

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0354	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Loft conversion to create a master bedroom and en-suite with the insertion of dormer windows to the rear and front elevations.		
Site:	56 Oak Tree Drive, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8YD, , , ,		
Validation Date	17 Apr 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	17 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	20 Jul 2026
Target Date:	12 Jun 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Joanne Fisher	Date:	21 Jul 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0354

56 Oak Tree Drive, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8YD, , ,
Loft conversion to create a master bedroom and en-suite with the insertion of dormer windows to the rear and front elevations.
Ms Lucy Watt

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

None received.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

The committee recommend permission is granted.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for a loft conversion to create a master bedroom and en-suite with the insertion of dormer windows to the rear and front elevations.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

04/02311/OUT - Outline application for residential development (up to 250 dwellings at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare) with associated access and public open space. (Revised layout and house types shown to Phase One. Revised Flood Risk & Surface Water Assessment. Highways amendments. Land reserved for Medical Centre through S106 Legal Agreement). (Approved at appeal).

DM/19/5186 - Single storey rear extension to existing property with part garage conversion. (Approved).

DM/25/0147 - Proposed loft conversion to create a master bedroom, raising of the roof by 710mm, and insertion of dormer window to the rear. (Joint with No.54 - Refused)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

56 Oak Tree Drive is a two-storey semi-detached pitched roofed dwelling. The walls are face brickwork with uPVC doors and windows.

To the north of the dwelling is the rear gardens with close boarded fencing to fields beyond, to the south of the site is the driveway to the highway beyond, to the west is the adjacent No.58, and to the east is the adjoining No.54.

The site is within the built-up area of Hassocks.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The loft conversion includes the installation of two pitched roofed rear dormers and a pitched roofed front dormer

The proposed two rear dormers each approximately measure 2.8m in depth, 1.75m in width with a height to eaves of 1.75m and an overall height of 2.6m.

The proposed front dormer approximately measures 2.3m in depth, 1.75m in width with a height to eaves of 1.5m and an overall height of 2.4m.

The loft space will serve a master bedroom, wardrobe and en-suite.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Hassocks 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:

DP21 (Transport)
DP26 (Design and Character)
DP39 (Sustainability)

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.

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was made on 24th June 2020.

Relevant policies:

Policy 5 (Enabling zero carbon)
Policy 9 (Character and Design)

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

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

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle 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.

WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration. Paragraphs 8, 11, 131 and 135 are considered to be relevant to this application

ASSESSMENT

Character and Design

DP26 of the 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;*
- 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'*

A similar ethos is found in policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan which states:

'Development proposals will be supported where, they are in line with the Townscape Appraisal, and where the character and design:

- 1. Is of high-quality design and layout;*
- 2. Contributes positively to the private and public realm to create a sense of place;*
- 3. Respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- 4. Protects open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- 5. Protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of Hassocks, Keymer and Clayton;*
- 6. 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, sunlight and security;*
- 7. Creates safe, accessible and well-connected environments;*
- 8. Protects existing landscape features and contributes to the village's Green Infrastructure network;*
- 9. Incorporates the use of local materials which are appropriate to the defined Local Townscape Character Area; and*

10. Positively responds to the local vernacular character of the defined Local Townscape Character Area'

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states:

'Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. The design approach may benefit from coordinating with the existing pattern of window and door openings as well as employing facing materials to match those of the existing dwelling. Otherwise, it should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternative approach.'

With reference to roof enlargement specifically, principle DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD in part states:

'A loft conversion is a space efficient means of extending the amount of living accommodation in a dwelling. Roof accommodation is normally reliant on dormer windows and rooflights to provide light and ventilation. However, if they are out of scale or out of character with the roofscape and proportions of a dwelling they can have an adverse impact on the character of both the dwelling and the streetscape.'

The roof pitch and form are intrinsic to a building's character and roof extensions should be sensitive to this. Roof extensions and dormer windows that alter the existing ridge of the roof or significantly alter the roof profile of a building will not normally be acceptable, particularly on the front roof slope, and where there is a strong established roofline.

Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows and / or doors.'

This principle also includes reference to further dormer window guidance in Chapter 6 of the Design Guide under sections 6.3.5 to 6.3.7 which state:

'6.3.5 While dormer windows can sometimes be prominent features in the streetscene, care needs to be taken with their design, proportions and position on the roof. The choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular.'

6.3.6 Dormer windows should be visually subordinate to the roof slope, enabling a large proportion of the main roof to remain visible. Excessively wide dormers are likely to look unsatisfactory as they will often be out of proportion with the existing roof.'

