



Summary Design & Access Statement

Proposed two-storey side extension and alterations

61 Turners Mill Road, Haywards Heath

April 2025

Rev -



Background

The existing house is borne of several prior extensions and alterations which leave the form and spaces inconsistent with the applicants' needs, having been implemented over time both by the applicant and their predecessors, without a clear masterplan. They comprise:

- An integral garage converted into a dining/playroom open to the kitchen, maintaining its original catslide roof;
- A detached garage to northern end of the site, possibly built to address the loss of the original garage although it has considerable age;
- A single-storey rear sunroom extension to the original lounge, presumed latter C20 from the style and materials;
- A most-recent single-storey rear kitchen extension undertaken by the applicants.

This Application

The applicants seek to increase the living space providing for missing functions, taking the opportunity to view the house holistically against their current and future family needs, creating a home that will endure.

Dwell has undertaken its typically-rigorous design development process which has resulted in the scheme brought forward for planning approval. We note the observations raised in the LPA's recent email and offer the following as insight into the design process, and in support of the scheme as submitted.

Terms of Reference

The LPA has suggested that the extension is 'overly large and lacking in subservience', and that consideration should be given to 'reducing height and width', 'dropping the ridge height' so it reads as a later addition. These suggestions appear to relate to Section 9 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD which we will refer to throughout this document. This is supplementary guidance for officers' use in assessing applications.

Whilst section 9 of the Design Guide SPD relating to house extensions is a logical starting point in assessing the scheme, the prominent location of the site in our view first merits consideration of the role of the building in the wider urban context. To this end, we include excerpts of other design guide policies that we have referenced in the development of the design, and which we consider support the carefully-considered design decisions that have been taken. For clarity, we offer a narrative against these design directives as they have been applied to the application scheme.



Site and Context

Turners Mill Road is a residential street within the town comprising mid-late C20 housing of varying types and styles, predominantly detached in form. No 61 is typical in this respect. Buildings are traditional in style, with steep pitched tiled roofs and masonry or render elevations. The original Crittall style glazing which would have been installed originally to houses of this era has been largely replaced with uPVC typically on cost and energy performance grounds. As an aside, Officers will see that we have sought to reintegrate this style of glazing to the new extension, with the expectation that these will be rolled out across the rest of the dwelling when the current windows reach their end of life.

The road arcs gently as it traverses north-south. No. 61 is located on the western side of the road. Houses on the eastern side of the road are set at a lower level. We are in agreement that the positioning of the building in the streetscene is prominent, occupying the corner of Turners Mill Road and Turners Mill Close, and accentuated by the natural topography giving the house a slightly elevated position over the highway.

The housing mix locally comprises dwellings both in their original form, and since extended. Several notable approaches to extensions are visible, including gable-fronted at number 57 (occupying a similar-but-lesser corner), crown/flat roofed at number 65, catslid and dormered at number 27, and hip-to-gabled at number 78 to accommodate a two-storey rear extension under crown roof.



57 Turners Mill Road as extended, in close proximity to the application site



27 Turners Mill Road, as extended. An example context building significantly wider than the application proposal.

The style of the original dwellings is distinctive and has been a key driver in the design process. An enclave of largely unmolested examples exists at 51-55 Turners Mill Road. These feature both gabled and hipped frontages with projecting ridge and main ridges united at the same level.



