

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/W/23/3335625
LPA Ref: WD/2022/3222/MAO

**Land South of the A271 and east of
the A22, Lower Horsebridge,
Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 4DN**

Heritage Proof of Evidence

For the appellant: Hertfordshire Holdings
Ltd

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. My name is James Weir and I am the Technical Director for heritage at tor&co (formerly Terence O'Rourke), where I lead and manage the built heritage and archaeology team.
- 1.2. The evidence which I have prepared and provided for this appeal (reference APP/C1435/W/23/3335625 is given in accordance with the professional standards and Code of Conduct of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation [IHBC] and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

Qualifications

- 1.3. I hold a doctorate (DPhil) in Architectural History from Kellogg College, University of Oxford, and an MA in Literae Humaniores from Somerville College, University of Oxford. I also hold a Postgraduate Certificate in Architectural History from the University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education and a Postgraduate Diploma in Surveying from the College of Estate Management.

Memberships

- 1.4. I am full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), which I have held since 2010, and am a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Current and previous roles

- 1.5. I am currently a Technical Director at tor&co, where I lead the built heritage and archaeology team. I have held this role since January 2024, before which time (and since January 2023) I was an Associate Director in the heritage team at tor&co. In my current role I am responsible for ensuring the quality of the comprehensive and objective output of the heritage team, whether that be in heritage statements, appraisals, desk-based assessments, Environmental Statement chapters or in general advice to clients on heritage matters.
- 1.6. Prior to joining tor&co I was the Senior Conservation Officer at Dorset Council with a specialist remit of dealing with spatial planning and major applications. The spatial planning aspect included input to the emerging local plan, such as writing policy and assessing potential impacts on heritage assets arising from draft site allocations. For major applications, I was involved in heritage input to all major full, outline and hybrid applications, which mainly comprised residential development, but also included minerals and waste, communications infrastructure, and renewables. As part of the role, I was also responsible for providing training to both Members and planning team staff on heritage policy and its application, including understanding setting.
- 1.7. My heritage input to major applications comprised assessing the significance of affected heritage assets. Given the nature of major schemes, this predominantly pertained to understanding the contribution of setting to the significance of affected heritage assets, and then providing the case officer

with a reasoned and dispassionate assessment of harm on those identified contributory elements of significance.

- 1.8. One of my responsibilities at Dorset Council was also to represent the authority at planning appeals as an expert witness. During my employment there I acted for the Council at an inquiry following refusal of residential development near Bridport, and I also represented the Council in a number of hearings and in providing statements for appeals determined by written representations.
- 1.9. Prior to joining Dorset Council, I had been self-employed as a heritage consultant for 10 years, after having held building surveying positions for five years at the National Trust and in private practice.

Abbreviations

- 1.10. For ease of reference, the following abbreviations and short-hand terms are used throughout this proof of evidence:

‘the appeal’	the current appeal, ref APP/C1435/W/23/3335625
‘the appeal site’	the site subject to this appeal, located within the submitted red line boundary
‘the appellant’	Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd
‘the application’	the refused planning application, ref WD/2022/3222/MAO
CD	Core document
CO	Conservation and design officer, Wealden District Council
CO1	Conservation and design officer’s consultation response, dated 6 April 2023 [CD3.13]
DBHA	Desk-based heritage assessment (tor&co [as formerly Terence O’Rourke], November 2022) [CD1.16]
DBHA Addendum	Heritage statement addendum (tor&co, November 2023) [CD 8.3]
HE	Historic England
HEAN	Historic England Advice Note
HEGPA3	Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets (Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3), 2 nd edn 2017 [CD7.2]
HER	Historic Environment Record
Knight’s Farm application	recent resolution to grant development of a new sports hub facility, including two artificial football pitches etc on land at Knight’s Farm East, Lower Horsebridge (WD/2023/2100/DC)

Knight's Farm HS	Heritage statement (Fuller Long, August 2023), submitted with Knight's Farm application [appendix c]
Knight's Farm OR	Officer's recommendation to Planning Committee South for Knight's Farm application, dated 25 January 2024 [CD11.1]
LPA	Local planning authority
LTSH	Less than substantial harm
OE	Old English
OR	Delegated officer report, dated 30 June 2023 [CD4.1]
PLBCAA	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
PoE	Proof of evidence
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRoW	Public right of way
RfR	Reason(s) for refusal
SoC	Statement of case
SoCG	Statement of common ground, dated 11 March 2024 [CD13.8]
WDC	Wealden District Council

Summary of involvement

- 1.11. tor&co (when formerly Terence O'Rourke Ltd) was appointed by the appellant in December 2021 to provide a desk-based heritage assessment, which was informed by on-site analysis, information on archaeological events and monuments gained from the Historic Environment Record, and a geophysical survey of the site (Cranfield University, February 2022). The desk-based assessment was completed in November 2022 and submitted, along with the rest of the application documents, in December 2022.
- 1.12. Following the refusal of the application in June 2023 and following amendments made prior to the submission of this appeal, tor&co produced an addendum to the desk-based heritage assessment in November 2023. The chief purpose of this addendum was to reassess the nature and extent of potential harm on the significance of designated heritage assets in the light of the amended scheme. The designated heritage assets included in the addendum were grade II-listed Brook House, to whose significance the DBHA had concluded LTSH accrued, and grade II-listed Boship Farm Hotel.
- 1.13. The latter had originally been scoped out of detailed assessment in the DBHA (see 4.3 below), but had been considered in CO1 to have its significance harmed (LTSH) by the proposed development.

- 1.14. Having joined tor&co in January 2023, I have not been involved in any earlier stages of the project, including the production of the DBHA or the DBHA Addendum. The latter was prepared by John Trehy, who left tor&co's employment at the end of January 2024 and has had no input in the preparation of this PoE.

Orientation

- 1.15. The application site is situated on a northwest-southeast axis and is perpendicular to the northeast-southwest alignment of the A271. For the purposes of this PoE and for convenience, the axis of the A271 will be assumed to be east-west and the axis of the site north-south. The edge of the proposed development closest to the A271 will therefore be described as 'north' etc.
- 1.16. I note that the A271 road is also called 'Lower Horsebridge' and so, to avoid confusion between the road and the settlement, I shall refer to the road as the 'A271' only. Where Lower Horsebridge is mentioned, it therefore refers to the settlement.

Pagination

- 1.17. Where page numbers are provided for appendices, they refer to the master pagination that applies to the whole appendix volume, as opposed to the page numbers within the individual documents.

2. Scope of evidence

Affected heritage assets

- 2.1. My evidence considers the effect of the development proposals submitted in the application on the significance of affected designated heritage assets, namely Brook House (grade II) and the Boship Farm Hotel (grade II), through development in their setting. Given that there is no direct impact on the physical form and fabric of these assets, the issue is the impact on any contribution the setting makes to the significance of these assets, rather than there being an impact on the architectural or historic interest bound up in their fabric.
- 2.2. The DBHA contained a map showing the location of all the listed buildings in a 1 km study area around the appeal site, which amounted in total to fourteen. On this map, which is included again with this PoE at figure 1 for ease of reference, Brook House was identified as LB3 and the Boship Farm Hotel as LB12. The list descriptions for these assets are included at appendix a.
- 2.3. No other listed buildings are identified within either CO1 or the RfR as having any impact on their significance and, similarly, none other was considered in detail within the original DBHA or DBHA Addendum. I have therefore not expanded the assessment to include any of these additional listed buildings and it is considered common ground that the significance of no other designated or non-designated heritage assets is affected by the proposals (CD13.8, 6.1.1(s)).
- 2.4. It should be noted that this evidence does not constitute comment on impacts on landscape sensitivity or amenity, which is dealt with in the PoE of Paul Warren of tor&co. Though information regarding landscape can be a relevant consideration to the assessment of the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage assets, the mechanisms and intentions for assessment are not the same and impacts on landscape amenity do not automatically equate to impacts on heritage significance (see below, 2.21).

Site visit

- 2.5. A site visit was undertaken on Tuesday 6 February 2024, during which I accessed the site and surrounding area on foot. In all these locations, my intention was twofold: i) to understand the way in which the affected heritage assets are experienced, taking into account relevant contributory considerations arising from their physical surroundings; and ii) to understand any contribution made by any designed or fortuitous views to the significance of the assets. The areas on which I focussed during the site visit were:
- the appeal site, including part of PRow HEL/12/1 eastwards;
 - the A22 west of Boship roundabout;
 - the A22 and service station immediately north of the Boship Farm Hotel;
 - the A267 north of Boship roundabout;
 - the Boship roundabout itself;
 - the A22 southeast of the Boship roundabout;
 - the A271 east of the Boship roundabout both ways along Lower Horsebridge;

- part of PRow HEL/3/1, which proceeds northwest from the A271 just west of The White Hart; and
- the A271 to the southeast of Lower Horsebridge.

Reason for refusal

- 2.6. The evidence I provide seeks to address RfR 2 given by WDC in the decision notice, dated 30 June 2023 (CD4.2).
- 2.7. RfR 2 identifies harm to the significance of Brook House and the Boship Farm Hotel. It is not specific as to the category of harm that WDC has assessed to these designated heritage assets, merely that the harm is 'unacceptable'. In CO1, the CO agrees with the findings of the DBHA that 'there would be impacts amounting to a medium level of less than substantial harm' to Brook House, although the following observations should be noted.
- 2.8. The DBHA did indeed identify a 'medium level' of LTSH to the significance of Brook House (CD1.16, 6.4 and 7.5). However, this assessment was made prior to the later amendments which reduced the extent of development. In consequence, the scale of harm was reassessed in the DBHA Addendum to be 'at the lower end' of LTSH (CD8.3, 4.11 and 5.4).
- 2.9. WDC's SoC confirms that, even with the reduced extent of development, it is maintaining the position that the less than substantial harm to the significance of Brook House is at a 'medium level'. Regarding the Boship Farm Hotel, WDC's position is that the harm to its significance would be 'at the lower end of less than substantial' (CD ref, 6.2.7-6.2.8)
- 2.10. Based on the above, I therefore consider the following heritage matters to be in issue between the parties:
1. the scale of harm to the significance of Brook House within the LTSH category; and
 2. the assessment of harm (at any category and scale) to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel.

