

Land at West Hoathly Road East Grinstead

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TCMS.2193

Summary

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of a planning application for the residential development of Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead. It follows pre-application advice received from Mid Sussex District Council and confirms that the proposed development of the Site has the potential to affect the setting and significance of a single Grade II listed building, Dunnings Mill.

In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, this document has been prepared to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposed development of the Site and describe their significance, with consideration given to any contribution made by their settings. This report also discusses the impact of the development on that significance, with reference to relevant design and mitigation measures.

This report demonstrates that the significance of the listed building is drawn from the building's historic interest as a post-medieval mill which illustrates historic construction techniques and the evolution of the local agricultural economy. The building also possesses architectural interest, tied to the construction methods and its former use, which demonstrates technological innovation. This has, however, been diminished by the conversion of the building. The building also possesses archaeological interest, with the multi-phased development of the building and its adaptations over time potentially providing further evidence of historic construction techniques and technological development.

The listed building is now located within a much-changed setting, following the conversion of the listed building to a public house and the gradual residential development of the surrounding area. This has led to substantial changes to the building and its immediate surroundings, together with the loss of its historic, isolated setting.

The Site continues to provide some rural context and remains as a remnant part of the historic, rural setting to the listed building. However, any contribution it now makes to the significance of the listed building is limited.

The proposals will lead to a degree of harm to the significance of the listed building, due to the further alteration of its setting and the impact to its historic interest. Any harm will, however, remain limited and at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm. The planning balance required under paragraph 215 of the NPPF is provided within the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

Contents

Summary	i
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Methodology and Approach	2
3. Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets	5
4. Setting Assessment	10
5. Conclusions	14

Figures

Figure 1: Extract from 1841 tithe map showing the Site and surrounding area

Figure 2: 1873 OS (large scale)

Figure 3: 1899 OS (large scale)

Figure 4: 1910 OS (large scale)

Figure 5: 1955 OS (large scale)

Figure 6: 2025 OS with the location of Dunnings Mill highlighted.

Figure 7: 2025 Satellite image showing the Site and surrounding development.

Figure 8: Dunnings Mill viewed from West Hoathly Road. The original building is visible to the left, with the various one and two storey extensions to the right (north). Recent development at Streatfield Place, which is elevated above the Mill, is visible in the background

Figure 9: The approach to the listed building from the north. Dunnings Mill is partially visible to the right, with the pub sign the most notable feature. The boundary planting of the Site is visible to the left

Figure 10: A view south from the road to the east of Dunnings Mill towards the Site. The Site is enclosed by its boundary planting and sits beyond existing residential development

Quality Management

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by TCMS Heritage Ltd on behalf of Devine Homes as part of a planning application for the residential development of Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead (the Site).
- 1.2. The Site lies to the south-east of West Hoathly Road and to the south of an adjacent recreational area. The Site has been subject to pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council, with a pre-application response provided on 10 September 2024. The Site has also been subject to previous heritage assessment, including the production of a Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment, prepared by RPS in 2023 as part of the pre-application process and the wider local plan process. The Site is included as an allocation in the draft local plan under policy DPA4.
- 1.3. The Council's pre-application response noted that the proposed development would alter the setting of the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill, which lies to the north of the Site and would give rise to less than substantial harm (likely in the mid range of the scale).
- 1.4. This Heritage Impact Assessment has subsequently been produced to accompany this planning application. In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, this document has been prepared to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposed development of the Site and describe their significance, with consideration given to any contribution made by their settings. This report also discusses the impact of the development on that significance, with reference to relevant design and mitigation measures. This assessment is provided in accordance with relevant Historic England guidance, which is described more fully at Section 2.
- 1.5. This Assessment includes an appraisal of the historic development of the Site and the local area, which has informed the assessment of significance presented within this document.
- 1.6. This report has been informed by a site visit undertaken in October 2025 and historic research. All photographs included within this report date from the October 2025 site visit.

2. Methodology and Approach

- 2.1. The relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance used in this assessment is set out below.
- 2.2. Section 66(1) of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990** (as amended) states that:

In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 2.3. The Act is supported by the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, which states at paragraph 212 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

- 2.4. Conservation is defined in the NPPF as:

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

- 2.5. Paragraph 213 states that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

- 2.6. Significance is defined in the NPPF as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

- 2.7. The **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** provides further information regarding those interests and defines them as follows:

Archaeological interest: 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.

Architectural and artistic interest: 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.

Historic interest: 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.

- 2.8. The PPG also provides additional information related to the meaning of less than substantial harm and the scale of harm that may be caused to the significance of a designated heritage asset.
- 2.9. The relevant local plan policies are set out in the **Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031**. Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets is relevant to this report. It states that listed buildings and their settings will be protected and that this will be achieved by (amongst other things) ensuring a thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting.
- 2.10. The draft **Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 – 2039** allocates the site for a residential development of up to 45 homes under policy DPA4.
- 2.11. Historic England provide guidance related to assessing change to heritage assets under **GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment** and **HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets**. These documents seek to ensure that changes to heritage assets are informed by an appropriate assessment of their significance and that a staged approach is undertaken for decision making. The staged approach set out in GPA2 requires an applicant to:
- Understand the significance of the affected assets
 - Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance
 - Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change
 - Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected
- 2.12. Historic England provide guidance related to assessing change within the setting of heritage assets within **GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets**. The methodology requires the following:
- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected*
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated*
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it*
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm*
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes*
- 2.13. The settings assessment provided at Section 5 follows the 5-step process set out above. Further explanation of each of these steps is provided in GPA3.
- 2.14. For Steps 2 and 3, the document also provides a list of certain characteristics, or matters that should be considered when undertaking the assessment. This includes, for example, consideration of land-uses, historic associations, views, the orientation and aspect of the asset, noise, odours and other non-visual effects.
- 2.15. The guidance document is clear (see paragraph 9) that:
- Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation [...] Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.*

- 2.16. To understand the contribution that an asset's setting makes to its significance, it is first therefore important to understand what significance the asset holds.
- 2.17. Paragraph 9 also notes that:
- Settings of heritage assets change over time. Understanding this history of change will help to determine how further development within the asset's setting is likely to affect the contribution made by setting to the significance of the heritage asset.*
- 2.18. Paragraph 10 notes that setting is often expressed in terms of views, but that setting also incorporates additional non-visual elements of setting.

3. Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

Site Description and Historic Development

- 3.1. The Site now comprises a single field currently used for grazing. It is enclosed by mature trees to the West Hoathly Road boundary and by a fence and trees to the other boundaries. It sits on the south face of a valley, and slopes down from south-west to north-east (with an approximate 12m drop). The Site appears to have remained in agricultural use throughout its recorded history.
- 3.2. Earlier mapping illustrates the general site location, with the Site appearing as agricultural land outside of the settlement. The 1841 East Grinstead tithe map (Figure 1) is the first to show the Site in detail. This records the majority of the Site within Plot 1385 which is owned and occupied by Jonathan Worrell. The state of cultivation is given as meadow, indicating that it was used for grazing at this time. Parts of two additional plots (1383 and 1386) are also included within the Site. They are both owned and occupied by Worrall and serve as meadow. Woodland planting is shown to the south and east.

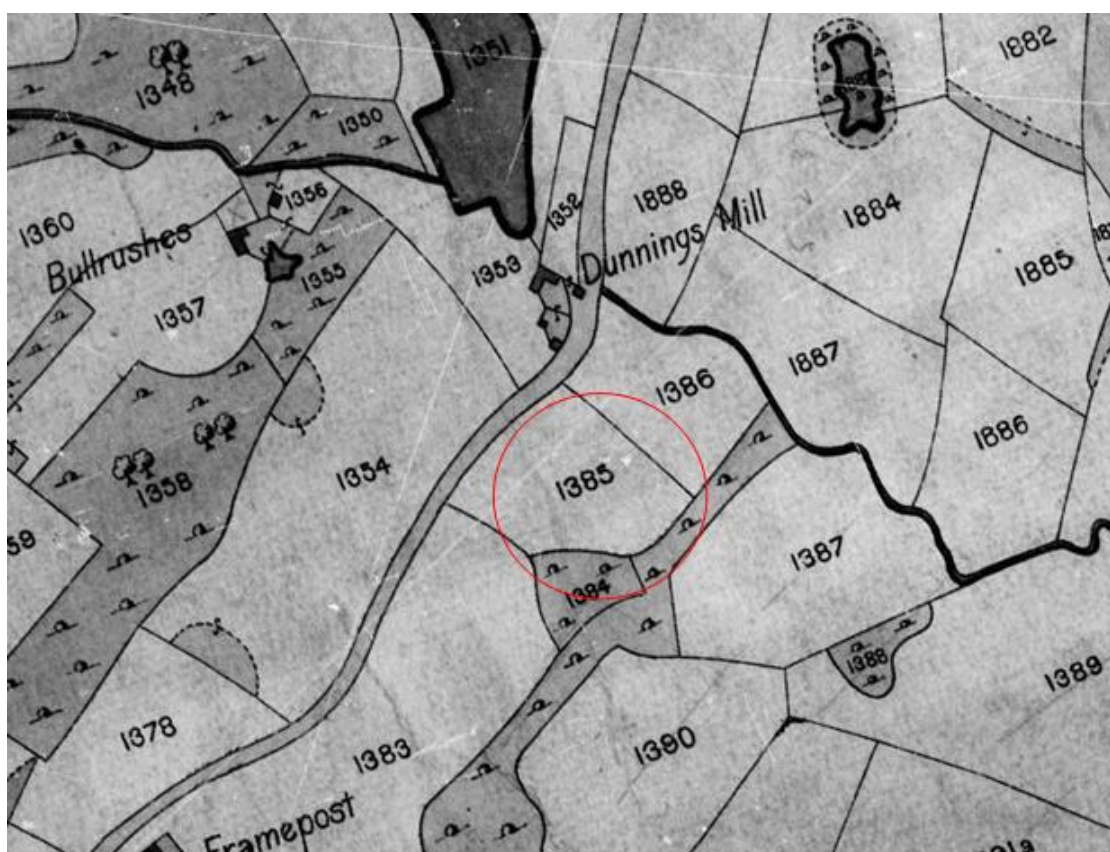
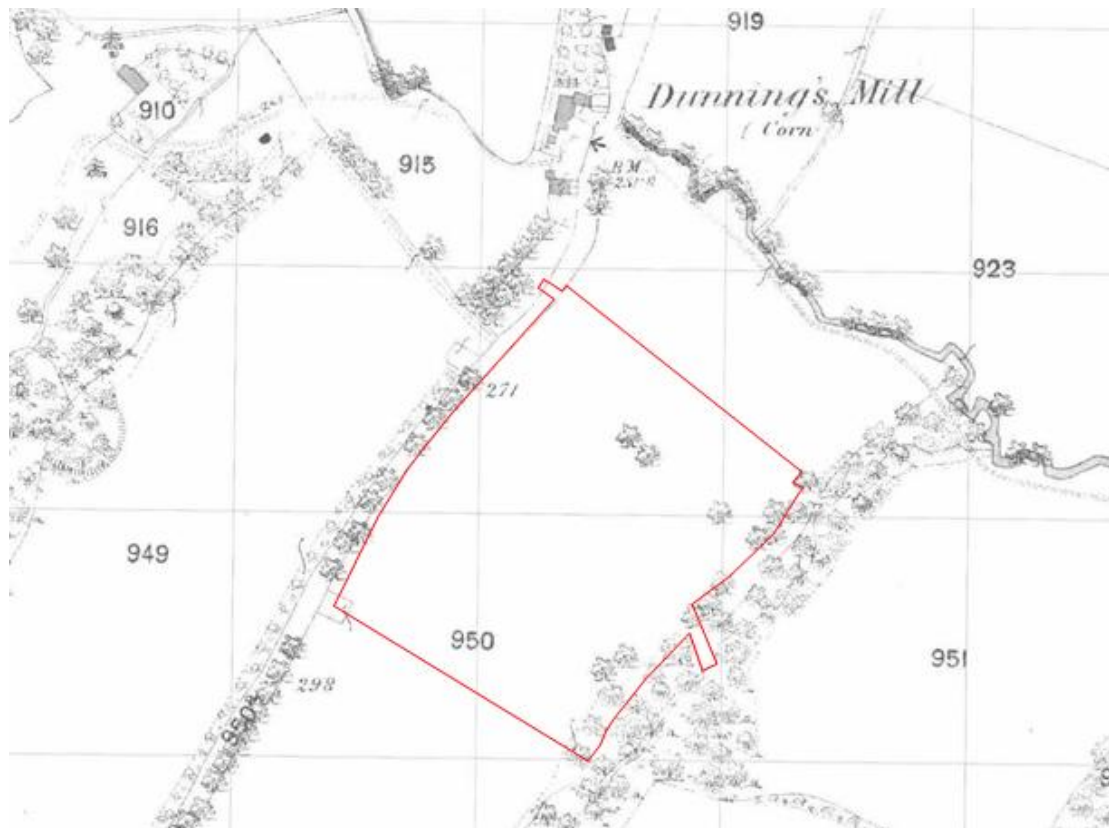


Figure 1: Extract from 1841 tithe map showing the Site and surrounding area.

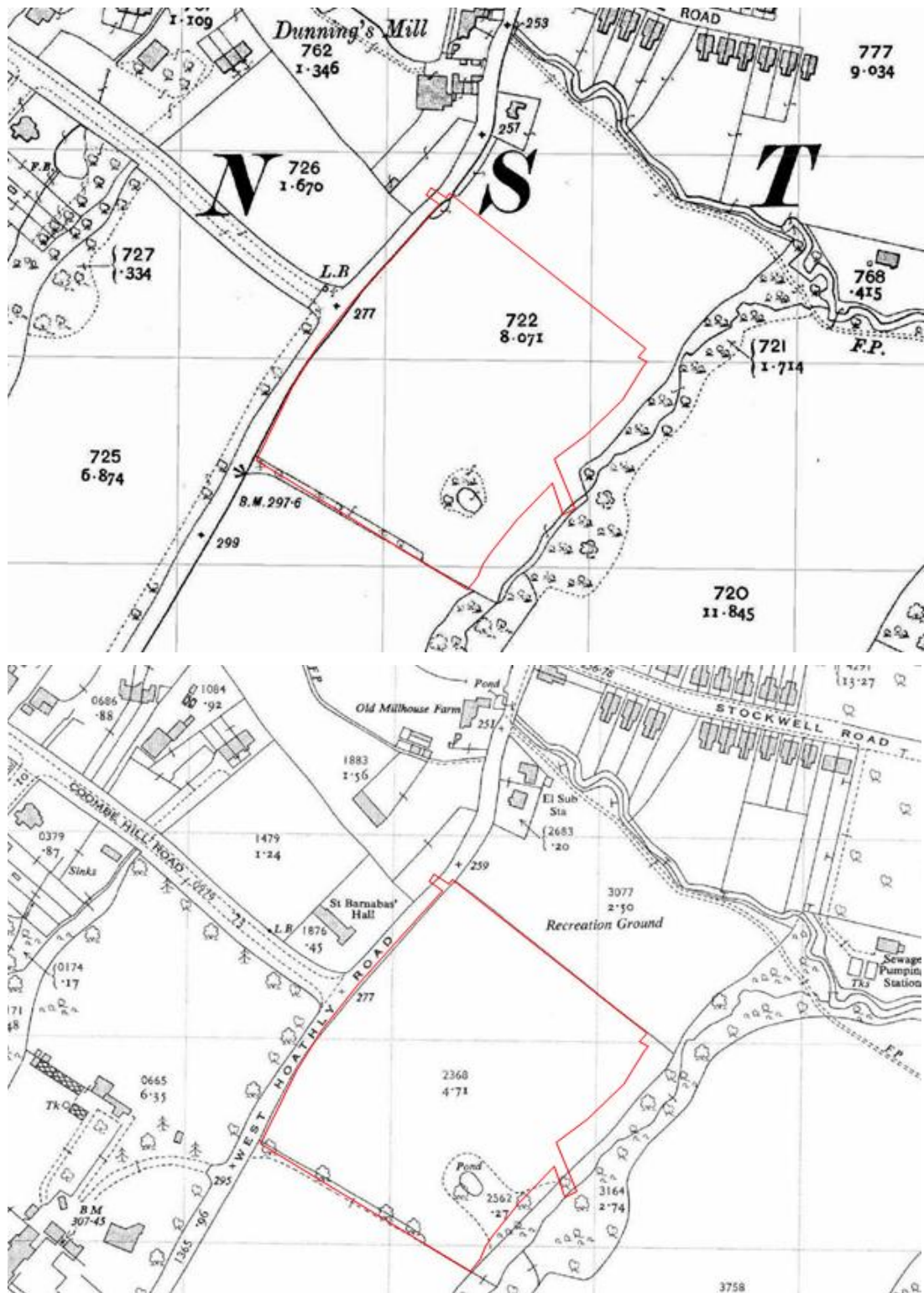
- 3.3. Dunnings Mill is clearly shown to the north of the Site. At this time it comprises an “L” plan building, with some smaller outbuildings and a yard area. A large mill pond is shown to the north, with the stream also illustrated. There is no development immediately adjoining or surrounding the Mill. The Mill was owned by Robery Crawford (who held an extensive landholding in the parish) and occupied by James Turner. It is recorded as *Water Mill House Gardens etc.* with Turner also occupying the Mill Pond and two meadow fields (Plots 1349 and 1352 to the north of the Mill).

