

~ WARNINGLID PRIMARY SCHOOL ~

SLAUGHAM LANE, WARNINGLID, HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX, RH17 5TJ

*Conversion, extension and alteration of former school building to 2no residential dwellings.
Removal of modern portacabins and construction of 2no detached residential dwellings. Minor associated landscape works.*

HERITAGE STATEMENT



Prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA ~ Reviewed by Ben Kirk MSc, IHBC

September 2025



ABOUT MANORWOOD

Manorwood is a small team of historic building professionals with varied skills across different areas of the historic environment.

This report has been prepared by Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher Roberto Prieto-Labrador and reviewed by Director Ben Kirk

Roberto holds a MA in English Building History, awarded with Distinction by the University of York. His field of expertise is domestic vernacular architecture, specialised in material culture and domestic life during the late medieval and early modern periods.

Roberto is a Practitioner member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (PCIfA), as well as an Affiliate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). He is also a member of The Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), The Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG) and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

As a Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher at Manorwood, Roberto is responsible for in depth research into building records, mapping, and physical evidence to help inform proposals and for preparing Heritage Statements and Statements of Significance to support applications for alteration or redevelopment of historic buildings and areas, as well as surveying and recording historic buildings.

Ben holds an MSc in Timber Building Conservation, completed at the Weald and Downland Museum, and validated by Bournemouth University, and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and a recognised Historic Environment Service provider under the well-established HESPR scheme.

Ben is a member of various groups including the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), the Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG), and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

Ben has been actively working in the historic environment industry for 15 years on numerous heritage asset projects which include surveying of historic buildings (both domestic and agricultural), preparation of schedules of works and detailing of repairs. Ben oversees numerous applications for Planning permission and Listed Building Consent and has built solid working relationships with Conservation Officers at a number of Authorities across the South East.

As a company Director at Manorwood, Ben has overseen works to historic buildings carried out by a skilled network of sub-contractors including the timber restoration at Charleston Farm barns in Firle and the re-erection of historic buildings at the Weald and Downland Living Museum near Chichester, both which received awards from the Sussex Heritage Trust.

As a company Manorwood have provided various historic environment services to a number of Country Estates across the South East including the Lydhurst Estate, the Borde Hill Estate, the West Dean Estate and a number of projects on the Wiston Estate where Manorwood continue to provide consultancy advice on redevelopment and reuse of various areas.

Most recently Manorwood completed the sensitive restoration and conversion of the magnificent 15th century barn for Nyetimber Vineyards in West Sussex.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA on behalf of Manorwood to accompany an application relating to a proposal at Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid.

1.2 Warninglid Primary School is a former late Victorian Board School, dating from 1878, which served the villages of Warninglid and Slaugham until its closure in 2021 and the relocation of the school to Crawley. The building is situated on the east side of Slaugham Lane, approximately half a mile north of Warninglid and one mile south-west of Slaugham.

1.3 The building is not statutorily designated, nor is it located within a conservation area. However, it has been considered by the Local Planning Authority to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

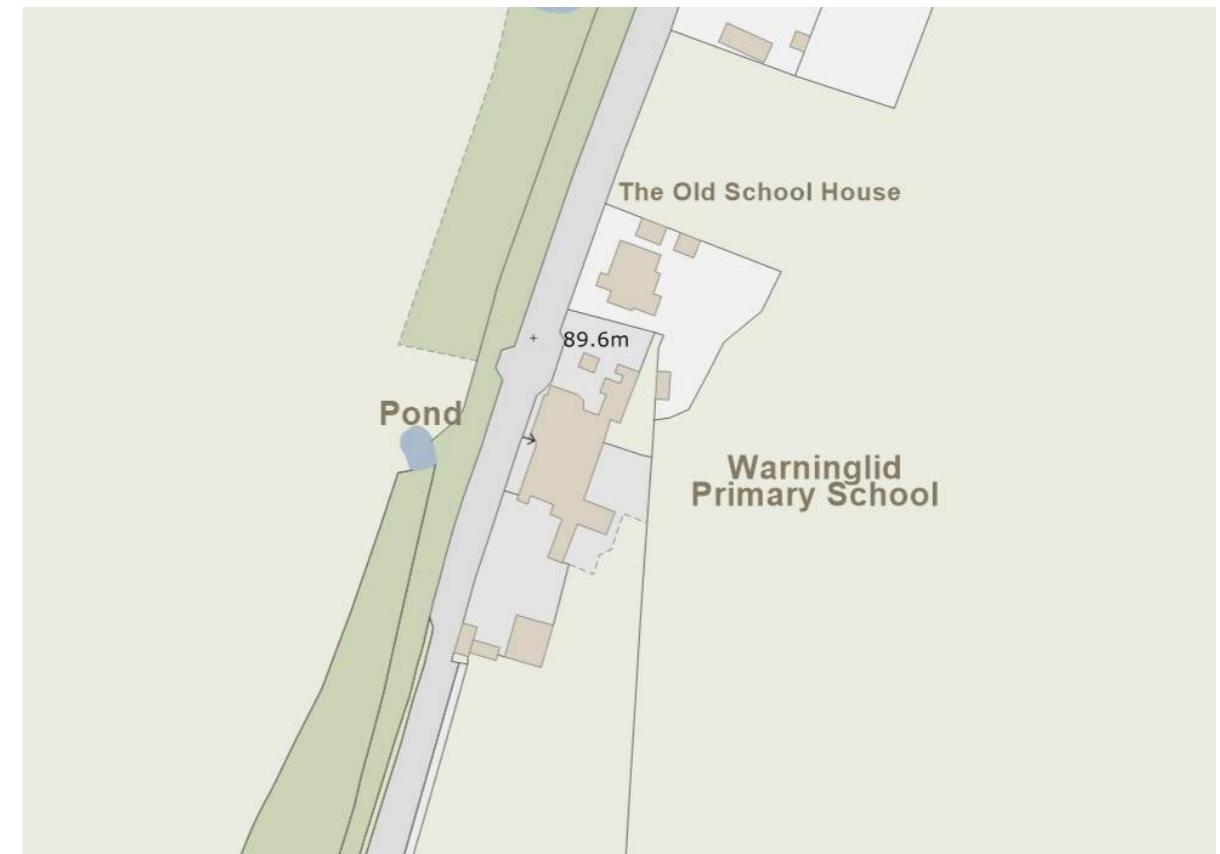
1.4 The school ceased operation in 2021 and remained vacant until it was purchased by the applicants in 2024. As a result of prolonged lack of use and maintenance, the building has suffered from both external and internal decay and is in need of repair, as well as a viable use that will ensure its long-term preservation.

1.5 Following the purchase of the property, the applicants submitted a pre-application enquiry in February 2025 under reference DM/24/3103, for the conversion, extension, and alteration of the existing school into two dwellings, along with four dwellings on the existing playfield, with a new shared access from the highway.

1.6 In March 2025 the Local Planning Authority provided written advice, in which it was stated that the conversion of the school was not considered contentious in principle, subject to further information. The construction of the proposed four dwellings, however, was considered harmful in heritage terms as they were judged to "represent an over-development of the site, having an overbearing relationship with the retained school building, and resulting in an unacceptable loss of the currently open and verdant character of this part of the site."

