Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield

Proof of Evidence of:
Edmund Stratford
BA (Hons), MCIfA

In respect of:
Heritage Matters

On behalf of:
Gleeson Land and John Alison Land and Research Ltd

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Section 1
Preamble

1.1 This Proof of Evidence has been prepared by Edmund Stratford, an Associate Director and senior member of The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), an independent multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy based in Cirencester, Cardiff and Cheltenham.

1.2 I have over 21 years of continuous experience in practice as a heritage professional, including over 11 years as a heritage consultant to private and public sector clients throughout the UK.

1.3 My qualifications comprise a BA with honours in Archaeology from the University of Exeter. I am a full Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA), and a Responsible Post Holder for the Archaeology and Heritage Team at EDP, which is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the CIfA.

1.4 My portfolio of project involvements includes the investigation and assessment of standing buildings, settings, and historic landscapes, as well as the assessment, evaluation and recording of archaeological sites, monuments and remains on a wide range of development schemes, ranging in scale and complexity from Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and major urban expansions to small-scale schemes for private clients.

1.5 I have also been commissioned to produce historic environment assessments for local authorities to inform the evidence base for both Local Plans and development control policy.

1.6 As an experienced cultural heritage professional, I have provided expert witness evidence to inform and support the determination of planning applications involving designated and non-designated heritage assets; in S78 public inquiries, informal hearings and through the exchange of written reps. With specific reference to the current appeal, I have previously provided expert witness evidence in respect of the potential impacts to non-designated heritage assets, listed buildings and conservation areas, both through direct and indirect effects – i.e. including changes within their setting.

Section 2
Appointment, Scope of Evidence and Background Context

MY APPOINTMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

2.1 I am appointed by Gleeson Land and John Alison Land and Research Ltd, hereafter referred to as the Appellant to provide expert witness evidence in respect of heritage matters. I was also appointed to produce the Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) that informed the planning application, as well as the subsequent Heritage Addendum (CD2/103). In addition, I have contributed to engagement with officers of Wealden District Council in respect of heritage matters, throughout the determination period for the planning application. I have visited the appeal site and the heritage assets identified by the Council as being affected by the appeal proposals on a number of occasions, in both summer and winter, including to inform this Proof of Evidence.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

2.2 The planning application was submitted as a hybrid application, reference WD/2022/1637/MEA, with the development description as set out below:

"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."

2.3 The historic environment assessments which informed the planning application were produced by EDP, to both identify and assess potential impacts arising from the development proposals on heritage assets. The Archaeological and Heritage Assessment is to be found at CD2/83, while the Heritage Addendum is to be found at CD2/103.

2.4 The hybrid planning application was refused by the Council on 21 April 2023 for nine separate reasons; including Reason for Refusal (RfR) 3 set out in the Notice of Decision (CD5/1), which relates to effects on heritage assets. RfR 3 is set out below:

"Reason for Refusal 3

The Council has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) (hereafter referred to as The Act). There are three listed buildings immediately

surrounding the site, including Oast Cottage (NHLE 1028090) and Swallows Barn (NHLE 1262256) at Downlands Farm and the grade II listed Buck[s]wood Grange (NHLE 1194277).*

It is commonly agreed that Spring Cottage and Pa[r]tridges Oast are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. The application also identifies an unlisted historic building - Chicory Cottage - which has the potential to be considered a non-designated heritage asset (if not curtilage listed) by virtue of its historic association to Buck[s]wood Grange. There are further unlisted historic buildings at Downlands Farm Cottages (historically known as Bridge Farm) which also have the potential to be considered non-designated heritage assets.

Section 72(1) of The Act relates to planning and conservation areas and requires that Local Planning Authorities pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. In this instance, the proposed access for the application site lies in the vicinity of the designated Maresfield Conservation Area. The Draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Maresfield has been published on the Council's website, and provides the most up to-date considerations of the character of the conservation area as designated in March 2017.

It should be noted that the Courts have held that 'preserve' means an absence of harm. The NPPF points out that harm can be either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial' and where harm occurs, it should be given considerable weight as a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications and as part of the balance exercise and in ascertaining if any public benefits would outweigh that harm. This national policy intent is addressed by 'saved' Local Plan Policies EN1 and EN27; Core Strategy Policy SP02; as well as Chapter 12 of the Wealden Design Guide.

The scheme in its totality would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets through the proposed development within their setting.

At present, in the absence of any mitigation evidenced in the indicative proposals, this is regarded to be the higher end of less than substantial harm. Though it was set out that this harm might be reduced through more thorough and considered understanding of significance and amendments to the design, none has been forthcoming.

In summary, the National Planning Policy Framework recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including any harm or loss of significance through development within their setting. The National Planning Policy Framework also places great importance on development being of good design and responding to local character to ensure the integration of new development into the existing environment. Where harm is considered to be less than substantial, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. It is not considered that any heritage benefits would arise from the present scheme, nor that planning conditions could be capable of sufficiently mitigating that harm.

The wider public benefits matters could include the delivery of housing on a site that is ready and available. However, the delivery of that housing presents other challenges in

regard to Ancient Woodland, access and connectivity. If the only benefits of the scheme are laced and intertwined with those harms, then the less than substantial harm is not outweighed. Therefore, the scheme would not satisfy the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework as regards the conservation of heritage assets, nor would it 'preserve' the significance of the listed buildings, including one grade II listed building and two grade II listed buildings."*

2.5 On this basis, this Proof of Evidence focusses on the matters raised in RfR3, in respect of the impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets through physical impacts or through changes to their setting.

2.6 The location of the relevant assets is depicted in relation to the appeal site on **Appendix ES 1**.

THE COUNCIL'S CASE

The Council's Statement of Case

2.7 Paragraphs 5.36 to 5.50 of the Council's Statement of Case (SoC) (CD1/6) presents its case insofar as heritage matters are concerned, with the following notable points being identified:

1. The Council consider that the appeal proposals would result in less than substantial harm to three Grade II listed buildings through change to their settings:
    - Oast Cottage (List Entry Number 1028090) to the east of the appeal site;
    - Barn at Downlands Farm (List Entry Number 1262256) to the east of the appeal site; and
    - Buckswood Grange (List Entry Number 1194277) to the south of the appeal site.
2. The Council state that the harm to each of these listed buildings is at the higher end of less than substantial harm, in terms of the NPPF;
3. The Council consider that the appeal proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the Maresfield Conservation Area through change to its setting. This harm is considered to fall at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm;
4. The Council consider that the appeal proposals would also result in harm to non-designated heritage assets, including Partridges Oast and Chicory Cottage. The Council also consider Lake Wood, to the south-west of the appeal site, to be a non-designated heritage asset, which would be affected by the appeal proposals; and
5. The LPA consider that the public benefits of the appeal proposals, including substantial weight to the contribution of new dwellings, would not outweigh the identified harms to designated heritage assets.

2.8 The Council's SoC includes a number of inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which have been addressed in the Heritage Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (CD1/12). Specifically,

that Buckswood Grange is a Grade II listed building, not Grade II*, that it is agreed that Downlands Cottages to the east of the appeal site are not non-designated heritage assets, and that Spring Cottage, a non-designated heritage asset to the north of the appeal site, is not affected by the appeal proposals.

The Heritage Officer's Consultation Responses

2.9 The written advice the Council received from the WDC Heritage Officer in determining the planning application is set out in three main consultation responses, dated 13 September 2022, 05 December 2022, and 13 February 2023 (CD1/1).

2.10 However, the Council's SoC and RfR 3 only make reference to the first of these consultations (13 September 2022 (CD1/1)) and neglect to take account of a number of issues resolved and matters agreed in subsequent consultations of 05 December 2022 and 13 February 2023, including most notably the acknowledgement of additional information and assessment in the form of the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) supplied by the Appellant and responded to by the Heritage Officer on 13 February 2023 (CD1/1).

2.11 Through the Heritage SoCG (CD1/12) the Appellant and Council have been able to agree and clarify a number of the points raised in the Council's SoC and RfR 3, to reflect matters which had previously been addressed through the Council's consultation responses of 05 December 2022, and 13 February 2023 (CD1/1).

The Council's Officer Report

2.12 The Officer Report, dated 21 April 2023 (CD5/2), outlines the Council's position in respect of the proposals within the appeal site and their impact on the historic environment, specifically referencing on pages 29-32 'Below Ground' heritage in respect of archaeological matters and 'Above Ground', in respect of historic built form.

2.13 Under the preliminary summary of responses, *Section 2. Other Relevant Responses/Issues,* the Report identifies that a single response was received on 13 September 2022 from the 'WDC Conservation and Design Officer', which concluded:

"I consider that there would be a less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets through the proposed development within their setting. At present, in the absence of any mitigation evidenced in the indicative proposals, I consider that this would be at the higher end of less than substantial harm, though could be reduced through more thorough and considered understanding of significance and amendments to the design in line with this understanding".

2.14 This summary in the Officer Report does not make any reference to the subsequent responses from the Heritage Officer of 05 December 2022 and 13 February 2023 (CD1/1), despite being written after the provision of the subsequent responses.

2.15 On pages 29-32, the Officer Report sets out in full the 13 September 2022 response from the Heritage Officer but makes no mention of the subsequent consultation responses or clarifications within.

2.16 Once more, the Officer Report makes clear in the conclusions that the Council consider that the identified 'less than substantial harm to heritage assets' is not outweighed by the public benefits of the appeal proposals.

THIRD PARTY CASE/COMMENTS

2.17 Review of the representations received from third parties indicate concerns in respect of heritage matters:

- Response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Mrs Stephens, 05 September 2022;
- Response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Vivienne Blandford MA, September 2022;
- The response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Mr & Mrs Williams, on behalf of Downlands Action Group (DAG), 09 September 2022, resubmitted for the Appeal, 13 July 2023; and
- The SoC prepared by Dr Stenning on behalf of the DAG.

2.18 Based upon the above representations (none of which represent a formal Rule 6 party to the Appeal) the Appellant has provided a response which seeks to address the main points made to aid the Inspector. A significant part of these responses relates to landscape character matters, rather than specific heritage assets, so reference should also be made to the Proof of Evidence (PoE) of Mr Mylchreest. Inevitably there are some areas of overlap in terms of heritage assets, historic landscape and landscape value and Mr Mylchreest and I have discussed these and attempted to provide clear and consistent, and non-repetitious, analysis of the key matters.

HERITAGE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

2.19 A Heritage SoCG has been agreed between the Appellant and the Council and is to be found at CD1/12.

INTERIM SUMMARY

2.20 From the analysis of the Council and third parties' consideration of the case, it is clear that the key issues identified in respect of heritage matters that will be addressed in evidence are as follows:

1. The effects of the appeal proposals on the following Grade II listed buildings through change to their settings:
    - Oast Cottage (List Entry Number 1028090) to the east of the appeal site;

- Barn at Downlands Farm (List Entry Number 1262256) to the east of the appeal site; and
- Buckswood Grange (List Entry Number 1194277) to the south of the appeal site.

2. The effects of the appeal proposals on the following non-designated heritage assets or alleged non-designated heritage assets:
   - Chicory Cottage within the appeal site;
   - Partridges Oast to the east of the appeal site; and
   - Lake Wood to the south-west of the appeal site.
3. The representations of third parties;
4. The resultant harm, if arising to any heritage assets, that is required to be considered in the planning balance; and
5. Whether the public benefits of the appeal proposals would outweigh any identified harms to heritage assets.

2.21 While issues 1 – 4 above will be addressed in this Proof of Evidence, it is not the intention to examine the fifth issue; i.e. whether or not the public benefits of the proposals outweigh any harm to heritage assets. Acknowledging that it is the role of the decision-taker, not heritage experts, to undertake the relevant Paragraph 201/202 balance, this matter will be addressed in the evidence of Mr Mellor concerning planning matters.

Section 3
Assessment of Effects

3.1 This section of my Proof assesses the likely nature and magnitude of any effects upon the heritage assets that are identified by the Council and third parties as being affected by the appeal proposals, as set out in **Section 2**.

3.2 The following assessment of effects will discuss the main heritage issues which have been identified; i.e. focussing on the effect of the appeal proposals on the identified assets' setting or physical form, and any resultant impact on the assets' significance, in line with the requirements of Paragraphs 194 and 195 of the NPPF.

3.3 The location of the appeal site, in relation to the relevant heritage assets, is indicated on **Appendix ES 1**.

METHODOLOGY

3.4 EDP produced the Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and subsequent Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) setting out the appeal scheme's impact on relevant heritage assets, which was submitted to inform the determination of the hybrid planning application.

3.5 In my professional opinion these documents provide an assessment that is proportionate to the significance of the assets that have the potential to be affected and the likely impact upon them as a result of the appeal proposals proceeding. They apply current best practice guidance and methodology for the identification and assessment of 'indirect' effects on heritage assets, which is set out in Historic England's (2017) *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*, which is known and referenced as GPA 3 (CD11/2).

3.6 The paragraphs which follow set out my own professional judgement in terms of the likely impact arising from the appeal proposals in respect of the relevant heritage assets, adopting that same methodology which, in addition to employing the guidance set out in GPA 3, included a site visit and walkover of the relevant heritage assets and their surrounds.

3.7 As the author of the Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and subsequent Heritage Addendum (CD2/103), my assessment in this Proof of Evidence aligns with the opinions expressed in those previously submitted documents. In addition, this proof also responds to issues raised in light of a review of the Council's SoC and relevant third-party representations to the appeal.

Setting Assessment

3.8 As set out above, my methodology employed in the assessment of the potential impacts of the appeal proposals on the significance of heritage assets through change to their setting has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's (2017) *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*, which is known and referenced hereafter as *GPA 3* (CD11/2).

3.9 My assessment employs the definition of setting that is set out in Annex 2 of the Framework, namely:

"Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

3.10 My definition of significance is similarly derived from Annex 2 of the Framework, namely:

"Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

3.11 As such, when assessing the impact of proposals through change to the setting of a heritage asset, it is not a question of simply determining whether its setting would be affected, but rather a question of whether change within an asset's setting would lead to a loss of 'significance' to the asset itself based on the above 'heritage interest' as defined in the NPPF.

3.12 In consideration of potential attributes of an asset's setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance, I have given regard to page 10 of GPA 3 (CD11/2), which identifies, in relation to the assessment process, that: "*it will generally be useful to consider, insofar as is possible, the way these attributes have contributed to the significance of the asset in the past (particularly when it was first built, constructed or laid out), the implications of change over time, and their contribution in the present."*

3.13 I have also given regard to the following pertinent points from GPA 3 (CD11/2):

"…setting is different from general amenity. Views out from heritage assets that neither contribute to significance nor allow appreciation of significance are a matter of amenity rather than of setting." (page 7, paragraph 16)"; and

"Historic England recommends that, when submitted as part of … evidence to a public Inquiry, technical analyses of this type should be seen primarily as material supporting a clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument that sets out 'what matters and why' in terms of the heritage significance and setting of the assets affected, together with the effects of the development upon them." (page 8, box 1, paragraph 2).

3.14 Equally, while I acknowledge that in considering the setting of a heritage asset - and the ways that elements of this setting may contribute to heritage significance - visual and physical considerations will be central considerations, I have nonetheless been conscious in undertaking the assessment that setting is not purely a visual consideration.

3.15 Accordingly, I have given regard to page 2, box 1, paragraph 5 of GPA 3, which states:

"The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors

such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places."

3.16 With specific regard to the *"understanding of the historic relationship between places*", I have given these matters due consideration following the approach to determining setting in GPA 3 (CD11/2) endorsed in Para 34-38 of *Catesby Estates v Steer* [2018] EWCA Civ 1697 per Lindblom LJ (the 'Kedleston Hall' Court of Appeal judgement) (CD4/11).

3.17 I have particularly followed the approach set out at para 38 of the judgement:

"*He was not saying that land could only fall within the setting of Kedleston Hall if there was a "physical or visual connection" between them. He was simply saying that in this instance the extent of the setting of the listed building could not be determined by the fact of the "historical, social and economic connection" to which he referred. There had to be something more than this connection alone if the appeal site were to be regarded as falling within the setting of the Hall."*

3.18 As such, in the setting assessment presented in this evidence I have been conscious of the historical, economic and social relationships between designated heritage assets and elements of the wider landscape, including the appeal site. However, my assessment has not stopped at that point, and I have not found it appropriate in this instance for these relationships to define the setting of the assets in their own right, given the extent of the wider landscape, and features within it, which share these relationships with the heritage assets in question.

3.19 Paragraph 29 of *Catesby Estates v Steer* (CD4/11) provides further clarity on this matter when defining setting and reiterating the primacy of the definition of setting set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

"Under current national planning policy and guidance in England, in the NPPF and the PPG, the decision-maker has to concentrate on the "surroundings in which [the heritage] asset is experienced", keeping in mind that those "surroundings" may change over time, and also that the way in which a heritage asset can be "experienced" is not limited only to the sense of sight. The "surroundings" of the heritage asset are its physical surroundings, and the relevant "experience", whatever it is, will be of the heritage asset itself in that physical place." (emphasis added).

3.20 Put simply, the historical, economic and social relationships between an asset and a place are only meaningful in the consideration of setting, if there is also some form of an 'experience' of the asset within that place.

3.21 With the above in mind, the assessment set out in this evidence adheres to the methodology set out in GPA 3 (CD11/2). GPA 3 is clear in stating that change within a heritage asset's setting need not be harmful; the implementation of development proposals within a heritage asset's setting can be positive, negative or neutral, and sets out an approach to setting and development management based on a five-step procedure:

1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;

3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;

4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and

5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

3.22 In considering the identification and potential level of harm to any heritage assets through change to their setting, I have had regard to the Government's Historic Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (CD11/3).

3.23 The PPG states that "*substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases*", with the implication being that a high level of less than substantial harm also occupies a relatively high threshold.

3.24 Indeed, a recent appeal decision endorsed by the Secretary of State APP/H5390/V/21/3277137 (Edith Summerskill House Inquiry, July 2022) (CD4/10), has clarified the position, in respect of the consideration of harm arising through change to the setting of a designated heritage asset, as follows (paragraphs 12.49 and 12.50 of the Inspector's Report (IR)):

"….Essentially, substantial harm is set at a high bar, such that a good deal (or all) of the significance of a designated heritage asset would have to be removed for it to be reached. That means that the range for a finding of less than substantial harm is very wide indeed, from a harmful impact that is hardly material, to something just below that high bar."

3.25 This leads to the important observation in paragraph 12.50 of the IR, when the Inspector identifies the approach to be taken to the assessment of where on this broad spectrum of less than substantial harm an individual impact is located:

"In cases where the impact is on the setting of a designated heritage asset, it is only the significance that asset derives from its setting that is affected. All the significance embodied in the asset itself would remain intact. In such a case, unless the asset concerned derives a major proportion of its significance from its setting, then it is very difficult to see how an impact on its setting can advance a long way along the scale towards substantial harm to significance."

3.26 The Planning Inspector subsequently sums up their approach to the identification of harm through changes within the setting of heritage assets in paragraph 12.54 of their Report, where they clearly articulate the following conclusions:

"It is often argued that such an approach leads to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset being underestimated. However, what is under consideration is the impact of change on the significance of a designated heritage asset. If that change would come about as a result of development in the setting of that asset, then it is only the component

of significance that the asset derives from its setting that would be affected. This is the outcome of the approach the Framework takes."

3.27 These considerations outlined above are addressed further in the relevant sections below.

3.28 The following assessment is therefore undertaken in line with best-practice guidance, based on my own assessment of the appeal site, the relevant heritage assets and the impact of the appeal scheme's approval and implementation on their significance, the latter being drawn from the description of development set out in **Section 2** above.

3.29 Subsequent to setting out my own assessment of the appeal proposals, this section also responds to the other issues raised by the Council and third parties, as set out in **Section 2**.

THE EFFECTS OF THE APPEAL PROPOSALS ON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Oast Cottage Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number 1028090)

The Significance of the Grade II listed Oast Cottage

3.30 Oast Cottage (1028090) is located to the east of the appeal site where if forms the most northerly historic building of the former Downlands Farm complex, located north of the converted oast house, Partridges Oast.

3.31 As it is in private ownership, it has only been possible to examine the building from public vantage points, the appeal site, and through published sources including the National Heritage List for England, map data and satellite imagery, as set out in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) accompanying the planning application.

3.32 This analysis confirms the building to align with the National Heritage List for England listing citation, which describes the building, listed in 1983, as follows (reproduced in its entirety):

"*Formerly two cottages. C17. Two storeys. Four windows. Colour-washed brick on ground floor tile hung above with colour-washed modillion cornice between. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Modern brick porch."*

3.33 Limited detail is provided of the building's early development by historic maps; the 1829 and 1841 maps reproduced in the Heritage Addendum (CD/103) identify the presence of what is likely to be Oast Cottage in its own enclosed plot, situated in the northeastern corner of a wider field which extends west from the farm complex. The 1841 Tithe map identifies the square plot as 'house and garden' and shows the building and its domestic curtilage at the northern extreme of the farm group. The 19th century and later mapping identify the building as broadly rectangular in footprint and orientated on a north/south axis. This plan form appears to have altered little over time, aside from the addition of a later rear wing. To the immediate north of the building was a field identified in the 19th century as orchards, while to the east was the grounds of 'Downlands House'.

3.34 The Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) have previously identified that during the 19th century the buildings of Downlands Farm, including this house and garden, were owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker. The agricultural land within the appeal site, which is located to the west beyond the field immediately west of the house and garden on the 19th century maps, also formed a part of the wider landholdings owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker at this time.

3.35 In terms of its heritage significance, as would be expected for a listed building of this type, the significance of Oast Cottage is overwhelmingly derived from the special architectural and historic interest of the building's fabric and built form, which represents a well-preserved example of a vernacular dwelling of the 17th century.

The Contribution of Setting to the Significance of the Grade II listed Oast Cottage

3.36 In terms of its setting, 19th and early 20th century map sources presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) indicate that Oast Cottage was positioned in its own broadly square gardens north of the working yards of Downlands Farm, and to the south of an area of orchards. Immediately west was an open meadow that extended to the west and formed part of the landholding owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker, the tenant of Downlands Farm. To the east was the grounds of Downlands House.

3.37 This situation appears to have remained largely unchanged until the mid-20th century when, in 1951, the Downlands Farm buildings were sold along with other parts of the Rocks Estate, in response to the post-war break-up of the wider Rocks Estate owned by the Streatfield family.

3.38 While Oast Cottage itself appears to have experienced limited change during this period, its setting underwent significant changes in the mid-20th century. This included the evolution of the associated farmstead to the south, with a number of large-scale buildings constructed to the south, while the surviving historic farm buildings (including the oast house and barn immediately to the south) were gradually converted to private residential dwellings.

3.39 In terms of the building's immediate setting, this appears to have changed through the extension of the building's gardens to the north across the former orchards, bringing them into the building's domestic curtilage, whereafter they appear to have been landscaped with the addition of ornamental planting, garden structures and a pond.

3.40 Most notable in terms of the change to the setting of Oast Cottage was the establishment of a substantial garden curtilage to the newly converted Partridges Oast to the immediate south. These new residential gardens extended c.150m across the extents of the former meadow west of the former oast house and Oast Cottage. The western extents of this newly established garden were planted as dense woodland, some 50m in depth, effectively enclosing the surviving historic buildings of the farmstead (i.e. Oast Cottage to the north and Partridges Oast and the listed barn to the south) from the agricultural land within the appeal site to the west.

3.41 This enclosure to the west - in combination with its modest scale and position set back from Snatt's Road behind Charlwood Manor (formerly Downlands House) to the east, high

boundary treatments and Partridges Oast to the south, and robust wooded boundaries to the north - means that Oast Cottage is not readily experienced from the public realm, and the listed building's surrounding residential curtilage exhibits an intimate and 'inward-looking' character.

3.42 The setting of Oast Cottage is therefore now defined by its own private residential gardens, including terrace, lawns, and ornamental planting and mature hedging to the rear (west) with the Partridges Oast planted gardens and robust woodland belt beyond. To the north the setting of the building is defined by a swimming pool and pool house contained by hedging, with the former orchards containing considerable ornamental planting further north and north-west, beyond which are robust treed boundaries.

3.43 The building is accessed from a shared trackway off Snatt's Road to the south-east that also serves Partridges Oast and the listed Swallow Barn to the south, while on the eastern side of the track are a pair of newly constructed dwellings and the 19th century Charlwood Manor further north.

3.44 Together, the immediately adjacent buildings and spaces of the former farmstead, as well as the newly constructed dwellings to the east, (which all lie outside the appeal site) presently define the wider surroundings in which Oast Cottage is experienced. Albeit this experience is limited given the highly enclosed nature of the building itself. The surviving historic buildings that are experienced as one approaches on the shared historical access to the listed building nonetheless evidence the building's role as a former domestic component of the historic farmstead.

3.45 While all the surviving historic buildings in the former farm complex (i.e. the listed Barn at Downlands Farm, Partridges Oast and their ancillary structures) have since been converted to residential use and are now under separate ownership, their proximity and character is such that their former historical associations as part of the farmstead can still be appreciated to a degree and they therefore provide some historic context to Oast Cottage.

3.46 However, these buildings have seen extensive changes too and are no longer appreciated as part of a working farm. The current character of the former farm complex, where the various buildings now have their own well-established residential curtilages and domestic buildings defined by generous landscaped grounds enclosed by woodland, individual trees and high boundary treatments, as well as the presence of newly constructed dwellings to the immediate east, illustrates the domestication of the farm complex in the 20th century and compromises the ability to read and understand the historical relationships on the ground. As such, the associated buildings of the former Downlands Farm complex only make a limited contribution to the historic interest, and overall significance, of Oast Cottage.

3.47 In terms of the experience of the building more widely, its modest scale and enclosed position means that it does not possess any landmark qualities in the local landscape and there is no kinetic experience of the building as one moves across the surrounding landscape, even during winter when the effects of vegetation screening are reduced. The intimate, enclosed setting of the building militates against any meaningful experience from the wider landscape, including the portions of the appeal site to the north and west.

3.48 While the historical relationship between the agricultural land in the appeal site and Oast Cottage as part of the Downlands Farm landholding is acknowledged, given the extensive alterations to the historic farm complex through its break up and the conversion of surviving components to discrete residential parcels - including the establishment of extensive gardens and a dense woodland screen on former agricultural land and orchards between the farm complex and the appeal site - it is not possible to appreciate or understand these historical relationships on the ground.

3.49 Neither is it expected that any historical relationship or notable association with the appeal site can be experienced from Oast Cottage itself. The core significance of the cottage as displayed by its 17th century form and fabric, cannot be appreciated from, or in combination with, the agricultural land or woodland within the appeal site. Only an historical association now remains, rather than any tangible functional or visual association, or any form of meaningful 'experience' of the asset in combination with the appeal site which retains historic integrity. The site visit established that Oast Cottage cannot presently be experienced from, or in combination with, the appeal site.

3.50 Therefore, while the agricultural land within the appeal site is acknowledged to have a past, historical association with Oast Cottage as a component of its wider associated agricultural landholding, this can only be appreciated through reference to documentary sources such as historic mapping and there is no tangible experience of this on the ground.

3.51 It is likely that, prior to the establishment of the residential gardens and dense woodland screen across the meadow to the west of Oast Cottage and Partridges Oast, and the incorporation of the former orchard to the north into the building's domestic curtilage, there was a tangible physical, visual and functional relationship between Oast Cottage and the agricultural land within the site, which could be experienced on the ground. However, the setting of the cottage to the north and west has radically changed and as a result of this evolution, the agricultural land within the appeal site presently does not form part of the surroundings in which the building is experienced.

The Impact on the Significance of the Grade II listed Oast Cottage

3.52 The assessment has concluded that the core significance of the Oast Cottage listed building lies in the architectural and historic interest of its fabric as a vernacular cottage of 17th century origins and that the setting of the cottage does not now retain notable historic integrity or contribute strongly to the asset's significance.

3.53 The appeal proposals would result in no change at all to the physical form or fabric of the building, from which it principally derives its heritage significance.

3.54 The setting of the building has seen notable change from the mid-20th century onwards. Former orchards to the north of the building have been subsumed into the domestic curtilage of the building, notably expanding its historically more humble gardens, and the modern landscaping and additions to the expanded grounds have similarly obfuscated the building's modest origins as a vernacular cottage. In addition, extensive residential gardens and dense woodland associated with Partridges Oast to the south have been laid out across former agricultural land to the immediate west of its historical curtilage, creating the

enclosed residential enclave in which the building is principally experienced, along with the other now converted farm buildings and more recent residential developments to the east.

3.55 The appeal proposals would not result in any change to the extensive gardens and residential grounds surrounding the listed building nor the dense woodland established to the west of the building. Neither would there be any change to the associated buildings and spaces within the former Downlands Farm group south of the asset. These elements of the former farmstead, and the limited contribution that these elements of the setting of Oast Cottage make to its significance, would remain unchanged by the appeal proposals.

3.56 The formerly associated agricultural land west of the building, beyond its gardens and the gardens and woodland grounds of Partridges Oast, would, however, be changed to accommodate residential development. This change would, however, not affect the surroundings in which Oast Cottage is experienced or materially diminish the ability to appreciate the special historic and architectural interest of the cottage.

3.57 The parameter plans and Illustrative Landscape and Ecology Strategy (edp6170_d019) for the appeal scheme illustrates how the portion of the appeal site closest to Oast Cottage's modern curtilage, i.e. the fields and woodland to the north, are proposed to be retained undeveloped in the appeal proposals and would form part of a proposed woodland park, where the land would retain its informal, agricultural character.

3.58 These measures ensure that there would be no adverse change to the current experience of Oast Cottage from within its setting, preserving the current character and experience of the building in its enclosed historical farmstead group.

3.59 Overall, therefore, the development of the appeal site as proposed is considered to result in a neutral impact on the significance of Oast Cottage. i.e. there would be no harm arising from any change to the setting of the asset, and its heritage significance would be preserved.

Barn at Downlands Farm Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number 1262256)

The Significance of the Grade II listed Barn at Downlands Farm

3.60 The Barn at Downlands Farm (1262256) (known also as the residential property Swallows Barn) is located to the east of the appeal site, south of Oast Cottage and immediately south of the Partridges Oast converted oast house.

3.61 As it is in private ownership, it has only been possible to examine the building from public vantage points, the appeal site, and through published sources including the National Heritage List for England, map data and satellite imagery, as set out in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) accompanying the planning application.

3.62 This analysis confirms the building to align with the National Heritage List for England listing citation, although dated to 1984, appears to have been written prior to the barn's conversion to a dwelling, so it does not account for the numerous modern changes to the building's fabric. The listing description describes the building as follows (reproduced in its entirety):

"Barn. C16 with C17 extension to south. Timber-framed on brick plinth and weatherboarded with plain tiled roof, hipped with gablet to north and half-hipped to south, and with deep catslide to west and wagon-doors to east. Interior: 5 bays, with 2 sets of purlins in roof lining through, the upper supported by wind braces, in northern 3 bays; southern 2 bays with staggered purlins. Jowled posts with queen post trusses, with simple queen truss in southern most bay."

3.63 Limited detail is provided of the building's early development by historic maps; the 1829 and 1841 maps reproduced in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) identify a group of buildings in the southern extents of the Downlands Farm complex, with the barn in question likely to comprise one of the structures in the eastern portion of the arrangement of buildings and yards.

3.64 Later OS maps from the 20th century attest to the presence of the barn at the eastern side of a loose courtyard of buildings, and confirm its broadly rectangular plan form and orientation on a north/south axis.

3.65 The Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) have previously identified that during the 19th century the buildings of Downlands Farm, including the barn, were owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker. The agricultural land within the appeal site, which is located to the west beyond the courtyard of agricultural buildings west of the barn on the 19th century maps, also formed a part of the wider landholdings owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker at this time.

3.66 The Barn at Downlands Farm was granted consent in 1996 for conversion to a domestic dwelling (WDC reference: WD/96/2693/F). Amendments were agreed in 2002 to revise the consent and include the addition of a garage and store.

3.67 In terms of its heritage significance, as would be expected for a listed building of this type, the significance of the barn is overwhelmingly derived from the special architectural and historic interest of the building's fabric and built form, inherent in its traditional timber-framed structure and early origins as a vernacular agricultural building.

3.68 The conversion of the building has altered its outward appearance and historic character; its agricultural origin is hinted at by the retained traditional elements of weather-boarding and substantial tiled roof, albeit tempered by obvious domestic details at the former cart entrance to the east and the insertion of a number of windows to the roof and walls.

The Contribution of Setting to the Significance of the Grade II listed Barn at Downlands Farm

3.69 In terms of its setting, 19th and early 20th century map sources presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) indicate that the barn was positioned in the south of the farmstead at the eastern side of a loose courtyard arrangement of working buildings. Immediately west was an associated complex of farm buildings. This arrangement indicates that the barn was not positioned to obtain a direct physical or functional relationship with the agricultural fields further west and indeed the earliest maps depicted in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) indicate that historically the

barn, and its associated courtyards to the west, were accessed from Snatt's Road to the east or via a now defunct north/south aligned track to the south. The cart entrance positioned on the east side of the building supports this interpretation.

3.70 The 20th century mapping indicates an ongoing pattern of reorganisation of the working buildings around the barn throughout the 20th century, with various buildings concentrated west and south of the barn and then subsequently demolished. Ordnance Survey maps from the 1970s presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) evidence the presence of a substantial range of large sheds extending some distance to the west of the barn at that time, before their removal in the later 20th century.

3.71 These significant changes to the setting of the barn appear to follow the post-war break-up of the Rocks Estate owned by the Streatfield family and separation of the buildings of Downlands Farm into separate ownership.

3.72 The landscape, as well as the historic farm buildings, immediately to the north of the barn underwent significant changes in the mid-20th century. This included the conversion of the former oast house to the north to a residential dwelling, which coincided with the establishment of a substantial garden curtilage to the newly converted Partridges Oast. These new residential gardens extended c.150m across the extents of the former meadow west of the former oast house and immediately north and northwest of the barn. The western extents of this newly established garden were planted as dense woodland, some 50m in depth, effectively enclosing the surviving historic buildings of the farmstead (i.e. Oast Cottage, Partridges Oast and the barn to the south) from the agricultural land within the appeal site to the west.

3.73 The residential conversion of the barn followed the conversion of Partridges Oast, when the surviving farm buildings across the former yards west and south of the barn were swept away. Residential gardens laid out to the east and more generously to the west defined the building's new domestic curtilage, while to the south and south-west, the footprint of former substantial modern sheds was left unmanaged allowing the growth of ruderal vegetation. The trackway that was installed in the late 20th century to allow access to the modern sheds from Snatt's Road remains along the southern boundary of the barn's domestic curtilage.

3.74 The defined domestic curtilage of the barn therefore extends over an area of former farmyard buildings west of the barn, tapering to meet the extensive woodland belt that was established at the western extreme of the Partridges Oast residential grounds. The rear and south boundaries of the barn's residential gardens are defined by hedges while its gardens are planted with trees and contain a substantial garage to the south-east.

3.75 The domestic boundary treatments of the barn's grounds and those of Partridges Oast to the north, in combination with robust wooded boundaries to the north-west, means that the barn and its surrounding residential curtilage exhibits an intimate and 'inward-looking' character and does not offer the experience of views out to the surrounding landscape.

3.76 The setting of the Barn at Downlands Farm is therefore now defined by its own private residential gardens, including lawns, ornamental planting and mature hedging to the rear (west) with the Partridges Oast dwelling and planted gardens and robust woodland belt beyond to the north and west. To the east, the barn is more open to Snatt's Road and its

shared access track and recently constructed modern dwellings, while to the south, the ruderal vegetation across the footprint of demolished modern barns defines its setting.

3.77 Together, the immediately adjacent buildings and spaces of the former farmstead, i.e. Partridges Oast, as well as the newly constructed dwellings to the east, (which all lie outside the appeal site) presently define the wider surroundings in which the barn is chiefly experienced, from its access to the east.

3.78 While Partridges Oast, as a surviving historic building in the former farm complex has since been converted to residential use and is now under separate ownership, its proximity and character is such that its former historical associations as part of the farmstead can still be appreciated to a degree and it therefore provides some historic context to the listed barn.

3.79 However, the former Downlands Farm buildings and spaces have seen extensive changes as set out above and are no longer appreciated as part of a working farm. The current character of the former farm complex, where the various buildings now have their own well-established residential curtilages and domestic buildings defined by generous landscaped grounds enclosed by woodland, individual trees and high boundary treatments, as well as the presence of newly constructed dwellings to the immediate east, illustrates the domestication, 'gentrification' and urbanisation of the farm complex in the 20th century and compromises the ability to read and understand the historic relationships on the ground. As such, the associated buildings of the former Downlands Farm complex only make a limited contribution to the historic interest, and overall significance, of the Barn at Downlands Farm.

3.80 In terms of the experience of the building more widely, its modest scale and enclosed position means that it does not possess any landmark qualities in the local landscape and there is no kinetic experience of the building as one moves across the surrounding landscape, even during winter when the effects of vegetation screening are reduced.

3.81 Despite the historical association of the barn and the appeal site, by virtue of their shared ownership and tenancy as part of Downlands Farm, it is clear that the barn's relationship with the agricultural land to west has never been a key contributor to its setting or significance. Throughout its historical use as a working barn, the building appears to have been buffered from the agricultural land in the appeal site by a multitude of differing working buildings and yard arrangements, and it is clear that the barn itself was orientated to the east and was historically intended to be accessed and approached from tracks to the east and south, rather than from the agricultural land to the west.

3.82 As established in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103), the barn can be experienced from the appeal site, along the informal track that runs through the finger of the site south of the barn's modern domestic curtilage. This view comprises the only 'experience' of the listed building from the appeal site.

3.83 The experience of the barn from the track to the south is limited to its rear tiled roof, which displays evidence of its domestic conversion through the inserted rooflight, and it is experienced over the boundary of the barn's now domestic residential curtilage. Aside from allowing appreciation of its scale and roof pitch, this experience does not allow any notable understanding or appreciation of the significance of the listed barn. Equally, this experience

is obtained from a private track established only in the late 20th century, which is not contemporary with any notable phase of the listed building's evolution, and which is heavily influenced by the growth of ruderal woodland on the site of demolished 20th century sheds, as well the presence of the residential gardens and woodland planting established around the barn in the late 20th century. On this basis, the limited experience of the listed building from within the appeal site is devoid of any historic integrity and makes no material contribution to the significance of the listed building.

The Impact on the Significance of the Grade II listed Barn at Downlands Farm

3.84 The assessment has concluded that the core significance of the Barn at Downlands Farm listed building lies in the architectural and historic interest of its fabric as a vernacular barn of 16th century origins and that the setting of the barn does not now retain notable historic integrity or contribute strongly to the asset's significance.

3.85 The appeal proposals would result in no change at all to the physical form or fabric of the building, from which it principally derives its heritage significance.

3.86 The setting of the building has seen notable change from the mid-20th century onwards: former farm buildings and courtyards to the west of the building have been demolished and replaced with modern units to the west and south, which themselves have subsequently been demolished. A domestic curtilage has been established around the barn obfuscating the building's origins as a working farm building. In addition, extensive residential gardens and dense woodland associated with Partridges Oast to the north have been laid out across former agricultural land to the immediate north-west, creating the enclosed residential enclave in which the building is principally experienced, along with the other now converted farm buildings and more recent residential developments to the east.

3.87 The appeal proposals would not result in any change to the gardens and residential grounds surrounding the listed building nor the dense woodland established to the west of the building. Neither would there be any change to the associated buildings and spaces within the former Downlands Farm group north of the asset. The elements of the former farmstead, and the limited contribution that these elements of the setting of the Barn at Downlands Farm make to its significance, would remain unchanged by the appeal proposals.

3.88 The formerly associated agricultural land west of the barn, beyond its gardens and the gardens and woodland grounds of Partridges Oast, would, however, be changed to accommodate residential development. This change would, however, not materially diminish the ability to appreciate the special historic and architectural interest of the listed building, because the barn's relationship with the agricultural land to west has never been a key contributor to its setting or significance.

3.89 The portion of the appeal site closest to the listed barn, i.e. the informal track south of the barn's domestic curtilage; is a location from where there is a limited experience of the building. As set out above, this experience is devoid of historic integrity and is therefore considered to make no material contribution to the understanding or appreciation of the significance of the listed barn.

3.90 Even so, the proximity of this part of the appeal site to the former Downlands Farm complex and its surviving historic buildings has been a key consideration in the evolution of the appeal proposals. The parameter plans for the appeal scheme indicate that this area would not form part of the residential development footprint, but be managed as part of the natural green space, providing a buffer of open space between the historic farmstead, including the listed barn, and the new built form within the appeal site further to the west.

3.91 The Illustrative Landscape and Ecology Strategy (edp6170_d019) for the appeal scheme illustrates how this area is proposed to be planted with orchards and landscape planting and will provide a pedestrian access to the appeal site, thereby replacing the existing ruderal vegetation and modern building remains across this area with new landscape planting that more sensitively addresses the historic context of the former Downlands Farm complex.

3.92 These measures ensure that there would be no adverse change to the current experience of the listed barn from within its historical farmstead setting, preserving the character and experience of the building without adversely impacting on any elements of its setting that possess historic integrity or contribute to its significance.

3.93 Overall, therefore, the development of the appeal site as proposed is considered to result in a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building. i.e. there would be no harm arising from any change to the setting of the asset, and its heritage significance would be preserved.

Buckswood Grange Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number 1194277)

The Significance of the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange

3.94 The Grade II listed Buckswood Grange (formerly The Rocks) is located south of Rocks Road, and south of the southern tip of the appeal site which borders the northern edge of Rocks Road at its junction with Snatt's Road.

3.95 As it is in private ownership - converted to around 20 flats that now form part of a gated community - it has only been possible to examine the building from public vantage points and through published sources including the National Heritage List for England, map data and satellite imagery, as set out in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) accompanying the planning application.

3.96 This analysis confirms the building to align with the National Heritage List for England listing citation, updated since its original listing in 1978. The listing description describes the building as follows (reproduced in its entirety):

"A private school from World War II until 2000 subsequently converted into housing. Formerly the home of the Streatfield family who were responsible for various local venefactions. Built by Sydney Smirke in 1838 in Tudor style. Asymmetrical building of two storeys and attic. Red brick, with some diaper patterns on ground floor. Long and short quoins, window dressings and plinth, all of stone. Clustered brick chimney pots. Front elevation has a projecting portion of two storeys and attics with gable surmounted by ball finials. Oriel window to first floor. Four-centred stone archway with hood moulding. The part set back has a pierced panel with stone coping, moulded eaves cornice, part stringcourse

and mullioned and transomed windows. The right side has two shaped gables and blank cartouches."

3.97 It is clear from the listing description and my own assessment that the building derives its significance overwhelmingly from the architectural, artistic and historic interest of the fabric of its Tudor-style built form, constructed as a mansion house at the dawn of the Victorian era and designed by a notable 19th century architect for a locally significant family.

The Contribution of Setting to the Significance of the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange

3.98 In terms of the historic evolution and setting of The Rocks, as Buckswood Grange was initially named, the Tithe Map of 1841 presented in the Archaeology and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) and Heritage Addendum (CD2/103), is the first map to show the house, having been built only a few years earlier in 1838. This map identifies the house standing east of a 'Park' which extends to Rocks Road to the north and across a field to the west. A collection of ancillary buildings is located immediately north-east of the main house and a barn and yard is identified in the park to the west.

3.99 While the surrounding landscape includes many features associated with the Rocks Estate identified on the Tithe Map, including Rocks Wood to the north-west with its large lake, and a 'cottage and garden' in Fir Grove to the north of Rocks Road, none of these features are identified as being related specifically to the house on this map, but rather simply form components of the wider estate under the same ownership.

3.100 The second edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1899 shows The Rocks and its associated grounds in good detail. The Rocks is identified south of Rocks Road, where shading on the map indicates the extents of a formalised expanse of parkland surrounding the house, extending north to Rocks Road and some distance to the south. The location of a summer house is also identified within the northern parkland, as are woodland blocks and a network of tracks, a number of which are shown to connect with Lake Wood and Fir Grove to the north of Rocks Road.

3.101 Within Lake Wood, the lake is clearly shown, as are the network of tracks around it and a number of rock outcrops. Notably, one of these tracks is shown to connect with the woodland within the appeal site at this time, comprising a long straight track through Thirty Acre Wood running from Budletts Common further north, through the western edge of the appeal site and south into Lake Wood.

3.102 As set out in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103), in the first half of the 19th century - presumably at the time of the construction of The Rocks house and the laying out of the park around the main house - the southern part of Lake Wood was landscaped in a "Picturesque" style by the Streatfield family who owned the wood and The Rocks as part of the wider estate. An existing pond was enlarged by the building of an earth dam which created a three acre spring-fed lake. Carriage drives were put through Lake Wood, including a tunnel under Rocks Road to link with the parkland in Rocks Estate to the south of Rocks Road. Many exotic and native trees and shrubs were planted, some of which still survive as large specimen trees. The wood already benefited from dramatic outcrops of Cretaceous Ardingly sandstone and where the rocks formed the shoreline of the new lake, structures

were cut into them including steps, tunnels and a boat-house. The northern part of Lake Wood, closest to the appeal site, was retained largely as overstood mixed coppice.

3.103 The landscaping of Lake Wood appears to have been designed to create an extension to the gardens and pleasure grounds of Rocks House and provide picturesque and romantic walks. In this way, it is acknowledged that Lake Wood forms part of a wider 'designed' landscape associated with The Rocks (i.e. the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange) through the enhancements and management of its existing features, albeit it is also acknowledged that its function was to provide pleasure grounds separate to the house itself, rather than grounds from where the house itself could be appreciated or experienced.

3.104 The Rocks and its surrounding parkland, as well as Lake Wood to the north, appear to have remained largely as depicted on the 1899 map throughout the first half of the 20th century. During World War II the house was repurposed as a school, coinciding with its renaming as Buckswood Grange, around which time the Rocks Estate was broken up and its various elements were sold off into separate ownership.

3.105 While the school appears to have retained the northern portion of the parkland south of Rocks Road in its grounds, the wider parkland to the south and west was disposed of and progressively developed for housing and a primary school throughout the second half of the 20th century.

3.106 It is understood that a gated underpass under Rocks Road still allows access from the former park west of the house (which is now West Park Nature Reserve) to Lake Wood to the north, but for the most part the routes from the house to Lake Wood are now defunct.

3.107 In 2000, the Buckswood Grange school was closed and the house and its surrounding buildings converted to a residential development, which remains a private gated and enclosed community with no public access. The house itself is now subdivided into around 20 properties. The wider parkland formerly extending around Buckswood Grange has for the most part been developed for residential housing and as a school site since the mid-20th century and, aside from the band of scrub and woodland extending to the west of the house surviving as West Park Nature Reserve, this modern development defines the setting of the house, formerly occupied by its parkland.

3.108 My site visit and walkover of Lake Wood established that the trackway connection between Lake Wood and the woodland on the western boundary of the appeal site, that is identified on the 1899 plan leading on through the woods towards the wider grounds of Buckswood House, is no longer extant, it presumably having ceased to function and be maintained after the mid-20th century break-up of the Rocks Estate. No trace of any track or route through this woodland on the western boundary of the site was observed during the site visit.

3.109 In terms of the contribution of the appeal site to the setting of Buckswood Grange, it is acknowledged that the entirety of the appeal site shared an historical association, by virtue of forming part of the wider Rocks Estate and landholding of the owners of The Rocks mansion up until the mid-20th century.

3.110 This association on its own is,, however not considered sufficient to determine that the appeal site forms part of the setting of the listed building. Indeed, the site visit established

that the woodland and farmland that forms the appeal site does not form any part of the surroundings in which the listed building is experienced. Equally, there is nothing about the non-descript farmland within the site which indicates this historical ownership link or indeed suggests any connection whatsoever with Buckswood Grange.

3.111 There are no 'designed' or 'associative' views towards the appeal site from Buckswood Grange, nor is there any indication that the appeal site was intended to be experienced in combination with the listed building. or vice versa.

3.112 From the surviving parkland and surrounds of Buckswood Grange that lie to the south of Rocks Road, there was found to be no experience of the land within the appeal site further north, which is screened by robust boundary planting and the rising topography.

3.113 While acknowledging the proximity of Chicory Cottage (a building in the southern edge of the appeal site historically associated with The Rocks to the south; (see below)), to the listed building, it is nonetheless the case that the two buildings are physically separate and well enclosed from each other, such that the experience of each does not include the other. This is due to the fact that the Buckswood Grange listed building in its current form is now at the centre of a private residential development that has expanded across the former school and mansion house grounds and is now enclosed by gates and robust boundary fencing and vegetation, which continues to provide a strong physical boundary between the house, its grounds and the landscape beyond to the north.

3.114 Similarly, the grounds of Chicory Cottage to the north are bounded by dense vegetation, which screens the building from the road north of the listed building, even in winter.

The Impact on the Significance of the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange

3.115 The assessment has concluded that the core significance of the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange lies in the architectural and historic interest of its fabric as a 19th century mansion house and that the setting of the house does not now retain notable historic integrity or contribute strongly to the asset's significance.

3.116 The appeal proposals would result in no change at all to the physical form or fabric of Buckswood Grange, from which it principally derives its heritage significance.

3.117 The setting of the building has seen notable change from the mid-20th century onwards; the building is no longer an individual private dwelling set within its own extensive grounds including gardens and parkland. It is now subdivided into numerous separate dwellings, with their own immediate grounds being developed for private and communal garden spaces, car parking and the provision of a series of additional dwellings constructed immediately north and east of the listed building.

3.118 More widely, its formerly associated parkland and landholdings have been broken up into separate ownerships, with a large proportion of its immediately surrounding parkland to the south since developed for housing in the late 20th century, as well as to provide a primary school immediately to the south. Its setting therefore no longer retains its historic integrity, and it is not possible to access its former wider landholdings, such as Lake Wood, directly from the listed building, due to changes in ownership and the establishment of new property boundaries and curtilages over several decades after the break-up of its wider estate.

3.119 While it is acknowledged that the entirety of the appeal site has an historical association with the listed building through forming part of the wider Rocks Estate, it does not from part of the surroundings in which Buckswood Grange is experienced. The change resulting from the construction of new residential development across the agricultural land in the appeal site, is therefore not expected to result in any change to the setting of the listed building or loss of its heritage significance.

3.120 The implementation of the development proposals for the appeal site (including the demolition of Chicory Cottage and the construction of a new access route through Fir Tree Grove), is not expected to have any potential to be experienced in combination with the listed building, from either its surrounding grounds or in the wider landscape.

3.121 It is expected that the appeal proposals would result in no adverse change to the current experience of the listed building and its significance, and they would preserve the character and experience of the building without adversely impacting on any elements of its setting that possess historic integrity or contribute to its significance.

3.122 Overall, therefore, the development of the appeal site as proposed is considered to result in a neutral impact on the significance of the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange. i.e. there would be no harm arising from any change to the setting of the asset, and its heritage significance would be preserved.

Maresfield Conservation Area

3.123 It is common ground between the Appellants and the Council that, as set out in the Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (CD2/83) accompanying the planning application, the implementation of the appeal proposals would result in a change to the setting of Maresfield Conservation Area, and specifically an adverse change to an identified important view south from the conservation area.

3.124 Both parties agree that this would result in a very low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area.

3.125 In light of the fact that the impact of the appeal proposals on this designated heritage asset is agreed by both parties and not a matter of dispute at this Inquiry, this issue is not explored further in my evidence.

THE EFFECTS OF THE APPEAL PROPOSALS ON NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Chicory Cottage

Preamble

3.126 Chicory Cottage is located in the southern portion of the appeal site, south of the wooded Fir Tree Grove, where the appeal proposals propose to install a new pedestrian and cycle route.

3.127 Chicory Cottage is not formally identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record, nor is it identified on any local list of non-designated heritage assets by Wealden District Council.

3.128 The Council's heritage officers did not identify the cottage as a non-designated heritage asset during their scoping response to the planning application (dated 18 November 2020). The Heritage Officer noted during determination of the planning application (in a formal consultation response dated 13 September 2022) that Chicory Cottage "*has the potential to be considered a non-designated heritage asset (if not curtilage listed) by virtue of its historic association to Buck*[s]*wood Grange."*

3.129 Further clarification was sought by the Appellant in respect of whether Chicory Cottage was formally identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset, with the response received by email dated 05 December 2022 (CD1/1) stating, "*the house lies in generous landscaped gardens with rocky outcrops, which broadly reflect the curtilage since at least the 1841 tithe map, and are consistent with other features of the Rocks Estate. It has a close relationship with Lake Wood and Fir Tree Grove, and has a clear historic relationship to Buck[s]wood Grange. I therefore conclude that it has a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest."*

3.130 It is on this basis that the Council appear to consider Chicory Cottage as a non-designated heritage asset. However, it is my view that the Council's rationale does not align with the PPG (CD11/3) in respect of the identification of non-designated heritage assets (my emphasis):

> *"There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence.*
>
> *Plan-making bodies should make clear and up to date information on non-designated heritage assets accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainty for developers and decision-makers. This includes information on the criteria used to select non-designated heritage assets and information about the location of existing assets.*
>
> *It is important that all non-designated heritage assets are clearly identified as such. In this context, it can be helpful if local planning authorities keep a local list of non-designated heritage assets, incorporating any such assets which are identified by neighbourhood planning bodies. (See the Historic England website for advice on local lists) They should also ensure that up to date information about non-designated heritage assets is included in the local historic environment record"*

3.131 It is my view that the Council have not clearly identified Chicory Cottage as a non-designated heritage asset based on sound evidence of any heritage interest the building possesses itself, nor the application of any clear criteria. Rather, the Council have simply relied on the building's historical association with Buckswood Grange as justification for its alleged status as a non-designated heritage asset.

3.132 To be clear, the decision-making process for the planning application did not reveal the discovery of Chicory Cottage for the first time, as the PPG (para 040) also indicates non-designated heritage assets may be identified; indeed the building has been the subject of numerous planning applications for alterations and extensions in recent years (see references below), without any suggestion previously by the Council that any heritage interest it possesses was sufficient to represent a material consideration.

3.133 Setting the above points aside, the following paragraphs set out a description of Chicory Cottage, its heritage interest and the potential impact of the appeal proposals on the building.

The Significance of Chicory Cottage

3.134 Chicory Cottage comprises a two-storey brick structure with hipped roof located in its own grounds north of Rocks Road, in the southern portion of the appeal site (see **Appendix ES 1**).

3.135 The building is set within a generous and well vegetated plot south of Fir Tree Grove, which provides a rising backdrop behind the building when approaching the property via the access north of the junction of Rocks Road and Snatt's Road. The building is set back in the plot and does not present an obvious presence to the road or public realm given its location beyond the plot's enclosing fenced and treed boundaries.

3.136 The 1829 and 1841 maps presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) that informed the planning application indicate that a building was located here in the 19th century, identified as a 'cottage and garden', with the associated gardens, including outcrops of rock, extending to the east of the house, as well as towards Fir Tree Grove to the north. The current gardens comprise mainly lawns with the addition of modern elements such as a tarmac drive, swimming pool, pergolas, summerhouse and garages.

3.137 Online sales particulars produced by Batcheller Monkhouse dated to 2018 (**Appendix ES 2**) note the property is believed to have been constructed in the 1890s as the former butler's house associated with Buckswood Grange to the south. However, this assertion appears anecdotal and I am not aware of any documentary evidence that supports this.

3.138 As set out in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) accompanying the planning application, the 1829 and 1841 maps which identify a dwelling in this location at this time confirm that the property was then in the ownership of the Streatfield family who owned the Rocks Estate, and the associated The Rocks mansion (now Buckswood Grange) to the south.

3.139 It is clear that a building was positioned in this location as early as 1829, predating the construction of The Rocks (Buckswood Grange), which was constructed in 1839. This suggests that the present Chicory Cottage may either have its origins in at least the early 19th century, or potentially may have replaced an earlier dwelling in this location later in the 19th century.

3.140 Regardless of this chronology, it is nonetheless apparent that the present building is formerly associated with the principal dwelling of the former Rocks Estate (comprising Buckswood Grange to the south), through association as a component of the wider Rocks

Estate, albeit this link today is extinct given that Chicory Cottage has been in separate ownership to Buckswood Grange since the mid-late 20th century.

3.141 Despite this historical association, there is nothing in the architectural treatment or style of Chicory Cottage that suggests a contemporary association or design intention for consistency with the listed building of Tudor style to the south.

3.142 It is likely that Chicory Cottage was separated from The Rocks Estate in the 1970s or before, prior to the listing of Buckswood Grange in April 1978, at which point Buckswood Grange was a school site.

3.143 In the 1970s, Chicory Cottage appears to have been notably enlarged with the addition of a two-storey extension to the north-west (WD/1977/0296/F). This extension is apparent in photographs of the building (**Plates ES 1** and **ES 2** below), where its brown brickwork contrasts with the red brick of the earliest, 19th century central portion of the building. Subsequent planning applications consented the addition of a conservatory to the rear of the building in 1990 (WD/1990/3052/F), and a small extension to the south-east (F/101/0010) in 2010.

