

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0747	Case Officer:	Katherine Williams
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed alterations to existing detached garage to enlarge to the side and attach to house, some additional solar PV panels located on garage roof		
Site:	Mead Lodge, Courtmead Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5LR, ,		
Validation Date	20 Mar 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	25 Apr 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	1 May 2025
Target Date:	15 May 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Katherine Williams

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	1 May 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0747

**Mead Lodge, Courtmead Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5LR,
Proposed alterations to existing detached garage to enlarge to the side and attach to house,
some additional solar PV panels located on garage roof
Mr Colin Williams**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer - objection, suggests amendments

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for alterations to existing detached garage to enlarge to the side and attach to house, some additional solar PV panels located on garage roof.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CU/345/79 - Integral garage into study, extension of separate garage and formation of entrance porch, conversion of roofspace into habitable room. Granted

DM/22/3224 - Proposed first floor side extension, single storey rear extension, alterations to existing rear dormer, solar PV panels located on detached garage roof. Granted

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a detached two storey dwelling located on the northern side of Courtmead Road, with Broad Street to the north, within the Conservation Area and built up area of Cuckfield.

The locality is characterised by large, detached dwellings of differing designs and forms, with off street parking and soft landscaping. The properties are set back from the highway with wide verges, which also includes a public footpath that runs parallel with the road. Many of the properties are partly screened from the highway by mature front boundary hedging which contributes to the verdant character of the area. Many of the dwellinghouses have also benefited from extensions and alterations.

The dwellinghouse have a pitched hipped roof form with front and rear dormer windows and a single storey rear extension. The dwelling has a central front porch and flat roof bay window. To the eastern side on the dwelling is a single detached garage with a flat roof and a front parapet.

The dwelling is constructed in brick, hanging tiles on the front first floor elevation, plain roof tiles and white upvc fenestration.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposal includes the extension of the garage to adjoin the existing eastern side elevation of the dwelling, this extension would have a depth of some 6 metres, with a flush canopy beyond to be flush with the rear elevation of the garage. This would also result in the front elevation of the garage being moved approximately 0.3 metres back.

Solar panels are proposed to the roof of the garage which would be screened by a front dummy pitch roof which would have an overall height of some 3.5 metres.

The rear window and door to the garage would be replaced by 2 No. windows.

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, Site Allocation DPD and Cuckfield 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:

DP21 - Transport
DP26 - Character and Design
DP35 - Conservation Area

Site Allocations DPD

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

There are no relevant policies.

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2014)

CNP1 - Design of new development and conservation
CNP10 - 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 Consultation 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 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:

DPS1 - Climate Change
DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB3 - Conservation Area
DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

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)

National Planning Policy Guidance

Cuckfield Conservation Area Appraisal

ASSESSMENT

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

- Design and Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on neighbouring properties
- Impact on parking provision
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and Impact on the Conservation Area

S.72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'

Paras 205, 212-215 of the NPPF state:

'205. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

214. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*

- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

Mid Sussex District Plan policy DP35 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:

- *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;*
- *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;*
- *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;*
- *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;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.*

Development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area.

New buildings of outstanding or innovative design may be acceptable in conservation areas provided that their impact would not cause material harm to the area.'

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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 DP27);*
 - *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.'*

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan policy CNP1 states:

'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.'*

Policy CNP10 of the neighbourhood plan states:

'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.'*

Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states: *'Heritage assets and historic landscapes should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved where appropriate, for the enjoyment of existing and future residents. Where appropriate and providing it does not cause harm to the heritage assets or their setting, they should be carefully integrated into development proposals as they help to reinforce a sense of place and local identity.'*

Elsewhere new development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric. There may be potential to introduce a new character / development form and massing:

- On larger urban extensions; this will typically be within the middle of the site and associated with a new neighbourhood centre, spine road or the main open space.*
- In town centre locations defined as coarse grain areas and nearby sites identified on the brownfield sites register.'*

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states: *'Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment 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.'*

