

~ SHERMANBURY PLACE ~

BRIGHTON ROAD, SHERMANBURY, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX, RH13 8HF

Installation of replacement solar PV array to south and west facing inner roof slopes

DESIGN ACCESS STATEMENT INCORPORATING HERITAGE STATEMENT



Prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA ~ Reviewed by Ben Kirk MSc, IHBC

December 2025



ABOUT MANORWOOD

Manorwood is a small team of historic building professionals with varied skills across different areas of the historic environment.

This report has been prepared by Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher Roberto Prieto-Labrador and reviewed by Director Ben Kirk

Roberto holds a MA in English Building History, awarded with Distinction by the University of York. His field of expertise is domestic vernacular architecture, specialised in material culture and domestic life during the late medieval and early modern periods.

Roberto is a Practitioner member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (PCIfA), as well as an Affiliate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). He is also a member of The Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), The Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG) and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

As a Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher at Manorwood, Roberto is responsible for in depth research into building records, mapping, and physical evidence to help inform proposals and for preparing Heritage Statements and Statements of Significance to support applications for alteration or redevelopment of historic buildings and areas, as well as surveying and recording historic buildings.

Ben holds an MSc in Timber Building Conservation, completed at the Weald and Downland Museum, and validated by Bournemouth University, and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and a recognised Historic Environment Service provider under the well-established HESPR scheme.

Ben is a member of various groups including the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), the Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG), and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

Ben has been actively working in the historic environment industry for 15 years on numerous heritage asset projects which include surveying of historic buildings (both domestic and agricultural), preparation of schedules of works and detailing of repairs. Ben oversees numerous applications for Planning permission and Listed Building Consent and has built solid working relationships with Conservation Officers at a number of Authorities across the South East.

As a company Director at Manorwood, Ben has overseen works to historic buildings carried out by a skilled network of sub-contractors including the timber restoration at Charleston Farm barns in Firle and the re-erection of historic buildings at the Weald and Downland Living Museum near Chichester, both which received awards from the Sussex Heritage Trust.

As a company Manorwood have provided various historic environment services to a number of Country Estates across the South East including the Lydhurst Estate, the Borde Hill Estate, the West Dean Estate and a number of projects on the Wiston Estate where Manorwood continue to provide consultancy advice on redevelopment and reuse of various areas.

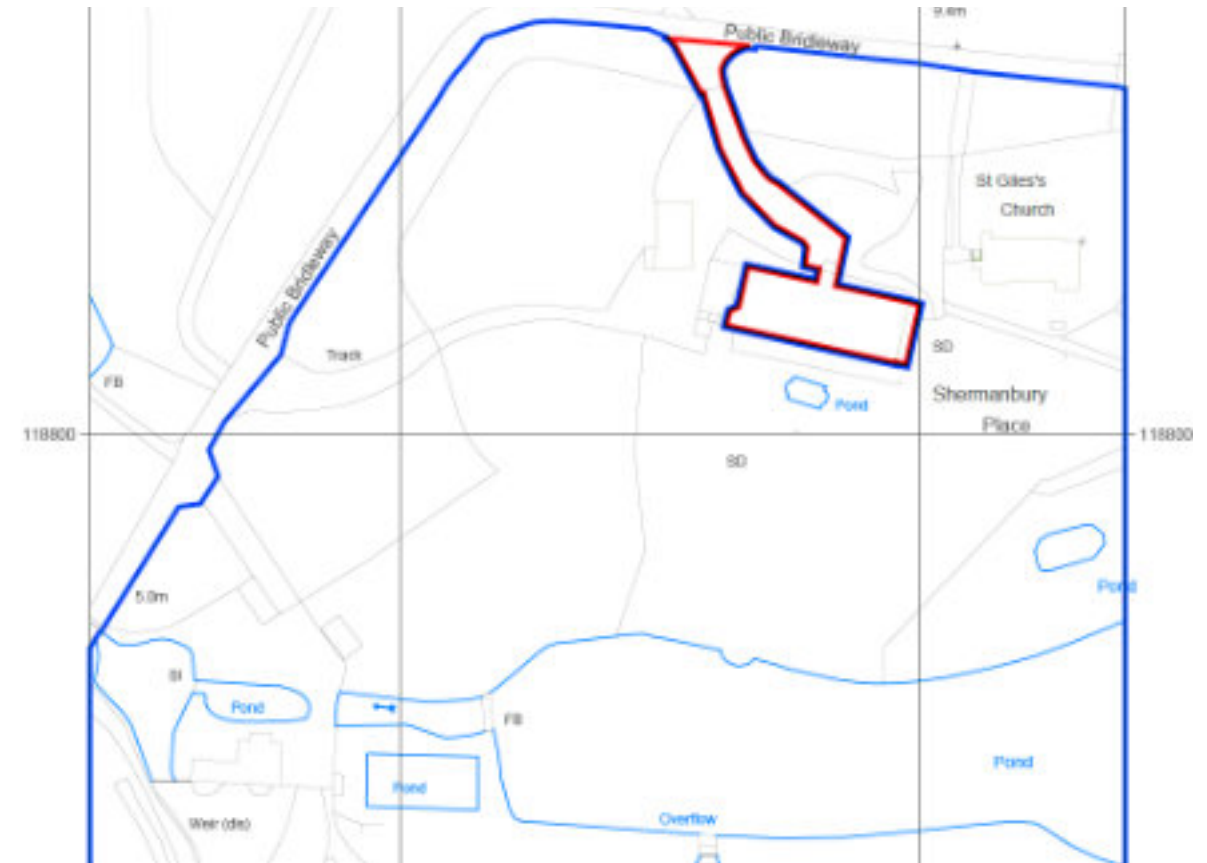
Most recently Manorwood completed the sensitive restoration and conversion of the magnificent 15th century barn for Nyetimber Vineyards in West Sussex.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA on behalf of Manorwood to accompany an application relating to a proposal at Shermanbury Place, Shermanbury.
- 1.2 Shermanbury Place is a Grade II Listed Building located on the east edge of the hamlet of Shermanbury, West Sussex. The site is accessed via a track off the east side of Brighton Road.
- 1.3 The property is a Grade II Listed Building built in 1779 by John Challen on the site of an earlier 16th-century Tudor house with projecting cross-wings, originally constructed by the Comber family. Its current form is the result of substantial alterations and extensions carried out during the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 1.4 The building has been unoccupied and neglected for a number of years. This has led to the severe decay to the building, which now requires significant works to ensure its long-term preservation and use as a residential dwelling.
- 1.5 The property has been recently acquired by the applicants, who are keen to make the building a modern family home by providing the significant investment that the building requires to ensure its preservation.
- 1.6 This report has been prepared to support a revised application for the external and internal alterations proposed to the building.
- 1.7 This Heritage Statement should be read alongside the accompanying drawings prepared by Manorwood.
- 1.8 Historic maps have been consulted to better understand the development of the site and its setting. The maps are included in Section 4 of this report.
- 1.9 This Heritage Statement also includes a Significance Assessment, which identifies the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets (i.e., the listed building). It also includes an Impact Assessment, which evaluates the potential effect of the proposed scheme on the significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by its setting. This approach to impact assessment is required to comply with the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), and the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.10 The relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) has also been consulted in the preparation of this report, in accordance with paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).



