

Anna Tidey

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 December 2025 17:51
To: Anna Tidey
Subject: Re: Planning application - DM/25/2311 Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Balcombe
Attachments: Garden House.jpeg; Future Cladding (on approval).JPG; Mock up - Llain.png; Fable & Bloom - Black frames.jpg; Hedgerow Removal Enquiry.pdf

Dear Anna,

Thank you for your call today and for forwarding the consultation responses from the Conservation Officer and Balcombe Parish Council. I have reviewed these comments carefully and provide below my response and supporting justification. I hope the following will assist in progressing your assessment of the application. Please could you consider my response below before we take any action to change the materials we've proposed?

1. Window and Door Material – Justification for Aluminium

I note the Conservation Officer's preference for painted timber joinery; however, there is clear precedent within Balcombe for the use of **aluminium windows on residential properties within the Conservation Area**. In particular:

- **Garden House, Haywards Heath Road**, directly opposite Llain, benefits from approval under **DM/16/5040**, which permitted **green aluminium-framed windows** in a prominent, highly visible position at the entrance to the village. (See image Balcombe House.)

This is an important precedent: not only does it confirm that aluminium is acceptable within the Balcombe Conservation Area when well specified, but it also demonstrates that **coloured aluminium frames have previously been approved without harm to local character**.

The heritage putty-line aluminium system proposed for Llain aligns closely with this precedent and has been selected for the following reasons:

- **Energy efficiency:** thermally broken aluminium significantly outperforms timber in long-term performance, supporting sustainability objectives.
- **Longevity & reduced maintenance:** aluminium offers robust performance in exposed rural environments, ensuring a stable appearance without ongoing repainting.
- **Precision of heritage detailing:** the system replicates traditional putty-line profiles and Georgian bar arrangements with dimensional accuracy that timber cannot consistently achieve.

These considerations are fully consistent with NPPF paragraph 135, which recognises the role of high-quality contemporary materials in enhancing heritage settings.

2. Colour Choice – Justification for Black Frames

Whilst black is not the dominant colour within Nostel Priory Cottages specifically, it is **consistent with wider patterns within the local area**. The attached photograph of **Fable & Bloom**, located nearby, shows black-framed fenestration functioning successfully in a heritage context.

The proposed matt black finish for Llain is therefore appropriate and justified for the following reasons:

- The colour harmonises with existing **grey roof tiles, lead flashings and white weatherboarding** (as shown in the attached mock-up).
- The contrast of black frames against white or pale cladding is a long-established vernacular combination within the High Weald.
- The matt finish ensures a non-reflective, timber-like appearance.

Taken together, these factors demonstrate strong contextual compatibility.

3. Visual Impact – Attached Mock-Up

To support the assessment, I have included a rendered mock-up showing the proposed black heritage aluminium casements set against the existing white weatherboarding. This clearly illustrates:

- The subtle and proportionate frame profiles;
- The compatibility between the black colour, roofscape and leadwork; and
- The overall elevation improvement compared with the current mixed uPVC and ageing timber.

The mock-up, whilst AI generated, confirms that the proposal will enhance, not harm, the appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. Long-Term Design Intent

For context only (not for determination under this application), our long-term intention is to **replace the existing white weatherboarding with local ash**, echoing the materiality of the property at **Deanland** (reference image attached). This demonstrates our commitment to using locally appropriate, high-quality materials that reinforce the village's distinctive character.

5. Parish Council – Parking Provision

The Parish Council queried parking provision; I wish to clarify that:

- We are a **one-car household**, and
- The proposal **retains exactly two parking spaces** — one for our household and one for occasional guests.

No reduction in parking capacity is proposed, and the annex does not introduce new vehicle demand or any subdivision of the dwelling.

6. Hedge Removal – Clarification of Consents and Reason for Inclusion

I note the Conservation Officer's comments regarding the hedgerow. For clarity, we previously sought formal confirmation from Mid Sussex District Council regarding the removal of the front privet hedge.

As shown in the **Hedgerow Removal Enquiry correspondence**, the Council's Tree Officer confirmed that:

- **"Hedges are not protected under Conservation Area status and the Hedgerow Regulations apply to agricultural hedges only."**

- **“The privet hedge may be removed without consent...”**

(Email from Irene Fletcher, Tree Officer, attached).

I don't believe we require planning permission to remove the hedge. We included the hedge revision as a courtesy, to ensure transparency within this application and to facilitate coordinated consideration of the frontage. The hedge works should not, therefore, form a basis for planning refusal, as they fall outside the scope of development requiring consent.

7. Summary & Request for Officer Confirmation

In summary:

- There is **direct and highly relevant Conservation Area precedent** at Garden House (DM/16/5040) for **coloured aluminium windows**.
- Black windows are present in the local area (e.g. Fable & Bloom) and sit comfortably within the wider village character.
- The heritage aluminium system proposed delivers long-term sustainability, visual consistency and high-fidelity traditional detailing.
- Parking provision remains unchanged and fully compliant.
- The submitted mock-up demonstrates architectural harmony and enhancement.
- Hedge removal is confirmed by MSDC as permitted without planning consent, and was included in the application purely for completeness.

