



Public Interest Benefits Statement

Application: DM/25/2616 – Land at Hurstpierpoint College (Ruckford House)

Project: Four staff houses at Hurstpierpoint College (Ruckford House site, BN6 9JS)

Applicant: Hurstpierpoint College Limited

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Date: 09 October 2025

Planning and heritage context

The Conservation Officer concludes that the proposal would result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of nearby heritage assets, arising primarily from a localised loss of green space, the introduction of domestic built form, and the perception of suburban character within an otherwise verdant and rural context. It is further confirmed that, subject to detailed landscaping, this harm would fall at the lower end of the less than substantial spectrum.

In accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Operational and educational public benefit

The development delivers four dwellings specifically to meet the identified operational need for on-site staff accommodation at Hurstpierpoint College. The College is a long-established educational institution and a significant local employer. The ability to attract, retain, and accommodate key staff is fundamental to its continued effective operation and resilience. This benefit is functional, tangible, and ongoing, directly supporting the delivery of education, safeguarding, and pastoral care.

The staff-only nature of the accommodation ensures a direct and policy-compliant relationship between the development and the institutional use it serves, rather than representing general market housing.

Securing the long-term viability of heritage assets

By supporting the efficient operation of the College, the proposal contributes to the

long-term stewardship, maintenance, and conservation of the historic buildings on campus and landscape that form part of the wider estate. Enabling viable contemporary use is consistent with national heritage policy, which recognises that heritage assets are best conserved when they are actively used and properly resourced.

Reduction in commuting and sustainability benefits

On-site staff accommodation materially reduces daily commuting movements, particularly by private car. This delivers clear environmental benefits through reduced traffic on rural roads, lower carbon emissions, and reduced pressure on surrounding settlements. These benefits are permanent and align with national and local objectives relating to climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

Environmental and infrastructure betterment

The scheme delivers demonstrable environmental improvements beyond the existing baseline. These include the disconnection of surface water from the foul network, the introduction of infiltration-based Sustainable Drainage Systems designed to accommodate climate change allowances, and measurable Biodiversity Net Gain secured through native planting and habitat creation. These benefits represent a net improvement over the current situation and are secured through submitted technical strategies and conditions.

Improvement to site organisation, safety, and movement

The proposal rationalises access arrangements within the estate by providing a formal passing place, a segregated pedestrian route, and improved emergency access. These measures enhance safety for residents, staff, and visitors, and provide an additional public benefit within the operational campus environment.

Design mitigation and proportionality of harm

The identified heritage harm is limited, localised, and reversible. The design has been refined to minimise visual impact through restrained massing, a rural and contextually appropriate material palette, reduced and softened hardstanding, strengthened boundary planting, and controlled external lighting. As acknowledged by the Conservation Officer, these measures place the impact at the lower end of the less than substantial harm spectrum.

Planning balance conclusion

When considered cumulatively, the public benefits of the proposal are clear, substantial, and enduring. They include support for an established educational institution, reduced commuting and environmental impact, enhanced site safety and infrastructure,

environmental and biodiversity improvements, and the long-term sustainability of heritage assets through viable use.

These benefits decisively outweigh the identified less than substantial harm to heritage significance at the lower end of the scale. The proposal therefore satisfies the statutory duty under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the balancing exercise required by paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and planning permission should be granted subject to appropriate conditions.