Location of Shermanbury Place.

2 HERITAGE ASSETS AND DESIGNATIONS

- 2.1 Shermanbury Place is a statutory Listed Building designated in March 1955. The listing reads:

SHERMANBURY PLACE

Location Shermanbury, West Sussex, RH13 8HF

District Horsham (District Authority)

Date Listed 15th March 1955

List Entry No 1354041

Grade II

Description James Dallaway's "History of the Western Division of Sussex" says that this house was rebuilt by John Challen about 1780 on the site of an old mansion then demolished. But he also gives a plate of the house. This, though very similar in character to the present house, is considerably smaller than the latter, and it presumably was enlarged or rebuilt about 60 years later. It is built of white brick on a stuccoed base and consists of a centre portion and 2 wings. Two storeys. The centre portion has 5 windows, of which the three centre window-bays project with a pediment over containing a round panel. Stringcourse, modillion cornice and blocking course. Hipped slate roof. Windows in moulded architrave surrounds but with their glazing bars missing. At the head of 5 segmental steps in the centre of the front a porch with pediment over has been added later. The wings are of lower elevation and have 2 windows each. At the east end of the house is a veranda covering the whole width of the house on this side. This consists of 4 pairs of coupled Doric columns. At the west end but detached from the house a tower has been added in the mid C19.

- 2.2 There are two further statutory Listed Buildings within the setting of Shermanbury Place also designated in March 1955. This includes the Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St Giles (1194079) and the Grade II Listed cowshed to the northeast of the house (1285847).



Grade II Listed Shermanbury Place in 2024.



Grade II Listed Church of St Giles (left) and Grade II Listed cowshed (right).*



Heritage Assets at Shermanbury Place.

CURTILAGE LISTED

- 2.3 According to the advice note *Listed Buildings and Curtilage* published by Historic England in 2018, the law provides that buildings and other structures that pre-date July 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building. Historic England's advice note gives hypothetical examples to assist in the assessment as to whether a building within the curtilage of a statutory listed building should be deemed to be part of the listing.
- 2.4 The cottage known as Coppards to the east of the Listed house is not a statutory listed buildings in its own right. It is clear, however, that the building was constructed before 1948 and associated in use and ownership to the Grade II Listed farmhouse and its setting. The cottage, therefore, forms part of the listing and is considered to be "curtilage listed".

CONSERVATION AREA AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTIFICATION AREA (ANA)

- 2.5 Shermanbury Place is not located within the boundaries of any Conservation Area.
- 2.6 Shermanbury Place sits within the boundaries of the red Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) DWS8576 – Medieval Moated Site, Shermanbury Deserted Medieval Village and the Parish Church of St Giles, Shermanbury.
- 2.7 Red ANAs are described by West Sussex HER as a "very sensitive area for Archaeology, where new building(s), ground excavation or landscaping may have major adverse impact on nationally important and other significant archaeological sites".

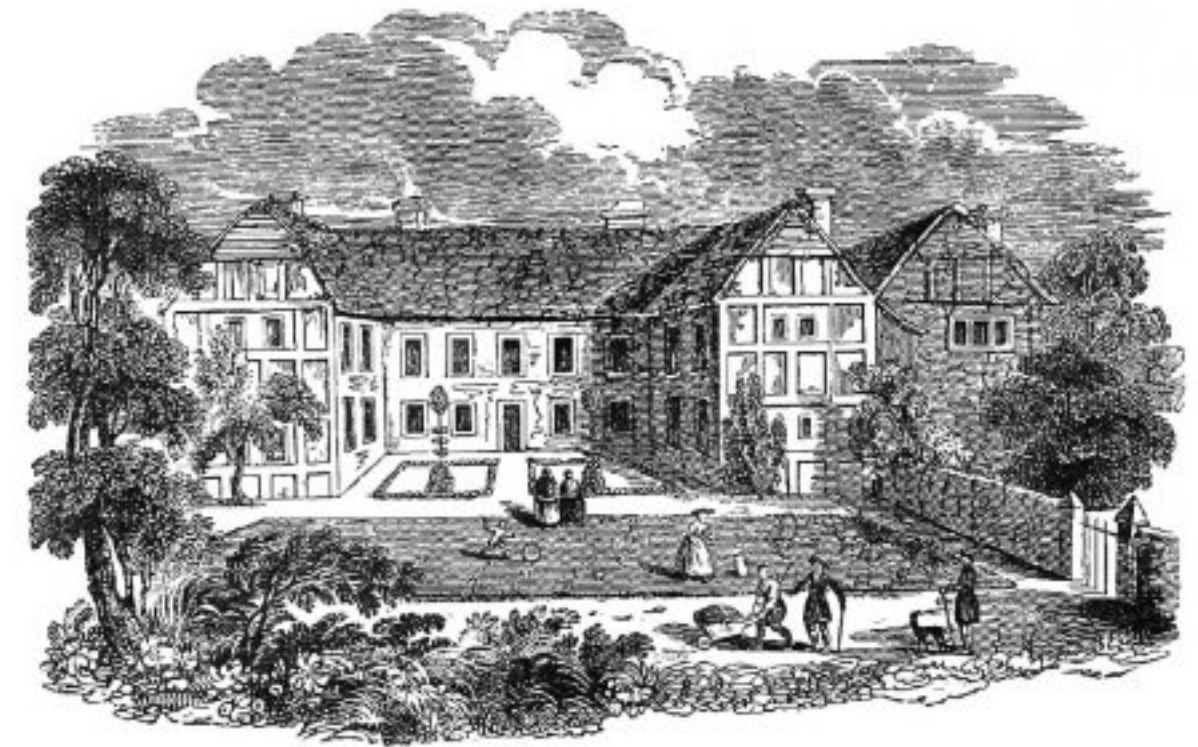
3 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposal comprises carefully considered discreet energy-efficiency upgrade by way of the installation of replacement solar PV array to south and west facing inner roof slopes. This proposal is intended to upgrade essential services and improve functionality and output above that of an outdated existing array (installed 2011), whilst preserving the architectural and historic interest of Shermanbury Place and supporting its long-term residential use.
- 3.2 Further details of the nature and extent of the proposed works are set out on the accompanying drawings prepared by Manorwood, which should also be read alongside this report.
- 3.3 The proposal and its potential impact on the significance of the listed building and its setting are discussed in detail in Section 7 of this report.
- 3.4 Listed Build Consent has already been approved for the proposed array, see application reference DC/25/2125.