Legislation

- 2.11. The provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) are well known and are not repeated here. I acknowledge the provisions of section 66(1) of the Act and the need for local planning authorities to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
- 2.12. I also acknowledge that this 'special regard' is carried through into the 'great weight' to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be, all as per NPPF para. 205.
- 2.13. I also acknowledge the clarifications to the nature and import of setting that have emerged from subsequent case law, especially *Barnwell Manor*.¹ In the

¹ *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire DC* [2014] EWCA Civ 1347

latter, Sullivan LJ (as he then was) confirmed that ‘a finding of harm to the setting of a listed building is a consideration to which the decision-maker must give “considerable important and weight”.’ (CD11.7, para. 22), citing Glidewell LJ in *The Bath Society v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1991] 1 WLR 1303 as the authority.

Policy

NPPF/PPG

- 2.14. The NPPF is included within the Core Documents (CD 7.1) and historic environment sections are not repeated here. The Historic Environment chapter of the PPG is included at CD7.3 and, again is not repeated. However, I offer here some brief comments on relevant aspects.
- 2.15. The NPPF was revised in December 2023 and this version replaces that which was current at the time of the determination of the application and the preparation of the DBHA and DBHA Addendum. However, other than the revision of paragraph numbers to take account of amendments elsewhere in the Framework, there have been no changes to the historic environment provisions in section 16. In this evidence, I therefore refer to the revised paragraph numbers. A comparative schedule of paragraph numbers referenced in the decision notice and those in the latest version of the NPPF is provided at 2.14 below.
- 2.16. No definition of harm is provided in the NPPF glossary or PPG, but it arises when proposals result in a detrimental effect on our ability to understand or appreciate the identified elements of significance of a heritage asset, including any contribution to that significance made by setting. Structuring an understanding of harm in this way guards against the pitfall of inferring that all change to the *status quo* of either the physical form and fabric and/or the setting of a heritage asset is inevitably harmful.
- 2.17. WDC’s decision notice (in RfR 2) refers specifically to several paragraphs in the version of the NPPF current at the time of determination (July 2021). For ease of reference, I schedule them below along with their revised numbers in the most recent edition:

Paragraph in 2021 NPPF	Paragraph in latest NPPF
130	135
189	195
197	203
199	205
200	206
206	212

Local plan policies

- 2.18. The Local Plan policies referred to in the decision notice (RfR2) and therefore

considered relevant to the heritage elements of the appeal are:

- Wealden Local Plan (adopted 1998; CD5.1)
 - EN1 and EN2
- Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (adopted 2013; CD5.2)
 - Policy SPO2

Guidance

Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets. Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, 2nd edn (2017) [CD7.2]

- 2.19. HEGPA3 is essential clarifying where setting fits with significance: it is ‘not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation...its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance’ (p. 4). This means that setting is contributory to the significance of a heritage asset when it assists our ability to appreciate the archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic interest of an asset, which are the defining elements of significance as set out in the NPPF glossary.
- 2.20. On that basis, and whilst acknowledging that later change can contribute to setting if the change over time is itself historically illustrative to the asset, it stands to reason that

Settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed or formed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance... (p. 4).

- 2.21. The need for setting to contribute to the identified interests of a heritage asset is perhaps not captured in the NPPF glossary, which is often cited in shorthand as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’. This shorthand risks being applied too constrictively by inadvertently implying that all change to the surroundings in which an asset is experienced – whether or not that experience communicates anything about significance – is harmful.
- 2.22. One aspect of setting which requires frequent clarification is how it relates to views and the guidance is useful in this respect. It defines views as a ‘purely visual impression of an asset or place’ which can have various qualities (dynamic, long, short, etc). Importantly, however, views are relevant to setting where they contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.23. The guidance goes on to identify those assets where intervisibility, even between assets of different historical periods, might be important for ‘aesthetic, functional, ceremonial or religious reasons’, such as military defensive sites; prehistoric funerary sites; beacons etc (p. 6).
- 2.24. The guidance is useful in distinguishing setting from both landscape and general amenity, which are often confused (p. 7):

14. Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible

with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.

15. Assessment and management of both setting and views are related to consideration of the wider landscape, which is outside the scope of this advice note. Additional advice on views is available in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment, 3rd edition, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (in partnership with Historic England).

16. Similarly, 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.

- 2.25. In order to promote a consistent and proportionate approach to decision-making with regard to setting, the guidance suggests a stepped approach to assessment (p. 8):

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

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

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement or avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

- 2.26. The above approach is therefore a useful, consistent and accepted framework around which to articulate an assessment of the contribution of setting to the significance of the identified heritage assets and the impacts of the proposed development on this contribution. However, as it is not relevant to the assessment at hand, I do not consider further the documenting and monitoring of outcomes (step 5) as part of this evidence.
- 2.27. HEGPA3 also includes guidance on cumulative change (p. 4), where detrimental change to an asset's setting has already impacted the significance of a heritage asset. In this case, local authorities must consider whether additional change further detracts from, or enhances, significance. This reflects a similar consideration set out in the PPG (CD7.3, p. 11).
- 2.28. However, the existence of cumulative change is not a reason *per se* to await a particular application in which harm to the significance of an asset can suddenly be decided to be, say, substantial. The implication of cumulative change is rather to consider whether the extent of incremental change has already acted in such a way as to lessen or remove a particular contribution of setting to significance, which in turn then informs an assessment of harm.

3. The significance of affected heritage assets

- 3.1. In this section, I provide a succinct overview of the significance of the relevant heritage assets, namely Brook House and the Boship Farm Hotel. For the purposes of this section, the overview will be confined to any archaeological, architectural and historical interest of the assets.
- 3.2. For each of these interests, I employ a simple scale of 'high', 'moderate' and 'low'. Where judgements of 'low' are provided for a particular interest, this is not with a view to superseding the acknowledged special interest inherent in the listing, but rather to clarify exactly where the significance of an asset is concentrated. In turn, this facilitates not only assessments of harm to significance and any necessary planning balances that follow, but also the need for a clear articulation of harm explicit in the PPG (CD7.3, p. 15), which is best achieved when the relative contribution of the various interests is understood.
- 3.3. The contribution of setting will be dealt with in a proprietary section below, but this initial assessment establishes both the elements to which setting would have to contribute and the baseline against which any harm to that contribution can be assessed.
- 3.4. It should be noted that the overview here is provided without having had internal access to the buildings or full access to the curtilage of the affected assets. Like the assessments provided in the DBHA, my assessments here are based on observable, deducible or inferable attributes arising from an external view of the buildings and any historical information known or available.
- 3.5. Though there is no direct impact on the physical form and fabric of these assets, and so we are dealing with impacts on setting, I am conscious that the setting of these assets can only be contributory to significance when it permits one or more of these identified attributes of significance to be understood or appreciated.
- 3.6. The intention is to avoid the contribution of setting to significance being confused with a simple description of the asset's setting which, in turn, can lead to an erroneous conflation of 'change' with 'harm' (see 2.16 above). This point is captured neatly in *Palmer*, where Lewison LJ approvingly cited the judge at first instance:²
- It is still plainly the case that it is for the decision taker to assess the nature and degree of harm caused, and in the case of harm to setting rather than directly to a listed building itself, the degree to which the impact on the setting affects the reasons why it is listed. [34, my emphasis]*
- 3.7. The information on significance presented in this section is drawn from the following principal sources:

- the DBHA and DBHA Addendum and their associated research;

² *Palmer v Herefordshire Council* [2016] EWCA Civ 1061, included at appendix b

- the Knight's Farm HS,³ which includes Brook House and whose assessment received no contradiction from WDC officers or Members in the determination of the Knight's Farm application; and
- my own site visit, detailed at 2.5 above.

3.8. The map designations given beside each asset below refer to those on the built heritage map at figure 1 and we have added relevant references to submitted material, where appropriate.

Brook House (grade II; LB3)

Archaeological interest

- 3.9. Brook House is understood to have been constructed c. 1830, which is the date given in the list description.⁴ However, as noted in the DBHA (5.14), a building or small building group is shown on the site by at least the late 18th century (figure 3). The Ordnance Survey First Series map (c. 1813) appears to show a group of three buildings set within an enclosed curtilage, though small-scale maps of this date are not necessarily wholly accurate representations of site layouts (figure 4).
- 3.10. The pattern of fields and wooded areas evident on the Yeakell map suggests that the field arrangement arose from piecemeal assarts of woodland throughout the medieval period, which corresponds with the area's location in proximity to the Roman fort at *Anderitum* (Pevensay), later corrupted to *Anderida*, which in turn gave its name to the *Andredes weald* forest. The historically wooded nature of the area is also reflected in the name 'Horsebridge' which, from its earlier forms (e.g. *Herstbregge* in the 13th century), suggests a bridge (OE *brycg*) in or by a wood (OE *hyrst*).
- 3.11. The pattern of settlement shown on the Yeakell map illustrates a dispersed settlement pattern between hamlets, such as Lower Horsebridge, which are sited at nodal points on the road network. Between these nodes, small enclosures adjacent to roadways have been formed from the edge of larger fields, which is a typical pattern of post-medieval settlement in areas of dispersed settlement.
- 3.12. Given the similar position and scale of the building shown on the historic maps, though acknowledging that they are not georeferenced with modern maps, it is possible that the building contains fabric relating to an earlier building or building phase. Given the nature of the historic settlement pattern, it would seem likely that any earlier fabric would not pre-date the early 18th century, which would be consistent with this type of settlement.
- 3.13. Based on the above, the archaeological interest of the asset is considered to be **low**. This corresponds with the findings of the Knight's Farm HS, which concluded that the 'evidential value' of Brook House – analogous with archaeological interest – is low, and the Knight's Farm OR, which agreed (appendix c, 4.2.11, p. 40).