Principle DG50 relates to side extensions and states: *'Side extensions should normally be subservient to the original dwelling and typically be set-back from the front of the house to help define the original building. The gaps between dwellings can sometimes positively contribute to articulating (for example, through the consistent rhythm of repeated houses) and adding interest in a street frontage or by providing views / visible connections to the surrounding countryside. Side extensions will therefore need to appropriately respond to the character of the street form and will not normally be accepted where they close an important gap and view.'*

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and has provided the following comments:

'Mead Lodge is an unlisted detached house located to the north side of Courtmead Road within the Cuckfield Conservation Area. The property, which dates from the 1960s, is in a loosely vernacular style which reflects the semi-rural, 'garden village' character of Courtmead Road (as described in more detail the Council's adopted Conservation Area Appraisal), and the style of the other older properties along it. A detached flat roofed garage is set to one side of the house. The house makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area- the garage arguably detracts from it. The gardens around the house are quite extensive and contribute positively to the verdant nature of the Area.

Planning permission was granted in 2022 for a first floor side extension to the house, alterations to a rear dormer, and solar panels to the roof of the garage.

The current proposal is for a side extension to the garage to attach it to the house, together with a glazed canopy to allow covered access to the two, and solar panels to the garage roof. It is proposed to add a dummy pitch to the front of the garage to screen the panels in views from the direction of Courtmead Road (the previous approval allowed for the parapet to the flat roof to be raised for the same reason).

In my opinion the principle of a modest side extension to the garage will not be contentious, notwithstanding the slight loss of openness, however I do not consider that extending to the western side of the building to attach it to the house wall is appropriate. This creates an attached garage, which is a suburban feature, which would tend to detract from the appearance of the house and its contribution to the character of Courtmead Road. I would recommend that the proposal is reconsidered to instead extend the garage to the east, away from the house, and maintaining separation from it. Having said that, the proposed glazed canopy towards the rear of the structure and provided a covered access between the house and garage would not be considered contentious and could be retained as part of the proposal.

In the context of the existing approval, the proposed solar PV panels to the roof of the garage are not considered contentious. The dummy pitch is also considered acceptable in the context of the existing flat roof, which is not a positive feature of the building or the street scene.

In summary although the principle of the proposal is acceptable, the manner in which the garage is extended requires reconsideration and amendment. As it stands, the attachment of the garage to the house would in my opinion be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the harm caused would be less than substantial, such that paragraph 215 will apply.'

The proposal would be of a design, scale and materials that is in proportion and appropriate to the character of the dwelling. The proposed side extension and alteration to the garage would be visible from the streetscene and would be viewed within the context of the existing garage and its proximity to the dwellinghouse. The Conservation Officer's comments regarding the suburban nature of an attached garage are noted, however, there are a number of properties within the locality with attached garages including the adjacent neighbour, The Limes. Courtmead Road, does have a verdant element to its character with mature front boundary hedging and trees, which your Planning Officer considers would be unaffected by this proposal. Given this, it is considered that the proposal is in keeping within the character of area and would have a neutral impact on the special interest of the Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies CNP1 and CNP10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on neighbouring properties

DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure that development *'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);'*

Policy CNP10 states that proposals should "safeguard" adjoining neighbours amenity whereas policy DP26 of the MSDP states that development should 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. There is therefore some conflict between the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in this respect. 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. As such, policy DP26 of the MSDP is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes significant harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

To the western side is Holly Oaks, which has mature boundary hedging between itself and the application property. The proposed extension and alteration would be located to the eastern side of the dwelling and would not be visible from this neighbour. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to the amenities of this neighbour.

On the eastern side is The Limes. This neighbour has an existing single storey side extension up to the boundary with the application property with close boarded fence boundary and mature planting in between. The proposal would be visible from this neighbour, however given the nature of these works they are not considered to cause harm to the amenities of this neighbour.

Impact on parking provision

The proposal would result in an enlarged footprint to the garage and therefore would maintain the parking provision for the property.

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.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size and scale to the dwellinghouse and Conservation Area, would not cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties and would retain the parking provision for the property. Therefore, the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP21, DP26 and DP35, and policies CNP1 and CNP10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, with the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application therefore accords with the Development Plan and is considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Katherine Williams