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Heritage Report

Clock House Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Cowfold, RH13 8DL

Report prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning
May 2026



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 planning 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 22 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 April 2021, 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 during May 2021. 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 appeal 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 in a rural environment to the west of Stonehouse Lane, with access via an separate entrance to the eastern side providing vehicular access. To the east sit the dwellings of Little Patches, Dairy Cottage and Clockhouse Farmhouse.
- 3.2) Clock House Farm comprises a range of former agricultural and equestrian buildings that have been redundant for some time. The oldest building within the proposed site is that of a former stable block, consisting of a large brick built single storey building built in the 1930s, first appearing on the ordinance survey map of 1939 (see Fig 3). It is of a considerable size occupying a large footprint that spreads to the eastern side of the site and sits directly west of Dairy Cottage (see Fig 4). It has a tiled hipped roof with open archways in the elevations and dormer windows (see Fig 7). Throughout there are timber casement windows with glazing bars and a wide eaves overhang (see Fig 5). The form of the building remains completely original and has not been subsequently extended or altered.
- 3.3) The former stable block is of an above average quality of construction, typical of the type of construction that remained prevalent before the outbreak of WW2. The building uses red brick with grey headers and includes an ornate brick archway at the centre of the inner courtyard (see Fig 8). The outer brickwork contains rounded edges and parts of the inside are lined with glazed tiles, to aid wet washing down and improve cleanliness. Details such as this are typically more absent post 1939 as buildings moved towards functionality and speed and cost of construction over and above the finish and architectural detailing of a building, as the country emerged from the post war years. Due to its age and quality, the building could be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
- 3.4) To the west and north of the site, there are a number of metal clad agricultural buildings that occupy the periphery (see Fig 12). Although these are of no historic merit, the buildings that sit to the western side do at least mimic other buildings that were once there as shown the 1939 map. The building to the north already benefits from permission to be relocated to the western side.



Fig 1: 1879 – Clockhouse Farmhouse, then known as Patches, dates from the early 19th Century if not earlier, as shown here. The proposed site remained undeveloped until the early 20th Century (**see Fig 3**).