³ Included at appendix c

⁴ See appendix a.

Architectural interest

- 3.14. The building is a good example of a 19th-century polite rural villa in a half H-shape, which would be relatively unusual for the period. The building has several details which are more suggestive of the later 19th-century, such as the scalloped clay tile-hanging, the decorative lead apron flashings, the hipped front bays, the fretted bargeboards and terracotta finials, which all point to later amendments. The central porch is also a later element – the red stretcher bond brick contrasts with the Flemish bond brick with burnt headers of the main ranges – or a rebuilding of an original feature.
- 3.15. These features combine to give an ‘elegant principal façade’ (Knight’s Farm HS, appendix c, 4.2.22, p. 42) and a building which demonstrates both intentional formality in the footprint of the symmetrical frontage and also the changing tastes of architectural decoration throughout the 19th century, all of which lends it a pleasing aesthetic.
- 3.16. Summing up the ‘aesthetic value’, which encompasses architectural composition, the Knight’s Farm HS judges that the value of the building is ‘moderate, and derived principally from the scale, articulation and material palette of the original house and the architectural and aesthetic treatment of its principal elevation...’ (appendix c, 4.2.23, p. 42).
- 3.17. I would agree with this assessment and conclude that the architectural interest of the asset is **moderate**, which is the view also taken in the Knight’s Farm HS with regard to this asset (appendix c, 4.2.23, p. 42) and the Knight’s Farm OR (CD11.1, p. 38).

Historic interest

- 3.18. According to the PPG’s explanation of significance, the three principal limbs to historic interest are illustration, association and communal (CD7.3, p. 7). ‘Illustration’ refers to how the asset illustrates its original use and/or prevailing historical patterns or trends, especially those which might be rare survivals or poorly evidenced. ‘Association’ will arise where the asset has any known associations with important historical events, movements, groups or individuals. ‘Communal’ will arise where there is intangible meaning of an asset for collective local identity or experience, typically experienced in terms of faith or cultural identity.
- 3.19. Beginning with association, I agree with the Knight’s Farm HS in its conclusion that ‘the asset is not known to have any direct or tangible links to notable historical events, movements, groups or individuals’ (appendix c, 4.2.17, p. 41). In a similar vein, I agree with the assessment the building has ‘no communal value’, largely owing to its history as a private dwelling (appendix c, 4.2.25, p. 42).
- 3.20. The illustrative value of the asset can be derived from various attributes. The Knight’s Farm HS notes that this derives ‘principally from it being an example of a modest Early Victorian detached house’, though the report considers this to be ‘limited’ owing to subsequent change and alteration (appendix c, 4.2.16, p. 41). To this, I would add that, even with its later alterations, the asset continues to illustrate its original use and purpose as a formal dwelling of high design and material quality which, in a local context, is relatively high-status.

- 3.21. I would also add that the building retains some ability to illustrate the historic dispersed settlement pattern along a former primary thoroughfare into Hailsham through subdivision of a pre-existing larger field parcel.
- 3.22. Taking the above attributes into account, on balance I consider the historic interest of the asset to be **low**. Again, this concurs with the Knight's Farm HS, which concludes that the 'historical value of this asset is...considered to be low' (appendix c, 4.2.18, p. 41), and the Knight's Farm OR which judged likewise (CD11.1 p. 37).

Summary of significance

- 3.23. The above sets out an assessment of significance which is in agreement with the findings of both the Knight's Farm HS and the Knight's Farm OR, of which the latter agreed entirely with the former. The significance is summarised as follows:
- architectural interest moderate
 - historic interest low
 - archaeological interest low
- 3.24. This assessment can now illustrate the baseline approach to significance and the way in which it is properly used for establishing the nature and extent of harm through setting (outlined in 3.3 above). Using the values established in 3.23 above,
- if setting contributes nothing to understanding or appreciating archaeological interest, then any proposed development within the setting of an asset cannot result in harm to the archaeological limb of its significance; and
 - if setting contributes, for example, to architectural interest, the weight given to any harm would be greater than that given to harm on historic interest as the former contributes greater than the latter to significance.

Boship Farm Hotel (grade II; LB12)

Archaeological interest

- 3.25. The list description refers to the building as having been built in 1652 by 'M Fuller', though unfortunately no reference is given.
- 3.26. The hotel site, along with a stretch of land westwards on the south side of the A271, is identified in the HER as an archaeological notification area owing in part to the potential for medieval occupation of the site (figure 2). One feature which might reflect this is recorded on the HER as evidence of a moat (CD1.16, 4.14). This possibly arises from the description of a small parcel of land just to the east of the hotel labelled on the Tithe map (1842) as 'part of old moat' (figure 5, plot 1494). However, the description in the HER also records it as 'doubtful' and, though acknowledging its overgrown state at the time, without any obvious trace of a level building platform.
- 3.27. The name 'Boship' also suggests medieval activity. Though much altered, it is a vestige of OE *gebūrscepe*, a term used in the laws of Edward the Elder (reg. 899-924) to mean a locality or some form of community association. In any

case, the term hints at some kind of pre-Conquest communal use or ownership of the site and its contemporary landholdings.

- 3.28. Taking the above into account, and giving the benefit of the doubt to the moated element, I would infer that there is high potential for the hotel to contain fabric relating not only to the 17th-century building, but also earlier buildings or building phases, whether incorporated into later phases or buried beneath its footprint.
- 3.29. I therefore consider the building to have **high** archaeological interest.

Architectural interest

- 3.30. I was not able to access the site during my visit, as signage outside the hotel indicated that no entry was permitted. Any description and understanding of its architecture, must therefore come from such interpretation as is afforded by the available information and by the view obtained from outside the perimeter.
- 3.31. The building is of interest as a high-status gentry farmhouse, with a frontage dominated by three steep gabled ranges, a style typical of the late 16th and 17th centuries and the most notable architectural element. The building is described in the list description as timber-framed and therefore probably retains structural timber elements that add to this interest, especially if they demonstrate the construction method and sequence.
- 3.32. The list description refers to the building being encased in brick in the early 19th century, though this cannot be confirmed without closer inspection. Certainly the brickwork visible in photographs seems to be of older date, especially with the seemingly random use of burnt headers and the fact that it appears to match the large chimney stack on the eastern end, which would have been an unusual addition in the early 19th century. The building rather gives off the impression that the brickwork was in fact the 1652 addition to an earlier, possibly 16th-century building.
- 3.33. In any event the brickwork, whether 17th- or 19th-century, adds a layer of interest to the building's architecture insofar as it communicates contemporary modernising responses to earlier building styles and materials. Other features of interest are the 17th-century window openings, with stone mullions and dressings, and the aforementioned large external brick external stack on the east elevation.
- 3.34. In addition, if elements of the structural timber frame remain, then these may have architectural interest if they illustrate locally or regionally distinctive elements, which might include jointing or methods of ornamentation, such as stops and chamfers, and/or permit closer dating of the building.
- 3.35. The building has been altered to an extent which does diminish the form of the original building, predominantly through the large rear and side extensions. Given its long-standing use as a hotel, it is also likely that there has been considerable change to the internal areas and a widespread loss of original fixed and decorative features should be envisaged.
- 3.36. On the above basis, and taking into account the external changes and the likely internal changes associated with modern hotel use over a long period, I would assess the architectural interest of the building as **moderate**.

Historic interest

- 3.37. The assumed construction date of 1652 given in the list description, which I have suggested could in fact relate to a remodelling, is derived from the date on the central gable (1653 – *pace* HE's list description). With this date are the initials 'M.F.', which is taken by HE to be the 'M Fuller' mentioned above.⁵ If this identification is correct, then it is likely that these are the same Fullers who had had ironworking interests in Heathfield since the 17th century, presumably a branch of the Fullers who had been tenants at Tanners Manor, Waldron, since the early 16th century. However, the identity of 'M Fuller' is not known.
- 3.38. The Fuller association seems to be confirmed through later records: for example, the Tithe records give the owner of Boship Farm as Augustus Elliott Fuller (1777-1857), at that time MP for East Sussex and resident at Ashdown House, Forest Row. If Boship Farm was an earlier seat of the Fullers, it must have been sometime before Augustus Elliott Fuller, whose father John Trayton Fuller (1723-1811) had built Ashdown House in 1793/5 and, before that, had been resident at Heathfield Park.
- 3.39. There is no historical evidence to suggest that Augustus Elliott Fuller was ever resident at Boship Farm and it likely formed just one element of their extensive estates. However, the building/remodelling of the farm in the 1650s does suggest the wealth that had accrued to the Fullers through Wealden ironworking.
- 3.40. The building's ability to illustrate its original use as a relatively high-status farmstead has been significantly eroded by the expansion of the site with the accoutrements of hotel use to the point that the site retains little communicable trace of agricultural usage. At least two farm buildings of early 19th century date or slightly earlier survive on the site, but have been joined to the building with long arms of modern extensions. This limits the ability to understand and appreciate them as historic farm buildings, but they retain a vestigial historic spatial and functional relationship with the asset. I discuss the immediate setting in more detail below.
- 3.41. Whilst acknowledging that I did not visit the building internally, my experience suggests that the legibility of the 17th-century (or earlier) internal spaces, room uses and circulation routes – especially on the ground floor – will have been diminished through modern alterations to accommodate modern hotel requirements.
- 3.42. The building retains some historic interest owing to its ability to understand medieval settlement across the locality. If it were a moated site, it would sit in a legible context with other surviving moated sites in the area, such as Horselunges Manor and Michelham Priory.
- 3.43. The building has academic interest in the vestigial form of its name and the potential to inform further research into a little-understood Anglo-Saxon form of community association, especially if it indicates communal landholding. However, this is not bound up in the fabric of the building itself, which, even if earlier fabric remains, almost certainly will not date from the Anglo-Saxon period.

⁵ See list description at appendix a

- 3.44. The building has been a hotel since at least 1966, which is the date at which it was listed, and thus will have some interest as a place where the public could stay and experience the building and its immediate surroundings. However, I would not assess this to equate with any sense of wider cultural or collective identity and so would conclude that the building has no communal value.
- 3.45. Taking the above into account, my assessment would be that the Boship Farm Hotel has **moderate** historic interest.

Summary of significance

- 3.46. Based on the assessment above, the significance may be summarised as follows:
- archaeological interest high
 - architectural interest moderate
 - historic interest moderate

4. Setting assessment steps 1-2: the contribution of setting to significance

- 4.1. Now that an assessment of significance for each asset has been provided, I shall proceed with HE's stepped methodology of setting assessment, as summarised at 2.25 above.
- 4.2. Given that it is agreed between the parties that no other heritage assets are potentially affected by the proposals (CD13.8, 6.1.1(s)), I shall take it that step 1 (identifying affected assets) has been suitably completed.
- 4.3. I should like to preface this section by noting the findings of the DBHA and the DBHA Addendum, which jointly concluded that there is no potential for development on the appeal site to affect the setting of the Boship Farm Hotel (CD1.16, 5.13; CD8.3, 4.15). For this reason, this asset was not taken forward for setting assessment in the DBHA and the DBHA Addendum repeats the conclusion.
- 4.4. However, given that the issue between the parties is whether harm accrues to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel or not, it seems appropriate here to provide an assessment of what elements of the hotel's setting actually do contribute to its significance, as set out above. I shall then be able to reach a conclusion as to whether harm arises or not.
- 4.5. In what follows, I again deal with each asset individually using, wherever possible, information from the same sources set out at 3.7 above. These include the documents submitted with the refused application and relevant documentation from the Knight's Farm application. The latter is, again, illustrative for our purposes, not only because no criticism of its conclusions was raised by WDC officers during consultation, but also because its findings were largely translated into the Knight's Farm OR.
- 4.6. In assessing contributory elements of setting, I have had particular regard to the wide range of aspects which can comprise setting, especially those relating to the asset's physical surroundings and the experience of the asset. A list of facets under each of these elements is provided in HEGPA3 (CD7.2, p. 11). As these are provided for illustrative purposes only, I have not thought it necessary to provide a comment under each and every facet.
- 4.7. There are also various elements relating to the current or future baseline setting of the assets which I consider to be relevant and so to which I have paid attention in the assessment.
- 4.8. I have taken into account the recent approval in the Knight's Farm application, the description of which development is repeated below for reference (taken *verbatim* from the Knight's Farm OR) and the site of which borders the east and north boundaries of Brook House.

Full planning permission for the development of a new sports hub facility, including two artificial football pitches, two multi-use games areas (containing four tennis courts and four netball courts), two padel tennis courts, skate park, play facilities and a sports building providing changing rooms, toilets and café, alongside parking, landscaping, drainage, ancillary works and vehicular access via the A267.

- 4.9. I note that this approval has not yet been built out, but am aware that, at the Full Council meeting on 22 November 2023, WDC approved an additional £5.183m of CIL funding to the project, noting also a possible grant of £3.5m from the Football Foundation to add to the previously agreed allocation of £8m to the project (appendix d, p. 66). The prospect of the scheme being delivered therefore seems to be a reasonable one at present.
- 4.10. I note also the policies map for Hailsham, Hellingly and Lower Horsebridge, which is to be included in the current WDC Draft Local Plan Consultation (CD6.7) and which was put before Full Council at an EGM on 8 February 2024 (CD12.4). The draft policy indicates a large (40,000 sqm) strategic employment allocation (HEL4/SS6) on land to the west of the A22 spreading north and west from the existing services opposite the Boship Farm Hotel. The draft allocation site is currently, and has historically been, undeveloped and in agricultural use.
- 4.11. For ease of reference, I have included at figure 7 a plan showing the extent of the Knight's Farm proposals, along with the draft Knight's Farm strategic employment allocation, so that they can be understood in the context of Brook House and Boship Farm Hotel and WDC's approach to an ostensibly 'rural' area.
- 4.12. Though I acknowledge that delivery of this strategic site is somewhat further afield at present than at Knight's Farm, the developed site would form a western companion to the Knight's farm development and would result in development straddling the A267 north of the Boship roundabout.
- 4.13. The Knight's Farm application and the draft strategic employment allocation are together illustrative of what would seem to be WDC's long-term vision for growth around the Boship roundabout area.
- 4.14. For illustration of the points made, this section includes reference to photographic plates, which are included at appendix e.

Brook House (grade II; LB3)

- 4.15. The assessment of significance in section 3 above identified a number of aspects which comprise the significance of the asset and which may be summarised as follows (given in order of importance, as I have assessed them):
- architectural value (moderate) – derived primarily from the scale, material palette and general aesthetics of the principal elevation;
 - historic interest (low) – derived from the ability of the building to illustrate its original purpose and function and the dispersed settlement pattern through subdivision of larger fields along the former primary thoroughfare; and
 - archaeological interest (low) – through the potential, speculative only, that the building retains fabric relating to an earlier phase of house, perhaps the building shown on the Yeakell map of the late 18th century (figure 3).

- 4.16. The above provides a basis on which to assess whether the asset's setting, which is to say the surroundings in which it is experienced *today*, contributes to these aspects or not.
- 4.17. Brook House occupies the eastern side of a sub-rectangular plot, bordered to the north and east sides by mature hedging and shrubs and to the west side by mature trees. The front boundary with the A271 comprises partly a modern stretcher bond brick wall with concrete copings, which is itself divided from the roadway by a small strip of grass verge, and partly a modern timber closeboard fence. The changes to the historic plot boundary are covered in various reports (CD1.16, 5.15; Knight's Farm HS, appendix c, 4.2.6, p. 38), but, in summary, the property occupies a larger plot than that evidenced on the 1842 Tithe map (figure 5). Historic mapping confirms that this enlargement took place at some point between 1908 and 1937.
- 4.18. I have made observations above relating to the historic dispersed settlement pattern evident in this locality and Brook House was certainly built into this pattern. However, as the Knight's Farm OR notes (CD11.1, p. 38),

The historic setting has been eroded through modern development since the 1950s, as identified on the historic mapping.

Further details of the causes of this 'erosion' are to be found in the Knight's Farm HS, which observes:

However, the expansion of Horsebridge [sic] and housing to the west, alongside the construction of the A267 bypass and associated service development, has resulted in clear and apparent change to the wider rural character of the area.⁶

- 4.19. Given the extent of erosion so recently acknowledged by WDC when assessing the setting impacts of their application at Knight's Farm, it is surprising that a similar acknowledgment has not been made by WDC on this application or appeal; neither CO1, nor the OR, nor the Decision Notice, nor the SoC reflects such an acknowledgement.
- 4.20. The erosion of the rural character 'of the area' is surely to be understood as referring to the immediate locality, which in turn includes the appeal site. On that basis, and thus on WDC's own assessment, it seems that any surviving rural character of Brook House's setting can make only a limited contribution to its significance. It continues partly to illustrate the historically isolated position of the asset and the wider dispersed settlement pattern, but this is now less appreciable, and thus less contributory, owing at least to the expansion of Lower Horsebridge; the construction of the A22/A267 bypass; and the construction of the services.
- 4.21. Taking into account this erosion of rural character, the Knight's Farm OR identifies the contributory elements of Brook House's setting as follows, which is largely echoed in the DBHA (CD1.16, 5.15):

...principally derived from its interrelationship between the house, ancillary buildings and its historic plot, its set back position from the

⁶ Appendix c, 4.2.28, p. 43

*road, the visual and aesthetic interest of the garden, planting and boundary treatments.*⁷

It goes on to state in a separate paragraph that ‘the setting of the asset is derived from land to the south of the site’,⁸ presumably meaning in addition to those aspects listed above rather than in their stead.

- 4.22. The above point is not expanded upon further in the Knight’s Farm OR, but I interpret this to be for two reasons: i) the remaining contribution of the field to the south (i.e. the appeal site) to the illustration of the historic isolation of the asset and the historically dispersed settlement pattern;⁹ and ii) the possibility for the front of the building, acknowledged as being the principal limb of its architectural interest (see above, 3.14-3.17), to be viewed.
- 4.23. The latter point brings me to consider the contribution of views of the asset to its significance. The general guidance on views in HEGPA3 is summarised above (2.19-2.20) and it demonstrates that, in order to contribute to significance, views have to serve some demonstrable purpose beyond a mere ability to see something from any and every given spot.
- 4.24. In the case of Brook House, the Knight’s Farm OR makes the reasonable point that

*The most notable views of the asset are from the A271 which allow an appreciation of significance of the asset. This is derived from its architectural merits.*¹⁰

In other words, the view of the building from the A271 contributes to its significance as it enables its architectural interest to be understood and appreciated (plate 1).

- 4.25. I agree with the above point and would sharpen it further by stating that this is most appreciable from the A271 at close quarters, as opposed to longer, oblique views. In any case, the asset is not visible at a long distance from the road to the west, as it is obscured by the well-established tree line on the north side of the A271.
- 4.26. I am also in agreement with the observation in the Knight’s Farm HS (appendix c, 4.2.27, p. 43) that the views *from* Brook House ‘out over its front garden, the adjacent road and the field immediately opposite’ contribute to its significance. This is insofar as they assist the vestigial experience of the asset’s historical isolation and the historically dispersed settlement pattern previously mentioned. However, the contribution of this outward view is limited by the peripheral view of 20th-century built development on the edge of Lower Horsebridge; the noise and regular traffic along the A271; and the fact that the view itself is terminated beyond the appeal site by the presence of modern housing on the southeast side of the Cuckmere River (Solent Crescent), which forms the northern edge of Hailsham (plate 2).
- 4.27. The Knight’s Farm HS adds to this picture with the observation that, in oblique

⁷ CD11.1, p. 38

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ The point also made in Knight’s Farm HS, appendix c, 4.2.27, p. 42

¹⁰ CD11.1 p. 37

views from the A271 (plate 3),

*trees and hedges form a notable component of the asset's setting and help reinforce its general rural situation and separation from development.*¹¹

In referring to the 'general rural situation', I assume that the writer meant this to be understood with the implicit acknowledgment of the detrimental change to the 'wider rural character' expressed in the same paragraph (cited at 4.18 above).

- 4.28. There is no suggestion in WDC's SoC that any specific view of Brook House from the appeal site or the PRow to the east of the appeal site (HEL/12/1) is a contributory element to its significance.
- 4.29. However, and acknowledging that the contribution of setting does not depend on there being public rights of access, the front elevation of Brook House is visible from the PRow HEL12/1 (plate 4). From this view, the two gables, chimney stacks and tile-hanging are visible, thus permitting a fortuitous appreciation of its architectural interest. The ability of this view to communicate more of the asset's significance is restricted by the built development at the western end of the A271 by the Boship roundabout and by the sight and noise of the traffic using the dual carriageway bypass and the A271 itself. These attributes inhibit one's ability to understand or appreciate – on the ground, as opposed to on a map – any vestigial sense of isolation or historic dispersed development pattern.
- 4.30. In the above I have devoted some time to understanding the contribution of the setting outside the curtilage of Brook House to its significance. Returning briefly to the summary offered in the Knight's Farm OR, and cited at 4.21 above, there were several other contributory elements of setting noted. These comprised the relationship between the house and ancillary buildings; the building's position set back from the road; and the visual and aesthetic interest of the garden and boundary treatments. I would generally agree with these elements as contributory to understanding the architectural and historic interest of the asset.
- 4.31. Based on the above assessment, I offer below a summary of those elements of setting which I consider contribute to the significance of Brook House. I have set out each interest in decreasing order of importance (based on the assessment in section 3 above); the element(s) which contribute to it; and the level of contribution I consider it to have, based on the above assessment.
- Contributory to architectural interest (moderate):
 - view from the A271 (plates 1 and 3) – high contribution;
 - view from PRow HEL/12/1 (plate 4) – moderate contribution;
 - interrelationship between house and ancillary building – moderate contribution;
 - visual and aesthetic interest of gardens and boundary treatments – moderate contribution; and
 - set-back position – low contribution.
 - Contributory to historic interest (low):

¹¹ Appendix c, 4.2.27, p. 43

- view over land to the south from the asset (plate 2) – low contribution;
 - the vestigial undeveloped land to the south of the asset – low contribution owing to aforesaid ‘erosion’; and
 - view from the A271 and from PRow HEL 12/1 (plates 1, 3 and 4) – low contribution.
- Contributory to archaeological interest (low):
 - I have not identified any specific element of the setting which contributes to understanding this interest.

Boship Farm Hotel (grade II; LB12)

- 4.32. The assessment of significance in section 3 above identified a number of aspects which comprise the significance of the asset and which may be summarised as follows (given in order of importance, as I understand them):
- archaeological interest (high) – derived from the likely survival of 17th-century fabric within the building and potentially of fabric relating to an earlier building or building phase;
 - architectural interest (moderate) – derived from the building’s form, timber-frame construction, architectural details and later brick fronting, but limited by extensive external additions; and
 - historic interest (moderate) – derived primarily from the building’s inferred historical association with the iron-working Fuller family, but also a limited legibility of a spatial and functional relationship with two historic farm buildings, and illustration of medieval moated sites in the area.
- 4.33. As for Brook House, I take the above as the basis on which to assess whether the asset’s current setting contributes to these aspects or not.
- 4.34. The Boship Farm Hotel occupies a roughly central position on a large site and is set back some distance from the A22, from which it is accessed. The site comprises numerous elements. The earliest elements on the site comprise the hotel building and two ancillary farm buildings of at least the early 19th century; one located just to the northwest of the main building, and the other to the west.
- 4.35. These two buildings have now been subsumed into the overall footprint, having been connected by several limbs of extensions. Together with the other changes to the site (see below), and any changes they have undergone in the conversion, this has severely curtailed their intelligible spatial and functional relationship with the main hotel building. Whilst this relationship does remain in vestigial form, it does not translate to understanding the site as a centre of a historic agricultural estate.
- 4.36. As well as the numerous extensions, the need to attract and accommodate hotel guests has resulted in other changes to the original farmstead. These include a wide modern entrance splay with modern brick walls and ornamental beasts; large areas of Tarmac for parking which surround the building on three sides; a swimming pool; numerous modern external circulation pathways;

modern buildings and jetties added to the ponds; and a tennis court, which features are illustrated on the aerial view in figure 6.

- 4.37. The extent of changes to the site is such that the immediate setting of the asset illustrates less a post-medieval, high-status farmhouse and farmstead and rather more an extended hotel complex (plate 5).
- 4.38. As mentioned above, the Boship Farm Hotel historically formed part of the wider dispersed settlement pattern that was evident in the immediate area until well into the 20th century. However, the processes which have been at work since, specifically the ‘erosion’ acknowledged by WDC in the context of Brook House, have also affected it, especially on the areas to its north and east.
- 4.39. The causes of this erosion were identified in the Knight’s Farm HS as the expansion of Lower Horsebridge, the construction of the bypass and the associated service station (see above 4.18). However, notwithstanding the fact that the asset forms very much a part of this eroded rural area, I note again that it does not seem to be acknowledged in WDC’s observations on this appeal.
- 4.40. The SoC refers to the asset having a ‘countryside setting’ (CD13.5, 6.2.6), though this is perhaps tempered by a subsequent reference to simply its ‘surviving rural qualities’ (CD13.5, 6.2.9). The OR does, however, cite the heritage officer’s view (repeated from CO1) that development would result in ‘further erosion of the rural character of the surroundings’ (CD4.1, p. 43), indicating an implicit acknowledgement that erosion has already occurred.
- 4.41. One aspect worth noting is the extent to which the A267/A22 bypass acts as an agent of separation between land to its east and land to its west. It is clear from its SoC that WDC does not consider the A22 dual carriageway to be a feature which has this effect, at least to any extent which impacts its assessment of setting. However, the Knight’s Farm OR took a different approach when assessing the potential for heritage assets to be affected by development, concluding that they were separated by:

their distance [and] physical separation through intervening features such as the A267 and A271.¹²

- 4.42. Therefore, it seems that, in the Knight’s Farm application, WDC took the view that these *single-carriageway* roads, at least one of which is a historic routeway (A271), created sufficient separation so as to divorce that development from potential impacts on the setting of neighbouring heritage assets.
- 4.43. The A22 itself is noted as a separating factor in the Knight’s Farm HS, which lists a large number of heritage assets in the vicinity of the Knight’s Farm site, including the Boship Farm Hotel, and concludes that:

...they are separated from the subject site both by distance and/or intervening built form, landscape features and the course of either the A22, A267 or A271.¹³

¹² CD11.1, p. 37

¹³ Appendix c, 4.1.7, p.36

- 4.44. The appeal site is separated from the Boship Farm Hotel by a dual carriageway, considerably wider and faster than the two separating thoroughfares discussed above. My view concurs with WDC in its alternative standpoint, namely that this major carriageway acts as a *de facto* intervening element which severs the heritage assets from the land beyond.
- 4.45. Notwithstanding the clear divorce between the asset and any perception or appreciation of unspoilt countryside to its north and east, the undeveloped landscape to the south and southwest of the asset does retain a more appreciable sense of connection with countryside. This area benefits from not having a major dual carriageway or any major development, with very little other than fields between Boship Farm Hotel and Michelham Priory, another medieval moated site in the wider landscape. It therefore offers some illustrative potential of the asset's historic interest and I conclude that it is a moderate contributory element to its historic interest.
- 4.46. Taking the above into account, along with the general 'erosion' of the Boship area's rural character acknowledged elsewhere by WDC, my view is that there is no contributory 'countryside setting' to the north and east of the asset of which the appeal site forms part. By extension, the undeveloped nature of the appeal site is not a factor which can contribute to the significance of the asset.
- 4.47. I have set out above how the appeal site was historically part of the wider landholdings of the asset. However, as stated above, there is very limited ability to appreciate the Boship Farm Hotel as a post-medieval farmstead and even less as the centre of an agricultural estate from within its own immediate setting, whilst the rural character to the north and east has been eroded by modern development. Therefore, the existence of a historically associated field, now divorced from the asset by a busy tree-screened dual carriageway and without any immediately intelligible connection, is not an element which contributes to understanding or appreciating the significance of the asset.
- 4.48. A consideration of how any potential views might contribute to the significance of the asset, noting the interests outlined above, also serves to illustrate the degree of detrimental change to the Boship Farm Hotel site and its environs.
- 4.49. The most contributory views of the building will arise from within its own curtilage, which is extensive and permits numerous opportunities for the building's architectural interest, especially more prominent views of the gabled frontage, to be appreciated, as well as the limited ability to appreciate the historic spatial and functional relationship with the now conjoined farm buildings. Views from within the curtilage do not contribute to the primary source of historic interest, namely the historical connection with the ironworking Fuller family.
- 4.50. The hotel is a prominent building on the approach from the west along the A22 (plates 5 and 6) and from the north along the A267 (plate 7). The building's frontage is orientated to the north and so these views permit the building's historic architectural form, especially the distinctive three gables, to be appreciated. However, the contribution of the view from the A267 is more limited owing to the asset's co-visibility with more prominent and distracting visual elements in the foreground street-scene, including numerous streetlights, a Shell petrol station forecourt totem and a Greggs totem, not to mention ever-present traffic on the Boship roundabout. In both these views,

their brief and kinetic nature lessens their ability to contribute.

- 4.51. Views from the A271 to the northeast (plate 8) and from the A22 to the east (plate 9) are limited: in the former case by the trees on and around the Boship roundabout; the latter by the side or oblique angle of the building from this direction. In my view, any contribution of these views to the asset's architectural interest is also limited.
- 4.52. Middle distance views of the Boship Farm Hotel are achievable in westward views from PRoW HEL12/1 (plate 10). Given that these views are distant (c. 445 m), glimpsed, oblique, and mostly restricted to winter cover, it is not considered that they are contributory to the significance of the asset.
- 4.53. On my site visit, no long-distance views of Boship Farm Hotel were gained looking west from the A271 southeast of Lower Horsebridge, located c. 870 m to the east of Boship Farm Hotel. Views towards the asset were obscured by the arms of trees that bound the bowls club and, beyond, by the small copse that sits within the appeal site. Any views that might be possible under different foliage cover would be no more than glimpsed, oblique and likely indistinct and would contribute nothing to the significance of the asset.
- 4.54. Having dealt above with the wider setting and some contributory fortuitous views, I should also note one contributory element of setting which does emerge from the hotel site itself. Given the archaeological interest of the whole site, I would conclude that any previously undeveloped areas around the hotel buildings are contributory to its significance insofar as any archaeological remains here could illustrate earlier uses or building phases on the site.
- 4.55. Based on the above, I assess those elements of setting which I consider contribute to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel. I have set out each interest in decreasing order of importance (based on the assessment in section 3 above); the element(s) which contribute to it; and the level of contribution I consider it to have, based on the above assessment.
 - Contributory to archaeological interest (high):
 - any previously undeveloped areas around the hotel buildings – high contribution;
 - Contributory to architectural interest (moderate):
 - views from within the hotel curtilage – high contribution;
 - view from the A22 (plates 5 and 6) – moderate contribution;
 - view from the A267 (plate 7) – low contribution;
 - Contributory to historic interest (moderate):
 - undeveloped landscape to the south and southwest – moderate contribution
 - views from within the curtilage – low contribution;

5. Setting assessment step 3: impacts on contribution to significance

- 5.1. The preceding sections have established the significance of the potentially affected assets, broken down by interest and rated by importance, and then established what elements of the assets' current setting contribute to those interests, again rated by importance. This section will focus on any the impacts on significance, taking into account those assessments and ratings in order to arrive at a finely grained assessment of impact on significance.
- 5.2. I reiterate here that it is common ground that the proposed development would result in LTSH to the significance of Brook House (CD13.8, 6.1.1(q)). For that asset, this section will therefore articulate the nature and extent of that harm within the LTSH category, which is the matter between the parties.
- 5.3. I have based this assessment on the amended proposals, which were drawn up after the refusal of the application and before submission of the appeal; specifically the revised illustrative masterplan (tor&co drawing no. TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P010 Rev C; CD8.1) and the revised parameters plan (tor&co drawing no. TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011 Rev C; CD8.2). I have also taken into account that the application is in outline, with all matters reserved other than access.
- 5.4. In undertaking this assessment, I have had regard to the multifarious ways in which development can potentially affect the setting of heritage assets and therefore the significance, where affected setting elements are contributory. An illustrative list is usefully summarised in HEGPA3 (CD7.2, p. 13) under several headings: i) location and siting of development; ii) form and appearance of development; iii) wider effects of the development; and iv) permanence of the development.

Brook House (grade II; LB3)

- 5.5. The assessment in section 4 above enabled various conclusions about the contribution of setting to the significance of Brook House and the relative importance of those contributions. For ease, I have addressed impacts under the summary setting headings above.
- 5.6. As no elements of setting which contribute to the asset's archaeological interest were identified in section 4 above, I have not considered that element further here.

Contributory to architectural interest

- 5.7. These elements are those which I considered to contribute to the architectural interest, which was found to derive from the building's front elevation, scale, form, and material palette. Therefore, detrimental impacts will arise where development affecting the setting diminished the ability to understand or appreciate this interest.
- 5.8. The highest contributor to this interest as found to be the view from the A271 (plate 1), specifically at close quarters where the building is not obscured by tree lines and the view is not oblique. From a frontal position and from a close oblique angle to the west, the proposed development is situated behind the

viewer and therefore offers no potential for obstructing the view of the asset and therefore its contribution to architectural interest. From an oblique angle at close quarters to the east of Brook House, the front elevation would likely be co-visible with the eastern edge of the development, though this could be lessened by landscaping at reserved matters stage. The access would, in any event, be co-visible. However, the peripheral co-visibility of these elements in the view of the front of the building does not impact upon the ability of this view to communicate the asset's architectural interest, which is bound up in its design and materials. These remain unaffected by any such co-visibility with other features that do not directly block or hinder the view.

- 5.9. The view from PRoW HEL12/1 (plate 4) is a lesser (moderate) contributor owing to the distance from which the building's front elevation is experienced. From this view, the development would be co-visible as a peripheral element, even with any landscaping that would be introduced at reserved matters stage to screen the east side of the development. However, again this would not directly block or hinder the view of the front of the building that is possible from this standpoint and would not affect any ability that view has of communicating its architectural interest.
- 5.10. Given the location of the development outside the curtilage of the asset, the proposals will have no impact on the remaining contributory elements of architectural interest, specifically the interrelationship between the house and its ancillary building; the visual and aesthetic interest of its garden and boundaries; and the set-back position from the road. The legibility of these attributes remains unaffected by the development. I therefore conclude that no diminishment of these elements arises from the development.
- 5.11. Based on the above assessment, I conclude that the proposals would have no detrimental impact on the contribution of setting to the asset's architectural interest.

Contributory to historic interest

- 5.12. The contribution of setting to the historic interest of Brook House was found to be low in all attributes. However, impacts on the significance will still arise where even a low contribution is found to be diminished.
- 5.13. The development will be visible in the view from Brook House (plate 2). I concluded above that the contribution of this view to significance was low, largely owing again to the components of 'erosion' which have reduced the formerly isolated, rural character of the area, especially the modern expansion of Lower Horsebridge and the northern expansion of Hailsham, which terminates the southward view. However, the view still communicates some extent of the historic dispersed settlement pattern, of which Brook House forms part.
- 5.14. Even with a tree-screened edge to the eastern side of the development, which could conceivably be forthcoming at reserved matters stage, the development will result in a partial 'closure' of the current view from the asset and thus diminish its current contribution. However, the southward view will not be blocked by the proposed development and therefore an appreciable sense of openness over the land either side of the stream towards the Cuckmere River will remain. Given the low contribution of this element of setting and the low contribution of historic interest to significance, I consider the impact itself to be

low.

- 5.15. The above considerations are also relevant to the remaining contributory elements to historic interest, specifically the view of the asset and its context from PRow HEL12/1 (plates 3 and 4) and the undeveloped character of the land to the south of the asset.
- 5.16. On the latter point, the development will result in the partial permanent loss of an area which currently contributes to the asset's historic interest through its remnant communication of a historically dispersed settlement pattern, though again this contribution is limited in the context of the aforesaid 'erosion' of rural character that has already occurred.
- 5.17. The development will again be visible from the PRow, which I discussed above in the context of architectural interest. In terms of historic interest, the view communicates the remnant appreciation of a historically rural area, though much limited by modern development and modern transport infrastructure, the latter of which is an especially dominant element in the view. Therefore, I conclude that the development does result in the diminishment of the ability of this view to communicate this interest. However, given the low contribution of this element of setting and the low contribution of historic interest to significance, I again consider the impact to be low.
- 5.18. The view of the asset from the A271, insofar as it communicates the asset's historic interest, will remain unaffected for the same reasons as those given for assessing impacts on architectural interest (see 5.8 above).
- 5.19. Based on the above assessment, I consider that the development would have a negative impact on the contribution of setting to the asset's historic interest. As this harm results from the continuation of an existing long-term detrimental change (i.e. WDC's observation of 'erosion', as discussed above), it may be described as a cumulative effect (see 2.28 above). However, taking into account how the affected elements actually contribute to the asset's significance and the nature of the current setting resulting from long-term change, I consider the nature and extent of this impact would nonetheless be low.
- 5.20. I also note here for comparison that there is no mention of cumulative heritage impacts in the Knight's Farm OR, nor was it raised as a concern in the Knight's Farm HS with regard to WDC's own application.

Boship Farm Hotel (grade II; LB12)

- 5.21. The approach here is the same as that taken for Brook House above, with the impacts on the identified contributory elements of setting individually and methodically assessed.

Contributory to archaeological interest

- 5.22. This contribution was found to arise from any areas in the curtilage of the hotel which have not previously been developed, as these areas could contain archaeological remains relating to the medieval phases of the site, which in turn could contribute to understanding the context of the asset itself.
- 5.23. The proposed development is separated from the curtilage of the hotel by the

A22 dual carriageway and therefore can have no impact on these undeveloped area around the buildings.

- 5.24. Based on the above assessment, I conclude that the proposals would have no negative impact on the high contribution of setting to the asset's archaeological interest.

Contributory to architectural interest

- 5.25. The contribution of setting to this interest was found largely to reside in fortuitous views from the immediate surroundings, as these permitted an ability to appreciate the architectural form of the building, especially its prominent gabled frontage.
- 5.26. The setting is not considered to contribute to internal elements of architectural interest, such as any details of the surviving timber frame.
- 5.27. The highest contributing views are those from within the hotel's grounds, as these best permit the architectural form and details of the building, such as its prominent gables, its external architectural details and its later brick casing, to be understood and appreciated. Given the location of the proposed development, it can have no negative impact on the high contribution of views of the building from within its curtilage.
- 5.28. A moderately contributory view is obtained from the A22, especially from in front of the building through the gates, and a lesser contributory view from the A267 (plates 5-7). Though both views permit the building's architectural interest to be appreciated, their contribution is less owing to the nature of the experience (kinetic, brief) and their respectively greater distance from the asset.
- 5.29. Whilst the proposed development will not be co-visible with the asset in directly frontal views from the A22 through the front gates, it will likely be co-visible in the views on the approach from the west (plate 6). However, the development would be a peripheral element at a more distant perspective in that view and the ability to see other buildings and features does not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the communicability of the building's architectural interest from the A22. I do not consider that the development would result in any negative impact on the moderate contribution of this view.
- 5.30. The proposed development, even with potential landscaping/screening that could be advanced at reserved matters stage, will be co-visible with the asset on the northern approach from the A267 (plate 7). However, unlike the distracting foreground elements (totems, traffic and streetlights), the development would again be a peripheral element in the view, visually separated by the Boship roundabout. With this in mind, I do not consider that the development would result in any negative impact on the low contribution of this view.
- 5.31. Based on the above assessment, I conclude that the proposals would have no negative impact on the contribution of setting to the asset's architectural interest.

Contributory to historic interest

- 5.32. Owing to the established erosion of the area's rural character and the detrimental changes within the asset's immediate curtilage, the contribution of setting to historic interest is restricted to the surviving undeveloped landscape to the south and southwest and views within the curtilage. The views with the curtilage were specifically derived from a perception, albeit limited, of a spatial and functional relationship between the main hotel building and two historic farm buildings.
- 5.33. The location of the proposed development to the east of the asset on the other side of the A22 dual carriageway means that it presents no diminishment of the undeveloped landscape to the south and southwest of the asset. For the same reason, there can be no negative impact on the views of the asset from its immediate curtilage which permit a vestigial understanding of its relationship with the no conjoined farm buildings.
- 5.34. Based on the above assessment, I conclude that the proposals would have no negative impact on the contribution of setting to the asset's historic interest.

Summary of impacts

Brook House

- 5.35. Based on the above assessment, the impacts of the proposed development on the contribution of setting to the significance of Brook House may be summarised as follows (in order of precedence):
- impact on contribution to architectural interest none
 - impact on contribution to historic interest low
 - impact on contribution to archaeological interest n/a
- 5.36. Given a low negative impact on the asset's historic interest through development affecting its setting, this confirms the agreed common ground of LTSH. In terms of articulating the nature and extent of harm within that category, I have established several relevant observations:
- the negative impact on this element of setting is low;
 - the contribution of the negatively affected element of setting to historic interest is low; and
 - the historic interest of the asset is low.
- 5.37. If nature and extent of harm are expressed alternatively on a 'spectrum', then I would conclude that the above is consistent with an assessment of harm at the 'low end' of less than substantial harm.

Boship Farm Hotel

- 5.38. Based on the above assessment, the impacts of the proposed development on the contribution of setting to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel may be summarised as follows (again in order of precedence):
- impact on contribution to archaeological interest none
 - impact on contribution to architectural interest none

- impact on contribution to historic interest none

5.39. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would result in no harm to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel through development affecting its setting.

6. Setting assessment step 4: maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm

- 6.1. The proposals being assessed as part of this PoE represent the second revision to the submitted scheme. As is recounted in the DBHA (CD1.16, 3.5), an amendment was made prior to the determination of the application, and then again after the refusal, to reduce the extent of development. These amendments were made specifically to address the concerns raised in CO1 and the extent of the LTSH arising to the significance of Brook House. The outcome of these amendments was the removal of all built development on the eastern side of the proposed access road, which, as this assessment has demonstrated, resulted in the successful reduction in the extent of harm to Brook House.
- 6.2. My assessment above identified a low extent of LTSH to the significance of Brook House through a diminishment of the contribution of its setting to its historic interest. The negative impact, however low, is permanent, arising from the further erosion – though not total or significant loss – of a vestigial open setting that illustrates to a limited extent the historic dispersed settlement pattern in which Brook House was constructed. The impact also included views from Brook House and towards it from the PRoW, which both again contribute in a limited way to understanding and appreciating this formerly dispersed settlement character.
- 6.3. It is therefore the presence of development in any form which gives rise to this harm and so it is unlikely that harm could be avoided entirely by reducing the extent of development on the site any further. Beyond a certain level, reductions in quantum are also not always possible on developments seeking to deliver public benefits in other areas of the planning balance, such as housing delivery.
- 6.4. Whilst I note that WDC's position remains that the LTSH arising to the significance of Brook House is at a 'medium' level, the principle of securing a reduction in the extent of harm through reducing the development quantum appears to be one which is acceptable. In CO1 (CD3.13, p. 1), the Heritage Officer notes that:

The impacts could be reduced modestly by removal of the houses on the eastern side of the new access...

- 6.5. The application is in outline, with all matters reserved except access, and therefore offers opportunities for detailed design at reserved matters stage; this assessment has been undertaken on the basis that such mitigation is possible in limited areas at these stages. This includes the introduction of landscaping, screening and the suitable choice of building scale throughout the site.

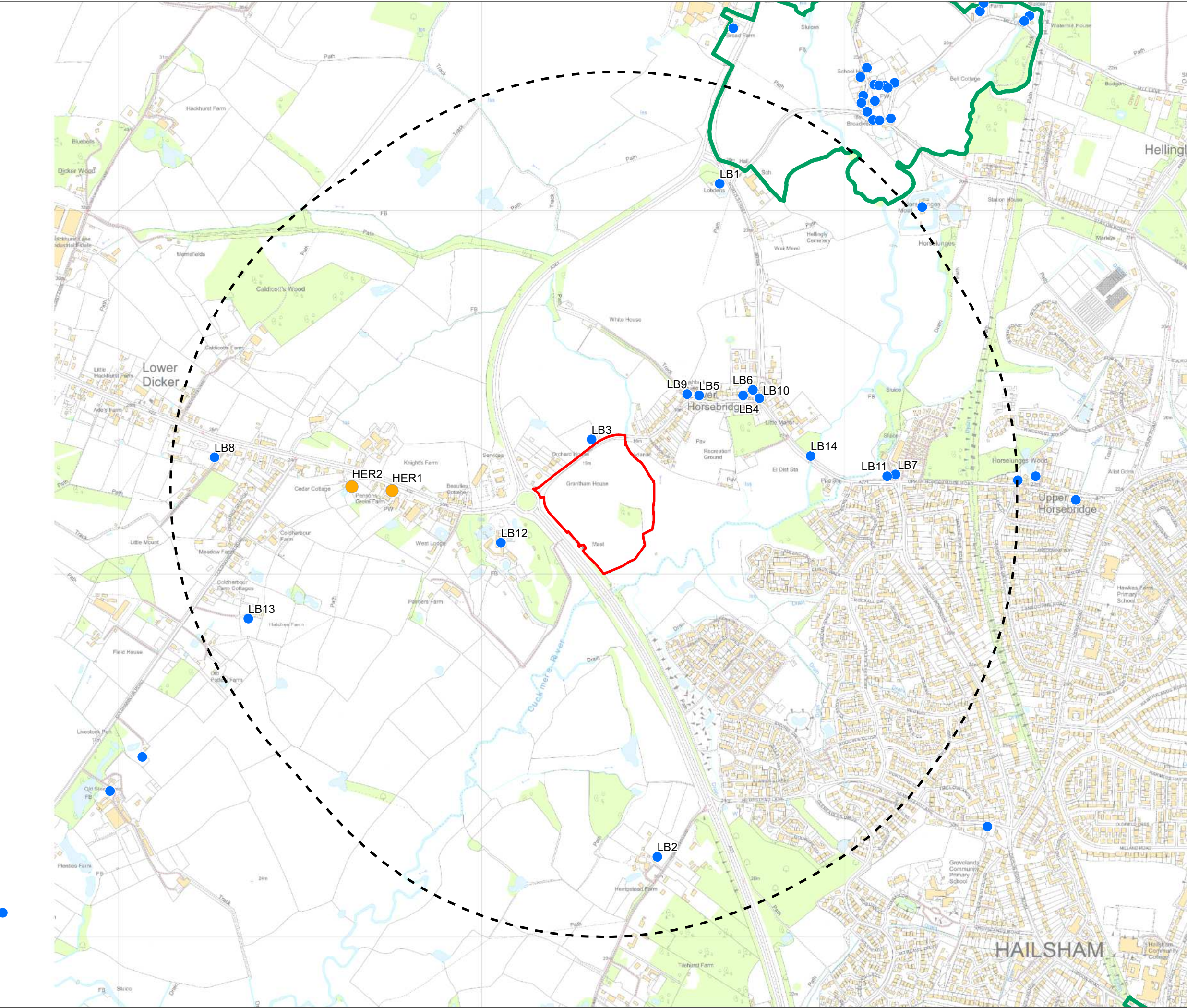
7. Conclusion

- 7.1. My assessment has addressed the matters in dispute between the parties relating to heritage, specifically the nature and extent of harm within the LTSH category and whether or not the development results in harm to the significance of the Boship Farm Hotel.
- 7.2. The assessment has followed a detailed and methodical approach, building up the layers of understanding from a baseline assessment of the interests that comprise the affected assets' significance, followed by the contribution of setting to those interests, followed by an assessment of impacts of the development on those contributions.
- 7.3. This approach has been followed in order to avoid general, vague notions of setting and the particular pitfall of assessing change to setting as harm *per se*. It is always instructive to understand those interests to which setting is being advocated as a contributor. I have given this assessment a fine grain through a simple assessment of the extent of contribution of each element of setting, again so that harm can be better understood.
- 7.4. The assessment has benefitted from the recent positive determination of the Knight's Farm application, which has a committee resolution to grant following on from an officer recommendation to approve. This application provided relevant information relating to WDC's understanding of the significance of Brook House, both through the Knight's Farm OR and the Knight's Farm HS, which was not criticised or disagreed with in the process of the determination.
- 7.5. However, close reading of the Knight's Farm application documentation suggested some discrepancies as to how WDC understood significance and setting in that application compared to this appeal, such as in the separating function of the A267 and A22 bypass and the extent to which acceptance of modern erosion of a historic 'rural character' or 'countryside setting' is understood and applied.
- 7.6. Relating to Brook House, my assessment confirmed the conclusion of LTSH, but clarified its nature and extent by establishing that:
- the impacts affect only historic interest, which is low within the asset's overall significance;
 - the contribution of the affected element of setting to historic interest is low; and
 - the impact on that contribution is low.

On that basis, and if a spectrum were to be used, an assessment of harm at the 'low end' of LTSH seems a reasonable conclusion.

- 7.7. Relating to Boship Farm Hotel, my assessment provided a comprehensive overview of significance and how its setting contributes to it. It established that the proposed development would have no negative impact on these contributory elements and therefore would result in no harm to the asset's significance.

Figures



- Site boundary
- 1km study area
- Listed buildings
- Building in the HER
- Conservation areas

Land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd

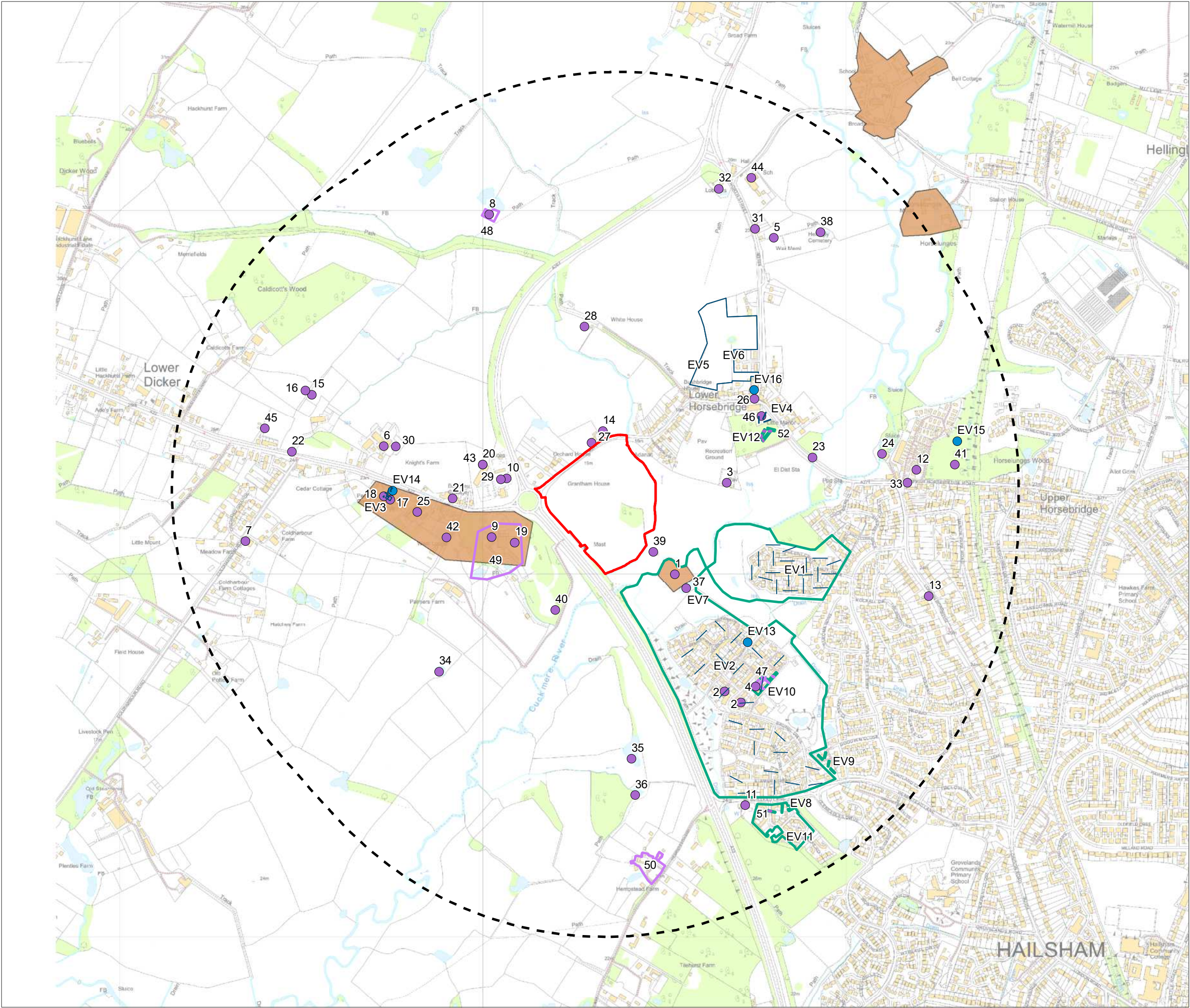
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Figure 1: Built heritage in the study area

Dwg no/231703C/H001	Revision
Status	22 March 2024
Scale: 1:10,000 @A3	Drawn by: JC Checked by: JW

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- Site boundary
- 1km study area
- HER point
- HER line
- HER area
- Event points
- Event lines
- Event areas
- Archaeological Notification Area

Land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge
Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd

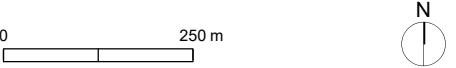
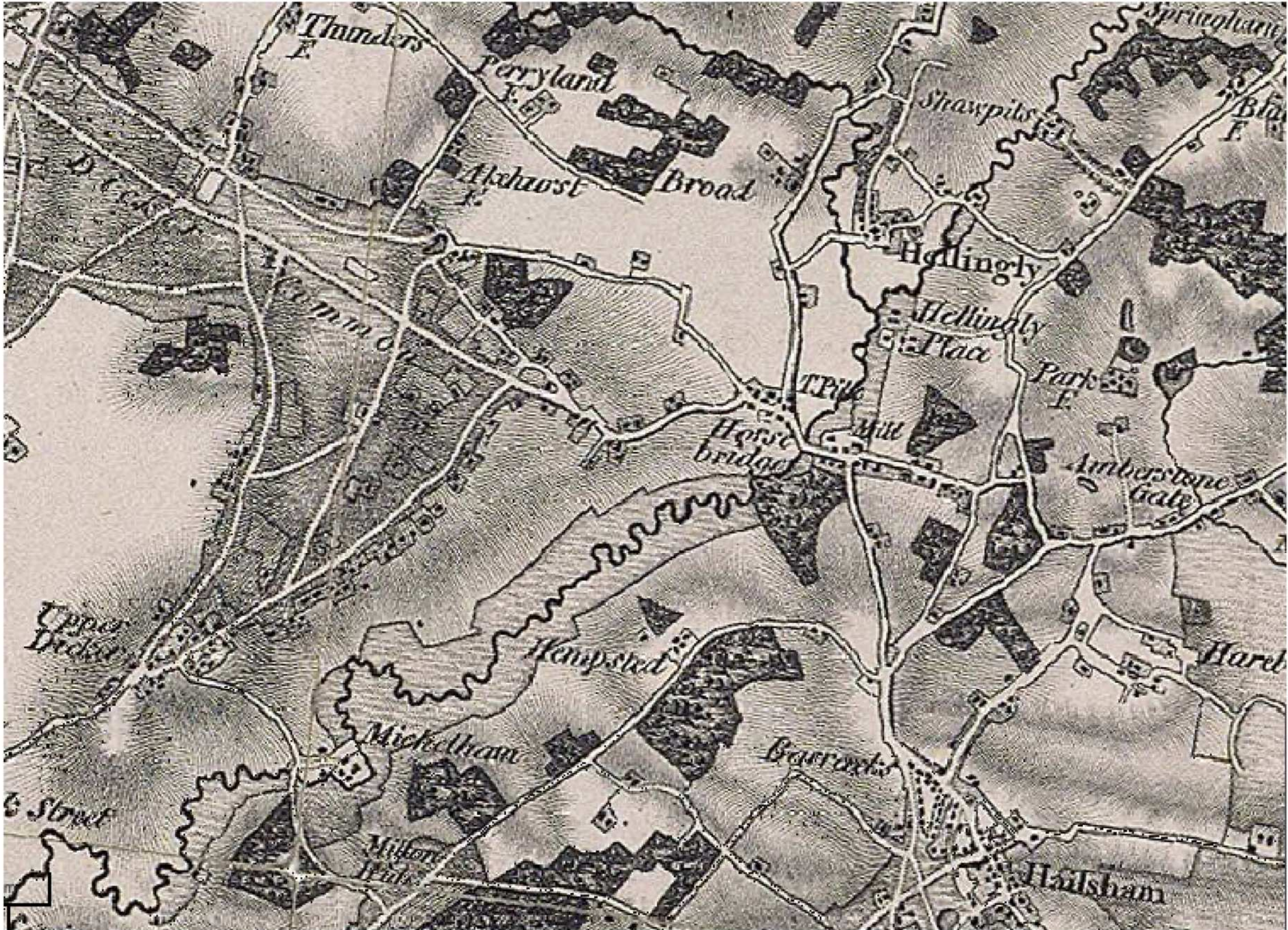


Figure 2: Non-designated archaeology in the study area

Dwg no/231703C/H002	Revision
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Figure 4: Extract from Ordnance
Survey First Series map (1813)

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Figure 5: Extract from Tithe Map of
Hellingly parish (1842)

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Figure 6: Current aerial view showing Boship Farm Hotel

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