- 3.4. Subsequent mapping illustrates the development of the Mill and the local area. The 1873 OS (Figure 2) shows the Mill in more detail, with the main range and additional outbuildings shown. It is recorded as a corn mill. The Mill Pond is visible to the north. The Site appears to remain in agricultural use and there is boundary planting shown to West Hoathly Road.



Figures 2 and 3: 1873 OS (large scale) and 1899 OS (large scale).

- 3.5. The 1899 OS (Figure 3) shows a similar arrangement, with some additional development also shown to the south and east of the Mill. The local area began to develop in the early 20th century, with the 1910 OS (Figure 4) showing the development of Stockwell Road to the east of the Mill and the construction of a larger building to the south of Dunning's Mill. There is also residential development to the west, although the Site and its immediate surroundings remain undeveloped.



Figures 4 and 5: 1910 OS (large scale) and 1955 OS (large scale).

- 3.6. The local area continued to develop during the 20th century and into the 21st century. The 1955 OS (Figure 5) shows some additional development along West Hoathly Road, while Dunning's Mill is also recorded as *Old Millhouse Farm* at this time, indicating a move away from milling to use as a farmhouse. The mapping does not indicate any notable changes to the form of the building.

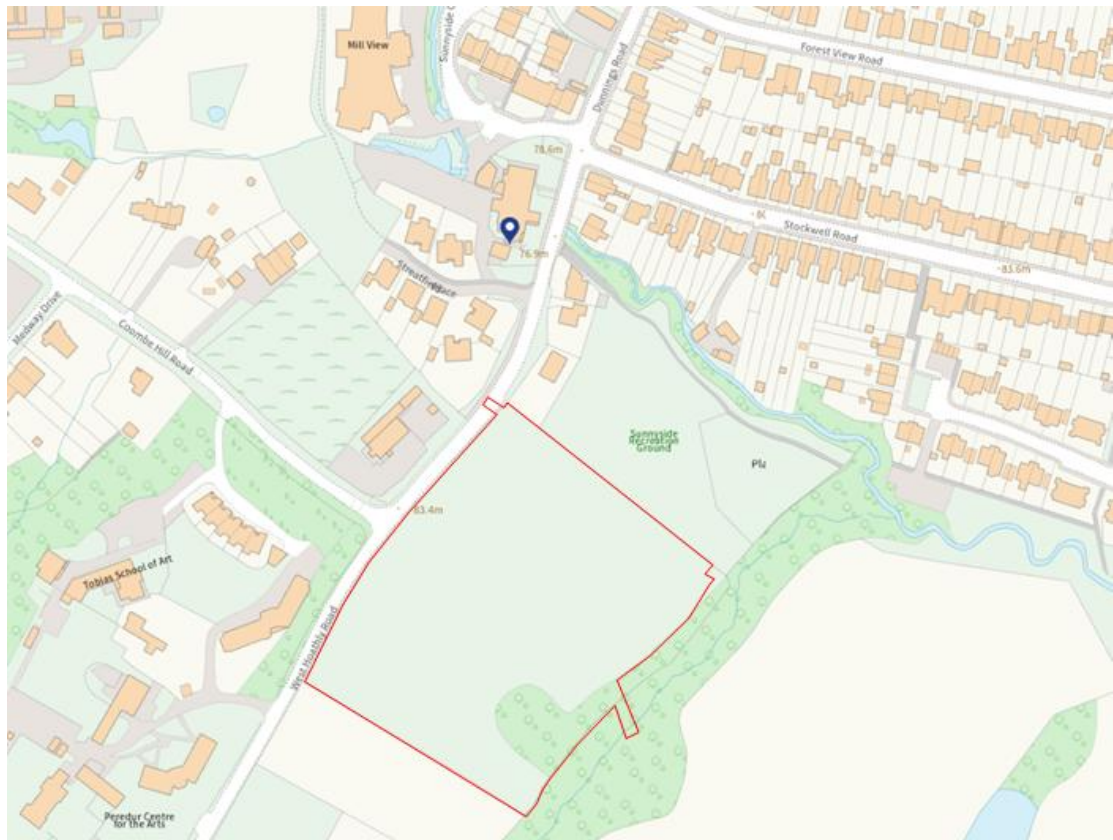


Figure 6: 2025 OS with the location of Dunning's Mill highlighted.

- 3.7. More recently, the local area has been more intensively developed with additional development to the north and south of the Mill in the form of Sunnyside Close and the Mill View Care Home to the north, and Streatfield Place to the south. These changes are illustrated by Figures 6 and 7, which show the current Site context. The Mill itself has also seen substantial changes, related to its conversion to use as a public house, as described more fully at Section 4 below.



Figure 7: 2025 Satellite image showing the Site and surrounding development.

Relevant Heritage Assets

- 3.8. The Council's pre-application response noted that the proposed development would affect the setting and significance of Dunnings Mill. The Mill is a Grade II listed building having been listed in 1972 with the list entry 1249038. At the time it was described as "*disused*" but the building has since been redeveloped and converted to use as a public house.
- 3.9. The Conservation Officer also noted the presence of the Grade II listed Boyles Farmhouse, but noted that this listed building was sufficiently separated from the Site and was unlikely to be affected. Having visited the Site, I agree with this assessment and have only considered Dunnings Mill below.

4. Heritage Assessment

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

- 4.1. Dunnings Mill lies approximately 100m north of the Site. The list entry is brief and simply states:

2. Small, disused mill on tributary of River Medway. Brick, half-timber and weatherboarding. Tile roof C18. Cottage probably late C16 adjoining mill building. Position of wheel still discernible.

- 4.2. Since the listing of the building in 1972, it has been converted to use as a public house, which has necessitated numerous changes to the listed building and its setting. The planning history for the building is lengthy and includes applications from the 1970s for alterations to the restaurant and creation of a brewery, followed by applications for further extensions in the 1980s. Conservation Officer comments related to a recent application for minor alterations to the listed building (see DM/23/0012) confirmed that the building has been “*substantially extended*”. The associated Structural report also noted various alterations to the gable end of the building, illustrating the extent of change to the historic structure.



