

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1413	Case Officer:	Caroline Grist
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed roof extension and enlargement of existing first floor level. New conservation style sky-lights to the front, side and rear elevations and a new access door at ground floor level, also to the side elevation.		
Site:	Flagstones, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6LN, ,		
Validation Date	2 Jun 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	4 Jul 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	28 Jul 2025
Target Date:	28 Jul 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Caroline Grist</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	28 Jul 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1413

**Flagstones, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6LN,
Proposed roof extension and enlargement of existing first floor level. New conservation style
sky-lights to the front, side and rear elevations and a new access door at ground floor level, also
to the side elevation.**

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SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received in response to this application.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer

Flagstones is an unlisted, detached 20th century house located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. It is a substantial two storey brick-built house in a vernacular style, with a tile hung upper floor and a hipped tiled roof with gablets and a side catslide. To the front elevation is a two storey hip-roofed projection, with an open porch beneath an upper storey supported on exposed timber posts. There is a flat roofed garage attached to the northern side, adjacent to the base of the catslide. The property is set back from the road behind a deep front garden, and there is a similarly generous garden to the rear.

This part of Stockcroft Road is characterised by substantial houses, in generous gardens. Notwithstanding the scale of some of the properties, the area has a generally open and verdant character, which due to the extensive front and rear gardens, grass verges, and presence of abundant trees, hedgerows and other planting. Although the spacing between the properties to this side of the road varies, and is in some places quite close-set, there are still views from many points along Stockcroft Road looking between and above the houses towards a line of mature trees beyond which marks the shared boundary between the rear of the houses to the east of Stockcroft Road, and those to the west of Deanland Road. These views contribute positively to the verdant character of the Area.

Although the Council does not have an adopted character appraisal for the Balcombe Conservation Area, the Council's document 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' contains a brief high level analysis of its key features, and notes with respect to Stockcroft Road and the surrounding roads (which were a later addition to the original Area):

'These roads are, for the most part, characterised by large detached houses of varying ages and styles with spacious gardens, set in attractive tree and hedge lined roads with wide grass verges. Although there has been some recent infill development these areas have retained an attractive character and appearance worthy of Conservation Area status.

The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

- o the large detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens, and the extensive grass verges bordering wide roads which contribute to the overall open character of the residential area of Stockcroft Road, Deanland Road and Oldlands Avenue;
- o the number of hedgerows and fine trees, both deciduous and evergreen, in the area...'

The current proposal is for an extension to the side of Flagstones, to remove the existing catslide roof and create a further hipped roof with gablet above a first floor addition sitting over the existing garage. An existing two storey rear range would also be extended so that its northern side elevation would be brought out to match. Rooflights are proposed to the front and rear elevations.

In my opinion, the proposal raises concerns in terms of the scale of the proposed extension, in terms of the impact that this has on the street scene of Stockcroft Road, and in particular in terms of the reduction of the high level gap between this property and the neighbouring property to the north, which will partly block the existing attractive views between the buildings and over the catslide towards the mature trees to the rear. These views add to the verdant character of the Conservation Area, as discussed above. In my opinion, the scale of the building as extended would also be such as to create a potentially overbearing relationship in design terms with the neighbour to the north, which is a more modest 1½ storey dwelling. The loss of the catslide roof to the existing house is also regrettable, as this is an attractive feature of the house which contributes to its 'vernacular' character, and creates a more harmonious relationship of scale with its lower neighbour.

For these reasons I consider that the proposal results in a degree of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, such that paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply. I would place this harm at the lower end of that scale. The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council have no objections to the proposed planning application.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for a roof extension and enlargement of existing first floor level, new conservation style sky-lights to the front, side and rear elevations and a new access door at ground floor level, also to the side elevation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

BA/001/92 - Removal of existing external metal staircase to be replaced with enclosed stair with entrance hall, and garden store below stairs. Permission.

BA/027/99 - Proposed house to replace existing. Permission.

BA/034/99 - Conservation area consent: Proposed house to replace existing. Permission.

DM/17/4531 - The proposed works include a small rear extension to enable an open kitchen space internally. The new rear wall is proposed to have bi-fold doors, and be constructed of brickwork and hung tiling, with a tiled pitched side roof, all to match existing materials. Permission.

DM/25/0076 - Proposed rear facing dormer structure, 3no. new conservation style sky-lights to the front and side elevations and a new access door at ground floor level, also to the side elevation. Refused.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Flagstones is a detached, west facing, two storey dwelling. It is constructed of red brick, with tile hanging at the first floor level, a plain tile roof and brown upvc windows. The dwelling is characterised by a gable projection, at the first floor level, which creates an open entrance below. To the side is an integral garage and the dwelling has a Dutch gable roof.

The site is located within the built up area of Balcombe. Neighbouring dwellings are located to the north, south and east, whilst the public highway is to the west. The house is set back from the highway by a paved frontage. The application site is also within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Balcombe Conservation Area.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is primarily sought for a roof and first floor extension to the side of the dwelling. The first floor works would enlarge an existing bedroom and create a dressing room and en-suite for another bedroom. Within the roofspace a new bedroom is to be created. The extension is to be some 3.0 metres

wide and 11.1 metres deep. It is proposed to continue the existing roof lines and the roof form would match the existing. The external materials are to match the host dwelling.

