

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1708	Case Officer:	Hamish Evans
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage)		
Site:	Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1RZ, , ,		
Validation Date	9 Jul 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	7 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	23 Sep 2026
Target Date:	3 Sep 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Hamish Evans

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	24 Sep 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1708

**Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1RZ, ,
Alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external
and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal
alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage)
Peter And Hayley Reid**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party letters of representation have been received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

Identifies less than substantial harm to the curtilage listed buildings, and through impact on setting to the special interest of Sunte House.

Historic England

Recommend approval.

MSDC Tree Officer

No objection subject to conditions.

Place Services Ecology

No objection subject to conditions.

NatureSpace Newt Officer

No comment.

MSDC Flood Risk and Drainage

No objection.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Haywards Heath Town Council

No comment.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage). The application site is located at Sunte House Birchen Lane Haywards Heath RH16 1RZ.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

05/02450/FUL. Conversion of redundant barn and cowshed together with existing cottage to form two dwellings. Permission.

05/02781/LBC. Conversion of redundant barn and cowshed together with existing cottage to form two dwellings. Permission.

DM/21/0793. To obtain formal confirmation of implementation, and continued validity, of the existing consents HH/05/02450/FUL and HH/05/02781/LBC (conversion of redundant farm buildings with existing cottage). Permission.

DM/25/1705. Proposed demolition and removal of roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. Proposed construction of rear extension to main house and extension linking the Dairy and Toolshed outbuildings. Proposed construction of new poolhouse and associated external and internal works, including window replacements. Permission.

DM/25/1706. Proposed demolition and removal of roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. Proposed construction of rear extension to main house and extension linking the Dairy and Toolshed outbuildings. Proposed construction of new poolhouse and associated external and internal works, including window replacements. Permission.

DM/25/1709. Alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage). Pending consideration.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located within countryside and adjacent to the built-up area boundary of Haywards Heath, which is located to the south of the site. The site consists of a former home farmstead of the estate of Sunte House which is a substantial Grade II* listed building.

The application site is located to the northeast of the main house. The farmyard includes a large timber framed, weatherboarded barn dating originally from the late 17th- early/mid-18th century, which would appear to have been altered and/or partly rebuilt during the 1980s, a late 18th/early 19th century stables and cowshed, and a mid-19th century byre. A mid-19th century cottage forms the northwest corner of the yard. These buildings are regarded as curtilage listed, and have group value with Sunte House and the Grade II listed garden buildings, contributing positively to their setting.

The existing barn is a two-storey building with a large catslide roof. It is characterised by block work and timber clad walls, brown clay roof tiles and timber framed windows and doors. The existing stable building is single storey in its nature and is characterised by block work walls, brown concrete roof tiles and timber window and door frames. The existing cow shed is single storey in its nature and is characterised by block work walls, brown clay roof tiles and timber window and door frames. The existing open-sided Byre is single storey in its nature and characterised by block work walls, brown clay roof tiles and timber framing. The existing cottage is single storey in its nature and is characterised by bare brown brick work walls, brown clay roof tiles and white timber window and door frames.

The site is accessed from a private road to the north which leads to Birchen Lane. There are several trees located within the site that are category A, B, C and U trees. To the east, north and south of the application are existing residential properties and to the west of the site is open countryside.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage). The application site is located at Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, RH16 1RZ.

The proposed alterations to the barn consist of a single storey side extension, four proposed rooflights, replacement brown clay roof tiles, new timber horizontal cladding, replacement ground floor windows, a

new wood burner flue, the installation of partition walls internally to create a kitchen, WC and mezzanine floor. The proposed side extension would measure some 2.5 metres in width, 5.8 metres in depth, an eaves height of 2.3 metres and a total height of 4.6 metres. It has been confirmed that the building would continue to be used for ancillary purposes to the main dwelling Sunte House.

The proposed alterations to the existing stables consists of new timber cladding to existing elevations, replacement timber doors, replacement ground floor north and south facing windows, replacement roof tiles and a new wood burner flue. It has been confirmed that the building would continue to be used for ancillary purposes to the main dwelling Sunte House.

It is proposed that the existing cowshed will be internally partitioned. The northern element will be connected with the existing byre and together they would provide a gym, toilet, changing room, plant room, garden store/potting shed and mower/equipment store. The southern element will be incorporated into the cottage building. The proposal would also include elevational alterations to the cowshed and byre including windows, doors timber cladding and brickwork.

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.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application, and*
- b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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
DP38 - Ecology
DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

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.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (adopted December 2016)

Relevant policies:

Policy E9 - Character and Design
Policy H9 - Extensions to existing dwellings

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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
DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DPN7: Noise Impacts
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPB1: Character and Design
DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DPT4: Parking and Electric Vehicle (EV) 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

ASSESSMENT

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

- o Impact on Heritage Assets
- o Impact on Design, Character and Appearance of the Area
- o Ecology
- o Impact on Residential Amenity
- o Flood Risk and Drainage
- o Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- o Sustainability
- o Biodiversity Net Gain
- o Planning Balance and Conclusion

Assessment

Impact on Heritage Assets

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall 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 seeks to preserve the special interest of the Listed Building. However, it is considered to have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF.