Figure 8: Dunnings Mill viewed from West Hoathly Road. The original building is visible to the left, with the various one and two storey extensions to the right (north). Recent development at Streatfield Place, which is elevated above the Mill, is visible in the background.

- 4.3. The building today comprises a tall, two and a half storey building constructed from timber framing and faced in a combination of hung tiles, weatherboarding and painted brick. It has a prominent brick chimney stack towards the southern end, with irregular widows (predominantly casements) to the principal elevation which overlooks West Hoathly Road to the east. A series of 20th century extensions lie to the north, comprising a single-storey linking range and a taller, square plan building further to the north. There is also a modest, single-storey outbuilding. These are all finished in weatherboarding and have hipped tile roofs, with prominent dormers to the two-

storey range. The linking range includes a crown roof, with a large expanse of flat roof to the rear of the main elevations, which is obscured from the street.

- 4.4. The significance of the listed building derives from its historic interest as a post-medieval mill which illustrates historic construction techniques and the evolution of the local agricultural economy. The building also possesses architectural interest, tied to the construction methods and its former use, which demonstrates technological innovation. This has, however, been diminished by the conversion of the building and the provision of a replica water mill. The building also possesses archaeological interest, with the multi-phased development of the building and its adaptations over time potentially providing further evidence of historic construction techniques and technological development.
- 4.5. The setting of the listed building is linked to its position straddling the “Sunnyside” river, a tributary of the Medway, and its valley bottom location. The setting beyond this now comprises the associated car park and beer garden which serve the pub, surrounding residential development, the recreation ground and agricultural land beyond. This includes the Site, which is discussed in more detail below.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow that significance to be appreciated

- 4.6. The local topography is undulating and influences the way in which the listed building is experienced. The land drops steeply down Dunnings Road (from north to south) and down West Hoathly Road (from south to north), with the Mill set within a valley bottom. This assists in illustrating the historic use of the listed building as a water mill, despite the significant changes to the local landscape which have included the infilling of the mill pond and its replacement with parking and roads.



Figure 9: The approach to the listed building from the north. Dunnings Mill is partially visible to the right, with the pub sign the most notable feature. The boundary planting of the Site is visible to the left.

- 4.7. This topography does, however, restrict views of the listed building on the approaches both from the north and south (see Figure 7). The appreciation of the building's architectural interest and vernacular form is consequently more apparent when standing immediately west of the original range, with other views obscured by intervening development, including the later extensions to the north and west of the listed building.
- 4.8. The surrounding 20th century residential development is also a feature of these views and approaches to the listed building. As noted by the Conservation Officer at pre-application stage, the building historically sat in an isolated, rural location but has since been subsumed into the town by later development. The local topography means that this surrounding development, notably the Sunnyside Court development to the north which is of three storeys, and the Streatfield Place development to the south, is prominent.
- 4.9. The Site lies to the south of the listed building and is similarly elevated above it. From elevated views on Dunnings Road to the north of the listed building, the elevated, southern part of the Site is visible. However, the listed building itself is not appreciated within these views. From the Mill and its immediate surroundings, the views are obscured by the boundary planting to the Site (Figure 8) although winter views will likely provide greater visual permeability. In return views, it is not possible to appreciate the form, or the architectural and historic interests of the listed building due to its set back from the road and the limited appreciation of the building that is permitted.



Figure 10: A view south from the road to the east of Dunnings Mill towards the Site. The Site is enclosed by its boundary planting and sits beyond existing residential development.

- 4.10. The Conservation Officer has stated that the Site remains as “*the most prominent remainder of the countryside which originally surrounded the mill*”. While it is acknowledged that the Site is visible from the elevated views permitted from Dunnings Road, these do not allow for any appreciation of the listed building. In views from the listed building and its surroundings, the most notable feature of the Site is the boundary planting, with much of the Site obscured from view.

