

LEONARDSLEE LAKES AND GARDENS
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ISSUE 04
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LEONARDSLEE LAKES AND GARDENS: HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Purcell on behalf of the current owner of Leonardslee in support of Listed Building Consent and planning for the conversion and alteration of curtilage Listed Buildings within the Grade I Leonardslee Registered Park and Garden. The report should be read alongside the application drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Purcell Architects.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Report

The buildings affected by the proposals (the ‘application site’) lie within the setting of a Grade II Listed Building at Leonardslee and are curtilage listed in accordance with Section 1 (5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 16 and 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Local Planning Authority 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.

The application site is also within a Grade I Registered Park and Garden (Leonardslee), which, as a designated heritage asset, triggers specific policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The purpose of this report is to set out the physical fabric, use, context and historic development of the buildings and sites and their contribution to the Listed Building and Registered Park and Garden, in order to make an assessment of their significance within this context. This understanding will inform an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets.

1.3 Report Structure

The report takes the following structure:

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Section 1	Introduction	
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Section 2	Legislative Context:	Summary of relevant legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance.
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Section 3	Methodology for Assessment	Introduction to methodology used for assessing significance and impact assessment.
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Section 4	Area-by-Area Assessment	Assessment of each site in turn including a summary of the relevant designations, illustrated descriptions, historic development, assessment of significance, summary of proposals and impact assessment.
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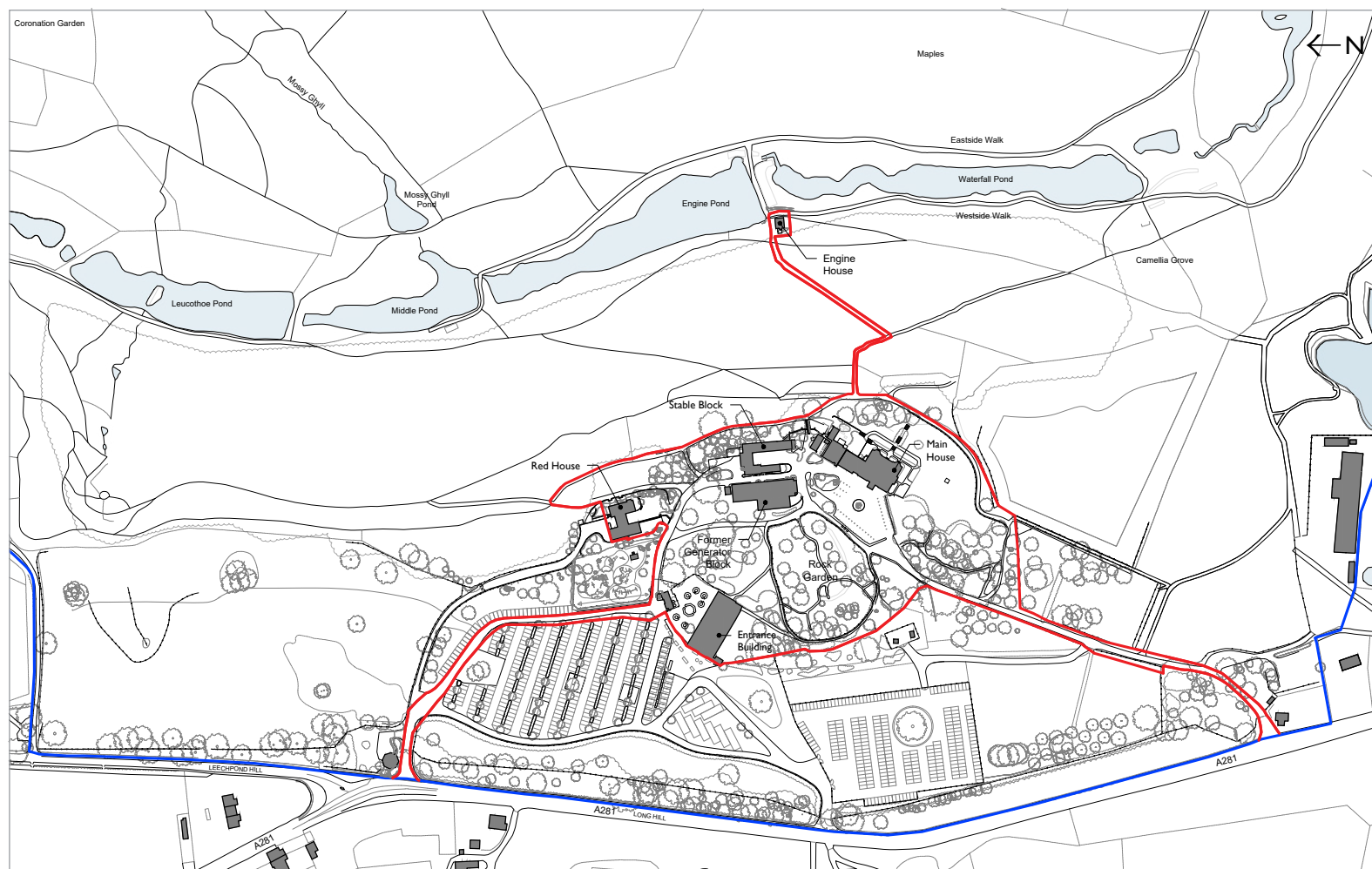
SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.4 Location and Context

Leonardslee is located in the eastern part of West Sussex, to the south-east of Horsham. The gardens are contained by Long Hill (A281) to the west and estate fencing forms the boundary to the north, east and south.

A string of ponds at the foot of a valley meander through the gardens on a roughly north-south alignment, curving to the east at their southern extent. The landscape to the east of the ponds features woodland walks, pinetums and a large deer park, whilst the designed landscape to the west is made up of woodland gardens, parkland and ornamental pleasure grounds. Leonardslee House lies at the heart of the gardens to the west of the lakes.

The main outbuildings proposed for alterations are located immediately to the north of the house, including the Stables and the Generator Block and Alpine House. The Engine House is located to the south-west of Engine Pond in the valley to the east. The proposed entrance kiosk will be located to the north of the Stables and the proposed Wedding Pavilion to the south of Leonardslee House on the south-west lawn.



Site plan showing location of areas affected by the proposals

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The former 19th century estate buildings, which form the subject of the development proposals, are curtilage listed in accordance with Section 1 (5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This section of the Act sets out that any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948, shall be treated as part of the Listed Building.

The outbuildings meet this criteria as they are contemporary in date and within the same land ownership boundary as the listed Leonardslee House.

Leonardslee is statutorily listed at Grade II and is shown on the heritage assets map.

The following Listed Building description is provided by the National Heritage List for England.

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1027010

Date first listed: 19-Jan-1973

List Entry Name: LEONARDSLEE

Statutory Address: LEONARDSLEE, BRIGHTON ROAD

Italianate house designed by T L Donaldson in 1853. Two storeys. Ashlar. Slate roof. Wide eaves bracket cornice. Sash windows. Porch with 4 rusticated Tuscan columns. To north-east is a probably older and Georgian wing of 3 window-bays, now the office wing. Interior has a central hall with Ionic columns based on those of the Erechtheum.

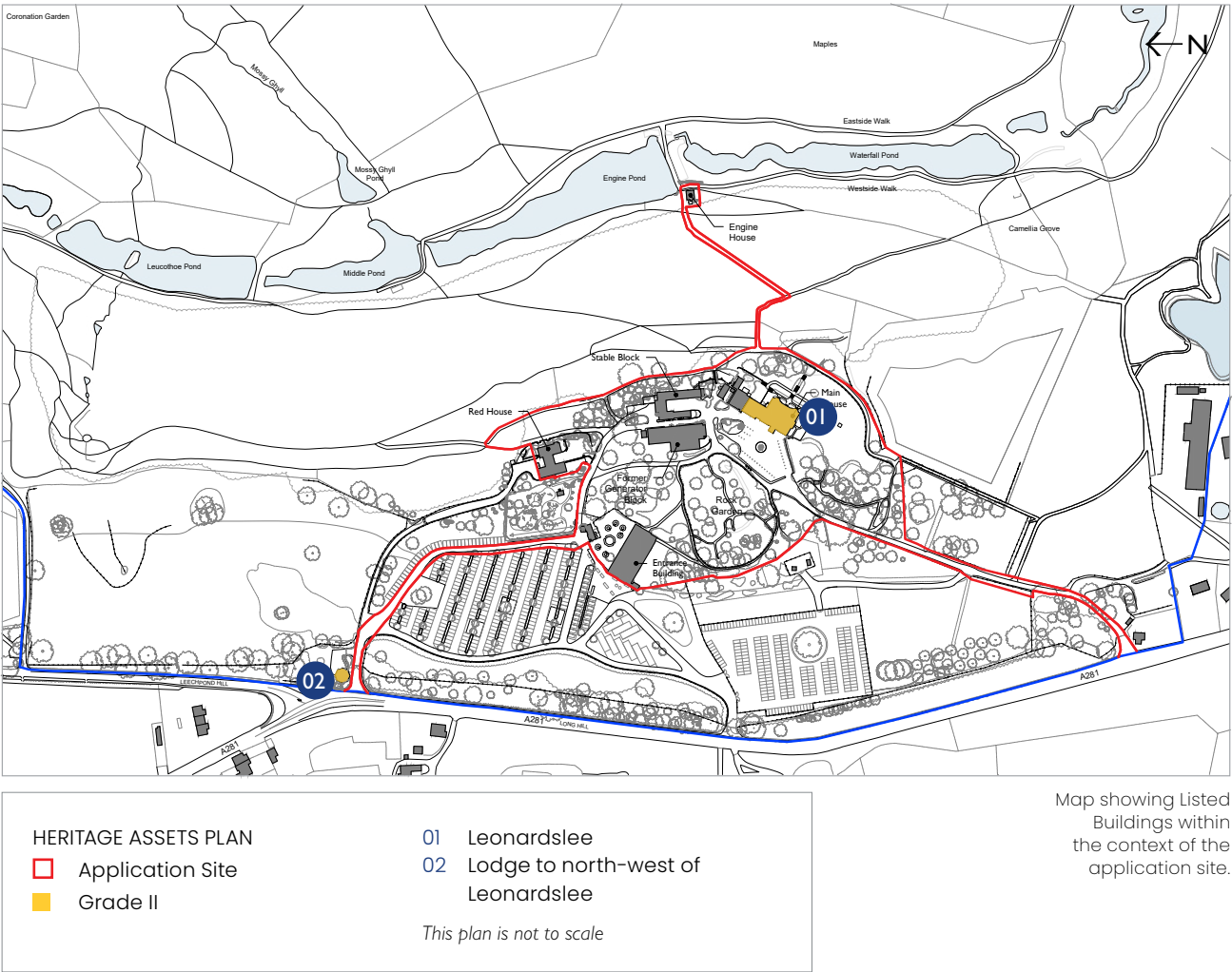
Listing NGR: TQ2217125905

When considering whether to grant planning permission and listed building consent for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, Sections 16 and 66 of the Act requires local planning authorities to have special regard to

the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

There is one other Listed Building within the vicinity of Leonardslee House and the development sites: the lodge

to the north-west which is Grade II listed and shown on the heritage assets map. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, although the Crabtree Conservation Area lies to the south of the garden boundary.