1.7 This report accompanies a formal application seeking planning permission for the conversion, extension, and alteration of the school into two residential dwellings, together with the construction of two residential dwellings, including minor associated landscape works. This scheme is a revised version of the earlier proposal and seeks to address the comments and advice provided by the Local Planning Authority as part of the previous pre-application enquiry.

1.8 Historic maps has been consulted to better understand the development of the site and the Conservation Area. The maps are included in Section 4 of this report.



Location of Warninglid Primary School.

1.9 This Heritage Statement includes a Significance Assessment, which identifies the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets (i.e., the former school building). It also includes an Impact Assessment, which evaluates the potential effect of the proposed scheme on the significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by its setting. This approach to impact assessment is required to comply with the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), and the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

1.10 The relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) has been consulted in the preparation of this report, in accordance with paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

2 HERITAGE ASSETS AND DESIGNATIONS

2.1 Warninglid Primary School is not a statutory Listed Building, nor is it curtilage listed to any neighbouring designated heritage assets. The building, however, has been considered by Mid Sussex District Council as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

2.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, or landscapes that hold significance meriting consideration in planning decisions due to their heritage interest, but do not meet the criteria for formal designation.

2.3 Mid Sussex District Council has stated that the school building merits consideration as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) for the following reasons:

- The age and architectural character of the building, as a good example within the local context of a typical Victorian village school, which retains numerous original features;
- The communal value within the local context of the building as a focus of village life for over 140 years; and
- Potential group value with the adjacent former school master's house.

CONSERVATION AREAS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTIFICATION AREA (ANA)

2.4 Warninglid Primary School is not located adjacent to or within the boundaries of any Conservation Area and/or Archaeological Notification Area (ANA).



Warninglid Primary School in 2025

3 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposal comprises the conversion of the former school building into two residential dwellings, including a number of associated external and internal alterations to enable its adaptation for residential use, whilst enhancing its character as far as possible.
- 3.2 The proposed alterations are limited to the late 20th century additions and extensions of the building. They seek to provide these elements with a more coherent and attractive appearance, resulting in an overall enhancement of the character of the building, whilst ensuring that the legibility of the historic core is preserved.
- 3.3 These alterations also include the construction of two carports to serve the new dwellings, merged into and situated at the end of the existing 20th century extensions of the building.
- 3.4 The scheme further incorporates a number of essential repair and conservation works that the building presently requires in order to secure its long-term preservation.
- 3.5 In addition, the scheme proposes the construction of two new detached residential dwellings to the south-east of the former school building. These will adopt the same design approach as that applied to the 20th century additions of the school, thereby ensuring visual coherence and a consistent architectural narrative.
- 3.6 The proposal also includes associated landscaping works, such as the replacement of the existing modern hardstanding (tarmac).
- 3.7 Further details of the proposal are set out in the accompanying plans, which should be read in conjunction with this report.
- 3.8 The potential impact of the proposal on the historic building and its setting is assessed in Section 6 of this report.

4 HISTORIC CONTEXT

4.1 The following section sets up the historic context and a brief description of Warninglid Primary School based on desk-based research and site visits. The historical information and photographs included in this section have been obtained in the website of the Slaugham Archives.

4.2 Warninglid School is a modest late Victorian Board School built in brick with red-brick dressings beneath plain clay-tile roofs, planned around a tall central hall with lower classroom ranges flanking it. The principal south gable presents a characteristically school-board composition: a steeply pitched roof with a timber bellcote and shingled spirelet, timber bargeboards, and a tall round-headed multi-pane window set within a red-brick relieving arch. Historic photographs from the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s confirm the continuity of this principal elevation, the twin ridge stacks, and the low, later classroom range to the west, as well as incremental single-storey additions that accumulated through the 20th century. This unsympathetic mid and later 20th century accretions read clearly against the 1878 core, which remains the architecturally legible focus of the complex.

4.3 The site is enclosed to Slaugham Lane by a low brick wall (original to the building) and simple gates, with tarmac playgrounds to the south and west that preserve painted games and a lightweight timber shelter.

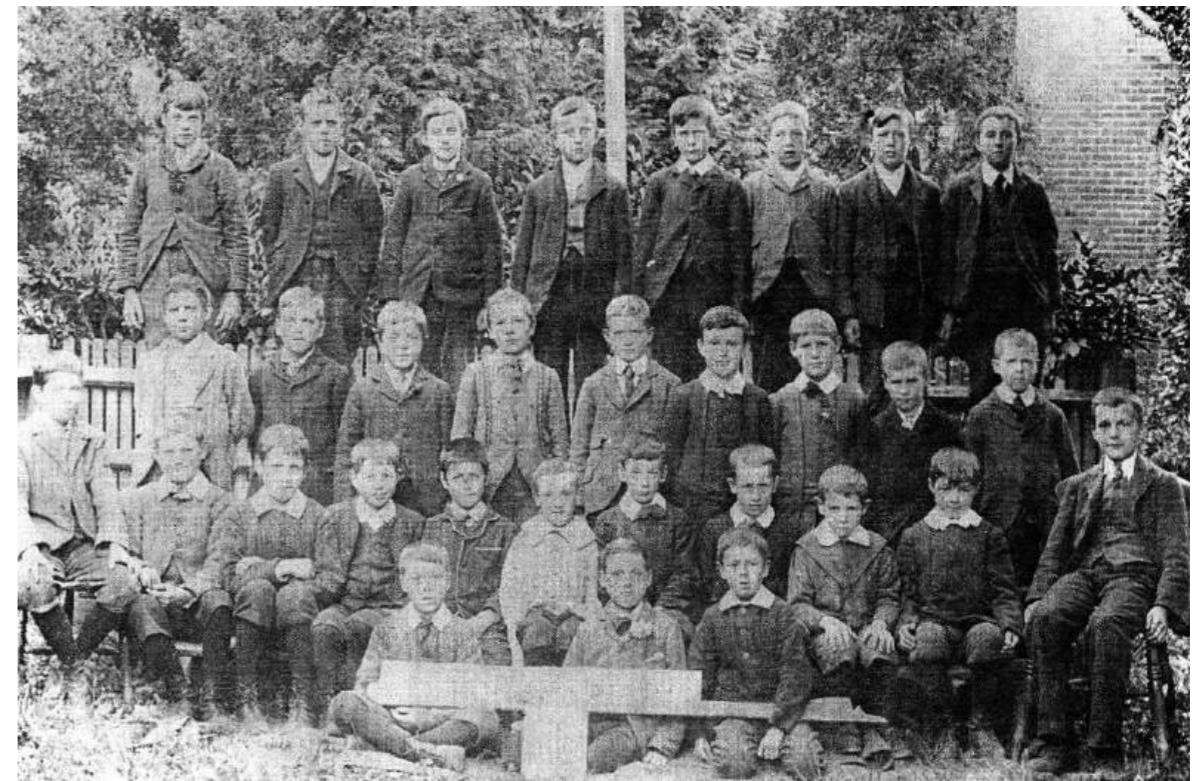
4.4 The school originated in 1878, when the longstanding school at Slaugham closed and pupils were transferred to newly established schools at Handcross and Warninglid. The Warninglid building appears to have been newly erected at this date, set on Slaugham Lane approximately half a mile north of Warninglid's centre, seemingly chosen as a practical halfway point between Warninglid and Slaugham so as to serve both settlements. Mr Holloway acted as surveyor to the School Board and Mr Box was the builder; he also constructed the contemporary school at Handcross. A report in the *West Sussex County Times* of 21 September 1878 confirms that the Board expected both schools to open on 1 October 1878, albeit with some minor fittings unfinished and the master's house not yet ready for occupation.

