

Planning Statement

Proposed conversion and extension of the existing garage into additional living accommodation; construction of new glass link extension; and demolition of existing porch extension with proposed replacement extension

**Red Oaks, Weald Chase, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath,
RH17 5HY**

Prepared for

Mr & Mrs Orpen

Prepared by

Sarah Sheath BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a householder planning application for the conversion and extension of the existing garage at Red Oaks, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield. The proposal seeks to create additional ground floor living accommodation; construction of a new glass link extension; together with the demolition of the existing porch and its replacement with a new utility room extension.
- 1.2. The applicants have lived at the property for many years. It has been their family home where they have watched their children grow up and move on. More recently their son, his fiancée and her daughter have returned to the property to live as a multigenerational household. His return to the family home has highlighted a number of limitations. Principally the disproportionate amount of ground floor living space in comparison to the upper floors, and accessibility of the accommodation.
- 1.3. Mr Orpen has been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and is Mr Orpen is already experiencing health issues that affect his mobility, and these challenges are expected to increase over time. The proposals therefore seek to future-proof their home by providing accessible ground floor accommodation that will enable them to remain in the property comfortably and safely, with on-going care provided by the family.
- 1.4. The proposed conversion and extension of the garage will deliver essential, accessible living space, ensuring the applicants can stay close to their family while maintaining a degree of independence. This practical approach will secure their ability to continue living in familiar surroundings with the benefit of family support.
- 1.5. The application is to be considered in relation to the following list of plans:
 - Location plan and existing block plan (2506-00-00);
 - Existing site plan (2506-00-01);
 - Existing site plan (2506-00-02);
 - Existing ground floor (2506-00-10);
 - Existing first floor (2506-00-11);
 - Existing second floor (2506-00-12);
 - Existing roof plan (2506-0013);
 - Existing south elevation (2506-00-20);
 - Existing north elevation (2506-00-21);
 - Existing west elevation (2506-00-22);
 - Existing east elevation (2506-00-23);

- Proposed block plan (2506-01-00);
- Proposed site plan (2506-01-01);
- Proposed site plan (2506-01-02);
- Proposed ground floor (2506-01-10);
- Proposed first floor plan (2506-01-11);
- Proposed second floor plan (2506-01-12);
- Proposed roof plan (2506-01-13);
- Proposed south elevation (2506-01-20);
- Proposed north elevation (2506-01-21);
- Proposed west elevation (2506-01-22);
- Proposed east elevation (2506-01-23);
- Bin store - north elevation (2506-01-25);
- Bin store - west elevation (2506-01-26);
- Proposed Section A-A (2506-01-30);
- Proposed Section B-B (2506-01-31);
- Proposed Section C-C (2506-01-32);
- 3-D Images x 3;
- Design and Access Statement; and
- Bat Emergence Survey Report.

- 1.6. Additionally this statement sets out relevant planning policy, planning history, and assesses the scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. Red Oaks is a large semi-detached residential property that historically formed part of a larger property known as Weald Chase. Weald Chase was subdivided into three residential properties in the early/mid 1980s. As a consequence of this approval, Red Oaks now forms the eastern most property and is an attractive three storey semi-detached property set in a substantial plot, with a detached double garage located on its eastern side.

- 2.2. The existing dwelling is spread over three floors with the second floor largely contained within the roof space served by dormer windows. Externally, the property features a mix of brickwork and tile hanging to the front elevation, with timber-framed rendered panels to the rear. Distinctive, substantial chimneys add character to the building. To the rear, a modern conservatory has been added, while the front and side elevations include a variety of smaller single-storey extensions.
- 2.3. The detached garage is a simple modern brick addition featuring two single garages set under a substantial gabled, tiled roof. The garage stands on the southern side of an expansive drive, which circulates around a central planted island.
- 2.4. Access to the site is gained off Staplefield Road (B2114) in the north east corner of the site. The first section of the access drive is shared with the neighbouring properties before a gated entry to the site itself is reached. Ample parking and turning is available within the site, clear of the highway and shared access drive.
- 2.5. The dwelling sits some 45 metres to the south of Staplefield Road which passes the site in a broadly east-west direction. The house is well screened from the road by dense trees and planting.



