



## HERITAGE STATEMENT

**16 Jengers Mead, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9PB**

Reconfiguration of Existing Ground Floor Retail Unit and Construction of an Additional Storey to Provide Five Additional Residential Dwellings

**Applicant:** Brindle Investments Ltd

**Planning Agent:** Your Living Space Limited

**Local Planning Authority:** Horsham District Council

**Date:** September 2026

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by **Your Living Space Limited** on behalf of **Brindle Investments Ltd** in response to the validation requirement raised by Horsham District Council in respect of the planning application for:

**Reconfiguration of the existing ground floor retail unit and construction of an additional storey to provide five additional residential dwellings, whilst retaining the existing first-floor residential dwelling and ground-floor commercial use.**

The completed development will therefore comprise:

- an existing ground-floor commercial Class E use, retained and reconfigured;
- the existing first-floor residential dwelling, retained; and
- five additional self-contained Class C3 residential dwellings.



The site is located within the **Billingshurst Conservation Area**.

The existing building is **not a Listed Building**.

The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to:

1. identify the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposal;
2. describe the historical development and character of the surrounding area;
3. assess the significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area;
4. consider the contribution made by the existing building at 16 Jengers Mead;
5. assess the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
6. demonstrate that the proposal has been designed to conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The assessment has been undertaken having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Horsham District Planning Framework, the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan, the Billingshurst Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document and relevant Historic England guidance.

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## 2. CONFIRMATION OF CONSERVATION AREA STATUS

The application site is located within the **Billingshurst Conservation Area**.

This has been confirmed through Horsham District Council's own planning records.

In particular, a Horsham District Council Development Management Committee report relating specifically to **16 Jengers Mead** recorded that:

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"The unit is located in the designated Billingshurst Conservation Area."

The same report identifies 16 Jengers Mead as a retail unit within the primary shopping frontage of Billingshurst village centre, with residential units occupying floors above the retail premises.

The site's location within the Conservation Area is therefore accepted for the purposes of this application.

The existing building itself is not a Listed Building.

The heritage consideration is consequently principally concerned with the effect of the proposed development upon the **character and appearance and significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area**, rather than the alteration of a listed building.

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## 3. HERITAGE POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised by the Government on **17 August 2026** and the new Framework is now the applicable national planning policy document. It replaced the December 2024 version.

The new Framework places the historic environment within Chapter 20, "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment".

Of particular relevance to this proposal are the new heritage policies **HE4 to HE10**.



The Framework establishes the principle that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that development should conserve and, where appropriate, enhance their significance.

Policy **HE5 – Assessing effects on heritage assets** requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to be assessed having regard to the significance of the asset and the effect of the proposal upon that significance.

The new Framework specifically recognises that development can have:

- positive effects;
- no effect;
- harm; or
- substantial harm or total loss of significance,

depending upon the circumstances of the case.

The approach is therefore one of understanding the significance of the heritage asset and assessing the actual effect of the proposal upon that significance, rather than assuming that development within a Conservation Area is inherently harmful.

The new Framework also places emphasis upon opportunities for development to conserve and enhance heritage assets and to make positive contributions to local character and distinctiveness.

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## 4. STATUTORY DUTY

Section 72(1) of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires the Local Planning Authority, when exercising planning functions in respect of land within a



Conservation Area, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The proposal has therefore been considered specifically in relation to:

- the character of the Conservation Area;
- its appearance;
- its historic development;
- the architectural character of its buildings;
- the relationship between historic and modern development;
- the contribution made by the existing building; and
- the effect of the proposed additional storey.

The statutory duty does not prevent change within Conservation Areas.

Horsham District Council itself explains that Conservation Area designation does not prevent development, but means that development should be controlled and managed so that it has a preserving or enhancing effect on the character of the area. The Council specifically identifies building height, plot size, layout, materials and design quality as important considerations.

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## 5. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

### 5.1 Horsham District Planning Framework

The **Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)** remains the adopted Local Plan for Horsham District.



The principal heritage policy is:

## Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets

Policy 34 requires development affecting heritage assets to:

- make reference to the significance of the asset;
- draw upon appropriate historic environment evidence;
- reflect current best practice;
- reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design;
- make a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness;
- ensure development in Conservation Areas is consistent with their special character;
- retain locally distinctive building forms and their settings where appropriate; and
- address archaeological interests where relevant.

The proposal has been assessed against these requirements.

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## 6. BILLINGSHURST CONSERVATION AREA

### 6.1 Historical Development of Billingshurst

Billingshurst is an historic settlement situated within the western Weald.

The historic village developed around the High Street and the junction of historic routes, including the route of the Roman road traditionally identified as Stane Street.



The historic centre contains a range of buildings reflecting the development of the village over several centuries, including timber-framed buildings, traditional cottages, historic public houses, commercial premises and institutional buildings.

The historic character of the village is therefore derived not from a single architectural period but from the layering of development over time.

This is important in considering the current proposal because the Conservation Area contains both historic buildings and later twentieth-century development.

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## 7. JENGERS MEAD

Jengers Mead occupies a particular position within the history and character of Billingshurst.

The present Jengers Mead development dates principally from the **1960s**, when part of the historic commercial area was redeveloped to create a modern shopping and parking environment.

The Billingshurst Design Statement records that the 1960s Jengers Mead development represented a significant change from the traditional historic centre and did not replicate the character of the earlier buildings.

This distinction is important.

The existing buildings at Jengers Mead are not historic structures of the same architectural character or significance as the surviving timber-framed buildings and historic frontage buildings within the older High Street.



Jengers Mead forms a later layer of development within the wider historic settlement.

It therefore contributes to the understanding of the **evolution of Billingshurst**, but its architectural significance is materially different from that of the older buildings which form the principal historic interest of the Conservation Area.

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## 8. CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The character of the wider Billingshurst Conservation Area is principally derived from:

- the historic High Street;
- surviving historic buildings;
- timber-framed structures;
- traditional building materials;
- established street patterns;
- the relationship between buildings and the historic routes;
- the church and other historic landmarks;
- the varied roofscape;
- historic public houses and commercial premises; and
- the surviving relationship between the historic core and later development.

The Conservation Area is not architecturally uniform.

It contains buildings from different periods and of different architectural quality.

The later development at Jengers Mead forms part of this layered character.



The Billingshurst Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document specifically identifies **Jengers Mead and the Library Car Park as one of the key areas of the village centre** and recognises the potential for further development at Jengers Mead.

Of particular relevance, the SPD states that:

"infill development could be explored at Jengers Mead which has potential to deliver additional homes above and groundfloor activity subject to more detailed design and discussions."

This is a particularly relevant consideration for the current proposal.

The principle of additional residential accommodation above active ground-floor uses at Jengers Mead has therefore been specifically identified by the Council as an opportunity for the future evolution of this part of the village centre.

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## 9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area can be understood through its principal heritage interests.

### 9.1 Historical Interest

The Conservation Area has significant historical interest arising from the evolution of Billingshurst from an historic rural settlement into a modern village centre.

The historic High Street, church, traditional buildings and surviving street pattern provide evidence of the historic development of the settlement.



Jengers Mead contributes to the understanding of the later twentieth-century evolution of the centre, although it does not possess the same level of historic significance as the surviving historic core.

## **9.2 Architectural Interest**

The principal architectural interest of the Conservation Area derives from its surviving historic buildings, including timber-framed and traditionally constructed buildings and the varied collection of historic commercial and residential properties.

The architecture of Jengers Mead is predominantly later twentieth-century commercial architecture.

The existing building at No. 16 is not listed and does not possess identified architectural significance equivalent to the listed and historic buildings elsewhere within the Conservation Area.

## **9.3 Archaeological Interest**

The historic settlement of Billingshurst has archaeological interest associated with its long-established occupation and historic development.

However, the application principally concerns the vertical extension and internal reconfiguration of an existing building.

No substantial excavation or redevelopment of undeveloped ground is proposed.

The potential for the proposal to adversely affect below-ground archaeological remains is therefore considered limited.



Any archaeological requirements identified by the Council or West Sussex County Council's Historic Environment Record can be addressed through an appropriate condition if necessary.

## **9.4 Communal Value**

The village centre has considerable communal value as the principal commercial and social focus of Billingshurst.

Jengers Mead contributes to this communal function through its commercial premises, pedestrian environment and relationship with the village centre.

The proposal retains the existing commercial use and introduces additional residents into the centre.

It therefore supports the continued vitality and activity of the area.

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## **10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AT 16 JENGERS MEAD**

The existing building is a later commercial building forming part of the Jengers Mead shopping development.

It is:

- not a Listed Building;
- not identified as a historic building of equivalent significance to the principal listed buildings in the High Street;
- of predominantly twentieth-century construction;



- already commercial in character; and
- located within a development that represents a later phase in the evolution of the village centre.

The building therefore makes a **limited contribution to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area**.

Its principal contribution is contextual rather than architectural.

It forms part of the established built form of Jengers Mead and contributes to the enclosure and commercial activity of the area.

Its significance is therefore assessed as **low** in heritage terms.

This does not mean that the building can be altered without consideration.

Rather, it means that the appropriate conservation response is to ensure that any alteration is sympathetic to the established townscape and does not adversely affect the elements of the Conservation Area which possess greater heritage significance.

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## 11. CONTRIBUTION OF THE SITE TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

The site makes a limited contribution to the Conservation Area through:

- its position within the Jengers Mead shopping parade;
- its contribution to the established commercial frontage;
- its built form and relationship with adjoining commercial premises;
- its contribution to the enclosure of the public realm; and



- its role within the later twentieth-century evolution of Billingshurst.

The building does not make a strong individual architectural contribution.

The principal heritage sensitivity therefore relates to the **effect of the additional storey upon the wider townscape**, rather than the loss of historic fabric.

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## 12. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises:

1. retention and reconfiguration of the existing ground-floor commercial premises;
2. construction of an additional storey;
3. retention of the existing first-floor residential dwelling;
4. provision of five additional self-contained residential dwellings;
5. introduction of four rear-facing windows to improve natural daylight to the commercial premises;
6. reinstatement of the existing rear commercial access shutter; and
7. associated internal alterations.

The principle of adding a further storey to the building has previously been approved by Horsham District Council under the planning permission granted in **May 2016**, although that permission has now expired.

The current application therefore represents a renewed and modestly refined version of a previously accepted development principle.

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## **13. HERITAGE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL**

### **13.1 Additional Storey**

The principal heritage consideration is the proposed additional storey.

The additional floor will alter the existing roofscape and increase the vertical presence of the building.

However, the building is already part of the later twentieth-century Jengers Mead development and is not itself a historic building.

The additional storey therefore does not involve the alteration or loss of historic architectural fabric.

The proposal must instead be assessed in terms of its effect upon the wider Conservation Area.

The additional storey has been designed to relate to the existing building and the established scale of Jengers Mead.

It will form part of the existing commercial/residential character of the parade rather than introducing an isolated building of substantially different character.

Importantly, the Council's own Village Centre SPD identifies the potential for additional residential accommodation above ground-floor activity at Jengers Mead.

The proposal is therefore consistent with the identified potential for the area to evolve through appropriately designed intensification.



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## 14. EFFECT ON HISTORIC VIEWS

The proposal has been considered in relation to views within and across the Conservation Area.

The principal historic views and architectural landmarks of Billingshurst are associated with the High Street and its surviving historic buildings.

The application site is located within the later Jengers Mead development.

The additional storey will be experienced principally as part of the Jengers Mead commercial environment rather than as an alteration to a historic High Street building.

The proposal will not obscure or remove any identified historic landmark.

There is no proposal to demolish a historic building or remove a significant historic townscape feature.

Accordingly, the effect upon important historic views is expected to be limited.

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## 15. EFFECT ON LISTED BUILDINGS

The existing building at 16 Jengers Mead is not listed.

There are listed buildings within the wider Billingshurst Conservation Area.

The principal consideration is therefore whether the proposal affects their setting.



The proposed development is contained within the established Jengers Mead development and does not involve alteration to any listed building.

The additional storey will remain visually associated with the existing twentieth-century commercial development rather than becoming part of the architectural composition of the historic buildings on the High Street.

The proposal is therefore not considered to cause material harm to the setting or significance of nearby listed buildings.

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## 16. DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

The design has been developed with regard to the character of the site and the wider Conservation Area.

The key principles are:

Retention of the existing commercial character

The ground-floor commercial use is retained.

This is important because Jengers Mead forms part of the commercial centre of Billingshurst.

Controlled vertical extension

The additional accommodation is provided through a further storey rather than through expansion into surrounding land.



This represents an efficient form of development and follows the principle previously accepted through the 2016 planning permission.

## Respect for existing built form

The additional storey relates directly to the existing building and does not introduce an unrelated building form.

## Limited external alteration

The majority of the proposed changes are internal.

The new rear windows and reinstated shutter are functional alterations to the existing commercial premises and have limited heritage impact.

## Improved functionality

The proposal improves the functionality of both the commercial and residential accommodation.

This supports the continued viable use of the building and contributes to the ongoing vitality of the village centre.

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## 17. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal has the potential to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area through the continued use and enhancement of an existing commercial building.

The development:

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- retains the commercial function of Jengers Mead;
- provides additional housing within the village centre;
- makes efficient use of an existing building;
- avoids development of greenfield land;
- improves the quality of the existing and proposed accommodation;
- provides a viable long-term use for the upper floors;
- improves the functionality of the commercial unit; and
- provides opportunities for environmental enhancements, including a potential green roof.

The retention and active use of buildings within historic centres is an important component of sustainable conservation.

The Council's own Village Centre SPD recognises the opportunity for additional residential development above ground-floor activity at Jengers Mead.

The proposal consequently represents the type of controlled evolution of the area contemplated by the Council's own guidance.

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## 18. GREEN ROOF AND HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT

The applicant is willing, subject to technical and construction feasibility, to incorporate a green roof as part of the development.

A green roof could provide:

- biodiversity enhancement;



- improved surface water attenuation;
- improved thermal performance;
- climate resilience; and
- an enhanced ecological contribution.

Given the site's location within a Conservation Area, the detailed form and visibility of any green roof would be considered carefully to ensure that it complements rather than detracts from the surrounding townscape.

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## 19. PLANNING BALANCE AND HERITAGE

The proposal should be assessed having regard to the significance of the Conservation Area and the actual degree of impact upon that significance.

The existing building is a later twentieth-century commercial building of limited individual heritage significance.

The proposal does not:

- demolish a historic building;
- remove historic architectural fabric;
- alter a listed building;
- remove a historic street pattern;
- remove a historic public space;
- affect a scheduled monument; or
- materially alter an identified historic landmark.



The principal change is the addition of a storey to an existing later commercial building.

The proposal therefore represents a **low-impact form of change to a low-significance component of the Conservation Area.**

The proposal is considered to result in **no material harm to the significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area.**

In the context of the new NPPF, the proposal should therefore be regarded as a form of development which can conserve the significance of the heritage asset while supporting the continued sustainable use and evolution of the village centre.

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## 20. CONCLUSION

The application site at **16 Jengers Mead is confirmed to be within the Billingshurst Conservation Area.**

The existing building is not a Listed Building.

The heritage assessment has established that the principal significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area derives from the historic evolution of the village, its historic High Street, surviving traditional buildings, historic street pattern, architectural character and associated townscape.

Jengers Mead represents a later phase in that evolution.

The existing building at No. 16 is a twentieth-century commercial building which makes a **limited contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.**



The proposal does not result in the loss or alteration of a historic building or historic architectural fabric.

The principal heritage consideration is the effect of the proposed additional storey upon the wider townscape.

The additional storey has already been accepted in principle through the previous planning permission granted in May 2016.

Furthermore, Horsham District Council's own **Billingshurst Village Centre SPD** expressly identifies Jengers Mead as an area with potential for infill development delivering **additional homes above ground-floor activity**, subject to detailed design.

The current proposal follows this principle.

The development will retain the active commercial use at ground-floor level and provide additional residential accommodation above.

The proposed amendments to the existing building are limited and principally improve functionality and viability.

The four rear windows and reinstated rear shutter have negligible heritage implications.

The additional storey will be integrated with the existing building and will not result in the loss of any significant historic fabric or important townscape feature.

The proposal is therefore considered to:

- preserve the established character of Jengers Mead;
- maintain the commercial vitality of the village centre;



- make efficient use of an existing building;
- provide additional housing in a sustainable location;
- avoid harm to listed buildings;
- avoid harm to important historic views;
- conserve the significance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area; and
- provide an appropriate and sustainable form of change within the historic environment.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and accords with **Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 34**, the relevant provisions of the **Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan**, the **Billingshurst Village Centre SPD**, and the heritage policies of the **National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)**.

There is consequently **no heritage reason why planning permission should be withheld**.

Planning permission is respectfully requested.