6.3.7 Dormer windows should normally be positioned below the ridge-line, and above the eaves line'.

A joint application at No.54 and No.56 Oak Tree Drive for the raising of the roof by 71cm and flat roofed rear dormers at each dwelling was refused and dismissed at appeal in 2025 (DM/25/0147 and APP/D3830/D/25/3368033).

It was refused for the following reason:

"By virtue of the scale, form and design of the proposed dormer windows, they would be harmfully out of proportion with the roof slope of the dwellings and would create a dominant and prominent addition that would be out of keeping with the character of the properties and that of the surrounding area. As a result, the proposal would not comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, Principles DG49 and DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework".

The Planning Inspector within the appeal decision agreed stating the following:

"they (the dormers) would be at odds with the established character of the area due to the bulk and scale of the extension to the rear roof slope. The dormers would effectively obscure the rear roof slope and would not be visually subordinate. Given the scale, bulk and visual dominance of the dormers, the proposal would conflict with Principles DG49 and DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document adopted 2020 (the SPG). These require extensions to be well integrated with the

scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property, and in the case of loft conversions, they should not be out of scale or character with the roofscape and proportions of a dwelling.

Where there is accommodation set within the roof storey, there are several examples of individual pitched roof dormer windows set within the roof slope. Rear dormers spanning the full width of the dwellings are, however, not a characteristic feature of the area".

Notwithstanding that this proposal relates solely to No.56, the design of the proposed dormers in form and scale has been significantly reduced with the dormers on the rear elevation changed from a single flat roofed to two pitched roofed dormers and reduced in width. A front pitched roofed dormer has been added. The proposed dormers are therefore of a design in line with the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD than the dormer refused in 2025.

Dormers do not dominate the locality but pitched roofed front dormers are highly visible at Nos.20, 22, 24, No.55 (above garage) and No.69 (13/03531/FUL) Oak Tree Drive.

The proposed dormers to the rear of the site would only be glanced from the streetscene. The front dormer would be highly visible, however as noted above dormers of this type and design are not out of character with the streetscene. They would match the existing ridge height so not wholly subservient but would be of modest width and therefore will not dominate the roofslope.

The proposed dormers are therefore deemed in line with principle DG52 and associated paragraphs of the Mid Sussex Design Guide. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD in terms of character and design.

Impact on residential amenities

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed extension works upon the neighbouring amenities consideration needs to be given to District Plan Policy DP26 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 9.

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.'

Neighbourhood Plan Policy 9 refers to the impact of development upon neighbouring amenity and requires that it *'Does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and security'*.

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 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, dating from June 2020, is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

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.

Given the nature of the proposal, light and outlook is not deemed to be unacceptably harmed to neighbouring properties.

Whilst the dormers would create a degree of overlooking toward to neighbouring gardens, given the existing level of overlooking from the first-floor windows and the expected level of overlooking within the built-up area, the impact on privacy and overlooking is not deemed unacceptably harmful.

Therefore, in terms of neighbouring amenities, with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Parking Provision

As an additional bedroom is to be provided, parking standards has to be assessed.

West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking sets out the maximum parking standards for residential houses. No.56 is a 4-bed dwelling. For a 4-bed property in this location in Hassocks 2.7 parking spaces should be provided.

There is 1 parking space available within the existing driveway, coupled with this there are no on-street parking restrictions and the site is within walking distance of the village centre and alternative forms of transportation (buses and trains).

Whilst there is a shortfall, given the alternative forms of transportation available within walking distance, the parking provision is seen as acceptable.

Therefore, the proposal will accord with DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Sustainable development

Policy 5 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Residential development proposals that modify existing buildings (including extensions) should seek to maximise the inclusion of energy-saving measures and renewable energy generation'

The Parish Council have advised the applicant that Government has committed to adopt a 'Future Buildings Standard' during 2021 which will change the Building Regulations requirements for alterations and extensions to homes to bring these alterations closer to that of a 'zero energy building'. This is supported by the above policy.

However, owing to the small-scale nature of the proposal it is not considered to have any impact on the overall sustainability of the dwelling and these details can be secured through Building Regulations. As such it is considered acceptable in regard to the above mentioned policy.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. As a householder application this development is exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size, and scale to the dwellinghouse and locality, is in a sustainable location and would not cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties. The application is also exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP21, DP26 and DP39, policies 5 and 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, WSCC Parking Guidance for new developments as well as the relevant provisions of the NPPF. The application therefore accords with the Development Plan and is considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell

