



Woolf Bond Planning

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

3rd February 2026

Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Dear Sir/Madam,

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AH

Objection to Planning Application DC/25/2079 for “Use of land for the stationing of 4 no. static caravans (Gypsy and Traveller residential purposes) and associated day rooms”

General

On behalf of our client, [REDACTED] please find enclosed an objection to the development as described above.

Content of the Objection

This letter of objection is supported by the following documentation:

- Heritage Technical Note (TCMS Heritage)
- Landscape Note (EDP)
- Highway Safety Technical Note

Introduction

On behalf of our client, [REDACTED] Woolf Bond Planning Ltd have reviewed the application materials submitted in support of application DC/25/2079 for the “Use of land for the stationing of 4 no. static caravans (Gypsy and Traveller residential purposes) and associated day rooms”.

As we elaborate on below, there are a number of areas in which the proposed development fails to accord with the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

We approach our review of this planning submission on a topic by topic manner.

Heritage Impacts

As [REDACTED] identifies in the supporting Heritage Technical Note, the Application Site is within the setting of two designated heritage assets: Cotlands (Grade II) and Brook Place (Grade II*). The application as presented is inadequate with regards to assessment and addressing of these designated heritage assets. There is no heritage statement so to speak of but a few paragraphs within the Planning Statement.

The Applicant relies upon the conclusions reached in the Council's assessment when assessing application DC/25/0054 for stables and a barn within the western part of the site saying:

“In a previous application permitted on site for the “construction of stables and barn with yard and access track” (ref. DC/25/0054), the assessing officer found that the development permitted at the western side of the application site did not harm to the setting of the listed buildings mentioned above. This was reinforced via a site visit carried out by a Council officer during winter months confirming that the existing trees and hedgerows at the southern boundary of the application site limited views to and from the nearby listed buildings. This assessment sets precedents for the lack of heritage impact from development at the application site. Given this proposal's greater distance from the nearby listed buildings, it is considered that the proposal would certainly not impact the setting of either listed building.”

This interpretation of events is inaccurate as it omits reference to the comments made by the Council's Conservation Officer in response to application DC/25/0054 (dated 17/02/2025):

“Due to the nature of the use and the design of the buildings the proposal would not result in additional harm to the setting of the listed building.”

“Due to the nature and use and design”. The Applicant has misinterpreted these comments, which are specific to the previous application, to justify a form of development that will result in a far greater level of harm. The nature, use, and design of this application are so materially different to that consented that it is in no way feasible to transfer the Conservation Officer's comments to this application and does not set a precedent for the wider site.

The Applicant relies upon screening to justify acceptability regarding heritage impacts. Just because a development is screened from a heritage asset, this does not mean that the proposal is not in the setting of a heritage asset. Moreover, Appeal precedent confirms that such an approach cannot be taken with the Planning Inspectorate, when dismissing the Waterditch Cottage Appeal¹, saying:

“The appellant's case is essentially that the new building would be screened from view by the mature vegetation on the site boundaries. Whilst the existing screening is quite effective in this regard, listed buildings are irreplaceable heritage assets of intrinsic value and have statutory protection whether or not they are easily seen...” (our emphasis)

Historic England's The Setting of Heritage Assets document² further solidifies the position that screening cannot remove harm to the setting of a heritage asset saying at paragraph 40:

“As screening can only mitigate negative impacts, rather than removing impacts or providing enhancement, it ought never to be regarded as a substitute for well-designed developments within the setting of heritage assets” (our emphasis)

¹ PINS Ref: APP/K2230/W/17/3175510

² [Historic England: The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 \(Second Edition\)](#)

It is clear that the Applicant's approach regarding heritage impacts is fundamentally flawed.

It must also be noted that the author of this heritage section is not a qualified heritage consultant and their opinion on heritage matters should carry very limited weight at best.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires an applicant to, as a minimum, consult the relevant historic environment records using appropriate expertise where necessary. The Applicant has neither consulted the relevant historic record nor used appropriate expertise.

Next, I draw your attention to Paragraph 210 of the NPPF which says:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;**
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and**
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."**

Most pertinent to the consideration of this application is sub-paragraph c). The previous barn was approved because it was an entirely in-keeping form of development for the area with the local vernacular which is defined by farmsteads and dwellings with agricultural (or at least agricultural style) outbuildings associated with them. The siting of four static caravans, however well designed they may be (noting that no elevation plans have been submitted to give assurances of this), will not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness but, in fact, read as a stark contrast to the charming rural character so prevalent. The proposal clearly conflicts with paragraph 210 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF requires that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF makes very clear that great weight needs to be applied to the conservation of these heritage assets.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF requires:

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;**
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional"**

As [REDACTED] also points out, the Applicant's assessment of heritage impacts is flawed. As such, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the great weight to be applied to the conservation of these heritage assets must translate to this development causing substantial harm to the setting of

these heritage assets. Noting that the proposal will impact the setting of Grade II* Brook Place, the justification for this harm should be “wholly exceptional”. It isn’t.

These national policies are manifested at the Local Level within Policy 34 of the Horsham local Plan. The Application has not demonstrated that it has met any of these requirements. This alone warrants refusal of this application.

Landscape Impacts

The supporting Landscape Technical Note includes a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the area. In particular, it highlights that the Application Site is within the setting of the High Weald National Landscape.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF Says:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

No landscape and visual impact assessment has been submitted with this application to provide a detailed analysis of the surrounding landscape quality and an assessment of the development’s impacts upon such, including the setting of the High Weald National Landscape.

As the supporting Landscape Technical Note rightly identifies³ many assertions have been made within the accompanying planning statement regarding the landscape value of the area and the proposal’s compliance with adopted Development Plan policies but no supporting evidence has been provided. As such, minimal weight can be afforded to the landscape arguments presented in favour of this application.

Turning to the matter of Development Plan compliance with regard to landscape impacts, the Council’s Planning policy map confirms that the site falls outside any defined settlement boundary and therefore constitutes countryside development.

Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) states that:

“Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;**
- 2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;**
- 3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or**
- 4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.**

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in

³ See paragraph 3.1 therein.

the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;

- 1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;**
- 2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and**
- 3. The landform of the area.**

Noting that Policy 23 allows traveller pitches to be sited “in or near existing settlements” (a matter we discuss in greater detail below) it is taken as read that there is in-principle support for a countryside location. However, it must still, amongst other things, protect, conserve and enhance their features and characteristics of its locality.

As we have discussed, the proposed development does not respect and enhance the historic qualities so readily prevalent in the area which alone justifies refusal of this application. However, as the Landscape technical note confirms, the proposed development would result in detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Site, including the experience from the adjacent PROW. It is clear then that the proposed development fails to comply with Policy 26.

Policy 23, insofar as it relates to landscape impacts, requires applications for traveller pitches to evidence that:

“The development will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings.”

As is discussed within the supporting landscape technical Note, the proposed development will result in an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape such that this criterion of Policy 23 is not met.

Policy 30 has been completely overlooked in the Applicant’s submission. This policy says:

“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. (our emphasis)

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...**

This approach is consistent with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (cited above). Noting that the Application Site is within 500m of the High Weald National Landscape. As such, the Application Site is very much within its setting and is required to comply with the requirements of Policy 30.

No such assessment, having regard to the relevant National Landscape Management Plan, has been provided thus failing to adhere to part 2 of this Policy.

No elevation plans have been submitted with this application to enable the full visual impact of the proposed dayrooms to be assessed.

We note that such plans have been submitted with other recent applications for similar proposals within Horsham District (LPA Refs: DC/25/1700, DC/25/0982, DC/25/0519, DC/25/0497 to name but a few). We question why the Council is content to take a decision on this application in the absence of this information. It would clearly be an inconsistent approach to decision making to not request elevation plans here so that a full assessment of the visual impacts of the dayrooms may be undertaken.

Without a full assessment of the visual impacts of the development, it cannot be concluded that the proposed development will not harm the local landscape character. For all of these reasons, the proposed application warrants refusal on landscape grounds.

Ecology

Before assessing the ecological information submitted with this application, we acknowledge that the Environment Act allows a 10% net gain in biodiversity to be achieved through off-site mitigation. However, there are some concerns with the submitted ecological information.

The Assessment Area Does Not Match the Application Boundary

The Applicant makes the following assertions in the submitted planning statement:

“As shown in the accompanying BNG assessment the post development habitat creation within the design of the scheme would result in a significant increase of habitat units, totalling 0.2308, giving a Biodiversity Net Gain of +11.66% and a gain of 1.0603 hedgerow units. Therefore, the proposal exceeds the requirement to achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain under the Environment Act 2021.”

Below is an extract of the survey area used to inform the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment:



Figure 1: Extract of DC/25/2079 BNG Assessment

Compared to the submitted site location plan (Extract below), the survey area has completely omitted the western part of the application site. It is clear that the full site has not been accurately surveyed and the conclusions within this report cannot be relied upon.

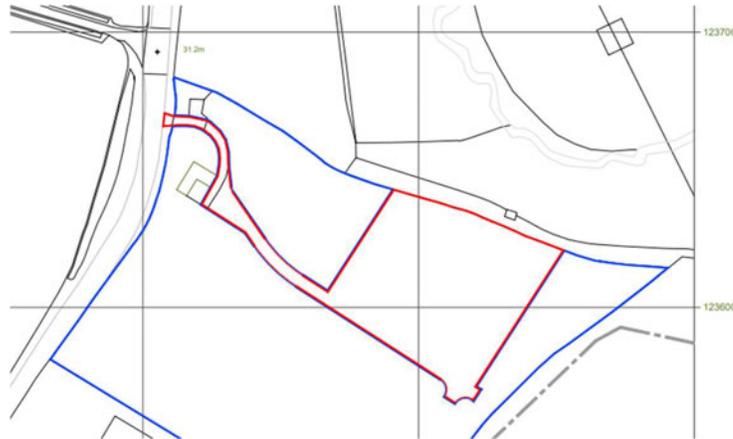


Figure 2: Extract of DC/25/2079 Location Plan

Site Degradation

In addition to this, the submitted BNG Assessment takes no account of the site degradation that has occurred. This has taken the form of waste piles and bonfires as witnessed by numerous residents.

In these circumstances, the PPG⁴ mandates:

“If there has been degradation and there is insufficient evidence about the biodiversity value of the onsite habitat immediately before the degradation, the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat must be taken to be the highest biodiversity value of the habitat which is reasonably supported by any available evidence relating to it. This requirement must be applied to the calculation of pre-development biodiversity value in the metric tool, and the Biodiversity Gain Plan template asks for information regarding whether there has been prior habitat degradation. “

This has not been taken account of in the submitted metric.

Due to this gross inconsistency between the application boundary and the area surveyed to inform the BNG survey, and the clear on-site degradation that has not been accounted for in the submitted metric, the cited assertions by the Applicant cannot be relied upon.

The findings of the Inspector, when refusing the recent Madela Way Appeal⁵, made the following particularly pertinent comments regarding site degradation:

“14. For all three of the appeals the appellant submitted a small site metric and indicated that degradation of the site had not occurred. However, on the basis that there can be no dispute that the eucalyptus tree has been removed, as it is subject to a tree replacement notice, the submitted small site metric, whilst providing baseline habitat data, cannot account for the degradation and this could lead to a misleading net gain calculation. Whilst the appellant has provided, for Appeal C, a preliminary ecological assessment, it does not also

⁴ Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 74-036-20240214

⁵ PINS Ref: APP/A5840/W/25/3361085, APP/A5840/W/25/3361771, APP/A5840/W/25/3368058

account for the removal of the eucalyptus tree and therefore is insufficient for the requirements of Article 7.

15. There is therefore a clear deficiency with the BNG information as submitted which would affect the reliability of the BNG calculations needed to demonstrate a minimum 10% gain.

17. On the evidence before me, I am not satisfied that the minimum information requirements for BNG required as part of the initial application have been met. The absence of the minimum requirements for BNG means that the planning applications as submitted to the Council were invalid. An invalid application may not lawfully be determined. It follows that any appeal relating to such an application, is also invalid. Consequently, I am unable to consider the substantive matters of the appeals before me. It would be open to the appellant to submit a revised valid application to the Council for determination if they wish to pursue these proposals further.

18. Whilst I appreciate that this may be frustrating for the appellant, the legislation is very clear regarding the minimum requirements for BNG information. (our emphasis)

The scheme therefore fails to evidence that 10% net-gain in biodiversity can be achieved contrary to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. The appeal precedent above makes it abundantly clear that the whole application is invalid and must be dismissed without delay.

Even if the Council were to consider that no site degradation has occurred, the inconsistency between the application site boundary and the survey area (as highlighted on figures 1 & 2 above) mean the submitted BNG metric is invalid, rendering the whole application invalid.

Whilst taken during the life of this application, the photos below show the nature of the activity the site has been subject to :



View of the site from the east, from the public footpath



Highway Safety Implications

The supporting highway note, produced by SPD, identifies that the A281 Brook Hill is subject to a 60mph speed limit. On such roads a visibility splay of 215m in each direction is required. Figure 5 within the technical note confirms that such splay cannot be achieved without having to rely upon third party land and are restricted by trees and other vegetation.

At best, visibility splays suitable for vehicle speeds of 35mph or lower are achievable. Whilst there is an extant permission for use of this access to service stables, the nature and pressure upon the site access arising from this application will be materially different in terms of regularity of use thus further prejudicing highway safety

Most alarmingly, the technical note highlights that there have been three fatal collisions within the immediate vicinity of the Site access within the last 20 years. The intensification of the use of this access, for which no swept path analysis has been provided, will only achieve a greater likelihood of further accidents in the future.

It has not been demonstrated that safe and suitable access for all users has been incorporated into this proposal, contrary to Policy 40.

Conclusion

The submitted ecological information warrants dismissal of this application. However, should the Council elect to continue to determine this application, against clear appeal precedent, the deficiencies of the application with regard to heritage, landscape, highway safety, and ecology matters provide clear and compelling justification for refusal of this application.

Yours faithfully

Woolf Bond Planning Ltd

Land at Cotlands Paddock, Cowfold, RH13 8AH

Landscape Note

edp9663_r001a

QA: WGa/NPR_FJe/NHa_300126

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following note has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of [REDACTED] ('the client') who is objecting to the proposed redevelopment of Land at Cotlands Paddock, Cowfold, Horsham, RH13 8AH ('the site').
- 1.2 The site comprises a single field parcel, located within open countryside, and is not subject to any discernible landscape detractors. In broad terms, the site is bounded by intact hedgerows and trees. The current land use is pasture.
- 1.3 The site and context generally comprise an area of well-wooded farmland to the south-west of the lower lying, well-wooded fringes of the High Weald National Landscape (NL).

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The location of the site is illustrated in **Image EDP 2.1** below, to the north of Cowfold (and its associated conservation area). Within the vicinity of the site are several heritage assets and an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. The High Weald NL is located within 500m at its nearest point to the site.

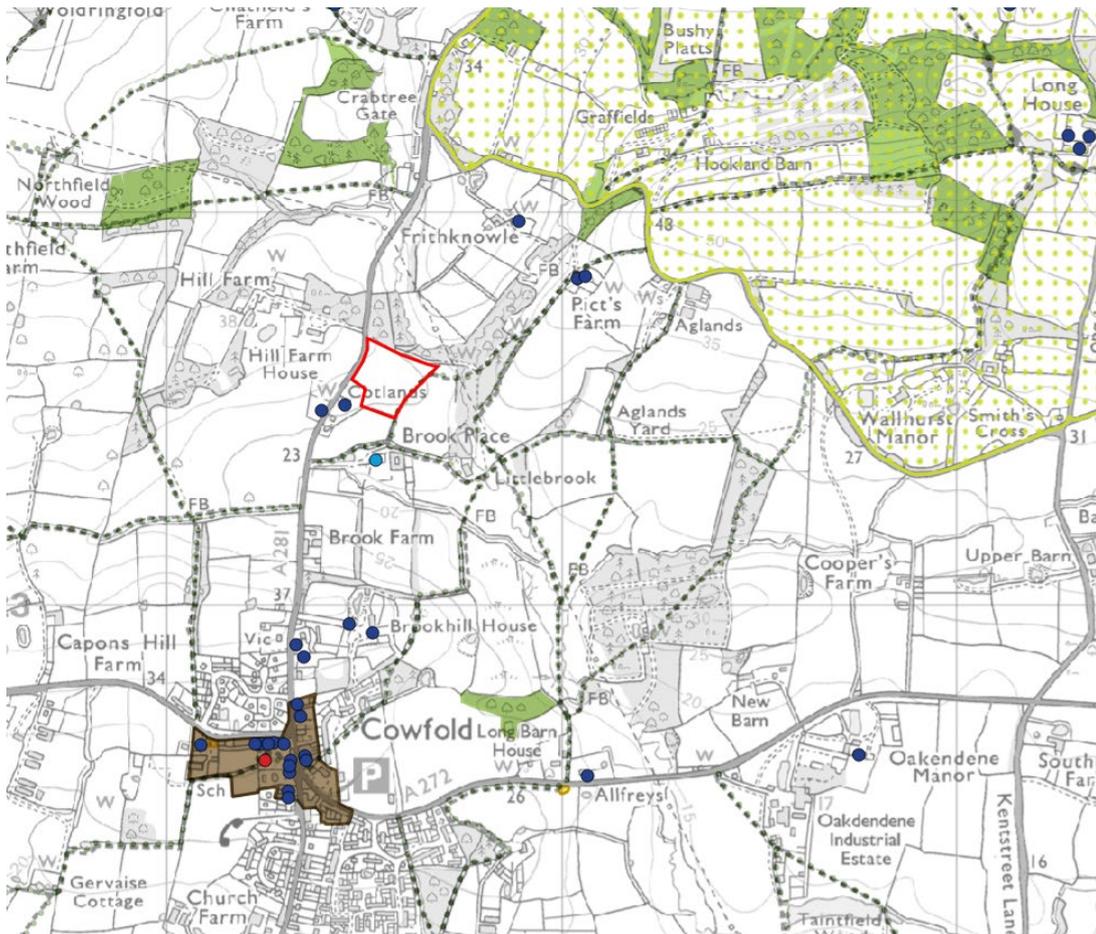


Image EDP 2.1: Site location and environmental planning context.

- 2.2 **Image EDP 2.2** illustrates the open, tranquil character of the site, which is contrasted in the wider context by frequent and extensive areas of trees and woodland.
- 2.3 This is a gently undulating, agricultural landscape of small to medium scale fields, defined by mature, often well-treed hedgerows and interspersed with a network of woodland (some ancient) and shaws (or copses). This landscape is generally undeveloped, with a remote character and limited detractors.
- 2.4 There is a network of lanes and PRoW across the area, including adjacent to the site, and the Downes Link and the Sussex Diamond Way long distance routes are in relative proximity to the site.
- 2.5 The surrounding agricultural land includes pockets of settlement, scattered residential properties and isolated farmsteads. The properties include listed buildings, dotted across the landscape and concentrated within Cowfold Conservation Area, that give an indication of the time depth of the area. These elements provide a generally rural agricultural landscape.



Image EDP 2.2: Site and surrounding character context.

- 2.6 Whilst the site falls outside the High Weald National Landscape, it is within 500m of its boundary.
- 2.7 The High Weald AONB (NL) Management Plan (2024-2029)¹ recognises that it is not just activities within the AONB that may affect land within the AONB, stating (emphasis added by EDP):

“It is not only development within the boundary of the High Weald AONB that needs to be informed by consideration of the Management Plan; national planning policy and guidance make clear that land within the setting of AONBs often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and here poorly located or designed development can do harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.”

- 2.8 The Management Plan sets out the main contributors to the natural beauty of the AONB which contribute to its character. These include matters pertaining to land-based economy and related rural life, as well as other qualities. Matters subject to change, as a result of development within the NL setting, include not only the visual dimension but the unspoilt rural landscape and sense of naturalness. The Management Plan also emphasises the need

¹ highweald.org/document-library/aonb-management-plan/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-2024-2029/?layout=default. Accessed 29.01.26.

to consider impacts on lighting, on what is an intrinsically dark landscape with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

2.9 In consideration of the above, development within the site will need to have regard for the potential for intervisibility between the site and the NL, which should be determined through desk- and field-based assessment. Consideration will then need to be given to the nature of any effects on the landscape character, visual amenity, or key characteristics of the NL or its setting.

2.10 The site is situated within Horsham District Council Local Planning Authority (LPA) and is subject to the policy set out within the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (2015)². A review of the local planning policy circumstances, including relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and associated guidelines relevant to the site, are summarised below.

2.11 The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) includes the following policies that are considered relevant to the site:

- **Policy 2: Strategic Policy: Strategic Development** aims to maintain the district's unique rural character whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met. With regard to landscape, it states that its aim is to:

"12. Retain and enhance natural environmental resources, including landscapes and landscape character, biodiversity, and retaining and enhancing environmental quality including air, minimises energy and resource use and provides flood mitigation."

- **Policy 25: Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character** aims to protect the *"Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats"*;

- **Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection** aims to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside to outside built-up area boundaries. The policy states that *"Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location"* in addition to meeting one of a series of criteria including *"4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas."* The policy continues:

"In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;

1. *The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*

² https://www.horsham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/60190/Horsham-District-Planning-Framework-November-2015.pdf. Accessed 29.01.26.

2. *The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
 3. *The landform of the area.”*
- **Policy 30: Protected Landscapes** aims to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB (NL) and the adjoining South Downs National Park and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. It states that *“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”*.
 - **Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity** aims to maintain or enhance the existing network of green infrastructure. To this end the policy:
 - Requires that development proposals enhance existing biodiversity, and create and manage new habitats where appropriate;
 - Supports new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites;
 - Supports development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks;
 - Requires replacement planting with a suitable species where felling of protected trees is necessary; and
 - States that particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district and lists the hierarchy.
 - **Policy 32: The Quality of New Development** aims to secure high quality and inclusive design for all development in the district, based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context for development. The policy sets out particular expectation to achieve this aim, including the expectation that development will *“Complement locally distinctive characters and heritage of the district.”*;
 - **Policy 35: Strategic Policy: Climate Change** states that:

“Development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009.”

2.12 The Landscape Character Area (LCA) M1 'Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridges and Ghylls' is described as:

"A well wooded and enclosed landscape of steep wooded ridges and ghylls, as well as small valleys situated on the Tunbridge Wells Sand. The relief becomes slightly more subdued towards the west of the character area with a transition to the Low Weald. It has a strong network of small to large sized woods, shaws and hedgerows, which enclose mainly small pasture fields. As a result, views are generally very confined, although there are occasional long views over the undulating ridges. Farmland ponds, hedgerow oaks and steep winding lanes are also distinctive features".

2.13 Key Characteristics are listed below:

- *"Steep wooded ridges and ghylls.*
- *Strong pattern of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows.*
- *Ancient hedgerow oaks.*
- *Small to medium size irregular and regular shaped pasture fields.*
- *Field ponds and small lakes.*
- *Numerous historic parks and gardens e.g. Leonardslee, Sedgwick Park, Denne Park.*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads, and small hamlets, e.g. Nuthurst.*
- *Confined views.*
- *Traditional local building materials of sandstone, brick and tile hanging."*

2.14 The Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment sets out the condition and sensitivity to change for the LCA in which the site falls, as listed below:

- *"Landscape Condition – Overall condition is **good**, although there are localised areas where it is declining due to loss of hedgerows;*
- *Sensitivity to Change - Overall sensitivity to change is **high** due to the many landscape qualities of the area, and locally visually prominent topography. Key sensitivities are to:*
 - *Any large scale housing development;*
 - *Incremental improvements to the character of the minor roads;*
 - *Suburbanisation; and*
 - *Changes to traditional land management."*

- 2.15 Clearly whilst the site does not fall within the NL, this is a site with 'good' landscape condition and high sensitivity to change. Furthermore, in relation to its role in forming the setting to the NL, as illustrated below in **Image EDP 2.3**, the host LCA within which the site falls is consistent with the of the High Weald NL.

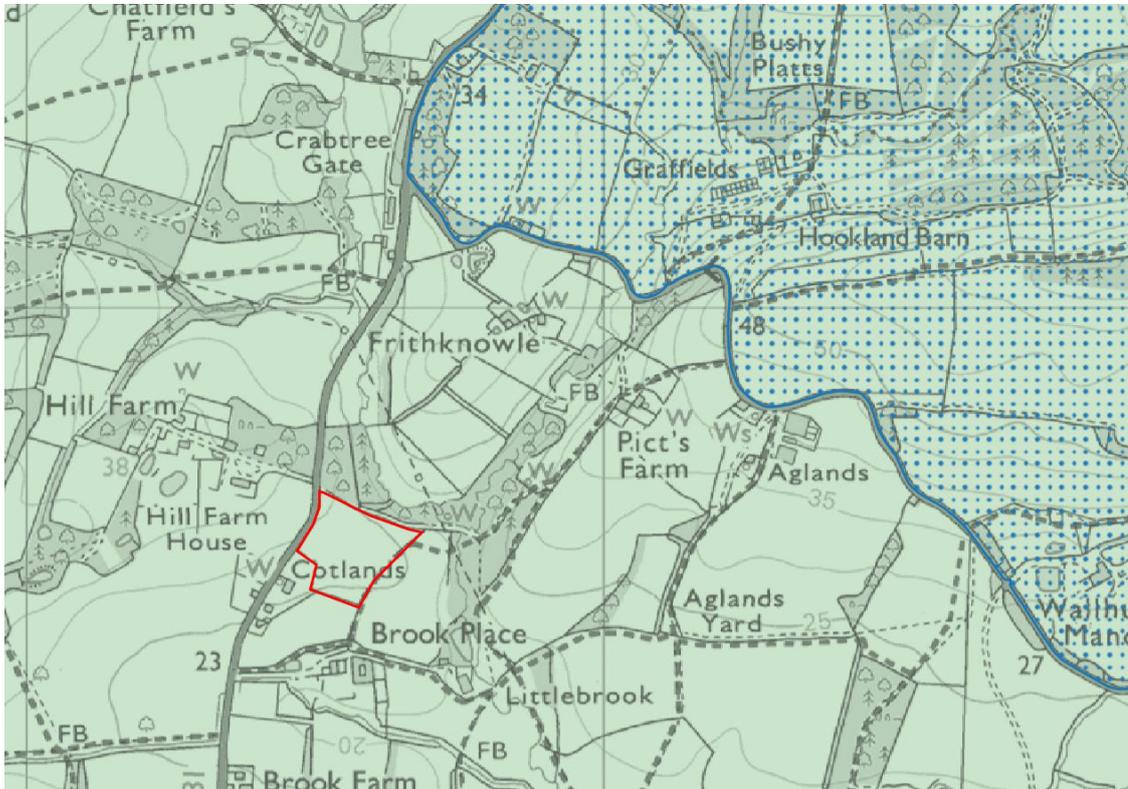


Image EDP 2.3: Extent of LCA M1 'Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridges and Ghylls'.

- 2.16 The submission is not accompanied by any proportionate assessment of the potential visual impact of the proposals. The starting point for the consideration of any potential visual impact of development within the site is a desktop Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). **Image EDP 2.4** is an output utilising a 1m digital terrain model (DTM) which shows the potential for views extending beyond the site to various receptor groups. Further desktop and fieldwork are required to reasonably predict the likely visual impact of the development proposals.

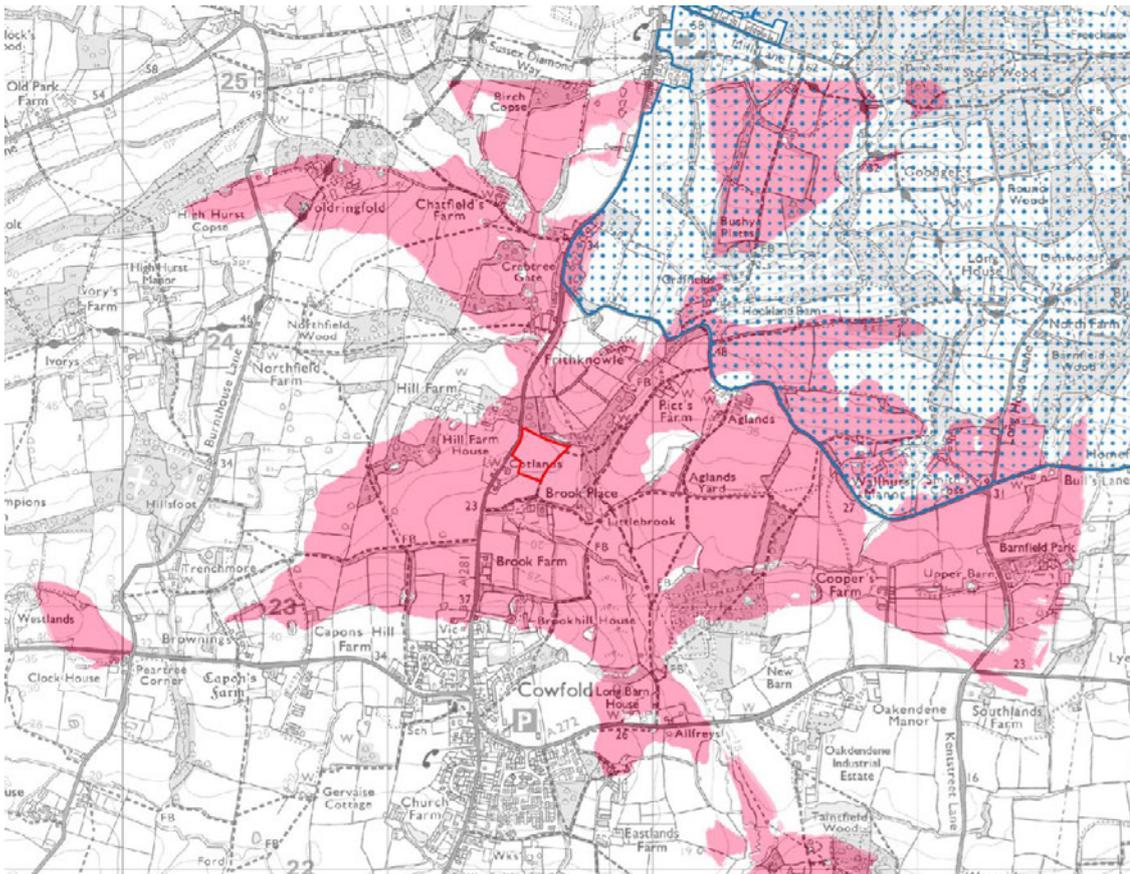


Image EDP 2.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The submitted planning application is not supported by any *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (GLVIA) compliant assessment. The planning statement refers to compliance with relevant local landscape policies, but there is no evidence to support these assertions. Furthermore, there is an absence of detailed information regarding matters such as lighting and fencing.

3.2 Clearly, the development proposals would, both in a landscape and spatial sense, form an incongruous element in the context of a high-sensitivity landscape in good condition, defined by low density settlement, quiet roads and peaceful tranquillity. Furthermore:

- The development would result in the addition of visual elements, noise, lighting and an intensification of urban activities;
- It will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape context (including the road and PRoW network);
- The proposals will detract from the appearance of the area and would fail to conserve and enhance the district's natural environment as detailed in the published character assessment and planning policy;

- Views of the proposed development from public vantage points would be perceptible and adverse in nature; and
 - Additional planting will not be able to fully mitigate an overall negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 3.3 The planning statement makes reference to the scheme being 'landscape-led' but there is no evidence of any consideration of landscape and visual matters by an appropriately qualified landscape architect.
- 3.4 The site lies within open countryside, within LCA M1 'Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridge and Ghyll Farmlands', which is characterised by its rural, pastoral qualities, irregular field patterns, woodland structure, and sensitivity to incremental change. Although the site is not located within a nationally designated landscape, adopted and emerging policies afford clear protection to undesignated countryside and require development to conserve landscape character, development pattern, and tranquillity. Furthermore, LCA M1 extends into the High Weald NL.
- 3.5 The proposal would introduce a new, permanent residential use into an open grassland field, resulting in a material intensification of activity and an urbanising influence inconsistent with the prevailing rural character. The existence of sporadic development along Horsham Road does not establish a settlement pattern that would justify further encroachment into the countryside, nor does it diminish the sensitivity of the site to change, which is recognised as being 'high' in the published LCA.
- 3.6 Whilst there is no objective assessment accompanying the proposals, the planning statement places disproportionate weight on existing and proposed vegetation as a means of screening the development. Even if there were to be limited visibility from Horsham Road or nearby PRow, this does not negate the harm to landscape character arising from the change in land use, introduction of caravans, domestic paraphernalia, hardstanding, lighting, and associated activity. Landscape impact must go beyond the visual dimension, and harm would arise irrespective of the degree of screening or filtering of views.
- 3.7 The proposal is not accompanied by any proportional assessment and would result in an encroachment into the open countryside, eroding the rural character, development pattern, and landscape qualities of Landscape Character Area M1. It would introduce an urbanising and domesticated form of development, that is neither landscape-led nor sympathetic to its surroundings.

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold

Technical Note – Highway Safety Issues

Introduction

This Technical Note presents information on items related to highway safety for the access to Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold.

The Planning Statement produced by JHB Planning (December 2025) states that the existing vehicular access from the A281 Horsham Road will be used by the development and that no road safety concerns in relation to the proposed access are apparent.

However, no plans are provided showing the achievable or required visibility splays based on the 60mph speed limit. Furthermore, no Road Safety Audit by a qualified auditor has been submitted and it is likely, for these reasons, that the highway safety concerns were not apparent to the planner.

Site Access

The existing site access comprises an informal driveway with a gate located approximately 15m from the main road.



Figure 1 - View of access from A281 Horsham Road

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold

Technical Note – Highway Safety Issues

The approach to the main road is steep, with a gradient of around 1 in 10 for the first 15m from the main road. This gradient is far from ideal for a junction as it means that vehicles, and especially larger vehicles, exiting onto the main road can lose traction and cannot get up to speed as quickly, increasing the risk of collisions.

There is no footway for pedestrians at the site access or along the A281. Therefore, people wishing to walk along the A281 to local facilities would have to walk in the carriageway along this 60mph road. The presence of hedges means that there is little opportunity for pedestrians to stand out of the way of approaching vehicles.

Visibility

Visibility is required both from the access in both directions along the main road, and along the main road on the approach to the junction.



Figure 2 - View looking left from the access

Looking from the access to the left, the vegetation and banking on the opposite verge create a blind spot along the main road.

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold

Technical Note – Highway Safety Issues



Figure 3 - View looking right from the access

Looking to the right, the trees and hedgerow block clear visibility from the access along the main road. This visibility splay goes through third party land.

The visibility from the access in both directions along the main road are therefore restricted.

The forward visibility for traffic travelling northbound on Horsham Road to a stationary vehicle waiting to turn right into the access is also an important factor. The photos on the next page show views from a vehicle travelling northbound and show that the access and any vehicles waiting to turn right are obscured. There is therefore a genuine risk of rear-end collisions if a vehicle is stationary waiting to turn into the site.

It should also be noted that the views in the photos show winter vegetation. When the vegetation is in leaf it will further obscure views along the highway with no ability to see through the bare branches.

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Technical Note – Highway Safety Issues



Figure 4 – Views looking north towards the access (approximate location marked with arrow)

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold

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The required lengths of visibility splays are based on the speed of traffic, and for traffic speeds of 60mph the visibility splay is 215m. The plans below show the extent of a 215m visibility splay at the access. The plans confirm that the visibility splays go through third party land and are severely restricted by trees, vegetation or banking.



Figure 5 – Visibility splays

The achievable forward visibility for vehicles travelling northbound has been measured as being less than 80m. This distance is appropriate for traffic speeds of around 35mph or less and is therefore not suitable for the higher speed of traffic on this 60mph road.

Vehicle Swept Path Analysis

No evidence of vehicle swept path tracking has been presented with the application documents. The nature of the proposed development will mean that vehicles with large trailers will be accessing the site. There is evidence that vehicles have overrun onto the soft verges in the vicinity of this access and therefore the ability for the expected vehicles to safely access the site should be confirmed.

Collision Data

The Crashmap database has been interrogated to review road collisions from the past five years in the vicinity of the site access. This shows that there have been two “serious” collisions, one each side of the site access.

Cotlands Paddock, Horsham Road, Cowfold

Technical Note – Highway Safety Issues

The incident to the north of the access occurred in June 2021 and involved six vehicles with two casualties. The collision occurred in daylight hours in fine weather. The incident to the south of the access occurred in May 2023 and involved a single vehicle with one casualty. The collision occurred in daylight hours in fine weather.

There have been three fatal collisions to the north of the site in the last twenty years, with two of these occurring in the last ten years. The incident closest to the site access occurred in November 2015, the next nearest in February 2007, and the third incident in April 2017.

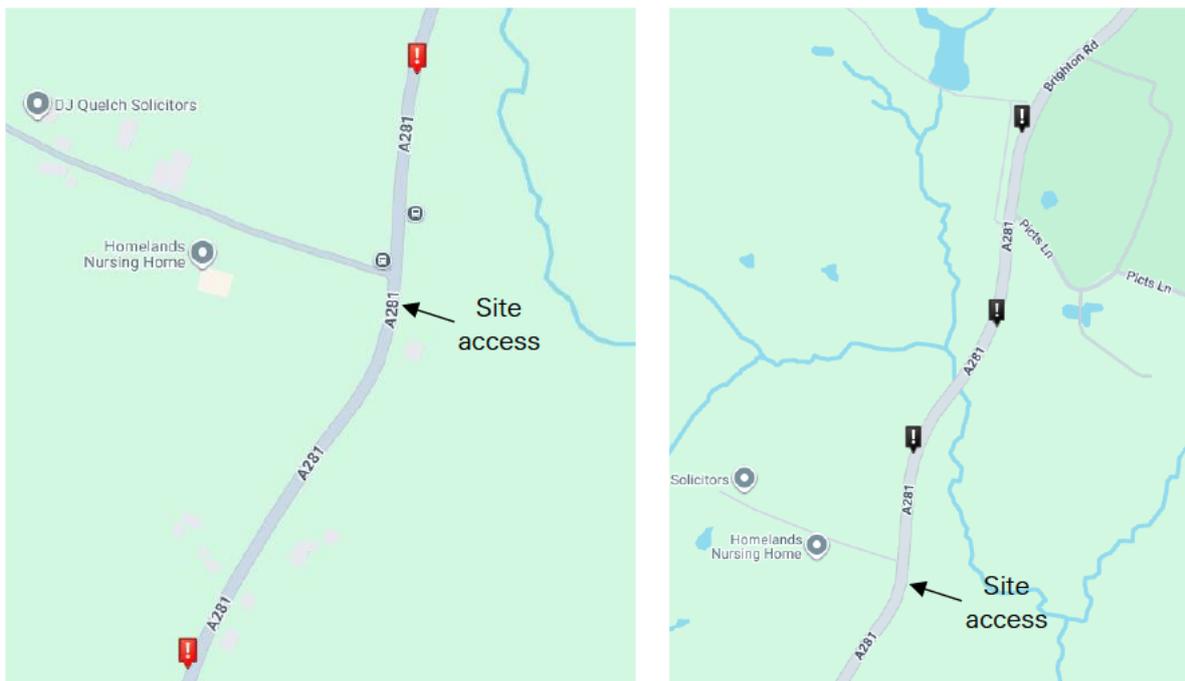


Figure 6 – Location of collisions (“serious” incidents shown in red, “fatal” incidents shown in black)

The intensification of use of the existing access increases the risk of incidents occurring at the site access.

Summary

Based on the information available, sufficient visibility splays towards and from the access junction based on the speed of the road are unable to be provided within land under the control of the applicant. The reduced visibility presents highway safety concerns on a road that has a history of serious and fatal road traffic collisions in the vicinity of the existing access.

We consider the serious nature of the matters detailed in this technical note cannot be resolved - in fact - with three fatalities and a number of further casualties in recent crashes, this is without question undeliverable both technically and from the casualty data evidence. The proposal cannot be considered compliant with highway standards. It is therefore recommended that the application be refused to avoid any future fatalities and serious injuries.

Date: January 2026

DC/25/2079 Cotlands Paddock: Heritage Technical Note

Introduction

1. This Heritage Technical Note has been prepared by TCMS Heritage Ltd in relation to the above planning application at “Cotlands Paddock”, Horsham Road, Cowfold, RH13 8AH. The application proposes the “*Use of land for the stationing of 4no. static caravans for (Gypsy and Traveller) residential purposes and associated day rooms*”.
2. This Heritage Note has been prepared to review the application, including the relevant submission documents, and the potential heritage impacts arising from the proposed development. The application site is located approximately 130m north-east of Cotlands, a Grade II listed building. It also lies approximately 190m north-east of West Cotlands, which is Grade II listed, and approximately 215m north of Brook Place, a Grade II* listed building. Brook Place’s Grade II* designation means that it is a heritage asset of the highest significance, as defined by paragraph 213 of the NPPF, and in the top 8% of all listed buildings in the country.
3. Despite the proximity to three listed buildings, including a building of the highest significance, no heritage assessment was submitted as part of the application. Heritage matters were briefly discussed in the submitted Planning Statement, but no setting assessment has been prepared. This leads to two areas of concern:
 - i. Inadequacy of the application with regards to heritage matters
 - ii. Potential impact to the significance of heritage assets in the local area
4. These matters are discussed further below.

Inadequacy of the Application Submission

5. Listed buildings, and their settings, are protected by primary legislation set out at section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. This states that special regard must be given to the desirability to preserve (keep from harm) listed buildings and their settings. It is well established that this is a matter of “*considerable importance and weight*” when determining any application that affects the setting of a listed building¹.
6. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires an appropriate assessment of any heritage assets that may be affected by a proposed development. This should be proportionate to the significance of the assets and, where relevant, should describe the significance of these heritage assets and any contribution made by their settings to this significance.

¹ See, for example, Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v E.Northants DC, English Heritage, National Trust & SSCLG [2014] EWCA Civ 137

7. Detailed guidance on how to undertake such an assessment is provided by Historic England (most notably within *GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* and *HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance*).
8. No such heritage assessment was provided as part of this planning application. The Planning Statement provides some consideration of two of the nearby heritage assets within the Site Constraints Table (p. 4). This concludes that Cotlands and West Cotlands are “*clearly separated*” from the application site by treelines, hedgerows, built form and, in the case of West Cotlands, the A281.
9. Further discussion of heritage matters is provided at p.19. This concludes that “*the proposal would certainly not impact the setting of either listed building*” again by relying primarily on the lack of views between the listed buildings and the site. It also relies on the previous planning application for the stables and states that the Council’s assessment in that case “*sets precedents of the lack of heritage impact from development at the application site*”. However, it is important that all cases are determined on their own merits and it is apparent from the submitted plans that the land subject to this application is larger than that considered in the previous application. It is not appropriate to rely on conclusions which related to a different development, which occupied only a small part of the field parcel, when determining this planning application. Indeed, when determining that application, the Council’s Conservation Officer noted that “*Due to the nature of the use and the design of the buildings the proposal would not result in additional harm to the setting of the listed building*”. It is clear that his conclusion therefore related to the nature of the development, and not its location.
10. At no stage does the applicant provide any description of the significance of the relevant heritage assets, nor any assessment of how their settings may, or may not, contribute to their significance. There is also no reference whatsoever to Brook Place, a Grade II* listed building which is located close to the application site and, as discussed further below, shares a historic relationship with the application site. The Planning Statement and application therefore clearly fail to comply with paragraph 207 of the NPPF.
11. The reliance on views (or the lack thereof) is also clearly contrary to Historic England guidance set out in *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*. The setting of a heritage asset is defined as “*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*” and *GPA3* acknowledges that “*although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our **understanding of the historic relationship between places***” (my emphasis). There is no such analysis of any non-visual factors within the application submission. This is particularly important in this case, where the application site occupies parts of two historic fields which both share historic associations with the nearby listed buildings.

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development

12. Any analysis of the setting of the relevant heritage assets would have established that Brook Place, which is described in the listing as a “*fine 16th century building*” was historically associated with an extensive landholding. In 1839, this included the eastern part of the application site (where the development will be sited) which was in arable use and formed part of Brook Place’s associated

farmland². The application site therefore forms part of the historic estate of the listed building and, given its proximity and this historic connection, is considered to form part of its setting. In addition, the western part of the site was recorded in 1839 as being associated with Cotlands, demonstrating that the site shares a historic relationship with two listed buildings in the local area and forms part of their settings. This means that, irrespective of the visual relationship between the site and these listed buildings, at the minimum, an appropriate assessment of their significance should have been provided as part of the planning application.

13. This historic relationship means that any change to the character and use of the land has the potential to affect the significance of the heritage assets. In addition, and contrary to the applicant's conclusion that the vegetation on the site's southern boundary prevents views to and from the listed buildings, this is not the case. Although the planting does provide some screening, in winter months views are provided through the trees into the application site and views of the proposed development would be permitted. Views would also be provided from the upper floors of Brook Place. This would exacerbate the impacts and has the potential to result in harm to the significance of both Brook Place, a Grade II* listed building, and the Grade II listed Cotlands. As noted above any harm must attract great weight in the planning balance when determining this application.

Summary

14. The application site forms part of the setting of two listed buildings: the Grade II* listed Brook Place and the Grade II listed Cotlands. Documentary sources demonstrate that the eastern part of the site formed part of the historic landholding of Brook Place, with the western part associated with Cotlands. There is, therefore, a demonstrable historic association between them, with the site now forming part of their rural settings.
15. Despite this, no heritage assessment was provided as part of this planning application the applicant has simply relied on comments related to a previous scheme, which occupied a smaller area of land, to conclude that the development will result in no heritage impacts. This is clearly inadequate and the application does not meet the requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF as a result.
16. Furthermore, the development has the potential to lead to harm to the significance of these two heritage assets (which include a heritage asset of the highest significance) and any such harm must be afforded great weight when determining this planning application.

² As recorded in the 1839 tithe map and apportionment for Cowfold Parish