

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2311	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	To replace all existing windows, currently comprising a mixture of wooden frames and UPVC, with Steel Replacement aluminium profiles. Alteration to external door opening to be reduced and converted to a side window. Replacement of french door with bi-fold door. Garage door replacement with bi-fold door and conversion to form part of new kitchen. Adjustment of parking bays. Front door replacement.		
Site:	Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6PE,		
Validation Date	16 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	21 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	17 Dec 2025
Target Date:	11 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Anna Tidey

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	18 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2311

Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6PE

To replace all existing windows, currently comprising a mixture of wooden frames and UPVC, with Steel Replacement aluminium profiles. Alteration to external door opening to be reduced and converted to a side window. Replacement of french door with bi-fold door. Garage door replacement with bi-fold door and conversion to form part of new kitchen. Adjustment of parking bays. Front door replacement.

Mrs Alecia Ridout

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer:

Llain is an unlisted, attached dwelling located within the Balcombe Conservation Area. It appears to date from the mid-late c20th, and is attached at its southeastern side to an apparently earlier (possibly c19th) row of cottages. The house is of an L shaped footprint and is of two storeys, with yellow brick at ground floor and painted weatherboarding at first. It has a hipped roof with a projecting gable to the northwestern elevation. The existing windows, which are Georgian style multi-pane casements, appear to be largely timber. The property is set in a modest garden with thick hedging to the road frontages to the north and east.

In my opinion, the property as a whole makes a modest positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in particular in respect of the boundary hedging, which enhances the semi-rural character of this edge-of-village location. The house itself is perhaps neutral in this respect, although some aspects of its design including the facing materials and use of timber casement windows are sympathetic to the wider context of the centre of the village.

The current proposal is for the following works:

- Replacement of all windows with black aluminium framed windows with planted glazing bars;
- Conversion of an external door to window opening;
- Replacement of an existing uPVC French window with aluminium bifolding doors;
- Conversion of the existing attached garage to form part of the new kitchen, with replacement of the garage door with aluminium bifold doors;
- Removal of a section of hedge to allow for repositioning of parking bays; and
- Replacement of the front door with an aluminium framed door with glazed panels.

To consider these works in turn:

- The existing windows to the property appear to be largely timber framed, although some uPVC units are present. The presence of uPVC detracts from the traditional character of the Conservation Area, and its replacement with a more appropriate material would be welcomed in principle. The replacement of the existing timber windows is also not considered contentious in principle. However, in this instance the proposed use of aluminium throughout the property is a concern given the lack of other examples of the use of this material to windows and doors to residential properties within the village centre. Unless the applicant is able to offer a robust justification for this aspect of the proposal it is my opinion that it should be amended to show replacement painted timber windows and doors. This material will be more appropriate to the 'traditional' style of the house and to the wider character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- The proposed alteration to the door opening to form a window is not considered contentious.

- The conversion of the garage and replacement of the garage door with bifolding doors is not contentious in principle, subject to detail of the doors.
- The proposed alterations to the access and parking arrangements affects the northern frontage of the property, which is currently largely enclosed by a mature hedgerow, with a vehicle access towards the western end. The proposal is for the removal of a section of this hedge to the east of the existing access, creating a more open frontage with off street parking in front of the house. Although the hedgerow removal would be partly mitigated by replacement hedging to the existing access, there will be a net loss of hedgerow, and the replacement planting will not have the same character as the existing mature hedge. The enlarged opening will also increase the visual prominence of the house in views from the street. This will have an adverse effect on the currently verdant and semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area, detracting from its significance. I would recommend that this aspect of the proposal is reconsidered to retain the existing access and hedgerow.
- The replacement of the front door is not considered contentious in principle, but please see above with regards to the material choice.

In summary, the proposal raises concerns in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Balcombe Conservation Area, arising from the proposed material for the replacement windows and doors, and the revised off street parking arrangements with associated loss of boundary hedging. This fails to meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, at around the low-mid point of that scale.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council: Balcombe Parish Council raises no objection to the proposals in principle; however, the Council is concerned about whether adequate parking provision will remain for a property of this size, including the proposed annex. The Council also queries the choice of window colour and the removal of existing fenestration.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission for various works to alter a 3 bed end of terrace property known as 'Llain', 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, which is located within the centre of Balcombe.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant planning history.

SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The house has an L shaped footprint and accommodates a dwelling with an attached two storey annexe, which is accessed independently at ground floor, but linked at first floor, next to an integral single garage. At first floor the annexe accommodation extends over the garage and it is linked via an internal door to the third bedroom. The annexe benefits from a separate access doorway, which faces in a north easterly direction, an entrance hall and a utility on the ground floor. The first floor of the annexe is reached by a separate staircase which leads to a small kitchen, bathroom and living room.

The house is located on a corner plot opposite converted stables and a former coach house sited in the grounds of a Grade II Listed building at Balcombe House (to the north of the site). The longer L shaped wing of the house is orientated to face in a north westerly direction, with the front door located in the main façade, which is constructed in brick with first floor white painted horizontal weather boarding. The existing windows on the public facing elevations of the house are of white painted timber. To the rear of the house white UPVC doors and windows have been added. The existing windows are of a multi paned Georgian style.

Much of the house is obscured in public views from the shared access road by substantial hedgerows which border the shared access lane, which also provides access, via a pair of solid timber gates, into the garden. Here there is a tarmac drive way providing two parking spaces laid out in a tandem arrangement.

A public footpath (Route BAL/30Ba/1) passes the northern boundary of the site along the access road, starting from Haywards Heath Road and extending into the countryside to the eastern side of the village.

The property is located in the High Weald National Landscape/AONB, within the Balcombe Conservation Area and inside the Built up Area boundary of Balcombe.

APPLICATION DETAILS

This application seeks planning permission to replace all of the existing windows in the house with steel replacement windows with aluminium profiles. In addition an external doorway is proposed to be reduced in scale and replaced with a new window, a French doorway in the south western side elevation is proposed to be replaced by a bi-fold door, the garage door with a similar bi-fold door and the front door and side lights are also to be replaced.

Associated works include the conversion of the existing garage to allow the relocation and enlargement of the main kitchen in the house, the one bed annexe accommodation being relocated into the ground floor of the western side of the building. The existing annexe hall and utility room are to be formed into a new utility/store with a retained outside access doorway. At first floor level the existing annexe space is shown to be converted into a master bedroom with an ensuite. The total number of bedrooms in the property is to increase from 3 to 5 as a result of the proposed internal alterations.

The planning application also seeks permission to alter the parking bay arrangement for the dwelling. The submitted plans include a garden relandscaping plan. This will remove the existing gated vehicular access to create an enlarged private garden space on the eastern side of the house.

The proposed plans show the provision of a pair of parking spaces set perpendicular to the access road off a widened access, with a new paving stone path leading directly to the front door. An approx. 8m long section of the frontage hedge will need to be removed to allow for the creation of this new arrangement. A section of the front hedge and the existing pedestrian access gate are shown to be retained and proposed new hedges will be planted to provide privacy to the new side paved patio, lawn and outdoor seating area.

The application has been accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, window and door specifications. These documents are available to view on the planning file.

The DAS contains a Design justification, which includes the following points:

- 'Respect for Character: The replacement windows replicate the proportions and detailing of the originals, using slimline putty-line aluminium sections that maintain the heritage appearance while providing modern performance.
- Material Choice: High-quality aluminium is chosen for durability and minimal maintenance, with finishes that closely replicate the appearance of painted steel.
- Consistency: The use of Georgian bars ensures continuity with the existing layout, avoiding any change to the established rhythm of fenestration.
- Front Door: The proposed replacement door introduces a traditional design with sympathetic proportions and high-quality detailing appropriate to the Conservation Area.
- The works will enhance the property's contribution to the Conservation Area by:
 - Removing unsympathetic UPVC elements and replacing them with heritage-appropriate designs.
 - Using a consistent and high-quality material palette that complements the cottage's traditional character.
 - Improving the overall appearance of the building without altering its scale, form, or architectural integrity.
 - Landscaping and parking adjustments have been carefully designed to retain and reinforce boundary planting and historic character'.