I therefore remain confident that the proposed materials and colour meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35 and the heritage policies of the NPPF, and I hope this additional evidence will enable the application to progress without modification.

I am very happy to supply any further images, product samples or clarification you may require.

Kind regards,

[Redacted Signature]

From: Anna Tidey <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, 01 December 2025 13:47

Cc: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>

Subject: Planning application - DM/25/2311 Llain, 4 Nostel Priory Cottages, Balcombe

[Redacted]

Thank you for taking time to speak to me regarding your planning application this morning. I attach for your information the comments that I have received from both Emily Wade, MSDC Conservation Officer, and Balcombe Parish Council regarding your submitted application details.

Of most concern to me as I make my recommendation are the comments that have been made regarding the proposed colour and material for the proposed replacement doors and windows.

I mentioned another application at a house in Cuckfield where I have determined an application for replacement windows (Howdean, High Street, Cuckfield, under application DM/25/1690). In that case the house is located in a prominent position fronting the High Street and had shiny white UPVC replacement windows already installed. The Conservation Officer comments for that application are attached, for your information. Below I have reproduced the image and website link details for the white windows with a foil grained finish which were approved in that case, for your information.



Rehau R7 Residence window in white foil grained finish

R7 | Flush Windows | The Residence Collection

Each planning application is determined upon its merits and in that case the proposed new windows were accepted as a replacement for white UPVC windows that had been installed without consent.

I understand that you will want to think about the comments that have been made, and ask that you reply to me by the end of the week to explain how you would like to take this matter forward. I would like you to reconsider the window colour and materials to reflect the immediate context of your house and the other neighbouring dwellings in the Conservation Area.

The Decision Target date for your application is currently 11.12.2025. Should you wish to amend the application please confirm this with added plans/drawings, eg, to show the proposed cladding, if you wish this to be added into the description and also be determined under DM/25/2311. If this is the case the application will need to be readvertised, 21 day re-consultations sent out and a new Decision Target Date agreed.

As I explained I shall be on a period of leave from the end of this Friday, returning Friday 12th December 2025. I do hope that we can speak again this week.

Kind regards

Anna Tidey

Planning Officer

Submit your planning application online.

