

## Delegated Decision

### Sign off Sheet

|                                              |                                                                                              |                                        |                          |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Ref. No:</b>                              | DM/26/0412                                                                                   | <b>Case Officer:</b>                   | Rachel Richardson        |
| <b>Application Type:</b>                     | Householder Application                                                                      |                                        |                          |
| <b>Proposal:</b>                             | Proposed ground mounted PV solar panels.                                                     |                                        |                          |
| <b>Site:</b>                                 | Barrington House, Portsmouth Wood Drive, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2DW, , |                                        |                          |
| <b>Validation Date</b>                       | 19 Feb 2026                                                                                  | <b>Overall Expiry Date:</b>            | 13 Aug 2026              |
| <b>Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:</b> |                                                                                              | <b>Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:</b> |                          |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>                       | Permission                                                                                   | <b>Recommendation Date:</b>            | 19 Aug 2026              |
| <b>Target Date:</b>                          | 16 Apr 2026                                                                                  | <b>Recommending Officer Signature:</b> | <i>Rachel Richardson</i> |

|                                                        |  |                               |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)</b> |  | <b>No of Representations:</b> | 6 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|

|                              |                        |              |             |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Signed and Agreed By:</b> | <i>Stephen Ashdown</i> | <b>Date:</b> | 20 Aug 2026 |
| <b>Comments:</b>             |                        |              |             |

## **MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**DM/26/0412**

**Barrington House, Portsmouth Wood Drive, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2DW,  
Proposed ground mounted PV solar panels.**

**Mr Simon Weedon**

### **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

Six letters of objection have been received from four households. Their concerns are summarised as follows:

- o Detrimental impact on character and appearance of locality
- o It will be in an elevated position and be visually intrusive/dominant in the street scene
- o The plans are inaccurate, the vegetation has been removed on site
- o The no. of proposed solar panels is 20 on one drawing and 22 on another
- o No technical detail is provided for the proposed panels
- o Undermines historic/verdant setting and character of NDHA
- o No assessment has been carried out of the glint/glare of the panels
- o The applicant has an alternative space which would be less prominent in the street scene
- o Harmful impact from rainwater run-off and increased risk and ingress/drainage concerns in relation to consequential impact on garage at adjoining property.
- o A previous permission to develop this site was refused and dismissed on appeal. DM/23/0632. The appeal referred to retention of boundary hedges.
- o Low level screening would be ineffective in mitigating the overbearing nature of the proposal.
- o Insufficient information. There are no elevations.

### **SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES**

MSDC Trees and Landscape: No objection subject to condition.

MSDC Conservation: Objection. In terms of paragraph 216 of the NPPF. The Conservation Officer considers the proposal to result in mid level of harm to an asset of a mid level of interest within the local context. This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34.

### **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS**

No objection.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Permission is sought for ground mounted PV solar panels.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

LF/020/89 - Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Permission granted 29.11.1989.

LF/020/89/AP1 - Amended plans: Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Amended plans showing: alterations to Plot 1. No Objection 10.01.1991.

LF/020/89/AP2 - Amended plans: Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Amended plans showing: reduced number of units and smaller extension. No Objection 04.07.1991.

LF/020/89/AP3 - Amended plans: Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Amended plans showing: Alterations to elevations and re-siting of house on plot 5 2m to the north. Permission granted 11.04.1994.

LF/020/89/AP4 - Amended plans: Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Amended plans showing: corrected siting of house on plot 5 (closer to western boundary). Permission granted 06.09.1994.

LF/020/89/AP5 - Amended plans : Proposed conversion and extension of Barrington House to form 4 dwelling units, erection of 2 bungalows and 3 dwellings. Amended plans showing: Addition of 3 roof lights to house on Plot 5. Permission granted 05.07.1994.

DM/22/2389 - Application for a lawful development certificate for proposed widening of front facing garage window. Permission granted 04.10.2022.

DM/22/3046 - New 1 bedroom, 2 storey family annex for elderly relative use accessed from existing driveway of main house, adjacent to existing garage building. Amended plans received 23.01.2023 showing reduction in ridge and eaves height of roof, alterations to windows and additional window to existing garage. Withdrawn 23.02.2023.

