

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In support of Planning application for Extension to Hurstmead

*Lewes Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex*



ecotecture



ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION:

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application to Mid Sussex District Council in support of proposals for alterations and a modest extension to Hurstmead, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath. The proposals comprise a small rear infill extension to the existing dwelling, internal alterations, replacement windows, replacement roof coverings, and associated external works.

The design has been developed through a heritage-led approach informed by an understanding of the historical development of Hurstmead and the defining characteristics of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The proposals seek to preserve the architectural significance of the existing dwelling while enabling its continued long-term use as a family home.

Compared with earlier design iterations, the current proposals represent a significantly reduced level of intervention. The previously proposed side extension has been omitted and replaced with a modest rear infill extension positioned beneath an existing roof overhang. This approach retains the established form and character of the building whilst limiting new built development to a discreet and subservient addition.

The proposals seek to preserve the significance of Hurstmead as a positive non-designated heritage asset and preserve the character and appearance of the wider Lewes Road Conservation Area.

STATUTORY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

Lewes Road Conservation Area in Haywards Heath was designated in 1989. It encompasses the prominent Birch Hotel and forms one of the principal eastern approaches into the town. The Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset and serves to protect areas identified by the local authority as possessing special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Conservation Area designation is intended to assist local authorities in managing change and guiding development in a way that responds sympathetically to the existing character of an area, ensuring that new structures relate appropriately to their surroundings in terms of scale, materials, layout, and landscape character.

The site lies within a designated Conservation Area and is therefore subject to the statutory duties set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In particular, Section 72(1) requires that, in the exercise of planning functions, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) provides the overarching policy guidance for the conservation of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 212 confirms that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, irrespective of the level of potential harm. Paragraph 213 states that where a proposal would result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm must be

clearly and convincingly justified. Where harm is identified as less than substantial, Paragraph 214 requires that it is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Public benefits may include securing the optimum viable use of a site, enhancing the character and appearance of an area, and delivering wider environmental, social, or economic benefits.

Finally, Paragraph 219 recognises that development within Conservation Areas should be informed by an understanding of their significance, including their setting, and should seek opportunities to enhance or better reveal that significance.

Although the Council does not have an adopted appraisal for the Lewes Road Conservation Area, the document Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex provides a brief overview of its defining characteristics at the time of designation. These include:

- The variety of age and style of buildings, most of which are large properties set well back from the road within spacious grounds;
- The presence of trees and hedges around and between buildings;
- Grass verges, hedges, and 'fingers' of agricultural land between dwellings, reinforcing the rural character of the area;
- The low density of development, creating a gradual transition from countryside to urban area.

ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE:

Identifying the values of a heritage asset allows an understanding of its significance and informs the assessment of the potential impact of proposed works on the heritage asset and its setting. These values may be tangible, such as physical built fabric or landscape views, or intangible through historical associations or communal importance.

The recognised heritage values include:

- Evidential value – relating to the physical fabric of a site and the evidence it contains about the past;
- Historical value – the extent to which the asset illustrates or is associated with historic events, people, or development patterns;
- Aesthetic value – including architectural, visual, artistic, and landscape qualities;
- Communal value – including social significance, local identity, and the meaning of place for communities.

The assessment of significance considers both the importance of the heritage asset and the magnitude of impact in order to understand the potential effect of development proposals. The setting of a heritage asset also forms an integral component of its significance.

Taking these criteria into account, each identified heritage asset can be assigned a level of significance in accordance with the table below.

Level of Significance	Definition of Heritage Asset
High	- Remains of inscribed international importance, such as World Heritage Sites. - Grade I and II* listed buildings - Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens - Registered Battlefields - Scheduled Monuments - Non-designated archaeological assets of schedulable quality and importance
Medium	- Grade II listed buildings - Grade II listed Registered Parks and Gardens - Conservation Areas - Non-designated buildings which contribute to regional importance
Low	- Locally listed buildings - Parks and gardens of some local interest - Non-designated buildings, monuments or sites of local importance or of modest quality, including those historic townscapes with historic integrity
No Significance	- Assets identified as being of no archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic value - Assets whose values are comprised by poor preservation, survival or contextual associations to justify inclusion into a higher grade

Table 1: Establishing the level of significance of a heritage asset (Source: Seeing the History in the View (2011))

The Lewes Road Conservation Area is considered to be of medium heritage significance as a designated Conservation Area. Hurstmead itself is considered a positive non-designated heritage asset which contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area through its architecture, spacious setting, and relationship with the historic development of Lewes Road.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - LEWES ROAD CONSERVATION AREA:

The Conservation Area is characterised by detached dwellings in generous plots which vary along the ribbon of development, with the eastern end retaining a much stronger countryside setting beyond the detached houses.

The setting of the western end of the Conservation Area differs notably from the eastern end, reflecting the gradual urban transition that forms an important aspect of its character. The Lewes Road frontage, which forms the most significant part of the Conservation Area, has remained relatively well preserved since designation. Along the ribbon of the road, there remain green frontages, mature beech trees, hedges, and wide grass verges which continue to reinforce the gradual transition from countryside to urban form.

The western approach to the Conservation Area, close to the Listed Birch Hotel, possesses a noticeably more urban character than the eastern approach, where the relationship with open countryside

remains more apparent. Aerial views of the Conservation Area further reinforce this gradual transition from west to east.



Figure 2: The entry to the west end of the Conservation Area



Figure 1: The entry to the eastern end of the Conservation Area



Figure 3: Aerial view of the Conservation Area

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - HURSTMEAD HOUSE:

Hurstmead is an unlisted detached house located on the southern side of Lewes Road within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. It is a substantial building set within a large plot and forms part of the early twentieth-century expansion of Haywards Heath.

Whilst the house has undergone changes since its construction, it remains an attractive and well-composed building, positioned on the western half of the plot, within a spacious landscape setting. The building contributes positively to the established pattern of development along Lewes Road and reflects the gradual transition from rural landscape to suburban settlement.

