Planning Inspector

Dear Sir,

I object to the Appeal Reference APP/C145/W/23/3321978.

I perviously submitted my objection, dated 5th September 2022, to the planning application WD/2022/1678/MEA on the Wealden Planning Portal, to which this appeal relates. I now submit additional evidence to support and potentially give weight to some points made in my original objection, attached for ease of reference at Appendix 2

The SANG carpark proposed for Snatts Road

In my original objection I highlighted my safety concerns regarding the location of the SANG car park exit and entrance off Snatts Road, a narrow country road. However, in addition to my initial concerns I would like to add that is likely that some walkers from the Snatts Road Car Park will try to walk to Lake Wood via Snatts Road. This will cause a considerable risk to life of both pedestrians and other road users due to the narrowness of the road, its blind bends and lack of footpaths.

Historic Setting

The Rocks (Buckswood Grange Grade II) can be defined as a building of local historic value (a historic asset) and as such its setting is of equal importance and value, and should therefore preserved for future generations.

Lake Wood

At the time of Buckswood Grange's listing in 1978, The Rocks and Lake Wood were still in the same ownership (Reference Hindsight 2000, Uckfield and District Preservation Society), therefore for this reason it is likely that Lake Wood falls within the curtilage of Buckswood Grange Grade II and is therefore subject to the protection the listing affords.

Furthermore due to its designed nature and unique features Lake Wood should be recognised as a currently 'undesignated' heritage/rural park and garden. The following is an excerpt from an entry on Historic England Site under the Buckswood Grange Listing.

"Lake Wood is of importance as a rare peat fed lake and the Rural Park and Garden of The Rocks, Streatfeilds consulted William Gilpin and Lord Sheffield to form an inspired beautiful, rugged landscape setting of the Picturesque incorporating Lake, ghylls, ancient woodland and impressive sandstone rock outcrops with Mesolithic shelters and finds of flints and blades. Meeting registration criteria of a historic landscape and Rural Parks and Gardens of The Rocks aka Buckswood Grange Grade II"

Rocks Road

Rocks Road was created by the Streatfeild family to allow access to their Estate, and facilitate the transportation of goods from the Shortbridge Bridge Steam Wharf (Reference Hindsight 2000, Uckfield and District Preservation Society). They also built a wooden bridge from The Rocks across Rocks Road Fir Tree Grove and Chicory Cottage. The brick staithes for supporting the bridge pillars can still be seen in the rocks at the side of the road. The Snatts Rocks Road Junction, opposite Buckswood Grange Gates has hardly changed in centuries, see photos below

Lake Wood and Rocks Road are part of Buckswood Grange Grade II historic setting and must be protected in perpetuity. I have attached some photos and pictures to illustrate this in Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Rocks Road/Snatts Road Junction



Entrance to Chicory Cottage on Left, Snatts Road second left.



Snatts Road/Rocks Road Junction, The Rocks (BWG) entrance on right.







Photo 1 . Rocks Road/Snatts Road Junction (Buckswood Grange entrance in foreground)

Photo 2. Rocks Road looking in the direction of Piltdown. Rocks Road/Snatts Road Junction top right and Buckswood Grange Drive entrance top left.

Photo 3. Rocks Road with entrance to Chicory Cottage on left, Buckswood Grange entrance on right. Snatts road far left.

Wooden Bridge from Buckswood Grange to Fir Tree Grove





Lake Wood designed in the Picturesque Style. Drawing by T Henworth, Engraved by Henry Alexander Ogg (active 1842-1846)





Lake wood circa 2020

I sincerely hope that in you deliberations, you take time to consider all of the overwhelming evidence presented by the local community and expert testimony, and conclude; Downlands Farm is an intact part of an ancient landscape to the north of Uckfield. This beautiful landscape which encompasses Lakewood LWS and extends across Ancient Woodlands to Budletts Common, with uninterrupted views of the Ashdown Forest on the horizon, an area of treasured beauty and wildlife must be preserved in its natural state for future generations. I ask you to uphold Wealden's decision to refuse this current planning application, and find a way to protect the land in perpetuity.

