

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2685	Case Officer:	Catherine Cardin
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Conversion of garage into habitable space with replacement pitched roof.		
Site:	Albany, Deanland Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6PH, ,		
Validation Date	20 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	26 Jan 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	23 Feb 2026
Target Date:	15 Dec 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:	23 Feb 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2685

**Albany, Deanland Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6PH,
Conversion of garage into habitable space with replacement pitched roof.
Miss Helen Caudrey**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Heritage Officer

Albany is an unlisted semi-detached house located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. The property, which appears to date from the late 19th or early 20th century, is one half of a handed pair, part of a group of 4 similar pairs running along this western side of the northern end of Deanland Road. Although some of the houses within this group have been altered, many retain period features such as projecting canted bay windows at ground floor, sash windows, and brick detailing to the facades. The group makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

Albany, which is to the northern end of the group, as been extended to one side by a flat roofed garage addition. This is not a positive feature of the property, being unsympathetic in form to the period of the house, and detracting from the original symmetry of the semi-detached pair.

The current proposal is for the conversion of the garage for use as additional residential accommodation, with associated works including raising of the roof height behind a raised parapet, replacement of the garage door to the front elevation with a tripartite sash window, and installation of sliding folding doors to the rear.

Whilst I would not have an objection in principle to the conversion of the garage, aspects of the current proposal raise concerns in terms of the impact on the appearance of the property. I would suggest the following amendments to the scheme:

- Raising the height of the flat roof to the existing garage building including adding a parapet to the front elevation increases the bulk and visual prominence of this unsympathetic addition to the house, which has the potential to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. I would suggest that the applicant consider instead introducing a pitched roof above the converted garage- whilst this would also be higher than the existing roof structure, it would be more sympathetic in its form to the original architecture of the building, and would sit more comfortably alongside it. On balance, the improved form of a pitched roof would, subject to detail, be likely to be considered to outweigh the harm caused by the additional height and bulk.
- Whilst I would have no objection in principle to removing the garage doors to the front of the structure in favour of a window, I would recommend that the scale and proportions of the new window are rethought so that it (and the extension generally) reads as appropriately subordinate to the original house. In this context, rather than a large tripartite sash I would recommend a narrower single sash window similar in proportions to those to the bay window at ground floor. To compensate for this, additional light to the new room could be achieved by the installation of rooflights to the pitched roof suggested above.

In summary as it stands although I have no objection to the principle of the development, in my opinion aspects of the scheme require reconsideration to ensure that the character and appearance of the house, the group of which it is part, and the wider Balcombe Conservation Area are preserved.

Further comments on the above proposal following the receipt of revised plans:

The application has been amended to revise the roof form of the converted garage to show a pitched roof. This is a welcome improvement over the original proposal and the additional height to the garage is now acceptable in its impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. I note however that the proportions of the window to the front elevation of the conversion have not been significantly amended. This window remains in my opinion over scaled, and consequently unduly visually prominent in the context of the historic façade of the house. I would again recommend that the size of the window is reduced- if the sidelights were to be omitted leaving the central sash, this would be sufficient.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council has no objection to the proposed planning application.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of garage into habitable space with replacement higher pitched roof.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

BA/020/78- New garage to replace existing. Permission.

07/00212/COU- Proposed conversion of garage to a one bedroom cottage style unit. Remove garage door replace with timber windows. Refused.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Albany is a two-storey semi-detached property. The dwelling is characterised by red brick, white upvc windows and a plain tile roof. The property benefits from an attached garage to the side of the property.

The property lies within the built-up area boundary of Balcombe and within the Balcombe Conservation Area. Neighbouring properties are located to the north, south and west. Highway is located to the east.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission to convert the existing garage into habitable space and to replace the existing roof.

The proposed garage conversion would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of some 3 metres. It is proposed to install a window on the front elevation, 2 no. rooflights on the side (northern) roof pitch and to install aluminium bifold doors on the rear elevation. Brickwork would 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 Development Plan Document (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

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

The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan was made on 22 September 2016.