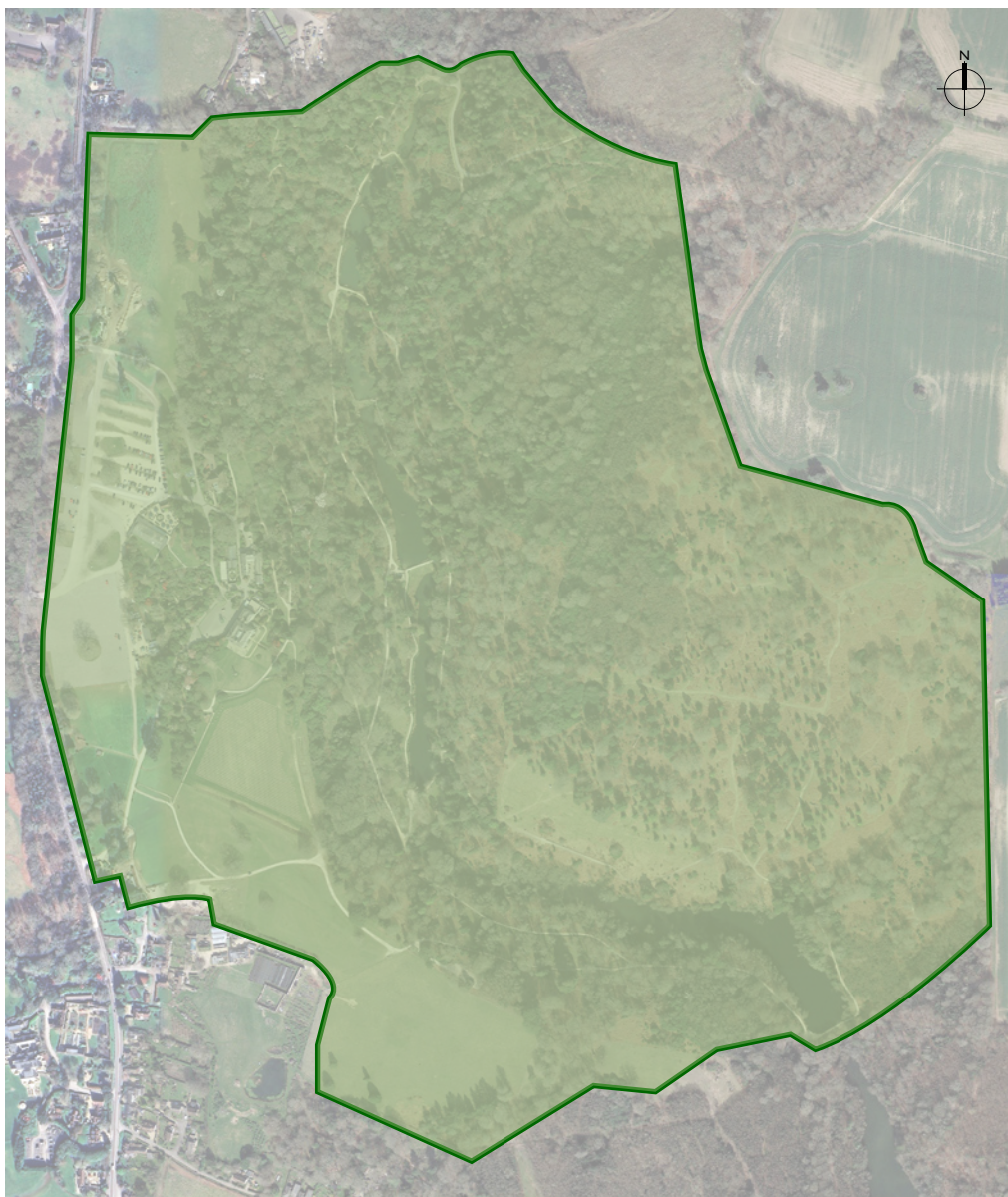
SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.2 Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023

The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England was established in 1984 and as designated heritage assets, Registered Parks and Gardens trigger specific policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The recently approved Levelling Up and Generation Act (October 2023) has introduced, for the first time, a statutory duty to preserve or enhance Registered Parks and Gardens, alongside other heritage assets. Section 102 introduces a new Section 58B into the Town and Country Planning Act of 1990 requiring local planning authorities and the Secretary of State to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing a range of heritage assets or their setting when granting planning permission or permission in principle. The relevant assets outlined in the Act are World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Protected Wrecks and Scheduled Monuments. At the time of writing (June 2025), the Act is not yet in force, requiring secondary legislation to implement it.

The site lies within the Leonardslee Grade I Registered Park and Garden (list entry number: 1000159; first listed: June 1984). The Registered Park and Garden list description provided by the National Heritage List for England is included in Appendix A.



Map showing the Registered Park and Garden covering the application site. Base map © GoogleEarth 2024

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.3 Other Landscape Designations and Protection

The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (DWS8715), as designated by Horsham District Council and protected by Policy 34, Cultural and Heritage Assets of Horsham's Local Plan.

The site sits within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Landscapes. AONBs are designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act), which protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. AONBs are afforded a high level of protection against large scale or inappropriate development. AONBs or National Landscapes are also protected by Policy 30, Protected Landscapes, within Horsham's Local Plan.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan (2024-2029) is the statutory document which defines the natural beauty of the AONB and sets out a 20 year strategy for conserving this nationally important landscape. Whilst from November 2023, all AONBs became known as National Landscapes. The High Weald National Landscape remains designated as an AONB and is referred to as such in policy, legislation and guidance.

2.4 National and Local Planning Policy

2.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The *National Planning Policy Framework* establishes the government's planning policies for new development within England and how these are expected to be applied. The following sections are most relevant here:

Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places

- Paragraph 131 – The creation of high quality buildings and good design.
- Paragraph 135 – developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
- Paragraph 139 – Refusal for poor design.

Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- Paragraph 207 – applicant required to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by development proposals.
- Paragraph 208 – requires the local planning authority to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets affected.
- Paragraph 212 – great weight to be given to the asset's conservation.
- Paragraph 213 – Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- Paragraph 214 – where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits.
- Paragraph 215 – where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.
- Paragraph 216 – the effects of development proposals on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should be taken into account.

2.4.2 Local Planning Policy

Horsham District Planning Framework (November 2015)

Horsham District Council's current Local Plan is called the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015, which is the overarching planning document from Horsham District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The most relevant policies for the site and the development proposals are included below:

Policy 25 Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:

- 1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.*
- 2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.*
- 3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.*
- 4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.*

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Policy 30: Protected Landscapes

1. The natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB and the adjoining South Downs National Park will be conserved and enhanced and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities will be promoted. Development proposals will be supported in or close to protected landscapes where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to the natural beauty and public enjoyment of these landscapes as well as any relevant cross boundary linkages.

2. Proposals should have regard to any management plans for these areas and must demonstrate:

a. How the key landscape features or components of natural beauty will be conserved and enhanced. This includes maintaining local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the protected landscapes, and if necessary providing mitigation or compensation measures.

b. How the public enjoyment of these landscapes will be retained.

c. How the proposal supports the economy of the protected landscape and will contribute to the social wellbeing of the population who live and work in these areas.

3. In the case of major development proposals in or adjoining protected areas, applicants will also be required to demonstrate why the proposal is in the public interest and what alternatives to the scheme have been considered.

Policy 32: The Quality of New Development

High quality and inclusive design for all development in the district will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context for development. In particular, development will be expected to:

1. Provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment;

2. Complement locally distinctive characters and heritage of the district;

3. Contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings and the historic landscape in which they sit;

4. Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses; and

5. Help secure a framework of high quality open spaces which meets the identified needs of the community.

Policy 33: Development Principles

In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:

1. Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist;

2. Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;

3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;

4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;

5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;

6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development; and,

7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.

Proposals will also need to take the following into account where relevant:

8. Incorporate where appropriate convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities without dominating the development or its surroundings;

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

9. Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area; and create visually attractive frontages where adjoining streets and public spaces, including appropriate windows and doors to assist in the informal surveillance of public areas by occupants of the site;

10. Contribute to the removal of physical barriers; and,

11. Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within the site.

Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets

The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Applications for such development will be required to:

1. Make reference to the significance of the asset, including drawing from research and documentation such as the West Sussex Historic Environment Record;

2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by English Heritage and Conservation Area Character Statements;

3. Reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; including the use of traditional materials and techniques;

4. Make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensuring that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas;

5. Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials;

6. Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset;

7. Retain and improves the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features; and

8. Ensure appropriate archaeological research, investigation, recording and reporting of both above and below-ground archaeology, and retention where required, with any assessment provided as appropriate.

The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040

The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 is currently being drafted. When adopted, this will be the main planning document for Horsham District, outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

The relevant policies listed above in the current Local Plan have been reviewed and expanded and are included here for completeness.

Strategic Policy 26: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats, will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will expect development proposals to be landscape led from the outset so that they clearly inform the design and layout. Proposals will also be required to:

1. Protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintain settlement separation;

2. Maintain and enhance the Green Infrastructure Network, the emerging Nature Recovery Network and, where practicable, help to address any identified deficiencies in these networks across the District;

3. Maintain and enhance the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and secure measurable net gains in biodiversity; and

4. Incorporate SUDS into a scheme in an optimal location for their purpose whilst also securing landscape and biodiversity enhancements and delivering high-quality green spaces. Proposals will be expected to provide details to demonstrate that the whole life management and maintenance of the SUDS are appropriate, deliverable and will not cause harm to the natural environment and/or landscape.

Strategic Policy 29: Protected Landscapes

1. Development proposals within and adjacent to the High Weald AONB must demonstrate how their development proposals conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, having appropriate regard to the setting and views into and out of the AONB, the High Weald AONB Management Plan, any updates and any other relevant documents. Proposals will be required to set out any proposed mitigation or compensation measures needed to address any harm.

2. Small scale development that helps to support the social and economic well-being of the AONB will be supported, provided that the scheme is compatible with the purpose of the designation.

3. Major development within the AONB will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Applicants will be required to demonstrate why the proposal is in the public interest and what alternatives to the proposal have been considered.

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

4. *Proposals within land that contributes to the setting of the South Downs National Park should be consistent with National Park purposes and have regard to the South Downs Local Plan, the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, the South Downs Partnership Management Plan and any other relevant document and updates. In particular, proposals should not cause harm to the special qualities (including dark skies), local distinctiveness or sense of place, by negatively affecting views into and out of the National Park. Proposals will be required to set out any proposed mitigation or compensation measures needed to address any harm.*

Strategic Policy 32 – Development Quality, Design and Heritage

High-quality and inclusive design for all development in the District will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context. In particular, development will be supported provided that it meets all the following relevant criteria:

- 1. It provides an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment in accordance with the principles of the National Design Guide, or any future updates;*
- 2. It complements and responds to locally distinctive characters and heritage of the District. In appropriate locations where context permits, contemporary architecture can be considered;*
- 3. It contributes a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves, having consideration to the built historic environment and townscape, and in the way they integrate with their structural surroundings and the landscape in which they sit;*
- 4. It makes efficient use of land and optimises the provision and use of buildings and open space within a site, taking into account the character, appearance and needs of the site itself, together with the appearance and needs of the surrounding area;*

5. It contributes to, and enhances, the green and blue infrastructure that makes the District a pleasant place to live. Existing landscape belts, trees, hedgerows and watercourses that form the character of the landscape should be retained;

6. It helps secure a framework of high-quality open spaces which meets the identified needs of the community, and where relevant to reflect the Neighbourhood Plan, Design Statement and/or Character Statement for that area; and

7. If located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, proposals for housing should have regard to the High Weald Housing Design Guide.

Strategic Policy 33: Development Principles

In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment, proposals for development will supported provided that it meets all of the following:

- 1. Makes efficient use of land, and prioritises the use of previously developed land and buildings, whilst respecting any constraints that exist and meet the requirements of, and accord with, other Local Plan policies and designations;*
- 2. Provides or retains a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings of the proposed site;*
- 3. Is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing and future occupiers or users of nearby property and land, for example due to overlooking, over dominance or overshadowing, light pollution, traffic generation, and general activity, noise, odour and/or vibration, and having regard to the sensitivities/impact of surrounding development;*
- 4. Ensures that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;*

5. Ensures that it is locally distinctive in character, respects and responds to the character of the surrounding area (including the overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, takes account of the guidance in relevant Council endorsed Supplementary Planning Documents, Design Statements, Character Assessments and/or masterplans;

6. Uses high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping and demonstrates sustainable use of resources in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management, energy efficiency and climate change adaption;

7. Includes the provision of street furniture, public art and street scene improvements where appropriate;

8. Relates sympathetically to the local landscape and nature. Any losses or harm to landscape and natural features that may occur through the development will require justification and evidence that new opportunities will be provided or that mitigation or compensation for any loss will be provided;

9. Ensures buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the positive character features of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography or otherwise significantly compromises other design principles;

10. Provides pedestrian, cycle and public transport priority over the use of private vehicles, incorporating the provision of safe recreational/utility routes, public rights of way and connectivity within the development and to the surrounding area;

11. Incorporates convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities;

SECTION 2.0: LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

12. Incorporates measures to reduce actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour both on the site and in the surrounding area. Measures expected include the creation of visually attractive active frontages with windows and doors that provide informal surveillance of public areas by occupants of the site, adjoining streets and public spaces; and

13. Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces.

Policy 34: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

1. The Council will preserve and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets, and their settings. Applications for such development will only be supported if they:

a) Make reference to, and show an understanding of, the significance of the asset, including drawing from research and documentation such as the West Sussex Historic Environment Record;

b) Take account current best practice guidance produced by Historic England and Conservation Area Character Statements, Appraisals and Management Plans;

c) Make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensure that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas;

d) Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, including traditional architectural form, proportion, detailing, materials and, where appropriate, landscape features including trees;

e) Demonstrate that the use(s) proposed are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset whilst securing its viable and sustainable future and continued preservation. Changes of use must be compatible with, and respect, the special architectural or historic interest of the asset and setting; and

f) Demonstrate that any proposal in the vicinity of a heritage asset with, or has the potential to include, archaeological interest is accompanied by appropriate archaeological research, including the investigation, recording and reporting of both above and below-ground archaeology. This will, as a minimum, include a deskbased assessment, and where deemed necessary by the Council, a field evaluation will also be required. If necessary, the Council will require assets to be preserved in situ or excavated.

2. Proposals which affect a heritage asset, or the setting of a heritage asset, will only be supported where accompanied by a Heritage Statement.

3. Proposals which would cause substantial harm to, or loss of, a heritage asset will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial public benefits gained would outweigh the substantial harm or total loss of the asset and that any replacement scheme makes an equal contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Applicants must show an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset to be lost, either wholly or in part, and demonstrate how the heritage asset has been recorded.

4. Proposals which would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and will only be supported where public benefit is considered to outweigh the harm.

2.4.3 Historic England Guidance

Historic England, Conservation Principles, 2008

The Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment were produced to strengthen the credibility and consistency of decisions taken and advice given by Historic England staff (formerly English Heritage).

The guidance is intended to be read by local authorities, property owners, developers and professional advisers and is fully aligned with the NPPF and many Local Plans refer to it as important policy.

Historic England, Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 2 – Managing Significance In Decision-Taking In The Historic Environment, 2015

The purpose of this note is to provide information on good practice to assist local planning authorities, consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and the related guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Historic England, Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3 – The Setting Of Heritage Assets, 2017

This note provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets and supersedes 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', English Heritage, 2011

SECTION 3.0: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the methodology for the remainder of the report, which features a site-by-site assessment of each of the areas affected by the proposals. Each area assessment comprises a summary of the relevant heritage designations, an illustrated description, a detailed historic development with phasing plans and a statement of significance. Each assessment ends with an assessment of impact of the development proposals on significance, informed and aided by views analysis to help test and assess the impact of the proposals. Some proposals are not covered within this assessment where they pertain to modern, non curtilage listed buildings and the proposals are not considered to be of a scale which would have any effect on the wider Registered Park and Garden. For example the works to the modern Garden Shop are included due to its prominent position within the estate whereas the Red House, dating from the 1980s with no external alterations, is not.

This section provides information on the relevant frameworks for assessing heritage significance and heritage impact.

3.2 Assessing Heritage Significance

The assessments of heritage significance included in Section 4 are informed by Historic England's Conservation Principles (April 2008), Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015), and Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019).

3.3 Heritage Values

The concept of 'significance' lies at the heart of Historic England's Conservation Principles, which is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values that society attaches to a place. Understanding who values a place, and why, provides the basis for managing and sustaining those values for future generations. Heritage values can be arranged into the following four groups:

Evidential Value: The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historic Value: The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative.

Aesthetic Value: The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal Value: Derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

These values have been reframed into three groups of interest in Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Advice Note (October 2019). These three groups comprise:

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically:

- Architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types.
- Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

The fourfold division established in Conservation Principles will be used in the following assessment, as it is felt that this approach is more appropriate considering the strong connections Leonardslee has to the local community.

Factors such as rarity, integrity and group value will further contribute to significance. Setting – the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced or is otherwise linked to – is also a key consideration.

SECTION 3.0: METHODOLOGY

3.4 Levels of Heritage Significance

Significance and the interests or values which contribute to it are measured against a sliding scale: whilst many elements will be significant, not all will be significant to the same degree. It is important to recognise these variations so that future change is determined proportionately to significance.

High: A theme, feature, building or space which is has a high cultural value and forms an essential part of understanding the historic value of the site, while greatly contributing towards its character and appearance. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

Medium: A theme, feature, building or space which has some cultural importance and helps define the character, history and appearance of the site. Efforts should be made to retain features of this level if possible, though a greater degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible.

Low: Themes, features, buildings or spaces which have minor cultural importance and which might contribute to the character or appearance of the site. A greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.

Neutral: Themes, spaces, buildings or features which have little or no cultural value and neither contribute to nor detract from the character or appearance of the site. Considerable alteration or change is likely to be possible.