Figure 1 - Aerial photo showing site and immediate surroundings

- 2.6. The shared drive passes between these trees to the neighbouring properties to the west and north west. The adjoining property to the immediate west is Downsview and is similar in style and scale to Red Oaks, the two having originally been a single property.
- 2.7. To the north west is Orchard House, a two storey detached property.
- 2.8. To the north east are a pair of semi-detached cottages, North Lodge and Weald Chase Cottage.
- 2.9. Red Oaks benefits from a large, irregularly shaped plot extending to some 0.6 hectares. The rear garden is some 60 metres in depth by approximately 65 metres in width.
- 2.10. The site lies approximately 1km to the west of Cuckfield and falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as the High Weald National Landscape).
- 2.11. A public footpath runs past the eastern boundary of the site, from Staplefield Road, heading in a south easterly direction towards Beech Farm.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The Council's online planning register indicates that the following historic applications relate to the application site:
 - CD/047/78 - Change of use to permit the main house to be used as a rest home for persons of both sexes. The existing flat over the garage to be used as staff accommodation - Withdrawn.
 - CD/046/81 - Division of Weald Chase house and flat into three residential units. New porch and garage - Approved - 26th January 1982.
 - CD/070/89 - Conservatory to rear of private dwelling - Approved - 13th February 1990

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. Permission is sought for alterations and extensions to the main dwelling and the existing garage at Red Oaks.
- 4.2. For the main house, the proposal includes the demolition of a small flat-roofed porch on the eastern elevation, which currently fronts the access drive. Although the formal entrance to the dwelling is located on the northern elevation near the western boundary, the existing porch serves as the most frequently used access point due to its proximity to the driveway and parking area. In its place, a new utility room is proposed, measuring approximately 3.3 metres by 4 metres and projecting slightly beyond the adjacent boiler room. This addition will feature a predominantly glazed design beneath a flat leaded roof, providing a practical, simplified and visually appealing upgrade.
- 4.3. To the east of the dwelling, the existing garage will be converted into habitable accommodation with modest extensions to the north, east, and west, creating a building with the character of a traditional coach house. A small glazed link will connect the converted garage to the main

house, ensuring convenient internal access, and well as a new accessible entrance to the dwelling. The converted garage space will provide an accessible bedroom and bathroom for the applicants, alongside a snug and a small artist's studio designed to take advantage of views across the garden and surrounding landscape.

- 4.4. The proposed side extensions to the garage are symmetrically arranged, each measuring approximately 4.6 metres in width and 5.3 metres in depth. A modest forward projection, matching the width of the existing garage, will extend by around 2.3 metres. The design incorporates a hipped tiled roof over the side wings, complemented by a feature cupola to reflect the Arts and Crafts style of the main dwelling. Materials will include brickwork to match the existing house, with sandstone detailing to the forward projection to add visual interest and break up the elevation.
- 4.5. Overall, the proposals represent a modest increase in floorspace (approximately 57 sqm, equating to just 15% of the existing dwelling) while delivering a sensitive and well-integrated design that enhances both functionality and character.

5. PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) states that the Development Plan includes the adopted Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Material considerations include National Planning Guidance, and in particular the NPPF, together with supplementary planning documents adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 5.2. The approved Development Plan, in relation to this application, for the purposes of the Act, comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.3. Other relevant material considerations would include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) along with adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) such as the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Mid Sussex District Plan

- 5.4. The Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) was adopted on 28th March 2018. It covers the period 2014 - 2031 and sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved.
- 5.5. The following policies are considered most relevant to these proposals:

Policy DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- 5.6. This policy seeks to protect the countryside in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty and states that development will be permitted in the countryside provided it maintains, or

where possible, enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and is either:

- necessary for the purpose of agriculture; or
- supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document (DPD) or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.7. This policy seeks to ensure any development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) conserves or enhances the natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Policy DP21 - Transport

- 5.8. This policy states that development proposals should provide adequate car parking, protect the safety of road users and pedestrians, and not harm the special qualities of the High Weald AONB through its transport impact.

Policy DP26 - Character and Design

- 5.9. This policy seeks to ensure all new development, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, are well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside.

Policy DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

- 5.10. This policy states that development that would damage or lead to 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 the landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Policy DP38 - Biodiversity

- 5.11. This policy states that biodiversity will be protected and enhanced so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. It notes that appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species and that unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures.

Site Allocation DPD

- 5.12. The Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document was adopted on 29th June 2022. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment need.
- 5.13. There are no policies within this plan that are of particular relevance to the consideration of this application.