During the course of determining the application the applicant has also supported the application with correspondence to justify and explain her preference for black windows, including a photomontage of the house to illustrate the appearance of the proposed replacement windows, details of other properties in Balcombe Conservation Area where she believes aluminium windows have been installed (including in a green colour), further details of the benefits of the proposed heritage putty-line aluminium system - energy efficiency, longevity and reduced maintenance and precision detailing, the presence of black windows in the wider area and on a nearby commercial property (Fable & Bloom), and to explain her longer term intention to replace the first floor timber cladding on the property with local Ash (which will also require planning permission). In addition, the applicant has commented on the revised parking provision for two vehicles. She has confirmed that it is a one car household, and therefore the spare space will be for visitors. The applicant has also produced email correspondence from the Council's Tree Officer to confirm that the proposed hedge removal does not require consent.

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,*
- b) And 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 Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

- DP16 High Weald AONB
- DP21 Transport
- DP35 Conservation Areas
- 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.

Neighbourhood Plan

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan, made on 22 September 2016.

There are no relevant policies.

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 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:

DPS2 Sustainable Design and Construction
DPN1 Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
DPS6 Health and Wellbeing
DPB3 Conservation Areas

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 Housing Design Guide 2020

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

ASSESSMENT

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

- Impact upon the Conservation Area

- Impact upon the High Weald National Landscape (AONB)
- Impact on residential amenities
- Access and Parking Provision
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Impact upon the Conservation Area

Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages is located within the Balcombe Conservation Area, which was established in August 1984 and extended in March 1990.

This application needs to be considered with reference to guidance contained in Paragraphs 207-221 of the NPPF and with regard to the statutory duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, as set out in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

NPPF Paragraphs 207 to 221 are reproduced below:

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

209. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

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.

211. In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.

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.

216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

217. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

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.

219. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

220. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

221. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.'

The District Plan contains Policy DP35, which requires development to conserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Policy 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.'

The Conservation Officer considers the residential property at Llain makes a modest positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area. The house occupies a prominent site on the line of a public footpath which links the centre of the village to the countryside on the eastern side of the village. The proposed change to the window colour from white to black would make a significant change to the appearance of the house, and the colour and material contrast to the remaining white painted weatherboarding would create a harmful visual impact for the users of the public footpath and shared access road. The dramatic change would result in a visual impact, harmful to the character and appearance of this part of the Balcombe Conservation Area.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF refers to the need to assess the level of harm of a development proposal to the significance of a designated heritage asset. In the case where there would be less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case there would be no public benefit as a result of the proposal. The harm would outweigh any potential benefit and therefore the proposal cannot be supported.

The Conservation Officer has assessed that the proposed replacement windows would cause have less than substantial harm to the significance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, resulting in a low-mid level of less than substantial harm to this asset. This opinion is supported. It is therefore considered that the impact of the proposed replacement windows would be contrary to the aims of District Plan Policy DP35 and the aims of the NPPF with regards to preserving heritage assets.

With regards to the landscaping proposals and the change shown to the parking provision for the house, which also form part of the proposal, it is considered that there would be some public benefits from the proposed widened side by side parking layout. This benefit would outweigh the harm of the change to the frontage.

The concerns of the Conservation Officer with regards to the loss of part of the frontage hedge are appreciated. However, the proposed landscaping scheme is comprehensive and includes new planting and set back hedgerows, and these will help to maintain the verdant appearance of the site and the immediate setting of the house. As such it is considered that the proposed landscaping associated with the change to the parking layout will have benefits for the appearance of the Conservation Area that outweigh the impact of this part of the proposal.

Impact upon the High Weald national landscape/ AONB

The application site lies in the village of Balcombe, and is washed over by the High Weald National Landscape/AONB designation.

District Plan Policy DP16 is relevant. This states:

'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;

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

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design'.

The legal framework for AONBs 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'.

