From: Heather Hall
Sent: 13 February 2023 15:30
To: Samuel Batchelor
Cc: planning
Subject: WD/2022/1637/MEA - Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield

Categories: Consultee

Dear Sam,

Thank you for reconsulting me on the above major hybrid planning application for the erection of up to 424 residential dwellings and associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks at Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield.

I have reviewed the Heritage Addendum by EDP, which now presents a much more thorough response to assessing the site and understanding the contribution that setting makes to significance of the heritage assets. My main concern is that the 'broad approach' to setting which was established by the Court of Appeal in *Catesby Estates Ltd and SSCLG v Steer* [2018] EWCA Civ 1697 has not been followed. This essentially comes down to a professional difference of opinion and I have only two points to add to my earlier comments and specifically the impacts identified.

Downlands Farm: The Addendum includes some information with which I disagree - i.e. Gormanston was built as a new farmhouse, together with farm workers cottages, which I do not considered to be 'domestication' in the manner implied - however, it remains my view that there is a meaningful historic association between the land within the site and the heritage assets, and that this can be experienced and appreciated despite later changes, many of which have actually been reversed and 'restored' the associational relationship. The barn and oast house is discernible, even if not seen directly from portions of the site, identifiable typologically as a locally valued and distinctive building form and well understood to be related the hop industry and agriculture in the Weald. By implication, the location on the edge of the rural area and adjoining agricultural fieldscapes, with which the farmstead has a genuine historic relationship, would necessarily contribute to its significance, even where the use has changed. The assessment shows locations where this is discernible, and where these would continue to be experienced with greater frequency and public access than presently, together with the new development within the site.

Buckwood Grange/Lake Wood: The Addendum notes the historic interest and relationship of Lake Wood with the Buckwood Grange. The public representations on this application suggest that not all of the routes between it and Buckwood Grange been severed as is suggested. In any event, development should not prejudice the ability to appreciate significance via setting *now or in the future* (i.e. where there is some possibility that such access could be restored in future). The assessment relies entirely on (lack of) direct visual connections and fails in my view to approach setting in the broader way required, and account for experiential impacts such as noise and activity which would result from the change of use of the site and Fir Tree Grove. The 'protective fencing' to the southern boundary of the site and adjacent to Lake Wood, indicated on the parameter plans, is referred to by the Addendum with the suggestion that this would mitigate all impact. In this regard I would refer to Paragraph 40 of GPA3.

It remains my view that the proposals would occasion less than substantial harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets through the proposed development within their

setting. At present, and in the absence of any mitigation evidenced in the indicative proposals, I consider that this would be at the moderate or higher end of less than substantial harm, though could be reduced through amendments to the design in line with the broader understanding of settings contribution to significance.

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