4.5 Early logbook entries provide a vivid sense of conditions. On 18 January 1881 the master recorded that the weather was so severe "all ink in school [was] frozen," a circumstance hardly conducive to teaching or learning. Provision for children who lived at a distance was a recurring concern. In November 1890, soup dinners were supplied during the winter months to those unable to return home at midday, primarily aimed at poorer families but offered at a nominal charge to others. Parish Council minutes further record that in 1917 hot meals were provided three days a week to both Handcross and Warninglid Schools, cooked by volunteers from the Council.

4.6 The school also served as a locus for community pride. In 1901 Warninglid School hosted a presentation by Major Lister of a vellum certificate from the Royal Humane Society to eleven-year-old Harry Langley for saving the life of his ten-year-old schoolmate, James Tompsett, who had fallen through the ice on the Mill Pond at Slaugham. The episode, reported in the local press and pasted into the school logbook, records the boys' bravery and the school's collective celebration of the act.



Warninglid Primary School, 1920s.



Group of boys attending Warninglid Primary School, 1899.



Group of girls and teachers attending Warninglid Primary School, 1909



Group of boys and teacher attending Warninglid Primary School, 1909

- 4.7 By 1920 a postcard view shows Warninglid School still looking comparatively fresh, likely little altered from its late-Victorian origin. The caption indicates that children from both Warninglid and Slaugham were expected to attend, reinforcing the school's intended dual catchment.
- 4.8 Recollections and family records from the mid-twentieth century illustrate continuity and gradual adaptation. Examination success in religious subjects at Warninglid School was formally recognised: both my mother and my uncle received certificates for passing. In 2019 Linda Bar-On (née Trevithick) shared memories of attending Warninglid from about May 1952 to November 1955, describing the transformative headship of Mrs Ford, who introduced brighter classroom materials, italic handwriting pens, BBC radio resources such as "Singing Together," and a more expansive curriculum that included nature walks to Slaugham Ponds, games in the neighbouring field, story-time in the copse opposite, and outdoor lunches in summer. Her testimony conveys a period in which the school broadened its pedagogical horizons whilst retaining its intimate village-school character.
- 4.9 The later twentieth century brought investment and community celebration. Warninglid School marked its centenary in September 1978 with a programme that included a tea party for former pupils, a Victorian evening, and a summer fair opened by Stirling Moss. The tea party preserved valuable first-hand testimony: former pupils recalled period discipline (girls made to bite paper to curb gossiping, and boys caned whilst running the length of the hall), wartime atmosphere (including the air-raid warden's whistle and associated routines), and everyday routines such as eating sandwiches under the old oak in the school field. Named attendees included Mrs Mabel Harris, noted for perfect attendance; Miss Dorothy Baker, who attended with seven siblings and could still recite lessons; and Mr Percy Arnold, who provided detail on mealtimes and the playground landscape. Former headmaster Mr Hollins was remembered by the school's oldest scholars, and the logbook's preoccupation with punctuality and attendance was echoed in recollections of latecomers being queried about journeys from Crawley and prolonged absences on medical grounds. These accounts offer texture to the social history of the site and corroborate the school's role as a small, tightly knit rural institution.
- 4.10 As a prelude to the centenary, a third classroom was formally opened in July 1978 by the county director of education, Mr Roy Potter, with Mr Oliver Longley (chairman of the managers) and headmaster Mr Don Sinclair in attendance. Community fund-raising then proceeded at pace for a swimming pool and associated equipment, culminating in the official opening of the new facility in July 1981. The centenary celebrations drew many former pupils who contributed memories of earlier decades, providing an oral record that complements surviving documentary sources.
- 4.11 In the 21st century, demographic pressures and a wider review of small rural schools reshaped Warninglid's future. A notice in May 2020 reported the imminent closure and transfer of the school with effect from 31 August 2021. The January 2020 School Census recorded 32 children on roll. Pupils then attending were offered places at the relocated school, established within the new Woodgate development on land at Hardriding Farm in Crawley, West Sussex.

4.12 Following the 2021 relocation to Woodgate, the Slaugham Lane premises remained vacant whilst disposal options were considered, and the site was openly marketed during late 2023. On 3 June 2024 the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property approved the freehold disposal of the former school, authorising a sale to the preferred bidder following the marketing process. The Council confirmed the decision shortly thereafter, bringing the educational chapter of the Slaugham Lane site to a formal close.



Warninglid Primary School, 1950s.



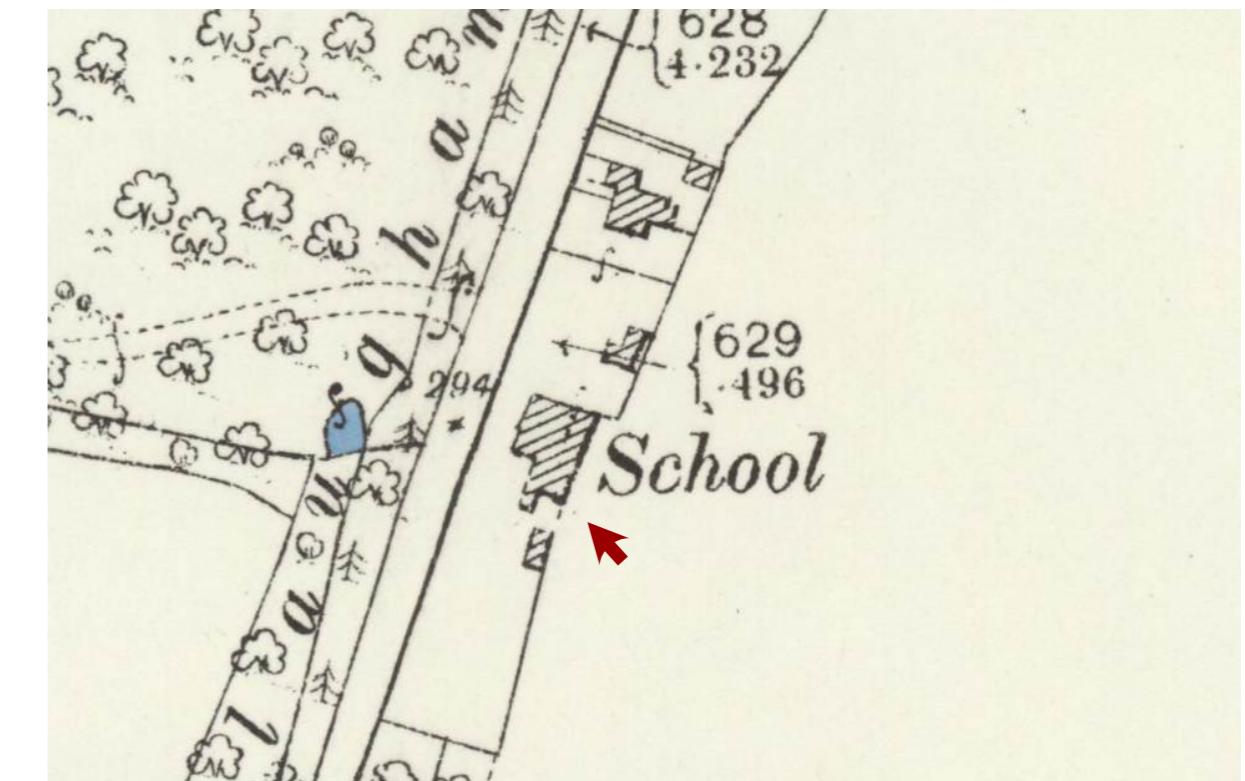
Warninglid Primary School and students, 1975. Note the school has not been extended yet.