3.144 Comparison of the building observed during the 2022 site visit for the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) with the photographs accompanying the 2018 sales particulars (**Appendix ES 2**) (**Plates ES 1** and **ES 2**) shows the presence of a further two-storey extension to the south-east end of the building completed by 2021, following a number of consented planning applications in 2018 (WD/2018/2416/F) (F/189/2450). Additional changes to the interior were undertaken at this time including the removal and repositioning of internal walls and staircases. It is clear that the original frontage of the cottage was also completely reordered at this time, with the reconfiguring of upper storey windows, including the insertion of a circular window above the repositioned main entrance door. The chimney was also removed from the north-east end of the building.



Plate ES 1: Image of Chicory Cottage taken from Batcheller Monkhouse sales particulars dated to 2018.



Plate ES 2: Photograph of Chicory Cottage taken in December 2022.

3.145 It is apparent from my review of the considerable recent planning history of Chicory Cottage that, during the positive determination of the foregoing applications which consented significant changes to the building's earliest fabric, there was no suggestion that the Council considered Chicory Cottage to be a non-designated heritage asset or indeed identified that it possessed any degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.

3.146 In terms of any heritage interest it does possess, it is my view that the building has no notable architectural interest in its design and fabric and no notable architectural treatments or ambition displayed in its simple brick construction. Indeed, the greater part of the building is now made up of extensions dating from the 1970s onwards.

3.147 It is clear that the original building, comprising the centrally positioned component with extensions either side to the north-west and south-east, has been substantially modified and modernised throughout, including the reconfiguration of its internal spaces, and replacement and reconfiguration of all windows and doors, such that any heritage interest that it may have once possessed in its fabric is now negligible. The building is not considered to possess any archaeological or artistic interest.

3.148 In terms of historic interest, the building is not a typical, well preserved, or indeed unusual, example of any local or national dwelling type, having been considerably altered over recent years. The building's association with the wider Rocks Estate and Buckswood Grange to the south is by virtue only of their historical shared ownership, which is not considered to imbue the building with any notable historic interest, particularly given the extent of alteration to the original building.

3.149 In this regard, Planning Practice Guidance (CD11/3) is clear that:

"A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets."

3.150 In conclusion, it is my view that Chicory Cottage does not possess sufficient heritage significance to constitute status as a heritage asset. Whilst Chicory Cottage may qualify as a non-designated heritage asset in the opinion of the Council, this is inconsistent with the Council's approach to recent planning decisions for the dwelling. Chicory Cottage could therefore only be considered of very limited significance and that significance has certainly been diminished by the fact that the building has experienced substantial extension, refurbishment and alteration to its original fabric in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Impact on the Significance of Chicory Cottage

3.151 The development proposals for the appeal site necessitate the demolition of Chicory Cottage and reorganisation of its grounds to facilitate the construction of an accessible pedestrian and cycle access from Rocks Road to connect with the main development area of the appeal site to the north.

3.152 The area of Fir Tree Grove and grounds of Chicory Cottage affected will be brought into an appropriate management regime to retain an informal, naturalistic woodland character and to secure long-term wildlife objectives and the visual amenity of users of the proposed access route.

3.153 Given it is my view that Chicory Cottage does not possess sufficient heritage interest to qualify as a non-designated heritage asset, I do not consider its loss to be a material consideration, in terms of heritage policy.

3.154 However, if the decision-taker considers the loss of Chicory Cottage to be a material consideration in terms of heritage policy, then the total loss of the cottage, and accordingly the loss of its very limited heritage interest, will need to be considered in accordance with paragraph 203 of the NPPF.

3.155 The Appellant has suggested a condition is attached to any planning consent to secure an appropriate programme of building recording in advance of the demolition of Chicory Cottage, should this be deemed necessary, which would provide mitigation for the loss of the building.

Partridges Oast

The Significance of Partridges Oast (Non-designated Heritage Asset)

3.156 Partridges Oast is located to the east of the appeal site in between the listed buildings at Downlands Farm, south of Oast Cottage and north of the Barn at Downlands Farm.

3.157 The building is not identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record, nor is it identified on any local list of non-designated heritage assets by Wealden District Council.

3.158 The Council did, however, identify the cottage as a non-designated heritage asset in the scoping response to the planning application (dated 18 November 2020) as Partridges

Oast, Snatt's Road, "*considered to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its age and the fact that it is part of the remains of the post medieval farmstead, being a converted oast house.*"

3.159 There is therefore no published information available in respect of the building's heritage interest and, as it is in private ownership, it has only been possible to examine the building from public vantage points, the appeal site and through mapping sources and satellite imagery, as set out in the Heritage Addendum accompanying the planning application (CD2/103).

3.160 This analysis confirms the building to be a brick built and clay-tiled former oast house now converted into a dwelling which survives as part of an L-shaped building range set within extensive gardens extending to the west.

3.161 Little detail is provided of the building's early development by historic maps; the 1829 and 1841 maps reproduced in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) do not show sufficiently reliable detail to verify the presence of an oast house at this time; although it is likely that the oast house represents a 19th century addition to the farmstead, during the peak of hop production in Sussex.

3.162 The Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) has previously identified that during the 19th century the buildings of Downlands Farm were owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker. The agricultural land within the appeal site also formed a part of the wider landholdings owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker at this time.

3.163 Early 20th century Ordnance Survey (OS) maps indicate that the oast house was originally developed as a north-west/south-east aligned structure with the conical kiln at the north-west end and stowage section to the south-east. Subsequent OS maps indicate that a north-east/south-west range was added to the south-east end of the stowage in the late 20th century, after the oast house was converted to a residential dwelling in the 1950s (1953 – 1955, WDC: T/1953/11007/F) and renamed Partridges Oast.

3.164 In terms of its heritage significance, Partridges Oast is not of special architectural or historic interest, but nonetheless, despite its conversion to residential use, retains some historic and architectural interest at a local level in its 19th century form and fabric, with the distinctive cylindrical kiln and its conical roof and white cowl providing clear evidence of the historical function of the structure. It represents a characteristic vernacular agricultural building, specifically an example of the more common and recognisable conical oast house buildings of East Sussex.

The Contribution of Setting to the Significance of Partridges Oast

3.165 In terms of its setting, 19th and early 20th century map sources presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103) indicate that the oast house was positioned on the northern edge of the yard associated with the working areas of Downlands Farm, to the south of Oast Cottage. Immediately west was an open meadow that extended to the west and formed part of the landholding owned by the Streatfield family and occupied by Napkin Brooker, the tenant of Downlands Farm.

3.166 This situation appears to have remained largely unchanged until the mid-20th century when, in 1951, the Downlands Farm buildings were sold along with other parts of the Rocks Estate, in response to the post-war break-up of the wider Rocks Estate owned by the Streatfield family.

3.167 The setting of the oast house thereafter underwent significant changes in the mid-20th century. This included the evolution of the farmstead, with a number of large-scale buildings constructed to the south, while the surviving historic farm buildings (including the oast house itself and later the listed barn to the south) were converted to private residential dwellings.

3.168 The oast house appears to have undergone significant alterations to facilitate its new residential use, including the construction of the attached range to the east to create an L-shaped dwelling. Equally as significant in terms of its setting was the establishment of a substantial garden curtilage to the newly converted Partridges Oast extending across the extents of the former meadow west of the building. The western portion of this newly established garden was planted as dense woodland, effectively enclosing Partridges Oast and the surviving historic buildings of the farmstead (i.e. Oast Cottage to the north and the listed barn to the south) from the agricultural land within the appeal site to the west.

3.169 This enclosure to the west, in combination with its position set back from Snatt's Road to the east, means that Partridges Oast is not readily experienced from the public realm, and the former oast house's surrounding residential curtilage retains an intimate and 'inward-looking' character.

3.170 The setting of Partridges Oast is therefore now defined by its own private residential gardens, including terraced lawns and a swimming pool to the rear (west) with the robust woodland planting belt beyond. It is neatly enclosed variously by mature trees, hedges, brick walls and post and rail fences to the east towards Snatt's Road and by the grounds of Oast Cottage to the north and residential curtilage of the listed barn to the south. The building is accessed from a shared trackway off Snatt's Road to the south-east that serves Oast Cottage and the listed Swallow Barn, while on the eastern side of the track are a pair of newly constructed dwellings and the 19th century Charlwood Manor further north.

3.171 Together, the immediately adjacent buildings and spaces of the former farmstead, as well as the newly constructed dwellings to the east, (which all lie outside the appeal site) presently define the wider surroundings in which Partridges Oast is experienced. The surviving historic buildings evidence the former oast house's role as a component of the working buildings of the 19th century phase of the farmstead. While all the surviving historic buildings in the former farm complex (i.e. the listed Barn at Downlands Farm, the listed Oast Cottage and their ancillary structures) have since been converted to residential use and are now under separate ownership, their proximity and character is such that their former historical associations as part of an historic farmstead can still be appreciated to a degree and they therefore provide some historic context to the former oast house.

3.172 However, these buildings have seen extensive changes too and are no longer appreciated as part of a working farm. The current character of the former farm complex, where the various buildings now have their own well-established residential curtilages and domestic buildings defined by generous landscaped grounds enclosed by woodland, individual trees

and high boundary treatments, as well as the presence of newly constructed dwellings to the immediate east, illustrates the domestication and 'gentrification' of the buildings of the farm complex in the 20th century and compromises the ability to read and understand the historical relationships on the ground. As such, the associated buildings of the former Downlands Farm complex only make a limited contribution to the historic interest, and overall significance, of Partridges Oast.

3.173 In terms of the experience of the building more widely, its enclosed position means that it does not possess any landmark qualities in the local landscape and there is no kinetic experience of the building as one moves across the surrounding landscape, even during winter when the effects of vegetation screening are reduced. Despite the height of the conical kiln and cowl of the former oast house, the intimate, enclosed setting of the building within its evolved historical farmstead militates against any meaningful experience from the wider landscape, including the appeal site.

3.174 While the historical relationship between the agricultural land in the appeal site and Partridges Oast as part of the Downlands Farm landholding is acknowledged, given the extensive alterations to the historic farm complex through its break up and conversion of surviving components to discrete residential parcels – including the establishment of extensive gardens and a dense woodland screen on former agricultural land between the farm complex and the appeal site - it is not possible to fully appreciate or understand these historical relationships on the ground.

3.175 Neither is it expected that any historical relationship or notable association with the appeal site can be experienced from Partridges Oast itself. The core significance of the former oast house as displayed by its distinctive 19th century form and fabric, cannot be appreciated from, or in combination with, the agricultural land or woodland within the appeal site. Only an historical association now remains, rather than any tangible functional or visual association, or any form of meaningful 'experience' of the asset in combination with the appeal site which retains historic integrity.

3.176 The experience of Partridges Oast in combination with the appeal site is limited to the finger of the appeal site that forms the informal trackway south of the former Downlands Farm complex. As evidenced by the historic mapping presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103), this informal trackway was established in the late 20th century to serve now demolished modern agricultural sheds and it is therefore not an historical approach to the farmstead of any heritage significance. The experience of Partridges Oast from this portion of the appeal site is limited to a glimpse between the domestic boundary vegetation of Swallow Barn and a modern garage structure in its curtilage. While this allows a limited experience of the form of the former oast house, it is an incidental glimpse from a location devoid of historic integrity and is therefore considered to make no material contribution to the understanding or appreciation of the significance of Partridges Oast.

3.177 Therefore, while the agricultural land within the appeal site is acknowledged to have a past, historical association with Partridges Oast as a component of its wider associated agricultural landholding, this can only be appreciated through reference to documentary sources such as historic mapping.

3.178 It may well be that, prior to the establishment of the residential gardens and dense woodland screen across the meadow to the west of the oast house, that there was a tangible physical, visual and functional relationship between the oast house and the agricultural land within the site, which could be experienced on the ground. However, the setting of the now converted oast house has radically changed and as a result of this evolution, the agricultural land within the appeal site presently does not form part of the surroundings in which the building is experienced.

The Impact on the Significance of Partridges Oast

3.179 The assessment has concluded that the core significance of the building lies in the architectural and historic interest of its fabric as an oast house and that the setting of the converted farm building does not now strongly contribute to its significance.

3.180 The appeal proposals would result in no change at all to the physical form or fabric of the building, from which it principally derives its heritage significance.

3.181 The setting of the building has seen notable change from the mid-20th century onwards: the building itself was converted to a residential dwelling; extended to accommodate this use; and extensive gardens and dense woodland were laid out across former agricultural land to the west, creating the enclosed enclave in which the building is principally experienced, along with the other now converted farm buildings and more recent residential developments to the east.

3.182 The appeal proposals would not result in any change to the extensive residential grounds and woodland established to the west of the building. Neither would there be any change to the associated buildings and spaces within the former Downlands Farm group that surround Partridges Oast. These elements of the former farmstead, and the limited contribution that these elements of the setting of Partridges Oast make to its significance, would remain unchanged by the appeal proposals.

3.183 The formerly associated agricultural land west of the building, beyond its gardens and woodland grounds, would, however, be changed to accommodate residential development of the form proposed. This change would, however, not affect the surroundings in which Partridges Oast is experienced or materially diminish the ability to appreciate the historic interest of the former oast house.

3.184 The portion of the appeal site closest to Partridges Oast, i.e. the informal track south of the former Downlands Farm complex; is a location from where there is a limited experience of the building. As set out above, this experience is an incidental glimpse from a location devoid of historic integrity and is therefore considered to make no material contribution to the understanding or appreciation of the significance of Partridges Oast.

3.185 Even so, the proximity of this part of the appeal site to the former Downlands Farm complex and its surviving historic buildings has been a key consideration in the evolution of the appeal proposals. The parameter plans for the appeal scheme indicate that this area would not form part of the residential development footprint, but be managed as part of the natural green space, providing a buffer of open space between the historic farmstead and the new built form.

3.186 The Illustrative Landscape and Ecology Strategy (edp6170_d019) for the appeal scheme illustrates how this area is proposed to be planted with orchards and provide a pedestrian access to the site, thereby replacing the existing vegetation and modern building remains across this area with new landscape planting that more sensitively addresses the historic context of the former Downlands Farm complex.

3.187 These measures ensure that there would be no adverse change to the current experience of Partridges Oast from within its historical farmstead setting, preserving the character and experience of the building in its historical farmstead group.

3.188 Overall, therefore, the development of the appeal site as proposed is considered to result in a neutral impact on the significance of the building. i.e. there would be no harm arising from any change to the setting of the asset, and its heritage significance would be preserved.

Lake Wood

The Significance of Lake Wood (Non-designated Heritage Asset)

3.189 Lake Wood is located to the south of the appeal site, where its northern wooded boundary addresses the southern boundary of the agricultural land within the appeal site.

3.190 Lake Wood is not identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record, nor is it identified on any local list of non-designated heritage assets by Wealden District Council.

3.191 Historic Landscape Characterisation data provided by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record to inform the planning application does not identify Lake Wood as a designed landscape, but rather identifies it simply as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.

3.192 The Council did not identify Lake Wood as a non-designated heritage asset in the scoping response to the planning application (dated 18 November 2020), nor do any of the Heritage Officer's three main consultation responses to the planning application, dated 13 September 2022, 05 December 2022 and 13 February 2023 (CD1/1) clearly identify Lake Wood as a heritage asset.

3.193 Through the agreement of the Heritage SoCG (CD1/12), the Council identified that they consider Lake Wood to be a non-designated heritage asset, which they consider would be affected by the appeal proposals through change to its setting. Although again, this identification does not follow any sound evidence base or process as recognised in the guidance of the PPG.

3.194 There is limited published information available in respect of Lake Wood's heritage interest, but it has been managed by the Woodland Trust since 1993 and is accessible to the public. It has therefore been possible to examine Lake Wood from the defined paths within it, the appeal site and wider landscape around it and through mapping sources and satellite imagery, as set out in the Heritage Addendum accompanying the planning application (CD2/103).

3.195 The Woodland Trust acquired Lake Wood in 1993 and continue to manage the woodland. According to the Woodland Trust website (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk), Lake Wood belonged to the Streatfield family as part of the Rocks Estate as early as 1789.

3.196 The Woodland Trust notes that, in the first half of the 19th century (presumably at the time of the construction of The Rocks house and the laying out of the park around the main house south of Rocks Road) the southern part of Lake Wood was landscaped in a 'Picturesque' style. An existing pond was enlarged by the building of an earth dam which created a three acre spring-fed lake. Carriage drives were put through the wood including a tunnel under Rocks Road to link with the parkland in Rocks Estate to the south of Rocks Road. Many exotic and native trees and shrubs were planted, some of which still survive as large specimen trees. The Woodland Trust website notes that the wood already benefited from the dramatic outcrops of Cretaceous Ardingly sandstone along the sides of the valley that runs east/west across it. Where the rocks formed the shoreline of the new lake, structures were cut into them including steps, tunnels and a boat-house. The northern part of Lake Wood, closest to the appeal site, is identified by the Woodland Trust website as being retained largely as overstood mixed coppice during the landscaping of the wood and lake.

3.197 The landscaping of Lake Wood appears to have been designed to create an extension to the gardens and pleasure grounds of Rocks House and provide picturesque and romantic walks. In this way, it is acknowledged that Lake Wood forms part of a wider 'designed' landscape associated with The Rocks (i.e. the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange) to the south, through the enhancements and management of its existing features. However, it is also acknowledged that its function was to provide pleasure grounds separate to the house itself, rather than grounds from where the house itself could be appreciated or experienced. This is evident from the enclosed nature of Lake Wood and its low-lying position, which prohibits any experience of the Buckswood Grange house to the south of Rocks Road.

3.198 The 1841 Tithe map presented in the Heritage Addendum accompanying the planning application (CD2/103) does not show any notable detail within Lake Wood, aside from the presence of woodland and the lake. The second edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1899 shows better detail. The Rocks (present-day Buckswood Grange) is identified south of Rocks Road, where the surrounding shading indicates the extents of a formalised expanse of parkland around the house, extending north to Rocks Road and some distance to the south. A network of tracks is shown in this parkland, a number of which are shown to connect with Lake Wood to the north of Rocks Road.

3.199 Within Lake Wood, the lake is clearly shown, as are the network of tracks around it and a number of rock outcrops. Notably, one of these tracks is shown to connect with the woodland within the appeal site at this time, comprising a long straight track through Thirty Acre Wood running from Budletts Common further north, through the western edge of the appeal site and south into Lake Wood.

3.200 Lake Wood appears to have remained largely as depicted on the 1899 map throughout the first half of the 20th century until the construction of the A22 Uckfield Bypass to the west in the late 20th century, which cut across the west edge of the woodland. During World War II The Rocks house was repurposed as a school, coinciding with its renaming as Buckswood Grange, around which time the wider elements of the Rocks Estate were broken up and sold off into separate ownership.

3.201 At this point it is likely that accesses across/under Rocks Road to Lake Wood became defunct, although it is understood that it is still possible to obtain access via a pedestrian tunnel under Rocks Road.

3.202 The site visit and walkover of Lake Wood established that it remains much as it is described by the Woodland Trust website, i.e. as a small-scale example of a designed historic landscape which has been allowed to develop naturally over 100 or so years. It is one of the few parts of the gardens and grounds associated with The Rocks (Buckswood Grange) that survives largely intact. Nonetheless, it is clear that it is an isolated remnant of the wider grounds of The Rocks, and there is no longer the direct connectivity with the former mansion house to the south of Rocks Road; the former parkland south of Rocks Road has been fenced along the road, with only a single point of access possible directly off the road.

3.203 The trackway connection between Lake Wood and the woodland on the western boundary of the appeal site that is identified on the 1899 OS map is similarly no longer extant, it presumably having ceased to function and be maintained after the mid-20th century break-up of the Rocks Estate. No trace of any track or route through this woodland on the western boundary of the appeal site was observed during the site visit.

3.204 Lake Wood therefore derives its limited heritage significance from the survival of the landscaped lake and rock outcrops set within a wooded enclave, with trackways which allow appreciation of its picturesque landscape within the wood; and to a lesser degree from its historical association with The Rocks mansion to the south.

The Contribution of Setting to the Significance of Lake Wood

3.205 As noted above, Lake Wood has an historical association with The Rocks, the former mansion to the south, and forms an element of its wider designed landscape. However, from the wood itself, there is no opportunity to experience or appreciate these historical associations.

3.206 Indeed, the low-lying and wooded nature of Lake Wood and the route of the existing tracks around it does not offer the opportunity to experience any elements of the landscape beyond it, aside from the more open southern edge which bounds Rocks Road.

3.207 From the paths maintained by the Woodland Trust in Lake Wood, it was observed that there is no experience of the land within the appeal site. This is again because of the low-lying nature of the network of paths around the lake, in combination with the rising topography to the north-east within the wood, which is densely vegetated by trees. There is no suggestion that the 19th century picturesque alterations to Lake Wood intended to take advantage of any views from Lake Wood in the direction of the appeal site. As one moves through Lake Wood, the appeal site does not form a part of the experience of any of Lake Wood's component features that might be considered to possess heritage interest (such as the lake, tracks, rock outcrops and former tunnel connections to The Rocks to the south). This position is evidenced in the images presented in the Heritage Addendum (CD2/103).

The Impact on the Significance of Lake Wood

3.208 The assessment has concluded that the heritage significance of Lake Wood is derived from the survival of the landscaped lake and rock outcrops set within a wooded enclave, with

trackways which allow appreciation of its picturesque landscape within the wood; While it shares an historical association with The Rocks mansion to the south, this association is not tangible on the ground.

3.209 The appeal proposals would result in no change at all to the physical form or fabric of Lake Wood or any components of historic interest within the wood itself. There is also no suggestion that the implementation of the appeal proposals would affect the experience or appreciation of Lake Wood's historical association, relationship and historical physical links to The Rocks (Buckswood Grange) to the south.

3.210 An historical connection between the appeal site and Lake Wood is acknowledged, through their association as part of a wider estate landholding and by virtue of their former connection by a track. However, the wood and the appeal site are no longer in the same ownership and the historical route between them has long since been defunct and is now indistinguishable on the ground.

3.211 Given the low-lying nature of the network of paths around the lake, in combination with the rising topography to the north-east within the wood, which is densely vegetated by trees, it is expected that the implementation of the appeal proposals would not result in any change to the experience of Lake Wood or its heritage significance as one moves through the woodland.

3.212 Overall, the development of the appeal site as proposed is considered to result in a neutral impact on the significance of Lake Wood; i.e. there would be no harm arising from any change to the fabric and physical form of the components of Lake Wood itself, nor would there be any appreciable change to the setting of the asset that would materially affect the heritage significance of Lake Wood as derived from the components of its 'designed' landscape. Lake Wood's heritage significance would therefore be preserved.

RESPONSE TO THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

3.213 Review of the representations received from third parties indicate the highlighting of concerns broadly related to heritage matters, with the main representations of relevance considered to be the following:

- Response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Mrs Stephens, 05 September 2022;
- Response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Vivienne Blandford MA, September 2022;
- The response to the original Planning Application (WD/2022/1637/MEA) made by Mr & Mrs Williams, on behalf of the Downlands Action Group (DAG), 09 September 2022, resubmitted for the Appeal, 13 July 2023; and
- The SoC prepared by Dr Stenning on behalf of the DAG.

3.214 The responses to the application and the Appeal from third parties identified above contain a considerable amount of information, not limited to heritage matters. Included within a

number of these representations, notably those provided by Vivienne Blandford and Dr Stenning, is information relating to the historic uses and evolution of the landscape of the appeal site and wider area. It is largely factual information that is provided based on documentary sources, and I do not propose to question the validity or accuracy of this information.

3.215 I have however drawn out the key themes emerging from these responses of relevance to my area of heritage expertise, and address these matters below.

3.216 In general terms, the theme of third-party comments of relevance to heritage matters focusses on the loss or change to the historic character of the landscape within the appeal site and its associations with the Streatfield family.

3.217 The historic character of a place may be considered to comprise the qualities derived from its past uses that make it distinctive. This may include its associations with people through time; its visual aspects; and the features, materials, and spaces associated with its history, including its original configuration and subsequent losses and changes.

3.218 While these representations are acknowledged, I nonetheless note that the appeal site does not contain any historic environment designations at either a national or local level and that no part of the appeal site has been formally identified as a heritage asset based on the characteristics of its landscape fabric or historic character. In this context, the historic character of the appeal site, such as it is, is not a material consideration of relevance to this proof of evidence.

3.219 The evidence of Mr Mylchreest addresses matters relating to landscape character and landscape value, which are matters beyond the scope of my evidence.

3.220 I also note that the third party representations raise the matter of the contribution of the appeal site to the setting of Buckswood Grange listed building and the association between the land within the appeal site with other heritage assets. These matters have accordingly been addressed in my evidence in respect of the assessment of identified designated and non-designated heritage assets, including assessing the contribution of the land within the appeal site to these heritage assets. I therefore do not consider these matters further.

CONSIDERATION OF HARM TO DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

3.221 My evidence has made clear that I consider that the appeal proposals would result in less than substantial harm, at a low level, to the Maresfield Conservation Area through change to its setting. This is a finding agreed by the Council.

3.222 Accordingly, for the purposes of the NPPF Paragraph 202 planning balance, the low level of less than substantial harm to this designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the appeal proposals by the decision-taker.

3.223 My evidence has made clear that I consider that the appeal proposals would not result in any harm or loss of significance to the Grade II listed buildings, namely, Buckswood Grange, Oast Cottage and Barn at Downlands Farm.

3.224 However, I note that the Council maintain that these three listed buildings would experience harm, and that this harm they consider to be at the 'moderate to higher end' of 'less than substantial harm' in terms of the Framework, as confirmed in the Heritage SoCG (CD1/12).

3.225 It is my view that a finding of such a relatively high level of harm through change to the setting of such an asset is incompatible with the guidance set out in the NPPF and its accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (CD11/3).

3.226 As previously set out, the PPG states that "*substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases*", with the implication being that a high level of less than substantial harm also occupies a relatively high threshold.

3.227 Indeed, the recent appeal decision endorsed by the Secretary of State APP/H5390/V/21/3277137 (Edith Summerskill House Inquiry) (CD4/10), has clarified the position, in respect of the consideration of harm arising through change to the setting of a designated heritage asset, as set out in the Methodology section above.

3.228 The Council's views on the alleged harm to the listed buildings to the east and south of the appeal site should accordingly be considered in this context.

Section 4
Policy Review and Conclusions

4.1 It is my assessment that the appeal proposals will result in a very low level of less than substantial harm to Maresfield Conservation Area, by introducing new built form (albeit at a distance) into a key view from the conservation area.

4.2 As far as national planning policy is concerned, Paragraph 199 of the NPPF places 'great weight' on the conservation of designated heritage assets such as the Maresfield Conservation Area. In addition, Paragraph 200 advises that 'clear and convincing justification' should be required for proposed development that causes any degree of harm to a designated heritage asset.

4.3 Of course, Paragraph 202 of the NPPF makes it clear that even harmful development can be acceptable if the public benefits that it would bring forward are of sufficient weight to outweigh the less than substantial harm generated by its implementation.

4.4 Accordingly, for the purposes of the NPPF Paragraph 202 planning balance, the low level of less than substantial harm to this designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the appeal proposals by the decision-taker.

4.5 In respect of the Grade II listed Oast Cottage and Barn at Downlands Farm to the east of the appeal site, my assessment concludes that the significance of these assets would not be adversely affected by the appeal proposals. While it is acknowledged that the appeal site historically formed part of the wider agricultural landholding associated with these two listed buildings, the implementation of the appeal proposals would not result in any loss of significance to these assets nor diminish the contribution that their settings presently make to their significance; i.e. there would be no harm to the Grade II listed Oast Cottage and Barn at Downlands Farm.

4.6 Similarly, it is acknowledged that the appeal site historically formed part of the wider landholding associated with the Grade II listed Buckswood Grange to the south. Nonetheless, it is considered that the implementation of the appeal proposals would not diminish the contribution that Buckswood Grange's setting presently makes to its significance and therefore this listed building would not be harmed.

4.7 It is the appellant's position that if the Council consider that the implementation of the appeal proposals would result in harm to any listed buildings in the wider environs of the appeal site, then relevant case law indicates that that harm deriving from any change to the setting of these assets could only be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm.

4.8 In terms of non-designated heritage assets, my assessment concludes that no such formally identified assets would be harmed through the implementation of the appeal proposals. My assessment concludes that the significance of Partridges Oast would not be harmed though any change to its setting. The same conclusion is found in respect of Lake Wood, which the Council consider to be a non-designated heritage asset.

4.9 If the decision-taker considers the loss of Chicory Cottage to be a material consideration in terms of heritage policy; i.e. if it is considered to qualify as a non-designated heritage asset; then the total loss of the cottage, and accordingly the loss of its very limited heritage interest, will need to be considered in accordance with paragraph 203 of the NPPF.

4.10 The Appellant has suggested a condition is attached to any planning consent to secure an appropriate programme of building recording in advance of the demolition of Chicory Cottage, should this be deemed necessary, which would provide mitigation for the loss of the building.

4.11 Accordingly, it is concluded that, subject to the application of the Paragraph 202 planning balance within the NPPF in respect of Maresfield Conservation Area, with regard to historic environment matters overall there are no issues that prevent the appeal proposals from proceeding.

4.12 Therefore, there continues to be every reason to believe that the appeal proposals are capable of receiving a positive determination in respect of heritage matters. The outline nature of the proposals across the agricultural fields in the appeal site ensures that there are future opportunities to address any heritage issues or concerns that the Council may have in respect of the exact location, scale, layout and character of the development at detailed design stage.

Appendix ES 1
The Appeal Site and its Heritage Context



Appendix ES 2
Chicory Cottage Sales Particulars; Batcheller Monkhouse, dated 2018



Chicory Cottage

Rocks Road, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 3PT

Batcheller Monkhouse

CHICORY COTTAGE

A charming 4 bedroom period house with excellent reception space and stunning gardens and grounds including woodland, located on the outskirts of Uckfield. In all approximately 5.27 acres.

- Entrance Hall
- Drawing Room
- Dining Room
- Sitting Room
- Conservatory
- Kitchen/Breakfast Room
- Utility Room/Cloakroom
- Master Bedroom with En-Suite Bathroom
- 3 further Bedrooms
- Family Shower Room
- Timber-framed Double Garage
- Heated Swimming Pool
- Summerhouse
- Outbuildings
- Gardens
- Woodland
- In all approximately 5.27 acres









AMENITIES

Chicory Cottage is located in a semi-rural situation on the edge of Uckfield, less than half a mile to the north-west of the town. Uckfield is a well-served town with a number of amenities and shops including 2 major brand supermarkets, award-winning independent cinema, leisure centre, and a well-respected secondary school, Uckfield College. Uckfield also has a train station offering services to London (London Bridge) in approximately 75 minutes. The popular county town of Lewes is also within easy reach, being approximately 8 miles distant, offering an eclectic mix of shops, pubs and restaurants. There are also a number of attractive villages close by, including Piltdown, Fletching and Newick. For education, in addition to Uckfield College, there is a wide choice of local state primary schools and preparatory schools including Cumnor House, Great Walstead and Brambletye with further education at St Bede's and Lewes Old Grammar School, to name but a few. There are good transport links with both the main A22 and A26 roads being easily reached, and the area is surrounded by beautiful countryside including both the South Downs National Park and Ashdown Forest, and close by, Piltdown Golf Club offers a well-respected golf course.

DESCRIPTION

Chicory Cottage is a charming and beautifully presented family house, believed to have been built in the 1890s as the butler's house for Buckswood Grange. The house offers a number of period features and has been subject to improvements by the current owner. Presenting traditional brick elevations under a tiled roof with UPVC double glazed units throughout, many rooms feature a double aspect inviting an abundance of natural light. The main features of the property include:

- Entrance Hall with woodblock flooring continued throughout the reception rooms, part-panelled wall.
- Dining Room with double doors leading through to the Drawing Room, being an elegant room with plenty of natural light having a double aspect and open fire and linking to the Conservatory, being wood-framed with a solid roof, tiled floor and radiators for year-round use.
- Sitting Room with views to the front, former fireplace, and door to the Hall and Kitchen.
- Kitchen/Breakfast Room, stone quarry tiled floor, range of units









with integrated AEG double oven, and AEG 4-ring induction hob with extractor over, low-level fridge and integrated Bosch dishwasher.

- Large Utility/Boot Room with stable door to the front, quarry tiled floor, range of units with sink and space for washing machine, fitted cupboards and pantry/wine store.
- Generous Master Bedroom with double aspect, walk-in wardrobe and En-suite Bathroom with wood floor and heated towel rail.
- 3 further Bedrooms together with a Family Shower Room having a large walk-in shower and tiled floors.

OUTSIDE

Chicory Cottage is approached from the road through wrought iron remotely-controlled automatic gates leading to a tarmacadam driveway providing plenty of parking to the front of a timber-framed double garage. The well-presented gardens surround the property with large areas of lawn backed by rocky outcrops with an abundance of herbaceous borders including rhododendrons and leading into a large area of woodland with a carpet of bluebells. To the rear of the main lawn is a heated swimming pool with an adjacent summerhouse and a greenhouse. There is a further garden shed and an attractive seating area under a timber pergola. In all, the gardens and land measure approximately 5.27 acres.

DIRECTIONS

Travelling north on Uckfield High Street, turn left into Church Street at the traffic lights immediately after the cinema. Continue along Church Street, leading into Rocks Road and the entrance to Chicory Cottage will be found on the right, shortly after passing Snatts Road on the right.

Additional Information:

Local Authority: Wealden District Council. Tel: 01323 443322 www.wealden.gov.uk
Services: All main services connected.
Links: www.environment-agency.gov.uk, www.highways.gov.uk, www.caa.co.uk, www.landregistry.gov.uk
Tenure: Freehold. Land Registry Title Nmber ESX274619
EPC: EPC Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £875,000 - £925,000

VIEWINGS

For an appointment to view please contact our Haywards Heath office, telephone 01444 453181

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Mayfair Office
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Chicory Cottage, Rocks Road, Uckfield, TN22 3PT

APPROX. GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA 2382 SQ FT 221.3 SQ METRES (EXCLUDES GARAGE)



Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the floor plan contained here, measurements of doors, windows and rooms are approximate and no responsibility is taken for any error, omission or misstatement. These plans are for representation purposes only as defined by RICS Code of Measuring Practice and should be used as such by any prospective purchaser. Specifically no guarantee is given on the total square footage of the property if quoted on this plan. Any figure given is for initial guidance only and should not be relied on as a basis of valuation.

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URBAN DESIGN GROUP REGISTERED PRACTICE

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