

24 March 2026

DM/26/0073: Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead**Introduction**

1. This Heritage Note has been prepared by TCMS Heritage Ltd in relation to the above planning application for the construction of 44 dwellings on Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead (the Site). It is intended to provide clarification on the level of harm caused to assist with the planning balance and the determination of this planning application.
2. The planning application was submitted in December 2025 and included a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by TCMS Heritage. The HIA was informed by a site visit and the pre-application comments provided by Mid Sussex District Council.
3. In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the HIA provided a proportionate description of the significance of the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill and assessed how the setting of the listed building contributes to its significance. It also provided an assessment of impact.
4. The HIA concluded that the Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Dunnings Mill as a remnant of its historic, rural setting and that the proposed development would lead to a degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building. However, any harm would remain limited and at the low end of the scale of less than substantial harm.
5. The Council's Conservation Officer provided a representation dated 9 March 2026. In the representation, the Conservation Officer stated that the HIA had underplayed the contribution that the Site currently makes to the significance of the listed building and, as a result, underplayed any harm resulting from the proposed development. The Conservation Officer stated that any harm would be in the mid range of the scale.
6. There is therefore a slight difference in opinion between the Applicant and Conservation Officer regarding the level of harm that the proposed development will cause. This response has been prepared to provide further clarification and to respond to the two primary points raised by the Conservation Officer, namely:
 - The HIA does not recognise the prominence of the Site, particularly in views south along Dunnings Road, and the contribution it makes to the significance of the listed building in these views
 - The HIA does not recognise the importance of the Site's character in the approaches to the listed building
7. These points are addressed, in turn, below. This Note has been provided to address these points only and does not repeat the information and assessment work previously provided, although reference is made to the submitted HIA where relevant.

Discussion

The Site's Prominence in Views

8. The approach to the listed building along Dunnings Road was discussed at paragraphs 4.8-10 of the HIA, with Figure 9 providing one such view on this approach. When considering these views, it is important to note that the experience of the listed building is a dynamic one, with the local topography meaning that the views of the listed building and of the Site change frequently when moving towards the building. It should also be noted that the views provided within the HIA at Figure 9 and at Figure R.1 below are both taken from the pavement at eye level and are typical of how a pedestrian, moving at a slower pace, would experience the listed building. From eye level, the Site is far less prominent than the image included within the Conservation Officer's response.
9. Nevertheless, there are still some views from Dunnings Road where the Site is visible, with the Site forming part of the wider setting of the listed building, as acknowledged within the HIA.



Figure R.1: A view taken from higher up Dunnings Road, where the Site is more visible than in Figure 9 of the HIA. However, from this position it is not possible to see Dunnings Mill, which only becomes visible further down the hill.

10. Within these views, there is little appreciation of Dunnings Mill, which is set back from the road and is largely obscured in views. It is only when you get further down the hill that the building becomes more visible and it is possible to appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the building. However, from these lower slopes, views to the Site are restricted by intervening development and the boundary planting to the Site.

11. For these reasons, the Site is not considered to form a prominent part of the listed building's setting and any contribution it makes to the significance of the building is limited, as set out at paragraphs 4.9-10 of the HIA.

The Site's role in Approaches to the Listed Building

12. The Conservation Officer has also stated that the HIA does not recognise the importance of the Site and its rural character on the approaches to the listed building from the north and south. However, the approaches to the listed building were discussed within the HIA (including the approach along Dunnings Road which is discussed in more detail above). While it is acknowledged that the Site does form part of these approaches, the main feature is its boundary planting, rather than its "open" or rural characteristics.
13. When approaching the listed building from the south, the bend in West Hoathly Road and falling topography mean that views are only permitted of the listed building once you have passed the Site and are adjacent to modern residential development at Streatfield Place. From here, the developments at Stockwell Road and the three-storey building at Sunnyside Close are more prominent than the listed building, with Dunnings Mill experienced within this suburban context, rather than within a rural context.
14. On the return approach, the Site is not prominent (as discussed above) and is separated from the listed building by planting and 20th and 21st century development. The listed building is experienced within the context of this later development and within a much-changed setting (as discussed at paragraph 4.8 of the HIA). The Site therefore forms part of the wider setting of the listed building, but its contribution to the significance of the listed building is limited.

Summary

15. The Site forms part of the setting of Dunnings Mill and is a remnant of its historic, largely rural setting. However, it does not strongly relate to the historic use of the building as a watermill, set within the valley bottom. In addition, the setting of the listed building has seen considerable alteration in the 20th and 21st centuries, removing its historic isolation and introducing built form close to the building.
16. The Site is not a prominent part of the setting of the building, with the Site largely obscured in views from the building and not forming a prominent part of the approaches to Dunnings Mill. For these reasons, the Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Dunnings Mill.
17. It is acknowledged that the proposed development will lead to a further change within the setting of the listed building, changing the character of the Site and altering some views from the building (especially in winter months). However, this will not diminish the ability to experience and appreciate the listed building as a historic watermill, set within a valley location and within the context of later development.
18. The alteration to the Site will result in some harm to the significance of Dunnings Mill but this remains clearly less than substantial and limited in magnitude. For these reasons, it is the Applicant's position that the proposed development will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of Dunnings Mill, which is slightly lower than the mid-level harm identified by the Conservation officer.