- 4.1 This section provides the historical background of Shermanbury Place. The documentary-based information included in this section has been obtained from *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 6 Part 3, Bramber Rape (North-Eastern Part) Including Crawley New Town* (1987):
- 4.2 In 1066 Shermanbury was part of the estate that centred on Kingston by Sea, being held then by Azor from Harold, and in 1086 by Ralph de Buci from William de Braose. The overlordship of the Braose family and their successors was recorded until 1387; a reference to John Fillol as overlord in 1496 is unexplained.
- 4.3 From Ralph de Buci, the undertenancy of Shermanbury descended with that of Kingston in the Buci family until the 14th century. Hugh de Buci and his wife Agnes, having entailed their estates in 1313–14, were dead by 1348, when one of Hugh's daughters and co-heirs was Joan, wife of William of Fyfield. William and Joan in that year received grants of Shermanbury manor from John de Lislebonne and his wife Sibyl, another daughter and co-heir, and from Robert of Bulkmere and his wife Anstice, probably a third daughter.
- 4.4 The Lislebannes' son John in 1341 and the Fyfields' son and heir William in 1342 were born at Shermanbury. The elder William of Fyfield (died 1361) was described as holding Shermanbury manor in 1349, and received a grant, evidently as a quitclaim, of it and Kingston from another Hugh de Buci in 1356.
- 4.5 With Kingston, Shermanbury passed from the younger William Fyfield (died 1387) to the Sandys family. In 1542 Thomas Sandys, Lord Sandys, leased Shermanbury for 500 years, retaining there, as at Kingston, an interest which was sold in 1752 by John Walker and his wife Ellen to Harry Bridger.
- 4.6 The lessee in 1542 was William Comber, who had already bought a 40-year lease of the manor made in 1512 to Thomas West, Lord de la Warr. He was likely the commissioner of the former timber-framed Tudor mansion that stood on the site of the current house.
- 4.7 William was succeeded in 1561 or 1562 by his son John (died 1608), whose son William (died 1625) had by his wife Martha (died 1635) four daughters. Of the daughters, Elizabeth (died 1678) married John Gratwicke (died 1642) and Eleanor married William Heath (died by 1647).
- 4.8 Gratwicke and Heath appear not to have divided their wives' inheritance, for Shermanbury manor court was held in 1659 in the names of Heath's grandson Robert Heath and Gratwicke's younger son Thomas (died 1664). Thomas devised his moiety in trust to Robert Heath for his son John, and in 1668 the manor court was held in the names of Robert and John.
- 4.9 By 1698 Shermanbury had been assigned to John Gratwicke, who in 1724 was succeeded there by his elder daughter Anne (died 1744), wife of John Lintott (died 1730). Their daughter and heir Cassandra Gratwicke (died 1755) married Henry Farncombe, who in 1753 acquired the freehold of the manor from Harry Bridger. Farncombe's daughter Cassandra Lintott succeeded him in 1757 and in 1762 married John Challen (died 1794), who built the current house.
- 4.10 Between 1795 and 1801 their son John Gratwicke Challen (died 1835), rector of Shermanbury, assumed the lordship of the manor from his mother, who lived until 1829. His brother and heir Stephen Hasler Challen was succeeded in 1858 by his daughter Maria Harriet (died 1873), wife of Henry Hunt (died 1877), the manor being apparently held from 1845 or earlier by trustees.
- 4.11 Henry Hunt sold it in 1874 to Sampson Copestake, who had 516 acres in Shermanbury in 1910. On his death in 1917, Shermanbury was sold to Harold Warren Coleman, the owner in 1921.
- 4.12 In 1922 the estate with 550 acres in all was offered for sale; Campbell Bernard Hausburg owned Shermanbury Place with 86 acres in 1925 and was living there in 1938, although Coleman was still described as lord of Shermanbury and Ewhurst manors.
- 4.13 During the events of the Second World War, the Canadian Army was stationed at Shermanbury Place. Local tradition suggests that, during this period, the mill associated with the estate was deliberately destroyed; however, no documentary or cartographic evidence has been identified to substantiate this account during the preparation of this report, and it should therefore be regarded as oral history rather than confirmed fact.
- 4.14 Following the end of the war, Shermanbury Place is understood to have been left in a severely damaged and dilapidated condition. The property was subsequently acquired by Captain George Hamilton Fletcher, although the precise date of purchase has not been established. Captain Fletcher undertook a substantial programme of repair and restoration, returning the house to habitable condition after its wartime decline.
- 4.15 Photographic evidence indicates that the tower formerly located on the western side of the house was dismantled during this period, probably in c.1953–54. Captain Fletcher is reported to have completed the restoration works shortly before his death from cancer.
- 4.16 In 1958, Shermanbury Place was purchased by W. A. A. Greenwell. Ownership later passed to his widow, V. R. E. Greenwell, in 1977, and subsequently to their children, Eve Greenwell and William Greenwell, in joint ownership in 1988. The property was acquired by the current owner (Eve Greenwell's daughter) in 2022, remaining within the same family for over six decades.