Ansty, Staplefield And Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (ASBNP)

- 5.14. The ASBNP was ‘made’ by the District Council on 2nd February 2017, and seeks to guide and influence development in the Parish up to 2031. The following policy would be most relevant to the consideration of these proposals:

Policy AS3 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.15. This policy is very similar to policy DP16 of the District Plan in that it requires development proposals within the High Weald AONB to show how they address the requirements of the NPPF and policies of the District Plan and:
- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB area; and
 - Demonstrate how they meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.1. The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner (paragraph 7). Paragraph 8 goes on to explain that “*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways*”: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.
- 6.2. Paragraph 9 states that planning decisions “*should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.*”
- 6.3. Paragraph 9 states that planning decisions “*should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.*”
- 6.4. Paragraph 10 states that, “So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development.**”
- 6.5. Paragraph 11 states that “*plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development... For decision-taking this means:*
- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*

- 6.6. Paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities “*should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*”
- 6.7. Chapter 12 relates to achieving well-designed places and paragraph 131 states that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.*”
- 6.8. Chapter 15 relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and paragraph 189 places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Mid Sussex Design Guide 2020

- 6.9. The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Document (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 this planning application.
- 6.10. Principle DG49 states that household extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. It notes extensions should normally be designed to be well integrated with the existing scale, form and massing and allow the original building to remain the dominant element of the property. It states that extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to complement and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. It notes the design approach may benefit from coordinating with the existing pattern of window and door openings and materials of the existing dwelling and alternatives to this approach should demonstrate the appropriateness of the approach followed.

High Weald Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan

- 6.11. On 22nd November 2023, all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were renamed as ‘National Landscapes’. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty become known as the ‘High Weald National Landscape’. All existing planning guidance and policies that relate to AONB’s apply in the same way to the High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.12. Within this report, reference is made to both National Landscape and the AONB. This is interchangeable, and reflects the specific wording of policies and policy documents.

- 6.13. The High Weald AONB was first designated in 1983. It covers a little under 1,500km² and covers 4 counties and 11 districts. It includes some 3,500 historic farmsteads and 17 market towns and villages.
- 6.14. The High Weald AONB Management Plan (HWMP) was first published in 2004. The most recent version was published in 2024 and seeks to cover the period up to 2029.
- 6.15. The HWMP sets out under the heading “Natural Beauty and the legislative purpose of AONBs (National Landscapes)” that the legal purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 85 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 sets out the general duty of public bodies as follows:
- 6.16. *“In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority other than a devolved Welsh authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.”*
- 6.17. The HWMP confirms that natural beauty is a holistic concept, and whilst the term has never been exhaustively defined in legislation, it has been made clear over the years that natural beauty includes considerations such as wildlife, geological features and cultural heritage but is not restricted by them.
- 6.18. The HWMP set out a Statement of Significance for the High Weald AONB, noting that it is one of the best preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe. Its natural beauty is derived from the essential rural and small-scale landscape character, rich in wildlife and cultural features.
- 6.19. The HWMP notes that there are 7 core character components of the High Weald’s natural beauty:
- 1) **Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate)** – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate;
 - 2) **Settlement** – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries;
 - 3) **Routeways** – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths);
 - 4) **Woodland** – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws;
 - 5) **Fieldscapes and heath** – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland);
 - 6) **Dark night skies** – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible;

- 7) **Aesthetic and perceptual qualities** – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape; and
- 8) **Land-based economy and rural living** – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.

6.20. Objective S2 of the HWMP is to enhance architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure new development reflects the character of the High Weald in its siting, scale, layout and design.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

- 6.21. The District Council is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current adopted District Plan. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 8th July 2024 and a number of initial hearings were held in October 2024.
- 6.22. In April 2025 the Inspector wrote to the Council setting out her initial findings on the emerging District Plan. In her view the Council had failed in its duty to co-operate with neighbouring authority's during the preparation of the emerging plan. Accordingly she recommended that the Plan should be withdrawn from the examination.
- 6.23. However, following the Governments recent announcement that it plans to abolish the Duty to Cooperate requirement early next year it is understood that the examination will be re-commenced, albeit dates are yet to be confirmed.
- 6.24. At this stage the policies of the emerging plan hold very little weight in the determination of this application.

