

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2676	Case Officer:	Catherine Cardin
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Proposed loft conversion		
Site:	17 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, , ,		
Validation Date	24 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	18 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	4 Dec 2025
Target Date:	19 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Catherine Cardin</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	4 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2676

**17 Barnfield, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6FW, ,
Proposed loft conversion
Mr And Mrs Russell**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

None.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Balcombe Parish Council raises no objection to the planning application and observes that the rear elevation overlooks the valley, thereby avoiding any loss of privacy to neighbouring properties.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for a proposed loft conversion.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/18/4541- Erection of 16 no. dwellings and associated development (amended plans and documents received 28th March 2019, 29th April 2019 and 18th September 2019). Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

17 Barnfield is a detached two-storey property. The dwelling is characterised by red brick, white upvc windows and a plain tile roof. The property had hanging tiles to the first-floor elevation. The property sits in a elevated position with land sloping away to the east.

The property lies within a cul-de-sac within a modern housing estate. The application site is located partly within the built-up area boundary of Balcombe and partly the countryside and is within the High Weald AONB. A neighbouring property is located to the north. Highway is located to the south and west, whilst open countryside lies to the east.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed loft conversion and extension would measure some 2.7 metres in depth and some 2.3 metres in width. It is proposed to install a Juliette balcony on the side (eastern) elevation. The proposal also includes the installation of no.5 rooflights.

It is also proposed to install a new window on the rear (northern) and side (western) first floor elevations. These would match the existing.

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 Balcombe 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

DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26 - Character and Design

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

No relevant policies

Neighbourhood Plan

The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan was made on 22nd September 2016.

Relevant policies:

Policy 3 - Design

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:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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;

- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Impact on the High Weald AONB
- Neighbouring amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Impact on character and appearance of the area

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to design and character and 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 protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;

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 (see Policy DP27);

o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible; o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;

o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;

o 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; o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'

Policy 3 of Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan relates to design and states:

'The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and to avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the significance and character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, where a building will command a view.

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide relates to general principles for extensions and states that:

Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.

Principle DG52 relates to loft conversions and roof extensions and 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 proposed loft conversion, roof extension and Juliette balcony is considered to be in keeping with the character of the existing roofscape and the proportions of the existing dwelling. It is considered that the roof extension would not significantly alter the roof profile of the building. It is considered that the proposed fenestration would respond appropriately to the existing windows and doors.

The proposal is therefore considered to address the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding buildings, and as such the proposal is deemed to comply with the above part of policy DP26 of the District Plan, and principles DG49 and DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and Policy 3 of Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on the High Weald AONB

The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CRoW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads 66. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

Footnote 66: English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

Policy DP12 in the District Plan seeks to protect the character of the countryside and states that development will be permitted where it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and is supported by a specific policy reference in the District Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or Development Plan Document. In this case policy DP26 is the relevant policy that supports high quality development.

The application relates to an existing residential property that unusually, is partly within the built-up area of Balcombe and partly within the countryside. The proposal would not form an isolated development within the wider landscape. The proposal would not have any adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB due to it being viewed in context with existing built form.

As such the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies DP12 and DP16 of the District Plan, The High Weald AONB Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

In terms of impact on neighbouring amenities, Policy DP26 of the District Plan states proposals 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'*.

To the north is 15 Barnfield. Given that the proposal would be offset from this neighbour by some 30 metres, it is not considered that the development would give rise to significant overlooking concerns.

To the west is 11 Barnfield. A window is proposed on the side (western) elevation. Although this will result in a degree of overlooking to a secondary bedroom window, given that the proposal would be offset from this neighbour by some 9 metres, it is not considered that the harm caused would be significant enough to warrant the refusal of the application. Furthermore, there is a highway between the two dwellings, and this arrangement is not considered unusual within a built-up area boundary.

Due to the domestic nature of the proposed development, it is considered that there would not be a harmful impact in terms of noise, air and light pollution.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan, and the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

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 proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of design, size and scale to the dwellinghouse and locality. It is considered that the proposal would not be harmful to the High Weald AONB and would not be harmful the amenities of neighbours.

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP16 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Catherine Cardin