Expiry Date - 25/08/2025

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0846/25 **Recommendation: APPROVE**

Site: **Sunridge Mill Lane Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Application to Vary Condition 2 of previously approved AWDM/1641/23: Amendment: To reduce the depth of the north section of decking from 3.5m to 3m. To remove the stairs to the North section of decking. To turn the direction of the southern staircase from facing North to facing South and attach it to the main decking.**

ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION: Raised deck to rear with external steps and balustrade

Date of site visit: 10/01/2024 (JA for AWDM/1641/23)

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

Sunridge comprises a detached house occupying a generous-sized plot on the east side of Mill Lane close to its junction with Newling Way. It has been enlarged and extended incrementally over many years.

The site slopes steeply down to the east so that the rear components of the dwelling are elevated in relation to the rear garden level. There is a raised terrace in the centre of the rear elevation with steps on the south side leading to a lower paved terrace close to the southern site boundary.

The site adjoins ‘Totftwood’ to the south, a modern detached house on lower ground.

To the north the site adjoins ‘Kingfisher’ an older detached bungalow occupying a similarly generous sized plot as Sunridge. It is set back substantially deeper (eastward) into its plot than Sunridge and towards the north side. A detached garage building with roof accommodation is sited forward of the main dwelling adjacent to the south side boundary with Sunridge.

A densely treed part of ‘The Gallops’ lies further down the slope to east, located within the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

The surrounding topography allows for expansive views across the Findon Valley towards the South Downs.

The property is not within a conservation area, is not a listed building and there are no protected trees on site.

Proposal

Planning permission was allowed on appeal in July 2024 for a large, raised platform/deck incorporating and on the same level as the existing rear terrace, but extending deeper into the rear garden and across almost the entire width of the rear elevation.

As approved the floor of the platform would be a maximum 1.85m above the rear garden level (2.65m to the top of the balustrading) projecting a maximum 4.5m from the rear wall of the existing single-storey component on the north side of the rear elevation, 7.8m from the 2-storey rear wall of central recessed component and a maximum 5m from the rear wall of the single-storey component on the south side of the rear elevation. The approved platform included 2 staircases stepping down to the rear garden at either end, descending parallel to the rear face of the platform. The southern staircase would serve a lower platform (6.2m wide by 1.8m deep) at the base, some 0.2m in height.

The approved scheme included a 5m deep timber privacy screen (maximum 3.6m high) on the south side of the proposed platform and southern stairs.

It is now proposed to reduce the depth and alter the layout of the approved platform/deck as a variation to Condition 2 (approved plans) of the appeal decision APP/M3835/D/24/3342904.

As revised the proposed platform/deck would now extend a maximum 3m from the rear wall of the single-storey component on the north side of the rear elevation. The depth of the central component would be reduced by 0.35m. The revised platform/deck would extend a maximum 2.4m from the rear wall of the single-storey component on the south side. There would now be only one staircase stepping down from the centre of the platform/deck onto the lower platform on the south side. The stairs would be positioned alongside and parallel to the face of the southern component of the platform/deck. A 2.4m deep x 1.8m high (from the floor of the platform) privacy screen is proposed on the south side of the raised platform/deck.

Relevant Planning History:

The original planning application AWDM/1641/23 was refused on the following ground:

“The proposal, by reason of its height and proximity to the southerly site boundary, would have a detrimental impact on privacy and the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling 'Toftwood' resulting in an unacceptable degree of overlooking, loss of daylight and an intrusive loss of outlook. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy DM5 of the Worthing

Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Extending or altering your home' and the policies of the revised National Planning Policy Framework."

In allowing the appeal APP/M3835/D/24/3342904 the Inspector noted the existence of a ground-floor window in the north side elevation of Toftwood which is separated from the common boundary by a narrow pathway to the side of Toftwood. The boundary treatment here consists of a wall and slatted fence the height of which extends to around the middle of the window. The Inspector accepted that the height and depth of the privacy screen would impact on the daylight and outlook from this window but considered the level of impact to be modest and not so serious to warrant refusal. They noted that the privacy screen would not be sited directly on the common boundary and that a reasonable gap would be retained on either side of the boundary to allow light to reach the window. The Inspector considered it likely that the window in question at Toftwood is not a principal window and that the privacy screen would be sited to the north of it.

In terms of outlook, the Inspector was satisfied that whilst some of the upper part of the privacy screen would be visible from the window in question, its impact on the outlook of Toftwood would be limited. The Inspector noted that the common boundary [alongside the respective gardens] is formed of a combination of fencing, hedging and planting which forms an effective screen between the two properties.

The Inspector did not agree with the Council's contention that unacceptable overlooking would arise from that part of the platform/stairs beyond the privacy screen close to the boundary with Toftwood. The Inspector considered that this part of the raised platform would be sited a reasonable distance from the common boundary and any views would be limited and oblique and would be towards a boundary that has an extensive high screen formed by fencing, hedging and planting.

The Inspector was satisfied that the proposed raised platform/deck would not be visually overbearing and would not result in any harmful increase in overlooking of or loss of privacy to Toftwood. The Inspector went on to comment further: -

"Even so mutual overlooking of neighbouring gardens is an inherent and common characteristic of most built up areas, even where, as in this case, the properties sit on spacious plots. It also arises where, again as in this case, there is a difference in levels and occupiers have either extended or constructed platforms, as proposed, to take full benefit of their gardens and views. The focus of those extensions and platforms, as in the case of the host, is towards their rear gardens and attractive views of the valley to the east……".

Consultations

SDNPA: No comment.

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Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

The key consideration is the effect of the revised proposal on visual and residential amenity.

The overall depth of the raised platform/deck has been reduced compared to the approved scheme and so any impact on visual amenity, for example, in distant views from across the valley will be lessened.

Kingfisher (to the north) is well screened from the proposed raised platform/deck by tall trees and shrubs growing along the common site boundary and will not be significantly impacted by the revised proposal, as before.

The consideration of the Inspector as to the impact of the previously proposed raised platform/deck on the residential amenities of Toftwood (to the south) is a material consideration of significant weight in deciding the current revised proposal.

The reduced depth of the raised platform and privacy screen (by some 2.6m) on the south side will have a notably lesser impact on the receipt of light to and outlook from the ground-floor window in the north side wall of Toftwood compared to the previously allowed scheme.

As revised, the single set of stairs would face south (toward Toftwood) stepping down from the central composed of the platform to the lower deck. Although anyone coming down the stairs will face directly toward the common boundary with Toftwood, at a separation distance of over 7m (between the top of the stairs and site boundary) it is considered the effects of overlooking would not be severe. In arriving at this conclusion consideration has been given to the appeal Inspector's consideration that some degree of mutual overlooking between neighbouring properties is a common characteristic in suburban built-up areas, such as would be the case here.

Recommendation

APPROVE Subject to conditions: -

1. Time limit as for AWDM/1641/23
2. Approved plans
3. Privacy screen solid/opaque construction to be in situ prior to first use

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Informative

Pro Active No Amendment

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 24/09/2025

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 24 September 2025