



HERITAGE STATEMENT rev A

Firs Farm, Copthorne Common Road, Copthorne, Crawley, RH10 3LF

Prepared for: Devtec Properties

The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning or Listed Building application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: Firs Farm, Copthorne Common Road, Copthorne, Crawley, RH10 3LF

Local Authority: Mid Sussex District Council

Conservation Area: None

Archaeological Notification Area: None

Building Use: Residential/Commercial

Listing Status: Not Listed List entry no. N/A

Designated Heritage Asset:

Scheduled Monument?	N
Listed Building?	N
Registered Park and Garden	N
Historic Battlefield	N
Conservation Area	N
World Heritage Site	N

Non Designated Heritage Asset	N
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Project Overview:

Redevelopment of an existing commercial site to provide 5 dwelling houses with associated amenity space and parking; hard and soft landscaping; cycle and refuse storage; change of use of land to residential garden for existing dwellinghouse and associated access works.



Photo 1 – View of existing site

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Photo 2 and 3 – View of Building 2



Photo 4 and 5 – View towards Building 6 and 7 (straight ahead), Building 2 to the right



Photo 6 – View of entrance to Firs Farm, view towards Building 2 and 7

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Photo 7 and 8 – View towards Building 2 and 7, with Building 3a and 4 in the background



Photo 9-12 – View of Building 3, 3a, and 4

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Photo 13 – View towards adjacent domestic building



Photo 14 and 15 – View of Building 4 and 3a from courtyard



Photo 16 – View of former entrance gate to The Firs (neighbouring listed dwelling) on Copthorne Common Rd.

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Photo 17 and 18 – View towards Firs Farm, approaching from Duke's Head roundabout



Photo 19 and 20 – View towards The Firs, approaching from Turners Hill Rd.

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Schedule of Intervention:

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- Demolition of the existing single storey storage / industrial units on the site.
- Removal of the existing hardstanding associated with the existing service yard.
- 5no. new two storey dwellings with associated landscaping as per drawing 23.0506D P-01-D.
- No change to the existing boundary treatment or trees.
- No change to the existing site access from the main road.

Existing and proposed drawings shown below:



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Setting Overview/ Context:

The site is located on the south side of Copthorne Common Road, a busy A road, close to the Dukes Head Roundabout and east of the village of Copthorne. Immediately to the north of the site on the opposite side of the main road is a residential area. The site is accessed from an existing road junction serving Firs Farm and Dukes Barns Business Park.

To the west of the site at the road entrance is a modern residential two storey red brick dormer bungalow with UPVC windows and doors and tiled roof which you currently pass close to in order to reach the site.

To the south of the site is the BT telephone exchange and a building contractors yard. Further south to that beyond the business park is semi-rural in its nature.

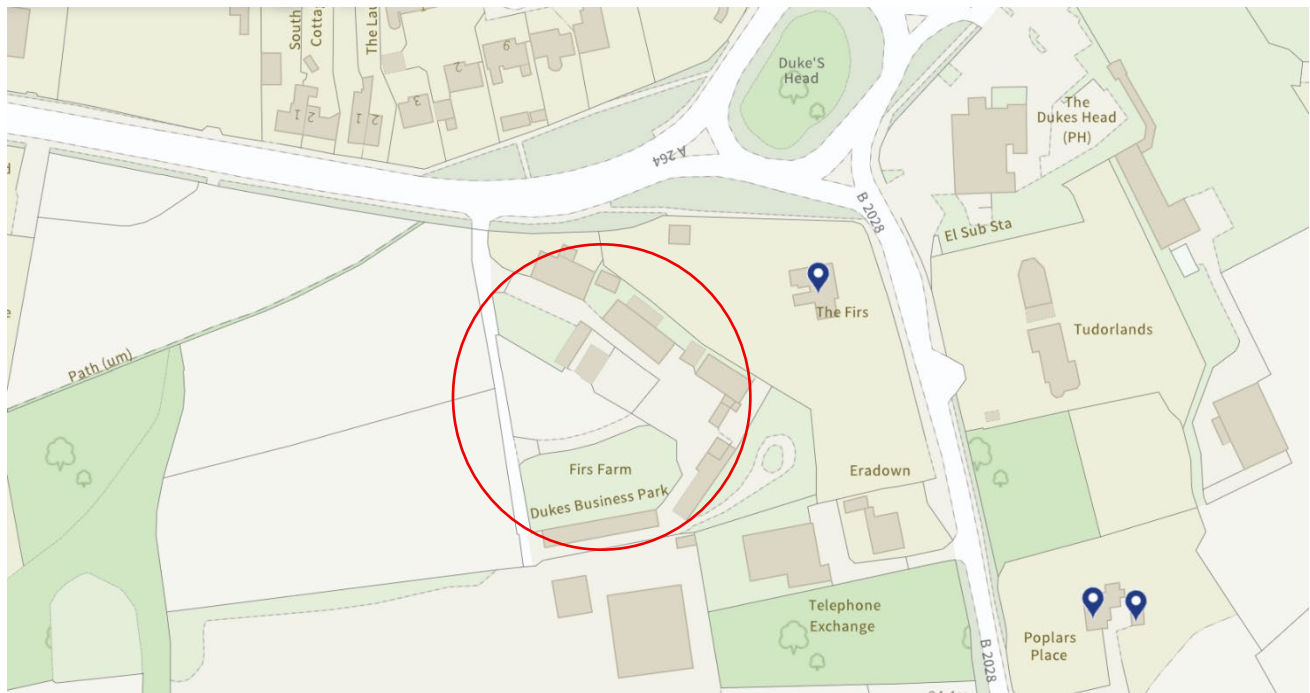
To the east of the site, but with no visual relationship is a Grade II Listed property called the Firs. This addresses and is accessed from Turners Hill Road, another busy road.

