

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0814	Case Officer:	Deborah Lynn
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Installation of a domestic ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array along the rear boundary of the property.		
Site:	Ranelagh, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NE, , ,		
Validation Date	31 Mar 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	25 Jun 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	29 Jun 2026
Target Date:	26 May 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Deborah Lynn

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	1 Jul 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0814

**Ranelagh, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NE, ,
Installation of a domestic ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array along the rear boundary
of the property.
Mrs Suzanne Holden**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Tree Officer

I have reviewed the Tree Plan and Battery Storage Location Plan and can see that the proposed work is at a suitable distance to have no impact on the trees. I have no objection and require no further information.

BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

The Committee of the 22nd June had a similar view to when this application was previously considered, and would Recommend Approval.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of a domestic ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array along the rear boundary of the property.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

07/00098/FUL - Demolition of existing garage and erection of granny annexe. Permission granted 02.03.2007.

08/01060/FUL - Retrospective application for gravel hardstanding/vehicle turning area (15m x 15m) at the existing access to highway (A273), for use as hardstanding to load sheep and horses for transportation in a safe manner. Erection of six stables adjacent to hardstanding. Erection of a pair of wooden security gates, six feet high. Permission granted 29.05.2008.

09/03913/FUL - Creation of a 40 x 20 metre horse exercising menage adjacent to existing stable block. Permission granted 10.03.2010.

10/01488/FUL - Demolish existing shed and greenhouse and replace with new shed. Permission granted 15.07.2010.

10/03444/FUL - Erection of four floodlights (400w) on existing horse exercising arena. Permission granted 12.01.2011.

12/00610/FUL - Extend existing double garage to incorporate a new exercise/games room and sauna. Permission granted 16.04.2012.

13/03886/FUL - Proposed extension and alterations to dwelling house, and existing planning consent 12/00610/Ful. For new exercise /games room and sauna. Refused 15.05.2014. Allowed at appeal (AP/14/0041) 05.03.2015.

14/01834/FUL - Erection of small hay barn. Permission granted 22.07.2014.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Ranelagh is a large detached dwellinghouse located on the eastern side of London Road to the south of Burgess Hill. The property adjoins a detached bungalow at Fairfields which is located to the east, with a large field located to the south.

The field is owned by the applicant who uses the land for private equestrian purposes. The land includes stables, a barn and exercise area and is served by a vehicular access and parking area located off London Road.

Land levels slope down to the south, providing views of the South Downs.

In terms of planning policy, the site lies within the countryside and a WSCC Archaeological Notification Area. A public bridleway (19bBH) runs parallel to the property to the north.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Permission is sought for the installation of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array within the adjoining field to the south of the property.

34 x 515 W solar PV panels are proposed to be installed adjacent to the southern boundary of the property at Fairfields. The PV array is shown to measure 38.5 metres long by 1.95 metres wide and 0.35 metres high. The panels will be sited on a low mounted frame, on a Type 1 MOT sub-base.

The associated battery storage unit is proposed to be installed between the garages serving Ranelagh and Fairfields.

The proposed array will be used for private domestic purposes, to improve the sustainability of the property at Ranelagh and reduce reliance upon grid electricity.

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 and the Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD).

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
- DP26 character and design
- DP34 listed buildings and other heritage assets
- DP37 trees, woodland and hedgerows
- DP39 sustainable design and construction
- DP40 renewable energy schemes

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.

Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan

The application site lies outside the Neighbourhood Plan area.

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 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
DPS3 renewable and low carbon energy schemes
DPS6 health and wellbeing
DPN4 trees, woodland and hedgerows
DPC1 protection and enhancement of the countryside
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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration. The following paragraphs are deemed relevant when considering this application:

167. Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.

168. When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should:

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future;
- b) recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;
- c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site.

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

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.

218. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues deemed relevant to the consideration of this application are:

- Principle of development;
- Design and impact on character of area;
- Impact on neighbouring amenities;
- Impact on trees;
- Impact on archaeology;
- Biodiversity net gain.

Principle of development

Policies DP39 and DP40 of the District Plan are deemed relevant when considering the principle of development.

DP39 relates to sustainable design and construction and encourages that development proposals use renewable sources of energy.