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.

NPPF paragraph 190 states: *'When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated'.*

The proposed changes to the windows and doors and the frontage to the property would impinge on local views, but not adversely affect the wider character of the National Landscape/AONB. Consequently this application accords with Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant NPPF and AONB guidance.

Impact on residential amenities

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed works upon the neighbouring amenities consideration needs to be given to District Plan Policy DP26. Policy DP26 requires that 'All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of the new dwellings.'

In addition Principle DG45 in the Design Guide refers to the need to consider privacy of existing and future residents and it is noted that privacy may be affected by the relationship of buildings to each other.

The immediate neighbouring properties are the attached houses on the terrace at Nostel Priory Cottages to the south and Stable Flat and Coach House, to the north of the site, which have overlooking windows.

It is considered that the proposed window changes would impact upon the visual appearance of Llain, but that this, together with the changes to the frontage for off street parking would not have a significant level of harm upon the amenities of the neighbouring residents.

Access and Parking Provision

The proposal seeks permission to alter the off road parking space to the front of Llain, to provide the same provision of two parking spaces for the altered dwelling. The garage conversion which forms part of the proposal will result in the loss of the 2.5m wide by 5.2m long space within the integral garage. It is also relevant that the number of bedrooms is shown to be increased from 3 to 5 as a result of the proposed internal layout arrangements in the house.

The relevant District Plan Policy is DP21, which states:

'Development will be required to support the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2011- 2026, which are:

- o A high quality transport network that promotes a competitive and prosperous economy;*
- o A resilient transport network that complements the built and natural environment whilst reducing carbon emissions over time;*
- o Access to services, employment and housing; and*
- o A transport network that feels, and is, safer and healthier to use.*

To meet these objectives, decisions on development proposals will take account of whether:

- o The scheme is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel noting there might be circumstances where development needs to be located in the countryside, such as rural economic uses (see policy DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy);*
- o Appropriate opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking, have been fully explored and taken up;*
- o The scheme is designed to adoptable standards, or other standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including road widths and size of garages;*
- o The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;*
- o Development which generates significant amounts of movement is supported by a Transport Assessment/ Statement and a Travel Plan that is effective and demonstrably deliverable including setting out how schemes will be funded;*
- o The scheme provides appropriate mitigation to support new development on the local and strategic road network, including the transport network outside of the district, secured where necessary through appropriate legal agreements;*
- o The scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively, taking account of any proposed mitigation;*
- o The scheme protects the safety of road users and pedestrians; and*
- o The scheme does not harm the special qualities of the South Downs National Park or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through its transport impacts.*

Where practical and viable, developments should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

Neighbourhood Plans can set local standards for car parking provision provided that it is based upon evidence that provides clear and compelling justification for doing so'.

For a 3 bed property located in Balcombe the West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking recommend 2.2 spaces should be provided, and for a 4+ bed house, 2.7 spaces. As a result of the proposed development there will be a shortfall in the parking provision for the house, which fails to accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP21.

With regards to access the site is located on an undesignated shared access road. The existing tandem parking arrangement is accessed via a narrow inset gateway off a bend in this road. This siting must create highway safety issues for the occupiers in both accessing and leaving the site. In addition the tandem parking arrangement is likely to cause inconvenience to the users. Safe access and egress to and from the parking spaces is of concern. It is clear that there are on street parking issues on the adjacent road which will also restrict the available manoeuvring space. The use of the current space must impact upon other users of the public footpath and highway. Overall there are benefits to the proposed alternative parking arrangements and as such it is considered that the proposal complies with polucy DP21 of the District Plan.

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 development is however exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain as it falls below threshold of 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed replacement windows as a result of the colour choice and materials will have a detrimental and harmful effect upon the wider character and visual appearance of this part of Balcombe and will fail to preserve this part of the Conservation Area, resulting in a low-mid level of less than substantial harm to this asset. This is contrary to the aims of District Plan Policy DP35 and the aims of the NPPF with regards to preserving heritage assets.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Anna Tidey