Architecturally, Hurstmead is a carefully designed building by the noted local architect Harold Turner, executed in a restrained Arts and Crafts style typical both of his work and of the period. The design incorporates traditional materials and forms, including hipped clay tiled roofs with deep projecting eaves, articulated brick chimney stacks, brick and tile-hung elevations, and timber/steel casement

windows. Collectively, these features contribute to the architectural cohesion of the building and reflect the broader vernacular influences evident throughout the Conservation Area.



Figure 4: Hurstmead rear elevation



Figure 5: Hurstmead front elevation

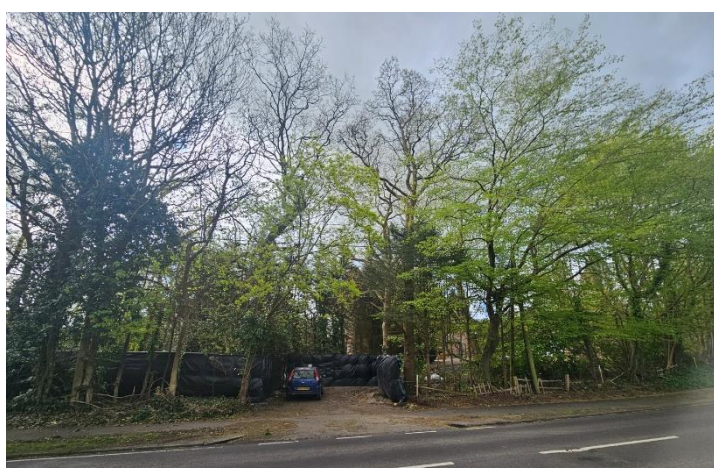


Figure 6: Site entrance from the Lewes Road conservation area

Pre-application discussions with the Conservation Officer have underlined the fact that Hurstmead is considered a non-designated heritage asset which contributes positively to the significance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. Its architectural quality, historic associations with the development of Haywards Heath, and its generous landscape setting all contribute to the area's special interest.

Pre-application advice also noted that while the property has been altered over time, including the addition of later twentieth-century extensions and a garage structure, these changes remain subsidiary in visual terms and do not fundamentally undermine the building's overall architectural integrity. The principal elevations and key architectural features remain clearly legible.

The garden setting of the house makes a particularly important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Mature trees, generous garden spaces and the spacious plot reinforce the verdant qualities that define this part of Lewes Road and make an important contribution to the setting and significance of Hurstmead.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Old maps show the area remained as open fields with little development until late Victorian Edwardian times. Hurstmead was built in the interwar period by the esteemed 20th-century local architect Harold Turner. The site is the 4th building in from the roundabout to which the bypass was formed. The site lies within the area that has been cocooned by development the most in comparison, and plots remain large but generally on a slightly smaller scale than the more rural easterly end of the Conservation Area.

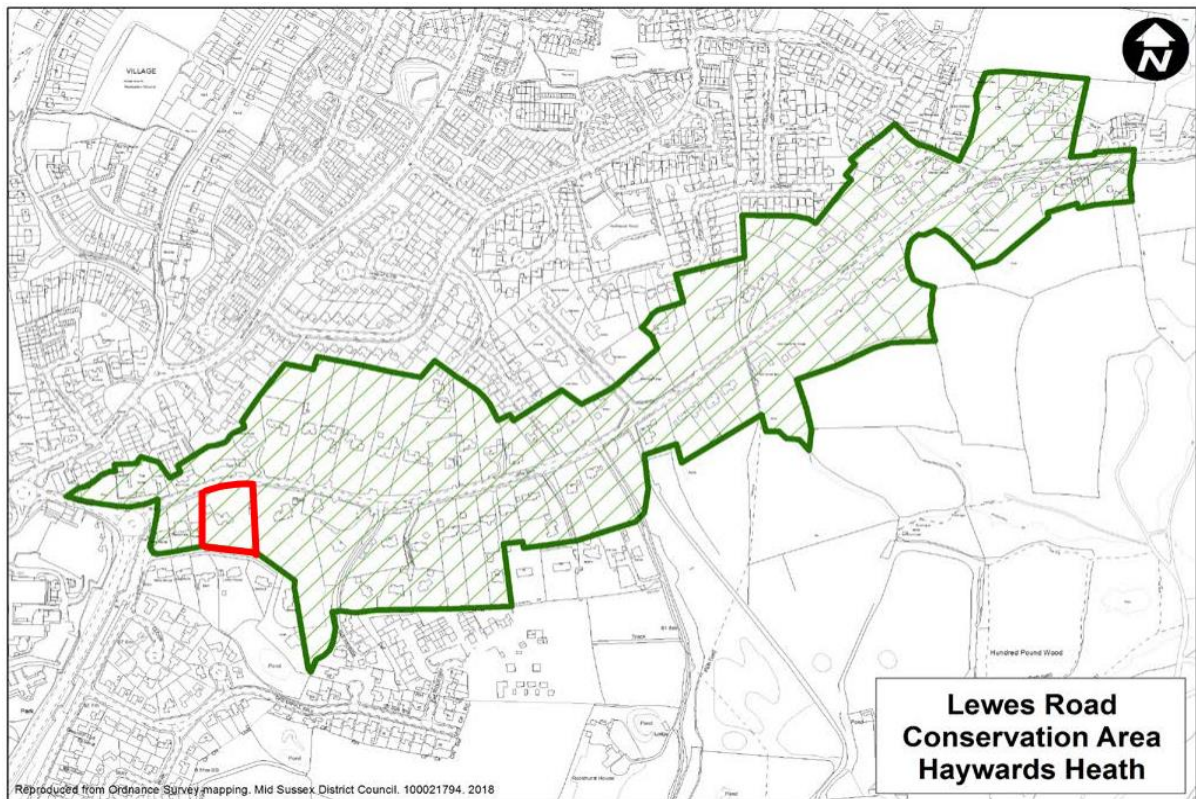


Figure 7: Map of Lewes Road conservation area (green) with site outlined (red)

The site is shown above, outlined in red, the setting of the heritage asset has been impacted by more recent development, as seen also below for comparison. It is now only the easterly end of the Conservation Area setting that remains as it was when first designated.

