan Policy DP26. Policy DP26 requires that 'All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of the new dwellings.'

In addition Principle DG45 in the Design Guide refers to the need to consider privacy of existing and future residents and it is noted that privacy may be affected by the relationship of buildings to each other.

The immediate neighbouring properties are the attached house at Oaklands North and the house at No 22 Leyton Lea, which lies at the rear of the garden, adjoining the western boundary of the site.

It is considered that the proposed stepped access and raised platform are sited further from the mutual boundary with the attached house at Oaklands North. This will provide a greater degree of privacy to the neighbouring residents of that house. There is an established hedgerow on the mutual boundary to ensure that the privacy of the rear garden is maintained when the access steps are in use.

The other neighbouring house at No 22 Leyton Lea is located some 14m from the addition. Given that there are no overlooking side windows in that property and the distance of the rear garden with a solid boundary wall, it is considered that the proposal would not cause any harm to the amenities of the neighbouring residents. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the requirements of District Plan Policy DP26 and the Design Guide Principles.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. As a householder application this development is exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed replacement steps and raised platform will preserve the character and appearance of the house at Howdean and its setting in the Cuckfield Conservation Area.

The proposal will therefore meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35, Policy CNP 1 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and NPPF guidance with regards to preserving the Conservation Area.

The proposed works will not cause any harm to the amenities of the neighbouring residents. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of District Plan Policy DP26 and the Design Guide Principles.

Consequently this application is recommended for approval.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Anna Tidey