The site has an industrial feel to it and largely laid to tarmac. It is covered by an array of low grade single storey industrial units. They have been in place for some time, linked to the general development of the local area, and are a varied mix of painted brick, timber cladding, blockwork and render. The roofs vary from felt to corrugated sheeting. It is all in a poor state of repair.

There are no views of the site from the road due to the high fences and mature boundary trees and vegetation.

Setting: Business Park/ Residential

Topography: Flat



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Area shown with a red circle.

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Site Planning History:

Redevelopment of the site to provide 5 dwellinghouses with associated amenity space and parking; hard and soft landscaping; cycle and refuse storage; change of use of land to residential garden for existing dwellinghouse and associated access works.

Ref. No: DM/25/0708 | Received: 17 Mar 2025 | Validated: 20 Mar 2025 | Status: Pending Consideration

Conversion of a storage building to form two dwellinghouses (2 x Use Class C3 Single Family Dwellinghouses).

Ref. No: DM/25/0053 | Received: 07 Jan 2025 | Validated: 09 Jan 2025 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/25/0031 | Status: Appeal Pending

Conversion of two buildings (Use Class E) to form a three bedroom family dwellinghouse (Use Class C3), associated outbuilding, amenity space and parking provision

Ref. No: DM/25/0047 | Received: 07 Jan 2025 | Validated: 09 Jan 2025 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/25/0032 | Status: Appeal Pending

Conversion of two buildings to 1 x single family dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) with associated amenity space and parking provision.

Ref. No: DM/24/2053 | Received: 23 Aug 2024 | Validated: 10 Sep 2024 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/25/0010 | Status: Appeal Allowed

Proposed Lawful Development Certificate application to resume the lawful uses of a number of buildings at Firs Farm.

Ref. No: DM/24/1234 | Received: 17 May 2024 | Validated: Tue 21 May 2024 | Status: Approved

Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings. Erection of 44 no. dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Ref. No: DM/19/2060 | Received: 03 Jun 2019 | Validated: 21 Aug 2019 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/21/0006 | Status: Appeal Withdrawn

Residential development comprising of 54 dwellings.

Ref. No: DM/18/4626 | Received: 14 Nov 2018 | Validated: 04 Dec 2018 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/19/0029 | Status: Appeal Withdrawn

Mobile home 40' x 20' in existence requiring retrospective planning permission. The building replaced an existing building 3 years ago. Decking to front of property provides access to front door.

Ref. No: 09/01894/FUL | Received: 18 Jun 2009 | Validated: 02 Mar 2011 | Status: Not Proceeded With

Retrospective application for new vehicular access.

Ref. No: 05/01170/FUL | Received: 01 Jun 2005 | Validated: 19 Jul 2005 | Status: Approved

Retrospective application for continued use of building for light industrial use (class B1(c)) and storage use (class B8).

Ref. No: 01/00489/COU | Received: 13 Mar 2001 | Validated: 13 Mar 2001 | Status: Approved

Outline application for residential development

Ref. No: 00/01825/OUT | Received: 15 Aug 2000 | Validated: 23 Aug 2000 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/00/0005 | Status: Appeal Dismissed

CHANGE OF USE TO PET SHOP (A1). – Unit 1 Firs Farm

Ref. No: WP/072/92 | Received: 11 Jun 1992 | Validated: 11 Jun 1992 | Status: Refused

(1) CHANGE OF USE FROM DOG BREEDING TO USE FOR BREEDING, KEEPING AND SALE OF BIRDS.

