

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0566	Case Officer:	Caroline Grist
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed loft conversion with rear dormer.		
Site:	14 Sycamore Way, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8YH, , , ,		
Validation Date	5 Mar 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	31 Mar 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	28 Apr 2025
Target Date:	30 Apr 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Caroline Grist</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	29 Apr 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0566

**14 Sycamore Way, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8YH, , ,
Proposed loft conversion with rear dormer.
R And L Habberfield**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received in response to this application.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

No responses from consultees have been received in response to this application.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Recommend Approval. The applicant is advised 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 Policy 5 'Enabling Zero Carbon' of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan which states that proposals that modify existing buildings (including extensions) should seek to maximise the inclusion of energy-saving measures and renewable energy generation. Energy saving measures include floor, roof and wall insulation, and low u-value windows (which may need to be triple glazed). These requirements may require amendments to your design which could affect the drawings submitted for planning permission. The applicant may wish to note that alterations that are built to a Nearly Zero Energy standard, are unlikely to need further retrofitting to minimise the carbon emissions that the nation is required to reduce to zero by 2050. As retrofitting an existing home to be highly energy efficient is more complex than doing so for a new building, applicants may wish to look at the 'EnerPHit' standard that the Government is understood to be considering as the applicable 'Nearly Zero Energy' standard in this context, or at the Architypes published by the London Energy Transformation Initiative for u-values for your extension walls, windows etc. and for ventilation and overheating prevention standards to be achieved.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a loft conversion with rear dormer.

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. Refused. Allowed at appeal.

06/02156/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. Withdrawn.

09/02026/REM - A residential development (up to 250 dwellings at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare) with associated access and public open space. Withdrawn.

09/02693/REM - Consent for the external appearance, design, siting and associated landscaping connected with 119 dwellings in Phase 2 of the development. Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

14 Sycamore Way is a south facing, two storey, semi-detached dwelling. It is constructed of red brick, with a plain tile roof and upvc windows. The dwelling is characterised by a canopy porch and benefits from a garage and parking space to the north of the site.

The site is located within the built up area of Hassocks. Neighbouring dwellings are situated to the north, east and west, whilst the highway is to the south. The dwelling is set back from the highway by a garden.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is sought for a loft conversion with a flat roof, dormer window to the rear roofslope. This would create a new bedroom, with bathroom. It is to be some 4.9 metres wide and 2.6 metres high. The elevations are to be finished in tile hanging to match the existing roof.

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 Allocations DPD and 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:

DP26 - Character and Design

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The Site Allocations DPD 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 Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan was formally 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 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

DPS6 - Health and Wellbeing

DPB1 - Character and Design

Mid Sussex Design Guide

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)

ASSESSMENT

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:

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

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

'Development proposals will be supported where they have regard to the Hassocks Townscape Appraisal, and where their character and design takes account of the following design principles as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the particular proposal:

- 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 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;
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'.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD also provides advice for extensions to dwellings. Principle DG49 states that:

'Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.

Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to complement 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.

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

There are two general approaches to extending a property:

- o Designing in the style of the existing building by closely matching its facing materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions; and*
- o Designing in a contemporary style that takes its cues from key aspects of the existing building that might include its underlying form and proportions, facing materials, window design and other specific architectural features. The success of this approach is particularly reliant on high quality facing materials and finishes, and this will normally need to be demonstrated through detailed elevations and section drawings.*

Both approaches can create successful, well-designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area'.

Principle DG52 relates to dormer windows and roof enlargements and states:

'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'.

The application site is situated within a relatively recent housing development, where houses are of a traditional design that is reflected in their form and detailing. From public vantage points dwellings appear relatively unaltered and, as such, there is still a level of uniformity to the area.

Planning permission is sought for a flat roof, dormer window that would be sited on the rear roofslope of 14 Sycamore Way. The proposed dormer would have a large form that would extend across the majority of the roofslope, thereby creating a large feature with proportions that would not appear visually subordinate within the roofslope.

Due to the layout of this housing development, the proposed dormer window would also be readily visible within the streetscene. The adjoining neighbour to the east, 1 Chestnut Drive, is a corner property and there is a break in the built form along this section of Chestnut Drive. As such there are direct views to the affected roofslope over the rear gardens of 1 Chestnut Drive and the application property. Given the identified character of the area it is considered that the proposal would create an incongruous and dominant addition to the streetscene that would fail to reflect the surrounding area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would fail to reflect the character and scale of the existing property and would be out of keeping with the character of the area and of surrounding properties, contrary to policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Impact to amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states that proposals should not cause 'significant harm' adjoining neighbours' amenity whereas policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan states that development should 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. 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 9 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.

Given the scale and form of the proposal it is considered that there would not be an harmful impact to the light and outlook available to neighbouring properties. In terms of overlooking, windows are only proposed on the northern elevation. The neighbour to the north, 3 Chestnut Drive, would be set away from the proposal by the applicant's garden and a double garage. Given this distance it is considered that an unacceptable level of overlooking would not occur.

Due to the domestic nature of the proposed development there would not be an harmful impact in terms of noise, air or light pollution.

Other matters

Policy 5 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan relates to sustainability and states:

'Development proposals will be supported that maximise the opportunity to include sustainable design features, providing any adverse local impacts can be made acceptable.

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

Proposals which make provision for charging electric vehicles at each dwelling (where feasible) and on-street; and making parking areas charging ready will be supported'.

The proposed development relates to the extension of an existing dwelling. A renewable energy source has not been included within the proposal nor any other energy saving measures, however the development would need to meet Building Regulation standards and similar works to the rear could be undertaken without requiring planning permission. It is therefore considered that this would not warrant the refusal of the proposal.

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 would be acceptable regarding neighbouring amenity. However, the proposal due to its design, scale and form would fail to create subordinate or proportionate addition to the original dwelling and would be out of keeping with the character of the existing property and the locality. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the requirements of 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 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Caroline Grist