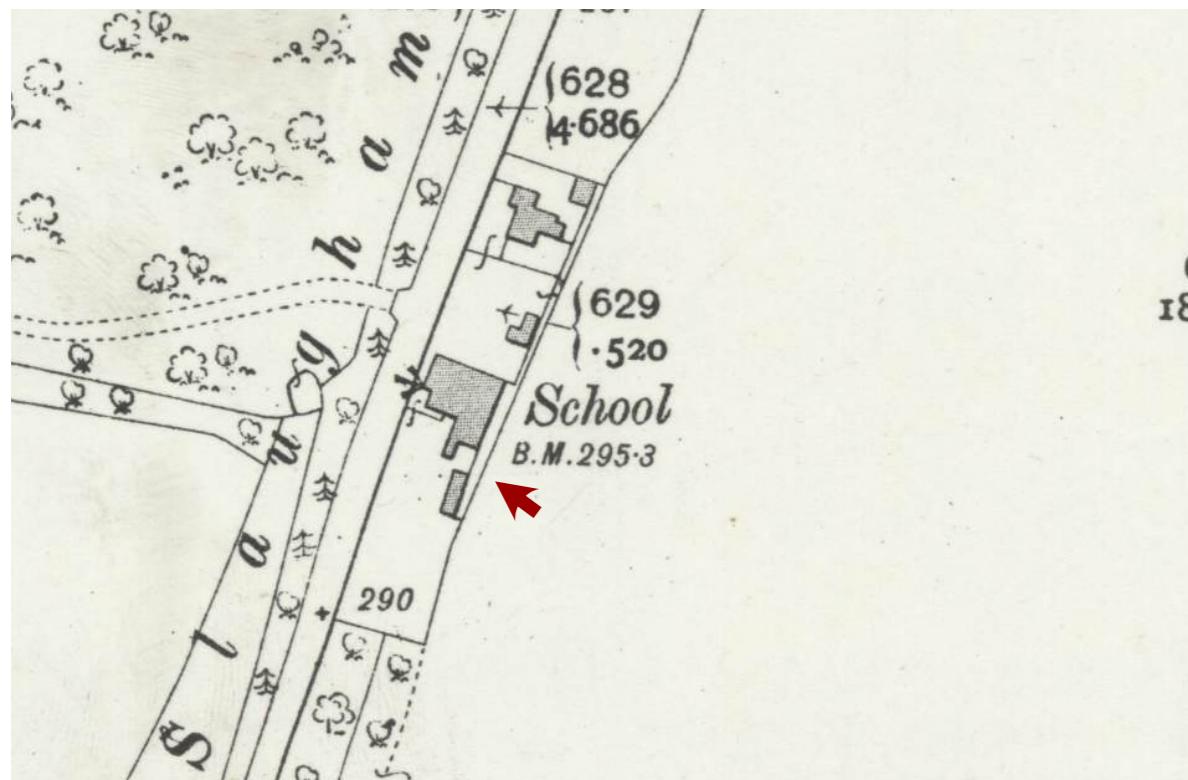
Warninglid Primary School and students, 1981. Note the school has already been extended.



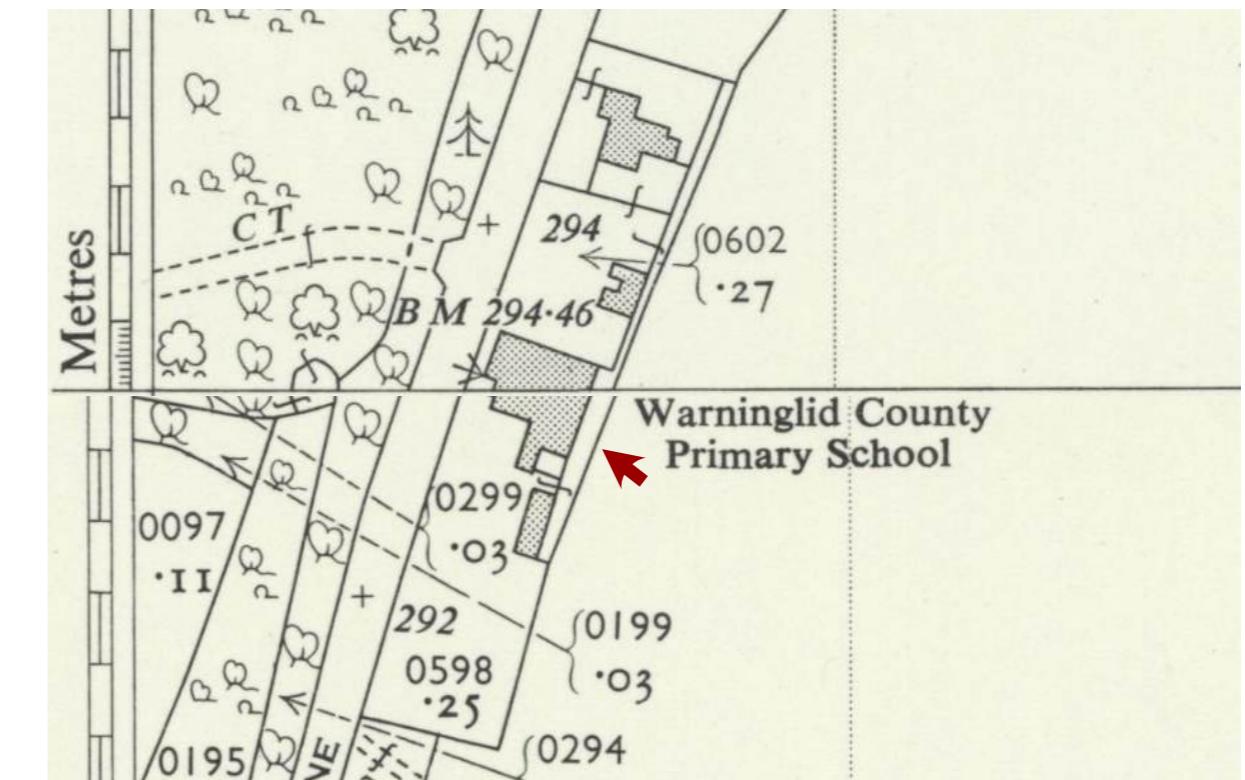
Detail of Ordnance Survey showing the future location of Warninglid Primary School, 1874 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Warninglid Primary School, 1895 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Warninglid Primary School, 1909 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Warninglid Primary School, 1956 (National Library of Scotland).



Satellite view of Warninglid Primary School, 2013 (© Google Earth).



Satellite view of Warninglid Primary School, 2022 (© Google Earth).

5 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 The following is an assessment of the significance of Warninglid Primary School according to the range of heritage values as outlined in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance published by Historic England in 2008. These values are distilled under the following headings: evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value.

EVIDENTIAL VALUE.

5.2 Evidential value is described by Historic England as “physical remains” and “evidence of past human activity” and is derived from one’s ability to interpret the history and historic evolution of a building through visible and tangible features.

5.3 The former Warninglid Board School possesses high evidential value, deriving principally from its surviving 1878 fabric and legible plan-form. The principal south gable with its tall round-headed multi-pane window, the timber bellcote with shingled spirelet, the open hall volume with scissor-braced roof trusses and iron ties, and the multi-light timber windows to the classroom ranges together provide direct physical evidence of late nineteenth-century school design and construction.

5.4 The later single-storey brick extensions, flat-roofed infill and lightweight canopies are of lower evidential value due to their modern construction. They are, however, considered to allow for the understanding of how the site adapted to changing educational and welfare expectations across the 20th century.

5.5 The school retains documentary and archival potential of a high order. Surviving log books, photographs and press cuttings, including the 1901 Royal Humane Society presentation, the 1978 centenary reminiscences and late twentieth-century coverage of improvements (third classroom and swimming pool), when read alongside the fabric, offer a well-contextualised record of elementary education at parish level.

HISTORICAL VALUE.

5.6 Historic England considers that historic value “derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present”. This is generally regarded as either illustrative value whereby the site can be perceived to represent a period in history, or associative value, where a connection with an event or person can contribute to the historic significance of a site.

5.7 The school holds considerable historical value, both illustrative and associative. It embodies the local delivery of the 1870 Elementary Education Act: the closure of Slaugham’s earlier provision, the creation of new schools at Handcross and Warninglid, and the deliberate siting on Slaugham Lane to serve both settlements. Named figures—Mr Holloway (surveyor), Mr Box (builder) and early staff—anchor the foundation phase. The 2020–2021 relocation to Woodgate, followed by the 2024 disposal of the Slaugham Lane premises, provides a clearly documented terminal chapter in a continuous narrative of more than 140 years.

5.8 Whilst no direct association with nationally significant figures has been identified, the completeness of the timeline and the quality of the record confer high local historic value, extending to district significance for the way the site exemplifies rural elementary education in Sussex.

AESTHETIC VALUE.

5.9 Aesthetic value according to Historic England “derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place”. This value can be attributed to conscious design whether it be predetermined by an architect or the work of a craftsman and can also encompass historic and evolutionary changes to a building.

5.10 The school’s aesthetic value resides in the disciplined late Victorian composition of the 1878 core: Sussex brick with red-brick dressings, plain clay-tile roofs, the steep south gable with bellcote and bargeboards, and the tall arched windows lighting the hall and original class rooms.

5.11 The later single-storey additions and lightweight canopies lack architectural merit and are considered to detract from the character of the building. Nonetheless, the different profile of the later additions allows for the legibility of the historic core of the building.

5.12 The semi-rural setting on Slaugham Lane, defined by a low brick boundary and open playgrounds, contributes modest landmark quality; glimpsed views of the bellcote from the lane reinforce the building’s identity. The existing portacabin structures, however, due to their pre-fabricated appearance and low-quality materials are considered to detract from the setting of the school.

COMMUNAL VALUE.

5.13 Communal value “derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory”. This can be divided into commemorative and symbolic values, where the place may invoke emotion or contribute to an individual’s or community’s sense of place or social values, where a place can be a form of catalyst for memories associated with it.

5.14 The school possesses strong communal value accumulated across multiple generations. The 1978 centenary deliberately captured first-hand testimony of discipline, play, wartime drills and everyday routines.

5.15 Even post-closure the boarded building remains a familiar local landmark on the lane, prompting reflection on community identity, continuity and change.

5.16 Significance is defined in Annex 2: Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not just from its physical presence but also from its setting”.

5.17 The various interest are defined as:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

5.18 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.

5.19 The former Warninglid Board School holds moderate archaeological interest, deriving from its continuous educational use on the Slaugham Lane site from 1878 until 2021.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

5.20 These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can rise 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.

5.21 The school possesses clear architectural interest as a modest but well-composed late Victorian Board School. The 1878 core remains legible: Sussex brickwork with red-brick dressings, plain clay-tile roofs, a steep south gable with timber bellcote and shingled spirelet, bargeboards, and a tall round-headed multi-pane window lighting the hall. Multi-light timber windows and the legible hall-and-classroom plan contribute to the intelligibility of the design.

5.22 Later alterations —single-storey brick ranges, a flat-roofed infill, lightweight canopies and a west dormer—are of low architectural quality, yet they remain visually subordinate to the 19th century core and allow for the reading of the building’s historic core. Their contribution is therefore neutral to modestly negative in terms of architectural interest,

ARTISTIC INTEREST

5.23 Artistic Interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

5.24 The school has low to moderate artistic interest. Its value lies in the restrained but picturesque composition of the principal gables and bellcote, its Gothic Revival design and the disciplined use of vernacular materials.

HISTORIC INTEREST

5.25 An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them, not only provide a maternal 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 as faith and cultural identity.

5.26 The school holds high historic interest. It embodies the parish-level implementation of the 1870 Elementary Education Act: the closure of Slaugham’s earlier school, the creation of new provision at Handcross and Warninglid, and the siting on Slaugham Lane to serve both settlements.

5.27 The documentary record and oral testimony chart successive themes in educational history and welfare: winter soup dinners (1890), hot meals during 1917, the 1901 Royal Humane Society presentation to pupil Harry Langley, mid-century curricular enrichment under Mrs Ford, the 1978 centenary and associated third classroom, and the community-funded swimming pool opened in 1981. The 2020–2021 relocation to Woodgate and the 2024 disposal of the Slaugham Lane premises provide a clearly documented terminal chapter to more than 140 years of continuous educational use.

5.28 Although associations are largely local rather than national in reach, the completeness of the timeline and the quality of the surviving records (log books, photographs and reminiscences) strengthen the site’s historic interest beyond the purely illustrative.

SETTING OF A HERITAGE ASSET

5.29 Annex 2 of the NPPF (2024) also defines the setting of a heritage asset as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

5.30 The setting of the former school is defined by its semi-rural position on Slaugham Lane, behind a low brick boundary and simple gates, with open tarmac playgrounds to the south and west and mature trees to the lane and hedged boundaries. Approaches along the lane afford glimpsed views of the bellcote and principal gable, conferring modest landmark quality at a local scale. The relationship between the principal elevation, playgrounds and boundary enclosure aids appreciation of the original plan and function.

5.31 Later chain-link fencing, lightweight canopies and certain late 20th century portacabins introduce utilitarian elements that dilute the wider and immediate setting of the building.

5.32 The presence and survival of the original school master’s house immediately to the north of the school building completes the complex and they are considered to contribute to each others character and, together, result in group value.

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 This section appraises the impact of the proposed conversion, extension and alteration of the former Warninglid Primary School and, separately, the impact of the constructing 2no. residential dwellings within the south-eastern part of the former playground, on the significance of the school's setting.

6.2 This assessment is informed by site visits, desk-based research and the revised proposal drawings, together with the Council's written pre-application response.

CHANGE OF USE OF SCHOOL TO 2NO RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS

6.3 The building was used continuously as a school from its foundation in 1878 until closure in 2021. The relocation of the school to a new, modern facility at Woodgate renders the original use obsolete and no longer viable at Slaugham Lane.

6.4 The building stood vacant from 2021 until its purchase by the applicants in late 2024. Prolonged vacancy has already led to deferred maintenance and heightened vulnerability to incremental fabric loss. The elapsed period without a new occupier demonstrates the difficulty of identifying a viable use capable of underwriting the investment necessary to ensure the building's long-term preservation.

6.5 National policy requires that change should seek the optimum viable use consistent with conservation. In reaching that position, a proportionate consideration of reasonable alternatives has been undertaken. For Warninglid School, those alternatives are constrained by location, access, the building's plan and volumes, and the need to avoid harm to the 1878 core and its setting.

6.6 Re-establishing a school at Slaugham Lane is not realistic given the formal relocation to Woodgate and the consolidation of roll numbers there. Alternative uses such as nursery, community hall or shared community hub, face material obstacles: safeguarding and access management at a constrained lane frontage; limited on-site parking and problematic drop-off arrangements; regulatory upgrades that would require intrusive alteration of the hall volume and principal elevations; and uncertain, grant-dependent revenue streams. Such a use would therefore be operationally fragile and would risk greater harm to significance for an outcome that is unlikely to be financially self-sustaining.

6.7 The rural edge location, limited public transport, and restricted parking render an office or co-working use marginal. Subdivision to create lettable units would completely erode the legibility of the hall, drive service penetrations through significant fabric, and necessitate acoustic compartmentalisation and intensive building-services interventions to meet modern standards. The amount of lettable floor space achievable without unacceptable harm would not support the level of investment needed for repair and ongoing management.

6.8 Leisure and commercial uses are fundamentally mismatched to context and fabric. They would introduce evening activity, lighting and extraction with a high likelihood of adverse impact on the principal elevation, the bellcote and the semi-rural character of Slaugham Lane. They would also demand car parking beyond a level compatible with the setting.

6.9 Although superficially compatible with the plan-form, seasonal occupancy as short-term holiday accommodation creates unreliable revenue for cyclical maintenance, and the operational model encourages high turnover, signage, servicing and external paraphernalia. It offers no conservation advantage over permanent residential use.

6.10 Based on the above, residential use is considered to be the current optimum viable use for the building. The building's extant arrangement (principal hall with flanking classrooms and ranges) lends itself to two dwellings with minimal disruption to the character and form of the 1878 core. It will also result in minimal traffic activity and domestic noise increase and is also considered to align harmoniously with the wider setting of the property, which is formed by residential dwellings only.

6.11 On this basis, the conversion of the former Warninglid Primary School to two C3 dwellings represents the only realistic and optimum viable use consistent with the conservation of the 1878 core and the character of its setting, and is therefore justified in heritage and planning terms.

6.12 The proposed change of use, however, bring with it a number of interventions and alterations that are considered necessary to make the building capable of being used for the proposed uses and, in turn, promote its long-term maintenance.

6.13 Whilst now replaced, previous Planning Practice guidance stated, "the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use, and for the great majority, some degree of adaptation is necessary".

6.14 This recognises that to allow buildings to continue with a viable use there will be the need for some changes to the building.

CONVERSION, EXTENSION AND ALTERATION OF THE SCHOOL

6.15 The conversion of the school remodels the existing late 20th century, flat-roofed additions with new gabled roofs, expressed in a contemporary language that adopts a restrained colour palette echoing the host building, so that the 1878 core remains clearly legible.

6.16 The contemporary expression of the remodelled modern additions is deliberately distinct yet harmonious, ensuring the historic core remains the architectural focus; materials (e.g. metal roofing, vertical timber cladding and metal-framed fenestration) are visually subservient against the Sussex brick and plain tile of the 1878 work. This approach is consistent with good conservation practice in expressing later phases honestly whilst respecting scale, profile and junctions. This approach has also been achieved successfully in similar examples in Sussex such as the Chichester Free School, the design of which received a 'High Commendation' at the Sussex Trust Heritage Awards, and Brighton College (located within the Brighton's College Conservation Area), both of late 19th century construction.

6.17 Internally, it is proposed to retain the original full height volume by inserting mezzanines within the former hall and classroom in a manner that preserves the sense of openness, re-open original blocked fireplaces, and repair historic windows as necessary.



Contemporary extensions against the historic core of the Victorian Chichester Free School, winner of a 'High Commendation at the Sussex Trust Heritage Awards.



Contemporary extension at Victorian Brighton College, which sits within Brighton's College Conservation Area.

- 6.18 Externally, the detached garages previously shown on the street frontage have been omitted; covered parking is now integrated as carports appended to the existing modern ranges, reducing visual clutter and avoiding competition with the principal south gable and bellcote. Portacabin-type structures will also be removed to reinstate the openness of the southern playground. This approach, therefore, omits stand-alone garages and subordinates necessary car-parking to the modern ranges, addressing concerns around prominence, domesticity and group value with the former School House to the north.
- 6.19 These changes implement the Conservation Officer's advice that pitched roofs over the unsympathetic additions are acceptable in principle and potentially enhancing, that original features (both external and internal) should be retained, that portacabins should be removed, and that the formerly proposed detached garages would be unduly prominent and risk eroding the readable school character.
- 6.20 Overall, the conversion and extensions preserve and enhance the non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) by:
 - improving the silhouette and roofscape where flat roofs are replaced by gables of traditional form;
 - retaining and repairing fabric and features where possible;
 - removing poor-quality unsympathetic additions; and
 - rationalising car-parking to avoid competition with the principal elevation.
- 6.21 As a whole and, on balance, the effect on significance is beneficial.