(2) STATIONING OF PORTALOO. – Ambassadors Birds Firs Farm

Ref. No: WP/059/91 | Received: 03 Jun 1991 | Validated: 03 Jun 1991 | Status: Approved

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OUTLINE APPLICATION - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TWO-STOREY HOTEL WITH ACCESS ROAD AND RELATED CAR PARKING.

Ref. No: WP/067/90 | Received: 23 Apr 1990 | Validated: 23 Apr 1990 | Status: Refused

Change of use to builders merchants.

Ref. No: WP/137/89 | Received: 07 Aug 1989 | Validated: 07 Aug 1989 | Status: Refused

STATIONING OF PORTALOO AND CONSTRUCTION OF BELOW GROUND CESSPOOL.

Ref. No: WP/075/89 | Received: 26 Apr 1989 | Validated: 26 Apr 1989 | Status: Approved

CHANGE OF USE FROM DOG BREEDING TO USE FOR BREEDING, KEEPING AND SALE OF BIRDS. – Land at Firs Farm

Ref. No: WP/164/87 | Received: 09 Oct 1987 | Validated: 09 Oct 1987 | Status: Approved

CHANGE OF USE TO STORE, SELL AND REPAIR MACHINERY FOR AGRICULTURAL/HORTICULTURAL ENGINEERS.

Ref. No: WP/007/84 | Received: 13 Jan 1984 | Validated: 13 Jan 1984 | Status: Refused

OFF AIRPORT PARKING FOR EXISTING FIRM.

Ref. No: WP/125/83 | Received: 22 Aug 1983 | Validated: 22 Aug 1983 | Status: Refused

Ref. No: AP/83/0057 | Status: Appeal Dismissed

Mobile home for temporary accommodation for agricultural worker.

Ref. No: WP/056/78 | Received: 05 Apr 1978 | Validated: 05 Apr 1978 | Status: Refused

Kenneling fourteen dogs.

Ref. No: WP/024/76 | Received: 04 Feb 1976 | Validated: 04 Feb 1976 | Status: Approved

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Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits neither within nor just outside a Conservation Area.

The building is not Listed.

The building is within the context of a Listed Building as follows.

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II List Entry Number: 1025539

Date first listed: 11-May-1983

List Entry Name: THE FIRS Statutory Address 1: THE FIRS, TURNERS HILL ROAD

Location

Statutory Address: THE FIRS, TURNERS HILL ROAD

County: West Sussex

District: Mid Sussex (District Authority)

Parish: Worth

National Grid Reference: TQ 33506 39132

Details

WORTH TURNERS HILL ROAD, 1. 5405 Crawley Down The Firs TQ 33 NW 2/547 II

2. Mid C19. Two storeys. Three window. Stuccoed. Long and short quoins. Eaves bracket cornice. Hipped slate roof. No glazing bars. Two bays on ground floor. Porch between with Doric columns.

Listing NGR: TQ3350639132



Extract from Google Earth

Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance – NPPF

Archeological: *As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

The site is not recorded as being an archaeological notification area for East Sussex, Brighton and Hove. The site sits outside the historic curtilage of the adjacent Listed Building and is not believed to have any below ground significance.

Historic: *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

The site does not appear on the historic mapping to have ever formed part of The Firs Listed Building curtilage. As is the case now 'The Firs' addresses the road to the east and the site in question has always historically been registered as a separate parcel of land hidden to the rear and accessed separately. In 1911 the Firs was registered as being a household owned by Widow Annie Welch. In 1939 it is shown as being owned by a farmer of poultry and dairy Edward Barbour. It is understood to have been a poultry farm throughout the 1940s. Firs farm by this point contained a separate domestic residence occupied by Richard Banks and his family.

The site appears to have developed beyond a single building in the 1960s for commercial purposes at the same time as the large telephone exchange immediately to the south. These were built as part of a large government communication infrastructure upgrade countrywide. The Copthorne area is generally developed extensively post war to meet a housing demand developing former farmland. It ceased to have a rural context at this point, with development on 3 sides, as Copthorne expanded to service Gatwick Airport.

Architectural or Artistic: *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

The site contains a number of low quality industrial/ commercial units which have no architectural or artistic significance and are modern in nature.

