

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0371	Case Officer:	Katherine Williams
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed widening to existing driveway together with new brick pier to match height of existing and close boarded fence modified to suit new layout.		
Site:	Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6QG, ,		
Validation Date	16 Mar 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	28 Apr 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	30 Apr 2026
Target Date:	11 May 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Katherine Williams

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	30 Apr 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0371

**Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6QG,
Proposed widening to existing driveway together with new brick pier to match height of existing
and close boarded fence modified to suit new layout.
Mr And Mrs Whittingham**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATION

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

WSCC Highways Authority - no objection, recommend informative

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

04.04.2026:

Balcombe Parish Council commented that the drawings provided on the planning portal are incorrect and do not show the revised gateway, however BPC do not object to the proposed planning application.

07.04.2026:

Balcombe Parish Council commented that the drawings provided on the planning portal are incorrect and do not show the revised gateway, however BPC do not object to the proposed planning application.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the widening to existing driveway together with new brick pier to match height of existing and close boarded fence modified to suit new layout.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/25/2993 - Removal of two existing shipping containers and construction of a new timber structure measuring 4m x 6m. Granted

DM/25/2433 - Variation of Condition 2 relating to planning reference DM/24/2404. Granted

DM/24/3124 - Demolition of existing porch, construction of new porch and two-storey rear extension, together with associated internal and external alterations. Granted

DM/24/2404 - Proposed erection of a detached garage, workshop and store/office over for the use of Worth Glamping Ltd (Amended description 15/11/2024). Granted

DM/23/2749 - Construction of detached garage with adjacent workshop and storage over. Granted

DM/21/0240 - Permission to add two camping pods to the existing private camping facility. Granted

DM/16/3532 - Change of use of part of the land within the curtilage of Worth Lodge Cottage to enable the provision of a private camping facility for six months of the year. Granted

11/02474/FUL - Two storey side extension and alterations to existing house. Granted

11/02089/FUL - Relocation of vehicle access and drive off a public highway. Granted

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property consists of a two storey detached dwelling located off the southern side of High Street, within the countryside and the High Weald AONB National Landscape.

The locality is characterised by large areas of woodland with residential properties positioned sporadically along the highway. The properties are generally positioned close to the highway and contribute to the character of the area and the streetscene. The application property consists of a large two storey detached dwellinghouse which is positioned centrally within the plot with the existing access and parking area located to the western side. The property is partly obscured from the highway with perimeter close boarded fencing and mature hedging. The dwellinghouse has a traditional form and appearance with pitched gable roof forms with a central chimney stack, and is constructed in brick, hanging tiles, plain roof tiles and timber fenestration.

A glamping site utilises the same access as the dwellinghouse with the access continuing to the south which is position within an area of woodland.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed widening of the access would increase the width by some 4.3 metres with additional gravel hardstanding up to the highway and connecting to the existing driveway. The proposal would include the addition of an entrance brick pier of a height and materials to match the existing.

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 DPD and Balcombe 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:

DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP21 - Transport

DP26 - Character and Design

Mid Sussex Site Allocations Document (DPD)

The Site Allocations Development Plan Document was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs 2031.

No relevant policies.

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan (made September 2016)

Relevant policies:

Policy 3 - Design

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

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 hearings were concluded on the 19th March 2026. 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:

DPS1 - Climate Change

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

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)

National Planning Policy Guidance

Ministerial Statement and Design Guide

On 1 October 2019 the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government made a statement relating to design. The thrust of the statement was that the Government was seeking to improve the quality of design and drive up the quality of new homes. The Government also published a National Design Guide, which is a material planning consideration.

The National Design Guide provides guidance on what the Government considers to be good design and provides examples of good practice. It notes that social, economic and environmental change will influence the planning, design and construction of new homes and places.

Other Planning Guidance

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

ASSESSMENT

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

- Design and Character
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Impact on neighbouring properties
- Highway Safety
- Other Matters
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and Character

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex 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:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *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;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*

- *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);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *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;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan echoes the ethos of this policy.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide requires all development to be of a high standard of design.

The proposed widened access is of a form and design which is appropriate to the character of the existing property. The proposal would result in a reduced length of close boarded fencing adjacent to the highway and a more open frontage. The proposed additional gravel hardstanding would also be minimal and would retain the rural character of the property and the locality. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the property or the locality.

Impact on the 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.

Mid Sussex District Plan policy DP16 states:

'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;

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

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular'

Paragraphs 189 of the NPPF states that

'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 and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas'

A similar ethos is found within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan requiring proposals to conserve and enhance the AONB.

Given the design, form and scale of the proposal in relation to the existing property, and the materials within the locality, it is considered that the proposal would not have an impact on the AONB and would conserve it.

Impact on neighbouring properties

Policy DP26 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 Policy DP29);'

The closest neighbouring property is Monks Garden Cottage, which is some 250 metres from the application site. Given the significant separation distance, it is considered that the proposal would not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Highway Safety

The Local Highway Authority have been consulted on the application and do not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Other Matters

Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council regarding inaccuracies on the proposed plans. The plans provided are accurate and show the proposed widening of the access and gateway and are considered to be correct.

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.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size and scale to the dwellinghouse, would not impact on the AONB, and would not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties and is acceptable in terms of the impact on the highway. Therefore, the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP16, DP21 and DP26, policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application therefore accords with the Development Plan and is considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Katherine Williams