DM/23/0632 New 1 bedroom, 2 storey family annex for elderly relative use, accessed from existing private driveway of main house, adjacent to existing garage building. Proposed revised roof and windows to existing garage. Drainage strategy report and details received 29.06.2023. Refused 26.09.2023. Appeal Dismissed (Ref: APP/D3830/D/23/3332694). 07.02.2024

## **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site forms part of a large Edwardian dwellinghouse which has been extended and converted to form 3 no. dwellinghouses. Barrington House is located on the western side of the building, with its principal elevation facing westwards onto an enclosed garden area and driveway. A detached double garage lies forward of the dwellinghouse, to the southwest. The property is served by a private drive, Portsmouth Wood Drive, which is accessed from Barrington Wood.

The dwellinghouse is situated at a significantly higher level to the adjoining road serving properties on Barrington Wood to the south, with a brick retaining wall enclosing the front garden and driveway. Part of the curtilage, the subject of the application site, which is to the southwest of the driveway and garage (with established trees, shrubs and grass) has been cleared.

The proposed solar panel area would be situated on the south western side of the detached two storey garage building and behind and above a retaining boundary wall fronting onto Barrington Wood Road.

In terms of planning policy, the site lies within the built-up area of Lindfield as defined in the District Plan.

## **APPLICATION DETAILS**

The amended proposed site layout plan shows the provision of 22 ground mounted solar panels. These are illustrated on the site section drawing stepping up the embankment as the land rises to the northwest.

Each panel measures 1.9m by 1.1m by 0.03m. Each panel is 500 watts and are manufactured by the Hengdian Group DMEGC Magnetics.

The Solar Statement confirms that the panels would be laid in five rows, in a 4-5-5-5-3 arrangement. They will be mounted in landscape orientation on standard 1.1m wide tubs. They will be 0.39m high. The layout has been designed to allow maximum distance from the rooting area of T1/T2 (see tree constraints drawing).

Page 2 provides key points in relation to the mounting of the panels. These are as follows:

- o The tubs are not dug into the ground and will sit on the ground and will be anchored by using rods. They do not need foundations.
- o The mounting tubs will be secured with gravel and ballasting. There are holes in the base to make them permeable.
- o The ground will be terraced so that the panel will be installed on a level surface running in an east-west orientation.
- o The panel surfaces will be angled at 10-15 degrees with the southern edge down. The southern edge will be about 10-15cm of the ground and the higher edge 30-40cm off the ground.

Additional tree related information was submitted on 22.07.2026.

## **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 Development Plan Document (DPD) and Lindfield and Lindfield Rural 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:

DP26 Character and Design  
DP34 Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets  
DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows  
DP40 Renewable Energy Schemes  
DP41 Flood Risk and Drainage

### **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.

### **Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan was made on the 23rd March 2016 and forms part of the development plan.

There are no policies deemed relevant to this application.

Relevant policies:

### **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 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time 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:

DPB1: Character and Design

DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

DPS3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage

#### *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 2026)*

### **ASSESSMENT**

The main issues deemed relevant to this application are:

- design and impact on character of the area
- impact on the setting of Barrington House
- impact on neighbouring amenity, and
- impact on trees

#### **Design and Impact on character of area**

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and states in part that:

*'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:*

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o 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;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o 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);*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; '*

DP40 states that proposals for new renewable and low carbon energy projects (other than wind energy development - see below), including community-led schemes, will be permitted provided that any

adverse local impacts can be made acceptable, with particular regard to, in part, residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour, traffic generation, recreation and access.

Notwithstanding this, at paragraph 2 of Policy CC2 in Chapter 5 (Mitigation of Climate Change) of the NPPF (2026), it states that;

*'Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).'*

In the recent appeal decision (APP/D3830/D/23/3332694) the Inspector describes the character and appearance as follows:

*'The appeal site is the side garden area of one of the dwellings which forms Barrington House. Barrington House is an elevated grand property in a locality which is generally spacious and verdant albeit nearby is a higher density cluster of single storey buildings which are low-key visually. The character of the area is formed from all of this and the locality has a very pleasing appearance.'*

The application site under the current application is in the same location as the appeal proposal. However, the appeal proposal was a two storey extension adjoining the two storey garage, resulting in what the Inspector commented as having the appearance of a new house for all intents and purposes.