IMPACT ON SETTING: TWO DWELLINGS WITHIN THE FORMER PLAYGROUND

- 6.22 The revised layout reduces the quantum from four dwellings to two, in direct response to the Council's concerns regarding scale, over-development and suburban character within the open, verdant part of the site. The new houses adopt a contemporary idiom aligned with the aesthetic of the remodelled modern ranges of the school, creating a coherent visual narrative without mimicking the 1878 core. The scheme retains generous green space, avoids the school field beyond, and maintains a buffer to trees and root protection areas indicated on the site plan.
- 6.23 The proposed development has been carefully conceived to follow national policy and best practice guidance for the historic environment, as outlined in Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*.
- 6.24 This guidance recommends a proportionate, step-by-step approach to assessing how development might affect heritage assets and their settings, ensuring that any change is based on a clear understanding of significance and is managed in a way that avoids or minimises harm.

STEP 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

6.25 The primary heritage assets potentially affected by the proposal is:

- The former Warninglid Primary School (NDHA): significance derives from its late Victorian design and character, communal associations over 140+ years, legible form within its grounds and advantageous views from Slaugham Lane. The hard-surfaced playground and the verdant field to the south contribute positively to how that significance is appreciated as they formed the original setting of the building.

6.26 In their written comments and feedback as part of the previous pre-application enquiry, Mid Sussex District Council, it was noted the present of other heritage assets namely the Grade II Listed Old Park House and the Warninglid Conservation Area and the potential for intervisibility between this heritage assets and the former school. This has been assessed as part of the preparation of this report and it is considered that there is no intervisibility between the above-mentioned assets the former school building (see Section 7).

6.27 Furthermore, the former school building and the narrow plot that formed its setting (see maps in Section 4) are too well screened by existing mature trees and dense vegetation and too far from Old Park House and the Warninglid Conservation Area to be affected by the proposal.

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.

6.28 The school's setting is most important immediately around the building, where the legibility of the playground and the open forecourt to Slaugham Lane allows appreciation of the schools original form and the primacy of the west and south gables and bellcote.

6.29 The wider rural edge contributes positively by reinforcing the village-school character. For Old Park House and the Conservation Area, the wider rural landscape is material to their appreciation, though the site is not visible from or within the context of these heritage assets and it is too far from them to be considered part of their wider setting.

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

6.30 The two houses are confined to the south-eastern corner of the former playground, away from the principal gable frontage. Their modest two-storey massing, simple gabled forms, and visually light contemporary approach avoid competing with the 1878 core, whilst replicate the colour palette of the school and visually connect with the remodelled modern extensions of the school.

6.31 The retained openness between the south gable and Slaugham Lane preserves key views and the building's landmark quality. On balance, the impact on the NDHA's setting is neutral to slightly beneficial, as it will result in the removal of the existing portacabin structures, which are considered detrimental to the setting of the building.

6.32 The reduced quantum, subdued architecture, and intervening long distance and existing dense vegetation mean the dwellings will not intrude upon views of Old Park House nor will affect its setting.

6.33 The school building and the proposed area for the new dwellings are too far and screened from the northern edge of the Warninglid Conservation Area to have any impact to its character or its appreciation from Slaugham Lane. Nonetheless, by limiting new development to two dwellings on the southeast area the school playground field, the proposal retains the rural character experienced on the northern approach to the village.

STEP 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

6.34 The scheme has been redesigned to address pre-app concerns by:

- Reducing the number of new dwellings from four to two, therefore significantly reducing bulk and site coverage and avoiding a suburban idiom.
- Omitting detached garages on the street frontage and integrating carports within the school's modern ranges to keep parking subordinate.
- Adopting a contemporary yet visually light materials for both the school's modern additions and the new houses reflecting the colour palette of the school, ensuring the 1878 core remains visually dominant.
- Limiting works within the most sensitive open areas; development to be located within the southeast area of the playground field, preserving uninterrupted views of the school from Slaugham Lane.
- Removing existing tarmac areas and replacing them with more sympathetic traditional hardstanding which will also allow to extend the existing grassed areas, further reinstating the original setting of the building.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

6.35 On the basis of the revised design, the two new dwellings result in no harm to the settings of the NDHA, Old Park House (Grade II) or the Warninglid Conservation Area.

6.36 The scheme aligns with the staged approach in Historic England GPA3 and responds directly to the Council's advice regarding scale, siting, garaging and character.

7 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

7.1 This section provide a visual assessment of the identified heritage asset (Warninglid Primary School) and the proposed development site.



View 1



View 1 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 1: School Building from the immediatly playground area.



View 2



View 2 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 2: Existing portacabins to be removed seen from Slaugham Lane. The proposed development area will be barely noticeable from Slaugham Lane towards the south (Warninglid way). Note there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



View 3



View 3 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 3: Existing portacabins to be removed seen from playground. The existing access will be used as secondary vehicle access and the modern tarmac will be replaced with more traditional hardstanding with soft edging and enlarged grassed areas.



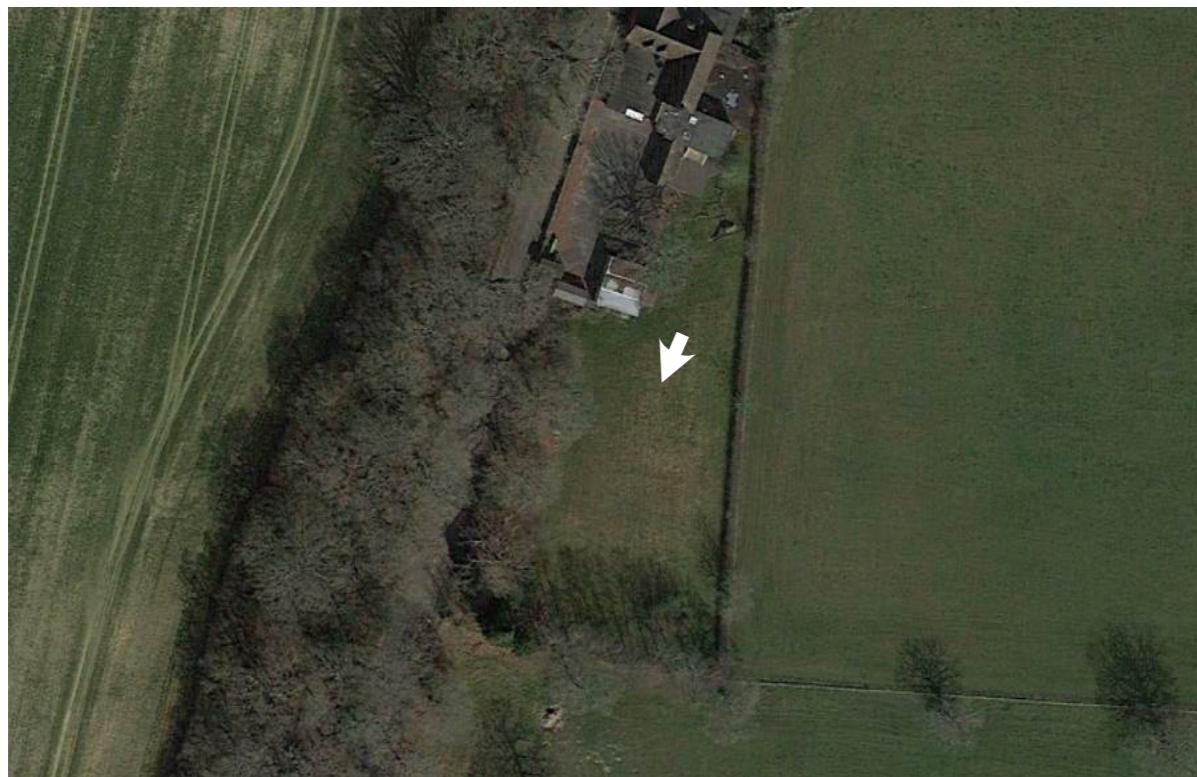
View 4



View 4 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 4: Proposed development area looking south. Note views towards Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



