

## ~ WESTHOUSE FARM ~

HENFIELD ROAD, ALBOURNE, HASSOCKS, WEST SUSSEX, BN6 9DE

*Removal of modern farm buildings and construction of stables and outbuilding (games room). Conversion and extension of barn and stables and associated landscape works.*

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCORPORATING HERITAGE STATEMENT



Prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA ~ Reviewed by Ben Kirk MSc, IHBC

November 2025



ABOUT MANORWOOD

Manorwood is a small team of historic building professionals with varied skills across different areas of the historic environment.

This report has been prepared by Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher Roberto Prieto-Labrador and reviewed by Director Ben Kirk

Roberto holds a MA in English Building History, awarded with Distinction by the University of York. His field of expertise is domestic vernacular architecture, specialised in material culture and domestic life during the late medieval and early modern periods.

Roberto is a Practitioner member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (PCIfA), as well as an Affiliate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). He is also a member of The Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), The Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG) and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

As a Senior Historic Building Consultant and Researcher at Manorwood, Roberto is responsible for in depth research into building records, mapping, and physical evidence to help inform proposals and for preparing Heritage Statements and Statements of Significance to support applications for alteration or redevelopment of historic buildings and areas, as well as surveying and recording historic buildings.

Ben holds an MSc in Timber Building Conservation, completed at the Weald and Downland Museum, and validated by Bournemouth University, and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and a recognised Historic Environment Service provider under the well-established HESPR scheme.

Ben is a member of various groups including the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), the Domestic Buildings Research Group (DBRG), and the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG).

Ben has been actively working in the historic environment industry for 15 years on numerous heritage asset projects which include surveying of historic buildings (both domestic and agricultural), preparation of schedules of works and detailing of repairs. Ben oversees numerous applications for Planning permission and Listed Building Consent and has built solid working relationships with Conservation Officers at a number of Authorities across the South East.

As a company Director at Manorwood, Ben has overseen works to historic buildings carried out by a skilled network of sub-contractors including the timber restoration at Charleston Farm barns in Firle and the re-erection of historic buildings at the Weald and Downland Living Museum near Chichester, both which received awards from the Sussex Heritage Trust.

As a company Manorwood have provided various historic environment services to a number of Country Estates across the South East including the Lydhurst Estate, the Borde Hill Estate, the West Dean Estate and a number of projects on the Wiston Estate where Manorwood continue to provide consultancy advice on redevelopment and reuse of various areas.

Most recently Manorwood completed the sensitive restoration and conversion of the magnificent 15<sup>th</sup> century barn for Nyetimber Vineyards in West Sussex.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Roberto Prieto-Labrador MA, PCIfA on behalf of Manorwood to accompany an application relating to a proposal at Westhouse Farm, Albourne.
- 1.2 Westhouse Farm is a historic farmstead comprising a group of former agricultural buildings located at the end of a driveway on the west side of Henfield Road, approximately half a mile to the north-west of Albourne, West Sussex.
- 1.3 The group includes a Grade II Listed farmhouse of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin, a Grade II Listed 17<sup>th</sup> century barn, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century stable building, and a group of 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural and storage structures.
- 1.4 The farmhouse has suffered significant decay due to a prolonged lack of maintenance. It is now in need of repair, along with upgrading works to ensure its long-term preservation and usability as a modern residential dwelling.
- 1.5 The property is in the process of being acquired by the applicants, who are keen to make the investment necessary to carry out essential repair works to the historic buildings on site, whilst also providing them with viable new uses to ensure their continued longevity.
- 1.6 This report has been prepared to support a revised application for the conversion and alterations proposed to the barn and stables, including the construction of two single-storey extensions to the barn and two additional buildings, following the removal of existing late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures.
- 1.7 This version supersedes the earlier Heritage Statement dated April 2025 and has been comprehensively revised following pre-application discussions (DM/25/1043) and detailed feedback received from Mid Sussex District Council's Conservation Officer in July 2025. It incorporates updated measured drawings (November 2025), a full interpretative analysis of the farm buildings and their evolution, and a revised scheme that responds directly to the conservation advice received.
- 1.8 The purpose of this document is to:
- Describe the historical and architectural significance of the buildings and their setting.
  - Assess the impact of the proposed works on that significance.
  - Demonstrate that the proposals preserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of the heritage asset.
  - Explain how the scheme has evolved in direct response to conservation advice and policy.
- 1.9 The scheme has been revised following the Conservation Officer's pre-application advice and has been guided by Historic England's publications Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings (HEAG158), National Farm Building Types, Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings, and the Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings series.



*Location of Westhouse Farm.*

- 1.10 This Heritage Statement should therefore be read alongside the updated drawings (refs. 2412WE\_001 - 203), which together form a coordinated response to the Conservation Officer's comments.
- 1.11 Historic maps has been consulted to better understand the development of the site and the Conservation Area. The maps are included in Section 4 of this report.
- 1.12 This Heritage Statement also includes a Significance Assessment, which identifies the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets (i.e., the historic buildings on site). It also includes an Impact Assessment, which evaluates the potential effect of the proposed scheme on the significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by its setting. This approach to impact assessment is required to comply with the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), and the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.13 The relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) has also been consulted in the preparation of this report, in accordance with paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

## 2 HERITAGE ASSETS AND DESIGNATIONS

- 2.1 Westhouse Farm comprises two statutory Listed Buildings designated in May 1983. The listing reads:

### **WEST HOUSE FARMHOUSE**

**Location** Albourne, West Sussex, BN6 9DE

**District** Mid Sussex (District Authority)

**Date Listed** 11<sup>th</sup> Mat 1983

**List Entry No** 1025825

**Grade** II

**Description** Late C18 or early C19. Two storeys. Three windows. Red bricks. Tiled roof. Glazing bars intact. Doorway with projecting cornice and panel over this and door of 6 fielded panels.

### **BARN TO THE SOUTH OF WEST HOUSE FARMHOUSE**

**Location** Albourne, West Sussex, BN6 9DE

**District** Mid Sussex (District Authority)

**Date Listed** 11<sup>th</sup> Mat 1983

**List Entry No** 1354799

**Grade** II

**Description** C18 Faced with weather-boarding. Hipped tiled roof.

### **CONSERVATION AREAS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTIFICATION AREA (ANA)**

- 2.2 Westhouse Farm is not located within the boundaries of any Conservation Area and/or Archaeological Notification Area (ANA).



*Grade II Listed West House Farmhouse*



*Grade II Listed barn to the south of West House Farmhouse*



*Heritage Assets at Westhouse Farm.*

## **CURTILAGE LISTED**

- 2.3 According to the advice note *Listed Buildings and Curtilage* published by Historic England in 2018, the law provides that buildings and other structures that pre-date July 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building. Historic England's advice note gives hypothetical examples to assist in the assessment as to whether a building within the curtilage of a statutory listed building should be deemed to be part of the listing.
- 2.4 The historic stables building to the northwest of the listed barn and southwest of the listed farmhouse is not a statutory listed building in its own right. It is clear, however, that the stables building was constructed before 1948 and associated in use and ownership to the Grade II Listed barn and farmhouse and their setting. The stables building, therefore, forms part of the listing and is considered to be "curtilage listed".

### 3 PROPOSALS

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- 3.1 The proposal comprises the conversion of the historic barn to a single dwelling, the conversion of the former stables to ancillary accommodation, the demolition of late 20<sup>th</sup> century outbuildings and their replacement with two modest single-storey side ranges to the barn, together with the demolition of further dilapidated 20<sup>th</sup> century structures at the western end of the site and their replacement with a new timber-framed stables block and a cart-shed-style games room, plus associated repair, insulation and landscape works within the farmyard.
- 3.2 The scheme has been revised following the Conservation Officer's pre-application advice. The flanking ranges to the barn have been reduced and simplified, each replacing an unsympathetic modern structure on broadly the same footprint; the internal layout now retains the main barn as a largely open threshing volume; and the number and position of new openings and rooflights have been rationalised to avoid over-domestication of the elevations and roofscape. The new stables and games room have been carefully scaled and aligned to follow the historic grain of the western yard and to read as secondary agricultural structures.
- 3.3 The works also include a programme of conservation-led repairs to the barn and stables, including timber-frame and plinth repairs, renewal of sacrificial weatherboarding, overhaul and re-use of clay tiles, reinstatement of appropriate rainwater goods, and the introduction of vapour-permeable insulation to walls, roof, plinths and floors using lime-based and natural materials. Existing historic doors and shutters will be repaired and retained where possible, with new steel-effect glazing introduced within existing and reinstated openings.
- 3.4 The new side ranges, replacement stables and games room will be timber-framed, set on brick plinths and clad in horizontal weatherboarding with handmade plain clay tile roofs, so that they read as modest, traditionally detailed agricultural ranges that sit comfortably alongside the historic fabric whilst clearly expressing their contemporary date.
- 3.5 Limited landscape works are proposed to rationalise access and surfacing within the yard, replacing modern hardstanding with permeable traditional finishes, providing modest parking and circulation space for the converted buildings, and avoiding suburban boundary treatments so that the open agricultural character of the farmstead is preserved.
- 3.6 The proposals have been developed through a heritage-led approach, informed by an understanding of the buildings' agricultural origins and their contribution to the wider farmstead.
- 3.7 Further details of the proposed works are contained within the accompanying plans, sections, details and specifications, which should be read in conjunction with this report.
- 3.8 The works and their potential impact on the heritage significance of the buildings and their setting are discussed further in Section 8 of this report.

## 4 HISTORIC CONTEXT

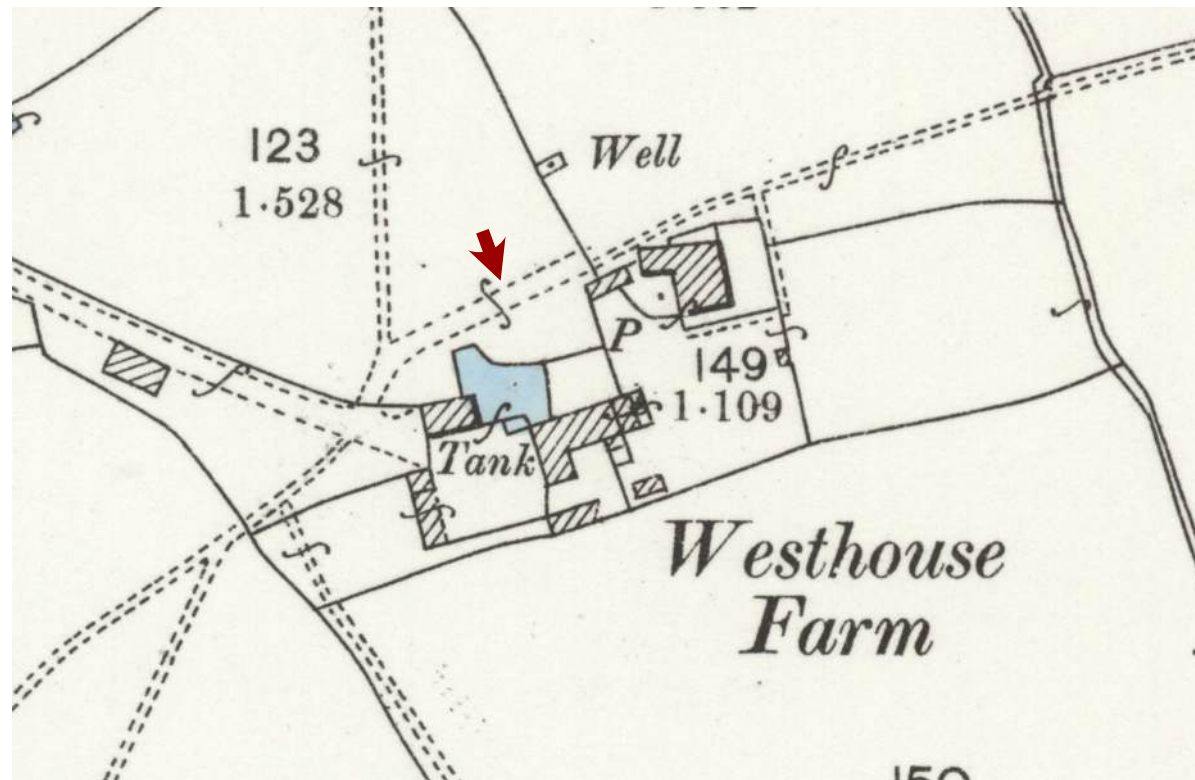
- 4.1 The earliest reference identified in connection with Westhouse Farm during the preparation of this report appears in the land tax assessment for the parish of Albourne, dated 1781. The document records a Mrs Michael as the owner of the property, which was tenanted at the time by a John Emery.
- 5.2 No earlier documentary evidence relating to the farmstead has been identified during the preparation of this report. However, physical evidence observed on site suggests that the complex has existed since at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.3 In its present form, the site comprises a medium-sized farmstead, with the agricultural buildings arranged around two open farmyards. Immediately to the north-east of the yards stands the farmhouse which, at first glance—and as noted in Historic England’s listing description—appears to date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, a survey of the farmhouse undertaken by Manorwood has established that the building originally dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This assessment is supported by the presence of a clasped purlin roof structure with raking struts and off-centre bridging beams decorated with run-out chamfer stops on the ground floor of the building. The original form of the house remains legible despite later alterations: it was a single-pile building with side chimneys and possibly featured a lean-to across the rear elevation.
- 5.4 The farmhouse was significantly altered and extended during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, achieving its current double-piled gentrified form. The single-storey rear extension also dates from this period. An inspection of the loft above this structure revealed that the roof timbers are heavily sooted, suggesting some form of service-related activity once took place here—possibly a brewhouse or washhouse.
- 5.5 To the south-west of the farmhouse stands the historic barn, which appears to be contemporary with the original phase of the farmhouse (mid- to late 17<sup>th</sup> century). Tar marks visible on the rafters indicate that the barn was originally thatched. Early maps of the farm depict two additional structures flanking the barn—possibly cattle shelters—which enclosed the easternmost of the two farmyards. These ancillary buildings no longer survive.
- 5.6 The western farmyard lay adjacent to the barn. The existing historic stable building forms the northern boundary of this yard. It is constructed of flint with brick quoins and dressings and features attractive timber trusses with raking struts. Evidence of former mangers is visible along the interior walls. The building appears to have survived in a relatively intact condition, although there is clear evidence that the original fenestration has been altered, particularly in relation to the width of the doorways.
- 5.7 An open-fronted structure once stood along the western side of the yard, possibly serving as a cowshed or cart shed. This building was replaced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century by the existing stable building, which is constructed of breeze blocks.
- 5.8 The remainder of the existing agricultural and storage buildings on site date from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These were constructed following the demolition of the historic outbuildings seen on early maps, which were lost after 1956.



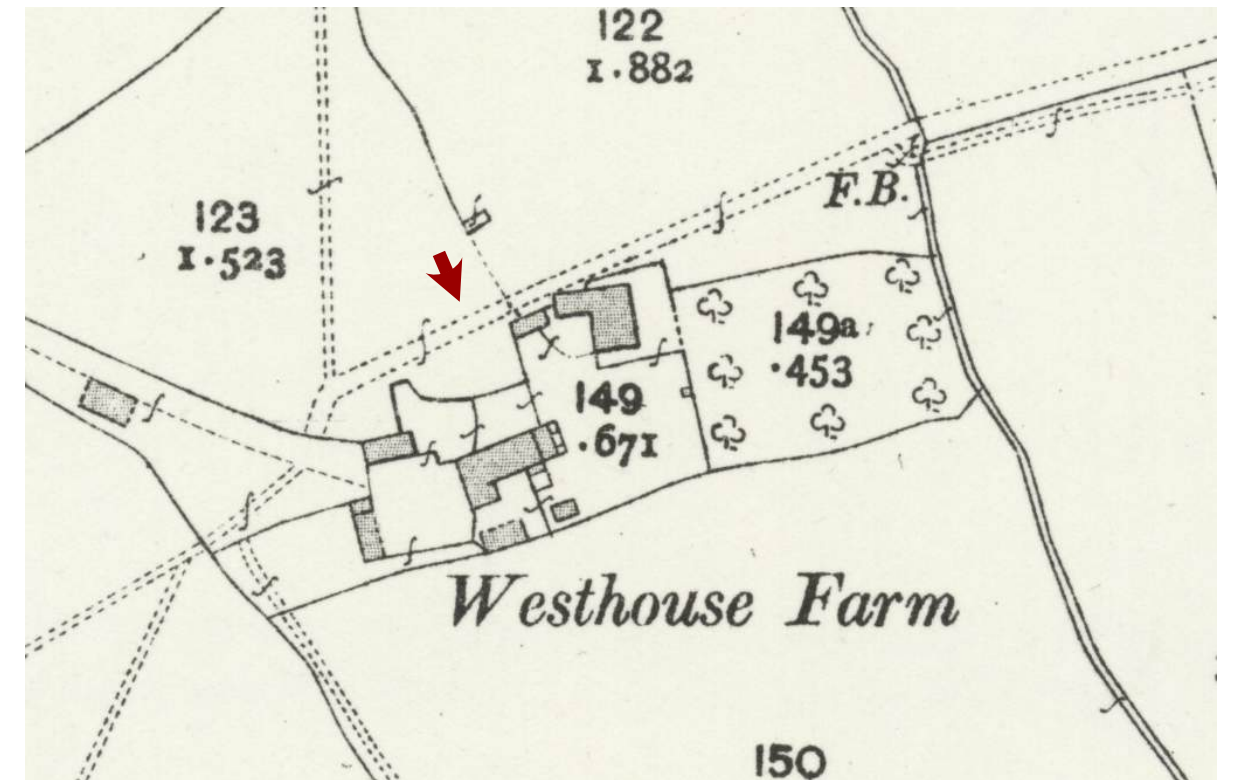
Detail of Tithe Map showing Westhouse Farm, 1838 (TheGenealogist).



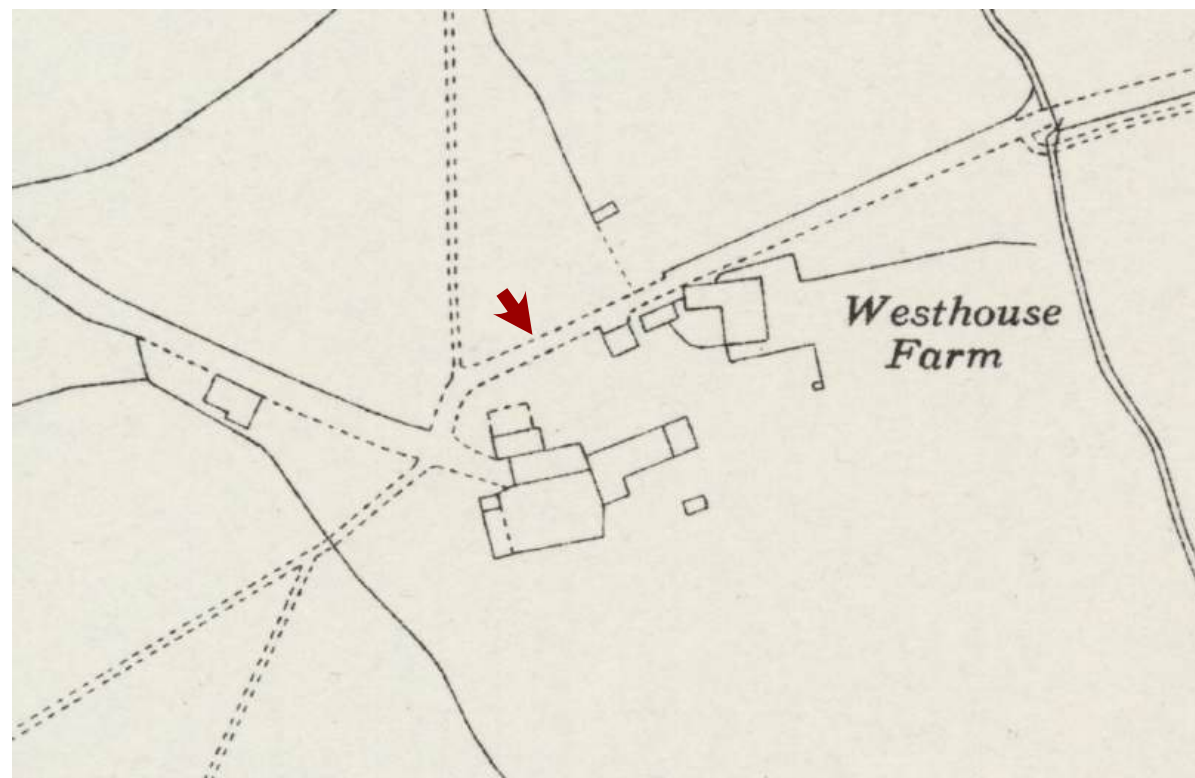
Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1874 (National Library of Scotland).



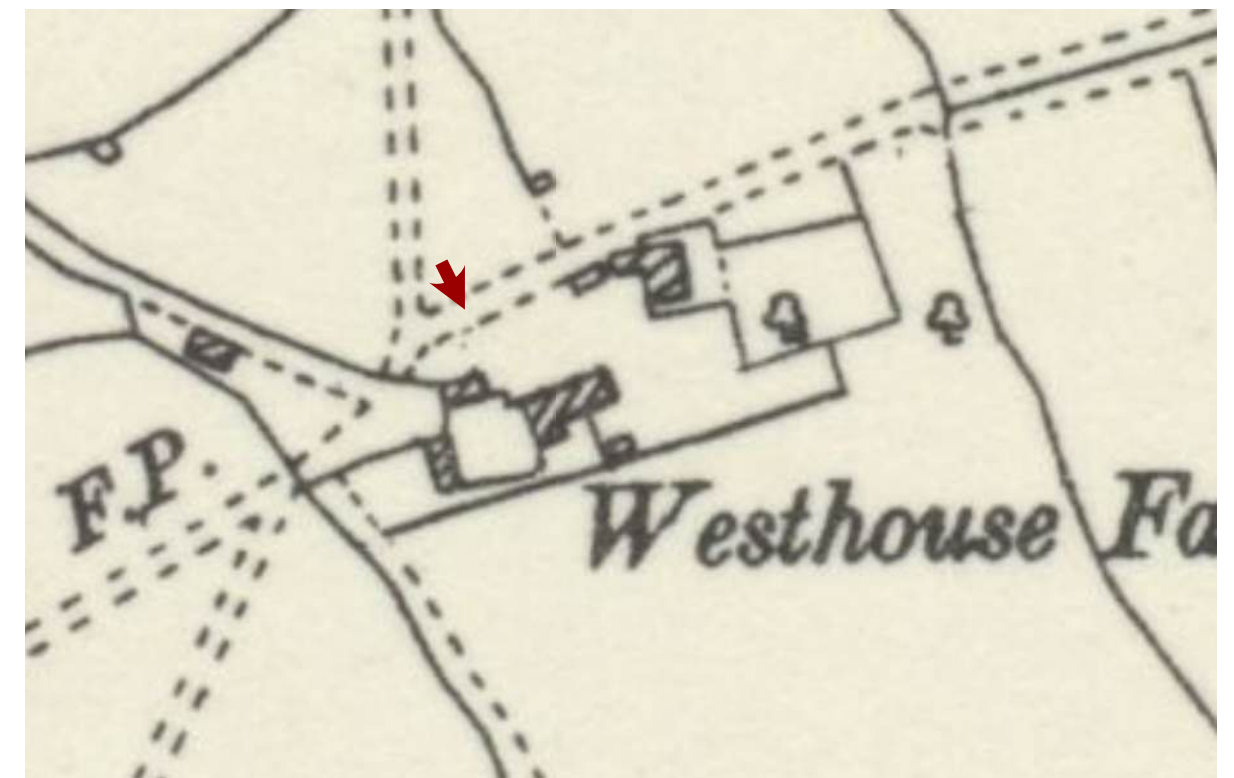
Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1896 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1939 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1938 (National Library of Scotland).



Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1947 (National Library of Scotland).



*Detail of Ordnance Survey showing Westhouse Farm, 1956 (National Library of Scotland).*



*Satellite view of Westhouse Farm, 2022 (© Google Earth).*

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIVE SURVEY

- 5.1 An archaeological interpretative survey was undertaken to assess the evidential value, constructional development and phasing of the timber barn and former stables situated to the south-west of the farmhouse at Westhouse Farm. The survey aimed to elucidate the buildings' chronological development, identify surviving historic fabric and interpret their evolution within the broader context of post-medieval agricultural practice in the Low Weald.
- 5.2 The survey was carried out through direct visual inspection of accessible elements, photographic recording and analytical observation of the carpentry, joinery and fabric, and masonry patterns in accordance with Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings (2016). No intrusive investigation was undertaken; all conclusions are therefore based on non-destructive analysis of exposed fabric.

### BARN

#### Description

- 5.3 The barn is a 5 bay timber framed structure aligned broadly north to south, set on a low brick plinth and clad externally in horizontal weatherboarding. The roof is now covered with clay tiles laid on battens; however, a number of rafters display tar markings, demonstrating that the building was originally thatched before being re-roofed in tile. The principal framing is in oak, and carpenters' assembly marks survive on the main posts, tie beams and principal rafters.
- 5.4 Internally, the barn is open to the roof over the full height of the central threshing bay, whilst the two end bays on either side contain later mezzanines carried on softwood joists. The primary trusses comprise heavy tie beams with straight and curved braces to the posts. The wall framing combines pronounced jowled posts with more slender intermediate studs, mid rails and straight tension braces, a structural vocabulary characteristic of post-medieval Wealden threshing barns.
- 5.5 The original threshing arrangement survives in the form of opposed large openings in the south and north elevations. The northern opening, which faces the historic farmyard, appears to have been the principal threshing entrance as evidenced by its height. A corresponding, slightly lower opening to the south would have created the through draught required for winnowing and allow for empty carts to leave the barn. Additional smaller openings in the north and south walls indicate later adaptation for ventilation.
- 5.6 Within the interior, several posts display later sling braces pegged to the post and principal rafter but strap bolted to the tie beam. These inserted members are of cleaner timber and slightly different scantling from the primary frame, and they interrupt the original tie beams. They represent a strengthening measure introduced after the initial construction, most probably in response to increased roof loading or the additional load of the mezzanines during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*South elevation of the barn.*



*East elevation of the barn.*



*Original late 17<sup>th</sup> century truss displaying curve raking struts and side purlins.*



*Original main threshing opening (left) and secondary threshing opening (right).*

## Phasing and Development

### Phase 1 – Late 17<sup>th</sup> century

- 5.7 The consistency of the primary wall and roof frame, together with the absence of breaks in carpentry sequence or differential settlement lines, indicates that the barn was conceived and erected as a single phase five bay structure during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Several diagnostic features support this conclusion: the presence of heavy jowled posts; a side purlin roof with common rafters and curved raking struts rather than earlier crown post construction; presence of tension braces and regular studding typical of the maturing Wealden framing tradition; and hand converted oak timbers displaying adze and pit sawn surfaces rather than machine sawn tooling associated with later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century carpentry.
- 5.8 The truss disposition and the placement of the opposed threshing doors confirm the building's original function as a classic Low Weald threshing barn, with a central threshing floor flanked by storage bays. In this primary phase the barn would have been thatched, as shown by the tar marked rafters. Timber weatherboarding formed the external cladding from the outset, creating an enclosed but well ventilated building suitable for working and storing cereal crops.

### Phase 2 – 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century

- 5.9 During the 18<sup>th</sup> century or in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the barn was augmented by the construction of ancillary ranges on its southern and eastern sides. Historic cartographic evidence, including the tithe map, depicts two such structures flanking the barn and helping to enclose the easternmost of the two farmyards. These ranges appear to have lain perpendicular to the barn on the south side and parallel to it on the east side. Although they no longer survive, their footprint and relationship to the barn indicate that they formed part of a functional yard group associated to the barn.
- 5.10 The construction and purpose of these now lost ranges can be interpreted in the context of agricultural developments of the period. Their small scale and attached configuration suggest use as cattle byres, calf pens, stabling or implement sheds. Their close association with the barn's threshing floor and storage bays reflects the broader economic transition toward mixed farming, in which arable processing and stock management were increasingly brought into closer spatial relationship. The introduction of these additional structures therefore marks an important phase in the development of the farmstead, creating a more enclosed and efficient working yard that integrated cereal production, fodder storage and livestock accommodation.

### Phase 3 – Late 19<sup>th</sup> / Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

- 5.11 During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the barn underwent a series of incremental internal and external modifications associated with changing agricultural demands. Mezzanines or lofts were inserted into the two end bays using softwood joists and supporting posts, interrupting the open volume of the original threshing space and reflecting the need for additional hay or straw storage. Small openings were created beneath the eaves in the side elevations to provide ventilation to these lofted areas.

- 5.12 This period also saw localised replacement of studs and rafters in softwood, together with partial rebuilding of sections of the brick plinth. These repairs indicate ongoing maintenance in response to decay, settlement and the greater structural demands introduced by the new lofts and stock accommodation. It is during this phase that the sling braces attached to the posts and principal rafters were introduced, providing additional support to tie beams subjected to higher bending stresses. Although these alterations affect parts of the internal character, they remain limited in extent and do not obscure the overall legibility of the seventeenth century structural form.

#### Phase 4 – 20th century

- 5.13 More recent changes comprise the wholesale replacement of much of the external weatherboarding and roofing materials, together with the insertion of corrugated sheet infill panels and the addition of softwood collars to the roof. These interventions belong to a period of utilitarian repair when the building had become partially redundant. They are largely superficial and reversible, leaving the primary seventeenth century frame intact.
- 5.14 The ancillary ranges shown on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping appear to have survived into the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century but were removed in the second half of the century and replaced by the present modern prefabricated structures. Their loss marks the final stage in the contraction of the historic farmyard arrangement, resulting in the barn standing today as the principal surviving agricultural structure of the earlier farmstead complex.

#### **Interpretation and Function**

- 5.15 The barn originated as a late 17<sup>th</sup> century 5 bay threshing barn of a type characteristic of the post-medieval Low Weald. Its substantial jowled posts, long curved braces, well executed tie beam trusses and side purlin roof frame indicate that it was built for a relatively prosperous mixed or arable farmer with the means to invest in a durable and architecturally confident structure. The former central threshing floor and opposed doors were designed to exploit prevailing winds for winnowing, whilst the flanking bays provided enclosed storage for harvested crops. The presence of tar marked rafters reused within the current roof confirms that the barn was originally thatched, which is consistent with regional practice in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and reflects the ready availability of straw and reed at the time.
- 5.16 The later additions of ancillary ranges, as shown on the tithe map and surviving into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, indicate that the barn formed the principal element in a more complex working farmyard. These flanking structures would have provided cattle standings, stabling or implement storage and represent a deliberate move toward a more integrated yard arrangement during the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This pattern accords with wider agricultural developments in the Low Weald, where increasing emphasis on mixed husbandry required closer spatial relationships between crop storage, fodder handling and the housing of cattle.



*Late 17<sup>th</sup> century jowled post and curved brace (left) and tar marked rafters indicating a former thatched roof (right)*



*Later inserted mezzanine (left) and sling brace (right).*



*Modern building replacing the historic range to the south of the barn.*



*Modern building replacing the historic range to the east of the barn.*

- 5.17 The subsequent installation of mezzanines, softwood lofts and later structural strengthening, together with the inserted sling braces strap bolted to the tie beam, evidences further intensification and adaptation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These changes reflect the shift in function from a predominantly arable barn to a more flexible building used for housing livestock and storing hay and straw. The incremental alterations are typical of a working farm building that was continually adapted to meet changing agricultural needs whilst retaining its essential 17<sup>th</sup> century structural core.
- 5.18 In summary, the barn illustrates a familiar and well documented evolutionary trajectory within Low Weald agricultural practice, progressing from a single purpose threshing barn to a more adaptable mixed use building and ultimately to a partially redundant twentieth century farm structure. Throughout these phases, the building remained at the functional and spatial heart of the historic farmstead.

#### **Significance**

- 5.19 The barn is of considerable evidential significance as a largely intact late 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed agricultural building retaining its primary structural skeleton, including jowled posts, substantial tie beams, tension braces, mid rails, struts and principal rafters. The survival of carpenters' assembly marks, pit sawn and adzed surfaces and tar marked rafters provides valuable insight into vernacular craft techniques and regional constructional practice. The later sling braces, mezzanine structures and softwood repairs offer further evidential value by illustrating successive phases of adaptation and maintenance.
- 5.20 Historically, the barn provides a clear and legible record of agricultural development at Westhouse Farm and in the wider Low Weald. Its original form speaks to the importance of arable cultivation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whilst the lost ranges shown on the tithe map, together with the later internal modifications, demonstrate the shift towards mixed husbandry and the increasing functional complexity of farm buildings during the Georgian and Victorian periods. The barn's large open interior, exposed primary frame and visible layering of change give it high illustrative and interpretative value and make its phasing unusually clear.
- 5.21 The barn also possesses strong group value. Its position within the former farmyard, its historic relationship with the farmhouse and its former flanking ranges, and its continued presence as the principal surviving agricultural structure contribute significantly to the understanding of the historic farmstead as a whole. Despite later alterations and modern accretions, the building retains a high degree of integrity and remains a key component of the architectural, historical and evidential significance of Westhouse Farm.

## STABLES

### Description

- 5.22 The stables building is a 3 bay, single storey structure aligned east to west and positioned to the south west of the farmhouse and to the north of the timber framed barn. Together with the latter it formed the northern boundary of the historic loose yard. The building is constructed in a characteristic late 18<sup>th</sup> century manner using a combination of rubble and knapped flint set within red brick quoins and dressings. A continuous decorative brick string course runs across the centre all elevations, providing both structural lacing and aesthetic coherence.
- 5.23 The roof is hipped at both ends and covered in handmade clay tiles. Internally, the roof structure comprises oak rafters and side purlins supported by raking struts. The rafters are concealed beneath modern conglomerate lining with only the purlins being visible. Carpenter's assembly marks can be seen on the joints between the struts and the tie beams. The carpentry is typical of the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, employing hand finished although increasingly standardised members and simple pegged joints. There is no evidence of earlier construction, supporting the interpretation of the structure as a single phase build.
- 5.24 The external walls retain their late 18<sup>th</sup> century character but show localised mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century repairs where breeze blocks have been inserted in place of deteriorated flintwork or redundant opening such as the doorway in the west elevation. The building was originally accessed by three separate stable doorways in the south elevation, each serving an individual standing stall. The present doors are of late 20<sup>th</sup> century date, constructed of narrow machine cut boards and fitted with modern steel ironmongery. The apertures themselves have been widened or altered, as evidenced by the double jambs and redundant brick dressings which flank each opening. This modification, together with the projecting eaves canopy, appears to be part of a mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century alteration intended to provide better weather protection and easier access for horses and equipment.
- 5.25 Internally, the three standing stalls are separated by 20<sup>th</sup> century breeze block partitions which rise only to door height and do not engage the roof structure. These likely replace earlier timber divisions that have been entirely lost. The interior surfaces of the flint walls retain areas of lime render, together with timber fixing points for former mangers on the rear north wall of each stall. These fixtures, though now absent, confirm the building's original use as a stable rather than a general livestock shelter.



*South elevation of the stables. Note the altered doorways and eave to form canopy.*



*North and west elevations of the barn.*



*Roof structure of the stables.*



*Interior of standing stall (left) and evidence of former manger (right).*

## **Phasing and Development**

### Phase 1 – Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

- 5.26 The building's constructional character indicates that it was erected during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as part of an improvement phase at Westhouse Farm. The use of flint panels set within brick frameworks, together with a hipped tiled roof, corresponds closely with vernacular stabling practices of the period in the Low Weald. The uniformity of the masonry, including the continuous brick string course, demonstrates that the structure was conceived and executed as a single build rather than as an accretion of earlier parts. The plan of three discrete standing stalls served by individual doorways reflects late 18<sup>th</sup> century stable design principles, providing efficient accommodation for working farm horses.

### Phase 2 – Mid- to Late 20<sup>th</sup> century

- 5.27 A substantial programme of alteration took place during the mid- and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The clearest evidence for this phase is the introduction of concrete block partitions within the interior, replacing earlier timber divisions that would have formed part of the original stable layout. The widening or reshaping of the stable door openings can also be attributed to this period. The double jambs and redundant brickwork indicate that the original apertures were altered, possibly to accommodate larger horses, mechanised equipment or more modern stable management practices. At the same time the projecting eaves canopy was introduced, replacing the original flush eaves line and providing enhanced shelter at the entrances.

- 5.28 The western wall underwent considerable alteration at this time, with an original doorway blocked with blockwork.

## **Interpretation and Function**

- 5.29 The stables building was constructed as part of a coherent late 18<sup>th</sup> century improvement of the farmstead, providing high quality accommodation for working horses which formed a fundamental component of agricultural activity at the time. Its position on the northern side of the yard, directly opposite the barn, reflects a deliberate functional organisation of the working landscape, with the stables forming part of a wider pattern of circulation, access and daily farm routines.
- 5.30 The evidence of lost mangers and lime plaster surfaces indicates that the interior environment was maintained to standard equine welfare expectations of the period. The later alterations, including widened doorways and the installation of the eaves canopy, reflect the changing needs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century farm and the gradual decline in reliance on horse traction. The eventual introduction of blockwork and conglomerate linings signals the building's transition from active stabling to occasional storage.
- 5.31 Overall the building embodies the shift from horse powered agriculture to mechanisation whilst preserving significant evidence of its original function.

### Significance

- 5.32 The stables building holds evidential significance as a representative and increasingly scarce example of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century brick and flint stable range within a traditional Low Weald farmstead. Its materials, plan and surviving features provide insight into equine management practices and the development of agricultural infrastructure during the period. The carpenter's marks within the roof structure and the clear phasing of later interventions contribute to its value as a document of changing rural practice.
- 5.33 Historically the building forms an integral part of the Westhouse Farm complex and contributes strongly to its legibility as a historic farmstead. Its relationship with the barn and farmhouse enhances the group value of the site and reinforces the understanding of the functional hierarchy of buildings within the historic yard.
- 5.34 Architecturally the building possesses modest but characteristic vernacular qualities in its use of flint, brick dressings and a hipped clay tile roof. Although altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the core 18<sup>th</sup> century fabric remains intact.



*Carpenters' marks (left) and modern blockwork partition (right).*

- 6.1 The following section is an assessment of the significance of Westhouse Farm according to the The planning policy requires an applicant to provide an assessment of the significance of any heritage assets affected by a development proposal.
- 6.2 Significance (for heritage policy), as defined in the NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary), is used to describe the heritage interest of an asset to this and future generations. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
- 6.3 The setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed, can extend beyond the asset's curtilage, 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 (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary).
- 6.4 The NPPF introduced the concept of interests to assess the significance of heritage assets, and the PPG (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723) provides interpretation. These interests are also set out in Historic England guidance (*Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019), which echoes the definitions set out in national policy and guidance on the historic environment:
- **Archaeological interest:** there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
  - **Architectural and artistic interest:** these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship, and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
  - **Historic interest:** an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.
- 6.5 The above criteria reflect NPPF terminology and previous Historic England guidance (*Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance*, English Heritage, 2008), which proposed values to assess heritage significance (Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic, Communal).
- 6.6 This assessment of significance has been used to inform the proposals in order to minimise impact on the special interest of the listed building, and, where possible, to take opportunities to enhance its special interest.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

- 6.7 A heritage asset will hold archaeological interest if it contains, or has the potential to contain, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation.
- 6.8 Westhouse Farm possesses moderate to high archaeological interest, arising from both the physical survival of its standing historic buildings and the potential for below-ground remains associated with at least 17<sup>th</sup> century agricultural occupation. Although the earliest documentary reference identified is the 1781 land tax assessment (naming Mrs Michael as owner and John Emery as tenant), the fabric of the farmhouse and barn demonstrates a significantly earlier origin.
- 6.9 The farmhouse retains extensive evidence of its original late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century construction. Early features include a clasped-purlin roof with raking struts, hand-converted common rafters, off-centre chamfered bridging beams with run-out stops, exposed timber studs and tension braces at first-floor level, and reclaimed structural members with empty mortices. These offer a highly valuable archaeological record of post-medieval domestic carpentry in the Low Weald.
- 6.10 The barn, which appears broadly contemporary with the earliest phase of the farmhouse, contains tar-marked rafters confirming an original thatched covering and retains early structural fabric consistent with 17<sup>th</sup> century agricultural construction. Such material provides evidence for building technologies, roofing practices, and the organisation of mixed farming during the early post-medieval period.
- 6.11 The flint-and-brick stable block also contributes meaningfully to archaeological interest through its largely intact roof trusses, surviving mangers and evidence of altered door openings. These features provide insight into historic husbandry practices and the functional operation of a medium-sized Wealden farmstead.
- 6.12 Early maps show now-lost outbuildings flanking the eastern farmyard, likely cattle or cart sheds. Their demolition after the mid-20th century suggests buried foundations or surfaces may survive.
- 6.13 Later 20th-century structures possess negligible archaeological interest.
- 6.14 Overall, Westhouse Farm represents an archaeologically rich multi-phased farmstead, retaining rare and legible evidence for rural domestic and agricultural life from the 17th century onward.

## ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- 6.15 Architectural interest arises from design, craftsmanship, materials, and construction, whether the result of conscious design or vernacular evolution.
- 6.16 Westhouse Farm possesses high architectural interest as a coherent and well-preserved traditional farmstead demonstrating sustained development from the 17th century onwards. The farmhouse is architecturally significant for the survival of its late 17th or early 18th century timber-framed core, including substantial hand-converted common rafters, chamfer-stopped bridging beams and a clasped-purlin roof structure characteristic of post-medieval domestic construction in the Low Weald. Despite later concealment, the internal fabric preserves a clear and legible sequence of structural evolution.
- 6.17 Equally important is the late 18th or early 19th century phase of gentrification, in which the building was refronted in brick and recast in a polite Georgian idiom. The symmetrical three-bay façade, Flemish-bond brickwork, rubbed brick arches, classical door surround and sash windows demonstrate a conscious shift from vernacular timber construction to the architectural language of rural gentility. The addition of the two-storey rear wings, executed in brick of broadly consistent character and date, established the present double-pile plan and reflects contemporary expectations regarding hierarchy, comfort and separation of service accommodation. The single-storey brewhouse or washhouse extension to the north-west similarly contributes to the architectural interest of the farmstead, its smoke-blackened roof timbers offering rare physical evidence for specialised domestic service functions.
- 6.18 The associated agricultural buildings enhance the architectural significance of the site. The barn retains early structural fabric and tar-marked rafters indicative of its original thatched roof, thereby illustrating traditional constructional methods and the materials of mixed husbandry. The flint-built stable block, with brick dressings and timber trusses, survives largely intact and demonstrates local craftsmanship and the functional requirements of 18th- or early 19th-century animal husbandry. As a group, these buildings form a visually coherent ensemble, unified by their massing, constructional logic and traditional material palette. Later 20th-century buildings lack architectural interest and dilute the coherence of the historic group, but do not substantively diminish the architectural value of the core structures.

## ARTISTIC INTEREST

- 6.19 Artistic interest concerns human creative skill and aesthetic quality, whether expressed through design, composition, or craftsmanship.
- 6.20 Westhouse Farm possesses modest but notable artistic interest, arising from the visual qualities, material palette and compositional relationships of its historic buildings and their rural setting. Although not designed as a formal architectural composition, the farmstead exhibits a layered aesthetic charm that results from the juxtaposition of its polite Georgian farmhouse and its more utilitarian vernacular outbuildings.

- 6.21 The farmhouse, with its late 18th- to early 19th-century brick refacing, symmetrical three-bay frontage, classical doorway and evenly spaced sash windows, introduces a consciously refined architectural language into what was originally a modest timber-framed dwelling. The proportions, regularity and material discipline of this polite façade produce a quiet elegance. Its carefully ordered appearance, emphasised by the use of Flemish-bond brickwork and rubbed brick arches, contributes significantly to the aesthetic qualities of the site.
- 6.22 This polite character creates an attractive and visually meaningful contrast with the vernacular appearance of the adjacent agricultural buildings. Whereas the farmhouse expresses aspirational domestic refinement through symmetry, brickwork and classical restraint, the barn and stable block are characterised by functional massing, weathered materials and the straightforward expression of structure. The barn's timber framing, boarded elevations and tar-marked rafters, together with the stable's flint and brick construction and exposed trusses, embody a more workmanlike, utilitarian aesthetic typical of traditional Low Weald farmsteads. This contrast between formality and vernacular simplicity enriches the farmstead's overall visual character, illustrating the historical hierarchy between domestic and agricultural spheres whilst producing a composition of notable rural charm.
- 6.23 The interplay of materials—soft red brick, hand-made clay roof tiles, weatherboarded agricultural elevations, flint and brick dressings—generates a cohesive palette that unifies the contrasting elements of the group. The patina of age, including weathering of timber and softening of brick surfaces, enhances the textural and tonal richness of the ensemble, reinforcing its picturesque qualities.
- 6.24 The spatial arrangement of buildings grouped around two interconnected yards also contributes to the farmstead's aesthetic value. The informal geometry of the yards, framed by the polite front of the farmhouse and the more modest agricultural ranges, creates a series of visually engaging views that reveal the historical working relationships between the structures whilst sustaining a sense of openness characteristic of traditional farmsteads in the Low Weald.
- 6.25 Although the late 20th century additions lack artistic interest and slightly detract from the coherence of the group, they do not overwhelm or diminish the aesthetic presence of the historic buildings, which remain the dominant visual and experiential components of the site.

## HISTORIC INTEREST

- 6.26 Historic interest relates to how a heritage asset illustrates or is associated with past lives, events, or developments in society, economy, or culture.
- 6.27 Westhouse Farm possesses considerable historic interest as a tangible record of agricultural life in the Low Weald from the 17th century to the present. The phased development of the farmhouse—from a late 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed dwelling to a polite Georgian farmhouse with specialised service accommodation—reflects rising prosperity and changing expectations of comfort among the rural middling sort.
- 6.28 The survival of early farm buildings, including the barn and stable, illustrates the evolution of mixed farming practices and the gradual expansion and rationalisation of agricultural operations during the post-medieval and Victorian periods.
- 6.29 The 1781 land tax reference anchors the site within known patterns of 18th-century landownership and tenancy, demonstrating the continuity of agricultural occupation.
- 6.30 The later loss of ancillary outbuildings and the replacement of some structures in the 20th century correspond with broader shifts in agricultural labour, mechanisation and farm consolidation.
- 6.31 Taken together, the farmstead offers a rich and layered narrative of rural social and economic change over more than three centuries.

## SETTING OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

- 6.32 Annex 2 of the NPPF (2024) 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.”*
- 6.33 The setting of Westhouse Farm remains predominantly rural and coherent, retaining key characteristics that allow its historic development to be readily understood. The farmhouse sits slightly apart from, yet visually connected to, the barn and stable, all arranged around two open yards that continue to read as the operational heart of the working farmstead.
- 6.34 The relationship between the farmhouse and its associated agricultural buildings remains strong. The spatial hierarchy—farmhouse to the east, barn to the south-west, stable defining the northern edge of the western yard—is intact and continues to contribute positively to the appreciation of the asset’s significance.
- 6.35 Views across the surrounding fields and hedged enclosures retain the farmstead’s agricultural character. Although pockets of modern domestication exist, these have not eroded the historic form or rural tranquillity of the wider setting.

- 6.36 Late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures within the curtilage have a neutral to slightly negative impact on setting. However, they do not overwhelm or prevent understanding of the historic grouping, which still forms the dominant visual and experiential component of the site.
- 6.37 The setting therefore continues to make a positive and integral contribution to the significance of Westhouse Farm as a historic farmstead.

## 7 ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE USES (SWOT ANALYSIS)

7.1 The following section evaluates a range of potential uses for the barn and stables using a SWOT framework (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), leading to a conclusion for each. This approach follows best practice in heritage and viability assessments and is aligned with Historic England guidance.

|                                                       | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Weakness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Opportunities                                                                                                                                                                    | Threats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Conclusion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>No Action / Do Nothing</b>                         | - No physical alteration to the building.                                                                                                                                                                                  | - No use means no regular maintenance, accelerating decay.<br><br>- Safety, liability and visual impact of a deteriorating structure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | - Limited – relies on future funding or grants.                                                                                                                                  | - High risk of progressive structural failure leading to eventual total or partial loss of historic fabric<br><br>- Failure to meet national or local heritage policy requirements.                                                                                              | - Does not provide a sustainable future or optimum viable use, contradicts conservation duties and would likely result in irreversible loss. <b>Rejected.</b>                                                                                                    |
| <b>Revert to Agricultural Use</b>                     | - Preserves the building's original purpose and avoid alterations.<br><br>- Minimal intervention required beyond essential repairs.                                                                                        | - No longer viable as agricultural activity has ceased on site and surrounding lands are no longer under farmstead's ownership.<br><br>- Provides no income or economic incentive to invest in repairs.<br><br>- Underuse likely to continue deterioration.                                                                                               | - May allow for occasional farm-related interpretation or community education, but only in limited public access setting.                                                        | - High risk of neglect due to lack of functional integration in modern farm operations.<br><br>- Structural decline likely to continue due to insufficient usage.                                                                                                                | - Not viable in modern context; would not deliver the necessary investment for long-term preservation. <b>Rejected.</b>                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Small Scale Workspace/Office</b>                   | - High value end use; could fund extensive repairs.                                                                                                                                                                        | - Viability less certain in current market due to remote and hybrid working patterns.<br><br>- Adaptations still needed for heating, services and facilities.<br><br>- Need for large parking area that will affect setting.                                                                                                                              | - Could host small heritage or agricultural-related business.                                                                                                                    | - Risk of incremental internal subdivision and servicing that erodes the open threshing volume.<br><br>- Need for larger parking area and external lighting, harming the agricultural character of the yard.<br><br>- If tenancy not secured, building could revert to underuse. | - Only marginally viable but uncertain in current market. Harm to building's original character and significance is greater than the harm caused by proposed use. <b>Rejected.</b>                                                                               |
| <b>Conversion to Commercial Use (Holiday Letting)</b> | - Offers a potential income stream that could help fund repair and maintenance.<br><br>- Retains some flexibility in layout compared to a fully domestic dwelling.<br><br>- Can contribute to local rural tourism economy. | - Still requires insertion of domestic facilities and internal subdivision.<br><br>- Occupation patterns may be irregular and could lead to underuse.<br><br>- Greater servicing demands could affect historic fabric (e.g. water, waste, ventilation, heating).<br><br>- More curated aesthetic might be expected by guests, risking over-domestication. | - Interpretation opportunities for guests (e.g. booklet or signage about the farm and barn's history).<br><br>- Integration into a local tourism offer with minimal daily impact | - Pressure to overfit the barn for comfort and privacy.<br><br>- Loss of open-volume character central to the barn's significance.<br><br>- Increased in vehicle movement and parking demands.                                                                                   | - More acceptable than full residential use only if significant open internal volume is retained. Nonetheless, still represents a compromise with inherent risks to spatial and material character. Not preferable to a simple residential use. <b>Rejected.</b> |

|                                                                           | Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Weakness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Threats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Conclusion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ancillary Multipurpose Spaces Only (non-residential)</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retains large open interior volume, with minimal subdivision.</li> <li>- Could be used flexibly for storage, hobbies or occasional community/ cultural use.</li> <li>- Least intrusive works in heritage terms.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generates very limited income and does not in itself justify extensive repairs and energy upgrading.</li> <li>- Risk that space becomes underused and slips back into neglect.</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could host occasional educational or heritage events.</li> <li>- Provides functional amenity space.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing maintenance burden without commensurate financial return.</li> <li>- Future owners may seek more intensive use, triggering a fresh cycle of applications and alterations.</li> </ul>                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offers good conservation outcome but does not provide a robust long-term funding mechanism for repairs or running costs. <b>Rejected.</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Conversion to Residential Dwelling and Associated Ancillary Space.</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High-value end use capable of funding comprehensive repairs, vapour-permeable insulation and ongoing maintenance.</li> <li>- Layout can be designed around the open threshing volume, with bedrooms placed in new side ranges rather than within the historic core.</li> <li>- Enables removal of unsightly late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures and their replacement with modest vernacular ranges, enhancing the group and setting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduces domestic facilities and services; requires careful detailing to avoid over-domestication.</li> <li>- Brings additional vehicles and some domestic paraphernalia into the yard.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secures a strong, permanent optimum viable use in accordance with HEAG158 and HEAN 9.</li> <li>- Provides opportunity to repair, insulate and weatherproof the structure using best-practice methods.</li> <li>- Enhances the wider farmstead through coordinated landscape works and replacement of poor-quality modern buildings.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term pressure for incremental change must be managed through good design and listed building control.</li> <li>- Risk of garden creep and suburban boundary treatments mitigated by the proposed simple, shared yard treatment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivers the best balance between viability, conservation and minimal harm. The open threshing volume is largely retained, new accommodation is contained within subordinate ranges, and unsympathetic modern buildings are removed. This option secures the barn's long-term future and optimises heritage benefits. <b>Chosen.</b></li> </ul> |

- 8.1 This section appraises the impact of the proposed works on the historic agricultural buildings at Westhouse Farm and their setting.

#### CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

- 8.2 The proposal seeks the conversion of the existing historic barn to a single four-bedroom dwelling and the adaptive reuse of the adjoining former stables building as ancillary accommodation serving that dwelling. Both structures are traditional agricultural buildings which historically formed part of the working farmstead and which, in recent decades, have been used in an ad hoc manner for storage and low-intensity domestic purposes. They are now significantly underused and have experienced progressive deterioration, particularly the barn, whose frame and cladding show clear evidence of age-related decay. Without a viable long-term use, these buildings are at risk of continuing decline and eventual loss.
- 8.3 In principle, the most desirable option would be to retain an agricultural use. However, farming activities at Westhouse Farm have ceased and the landholding has been fragmented, with much of the land that originally related to the farmstead now in separate ownership. In this context there is no realistic prospect of re-establishing a commercial agricultural enterprise at the site. Historic England's *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings* (HEAG158) and *Adaptive Reuse of Farm Buildings* (HEAN 9) recognise that where the functional farm operation has gone, continuing to seek a purely agricultural use can be neither viable nor sustainable, and that sensitive adaptive reuse is often the only realistic means of securing long-term conservation.
- 8.4 The character and significance of the barn and former stables derive from their simple forms, honest expression of structure and materials, and the legible relationship between enclosed volumes and open yards. The proposed scheme has been developed around these characteristics. The barn will remain legible as the principal historic volume within the group, and the former stables will continue to read as a lower-status ancillary building within the farmyard, retaining the traditional hierarchy of buildings within the farmstead.
- 8.5 Alternative uses – including commercial storage, office or studio space, or holiday accommodation – have been considered and discounted. As noted in HEAG158 and HEAN 9, such uses tend to demand a higher level of services, parking, lighting, signage and hardstanding, and often require deeper subdivision and servicing than a single private dwelling. Given the secluded rural location, limited access, and sensitive historic context, these alternative uses would either be unviable or would introduce an intensity of activity that would erode the quiet rural character that forms part of the farmstead's significance.
- 8.6 The revised scheme responds directly to the Conservation Officer's pre-application advice, which expressed concern that the earlier proposal for a larger four-bedroom dwelling with extensive extensions risked overdevelopment and loss of agricultural character. In this updated application, the quantum of new-build development associated with the barn has been reduced, internal partitioning within the main volume has been avoided, and the proposed use of the stables clarified as clearly ancillary. These changes ensure that the farm buildings remain visually and functionally subservient to the historic farmhouse whilst still providing a robust and viable new use for the redundant buildings.

- 8.7 Overall, the conversion of the barn to a single dwelling with the former stables as ancillary accommodation accords with the "optimum viable use" principle set out in the NPPF and with Historic England guidance, securing the long-term conservation of the assets through a use that demands only modest and carefully controlled change to their fabric, plan form, and setting

#### BARN

##### Overall Approach

- 8.8 The Conservation Officer's pre-application comments stressed the need to preserve the open character of the barn, to minimise subdivision, and to avoid an overly domesticated appearance, particularly in relation to fenestration and the extent of extensions. The revised proposals have been developed directly in response to these points, taking HEAG158 and HEAN 9 as key benchmarks. The fundamental aim is to maintain the barn's identity as a large, simple agricultural volume with clear legibility of its timber frame, whilst accommodating the minimum necessary domestic functions.

##### Internal Layout and Subdivision

- 8.9 The main body of the barn will remain a single, largely undivided volume, accommodating an open-plan living, kitchen, and dining space. The existing mezzanine at the western end will be retained and accessed via a new stair, but crucially no other partitioned rooms are proposed within the central volume. This directly addresses the Conservation Officer's concern that the previously proposed snug beneath the mezzanine would harm the perception of the barn's height and openness. Historic England (HEAG158, Sec. 3.3) explicitly advises that the primary spatial quality of barns – large, uninterrupted interiors – should be preserved wherever possible; the current layout adheres to this guidance.
- 8.10 Where enclosure is essential (for plant, utility and storage), it has been concentrated in the new side ranges rather than carved out of the historic volume. This ensures that the existing internal proportions, the rhythm of principal bays, and the exposed timber structure remain clearly appreciable. The approach is fully in line with HEAN 9, which advocates locating new services and "cellular" accommodation in clearly secondary structures in order to conserve the character of primary agricultural interiors.
- 8.11 The new stair to the existing mezzanine is designed as a lightweight timber element, in keeping with the agricultural character of the building. It will be detailed so that the historic frame remains visually dominant and will be reversible without significant loss of historic fabric. This accords with HEAG158's emphasis on reversibility and legibility in internal adaptations.

### New Side Ranges

- 8.12 The barn historically sat between two lower ancillary structures on its east and west sides, as shown on early mapping and noted in the historic context section of this report. The Conservation Officer acknowledged this historic precedent but raised concern that the previously proposed extensions – particularly the eastern wing – were too extensive and risked over-domesticating the building and overdeveloping the site. In response, the revised proposals retain the principle of flanking ranges on both sides of the barn, but reduce their depth and massing and ensure that each closely follows the footprint and alignment of existing modern outbuildings that are to be removed.
- 8.13 On the east side, the scheme now proposes a single-storey range that replaces the existing late 20<sup>th</sup> century ancillary building but is pulled back to a smaller, more compact footprint. Unlike the earlier perpendicular proposal, this new eastern extension is aligned parallel with the main barn, continuing its line rather than projecting out into the yard. It accommodates bedroom and bathroom accommodation which cannot reasonably be contained within the principal barn volume without harmful subdivision, whilst reinstating clearer views of the historic south elevation. The eaves and ridge are kept deliberately low so that, in key views from the yard and the wider landscape, the barn's original form remains visually dominant.
- 8.14 The western range will sit perpendicular to the barn, following the location of the existing late 20<sup>th</sup> century building and the known historic precedent for a range in this position. This western range accommodates bedrooms and bathrooms that cannot reasonably be contained within the main barn without harmful subdivision. The range is set back slightly from the principal barn elevation and kept to a clearly subordinate eaves and ridge height so that the historic barn remains the visually dominant element in views from the yard and public footpaths.
- 8.15 The western range will be timber framed, clad in horizontal weatherboarding, and roofed in handmade clay tiles to match the barn, echoing traditional Sussex ancillary ranges. The new eastern range will be treated in the same way, with timber frame, horizontal boarding and handmade clay tiles, so that the pair read as a coherent family of subordinate service wings framing the principal barn. Their simple, linear form and restrained detailing have been deliberately chosen to read as a contemporary but sympathetic re-interpretation of former agricultural wings. This approach follows HEAN 2 and HEAG158, which support new ancillary structures where they are clearly subordinate, respect historic grain and alignment, and use appropriate vernacular materials.
- 8.16 The removal of the existing unsightly modern buildings on both sides of the barn and their replacement with single-storey, well-detailed ranges of appropriate scale is considered to result in a net heritage benefit: it restores the historic sense of flanking structures to the barn, whilst avoiding the overly large, two-sided composition previously proposed.
- 8.17 Access between the main barn and the new ranges will be provided through carefully positioned openings that coincide with existing structural bays. Localised cuts to the sill plate and brick plinth will be required, but these will be minimal and limited to the width of the new doorways. The resulting loss of fabric is considered a proportionate and acceptable level of harm, justified by the wider heritage benefits of securing the barn's long-term use and avoiding more intrusive subdivision within the principal interior.



*Existing modern building to be replaced with new single-storey extension.*



*Existing modern building to be replaced with new single-storey extension.*

### Repair of Frame, Cladding and Roof

- 8.18 The barn's timber frame and external cladding show areas of decay, localised distortion, and failed previous repairs. Defective elements of the oak frame – including isolated lengths of sole plate, posts, wall plates and braces – will be repaired using pieced-in oak sections, scarf joints and stainless-steel or wrought-iron strapping where appropriate. Wholesale replacement of members is expressly avoided; instead, “repair by insertion” is adopted consistent with HEAG157 and HEAG158, preserving the maximum amount of historic carpentry, tooling marks, and jointing evidence.
- 8.19 Existing weatherboarding is a mixture of older and more recent softwood boards and is now heavily weathered, with widespread splitting and decay. Weatherboarding is a sacrificial and renewable protective layer rather than primary historic fabric. All cladding will therefore be renewed in matching horizontal softwood boards, left untreated to weather naturally. This approach follows HEAG157 and HEAG158, both of which note that cyclical replacement of cladding is a normal part of traditional farm building maintenance.
- 8.20 The roof will be stripped, with sound handmade clay tiles carefully set aside for re-use on prominent slopes. Tiles beyond repair will be replaced with matching handmade plain tiles, ensuring continuity of texture, colour variation and weathered appearance. This approach is consistent with HEAG157 and HEAG321, which emphasise repair and like-for-like replacement of traditional coverings as a means of both conserving character and improving performance.
- 8.21 These combined repair works are necessary to arrest ongoing decay and will enhance the evidential and aesthetic value of the barn without altering its original character. Their impact on significance is therefore assessed as positive.

### Fenestration and Openings

- 8.22 At pre-application stage, the Conservation Officer raised strong concern that the proposed fenestration pattern introduced numerous new openings, did not make full use of existing apertures, and produced an overly regular, domestic appearance at odds with the ad hoc pattern typical of historic farm buildings.
- 8.23 The fenestration strategy has been comprehensively revised in direct response. The key principles now adopted are:
- Maximise use of existing openings, including the historic threshing doors and smaller wall apertures;
  - Minimise new openings, and when unavoidable, locate them discretely within structural elements and in positions that could plausibly have emerged during the building's agricultural evolution;
  - Employ simple, slim-framed metal windows and doors with agricultural / semi-industrial character, avoiding traditional sash or casement patterns that would read as overtly domestic;
  - Retain and repair historic timber doors and shutters where they survive, pinning them open over new glazed infill so that their evidential value is preserved.

- 8.24 Both principal threshing door openings will be fully reinstated to their historic proportions and glazed using slim-framed “Crittall-style” aluminium doors. New glazed screens will sit within the revealed timber jambs, and the existing or replicated timber doors will be retained, repaired, and fixed back in the open position, as advised by the Conservation Officer and in line with HEAG158. This ensures that the barn's original method of access remains legible whilst allowing light and views required for a dwelling.
- 8.25 Additional windows have been significantly reduced in number and re-ordered to follow the irregular pattern of existing openings, especially on the south elevation where historic changes related to the farm's operation are evident. New units are restricted to modest sizes with simple vertical proportions, echoing former ventilation or loft openings rather than introducing large picture windows. This approach responds directly to the Conservation Officer's concern about regular, domestic fenestration and accords with the *National Farmsteads Character Statement*, which stresses that the character of farm buildings derives from small, functional openings set within large areas of plain walling.
- 8.26 Rooflights have likewise been kept to an absolute minimum, located on less visible roof slopes and specified as small conservation-type units. Historic England guidance (HEAG158, Sec. 3.5) accepts discreet rooflights where necessary for habitable rooms, provided they remain subservient to the roof form and are not arranged in regimented patterns. The limited number and careful positioning proposed here meet this criterion and will have only a low visual impact.
- 8.27 Taken together, the revised fenestration and rooflight strategy results in a restrained, agricultural appearance that maintains the primacy of the barn's large wall planes and roof slopes. The impact on significance is assessed as neutral to moderately beneficial, given the reinstatement of original openings and removal of visually intrusive modern elements.

### Insulation

- 8.28 A degree of insulation is required to ensure the long-term usability and environmental performance of the barn whilst maintaining the breathability and character of its traditional construction. The insulation strategy has been developed as a “fabric-first” approach, in line with Historic England's *Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency* (HEAG321), and is informed by the technical guidance in *Insulating Pitched Roofs at Rafter Level* (HEAG070), *Insulating Timber-Framed Walls* (HEAG071) and *Insulating Solid Floors* (HEAG087). All proposed build-ups use vapour-permeable, lime-based or natural insulation materials to protect the historic fabric from trapped moisture and interstitial condensation.

### Walls

- 8.29 The barn's walls comprise an oak timber frame on a brick plinth with later weatherboarding. The proposed insulation system applies a combined internal and external build-up that improves thermal performance whilst preserving vapour permeability and retaining the legibility of the primary structure.

- 8.30 Internally, the timber-framed walls will be insulated with 60 mm Steico Therm woodfibre between the studs, finished with 15 mm insulating lime plaster (two-coat work). The entire historic framing will remain visible, with the insulation applied between the timbers, preserving the internal agricultural character of the barn. This approach accords with HEAG071, which emphasises the importance of retaining visible evidence of framing whilst using vapour-open materials compatible with historic timber and masonry.
- 8.31 Externally, the existing weatherboarding and battens (which are sacrificial and partly modern) will be carefully removed and renewed following insulation works. Over the frame, 35 mm natural woodfibre insulated tongue-and-groove sarking boards will be introduced, protected by a breather membrane and 38 mm treated softwood counter battens to provide a ventilated cavity behind the new boarding. The new cladding will comprise paired 200 × 38 mm weatherboards, dark-stained to match the existing. This dual-layer, vapour-open system mirrors the approach recommended in HEAG071 and HEAG321, using woodfibre as a hygroscopic insulant capable of buffering moisture and reducing condensation risk within traditional wall assemblies.
- 8.32 The external build-up, together with the existing 225 mm brick plinth and c.200 mm sole plate, has been designed so that the marginal increase in wall thickness remains visually negligible. The relationship between plinth, plate and cladding is preserved, with the existing rafter feet, eaves detail and wall-plate junctions retained in their current positions. This avoids the need for sprockets or artificial overhangs and represents the optimum compromise between improved performance and conservation of external character.
- 8.33 The new weatherboarding will match the existing in width and depth and will be left untreated so that it weathers to the familiar silver-grey tone of aged softwood, maintaining the barn's traditional agricultural appearance. The slight increase in depth will not perceptibly alter proportions or silhouette, thereby sustaining the simple, utilitarian character identified as central to its significance.

#### Roof

- 8.34 The roof insulation follows the same breathable principle and adopts a warm-roof build-up. 60 mm Steico Therm woodfibre insulation will be fitted between the existing rafters, with 35 mm natural woodfibre insulated tongue-and-groove sarking boards over, above which new roof battens will be fixed. Internally, the rafters will remain exposed, with 15 mm insulating lime plaster applied between them so that the structural rhythm of the roof continues to be legible and visually linked to the exposed wall framing below.
- 8.35 This between-and-over rafter arrangement corresponds directly with HEAG070, which identifies vapour-permeable warm-roof systems as the preferred solution for traditional pitched roofs. The woodfibre and lime plaster combination allows the structure to “breathe”, providing thermal improvement whilst maintaining the roof's ability to regulate moisture and avoiding the condensation risks associated with impermeable membranes and rigid insulation boards.

- 8.36 Existing handmade clay tiles will be carefully stripped, cleaned and reused wherever possible, with any shortfall made up using reclaimed or new handmade tiles matched in size, profile and colour. This is consistent with HEAG157 and HEAG158, which advocate the repair and reuse of traditional materials to preserve authenticity and minimise embodied carbon.
- 8.37 Ventilation will be maintained by a 10 mm continuous ventilation gap at eaves level, protected by insect mesh, together with a drilled timber kick fillet to ensure airflow to the underside of the sarking board. These details follow the ventilation principles set out in HEAG070, ensuring that roof ventilation paths remain open despite the increased build-up.

#### Solid Wall (Plinth) and Floor

- 8.38 The brick plinth and short sections of masonry wall will be insulated internally, allowing the external brickwork to remain fully exposed and preserving historic weathering, tooling and bonding. This reflects Historic England's preference that external surfaces of traditional masonry be left unaltered wherever possible so that patina and constructional detail remain legible.
- 8.39 The internal insulation build-up to the plinth comprises a lime levelling plaster, followed by two layers of 100 mm calcium silicate board at the lower zone and 100 mm Schneider Multitherm tongue-and-groove woodfibre boards above, bonded with an NHL-based adhesive and finished with 15 mm insulating lime plaster. The use of calcium silicate at the base provides enhanced capillary resistance and moisture buffering in the zone most susceptible to rising damp, whilst the upper woodfibre layer offers improved thermal performance. This accords with HEAG071 and HEAG087, which recommend vapour-open, lime-based systems that allow masonry to continue acting as a moisture buffer.
- 8.40 A painted timber cover board will provide the junction between the insulated plinth and the exposed sill plate, allowing the timber/brick interface to remain visually legible whilst offering a neat and accessible finish. The sill plate itself is left visible, so that the structural relationship between plinth and frame continues to be understood.
- 8.41 The existing concrete slab will be removed and replaced with a limecrete floor build-up, comprising 150 mm GeoCell foam-glass aggregate as a structural and insulating sub-base, overlain by a geotextile and 100 mm natural hydraulic lime screed incorporating underfloor heating pipes, and finished with approximately 30 mm of traditional floor finish. A 30 mm cork perimeter strip will be provided at the edges to allow for movement and maintain breathability at the wall junction. This system follows HEAG087's guidance on insulating solid floors: foam-glass provides both insulation and a capillary break without requiring impermeable membranes, whilst limecrete allows moisture to evaporate naturally through the slab.
- 8.42 This floor build-up, combined with the internally insulated plinth, creates a fully vapour-permeable junction around the base of the walls, reducing the risk of trapped moisture and salt migration. At the same time, it enables the discreet installation of underfloor heating within a compatible lime matrix, in accordance with the whole-building, fabric-first philosophy set out in HEAG321.

- 8.43 Overall, the proposed insulation strategy for the barn achieves a carefully balanced improvement in thermal performance and comfort whilst prioritising breathability, reversibility and the retention of visible structure. It directly reflects Historic England’s technical guidance and is considered to sustain the barn’s historic character and evidential value whilst securing its long-term, energy-efficient use.

#### FORMER STABLES BUILDING

- 8.44 The former stables building to the west of the barn is an important component of the historic farmstead, contributing to the understanding of the original arrangement of working structures around the yard. The Conservation Officer’s pre-application comments accepted the principle of ancillary conversion but cautioned against unnecessary subdivision of the stall layout and the introduction of overly domestic detailing.
- 8.45 Externally, the building will be retained in its existing form, with simple repairs to timber, brickwork and roof coverings in accordance with HEAG158. The main visible changes comprise:
- Replacement of deteriorated stable doors with new timber ledged-and-braced doors of traditional form;
  - Glazing of the two end doorways with slim-framed metal screens, behind which new timber doors will be fixed open, thereby preserving the reading of the original openings;
  - Correction of the over-deepened eaves above the former doorways, reinstating the historic eaves line and original profile of the roof.
- 8.46 These works will enhance the building’s authenticity and reverse previous unsympathetic alterations. The impact is positive.
- 8.47 Internally, the existing modern partitions will be rationalised to provide a simple ancillary layout whilst retaining the essential stall divisions and the linear plan form. In direct response to the Conservation Officer’s concern, the amount of new partitioning has been reduced to the minimum necessary, and the WC is now planned more logically to avoid unnecessary double circulation through the bathroom.
- 8.48 New services (including the soil vent pipe) will be routed internally, boxed in and taken through the roof using a discreet vent tile rather than projecting externally. This maintains the external simplicity of the building and avoids visually intrusive pipework, in line with HEAG158’s recommendations on detailing and HEAG321’s emphasis on “fabric first” approaches that avoid unnecessary external clutter.
- 8.49 The overall impact of the stables conversion is judged to be neutral to positive: the works will secure the building’s repair and continued use, reinstate its historic roof profile, and maintain the legibility of its stall-based plan form whilst introducing only modest, reversible alterations.

#### REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF MODERN BUILDINGS

- 8.50 The application also proposes the removal of a number of late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures at the western end of the site, including dilapidated sheds and a modern stable range constructed in breeze blocks. These buildings are of no architectural or historic merit, and their materials, form and associated paraphernalia currently detract from the legibility and rural character of the historic farmstead. Their removal is, in heritage terms, unequivocally beneficial.
- 8.51 In their place, the scheme introduces a new six-bay stable building and a small outbuilding designed as a traditional cart-shed-type games room/gym, broadly occupying the footprints and alignment of the structures they replace. This approach respects the established grain of development and ensures that new build does not intrude into previously undeveloped parts of the landscape.
- 8.52 The new stables will be constructed with timber-clad walls combined with areas masonry and roofed in handmade plain clay tiles, reflecting the vernacular of the site. The games room will be of brick with and timber-framed open front with glazed infill to the yard elevation, echoing historic cart shed precedents evident on historic mapping. Both buildings are deliberately modest in height and breadth, ensuring that they remain subordinated to the listed farmhouse and converted barn.
- 8.53 Historic England’s GPA3 (*The Setting of Heritage Assets*) and the *National Farmsteads Character Statement* support the replacement of intrusive modern structures with sensitively designed vernacular buildings where this restores the historic character of a farmstead and reduces visual clutter. In this instance, the replacement of prefabricated and breeze-block buildings with traditionally detailed timber and brick structures markedly improves the character of the western yard whilst sustaining the perception of an active rural holding.
- 8.54 The impact on the setting of the listed farmhouse and curtilage-listed barn is therefore considered positive: harmful modern elements are removed, their associated clutter is reduced, and the replacement buildings reinforce rather than compete with the historic group.

#### ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS WORKS

- 8.55 The landscape proposals are intentionally modest and seek to address the Conservation Officer’s concern that previous iterations risked creating an “unwelcome sense of separation” between the farmhouse and its farmstead through new access arrangements and boundary treatments.



*Modern outbuildings to be replaced.*



*Modern dilapidated buildings to be replaced.*

- 8.56 The historic shared access drive from Henfield Road is retained as the principal means of entry to both the farmhouse and the converted farm buildings. No new vehicular access from the public highway is proposed. Within the site, a modest increase in the driveway's width provides direct access to the farmyard and parking/turning areas associated with the converted barn, as well as to the farmhouse but without creating double driveways or dramatic alterations to the hardstanding areas which will be simply rationalised following the replacement of the dilapidated 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.
- 8.57 Existing areas of modern hardstanding will be resurfaced in more sympathetic materials – such as compacted shingle or self-binding gravel – to reinforce the rural character, improve permeability and reduce visual harshness. This approach complies with HEAG158 and HEAG321's recommendations that surfacing upgrades in historic settings should use traditional, low-impact materials and respect historic circulation routes.
- 8.58 Boundary treatments between the farmhouse and the farmyard have been deliberately minimised, so as not to form a hard visual barrier between the farmhouse and the former working yard. This responds directly to the Conservation Officer's advice that features "physically or visually separating the two will be considered to detract from the setting," and aligns with the *National Farmsteads Character Statement*, which advocates simple, permeable boundaries based on traditional agricultural precedent.
- 8.59 Domestic garden features – formal lawns, ornamental planting beds, close-boarded fences or suburban lighting – are expressly avoided in the spaces immediately around the barn and stables. Instead, the yard will continue to read as a shared agricultural space with modest informal seating areas. This approach preserves the functional and visual unity of the historic farmstead, in line with GPA3 and HEAG158, which warn against over-domestication of converted farmyards.
- 8.60 Overall, the landscape and access works are assessed as neutral to beneficial in heritage terms. They maintain the legibility of the historic farmstead as a coherent group centred on a shared access and yard, avoid the harmful separation previously highlighted by the Conservation Officer, and use materials and boundary treatments rooted in local rural character.

#### **OVERALL EFFECT ON SIGNIFICANCE AND SETTING**

- 8.61 Taken as a whole, the proposals represent a conservation-led, heritage-informed scheme that directly addresses the issues raised at pre-application stage. The revised works secure the long-term viable use of the historic barn and former stables, remove intrusive modern structures, and treat the wider landscape with restraint. Internal subdivision within the barn has been minimised; new extensions are limited in extent, clearly subordinate, and historically justifiable; and the fenestration strategy now privileges existing openings and a simple agricultural character.

- 8.62 In accordance with the NPPF (2024) and Historic England guidance (HEAG157, HEAG158, HEAN 9, HEAG321 and GPA3), the proposals are judged to result in no more than a low level of less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, confined to localised loss of fabric for new openings and the introduction of a modest new ancillary range. This harm is outweighed by the substantial public benefits of securing the optimum viable use of redundant historic buildings, arresting ongoing decay through comprehensive repair, and enhancing the setting of the listed farmhouse by removing harmful modern structures and paraphernalia.
- 8.63 On balance, the impact of the scheme on the significance and setting of Westhouse Farm's heritage assets is therefore assessed as positive, representing good practice in the adaptive reuse of traditional farm buildings and aligning with national policy objectives for the sustainable conservation of the historic environment.

## 9 CONCLUSION

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- 9.1 The proposed works are based on a detailed understanding of the barn and former stables at Westhouse Farm and respond directly to the Conservation Officer's pre-application advice, as well as Historic England guidance (HEAG157, HEAG158, HEAG321, HEAG070, HEAG071, HEAG087, HEAN 9 and GPA3).
- 9.2 The conversion of the barn to a dwelling and the stables to ancillary accommodation secures an optimum viable use for these underused buildings whilst retaining the open threshing volume, the legibility of original plan forms and the agricultural character of the group.
- 9.3 The repair and insulation strategy adopts a fabric-first, minimum-intervention approach using vapour-permeable, lime-based and natural materials, ensuring compatibility with historic fabric and improving energy performance without compromising breathability or evidential value.
- 9.4 The two modest side ranges and the rationalisation of modern outbuildings replace intrusive late-20th-century structures with well-proportioned vernacular forms, and the limited landscape works preserve the open, functional character of the farmyard, thereby enhancing the setting of the historic farmstead.
- 9.5 The proposals are, therefore, compliant with respect to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 insofar as the special interest of the historic assets will be preserved and enhanced.
- 9.6 The proposals are, therefore, considered to be compliant with respect to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and the Mid Sussex Local Plan.

## APPENDIX: LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and their settings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

*Section 16(2) states “In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

*Section 66(1) reads: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

In relation to development within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) reads: *“Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at national level within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Policy relating to the historic environment is set out at local level within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031.

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

Chapter 16 (Paragraphs 202 to 221) of the NPPF updated and adopted in December 2024 constitute the Government’s national guidance and policy regarding development relating to the historic environment.

The NPPF is a material consideration and states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local framework unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment with much 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.”*

Setting is defined in Annex 2 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.”*

Annex 2 defines Conservation (for heritage policy) as:

*“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”*

This definition is important as it distinguishes conservation from preservation and puts an emphasis on proactively managing change rather than reactively resisting it.

### LOCAL POLICY – MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

The site lies within the boundary of the Mid Sussex District Council Authority. Mid Sussex District Council adopted the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 as a Development Plan Document at its meeting on 28th March 2018. It replaces the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004.

Policy PD34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relate to listed buildings and heritage assets, and Conservation Areas. They are, therefore, considered relevant to this proposal:

#### POLICY DP34 – Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.

Evidence Base: West Sussex Historic Environment Record; Register of Listed Buildings.

Listed Buildings

Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;
- Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;
- Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;
- Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;
- Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;

# APPENDIX: LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.

## Other Heritage Assets

Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.



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