Due to the heavy site boundary screening with vegetation the site makes no contribution to the architectural setting of the adjacent Listed Building.

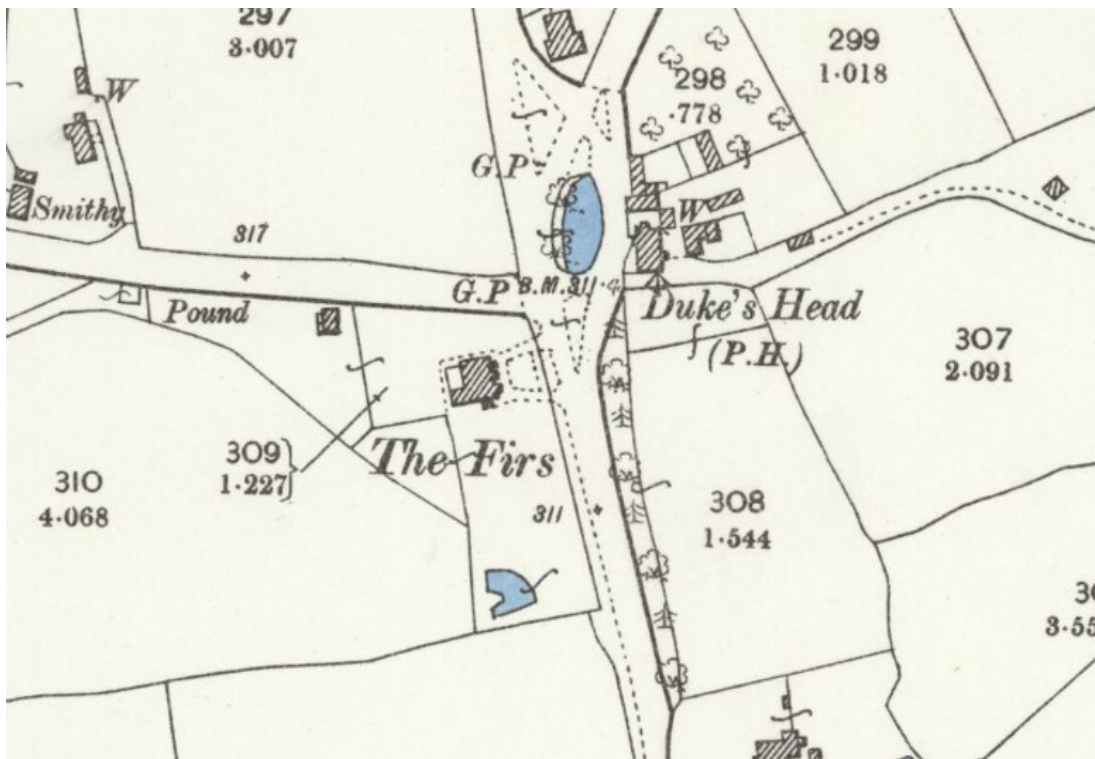
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Historic Mapping – For reference dating only, not for reproduction

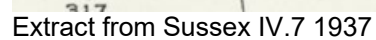
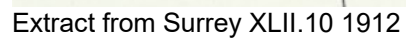


