

Heritage Statement

***Proposed development of 3-detached 4/5-bedroom
dwellings with integral double garages.***

***on land adjoining,
“Evergreen”
London Road.
Hassocks.
BN6 9NA.
West Sussex.***



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INTRODUCTION:-

The site is currently open grassland which is set to the north of the existing property known as “Evergreen” and is enclosed on the north and west sides by trees and natural hedging offering a natural screen between the site and the main A273 London Road. The site does not include any statutorily or locally listed buildings, also it does not lie within a conservation area.

The proposed site lies opposite the Friars Oak Farmhouse Farmstead sits on a plot size of approximately 7,559 square meters (roughly 1.87 acres).

EVOLUTION OF THE FARMSTEAD

Early History: The site and surrounding area trace back historically, with references near the locale found in the Domesday Book (linked to the namesake mature “Friars Oak” tree).

Structure & Use: The property features a detached freehold footprint and historical structure that has seen various local boundary shifts along London Road. [1]

Recent Developments: In recent years, the surrounding agricultural and green context has faced localized residential expansion (such as nearby Taylor Wimpey developments), and proposals have been made regarding the potential demolition and redevelopment of parts of the older farmstead structures for modern housing schemes

HISTORICAL BREAKDOWN & RELATIONSHIP

The site and surrounding land known as Evergreen was historically part of the original Friars Oak Farmstead land.

The Shared Parcel: “Evergreen” sits immediately adjacent to Friars Oak Farmhouse within the exact same cluster of historic farm buildings and post code (**BN6 9NA**) along London Road.

The Subdivision: The main house at Evergreen is a mid-century property built between **1950 and 1966**. It was constructed on a parcel of land that was subdivided from the broader, historic Friars Oak Farm estate as the old agricultural holding was incrementally broken up for residential use.

Modern Planning Context: The historic relationship between the properties remains highly relevant today. Recent planning application submissions (such as **DM/25/2046** for development at Evergreen) require Heritage Statements precisely because the land borders and shares an ancestral curtilage with the historically significant Friars Oak Farmhouse structures.

HISTORIC CONTEXT & DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located adjoining a dwelling named **Evergreen, situated along the A273 London Road** in Hassocks, West Sussex.

The Settlement: Hassocks possess a rich history dating from prehistoric, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon periods, sitting historically at a Roman crossroads near the Stonepound crossroads. The local landscape expanded drastically in the 19th century following the opening of the London to Brighton railway line in 1841.

The Site Location: The property sits on London Road, a historic turnpike and transit corridor linking London to the south coast. The surrounding area contains a blend of 20th-century infill development, agricultural history, and distinct historic structures like the nearby Friars Oak Farmhouse and Friars Oak Inn.

The Current Asset: [Insert short description here: e.g., The site currently consists of a late 20th-century residential dwelling and extensive garden grounds, which are bounded by mature hedging and specimen trees.]

The proposal is to erect three detached 4 / 5-bedroom dwellings with integral double garages, access will be from the main London Road

PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS:- (for housing within close proximity of the proposed site)

There have been several large-scale housing developments undertaken within proximity to the proposed site with the closest being listed below:-

165 dwellings being constructed on part of the existing Hassocks Golf Club, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex. with application reference **DM/18/2616**

130 dwellings on land at the rear of Friars Oak, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex.
with application reference **DM/19/1897 and DM/21/2628**

20 dwellings on land which is Friars Oak Farmhouse, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex.
with application reference **DM/24/0367**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Following the criteria set out by Historic England, the significance of the site and its immediate surroundings are assessed below:

Archaeological Interest: Low to Medium. While the site itself has been subjected to modern domestic use, the broader Hassocks area yields prehistoric and Roman trackways. Any potential subterranean remains can be managed via standard archaeological watching briefs or conditioned field evaluations.

Architectural & Artistic Interest: Low. The existing structures at Evergreen do not exhibit unique regional vernacular architecture, nor do they feature design traits that would elevate the site to a non-designated heritage asset.

Historic & Contextual Setting: Medium. The main significance lies in its placement along London Road. It forms part of the semi-rural approach into Hassocks, interacting loosely with the broader setting of the South Downs National Park to the south and local historic farmsteads.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks outline permission for the creation of detached dwellings. The potential impact on the heritage landscape is evaluated as follows:

Impact Arena	Assessment of Effect	Mitigation / Justification
Impact on Built Heritage	No direct harm. No statutory listed buildings or scheduled monuments are located within the physical boundaries of the site.	The development will not physically alter or demolish any designated heritage assets.
Impact on the Setting	Minimal / Neutral change. The proposal shifts a single low-density plot into a slightly higher residential configuration.	The layout utilizes existing natural screening (mature tree lines/hedgerows) to preserve the visual character of the London Road street scene.
Impact on Landscape Character	Negligible. The site boundary sits within a cluster of existing residential properties and developed spaces.	New buildings will adopt a scale, height, and material palette sympathetic to Mid Sussex vernacular styles, maintaining the character of the settlement gap.

PLANNING GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

The most relevant planning guidance concerning archaeology and other heritage assets is to be found in paragraphs 126-141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012). These advise on planning procedures covering designated heritage assets (e.g. world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks & gardens and registered battlefields) and also non-designated heritage assets which are of heritage interest and therefore a material planning consideration.

Paragraph 128 addresses planning applications stating that “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. 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”.

Paragraph 129 states that “local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

Designated heritage assets are addressed in Paragraph 132 which 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development

within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional”.*

Undesignated heritage assets are addressed in Paragraph 135 which states that “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 affect directly or indirectly 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”.

Advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment is also published in the Planning Practice Guidance (DCLG 2014) which expands on how development proposals affecting the historic environment should be assessed within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004)

Archaeology is protected under policy B18 in the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) which has been saved until adoption of the forthcoming Mid Sussex Local Development Framework. Policy B18 is as follows:

“Sites of archaeological interest and their settings will be protected and enhanced where possible. In particular, the fabric and setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites should be preserved intact.

Development proposals or changes of use or management which would have a detrimental impact on sites of archaeological importance, and their settings will not normally be permitted. An exception may be made only where the benefits of the proposal (which cannot reasonably be located elsewhere) are so great as to outweigh the possible effects on the archaeological importance of the site.

Where it appears that a proposed development may affect the archaeological or historic interest of a known or potential site of archaeological importance, the applicant will be required to carry out an archaeological assessment and field evaluation. A statement of the findings will be required to accompany the planning application.

There will be preference for preservation in-situ in preference to excavation recording and publication of findings. Where approved development will affect a site of archaeological interest, the developer will be required either by agreement or by conditions of planning permission to have undertaken a full investigation and recording by excavation and the publication of findings.”

RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS

This section summarises the recorded heritage resource within and around the Application Site.

Designated Heritage Assets

The following Grade II listed buildings are located close to the application site:-



Hammond's Mill Farmhouse

Built in the 18th century or earlier with some parts dating to c1743 it was listed as a Grade II in 1983

Description

It is a C18 or earlier house, restored and refaced. The ground floor with stucco, above tile-hanging, tiled pitched roof. Modern casement windows, large chimney breast on west wall, two storeys with attic, four windows and two hipped dormers.

Setting

Situated in an enchanting rural location between the villages of Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Burgess Hill it has the position of a rural property with the advantage of being within close proximity to the main London Road offering excellent road links.

Hammond Mill House itself is located north- west of the proposed site, its highlights are many original features with two additional cottages on the site envelope. It is accessed via an oak tree lined driveway that leads past the lake giving it a sense of privacy.

Significance

The house is set within open land and set over 3 floors with the original parts dating back to c 1743 with its exposed timber beams and inglenook fireplace which instantly reminds you of the charm and character of this Grade II listed home. With expansive views across the lake and gardens towards the orchard. Having approximately 80 acres of grounds the property is set within an expansive plot.

Friar's Oak House,

Built in the early 19th century, it was Grade II listed on 11th May 1983 it is nearly directly opposite the proposed site to the west of the A273 London Road Hassocks.



Friar's Oak House,

Description

Friar's Oak House is an early-nineteenth century, two-storey, detached house with stuccoed elevations and a hipped slate roof, five casement windows, wide eaves cornice and two small bays on the ground floor with The Porch between with Doric columns and doorway with door of 6 fielded panes.

The front elevation, which looks over a small front garden with a high boundary wall along London Road, is largely symmetrically in design. The front entrance sits centrally, sheltered under a porch with Doric columns, flanked by two bays at ground-floor level. Five casement windows sit at regular intervals at first-floor level.

Setting

The Grade II listed house is located close to the junction between London Road and the historic country lane.

The house sits within a lush garden plot full of mature trees, facing London Road, high garden wall screens the house from the main road, but the upper storey and roofline can still be experienced.

Two dwellings (Rodstone and Wyndham House) lie to the rear of Friar's Oak House, along the country lane. Three dwellings (Friar's Oak Barn and 1-2 Friar's Oak Cottages) lie to the north of the listed building. While two dwellings (Evergreen and The Paddock) stand on the opposite side of the road.

As such, Friar's Oak House forms part of small cluster of buildings that lie outside the built-up area of Hassocks and Keymer. Nonetheless, since most of these surrounding buildings are largely hidden behind trees and hedgerows, the listed house is still somewhat perceived as a relatively isolated house when viewed from London Road.

Land adjoining Evergreen (the Site) lies just to the east of Friar's Oak House but is screened from the main London Road by natural thick hedgerow / trees.

Significance

The significance of Friar's Oak House can be considered to lie within its historical and architectural value as an early-nineteenth century dwelling with some classical details and pleasing architectural proportions, set within a lush garden.

The house was originally an isolated rural residence, located well outside what were once the tiny settlements of Hassocks and Keymer. However, over time, some other houses were built to its rear, north, and opposite the road. As such, it now forms part of a small cluster of dwellings lying outside the built-up area of Hassocks and Keymer.

Hassocks Golf Course was also developed around it in the 1990s. Nonetheless, due to the arrangement of topographical features around it, Friar's Oak House is still perceived as a relatively isolated residence when viewed from London Road. This aspect is considered to make a small contribution to its significance.

The Site, which is open grassland to the north of the property known as Evergreen and to the east of Friars House is not visible from the main London Road due to existing vegetation.

New Close Farmhouse, which was built in the early 17th century it is a grade II listed.



New Close Farmhouse

Description

The property was originally a Farmhouse, later converted into country hotel, now house. Northernmost part is a two-bay early C17 cross wing to a now demolished earlier main range. To the south-west a late C17 two bay main range was erected. In the early C18 the eastern outshut was built over and the building converted into a central entrance end chimney stack house. The building was re-fronted in the early C19 and extended by about half to the south and re-fenestrated in the late C19.

The building has two storeys with attics under a mainly tiled pitched roof with a small part to the south-western slope, which is clad with Horsham stone slabs, irregular fenestration, six windows to west front, some sashes, some casements with leaded lights including many with yellow stained glass.

HISTORY: Shown as New Close on Budgen's Map of 1724. Circa 1909 it was known as Orchard Farm.

Setting

The property was originally a Farmhouse which was later converted into a Country Hotel, now a house. It is set within a large expansive plot located on the eastern side of London Road linking Hassocks to Burgess Hill.

Significance

The house is set within open land and set over 2 floors with the original parts dating back to c 1743 with its exposed timber beams and inglenook fireplace which instantly reminds you of the charm and character of this Grade II listed home. With expansive views across the lake and gardens towards the orchard. Having approximately 80 acres of grounds the property is set within an expansive plot and away from the A273 London Road.

OTHER RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS ON THE SUSSEX HER:-

Several non-designated heritage assets, in the form of archaeological/historic sites, are recorded on the Sussex HER within the vicinity of the Application Site and these are summarised below. However, it is important to note that the HER database is constantly being updated as new discoveries are made and therefore must not be interpreted as a definitive list of all surviving archaeological remains.

Mesolithic (10,000 – 4,000 BC),

Neolithic (4,000 – 2350 BC),

Bronze Age (2350 – 800 BC),

Iron Age (800 BC – AD 42),

Roman (AD 42 – 410)

Saxon (AD 410-1066)

PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT:-

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The following assessment identifies the effects that the development proposals are considered to have upon the significance of the Grade II listed Friar's Oak House, New Close Farmhouse and Hammonds Mill Farmhouse and follows the five-step process defined within Stages 3 & 4 of Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets.

As has been described in the previous chapters, the significance of Friar's Oak House can be considered to lie mainly within its historical and architectural value as an early-nineteenth century dwelling with some Classical details and pleasing architectural proportions, set within a lush garden. Its perceived relative isolation away from the main built-up area of Hassocks and Keymer and the sense of openness around it are considered to make a small contribution to its significance.

The development proposals include the construction of 3 new residential units within part of the setting of the listed house. This is considered to not to rode any of the perceived relative isolation of the house or the sense of openness around it.

It must be noted that the proposed building plot is set behind the high thick hedgerow that currently runs along the front boundary of the proposed plot. (see photograph numbered 1.)

This hedging and trees will help screen the proposed dwellings from London Road and the listed house. hence, Friar's Oak House should still be perceived as a relatively isolated house when viewed from London Road, where its main significance is mostly experienced.

Photo numbered 2. Indicates the natural screening to the northern boundary again giving natural screening of the proposed dwellings to the northern side.

POLICY COMPLIANCE & CONCLUSION

*The proposed scheme adheres strictly to the **Mid Sussex District Plan** and the **Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan**, specifically regarding policies aimed at preserving local character, historic building settings, and biodiversity.*

*Because the site features low intrinsic heritage significance and does not negatively encroach upon the setting of adjacent historical landmarks, the proposal causes **no harm** to the historic environment under the definitions of the NPPF. The delivery of much-needed local housing represents a clear public benefit that outweighs any perceived minor changes to the local layout. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.*



Photograph 1

indicating the western tree / hedge lined boundary which will offer natural screening between Friars Oak House and the proposed new dwellings.



Photograph No 2.

Indicating the northern boundary of the proposed site.