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1. In the assessment of this application is it considered that the main issues are:

- Principle of development
- Design
- Landscape
- Impact on Amenity
- Ecology and Arboriculture
- Access and Parking

7.2. Each is now considered in turn.

Principle Of Development

- 7.3. National and local planning guidance consistently supports the provision of residential accommodation to meet the evolving needs of communities, including through extensions and adaptations to existing homes.
- 7.4. The application site is located outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore considered countryside for the purposes of planning policy. In this context, Policy DP12 seeks to safeguard the countryside from inappropriate development, Policy DP26 requires proposals to be well-designed and sensitive to their surroundings, and Policy DP16 aims to conserve and enhance the High Weald National Landscape.
- 7.5. The current proposal comprises modest extensions to an existing dwelling, designed to respect the character of the property and its setting. Subject to the detailed design and amenity considerations addressed below, there is no policy basis to resist the scheme. On the contrary, the application represents a proportionate and carefully considered enhancement that aligns fully with the spirit and objectives of local planning policy, delivering improved functionality without compromising the landscape or rural character.

Design

- 7.6. Policy DP26 requires all development, including alterations and extensions, to achieve a high standard of design that respects the distinctive character of towns and villages while remaining sensitive to the countryside setting.
- 7.7. As outlined above, and as set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, Red Oaks was created through the subdivision of a larger dwelling. While the formal entrance remains on the northern elevation, the most frequently used access point is from the east, directly off the driveway. The proposals seek to rationalise this arrangement by replacing the existing porch with a new utility room and introducing a thoughtfully designed accessible, glazed link. This link will connect the main house to the converted garage, creating a modern, functional entrance without adding significant bulk to the property.
- 7.8. The proposed alterations to the garage will transform its appearance, ensuring it complements rather than competes with the main dwelling. The design draws inspiration from the Arts and Crafts character of the house, incorporating features such as a hipped tiled roof and a decorative cupola, while maintaining a subservient scale akin to a traditional coach house. Brickwork will match the existing dwelling, with sandstone detailing to add visual interest and break up the elevation.
- 7.9. As a result of the creation of Red Oaks through the subdivision of a former, larger property, the dwelling sits to the western side of the plot with the majority of its private garden extending to the south and east. The extension and incorporation of the garage building as ancillary accommodation provides a better relationship with the expansive garden without encroachment.
- 7.10. The additions would be modest in relation to the scale, form and character of the existing property. Given the substantial size of the plot, the proposed increase in footprint is minimal

and will not result in overdevelopment and the new accommodation will remain a subservient addition to the property.

- 7.11. Overall, the extensions represent a sensitive, proportionate, and high-quality architectural solution. They enhance the character and functionality of the dwelling, strengthen its relationship with the curtilage, and provide accessible accommodation for the applicants. The proposals fully accord with Chapter 12 of the NPPF, Policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, and Chapter 9 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Landscape

- 7.12. The application site lies within the High Weald National Landscape. Mid Sussex District Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2005) identifies ten distinct landscape areas, with the site located in Character Area 10: *High Weald Fringes*. This area is described as the densely wooded southern flanks of the High Weald forest ridge, dissected by gentle ghyll streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. It encompasses settlements such as Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, and Lindfield, and is characterised by its intimate, complex rural landscape, significant woodland cover, and historic dispersed settlement pattern.

- 7.13. Key characteristics of the High Weald Fringes include:

- A wooded, enclosed rural landscape with ancient woodland, shaws, hedgerows, and hedgerow trees.
- Small, irregular assart fields interspersed with larger fields and remnants of heathland.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the South Downs.
- Traditional rural buildings using local materials such as timber framing, Horsham stone, and tile hanging.
- A network of lanes, tracks, and footpaths, alongside historic features such as hammerponds and ornamental lakes.

- 7.14. The application site reflects these qualities, sitting within a well-screened, rural setting with mature trees and hedgerows, particularly to the south, and a pattern of small, irregular fields. Extensive planting around the site ensures that public views are extremely limited. Where glimpses are possible, the proposals will be seen within an established residential context.

- 7.15. The proposed extensions are modest, single-storey additions that will have negligible impact on the wider landscape. Their scale, height, and design ensure they integrate seamlessly with the existing dwelling and setting. Given the substantial screening and the sensitive approach to design, the development will conserve, and arguably enhance, the character of the site and its relationship with the surrounding landscape.

- 7.16. Accordingly, the proposals comply fully with Chapter 15 of the NPPF (particularly paragraph 189), Policies DP12 and DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, and the guidance set out in the Mid Sussex Design Guide and High Weald Management Plan.