© Ordnance Survey 1879

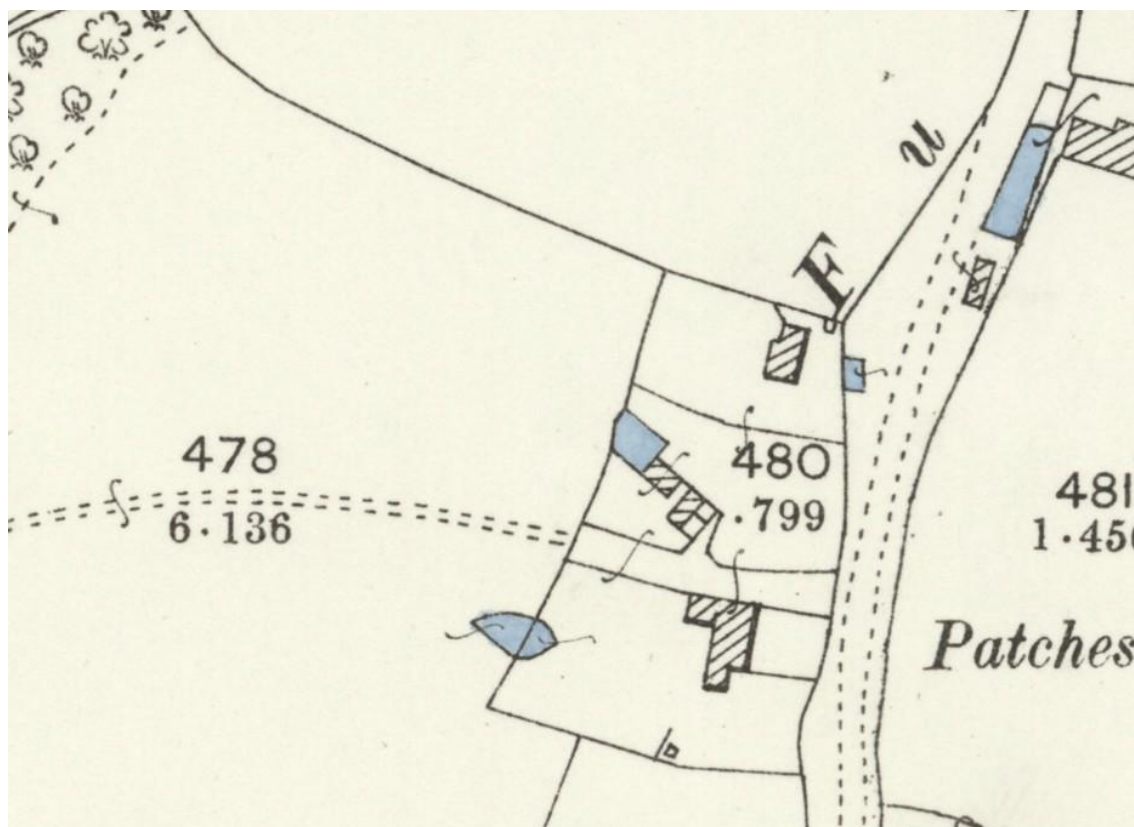


Fig 2: 1897 – A cluster of small farm buildings occupied the middle plot (480) of what is now Dairy Cottage. To the north sits the Grade II listed Little Patches with a footpath threading through (478) to the west side.

© Ordnance Survey 1897

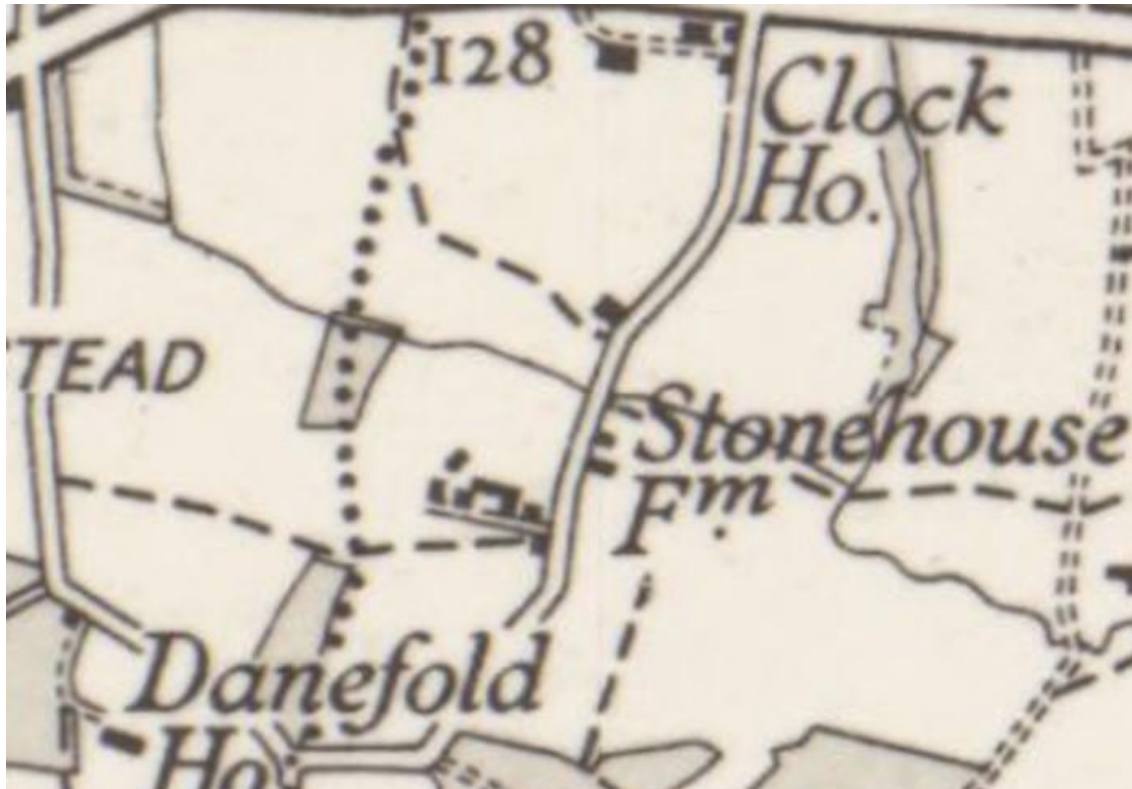


Fig 3: 1939 – The historic stable block range of buildings first appears on this map recorded in the 1930s.
© Ordnance Survey 1939

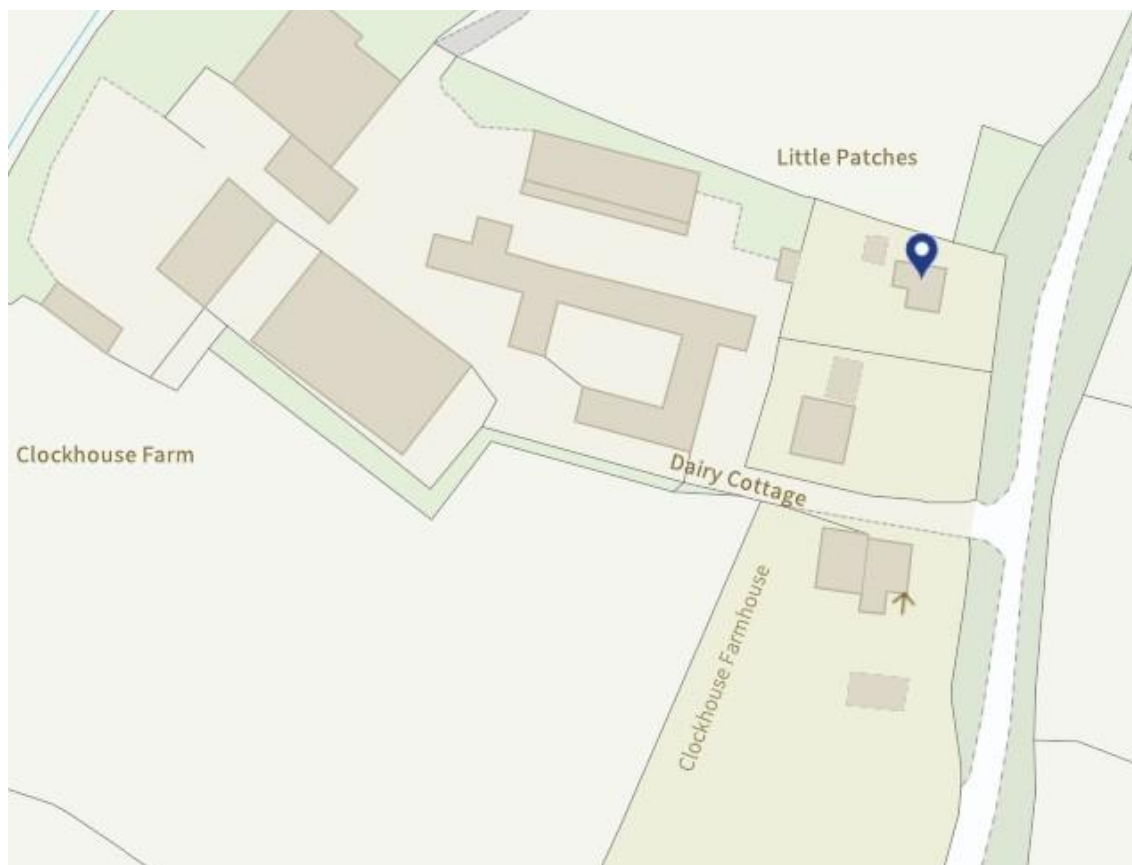


Fig 4: The proposed site sits to the west of the Grade II listed building of Little Patches and north-west of the NDHA of Clockhouse Farmhouse. The stable block sits at the centre with modern barns to the west.
© Historic England 2026

- 3.5) Stonehouse Lane is named for the farm that lies to the north-east of the site, as shown in Fig 3, and predates Clockhouse Farm. The former farmhouse was what is now known as Clockhouse Farmhouse to the south-east of the proposed site, which dates from the early 19th Century if not earlier. The dwelling is of a Georgian architectural style with red brickwork and sash windows, set over two storeys with a symmetrical front elevation and central porch that faces east overlooking Stonehouse Lane (**see Fig 11**). It has slate gable end roof with a pair of tall chimneys stacks at each side, which only serves to increase its prominence. For some reason, the dwelling is not a listed building but would at the very least be considered to be a NDHA. The rear elevation contains a later projecting extension and directly overlooks open pasture, including the access to the public footpath. The heritage asset remains most original as seen from its principal elevation to the eastern side, from there it is best appreciated including from the public realm of Stonehouse Lane itself. The former farmhouse was originally called Patches as shown on the tithe maps of 1879 and 1897 (**see Fig 1 and 2**) and was constructed as a replacement farmhouse to the original timber frame 17th Century farmhouse that sits further to the north and is now known as Little Patches.
- 3.6) Unlike Clockhouse Farmhouse, Little Patches is a Grade II listed building (**List No. 1027052**) and dates from the 17th Century if not earlier (**see Fig 9**). It is timber frame with later red and grey brick infill. Built over two storeys with a gable end tiled roof and two tall chimney stacks to each side, its principal elevation faces east overlooking Stonehouse Lane. The rear of the building faces west and was originally constructed with a catslide roof, giving it the more humble appearance of a single storey from this aspect (**see Fig 10**). It was later extended across two storeys in the late 20th Century with a brick built extension, creating an enlarged L-shaped footprint. The dwelling remains the most original as seen from its principal elevation, which showcases exposed timber framing making clear the true extent of its age, despite the later brickwork. For this reason, the listed building and its significance is best understood from this aspect to the east. The later built farm and stables buildings that form part of the proposed site form an indelible historic link with Little Patches and Clockhouse Farm, which allow for an understanding of these two historic buildings to be read within the context of a former farmstead.



Fig 5: The proposed site contains a former stable block range that dates from the 1930s and is of above average architectural and material finish. The proposal would see it given a long term sustainable use.

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Fig 6: The western side of the former stable block showing a metal clad agricultural building (left) to the north of the site that will be relocated, thereby enhancing the setting of the listed building and heritage assets.

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Fig 7: The north elevation of the stable block showing a line of dormer windows and coursed brickwork. The building, which has never been altered, will be restored and given a sustainable residential use.

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Fig 8: The inner courtyard of the stable block contains some fine detailing including the use of grey headed brick and through archways. These architectural features add to the merit of the historic building.

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Fig 9: Little Patches is a Grade II listed building and dates from the 17th Century if not earlier. It remains best appreciated from its principal elevation as shown here, which directly overlooks Stonehouse Lane.

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Fig 10: Little Patches as seen from the proposed site towards its rear (west) elevation. This contains a modern two storey extension, finished in a matching style, that is of least significance to the listed building.

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Fig 11: Clockhouse Farmhouse dates from the early 19th Century if not earlier and is a NDHA. It is best appreciated from its principal elevation. On balance, the proposal will preserve the setting of the asset.

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Fig 12: To the western side of the proposed site, there are a cluster of more modern metal clad agricultural buildings that are of no heritage significance to the setting. The proposed design would improve upon these.

