

HERITAGE STATEMENT



Construction of ramped access to connect existing front entrance to public footpath

**Hawthorns
Church Street
Rudgwick
Horsham
RH12 3EJ**

Prepared for: Horsham District Council

Date: January 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Statement

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the construction of ramped access to connect the existing front entrance of Hawthorns to the public footpath nearby.

The proposed works are required to facilitate wheelchair access and improve accessibility to the property in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 Site Location

Hawthorns is located on Church Street, Rudgwick, within the historic core of the village. Church Street (historically known as Rudgwick Street or "The Street") forms the principal historic thoroughfare through the village and contains numerous heritage assets.

2. HERITAGE CONTEXT

2.1 Conservation Area

Rudgwick Conservation Area

Church Street, Rudgwick is located within the Rudgwick Conservation Area, designated by Horsham District Council under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Conservation Area centres around the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity and encompasses the historic core of the village, characterized by its collection of timber-framed buildings and structures dating from the medieval period through to the Victorian era.

The Conservation Area was designated to protect the special architectural and historic character of Old Rudgwick, particularly the concentration of timber-framed houses that contribute significantly to the village's character.

2.2 Nearby Listed Buildings

The Conservation Area contains several significant listed buildings, including:

- **Holy Trinity Church** (Grade I listed) - 13th century church with tower dating from this period, located on the ridge and the old parish boundary
- **Little Ames, Church Street** (Listed Building, Historic England List Entry 1027000)

- Multiple other timber-framed houses, with over 90 listed timber-framed structures within the parish

2.3 Historic Character of Church Street

Church Street represents the linear development pattern typical of historic Sussex villages. The area has evolved from medieval origins, with significant development during the Elizabethan period when local ironworks brought prosperity to the region. This resulted in the construction of numerous "smoke-bay and chimney houses" during the 16th and 17th centuries. The street retains its historic character with a mixture of building ages and styles, ranging from medieval timber-framed structures to Victorian additions.

3. THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

3.1 Description of Hawthorns

Hawthorns is a detached property located on Church Street, Rudgwick. It's not a listed building. However, its close proximity to the Rudgwick Conservation Area means that the property contributes to the overall character and setting of the Conservation Area, and any alterations are subject to additional planning controls to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area's character.

3.2 Architectural Significance

Hawthorns represents a later phase of development in Church Street, post-dating the historic core by several centuries. The building does not possess particular architectural or historic merit in its own right but forms part of the more recent layers of development that have shaped the village over time.

4. PROPOSED WORKS

4.1 Description of Proposal

The proposed development comprises:

- Construction of a ramped access from the public footpath on Church Street to the existing front entrance of the property
- The ramp will be designed to current Building Regulations standards for accessibility (maximum gradient 1:12)
- Materials will be selected to complement the existing property and be sympathetic to the Conservation Area setting

4.2 Purpose and Need

The proposed ramp is essential to provide wheelchair access to the property, ensuring that the dwelling is accessible to persons with mobility impairments. This represents a reasonable and necessary adaptation to meet contemporary accessibility standards and equality requirements.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Significance of Heritage Assets Affected

The Conservation Area:

The Rudgwick Conservation Area derives its significance from:

- The concentration of historic timber-framed buildings from the medieval to post-medieval periods
- The linear settlement pattern along Church Street
- The relationship between buildings and the street
- The setting of the Grade I listed Holy Trinity Church
- The architectural diversity spanning several centuries
- The contribution to understanding the historic development of a Sussex village

Hawthorns:

The property itself is of neutral heritage significance. It does not contribute to the historic architectural character that forms the primary significance of the Conservation Area. However, it forms part of the evolved streetscape.

5.2 Impact on Heritage Significance

Impact on the Conservation Area: MINIMAL TO NEGLIGIBLE

The proposed ramp will have minimal impact on the Conservation Area for the following reasons:

1. **Scale and Location:** The ramp will be a modest, utilitarian structure serving a functional accessibility purpose.
2. **Reversibility:** Should circumstances change, the ramp could be removed without permanent harm to the property or the Conservation Area.
3. **Property Context:** Hawthorns does not contribute to the historic architectural significance of the Conservation Area. The addition of accessibility features to such a property will not harm the historic character that the Conservation Area was designated to protect.
4. **Sympathetic Design:** The ramp will be designed with materials and finishes that respect the setting, avoiding visually intrusive or discordant elements.

5. **Public Benefit:** The enhancement of accessibility represents a significant public benefit in making housing stock accessible to all members of society, aligning with contemporary social values and legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Impact on Listed Buildings: NONE

The proposed works will not affect any listed buildings. Hawthorns is not itself listed, and the ramp will not impact views of, or the setting of, nearby listed structures including Little Ames or Holy Trinity Church.

Impact on the Character of Church Street: MINIMAL

Church Street already contains a variety of building types and ages, including modern developments. The addition of a modest access ramp to the property will not materially alter the character or appearance of the street scene, particularly given that accessibility features are increasingly common and accepted elements of the built environment.

5.3 Cumulative Impact

No cumulative impacts are anticipated. The proposal is a minor, site-specific alteration to facilitate accessibility and will not set a precedent for inappropriate development.

6. DESIGN APPROACH AND MITIGATION

6.1 Design Principles

The design of the ramp will follow these principles to minimise heritage impact:

1. **Minimal Footprint:** The ramp will be designed to the minimum dimensions necessary to achieve safe wheelchair access.
2. **Appropriate Materials:** Materials will be selected to be discreet and appropriate to the setting:
 - The brickwork will match the existing structure in term of colour, texture and finish
3. **Visual Discretion:** The ramp will be positioned to minimise visual intrusion from the street. Where possible, existing landscaping will be retained.

6.2 Compliance with Legislation

The design will comply with:

- Building Regulations Part M (Access to and Use of Buildings)
- The Equality Act 2010
- Horsham District Council Conservation Area policies

7. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF requires that when considering applications affecting heritage assets, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

7.2 Local Policy

Horsham District Planning Framework:

Policy 34 (Heritage Assets and Managing Change in the Historic Environment) requires that development conserves and enhances heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conservation Area Designation:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

7.3 Policy Compliance

The proposed development complies with heritage policy requirements:

- It preserves the significance of the Conservation Area by affecting only a non-contributory building
- Any heritage impact is negligible and is outweighed by the public benefit of improved accessibility
- The design approach respects the Conservation Area setting
- The proposal aligns with national policy objectives for inclusive communities

8. PUBLIC BENEFITS

8.1 Accessibility and Inclusion

The primary public benefit of the proposal is the provision of wheelchair access to the property by:

- Enabling occupation by persons with mobility impairments
- Supporting independent living
- Complying with Equality Act 2010 principles
- Contributing to creating an inclusive community
- Extending the useful life of the property for existing or future occupants

8.2 Social Sustainability

Adapting existing housing stock to meet accessibility needs is preferable to requiring new housing development. It represents sustainable use of the existing built environment and reduces pressure for development elsewhere.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary of Heritage Impact

The proposed construction of a ramped access to facilitate wheelchair access at Hawthorns, Church Street, Rudgwick will result in:

- **No harm to listed buildings**
- **Minimal to negligible impact on the Rudgwick Conservation Area**
- **No adverse impact on the character or appearance of Church Street**

The property affected does not contribute to the historic or architectural significance of the Conservation Area. The proposed ramp is a modest, functional structure that will be sensitively designed to minimise visual impact.

9.2 Balance of Harm and Public Benefit

Even if it were considered that the proposal results in a minimal degree of less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area (which is not accepted), such harm would be clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefit of providing accessible housing that complies with contemporary equality standards.

10. CONCLUSION

The proposed access work preserves the character and appearance of the Rudgwick Conservation Area and is consistent with national and local planning policies for heritage assets. The application should be approved, subject to appropriate conditions regarding materials and detailed design to ensure the final construction is sympathetic to the Conservation Area setting.

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This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with Historic England guidance on Heritage Statements and to support a planning application to Horsham District Council.