Impact On Amenity

- 7.17. Policy DP26 requires that new development safeguards the amenities of existing and future occupants, with particular regard to privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and protection from noise, air, and light pollution.
- 7.18. In this case, the nearest neighbouring property is the adjoining dwelling to the west, which will be largely screened from the proposed works by the existing house itself. To the northeast, the closest properties are situated over 50 metres away. This generous separation, combined with the single-storey nature of the proposed extensions and the presence of mature vegetative screening, ensures there will be no adverse impact on privacy, outlook, or light for neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.19. Given the modest scale, sensitive siting, and carefully considered design of the proposals, it is submitted that the development will fully comply with the amenity safeguards set out in Policy DP26 and will not result in any material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Ecology And Arboriculture

- 7.20. Policy DP38 seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, requiring that appropriate measures are implemented to avoid and minimise disturbance to sensitive habitats and species.
- 7.21. A preliminary bat roost assessment for the application identified only low potential for roosting bats in both the main house and garage, primarily due to lifted roof tiles. As a consequence the application is supported by a Bat Emergence Survey Report prepared by The Ecology Co-op. This report follows a detailed emergence survey designed to confirm the presence of roosting bats and assess the site's conservation value for bat species.
- 7.22. The findings are clear: no bats were observed emerging from either building, although some activity was recorded with bats foraging and commuting around the property. These results indicate that the buildings are unlikely to serve as regular roosting sites. Consequently, no further surveys or formal mitigation licences are required for the proposed works.
- 7.23. Accordingly, the proposed development will not harm or disturb sensitive or protected species, fully aligning with the objectives of Policy DP38.
- 7.24. Policy DP37 seeks to prevent development that would damage or result in the loss of trees or hedgerows that contribute to the visual amenity or character of an area.
- 7.25. The proposed works will involve the removal of a small section of an existing hedge that currently separates the driveway from the main garden. This hedge is domestic in scale and does not make a significant contribution to the wider character of the area.
- 7.26. Importantly, the proposals will have no impact on any of the mature or significant trees within the site, as the development is set well away from them. All key boundary hedgerows, which provide valuable screening and contribute to the rural character of the landscape, will be retained in full. These features will continue to offer soft landscaping and visual interest both within the site and in the wider setting.

- 7.27. On this basis, the scheme is considered fully compliant with Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, ensuring that the integrity and character of the landscape are preserved.

Access And Parking

- 7.28. Access to the site is via Staplefield Road, using a shared driveway for the initial section before reaching the gated entrance to Red Oaks. The existing driveway provides ample space for access, parking, and turning for multiple vehicles.
- 7.29. Although the proposal includes a modest forward extension to the garage's front elevation, this will not materially reduce the available parking or turning space within the site. The layout will continue to accommodate vehicles comfortably and safely.
- 7.30. While the development results in a small increase in the property's overall floor area, this will not generate any significant additional traffic movements to or from the site. Consequently, the proposals will have no adverse impact on the capacity or safety of the existing access from the public highway. Adequate on-site parking and turning facilities will be maintained to fully meet the needs of the dwelling.
- 7.31. On this basis, the application is considered to comply with Chapter 9 of the NPPF and Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

8. SUMMARY

- 8.1. The proposed development at Red Oaks represents a modest, carefully considered enhancement to an existing dwelling, designed to meet the evolving needs of the applicants while respecting the character and setting of the site. The scheme delivers accessible ground-floor accommodation to support long-term occupation and family care, without introducing significant bulk or harm to the surrounding landscape.
- 8.2. The design has been informed by a thorough understanding of the property, its context, and relevant planning policies. The extensions are proportionate, subservient to the main dwelling, and of high-quality architectural design that complements the Arts and Crafts character of the house. The proposals maintain the integrity of the High Weald National Landscape, with negligible visual impact due to the site's extensive screening and the single-storey nature of the additions.
- 8.3. There will be no material harm to residential amenity, with generous separation distances and intervening vegetation ensuring privacy and outlook are preserved. Access and parking arrangements remain safe and adequate, and the development will not increase traffic movements. The scheme avoids any impact on significant trees or boundary hedgerows, with only a minor domestic hedge affected, and retains the site's key landscape features.
- 8.4. In summary, the proposals:
- Conserve and enhance the rural character of the site and its setting.
 - Deliver a sensitive, proportionate design that meets family needs.

- Comply fully with the requirements of the NPPF (Chapters 9, 12, and 15), Policies DP12, DP16, DP21, DP26, DP37 and DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, and the guidance of the Mid Sussex Design Guide and High Weald Management Plan.

8.5. The application therefore represents sustainable, policy-compliant development and should be supported.