

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1705	Case Officer:	Hamish Evans
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed demolition and removal of roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. Proposed construction of rear extension to main house and extension linking the Dairy and Toolshed outbuildings. Proposed construction of new poolhouse and associated external and internal works, including window replacements.		
Site:	Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1RZ, , ,		
Validation Date	8 Jul 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	7 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	25 Aug 2026
Target Date:	2 Sep 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Hamish Evans

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	26 Aug 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1705

**Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1RZ, ,
Proposed demolition and removal of roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. Proposed construction of rear extension to main house and extension linking the Dairy and Toolshed outbuildings. Proposed construction of new poolhouse and associated external and internal works, including window replacements.
Peter And Hayley Reid**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party letters of representation have been received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

Historic England

No objection.

MSDC Tree Officer

Have concerns but recommend conditions should permission be granted.

MSDC Ecologist

No objection subject to conditions.

MSDC Flood Risk and Drainage

No objection subject to conditions.

NatureSpace Newt Officer

No objection, recommend informatives.

Southern Water

Not within Southern Water area, provides advice.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Haywards Heath Town Council

No comment.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. Internal alterations and the construction of a

rear extension, a new pool house and replacement windows at Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

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

DM/25/1708. Alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage). Pending consideration.

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

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located within countryside and adjacent to the built up area boundary of Haywards Heath which is located to the south of the site. The site consists of a main dwelling house, with several single storey buildings that are ancillary to the main dwelling, a tennis court, significant open grassed garden areas, areas of gravel and a walled kitchen garden. The existing dwelling and single storey buildings are characterised by bare brown brickwork and timber clad walls, grey slate roof tiles and white timber window and door frames.

The existing dwelling is a grade II* listed building. It is understood that the earliest parts of the building were constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century, apparently replacing an earlier house on the site. The house was extended substantially to the northwest around the mid-19th century; a further phase of extensive alteration occurred in the late 20th century, when internal alterations were made at ground floor within the later 19th century extension, and at first floor throughout the building.

The kitchen and formal gardens around the house, as well as the southern approach and circular driveway appear to date from the mid-19th century. The gardens contain a further two Grade II listed structures, an 18th century gardener's cottage and 18th century garden wall located a short distance to the northeast of the house. There are also a trio of detached 19th century outbuildings directly to the north of the house known as the dairy, toolshed and garage, which would be regarded as curtilage listed.

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

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing roof canopy and stairs to existing garage and replace with new wooden staircase. The construction of a rear extension, a new pool house and replacement windows at Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath.

The proposed replacement staircase to the existing garage would measure some 0.9 metres in width, a depth of 3.6 metres and a total height of 3.4 metres and it would be characterised by timber. It would also remove an existing single storey roof canopy.

The proposed single storey rear extension would consist of predominantly a glazed flat roof element and the extension of the existing pitched roof of the dairy building. The floor space of the extension as a whole would measure some 7.2 metres in depth and 7.3 metres in width. The proposed flat roof element would measure some 3.1 metres in height. It would be characterised by glazed walls and zinc clad roofing. The proposed extension of the existing pitched roof would measure some 4.5 metres in depth,

an eaves height of 2.5 metres and a total height of 4.8 metres. The proposed pitched roof would be characterised by similar roof tiles as the existing dairy building.

The proposal includes the erection of a pool house within the existing walled kitchen garden which is located to the west of the existing dwelling. It would consist of the main pool building and a building housing a plant room, changing rooms and a sauna. The main proposed pool house would measure some 7.9 metres in width and 21.3 metres in depth, an eaves height of 2.4 metres and 3.7 metres in total height. It would be characterised by glazed walls to the south, east and west elevations and the northern elevation would consist of the existing bare brick wall and zinc clad roofing panels. It would also include solar PV panels on the roof. The other proposed building would be located to the west of the main pool building. It would measure some 5.0 metres in width, 15.2 metres in depth and 3.0 metres in total height. It would be characterised by bare brickwork walls and a flat roof.

The proposal also seeks to replace windows through the main house with new sashes incorporating slimline double glazing.

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 Haywards Heath 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
DP26 - Character and Design
DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DP38 - Biodiversity
DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (adopted December 2016)

Relevant policies:

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

Other 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 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. 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:

DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPB1: Character and Design
DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

ASSESSMENT

Impact on Heritage Assets

The LPA is under a duty by virtue of s.66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area (LBCA) Act 1990 (Decision on application): to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Recent case law has stated that 'As the Court of Appeal has made absolutely clear in its recent decision in Barnwell, the duties in sections 66 and 72 of the Listed Buildings Act do not allow a local planning authority to treat the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas as mere material considerations to which it can simply attach such weight as it sees fit. If there was any doubt about this before the decision in Barnwell it has now been firmly dispelled. When an authority finds that a proposed development would harm the setting of a listed building or the character or appearance of a conservation area, it must give that harm considerable importance and weight.'

The Courts further stated on this point 'This does not mean that an authority's assessment of likely harm to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area is other than a matter for its own planning judgment. It does not mean that the weight the authority should give to harm which it considers would be limited or less than substantial must be the same as the weight it might give to harm which would be substantial. But it is to recognize, as the Court of Appeal emphasized in Barnwell, that a finding of harm to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area gives rise to a strong presumption against planning permission being granted. The presumption is a statutory one. It is not irrebuttable. It can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so. But an authority can only properly strike the balance between harm to a heritage asset on the one hand and planning benefits on the other if it is conscious of the statutory presumption in favour of preservation and if it demonstrably applies that presumption to the proposal it is considering.'

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development to protect listed buildings and their settings.

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

Policy HE6 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

The Council's Conservation Officer and Historic England have raised no objection to the proposal. Historic England have advised that they consider that the elevational treatment of the link extension between the house and dairy to cause less than substantial harm to the listed building however this would be on the lower end of that scale. Whilst Historic England considers that the elevational treatment of the link extension would result in less than substantial harm, officers consider that the lightweight and subservient form of the link, together with its clear distinction from the historic fabric and limited visibility within the wider setting, would preserve the significance of the listed building. Consequently, no harm has been identified to the significance of the heritage asset. Taking into account, the above the proposal is considered to preserve the special interest of the listed building. As such the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy HE6 of the NPPF and section 66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990.

Impact on Character, Appearance and Countryside

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural landscape character of the District.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and requires all proposals to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside as well as addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. In part the policy requires proposals to be of a high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; and creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

A similar ethos is found within policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

The proposed external materials for the extension and pool house would be partially similar in appearance to external materials used within the existing dwellinghouse. Those that are not are of a contemporary appearance. The appearance of these are considered to be of high quality and would help contrast against the more traditional materials used in the main house.

The proposed replacement windows and rooflights are of similar appearance to the existing opening and details of these can be secured by a suitably worded condition.

The proposed extension is of a modest single storey nature and it would be seen within the context of the existing built-form. Due to its glazed nature it would allow for appreciation of the existing main house. The proposed pool house is also of a modest single storey nature and would be sited on an existing built area. Whilst there would be views of it from the wider area these would be limited and the building would also be seen within the context of the existing built form.

As such the proposed works are considered to address the character and scale of the existing and surrounding buildings and landscape and maintain the quality of the rural landscape character of the countryside. As such it is considered to comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states:

'The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.'

The proposal seeks to remove three category B trees within the site and the proposed pool house would be within 15 metres of a number of trees on the site. The Council's Tree Officer has raised concerns relating to the proposed loss of three category B trees, and whilst this is noted they are well within the site and have limited views from the public realm. A condition can be imposed to secure adequate replacement trees to mitigate the loss of these trees. As such their loss is not considered to warrant a refusal of this application. An Arboricultural Method Statement can be secured by a condition to ensure the existing trees are suitably protected.

Taking into account the above the proposal is considered to comply with policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Ecology

Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to biodiversity and in part requires proposals to:

'Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances).'

A similar ethos is found within policy N2 of NPPF.

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

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

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 relates to flood risk and drainage and requires development to demonstrate it is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Policy F7 of the NPPF relates to planning and flood risk and states:

'Development proposals should not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.'

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 very low risk of fluvial flooding and the proposed built footprint is located outside any mapped Risk of Flooding areas. The Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer has raised no objection to the proposal subject to a condition securing further details. As such the application is considered to comply with Policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy F7 of the NPPF.

Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that 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 (see Policy DP29);'

A similar ethos is contained within the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

A similar ethos is also found within policy H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan. Although policy H9 states that proposals should "safeguard" adjoining neighbour's privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook whereas policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states that development should 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. 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 of the MSDP 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 existing site is isolated from the surrounding residential dwellings and as such all the proposed works would be set away from any neighbouring properties. The new structures to be built are of single storey natures and due to the location of them they are not considered to result in an overbearing nature to nearby residents.

Due to the location of the proposed openings, they would not have direct views into nearby residents private amenity spaces.

Taking into account the above the proposed works would not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents and the proposal would comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

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 development is considered to address the character and scale of the existing and surrounding buildings and landscape, maintain the quality of the rural landscape character of the countryside and preserve the special interest of the listed building. The proposal would not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents, it would have an acceptable impact on flood risk, drainage, trees, ecology and it is exempt from the requirements of BNG. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DP12, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP38 and DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant policies HE6, N2 and F7 of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Hamish Evans