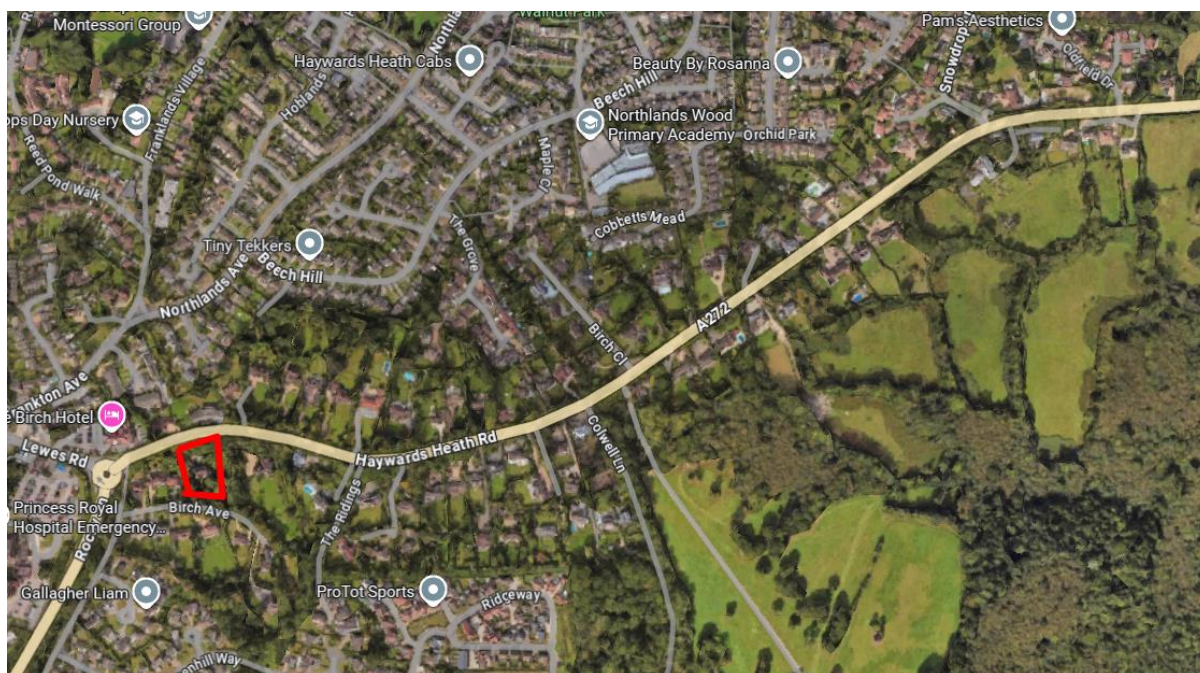


Figure 8: Aerial view showing the heavier developments towards the western end of the Lewes Road conservation area in comparison to the Eastern end. (Site in red)

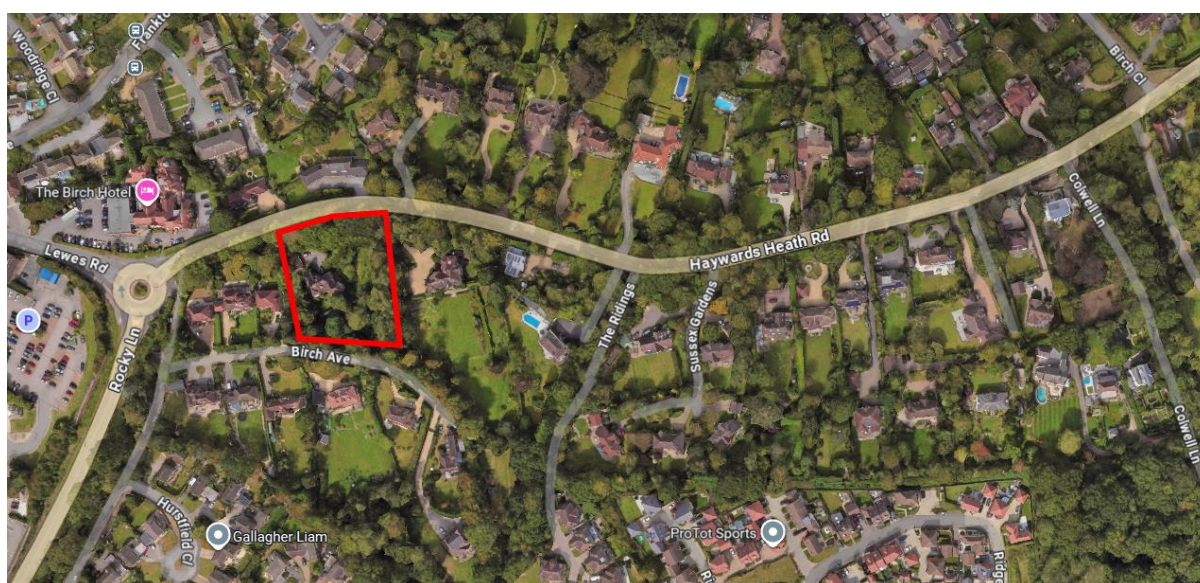


Figure 9: Aerial view of the westerly end of the Lewes Road conservation area and its urban development. (Site in red)