The Inspector commented that, *'Barrington House, even as divided and extended, and with appreciable grounds removed, is a fine property, relatively old for the area, and one which deserves spatial and aesthetic consideration when a curtilage scheme is proposed.'*

Comments were also made by the Inspector that the appeal scheme *'would remove excessive vegetation and end up being positioned uncomfortably close to nearby trees. The scale and style of built form would detract from the visual merits of Barrington House and add nothing positive to the local scene. Unfortunately, the scheme would look alien in its immediate and wider context and its incongruity would be ill at ease on the eye. It would detract from the qualities of the host building, the streetscene, and the character of the locality.'*

The application proposal is not proposing an extension, so would not have the same visual presence in terms of its scale and building mass, and would not therefore be considered to result in the same harmful visual intrusion in the street scene.

The applicant has confirmed that the panels highest and maximum height above the ground level on which they would be installed, is 0.8m. It is also noted that the applicant has planted a short stretch of laurel to further screen the panels from surrounding views. The applicant has commented that the proposed panels will not be prominent, although could possibly be glimpsed in the street scene.

Unlike an extension, the proposed panels will be relatively low to the ground with planting around them thereby being respectful of the generally 'spacious and verdant' character of the area. The substantial weight attributed to the installation of solar panels (in the NPPF) is also a strong factor in considering that this scheme is acceptable.

It is considered that the solar panels would protect the valued characteristics of the built environment in accordance with DP26 and DP40 and the NPPF.

#### Impact on the setting of Barrington House

Policy DP34 of the District Plan relates to listed buildings and other heritage assets and advises in part that:

*'Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.'*

*The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.*

*Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.'*

Paragraph 2 of policy HE7 of the NPPF is relevant, stating that:

*Where a development proposal would cause harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.'*

The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that;

*'The application site, Barrington House, is an unlisted building located within the suburban northern edge of Haywards Heath/Lindfield. The building, which was originally a substantial detached country house and is now subdivided into a number of properties, dates from the Edwardian period (c.1904-6). At the time of its construction it stood in extensive grounds in a rural setting of fields and woodland. It predates the expansion of Haywards Heath/Lindfield this far north by half a century or so, and is one of the earliest surviving buildings in the area, with an interesting list of former inhabitants (further information on these can be found in this article: Lindfield houses - Barrington and Buxshalls — Lindfield Life - the community magazine for Lindfield, West Sussex). After being requisitioned by the military during WWII, the house was first divided into flats and then into 3 dwellings. Architecturally, it is typical of its period and retains a number of period features. For these reasons I would consider that the property would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) with the potential for inclusion on a local list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.*

*The original, rural setting of Barrington House has been almost entirely eroded by the surrounding suburban development, including the recently approved development to the north at Town Wood Close, however the surviving trees and greenery within the immediate vicinity of the house do suggest something of the original verdant nature of its grounds, hinting at its origins as a country house, and therefore in my opinion make a positive contribution to its special interest within the local context, and how this is appreciated.*

*The current proposal is for the installation of a solar PV array to be located on the land to the southwest of the house, which is currently undeveloped and was occupied until its recent partial clearance by planting. This land is one of the more prominent aspects of the surviving verdant setting of the house which as noted above contributes positively to its significance as an NDHA, particularly so because it is raised above Portsmouth Wood Drive and slopes quite steeply broadly west to east towards the road.*

*The installation of the array will according to the submitted Arboricultural Report require the land to be terraced, although this is not reflected in the submitted site section- this aspect of the proposal requires clarification. The submitted report also identifies potential harm to adjacent trees T1, T2 and TG1.*

*In my opinion, the proposed array because of its nature, location and extent, and impact on the character of the site including potential impact on adjacent trees, will detract from the setting and significance of the NDHA. This impact will be exacerbated by the visual prominence of the site, its proximity to the house and to the road, and its elevation and profile. As a result, the panels will have quite a marked impact on the context within which the asset is seen and appreciated.*

*This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets). In terms of paragraph 216 of the NPPF, I would consider the proposal to result in mid level of harm to an asset of a mid level of interest within the local context.'*

Under the appeal, the Inspector commented that they did not consider Barrington House to be a NDHA and the reason for this was because they didn't have the evidence before them to be proven otherwise and that the building was not included on any local list produced by the LPA. That said, it is perfectly legitimate for NDHA's to be identified by the LPA during the course of an application. There are appeal examples where the Inspector has accepted the LPA's recommendations of NDHA's. For example, The Old Post Office, The Street, Bolney ( Council Ref: AP/23/0048) and also a care home proposal at Albourne with respect to Spurk Barn in particular (Council Ref: AP/19/0081).