Policy DP40 relates to renewable energy schemes and states in part that:

'Proposals for new renewable and low carbon energy projects (other than wind energy development - see below), including community-led schemes, will be permitted provided that any adverse local impacts can be made acceptable, with particular regard to:

o Landscape and visual impacts, including cumulative impacts, such as on the setting of the South Downs National Park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the appearance of existing buildings;

o Ecology and biodiversity, including protected species, and designated and non-designated wildlife sites;

o Residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour, traffic generation, recreation and access.'

Principle DG37 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD also encourages the incorporation of renewable energy such as photovoltaics.

The proposed solar array will be used for private domestic purposes to improve the sustainability of the property, thereby reducing reliance upon grid electricity.

The proposal is therefore supported in principle by the above policies, subject to other planning policy considerations.

Design and impact on character of area

As the site lies within the countryside, NPPF paragraph 187 is relevant, stating in part that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

This stance is reflected under policy DP12 of the District Plan which states that development proposals will be permitted in the countryside provided they maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and requires all proposals, including alterations and extensions, 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.

The proposed solar array will be installed on a freestanding ballasted PV mounting system. Plans indicate that the solar array will be no higher than 0.35 metres and will measure 38.5 metres in length.

Given the low profile of the array, which will be discreetly sited adjacent to the southern boundary of Fairfields, the proposal is considered to have limited visual impact within the locality. Ground levels rise slightly to the south of the proposal, forming a natural bund which should assist in screening the array in views to the south. The proposal should not be visible in views from the public bridleway that runs parallel to the north of the property.

The proposed battery storage unit will also have limited visual impact, being located between the garages serving Ranelagh and Fairfield, where it will be obscured from public view.

As such, the proposed development, by reason of its design, scale and siting is considered to maintain the rural and landscape character of the District, thereby according with aforementioned policies.

Impact on amenity

Policy DP26 of the District Plan refers to amenity and states that development 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*'.

Given the low profile of the proposed development, the proposal is not considered to affect neighbouring amenities in terms of affecting light levels, outlook or privacy.

Impact on trees

Policy DP37 of the District Plan refers to trees and states in part that: '*development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.*'

A large Fir tree lies on the southern boundary of Fairfield, with Oak trees located on the eastern boundary of the field.

The applicant has provided an aerial plan showing the location of the trees in relation to the solar array and advises that the proposed works would not involve any pile driving or deep excavation.

The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the proposal and advised that the proposed works are a suitable distance as to have no impact upon the trees.

As such, the proposal is deemed acceptable from an arboricultural perspective, thereby according with policy DP37.

Impact upon archaeology

The application site falls within a grade red WSCC Archaeological Notification Area (reference DWS8680) which covers the route of the Roman road through Mid Sussex.

Section 16 of the NPPF is therefore relevant in this instance, as is District Plan policy DP34 which states in part that '*the Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.*'

As the proposed development would not involve any significant excavation works, it is not considered that the significance of the Archaeological Notification Area should be impacted. However, a condition can be attached to the permission to ensure that if any artefacts are discovered appropriate action would be undertaken.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

As the proposed solar array would be sited in an adjoining field, outside the domestic curtilage of the property, a full planning application has been submitted for the proposal.

From the 2nd April 2024, small sites are legally required to achieve at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity value for the development. However, this requirement is not applicable for householder applications and development.

Whilst a householder application has not been submitted for the development (as the land falls outside the boundary of the domestic curtilage of the property) the proposed development would serve the existing dwellinghouse and is considered to fall within the remit of a householder application which is defined under section 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as follows:

"householder application" means—

(a) an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse, or

(b) an application for any consent, agreement or approval required by or under a planning permission, development order or local development order in relation to such development.'

In view of the above, the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development is for an existing dwellinghouse and therefore there is no legal requirement for the proposal to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed development is deemed acceptable as it will improve the sustainability of the property and is appropriate in terms of design, scale and siting such that it should not detract from the character of the area, thereby maintaining the wider landscape and rural character of the District. The proposal should not cause harm to neighbouring amenities or nearby trees. The proposal therefore accords with policies DP12, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP39 and DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Deborah Lynn