The policies require development conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Applications should identify whether there is harm to the significance of the heritage asset and that if there is harm this will be a matter of considerable importance and weight. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal.

The application building Sunte House is a grade II* listed building.

The Council's Conservation Officer has objected to the proposal identifying less than substantial harm to the curtilage listed buildings, and through impact on setting to the special interest of Sunte House. This is due to the proposed elevational treatment to the existing buildings. They raise no objection to the other elements of the application, subject to imposition of conditions. Historic England have raised no objection to the proposal.

Whilst the Conservation Officer's comments are noted, the elevational treatment would be relatively traditional in its appearance and openings would be in similar locations to existing openings. A condition can also be imposed to ensure that any repair or replacement works are done sympathetically. As such, whilst the Conservation Officers comments are noted, it is not considered that the development would result in harm to the significance of the heritage assets. Taking into account, the above the proposal is considered to preserve and conserve the special interest of the listed building. As such the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF and section 66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990.

Impact on Design, Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DP12 relates to development located within the countryside, Due to the publication of the NPPF these policies are considered to be materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should therefore be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF relates to improving the natural environment. Part 1a requires proposals to contribute positively to the natural environment and to *'Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced'*.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. In addition, policies E9 and H9 of the Neighbourhood Plan have a similar ethos. However, these are considered to have very limited weight due to the publication of the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Policy DP3 of the NPPF sets out the key principles for well-designed places. This sets out in part that proposals should respond to their context, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

The proposed works are considered to be characterised by materials that are sympathetic to the existing structures and surrounding buildings. The proposed works are considered to be sympathetic in their design, of a modest scale and due to the position of the works there would be limited views of them from the surrounding area. The development is located near existing development. As such it is considered that the development would respond to its context, integrate with the surrounding area and conserve the natural beauty of the countryside. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and policies N2 and DP3 of the NPPF.

Ecology

Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to biodiversity and seeks to protect existing biodiversity. It is considered that this policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with NPPF and greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF requires development minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and conserve the environmental qualities of land including habitats.

The Council's Ecologist has commented on the application and advised that the proposal's impacts to protected and priority habitats and species can be suitably minimised subject to the imposition of a number of conditions.

The development is considered to be acceptable in respect of the impact on ecology. Considering, the above it is considered to comply with the above-mentioned part of policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy N2 of the NPPF.

Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that new development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings. Policy H9 of the Neighbourhood Plan requires development safeguard adjoining neighbour's amenities. It is considered that these policies have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Policy L2 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of land. Part L2(1dii) requires proposals to have *'acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space'*.

Policy P3 of the NPPF relates to living conditions and pollution. Part 2(b) of this policy requires proposals *'Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site'*.

The proposal does not seek to increase the size of the existing buildings by a significant amount and the proposed extension to the barn is of a relatively modest nature. Due to the position of the proposed

openings, they would not have direct views into neighbouring properties private amenity spaces. The proposed openings are also considered to provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to the interior of the buildings.

As such the proposal is not considered to cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of nearby residents. The works are therefore, considered to comply with the above-mentioned part of policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 of the District Plan relates to flood risk and drainage. However, it is considered to have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policies F4 and F7 of the NPPF.

Policy F4 requires site specific flood risk assessments be appropriate to the development proposed and policy F7 requires development not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The site is located in an area of increased surface water flood risk. The Council's Drainage Engineer had raised no objection to the application and that drainage should be managed via Building Regulations and Building Control, as necessary. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of its impact on flood risk and drainage and it would comply with the above part of policies F4 and F7 of the NPPF.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to the protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows. Very limited weight is given to this policy as it is considered to be materially inconsistent with the NPPF. Greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF relates to conserving existing natural features of visual and nature conservation value such as established trees.

The Council's Tree Officer has raised no objection to the application and advised that the development would have an acceptable impact on existing trees subject to the implementation of the measures set out in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Taking into account the above it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the existing trees on the site and it would comply with policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy N2 of the NPPF.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to sustainable design and construction and supports measures that improve the sustainability of a development. However, it is considered to have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy CC2 of the NPPF.

Policy CC2 of the NPPF advises development should use design approaches which conserve energy and other resources and take advantage of opportunities to reuse existing structures and materials. It also states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings.

An energy and sustainability section was included as part of the Design and Access Statement. It includes roof insulation strategy, details of solar PV panels, upgraded glazing and Air Source Heat Pumps. These measures are considered to improve the energy efficiency of the existing building. A condition can be imposed to secure the implementation of these measures. As such it is considered that the proposal would comply with policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy CC2 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion the development is considered to respond to its context, integrate with the surrounding area, conserve the natural beauty of the countryside and preserve the special interest of the listed and curtilage listed buildings. There would not be an adverse impact on protected species of their habitats, adverse impact in there would not be unacceptable harm to the amenities of nearby residents, the development would be acceptable in respect of flood risk, drainage and sustainable design and construction. The development is also exempt from the requirements of BNG. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DP12, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP38, DP39 and DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and policies HE4, HE5, HE6, N2, DP3, L2, P3, F4, F7 and CC2 of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Hamish Evans