

Heritage Statement

**Land West of Gatesmead,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex**

On behalf of:

Crest Nicholson

August 2026

Ref: 5552

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage on behalf of Crest Nicholson in support of redevelopment proposals (Application Reference: DM/26/1315) for Land West of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath, West Sussex (hereinafter also referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 The Site is also identified as a proposed housing allocation within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039 Main Modifications (MM67: Land to the North of Old Wickham Lane, Haywards Heath). The emerging allocation includes specific heritage requirements relating to the setting of Wickham Farmhouse and Sunte House and requires development proposals to be informed by a Heritage Statement. This assessment has been prepared having regard to those requirements.
- 1.3 Whilst the site does not include any heritage assets, there are several listed buildings within the surrounding area which have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. This includes the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse and the Grade II* listed Sunte House (which also includes the separately Grade II listed Garden Wall and Garden Building).
- 1.4 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in line with Historic England's Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance' published in October 2019.
- 1.5 Paragraph HE5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026 sets out the information requirements for determining applications with the potential to affect heritage assets, and states that:

'Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.'

- 1.6 In response to the NPPF, Section 2 of this report identifies the heritage assets which may be affected by the application proposals. Section 3 sets out the historic development of the application site and the surrounding area, whilst Section 4 provides statements of significance for the heritage assets identified within Section 2. These are relative to the scale, nature and effect of the proposed development.
- 1.7 Section 5 identifies any relevant surrounding Appeal decisions to understand how the setting of the listed buildings has been assessed in previous decisions. Section 6 provides an assessment of the application proposals on the significance of the identified heritage assets based on national, regional and local policy and guidance. The Heritage Planning Policy context for the consideration of these proposals is set out in Appendix A. This includes the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, regional and local planning policy.
- 1.8 To inform this Statement, the site was visited on Friday 31st July which involved a full site walkover to understand the relationships with the surrounding heritage assets.
- 1.9 This Statement has been prepared in response to comments received from Historic England dated 19th June 2026.

2 The Heritage Assets

2.1 A heritage asset is defined by the NPPF as:

‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.¹

2.2 There are a number of designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site, and a scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify which assets have the potential to be impacted by the proposals.

Designated Heritage Assets

2.3 A Designated Heritage Asset is described by the NPPF (2026) as:

‘A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation’.²

2.4 Such assets are statutorily identified as having a level of heritage (architectural and/or historic) interest to justify designation. There are then particular procedures in planning decisions to ensure that their special interest is preserved or enhanced.

Listed Buildings

2.5 Wickham Farmhouse and Sunte House are both Grade II* listed buildings (list entry nos: 1286539 and 1192455) that are located south of the Site. There are also two other structures within the curtilage of Sunte House – a garden building and a garden wall – which are separately listed (at Grade II).

Key	Address	Grade
1	Wickham Farmhouse	II*
2	Sunte House	II*
3	Garden Building Within Walled Garden to East of Sunte House	II
4	Garden Wall to North East of Sunte House	II

2.6 For the purposes of this assessment, Sunte House and its associated listed structures (Garden Wall and Garden Building) are assessed as one due to their group value.

¹ NPPF (2026) Annex 2: Glossary

² Ibid.



3 Historic Development

- 3.1 For the purposes of this section, we have included historic maps at a greater resolution at Appendix B of this report.
- 3.2 Activity in Haywards Heath spans back to the Mesolithic period, being one of the earliest known settled areas in West Sussex. The name Haywards Heath derives from the Old English for hedge enclosure. This name developed over time, becoming 'Hayworths Hethe' in the early-17th century.
- 3.3 During the medieval period, Haywards Heath was a small agricultural settlement comprising of open land for grazing and woodland controlled by the Manor of Wakehurst. Much of the land was owned by The Knights Hospitaller and locally life was centred around agricultural activities such as farming and forestry.
- 3.4 Haywards Heath survives today as a settlement of relatively modern development. In the early years of the 19th century, there was great poverty amongst agricultural workers across the country. William Allen, a chemist, philanthropist and social reformer established colonies of cottages to help reduce this poverty. The arrival of the railway, and specifically the London to Brighton route, marked a new era for Haywards Heath with the emergence of country labourers from the north. The railway transformed the agricultural village to a thriving market town, spurring on trade, employment and population growth.



Figure 3.1. 1840 Tithe Map (left) and the 1874 OS Map (right), showing the development of the railway beside two historic properties and the Site (Source – The Genealogist; National Library of Scotland [NLS]).

- 3.5 The 1930s saw the erection of the Franklands Village Development, which was a housing initiative supporting low-income families in the area. The development is a notable example of social housing, with community and economic stability standing at the forefront. The later-20th century saw the industrial expansion of Haywards Heath, with the establishment of light industrial estates.



Figure 3.2. The 1909 OS Map (left) and the 1965 OS Map (right), showing a large residential development scheme to the west of the Site (Source – NLS).

History of the Site

- 3.6 The Site is located within an area of open land referred to as Wickham Fields. On the 1840 Tithe Map the Site is shown in the same form as it survives today, being made up of four fields surrounded by an enclosure of trees (Figure 3.3). The supporting tithe document records these four fields as a meadow, 11 acres of arable land, a spring plot, and further arable land for Wickham Farm. The Grade II* listed Sunte House (list entry no: 1192455) is also located within close proximity to the Site, sitting to the east.

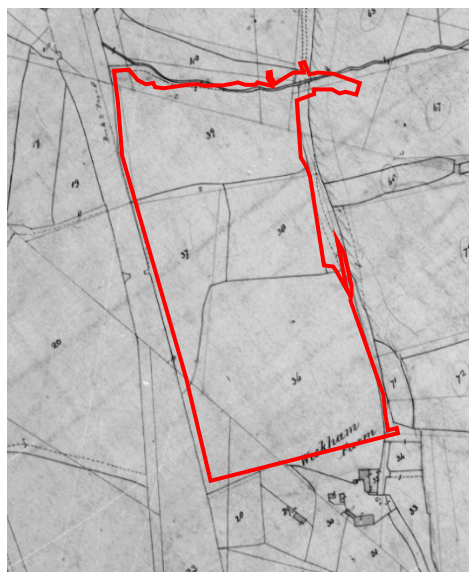


Figure 3.3. 1840 Tithe Map showing the Site as part of Wickham Farm's wider landscape (Source – The Genealogist).

- 3.7 With the arrival of the railway directly along the western boundary of the Site came large scale residential development on the other side of the railway track to the west (Figure 3.4). This area of built development continued to grow into the 20th century. The erection of Old Wickham Road (running alongside the southern boundary of the site) in the late-19th century created a separation between the Site and Wickham Farm.

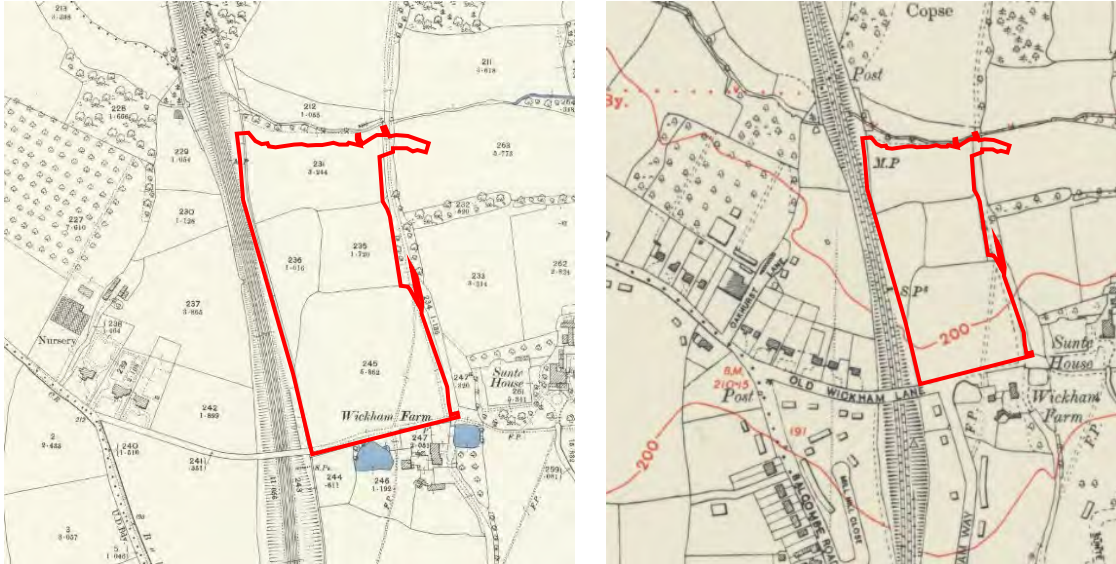


Figure 3.4. The 1896 OS Map (left) and the 1938 OS Map (right), showing development to the west of the Site (Source – NLS).

- 3.8 In the mid-20th century, the Site is shown as two fields, however current satellite imagery shows the same four fields as were there in the 19th century (Figure 3.5). Ancient field boundaries/footpaths are also still evident at the Site when looking at modern satellite photos. The 1965 OS Map shows a clear boundary of trees between Wickham Farm and the Site, without an access point, marking the end of their joint ownership.



Figure 3.5. The 1965 OS Map (left) and a 2025 satellite photo (right), with modern development to the west (Source – NLS; Google Earth).

4 Significance

- 4.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined within the glossary of the NPPF 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’.*³

- 4.2 Listed buildings are statutorily designated and, for the purposes of the NPPF, are designated heritage assets. Recognising this statutory designation, buildings must hold special architectural or historic interest. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport publish the *‘Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (2010)’* which is supported by thematic papers, *‘Listing Selection Guides’*, based on building type, which give more detailed guidance.
- 4.3 Historic England published a Good Practice Advice Note on the *‘Setting of Heritage Assets’* (2nd Edition, 2017) which is used to understand the surroundings of a heritage asset which may contribute to the significance of a heritage asset. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset is ascribed a value of ‘limited’, ‘moderate’ or ‘high’ as determined by a detailed assessment and professional judgement.
- 4.4 The purpose of assessing setting is to understand the extent to which surroundings contribute to significance, rather than to assume that all surviving undeveloped land surrounding a listed building contributes equally to that significance. Indeed, the setting of a heritage asset is not an asset in its own right but needs to be considered as part of a listed building. Historic England’s GPA3 recognises that setting is not fixed but evolves as the surroundings of a heritage asset change. It follows that the survival of a historic association (which may have ceased) between land and a heritage asset does not necessarily mean that the land continues to make the same contribution to significance that it once did. In assessing setting, the key consideration is the extent to which the surroundings continue to contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the heritage significance of the asset, rather than whether a historical relationship simply existed at one point in time.
- 4.5 The assessment considers to what degree the application site makes a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset. This is ascribed an attribute of ‘positive’, ‘neutral’ or ‘negative’ and is then given a value of ‘low’, ‘medium’ or ‘high’ and is also based on detailed baseline assessment and professional judgement.
- 4.6 The following assessments are proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposals. Whilst we discuss the architectural and historic significance of the listed buildings, the heritage assets will not be directly affected by the proposals with only indirect impacts, i.e. effects on setting.

Assessment

- 4.7 The following statements of significance provide an overview of the identified designated heritage assets set out in Section 2, which have the potential to be indirectly affected by the application proposals. These are proportionate to the importance of the asset and the likely impacts of the

³ NPPF (2026) Annex 2: Glossary

proposals. In the first instance, it must be noted that there will be no direct impact on the fabric of the listed buildings, instead, it is only their settings that have the potential to be affected.

Wickham Farmhouse: Listed Building – Grade II*

- 4.8 Wickham Farmhouse was added to the National Heritage List for England on 10th September 1951 at Grade II*⁴. The list description, which is used for identification purposes only, describes the building as:

“House. Building on site mentioned in 1279 and foundations may relate to this, but existing building is a late C16 lobby entrance house of fine quality with early C17 parlour wing added to south, later C17 extension to west with late C19 alterations and further extension of c1960 to rear in matching materials but not of special interest. 2 storeys and attics. North part has ground floor of red brick with some exposed framing on Sussex sandstone plinth, the 1st floor hung with alternate courses of pointed and curved tiles. Roof of Horsham stone slabs with cruciform and filleted brick chimney stack in centre of ridge. Projecting wing to south has exposed framing, tiled gable and C20 2-storey projecting window. Massive C17 external chimney stack, sandstone to base and brick to top. 3 other modern casement windows, 1 hipped dormer and late C19 stone 4 centred arched door. West elevation has 3 gables, 2 of which are tile hung with alternate courses of curved and pointed tiles. The Dining Room has a ceiling with spine beam and joists all having lambs tongue stops. Hall retains C17 framing. The 1st floor has jowled posts and late C16 square framing. There is another ceiling with lambs tongue stops and a powder closet retaining a hatch for transferring a wig through the bedroom to the maid in the powder closet. There is a fine series of old planked doors, some with elaborate architrave mouldings and some 2 panelled doors. Roof of queen post construction with carpenter's marks. Graded II despite alterations for frame of high quality and survival of rare internal features”.*

