

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2829	Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed conversion of garage into living accommodation		
Site:	Ockenden Garden Lodge, Ockenden Lane, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5LD, ,		
Validation Date	3 Nov 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	5 Dec 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	12 Dec 2025
Target Date:	29 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Stefan Galyas</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	12 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2829

**Ockenden Garden Lodge, Ockenden Lane, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5LD,
Proposed conversion of garage into living accommodation
Mr And Mrs Horne**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

There were no letters of representation received in response to the current proposal.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer: *'The existing building is not of any particular historical or architectural merit, and makes at best a neutral contribution to the setting of Ockenden Manor and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed alterations are not considered contentious, subject to detail, and will not materially affect the building's contribution to the significance of these heritage assets.'*

'The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.'

Historic England: No comment.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Parish Council: No objection.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission to convert the existing ground floor garage into living accommodation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CU/144/81 - Conversion of existing Chauffeur's flat and garages to provide 3 bedroom detached private dwelling with double garage. Permission 26.05.1981.

07/00518/FUL - Single storey extension containing a games room and a kitchen breakfast room along with internal alterations to the house including a loft conversion with three dormer windows to provide new bedroom accommodation. Permission 08.05.2007.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application relates to Ockenden Garden Lodge, a detached two storey dwelling which features a mansard style roof. The property is set to the western side of the road and is served access by a front driveway. There is some garden amenity space set to the northern side of the dwelling where an existing mature tree is positioned within. A brick boundary wall separates the site from Ockenden Garden House and a timber built shed is positioned to the south-west of the site. In terms of existing materials, the dwelling is composed of brick exterior walls, a tiled roof, white uPVC windows and a timber front door.

With regard to the site's locality, there are a number of other detached residential dwellings with mature tree planting abutting the lane moving towards the north. This provides a general verdant character to the area.

The site is not located within any built up area boundary but is set within the Cuckfield Conservation Area which is also subject to an Article 4 Direction. The nearby Ockenden Manor to the south-west is grade II* listed.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposal would convert the existing garage at ground floor level into living accommodation, including a living, dining and kitchen room, a utility and a workshop. The existing garage doors to the principal (south-eastern) elevation would be infilled with horizontal cladding and white uPVC windows. To the side (south-western) elevation a new set of sliding/ bi-fold doors would be added in a patio coated aluminium material. To the other side (north-western) elevation, two new doorways would be added.

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 the Cuckfield 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:

DP21: Transport

DP26: Character and Design

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DP35: Conservation Areas

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.

Neighbourhood Plan

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (Made May 2014)

Relevant policies.

Policy CNP1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

CNP10 - Building Extensions Within and Outside the Built-Up Area Boundary

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) - Special Regard to be had to the preservation of a listed building or its setting.

Section 72(1) - Special attention to be paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Other Material Considerations

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 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:

DPS1 - Climate Change

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DPB3 - Conservation Areas

DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration. Paragraphs 2, 8, 11, 39, 48, 115-117, 131, 135, 139, 189, 207, 208, 209, 212-215, 219 & 220.

West Sussex County Council Guidance for Parking Provision 2018

ASSESSMENT

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

- Impact on Character and Appearance, Including Heritage Assets
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Highways and Parking
- Other Matters
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Impact on Character and Design, Including Heritage Assets

In terms of the impact on the Cuckfield Conservation Area, policy DP35 of the District Plan states:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:
o New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;
o Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;
o Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;
o Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;
o Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;

o New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.

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

New buildings of outstanding or innovative design may be acceptable in conservation areas provided that their impact would not cause material harm to the area.'

Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires the Local Planning Authority to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal.

The Cuckfield Conservation Area, by virtue of its designation, is significant in heritage terms and this significance is likely to arise from its aesthetic (fortuitous) value and historical (illustrative) value.

The NPPF states that 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.

Paragraphs 212 - 215 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.'

Policy DP26 of the District Plan 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 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'*

Policy CNP1 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan states that:

'New development in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted where it:

- a) Is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character and reflects the identity of the local context of Cuckfield as defined on Map 3 - Conservation Areas and Character Areas, by way of;*
 - i. height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings,*
 - ii. the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape), and*
- b) Is sympathetic to the setting of any heritage asset and*
- c) Follows guidance in the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, the High Weald AONB Management Plan, and*
- d) Respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site, and*
- e) Creates safe, accessible and well-connected environments that meet the needs of users, and*
- f) Will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution, and*
- g) Makes best use of the site to accommodate development.'*

Additionally, Policy CNP10 of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Building extension will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- a) The scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with the existing building and the character of the street scene.*
- b) Spacing between buildings would respect the character of the street scene.*
- c) Gaps which provide views out of the village to surrounding countryside are maintained.*
- d) Materials are compatible with the materials of the existing building.*
- e) The traditional boundary treatment of an area is retained and, where feasible, reinforced and*
- f) The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded.'*

The below assessment is made whilst being mindful of this guidance and having regard to the statutory duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to pay special attention and regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and nearby listed building in accordance with the requirements of Sections 66 and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposed alterations would likely offer a more domestic appearance to the building rather than the existing utilitarian appearance of the garage doors at ground floor level. Whilst the proposed materials would not exactly match the existing material palette, no objection was raised by the Conservation Officer in response to the application. It was however suggested that further details of materials would be required prior to the development's commencement. Such conditions are considered to be necessary and relevant should permission be granted.

To the other side elevations, the proposed patio door to the south-west would not result in an adverse impact despite the extensive amount of glazing proposed. The openings would provide access to the patio area as well as serving light to the living, dining and kitchen area.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to conserve the special character and appearance of the Cuckfield Conservation Area and the surrounding listed buildings and results in a neutral impact. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies DP26, DP34 and DP35 of the District Plan, Policies CNP1 and CNP10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

In terms of impact upon neighbouring amenities, Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that development: *'does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see DP29);'*

The proposal would not increase the buildings overall footprint and the proposed new window openings would solely be contained to ground floor level. Accordingly, the new windows are considered to be limited in outlook and would likely be obscured in their views towards neighbouring sites by the existing boundary walls. The proposal is therefore not considered to give rise to a significant overlooking or overbearing impact.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of neighbouring amenities.

Impact on Highways and Parking

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Additionally, Policy DP21 of the District Plan requires development proposals to protect the safety of road users and pedestrians.

The proposal would result in the loss of two internal garage spaces and therefore the residual parking demand would have to be met elsewhere on site. According to the West Sussex County Council Guidance for Parking Provision (2018), three off road parking spaces would be required for a three-bedroom property. There is an existing front driveway on site, and it is considered that this space would sufficiently accommodate the parking of three cars.

In light of the above, although the site would lose internal parking spaces, the existing driveway would meet the expected parking provision requirements. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy DP21 of the District Plan.

Other Matters

The proposed ground floor alterations would include the creation of a workshop which could be accessed through a separate door to the rest of the dwelling. It is considered that a condition is necessary restricting the workshop from becoming a separate use and to ensure that it remains ancillary to the host dwelling.

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

In conclusion, the proposal is appropriate in terms of design and will not negatively impact on the host dwelling nor its immediate setting and will not harm neighbouring amenities.

The proposal will comply with Policies DP21, DP26, DP34 and DP35 of the District Plan, Policies CNP1 and CNP10 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, the MSDC Design Guide and the requirements of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Stefan Galyas

