

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2613	Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Conversion of the existing garage into ancillary accommodation, that will include a playroom, pool changing room and storage in the roofspace		
Site:	Sandhill, Sandhill Lane, Crawley Down, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4LE, ,		
Validation Date	15 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	21 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	4 Dec 2025
Target Date:	10 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Stefan Galyas</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	4 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2613

**Sandhill, Sandhill Lane, Crawley Down, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4LE,
Conversion of the existing garage into ancillary accommodation, that will include a playroom,
pool changing room and storage in the roofspace
Mr Tim Nixon**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

There was one letter of representation received in response to the proposed development. The letter sought to support the proposal.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer: *'Sandhill is a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier former farmhouse located in a semi-rural position on the edge of Crawley Down. The former farmstead also includes a 16th century barn, now converted for residential use, and an ancillary building which would be regarded as curtilage listed. The current proposal relates to a further, modern outbuilding, a garage and plant room which is located to the south of the historic grouping, and is for works to convert the building for use as a play room, pool changing room and storage space. The proposed external alterations include removal of garage doors and bricking up of the openings to the front (west) elevation, new windows to the northern elevation, removal of windows and new sliding doors and solid door to the eastern elevation, and new rooflights.*

The existing garage building is, as noted above, modern, and is not particularly sympathetic in its design or materials (for example the garage doors are up-and-over in style and the windows are uPVC). It makes at best a neutral contribution to the setting of the listed buildings. In this context, whilst it is considered unfortunate that the existing proposal does not seek to introduce improvements to the design of the building which would better relate it to the rural/agricultural context (although the proposed use of timber to some of the windows and the external door is welcomed) it is not considered that an objection on these grounds could be sustained.

On balance, the proposal is considered to preserve the settings of the adjacent listed and curtilage listed buildings, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.'

Southern Water No objection.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Parish Council: *'Defer to officer but request that a non-severance clause is added'*

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing detached garage into ancillary accommodation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

00/01265/FUL - Helicopter landing platform (Amended application: further information received re: hours and frequency of use). Permission 17.08.2001.

02/00066/FUL - Variation of existing planning condition to permit use of helicopter from dawn until dusk Monday to Sunday. Permission 03.05.2002.

04/02538/FUL - Installation of tennis court surrounded by 2 metre high fence. Permission 17.12.2004.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application relates to Sandhill, a two-storey detached dwelling featuring a pitched roof with a catslide to the rear. The existing dwelling has been extended through a relatively modern flat roofed extension to the northeastern corner. This link connects to the former barn which is of a two-storey size and scale with a hipped roof and single storey element to the western side. The barn has since been converted into residential accommodation and forms a courtyard alongside the main original farmhouse. A circular driveway with a central grassed area is contained within the courtyard with a single storey timber-built outbuilding to the southern side. A further more modern brick built single storey outbuilding is positioned further to the south with a barn hipped roof. The dwelling is afforded generous grounds to the east with a swimming pool and a tennis court contained within the garden amenity space.

Moving further afield, the site is largely bounded by open fields, mature vegetation and ponds all of which contribute to an overall verdant character. Large, corrugated sheet farm buildings are positioned to the south of the site, further contributing to the semi-rural character.

In terms of policy constraints, the site is not located within any built-up area boundary. Sandhill Farmhouse and Sandhill Barn are both grade II listed in their own right.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposal would convert the existing detached garage to the south of the site into ancillary accommodation. The proposed building would accommodate a pool changing area, storage and a playroom.

Externally, the existing garage doors to the principal (west) elevation would be removed and bricked up with matching brickwork. Furthermore, four rooflights would be installed to the roof pitch with the existing chimney stacks removed. To the rear (east) elevation, there would be alterations to the existing fenestration arrangement with a further timber door added. The side (north) elevation would add three window openings. To the other side (south) elevation, the existing doorway would be bricked up.

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 Crawley Down 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: Character and Design

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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.

Neighbourhood Plan

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (Made January 2016)

No relevant policies.

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) - Special regard to be had to the preservation of a listed building or its setting.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation 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 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

DPN5 - Historic Parks and Gardens

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) (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration.