Yours Sincerely

Marianne Stephens

Buckswood Grange, Rocks Road.

Appendix 2

Mrs Turner Wealden Planning.

5th September 2022

Dear Mrs Turner,

I object to Planning Application WD/2022/1637/MEA for the following reasons:

Infrastructure

The infrastructure cited by the developer to support the development is already at capacity. especially Surgeries and Schools within walking distance of the development.

The Meads Surgery's website states that they are not taking any new patients and there is no waiting list. Surgeries are already overwhelmed and yet developments are being put forward. The knock on effect of this will be that surgeries further afield such as Bird in Eye, Buxted Surgery and the Minor Injuries Unit at Bird in Eye will also become overwhelmed. The health of Uckfield's current residents will be put at risk if developments are approved without the sufficient GP infrastructure.

Rocks Park and Holy Cross Schools and Uckfield College are all currently at capacity and over subscribed. This means that pupils and students will have to use public transport or be driven to and from the next nearest available establishment, making roads within the town even more congested and gridlocked at peak times. I note that the developer has recommended a community/school bus. However, planning multiple routes, timings, the length of journeys, and the cost make this proposal questionable. In reality the car will be the default mode of transport for the majority of parents.

NPPF 20 says 'strategic policy must make sufficient provision for..... (b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
(c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); .....etc.'

Therefore, if sufficient provision cannot be guaranteed the development should be refused.

Travel

The Travel Plan proposes pedestrians use existing footpaths into Uckfield Town Centre. The two routes proposed via Downlands Copse and via the Boardwalk (Rocks Road) have multiple steps. Navigating steps with a pram, pushchair, wheelchair, or young children is at best impractical and at worst impossible.

As a resident of Buckswood Grange I am gravely concerned that neither the Application, Travel Plan nor the Road Safety Report give consideration as to how the proposed changes to the Snatts Road, Rocks Road junction (to accommodate the pedestrian board walk and cycle path) will affect road safety. In particular the blind bends and deep shade that currently severely restrict visibility, the 60mph limit that will be still in force immediately outside our gates, the new pedestrian crossing (to be situated immediately to the right of our gates) and flooding at the junction during heavy rain with cascading

water down Rocks Road to the low depression by Hunters Way. It is extremely unsatisfactory that road users will have contend with these issues while being mindful of pedestrians, vehicles and cycles emerging from six points simultaneously. These safety issues affect residents of Buckswood Grange and the safety of other road users and pedestrians.

In addition to the above, the plans to widen the footpath along Rocks Road will, I believe, use land belonging to Buckswood Grange, ie in and around our gate and parallel to the existing pavement. Unacceptably there has been no consultation with Buckswood Grange about the developers intentions.

The SANG (Suitable Alternative Green Space) and Woodland Car Park entrance and exit is inappropriately located in Snatts Road. The road itself is a narrow and winding country road, with

parked cars dotted along its northern end for approximately 1/4 mile making progress along the road hazardous and sometimes stop start due to queuing cars. Due to the 60mph speed limit on the southern section, cars often speed the whole length of the road, so much so that they take the tight and mostly blind bends in the middle of the road. The junctions at either end of Snatts Road are very hazardous with restricted visibility (see comments above regarding the junction with Rocks Road) the junction with London Road is an accident black spot due to poor visibility when turning, the volume of cars, parked cars immediately left of the junction, the immediate right turn to Buxted, frequent flooding, and pedestrians crossing on the road due to no pavement. Residents on Snatts and Rocks Road will be affected by increased volume and traffic noise traveling to and from the SANG carpark. The Little Horsted SANG car park has increased traffic volume along the Horsted Lane reportedly by 7000 cars a month.

The Transport Assessment accompanying the application states in para 3.14 that the critical periods for assessing traffic volume are weekday (7.00 to 10.00) and evening (16.00 to 19.00) however the Road Safety Report states the SANG Carpark Access was assessed on 2nd December 2020 between 11.00 and 13.00 and the Rocks Road site on 14th December between 11.30 and 13.00. It is therefore no surprise to me that at these off peak times the traffic was assessed to be light to moderate. Also a factor to be taken into account is that we were on the verge of a COVID lockdown announced by the PM on 19th December 2020. It is reasonable to conclude therefore, that traffic would have been light during the run up to the announcement. The data therefore is flawed and not a true representation of traffic movement on Rocks Road or Snatts Road.

The National Planning Policy Framework para 110 (b) states that in considering development proposals the Authority should ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, and states that one of the reasons for refusal is if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Therefore this Application should be refused on the basis of the unacceptable impact on road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists at Snatts and Rocks Road.

SANG and Woodland Park

I object to the ‘Strategic SANG’ for the following reasons: The Application’s covering letter from Barton Willmore on behalf of Gleeson states: ‘The SANG seeks to mitigate the potential impacts arising from the proposed development, as well providing capacity to offset visitor pressure arising from an additional 424 dwellings from other developments’. This implies that if the SANG is approved it will be a lever to obtain planning approval for an additional 424 dwellings, which is totally inappropriate due to the lack of infrastructure and a sustainable Transport Plan as mentioned previously in this letter. NB: This current development proposes a total of 800 spaces plus the two SANG carparks, if another development is approved off the back of this, there are likely to be 1600 car park spaces plus the two and probably more car parks for the SANG. Such numbers are not sustainable on the existing local road network.

The Woodland Park winds its way through the Ancient Woodlands of Budletts Wood North, Shermanreed Wood and part of the A22 Corridor. Although these woodlands have a few meandering informal footpaths currently enjoyed by locals, the sheer volume of people and dogs that will be attracted to this area will be unsustainable causing harm and deterioration to the woodland and the wildlife it supports. The SANG and Woodland Park has capacity for 2,036 residents based on 848 residential units, however as there is no control over numbers entering the SANG it is likely that this number could be exceeded. The sheer volume of people, and dogs off the lead will disturb this precious wildlife habitat. The fencing used to deter and contain people and dogs in the woodland will also be barriers for wildlife, sectioning off their existing habitats. It appears that there is no real appreciation for how muddy and boggy parts of the woodland become after rain, and as it is human nature go around an obstacle, explore off the path or create a short cut, human and dog interference is a real threat to the habitat and wildlife.

The SANG and Woodland Park is an area that is created for human recreation not wildlife conservation, the flora will be newly planted and will not recreate the established habitats that are

currently at Downlands Farm and surrounding woodlands and hay meadows. Wildlife corridors and habits will be removed, changed or built upon forcing the wildlife into an ever deceasing area of countryside. Bio Diversity Net Gain cannot be obtained via a building development SANG, destroyed habitat can never be recreated, for example, the dormice*, bats, **Great Crested Newts will be lost due to predation by domestic dogs and cats, the *** Curlew will never land on houses, roads or man-made woodland rather than naturally existing green fields or naturally occurring mature woodland.

Cycle paths are included in the Application for healthy human recreation in and around the SANG and transport to and from the local area. However, will the amount of Ancient Woodland, woodland and hedgerow that will be destroyed to accommodate them be sufficiently offset by the planting of saplings and young shrubs? I think not, because the vegetation that will be destroyed is mature which offers protection, shelter and food for wildlife. Newly planted immature trees and shrubs will take years before they are suitable to sustain wildlife, in which time the rich and varied species that we hold dear will have vanished. Therefore there will be no bio diversity net gain. In addition cycle paths through the Ancient Woods will bring urbanisation and mechanisation to the heart of the countryside.

According to **NPPF Section 15, para 180 A , Protect and Enhance Biodiversity, if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided... then planning should be refused.** According to the Standing Advice planning permission should be refused if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees is Standing Advice is upheld by **The National Planning Policy FrameWork Section 15 Paragraph 180c.**

NB: Enhanced protection of irreplaceable habitats is under review .

Conservation status of Dormice:
Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. (source: wildlifetrusts.org)

**Conservation status of Great Crested Newt
Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive.(source: wildlifetrusts.org)

*** Conservation status of Curlew
Classified in the UK as Red under the Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds (2021). Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as Near Threatened on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. (source: wildlifetrusts.org)

Species

There is a rich and diverse range of wildlife throughout Downlands Farm and Lake Wood. Over 70 species of birds; mammals include badger, dormice, voles and shrew; insects include dragonfly and over 150 different moths and butterflies. The interconnected habitats enable wildlife to move freely between Lake Wood and Budletts Common and enable them to forage, feed and breed in safety. Endangered species also thrive because of the shelter that this unbroken wildlife corridor provides. These include 17 species of birds, dormice, Barbastelle bat and Great Crested Newts. These all will be impacted by the disruption and removal of their natural habitats.

Fir Tree Grove.

Sylvan's Botanical Report, appended to the Application, confirms that Fir Tree Grove is Ancient Woodland which supports many Ancient Wood Indicators (AWI) Species. However, the report is constructed to question the quality and frequency of occurrence of the AWIs so that the board walk and cycle path can justifiably be plotted through the less AWI rich areas, translocating plants where necessary to achieve this. According to Ancient Woodland Standing advice, an Ancient Woodland does not have to have continuous tree cover across the whole site, not all trees in the woodland have to be old, and open ground both temporary and permanent is an important component of ancient woodland. Therefore to argue that one area in an Ancient Woodland is more suitable for the board walk and cycle path than another is not supported by the Standing Advice, as all ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and as such must not be disturbed or destroyed.

The Standing Advice also advocates that at least a 15m buffer zone is observed around the perimeter of an Ancient Woodland to protect the wood as whole, individual trees (whether young, old or veteran) and their root systems from the effects of disturbance. Therefore there can be no entry or exit points for the cycle and pedestrian paths because in creating them the 15m buffer zone will be infringed and Ancient Woodland would be disturbed or destroyed.

Additionally, they identify Veteran Beech and Oak trees in the Grove but their location is not clear nor is the protection that will be afforded to them. Ancient Woodland Standing Advice states that Veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats and as such must be protected from harm.

The construction of both raised paths includes drilling through the ancient soils and the lower cretaceous sedimentary sand rocks. The presence of humans, dogs and cats from the development will have a negative impact on the wildlife using the Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees through predation, littering and disturbance. The presence of lighting will disturb nocturnal creatures. Even though the lights are billed non spill, surely the lighting must be bright enough for people to see their way and for their safety? Therefore the raised lighting levels will negatively impact nocturnal wildlife and the dark skies. All these infringements on the Ancient Woodland will result in the loss of irreplaceable habitat and species. The development as a whole will separate sections of habitat by destroying existing wildlife corridors, making areas less diverse.

Another concern is that during the construction of the cycle path and pedestrian walkway, sand stone rock outcrops will be either drilled through, cut or completely removed as part of the earthworks phase. As far as I can see none of these sandstone outcrops have been assessed for the plant and fern species that may be growing on them. It is known that some Sandstone outcrops can support very rare species, therefore until a study has been completed there can be no assessment of potential harm or of biodiversity net gain.

The Applications supporting plans and artistic representation show the area in present location of Chicory Cottage as cleared and completely open to Snatts and Rocks Road. This area will become a magnet for gatherings of people causing disturbance to the wildlife and close neighbours.