Intrusive: Themes, features or spaces which actually detract from the values of the site and its character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove these features.

3.5 Assessing Heritage Impact

The following impact assessment methodology and criteria have been informed by the ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (2011) and IEMA's Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (July 2021).

High Beneficial	The development considerably enhances the heritage values of the identified heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Medium Beneficial	The development enhances to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Low Beneficial	The development enhances to a minor extent the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
No Harm/No Change	The development does not change the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Low Adverse	The development erodes to a minor extent the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Medium Adverse	The development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values.
High Adverse	The development substantially affects the heritage values of the heritage assets, or the ability to appreciate those values

Views analysis, showing renders or wire lines of the proposals, are embedded into the impact assessments to help test and assess the impact of the proposals on the surrounding heritage assets.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

4.1 Overview Historical Timeline of Wider Site

This section on the historic development of Leonardslee, as well as the site-by-site historic developments, refers to the Insalls' Garden CMP as a point of departure, whilst supplementing this understanding with first-hand research in West Sussex Record Office and the Keep in Brighton. It also draws upon historic photographs, held by the Leonardslee Estate. Historic Environment Records were requested from West Sussex County Council and received on 29.07.24. Where relevant, the results are incorporated within this historic development.

There is limited evidence relating to the prehistory of the land later to become the Leonardslee Estate, however a small number of finds have been identified and the lack of evidence may be due to a lack of local excavation activity. A Neolithic flint arrowhead (HER number: MWS629) was ploughed up at Leonardslee in the former parkland and current car park and a Bronze Age axe head (HER number: MWS641) to the south of Crabtree, in an area formerly part of the estate. These finds would indicate that the land has been home to human activity since at least the Neolithic period

From the late 16th century, the valley to the east and south-east of the current house contained a series of hammer ponds, excavated to support the Wealden iron industry. Iron was in high demand for cannons, cannon balls, hinges, horseshoes and nails. The furnace at Gosden, south-east of Crabtree, was built around 1560 by Roger Gratwicke the younger. The ponds provided the power for the hammers and other machinery to crush the ore. The iron working mill of Gosden furnace was no longer in use by the mid-17th century, when it was burnt down during the Civil War.⁰¹

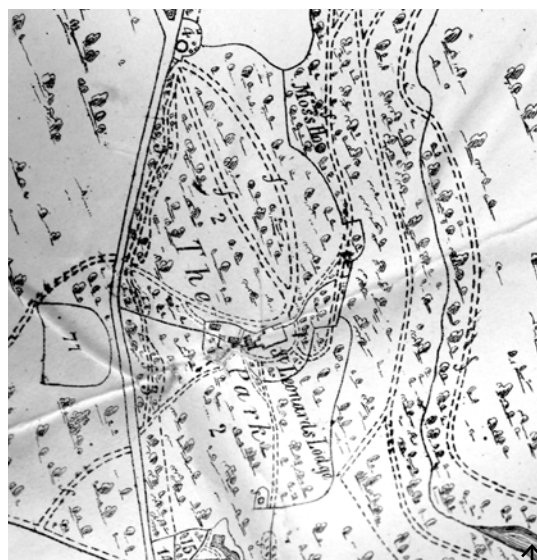
In the late 17th century, King Charles II gifted St Leonard's Forest, later to become the Leonardslee Estate, to his physician, Sir Edward Greaves, and from him it passed to the Aldridge family in 1746. St Leonard's Lodge was built on the

site in 1801 for Charles George Beauclerk to the designs of John Johnson. Beauclerk began to lay out gardens in c.1810. Some of the oldest plants in the garden date to this period, including in the American garden, now the Upper Dell.

In 1852, the St Leonard's Forest Estate, which comprised 1,919 acres, was sold at auction for £42,000. The buyer, William Egerton Hubbard, was a London-based Russian merchant who was particularly interested in the estate as a sporting property for shooting and hunting. Accompanying sales particulars include a map, which show the earlier arrangement of buildings and landscape prior to the construction of the current house and the development of the grounds. Whilst it has previously been held that the former building was on the site of the current building, the map shows the former lodge to the south-west of the current site with a number of outbuildings to the west. This is corroborated by a diary entry or written record by Louisa Maria Hubbard, Hubbard's eldest daughter, where she writes 'when the old house was pulled down, my father took Nellie

and me to stay at Freechase when we came down'. Louisa goes on to write 'St Leonard's Lodge occupied what is now the lawn - in fact at the side of the new house'.⁰² The new house sat within the densely wooded setting of St Leonard's Forest, with parkland laid out between the house and the main road.

The main approach was to the north-west of the park via the lodge or Round House, with additional approaches further to the south along the main road. The Round House had been moved to its present position from Horsham in the 1820s.⁰³ A further drive accessed the house via the walled garden to the south. A number of paths and walkways were laid out connecting the house with its gardens, with key landscape features including the Moss House and the American Gardens to the north. The latter survive today. New Pond, a former Hammer Pond, was shown in place to the south-east of the house, whilst none of the other ponds to the north were yet laid out. The other ponds were laid out in the late 19th century and enlarged in the late 20th century.



Map within Sales Particulars, 1852 (The Keep, Brighton)

New Pond



Overlay of 1852 Sales Particulars map and 1870 OS map showing the former location of St Leonard's Lodge in relation to the mid-19th century house

The existing house at Leonardslee

Location of former St Leonard's Lodge, to the south-west of the current building

⁰¹ The Horsham Society Newsletter, February 2011, p. 12; Unpublished report prepared by the Hubbard family, p. 1.

⁰² Unpublished Hubbard report, pp. 7 and 18.

⁰³ Unpublished Hubbard report, p. 71.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

The new house, which replaced the earlier stone St Leonard's Lodge, was designed by T.L. Donaldson in the Italianate style. The building was constructed from 1853 to 1855. Donaldson was a pioneer of architectural education as a co-founder and president of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a winner of the RIBA Royal Gold Medal.

During the construction period of the new house, Hubbard made other improvements to the estate including the addition of the Gardener's Cottage and the walled garden and greenhouses to make a productive kitchen garden. The Carriage House and Stables surmounted by a clock tower were built in 1856. The Engine Pond, sluice weir and adjacent brick building known today as the Engine House, which housed pumps to deliver water to the main house and estate were constructed in the period intervening 1852 and 1896. Hubbard, who was a devout man and longstanding Church Warden of the Holy Trinity Church, also carried out building improvements within the wider estate. He added two side aisles to the church and constructed a school near the Vicarage, as well as Mission Rooms, and the Drill Shed and Club for the Horsham Volunteers. Hubbard's son added a bell tower to the church in commemoration of his parents death in 1883.

The new house and outbuildings are shown on the OS map of 1874. The house is shown positioned to the north-east of the former St Leonard's Lodge, with outbuildings to the north rather than to the west. The main drive still approached via the Round House, but on a more circuitous, arcing alignment. The other drives to the south were also shown on different alignments to those shown in 1852. Engine Pond, which is shown in the valley to the east of the house, was laid out by Hubbard.⁰⁴



1874 OS Map of Leonardslee (West Sussex Record Office)

⁰⁴ Unpublished Hubbard report, p. 73.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

In 1876 Sir Edmund Loder married William Egerton Hubbard's youngest daughter, Marion Hubbard, at Leonardslee. The estate was sold to Loder in 1888 for £105,000, under whose keen attention the gardens and estate flourished. Loder came from a family of plantsmen. Sir Edmund's father Sir Robert Loder, owned nearby High Beeches, where he developed woodland gardens. Gerald Loder, 1st Baron Wakehurst, Sir Edmund's brother, owned Wakehurst Place, where he developed a considerable collection of rhododendrons. Like his father and brother, Sir Edmund developed woodland gardens of a type popular in the late 19th century, as advocated in the writings of landscape gardeners and designers such as Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson.⁰⁵

Loder planted rhododendron species, cultivars and hybrids, as well as specimen trees in the valley to the east of the house. He exploited the natural features of the valley, streams, rock outcrops and absorbed the existing native forest trees and North American conifers (Redwoods and Wellingtonias), introduced by Beauclerk, into his planting schemes. Sir Edmund Loder laid out the three upper lakes in the valley in the late 19th century.

As a keen plant breeder, Loder developed hybrid rhododendrons, including, in 1901, the Loderi Rhododendron hybrids (later named in his honour). Three of his rhododendron hybrids received the Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Loder was one of a small group of key figures developing and hybridising rhododendrons in the late 19th and early 20th century, including his brother Gerald Loder at Wakehurst, Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury, Hampshire, J.C. Williams of Caerhays Castle and the Aberconways at Bodnant. These men created a Rhododendron Society, competed in competitions and sometimes worked together. In 1926, for example, the Dame Nellie Melba hybrid was hybridised by Sir Edmund Loder at Leonardslee but named and distributed by Lionel de Rothschild in 1926.

Loder also collected rare and exotic animals from the early 1890s including Indian antelope and other unusual species of deer, kangaroos, wallabies from Tasmania and later, American coypys, caprbara, emu and prairie dogs.⁰⁶ Whilst beavers are previously thought to have been introduced by Loder, an article in the Sphere Magazine from the 1890s records that they were introduced to the ponds in the 1850s and must therefore have been introduced by Hubbard.⁰⁷

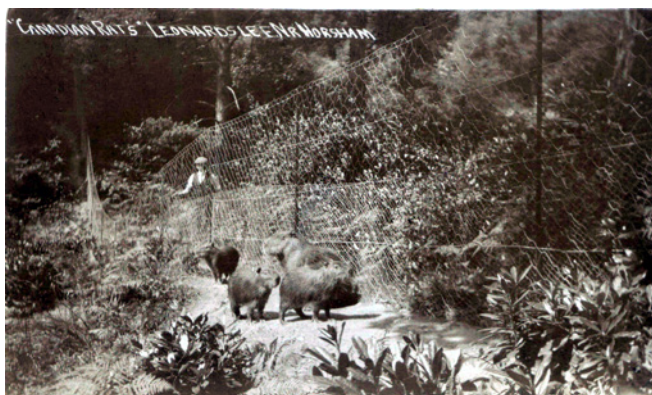
The animals adapted and acclimatised very well. Descendants of the deer and wallabies remain at Leonardslee today. Whilst the introduction of exotic species on country estates was relatively unusual, it had been pioneered by Walter Rothschild, who introduced herds of kangaroos and wallabies into the grounds of the museum at Tring in 1885.



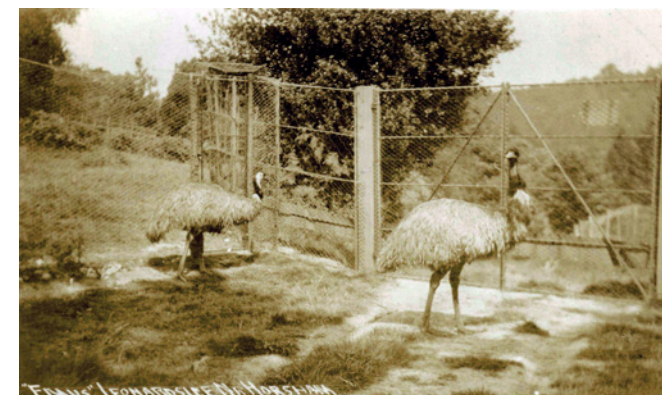
Historic photograph of Loder brothers (Leonardslee Estate)



Kangaroos at Leonardslee (Horsham Museum)



Capybaras or 'Canadian rats' at Leonardslee (Horsham Museum)



Emus at Leonardslee (Horsham Museum)

⁰⁵ Gertrude Jekyll's *Wall, Water and Woodland Gardens*, (1901) for example, included a chapter on woodland gardens, including the use of rhododendrons and azaleas in providing a suitable transition between garden and woodland.

⁰⁶ Victoria County History Society, *A History of Sussex: Volume 6 Part 3, Bamber Rape*, p. 8.

⁰⁷ Unpublished Hubbard report, p. 66.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Sir Edmund re-landscaped and extended the formal gardens within the curtilage of the house. He created an ornamental rock garden for his collection of alpine plants and ferns. This was constructed in 1890 by James Pulham & Sons (by the second James Pulham), who excavated the site, leaving two high mounds in the centre and planted a ring of conifers around the top to create a more sheltered environment.

Pulham used a combination of large natural rocks with artificial ones, formed from a facing material of concrete-like 'Pulhamite'. The Pulhamite is particularly convincing at Leonardslee making it difficult to distinguish from the natural sandstone. Whilst the rockery was originally planted with alpine and rock plants, as well as dwarf shrubs, as shown in historic photographs, shrubs have since been able to take over almost completely with hummocks of azaleas, dwarf rhododendrons and dwarf conifers.⁰⁸ The rock garden originally featured a fernery, beside a small pool, which featured five glass skylights set in its roof.⁰⁹ Whilst the pool remains, the fernery was later blocked up or demolished.



Historic undated [20th century] photograph of the rock garden (Horsham Museum)



Historic photograph of the rock garden, 1909 (Horsham Museum)



Historic undated [20th century] photograph of the rock garden showing more modest size shrubs, ferns and alpine plants (Horsham Museum)



Historic photograph of the rock garden or 'alpine garden', 1908 (Leonardslee Estate)

⁰⁸ *Country Life*, 'A Great Woodland Garden', Arthur Hellyer, March 17, 1977, p. 631.

⁰⁹ *Garden History*, 'Pulham has Done His Work Well', Sally Festing, Vol 12, No. 2, Autumn 1984, p. 150.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

As was typical of the Pulham firm, their rockwork was not limited to a single location at Leonardslee. A further rockwork element was laid out to the south of the house as the central feature within a railed enclosure for mountain sheep. It also featured caves inside the mound, which were used as wallaby breeding pens. This second piece of rockwork is shown in the images on this page.



View of the interior of the rockwork showing structural brick walls and corrugated metal ceiling cladding



View of the rockwork and animal enclosure to the south of the house, 1909 (Leonardslee Estate)



Rockwork to the south of the house, formerly for mountain sheep and wallabies



View of the rockwork and animal enclosure to the south of the house featuring mountain sheep, 1906 (Horsham Museum)



Rockwork showing tunnels and caves indicating historic function for wallaby shelter and breeding

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Pulham Rockwork

A fashion for grottoes, ferneries and the adoption of 'artificial rockwork' emerged from the mid-19th century. Pulham and Sons was the best-known producer with three generations of Pulhams (all named James) producing rockwork from the 1840s to 1945. The second James Pulham designed the rock garden at Leonardslee.

The Pulham family's range of artificial landscapes, which included rockeries, ferneries, grottoes, temples and water gardens, were particularly popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They often employed natural with artificial rocks. The latter, which became known as Pulhamite, involved a render applied to a masonry core or backing structure to produce texture and colour variations in imitation of natural rock. The render consisted of a hydraulic lime or natural cement binder, gauged with sand and other aggregates. The Pulhams saw that artificial materials would allow the construction of large-scale rockwork at a lower cost, allowing more money to be spent on expensive plants. However, interestingly, from the 1900s, most Pulham rock gardens were built from natural stone.¹⁰

By the mid-1870s, the firm had produced their first prospectus: *Picturesque Ferneries and Rock-Garden Scenery* (c.1877). This set out that the aim of their rockwork creations was to replicate natural alpine scenery. The rockwork was then planted with alpines, ferns and other rock garden varieties. The prospectus included a list of executed work at over 170 sites indicating business was thriving. Most of the firm's projects were in England, principally in the Home Counties, with others scattered around the country. Some Pulham features have been lost or perished over the years. However, owing to the robustness of their structures, prided by the Pulhams as indicated by their motto 'Durability Guaranteed', many survive although often in a ruinous condition or in bad need of repair and restoration.

The firm typically laid out rockwork at intervals around a garden or pleasure ground within the environs of the house forming part of a wider circuit. At Waddesdon Manor, Pulham rockwork was laid out for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild between 1877 and 1891 on a grand scale. The Waddesdon rockwork included the impressive rock garden around the ornamental Dairy and lakes to the north-east of the house, a shelter for Barbary sheep with rockwork boulders forming miniature mountains near the Stables, and artificial banks and rocky outcrops along the north front. The latter disguised a water tank and included a tunnel forming a gardeners' store. The shelter for sheep forms an interesting comparator to the rockwork at Leonardslee to

the south of the house, within the wallaby enclosure. Meanwhile at Gunnersbury Park, Leopold de Rothschild had commissioned the firm to create rocky banks for ferns, alpines and shrubs.

The firm laid out various rockwork constructions in Sussex, including at nearby Nymans, where a smaller rock garden than that at Leonardslee was laid out between 1898 and 1902, not in artificial rockwork but real, local sandstone. Other local rockwork includes the rock garden at Homestall, East Grinstead (c.1902), cascades and waterfalls at Sheffield Park Garden (c.1895), and a rock garden and other ornaments at Worth Park (c.1895)



Mountain sheep in the park at Waddesdon

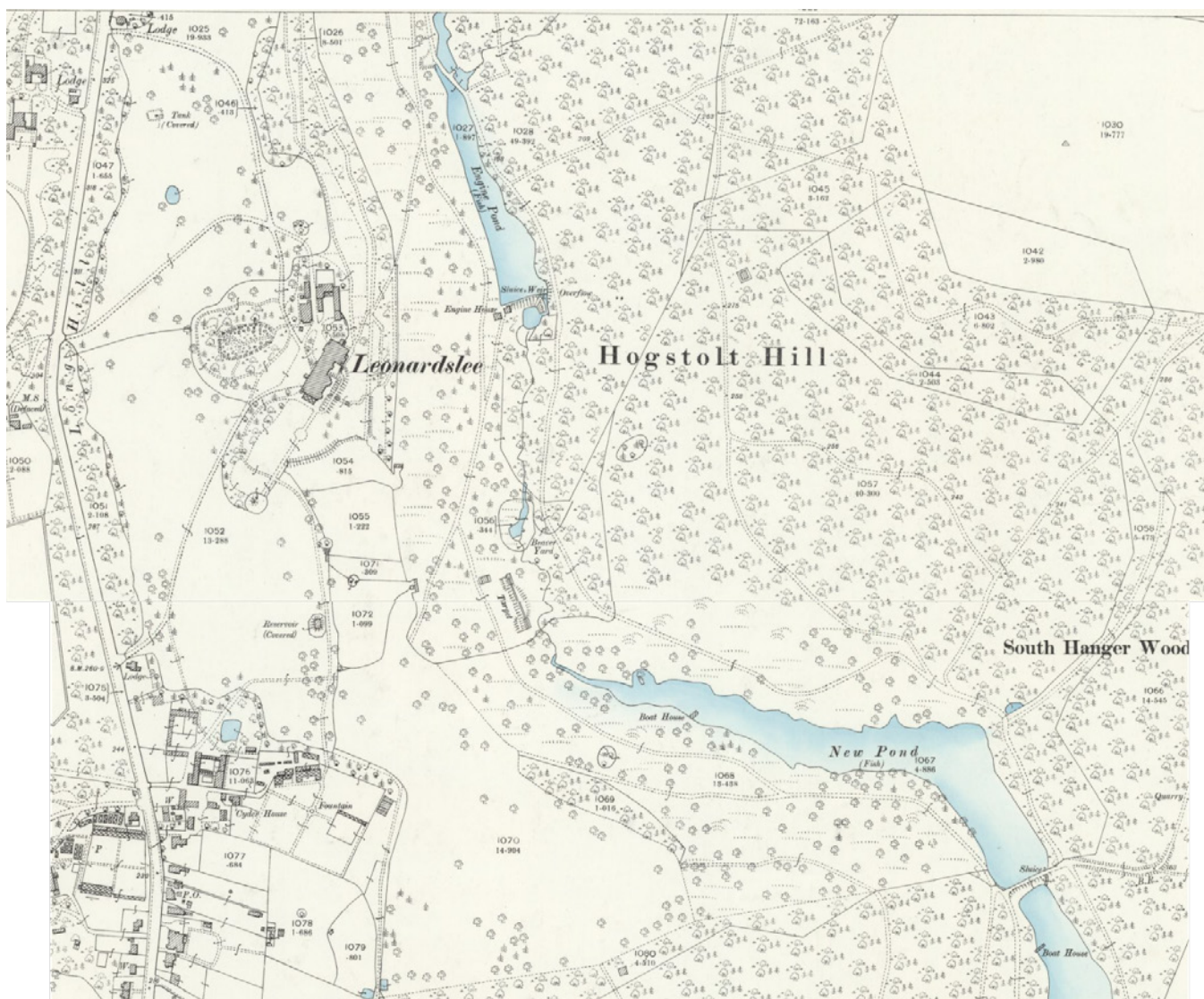
¹⁰ English Heritage, *Durability Guaranteed: Pulhamite Rockwork – its conservation and repair*, 200, p. 7.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Progression between the 1870 OS map and the 1896 edition show a new group of buildings to the west of the stables. During this time Sir Edmund Loder introduced electricity to the estate with the generators thought to have been housed within this new group of buildings, today known as the Generator Block. From the turn of the 20th century at least, the block also accommodated Sir Edmund's collection of hunting trophies, including animal heads, skins and antlers.

In 1909, Loder laid out Mossy Ghyll Pond and, during his tenure, altered the size and shape of other ponds for ornamental purposes.

The death of Sir Edmund in 1920 led to a period of neglect for the gardens, until his grandson Sir Giles Loder regained control over the estate in 1947, following the departure of Canadian Troops billeted to Leonardslee House during WWII. Sir Giles, also a keen horticulturalist, restored and continued the expansion of the gardens with the introduction of the Coronation Garden (1952-1953) and the Camelia Grove (1957-1958).



1896 OS Map. National Library of Scotland (National Library of Scotland)

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Photographs from the turn of the century and early to mid-20th century show the main house in relationship to the woodland landscape to the east. These images show considerably less grown up valley slopes, with the house visible from the woodland walks and from the lakes. Intervisibility between the house and the woodland walks and lakes is more limited today, owing to the mature tree canopies and dense shrubbery plantings.

An aerial photograph taken in 1949 shows the house, Stable Complex, Generator Block, and southern lawn in 1949. This image shows the extent of the house prior to the demolition of the service wing in the 1960s, visible to the right of the main core of the house. It also shows the mature tree coverage across the estate, however with comparatively less dense vegetation to the east of the house than today.

A large greenhouse was added to the former parkland to the west of the house in 1970. This remains today and forms the entrance to the house and gardens.

In 1981, Robin Loder inherited the estate and the family moved out, selling the house and retaining the gardens segregating the ownership within the historic estate. In 1984, the house was converted into office accommodation for Eurotherm International, at which time the gardens were registered as a Grade I Registered Park and Garden. In 1986, Robin Loder built the Red House within the gardens as a home for his family. In 1987, the Great Storm damaged the gardens; as a result Robin was able to redesign parts of the estate, opening up new vistas and laying out new planting. The Tulip Tree to the south of Leonardslee House was one of the casualties of the storm. In 1988, the Stable Block was converted into a restaurant.



Historic photograph, 1906, showing clear views of the house from the lakes

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Between 1992 and 1993, Robin Loder enlarged a number of the lakes and cleared and remodelled the lake surrounds. He also made plantings on the east side of the valley. During the late 20th century, a new block west of the Generator Block was built to house Victorian motor cars. The building has accommodated various uses since, including for a Bonsai Exhibition from 1991 and then the Dolls' House Exhibition from 1998, which remains today.

Robin Loder retired from running the gardens in 2005 and was followed by his twin children Tom and Mary, under who the garden was sold in 2010 to the Leonardslee Estate Ltd. The gardens were left to grow wild until 2017, when the estate was sold to Penny Streeter OBE, who began the restoration and reunification of the house and garden. The house was converted into a restaurant at ground level in 2018, with the first floor converted into a hotel in 2020. During this period, the ancillary buildings were also iteratively converted into visitor facilities; the Engine House into a café, parts of the Stable into a café and restaurant, and the late 20th century extension to the Generator Block into an additional café. In 2019, the gardens were re-opened to the public.



Undated 20th century photograph showing Leonardslee House from the woodland gardens



Undated print [late 19th century?] of a painting of Leonardslee showing open views of the house across the woodland gardens



Historic England, Aerial photo showing the Generator Hall with its roof still intact, 1949

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

4.2 Significance of the Registered Park and Garden

This assessment of the significance of the Registered Park and Garden draws on the significance set out within Insalls' CMP on the gardens as a point of departure; however, it expands upon the historical and aesthetic values and provides an assessment of evidential and communal values.

The significance and special interest of the Leonardslee site lies primarily in its extensive and historic gardens and is recognised by its status as a Grade I Registered Park and Garden. This places the landscape within the top 10% of Registered Parks and Gardens and reflects its exceptional significance.

The Registered Park and Garden also lies on the western edge of the High Weald National Landscape, which is nationally designated as a National Landscape (previously known as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty). A number of the National Landscape's special qualities are represented at Leonardslee including deeply incised landform, ancient woodland, heath and species rich grassland and a legacy of gardeners inspired by the landscape.

4.2.1 Evidential Value

The evidential value of the Registered Park and Garden stems principally from the topography of the site, characterised by steep valley sides preventing the site being cleared for agriculture and allowing the continuation of forest cover. The decomposition of leaves over the millennia resulted in the relatively acidic soils, within an otherwise largely alkaline area. The steep terrain and acidic soils provided optimum, sheltered growing conditions allowing rhododendrons to thrive.

The chain of man-made lakes lying in the sheltered valley to the east of the house has evidential value in reflecting previous human activity associated with former industries. In the late 16th century, the valley streams were damned and the first ponds excavated at Leonardslee as hammer ponds to support the Wealden iron industry. These powered

the hammers to crush the ore. New Pond, the southernmost pond on the estate, survives as an early hammer pond and provides evidence of this former industry. Subsequent ponds were laid out and altered iteratively in line with 19th and 20th century landscape improvements.

The survival of features such as the rockery in the Upper Dell (American Garden) and a ha-ha evidence the origins of the earlier 19th century house (St Leonard's Lodge), of which there is no trace above ground. These features reflect the earliest designed landscape elements within a wider forested landscape. Subsequent improvements have retained and expanded upon these features.

Few archaeological features have been found to date except a Neolithic arrowhead found in the current car park and a Bronze Age axe found beyond the estate boundary to the south. However, there have been no comprehensive archaeological walkover surveys across the site. There is archaeological potential associated with possible below ground remains relating to the former St Leonard's Lodge, which was located to the south-west of the current Leonardslee House and any associated outbuildings. There may also be archaeological remains associated with lost estate buildings, including the second building by the Engine Pond and certain buildings or structures on the site of or around the Stables and Generator Block. In some cases, archaeology may have been impacted by subsequent demolition and construction.

For these reasons, the Registered Park and Garden has **High evidential value**.

4.2.2 Historical Value

The gardens at Leonardslee represent a fundamental part of the site's history and development, with various phases of landscaping pre-dating the main house. The origins of the gardens, as they are seen today, lie with Charles George Beauclerk, who bought one thousand acres of the forest in the early 1800s and laid out the American Garden, today known as the Dell and the Upper Dell at the northern end of the garden, containing magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas

and other flowering shrubs from America and South East Asia. Here remain some of the oldest plants in the garden, notably one Rhododendron 'Cornish Arboreum', planted before 1810 and an ancient Cedus deodora. These early plantings have especially high historical value.

The ecological rarity of the garden bolsters the site's significance. The steep terrain of the majority of the site has created sheltered growing conditions that allow normally semi-hardy plants to flourish. Additionally, the several millennia of leaf mould provided by the historic forest has created relatively acidic soil – providing the perfect conditions for Rhododendrons and other species and making the garden a rarity in an otherwise alkaline southern England. The incremental development of the Gardens, through the planting of further areas, the intermittent cutting back and re-planting of zones, and the laying out of additional lakes over nearly 200 years, adds to the historic character and visual interest of the gardens. While the valley originally featured a series of ponds to provide a continuous water supply to supply a forge a little further down the valley, they were progressively developed from the mid- nineteenth century until the late twentieth century to create the vistas and larger bodies of water we see today.

After the acquisition of the garden by the Loder family in 1888, the extents of the current garden were achieved. The sheer dedication to the gardens given by the Loders resulted in it becoming world renowned for its type of woodland gardening. This approach to gardening was popularised in the late 19th century in the writings of Getrude Jekyll and William Robinson and facilitated through the arrival of an influx of plant species from abroad in the early 20th century, including from China. The successive ownership and longevity of the Loder family, and their keen interest and innovation in horticulture, enabled the creation of the extensive collection of plants seen at Leonardslee. So unusual is the garden's type in England that in 1947 it was used to film exterior shots of the film *Black Narcissus*, set in the northern borders of India.