5 EVOLUTION OF THE BUILDING

- 5.1 This section provides the architectural evolution of Shermanbury Place based on historic maps, documents, and photographs.
- 5.2 The earliest surviving representation of Shermanbury Place is an early to mid-18th century engraving, which is included in both Edmund Cartwright's *The Parochial Topography of the Rape of Bramber*, in the Western Division of the County of Sussex (1830) and Thomas Horsfield's *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of Sussex* (1835).
- 5.3 The engraving depicts the Tudor mansion erected in the 16th century, possibly by William Comber, after he purchased the estate in 1542. The house appears as an imposing timber-framed building of two storeys with projecting wings enclosing a walled ornamental garden. It seems that this mansion replaced an earlier manor house on the site, about which no information has been found.
- 5.4 The 16th century mansion was demolished in 1779 by John Challen Esq. and replaced with a buff-brick building of two storeys with a basement, three bays wide, flanked by lower two-storeyed wings. It is possible that parts and materials of the Tudor house were reused in the construction of the new building, as 16th century chamfered beams have been found in the basement, which appear to pre-date John Challen's work.
- 5.5 Two surviving early 19th century engravings (c.1830) appear to show the house in a form close to John Challen's original design. At this stage, the site was known as Shermanbury Park, and the house was surrounded by simple parkland, without the ornamental gardens of the earlier sixteenth-century mansion. It is believed that one of the two side wings housed the servants' quarters. In both images, a tower can be seen to the west of the house, suggesting it was an original or early feature.
- 5.6 The 1840 Tithe Map, surveyed by H. and F. Hitchins, shows a clear outline of the estate at that date. The small outbuilding to the north, attached to the clock tower at the north-west end of the house, is visible. In addition, the stables and a single outbuilding are located on the other side of the church. The watermill and its three associated outbuildings can be seen to the west, and just above are two small buildings listed in the accompanying apportionment as the entrance lodge.
- 5.7 The house underwent substantial alterations during the mid to late 19th century, as indicated in an engraving included in a set of sales particulars from 1874. The basic form of the house, with the central block flanked by lower wings, remained. However, the central block was extended from three to five bays, and a more spacious first floor was added to the east wing. The windows were also altered, the most significant change being the addition of a ground-floor window to the east wing and a Venetian window in the central block. The existing columned porch to the east end of the house was also added as part of these alterations, as shown in the engraving. A greenhouse was constructed against the south elevation of the west wing, and a simple ornamental garden was introduced immediately to the south of the house.



16th century Shermanbury Place in an 18th century engraving.



Post-1780 Shermanbury Place. Early 19th century engraving (c.1830).



Shermanbury Place in 1874.

- 5.8 Further alterations were carried out during the final years of the 19th century and the early 20th century. The most notable changes involved the extension of the first floor over the west wing to match the east wing, the alteration of the clock tower, and the replacement of the greenhouse with a new 'billiard room' (as described in a 1917 sales brochure) or sun room, added to the south-west corner, giving the building its current form.



Shermanbury Place in 1917.



Shermanbury Place in 1923.



Detail of Tithe Map showing Shermanbury Place, 1839 (Private Collection).



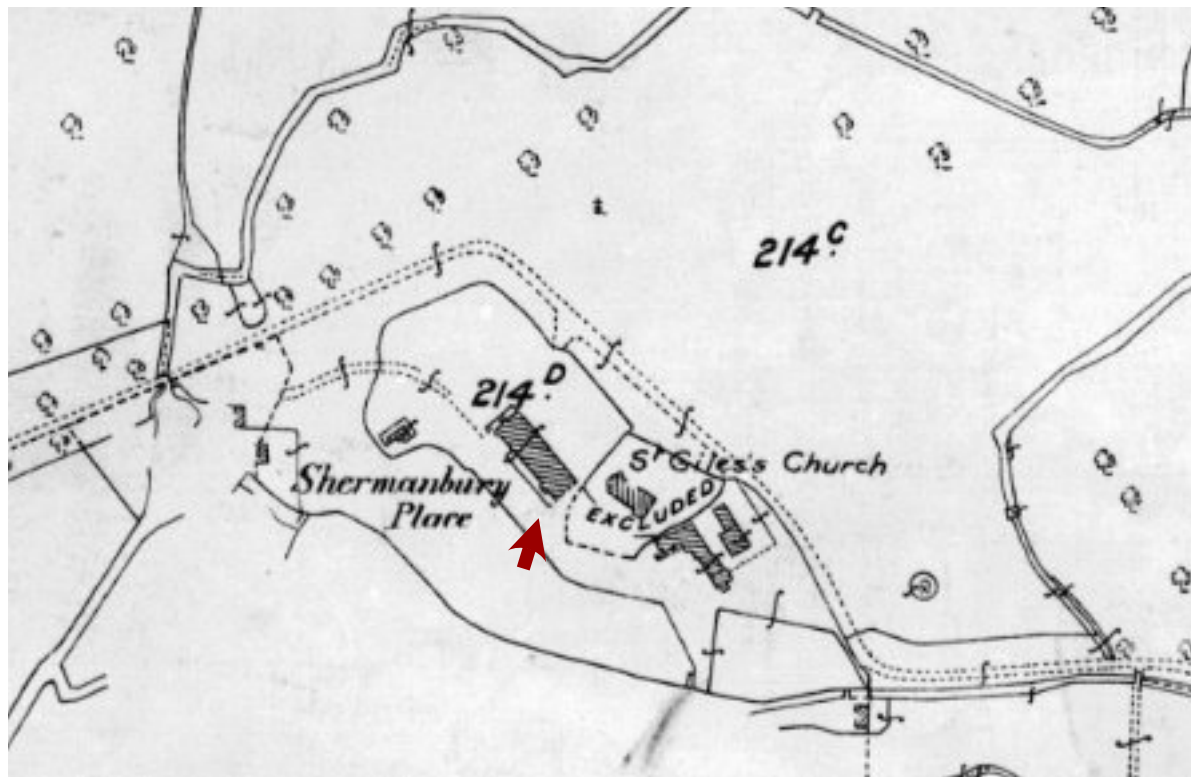
Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Shermanbury Place, 1874 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Shermanbury Place, 1896 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Shermanbury Place, 1909 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of sales brochure's map showing Shermanbury Place, 1925 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Shermanbury Place, 1938 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Shermanbury Place, 1956 (National Library of Scotland).



