

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0972	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Retrospective garage conversion ancillary to residential accommodation (snug and utility) including installation of rear facing window.		
Site:	11 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, , ,		
Validation Date	24 Apr 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	19 May 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	9 Jun 2026
Target Date:	19 Jun 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	2
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Signed and Agreed By:	Joanne Fisher	Date:	11 Jun 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0972

**11 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, ,
Retrospective garage conversion ancillary to residential accommodation (snug and utility)
including installation of rear facing window.
Mr James Carr**

REPRESENTATION RECEIVED

2 letters of representation have been received in support of the application

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council had no objection to the retrospective planning application.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a retrospective garage conversion to habitable space including the installation of a window on the rear elevation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/18/4541 - Erection of 16 no. dwellings and associated development. Permission.

DM/23/0704 - Proposed single storey rear extension. Permission.

DM/25/1973 - Loft conversion proposing 2 dormers windows on the rear elevation and Velux windows on the front roof slope. Permission.

DM/26/0216 - Retrospective Velux window and a side door added to the existing garage and proposed rooflight to rear roof. Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a large, detached dwelling located within a cul-de-sac of 16 houses which is located within the south-eastern corner of Balcombe built-up area boundary, as defined in the District Plan. The countryside, as defined in the District Plan, surrounds Barnfield to the north, east and southern sides. The application site is located within the National Landscape of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The property is of brick and tile construction and its rear garden to the north is enclosed by 2m high close boarded fencing. The dwelling has white uPVC windows and doors across ground and first floor with grey aluminium windows on the existing dormers. A road on its eastern boundary accesses two properties at the rear. The front gardens are of open plan landscaping. The site is flat.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for a garage conversion to create a snug and utility room and for a floor to ceiling window on the rear elevation. The garage door is to remain in place. The window is white uPVC.

Planning permission is required as permitted development rights were removed as well as preventing the conversion of the garage as part of application DM/18/4541.

Condition 23 of the original permission for the development states:

'The garage buildings and parking barns shall be used only as private domestic garages for the parking of vehicles incidental to the use of the properties as dwellings and for no other purposes.'

Reason: To ensure adequate off-street provision of parking in the interests of amenity and highway and to accord with Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.'

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 AONB
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.

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan made in 2016.

Relevant policy:
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:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DPB1 - Character and Design

DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
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.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Paragraphs 8, 11, 131 and 135 are considered to be relevant.

National Planning Policy Guidance

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
- Impact on parking provision
- 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 relates to design and states in part that:

'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.'

A similar ethos is found within the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

The proposal has resulted in the only external alteration being the window on the rear elevation of the garage. The window is of the same materials to match the existing windows on the dwelling and is of an acceptable design. Additionally, the window is not visible from the street scene.

The proposal is therefore considered to address the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area, and as such the proposal is deemed to comply with policy DP26 of the District Plan and policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan.

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.'

Policy DP16 in the District Plan has a similar ethos.

The application relates to a garage conversion of an existing dwelling. It is situated within the built-up area of Balcombe. The proposal would not form an isolated development within the wider landscape. Due to the development being external and internal alterations, it is not considered to have an adverse impact on the overall landscape quality of the AONB.

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 properties

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 Policy DP29);'

The only external alteration is the window to the rear elevation which is at ground floor level facing into the application property garden. The proposal will therefore not result in significant harm to neighbouring properties and therefore complies with the above-mentioned part of Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Impact on parking provision

Policy DP21 of the District Plan states in part 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;'

Condition 23 of the original permission for the development (DM/18/4541) removed permitted development rights to convert the garage as set out within the application details of this report.

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.

It is noted in the submitted planning statement that it states the property has 2 parking spaces on the driveway. It is suggested that part of the grass and landscaping to the front could be paved over to help create this second space. However, this application can only assess what parking is already in place as the proposal does not create any additional hardstanding. Additionally, there is only 1 space that meets the 4.8 metre by 2.4 metre space requirements even if some of the garden was replaced with hardstanding.

The planning statement also makes reference to other garage conversions within the Balcombe area. However, all proposals are assessed on a case basis with parking requirements and spaces varying.

The application property was originally a 3 bedroom dwelling but has since been converted to a 4 bedroom dwelling as a result of a loft conversion approved in application DM/25/1973. West Sussex County Council September 2020 Parking Standards Guidance, outlines that for a 4 bed dwelling in parking behaviour zone 1, 2.7 spaces should be provided. The dwelling has parking for 1 car on the drive and the garage space already lost due to the retrospective nature of the proposal.

The proposal therefore has 1.7 spaces less than the requirements of the parking guidance. Additionally, whilst there are no on street parking restrictions within the new build estate, due to the narrow layout of the roads, junctions and other properties parking, there is very limited parking except for 5 designated parking bays which are shown to be visitor bays in the approved parking allocation plan of DM/18/4541. The loss of the garage would therefore not provide adequate car parking in highway terms and would be likely to cause obstruction and be prejudicial to highway safety.

As a result the proposal will create added on street parking pressures on an estate where there are already limited on street parking opportunities, and limited visitor spaces. Consequently, the proposal will result in a parking provision that fails to accord with the WSCC Parking Standards Guidance and District Plan Policy DP21.

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 would be acceptable in terms of design and neighbour amenity. However, the conversion results in the loss of an off-street parking space and is likely to increase the need for onstreet parking as the driveway space is below the WSCC Parking requirements for a 4 bed dwelling in Balcombe. The proposal would increase the need for on street parking which is already limited which would lead to obstruction and be prejudicial to highway safety. As such the resulting parking arrangement would be contrary to policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the West Sussex County Council Parking Standards Guidance and the NPPF, and permission should be refused.

Due to the retrospective nature of the application, the local planning authority deems that enforcement action is necessary in order to address the concerns that have been raised.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Peter Davies