

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2096	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Installation of a ground mounted domestic solar array.		
Site:	Park House, Twineham Lane, Twineham, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5NP, ,		
Validation Date	19 Aug 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	12 Sep 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	17 Sep 2025
Target Date:	14 Oct 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	18 Sep 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2096

**Park House, Twineham Lane, Twineham, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5NP,
Installation of a ground mounted domestic solar array.
Mr And Mrs Darby**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

A letter of support has been received from Park Farm Barns, Twineham Lane.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

WSCC Highways: This application seeks the installation of a ground mounted domestic solar array. The site is located on Twineham Lane, a C-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 40 mph in this location.

Such proposals are not anticipated to give rise to a material intensification of movements to or from the site. Access and parking arrangements will remain unaffected by the proposed development. As such, no highway safety or capacity concerns would be raised.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Twineham Parish Council confirms it has no objections to the application

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a ground mounted solar array on land to the north of the main dwelling and its driveway.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

12/02673/FUL - Installation of solar photovoltaic system for domestic use of Park House only.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Park House is a large detached hipped roofed dwelling with two separate vehicular entrances accessed off a private track shared with Park Farm.

The dwelling has pebbledash render, face brickwork and tile hanging. The property is characterised by various extensions and an existing detached garage.

The solar array is to be located within a field to the north of the property which already is characterised by ground mounted solar panels approved in 2012.

The field is characterised by hedging boundary to adjoining fields and post and rail fencing to the driveway of Park House.

The site is located outside of the built-up area.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The solar array comprises of five ground mounted groups of twenty 30 degrees angled solar panels which measure 2.07m in depth, 22.88m in width with a bottom height of 0.728m with a maximum height above ground level of 1.919m. There is a 5m gap between the five panels.

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 Twineham 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

DP40 - Renewable Energy Schemes

Twineham Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2016)

Relevant policies:

TNP2 - Design

Mid Sussex Site Allocations Document (DPD)

Mid Sussex District Council adopted its Site Allocations Development Plan Document on 29th June 2022. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five-year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment needs.

There are no policies deemed relevant to this application.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission 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 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

DPS3 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration. Paragraphs 8, 11, 131, 135 and 167 are considered to be relevant to this application.

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
- Impact on neighbour amenities

Principle of Development

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'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, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

Policy DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to renewable energy and states:

'Proposals for new renewable and low carbon energy projects (other than wind energy development - see below), including community-led schemes, will be permitted provided that any adverse local impacts can be made acceptable, with particular regard to:

- *Landscape and visual impacts, including cumulative impacts, such as on the setting of the South Downs National Park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the appearance of existing buildings;*
- *Ecology and biodiversity, including protected species, and designated and non-designated wildlife sites;*
- *Residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour, traffic generation, recreation and access.*

Assessment of impacts will need to be based on the best available evidence, including landscape capacity studies'.

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states:

'Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework'.

The solar panel system would generate renewable energy for Park House. The proposal would be modest in size, therefore in keeping with the rural location.

It is therefore considered that the principle of proposal would meet the requirements of policies DP12 and DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and is acceptable.

Design and Impact

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'.*

The Mid Sussex Design Guide requires all development to have a high standard of design.

TNP2 of the Twineham Neighbour Plan has a similar ethos and states:

'All development should be of good design consisting of the best practice standards for well-designed new homes and neighbourhoods in force at the time, contemporary and innovative design is encouraged where appropriate. This means development should:

- *Include energy and water efficiency measures*
- *Use quality materials, these should be sustainably and locally sourced where feasible.*
- *Apply space standards taking into account the user, circulation space and the need for storage*
- *Contribute positively to the local character and rural setting*
- *Recognise that architectural integrity is of paramount importance and respond in a coherent way*
- *Not be dominated by parking and hard surfacing*
- *Utilise appropriate landscaping'*

It is noted that the field is characterised by existing ground mounted solar panels approved in 2012.

The array would not be visible from public vantage points.

The visual impact of the panels is therefore considered to be acceptable and it is not considered to be necessary to require any mitigation landscaping planting in this case. The character of the countryside will be maintained. Therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design of proposals. Within this there is a requirement that proposals do '*...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*'.

Given the nature of the proposed development, its position and scale it is considered that there would not be an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

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.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposal is considered to be appropriate in terms of character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape; would not cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP12, DP26, and DP40, policy TNP2 of the Twineham Neighbourhood Plan, Mid Sussex Design Guide and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell