Answers to the four points requested by Havant Borough Council regarding application APP/25/00645:

1. It does not affect Belmont Castle's listed building heritage. In the 32 years the current residents have lived at 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road, they have been granted planning permission for the following projects:

    - Front wall with electric gates
    - Extension of a front bay window
    - Double sided extension with indoor swimming pool with bedrooms and bathroom above
    - To build a double garage
    - Conversion of double garage into living dwelling for family members only

Whilst it may have listed status (which, of course, must be respected as we have lost far too many beautiful old buildings over the years) Belmont Castle is not a true castle as it was built in the early 19th century as a mansion house in the style of a castle from predominantly red brick with some faux stone and other architectural features. Its use a care home bears this out as a true castle would be highly impractical as a care home.

Belmont Castle has been granted planning permission twice in the past years for 38 extra resident rooms with a walkway corridor from the back of the main building to the new extension in a modern design not in keeping with the architectural style of the main building. The current owners of 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road had access to the drawings, and the extension granted at Belmont Castle is closer to the protected tree than the small project at 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road. The oak tree had the protection order applied to it when Belmont Castle applied for planning and may have been as part of the planning permission.

Furthermore, none of the buildings at 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road can be read in conjunction with Belmont Castle, or vice-versa, as a very large hedgerow (essential for small birds) and tall fence separates the two plots. This is especially true of the annexe and the proposed extension to the annexe. Therefore, a 'listed by association' situation does not exist with this application.

2. 16 Portsdown Hill Road is not an agricultural property. It being called "Towers Farm" is just a name and was chosen by previous owners. The current owners have lived there for 32 years and have never run it as a farm, and the previous owners never ran it as a farm either.

    If the above means the incorrect certificate has been completed then please send the correct one for completion – thank you.

3. The protected oak tree mentioned above is off site to the rear of Belmont Castle and is approximately 80 metres away from the proposed extension to the annexe at the front of 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road.

   The owners of 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road know about the protected oak tree as between 7 to 8 years ago the Griffin Family had a meeting with an officer from Havant Borough Council regarding all the trees to the left-hand/westerly side of 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road in the grounds of Belmont Castle.

   The proposed extension to the annexe at the front of 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road already has all services in place, as well as access to the drive that is shared on the property to the family's main home.

4. The reason for the extension to the annexe at 'Towers Farm' 16 Portsdown Hill Road is to provide a loving and nurturing home to Mr & Mrs Griffin's daughter and her two children. [redacted] The extension to the annexe gives the extra room needed for both children and their mother to live somewhere safe and secure whilst also having the extra support of the family just moments away in the main dwelling.

   As with the previous permission (APP/13/00484) for the annexe, there is absolutely intention whatsoever for the annexe to be rented or let out whether on a long-term or short-term basis, and will only be used by the family in an ancillary manner to the main dwelling. As before, this could be made a condition of the planning permission.

Summary

Given the above, it is recommended the application is made valid (subject to the correct certificate being completed) and that a site visit is carried out by an experience or senior planning officer along with the applicant and/or the agent. This would allow for the situation to be properly assessed as there is only so much information that can be garnered from drawings and then decide if any extra information is required.