APPENDIX 11:

Public representation of Vivienne Blandford

Comment for planning application WD/2022/1637/MEA

Application Number	WD/2022/1637/MEA
Location	LAND AT DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD
Proposal	HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION COMPRISING: OUTLINE APPLICATION (WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS) FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 424 NO. RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, THE PROVISION OF VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS AND SEPARATE EMERGENCY ACCESS FROM THE UCKFIELD BYPASS (A22), PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS FROM SNATTS ROAD, OPEN SPACES INCLUDING CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EARTHWORKS; AND FULL APPLICATION COMPRISING CREATION OF A STRATEGIC SANG, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING, AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AND OTHER BUILDINGS AND PROVISION OF PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS FROM ROCKS ROAD, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EARTHWORKS.
Case Officer	Mrs C Turner
Organisation	
Name	Vivienne Blandford
Address	Greenbank,Shepherds Hill,Buxted,TN22 4PX
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	In the archaeological assessment prepared for this development it inevitably included only that which is known. Further research and expert local knowledge brought to light much more information, both ecologically, and in this accompanying assessment, concerning the historic landscape. The NPPF sets the national agenda for 'Conserving and enhancing historic environment'. In particular, it requires the significance of any heritage asset to be identified and assessed that may be affected by a proposal. The NPPF also states that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for the contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. I would urge Wealden District Council to consider the impact such a development would have on, not only the known assets, but also those that are not yet recognised but are clearly present, in particular in the overall historic landscape, as detailed in the accompanying reports. This development would have a severe and damaging effect on Lake Wood and change a predominantly, albeit, changed though time, to a medieval farmed and wooded landscape which has seen very little modern development.
Received Date	08/09/2022 09:13:02
Attachments	The following files have been uploaded: Land North of Uckfield v1.pdf Lake Wood history.pdf

Land north of Uckfield: A brief historic landscape assessment with additional knowledge to that submitted by Gleeson in their Archaeological and Heritage Assessment.

Summary

The following brief historic landscape assessment covers a slightly wider area than that of area the submitted planning application of Downlands Farm WD/2022/1637/MEA. However, it is important that the landscape is considered holistically rather than in separate parcels. This assessment covers mainly that which is not in the public record and comes from local knowledge and research into the area. The assessment carried out by Gleeson for the Downlands Farm application more than adequately covers that which is known, it is the unknown, or unacknowledged which causes concern by its omission. In fact, the response from Heritage England did include the fact that development on this site has the potential to impact on undesignated archaeology as well as designated heritage assets.

The following document hopes to address that concern about the undesignated, or unknown. It, therefore, does not repeat the archaeological or historical facts, covered in the Gleeson report, in any depth. The known archaeology ranges from Mesolithic to Modern, including Mesolithic rock shelters, Roman sites, and a predominantly medieval landscape carved out of the woodland. It also includes different periods of the Wealden Iron Industry from bloomery sites to Blast furnaces, the water which drove the Blast furnaces later utilised for Gunpowder Mills. The known sites are recorded and discussed in the Gleeson report which include Conservation Areas in Maresfield and Uckfield, Listed buildings and other Heritage Environment data. This report does cover, in any detail, the ecological diversity unless it is relevant to the archaeological or historical nature of the site.

Introduction

Land North of Uckfield is bounded by Snatts Road to the south and westwards where the A22 bypass cuts through the western end of Lake Wood and through Butcher's Wood. It includes Park Wood as a stand-alone area. The London Road (old A22) forms the eastern boundary and Malling Budletts Common forms the northern boundary (Fig 1).

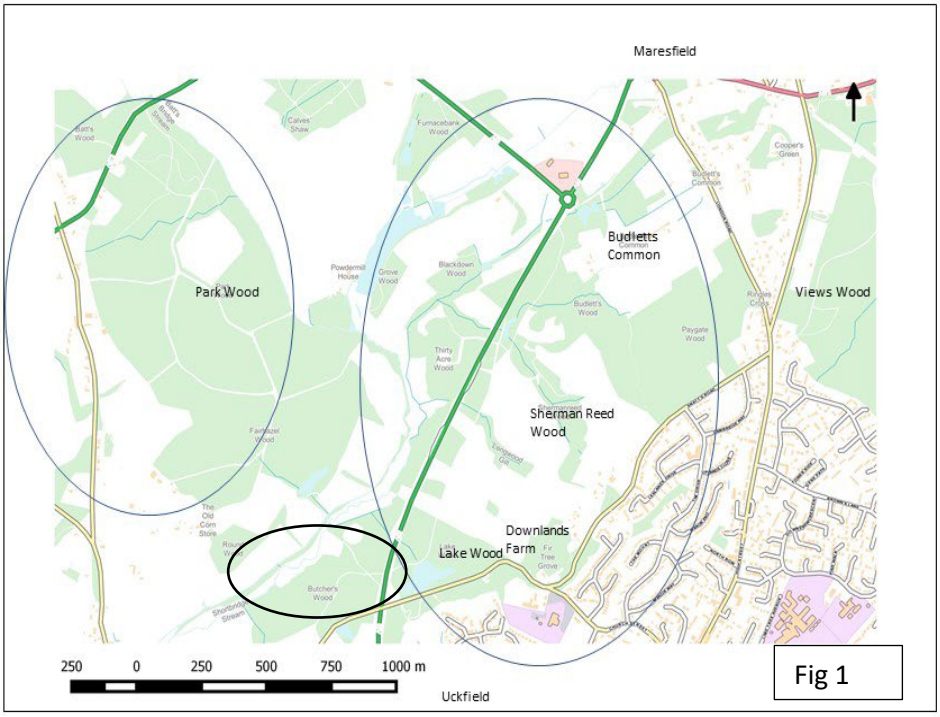
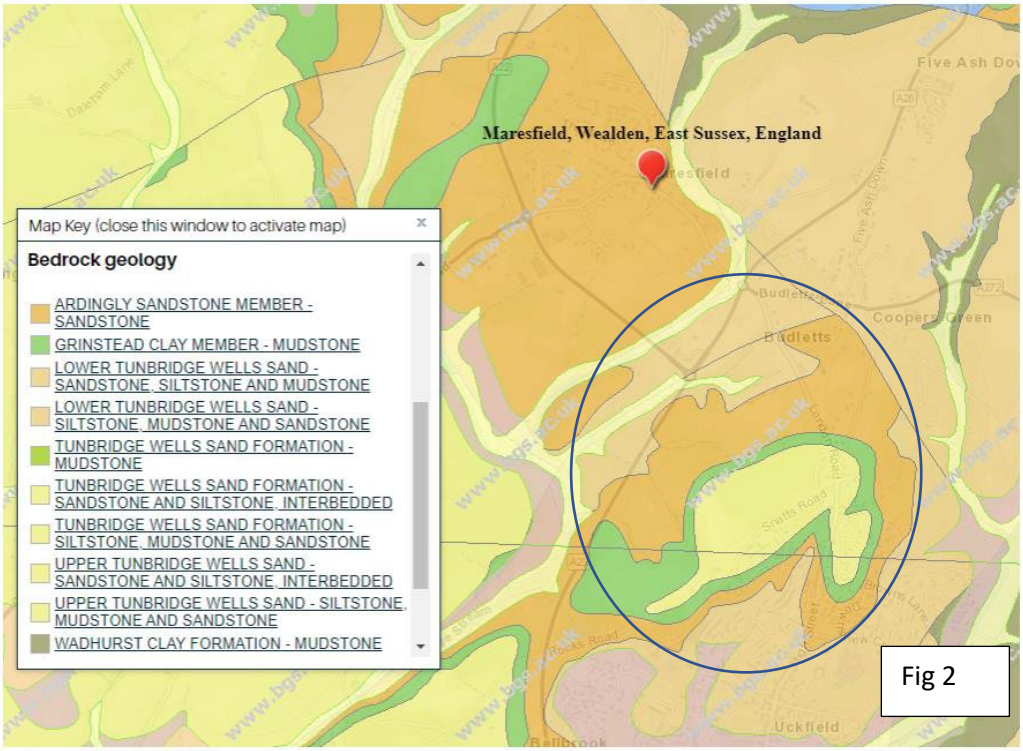


Fig 1

The area falls within the Low Weald of Sussex but is close to the High Weald ANOB which lies to the north-east. At present this forms a landscape devoid of much modern development which therefore retains an important historic landscape with a high degree of diverse forms of ecology comprising of an important east-west corridor north of Uckfield, stretching from Buxted Park to Shortbridge and northwards to Ashdown Forest. The geology is a mixture of Ardingly Sandstone, Grinstead Clay, and Tunbridge Wells Sandstone, in roughly concentric circles with the most part being of Ardingly Sandstone, which has made good building sandstone, providing ashlar stone for buildings (Fig 2). Budletts Cottage C16 and Budletts Lodge C19 are part built with this local sandstone with more modern additions. It includes an ecologically rich and diverse range of habitats from the ghyll valleys, Longwood ghyll within Downlands, remnants of ancient woodland and an unknown heathland habitat at Malling Budletts. The drainage and consequential run off, of a development in the area, would adversely affect wetland habitats from the east-west drainage to the Shortbridge Stream and onto the Ouse and southwards into the peat fed lake at Lake Wood.



Whilst the area under consideration today falls mostly within Uckfield, the northern part falls with the parish of Maresfield and its history more closely tied with Maresfield. The land in this area was once part of the Archbishops of Canterbury land holding of the Manor of South Malling and was already held by them in 1086 and was only split up in the mid-16th century. The church dates from the 11th century and very early Maresfield would have grown up around the church which is to the north of the study area. Budletts Common belonged to one of the manors of South Malling[1]

History

Maresfield has also been known by various other spellings, for example, Marysfyld, Marsfield and Meresfeld in 1234 'mere-field' open land by a pool (EPN).[2]

The church of St Bartholomew dates from the 12th century with additions throughout the 11th 12th and 15th centuries[3]. In a charter granted in 1332, King Edward 11 granted the manor of Maresfield to Queen Philippa. Thus, placing the development of the historic landscape firmly in the medieval period.

In the C19, the Reverend Edward Turner states that in one of the Register Books of the Archbishop of Canterbury reference is made to a deed of John Duke of Lancaster, by which Gilbertinus de Aquila gives to the church of Maresfield, towards its endowment, an annual rent of 60s., and divers lands in the parish. Perhaps Budletts Common, alias St Bartholomew's Common was part of these lands? The

[1] Mawer and Stenton. 'The Place names of Sussex Part 11, 1930: CUP
[2] Mawer and Stenton. 'The Place names of Sussex Part 11, 1930: CUP
[3] ESCC Monument Report

Manor of Maresfield was extensive and was the property of John of Gaunt who also owned Ashdown Forest when it was known as the as the Great Park of Lancaster.

The Reverend Edward Turner, a Victorian historian who lived in Maresfield mentions that in a meadow, close to Black house Farm, there is a moat with two sides extant and part of the third with the fourth arm filled in. This is likely to be the possible moated site visible in the scrubby woodland on the northern edge of the meadow, very close to Budletts roundabout, it is roughly 'D' shaped (TQ46832297). Whilst it looks like a moated feature on aerial photographs and EA lidar images, it is now very shallow ditch about 0.5 metres wide with a depth of 0.25 but much silted with a fairly flat low platform. Whilst he speculated that it may have had a house within in it is more likely to have been some kind of stock enclosure on the northern edge of the common (TQ467229). There are a couple of other enclosures on this common land, identified by aerial photographs and can be seen on Environmental data lidar images These are possibly medieval stock enclosures on common land.

Rocks settlement Mesolithic Rock shelters

There are known and fairly well documented Mesolithic rock shelters in the southern part of the area (MES4826) but there are other sandstone outcrops, Budlett Rocks to the east and more on the western part of Budletts Common. No archaeological investigations have taken place in these other locations. Also unrecorded in the Heritage Environment Record are flint implements and flakes found in Lake Wood, thus proving there was an active Mesolithic presence in the area. Perhaps more than just passing though as suggested in the planning assessment.

Roman

There is recorded information of Roman occupation locally from Roman and Romano-British bloomery, iron making sites, a corn-drying kiln to the east, in part, still extant Roman Road in Park Wood to the west (MES5318). This extant line of the Roman road is not only visible on EA lidar images but also on the ground in Park Wood.

Medieval, Post Medieval

Park Wood is also the likely location of the Archbishops of Canterbury Deer Park, known to be somewhere in the Maresfield area but its whereabouts hitherto unknown. This small deer park was contemporaneous with Ashdown Forest deer park but had a short-lived existence and has a poorly documented, or virtually non-existent history. However, in Park Wood on the western boundary, close to the Isfield golf course there is evidence of the ditch and bank of the Pale surviving (TQ45042258). Thus, with the name Park Wood, this seems a good location for this lost park.

The story of settlement of the main study area, that is from, and including Lake wood to the northern edge of Budletts Common is one of piecemeal land enclosure and small asssarting and enclosure from the woodland landscape which was once part of the woodland that stretched from Pevensey to Tonbridge and known as Andreasweald. Blackhouse farm, and its immediate landscape is recognised a medieval dispersed settlement. Park Farm and Downlands Farm also have their medieval origins.

Just south of Blackhouse Farm is Budletts Common, and this small enclosed and somewhat hidden landscape was once part of a wider landscape, some of which still exists to the west of the A22. This common stretched across the A22 and its name lives on in Budletts Lane and in the names of some of the houses to the east of the A22. There is some historical reference to the common previously being called St Bartholomew's Common which would mean it was connected to St Bartholomew's Church in Maresfield and now is but a small extant part of a much wider landscape. In Booker's 1888

guide to Uckfield Budletts was described as: 'The Budletts is a piece of waste land, covered with large masses of sandstone rock, interspersed with patches of heath and gorse, and having a background of birch and pine trees, the whole forming as pretty and romantic a spot as it is possible to conceive' [4]. This description covers the common land known as Malling Budletts, mainly to the west of the A22 but also to the east. This area still contains ecologically rich remnants of heathland grasses, plants, alder carr and wet flushes. There are areas of standing water and a good specimen of a stump cut boundary marker tree, marking the boundary between Maresfield and Uckfield.



Fig 3

Centred at TQ47062309

Malling Budletts Common 2022

Origins of Stookilstones, Stucklestones, Stukle

In 1492 Stukels Ferling and Stone were two hamlets recorded in the Customals of the Sussex Manor of the Archbishop of Canterbury, also an early reference to Shermanreed, Birchett, Lodgelands, Mallings Buddell Common and Ringley Cross. There is also a reference to a Ralph Stukele[5]. Perhaps the name derives from this Ralph and the sandstone outcrops that occur from Rocks Road, in the south, to Malling Budletts Common in the north of the study area. These early documents refer to land use as being mainly woodland, with pasture and meadow. The woods were sometimes managed as coppice as wood was a valuable commodity. Some of the woodland management continued into the C20.

Richard J Streatfeild (1844-1931) looked after, and added property to the estate into the early C20, and he carried research into the name Stucklestones, Stookistones and other variations which were mentioned in the early documents, starting in 1585 which were giving a location to the places mentioned. He made enquiries in 1925 to an early forerunner of the East Sussex Record Office with the result, in a letter sent back to RJS, there was proof of several references to Stucklestones still in the Court Rolls of Framfield. The earliest that RJS found then was dated to 1725 when five acres of land at Stucklestones, alias St Bartholomew's Common was granted to John Egles. One of Budletts rocks is known as Eagle Rock, presumably after this early owner. It would seem that the Sticklestones Common was the name of the waste which was enclosed by grant in early days [6]. Large outcrops of stone still exist but the name has fallen out of use.

[4] www/http:theweald.org/P2asp
[5] M K Hakiel notes undated
[6] ESRO ACC 6497/1/18/4

Another record is in 1585 when there was a conveyance for £800.00 for three pieces of land called Shermanrede, Byrchett and Lodgeland, amounting to 40 acres in Uckfield[7]. Also mentioned is the common called Malling Budletts west of the road from Ringles Cross to Stocklestones. In 1645 a conveyance mentions two messauges, barn, buildings, brick-kiln and 60 acres called Downe Lands in the chapelry of Buxted[8]. In 1703 a lease for a year includes coppice, lands and woodgrounds called Shermanrede, Birchett and Lodgeland (40 acres) with the same geographical references to Malling Budletts Common, Ringles Cross and Stocklestones[9]. In 1717 there is a lease for a year to a James Croke of Blackfriars, woodmonger for the same coppice, lands and woodgrounds called Sherman Reed, Birchett and Lodge Land There are similar refences for leases and mortgages in 1717[10]. This land was obviously profitable and interesting that it attracted interest from a London based woodmonger. In 1767 the lease was held bought by John Newham of Maresfield, esq and this was when the land became owned by the Newnham and Shelley family of Maresfield[11]. The early building, a lodge referred, first in 1492 still exists as an undesignated heritage asset, Budletts Cottage which has a sandstone ashlar 'lodge like' entrance which probably dates to the C15- C16 with later additions. It is located on the western edge of Malling Budletts Common (TQ46932278) and may have started its life as a practical lodge, was it for hunting?



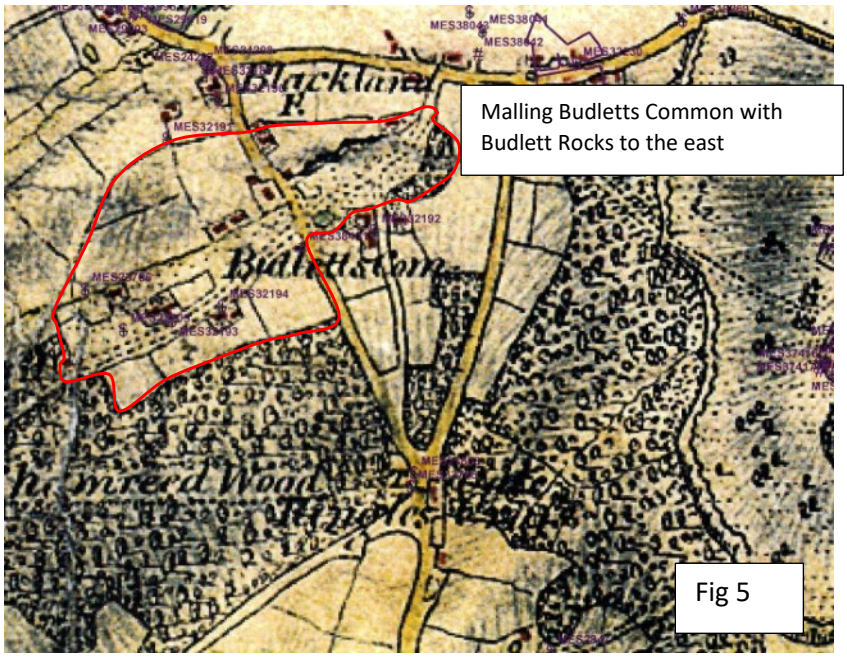
Fig 4

Budletts Cottage

This land stretching from Rocks Road to Malling Budletts was mainly waste land with a common forming a large part of it, mainly driven by its geology. Large outcrops of Cretaceous Ardingly

[7] ESRO AMS6994/3/1/1
[8] ESRO AMS 7036/1/4/1
[9] ESRO SAS/AB/1072
[10] ESRO SAS/AB/1074
[11] ESRO SAS/AB/1080

Sandstones with resulting poor sandy soils. Part woodland, part common which may have reached as far as Maresfield. Unusually this 'common land' was part farmed which is rare in the historic landscape and still survives in the northern part of the study area in Malling Budletts Common. It was not fit for agriculture owing to the poor soils and parts were also known as waste land.



OS surveyor's 1st edition circa 1813 showing rough extent of Budletts Common



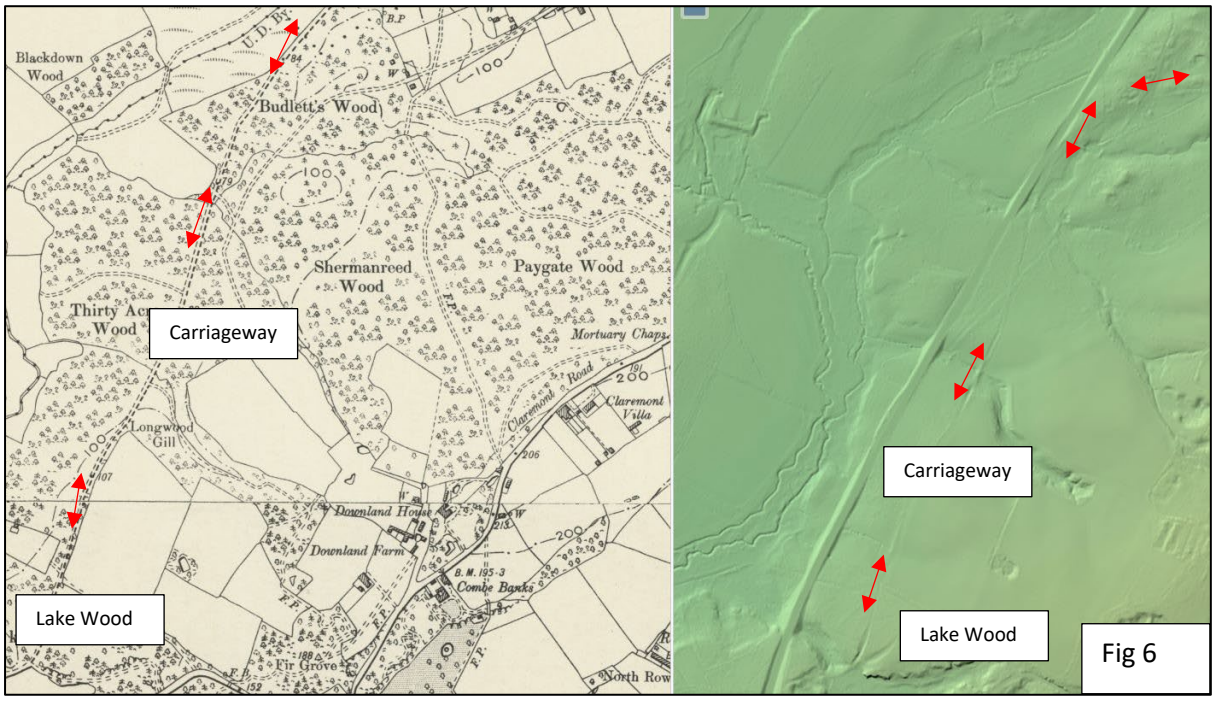
ESRO TD/E 33

Tithe Map 1841 showing common/waste with barn fields/houses farmed land

The southern part which was once part of the Streatfeild estate has been built over, the Rocks Park Estate, the name taken from the many outcrops of Rocks found within the housing estate and in West Park Nature Reserve, but the northerly part survives and should be considered a remarkable survivor of an unusual landscape. It is an unremarkable landscape at first glance but has hidden depth and has been poorly researched but nevertheless is an important survivor of a wooded, farmed and heathland landscape.

Georgian through Victorian

The Streatfeild family were one of the larger landowners in and around Uckfield from the first owner Richard Beard Streatfeild in 1710 who owned the Copwood estate. His nephew, Richard Thomas Streatfeild had bought the Rocks House and farmlands in 1784, which included one half of Lake Wood and inherited the Copwood estate in 1789, which included the western half and Butchers Wood. Part of the wood was called Rockwood Richard Thomas started to develop and plant Lake Wood, which was continued by his son, Richard Shuttleworth Streatfeild (RTS) (1805-1851). The history of this lake is covered in separate document. The lake is a late C18 historic designed landscape which was 'built' as part of a picturesque woodland garden with sandstone outcrops and exotic planting (NGR centred at TQ4682167). However, as much as the lake and adjoining house gardens were designed for pleasure and status, the surrounding woodlands were used for economic benefit and there are various records in the newspapers of the time of coppiced underwood being sold, and in one case, standing trees. Two carriage drives were built in the late C18, from Lake Wood to Shortbridge in the west and north-east to the A22 near what is now Budletts roundabout. The north-eastern one survives in the woodland, west of Downland Farm and exits at Budletts Lodge on the A22 (TQ47212334). In places it was built up into a causeway and at other places sunk in or totally flat. It is depicted on the 1898 OS map and on the lidar image.

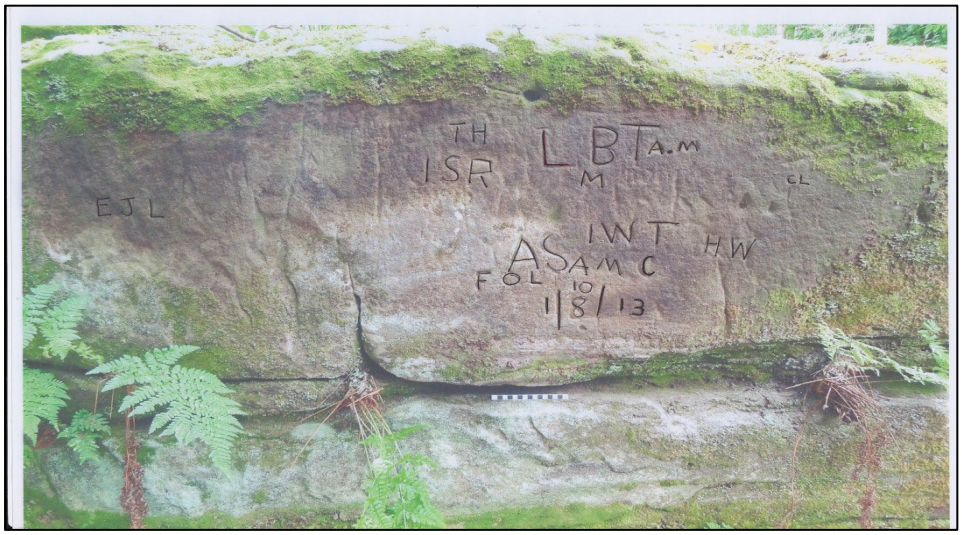


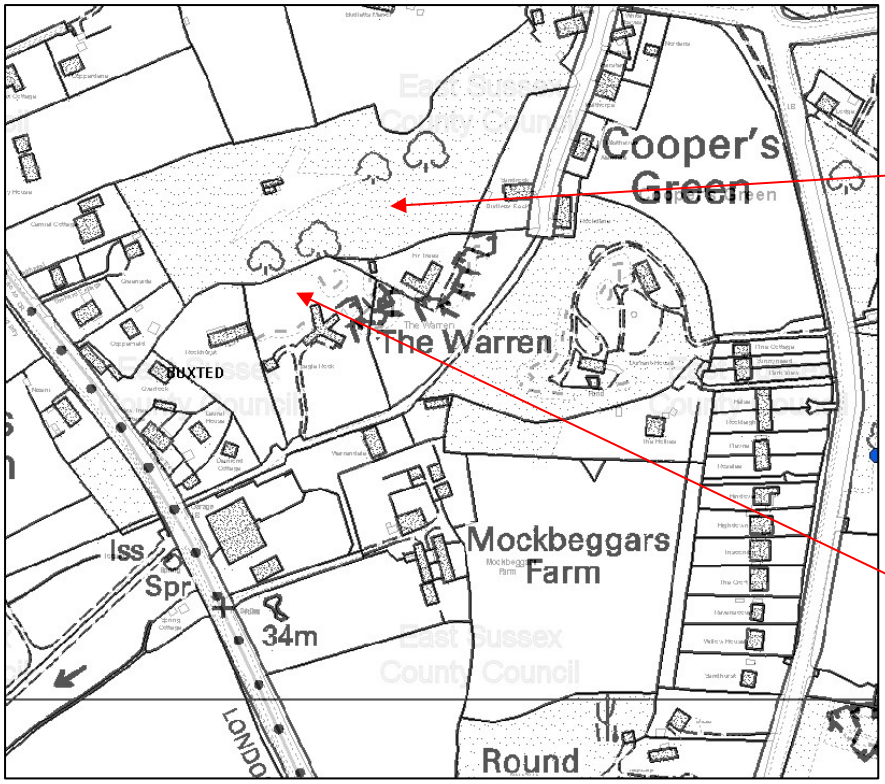
National library of Scotland image OS 1813 side by side lidar

The carriageway to Shortbridge, through Butcher's Wood, has not survived but used to provide access to the short-lived quay and barge transport there.

Modern Period

This area has remained very little changed during the modern period with some infilling taking place during the 1930's in the northeast after the sale of Buxted Park Land. Part of the eastern 'waste' around the Warren and Budletts Rocks has seen some changes, including an army presence in WW1 and W11. The area known as the 'Warren' contains numerous sandpits which were actively dug until just before the WW11. However, the surviving part of Malling Budletts common in the north down to Snatts Road in the south has remained unchanged except for modern additions to older buildings and to the medieval farmsteads.





Row of Army huts on seen on 1947 aerial. A previous owner of the Warren said that the graffiti dated to just before and during the First World War. They could remember army huts being used as a garage by the house opposite the end of their drive

Graffiti on sandstone outcrop, vertical face as above (TQ474232)

Conclusion

This historic landscape assessment has not been carried out in depth and the whole area would benefit from a comprehensive study which would include that what is already known. The Roman Road in Park wood is still visible as distinct bank with ditches to the side and there is evidence of a pale boundary with the ditch inside the woodland and the bank to the outside. This is the likely location of the Archbishops of Canterbury medieval deer park. This study highlights the development of a largely medieval landscape with piecemeal dispersed settlements carved out of the extensive woodland. Some woodland now exists as pockets of ancient woodland and parts were still actively being managed into the mid C20. A rare, part farmed, common land and waste, can be dated back to late medieval times exists at Budletts Common. It may have been connected to the church at Maresfield (St Bartholomew's) as at one time it was known by that name. Several enclosures remain hidden under the bracken cover but can be seen in early aerial photographs and on lidar images. There are large sandstone outcrops, with potential for Mesolithic activities and elsewhere in the study area are the remains of the Wealden Iron Industry from bloomeries to Blast Furnaces, later used as Gun Powder Mills. There is a direct link with the western carriage drive to the canal at Shortbridge and the northern carriage drive leading from Lake Wood still survives for most of its length, existing at the extant C19 lodge on the course of the old A22, near Budletts roundabout.

Any development, such as is proposed currently at Downlands, is located precisely between two historic landscapes. Lake Wood, a C18 historic designed woodland garden, remnants of a dispersed medieval landscape and medieval common land, this landscape would be adversely affected.

Vivienne Blandford, MA: Landscape Archaeologist

September 2022

Lake Wood: A Designed Historic Landscape

Summary

The following abbreviated history about Lake Wood has been written to enhance the knowledge about this specific site in the light of the application of Downlands Farm WD/2022/1637/MEA. There are severe concerns about the impact that the development would have on Lake Wood, which is essentially a picturesque type woodland garden dating from the late C18. It is located to the south of the development, and in close proximity. This analysis covers the period from the late C18 to the present day. The inevitable increased footfall would have a negative impact on the fragile and unique ecosystems, which has not been covered in this historic analysis but is more than adequately considered elsewhere in the objections to this development. Increased footfall would also have a damaging impact on the managed natural and historic fabric of Lake Wood.



WD_2022-1637 MEA Block Plan130902

Lake and Lake Wood

Early History

The Streatfeild family were one of the larger landowners in and around Uckfield and the first was the Richard Beard Streatfeild in 1710 who owned the Copwood estate. His nephew, Richard Thomas Streatfeild had bought the Rocks House and farmlands in 1784, which included one half of Lake Wood and later inherited the Copwood estate in 1789, which included the western half of Lake Wood and Butchers Wood. Richard Thomas started to develop and plant Lake Wood, which was continued by his son, Richard Shuttleworth Streatfeild (RTS) (1805-1851).

In the Yeakell and Gardner map of 1778 the definition of this area is poor, but it does show a lake, similar is shape to the lake depicted in later maps, surrounded by woodland with the Rocks House surrounded by a more open landscape *(Fig 1.).* Before the purchase of Lake Wood by the Streatfeilds this lake had been known as Old Rocks Pond or Uckfield Pond, this is likely the pond on the Yeakell and Gardner map.

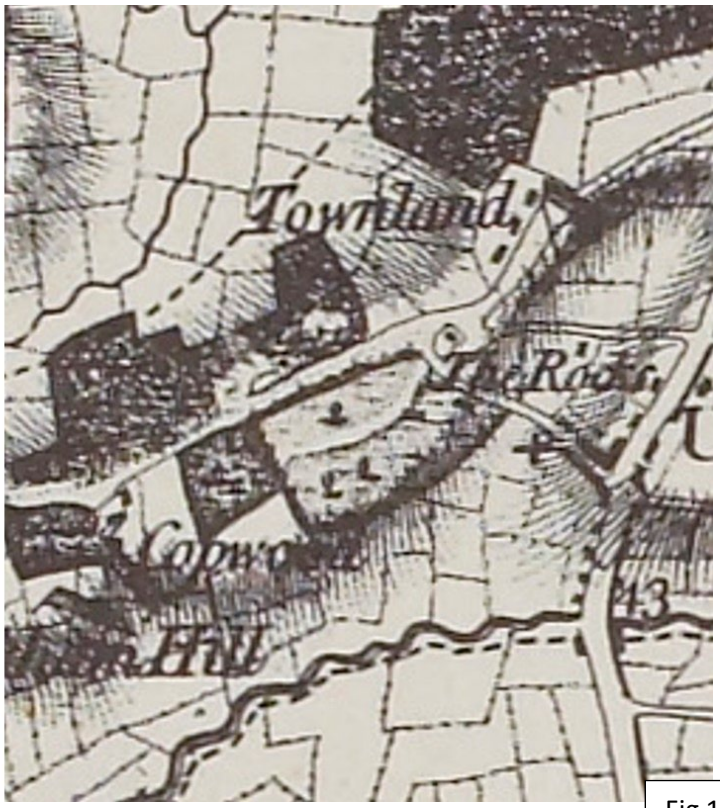


Fig 1 1778

In the Figg map of 1786 part of Copwood, and other lands the eastern corner, shows Lake Wood, as a familiar shape with the early carriage drives stretching westwards to Shortbridge and north-eastward towards Budletts *(Fig 2).* The carriageways are said to have been built in 1789 and possibly the dam at the same time. Accounts, held by the family gave evidence that RTS constructed the two main drives, which ran from Shortbridge Lodge in the west to Budletts Lodge in the north, exiting at Budletts lodge on the former A22. Budletts Lodge still exists and has the appearance of early C19 small sandstone lodge with later brick additions *(Image 1)*. The stone, probably Ardingly sandstone is of good quality ashlar blocks. The road's surface still exists in the garden of Budletts lodge, some 5-10 cm deep and appears to be of packed chalk in this location.

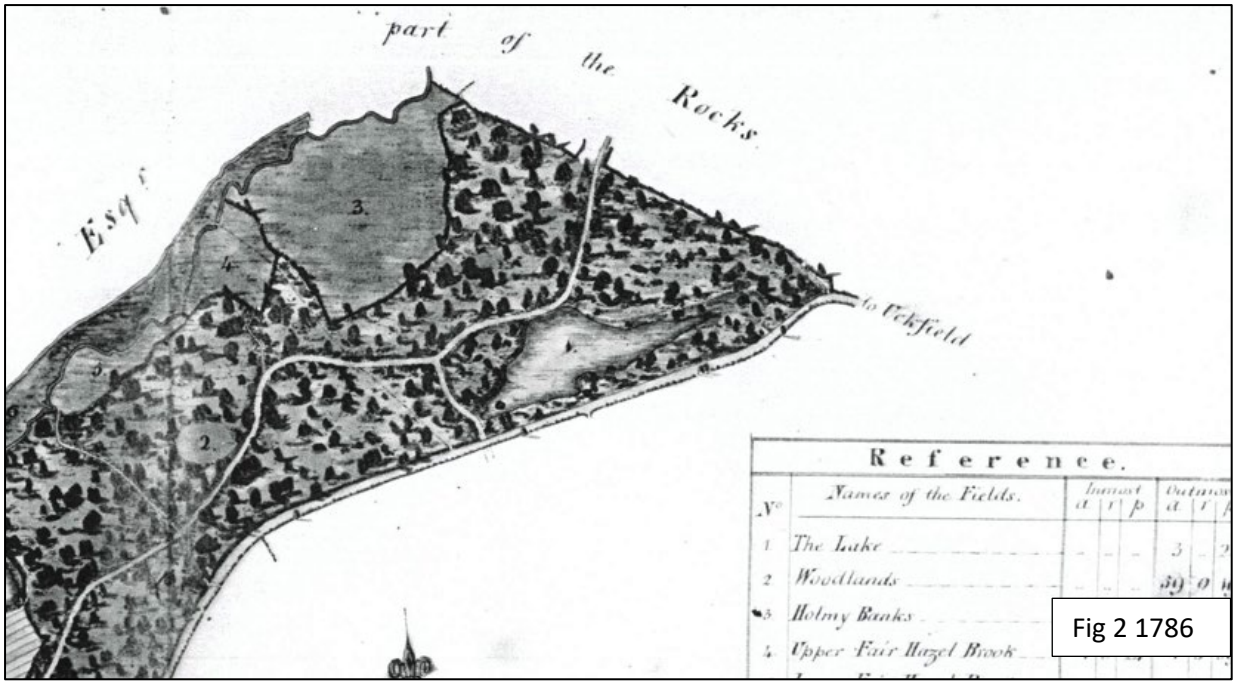


Fig 2 1786



Budletts Lodge

Image 1

These roads were connected to the road that formed the drive southwards to Rocks House which ran through a tunnel under the road, the carriage drive having passed over the dam at the western end of the Lake. It is said that RTS's mother, Anne Prime had suggested to her son, in a letter dated November 1840, that he might use the services of the well-known landscape gardener, William S Gilpin. It is not known whether he did but there was book by William Gilpin in library at Rocks House. 'Practical Hints on Landscape Gardening '1835. In 1836 Anne refers to the architect of the new Rocks House, Sidney Smirke, mentioning both lay out and elevation. Apparently, advice was also sought from Lord Sheffield of Sheffield Park who had work done of Sheffield Park by Capability Brown. Regrettably no details of the planting were found or whom was actually consulted. (*Notes signed by Pamela Scarlett Streatfield 1990*).

The main changes and landscaping were implemented between 1826 and 1851 by Richard Shuttleworth Streatfeild (RSS), the son of RTS, had inherited the estate after the unexpected and early death of his father. Advice sought from Lord Sheffield, whose garden had been designed by Capability Brown influenced the planting at Lake Wood in the opinion of the Woodland Trust who took ownership of the site in 1993 to protect it from developers. The influence in planting could be seen, from the large exotics and other non-native species surviving around the lake, such as the royal fern and rhododendrons that were planted between 1800 and 1850. The specimen trees included Coastal redwood *(Sequoia sempervirens)* Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron gigantium)* and Monterey pine *(Pinus radiata).* RSS also created and planted a water garden, later infilled due to lack of maintenance. The dramatic outcrops of the Cretaceous Ardingly sandstone were utilised for dramatic effect and the boat house, steps and tunnel were carved out of the sand rock on the south side of the lake. A sandstone block wall was built on the boundary along Rocks Road which is still extant today.

Some of the nature of the layout of a designed space can be seen depicted in the Ordnance Survey 1874-1878 map. 'The gardenesque' nature of the environs of Lake Wood with the rock outcrops to the east, smaller paths around the perimeter of the lake and the carriageways with their connection to the house and landscape gardens are well represented *(Fig 3).*



Fig 3

However, as much as the lake, wood and adjoining house gardens were designed for pleasure and status, the surrounding woodlands were used for economic benefit and there are various records in the newspapers of the time of coppiced underwood being sold, and in one case, standing trees. In 1834 there were six acres of underwood being sold from Lake Wood.[1] In April 1835 111 oak trees, in

[1] British Newspaper Archive Sussex Advertiser: 01/12/1834

the Rocks Wood, were to be sold at Auction and Mr Murrell of the Rocks will show this lot, presumably still standing. In 1846, at 'a capital auction of underwood', Lot 2 consisted of two acres in Butcher's Wood, near the lake and others lots, nearby, on land belonging to RJS in Shermanreed Wood, Paygate Wood and Budletts Wood[2] . In a document, written by the Woodland Trust, it is stated that the pattern of coppicing was carried out in rotation cycles of 15 years which appears to have continued sporadically until the 1960's. The last Streatfeild owner, Commander N Scarlett-Streatfeild, used to sell coppice from the 'Rocks Wood' area, and it was this Streatfeild that did not want the drives to be used or seen as a permissive footpath and subsequently some were blocked at the edges of the wood, whilst the drives became overgrown. Two woodmen were employed in the woodlands and there was a steam driven sawmill at Downlands Farm[3] .

The Garden in literature and Science in late Edwardian/ Victorian times

Gideon Mantell (1730-1852) was a local obstetrician, geologist and palaeontologist who wrote a journal between 1818 and 1852. The value of this journal lies in its portrayal of contemporary manners, events, and long excursions, whilst working. On October 18th, 1820, he rode with Mr Relfe to the Rocks near Uckfield where: 'we had a most delightful ride: the rocks are picturesque and romantic, it is the most enchanting spot I ever witnessed. A beautiful shallop was moored in the water under a natural archway in the rock; the summits were covered with lichens, mosses and ferns and surmounted by birches, firs, and larches. Before we quitted this lovely lake the moon had risen, and the reflection in the water, heightened, if possible, the beauties of the scene. In 1826 he attended a 'Grand Fete at Rocks Uckfield'. In August 1831 he drove to Uckfield with his wife and son to leave his son, Walter at school. He strolled to the Rocks and approached them, on foot, by a public footway and: 'when we reached the borders of the lakes, a dandy young man was fishing in a boat who hailed us in insolent terms and ordered them to quit the premises.' Mantell was disinclined to quarrel with him as the scene was most enchanting. It was provoking to be deprived of the enjoyment of the scene by an upstart youth[4].

[2] British Newspaper Archive Sussex Advertiser: 22/12/1846

[3] Notes written by Pamela Streatfeild

[4] Journal of Gideon Mantel, Surgeon, and Geologist. Curwen, E Cecil 1940: Oxford



In the early C19 there was a postman poet from Uckfield, called Thomas Pentecost, who wrote some flowery poems about Lake Wood, one entitled 'The Island Grave' in which the rocks, water, island, and romantic cavern with tall cypresses are woven into the poem[5].

Final years of the Streatfeilds

R J Streatfeild died in 1931 and the estate passed to his only child, Annette, who died in 1937 and the estate came up for auction in 1938. A beneficiary of her estate was a second cousin who bought Rocks House and a large area of land, including Lake Wood. He was subsequently killed in W11, after which his estate passed to his brother, Commander N J Scarlett-Streatfeild. The land and Lake Wood was managed by an agent, not very well, and when the Uckfield bypass, was built in 1986, it was located right on the western extreme of Lake Wood. No correct measures were taken to protect the wood and consequently left this western edge open after the felling of some mature trees which had protected the woodland within. The following year, 1987 the October hurricane caused much damage, blowing down many of the large specimen trees and approximately 100 oak standards, allowing the spread of invasive Rhododendron ponticum. Commander Scarlett-Streatfeild died in 1993 and the Woodland Trust has owned and managed Lake Wood soon after his death. The Woodland Trust describes Lake Wood today as: In the northern part of the site there is overstood mixed coppice (including hazel, hornbeam, and sweet chestnut this once part of the woodland which was managed for regular sales of underwood. The site is heavily used by local people but suffers from regular anti-social behaviour such as camping, fires, swimming litter and vandalism. This increased during the recent lockdowns in 2020-2021.

[5] Sussex Advertiser 12/09/1825

The Woodland Trust's 20-year management plan from 2001-2026 can be found here: extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/50676/4523-lake-wood.pdf.

Conclusion

However, the significance of this site attributed by the Woodland Trust, sis as follows: The site is an interesting small-scale example of a designed historic landscape which has been allowed to develop naturally over 100+ years. In the past 20 years it has been sympathetically restored to remove the threat from invasive rhododendron and to preserve its historic features. In addition to its aesthetic and historic value the site contains important habitats such as veteran trees, sandstone outcrops, standing open water and ancient woodland. The site has been extensively studied over by local ecologists over a long time and has an impressive list of species including various rare and protested plants and animals.



The above image is from an undated postcard, probably early C21, late C20.

It is hoped that the lake and it's woodland and sandstone historic setting together with its fragile ecosystems will not come under threat from any future development and that this unique garden gets the statutory protection it deserves.

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