Gabled and hipped roof frontages at 51-55 Turners Mill Road

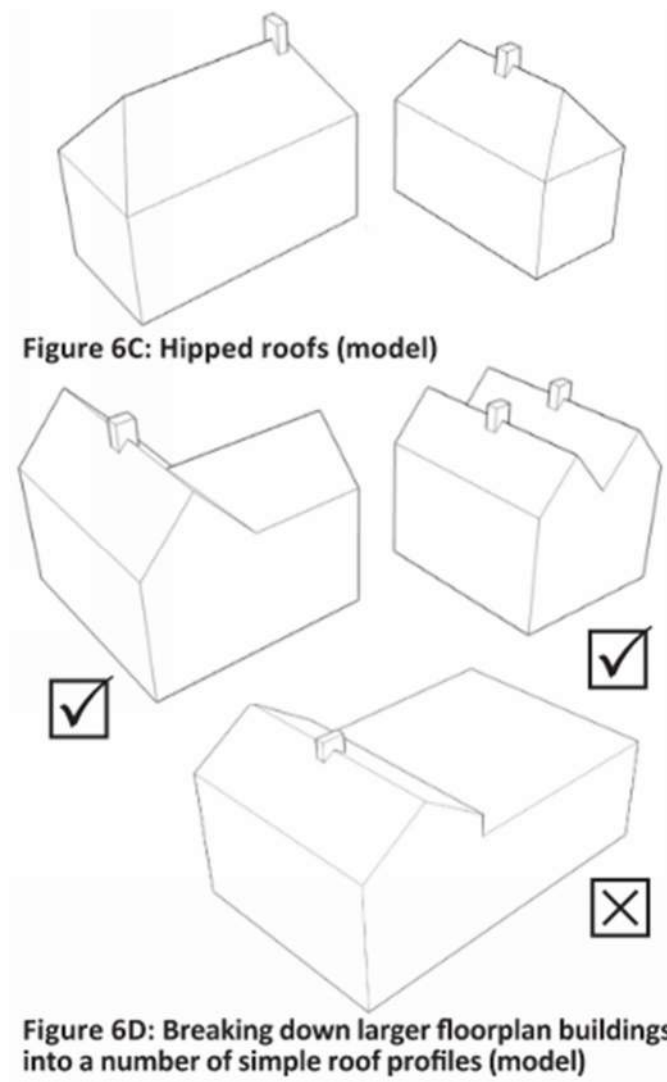


Design Criteria

It's helpful to consider the design cues which underpinned the scheme. Our early site analysis set the agenda for utilising the existing and established original architectural features which give the area its distinctive character, including:

- Matching the distinctive steep roof pitch, maintaining the mix of catslide and more prominent roofs;
- Consistency in external facing material selection;
- Marking the corner;
- Maintaining open frontage;
- Diluting the bulk and massing with fenestration, roof, and elevational treatments.

Core to developing the building envelope was providing for a roofscape and form that creates a harmonious composition, in accordance with DG38. Noting that roof articulation is deemed to add interest, fig 6D of the SPD breaks down a larger floorplan building into a number of simple roof profiles. The application building as extended has a pleasing mix of catslide, gabled and hipped roof profiles, carefully choreographed to suit each position, with the specific goals of either promoting or receding visually.





Height, size, scale and massing

The LPA's observations are all generally concerned with these factors, which are discussed here. In support, a context elevation drawing 1399 SI 03 is provided at 1:200 scale prepared from our point cloud survey which incorporates the application proposal as submitted. Whilst the building as extended is broad it does not visually jar; there are similar examples in the streetscene for reference.

In reply, we note that higher density blocks are deemed suitable for the urban context (DG fig 4D) and by virtue of the considerable plot size and buildings/extension to be demolished, a generous garden is maintained.

The width of the proposal is scaled back from initial sketch design proposals, largely on grounds of economy but also in recognition that maintaining the roof pitch and matching ridges was a key driver for the design as plans were elevated. The resulting proposal is slightly wider than number 57 as extended, but significantly narrower than number 27 as extended.

A core function of the width is to present a strong building line to the street in accordance with reinforcing the perimeter block layout intent illustrated in fig 4G p59 of the SPD reproduced here. This also alludes to the significance of corners as set out in DG15 which we have sought to mark in an appropriate fashion.

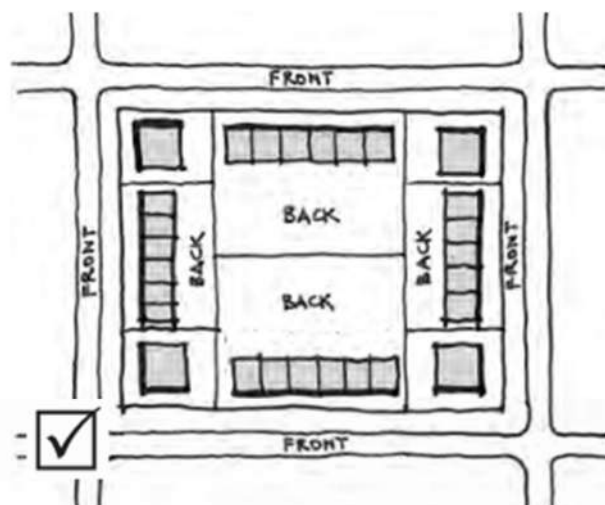


Figure 4G: Perimeter block layout ensuring a clear definition of front and backs and a strong building line to the street

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD

DG13 promotes positive frontage with emphasis of corner blocks which is of particular relevance for a corner site such as this. It resists blank side elevations and encourages natural surveillance.



To this end the front gable addressing the highway is the prominent design feature, ensuring that the eaves are complete by bringing the front elevation forward fractionally. This also creates an inner corner to conceal the rainwater downpipe (DG38 again refers). Due regard has also been given to DG41 which addresses design for sloping sites and which specifically-recommends gable-fronted houses in these circumstances.

6 High Quality Building Design Responding to Topography

6.6 Designing Buildings on Sloping Sites

Principle DG41: Addressing sloping sites

Buildings should be designed so they elegantly respond to the gradient of sloping streets while also facilitating level /step-free access to ground floor entrances allowing the main façade to fully address the street. Front elevations and rooflines should normally be evenly stepped so that they echo the angle of the slope and avoid both prominent retaining walls and over-large flank elevations.