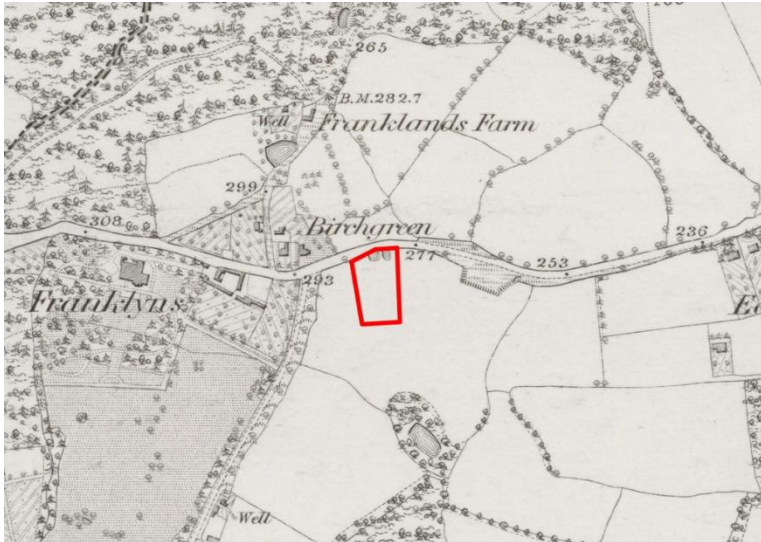


Figure 10: OS Surveyed 1874 published 1879 NLB later version is published with slight differences in drawing styles

The maps of this time show total countryside where our site is located, though the Asylum has just been constructed, which, with the railway, triggered the beginning of a period of great development for Haywards Heath.

By 1899, Birch House (later Birch Hotel) had appeared, and by the early twentieth century, additional development had emerged along Lewes Road.

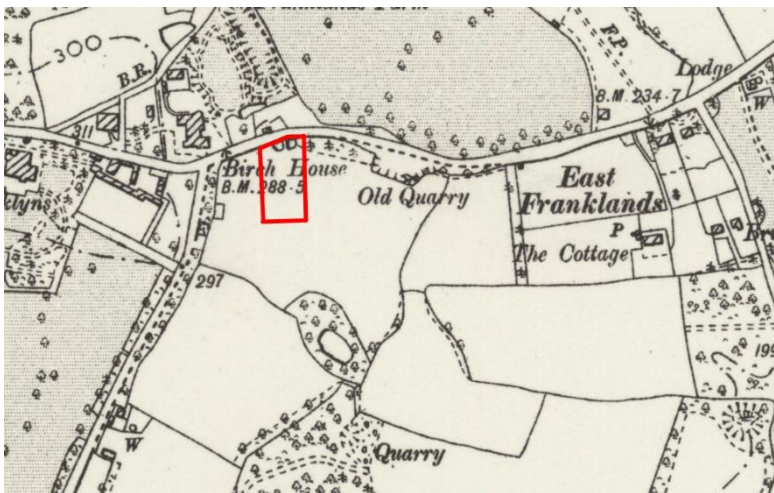


Figure 11: OS revised 1896 published 1899 NLB

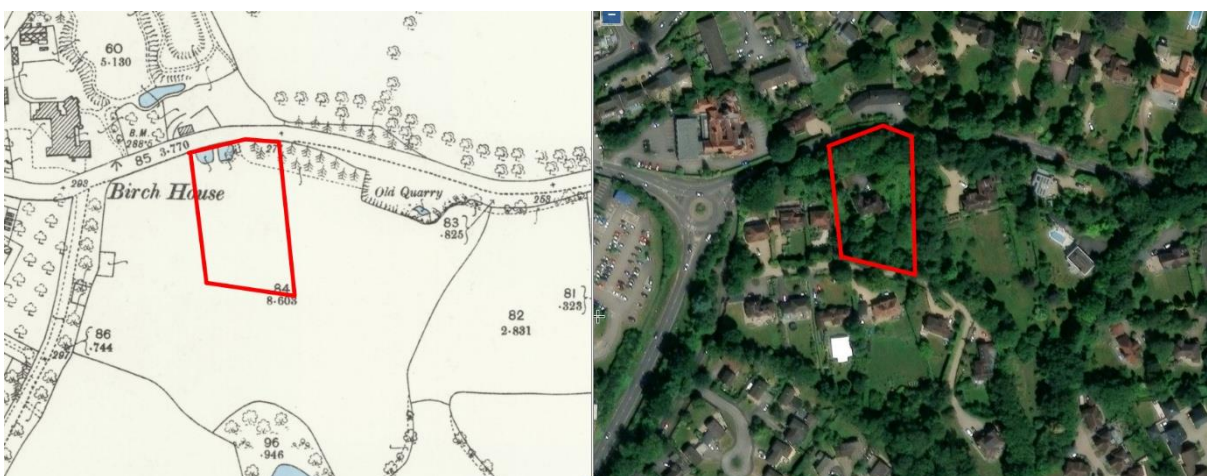


Figure 12: Map vs aerial view comparison of our site (red)

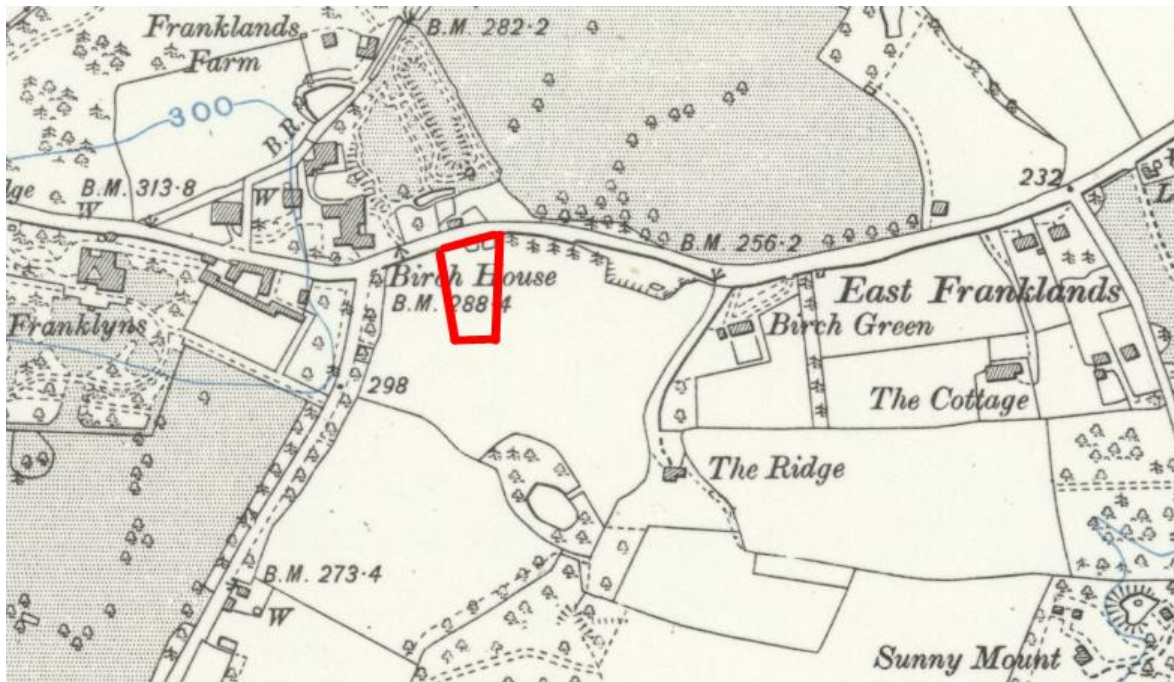


Figure 13: OS 1909 pub 1912 1933 NLS

This map shows that although Hurstmead had not been constructed, Lewes Road was starting to see more development, with others like Birch Green appearing.

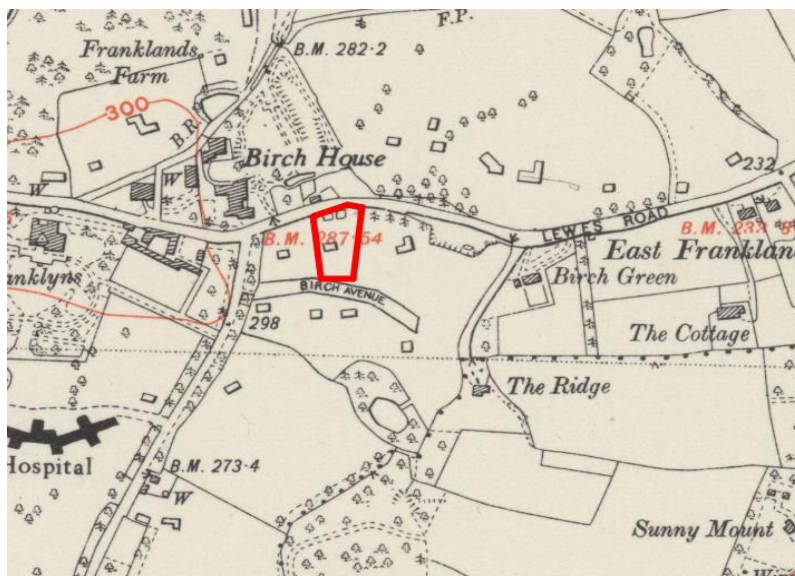


Figure 14: OS revised 1938 pub 1949 NLS

This map now dates our house as interwar, built at some point between 1933 and 1938. The house is shown as a rectangle, which would concur with the evidence on site of the extension to the front and north of the house, which is very similar in style, but clearly built at a different time from evidence within the roof space, showing the original line of the front roof, and in the walls lovely clues like the air brick styles which differ, in confirmation that the later addition which took place between 1944 and 1952.

Further infill is also beginning with Birch Green and the appearance of Birch Avenue to service a row of houses that had been built in parallel to Lewes Road to the rear of Hurstmead. This map is drawn when the original house was in its pure rectangular form.



Figure 15: Image entitled *Birch Hotel, Haywards Heath 1952* – found at ‘Britain from above’

This image manages to capture the western side of Hurstmead, which can be seen in more detail below. It would appear the ponds to the front have been lost, or covered in trees.

What is also significant is that there are a number of outbuildings and fencing located on what was later built over with hard standing for the tennis court in 1982, which is evidence that this area has not always been open, in fact.

The second photograph taken from a different angle also illustrates the past feel of the area, and Hurstmead can be seen to have originally been a countryside dwelling surrounded by fields and trees.



Figure 16: Image from ‘Britain from above’



Figure 17: Inset from image entitled 1952 Birch Hotel and environs Haywards' Heath 1952 – found at 'Britain from above'

These images come from the Britain from Above project, aimed at conserving 95,000 photographs from the Aerofilms website, which was funded by Heritage Lottery funding, and features three photographs which catch Hurstmead on the periphery. Aimed at catching the Birch Hotel, they are a fabulous reminder of Haywards Heath as a much smaller town, and how rural the area used to be. This and evidence on site has helped us understand the three stages of building on the site.

It is clear that the 1982 development on site, namely the south-eastern kitchen, the dummy pitch garage to the front and the tennis courts, did not tally with the original architects, but the new east-facing bay window, particularly in its elevated position, was intended as a view platform for the tennis court. This replaces what was once a green lawn, as seen in our 1950's aerial photographs.

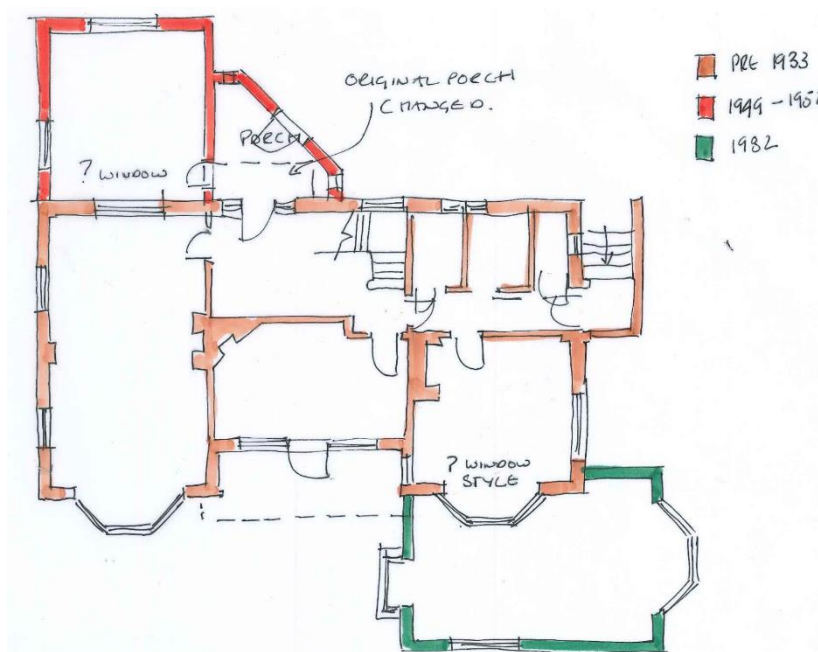


Figure 18: Diagram to show when each segment of the property was constructed



Figure 19: Image to show where each air brick is located



Figure 20: Air brick 1



Figure 21: Airbrick 2

Evidence externally that the front extension is pre-1952 is found inside the roof, where there are different air brick styles. Type 1 is made of tiles, whereas pre-war type 2 is imprinted into an actual brick. This may have been due to a shortage of supplies after the war.

CURRENT PROPOSALS AND HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED WORKS:

The proposals comprise alterations and a modest extension to the existing dwelling, Hurstmead. The scheme has evolved significantly following pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council officers and specialist consultant input relating to heritage matters.

The current proposals have been carefully developed to minimise intervention to the historic building whilst improving its functionality and ensuring its continued long-term occupation. Heritage considerations have informed the design process throughout, with particular emphasis placed on retaining the building's architectural character and limiting alterations to those necessary to support modern living requirements.

The proposals have been deliberately reduced in scale from earlier design iterations. The previously proposed two-storey side extension has been omitted and replaced with a modest rear infill extension beneath an existing roof overhang, significantly reducing the overall level of intervention to the building.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO HURSTMEAD:

The proposals to Hurstmead have been significantly reduced in scale compared with earlier design iterations. The previously proposed two-storey side extension measuring approximately 99m² has been omitted entirely and replaced with a modest rear infill extension of approximately 5m² located beneath an existing roof overhang. This approach substantially reduces the overall impact of the proposals whilst preserving the original form and architectural composition of the dwelling.

A number of later twentieth-century additions to the property are proposed to be retained. The existing 1980s bay window and side windows on the eastern elevation will remain in place, with the internal layout adapted accordingly. The first-floor bay window will continue to serve dressing room and ensuite accommodation and will incorporate obscured glazing to protect privacy. Similarly, the existing 1980s oriel window at first-floor level will be retained, with only the adjacent window removed as part of the revised internal arrangement.

Additional external alterations include the replacement of the existing roof covering, and the replacement of the existing single-glazed timber and steel windows with aluminium units designed to match the existing sightlines, glazing bar arrangements and traditional casement proportions.

Overall, the proposals represent a carefully considered programme of modest alterations which seek to minimise intervention to the original building whilst allowing sensitive modernisation and securing its continued long-term use.

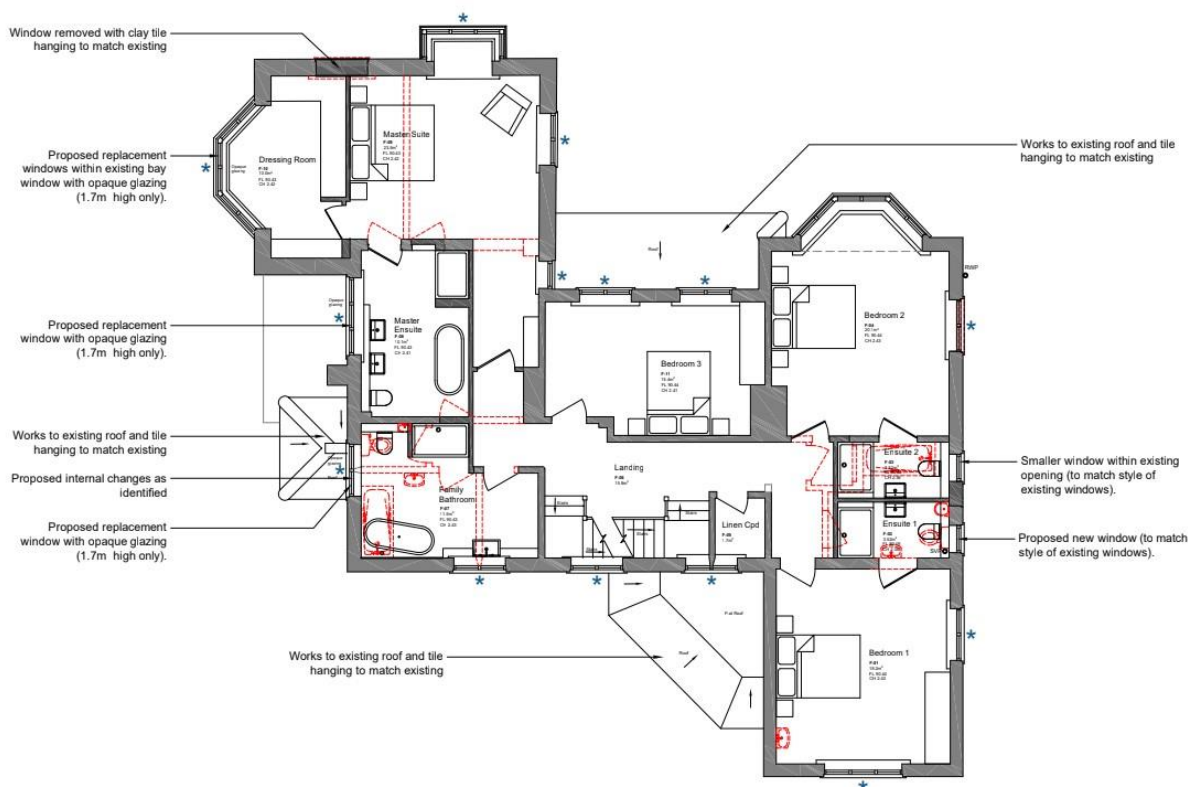


Figure 23: Proposed changes to Hurstmead (first floor)

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED WORKS:

The proposed works have been carefully designed to preserve the architectural significance of Hurstmead whilst allowing for its continued use as a modern family home. The scale of intervention has been deliberately minimised, with alterations concentrated on areas of the building that have been subject to previous alteration and therefore make a lesser contribution to its overall heritage significance.

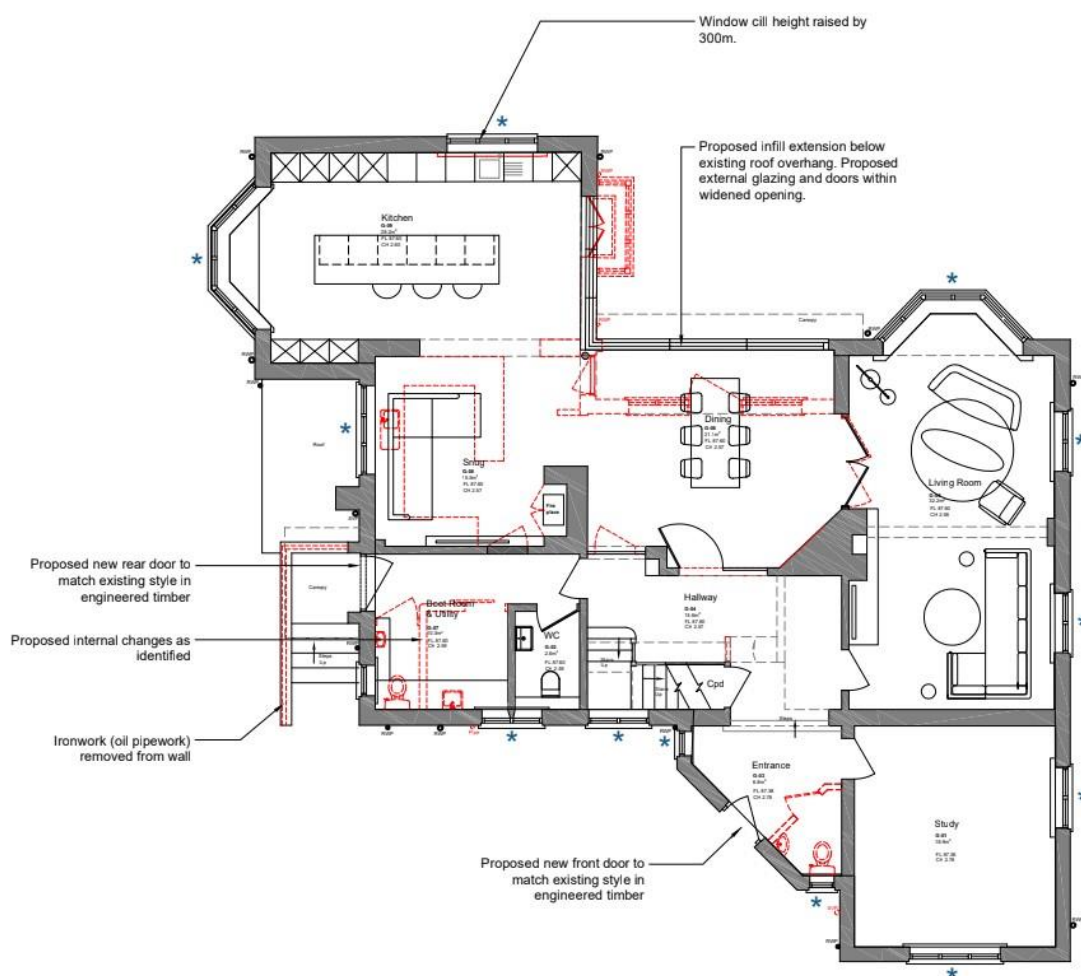


Figure 22: Proposed changes to Hurstmead (ground floor)

The principal element of new built development comprises a modest rear infill extension positioned beneath an existing roof overhang. By occupying an enclosed and visually recessive location, the extension remains subservient to the original dwelling and does not alter the established form, proportions or architectural composition of Hurstmead. The omission of the previously proposed two-storey side extension represents a significant reduction in the overall impact of the proposals and better preserves the building's original character.

IMPACT ON HURSTMEAD:

Hurstmead is recognised as a positive non-designated heritage asset within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. Although the building has undergone several phases of alteration throughout its history, including twentieth-century extensions, its principal architectural characteristics remain readily identifiable.

The proposed works have been informed by an understanding of this evolution and seek to retain those elements that contribute positively to the building's significance. Existing later twentieth-century additions, including the eastern bay window and oriel window, are retained as part of the building's established evolution, whilst new interventions have been kept to the minimum necessary to improve the functionality of the dwelling.

The replacement of the existing roof covering provides an opportunity to secure the long-term maintenance of the building. Similarly, the replacement of existing single-glazed timber and steel windows with high-quality aluminium units matching the existing sightlines and proportions will preserve the architectural appearance of the dwelling whilst improving its performance and longevity.

IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA:

Hurstmead occupies a landscaped plot and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area through its Arts and Crafts architecture, spacious setting and mature vegetation.

The proposed works are modest in scale and largely confined to the rear of the property, where they will have little influence on public views from Lewes Road. The rear infill extension is contained beneath an existing roof form and remains visually subordinate to the original house, ensuring that the established appearance of the building is retained.

The proposals preserve the spacious character of the site and do not alter the relationship between Hurstmead and its surrounding landscape. Consequently, the contribution made by the property to the wider significance of the Conservation Area will remain unchanged.

OVERALL HERITAGE IMPACT:

Overall, the proposed alterations represent a sensitive and proportionate response to the significance of Hurstmead and its location within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The scheme has evolved through a heritage-led design process, with earlier, more substantial proposals omitted in favour of a significantly reduced level of intervention.

Change Rating	Description of Impact
High	Change to key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are lost or destroyed, or the significance of the asset's setting is extensively changed.
Medium	Change to many key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are significantly modified, or the significance of the asset's setting is noticeably different.
Low	Change to key elements are slightly altered, affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is slightly altered.
Minimal	Change to key elements hardly affect the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is hardly affected.
No Change	The development does not affect the asset's special architectural or historic interest or change the asset's setting.

Table 2: Establishing the level of change on a heritage asset (Source: Seeing the History in the View (2011))

As demonstrated within the Heritage Impact Assessment Table, the proposed works are assessed as having a Minimal impact upon the significance of Hurstmead and the character and appearance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. This reflects the modest scale of the rear infill extension, the retention of the building's principal form and architectural character, and the careful design of the proposed alterations.

The proposals preserve the significance of Hurstmead as a positive non-designated heritage asset and preserve the character and appearance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The scheme therefore accords with the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the heritage objectives of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

JUSTIFICATION, MITIGATION AND CONCLUSION

The proposed works have been developed through a heritage-led design process that has sought to balance the conservation of Hurstmead's heritage significance with the practical requirements of its continued occupation as a family home. From the outset, careful consideration has been given to the architectural qualities of the existing building, its contribution as a positive non-designated heritage asset, and its wider role within the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The resulting proposals have been informed by an understanding of the site's historical development and have evolved through pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council to minimise the extent of intervention whilst ensuring the building remains fit for modern use.

A key objective throughout the design process has been to retain the architectural integrity and legibility of Hurstmead. Earlier design iterations proposed a substantial two-storey side extension; however, following heritage assessment and consultation, this element has been omitted entirely. In its place, a modest rear infill extension has been developed beneath an existing roof overhang. This represents a significant reduction in the scale, visibility and potential heritage impact of the proposals. By limiting new built form to a discreet location at the rear of the dwelling, the proposals preserve the established massing, proportions and architectural composition of the original house, ensuring that its significance continues to be readily appreciated.

The proposed extension has been carefully designed to remain visually subordinate to the existing dwelling. Located within an enclosed area of the building, beneath the existing roof form, it avoids altering the principal elevations or disrupting the building's characteristic Arts and Crafts composition. As a result, the extension will have very limited visibility within the wider Conservation Area and will not detract from the contribution that Hurstmead makes to the character and appearance of Lewes Road.

The scheme also seeks to retain and respect the building's architectural evolution. Whilst the assessment has identified that Hurstmead has been altered during the twentieth century, these later additions now form part of the property's history and are retained wherever appropriate. Existing features such as the eastern bay window and first-floor oriel window remain within the proposals, reflecting a conservation-led approach that avoids unnecessary removal of historic fabric. Internal alterations have similarly been designed to work within the existing structure wherever possible, reducing the need for extensive alterations to the building's original fabric.

The proposed replacement of the existing roof covering forms part of a wider programme of repair and long-term maintenance. Ensuring that the roof remains weatherproof and fit for purpose will contribute to the ongoing conservation of the building and help secure its continued use. Likewise, the replacement of the existing single-glazed timber and steel windows with carefully detailed aluminium units has been developed to improve thermal performance and energy efficiency whilst maintaining the appearance of the existing fenestration. The proposed windows have been designed to replicate the proportions, sightlines and opening arrangements of the existing units, thereby preserving the building's architectural character whilst enhancing its long-term sustainability.

The introduction of a limited number of rooflights has also been carefully considered. Positioned on secondary roof slopes away from the principal public viewpoints, they have been designed to provide additional natural light to the adapted internal accommodation whilst minimising their visual impact on the external appearance of the building. Their discreet positioning ensures that they do not compete with or detract from the defining architectural features of Hurstmead.

Throughout the design process, opportunities have been taken to reduce the potential impact of the proposals upon both Hurstmead and the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The omission of the previously proposed side extension, the careful siting of the rear infill extension, the retention of existing architectural features, and the sensitive specification of replacement materials all demonstrate a clear commitment to minimising intervention and conserving the significance of the heritage asset.

Throughout this assessment, the significance of Hurstmead and the Lewes Road Conservation Area has been considered alongside the magnitude of change arising from the proposed works using the methodology set out within the Heritage Impact Assessment Table. The assessment considers both the significance of the heritage asset and the magnitude of change associated with each element of the proposals, providing a clear and transparent evaluation of the resulting heritage impact. The table demonstrates that the proposed works constitute a Minimal magnitude of change to a heritage asset of Medium significance, resulting in an overall level of Minor heritage harm.

Significance of Asset	Level of Change				
	No Change	Minimal	Low	Medium	High
High	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate
Not Significant	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Table 3: Matrix for establishing the level of impact against the asset's significance (Source: Seeing the History in the View (2011))

This conclusion reflects the deliberately restrained nature of the proposals, which have evolved through a heritage-led design process to minimise intervention wherever possible. The omission of the previously proposed two-storey side extension, the retention of the building's defining architectural features, and the careful design of the modest rear infill extension all contribute to reducing the overall level of impact. Although a Minor level of heritage harm has been identified, this harm is considered to be at the lower end of the scale and is outweighed by the public benefits arising from securing the continued viable use, maintenance and sensitive enhancement of Hurstmead. The proposals therefore represent a balanced and proportionate response to the conservation of the heritage asset and its setting.

In accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention has been given to the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of the Lewes Road Conservation Area throughout the development of the proposals. Furthermore, the scheme accords with the objectives of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework by conserving the significance of the heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its importance whilst enabling its continued viable use. The proposals therefore represent a balanced and proportionate response to both the heritage significance of Hurstmead and the practical requirements of its long-term occupation.