

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2991	Case Officer:	Hamish Evans
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Conversion of the first floor of the Granary to facilitate ancillary accommodation to the main house together with associated minor external alterations.		
Site:	North Hall, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6AS, ,		
Validation Date	21 Nov 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	26 Feb 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	12 Mar 2026
Target Date:	16 Jan 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Hamish Evans

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Joanne Fisher	Date:	13 Mar 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2991

**North Hall, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6AS,
Conversion of the first floor of the Granary to facilitate ancillary accommodation to the main
house together with associated minor external alterations.
Mr Darren And Jacqueline Claire Stone**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party letters of representation have been received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

Ecology Consultant

No objection, subject to conditions.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council

No objection, subject to ancillary condition.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the first floor of the Granary for ancillary purposes and associated external alterations at North Hall Staplefield Lane Staplefield RH17 6AS.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located within the countryside and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site consists of a significant two-storey detached dwelling, which is a grade II listed building. It is characterised by white render, brown hanging clay tile and bare brick work walls, brown clay roof tiles and timber window and door frames. There are also a variety of single storey and two-storey buildings surrounding the existing dwelling and that are used in association with it. One of the buildings to the west of the existing dwelling is also a grade II listed building.

The application relates to a two-storey building which is located to the west of the existing dwelling. It is characterised by bare brick walls at ground floor level and timber clad walls at first floor level, brown clay roof tiles and timber framed window and doors. At ground floor level the building is used as storage and the garaging of vehicles. The application documents state that the first-floor level's existing use is as storage and a games room.

Staplefield Lane is located to the west of the site and Mallions Lane is located to the south of the site. The site is surrounded by open countryside and there is sporadic residential development within the surrounding area.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the first floor of the Granary for ancillary purposes and associated external alterations at North Hall, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield.

The proposal seeks to use the first-floor level for ancillary purposes, specifically for an office, gym and games room. The proposal also seeks to replace an existing rooflight, relocate the existing flue, new east facing window and internal works.

The submitted application documents advise that the annexe will not have separate or independent address, post box, utility meters, residential curtilage or access.

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 Mid Sussex District Plan, the Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD and Ansty and Staplefield 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:

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
DP15 - New Homes in the Countryside
DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DP26 - Character and Design
DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DP38 - Biodiversity

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.

Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan (adopted February 2017)

Policy AS3 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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 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.

DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPC3: New Homes in the Countryside

DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DPB1: Character and Design

DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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.

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives to sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). The three objectives are economic, social and environmental.

Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states *'these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.'*

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that for both plan-making and decision-taking, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states;

'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states;

'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

ASSESSMENT

The primary considerations of the application relate to:

- Principle of the development,
- Impact on heritage assets,
- Impact on character, appearance and countryside,
- Impact on nearby residents,
- Ecology,
- Biodiversity, and
- Conclusion.

Principle of development

As noted above, planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In terms of policy designations, the starting point for this assessment is that the application site falls outside of a built-up area as defined by the District Plan. As such the site is located within the defined Countryside.

Policy DP12 of the District Plan refers to the protection of the Countryside and states, in part, that development will be permitted in the countryside provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and is necessary for the purposes of agriculture or is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to new homes and annexes in the countryside and in part states, New 'granny annexes' that are physically separate to the dwelling are defined as a new home and are subject to the requirements as set out in DP15.

The application building is physically separate from the main dwelling at the site and there is the potential for facilities needed for an independent residential unit can be installed within the building. Whilst this is noted, the building does not have any independent external private amenity space and it does share an access with North Hall. It is also of a modest scale. The building is within close proximity of North Hall with it being 1.0 metre to the west of the main dwelling on the site.

Taking into account the above the building is considered to be an annexe which serves North Hall, the main dwelling on the site and a condition can be imposed to ensure that the building would only be used for purposes ancillary to the main dwelling. Therefore, an independent unit of accommodation has not been created and the requirements of policy DP15 are not considered to be relevant. Taking into account the above, subject to its compliance with other policies within the Development Plan, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable and it would in principle comply with policies DP12 and DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan,

Impact on Heritage Assets

The LPA is under a duty by virtue of s.66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area (LBCA) Act 1990 (Decision on application): to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development to protect listed buildings and their settings.

The application building is a curtilage listed within the residential curtilage of North Hall, a grade II listed building. There is also a grade II listed building to the west of the application building.

Paragraphs 212 - 216 of the NPPF state 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.

The proposed works are modest in their nature and there would be limited views of them from the public realm. The proposed external alterations would be of a sympathetic design and appearance to the rural setting of the site.

The Conservation Officer has commented on the application and subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal is considered to preserve the special interest of the listed buildings. The conditions that have been recommended include securing the details of the new flue pipe and rooflights. These conditions are considered to be acceptable. They also recommend a condition requesting additional information relating to the new windows and doors, that the existing metal casements to be removed are kept in appropriate separate storage and that the internal walls are lined with lathe and plaster. Given the level of information submitted with the application it is not considered necessary for further information to be submitted and as the removal of the metal casements has been considered acceptable it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require them to be retained in appropriate separate storage. Given the existing walls are not lined with lathe and plaster it is not considered necessary to require the walls to be lined as such.

Taking into account the Conservation Officers comments and the relatively modest nature of the works the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, paragraphs 212 - 216 of the NPPF and section 66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990.

Impact on Character, Appearance and Countryside

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural landscape character of the District.

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.

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

The proposed works are modest in their nature and there would be limited views of them from the public realm. The proposed external alterations would be of a sympathetic design and appearance to the rural setting of the site.

As such the proposed works are considered to address the character and scale of the existing and surrounding buildings and landscape and maintain the quality of the rural landscape character of the countryside. As such it is considered to comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

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 Policy DP29);'

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

Given the location of the openings they would not have direct views into neighbouring properties private amenity spaces and the application building is set away from the boundaries of the site. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents including taking account of the impact on overlooking and loss of privacy, reduction in sunlight and daylight and a loss of outlook. The proposal is therefore, considered to comply with the above-mentioned part of policy DP26 and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Impact on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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 and the Broads 66. 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.'

Footnote 66: English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

A similar ethos is found within policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan and the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029.

The proposed works are relatively modest in their nature and the design and character of the proposed works are considered to address the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such it would not have any adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB and the complies with the requirements of policy DP16 of the District Plan, policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029 and paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

Ecology

Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Paragraph 193 states in part that if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for, planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. This stance is reflected under policy DP38 of the District Plan which states in part that:

'Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to*

biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and...

The Council's Ecologist has commented on the application and stated that the submitted measures and information is sufficient enough to determine the application and subject to the imposition of conditions and compliance with the submitted information any protected species or their habitats within the site would be adequately protected.

Taking into account the above the proposal is considered to comply with the policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

It should be noted that biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This requirement is assessed in a subsequent section of the report.

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 development is considered to result in an annexe that would be used ancillary to the main dwelling, which can be secured by a suitably worded condition, as such the principle of development is considered to be acceptable. Due to the scale and nature of the development it would preserve the special interest of the listed buildings, address the character and scale of the existing and surrounding buildings and landscape and maintain the quality of the rural landscape character of the District. The proposal would not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents, it would have an acceptable impact on the landscape of the AONB and it would have an acceptable impact on protected species and their habitats. The development is exempt from the requirements of BNG. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DP12, DP15, DP16, DP26, DP34 and DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy ASW3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Hamish Evans