Historic Development

- 4.9 Wickham Farmhouse occupies the site of a documented building first recorded in 1279, although the surviving structure principally dates from the late 16th century. The earliest standing phase comprises a high-quality lobby-entry farmhouse, representative of the dispersed farmsteads characteristic of the High Weald, where isolated agricultural holdings were established within assarted⁵ woodland from the medieval period onwards. Whilst elements of the building may preserve earlier fabric within its foundations, the present farmhouse reflects the prosperity of a late 16th century agricultural enterprise and the continued evolution of the property through subsequent centuries.
- 4.10 The original late 16th century plan comprised a lobby-entry house constructed in timber frame on a sandstone plinth with red brick to the ground floor, decorative tile hanging to the upper storey and a Horsham stone roof. During the early 17th century, the building was enlarged through the addition of a substantial parlour wing to the south, followed later in the century by a western extension. These phases of development transformed the farmhouse into a larger and more sophisticated residence whilst maintaining its agricultural function, reflecting increasing prosperity and changing domestic requirements. 19th century alterations modified aspects of the building without fundamentally

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1286539?section=official-list-entry>

⁵ The clearance of forested lands for agricultural or other use, normally for private use.

altering its historic form, while a 20th century rear extension further adapted the house for modern occupation. Importantly, the successive phases remain readily legible, allowing the architectural evolution of the farmhouse to be clearly understood. The survival of its timber framing, roof structure, historic joinery, moulded beams, chimney stacks and rare internal features demonstrates continuity of occupation over more than four centuries and underpins its Grade II* designation.

- 4.11 The earliest cartographic evidence demonstrates that Wickham Farmhouse historically occupied an isolated position within an extensive agricultural landscape. Budgen's map of 1724 and Gardner and Gream's survey of 1795 depict the farmstead within a dispersed rural landscape characterised by enclosed fields, woodland and isolated farms typical of the Weald. No significant nucleated settlement had developed around the farmstead and the surrounding land was overwhelmingly agricultural in character.



Figure 4.1. Budgen's map of 1724.

- 4.12 By the early 19th century, the Ordnance Survey Drawing of 1808 and, more clearly, the Lindfield Tithe Map of 1840 demonstrate the relationship between Wickham Farmhouse and its surrounding agricultural land. The fields immediately north of the farmhouse, including the present Site, formed part of the wider agricultural holding associated with Wickham Farm. The Tithe Apportionment records these fields as being under the same ownership and tenancy as the farmhouse, illustrating the integrated nature of the agricultural enterprise during the mid-19th century. At this stage, the surrounding landscape remained almost entirely rural, with the farmhouse functioning as the centre of a working farmstead whose significance was understood in conjunction with its associated farmland.



Figure 4.2. Ordnance Survey Drawing of 1808.



Figure 4.3. Lindfield Tithe Map of 1840.

- 4.13 The second half of the 19th century saw the first significant changes to the landscape. The construction of the London to Brighton Railway introduced major infrastructure immediately west of the farmstead, permanently altering the historic rural context both visually and aurally. At broadly the same time, Sunde House underwent extensive 19th century remodelling and the creation of its designed grounds, resulting in a more varied landscape character to the east. Nevertheless, the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1875 demonstrates that the land immediately surrounding Wickham Farmhouse remained open in character, with the northern fields continuing to form part of the wider agricultural landscape.



Figure 4.4. 1875 Ordnance Survey Plan.

- 4.14 Throughout the early 20th century the agricultural landscape surrounding Wickham Farmhouse remained largely intact. The 1910 Ordnance Survey and 1947 aerial photography illustrate that the northern fields remained open agricultural land despite the continued expansion of Haywards Heath beyond the immediate area. However, these sources also demonstrate that suburban development was beginning to encroach upon the wider rural landscape, marking the beginning of a gradual transition from an isolated agricultural setting to one increasingly influenced by urban growth.

