

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1636	Case Officer:	Catherine Cardin
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Reinstatement of an existing kitchen and surrounding spaces recently damaged by fire. Replacement of external windows. Removal of 5 external roof lanterns and replacement with new flat roofs.		
Site:	Worth School, Paddockhurst Road, Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4SD, ,		
Validation Date	30 Jun 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	1 Aug 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	20 Aug 2025
Target Date:	25 Aug 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Catherine Cardin</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	20 Aug 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1636

**Worth School, Paddockhurst Road, Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4SD,
Reinstatement of an existing kitchen and surrounding spaces recently damaged by fire.
Replacement of external windows. Removal of 5 external roof lanterns and replacement with new
flat roofs.**

Mr Matthew Tyler Smith

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received in response to this application.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

Worth School is a Grade II listed building, a former country house now private school, dating originally from 1865-97 and located in a rural position. There are a number of other Grade II listed buildings in its close vicinity, including the former stables building to the north, the carriage gateways to the west, and the Abbey Church to the east.

The current proposal relates to works primarily to the school kitchen, which is within the main building, and which recently suffered a fire. The works including stripping out and deep cleaning of the area, with asbestos removal, reinstatement of finishes and equipment, and some alterations including minor changes to the plan form, replacement of windows, and removal of roof lanterns. To consider these works in turn:

- The area affected by the fire appears to have retained little in the way of historic features or finishes of interest, having been much altered to allow for the installation of the previous kitchen. The stripping out of fire damaged finishes, light fittings etc. will therefore not result in harm to the special interest of the listed building. It is noted that one surviving area of original tiling will be retained.
- The deep cleaning appears again to largely affect areas of relatively little interest and as such I would not consider it contentious, in the context of the necessity of remedial action.
- Details of the programme of asbestos removal have been provided and are not considered contentious.
- The reintroduction of catering equipment is not considered problematic, given the previous condition of the spaces.
- The proposed alterations to the plan form are relatively minor, and although there will be some limited impact on historic fabric this is not considered to be harmful to the special interest of the building.
- The replacement of the modern windows noted is not considered contentious.
- The removal of the glazed roof lanterns to the flat roofed structure above the side corridor is not considered contentious, and should enhance the appearance of this part of the building.
- The replacement of uPVC rainwater goods with painted metal is welcomed.

In summary, the works as carried out and proposed are in my opinion not contentious in terms of the impact on the listed building. The proposal meets the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comment received.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for the reinstatement of an existing kitchen and surrounding spaces recently damaged by fire, the replacement of external windows, and the removal of 5 external roof lanterns and replacement with new flat roofs.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is substantial history to the site but none of direct relevance to this application.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site forms part of a monastery and Roman Catholic school campus which includes a number of listed buildings. To the east are the 'Former Stables at Worth Abbey', which are listed at Grade II. To the south are 'Worth Abbey' house and 'Worth Church' further to the south-east, which are also Grade II listed. Further south-west are Grade II listed gates. Immediately to the west is Gervase House, formerly the farmhouse of Paddockhurst Farm, a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

Adjoining the site to the north is the Sports Hall, a more utilitarian modern building, and immediately south is a Classroom Block and Library set over 2/3-storeys.

The application site is located on the northern part of the campus immediately south of the B2110 Paddockhurst Road and just east of the bridge crossing this road. The campus is located some distance west from Turners Hill village, within the countryside and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks to reinstate a school kitchen, recently damaged by a fire. This includes stripping out and deep cleaning the area, with asbestos removal, reinstatement of finishes and equipment, and some alterations to the plan form.

The application also seeks to replace 3 no. high-level external windows to the kitchen/bakery on the ground floor with fire rated windows to match existing. These would be sited within an internal courtyard.

It is also proposed to replace 1 no. existing high-level window between the kitchen and refectory on the ground floor with a new fire rated window to match the existing. This would be sited within an internal courtyard.

In addition, it is proposed to remove 5 no. roof lanterns and replace these with new flat roofs.