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4) IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1) The proposed development would see the existing historic stable block range restored and converted to become 5 residential units, with associated landscaping and parking provision. Other parts of the site would see the existing metal clad agricultural buildings replaced in favour of new commercial units, utilising the vehicular access from Stonehouse Lane.
- 4.2) The listed building of Little Patches backs on to the proposed site, with its rear curtilage sharing the boundary. There is presently a great awareness of the proposed site and the redundant buildings that occupy it. Whilst this appearance accords with that of a disused farmstead and the heritage asset has always had this view ever since it was listed in 1980, that does not mean to say that it is not capable of improvement (**see Fig 7**). There is currently a great deal of awareness of the proposed site from the listed building and anything that can better preserve or enhance its setting would be broadly welcomed. The large metal barn that sits to the north of the proposed site, closest to the listed building, already has permission to be resighted further west, which would improve the views from and towards the listed building from the west side. Furthermore, the restoration of the historic stable block would see this building brought back into life, being sensitively repaired without any substantial external changes that would be thought harmful. The introduction of new landscaping in place of hardstanding would also be broadly welcomed and help soften the setting of the listed building. The proposed residential use would on balance provide the building with a long term sustainable use, that will be capable of preserving the enhanced setting of the listed building. When taken as a whole, the proposal would enhance the significance of the listed building.
- 4.3) Before coming to any wider conclusions, it should be noted that the significance of Little Patches and Clockhouse Farm and their historic interest linked to their age, presence from the public realm along Stonehouse Lane, architectural form and legibility as part of a former farmstead – will not be at all affected. These components of the significance of the heritage assets and the areas from where they can be best appreciated, will be preserved. Any harm to the setting of the heritage assets can only relate to the extent to which the experience of the significance of the listed building is altered.

- 4.4) The NPPF defines setting as the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced. In terms of how the historic association of the proposed site is best experienced, there is a medium to higher degree of awareness. This is not only inferred by virtue of proximity but also due to the clear inference of the former farmstead and its historic links with the heritage assets, which once fell under the same ownership. The presence of a public footpath running through the access better allows for this appreciation not only from Stonehouse Lane, but also from the rearmost setting of the heritage assets to the westernmost side, including the outlying areas best associated with the proposed site. This is particularly relevant in the case of the NDHA of Clockhouse Farmhouse which backs onto the pastureland and footpath.
- 4.5) Clockhouse Farmhouse, although not a listed building, is a NDHA and like Little Patches, is best appreciated from its principal elevation which faces east, away from the proposed site. It is the rear of these buildings that face west and therefore would have greatest awareness of the proposed development. In the case of Clockhouse Farmhouse however, it does not directly back onto it, with the proposed site being in the wider periphery and off to one side. Nevertheless, an awareness of the proposed site is inescapable by its very nature given its proximity. The proposed design would not involve the enlargement of the existing stable block, thereby avoiding any negative encroachment. Furthermore, there is presently an unenviable amount of hardstanding spread around the part of the site that sits closest to the NDHA, so the proposal to introduce soft landscaping around the very edge of the footprint in addition to new lawn and planting areas is welcomed and will enhance the setting of the heritage asset.
- 4.6) Although the existing vehicular access will result in its use for cars and the need for parking spaces, this will overall reduce the level of commercial and heavy traffic that the existing site is capable of using, which is seen as broadly beneficial. Furthermore, Historic England guidance states that the best use for a heritage asset is the one it was originally intended for however, in the case of a stable block as large as this, this is clearly impractical. In this sense, the proposed residential use is thought to be an acceptable use that will involve reversible interventions. It is also felt that this use will provide the historic building with a long term sustainable use, something it is very much in need of.

5) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 5.1) 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.
- 5.2) 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.
- 5.3) The Horsham District Council's adopted Development Plan policies require development proposals to conserve heritage assets (such as listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets), and their settings.
- 5.4) The guidance in Historic England's GPA3 provides a framework for considering and assessing effects on the setting of heritage assets.

Conclusions

- 5.5) The significance of the Grade II listed building of Little Patches and the NDHA of Clockhouse Farmhouse are best appreciated from their principal elevations overlooking Stonehouse Lane, facing away from the proposed site.
- 5.6) The greatest awareness to the heritage assets is from their rear curtilages, with the proposed site forming part of their setting. On balance, the proposals are of a design and material quality that would enhance their respective settings over and above what is presently experienced, including the use of soft landscaping.
- 5.7) The setting of the heritage assets benefit from the presence of the historic stable block and our understanding as a former farmstead. The proposal will preserve this legibility and see it provided with a long term sustainable use.
- 5.8) The inclusion of commercial buildings to the far western side of the proposed site will be set back and well-spaced out from the historic range of buildings.

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