

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0559	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Installation of 15 solar panels. Installation of air source heat pump. Installation of outdoor therapy pool.		
Site:	The Old Malthouse, Ockley Manor Farm, Ockley Lane, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8NX, ,		
Validation Date	23 May 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	30 Jul 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	31 Jul 2025
Target Date:	18 Jul 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	1 Aug 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0559

**The Old Malthouse, Ockley Manor Farm, Ockley Lane, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8NX,
Installation of 15 solar panels. Installation of air source heat pump. Installation of outdoor
therapy pool.**

Emma Warde-Robinson

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Historic England: No comment

MSDC Conservation Officer:

The information is about sufficient to allow an assessment of the impact of the works on the character of the Old Malthouse as an NDHA and its contribution to the settings of the adjacent listed buildings.

To consider these works in turn:

- Solar PV Panels: The impact on views of the building from the Lane and from the immediate settings of the adjacent listed buildings is likely to be less significant, due in part to the enclosed nature of the yard.

This aspect of the proposal will result in a mid level of harm to the Old Malthouse as an NDHA of a mid level of interest in the local context. In terms of the impact, through setting, on the special interests of the adjacent listed buildings, I would place this at the lower end of the scale. The great weight which must be attached to this harm under para. 212 of the NPPF stands to be weighed against the public benefits, if any, of the proposal, bearing in mind that para. 167 of the Framework requires that significant weight should be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to existing buildings.

- Therapy pool: The proposed therapy pool is to be located within the courtyard area, parallel with the southern range of buildings which surround it. The pool is approximately 8m x 4m in footprint and 1.6m high with a telescopic cover. It is a relatively modest structure and a potentially reversible intervention. This aspect of the proposal is therefore not on balance considered contentious, subject to appropriate screening around the pool, including of views from the direction of Ockley Lane.

- ASHP: The proposed ASHP is shown located adjacent to the southern elevation of the western range. Whilst there would be no objection in principle to an ASHP, this location renders it potentially visible in views from the Lane when the vehicle gates are left open. I would suggest it would be better located adjacent to the eastern elevation if this is possible. If not, appropriate screening should be introduced around the pump, to avoid harm to the significance of the NDHA and the settings of the adjacent heritage assets.

- Amendments to windows: The proposal includes alterations to the form and proportions of a number of windows to the eastern and northern elevations of the building. It is proposed to enlarge a number of openings and to replace timber casement windows with aluminium windows of a different design.

I consider that this aspect of the proposal is partially contentious. The replacement windows themselves should be of a more sympathetic design, retaining the current vertical emphasis, and should be of

painted timber. Aluminium windows will not be acceptable in this context. Side opening rather than top hung casements should also be employed.

The enlargement of the remaining windows affected by the proposal, to the kitchen and bedroom, is in my opinion unfortunately contentious in principle as this would have both a domesticating impact on the building's appearance, and would detract from the currently fairly consistent proportions of the window openings and for the same reasons as the replacement windows.

As it stands the proposal is harmful to the significance of the NDHA, resulting in a mid level of harm to an asset of a mid level of interest in the local context, and also to the positive contribution that the building makes to the settings of the adjacent listed buildings, resulting in low level of harm, through impact on setting, to their special interests and how these are appreciated.

- Painting of the southern building: The application property includes the western end of the southern range of buildings enclosing the courtyard. Historical map regression shows that this is a more modern building, dating from around the mid 20th century. This will be harmful to the contribution which this building makes to the settings of the other buildings around the courtyard and to the adjacent listed buildings. I would suggest this element of the proposal is therefore rethought.

In summary, although aspects of the proposal are considered acceptable, others result in harm to the significance of the NDHA or its setting, and to the settings of the adjacent listed buildings, as set out above. Amendments would be required, but as it stands the proposal overall would be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34.

With respect to the proposed solar PV panels a balanced judgement is required as set out above.

Naturespace: we consider there would be no likely impact on great crested newts or their habitats. I therefore have no comments to make at this time

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Recommend Approval.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of 15 solar panels on the rear roofslope, the installation of an air source heat pump and an outdoor therapy pool.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

01/02498/FUL - The conversion of redundant farm buildings to form 3 no. residential units, including demolition of some modern agricultural buildings. (approved)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The dwelling is a converted farm building detached part hipped roofed and part pitched roofed bungalow. The dwelling is characterised by timber doors and windows with walls a mix of timber cladding and face brickwork. The dwelling is characterised by existing rooflights

To the west of the site is the grass to the highway beyond, to the south of the site is the driveway with hedging to neighbour beyond, to the north of the site is the driveway to access track serving neighbours beyond and to the east of the site is the rear garden with brick wall to neighbours (Old Dairy and Old Granary) beyond.