The application is accompanied by a Design, Access and Heritage Statement.

An application for Listed Building consent is being considered for these works under DM/25/1637.

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.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Turners Hill 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:

DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26: Character and Design

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

Site Allocations DPD

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

No relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan made in 2016.

Relevant policies:

THP8: Countryside Protection

THP9: Worth Abbey and Worth School

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states '*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.*'

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states '*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*'

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Design Guide/Code

Published in 2021, the National Design Guide illustrates how the government consider well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out that this national document, along with the National Model Design Code, should be used to guide decisions on application in the absence of locally design guides or design codes.

Other policy guidance

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024

ASSESSMENT

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

- Design, character and impact on the character of the surrounding area
- Impact on the Listed Buildings and their setting
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design, character and impact on the character of the surrounding area

The application site is located within the countryside, as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan. Policy DP12 establishes that:

'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:

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

Policy THP8 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan reflects this ethos.

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to Character and Design and 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:

- 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 protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- 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 DP27);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o 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;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development'.*

Policy DP12 in the District Plan seeks to protect the character of the countryside and states that development will be permitted where it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and is supported by a specific policy reference in the District Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or Development Plan Document. In this case policy DP26 is the relevant policy that supports high quality development.

It is considered that the proposed works are sympathetic to the existing buildings and the rural setting of Worth School. As the modern high-level windows would be replaced to match the existing and would be located within internal courtyards, it is considered that the proposal would respect the historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric of the listed building. Regarding the removal of the modern glazed roof lanterns, their design is not considered to be of high quality, so their removal is considered to enhance the appearance of the existing building.

It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with policies DP12 and DP26 of the MSDC District Plan and policy THP8 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan.

The Design, Access and Heritage Statement confirms that the proposal employs energy efficient appliances, lighting and insulation. The application is supported by a Sustainability Statement which provides more detail. As a result, it is considered that the application proposal is compliant with policy DP39 of the MSDC District Plan.

Impact on the Listed Buildings and their setting

S. 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *'In considering whether to grant planning permission [F1or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*

MSDC District Plan policy DP34 states:

'Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- o Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- o Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*
- o Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;*
- o Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- o Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.*

Other Heritage Assets

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.'

Paragraphs 212 - 216 of the NPPF states:

'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.

216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

Neighbourhood Plan policy THP9, Worth Abbey and Worth School, states:

'The Neighbourhood Plan supports development proposals within the built campus at Worth Abbey and School provided they:

Are sympathetic to the rural setting and to the listed buildings;

Recognise the impact any buildings may have on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are landscaped appropriately;

Enhance both the School's status and position as a major local employer; and Enhance and benefit facilities for the Religious Order.'

The MSDC Conservation Officer was consulted on the application and has not raised any objections. This was because the works are considered to be minor and would have a limited impact on the historic fabric of the building, with the removal of the roof lanterns being considered beneficial. The Conservation Officer's comments are accepted and agreed with from a planning perspective and in policy terms. As such, it is considered that the proposed development meets the criteria of policy DP34 of the MSDC District Plan and THP9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the provisions contained within the NPPF.

Impact on the High Weald AONB

The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CROW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CROW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB, and policy THP8 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes 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.'

Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to the AONB and states that:

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular:

- o the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
- o the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
- o character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB;*
- and*
- o the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage'.*

Policy THP9 of the Neighbourhood Plan also makes reference to the need to recognise the impact any buildings may have on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are landscaped appropriately.

The application relates to an existing building outside the built-up area of Turners Hill. As the proposal seeks to undertake works to this building, the proposal would not form an isolated development within the wider landscape. The proposal would not have any adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB due to it being viewed in context with existing built form.

As such the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy DP16 of the District Plan, The High Weald AONB Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

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.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size and scale to the building and locality, and would not cause harm to the Listed Building or to the High Weald AONB.

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP12, DP16, DP26, DP34 and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies TPH8 and TPH9 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Catherine Cardin