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

Anna Tidey BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

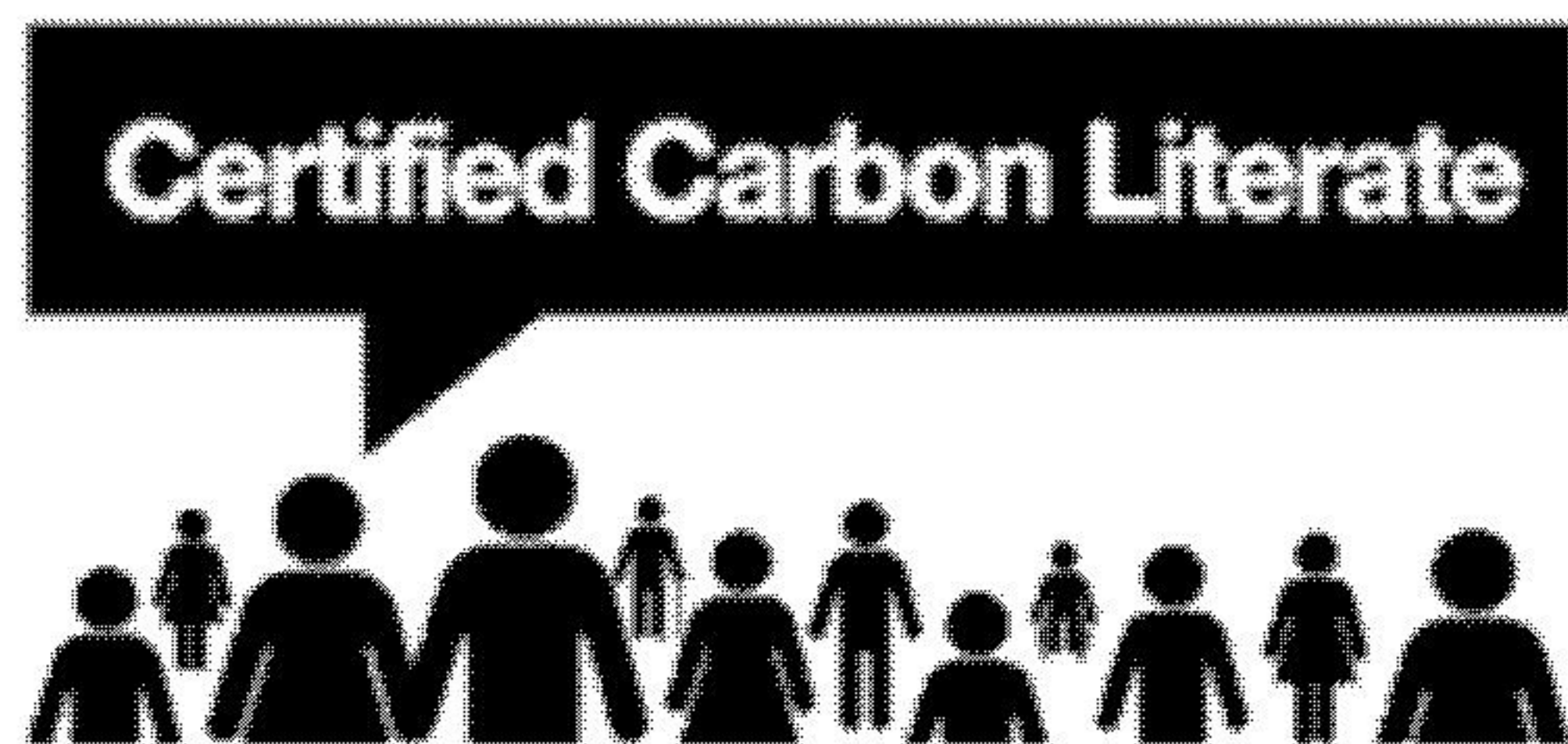
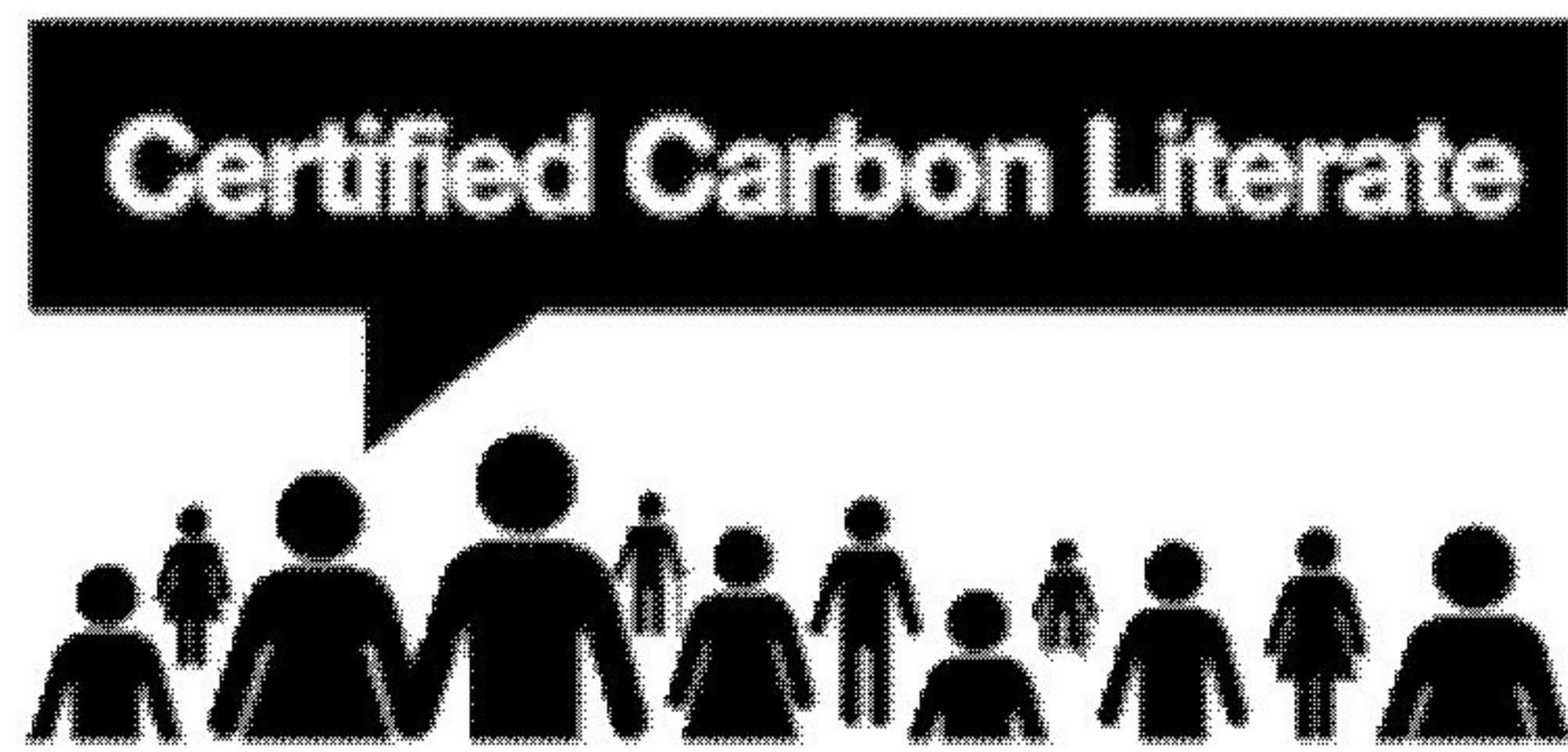
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