Extract from Surrey XLII 1879

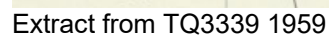


Extract from Sussex IV.7 1898

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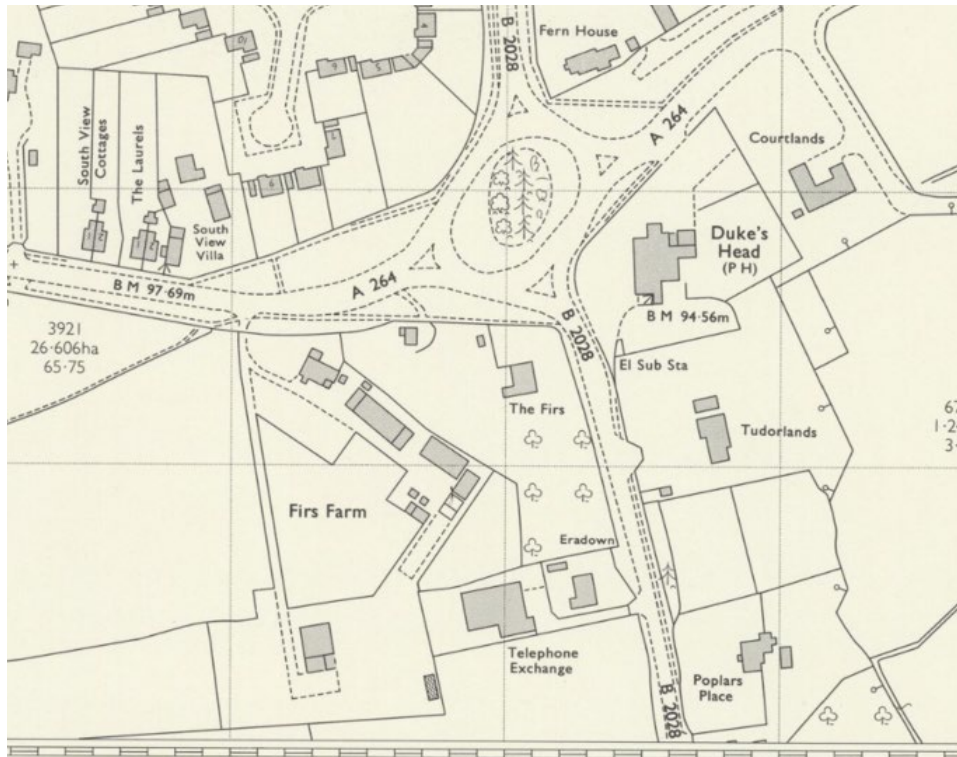


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Extract from TQ3239 – TQ3339 1973

Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.

Proposals should and do:

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

Building Elevations and Setting:

Read from a desktop study the site appears to be in close visual proximity to the Grade II Listed house 'The Firs'. From visiting the site however it is clear that in reality there is no visual relationship between the Listed Building setting and the area of land proposed to be developed from any angle. It is likely that any past visual views out past the site were heavily screened from the late 1950s when the site was first substantially developed.

The site is served by an existing and established access from the main road, separate to the Listed building, and is visually a developed and established area of commercial land. The change does not result in harm to a historic farmstead layout. The buildings on the land are of a low quality and aesthetic value and their replacement will enhance the aesthetics of the site as a whole and likely long term to have a more positive impact upon the adjacent Listed Building. The current low status of the site and the quantity of traffic using the adjacent road is likely at present to have a negative impact upon the value of the Listed house and may result in a threat to future investment. The development of the site to houses in this logical location may reduce that threat in the long term and be of a benefit to the owner.

The proposals do not result in the loss of the established boundary treatment or trees and therefore have no impact upon the wider setting.

Internally:

The buildings on site are of a poor quality and modern in nature. There is no loss of historic fabric or detailing as a result of the proposals.

Scale and Massing:

The existing buildings are single storey in nature and therefore of a smaller scale and massing than what is currently on site. The volume of developed land on the site however is visually greater now than what is being proposed and the reduction in density I believe more than offsets any increase in ridge height.

Archeaology:

The site is of low archaeological value and there is no known impact as a result of the proposals.

Use:

There is a change of use of the site from commercial to residential. The site is however in close proximity to residential dwellings and is a logical location for such a use class. The change of use does not harm any rural context to the Listed Building nor is it harmful to the historical character of the local area.

Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as, 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

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.

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 judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority may have location specific guidance also which includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. In assessing the impact of these proposals local guidance has also been considered.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Examples of heritage benefits may include: sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset, securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

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Conclusion:

The site at present is of a poor quality in its architectural or aesthetic qualities. It is a piece of low grade development, well established as developed land that makes no positive contribution to the wider setting and has its own independent access. The nearby Listed Building is not visible from the site nor are the two read as visual context to each other. The site forms no part of the Listed Building Curtilage either now, nor historically.

The demolition of the existing buildings does not result in the loss of historic fabric and the replacement with new buildings of a higher quality and a lower density would be a positive for the local area. Past planning officer reports have described a rural setting however the land is clearly part of the development boundary of Copthorne, surrounded by existing development on 3 sides and served by a busy network of established roads that give anything but a rural feel.

We believe this is a logical site for meeting local housing need without causing heritage harm and should be supported by the local authority. The proposed development causes no harm to the significance of the adjacent Listed Building nor its wider setting and therefore demonstrates compliance with heritage planning policies contained within the NPPF.

Assessor Details:

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

A site visit was undertaken as part of the site investigation in order to understand important relationships in the area surrounding the site. Date of Site Visit: 25/07/25 Weather conditions at time of visit: Dry

Information Source Checklist:

The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x

National Planning Policy Framework x

Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x

Relevant Local Plans x

Conservation Area Character Appraisal x

Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a

The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x

Local Records Office Other (please state):

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