The site is outside of the built up area of Hassocks

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed solar panels on the rear roofslope are in two blocks, the smaller block of 6 panels measures 6.854m in width and 1.757m in height and the larger block of 9 panels measures 10.286m in width and 1.757m in height.

The proposed of an air source heat pump measures 1.385m in depth, 0.45m in width with a height of 0.864m.

The proposed outdoor therapy pool measures 7m in depth, 4.028m in width with a height of 1.6m.

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 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:

DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside)
DP26 (Design and Character)
DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets)
DP39 (Sustainability)

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.

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was 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

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
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB2 - Listed Building 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) (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration. Paragraphs 8, 11, 131, 135, 167, 207-216 are considered to be relevant to this application.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 directs that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall 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.

ASSESSMENT

Impact on Countryside Setting

Policy DP12 of the District Plan is relevant to development in rural areas and 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:

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

Given the domestic nature of the proposal means it is therefore considered the proposal will protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Due to the above, the proposal complies with DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Character and Design

DP26 of the District Plan, in part, 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;
- 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'

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

'Development proposals will be supported where, they are in line with the Townscape Appraisal, and where the character and design:

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 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, 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 proposed works are to the rear of the property and will not be visible from the streetscene. The therapy pool and Air Source Heat pump are modest structures with the proposed solar panels within the rear roofslope.

Therefore, the proposal complies with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and principles DG49 and DG51 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Impact on Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Neighbouring Ockley Manor Barn, Ockley Manor and Ockley Farm Cottages are listed. Therefore, the property affects the setting of this listed building.

The Conservation Officer has commented on the proposal as sees the dwelling as a Non designated heritage asset. The contentious elements of the proposal (new windows and cladding) have been removed.

The Air Source heat pump will be screened by small fencing to match the existing boundary treatments.

The conservation officer sees the solar panels as resulting in *"mid level of harm to the Old Malthouse as an NDHA of a mid level of interest in the local context. In terms of the impact, through setting, on the special interests of the adjacent listed buildings, I would place this at the lower end of the scale. The great weight which must be attached to this harm under paragraph 212 of the NPPF stands to be weighed against the public benefits."*

Para 216 of the NPPF sets out that where a proposal effects on a non-designated heritage asset a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the asset.

It is also noted that paragraph 167 of the NPPF *"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"*.

Therefore, given the harm is placed on the lower end of the scale, the public benefits of the solar panels for energy efficiency and low carbon improvements to the existing building and given their non-permanent nature the sustainability benefits of this element are deemed to outweigh the harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building and the NDHA.

A condition ensuring that the solar panels are removed once redundant in use is considered reasonable and necessary in this instance in the interest of the protecting the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings and the NDHA.

Sustainable Design

District Plan Policy DP39 states:

'All development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location, incorporate the following measures:

- o Minimise energy use through the design and layout of the scheme including through the use of natural lighting and ventilation;*
- o Explore opportunities for efficient energy supply through the use of communal heating networks where viable and feasible;*
- o Use renewable sources of energy;*
- o Maximise efficient use of resources, including minimising waste and maximising recycling/ re-use of materials through both construction and occupation;*
- o Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day in accordance with Policy DP42: Water infrastructure and the Water Environment;*
- o Demonstrate how the risks associated with future climate change have been planned for as part of the layout of the scheme and design of its buildings to ensure its longer term resilience'*

Policy 5 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan states:

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

The use of solar panels and heat pump are renewable sources of energy that improve efficiency. Therefore, these elements mean the proposal complies with DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 5 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbouring Amenities

In terms of neighbouring amenities, Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan requires residential amenities to not cause unacceptable harm, while 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 9 of the HNP 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 nature of the proposals, unacceptable harm is not deemed to be caused to neighbouring amenities.

Therefore, in terms of neighbouring amenities, the proposal is deemed to comply with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood 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

The proposed development is deemed acceptable in terms of design, form and scale to the existing dwellinghouse and surrounding properties and should not have a harmful impact upon the character of the area. Nor is the proposal considered to have an unacceptable impact upon neighbouring amenities.

Whilst the installation of solar panels to the rear roofslope are deemed to be harmful to the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings but this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the move to a non-carbon energy economy.

The proposal therefore accords with policies DP12, DP26, and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies 5 and 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell