folkes architects

Design, Access & Heritage Statement

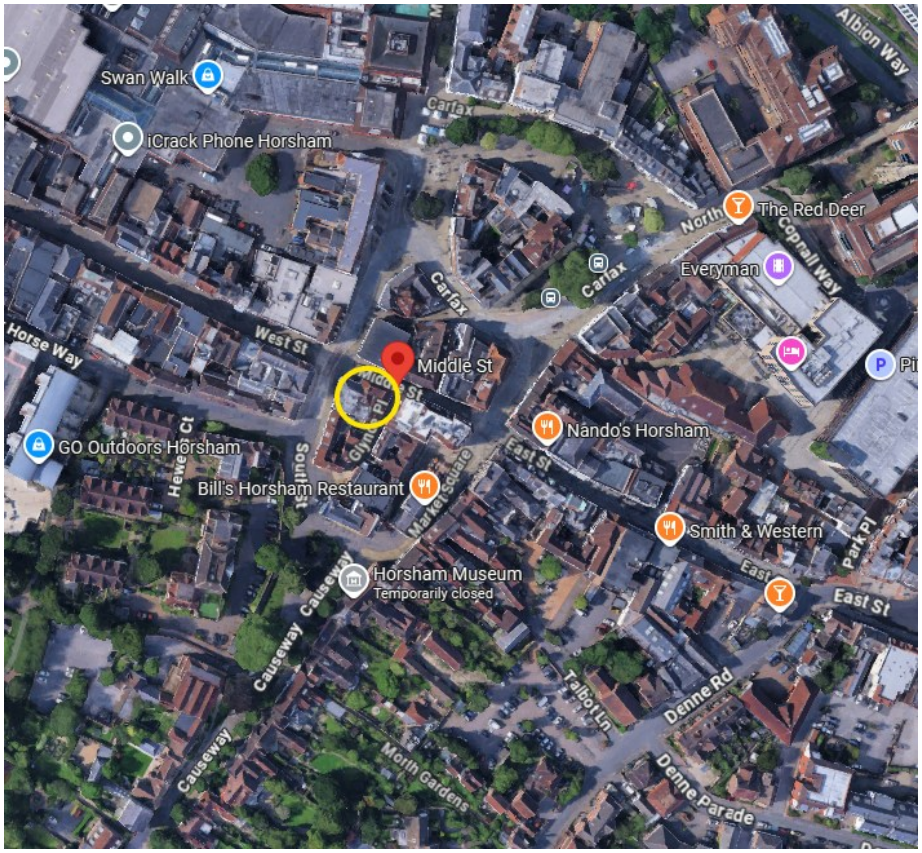
Proposal for alterations to create a larger open plan retail unit including signage changes

5 & 5A Middle Street | Horsham | RH12 1NW

Oct 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent for proposed alterations at 5 & 5a Middle Street, Horsham, RH12 1NW (hereafter "the Site"). The purpose of this statement is to describe the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, assess the impact of the proposed works on that significance, and demonstrate that the proposals have been developed with due regard to the building's heritage value and its setting within the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area.



Location of 5 & 5A Middle Street – courtesy of Google Maps 2026

2.0 THE HERITAGE ASSET

2.1 Statutory Designation

5 & 5a Middle Street is a Grade II Listed Building, first listed on 26 July 1974 (List Entry Number: 1353934). The statutory address is given as 5 and 5A, Middle Street, Horsham, West Sussex. The building is located within the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area and forms part of a group with Nos 1 to 4 (consec) South Street.

2.2 Architectural Description

The listed building is described in the National Heritage List for England as follows:

"Probably early C19. 3 storeys. 4 windows. Painted brick. Tiled roof. Moulded brick chimney-stack. Modillioned eaves cornice. Rusticated quoins. Circular moulded braces between first

and second floors. Sash windows facing north, some glazing bars missing. One triple sash window on second floor facing west, glazing bars intact. Venetian window with moulded surround, glazing bars missing, on first floor to west. Modern shop fronts."

The building is a three-storey structure of painted brick construction under a tiled roof, with a moulded brick chimney stack and a modillioned eaves cornice. Notable architectural features include rusticated quoins and circular moulded braces between the first and second floors. The fenestration includes sash windows to the north elevation (some with missing glazing bars), a triple sash window to the second floor facing west with intact glazing bars, and a Venetian window with moulded surround at first floor level to the west. The ground floor accommodates modern shop fronts (see images below).





2.3 Historical Context and Significance

Middle Street has medieval origins, having been formed in the 14th century when traders constructed permanent shops to replace temporary market stalls. It was historically known as "Butchers' Row," a name recorded from 1727 but likely originating earlier, reflecting the street's historic association with the meat trade and its proximity to the former cattle market in the Carfax. The street cuts across what was originally the large triangular market place of Horsham, the town having been founded as a planned "new town" by the Braose family in the medieval period .

By the 1830s, Middle Street was characterised by trades that were considered less salubrious than those in the neighbouring Carfax and Market Square, including a fellmonger and tallow chandler. The street evolved over the 19th and 20th centuries, with many buildings undergoing rebuilding or refronting, particularly after 1850. Middle Street was later pedestrianised and now functions as a shopping street linking East Street and West Street.

The building at 5 & 5a Middle Street, dating from the early 19th century, represents a later phase of development within this historic street. Its painted brick construction, classical detailing (rusticated quoins, modillioned cornice), and Venetian window reflect the architectural fashions of the Georgian/Victorian transition period. The building makes a positive contribution to the street scene and the wider Conservation Area, both through its architectural quality and its role in the continuous built frontage that characterises Middle Street.

The building's significance derives from:

- Its **architectural interest** as an early 19th-century building with distinctive classical detailing
- Its **historic interest** as part of the historic commercial heart of Horsham
- Its **group value** with the adjacent listed buildings, including Nos 1 to 4 South Street, and its contribution to the townscape of the Conservation Area
- Its **setting** within Middle Street, a historically significant thoroughfare of medieval origin

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

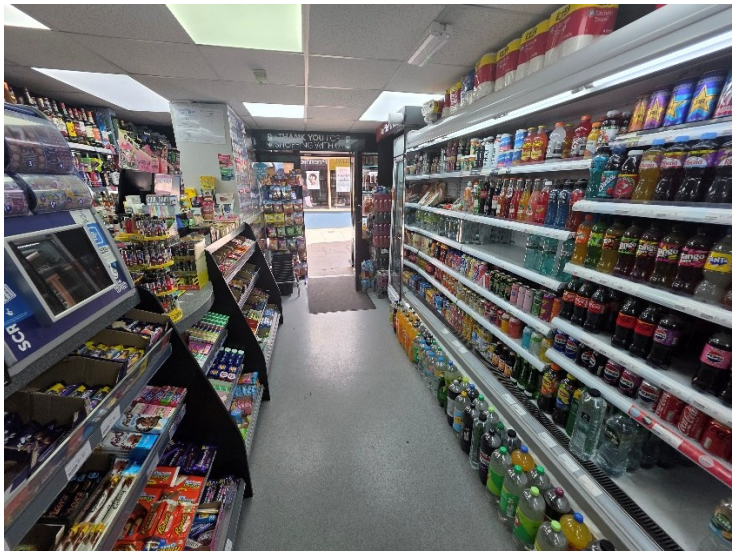
3.1 The Brief

The proposals are intended to facilitate the amalgamation of 5 and 5a Middle Street into a single open-plan shop unit. The works comprise:

- **Creation of an internal opening** between No. 5 and No. 5a to create one unified retail space
- **Blocking up of an existing door** (location to be confirmed)
- **Removal of the existing WC**
- **New external signage** (a Listed Building and Signage Application is required; the applicant will provide the signage design)



Existing images of 5A Middle Street


Existing images of 5 Middle Street

3.2 Objective

The objective of the works is to enable the two existing retail units to operate as a single, viable commercial space. This responds to the practical needs of modern retail use and supports the continued economic vitality of Middle Street as a shopping street, consistent with the mixed commercial and residential history of the Conservation Area.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

4.1 Impact on the Listed Building

The proposed internal opening between No. 5 and No. 5a is located within the internal fabric of the building. Its creation will necessitate the removal of a limited section of internal wall. The specific location, structural implications, and treatment of the opening (including its head, jambs, and any supporting structure) will be detailed in the submitted drawings and specification prepared by the project's structural engineer.

The blocking up of an existing door and removal of the WC are similarly internal alterations that affect later, likely non-historic fabric. The significance of the listed building derives primarily from its external architectural character and its historic role within the street scene, rather than from internal fixtures or later partitions that may have been introduced to facilitate the separate use of the two units.

The proposed external signage will be subject to changes. At this stage, it is anticipated that signage will be located on the existing modern shop fronts and will be designed to respect the character and appearance of the listed building and the Conservation Area.

4.2 Impact on the Conservation Area and Setting

The proposals do not involve any major external alterations to the building's historic fabric beyond the proposed signage and minor upgrading and making good works. The building's contribution to the Conservation Area - through its frontage, roofline, and architectural detailing

- will be preserved. The grouping of listed buildings along Middle Street and the street's historic character will remain intact.

4.3 Level of Harm

The internal works are anticipated to result in no harm or, at most, less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building. Any harm would be limited to the loss of a section of internal wall of no particular historic or architectural interest. The public benefit of sustaining the commercial use of the building, and thereby ensuring its ongoing maintenance and viability, weighs in favour of the proposals. Prior to submitting the Full Planning Application, informal consultation was sought through HDC Conservation Officer, Sean Rix who agreed the changes would have very minor impact on the building.

5.0 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by proposals and to assess the impact on that significance. Where harm is identified, the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification and, for less than substantial harm, an assessment of the public benefits.

Historic England's guidance confirms that the level of detail in a heritage statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals. The relevant legislation (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s.8) requires that works of alteration to a listed building receive written consent from the local planning authority.

The Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the medieval origins of the town, the survival of historic building forms, and the mixed commercial and residential character of the area as key positive characteristics. The proposals are consistent with the continued commercial use of historic buildings within the Conservation Area and do not detract from its special interest.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed works at 5 & 5a Middle Street are internal alterations that will enable the two units to function as a single retail space. The building's external architectural character, its contribution to the Middle Street street scene, and its role within the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area will be preserved. The works affect primarily later, non-historic fabric and will result in no harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building, outweighed by the public benefit of sustaining commercial activity in this historic location.