

Hi Steve

Comments on the above planning application. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you which has been caused by pressure of other work, and leave over the Easter period.

This application relates to a series of open fields to the west of Turners Hill Road in Crawley Down, plus Hurst Farm, which is a disused 20th century farmstead adjacent to the road comprising a house and some farm buildings. This application follows on from the granting in 2025 of outline planning permission for a larger scheme including fields to the west, south and east of Huntsland (Fields 3-7 on the submitted masterplan). The current application is in effect for a revised proposal to the northern part of that larger site, comprising up to 230 new houses, but changing the vehicular access from the approved position via Wychwood Place to be via Hurst Farm, which is now included in the development site. The revised proposal also includes demolition of the existing buildings at Hurst Farm and construction of a 70 bed care home alongside the proposed vehicle access.

There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site itself, but there are a number within the vicinity:

- Westlands, Turners Hill Road.

This is a Grade II listed former farmhouse of two parallel ranges dating from the 16th century and the early 19th century. The associated farmstead appears to have been largely located to the north of the farmhouse, and is now lost, but there is one remaining outbuilding to the rear of the house which may be regarded as curtilage listed. Westlands Farm is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the 19th century.

Based on the information in front of us, Westlands is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse altered and extended over the years in response to changing socio-economic circumstances, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed against the landscape from which they were drawn.

As such the surviving rural setting of the farmhouse will make a strong positive contribution to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated. The farmhouse fronts on to Turners Hill Road, with residential development opposite. There is further development to the north and south. However, to the west a rural landscape of fields and woodland survives. The northern part of the application site (Hurst Farm, Field 8)) lies adjacent to this asset to the south and south west.

A public right of way (PROW) runs westwards from Turners Hill Road along the southern boundary of the gardens to Westlands- this continues west along the

northern edge of Hurst Farm (Field 8) before turning south and passing along the western side of the application site (Field 1).

Hurst Farm house, which is located to the eastern side of the farm, adjacent to Turners Hill Road, appears to date from the mid 20th century, but has been greatly extended, or possibly rebuilt. The former farm buildings, which appear to be chicken sheds or similar, and slightly later in date. Although the farmstead is of no particular heritage interest in its own right, it has a rural/agricultural character which is enhanced by the generous amount of open green space around the buildings, and which contributes positively, in my opinion, to the setting and special interest of Westlands. The Farm and its currently low-key vehicle entrance from Turners Hill Road are a large part of the context within which Westlands is currently appreciated in public views from Turners Hill Road. There will also be some filtered intervisibility between the Farm field and the listed building and its immediate setting, looking across the intervening PROW. Hurst Farm is also very important to the character of the approach to Westlands along the PROW from the west.

Fields 1 and 2 also form part of the wider rural setting of Westlands. These fields contribute positively to the rural character of the wider approach to Westlands from the southwest along the PROW, including potentially the currently rural views looking south across Hurst Farm to the site from the part of the PROW just to the west of the listed building.

The site in its current condition is therefore considered to make a positive contribution to the special interest of this listed building and how it is appreciated.

- Heatherwood South and Heatherwood West, Sandy Lane
These two properties are formed from what was originally one substantial 19th century dwelling, which is now Grade II listed. They are located to the north of Sandy Lane, to the east of Turners Hill Road, and separated from the site by Pestcotts Wood, and modern residential development at Wychwood to the west of Turners Hill Road. In my opinion, given the intervening roads, woodland and buildings the current proposal will not materially affect the setting of this listed building.
- Huntsland House, Huntsland Barn, Primrose Lodge and the Coach House Turners Hill Road
These buildings lie to the south of a trackway leading west off Turners Hill Road. They are situated to the south of the application site, between this and the approved development site to the south. Huntsland House is a substantial house, now run as a boutique hotel and wedding venue. Information on the venue website suggests that the current Victorian house was reconstructed around the shell of an earlier Regency property, elements of which were retained internally, including an attractive oval shaped stair hall. The house has had a

number of interesting and significant owners, more information on which can be found on the website, here:

[History of Huntsland House, B&B near Gatwick Airport, Sussex](#)

There are a number of former ancillary buildings around the house, now in separate ownership, which are also of character, and contribute to the group value and the narrative of the assemblage as the core of a modest 19th century country estate. These include the former coach house, and a barn, which according to the information on the Huntsland House website contains much older fabric dating from the farmstead formerly on the site. This would be supported by the inclusion of the group as part of an WSCC Red Archaeological Notification Area as a medieval to post-medieval historic farmstead.

In my opinion, the group of buildings at Huntsland merit consideration as non-designated heritage assets of a mid level of interest in the local context, for the following reasons:

- the quality and character of the buildings;
- their group narrative value as a surviving 19th century country house and ancillary buildings, representing the most recent phase of development of a former farmstead, later country estate which appears to have evolved over many centuries, and which retain some fabric and features demonstrating earlier phases of the site's history; and
- the historical associative value of the house due to its association with a number of interesting local figures.

As a former country estate and farmstead, the surviving rural setting beyond the extensive gardens around Huntsland House will make a strong positive contribution to significance of the non-designated assets. Despite the proximity to Crawley Down and the presence of a small number of other more modern dwellings around the group, the entrance track from Turners Hill Road (which is also a PROW) and the wider setting retain a rural character. The current application site is visible in views looking north from the PROW to the west of the NDHAs, and contributes to the rural character of the approach to the group from this direction.

The setting of Huntsland will be very much affected by the approved development to the south; the effect of the current proposal will be cumulative with this.

The extensive residential development, care home, and all the associated works proposed on the application site will have a fundamental impact on its character, which would become suburbanised. This will remove and reverse the positive impact currently made by the site to the settings of the above-mentioned heritage assets; this impact will be cumulative in the case of Huntsland with the approved scheme on the fields to the south of this NDHA. To consider the affected assets it turn:

- [Westlands](#)

The proposed demolition of the existing buildings at Hurst Farm, construction of a 70 bed care home, provision of an enhanced vehicular access into the development via Hurst Farm, and associated landscaping works, will have a marked effect on the currently rural/agricultural character of that significant part of the setting of the listed building. The proposal including the access will have a suburbanising effect on the context in which the listed building is appreciated in views from Turners Hill Road, on the existing rural/agricultural character of the filtered views from the house and/or its immediate setting towards the site, and on the currently rural character of the approach to it along the adjacent PROW. The proximity of the relocated vehicle entrance to the development and of the proposed care home at Hurst Farm is also likely to result in an increase in noise and activity immediately adjacent to the listed building and its gardens. In addition, the wider residential development on Fields 1 and 2 will adversely affect the character of the approach to the listed building along the PROW from the southwest. I would consequently place the level of harm caused to the special interest of the listed building at around the mid-range of the less than substantial scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply.

I note that two new buildings (other than the care home) are shown just to the south of Westlands, in the place of the existing Hurst Farm house- it is not clear from the masterplan what these are- can the applicant please clarify?

- Huntsland House and associated buildings.

The proposed development on Fields 1 and 2 will affect the currently rural views looking northwards from the PROW which runs across the northern side of the Huntsland grouping. Whilst there is unlikely to be direct intervisibility between the northern development and the NDHAs, this will affect the context within which they are appreciated in terms of the approach to them along this PROW from the west. This will result in a low degree of harm to assets of a mid-level of interest within the local context, however it should be noted that this harm will be cumulative with that caused by the associated approved development on the southern site.

In any further development of the current scheme consideration should be given to mitigation of the harms identified above. In particular, in relation to Westlands careful consideration should be given to the detailed design of the entrance from Turners Hill Road, the location, scale and detailed design of the care home building, an appropriate landscaping scheme to include planted screening within and to the boundaries of the site, where this is not currently present or can be enhanced, and a sympathetic proposal for lighting. The treatment of the southern boundary of the site should also be carefully considered to reduce wherever possible the harm to the setting of Huntsland.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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