Paragraphs 2, 8, 11, 39, 48, 131, 135, 139, 189, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212-215, 216, 219 & 220.

The National Design Guide (2021)

ASSESSMENT

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

- Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- Impact on Design and Character, Including Heritage Assets
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Other Matters
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'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 within the existing dwellings established residential curtilage, the proposed development is considered to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

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

Impact on Design and Character, Including Heritage Assets

With regard to the setting of listed buildings, policy DP34 elaborates further by stating:

Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- o Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- o Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*
- o Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;*
- o Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- o Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.*

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected. Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'* The applicant has provided a Heritage Statement in support of the application which assesses the proposals impact on the relevant heritage assets. Therefore, this requirement of the NPPF is considered to have been met.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires the Local Planning Authority to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal.

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

Paragraphs 212 - 215 of the NPPF states:

'212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) *grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) *assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

214. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) *conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

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.'

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF notes:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

Policy DP26 of the 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:

- o is of high-quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o 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;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o 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'*

The below assessment is made whilst being mindful of this guidance and having regard to the statutory duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting in accordance with the requirements of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The existing garage to which the application relates is a more modern addition to the site and it was noted in the Conservation Officer's response that the building is not particularly sympathetic in its design. It is considered that whilst the building is of a limited overall architectural merit, there are some features such as the barn hipped roof which help the existing building embed into its surroundings.

The proposed alterations would not alter the existing building footprint and would include alterations to the various elevations and the removal of the existing chimney stacks/ features. It is considered that the removal of these stacks would not be contentious considering that they provide a limited contribution towards the existing setting of the nearby listed and curtilage listed buildings.

Further alterations would be made to the rear (west) roof pitch through the addition of four rooflights. The rooflights would be of a conservation model in order to be more flush fitting with the roof slope. A

condition requiring this material as suggested by the Conservation Officer is not considered to be necessary as this has been detailed on the proposed drawings.

The scheme would also block up a number of fenestration and door openings with matching brickwork. This would likely help these alterations assimilate with the existing, however further details of the proposed facing brickwork can be secured by way of a pre-commencement condition which has been agreed with by the Applicant. Furthermore, appropriate sections of the windows and doors have been suggested by the Conservation Officer and are considered to be necessary and relevant should permission be granted.

In light of the above, the proposal would result in a neutral impact and is considered to preserve the special interest of the nearby listed buildings at Sandhill Farmhouse and Sandhill Barn and curtilage listed buildings. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies DP26 and DP34 of the District Plan, the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF and the statutory duties as set out within the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act.

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 DP29);'*

The proposal would not enlarge the existing footprint of the building and the proposed new window openings throughout are considered to look out back towards the sites established residential curtilage.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to a significant overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing impact on the neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Other Matters

A key element which contributes towards the acceptability of an annexe is that there should be a functional relationship with the primary use of the planning unit. However, as established within the *Uttlesford DC v SSE & White* [1992] JLP 171, even if the accommodation provides facilities for independent day-to-day living, it would not necessarily become a separate planning unit from the main dwelling; it would be a matter of fact and degree.

Whilst the proposal would convert the existing garage into vaulted party/ play space as well as a pool changing room, it is considered that the outbuilding would be sufficiently linked to the host dwelling on site. A brick paved pathway links the outbuilding to the main dwelling, and the two buildings would share the same access. Moreover, the proposed quantum of accommodation is not considered to be tantamount to a separate unit on site. No kitchen or kitchenette has been shown within the proposed floor plans and therefore it is considered that the outbuilding would have some reliance on the host dwelling for the preparation of meals. In any circumstance, an appropriately worded condition ensuring that the outbuilding remains ancillary to the host property is considered relevant and necessary in the instance that planning permission is granted.

Therefore, as established the proposal would not constitute a separate unit on site and would be used as ancillary to the host dwelling.

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

To summarise, it is considered that the proposal will protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The proposal is also considered to preserve the special interest of the nearby listed buildings at Sandhill Farmhouse and Sandhill Barn as well as the curtilage listed building. Finally, the proposal would not lead to significant harm in relation to neighbouring amenities. As such, the application complies with Policies DP12, DP26 and DP34 of the District Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Stefan Galyas