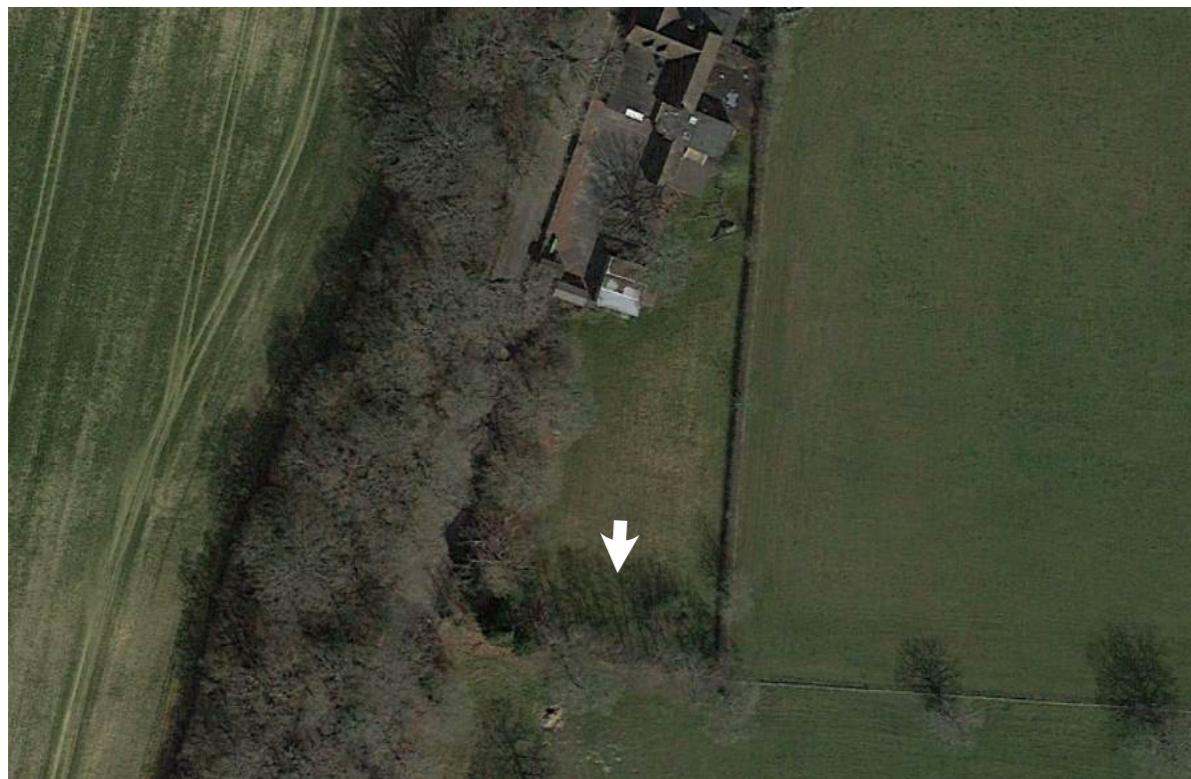
View 5



View 5 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 5: Proposed development area looking south. Note views towards Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



View 6



View 6 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 6: Southern boundary of plot seen from proposed development area. Note views towards Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



View 7



View 7 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 7: Eastern boundary of plot seen from proposed development area. Note there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



View 8



View 8 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 8: Western boundary of plot seen from proposed development area. Note views towards Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area).



View 9



View 9 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 9: Portacabins to be removed and school in the background seen from proposed development area. Note views towards Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area), only a small part of the school building.



View 10



View 10 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 10: Portacabins to be removed and view of Slaugham Lane from playground area. This area will remain as part of the undeveloped area but significantly enhanced by the removal of the portacabin structures.



View 11



View 11 (Proposed Block Plan)



View 11: View of the proposed development area from Slaugham Lane. Note views from Slaugham Lane are well screened and that there are not intervisibility with other heritage assets (e.g. Old Park House and Warninglid Conservation Area) and the school building.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed scheme of works and alterations is based on a thorough understanding of the historic building, its historic development and significance and has been informed by desk-based research and on-site assessment of the surviving historic fabric.
- 8.2 The conversion, extension and alteration of the former school will enhance the building's character by improving roof profiles, retaining key fabric and volumes, and removing and altering unsympathetic addition.
- 8.3 The two dwellings within the south-eastern playground have been materially reduced in number and carefully designed to remain visually recessive in views of the school, to maintain verdancy, and to avoid harm to the settings of the adjacent heritage asset. The overall impact on setting is neutral, with elements of enhancement arising from the removal of the modern portacabin structures.
- 8.4 The Council's pre-application concerns (over-development, suburban character, prominent garaging, and tree impacts) have been addressed in the revised scheme. Any potential harm on the character of the building and its setting is considered to be minimal and to be outweighed by the benefits from providing the site with the necessary investment and use to ensure its long-term preservation.
- 8.5 The proposals are compliant with respect to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 insofar as the special interest of the historic asset will be preserved and enhanced.
- 8.6 The proposals are, therefore, considered to be compliant with respect to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Mid Sussex Local Plan.

APPENDIX: LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and their settings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 16(2) states “In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or 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.”

Section 66(1) reads: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, 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.”

In relation to development within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) reads: *“Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at national level within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at local level within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

Chapter 16 (Paragraphs 202 to 221) of the NPPF updated and adopted in December 2024 constitute the Government's national guidance and policy regarding development relating to the historic environment.

The NPPF is a material consideration and states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local framework unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment with much emphasis on “significance”, defined in Annex 2 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.”

Setting is defined in Annex 2 as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

Annex 2 defines Conservation (for heritage policy) as:

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

This definition is important as it distinguishes conservation from preservation and puts an emphasis on proactively managing change rather than reactively resisting it.

LOCAL POLICY – MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

The site lies within the boundary of the Mid Sussex District Council Authority. Mid Sussex District Council adopted the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 as a Development Plan Document at its meeting on 28th March 2018. It replaces the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004.

Policy PD34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relate to listed buildings and heritage assets, and Conservation Areas. They are, therefore, considered relevant to this proposal:

POLICY DP34 – Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.

Evidence Base: West Sussex Historic Environment Record; Register of Listed Buildings.

Listed Buildings

Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;
- Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;
- Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;
- Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;
- Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;

APPENDIX: LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.

Other Heritage Assets

Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.



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