SECTION 4.0: LEONARDSLEE ESTATE OVERVIEW

Sir Edmund Loder had a fascination with plant hybridisation and developed the acclaimed group of rhododendrons which came to be known as the Loderi hybrid Rhododendrons in 1901. Leonardslee has international importance as the home of the original collection of these hybrids. Part of the historic plant collection has been recognised by Plant Heritage who awarded a Full National Collection status to Leonardslee for the Loderi & Leonardslee-related Rhododendrons. There are now 68 different rhododendrons in the collection (over 100 specimens) including 32 registered as threatened in cultivation and 17 currently believed to be unique to Leonardslee in the UK (for example the Spearmint Hybrid). The survival and quality of the plant specimens themselves hold significant historic value. The most important collection of these is found in the Loderi Garden to the north-east of the Red House.

The collection of Champion Trees (either the tallest or exhibiting the largest trunk circumference of their type) reflects the 19th century horticultural specimen curation and design by former residents and owners. Leonardslee features 31 British & Irish Champion trees, 6 English Champions and over 80 county champions. It has one Monumental Tree, the Algerian Oak *Quercus canariensis*, which is the tallest of its type recorded in the world. The veteran and mature trees within the gardens also reflect the age and history of the Registered Park and Garden.

The gardens' excellent maintenance over many years, including an impressive rejuvenation by the present owners after a period of neglect, means that a number of historic specimens remain in situ. The gardens today represent one of the largest and most spectacular woodland gardens in the world, with one of the finest collections of mature rhododendrons, azaleas, specimen trees and shrubs.

The garden has associative value with various members of the Loder family and other Loder gardens nearby in Sussex, reflecting the family's strong horticultural dynasty. The three generations of Loders who held possession of Leonardslee each made their mark on the landscape, with each new

generation making sensitive new additions to the woodland gardens and plantations in the vein of their predecessors.

The Loders were also closely involved with other successful gardens in Sussex. Sir Robert Loder, Sir Edmund's Father, owned High Beeches (where Edmund was born) (Grade II*), and developed outstanding early 20th century woodland gardens, gathering specimens from around the world during plant hunting expeditions. Edmund Loder's brother, Gerald, past president of the Royal Horticultural Society, owned Wakehurst Place (Grade II* RPG). Gerald Loder was a keen gardener and collector who sponsored plant hunting expeditions abroad and transformed the grounds into a botanic collection of rhododendrons at the turn of the 20th century. Wakehurst is now part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and, combined with Kew, forms the most important conservation collection in a botanic garden in the world.

The gardens also form part of a wider group of other, non-Loder, High Weald plantsman's gardens laid out from the late 19th to the early 20th century within the High Weald AONB, which are of considerable significance for their shared design principles, characteristics and horticultural and botanical interest. These gardens include the Grade II* RPG at Nymans laid out by Ludwig Messel; the Grade II* RPG at Borde Hill laid out by Colonel Ralph Stevenson Clarke; the Grade II* Gravetye Manor laid out by William Robinson; and the Grade I RPG at Sheffield Park laid out by Arthur Gilstrap Soames. Even closer to Leonardslee are the historic gardens at South Lodge, laid out by Frederic Du Cane Godman from 1883 following his construction of a new neo-Jacobean style house. He planted native and exotic trees, woodland gardens, rhododendrons, including hybrids, and laid out a rockery and water garden. Godman is known to have entered into friendly competition with his neighbour, Edmund Loder. These gardens, which are not registered, are now overgrown in areas.

Similarly to Leonardslee, these landscapes are reflective of their patrons' deep interest in horticulture; passion for collecting exotic plants on far-flung plant hunting expeditions; and experimental outlook in hybridising plants, notably Rhododendrons and azaleas. Most of these figures were not members of the traditional landed gentry but, like Edmund

Loder, were members of the new landowning class emerging in the 19th century, made wealthy from commerce, banking and industry. Arthur Gilstrap Soames ran a malting business, Ludwig Messel set up a successful stockbroking business, Colonel Ralph Stevenson's money stemmed from a family shipping company and William Robinson's income came from his popular books on gardening. Godman inherited a fortune through a family brewing connection.

These men purchased country estates to provide peaceful retreats for them and their family, away from the city or their business needs, as well as entertainment for guests, and carried out innovative and pioneering landscape developments. Like the multiple generations of Loders who contributed to the landscape, these other plantsman's gardens were often the product of generations of the same family, notably the three generations of Messels at Nymans and the five generations of Stephenson Clarkes at Borde Hill. Together with these other local plantsman's gardens, Leonardslee is illustrative of the period from the end of the Victorian period through to the interwar years when plant collecting, travel expeditions and hybridising was particularly popular and dominated by number of wealthy connoisseurs and plant hunters.

The Pulham rockwork found at Leonardslee is of considerable significance, reflecting a fusion of Victorian interests including landscaping, botany, travel, geology, engineering and technological advancement. It provides a particularly well-maintained and preserved example of the rockwork landscapes produced by Pulham and Son from the 1840s to 1945, which were particularly popular in the late 19th century. The firm's development of 'Pulhamite', artificial rock involving a cement render coloured to imitate natural rock, is of considerable technological interest. The Pulhamite at Leonardslee is difficult to distinguish from the natural stone. It represents a period mid-way through Pulham production, when their creations were particularly convincing and often only distinguishable by giveaway plant pockets. Shortly after, from 1900, they abandoned artificial rock and reverted to using only natural stone. The rockery, originally laid out for Edmund Loder's collection of alpine plants, is one of

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the few Pulham features around the country, which is fully maintained, blooming seasonably with Kurume azaleas and variety of flowering shrubs amidst dwarf conifers. The rockery, which lies outside of the main woodland gardens, forms a microcosm of the gardens beyond, on a very different scale. Its design value, as seen in the artifice of the Pulhamite and the layout of the paths, and botanical interest, as experienced through the rhododendrons and specimen plants, provides a flavour of the wider designed landscape at Leonardslee.

The second piece of Pulham rockwork at Leonardslee, to the south-west of the house, is also of high significance. This feature was designed both for Loder's collection of mountain sheep and wallabies and as an eyecatcher or point of interest on this side of the house. In this respect, it bears comparison with other Pulham rockwork, which was very often laid out at intervals around a garden and designed to recreate mountainous conditions for animals. The rockwork at Waddesdon, for example, provides a good comparator, with features designed for Rothschild's collection of Barbary sheep.

The Pulham firm also constructed rock gardens and rockwork at some of the High Weald plantsman's gardens discussed above, including waterfalls and stonework at Sheffield Park (c.1895) and a rock garden at Nymans (c.1898-1902). These examples are both slightly later than the rockwork at Leonardslee. However, considering their proximity and the likely discourse between the respective owners in relation to plant collecting and hybridising, the Loder's may well have recommended the Pulham firm to their neighbours. The latter is a much smaller feature than that at Leonardslee but interestingly is made up of only local sandstone with no artificial rock, reflecting the period the Pulham firm began using natural rock exclusively.

For these reasons, the Registered Park and Garden has [High historical value](#).

4.2.3 Aesthetic Value

The ornamental gardens, planted with rare and exotic species and set within a peaceful valley, have considerable aesthetic value. The co-ordinating feature of the gardens within their landscape is the chain of manmade lakes, which run down the centre of the natural ravine in which the gardens are planted. These water bodies form the focal point and hinge within the landscape, from where the woodland gardens can be explored and enjoyed. The open quality of the ponds provides a dramatic contrast to the densely planted woodland paths, offering a calming and tranquil setting and affording generous views of the wooded valley slopes.

The gardens boast a large collection of champion and specimen plants, which forms a pivotal contribution to the high aesthetic value of the gardens. These include towering redwoods and cedar, interesting oak trees, wonderfully gnarled trunks of mature rhododendrons and the bright colours of hybrid shrubs. Different plants bring interest at different times of the year, with Magnolia, Rhododendron and Camellias flowering in Spring and Acers, Flowering dogwood, Hydrangeas and other shrubs in the Summer. The rockery comes alive in May with the Rhododendrons and Japanese Azaleas resulting in a kaleidoscope of colour. In Autumn, the colour palette is spectacular with Maples and deciduous Azaleas exhibiting their dramatic autumn colours against a backdrop of woodland trees displaying shades of gold and russet. This rich and varied visual character is the result of the developments and plantings of the Loder family (and before them the Beauclerk family), as well as the incorporation of native forest trees from the ancient Leonard's Forest into planting schemes.

The long walks laid out through the gardens, which are typically serpentine and meandering, contribute to the informal, picturesque aesthetic of the woodland gardens. Many of these routes lie on their historic alignment. Interesting plant specimens planted on either side or even arching over the paths, contribute to the secluded and intimate character of the gardens.

The garden's key views and vistas, highlighted within Insalls' Garden CMP (p.48), are important contributors to the experience and enjoyment of the landscape. These views were created through the artistry of careful planting and management of trees and plants in accordance with the site's natural landscape. The views and vistas focus on the woodland garden and lakeside walks and include views from key landscape features, such as bridges, unenclosed sections of paths, and elevated points on the valley slopes. The views also include select views from the main house and the Red House, although there is generally very little visibility between the house and the lakes and woodland gardens below owing to the topography and dense nature of the planting. A number of views have been lost over the years owing to vegetation and tree canopies growing up. The views from the western slopes of the valley up towards the house were previously much more open as shown in historic photographs, whereas today, the house is very rarely visible from these walks.

The areas within the immediate curtilage and setting of the house adopt a more formal and ornamental character than the picturesque woodland gardens to the east, featuring formal garden terraces and steps to the south-east of the house and an open lawn and ha-ha to the south-west. These areas still feature characterful, mature trees and vegetation, both lining the peripheries and planted at intervals. The rockery to the west forms a particularly ornamental feature with its undulating hummocks of azaleas, dwarf rhododendrons, and other shrubs, against a structural backdrop provided by the Pulhamite rocks and encircling conifers.

The parkland to the south and west of the house provides a more open and informal designed landscape within the Registered Park and Garden, which contrasts with the more inward-looking and enclosed, formal and ornamental areas elsewhere. Surviving areas of sweeping, expansive parkland, are of particular aesthetic value, for example to the south, where the open setting features isolated, mature parkland trees, such as oak, which form interesting features within the landscape. The historic drives approaching

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through the parkland to the west are significant in following their original alignment and building anticipation on the arrival to the house. However, both areas of parkland have been impacted by modern change; this is particularly evident to the east where the hard surfaced car park has compromised the parkland character and appearance. This detracting feature is currently being addressed, through removal of hard surfacing and introduction of further planting to reverse its visual impact.

For these reasons, the Registered Park and Garden has **High aesthetic value**.

4.2.4 Communal Value

The Leonardslee Registered Park and Garden has long been accessible to members of the public. Under Sir Edmund Loder, in the late 19th and early 20th century, the gardens were open for specific events and tours, with visitors taken to the rockery as well as other parts of the gardens. The gardens were opened to the public in the 1920s, before closure and re-opening in 2019.

The gardens play an important role both to local visitors and members and tourists visiting from further afield, owing to its gardens, parkland and woodland, which all provide valuable recreation and amenity space. The gardens also feature shared importance with other High Weald gardens as a collective owing to their geographical, familial and historical connections.

Rhododendron cultivars developed by Sir Edmund Loder are widely available for purchase from commercial nurseries and commonplace in domestic gardens. This availability expands the communal value of the gardens.

For these reasons, the Registered Park and Garden has **Medium communal value**.

The Registered Park and Garden is of **high significance**.

4.2.5 Contribution of curtilage Listed Buildings to the significance of the RPG

The significance of the curtilage Listed Buildings is covered fully in Section 5.0; however, this section assesses their contribution to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden.

The curtilage Listed Buildings form a contribution to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden as they form part of the area of gardens around the house and the physical connector between the rockery and the woodland gardens. They also have an important role to play in reflecting the former working or utilitarian parts, serving the house and estate.

The principal significance of the Registered Park and Garden, however, as set out in the assessment above and the Historic England list description, lies in the ornamental gardens lying on the east- and west-facing slopes of the valley, either side of the series of picturesque lakes, as well as the formal gardens, terraces and rockery laid out to the east, south and west of the house. The curtilage Listed Buildings to the north of the house are somewhat distanced from the wider Registered Park and Garden and do not form a major contribution to its character or appearance. They do not include former garden buildings or structures but rather buildings designed to service the house and feature limited associated landscaping or significant planting. They lie within an area that has undergone the most change and alteration within the Registered Park and Garden featuring alteration to historic buildings alongside extensive hard landscaping and signage. This area, in fact, has significant potential for enhancement.

The Engine House, on the other hand, has a slightly stronger connection with the Registered Park and Garden, owing to its positioning by the Engine Pond and its former function of pumping water from the lake up to the house. The building forms an appropriately rustic building within the undeveloped, natural setting of the lakes and woodland.

For these reasons, the curtilage Listed Buildings form a **Low** contribution to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden.

4.3 Significance of the Listed Building

This assessment of the significance of the Listed Building draws on the significance set out within Insalls' CMP on the house and gardens as a point of departure; however, it expands upon the historical and aesthetic values and provides an assessment of evidential and communal values.

4.3.1 Evidential Value

The site of the house was undeveloped prior to the development of the current house, with the former building, St Leonard's Lodge, located to the south-west; the site therefore has no archaeological value associated with previous buildings. Leonardslee is not an unusual example of its typology or style and thus its evidential value is limited. The house does however provide insight into mid 19th century domestic and architectural motivations and the practice of creating new houses within established estates. The choice of the site which did not replace the earlier lodge also provides insight into landscaping considerations.

The Listed Building has **Medium evidential value**.

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4.3.2 Historical Value

The house, which is a Grade II Listed Building of 'special interest', has retained its original character as an isolated Italianate villa sitting at the heart of ornamental gardens and parkland and positioned above picturesque woodland gardens. The building was originally a private dwelling, built for comfortable family living and entertaining guests. This function is reflected in the grand reception spaces, sizeable service wing (now truncated) and various ancillary buildings. The introduction of a self-sufficient electricity generating plant in the late 19th century also reflects the demand to modernise and increase the comfort of the building for residents and guests. Whilst the building is no longer in private ownership, it retains its villa character and entertainment function in its current hotel and restaurant use.

The building carries some association value with the architect, Thomas Leverton Donaldson, who was a pioneer of architectural education and first professor of Architecture at University College London. He was a founding member of the Royal Institute of the British Architects and its President in the early 1860s. His significant works include the church of the Holy Trinity in South Kensington, alongside other churches and educational buildings. It carries limited associations with William Egerton Hubbard, the father-in-law of Edmund Loder who the house was built for in 1856. The strongest historic association stems from the connection with the Loder family, as explained in the significance assessment of the Registered Park and Garden.

The house was completed in 1856; however, there have been few alterations other than those necessary by insufficient maintenance with much greater attention paid to the gardens than to the house itself. Significant changes to the building's interior were made during its redevelopment in 2019 but these were sympathetic to the original fabric, and necessary to reverse damage made by the house lying empty after the previous owners went into receivership.

The layout of the principal rooms is largely intact, the exceptions being the ground floor WCs, which have been

altered to serve the restaurant and the remaining part of the former service wing to the north of the first floor, which has been converted into guest bedrooms. Some original furniture and fittings remain in the house, including fireplaces in many rooms.

The building suffered in the 1960s, with the removal of the billiards room and the greater part of the service wing, which compromised an understanding of the building's historic functions, specifically the service parts. The house underwent further damage in the 1980s when converted into use as office spaces. The damage that this caused to the house has now largely been addressed by the current owners, who acquired the site in 2017. Despite the negative impact on the building, these 20th century changes do reflect a wider context for country houses in the post-war period, when increased taxes and death duties made running them unviable, resulting in sale or demolition, in whole or in part.

The Listed Building has **High historic value**.

4.3.3 Aesthetic Value

Leonardslee House was fashioned as an Italianate villa designed for entertaining, a function which is demonstrated in its built form and surroundings, with a grand double-height reception hall, large windows and terraces displaying dramatic vistas, and steps from the house accessing the woodland gardens.

The elevations are of particular aesthetic value and character owing to their pared back materiality, simple detailing and legible hierarchy. The simple ashlar Wealden sandstone elevations, articulated only by quoining, to the main building, and channelling, to the service wing, and the shallow-pitched slate clad roof with a bracketed eaves cornice, reflect a distinctly Georgian character, despite construction in the 1850s. The service wing, now truncated, is clearly subordinate to the main house owing to its more stripped back detailing, with no entrance porch, bracketed eaves cornice, or quoining.

Internally, the principal rooms are of the highest aesthetic value as handsomely proportioned spaces that largely retain their original plan form, except the rooms to the north-east of the entrance hall, which have been subdivided for WCs. The main hall is particularly intact, retaining its plan form and decorative plasterwork and joinery. This highly significant space is characterised by architectural features including the dentilled cornice, upper balcony on moulded consoles, cantilevered stairs with cast iron balusters, columns and pilasters painted to resemble marble. Other principal spaces at ground floor, such as the restaurant and function room, retain their original decorative joinery and plasterwork, giving these spaces particular status.

The removal of part of the service wing to basement level has impacted the aesthetic value and historic character of the building, making it difficult to understand the extent of the utilitarian parts formerly servicing the house. The loss of the conservatory attached to the south-west elevation has also been detrimental to the aesthetic value of the house, both by causing external scarring and the resultant garden room's underutilisation for access to the lawns.

The Listed Building has **High / Medium aesthetic value**.

4.3.4 Communal Value

The significance of the curtilage Listed Buildings is covered fully in Section 5.0; however, this section assesses their contribution to the significance of the Listed Building's setting.

The building is open to the public as a hotel and restaurant and visible to paying visitors to the gardens, although it is not accessible internally except for those eating in the restaurant and staying in the hotel. The building features in the collective memory of the Loder family, whose ancestors laid out the gardens, and who continue to live nearby.

The Listed Building has **Medium communal value**.

Leonardslee is of **High significance**

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4.3.5 Contribution of curtilage Listed Buildings to the setting of the Listed Building

The significance of the curtilage Listed Buildings is covered fully in Section 5.0; however, this section assesses their contribution to the significance of the Listed Building's setting.

The Listed Building features a number of ancillary buildings nearby, which form part of its curtilage and should therefore be treated as part of the Listed Building. These include the Stables, built at the same time as the house, the Generator Block completed in stages from the late 19th century, and the Engine House, dating to the 19th century. In relative terms, these buildings, which are designed to be subservient and subordinate to the main house, both in function and architectural style, are of lower significance to the main house. However, they also complement the main Listed Building and illustrate the workings and self-sufficiency of a typical 19th century country estate, as well as the wealth and status of the residing family. The Stables reflects the need to accommodate horses and carriages for transport, whilst the Generator Block and Engine House reflect the technological introductions into the house in the late 19th century under the Loder family.

The Stables establishes the strongest visual connection and relationship with the main Listed Building through its proximity, its use of the same Wealden sandstone, although more roughly tooled than the ashlar finish of the house, and slate hipped roofs. The Generator Block and Engine House adopt a plainer, more utilitarian brick materiality, which differentiates these buildings from the politer architectural style of the house and Stables and reflects their former working function. There are certain factors that currently compromise the understanding of the historic relationship between these ancillary buildings and the main house, namely the loss of the roof and internal generating machinery to the Generator Block, as well as the loss of original stalls or loose boxes in the Stables and Coach House, making it more difficult to understand these buildings' ancillary functions.

A key element of the relationship between these curtilage Listed Buildings (namely the Stables and Generator Block) and the house is the balance of visibility and screening between these former working buildings and the main house. This is reflected to an extent in the current planting beds positioned between the service parts and the house; however, these have been considerably reduced since the early 20th century.

The curtilage Listed Buildings form a **Medium** contribution to the significance of the Listed Building's setting.