According to the Standing Advice planning permission should be refused if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees. Standing Advice is upheld by **The National Planning Policy FrameWork Section 15 Paragraph 180c.**

According to **NPPF Section 15, para 180 A , Protect and Enhance Biodiversity, if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided... then planning should be refused.**

NB Enhanced protection of irreplaceable habitats is under review. A22 Roundabout and Emergency Access

The proposed roundabout, its visual splays and the Emergency Access will punch through, destroy and disturb Ancient Woodland. Additionally, the proposal does not observe the 15m perimeter buffer required by Standing Advice to protect an Ancient Woodland from disturbance caused by the Development. Magic DFRA mapping is provisional, meaning that it is continually being updated,

however by referring to older mapping, for example the map included in Appendix 1 of the Application, Landscape Visual Base Line Image EDP 4.2: Extract of Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1899; it is clear to identify that the Site's A22 woodland corridor was in fact part of the much the larger Ancient Woodland of Thirty Acre Wood. This also can clearly be demonstrated on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory map and toggling between satellite, ordnance and Ancient mappings.

Therefore all of the Site's A22 corridor extending to/from Lakewood (LWS) is an Ancient Woodland Site, albeit a mixture of ancient woodland, plantations on ancient woodland soils and ancient semi-natural woodland. According to Ancient Woodland Standing advice, not all trees in the woodland have to be old, and some open ground both temporary and permanent is an important component of ancient woodland. Nonetheless all are afforded equal protection under Ancient Woodland Standing Advice.

Butchers Wood (LWS) ,opposite Lakewood (LWS) on the other side of the A22, is also at risk of loss/damage to its Ancient Woodland and significant lines of sandstone outcrops which lie close to the bypass. These habitats support rare species such as wild daffodil and bryophytes. It is of concern that the A22 roundabout and visibility splays for the A22 through traffic eat into these precious habitats.

Furthermore this Ancient Woodland corridor to/from Lake Wood forms a continuous canopy and supports a thriving dormice community. Lake Wood is part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme NDMP which monitors this protected and priority species. Dormice need a continuous canopy to move through the woodlands to forage as they do not move across ground. However when they hibernate they build their nests near to ground level. The Roundabout and the Emergency Access will destroy the continuous canopy and predation from domestic cats and dogs will become a real threat. Being nocturnal creatures they also will be negatively impacted by light pollution emanating from the A22, the roundabout, the Emergency Access and the development itself.

The mitigation for loss of dormice habitat by planting new woodland and shrubs will be a long term solution not an immediate fix as the trees and shrubs will take years to mature enough so as to give the dormice sufficient interconnecting tree canopy, habitat and protection. Therefore there can be no biodiversity net gain.

National Planning Policy States, Section15 Paragraph 180c, that if a development will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) planning permission should be refused. According to NPPF Section 15, para 180 A, Protect and Enhance Biodiversity, if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided... then planning should be refused.

According to NPPF Section 15, para 180 A , Protect and Enhance Biodiversity, if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided... then planning should be refused.

Conservation status of Dormice:

Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. (source: wildlifetrusts.org)

NB Enhanced protection of irreplaceable habitats is under review. Longwood Gill and the Woodland Surrounding Pond 6.

Longwood Gill and the woodland surrounding the pond are clearly shown on Extract of Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1899. Longwood Gill and the surrounding woodlands of Thirty Acre Wood, Shermanreed Wood, Lake Wood, Fir Tree Grove are also depicted on this map and all are Ancient Woodlands.

Pond 6, its surrounding woodland, the mature hedgerow between the pond and Longwood Gill, and surrounding fields provide essential habitats for the Great Crested Newt which has been recorded for many years as being present at this pond site. Notably by Professor Bee Bee in 2007, whose assessment was that the presence of Great Crested Newts at this site was of county importance and SSSI worthy. Dr Stenning has appended Professor Bee Bee's findings to his comments submitted 12th August 2022.