Another example, in relation to appeal decision (AP/24/0003) the Inspector accepted the view of MSDC that the building was a NDHA as set out below:

*'2. Old Mill House is not a statutory listed property. However, during the planning application process the Council, as it is entitled to do under paragraph 040 of the Planning Practice Guidance, identified it as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).*

*3. Accordingly, I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposal on the architectural integrity of the Old Mill House and thereby its significance as a non-designated heritage asset.'*

The appeal in relation to Barrington House (APP/D3830/D/23/3332694 and Council Ref DM/23/0632) was dismissed due to impact on the character of the area and appearance of the host dwelling. In paragraph 5, the Inspector comments on the removal of excessive vegetation that would be required and the proposal being positioned uncomfortably close to trees. However, in this case, the proposal is different in that the AIA confirms that if all the measures (stipulated in the AIA) are undertaken then the necessary work will have minimal effect on the retained local treescape, and with the proposed tree planting there will be enhanced tree cover as trees mature (see section on trees below).

In terms of the NPPF and paragraph 2 of Policy HE7, the Officer view is that Barrington House is a NDHA and the Conservation Officer is supported on this view. It is also accepted that Barrington House is of mid level of interest. However, it is not agreed that the proposal would result in a mid level of harm to the setting of the NDHA. It is also the case that the lesser level of harm resulting from the proposal would be outweighed by the benefits of the proposal providing solar panels and improving the energy efficiency of an existing building in accordance with para 2 of Policy CC2 of the NPPF.

The proposal is therefore not considered to conflict with policies DP26, DP34 and DP37 of the District Plan or policy HE7 of the NPPF.

### **Impact on residential amenity**

Policy DP26 of the District Plan refers to amenity and states that development proposals 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'*.

Of the concerns raised by nearby households, none of the above issues have been commented on.

As such the proposal is therefore acceptable and unlikely to result in significant harm to neighbouring amenities in terms of affecting light levels, outlook or privacy, and would comply with the criteria of policy DP26 of the District Plan.

### **Impact on trees**

Policy DP37 of the District Plan relates to trees and states in part that:

*The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.*

*Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.*

*Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.'*

The applicant has provided comments in their statement dated 22 July 2026 in relation to the impact of loss of trees and vegetation and in response to the Conservation Officers comments.

In summary, these comments are that the proposed development site has not been cleared to facilitate the proposed solar array. The area was previously mown grass then became overgrown with brambles and now comprises mainly weeds. Also, that since the proposed layout of the panels has been revised this will not now result in any permanent removals of the hedge TG1.

The conclusion of the AIA confirms that if all the measures (stipulated in the AIA) are undertaken then the necessary work will have minimal effect on the retained local treescape, and with the proposed tree planting there will be enhanced tree cover as trees mature.

The Council's Tree Officer has commented on the proposal as follows:

*'I have reviewed the Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) for this proposal and have no objection.'* This is subject to the works being carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the AIA, TPP and AMS.

Given the above, it is not considered that the proposal would conflict with policy DP37 of the District Plan.

## **Other matters**

Households have raised concern regarding the increased risk of surface water runoff and subsequent potential drainage problems as a result of the proposal.

Policy DP41 inter alia, seeks to improve public amenity by managing surface water drainage and discharging only to sewers to avoid any increase in flood risk.

The application site is not located in a vulnerable area likely to flood or at risk from surface water flooding and notwithstanding this the proposed solar array would be mounted on permeable bases and on soft ground. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with DP41.

## **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**

Overall, it is considered that the provision of 22 solar panels is acceptable in terms of policies DP26, DP34 and DP40 as well as national policy and the provisions contained within the NPPF. The proposal would result in a lesser level of harm to a NDHA of a mid level of interest, however this is outweighed by the benefits of improving the energy efficiency to an existing building in accordance with national guidance and the policies contained within the NPPF.

As such, it is recommended that permission be granted.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Rachel Richardson