The apparent size of side elevations can be inappropriately accentuated by sloping sites. Consideration should be given to reducing the impact through the roof design. For example, the extended gable-flank wall generated by a standard double pitch roof, should normally be avoided. As well as helping to model the front elevation, hipped rooflines or gable-fronted houses should instead be considered as they reduce the massing of the flank elevations.

Wrapping the first-floor tile-hanging around the side elevation helps to limit the apparent visual depth of the extension rearwards. Forming the hipped rear roof achieves a similar goal, reducing the length of full-height ridge addressing Turners Mill Close.

Windows at first floor level from the principal bedroom on the new side elevation offer informal oversight of the public realm, without direct overlooking of neighbours as a result of the distances involved and the orientation of neighbouring buildings (which aligns with DG40 also). These new windows replace a single larger window located on the existing north elevation.



6.4 Height and Scale

Principle DG39: Deliver appropriately scaled buildings

The scale of new buildings should relate to their context (rural or urban), their location within the hierarchy of routes and whether they act as a focal point, landmark or corner building and the topography of a site.

Subdividing a street frontage into a series of vertically proportioned bays helps avoid larger buildings, and extended frontages, appearing monolithic and provides them with a more human scale. The following measures should also be considered to reduce the scale of larger buildings:

- Articulating the upper floor(s) as a recessive element by employing a set-back and different façade treatment behind a parapet/solid balustrade that helps screen the full height of the building from street level.
- Stepping down the height of the building adjacent to lower scale frontages.

In existing less ordered street frontages, generating a consistent pattern of development may be less appropriate. In this context, subtle variations in height can be used to add visual interest. This can be achieved with differing ridge and eaves heights, as commonly found in traditional streets. Similarly, variations in frontage widths and plan forms can add further interest to the street scene.

It is often appropriate to emphasise a junction and terminate a street axis. This can be achieved by accentuating the façade treatment and/or exaggerating the vertical proportions of a façade either through clever articulation or, by raising the height of the building (at the corner or end of the axis) above the prevailing height.

DG39 underpins the scheme on many levels and is included here in full. It provides opportunity for varying height of buildings and frontage widths for visual interest, as we have done. It suggests emphasis of junctions/termination of street axes as we have done with the prominent gable end. The hipped roof treatment of the side/rear extension brings the roofline down to a level commensurate with the dwellings in Turners Mill Close, as the ground levels rise naturally, adding interest to this secondary street scene.



Directive DG40 requires an open active frontage, corner buildings that address both street facades, whilst ensuring the main entrance faces the street for legibility. The application scheme meets all these requirements.

6.5 Designing Buildings with Active Frontages

Principle DG40: Design buildings that respond to and animate the street space

Development should be designed to ensure that streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance and are overlooked by ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows. Buildings should therefore be designed with open, active frontages that engage with and provide a public face onto the street and spaces. They should normally be organised with:

- Windows that directly overlook the public realm;
- Corner buildings that address both their street facades;
- Main entrances that face the street; and
- Boundary treatment that allows for street surveillance.

Conversely blank facades and unsightly gaps in street frontages should be avoided.



6 High Quality Building Design Active Frontages

Addressing Corners

6.5.3 Attention should be given to corner buildings (those located on the intersection of two streets). These buildings should be designed so that they 'turn the corner' providing active fully fenestrated frontages on both streets. Corner buildings are often well defined by 'L' shaped buildings that help maintain the continuity of the built frontage.

6.5.4 Applicants should demonstrate how the design of corner buildings will aid legibility. Exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm will not be acceptable.

6.5.5 The rear elevations of corner houses are often more visible than other houses because of the gap in the street frontage to accommodate the rear garden. Additional care therefore also needs to be given to their articulation.

The proposal addresses the corner in precisely the manner suggested in paragraph 6.5.3.

Summary

Whilst DG50 suggests that side extensions should normally be subservient to the original dwelling, for the reasons established here the proposal has a more important role in the wider streetscene. It has been tabled in its current form, which in our view sits comfortably in its context by echoing the original established design and style of the area. The approach is supported by a legacy of similar previous neighbouring approvals both larger and smaller, and the measures incorporated mitigate size, bulk and massing in line with supplementary guidance, whilst adhering almost line-by-line to DG39 on matters of height, scale and massing. As demonstrated, the proposal resonates with myriad design guide directives, both at macro and micro scales, offering as it does benefit to both the applicants and wider public realm.

To this end we consider that the scheme is eminently appropriate for approval in its current guise, and trust that the LPA will, on balance and with the benefit of the streetscene elevation provided, adopt the same opinion.