Great Crested Newts require both terrestrial and aquatic habitats, spending the majority of their life on land sometimes hundreds of metres from ponds or other water sources, migrating to ponds in the spring to breed. A wide range of habitats are used by the species including grassland,

woodland (with a preference for deciduous woodland), scrub and mature hedgerows, especially during hibernation/over wintering. During this period the newts can be almost undetectable below ground, in voids in banks, log piles etc. The species is particularly vulnerable to changes in its environment due to its reliance on both terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Great crested newts also have more exacting pond requirements, so typically have not been able to take advantage of garden ponds like smooth newts and frogs, for example. Source https://www.discoverwildlife.com/ animal-facts/amphibians/facts-about-great-crested-newts/

Therefore, Great Crested Newts, the pond and sounding habitats require ultimate protection from harm, which is not afforded by the proposal for a recreational area immediately adjacent to the pond and hedgerow, neither will the newts be protected from the predation of domestic animals, and human disturbance.

Conservation status of Great Crested Newt
Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive.(source: wildlifetrusts.org)

According to **NPPF Section 15, para 180 A , Protect and Enhance Biodiversity, if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided... then planning should be refused.**

Longwood Gill is confirmed as important Ancient Woodland at County and District level; although the developer states that it is not included in the SANG, in fact the base of Longwood Gill is within the SANG boundary. However whether included in the SANG or as part of the development it is all open to harm. It is understood that the proposal is to fence off this area due to the safety risk posed by the steep sides of the Gill, its propensity to flood and fast flowing water. However, there will be impacts on the wildlife that use this Gill, the woodland, and the watercourse that flows to the Shortbridge Stream

(cypinid and salmonid). These impacts will be caused by human disturbance, the construction of the development and likely contamination (due to dust deposition, surface run-off of contaminants or silt) [which the developer admits will happen in the case of Lake Wood! See below], restriction of wildlife from using the habitat within the Gill due to fencing, and predation from domestic animals. It is human nature to climb and explore what is on the other side of a fence, and therefore Longwood Gill is in danger of becoming an informal addition to the SANG. Furthermore there should be no SuDs near Ancient Woodland or Ancient Wet Woodland, bigger protective buffers are required so that the Gill's hydrology is not affected. Therefore this scheme will certainly cause the loss and deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat.

National Planning Policy States, Section15 Paragraph 180c, that if a development will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) planning permission should be refused

NB Enhanced protection of irreplaceable habitats is under review.

Lakewood

Lakewood (LWS) adjoins the development boundary and managed by the Woodland Trust. Lakewood is an Ancient Woodland with a rare Peat Fed lake at its heart and flanked by sandstone rock outcrops.

The 424 housing development will immediately abut the boundaries of Lake wood and will be on higher ground above the lake, which is at the bottom of a Gill. Water currently flows from the hay meadows creating the right composition and quality of the water needed to support this rare peat fed lake. Lakewood is a completely natural environment highly sensitive to change or contamination with a truly complex freshwater ecosystem which is in conservation by the Woodland Trust. It recognised as a Local Wildlife Site and Local Geological Site for earth sciences due to the surrounding sandstone rock outcrops. In addition, the lake supports endangered species and priority wildlife including over 70 bird species and European Eels which migrate to/

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from the Sargasso Sea and are a UN Critically Endangered, IUCN Red List, UK BAP Priority Species.

The Developer in their Environmental Impact Assessment Non Technical states that 'The construction of the Development would result in some minor adverse effects on Lake Wood LWS (due to dust deposition, surface run-off of contaminants or silt), as well as on faunal species including Foraging and Commuting Bats, Dormouse, Birds, Great Crested Newt and reptiles' This is such a fragile and delicate habitat which supports a peat bog and peat fed lake, rare species and watercourse that flow directly into the protected Shortbridge Stream. Surely any contamination is unacceptable and the slightest change could be catastrophic. They say their mitigations would result in the residual effects being negligible. However, what does negligible mean in this instance? The risk of contamination no matter how small is not worth taking because there is a risk that the natural balance will be tipped and may never recover and therefore planning approval should not be given.

Para 18 a of the National Planning Policy States if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided .....then planning permission should be refused;

National Planning Policy States, Section15 Paragraph 180c, that if a development will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) planning permission should be refused

NB Enhanced protection of irreplaceable habitats is under review .