Two rooflights are proposed in the front, rear and side roof slopes and a new, ground floor door is proposed in the southern (side) elevation.

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 Allocations 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

DP26 - Character and Design

DP35 - Conservation Areas

Mid Sussex Site Allocations Document (DPD)

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

There are no relevant policies.

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan

The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 22nd September 2016.

Relevant policies:

Policy 1 - Built Up Area Boundary

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:

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DPB1 - Character and Design

Mid Sussex Design Guide

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

ASSESSMENT

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.'

Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to the AONB and states that:

'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:

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

This is also reflected in policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan.

The application relates to extending an existing dwelling, sited within the built up area of Balcombe. As the works are to take place within the built up area, the proposal would not form an isolated development within the wider landscape. Due to the development being an extension it is considered that there would not be an adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB. As such the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy DP16 of the District Plan, Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan, The High Weald Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Design and impact to the Balcombe Conservation Area

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'*.

This legislative requirement is reflected in Mid Sussex District Plan policy DP35.

Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- o Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- o Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- o Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- o Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- o New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.*

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'.

The NPPF states 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.

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'.

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to design and 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:

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o 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;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- o 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);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o 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;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan also requires the scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD also provides advice for extensions to dwellings. Principle DG49 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 relates to side extensions and states:

'Front and side extensions are typically visible from the public realm and will be resisted where they have an adverse impact on the street scene or the appearance of a dwelling.

Side extensions should normally be subservient to the original dwelling and typically be set-back from the front of the house to help define the original building.

The gaps between dwellings can sometimes positively contribute to articulating (for example, through the consistent rhythm of repeated houses) and adding interest in a street frontage or by providing views / visible connections to the surrounding countryside. Side extensions will therefore need to appropriately respond to the character of the street form and will not normally be accepted where they close an important gap and view'.

The application relates to an unlisted, detached house located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. The proposal has been reviewed by the Conservation Officer, who has commented on the application.

The Conservation Officer has identified this part of Stockcroft Road as having substantial houses in generous gardens. Notwithstanding the scale of some of these properties, it has been advised that the area has a generally open and verdant character, which due to the extensive front and rear gardens, grass verges, and presence of abundant trees, hedgerows and other planting. The Conservation Officer has further noted that the spacing, whilst varying on this side of the road and quite close-set, still provides views from many points along Stockcroft Road looking between and above the houses towards a line of mature trees beyond which marks the shared boundary between the rear of the houses to the east of Stockcroft Road, and those to the west of Deanland Road. These views are advised to contribute positively to the verdant character of the Area.

On this basis, the Conservation Officer has raised concern in terms of the scale of the proposed extension and the impact that this would have on the streetscene. This is particularly in terms of the reduction of the high level gap between this property and the neighbouring property to the north, which will partly block the existing attractive views between the buildings and over the catslide towards the mature trees to the rear. These views are advised as adding to the verdant character of the Conservation Area and the scale of the building, as extended, would also create a potentially overbearing relationship in design terms with the neighbour to the north, which is a more modest 1½ storey dwelling. The loss of the catslide roof to the existing house is also viewed as regrettable, as it forms an attractive feature of the house which contributes to its 'vernacular' character, and creates a more harmonious relationship of scale with its lower neighbour. It is therefore advised by the Conservation Officer that the proposal would result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, which would be at the lower end of the scale.

As set out in the Conservation Officer's comments, the spacing along Stockcroft Road varies and is quite close set in some places. Whilst the proposed development would result in a degree of enclosing, space would still remain between the application property and the neighbour to the north. Given this arrangement and that the hipped roof would slope away from this neighbour, it is considered that these works would not appear wholly incongruous, given the identified character of the streetscene, and that views would still remain between buildings and towards the mature trees to the rear. Furthermore the application property would remain set back from the highway, the extension is to be set down and set back, and the mature hedge to the front is not shown as being removed. The loss of the catslide roof is agreed as regrettable, however this on its own would not necessarily warrant the refusal of this application.

The Conservation Officer concluded that a degree of less than substantial harm would occur, at the lower end of the of the scale. As set out above, in this instance, it is considered the proposal would have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area.

As such, the application complies with policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Impact to neighbouring amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'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);'

To the north of the site is Burlestone, a detached bungalow, who would be closest to the proposed development. This neighbour has a side window facing the application property, which is understood to relate to a bedroom. The bedroom window is set away from the shared boundary by an integral garage. As such the submitted plans indicate that the proposed extension would be set away from the window by approximately 5.0 metres. Furthermore the proposal includes a hipped roof design that is pitched away from Burlestone, which would reduce the bulk closest to this neighbour and lessen the impact of these works. It is therefore concluded that, given the separation distance, orientation of the properties and pitched roof design, whilst there would be some impact to the light and outlook available to Burlestone the harm would not be significant enough to warrant the refusal of this application.

No windows are proposed that would result in any direct overlooking and, due to the domestic nature of the proposed development, it is considered that there would not be a significant level of harm with regards to noise, air or light pollution.

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

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP16, DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies 1 and 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Caroline Grist