



Historic England

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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3630

Our ref: P01597728

24 September 2025

Dear Mr Hawkes

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND WEST OF IFIELD CHARLWOOD ROAD IFIELD WEST SUSSEX
Application No. DC/25/1312**

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2025 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

The proposals cause harm to the significance of the Medieval moated site at Ifield Court (scheduled monument) and St Margaret's Church (Grade I listed).

The ES identifies significant adverse effects to these assets. We consider that in NPPF terms this would translate to less than substantial harm, in the middle of the range. There would be a direct and cumulative impact to both assets, with harm caused by development within their setting.

Harm to nationally important heritage assets requires careful consideration, particularly as to whether harm might be demonstrably avoided/minimised further.

We recommend that the issues outlined in our advice below should be considered for the application to meet the requirements of the NPPF (paras 77, 208, 212, 213, 215 and 219).

Historic England Advice

Introduction

The application is a hybrid planning application for a phased development at land west



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of Ifield, West Sussex. Full permission is sought for a new access road 'Crawley Western Multi-Modal Corridor' (CWMMC) and access/services to fix the secondary school site and key development parcels.

Outline planning is to include 3,000 residential homes (35% affordable), job creation from commercial/business, community and education facilities, plus public/leisure space etc.

The site is included in the draft Submission Horsham Local Plan 2030-2045. We provided a Scoping response in 2020 and 2024, noting careful consideration would be required to the following heritage assets:

Medieval moated site at Ifield Court (scheduled monument) National Heritage List no 1012464

St Margaret's Church (Grade I listed) NHL no1187108 which sits within Ifield Village Conservation Area

Our advice focuses on the most highly designated heritage assets, but we note there will be other heritage impacts that you will need to consider, in consultation with your own specialist conservation advisers.

Significance

Ifield Court

Medieval moated sites served as prestigious aristocratic and seigneurial residences; the moat primarily intended as a status symbol rather than a defensible barrier. Ifield Court is important because although its medieval buildings no longer exist above ground (the manor was superseded by the 19th century building to the east of the moated site, now a hotel), most of the remainder of the monument survives well as buried deposits and earthworks. The presence of a southward extension to the rectangular moat island also adds to the complexity and status of the monument, as this is an unusual and elaborate feature.

The significance of the moated site is further informed by an understanding of the rural surroundings in which it would have been constructed and used. Although development has taken place in the wider landscape surrounding Ifield Court, the site currently sits within open green space (vestiges of past agricultural and 19th century parkland). The historic function and position of the site in an agricultural landscape, in relation to the nearby river Mole and the village of Ifield, can therefore still be interpreted and understood, though the landscape has evolved and views out from within the monument are now hindered by vegetation/trees.



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The Parish Church of St. Margaret

The church is a very fine example of a medieval parish church with a prominent 15th century tower surmounted by a shingled spire; designed to be visible from the surrounding countryside. It is still appreciable as a distinctive local landmark in long distance views and from footpaths/public rights of way (PRoW). Its current, largely open, setting consists of meadows and countryside to the west, which contributes to its historic value, reflecting its rural origins and relationship with the wider landscape.

Impact

The CWMMC road passes, at its closest, 15 meters from the southern side of the moated site (the side where its moat was flamboyantly extended). This would harm its significance through erosion of its designed position and rural setting. It would make it harder to appreciate the moated manor's historic purpose and status, the rural setting it was set within, and its strategic position within this landscape.

The area immediately surrounding the church would be retained as open space, protecting the buried archaeology here and retaining an immediate sense of openness. However, construction of modern housing close to the church (c.25 meters) would lead to erosion and disconnect of the church with its wider rural setting.

Ifield village represents the rural edge of development in this area, with the church standing alone at its western edge. The open space beyond the village and around the church, provides an opportunity to understand that rural connection. The encroachment of urban development into this area is likely to result in erosion of this quality and represent a cumulative loss of significance, particularly in relation to the church given previous suburban development to the south and east.

Mitigation measures proposed include a bund between the CWMMC and the Ifield Court moated site, landscape planting, and the retention of a PRoW to the west of Ifield Brook Meadows as a green corridor with a pocket park to preserve views of the St Margaret's church. However, the LVIA shows that housing on either side of this corridor would dominate views of the church, eroding the rural outlook and adversely impacting the church's setting, and thus its significance.

The bund against the CWMMC would foreshorten the open landscape in relation to the moated site, though it would provide some visual and audio buffering of traffic. The road would also sever the spatial and historical relationship between the moated site and medieval parish church, undermining understanding of Ifield's manorial origins.

Additional harm would result from increased vehicular activity, noise, and general suburbanisation, affecting both heritage assets (with cumulative noise from GANR).



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Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 208 requires that local authorities avoid or minimise any conflict between a heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of a development proposal. Para 212 says that in considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Para 213 says any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Para 215 says that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal

Para 77 notes that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.

Position

The Environmental Statement identifies significant adverse effects to Ifield Court and St Margaret's Church, which are nationally important heritage assets. We agree there would be harm, and in the language of the NPPF, we consider this would translate to less than substantial harm, in the middle of the range, for both church and scheduled monument.

The proposals would harm how the moated site is understood, particularly its status and rural position, with the CWMMC encroaching on the open space to the south. There would also be harm to the significance of the parish church from housing close by, and the severing by the CWMMC of the spatial and historical relationship between the church and moated site. There would be a direct and cumulative impact through erosion of the rural quality of the landscape that the designated assets can be appreciated within, which contributes greatly to their significance.

Harm to highly significant heritage assets requires careful consideration, particularly as to whether harm might be demonstrably avoided/minimised further. Should the principle of the development be accepted, in order to help minimise harm to the church, particularly when appreciated from the proposed Meadows East Area, we recommend that further consideration be given to the layout of the building plots located closest to the church to achieve a greater sense of space and openness around it.



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NPPF para 219 recommends looking for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. We therefore encourage you to explore the opportunity of using heritage in placemaking here. For example, you could consider the use of interpretation signs, heritage trails, online resources etc. We would be interested in continuing a conversation on how to achieve this across the proposal area.

Because we have identified that the proposal would cause harm to designated heritage assets, we recommend that the points above be considered carefully, and advise that it will be for your local authority to weigh these matters in the planning balance, testing them against the relevant identified requirements of the NPPF.

Recommendation

Historic England is supportive of the Government's objectives for creating new housing and communities, while seeking to minimise adverse effects on the historic environment and opportunities for heritage to support placemaking.

Historic England notes that this application would lead to harm to nationally important assets, and recommends that the issues outlined in our advice should be considered in order for the application to meet the requirements of the NPPF (paras 77, 208, 212, 213, 215 and 219).

In determining this application you should also bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Lambert

Inspector of Ancient Monuments

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