

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0557	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Proposed first floor roof extension above existing classroom to Early Years/Pre-prep building to provide additional teaching accommodation for nursery occupants.		
Site:	Brambletye School, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3PD, ,		
Validation Date	4 Mar 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	27 Mar 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	29 Apr 2026
Target Date:	29 Apr 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	29 Apr 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0557

**Brambletye School, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3PD,
Proposed first floor roof extension above existing classroom to Early Years/Pre-prep building to
provide additional teaching accommodation for nursery occupants.
Mr Nick Hollamby**

REPRESENTATION RECEIVED

None received.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a proposed first floor extension to early years Pre-Prep building.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

GR/164/99 - New pre-prep department to replace existing facility. Demolition of 2 no. residential units. Re-use/change of use of existing facility to replace demolished residential units. Permission

02/01109/FUL - Classroom and changing room extension. Permission

10/03702/FUL - The proposal is for an additional classroom as an extension to the Pre-Prep part of Brambletye School Permission

DM/23/2723 - Extension and fenestration alterations to pre-prep school building. Permission

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site concerns the pre-prep school located to the northeast of the main complex of school buildings at Brambletye school.

The pre-prep school building is essentially single storey with a taller octagonal shaped rotunda that serves the main entrance and hall to the building. The building has been previously extended following the granting of planning permission in 2002, 2010 and 2023.

In terms of planning policy, the site lies within the countryside and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for a first-floor extension located at the southern end of the building. The extension will have a size of 8 metres by 8 metres and will have a catslide roof facing into the car park to the front and windows facing to the rear overlooking a playground for the pre-prep school. The extension will have an eaves height of 4.0 metres and an overall height of 7.10 metres. the extension is to create an additional classroom and will be constructed using hanging slate tile and a slate roof to match the existing roof along with white aluminium fenestration to match the existing building.

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 Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Mid Sussex District Plan

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

Relevant policies:

- DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services
- DP26 - Character and Design

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.

Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2016)

- ASW1 - Protection of the Countryside
- ASW14 - Design and Character
- ASW19 - Brambletye School

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and 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
DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPB1 - Character and Design

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 NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states *'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'*

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'*

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

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

National Planning Policy Guidance

ASSESSMENT

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

- Principle of development
- Design and Impact on Character of Area
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle of Development

The site lies within countryside. Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, in part, states:

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District'.

A similar ethos is found in policy ASW1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

District Plan policy DP25 relates to community facilities and local services and advises in part that 'the provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'

Neighbourhood Plan policy ASW19 specifically relates to Brambletye School and states that:

'Proposals for additional educational buildings or other associated uses within the grounds of Brambletye School will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- (a) The proposal does not detract from the architectural character, appearance and integrity of the existing collection of buildings; and*
- (b) The proposal does not detrimentally impact on the wider setting of the site within the local landscape.'*

Development plan policies therefore support the principle of additional educational facilities at the school, subject to the proposal not detracting from the existing collection of school buildings and wider setting of the school; these matters will be considered below.

The principle of development therefore accords with policies DP12 and DP25 of the District Plan and policies ASW1 and ASW19 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Design and Impact on character of area

District Plan policy DP12 and Neighbourhood Plan policy ASW1 set out the need to protect and enhance the countryside from inappropriate development.

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- 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;*

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

Neighbourhood Plan policy ASW14 relates to design and character, and states in part that:

'All new development (including extensions and additions to individual properties) must demonstrate good quality design and respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area. All proposals will be expected to identify how they address the local surroundings and landscape context by:

- (a) *Using design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings with reference to the Character Assessment; and*
- (b) *Demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area; and*
- (c) *Using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings; and*
- (d) *Respecting established building lines where relevant and using green hedging and / or trees for highway boundaries wherever possible and in keeping with the existing streetscape; and*
- (g) *Adopting the principles of sustainable drainage where appropriate; and*
- (i) *Providing off-street parking space in accordance with Policy 21 and ensuring that garages reflect the architectural style of the house they serve and are set back from the street frontage wherever possible to reflect the local character and context. Parking should be positioned between dwellings, rather than in front, so it is not prominent in or does not dominate the street scene to the detriment of local character; and the visual impact of parking areas should be minimised wherever possible by the use of alternative surfaces and screening; and*
- (j) *Ensuring that the living conditions of adjoining residents (including privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook) are safeguarded;...*

The proposed extension is of an acceptable scale however of a design that is not optimal to the character of the building and the area. The extension would not be visible from the public realm due to the set back location of the pre-prep building within the school grounds. It would therefore be difficult to sustain a refusal on design grounds with the extension required to support the requirements of the school and the extension being constructed from materials to match the existing building.

In view of the above, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the District Plan and policies ASW1 and ASW14 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on the High Weald AONB

The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CROW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CROW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of

Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads 66. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

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

Policy DP16 in the District Plan seeks to protect the character of the countryside and states that development will be permitted where it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and is supported by a specific policy reference in the District Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or Development Plan Document. In this case policy DP26 is the relevant policy that supports high quality development.

The proposed extension would be at first floor level however due to the secluded location of the building away from the public realm and an extension to an existing large building would not be considered to be obtrusive within the locality thereby conserving the overall landscape quality of the AONB. As such the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy DP16 of the District Plan, The High Weald AONB Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Impact on neighbouring properties

In terms of impact on neighbouring amenities, Policy DP26 of the District Plan states that it must be demonstrated that any development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution.

Policy ASW14 of the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan in part states:

'(j) Ensuring that the living conditions of adjoining residents (including privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook) are safeguarded'

There is therefore some conflict between the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in this respect.

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. As such, policy DP26 is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes significant harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

The proposed extension is to be located on the southern end of the pre-prep building with the nearest dwelling being Stable Cottage, approximately 50 metres to the north west with the main part of the existing pre-prep building in between. The Paddocks is located approximately 90 metres to the east of the site. The proposed extension will only result in overlooking to the playground to the rear of the building and will therefore not cause significant harm to neighbour amenity areas.

Therefore, in terms of neighbouring amenities, the proposal complies with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy ASW14 of the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood 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. 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 proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP12, DP16, DP25 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies ASW1, ASW14 and ASW19 of the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan, and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Peter Davies