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Heritage Report

**Bowood, Bashurst Copse, Itchingfield, RH13 0NZ**

Report prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning  
March 2025



Corporate members of:  
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
Historic Houses Association  
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## **1) INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1) I am Haig Dalton, founder of Chilcroft Heritage Planning, an established independent heritage consultancy since 2006. Formerly, I was a local planning authority officer within development control departments in the South of England. I have worked on a wide range of projects throughout the United Kingdom, predominantly (but not exclusively) for private sector clients.
- 1.2) I hold a masters degree in Historic Building Conservation (MSc); a postgraduate qualification in Architectural History from the University of Oxford (Oxon); I am an Affiliate member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).
- 1.3) Over the last 20 years I have specialised in the historic environment, both in terms of understanding and analysing physical fabric, and in terms of policy application, specifically by assessing impacts, providing advice and supporting development proposals. My experience includes a diverse range of cases relating to the assessment of physical changes to, and development affecting all manner of heritage assets, and their settings.
- 1.4) I have undertaken numerous impact assessments where I have considered the impacts of new development on the historic environment (dealing with physical impacts, setting, townscape, views and inter-visibility), including dealing with the effects of development on buildings in semi-rural contexts.
- 1.5) I have provided expert evidence at appeals, including public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants and local planning authorities.
- 1.6) I understand my role in producing this heritage report; to give independent and objective evidence on matters within my expertise, based on my own independent opinion and uninfluenced by the instructing party. I confirm that I have stated the facts and matters on which my opinion is based, and that I have not omitted to mention facts or matters that could detract from my conclusions.

- 1.7) I believe that the facts stated within this Heritage Report are true and that the opinions expressed are correct. I have drawn attention to any matters where I consider I lack sufficient information to reach anything other than a provisional conclusion. I have adhered to the standards and duties of the professional bodies I am a member of, and will continue to adhere to those standards.
- 1.8) I was first approached in early February 2024, when I was asked to provide a heritage report in relation to the proposed development on behalf the applicant. My quote was based on several stages/elements, the first of which was an initial case review, including a site visit during March 2024. I confirmed that I am able to act as the applicant's heritage expert following this initial work and a site visit.
- 1.9) As an independent professional, I have formed my own opinions and have come to my own conclusions about the effects of the proposed development.
- 1.10) I have included in my heritage statement photos taken on my original site visit. The photos were taken with a compact digital camera and they have not been digitally altered, aside from cropping superfluous areas of sky and/or foreground. This visual assessment is intended to be informative, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.
- 1.11) This statement will describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the setting, as required by Para.207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework (2024)*. It will assess the significance of the heritage assets by way of Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)* in accordance with their preferred five-step procedure, identify, assess and explore the significance of their setting and consider the applicant's scheme in relation to them.

## 2) LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 2.1) Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.
- 2.2) Section 72 of the Act places similar duty on the decision maker with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, however this does not extend to the setting of conservation areas.
- 2.3) The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** constitutes the Government's current national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.4) Paragraph 203 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with 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."*

- 2.5) Annex 2 of the NPPF 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."*

- 2.6) Paragraph 207 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.
- 2.7) Paragraph 208 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 2.8) Paragraph 212 states with regard to heritage assets. that great weight should be given to their conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm.
- 2.9) Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:
- “The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”*
- 2.10) The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.

- 2.11) Paragraphs 214 to 215 describe two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, namely substantial harm and less than substantial harm. These effects are to be weighed in the planning balance according to the guidance set out within the paragraphs, bearing in mind the statutory provisions above. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including grade I and II\* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 2.12) Paragraph 215 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public.
- 2.13) Harm is defined by Historic England as a change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.14) Paragraph 219 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.
- 2.15) **The National Planning Practice Guidance** provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF. The PPG currently relates to the 2019 version of the NPPF but will be updated in due course to reflect NPPF 2023.
- 2.16) In regards to the setting of heritage assets the PPG notes:

*“The setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage.”*

2.17) The guidance notes that a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.18) In relation to harm the guidance states:

*“Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.”*

2.19) Paragraph 020 of the document notes that public benefits can be heritage based and can include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset for the long term.

2.20) The **Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning** Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017) is a document published by Historic England as a second edition in December 2017, replacing the earlier 2015 setting guidance. The document provides for a thorough understanding of the setting of a heritage asset and the relationship of the setting to curtilage, character and context.

- 2.21) The guidance document notes, in paragraph 18, that the protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change. The document recognises that not all heritage assets are of equal importance and states that the contribution made by their setting to their significance will also vary. Not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without causing harm to the significance of the asset.
- 2.22) As per earlier Historic England guidance, the document advocates a stepped approach to assessing the impact of change within setting on the significance of heritage assets. This stepped approach is:
- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
- Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.
- 2.23) Guidance under Step 2 notes that the asset's physical surroundings and how the asset is experienced (such as views, noise, tranquillity, sense of enclosure etc.) should be taken in to consideration.
- 2.24) Step 3 is also important in making it clear that a proposed development should not be assessed in terms of its impact on setting; instead it should be assessed in terms of the impacts on significance. That is to say, what matters is not the extent of visibility of the development or change to the setting of an asset, but the extent of change to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. In some circumstances, this evaluation may need to extend to cumulative and complex impacts which may have as great an effect on heritage

assets as large-scale development and which may not only be visual. At the very least the assessment should address the key attributes of the development in terms of its location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.

- 2.25) Paragraph 39 notes that options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the relocation of elements of a development or changes to its design. It notes that good design may reduce or remove the harm.
- 2.26) **Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires great weight to be given to preserving the setting of a heritage asset. In *Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243* the court confirmed that if the decision-maker has worked through the relevant heritage paragraphs in the NPPF, they will have complied with the s66 duty.
- 2.27) In *Barnwell Manor [2014] EWCA Civ 137* the court confirmed that great weight should be attached to the desirability of preserving the setting of a heritage asset.

### **3) ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- 3.1) The proposed development is situated within the settlement boundary, within the existing curtilage of Bowood. The site is landscaped with a grass lawn and established hedging, which is situated to the northern side of Bashurst Copse. The site is accessed via an existing vehicular entrance leading to a driveway fronting the existing dwelling and a single garage outbuilding to the western side. Permission was given under DC/17/0985 for a replacement 6 bedroom dwelling on the site.
- 3.2) The proposed site is largely self-contained within existing hedgerows and trees, established since the 1930's. The proposed site comprises the curtilage of Bowood which benefits from an established vehicular access fronting Bashurst Copse. The frontage of the curtilage is well screened from the streetscene giving it a more insular feeling, with filtered views of the existing dwelling from the vehicular entrance.
- 3.3) The proposed site sits within a semi-rural development of dwellings that were built in the 1930's consisting of Tudor Revival thatched cottages. Many of them sit in generously proportioned curtilages and they are detached properties, built over two stories within brick, stone and timber frame elevations. Casement windows, catslide roofs and detached garage outbuildings are typical of the buildings found in this area. Although some original buildings have been replaced, many of the cottages remain.
- 3.4) The proposed site comprises Bowood, a Tudor Revival style thatched cottage which dates from 1939. The original principal elevation faces south overlooking Bashurst Copse and comprises a two storey cottage with the ground floor elevation of brick with brick quoins and dressings. A recessed arched porch fronts the building with a detached garage outbuilding in a matching style. On the first floor, the elevations contain timber framing with whitewashed infill. The building has metal casement windows and the roof is thatched with hooded dormer windows and a pair of brick chimney stacks. The dwelling had a modest ground floor side extension in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century but otherwise retains its original floorplan layout.

- 3.5) The existing dwelling is in a considerable state of disrepair and whilst it is considered that the building could be renovated, it is likely that any renovation would exceed what is considered to be financially viable. It is for this reason that the existing owners have not been able to adequately maintain it and a new solution is now sought. The interior of the building reflects the architectural fixtures and features associated with a building of the late 1930's with numerous small rooms and a layout that is not reflective of modern day living. Whilst the building could be adapted, it is likely that the internal layout would need to be substantially reworked and opened up, complete with a sizable ground floor extension, to make it truly workable. Any renovation would further diminish any significance associated with the Tudor Revival building.
- 3.6) Although the dwelling of Bowood is an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century building, it is not a Locally Listed Building. It is not located in a Conservation Area or considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. Other 1930's dwellings within the wider development at Bashurst Copse have subsequently been replaced with alternative style dwellings and there is no reason to assume that the same could not be realised here. Indeed the fact that the proposed site was previously given permission for a replacement 6 bedroom dwelling suggests that the existing site is capable of change, subject to appropriate design.
- 3.7) The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century development of Bashurst Copse is characterised by detached properties situated in spacious curtilages. It has a leafy feel with trees and boundary hedges along the perimeter and some early buildings inter-dispersed with occasional modern development. The character and appearance of the area is very much one of steady evolution, made up of later buildings that use a mixture of materials. Dwellings are well set back from the frontage of Bashurst Copse and appear subdued in the wider setting. The addition of more modern and replacement dwellings in this environment has not altogether altered the intrinsic semi-rural feeling of the area and this is indicative of its character. It is intermixed with the use of more contemporary and late 20<sup>th</sup> Century styles, which together are befitting of the large curtilages and detached style dwellings found throughout Bashurst Copse. Subject to appropriate design, a single replacement dwelling here is likely to be consistent with this.



**Fig 1:** The dwelling of Bowood dates from 1939 and was built as part of the development at Bashurst Copse. The principal elevation overlooks a driveway leading to an existing vehicular access, with a single garage.

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**Fig 2:** The rear elevation overlooks a large, generous curtilage. The existing dwelling is of a Tudor Revival cottage style and permission was previously given for a an even larger replacement 6 bedroom dwelling.

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**Fig 3:** The dwelling retains its original layout and fixtures with only a modest side extension being added. The building is in a very poor state of disrepair requiring considerable investment to be modernised.

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**Fig 4:** The existing dwelling is reflective of many others in Bashurst Copse being of a Tudor Revival style of architecture. Here we see the original arched porch leading to the entrance hall and central staircase.

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## **4) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

- 4.1) The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains a statutory duty to give considerable importance and great weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building in the planning balance. Preserving means to do no harm.
- 4.2) The NPPF lays down an approach that corresponds with the statutory duty of the 1990 Act. In cases where harm occurs, the NPPF requires balancing the benefits of a proposal against harm resulting from it.
- 4.3) The Horsham District Council's adopted Development Plan policies require development proposals to conserve heritage assets and their settings.
- 4.4) The guidance in Historic England's GPA3 provides a framework for considering and assessing effects on the setting of heritage assets.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.5) The existing dwelling of Bowood is not a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and was previously granted permission for a replacement 6 bedroom dwelling.
- 4.6) The proposal would utilise an existing vehicular access onto Bashurst Copse, without the need to alter the fundamental appearance of the streetscene.
- 4.7) The existing dwelling would require considerable investment to be renovated, beyond what is considered to be financially viable.
- 4.8) The previously proposed scheme did not raise any heritage objection against the demolition and replacement of the existing dwelling or consider it to be a heritage asset. Subject to appropriate design, it is therefore considered to be capable of replacement.



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