

Response to Conservation Officer Feedback

Land at Ansty Farm

May 2024

Introduction

1. Two planning applications were submitted on 6th November 2023 relating to a Site at Land East of Ansty Way, Cuckfield Bypass, Cuckfield, West Sussex. The descriptions of development were as follows:

“Outline planning application (All matters reserved except for access) for the redevelopment of land to the east of Ansty to create a new Garden Community, comprising of the erection of up to 1,450 homes (including 30% affordable housing), up to 90 residential care units (C2 class), a primary school, a SEND school, health hub, sports facilities including all weather hockey pitches and tennis centre, allotments, retail, community and employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes, open spaces, and landscaping.”¹

And

“Change of use of farmland and woodland to parkland reserve to include public access and instigation of long-term management and rewilding regime, including establishment of pedestrian and cycle tracks, with new pedestrian and cycle access points off Cuckfield Road to the south and Staplefield Road to the north. Proposals to include the addition of two wooden viewing platforms and two hides. Sports pitches at Beech Farm Field to remain in sports use.”²

2. Following the submission of these two applications, written feedback was received from the Conservation Officer at Mid Sussex District Council via email. This note summarises the differences in the conclusions between the Heritage Statement(s) prepared by Turley and the Conservation Officer’s feedback.
3. Where harm has been identified, by the Conservation Officer and/or Turley, this has been considered to be ‘less than substantial harm’ under the NPPF, albeit there are differences in the calibration of the level of harm within the ‘less than substantial harm’ spectrum.

¹ [Planning Application Ref. No. DM/23/2866](#)

² [Planning Application Ref. No. DM/23/2867](#)

Main Site

4. Written feedback from the Conservation Officer on the outline planning application for the Main Site was received on 8th March 2024, via email. In all cases, there is a difference between the Conservation Officer's assessment and that set out in the Heritage Statement. In addition, the Conservation Officer also identified further harms (i.e., to non-designated heritage assets) that were not identified in the Heritage Statement.
5. In summary, the Conservation Officer states that:

“Despite some areas of retained open space and woodland, the proposal would have a fundamental impact on the rural character of the site, which would be transformed into an extensive suburban enclave, with all the associated built form, hard landscaping, and increased activity (including vehicle movements), noise and light levels. The existing tranquil rural character of the area would be lost.”
6. This is similar to the conclusion reached by the Heritage Statement:

“The existing landscape character of a large part of the Site, is a contributor in some ways to our understanding and appreciation of the historical development and also heritage interests of a number of the nearby designated heritage assets. This existing character would be materially and permanently changed by the Proposed Development on the south parcel of the Site (Ansty Garden Community), primarily due to the urbanising effects of the proposed residential-led use, built form and infrastructure. These would be indirect and not direct effects on these identified heritage assets.”
7. Although both the Heritage Statement and Conservation Officer feedback identify that harm will arise from the permanent change in the nature of this site, the level of harm attributed to the identified heritage assets has been calibrated differently, with a higher level of harm identified in each instance by the Conservation Officer compared with the Heritage Statement.
8. **Table 1** sets out the conclusions reached by the Heritage Statement and set out in the Conservation Officer's feedback for each individual heritage asset for comparison.

Table 1: Comparison of Conservation Officer and Heritage Statement Conclusions for Main Site

