

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2264	Case Officer:	Andrew Watt
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Upgrade the existing clubhouse by increasing the size of the east facing windows, installing bifold doors to the south elevation, replacing the old paving stones in the external viewing area with modern composite decking and changing the entry point to the clubhouse from the east elevation to the south elevation. Replace the existing felt roofing tiles with a light weight artificial slate roof.		
Site:	Hurstpierpoint Lawn Tennis Club, South Avenue Recreation Ground, South Avenue, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex, BN6 9QA, ,		
Validation Date	8 Sep 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	10 Oct 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:	Yes	Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	11 Dec 2025
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	11 Dec 2025
Target Date:	3 Nov 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Watt

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	11 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2264

Hurstpierpoint Lawn Tennis Club, South Avenue Recreation Ground, South Avenue, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex, BN6 9QA,

Upgrade the existing clubhouse by increasing the size of the east facing windows, installing bifold doors to the south elevation, replacing the old paving stones in the external viewing area with modern composite decking and changing the entry point to the clubhouse from the east elevation to the south elevation. Replace the existing felt roofing tiles with a light weight artificial slate roof.

Mr Simon Newman

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

The committee recommends that MSDC grant permission. The committee supports the proposed improvements and welcomes the eco-friendly aspects of the upgrade.

INTRODUCTION

Full planning permission is sought to upgrade the existing clubhouse by increasing the size of the east facing windows, installing bifold doors to the south elevation, replacing the old paving stones in the external viewing area with modern composite decking and changing the entry point to the clubhouse from the east elevation to the south elevation, and replacing the existing felt roofing tiles with a lightweight artificial slate roof.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

In November 2001, planning permission was granted for construction of a new clubhouse, re-orientation of existing courts plus construction of one additional tennis court (01/02040/FUL).

Floodlighting to the tennis courts was originally approved in 2014 and the courts resurfaced in 2024.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site consists of a clubhouse and 3 clay surfaced tennis courts, which form part of Hurstpierpoint Recreation Ground. It is located outside the built-up area of Hurstpierpoint but within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area. Immediately west of the clubhouse are three dwellings (Hillbrow Bungalow, Red House Cottage and Hillbrow Cottage). To the east is a children's playground (and associated equipment) with a bowling green and pavilion immediately beyond. Further south-east is another group of dwellings, leading to the cemetery. Immediately south of the tennis courts are allotments and garden area to Lodge Cottage, on lower ground, with a new dwelling under construction within the latter area. South-west is Apple Tree Cottage, beyond a public right of way. To the north and east are a number of dwellings fronting onto the recreational area, with three further public rights of way criss-crossing the recreation ground.

The site is located in an elevated position and land levels drop significantly to the south. Beyond the allotments and garden of Lodge Cottage is the boundary of the South Downs National Park. The site is also designated as a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Red).

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought to upgrade the existing clubhouse by increasing the size of the east facing windows, installing bifold doors to the south elevation, replacing the old paving stones in the external viewing area with modern composite decking and changing the entry point to the clubhouse from the east elevation to the south elevation, and replacing the existing felt roofing tiles with a lightweight artificial slate roof.

In detail, the recessed entrance (with double doors) and 4 windows on the east elevation (facing the tennis courts) will be replaced with 2 wider windows and replacing a 3-light window nearest to the north with a 2-light window in the same opening, plus infilling the recessed area beneath the roof, with external materials to match those of the existing building. The north elevation will be unchanged. The west elevation (at the rear) will have a new accessible (ramped) access and fire escape door in what is currently a blank elevation. The south elevation containing a window and set of double doors will be replaced with near full-width bi-fold doors. These will open onto a new raised decking area to match the levels of the clubhouse floor (0.25m high), surrounded by a 0.6m high retaining wall. The extent of the decking area will match that of the existing concrete paving slabs, which currently acts as a viewing area for the courts, part of which is enclosed by a retaining wall and handrail. The new terrace will measure approximately 9.5m in width by 4.0m in width at its southernmost end, and be enclosed by planters on the western boundary. The existing grassed area to the south will be retained as existing (which contains an Apple tree, garden storage box and storage shed).

Internally the changes will allow the repositioning of the existing galley kitchen from the SW to the NE, retaining the accessible WC to the NW to form a more flexible open space with glazing overlooking the decked area and the courts.

