

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In support of planning application for the erection of a new dwelling at Hurstmead

Lewes Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex



ecotecture



ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION:

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application to Mid Sussex District Council for the erection of a new dwelling within the grounds of Hurstmead, 22 Lewes Road, Haywards Heath. The proposal follows the subdivision of the existing residential plot and would occupy the site of the existing tennis court, with associated parking, landscaping, tree works and use of the existing vehicular access from Lewes Road.

The assessment considers the potential effect of the proposed new dwelling on the significance of the heritage assets affected by the development, namely the Lewes Road Conservation Area and Hurstmead, an unlisted building considered to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The existing dwelling is subject to a separate planning application; this statement is concerned solely with the new dwelling and its relationship with the surrounding heritage assets.

The design has evolved through two rounds of pre-application engagement with Mid Sussex District Council and has been informed by specialist heritage, arboricultural, ecological and landscape advice. The submitted Design & Access Statement identifies the key design response as a contemporary dwelling which is set well back from Lewes Road, remains subordinate to Hurstmead, retains important boundary vegetation and substantially improves the landscape treatment of the former tennis court.

STATUTORY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

The site lies within the Lewes Road Conservation Area and is therefore subject to the statutory duty contained in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In exercising planning functions, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in August 2026. The 2026 Framework replaced the December 2024 version and separates national decision-making policies from plan-making policies. The Framework confirms that planning decisions must reflect statutory requirements, including the duties under Sections 66 and 72 of the 1990 Act.

For heritage matters, the principal national decision-making policies are HE4 to HE9. Policy HE4 requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and requires development proposals affecting significance, including its setting, to avoid or, where that is not possible, minimise harm. Policy HE5 requires applicants to assess both the significance of affected heritage assets and the potential effect of the proposal on that significance. It expressly distinguishes between positive effects, no effect, harm, substantial harm and total loss. Substantial harm is identified as harm which would seriously affect a key element of an asset's significance.

The 2026 Framework therefore differs materially from the previous policy wording used in the earlier version of this Heritage Statement. In particular, the former terminology of 'less than substantial harm' is no longer used, and the former reference to an 'optimum viable use' has been removed. The assessment below has accordingly been framed around the significance of the heritage assets and the potential effect of the proposed development upon that significance.

Policy HE6 relates to designated heritage assets and requires substantial weight to be given to their conservation. Where harm to a designated heritage asset is identified, its effect on significance is to be

weighed against public benefits. Policy HE7 provides the decision-making approach for non-designated heritage assets, requiring positive effects to be supported and any harm to be weighed against the benefits of the proposal having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

Policy HE9 specifically addresses Conservation Areas. It requires development proposals within or affecting their significance to retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to their character or appearance where possible, and to consider the area's special architectural or historic interest in the design of development. Proposals which conserve positive elements of a Conservation Area, or better reveal its significance, should be supported.

The 2026 Framework also places a clear relationship between design and heritage. Policy DP3 requires development proposals to respond to the history, character and features of the site and its setting so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings. The policy expressly recognises that responding to context does not preclude innovation or change where appropriate. This is particularly relevant to the contemporary architectural approach proposed at the new build.

The IHBC discussion of the 2026 NPPF revision also identifies the increased emphasis on assessing the potential effect on significance, assessing individual elements according to their contribution to significance, and making clearer links between design and heritage. These principles have informed the structure of this assessment.

Although Mid Sussex District Council does not have an adopted appraisal for the Lewes Road Conservation Area, the document 'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex' provides a summary of its defining characteristics. The Design & Access Statement also identifies the following characteristics as particularly relevant to the site:

- the variety of ages and styles of buildings, most of which are larger properties set well back from the road within spacious grounds;
- the presence of trees and hedges around and between buildings;
- grass verges, hedges and areas of open land which reinforce the rural character of the area
- the low density of development and the gradual transition between countryside and urban settlement

ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE:

The assessment of heritage significance considers the heritage interests of each asset and the contribution made by its setting. The established heritage values used in this assessment are:

- Evidential value - the physical fabric and surviving evidence of past activity;
- Historical value - the extent to which an asset illustrates or is associated with historic events, people or patterns of development;
- Aesthetic value - architectural, visual, artistic and landscape qualities; and
- Communal value - social significance, local identity and the meaning of place to communities.

The 2026 NPPF places particular emphasis on understanding which elements of a heritage asset actually contribute to its significance. The assessment therefore does not treat every part of the site as having equal heritage value. The contribution made by the existing Hurstmead building, its principal

architectural features, its spacious landscaped setting and the later tennis court are considered separately.

Level of Significance	Definition of Heritage Asset
High	- Remains of inscribed international importance, such as World Heritage Sites. - Grade I and II* listed buildings - Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens - Registered Battlefields - Scheduled Monuments - Non-designated archaeological assets of schedulable quality and importance
Medium	- Grade II listed buildings - Grade II listed Registered Parks and Gardens - Conservation Areas - Non-designated buildings which contribute to regional importance
Low	- Locally listed buildings - Parks and gardens of some local interest - Non-designated buildings, monuments or sites of local importance or of modest quality, including those historic townscapes with historic integrity
No Significance	- Assets identified as being of no archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic value - Assets whose values are comprised by poor preservation, survival or contextual associations to justify inclusion into a higher grade

Table 1: Assessment of the relative significance and contribution of the heritage asset

The Lewes Road Conservation Area is considered to be of medium heritage significance as a designated Conservation Area. Hurstmead is considered a positive non-designated heritage asset which contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area through its architecture, spacious setting and relationship with the historic development of Lewes Road. These descriptive categories are used to explain relative importance; the assessment of the proposal itself follows the 2026 NPPF approach to potential effects on significance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - LEWES ROAD CONSERVATION AREA:

The Lewes Road Conservation Area was designated in 1989 and forms an important approach to Haywards Heath. Its character is derived from a ribbon of predominantly detached residential development set within substantial landscaped plots. The character changes along the length of the Conservation Area, with the western end having a more urban character and the eastern end retaining a stronger relationship with the surrounding countryside.

The Lewes Road frontage is particularly important to the area's character. Mature trees, hedges, grass verges and generous gaps between buildings create a verdant setting and reinforce the gradual

transition from countryside to urban settlement. The variety of building ages, architectural styles and materials is also a characteristic of the Conservation Area.

The site lies towards the more developed western portion of the Conservation Area. The Design & Access Statement identifies a pattern of infill and backland development in the surrounding area, including more recent contemporary dwellings. The character is therefore not dependent upon a single architectural style, but upon the relationship between buildings, landscape, spacing, mature vegetation and the road.

The significance of the Conservation Area is therefore principally derived from the surviving relationship between substantial detached buildings and their landscaped plots, the established tree and hedge framework, the green character of the road frontage, and the gradual transition between rural and urban character.



Figure 1: The entry to the eastern end of the Conservation Area



Figure 2: The entry to the west end of the Conservation Area



Figure 3: Aerial view of the Conservation Area

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - HURSTMEAD:

Hurstmead is an unlisted detached house located on the southern side of Lewes Road within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. It is a substantial building set within a large plot and forms part of the early twentieth-century expansion of Haywards Heath.

Whilst the house has undergone changes since its construction, it remains an attractive and well-composed building, positioned on the western half of the plot, within a spacious landscape setting. The building contributes positively to the established pattern of development along Lewes Road and reflects the gradual transition from rural landscape to suburban settlement.

Architecturally, Hurstmead is a carefully designed building by the noted local architect Harold Turner, executed in a restrained Arts and Crafts style typical both of his work and of the period. The design incorporates traditional materials and forms, including hipped clay tiled roofs with deep projecting eaves, articulated brick chimney stacks, brick and tile-hung elevations, and timber/steel casement windows. Collectively, these features contribute to the architectural cohesion of the building and reflect the broader vernacular influences evident throughout the Conservation Area.



Figure 4: Hurstmead rear elevation



Figure 5: Hurstmead front elevation



Figure 6: Site entrance from the Lewes Road conservation area

Pre-application discussions with the Conservation Officer have underlined the fact that Hurstmead is considered a non-designated heritage asset which contributes positively to the significance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. Its architectural quality, historic associations with the development of Haywards Heath, and its generous landscape setting all contribute to the area's special interest.

Pre-application advice also noted that while the property has been altered over time, including the addition of later twentieth-century extensions and a garage structure, these changes remain subsidiary in visual terms and do not fundamentally undermine the building's overall architectural integrity. The principal elevations and key architectural features remain clearly legible.

The garden setting of the house makes a particularly important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Mature trees, generous garden spaces and the spacious plot reinforce the verdant qualities that define this part of Lewes Road and make an important contribution to the setting and significance of Hurstmead.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Old maps show the area remained as open fields with little development until late Victorian Edwardian times. Hurstmead was built in the interwar period by the esteemed 20th-century local architect Harold Turner. The site is the 4th building in from the roundabout to which the bypass was formed. The site lies within the area that has been cocooned by development the most in comparison, and plots remain large but generally on a slightly smaller scale than the more rural easterly end of the Conservation Area.

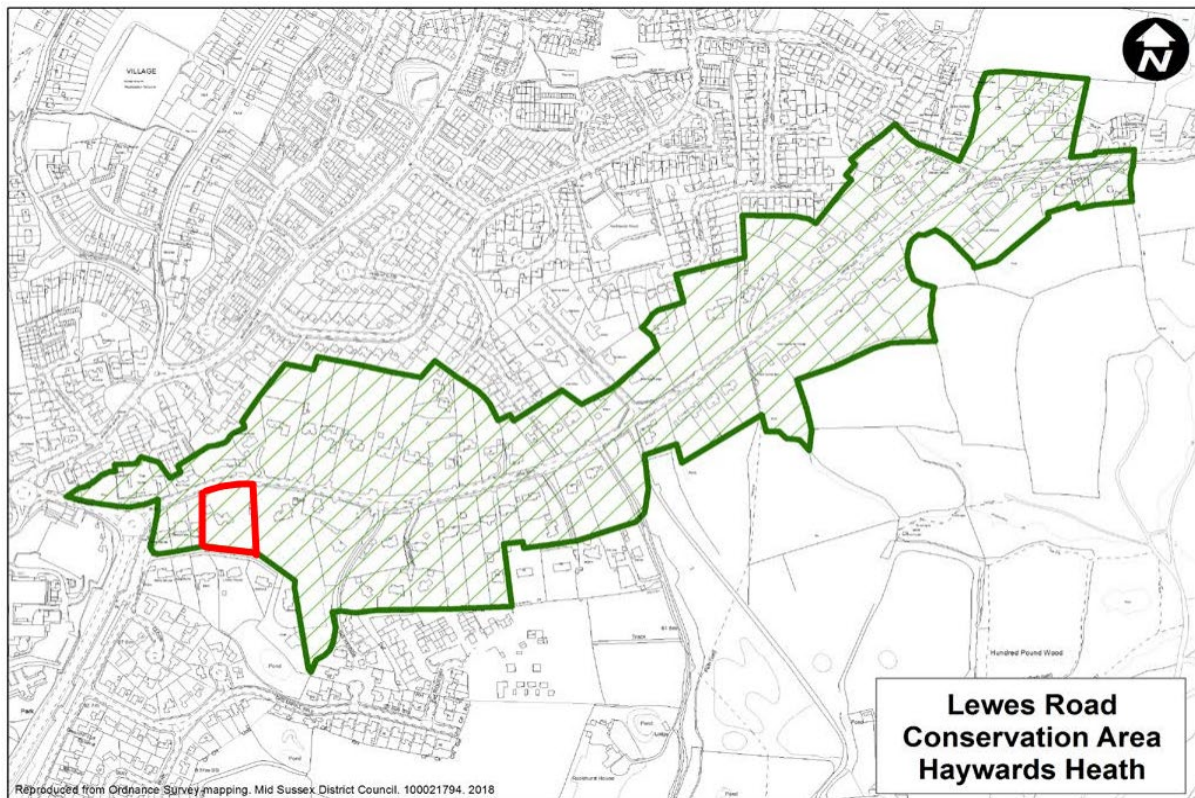


Figure 7: Map of Lewes Road conservation area (green) with site outlined (red)

The site is shown above, outlined in red, the setting of the heritage asset has been impacted by more recent development, as seen also below for comparison. It is now only the easterly end of the Conservation Area setting that remains as it was when first designated.

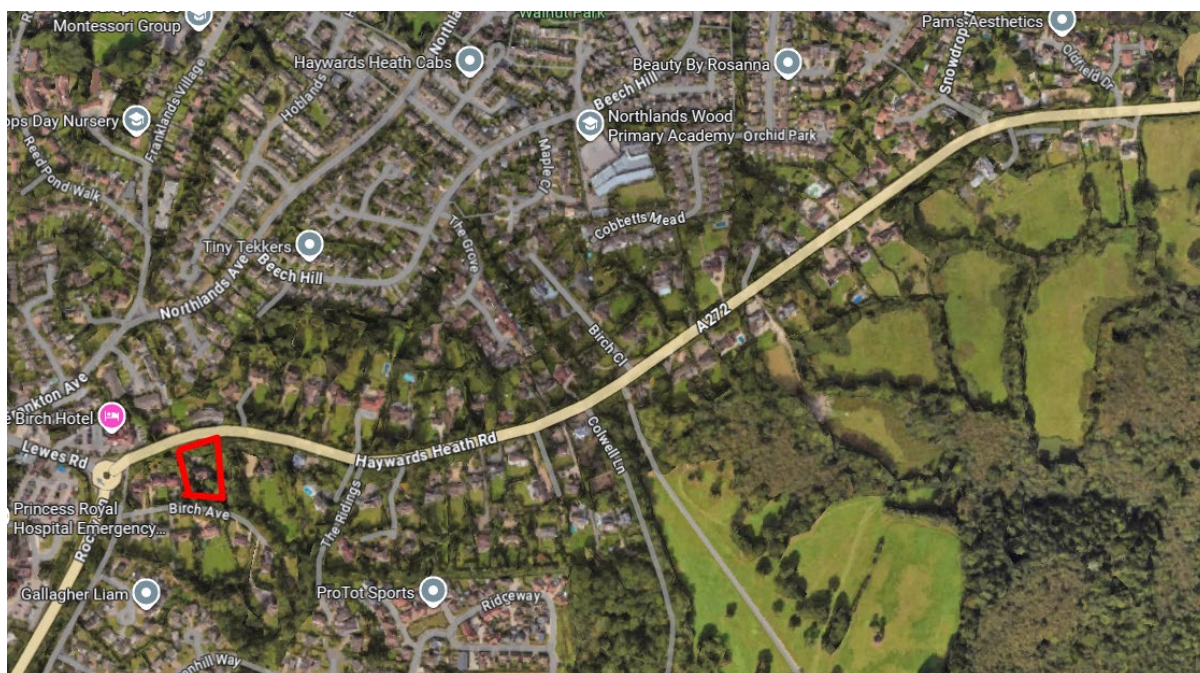


Figure 8: Aerial view showing the heavier developments towards the western end of the Lewes Road conservation area in comparison to the Eastern end. (Site in red)

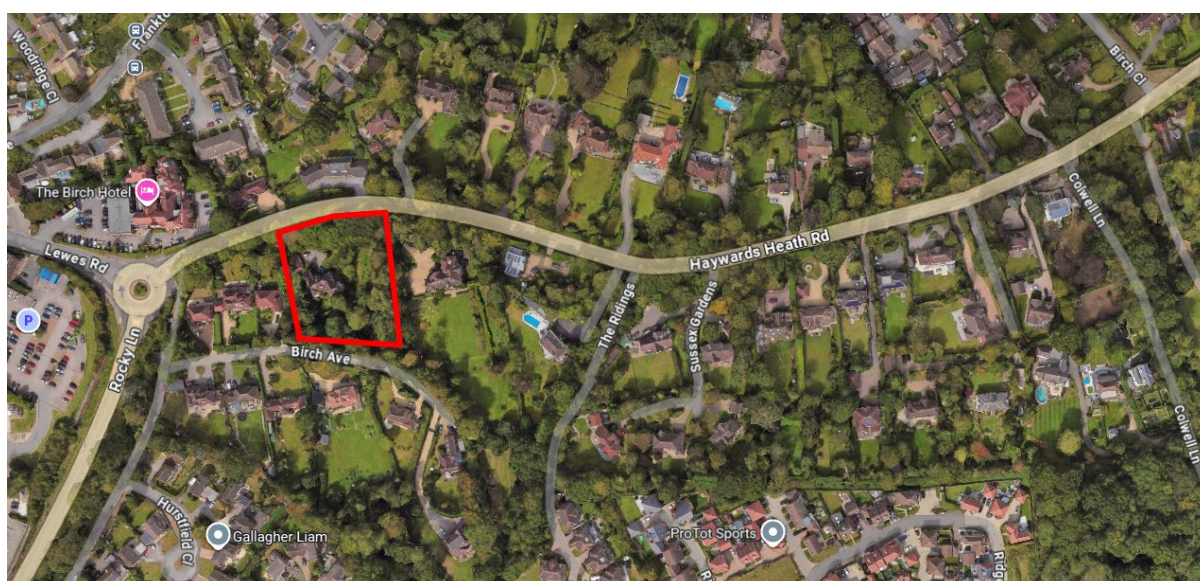


Figure 9: Aerial view of the westerly end of the Lewes Road conservation area and its urban development. (Site in red)

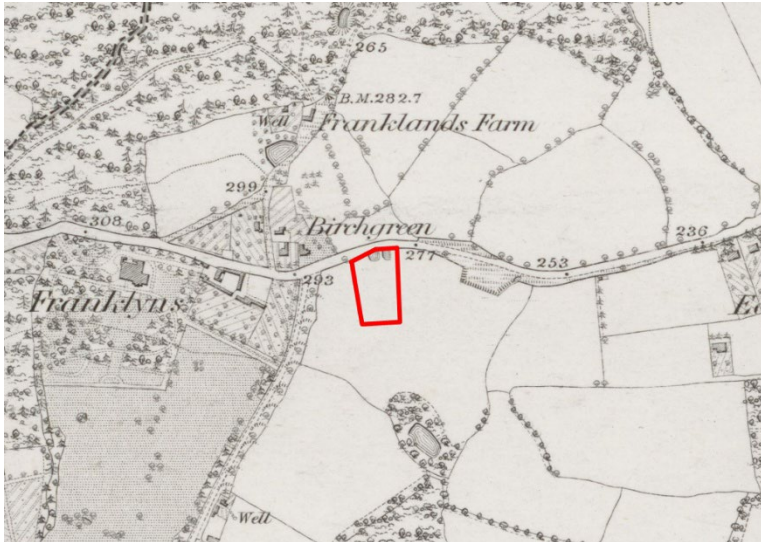


Figure 10: OS Surveyed 1874 published 1879 NLB later version is published with slight differences in drawing styles

The maps of this time show total countryside where our site is located, though the Asylum has just been constructed, which, with the railway, triggered the beginning of a period of great development for Haywards Heath.

By 1899, Birch House (later Birch Hotel) had appeared, and by the early twentieth century, additional development had emerged along Lewes Road.



Figure 11: OS revised 1896 published 1899 NLB

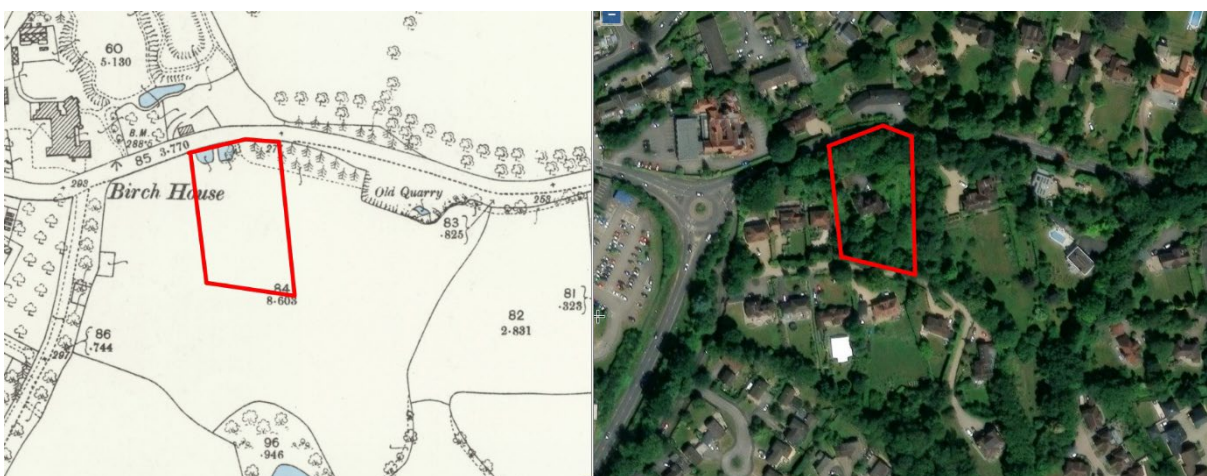


Figure 12: Map vs aerial view comparison of our site (red)



Figure 13: OS 1909 pub 1912 1933 NLS

This map shows that although Hurstmead had not been constructed, Lewes Road was starting to see more development, with others like Birch Green appearing.



Figure 14: OS revised 1938 pub 1949 NLS

This map now dates our house as interwar, built at some point between 1933 and 1938. The house is shown as a rectangle, which would concur with the evidence on site of the extension to the front and north of the house, which is very similar in style, but clearly built at a different time from evidence within the roof space, showing the original line of the front roof, and in the walls lovely clues like the air brick styles which differ, in confirmation that the later addition which took place between 1944 and 1952.

Further infill is also beginning with Birch Green and the appearance of Birch Avenue to service a row of houses that had been built in parallel to Lewes Road to the rear of Hurstmead. This map is drawn when the original house was in its pure rectangular form.



Figure 15: Image entitled Birch Hotel, Haywards Heath 1952 – found at ‘Britain from above’

Aerial evidence from the mid twentieth century provides useful information about the evolution of the site. The grounds around Hurstmead were historically more open and rural in character. Later development introduced additional built structures, hardstanding and the tennis court. The tennis court was constructed in 1982 and therefore represents a later phase of site development rather than an historic feature associated with the original house.

The historical development of the site demonstrates that the relationship between Hurstmead and its grounds has evolved over time. The significance of the site therefore does not depend upon the retention of the tennis court itself, but on the preservation of the principal architectural character of Hurstmead and the green, spacious qualities of its wider setting.



Figure 16: Image from ‘Britain from above’



Figure 17: Inset from image entitled 1952 Birch Hotel and environs Haywards' Heath 1952 – found at 'Britain from above'

CURRENT PROPOSALS AND HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED NEW DWELLING:



Figure 18: Perspective of new proposed dwelling

The proposal comprises a new four-bedroom dwelling on the site of the existing tennis court within the grounds of Hurstmead. The dwelling has a gross internal area of approximately 276.5m², excluding the garage, and is arranged as a part single-storey, part two-storey building.



Figure 19: Perspective of new proposed dwelling



Figure 20: Elevation showing the relationship between Hurstmead and the new proposed dwelling

The dwelling is positioned towards the eastern part of the existing garden, substantially set back from Lewes Road and separated from Hurstmead by retained and proposed landscaping. The single-storey element is set down approximately 2m from the existing dwelling at the level of the former tennis court. The new dwelling is separated from Hurstmead by approximately 6.15m, while the overall building height has been reduced to approximately 6m through the design evolution process.

The proposal adopts a contemporary architectural approach rather than a pastiche of Hurstmead. The angled form, brick base and change in material treatment draw on characteristics of the existing dwelling while allowing the new building to remain clearly distinguishable.



Figure 21: Proposed landscape plan

The ground floor is proposed in white/light grey brickwork, with dark grey/black timber cladding above. The flat roof and stepped massing are intended to keep the building low-lying and visually subordinate to Hurstmead.

The design incorporates a substantial first-floor setback, a central patio, roof overhangs and carefully positioned windows. The eastern side-facing first-floor window serves a bathroom and is proposed with opaque glazing and restricted opening. Existing and proposed planting, including a native hedgerow and shrub planting, provides additional separation between the new dwelling and Hurstmead.

The landscape proposals form an integral part of the heritage response. The scheme retains the established tree belt and boundary vegetation where appropriate, introduces additional native hedgerow and planting, and substantially

reduces the area of hardstanding associated with the existing tennis court. The Design & Access Statement identifies a reduction in hardstanding of approximately 21.31%, increasing to approximately 29.84% when the proposed sedum roof is taken into account.

The proposal also makes use of the existing vehicular access from Lewes Road. The new dwelling is positioned away from the eastern tree belt and the submitted arboricultural information has informed the siting, tree retention and proposed removal of low-quality trees. A new specimen tree and extensive native hedgerow planting are proposed.

The design therefore responds to heritage significance through its siting, scale, massing, landscape treatment and material distinction rather than attempting to replicate the Arts and Crafts architecture of Hurstmead.

DESIGN EVOLUTION AND HERITAGE RESPONSE:

The scheme has been subject to two rounds of pre-application engagement with Mid Sussex District Council. The initial proposal included a larger 2.5-storey dwelling together with a substantial extension to Hurstmead. The first pre-application response identified concerns relating to the scale and size of development, the amount of vegetation and open space between buildings, the relationship with Hurstmead, the proximity to the eastern tree belt and the cumulative intensity of development.

“The design was subsequently revised following specialist heritage advice and further site assessment. The new dwelling was reduced in height and massing, the first-floor element was set back, the dwelling was moved further from the tree belt, the parking area was reduced and additional landscaping was introduced. The garage was reduced from a double to a single-bay arrangement. These changes reduce the visual presence of the building and increase the amount of landscape between the new dwelling, Lewes Road, Hurstmead and the eastern boundary.

The second pre-application response confirmed that a contemporary two-storey house of sensitive design could be acceptable on the lower part of the site, on the former tennis court, subject to careful treatment of the garden and the relationship with Hurstmead. The submitted scheme responds to this advice through its low-profile form, setback, landscape treatment and separation from the existing dwelling.

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECT ON HURSTMEAD:

The proposed development does not involve physical alteration to Hurstmead itself. The potential effect on Hurstmead therefore arises from a change to its setting through the introduction of a new dwelling within its former garden and tennis court area.

The elements of Hurstmead which make the strongest contribution to its significance are its Arts and Crafts architectural composition, traditional materials and detailing, principal elevations, and its relationship with a spacious landscaped plot. These elements remain intact. The proposal is located away from the principal public frontage, is lower than the existing house, and is separated from it by a combination of level difference, planting, boundary treatment and the setback of the first-floor element.

The area occupied by the existing tennis court is a later intervention and is not itself a defining historic component of Hurstmead's architecture. The proposal therefore does not result in the loss of a historic feature which makes a strong contribution to the building's significance. Instead, it replaces a later

recreational structure with a carefully designed dwelling and a substantially enhanced landscape setting.

The new building will be visible from parts of Hurstmead's grounds and will alter the experience of the garden. This represents a change to the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. However, the principal architectural character of Hurstmead remains legible, the relationship with Lewes Road is retained, and the mature tree belt and other important vegetation remain as a strong landscape framework.

In accordance with NPPF Policy HE5, the potential effect on Hurstmead is considered to constitute harm to its setting at a limited level, but not substantial harm. The proposal would not seriously affect a key element of Hurstmead's significance. The potential effect is confined primarily to the character of part of the garden setting, while the architectural significance and principal landscaped framework are retained.

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECT ON THE LEWES ROAD CONSERVATION AREA:

The Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset and its significance is principally expressed through the established relationship between detached dwellings, generous landscaped plots, mature vegetation, green road frontages and the transition between rural and urban character.

The introduction of a new dwelling necessarily changes the spatial arrangement of the site. The proposal will increase the amount of built form within the former grounds of Hurstmead and will result in a subdivision of the original residential plot. The potential effect of this change must therefore be assessed against the elements which contribute to the Conservation Area's significance rather than against the scale of the building in isolation.

The proposed dwelling is set substantially back from Lewes Road and behind the existing tree belt and frontage vegetation. This limits its prominence in public views and maintains the established green character of the road. The dwelling is positioned on the footprint of the existing tennis court, which is a later intervention and already represents a developed area within the garden. This avoids extending the principal built form into a previously undeveloped part of the plot.

The proposal retains the established tree belt and boundary vegetation which are important to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Additional native hedgerow, shrub planting and a new specimen tree will strengthen the landscape framework. The reduction in hardstanding and introduction of a sedum roof further increase the proportion of landscape within the site.

The contemporary architectural approach is considered appropriate to the mixed architectural character of the Conservation Area. The Design & Access Statement identifies nearby contemporary development, including The Glade within the Lewes Road Conservation Area and Blackhill House within the neighbouring Lindfield Conservation Area, as precedents for contemporary residential architecture using render or timber cladding. The proposed dwelling does not attempt to imitate Hurstmead, but takes reference from its material hierarchy, angled form and relationship with landscape.

The white/light grey brick and dark timber cladding provide a visually recessive palette against the surrounding vegetation and distinguish the new building from the red brick and clay-tiled Hurstmead. The low-profile flat roof and stepped form reduce the prominence of the building and allow landscape to remain a dominant feature of the site.

On balance, the proposal is considered to conserve the elements of the Lewes Road Conservation Area which make the strongest contribution to its character and appearance. The scheme introduces a change to the spatial character of the original plot, but this is accompanied by measures which retain the green framework, improve landscape quality and reduce hardstanding. No adverse effect on the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole is identified. The landscape elements of the scheme provide positive effects through strengthening the green character and better integrating the development into its setting.

OVERALL HERITAGE IMPACT:

Overall, the proposed new dwelling represents a carefully considered and proportionate response to the significance of Hurstmead and its location within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The design has evolved through a heritage-led process which has sought to respond positively to the established character of the area whilst minimising potential effects upon the significance of the identified heritage assets.

The proposed dwelling is located on the established footprint of the existing tennis court, a later twentieth-century intervention within the grounds of Hurstmead. This approach avoids extending development into a previously undeveloped part of the garden and limits the extent of new built form within the wider landscape setting. The dwelling is also positioned well back from Lewes Road, with the established tree belt and boundary vegetation retained to maintain the verdant character and visual separation which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. The site plan demonstrates the retention of substantial vegetation around the site and the dwelling's position within the existing tennis court area.

The form and design of the proposed dwelling have also been carefully considered in response to the sensitivity of the site. The part single-storey, part two-storey form, low-profile flat roof and substantial first-floor setback reduce the apparent scale and massing of the building. Physical and visual separation between Hurstmead and the new dwelling is further maintained through the existing level change, planting, hedgerow and boundary treatment. The DAS identifies these relationships as important considerations in the positioning and development of the proposal.

The proposed material palette adopts a restrained contemporary approach which takes reference from the character and materiality of Hurstmead without seeking to replicate or imitate its Arts and Crafts architecture. This approach reflects the wider character of the Conservation Area, which contains a variety of architectural styles and periods, whilst ensuring that the new dwelling remains subordinate within the established landscape setting. The green frontage will be retained and enhanced through additional planting and native hedgerow, while the extent of hardstanding associated with the existing tennis court will be reduced.

Windows have also been positioned and detailed to minimise overlooking and maintain appropriate visual separation between Hurstmead and the proposed dwelling. Taken together, these measures seek to ensure that the introduction of a new dwelling does not undermine the established relationship between Hurstmead, its garden setting and the wider Conservation Area.

The principal measures which avoid or minimise potential effects on heritage significance are:

- locating the dwelling on the established footprint of the tennis court rather than extending development into a new part of the garden;
- setting the dwelling well back from Lewes Road and retaining the established tree belt and boundary vegetation;

- reducing the building to a part single-storey, part two-storey form with a low-profile flat roof and a substantial first-floor setback;
- maintaining physical and visual separation between Hurstmead and the new dwelling through level change, planting, hedgerow and boundary treatment;
- using a restrained contemporary material palette which complements rather than imitates Hurstmead;
- retaining and enhancing the green frontage and introducing native hedgerow and additional planting;
- reducing the extent of hardstanding associated with the existing tennis court; and
- positioning and detailing windows to minimise overlooking and maintain the visual separation between the properties.

These measures are not treated as a substitute for assessing the effect of the development. Rather, they form part of the design which has been assessed against the significance of the affected heritage assets.

The following table provides a framework for considering the level of change arising from the proposed development. In accordance with the revised approach to heritage assessment within the NPPF, the assessment considers the potential effect of the proposal upon the significance of the heritage assets, with particular regard to the elements which contribute to that significance. The assessment therefore considers both the nature and extent of the physical and visual change resulting from the proposed dwelling and the degree to which this affects the significance of Hurstmead and the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The revised NPPF approach places greater emphasis on assessing the potential effect on significance and on considering which individual elements of a heritage asset actually contribute to that significance.

Change Rating	Description of Impact
High	Change to key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are lost or destroyed, or the significance of the asset's setting is extensively changed.
Medium	Change to many key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are significantly modified, or the significance of the asset's setting is noticeably different.
Low	Change to key elements are slightly altered, affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is slightly altered.
Minimal	Change to key elements hardly affect the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is hardly affected.
No Change	The development does not affect the asset's special architectural or historic interest or change the asset's setting.

Table 2: Assessment of the relative significance and contribution of the heritage asset

Using the methodology set out above, the proposed new dwelling is assessed as resulting in a Low level of change to the setting of Hurstmead and to the character and appearance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area.

The introduction of a new dwelling within the former garden setting of Hurstmead represents a perceptible change to the site and therefore is not considered to constitute 'No Change' or 'Minimal' change. However, the potential effect is limited by the location of the dwelling on the existing tennis court, its substantial setback from Lewes Road, the retention of the established tree belt and vegetation, the separation between the two buildings, and the restrained scale and form of the proposal.

The proposed development does not involve alteration to the historic fabric of Hurstmead and does not affect the principal architectural features which contribute to its significance as a positive non-designated heritage asset. The potential effect is therefore principally associated with a change to its setting, rather than its architectural or historic fabric.

In relation to the Lewes Road Conservation Area, the proposal introduces additional built form within an established residential landscape. However, the key characteristics which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area, including its verdant character, mature vegetation, spacious plots, generous setbacks and gradual transition between the rural and urban environments, are retained. The proposal has been designed to sit within this established landscape framework and will remain visually recessive from Lewes Road.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to result in a limited potential effect on the significance of Hurstmead and the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The design responds to the significance of the affected heritage assets and incorporates measures which conserve the elements that make the greatest contribution to their significance. The proposal therefore represents an appropriate and proportionate approach to managing change within the historic environment.

JUSTIFICATION, MITIGATION AND CONCLUSION

The proposed development provides a new dwelling within the established residential grounds of Hurstmead, on the site of an existing tennis court. The proposal has been developed through a heritage-led design process and has responded to pre-application advice by reducing the scale and visual prominence of the development, increasing separation from Hurstmead and the eastern tree belt, and strengthening the landscape framework of the site.

The assessment has identified the Lewes Road Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset whose significance is derived principally from its varied residential architecture, generous plots, mature vegetation, green road frontage and gradual transition between countryside and urban settlement. Hurstmead is identified as a positive non-designated heritage asset, with significance arising from its restrained Arts and Crafts architecture, traditional materials, historical association with the development of Haywards Heath and spacious landscaped setting.

The proposed dwelling does not physically alter Hurstmead or remove any of its principal architectural features. Its potential effect arises from the change to part of Hurstmead's garden setting. The area occupied by the existing tennis court is a later intervention and is not identified as a defining historic component of the building. The new dwelling is lower and visually recessive, is separated from Hurstmead by level change and landscape, and retains the established tree belt and principal green framework of the site. The potential effect on Hurstmead is therefore principally associated with its setting and does not seriously affect a key element of its significance.

In relation to the Conservation Area, the development introduces additional built form into an established residential plot. However, the dwelling is positioned on an existing developed area, is

substantially set back from the public highway, and is contained within the established landscape framework. The scheme retains important vegetation, reduces hardstanding and introduces additional native planting. The contemporary architectural approach is consistent with the varied architectural character identified within the Conservation Area and has been designed to remain subordinate to Hurstmead.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND LEVEL OF CHANGE:

The potential effect of the proposed development has been considered by comparing the significance of each affected heritage asset with the level of change arising from the development. This provides a consistent framework for understanding the degree to which the proposed development may affect heritage significance.

The following matrix is used to illustrate the relationship between the significance of the heritage asset and the level of change identified. It is not intended to replace the qualitative assessment set out above; rather, it provides a summary of the conclusions reached through the assessment of the individual heritage assets and their respective settings

Significance of Asset	Level of Change				
	No Change	Minimal	Low	Medium	High
High	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate
Not Significant	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Table 3: Assessment of the relative significance and contribution of the heritage asset

For the purposes of this assessment, the Lewes Road Conservation Area is identified as being of Medium significance, reflecting its status as a designated Conservation Area and the identified architectural, historic and landscape qualities which contribute to its special interest. Hurstmead is identified as a positive non-designated heritage asset, with its significance arising principally from its architectural character, historic associations and landscaped setting.

The proposed development is considered to result in a Low level of change to the setting of Hurstmead. This reflects the introduction of a new building within its former garden setting, which represents a perceptible change, but one which is substantially moderated by the location of the dwelling on the existing tennis court, its separation from Hurstmead, the retention of mature vegetation and the proposed landscape treatment. Applying the matrix above, this results in a Minor level of impact for an asset of Medium significance.

In respect of the Lewes Road Conservation Area, the potential effect is more appropriately considered at the level of the Conservation Area as a whole. Although the proposal introduces additional built form, the development is contained within an established residential landscape, retains the principal green framework and mature vegetation, and is substantially screened from Lewes Road. The proposal therefore does not result in a change which undermines the characteristics that define the Conservation Area. The potential effect on its significance is consequently considered to be negligible.

The matrix therefore provides a useful summary of the assessment: the principal change arises from the effect of the new dwelling on the setting of Hurstmead, rather than its historic fabric, while the potential effect on the Lewes Road Conservation Area as a whole is negligible. In neither case does the proposal result in substantial harm or total loss of significance.

CONCLUSION:

Applying the 2026 NPPF approach, the proposal is not considered to result in substantial harm or total loss to any heritage asset. The limited change to the setting of Hurstmead is accompanied by measures which conserve the principal building and strengthen the landscaped character of the site. For the Conservation Area as a whole, no adverse effect on its significance is identified, while the landscape improvements provide opportunities to better integrate the development and reinforce the green character of this part of Lewes Road.

The proposal therefore represents a heritage-led and proportionate response to the site. It conserves the elements which make the strongest contribution to the significance of Hurstmead and the Lewes Road Conservation Area while allowing an appropriate contemporary addition within an established residential setting. The scheme has been designed in accordance with the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant heritage and design principles of the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Policies HE4, HE5, HE6, HE7, HE9 and DP3.