

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/3223	Case Officer:	Tracie Axford
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed loft conversion, rear dormers and front roof lights		
Site:	148 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9TB, , ,		
Validation Date	18 Dec 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	6 Feb 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	5 Feb 2026
Target Date:	12 Feb 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Tracie Axford</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	10 Feb 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/3223

**148 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9TB, ,
Proposed loft conversion, rear dormers and front roof lights
Jack And Chloe Bucknall**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer

The Conservation Officer commented as follows: *'This proposal is considered unacceptable in principle due to the scale and design of the dormer additions. These would appear unduly bulky and visually prominent in views of buildings from the rear, including from Sunleigh Court and the PROW which runs along it. The form and design of the dormer windows is also unsympathetic to the existing building. This would detract from the contribution which the house makes to the character and appearance of the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, at around the mid-level of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.'*

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council recommend approval.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a loft conversion, rear dormers and front rooflights.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/25/1337 - Proposed loft conversion and rear dormers and front roof lights - Permitted September 2025

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a semi-detached dwelling on the western side of Western Road. The Western side of the road, which is within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area, is characterised by semi-detached and period dwellings of similar form and scale positioned close to the highway, with open front gardens and/or off-road parking. To the eastern side the dwellings have a similar relationship with the highway but consist of modern and 20th century properties of varying designs. To the front of the property is a driveway with space for 2 cars.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The current proposal is for an L-shaped rear dormer and rooflight to the rear elevation and two conservatory style rooflights to the front elevation.

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 Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common 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

DP35 - Conservation Area

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.

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Plan

The Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish plan was made in 2015.

Relevant Policies:

Policy HurstC4

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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:

DPS1 - Climate Change

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPB3 - Conservation Areas

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)

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows;

- Design and Character
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on neighbouring properties
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Design and Character

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.'*

Principle DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states that:

'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.'

The Mid-Sussex Design Guide SPD advises in Chapter 6:

'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 scale and bulk of the proposed dormer window would not comply with principle DG52 and the principles in paragraph 6.3.6 of the Mid-Sussex Design Guide. The rear elevation is set in an unusually open position with regard to the public domain, as it can be viewed from the adjacent road, Sunleigh Court, and beyond from the PROW, which leads off of Western Road. The proposed rear dormer would therefore be highly visible in the public domain and the scale and design would appear overly dominant and visually intrusive.

It is noted that 150 Western Road has a similar dormer window to that proposed at 148 Western Road, however a certificate of lawful development was approved for this dormer (ref: 13/00313/LDC) prior to the extension of the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area in 2018.

The applicant has also referenced the more recent decision regarding 74 Western Road where permission was granted for a rear dormer (ref: DM/25/2083). In this particular case, the officer noted, *'Only the side of the dormer would be visible from the street scene, and marginally so, which would be seen in context with the neighbouring dormer, so an additional one is unlikely to be harmful to this existing character'*. It is not considered that this example is comparable to the application property as their positions on the street are different, with no. 148 far more open to views from the rear.

Two proposed conservation style rooflights are proposed to the front elevation which are acceptable in their own right. On balance, therefore, the scheme is not considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Impact on the Conservation Area

S.72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states: *'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'*

Paras 210, 215, 219 and 220 of the NPPF state:

'210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

219. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

220. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.'

Policy DP35 of the Mid-Sussex District Plan states:

Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- *Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- *Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- *Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.'*

Policy HurstC4 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan states: 'New development in the countryside adjacent to Conservation Areas will be permitted where it does not conflict with other Countryside policies and where the settings of the Conservation Areas are conserved or enhanced.'

The proposal is seeking permission for a proposed loft conversion with a rear dormer to the rear and 2 No. rooflights to the front elevation. It is noted that there are several existing box dormers of a similar scale and design in the vicinity, with one immediately adjacent to the application property (no. 150).

The conservation officer commented as follows: '148 Western Road is an unlisted semi-detached house located to the western side of Western Road within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area. The house is one half of a handed pair of late 19th/early 20th century villas, typical of the period and style of development within this part of the recently extended Conservation Area. It retains a number of attractive period features, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Area. It is unusual in being relatively open to view from the rear, from the adjacent road leading off Western Road, Sunleigh Court, which is also a public right of way (PROW).

Planning permission was recently granted for a loft conversion including a rear dormer window and rooflight, and two rooflights to the front roof slope. This permission was secured following revisions to the originally submitted scheme, which was for two rear dormers. This first scheme received an adverse response based on the scale and unsympathetic design of the dormer windows, which were considered to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and to be contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide.

The current application is also for a loft conversion, but to include box dormer extensions to the rear of the house, sitting across the rear roof slope and along the north facing slope of the existing rear wing's roof.

This proposal is considered unacceptable in principle due to the scale and design of the dormer additions. These would appear unduly bulky and visually prominent in views of buildings from the rear, including from Sunleigh Court and the PROW which runs along it. The form and design of the dormer

windows is also unsympathetic to the existing building. This would detract from the contribution which the house makes to the character and appearance of the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, at around the mid-level of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, specifically Design Principle DG52 Loft Conversions and Roof Extensions and paragraphs 6.3.5 and 6.3.8.

Although the principle of a loft conversion is not contentious, given that there is an extant planning permission to allow for this and including what would be, in my opinion, the maximum possible extension to the rear of the roof (in the form of the approved dormer window).'

In agreement with the Conservation Officer, it is considered that the proposed dormer extensions, spanning the rear roof slope and north-facing slope of the rear outrigger are unacceptable in terms of scale, bulk and design. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this level of harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the extension serves a private domestic purpose, and no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the identified harm.

It is therefore considered that the proposal will be harmful to the surrounding character of the conservation area and does not comply with policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy HurstC4 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on neighbouring amenities

In terms of impact upon 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).'*

The proposed dormer and rooflights, would not result in a harmful impact in terms of direct views into neighbouring properties' private amenity spaces, nor would it result in any loss of light to the neighbouring properties. Therefore it is considered that the proposal would not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight and sunlight, noise, air and light pollution or a loss of outlook.

Therefore, in terms of neighbouring amenities, the proposal is deemed to comply with this element of policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

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 not considered to be appropriate in terms of design, size and scale and would not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The development would result in less than substantial harm, and in accordance with the test set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF, there are no public benefits that would outweigh this harm. Therefore, the proposal does not comply with policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy HurstC4 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF and is recommended for refusal.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Tracie Axford