The existing felt roofing tiles will be replaced with a lightweight artificial slate roof with textured surface and riven edges (but will only be constructed if funds allow, according to the Planning Statement). Other materials as set out in the application form are: Painted tongue and groove timber cladding to match existing, charcoal grey aluminium window and bifold door frames, timber accessible door, concrete block wall with white painted rendered finish and composite stone capping, with grey teak composite decking.

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 Mid Sussex District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan (Mar 2018)

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted at Full Council on 28 March 2018.

Relevant policies:

Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
Policy DP18: Setting of the South Downs National Park
Policy DP24: Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities
Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services

Policy DP26: Character and Design
Policy DP28: Accessibility
Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution
Policy DP35: Conservation Areas
Policy DP38: Biodiversity
Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

Site Allocations DPD

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

There are no relevant policies.

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (Mar 2015)

Mid Sussex District Council formally 'made' the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan part of the Local Development Plan for the Parish of Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common as of 18 March 2015. The policies contained therein carry full weight as part of the Development Plan for planning decisions within Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common.

Relevant policies:

Policy HurstC1: Conserving and Enhancing Character
Policy HurstC2: South Downs National Park
Policy HurstC4: Conservation Areas

Other Legislation

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

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 31 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
DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
DPN6: Pollution
DPN7: Noise Impacts
DPN8: Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC5: Setting of the South Downs National Park
DPB1: Character and Design

DPB3: Conservation Areas
DPH12: Accessibility
DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities
DPI6: Community and Cultural Facilities and Local Services

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Nov 2020)

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 4 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.

Relevant design principles include:

Principle DG11: Respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscape
Principle DG37: Deliver high quality buildings that minimise their environmental impact
Principle DG38: Design buildings with architectural integrity and a sense of place
Principle DG48: Design to minimise the impact of noise, air and light pollution

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is also a material consideration and paragraphs 8 (overarching objectives), 11 (presumption in favour of sustainable development), 12 (status of development plan), 39 (decision-making), 48 (determining applications), 56 and 57 (planning conditions), 96 (achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings), 98 (social, recreational and cultural facilities and services), 104 (open space and recreation), 131 and 135 (design), 187 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment), 189 (National Parks and National Landscapes), 193 (biodiversity and ancient woodland) and 202-221 (heritage assets) are considered to be relevant to this application.

ASSESSMENT

Principle

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan (as set out above) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

Policy HurstC1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan is similar in intent:

'Development, including formal sports and recreation areas, will be permitted in the countryside, where:

It comprises an appropriate countryside use;

It maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the Parish area;

In the South Downs National Park, policy HurstC2 will take precedent.'

The application site is located in designated countryside for which no special justification of the proposal exists and is therefore considered contrary to the first criterion of Policy DP12. However, Policies DP24 and DP25 of the Mid Sussex District Plan are relevant.

Policy DP24 of the Mid Sussex District Plan supports the provision of additional leisure facilities as well as protecting existing facilities. It states (in part):

'Development that provides new and/or enhanced leisure and cultural activities and facilities, including allotments, in accordance with the strategic aims of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Mid Sussex will be supported.'

Policy DP25 of the Mid Sussex District Plan refers specifically to sports pavilions and states (in part):

'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'

The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with these policies.

Design and visual impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

The proposed development is located within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 refers to Conservation Areas and states: *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'*

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'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;'*

Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'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;*

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

Policy HurstC4 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan states:

'New development in the countryside adjacent to Conservation Areas will be permitted where it does not conflict with other Countryside policies and where the settings of the Conservation Areas are conserved or enhanced.'

Design Principle 11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that heritage assets are enhanced and preserved where appropriate.

Paragraphs 207, 208, 210, 212 and 215 of the NPPF are relevant, as follows:

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

210. 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.

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.

The Council's Conservation Officer has made the following comments:

Hurstpierpoint Tennis Club clubhouse, located to the western side of the tennis courts, which sit to the south of the South Avenue Recreation Ground. The Recreation Ground and Tennis Club fall within the West Furlong Lane to South Avenue Character Area of the Conservation Area as described within the Council's adopted Character Appraisal. The key characteristics of the Character Area are summarised thus: 'This character area runs along the southern edge of the Conservation Area, and includes the principle open spaces within it. It has an open, partly semi-rural character, to which views between buildings and along roads and path to the countryside to the south of the Conservation Area make a strong contribution.'

The vista looking south from the Recreation Ground towards the countryside beyond the village edge and the distant South Downs is also identified as being significant to the character of the Area. At page 16 of the appraisal, the 'Townscape Analysis of Hurstpierpoint' identifies the Recreation Ground, with the adjacent tennis courts, playground and bowls club as a significant open space.

The existing tennis clubhouse is a relatively modest, single storey building with a rectangular footprint set end on to the Recreation Ground, on a north-south alignment. It appears to have timber clad elevations under a pitched felt roof. It is not particularly prominent in views looking south from the Recreation Ground, due to its scale and alignment, and is not of any particular age or architectural merit, making a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for alterations to the clubhouse including enlargement of the window openings to the east elevation, new bifold doors to the south elevation, a new deck with retaining wall to the south of the building, a new accessible ramp and

doorway, and possible replacement of the roof covering. In the context of the existing building these works are not considered contentious subject to detail of materials.

The proposal is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

I would recommend the following conditions:

- Details of materials with respect to the replacement roof covering, window frames and doors, and new hard landscaping including the deck, retaining wall and access ramp. I note that the roofing works may be postponed due to cost, so this could be separated and prefaced 'prior to commencement of work on the relevant part of the development' if preferable.

These views are supported. On this basis, the proposed works would comply with Policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy HurstC4 of the Neighbourhood Plan and paragraph 210 of the NPPF.

Impact on the setting of the South Downs National Park

The site is located within the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Policy DP18 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Development within land that contributes to the setting of the South Downs National Park will only be permitted where it does not detract from, or cause detriment to, the visual and special qualities (including dark skies), tranquillity and essential characteristics of the National Park, and in particular should not adversely affect transitional open green spaces between the site and the boundary of the South Downs National Park, and the views, outlook and aspect, into and out of the National Park by virtue of its location, scale, form or design.'

Development should be consistent with National Park purposes and must not significantly harm the National Park or its setting. Assessment of such development proposals will also have regard to the South Downs Partnership Management Plan and emerging National Park Local Plan and other adopted planning documents and strategies.'

Policy HurstC2 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan states (in part):

'Development in the Parish that contributes to the setting of the South Downs National Park will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances and does not detract from the National Park's visual qualities and essential characteristics.'

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

It is considered that the proposed works are modest in scope and, although the overall extent of glazing will increase, particularly on the south elevation, it would have very limited impact on the setting of the South Downs National Park and the materials would not be out of keeping with the immediate area. It should be noted that although the building is sited on higher ground, a new modern dwelling is well under construction immediately in front, and therefore the existing clubhouse would be viewed beyond it and with a much smaller footprint. Overall, there would be no conflict with the above policies and guidance.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'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 new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29)'*

Policy DP29 states:

'The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:

Noise pollution:

- o It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- o If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.

In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:

- o an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- o an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;*

Light pollution:

- o The impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation areas of artificial lighting proposals (including floodlighting) is minimised, in terms of intensity and number of fittings;*
- o The applicant can demonstrate good design including fittings to restrict emissions from proposed lighting schemes.'*

Given that the use of the site (both the building and the outdoor terrace) will not change, it is not considered that the proposal will affect the amenities of neighbouring residents. At the pre-application stage, the council's Environmental Protection team advised that they had no adverse comments to make to the proposal and that the licensing regime would be the appropriate route to place controls over the use of the space for alcohol provision and regulated entertainment.

No neighbouring occupants have raised any adverse issues during the consultation process for this planning application, and accordingly the proposal would comply with the above policies.

Accessibility

Policy DP28 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states in part:

'All development will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily.

This will apply to all development, including changes of use, refurbishments and extensions, open spaces, the public realm and transport infrastructure, and will be demonstrated by the applicant.'

It is considered that the proposed works would improve the accessibility for the users and visitors to the clubhouse, thereby complying with the above policy.

Biodiversity Net Gain

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.

Other matters

The site is located within a designated Great Crested Newt - Impact Risk Zone (Red). However, having regard to the nature of the application, it is unlikely to have an impact on newts and accordingly there would be no conflict with biodiversity legislation, policy and guidance.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The principle of the development is acceptable and the proposed works are deemed appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will not adversely affect the setting of the South Downs National Park. It would not cause significant detriment to surrounding residents. There would be no harm to biodiversity. Accordingly it is considered that the proposed development would comply with Policies DP12, DP18, DP24, DP25, DP26, DP28, DP29, DP35, DP38 and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies HurstC1, HurstC2 and HurstC4 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the NPPF and is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Watt