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Heritage Report

## **Taintfield Farm, Kings Lane, Cowfold, RH13 8BD**

Statement prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning  
February 2025



Corporate members of:  
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
Historic Houses Association  
The Georgian Group



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## **1) INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1) I am Haig Dalton, founder of Chilcroft Heritage Planning, an established independent heritage consultancy since 2006. Formerly, I was a local authority officer within development control departments in the South of England. I have worked on a wide range of projects throughout the United Kingdom, predominantly (but not exclusively) for private sector clients.
- 1.2) I hold a masters degree in Historic Building Conservation (MSc); a postgraduate qualification in Architectural History from the University of Oxford (Oxon); I am an Affiliate member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).
- 1.3) Over the last 20 years I have specialised in the historic environment, both in terms of understanding and analysing physical fabric, and in terms of policy application, specifically by assessing impacts, providing advice and supporting development proposals. My experience includes a diverse range of cases relating to the assessment of physical changes to, and development affecting all manner of heritage assets, and their settings.
- 1.4) I have undertaken numerous impact assessments where I have considered the impacts of new development on the historic environment (dealing with physical impacts, setting, townscape, views and inter-visibility), including dealing with the effects of development on heritage assets in rural contexts.
- 1.5) I have provided expert evidence at appeals, including public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants and local planning authorities.
- 1.6) I understand my role in producing this heritage report; to give independent and objective evidence on matters within my expertise, based on my own independent opinion and uninfluenced by the instructing party. I confirm that I have stated the facts and matters on which my opinion is based, and that I have not omitted to mention facts or matters that could detract from my conclusions.

- 1.7) I believe that the facts stated within this Heritage Report are true and that the opinions expressed are correct. I have drawn attention to any matters where I consider I lack sufficient information to reach anything other than a provisional conclusion. I have adhered to the standards and duties of the professional bodies I am a member of, and will continue to adhere to those standards.
- 1.8) I was first approached in early June 2024, when I was asked to provide a heritage report in relation to the proposed development on behalf the applicant. My quote was based on several stages/elements, the first of which was an initial case review, including a site visit in August 2024 and subsequent Design Input. I confirmed that I am able to act as the applicant's heritage expert following this initial work and a site visit.
- 1.9) As an independent professional, I have formed my own opinions and have come to my own conclusions about the effects of the proposed development.
- 1.10) I have included in my heritage statement photos taken on my original site visit. The photos were taken with a compact digital camera and they have not been digitally altered, aside from cropping superfluous areas of sky and/or foreground. This visual assessment is intended to be informative, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.
- 1.11) This statement will describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the setting, as required by Para.207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2024). It will assess the significance of the heritage assets by way of Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017) in accordance with their preferred five-step procedure, identify, assess and explore the significance of their setting and consider the applicant's scheme in relation to them.

## 2) LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 2.1) Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.
- 2.2) Section 72 of the Act places similar duty on the decision maker with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, however this does not extend to the setting of conservation areas.
- 2.3) The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** constitutes the Government's current national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.4) Paragraph 203 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with emphasis on "significance", defined in Annex 2 as:

*"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."*

- 2.5) Annex 2 of the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."*

- 2.6) Paragraph 207 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.
- 2.7) Paragraph 208 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 2.8) Paragraph 212 states with regard to heritage assets. that great weight should be given to their conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm.
- 2.9) Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:
- “The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”*
- 2.10) The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.

- 2.11) Paragraphs 214 to 215 describe two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, namely substantial harm and less than substantial harm. These effects are to be weighed in the planning balance according to the guidance set out within the paragraphs, bearing in mind the statutory provisions above. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including grade I and II\* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 2.12) Paragraph 215 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public.
- 2.13) Harm is defined by Historic England as a change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.14) Paragraph 219 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.
- 2.15) **The National Planning Practice Guidance** provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF. The PPG currently relates to the 2019 version of the NPPF but will be updated in due course to reflect NPPF 2023.
- 2.16) In regards to the setting of heritage assets the PPG notes:

*“The setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage.”*

2.17) The guidance notes that a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.18) In relation to harm the guidance states:

*“Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.”*

2.19) Paragraph 020 of the document notes that public benefits can be heritage based and can include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset for the long term.

2.20) The **Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning** Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017) is a document published by Historic England as a second edition in December 2017, replacing the earlier 2015 setting guidance. The document provides for a thorough understanding of the setting of a heritage asset and the relationship of the setting to curtilage, character and context.

2.21) The guidance document notes, in paragraph 18, that the protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change. The document recognises that not all heritage assets are of equal importance and states that the contribution made by their setting to their significance will also vary. Not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without causing harm to the significance of the asset.

2.22) As per earlier Historic England guidance, the document advocates a stepped approach to assessing the impact of change within setting on the significance of heritage assets. This stepped approach is:

Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);

Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;

Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and

Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

2.23) Guidance under Step 2 notes that the asset's physical surroundings and how the asset is experienced (such as views, noise, tranquillity, sense of enclosure etc.) should be taken in to consideration.

2.24) Step 3 is also important in making it clear that a proposed development should not be assessed in terms of its impact on setting; instead it should be assessed in terms of the impacts on significance. That is to say, what matters is not the extent of visibility of the development or change to the setting of an asset, but the extent of change to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. In some circumstances, this evaluation may need to extend to cumulative and complex impacts which may have as great an effect on heritage

assets as large-scale development and which may not only be visual. At the very least the assessment should address the key attributes of the development in terms of its location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.

- 2.25) Paragraph 39 notes that options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the relocation of elements of a development or changes to its design. It notes that good design may reduce or remove the harm.
- 2.26) **Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires great weight to be given to preserving the setting of a heritage asset. In *Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243* the court confirmed that if the decision-maker has worked through the relevant heritage paragraphs in the NPPF, they will have complied with the s66 duty.
- 2.27) In *Barnwell Manor [2014] EWCA Civ 137* the court confirmed that great weight should be attached to the desirability of preserving the setting of a heritage asset.

### 3) ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1) The proposed site is situated within the farmstead of Taintfield Farm, a detached dwelling with a large southern curtilage area. It is situated north of King's Lane with access leading to it from the south of its land. The curtilage of Lidford Farm House and its associated outbuilding sits further to the west.
- 3.2) The farmstead is clustered around Taintfield Farmhouse, with the outbuildings fanning out to the north-west. Formerly the dwelling was a semi-detached pair of cottages that date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, first appearing on the 1957 tithe map (**see Fig 10**) and as such they are not of historic significance. The cottages were subsequently amalgamated into a single dwelling and remodelled at the turn of the century (**see Fig 1**). What historic significance there is does not lie with Taintfield Farm but with the neighbouring dwelling of Lidford Farm House directly to the west, with its former farmstead range of outbuildings now in the ownership of Taintfield Farm and forming part of the proposed site.
- 3.3) Lidford Farm House is a Grade II listed building (**List No. 1193164**) and dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century if not earlier, laid out as an L-shaped building. It is timber framed, constructed over two storeys with casement windows and a Horsham slab roof with tile hung upper elevations, part remodelled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in a Victorian architectural style (**see Fig 2**). A modern dormer window was added to the rear of the building on its single storey wing in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, at the same time that many of the existing windows were replaced to timber casement with leaded glazing bars. The principal elevation faces north overlooking a driveway and garage outbuilding, historically linking it with its former farmstead buildings to the north and east of the dwelling. The partitioning of this former farmstead has arguably harmed its significance and the way in which the former farmhouse was best appreciated. Nevertheless, many of these former farmstead outbuildings remain in situ in the adjoining ownership of Taintfield Farm and glimpsed views remain possible between the two.

- 3.4) In common with a historic farmstead, it benefits from a number of associated buildings that make up the setting of the listed building, the oldest being a 19<sup>th</sup> Century range of brick built former stables directly to the east of the listed building. Sent out as an L-shape around a central courtyard (**see Fig 3 & 4**), it was built in various phases with the earliest being the west wing which first appears in the 1879 tithe map (**see Fig 7**) and the southern wing added later, first appearing as the L-shaped outbuilding that we see today in the tithe map of 1912 (**see Fig 9**). It is constructed of red brick with grey headers and is single storey with a tiled roof and Crittall windows. The former stables are angled to face Lidford Farm House and comprise the most prominent historic former farmstead outbuilding. The two are now separated by a timber boundary fence and a brick built single storey garage that dates from the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century (**see Fig 10**). To the north of this sits the proposed site comprising a single storey timber frame outbuilding set out in an L-shape plan with a metal corrugated roof (**see Fig 5**). The building is believed to have been formerly used as a shelter for livestock and first appears on the 1912 tithe map complete with a brick built wall providing an enclosure to the south side. It is of an improvised form of construction consistent with a temporary structure (**see Fig 6**) and is considered to be of least significance to the former farmstead.
- 3.5) The proposed site sits with the broader setting of Lidford Farm House. Whilst this is now confined to an area of land that now forms part of Taintfield Farm, it remains within the setting of the listed building as defined by Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017). The proposed site is situated to the north of the dwelling and beyond its existing curtilage, furthest from the listed building. The layout of the former farmstead principally allowed for views over the north and east and these aspects have been diminished since the partitioning of the former farmstead, with the former range of farmstead outbuildings now having less awareness than before. What awareness there is best associated with the larger brick built stable block that sits closest to the north-east of the listed building, with the proposed site former outbuilding playing a lesser role. Not only is this smaller former outbuilding furthest from the listed building, it is of least significance in terms of its age and form of construction. Subject to appropriate design, the building is considered capable of replacement.



**Fig 1:** Taintfield Farmhouse dates from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century and was originally constructed as a pair of cottages before becoming a single dwelling. It now sits at the heart of what is today known as Taintfield Farm.

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**Fig 2:** The proposed site sits adjacent to the Grade II listed building of Lidford Farm House and dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. It was the farmhouse for the former farmstead which included a historic range of buildings.

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**Fig 3:** The oldest former farmstead outbuilding is that of the stable block range that sits to the north-east side of Lidford Farm House. The single storey range of buildings date from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and are currently disused.

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**Fig 4:** The former stable block now forms part of Taintfield Farm being separated across its western side. The historic outbuilding is brick built with grey headers and a slate roof with metal Crittall windows.

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**Fig 5:** To the north of the former stable block sits an L-shaped former livestock building of an improvised construction, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

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**Fig 6:** The improvised building is poorly constructed using tree trunk/branch cladding and a corrugated roof. On balance, the building is thought to be capable of replacement, subject to appropriate design.

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#### 4) MAP REGRESSION EXERCISE



**Fig 7:** The proposed site historically formed part of Lidford Farm with Lidford Farm House seen here centred within its curtilage with the farmstead outbuildings ranged around it to the north of the farmhouse.

© Ordnance Survey 1879



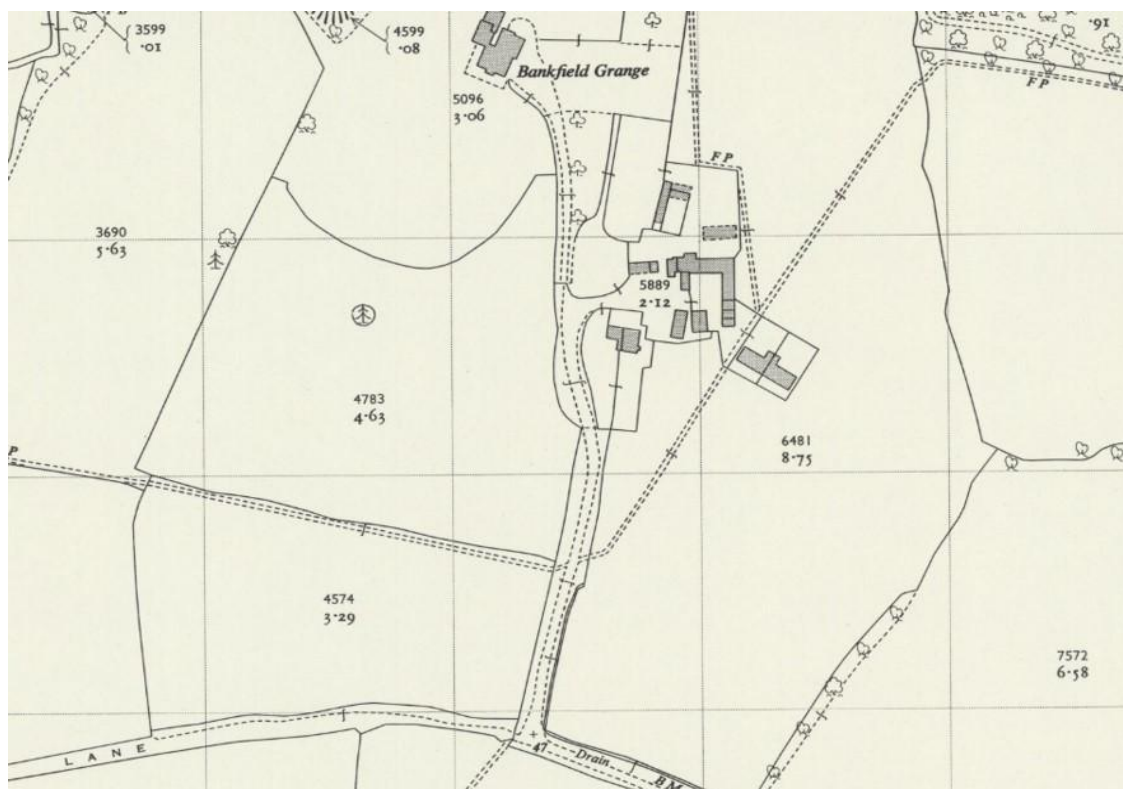
**Fig 8:** By the turn of the century, the former livestock outbuilding had yet to be constructed and a long rectangular outbuilding facing north/south (now demolished) acted as the main farmstead outbuilding.

© Ordnance Survey 1899



**Fig 9:** By the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the rectangular farm outbuilding had been demolished and the as existing L-shaped stable block outbuilding had been built to the north-east side, with the livestock building in situ.

© Ordnance Survey 1912



**Fig 10:** By 1957, Taintfield Farmhouse had been built as a pair of cottages and Lidford Farm House was also split into a pair of tenant houses, with the main farmhouse moving to the Edwardian Bankfield Grange.

© Ordnance Survey 1957

## 5) IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1) The proposed development would see the existing former farmstead building demolished together with the removal of the caravan and construction of a barn style single storey ancillary dwelling to be used as a holiday let.
- 5.2) The existing former livestock farm building is of poor quality and of an improvised form of construction that was never intended to last. Whilst it has served a purpose associated with the former farmstead, it does not necessarily follow that this must be of significance in its own right. The building dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century being not present at the time of the 1899 tithe map but does appear on the later tithe map of 1912. The timber frame building uses ad-hoc materials taken from the surrounding landscape that would have been readily available including being clad in tree trunks, with a crudely made frame to support it and a corrugated roof. By virtue of its age and method of construction, it is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The building is in a very poor condition with water ingress throughout which has clearly been longstanding and has not been in any active use for a considerable period of time. Of course, condition alone is not a reason alone for a building to be demolished but when taken as a whole with its lack of significance, poor quality construction and lack of a sustainable use, subject to appropriate design, an alternative proposal may be capable of improvement.
- 5.3) The proposed building consists of a chalet style single storey L-shape building similar to the one that it would be replacing. Although it would be of a slightly larger scale, mass and bulk, it is considered to be proportionate and does not push beyond a comfortable scope of development. The design would use materials that are considered to be consistent with the former farmstead with oak framing, timber weather boarding and a slate roof. The gable end design is also reflective of the roof form used throughout the historic stable block and Lidford Farm House itself. The proposal would be confined to an area of land furthest from the listed building and behind the historic stable block. The legibility of the listed building and how it is best appreciated from within the setting would remain unchanged, with no loss of significance. On balance, the proposal is likely to enhance the wider setting of the listed building.

## **6) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

- 6.1) The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains a statutory duty to give considerable importance and great weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building in the planning balance. Preserving means to do no harm.
- 6.2) The NPPF lays down an approach that corresponds with the statutory duty of the 1990 Act. In cases where harm occurs, the NPPF requires balancing the benefits of a proposal against harm resulting from it.
- 6.3) The Horsham District Council's adopted Development Plan policies require development proposals to conserve heritage assets (such as listed buildings), and their settings.
- 6.4) The guidance in Historic England's GPA3 provides a framework for considering and assessing effects on the setting of heritage assets.

### **Conclusions**

- 6.5) The existing building is not considered a non-designated heritage asset and dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is of an improvised form of construction and subject to appropriate design, is thought to be capable of replacement.
- 6.6) The proposed site is located furthest from the Grade II listed Lidford Farm House and beyond the stable block, which is the primary historic outbuilding.
- 6.7) The proposed design would be of a scale that is considered to be proportionate to existing and does not attempt to push beyond a comfortable scope.
- 6.8) The design, layout, proportions and materials are of a quality that would enhance the setting of the listed building over and above the existing improvised structure and reflects Lidford Farm House and former farmstead.



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