

Design and Access Statement

Proposal: Replacement of all windows and front door, conversion of one external door to a window, replacement of French doors and garage door with bi-folds, and associated works at 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Balcombe (Conservation Area).

Planning Portal Reference: PP-14296761

1. Introduction

This statement accompanies the Householder Application for works at 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Balcombe. The property lies within the Balcombe Conservation Area, where proposals must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. The statement explains the design rationale, material choices, and the proposal's impact on the heritage setting.

2. Site Context

4 Nostel Priory Cottages is a traditional dwelling located on Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe, within a recognised Conservation Area. The property is part of a group of cottages with historic character and sits within a landscaped plot bounded by hedging and stone walls. The building currently has a mix of timber, UPVC windows, and an older timber front door. These elements are of varying quality and detract from the overall heritage appearance.

3. Proposed Works

The application seeks permission for the following:

- Replacement of all windows with Black Heritage aluminium "Steel Replacement" profiles, featuring authentic Georgian bars to replicate the existing fenestration pattern.
- Replacement of the existing UPVC French doors and garage door with Black Heritage bi-fold doors with putty line detail.
- Replacement of the existing front door with a Harley aluminium framed door, incorporating reeded glass and gold hardware.
- Alteration of one existing external doorway into a matching side window.
- Associated driveway adjustments (removal of a section of hedge and creation of cobbled parking bays).

All other works are internal and outside planning control.

4. Design Justification

- Respect for Character: The replacement windows replicate the proportions and detailing of the originals, using slimline putty-line aluminium sections that maintain the heritage appearance while providing modern performance.
- Material Choice: High-quality aluminium is chosen for durability and minimal maintenance, with finishes that closely replicate the appearance of painted steel.
- Consistency: The use of Georgian bars ensures continuity with the existing layout, avoiding any change to the established rhythm of fenestration.
- Front Door: The proposed replacement door introduces a traditional design with sympathetic proportions and high-quality detailing appropriate to the Conservation Area.

5. Impact on the Conservation Area

The works will enhance the property's contribution to the Conservation Area by:

- Removing unsympathetic UPVC elements and replacing them with heritage-appropriate designs.
- Using a consistent and high-quality material palette that complements the cottage's traditional character.
- Improving the overall appearance of the building without altering its scale, form, or architectural integrity.

- Landscaping and parking adjustments have been carefully designed to retain and reinforce boundary planting and historic character.

No harm will arise to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area. On the contrary, the proposals will improve visual coherence and preserve its historic qualities.

6. Access

The proposals do not alter the main access arrangements to the dwelling. The entrance remains in its existing location, with improved door design for accessibility. Off-street parking is enhanced with sustainable surfacing, improving vehicle access and reducing on-street parking pressures.

7. Conclusion

The proposed works are sensitive, proportionate, and respectful of the Conservation Area setting. By replacing inappropriate UPVC and outdated joinery with heritage-appropriate designs, the development will enhance the appearance of the property and preserve the special character of Balcombe Conservation Area. The proposals therefore comply with the objectives of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and local planning policies requiring developments within Conservation Areas to preserve or enhance their character.