



Historic England

Mr Steven King
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
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RH16 1SS

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

Our ref: P01606451

2 April 2026

Dear Mr King

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND AT HURST FARM HURSTWOOD LANE HAYWARDS HEATH WEST
SUSSEX
Application No. DM/26/0682**

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2026 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Introduction

The development has the potential to have an impact on the heritage significance of Hospital Farmhouse (Hurst Farmhouse) (Grade II*), Hurst Barn (Grade II) and Middlefield Cottage (Grade II) as well as undesignated archaeology.

Our advice focuses on Hurst Farmhouse, a grade II* listed building and the reason for the consultation with Historic England. Your own Conservation and Landscape specialists should advise on all other heritage and historic landscape matters, including about grade II listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. You should obtain advice relating to undesignated archaeology from the County Archaeologist.

Summary

Historic England has concerns regarding the proposals as we do not consider that harm to Hurst Farmhouse has been sufficiently minimised as required by the National



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Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This is because at the Outline stage, the illustrative masterplan indicated that the proposed open space to the south east of the farmhouse was designed to be simple and informal in character to retain a semblance of the farmhouse's former rural setting.

Now it is proposed that this area incorporates 'Hillside Park.' This would create a suburban character that relates more to the proposed housing development rather than one that relates to the listed farmhouse.

We recommend amendments are made to the design of this space to create a more informal, rural character.

Significance of Hurst Farmhouse

The significance of Hurst Farmhouse lies in its early date from the 16th century and that it is a particularly fine example of its type. The quality of its materials and design features signifies a farmhouse of some former high status. The unusual degree of the survival of these elements has justified listing at Grade II*.

Its historic association and group value with the nearby farm buildings, including the Grade II listed barn to the northwest, also contributes to its significance and understanding as a former dispersed, historic, Wealden farmstead.

In the late 19th century, Hurst Farmhouse was renamed Asylum Farm after it became the Home Farm to St Francis Hospital. However, its appreciation as a farmstead could still be clearly recognised.

The current rural setting provided by this site makes an important contribution to the understanding and experience of Hurst Farm as an historic farmhouse and part of a farmstead. It helps to explain how the farmhouse and buildings came to be located here.

For instance, the rural nature of the approach from the south and the tranquil character of the landscape in terms of its current use and appearance to the south-west, south and south-east, re-enforce an understanding of the connection between the farmhouse and its rural setting.

Impact of the Proposals on the Significance of Hurst Farmhouse



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The proposals are reserved matters application pursuant to outline application Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Reference: DM/25/1630, Lewes District Council (LDC) Reference: LW/2510707 for appearance, layout, scale and landscaping only.

The housing would be provided in 4 'parcels' with Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 the closest to the Grade II* designed asset Hurst Farm and Grade II listed barn associated with it. The new buildings in these parcels would be 2 storeys high.

Based on our previous advice for similar proposals on this site, the proposals would cause some harm to the Grade II* listed farmhouse through the erosion of its rural setting.

However, while an area of land between two parcels will be kept undeveloped from housing, it will not be as effective as it could be in retaining some sort of semblance of the farmhouse's former rural setting. This is because as it is now proposed to incorporate a large play area into this area with hard and safety surfacing along with amphitheatre style seating. The previous outline application illustrated this area as simple, informal open space. Therefore the proposed open area would be more suburban rather than rural in character and would appear to relate more to the new housing rather than the farmhouse.

The harm caused by the proposals would be less than substantial under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

National Planning Policy Framework

The key policies within the NPPF to assess the proposals against are paragraphs 208, 212, 213 and 215, which require that: harm should be avoided or minimised; great weight should be given to the assets conservation and the more important the assets, the greater the weight; any unavoidable harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be clearly and convincingly justified by the public benefits of the proposal.

In addition, paragraph 219 highlights that opportunities should be sought for new development within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance, which would be a public benefit that would weigh in favour of the proposal.



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Historic England's position on the Proposals

The change in the wider setting arising from the proposed housing scheme will cause harm to the farmhouse's appreciation as part of a former historic farmstead within the Low Weald and later the home farm to St Francis Hospital. We consider this harm to be less than substantial under the terms of the NPPF.

The previous outline application included an illustrative masterplan that retained land to the southeast of the farmhouse as a simple, informal green space. This would have helped to retain some semblance of the farmhouse's former rural setting, even if not as currently experienced.

However, the Design and Access Statement now shows this land as containing 'Hillside Park.' This is very different to previous proposals and clearly not a rural character. This is retrograde step compared to the illustrative masterplan submitted with the outline application and fails to minimise harm required by the NPPF.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. We do not think that harm to significance has been sufficiently avoided or minimised as required by paragraph 208. This is required before undertaking the balancing exercise of weighing the harm against the public benefits.

We recommend amendments are made to the character and design of the proposed open space adjacent to Hurst Farmhouse so that it is more informal and rural in character and does not contain a play area. We would be pleased to advise further should any new information regarding this be provided.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Alma Howell

Alma Howell

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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cc: Emily Wade - Conservation Officer



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