Relevant policies:

Policy 3 - Design

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:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPB3 - Conservation Areas

DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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)

ASSESSMENT

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

- Impact on Heritage Assets and Character and Appearance
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Neighbouring amenities
- Parking arrangements
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Impact on Heritage Assets and Character and Appearance

The site is located within the Balcombe Conservation Area, as designated in 1984. A Conservation Area is defined as an area of "special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states 'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of conservation preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'

Policy DP35 of the District Plan in part states that:

'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.'

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and requires all proposals to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside as well as addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. In part the policy requires proposals to be of a high-quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; and creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

Policy 3 of Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan relates to design and states: *'The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and to avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the significance and character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, where a building will command a view.'*

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide relates to general principles for extensions and states that:

'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. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.'

Principle DG50 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide relates to front extensions and states that:

'Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road. They are less likely to be acceptable in streets with a strong consistent building form as they risk disrupting the underlying order.'

Where front extensions are considered acceptable, they should normally be limited to a modest single storey or porch-type extension that reflect the character of the existing property.'

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.'

The Conservation Officer was consulted on the application and has provided a response. The Conservation Officer concludes that the proposed garage conversion and replacement roof remains appropriately subordinate and is not considered contentious. Furthermore, they concluded that the initial proposal to construct a parapet to the front elevation would potentially detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and therefore advised that a pitched roof would be more sympathetic to the original architecture of the building. They also recommended that a narrower single sash window in place of a large tripartite sash would be more sympathetic. Following their consultation response, revised plans were received which proposed a pitched roof but retained the tripartite sash window. The Conservation Officer now considers that the roof is acceptable in its impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area but that the window remains over scaled. However, in this instance it is considered that the proposed window reflects the character of the window at first floor level and is therefore considered to be sympathetic to the existing property.

The proposal is therefore considered to address the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding buildings and would preserve the character of the Balcombe Conservation Area. As such the proposal is deemed to comply with the above part of policies DP26 and DP35 of the District Plan, Policy 3 of Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan, principles DG49, DG50 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the relevant paragraphs of 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.

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.'

The application relates to an existing residential property within the built-up area of Balcombe. As such 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.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

In terms of impact on neighbouring amenities, Policy DP26 of the District Plan states proposals should *'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'.

To the north is a detached garage. Given the modest single storey nature of the proposal, it is not considered that the development would be harmful to the amenities of this neighbour. As no new windows are proposed on the side elevation, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to significant overlooking concerns.

To the south is Elm Cottage. Given that the development would be screened by the application property itself, it is not considered that the development would be harmful to the amenities of this neighbour.

Due to the domestic nature of the proposed development, it is considered that there would not be a harmful impact in terms of noise, air and light pollution.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan, and the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Parking arrangements

Policy DP21 of the District Plan states that to meet the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2011- 2026, decisions on development proposals will take account of whether: *'the scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;.'*

It is noted that the proposal would result in the loss of one parking space associated with the dwelling. West Sussex County Council Parking Standards Guidance (2020) outlines the County Council's approach to parking at new developments to ensure that sufficient parking is provided to meet the needs of the development while maintaining highway network operations, protecting surrounding communities and pursuing opportunities to encourage use of sustainable modes of transport. The property currently has three bedrooms. West Sussex County Council Parking Standards Guidance (2020) outlines that for a 3-bedroom dwelling in this location that 3 parking spaces should be provided. There is an external parking space in front of the garage to accommodate one car, which would remain. In addition, there are no restrictions on the surrounding roads that would prevent on road parking and the proposal would not result in the creation of any new bedrooms, which would increase parking demand. It is therefore considered that, in this instance, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of highways impact. Therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the WSCC Parking Standards Guidance.

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

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of design, size and scale to the dwellinghouse and locality, and would not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties and would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP16, DP21, DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Catherine Cardin