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion
Harvest Hill House	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, low-mid.	<p>Sustain overall heritage significance.</p> <p>There would be no direct impacts as a result of the Proposed Development, nor change within the most important garden / curtilage area (including the approach from Harvest Hill road and views out from the house to the south) of this listed building. The scheme would affect change within a part of the wider setting of this designated heritage asset as a result of the introduction of new uses and built form / landscape features on the south parcel of the Site further to the north. It is not automatic that such effects would equate to harm in how the heritage significance or interests of this listed building is understood or appreciated, however.</p> <p>The ZTV run by fabrik indicates the likely more limited visual impact of the Proposed Development on the curtilage of the listed building, which would be even more constrained in reality considering the combined effects of distance, topography and the screening / filtering effects of intervening established vegetation (albeit subject to seasonal change). In addition, the parameter plans indicate that a landscape buffer would be maintained along the southern edge of proposed new housing within the Site beyond the existing separation of fields, and also the height and density of new built form would be reduced within this part of the Site relative to other areas. Contextually, the degree to which the use and character of the surrounding land has changed over time (and since the 19th century), and also how the nearby settlement of Ansty has expanded, reduces the relative sensitivity of the significance of this listed building to the influence of new development within its wider setting.</p> <p>Overall the Proposed Development on Site would sustain, and not harm, the understanding or appreciation of the particular heritage significance of this listed building.</p>
Upper Ridges	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, mid.	<p>Sustain overall heritage significance.</p> <p>There would be no direct impacts as a result of the Proposed Development, nor change within the most important garden / curtilage area of the listed building. There would be change within a part of the much more extended area of the setting of this designated heritage asset as a result of the introduction of new uses and built form / landscape features on the south parcel of the Site to the north west. However, the ZTV run by fabrik indicates the likelihood of no visual impacts on the listed building or its immediate setting as a result of the Proposed Development. This is due to the combined effects of distance, undulating topography and the heavy screening / filtering effects of intervening established vegetation, including two tree belts (albeit subject to seasonal change). In addition, the parameter plans indicate that a landscape buffer would be maintained along the southern edge of proposed new build housing within the Site, that the height and density of this built form would be reduced relative to other core areas, and also that the larger part of the south east area of the Site would be turned to amenity open space maintaining its undeveloped green character.</p> <p>Overall the Proposed Development on Site would sustain, and not harm, the understanding or appreciation of the particular heritage significance of this listed building.</p>
West Riddens Farm	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, mid-high.	<p>Less than substantial, low.</p> <p>There would be no direct impacts on historic fabric or features as a result of the Proposed Development, nor would there be change within the most important curtilage defining the historic farmstead of this listed building. However, the Proposed Development would change the character and appearance of a part of its wider setting, including the introduction of new residential use and associated activity and built form within the fields to the north, as well as new road infrastructure with a vehicular access point on to an upgraded Harvest Hill road to the west. Such a degree of change would diminish the current understanding and appreciation of the historically stronger rural landscape character setting and agricultural use of this listed farmhouse and have an uncharacteristically urbanising effect experientially and visually. These impacts would result in harm the significance of this designated heritage asset, principally to an aspect of its historic interest, and to a lesser degree its vernacular architectural interest.</p> <p>The relative magnitude of such harm to heritage significance would be influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, the indirect nature of development impacts, and the fact that change would occur not within the important curtilage of this farmstead but a part of its wider setting to the north and beyond an existing maintained pond / tree group and field. And also that the larger extent and other areas of countryside that contribute to significance as part of the wide setting of this listed building would not be affected by this development. Account should also be taken of the distinctive topography and existing mature landscape features within and around the Site that would help to screen or otherwise filter the Proposed Development from view.</p> <p>Such effects would be further reduced by the design and mitigation measures integrated as part of the scheme. These include the proposed 15m landscape buffer along the southern side of the proposed area of new housing, which would further strengthen existing planting and also its screening / filtering effects to help soften this built edge. The relative height and density of new built form within this area of housing located to the north of the farmstead is proposed to be reduced relative to the other core areas of the new development on Site. Built form is envisioned to rise up to 2 domestic storeys in height only.</p> <p>Overall, the harm to the heritage significance of this listed building as a whole would fall within the category of “less that substantial” as defined by the NPPF (paragraph 202). It further assessed that such harm would fall towards the lower end of the scale within the category of less than substantial, as also informed by NPPG.</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion
Mount Noddy Cottage	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, low-mid.	<p>Sustain overall heritage significance.</p> <p>In the <i>Heritage Statement</i> assessment, Mount Noddy Cottage was assessed in a group with The Old Cottage and The Ancient Farm (also Grade II Listed Buildings).</p> <p>The Main Site is not an element of the wider setting of these listed building that makes any particularly positive or clearly legible contribution to the understanding or appreciation of their significance, other than as part of a once much more extensive and historically intact agricultural rural landscape surrounding this settlement. The Proposed Development would change the character and appearance of one part of that wider countryside context; with new housing and school uses and built form established to the east, although importantly parameter plans indicate that no new vehicular access point would be created into the core of the village.</p> <p>The potential visual or other experiential impacts of such change on the understanding or appreciation of their particular heritage significance is highly constrained by existing separation distance from the Site and the screening or otherwise filtering effects of intervening built development and also mature vegetation. In addition, the parameter plans indicate that a landscape buffer would be maintained along the western edge of the Site to reinforce that boundary treatment. Historically, the significant degree to which the use and character of the townscape / landscape settings of these historic houses has changed since their original construction further limits the influence of new development on heritage significance.</p> <p>Overall the Proposed Development would sustain, and not harm, the understanding or appreciation of the particular significance or heritage interests of any of these listed buildings within Ansty village</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion
Old Place and The Barn House	Grade II Listed Buildings	Less than substantial harm, high.	<p data-bbox="911 317 2873 457">As a result of the Proposed Development, change would occur within the wider landscape setting of these listed buildings outside that immediate curtilage. It is recognised that these wider open and green landscape surroundings contribute to our understanding and appreciation of their heritage significance; where the more intact elements of a rural agricultural land, including field patterns, woodland and further ponds, provide evidence of the historic use and also character of the setting of this original working farmstead. Albeit to a lesser degree relative to the more immediate area of setting.</p> <p data-bbox="911 464 2873 709">The Proposed Development would change the character and appearance of this part of the setting of the listed building group (i.e. south parcel of the Site), including the introduction of new residential use and associated activity and built form to the north and south of the main east / east PROW through the Site, formal and more informal open space and landscape design, a new school site further to the west, as well as new road infrastructure. Such change would clearly diminish the current understanding and appreciation of the historically stronger rural landscape character setting and agricultural use of these listed former farm buildings and would have an uncharacteristically urbanising effect experientially and visually. These impacts would therefore result in harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets, principally to an aspect of their historic interest, albeit to a lesser degree to their architectural interest.</p> <p data-bbox="911 716 2873 926">The relative magnitude of such harm to heritage significance would be influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, the indirect nature of development impacts, and the fact that change would occur not within the more important curtilage of this former farmstead but within a part of its wider setting surrounding. There are mature trees and other vegetation along the boundaries of this property which (subject to seasonal change) would also help to some degree to filter or otherwise soften immediate views of new built development when looking outwards. Account should also be taken of the distinctive topography and existing mature landscape features within the Site that would be retained as part of the scheme to maintain aspects of the landscape character of this area alongside a new and integral landscape-led strategy for this new community.</p> <p data-bbox="911 932 2873 1108">Further consideration should also be given to the design and mitigation measures integrated as part of the outline scheme, which would serve to minimise to some degree development impacts on heritage significance and setting. The parameter plans indicate that the existing historically established track (and PROW) to the farmstead would be retained and incorporated as part of a new network of connections and would not be upgraded to carry the main vehicular traffic associated with new housing. New road infrastructure would be located further away to the north and south to serve this new community.</p> <p data-bbox="911 1115 2873 1360">Further consideration should also be given to the design and mitigation measures integrated as part of the outline scheme, which would serve to minimise to some degree development impacts on heritage significance and setting. The parameter plans indicate that the existing historically established track (and PROW) to the farmstead would be retained and incorporated as part of a new network of connections and would not be upgraded to carry the main vehicular traffic associated with new housing. New road infrastructure would be located further away to the north and south to serve this new community. In this way the likely additional effects of noise, movement, lights and activity of increased vehicle movements would be moderate to some degree within the setting of these listed buildings. The main points of vehicular access to the Site are also located further away from this former farmstead and towards the edges of the Site along existing main roads.</p> <p data-bbox="911 1367 2873 1472">Existing tree groups to the east and west of the listed buildings would be retained and reinforced, including planting along the east / west PROW. Areas immediately to the north and east would be turned to informal / formal open space (perhaps in the model of a traditional village green – Ansty Common), which would retain a greater sense of openness and also green landscape character within this part of the setting of this historic grouping.</p> <p data-bbox="911 1478 2873 1619">Overall, it is our assessment that the harm to the heritage significance of each of these listed buildings within this group would fall within the category of “less that substantial” as defined by the NPPF (paragraph 202). On the basis of our description of the likely development impacts and design response, it further assessed that such harm would fall between the middle and lower end of the scale within this category of less than substantial, as also informed by NPPG.</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion	
Mackrell's Farm Cottage	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, mid-high.	Less than substantial harm, low.	<p>There would be no direct impacts on the listed building as a result of the Proposed Development on Site, nor change within the most important and localised domestic curtilage area of its setting. There would be change within a part of the more extended area of the setting of this designated heritage asset as a result of the introduction of new uses and built form, infrastructure and landscape features on the Site. However, the ZTV run by fabrik indicates the likelihood of no visual impacts on the listed building or its immediate setting as a result of the Proposed Development. This is likely due to the combined effects of the undulating topography and the established heavy screening / filtering of intervening mature vegetation, including the wooded valley of the stream where the listed building is positioned (albeit subject to seasonal change). Historically, the degree to which the use and character of the surrounding land has changed over time, including the introduction of the modern water treatment works to the north, has reduced the sense of isolation and also relative sensitivity of the significance of this listed building to the influence of further development.</p> <p>The parameter plans indicate that the closest areas of the south parcel of the Site (to the north and west) would either be maintained as woodland or turned to amenity open space / allotments retaining a generally undeveloped green character. Existing tree belts to the west and north (alongside new green infrastructure) would help to screen the edges of the proposed new build housing within the Site, and also to some degree mitigate the intervention of the new infrastructure of roads and also new vehicular bridge across this part of the valley. The proposals also indicate that the height and density of new built form would be reduced along the eastern edge of the Site relative to other core areas to be developed.</p> <p>Importantly, the existing historically established track to this cottage would be retained and incorporated as part of a new network of connections and would not be upgraded to carry the main vehicular traffic associated with new housing. New road infrastructure would therefore be located further away to the west and integrated as part of existing mature vegetation to aid in the mitigation of the additional effects of noise, movement, lights and activity of increased vehicle movements for this property. In addition the PROW currently running directly past this listed building would be diverted away as part of wider proposals in order to help reduce associated pedestrian footfall nearby.</p> <p>Although the design approach and mitigation measures of the Proposed Development have clearly sought to minimise impacts on the experience of this listed building, it is likely that this change would diminish to some degree our current understanding and appreciation of the historically stronger rural landscape character setting of this heritage asset. Although visual impacts are likely to be highly limited due to topography and existing or new planting, the existing sense of isolation and relative tranquillity would be affected by the proximity of new urbanising activities related to housing and also new road infrastructure on the south parcel of the Site. These impacts would likely therefore result in a degree of harm to heritage significance, principally to this building's historic interest.</p> <p>Overall, it is our assessment that the harm to the heritage significance of this listed building would fall within the category of "less than substantial" as defined by the NPPF (paragraph 202). It is further assessed that such harm would fall towards the lower end of the scale within this category of less than substantial, as also informed by NPPG.</p>
Lodge Farm	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, low-mid.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>There would be no direct impacts on the listed building as a result of the Proposed Development on this part of the Site, nor change within the most important garden / curtilage area of its more immediate setting. There would be change within a part of the much more extended area of the setting of this designated heritage asset as a result of the introduction of new uses and built form / landscape features on the Site further to the north west / west. However, it is likely that visual or other experiential impacts would be relatively limited; constrained by the combined effects of distance, the undulating topography and the established heavy screening / filtering of intervening mature vegetation, including substantial tree belts to the western edge and also within the north eastern part of the Site (albeit subject to seasonal change). In addition, the parameter plans indicate that the closest area of the Site (to the north west) would be turned to amenity open space maintaining its undeveloped green character. An existing tree belt screens the western edge of the Site and with newly proposed open space would act as a landscape buffer between proposed new build housing and the listed building.</p> <p>Overall the Proposed Development on Site would sustain, and not harm, the understanding or appreciation of the particular heritage significance of this listed building within its setting.</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion	
Highbridge Mill	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, high.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>There would be no direct impacts on the listed building as a result of the Proposed Development on Site, nor change within the most important and localised curtilage area of the former mill complex. There would be change within a part of the more extended area of the setting of this designated heritage asset as a result of the introduction of new uses and built form / landscape features on the Site. However, the ZTV run by fabrik indicates the very low likelihood of visual impacts on the listed building or its immediate setting as a result of the Proposed Development. This is due to the combined effects of the contained valley location and the established heavy screening / filtering of intervening mature woodland (albeit subject to seasonal change). Historically, the degree to which the use and character of the listed building and also the surrounding land has changed over time, including the modern conversion and adaptation to housing and the modern upgrade of the nearby Cuckfield Road (now part of the A272), has reduced the sense of isolation and also relative sensitivity of the significance of this listed building to the influence of further development.</p> <p>In addition, the parameter plans indicate that areas of the south parcel of the Site and nearby edges would either be maintained as woodland or turned to amenity open space retaining an undeveloped green character. These plans also indicate that a landscape buffer would either be maintained or reinforced to the north east and south west as part of the boundary treatment to new build housing in those areas of the Site. The height and density of new built form would also be reduced within these areas relative to other core of central areas of the developed Site.</p> <p>It is our assessment that although change to the current experience would occur within the wider setting of this listed building complex, overall the Proposed Development would sustain, and not harm, the understanding or appreciation of the particular heritage significance of this designated heritage asset.</p>
Laines Farm and Court House Farm	Non-Designation Heritage Asset (low-mid level of interest within the local context – identified by Conservation Officer)	Mid-level of harm	No effect on overall heritage significance.	<p>Our team’s desktop and subsequent site survey analysis has been used to inform the scoping process for built heritage assets; based on our understanding or past and now existing historical, functional, physical and or visual relationships between the Site and the wider townscape / landscape surroundings containing those assets, and how that affects how heritage significance is understood and appreciated. The application LVIA, prepared by fabrik, includes a figure illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on the maximum building height parameter of 18m. This is a further tool that has also been used to informing the scoping process. However, it is noted that this viewshed is based on the topographical context, without taking into account the screening effects of vegetation and built form, i.e. a ‘worst case scenario’. The LVIA reports that in reality the Site is naturally well contained by virtue of the woodlands and tree belts within and surrounding the Site in combination with the undulating topography. This is also the findings of our own team’s on site survey.</p> <p>It is our assessment that the effects of distance, topography and or intervening landscape and built features, also in light of the historical evolution of the use and pattern of the wider countryside, would prevent development impacts on the heritage significance of other listed buildings within the wider surroundings of the Site, also including the 20th century Heaselands Register Park and Garden (Grade II) to the south east. Accordingly, these other heritage assets beyond our initial Study Area are not considered further in this report</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion	
Holy Trinity Church	Grade I Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, mid-high.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>The Site itself forms a minor part of the extensive countryside setting of this listed church beyond the village boundaries and in all compass directions, which would change in character and appearance as a result of the Proposed Development. The northern edge of the development area of the Site is located within the valley below at c.600m distance away to the north. Extensive views can be gained from within the immediate setting and large churchyard of this listed building southwards across the Site and much wider landscape area in this direction (including Ansty village further to the south west). The existing mature trees and other vegetation within and around the churchyard constrain to some degree the number and extent of longer distance views out from this core historic area around the church towards the Site. More widely, the undulating topography, and also established treed and hedged boundaries to fields and woodland areas, of the wider landscape (including as part of the character of the Site itself) further screen or otherwise filter the number and extent of views to and from the church and the areas of the Site proposed for new use and development. Intervisibility exists, but the Site itself is not an element of the extended setting of this listed building that makes the strongest positive contribution to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, other than as one element within that much wider experience / context of an historic rural agricultural landscape.</p> <p>Overall the change on Site brought about by the Proposed Development would not be so impactful as to result in harm to the understanding or appreciation of the significance or heritage interests of this Grade I listed building. In making this assessment we have taken into consideration that development impacts would not physically affect the form, fabric or architectural features of the church, which is where the significance of this heritage asset is principally invested, both internally and externally. Also change would not occur within the well-defined and more immediate historic churchyard setting of the church, nor within the historic village of Cuckfield (including the Conservation Area), which are those elements of setting that make the greatest contribution to our understanding and appreciation of its heritage significance. The Proposed Development would not affect the use or character of the greater part of the wider surrounding rural agricultural landscape that can be appreciated looking out from the ridgeline position of the church looking in an arc west, south and then eastwards. Where new built development on Site could be appreciated from this vantagepoint and in these longer distance views, this would be moderated or otherwise mitigated by the screening / filtering effects of existing land form and mature vegetation (subject to season change), including the retention of treed boundaries and woodland areas and also new strategic planting within the Site itself.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not undermine the local landmark status of this listed building within the village or the wider countryside, and it would retain its visual prominence and legibility on the ridgeline and against a sky backdrop in longer distance views looking northwards from the local area of the Site. Although a number of existing glimpsed views of the church tower and spire from within the Site itself would be affected by the introduction of new uses and built form / infrastructure, conversely the creation of new areas of informal or more formal open spaces here could also facilitate opportunities for views and a wider appreciation of the historic importance of the church by the new residential community being created here. An example of this approach is where new open green space would be formalised immediately to the north of former farmstead grouping and listed buildings (The Place / Barn North of Forsyth's Farmhouse), with new housing also located as to follow the undulating local land form, all in order to retain existing longer distance views north eastwards towards the local landmark parish church from these listed buildings and also this new public space.</p>
Cuckfield Park and Lodge	Grade II and II* Listed Buildings	Less than substantial, low.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>The Main Site is located at a greater distance away from Cuckfield Park to its south, within the lower part of the valley and beyond the line of the modern A272. This a part of the much more extensive rural / agricultural countryside setting of the listed building group at Cuckfield Park that makes very little legible contribution to their heritage significance. Historically, at least part of the south parcel of the Site is understood to have formed part of the once very extensive agricultural landholdings of this country house estate. However, as found today the legibility of that historic association has been eroded away by changing ownership patterns and the use and development of the wider landscape, including built settlement and local highways infrastructure. The potential visual or other experiential effects of the Proposed Development on this part of the Site would also be further constrained by distance and the intervention of topography, built form and or landscape features. The retention of treed boundaries and woodland areas, and also new strategic planting, within the Site as part these proposals would also assist in integrating new built development within that wider landscape. Overall these proposals would not result in any harm to the understanding or appreciation of the significance or heritage interests of these listed buildings, either individually or as a group.</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion
Cuckfield Conservation Area	-	Less than substantial harm, mid-high.	<p>No effect on overall heritage significance.</p> <p>Our team’s desktop and subsequent site survey analysis has been used to inform the scoping process for built heritage assets; based on our understanding of past and now existing historical, functional, physical and or visual relationships between the Site and the wider townscape / landscape surroundings containing those assets, and how that affects how heritage significance is understood and appreciated. The application LVIA, prepared by fabrik, includes a figure illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on the maximum building height parameter of 18m. This is a further tool that has also been used to informing the scoping process. However, it is noted that this viewshed is based on the topographical context, without taking into account the screening effects of vegetation and built form, i.e. a ‘worst case scenario’. The LVIA reports that in reality the Site is naturally well contained by virtue of the woodlands and tree belts within and surrounding the Site in combination with the undulating topography. This is also the findings of our own team’s on site survey.</p> <p>It is considered that to the north east of the Site, the Cuckfield Conservation Area (including listed buildings within that historic area) is a townscape area sufficiently screened, in terms of interposing landscape features and distance, such that would be unlikely to experience any materials effects on the particular heritage significance of this asset or assets as a result of the Proposed Development on the Site.</p>

Parkland Reserve Site

9. Written feedback from the Conservation Officer on the planning application for the Parkland Reserve Site were received on 11th March 2024, via email. In all cases, there is a difference between the Conservation Officer's assessment and that set out in the Heritage Statement. In addition, the Conservation Officer also identified further harms (i.e., to non-designated heritage assets) that were not identified in the Heritage Statement.
10. In summary, the Conservation Officer states that:

“Although the area would remain open and undeveloped (with the exception of minor built form (hides and platforms)), there would be some potential change to its character in terms of the visual impact of these structures, as well as new footpaths and cycleways, information boards and signage. There would also be a potential increase in noise and business arising from the anticipated intensification of use of the site, which might affect its current rural tranquillity.”
11. In contrast, the Heritage Statement concludes that the nature of the proposed use of this part of the Site, and most importantly the proposed retention of the existing open and green character of this area of land within the setting of the identified heritage assets, would sustain, or otherwise not effect, an understanding and/or appreciation of the overall heritage significance of the identified heritage assets. It does not conclude that any potential increase in perceived noise/busyness or visual intrusion from the minor built form would be of a sufficient magnitude to result in a level of harm to the identified heritage assets' overall heritage significance through a change in part of their settings.
12. The Heritage Statement also identifies that the envisioned restoration of parkland and pond, and also retention and management of existing woodland, would in some ways better reflect the historic landscape character of this former part of the Cuckfield Park Estate. The Conservation Officer's feedback does not acknowledge or otherwise comment on this point.
13. **Table 2** sets out the conclusions reached by the Heritage Statement and set out in the Conservation Officer's feedback for each individual heritage asset for comparison.

Table 2: Comparison of Conservation Officer and Heritage Statement Conclusions for Parkland Reserve Site

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion	
Old Mill Cottage	Non-Designated Heritage Asset (medium-high level of interest within local context – identified by Conservation Officer)	Low level of harm	No effect on overall heritage significance.	<p>Our team’s desktop and subsequent site survey analysis has been used to inform the scoping process for built heritage assets; based on our understanding or past and now existing historical, functional, physical and or visual relationships between the Site and the wider townscape / landscape surroundings containing those assets, and how that affects how heritage significance is understood and appreciated. The application LVIA, prepared by fabrik, includes a figure illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on the maximum building height parameter of 18m. This is a further tool that has also been used to informing the scoping process. However, it is noted that this viewshed is based on the topographical context, without taking into account the screening effects of vegetation and built form, i.e. a ‘worst case scenario’. The LVIA reports that in reality the Site is naturally well contained by virtue of the woodlands and tree belts within and surrounding the Site in combination with the undulating topography. This is also the findings of our own team’s on site survey.</p> <p>It is our assessment that the effects of distance, topography and or intervening landscape and built features, also in light of the historical evolution of the use and pattern of the wider countryside, would prevent development impacts on the heritage significance of other listed buildings within the wider surroundings of the Site, also including the 20th century Heaselands Register Park and Garden (Grade II) to the south east. Accordingly, these other heritage assets beyond our initial Study Area are not considered further in this report.</p>
Pondtail Cottage	Grade II Listed Building	Less than substantial harm, low.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>The Parkland Reserve Site forms part of the wider setting of this listed building and remains as a largely open and green landscape area as an element within its much more extensive countryside context. This part of the Site historically formed part of the parkland within the estate of Cuckfield Park, which, although now changed in terms of ownership and also its pattern of use and landscape character, still contributes to a degree to the significance of this listed building as part of that history and wider setting experience.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes the proposed restoration of traditional parkland on this part of the Site as part of wider landscape management, and also new or improved paths and interpretation, in use as a country park with public access. The nature of this proposed use, and also most importantly the proposed retention of the existing open and green character of this area of land within the setting of this listed building, would sustain, or otherwise not effect, our understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance.</p>
Cuckfield Park and Lodge	Grade II and II* Listed Buildings	Less than substantial harm, low.	Better reveal overall heritage significance.	<p>The north parcel of the Site is located to the west of Cuckfield Park and forms part of a landscape that was related historically and also physically and visually with the mansion and grouping within this estate (i.e. part of its defined parkland and or wider agricultural landholding). The envisioned restoration of parkland and pond, and also retention and management of existing woodland, as part of the new use of this area of the Site as a country park with public access, would in some ways better reflect the historic landscape character of this former part of the estate. In turn, these proposals would better reveal the significance of the Grade II* listed mansion Cuckfield Park at the heart of this estate and also that of the closely associated grouping of other listed buildings including Gatehouse to Cuckfield Park including Iron Railings (Grade II*), Gazebo and Wall to north and east of Cuckfield Park, Summerhouse at Cuckfield Park, Wall to east and south east of Cuckfield Park, and Lodge to Cuckfield Park (all Grade II).</p>
Listed buildings to the west of South Street and Ockenden Lane – Nos. 28 and 29 (Beams End), No. 27 (Valentine Cottage), Tudor Rose and Little Dormers, Nos. 22 and 23 South Street as well as Beadles, Old Courthouse, Almoners and Ockenden Lane Flats.	Grade II Listed Buildings	Neutral	No effect on overall heritage significance.	<p>Our team’s desktop and subsequent site survey analysis has been used to inform the scoping process for built heritage assets; based on our understanding or past and now existing historical, functional, physical and or visual relationships between the Site and the wider townscape / landscape surroundings containing those assets, and how that affects how heritage significance is understood and appreciated. The application LVIA, prepared by fabrik, includes a figure illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on the maximum building height parameter of 18m. This is a further tool that has also been used to informing the scoping process. However, it is noted that this viewshed is based on the topographical context, without taking into account the screening effects of vegetation and built form, i.e. a ‘worst case scenario’. The LVIA reports that in reality the Site is naturally well contained by virtue of the woodlands and tree belts within and surrounding the Site in combination with the undulating topography. This is also the findings of our own team’s on site survey.</p> <p>It is our assessment that the effects of distance, topography and or intervening landscape and built features, also in light of the historical evolution of the use and pattern of the wider countryside, would prevent development impacts on the heritage significance of other listed buildings within the wider surroundings of the Site, also including the 20th century Heaselands Register Park and Garden (Grade II) to the south east. Accordingly, these other heritage assets beyond our initial Study Area are not considered further in this report.</p>

Heritage Asset	Designation	Conservation Officer Conclusion	Heritage Statement Conclusion	
Ockenden Manor	Grade II* Listed Building	Neutral	No effect on overall heritage significance.	<p>Our team’s desktop and subsequent site survey analysis has been used to inform the scoping process for built heritage assets; based on our understanding of past and now existing historical, functional, physical and or visual relationships between the Site and the wider townscape / landscape surroundings containing those assets, and how that affects how heritage significance is understood and appreciated. The application LVIA, prepared by fabrik, includes a figure illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on the maximum building height parameter of 18m. This is a further tool that has also been used to inform the scoping process. However, it is noted that this viewshed is based on the topographical context, without taking into account the screening effects of vegetation and built form, i.e. a ‘worst case scenario’. The LVIA reports that in reality the Site is naturally well contained by virtue of the woodlands and tree belts within and surrounding the Site in combination with the undulating topography. This is also the findings of our own team’s on site survey.</p> <p>It is our assessment that the effects of distance, topography and or intervening landscape and built features, also in light of the historical evolution of the use and pattern of the wider countryside, would prevent development impacts on the heritage significance of other listed buildings within the wider surroundings of the Site, also including the 20th century Heaselands Register Park and Garden (Grade II) to the south east. Accordingly, these other heritage assets beyond our initial Study Area are not considered further in this report.</p>
Old Beech Farm and barn	Grade II Listed Buildings	Less than substantial harm, low.	Sustain overall heritage significance.	<p>The north parcel of the Site forms part of the wider setting of this group of listed buildings and remains as a largely open and green landscape area as an element within an existing more extensive countryside context. This part of the Site historically formed part of the parkland to Cuckfield Park or likely its larger agricultural estate. Although now changed in terms of ownership and also the pattern of use and landscape character, this land still contributes to the significance of these listed buildings as part of that history and a wider setting experience with a rural and agricultural character.</p> <p>Again, the Proposed Development includes the proposed restoration of traditional parkland on this north parcel of the Site as part of wider landscape management, and also new or improved paths and interpretation, in use as a country park with public access. The nature of this proposed use, and also most importantly the proposed retention of the existing open and green character of this area of land within the setting of these listed buildings, would sustain, or otherwise not effect, our understanding or appreciation of their heritage significance or group value</p>
Cuckfield Conservation - Area		Less than substantial harm, low.	No effect on overall heritage significance.	<p>It is considered that the Cuckfield Conservation Area (including listed buildings within that historic area) is a townscape area sufficiently screened, in terms of interposing landscape features and distance, such that would be unlikely to experience any materials effects on the particular heritage significance of this asset or assets as a result of the Proposed Development on the Site.</p>

Floodlighting

14. Following the submissions of the applications, the potential impact of floodlighting within the Main Site on the identified heritage assets has been raised by the Conservation Officer. The illustrative masterplan for the Main Site prepared by fabrik included two potential locations that could be used for sports pitches, either in isolation or in conjunction with a new school. However, at this stage, the masterplan layout is still illustrative and subject to change. The exact location, number and nature of the sports pitches and associated floodlighting requirements will be determined in due course as part of a reserved matters application, which will include further detail such as a full lighting assessment.
15. We have been asked to comment on the principle of floodlighting within the development to respond to these comments. This is challenging without knowing the exact location, extent and nature of the floodlighting required but some general principles are set out below.
16. The introduction of floodlighting within the Main Site would not result in direct intervention to the identified heritage assets. In this context, all of the aspects of heritage significance deriving from their intrinsic special architectural and historic interest, will be preserved. The only way in which any potential floodlighting has the potential to impact the identified heritage asset's overall heritage significance is through a change in a part of their setting, which would be seasonal and only be in operation during certain times of the day. In summary, any potential change would be temporary and transient.
17. In any reserved matters application, the number, placement and technical specification of the proposed floodlights will need to be carefully considered to meet both industry standards and reduce impact, via spill light, to the surrounding area. Intervisibility between any proposed floodlights and nearby heritage assets will also need to be reviewed as the enclosing effect of hedges and other mature vegetation will likely be an important factor. Finally, the proposed floodlighting, when operational, would be experienced within the context of the Proposed Development as a whole (i.e., in an emerging suburban context) rather than in isolation.