Satellite View of Shermanbury Place, 2022 (© Google Earth).

- 6.1 The following section is an assessment of the significance of Shermanbury Place according to the current planning policy (NPPF 2024, paragraph 207), which requires an applicant to provide an assessment of the significance of any heritage assets affected by a development proposal.
- 6.2 Significance (for heritage policy), as defined in the NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary), is used to describe the heritage interest of an asset to this and future generations. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
- 6.3 The setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed, can extend beyond the asset's curtilage, 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 (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary).
- 6.4 The NPPF introduced the concept of interests to assess the significance of heritage assets, and the PPG (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723) provides interpretation. These interests are also set out in Historic England guidance (*Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019), which echoes the definitions set out in national policy and guidance on the historic environment:
- **Archaeological interest:** there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
 - **Architectural and artistic interest:** these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship, and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
 - **Historic interest:** an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.
- 6.5 The above criteria reflect NPPF terminology and previous Historic England guidance (*Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance*, English Heritage, 2008), which proposed values to assess heritage significance (Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic, Communal).
- 6.6 This assessment of significance has been used to inform the proposals in order to minimise impact on the special interest of the listed building, and, where possible, to take opportunities to enhance its special interest.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

- 6.7 Shermanbury Place possesses archaeological interest, arising from both the material evidence of successive building phases and the potential for below-ground remains associated with earlier occupation. Documentary sources confirm continuous manorial history from the 11th century, whilst visual and fabric evidence attest to the existence of a substantial 16th century timber-framed Tudor mansion, likely commissioned by William Comber following his lease of the manor in 1542.
- 6.8 Although the Tudor house was demolished in 1779, the survival of reused 16th century chamfered beams in the basement of the present house demonstrates direct material continuity between the earlier and later buildings. These reused elements provide tangible evidence for the scale, construction and quality of the lost mansion and represent an important archaeological resource for the study of early modern high-status domestic architecture in Sussex.
- 6.9 Below-ground remains of the Tudor mansion, its walled ornamental garden, and associated service buildings are likely to survive within the vicinity of the current house. The early engravings indicate a formal garden layout and substantial wings enclosing courtyards, whilst later mapping records ancillary structures such as the tower, stables, entrance lodge and watermill complex. Foundations, yard surfaces and landscape features (including elements of former parkland and water management) are therefore likely to retain further evidential value.
- 6.10 The Victorian service wing, preserved in a virtually intact condition with original servants' staircase, butler's electric bell and fitted kitchen dresser, contributes additional archaeological interest. Its relatively unaltered plan and fittings represent a coherent body of fabric-based evidence for Victorian and Edwardian domestic service arrangements and working practices in a country house context.
- 6.11 Overall, Shermanbury Place has substantial archaeological interest as a multi-period manorial site, comprising standing fabric and probable buried remains that together illustrate the evolution of a high-status residence from at least the 16th century onward.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- 6.12 Architectural interest arises from design, craftsmanship, materials, and construction, whether the result of conscious design or vernacular evolution.
- 6.13 Shermanbury Place possesses high architectural interest as a late 18th century country house on the site of an earlier Tudor mansion, subsequently enlarged and remodelled in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The core of the current house, erected by John Challen in 1779, is a buff-brick building of two storeys over a basement, originally comprising a three-bay central block flanked by lower two-storey wings. This restrained, balanced composition exemplifies the measured elegance of late Georgian country house architecture, with its disciplined massing, simple detailing and ordered elevations.

- 6.14 The house underwent a major phase of 19th century alteration in which the principal block was extended to five bays and the first-floor accommodation over at least one side wing was enlarged. The introduction of a Venetian window in the central block, the addition of a columned porch to the east elevation and the reorganisation of fenestration reflect changing taste and the adoption of more expressive, picturesque elements within the underlying Georgian framework. These works maintained the essential symmetry and proportions of the original design whilst enriching its architectural character.
- 6.15 Late 19th- and early 20th-century works further developed the architectural interest of the building. The extension of the first floor over the west wing to match the east wing, alterations to the clock tower, and the replacement of the earlier greenhouse with a new billiard room or sun room at the south-west corner gave the house its present form. These additions demonstrate the continued adaptation of the house to contemporary expectations of comfort and leisure, whilst maintaining a coherent overall composition.
- 6.16 Particularly important is the survival of the late 19th century service wing, which retains most of its original plan form and key fittings. The servants' staircase, bell system and kitchen dresser, together with the spatial hierarchy between principal rooms and service areas, provide a remarkably complete picture of country house planning and operation in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. This degree of survival is unusual and significantly enhances the architectural interest of the building.
- 6.17 Taken together, the successive phases of construction and alteration at Shermanbury Place form a legible architectural palimpsest, illustrating the transition from a compact late Georgian house to a more expansive and embellished 19th-century residence, without obscuring the underlying design logic. The house is therefore an architecturally distinguished and informative example of a Sussex country house evolving over time.