Historic Setting

Buckswood Grange Grade II listed (formerly The Rocks) is part of the old Streatfeild Estate and is located off Rocks Road, Uckfield. The Streatfeild family from the 1800's to the 1900's were central to the evolution and prosperity of Uckfield. The Rocks was designed by the architect Sydney Smirke, a notable architect of his day. His work includes the Hall of Inner Temple and the Circular Reading Room at the British Museum https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney_Smirke. The pleasure grounds and gardens of the Estate included (but by no means limited to) Lakewood, Downlands Farm and Budletts Common, all linked by a carriage way starting from The Rocks through to Budletts Common. Some of the carriageway still survives today. Fir Tree Grove and what is now known as West Park Local Nature Reserve were also part of the larger Rocks Estate and pleasure grounds. Richard Shuttleworth Streatfeild was responsible for the design and planting of the garden, pleasure grounds, Lakewood and Fir Tree Grove. He was greatly influenced by William Gilpin, who originated the Picturesque style of landscaping and authored the book 'In Search of the Picturesque', and by Lord Sheffield another Picturesque devotee.

A pedestrian tunnel, which is still in use by the residents of Buckswood Grange, seamlessly links Lakewood with the grounds of The Rocks/Buckswood Grange. Residents still value walking in the footsteps of the Streatfeild's through the grounds, around the sandstone outcrops, past the adjoining West Park Local Nature Reserve, and via the pedestrian tunnel to 'Picturesque' Lakewood and then onward to admire the ancient hay meadows, ghylls and wet and ancient woodlands of Downlands Farm. Beyond are the far reaching and timeless views of open countryside towards the Ashdown Forest.

The entrance gates to Buckswood Grange are diagonally opposite Fir Tree Grove and Chicory Cottage at the point where the proposed cycle path and pedestrian walkway will emerge. Therefore, Buckswood Grange entrance will only be separated from the development by the width of Rocks Road. The setting for the entrance currently is a narrow country lane lined by a wooded embankment, sandstone outcrops, mature and ancient woodlands. If the development goes ahead at the Rocks/Snatts Road junction the nature of the setting would change totally unacceptably and irreversibly. Woodland would be lost and fragmented, there would be a gaping and open view to where once Chicory Cottage stood (home to the last Streatfeild) their garden embankment cut away to allow for the accommodation of the cycle and pedestrian paths. Additionally the pedestrian crossing, road markings, visual splays and traffic priority layout will urbanise the current rural setting.

Buckswood Grange Grade II sits within part of its original grounds and gardens. However, Lakewood, West Park Local Nature Reserve, Fir Tree Grove and Downlands Farm through to Budletts Common were all part of the original Rocks Estate and are therefore all integral to Buckswood Grange's historic setting . Any development on any part of the former estate especially on the Downlands Farm fields will totally, unacceptably and irreversibly eradicate its historic setting.

The Streatfeild's were central to the evolution and prosperity of Uckfield, therefore their long standing architect designed family home, The Rocks (Buckswood Grange Grade II) can be defined as a building of local historic value (a historic asset) and as such its setting is of equal importance and value and should preserved for future generations.

Reference: The Setting of Heritage Asset's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice. Planning Note 3

NPPF 189 states, Heritage **assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value** to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value [66] . **These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generation**s [67]

In conclusion: Downlands Farm is an intact part of an ancient landscape to the north of Uckfield. This beautiful landscape encompasses Lakewood LWS and extends across Ancient Woodlands to Budletts Common. Uninterrupted views of the Ashdown Forest loom on the horizon. This is our green lung, our area of treasured beauty and wildlife and must be preserved in its natural state for future generations.



Image EDP 4.2: Extract of Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1899 . Map included in Appendix 1 Landscape Visual Base Line .

Yours Sincerely

Buckswood Grange Rocks

Road Uckfield