- 4.11. The Site is also part of the rural setting to the listed building, but its former use for grazing indicates that there was not a strong relationship between the Site and the Mill. The Site therefore forms a remnant part of the historic, rural setting of the listed building as a result, but any contribution to the historic interest and significance of the listed building remains limited.
- 4.12. While elements of the setting of the listed building, notably its valley bottom location and relationship with the mill stream, continue to make a strong and important contribution to its significance, much of the setting now makes no contribution, or even detracts from the significance of the listed building. The extensive changes seen in the 20th century, which have included the conversion of the listed building to public house use, its significant extension to the north and west, the construction of car parking on the historic site of the mill pond, and surrounding development, have all diminished the contribution that the listed building's setting makes to its significance. It is now difficult to appreciate the building as a historic water mill and the building is now largely divorced from its historic rural setting. Where views do survive, for example towards the Site, these are seen within the context of existing modern residential development. These extensive changes and the context within which the listed building is now experienced mean that the Site does not strongly contribute to the significance of the listed building and makes only a limited contribution to its historic interest as a remnant of its historic, though much changed, rural setting.

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it

- 4.13. The proposals comprise the residential development of the Site, with access provided from West Hoathly Road. A footpath connection will also be provided at the north-east corner of the Site, with these new accesses requiring some localised vegetation removal.
- 4.14. The proposals will alter views from West Hoathly Road (to the immediate west of the listed building) and oblique, limited views from the building itself. The removal of vegetation will open up some views into the Site, with the proposed dwellings, particularly those at the north-east of the Site, becoming visible.
- 4.15. The proposals will alter one element of the listed building's historic, rural setting. However, this will be seen within the context of the numerous changes already seen (both to the building and its setting) and will not affect an element of the building's setting that appears to share a historic functional relationship with it. The alteration to this agricultural land will result in some, limited impact to the historic interest of the listed building.
- 4.16. The proposals will not, however, diminish the ability to appreciate the architectural interest of the listed building, and will have no impact on its important technological value as a former water mill. Any changes to the wider, rural surroundings of the listed building will be limited, particularly when seen in the context of the extensive changes that have already occurred and will result in a very limited impact to the significance of the listed building as a result.

Step 4: Explore Ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

- 4.17. The proposed development will include some alteration to the boundary planting, which currently provides a sense of enclosure along West Hoathly Road. The provision of proposed appropriate, native planting adjacent to the new footpath and vehicle access will assist in minimising any potential visual impacts. This will help to soften the impact to the listed building, but is unlikely to be sufficient to remove the harm in its entirety.

Step 5: Make and document decision and monitor outcomes

- 4.18. The proposed development will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Dunning's Mill. This is primarily due to the change in land use and character, and the related impacts to the historic interest of the listed building. The planning balance required under paragraph 215 of the NPPF is provided within the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of a planning application for the residential development of Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead. It follows pre-application advice received from Mid Sussex District Council and confirms that the proposed development of the Site has the potential to affect the setting and significance of a single Grade II listed building, Dunnings Mill.
- 5.2. This report demonstrates that the significance of the listed building is drawn from the building's historic interest as a post-medieval mill which illustrates historic construction techniques and the evolution of the local agricultural economy. The building also possesses architectural interest, tied to the construction methods and its former use, which demonstrates technological innovation. This has, however, been diminished by the conversion of the building. The building also possesses archaeological interest, with the multi-phased development of the building and its adaptations over time potentially providing further evidence of historic construction techniques and technological development.
- 5.3. The listed building is now located within a much-changed setting, following the conversion of the listed building to a public house and the gradual residential development of the surrounding area. This has led to substantial changes to the building and its immediate surroundings, together with the loss of its historic, isolated setting.
- 5.4. The Site continues to provide some rural context and remains as a remnant part of the historic, rural setting to the listed building. However, any contribution it now makes to the significance of the listed building is limited.
- 5.5. The proposals will lead to a degree of harm to the significance of the listed building, due to the further alteration of its setting and the impact to its historic interest. Any harm will, however, remain limited and at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm. The planning balance required under paragraph 215 of the NPPF is provided within the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

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