ARTISTIC INTEREST

- 6.18 Artistic interest concerns human creative skill and aesthetic quality, whether expressed through design, composition, or craftsmanship.
- 6.19 Shermanbury Place possesses considerable artistic interest, expressed through both its architectural composition and its historic relationship with the surrounding landscape. The late Georgian core, with its central block and flanking wings, embodies a calm, symmetrical and well-proportioned design. The buff-brick elevations, regular sash windows and understated detailing give the principal fronts a restrained dignity characteristic of the period.
- 6.20 The 19th century enhancements, including the Venetian window, columned porch and later billiard/sun room, introduce elements of visual richness and variety whilst remaining broadly sympathetic to the original composition. These additions contribute to a layered aesthetic, in which the clarity of the Georgian structure is enlivened by Victorian and Edwardian embellishments. The clock tower and associated outbuilding also add vertical emphasis and visual interest, reinforcing the sense of a composed estate group rather than a purely utilitarian farmstead.

- 6.21 The setting of the house within simple historic parkland, with a formal garden to the south and visual links to St Giles Church and the remains of the wider estate (including former stables, lodge and watermill), further enhances its artistic interest. Historic engravings and later mapping indicate that the house was conceived and understood in dialogue with its landscape, first as the focus of a Tudor garden and later as the centrepiece of an 18th and 19th century park. Although the elaborate ornamental gardens of the Tudor period have not survived, the later formal garden and the park-like character of the surrounding land provide an appropriately composed backdrop for the house.
- 6.22 The combined effect of the main house, its service ranges, ancillary structures and landscape setting is a visually coherent and picturesque ensemble, whose aesthetic qualities contribute significantly to the character of the local area.

HISTORIC INTEREST

- 6.23 Historic interest relates to how a heritage asset illustrates or is associated with past lives, events, or developments in society, economy, or culture.
- 6.24 Shermanbury Place possesses high historic interest as the principal manorial seat of Shermanbury, with a documented history stretching back to the 11th century. Its descent through the Buci, Fyfield, Sandys, Comber, Gratwicke, Farncombe, Challen and Hunt families, among others, is well recorded in county histories and estate documents. This continuity of occupation and ownership situates the house firmly within the long-term narrative of the Sussex gentry and their estates.
- 6.25 The replacement of the 16th century Tudor mansion with a new buff-brick house in 1779 reflects broader national trends in country house development, including the preference for classical forms and the rationalisation of older, more labyrinthine medieval and early post-medieval buildings. The subsequent 19th century extensions and embellishments mirror the Victorian tendency to expand and adapt existing houses rather than replace them wholesale, whilst the addition of a billiard/sun room and enlarged wings illustrates changing patterns of leisure and domestic comfort.
- 6.26 The ownership of Shermanbury Place in the later 19th and early 20th centuries by figures such as Sampson Copestake and Harold Warren Coleman, and the later sale and subdivision of the estate, reflect the transition of many country houses from long-established landed families to wealthy industrial, commercial and professional owners. The estate's partial dispersal in the 20th century, and the offering of the house with reduced acreage, align with wider national patterns of change in country house ownership, economics and landholding.
- 6.27 The largely intact late Victorian and Edwardian service wing provides particularly strong historic interest, illustrating the organisation of domestic labour and the hierarchical relationships between family and servants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its survival makes Shermanbury Place an instructive case study in the social history of country house service.

- 6.28 The proximity of Shermanbury Place to St Giles Church, the historic mill site and other estate-related structures positions it at the historic heart of the local community. The manor's frequent mention in topographical and county histories and its visual prominence as a local landmark underpin its role in the collective memory and identity of the area, contributing to its wider historic and associative interest.

SETTING OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

- 6.29 Annex 2 of the NPPF (2024) 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."*
- 6.30 The setting of Shermanbury Place remains largely rural and historically legible, retaining key components of the former estate landscape. The house occupies a slightly elevated position in relation to the surrounding grounds, with views across former parkland and towards St Giles Church, reinforcing the traditional visual and functional relationship between manor house and parish church.
- 6.31 Historic mapping demonstrates that the wider estate once included stables, lodge, watermill and associated buildings. Whilst the functional role of some of these structures has changed and elements of the wider parkland have been altered over time, the essential spatial relationships between the house, church and remnants of the estate remain appreciable.
- 6.32 The immediate setting of the house, including the simple formal garden to the south and the open grounds around the principal elevations, continues to provide an appropriate and complementary landscape frame. This setting allows the architectural form, scale and status of the house to be understood and appreciated.
- 6.33 Modern change within the wider landscape has introduced some degree of alteration but has not fundamentally eroded the historic character or legibility of the setting. The house still reads as the historic focus of a former estate, and the surviving spatial and visual relationships make a strong positive contribution to its overall significance.



Existing North Elevation



Existing South Elevation

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This section appraises the impact of the proposed works on Shermanbury Place and its setting. The proposals have been informed by an understanding of the building's significance (Section 6) and the relevant Historic England guidance, including Conservation Principles (2008), Making Changes to Heritage Assets (HEAN 2), Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency (HEAN 18), Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to Historic and Traditionally Constructed Building (HEAG014), and The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3, HEAG180). The works have been designed to sustain and the architectural, historic and artistic interest of the listed building whilst securing its long-term, viable residential use.

REPLACEMENT PV ARRAY

- 7.2 The proposals are for a 15 panel solar PV array to replace an existing system that has been installed on the property since 2011. The array has been simulated to produce 8,112Kwh annually and will be linked to a battery storage unit (to be located in the neighbouring but separate modern garage to the west of the main house). The system will also include a new PV inverter which allows additional 'storage' of excess solar energy as hot water for domestic use, utilising the existing water storage tank and immersion heating function that is located in the basement.
- 7.3 The proposal meets all of the Permitted Development rights, yet Planning Permission is required as the proposals relate to a Listed Building.
- 7.4 The system has been sized to make the most of the properties concealed inner roof pitches, located on the south and west pitches, where an older outdated PV array exists and is being replaced. The array is not visible from the ground on any elevation or aspect, although the 'as proposed' west elevation does show them due to perspective.
- 7.5 As such, the proposal will not result in any detrimental effect or harm to the special interest of the Listed building as its traditional character will be preserved. Listed Build Consent has already been approved for the proposed array, see application reference DC/25/2125.



Existing East Elevation



Existing West Elevation

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed scheme is based on a thorough understanding of the Listed Building and its curtilage listed, its historic development and significance and has been informed by desk-based research and on-site visits.
- 8.2 The works are modest in scale and limited to replacing an existing solar array with a new, updated system. They maintain the massing and silhouette of the house and preserve its historic relationships with St Giles Church, the former parkland and the immediate garden compartments. In GPA3 terms, these changes sit comfortably within the established designed and functional setting, and either maintain the ability to appreciate Shermanbury Place as the principal house of a historic rural estate.
- 8.3 The works help secure the long-term, sustainable occupation of the house, which is itself a key means of conserving significance over time.
- 8.4 The proposal will not result in any detrimental effect or harm to the special interest of the Listed building as its traditional character will be preserved. Listed Build Consent has already been approved for the proposed array, see application reference DC/25/2125.
- 8.5 The proposals are compliant with respect to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 insofar as the special interest of the Listed farmhouse, its curtilage listed, and setting will be preserved and enhanced.
- 8.6 In summary, the proposed works to the Listed Building are considered to be proportionate and in accordance with the requirement of the Act, the NPPF and the Horsham District Planning Framework – Horsham District’s Local Plan.



Existing East Elevation

APPENDIX: LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and their settings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 16(2) states “In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 66(1) reads: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

In relation to development within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) reads: *“Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at national level within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at local level within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

Chapter 16 (Paragraphs 202 to 221) of the NPPF updated and adopted in December 2024 constitute the Government’s national guidance and policy regarding development relating to the historic environment.

The NPPF is a material consideration and states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local framework unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment with much 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.”

Setting is defined in Annex 2 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.”

Annex 2 defines Conservation (for heritage policy) as:

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

This definition is important as it distinguishes conservation from preservation and puts an emphasis on proactively managing change rather than reactively resisting it.

LOCAL POLICY – HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

The site lies within the boundary of the Horsham District Council Authority. The Horsham District Planning Framework – Horsham District’s Local Plan is the overarching planning document for Horsham district outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and replaces the Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies documents which were adopted in 2007. This document was adopted in November 2015 and sets out the planning strategy for the years up to 2031.

Policy 34 of the HDPF relates to the Historic Environment:

Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets

The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Applications for such development will be required to:

1. Make reference to the significance of the asset, including drawing from research and documentation such as the West Sussex Historic Environment Record;
2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by English Heritage and Conservation Area Character Statements;
3. Reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; including the use of traditional materials and techniques;
4. Make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensuring that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas;
5. Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials;
6. Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset;
7. Retain and improves the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features; and
8. Ensure appropriate archaeological research, investigation, recording and reporting of both above and below-ground archaeology, and retention where required, with any assessment provided as appropriate.



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