

Heritage Statement

Shepherds Barn, Birch Avenue, Haywards Heath, RH17 7SL

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for alterations and extensions at Shepherds Barn, Birch Avenue, Haywards Heath, RH17 7SL.

The proposal comprises external alterations, front and rear extensions, and internal roof space alterations to the existing dwelling. The application has been informed by an assessment of the character of the site and its wider surroundings to ensure the proposed development responds appropriately to the local context and preserves the significance of nearby heritage assets where relevant.

The statement considers the potential impact of the proposed works on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and demonstrates that the proposals represent a sensitive and appropriate form of development.

2. Site and Surroundings

Shepherds Barn is an existing detached dwelling situated within a spacious residential plot along Birch Avenue. The property is characterised by generous landscaped gardens, mature planting, and a low-density residential setting.

The surrounding area comprises predominantly detached dwellings of varied architectural styles, ages, and forms. The streetscape displays a mixed architectural character, with properties ranging from traditional vernacular-inspired dwellings to more contemporary residential designs. This varied context contributes to an eclectic but spacious suburban-rural character.

The application site is not a listed building and is not located within a designated Conservation Area. The surrounding built environment is therefore primarily defined by residential character rather than formal heritage designation.

Nevertheless, the existing dwelling contains architectural references to traditional Sussex domestic architecture, including pitched roof forms, tile hanging, rendered walls, and

articulated gables. These elements contribute positively to the character of the property and wider street scene.

3. Heritage Context and Significance

While the site itself is not a designated heritage asset, consideration has been given to the wider historic and visual character of the area in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The significance of the surrounding area is derived primarily from:

- The spacious pattern of residential development;
- Mature landscaping and verdant character;
- Individually designed detached dwellings;
- Use of traditional materials and roof forms;
- Semi-rural residential setting.

The existing dwelling contributes to this character through its domestic scale and traditional architectural references. However, aspects of the current building appear fragmented due to inconsistent roof forms and fenestration arrangements.

The proposal therefore seeks not only to extend the property but also to enhance its overall architectural cohesion and appearance.

4. Proposed Development

The proposed development includes:

- Front elevation redesign and external alterations;
- Rear extension to create enlarged family living accommodation;
- Roof space alterations forming a non-habitable ancillary loft area;
- Associated fenestration and material updates.

The rear extension has been designed as a subordinate addition that integrates sensitively with the host dwelling and remains largely screened from the public realm by the existing building and mature landscaping.

The loft conversion does not create habitable accommodation due to the restricted head height within the roof caused by the eaves. The space is intended for ancillary and occasional use only and remains contained within the existing roof structure.

The proposal rationalises the architectural composition of the dwelling through improved proportions, clearer hierarchy, and a more cohesive material palette.

5. Design Response

The design has been carefully developed to respond positively to the established character of the area.

Key design principles include:

- Retention of traditional pitched roof forms;
- Use of clay tile hanging and rendered wall finishes;
- Subordinate scale of extensions;
- Improved architectural symmetry and balance;
- Preservation of the spacious character of the plot;
- Respect for established building lines and surrounding development patterns.

The material palette reflects traditional local residential character while introducing a refined and cohesive architectural appearance.

The roof alterations remain modest and sympathetic to the host dwelling, ensuring the proposals do not appear visually dominant or incongruous within the streetscape.

6. Impact on Heritage Character

Given the absence of designated heritage assets directly associated with the site, the proposals are not considered to result in harm to heritage significance.

The development preserves the established spacious and landscaped character of the area and enhances the appearance of the existing dwelling through a more coherent architectural approach.

The proposed extensions and alterations remain proportionate to the host property and are appropriate within the varied residential context of Birch Avenue.

The proposal is therefore considered to preserve and positively contribute to the local character and visual amenity of the surrounding area.

7. Conclusion

The proposed development at Shepherds Barn has been carefully designed with regard to the character of the existing dwelling and its wider setting.

The scheme:

- Respects the established residential character of the area;
- Retains traditional architectural references;
- Introduces sympathetic and proportionate extensions;
- Enhances the coherence and appearance of the dwelling;
- Preserves the spacious landscaped setting of the site;
- Results in no harm to heritage significance or local character.

Overall, the proposal represents a sensitive and well-considered enhancement to the property that accords with national and local design and heritage objectives.