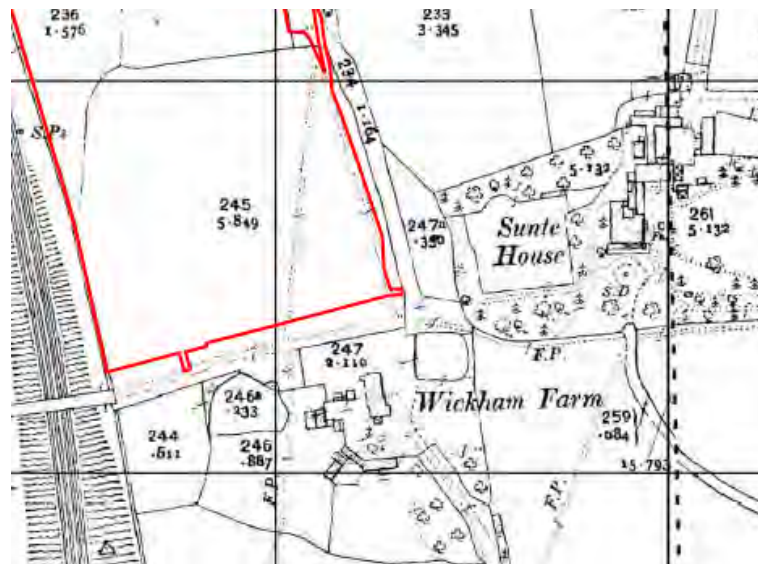


Figure 4.5. 1910 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Figure 4.6. 1947 aerial photography.

- 4.15 The most substantial development occurred during the second half of the 20th century. Mapping from 1966 demonstrates that Wickham Farmhouse had ceased to function as a traditional agricultural holding and had instead been changed to a private dwelling. The introduction of domestic features, including a swimming pool, tennis court and ornamental landscaping, reflects the transition from working farm to residential property and reduces the links to the surrounding farmland with which it had been previously been functionally associated. At the same time, successive phases of suburban development expanded around the former farmstead, fundamentally altering its wider surroundings. Residential development progressively extended to the south, west and east, while the construction of modern housing to the north during the 21st century further reduced the extent of undeveloped land surrounding the farmhouse.

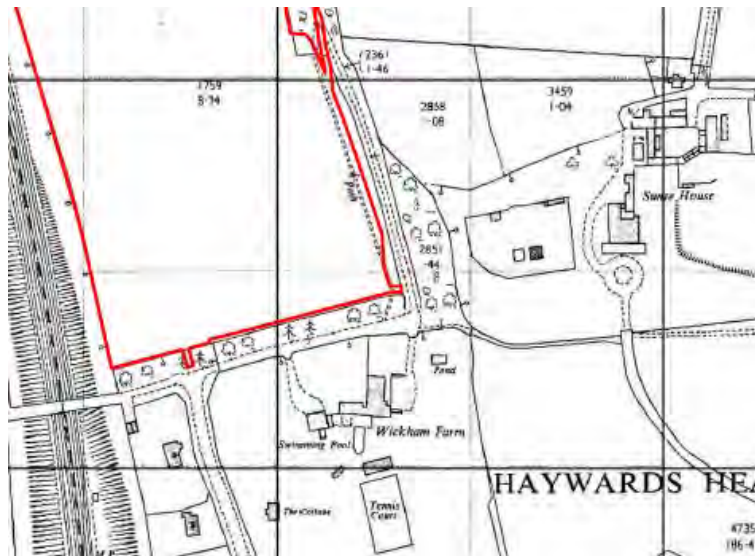


Figure 4.7. 1966 Ordnance Survey Plan.

- 4.16 The historic mapping sequence illustrates that the setting of Wickham Farmhouse has been subject to continuous evolution rather than remaining static. Whilst elements of the former agricultural landscape survive, the historic farmstead is no longer experienced within the extensive rural

environment that characterised its origins. Instead, it occupies a suburban-edge location in which surviving open land forms isolated remnants of a much larger agricultural landscape. The former agricultural landholding has been fragmented through changes in ownership, infrastructure development and urban expansion, while the farmhouse itself has undergone a transition from an operational farmstead to a private residence.

- 4.17 Previous appeal decisions have similarly recognised this process of change. The 2016 Inspector acknowledged that the land north of Wickham Farmhouse had no direct functional relationship with Sunte House, but accepted that it contributed to the rural setting of Wickham Farmhouse because it formed part of the wider agricultural landscape. Equally, the Secretary of State recognised that successive development around Haywards Heath had already altered the historic landscape whilst concluding that any further effect on heritage significance should be assessed in the context of these existing changes.
- 4.18 Accordingly, the historical development of Wickham Farmhouse demonstrates two parallel processes. Firstly, the farmhouse evolved architecturally from a late 16th century Wealden farmhouse into a substantial domestic residence through successive additions and alterations whilst retaining its architectural significance. Secondly, its surroundings evolved from an extensive agricultural landscape associated with a working farmstead into the suburban fringe of Haywards Heath.

Architectural Interest

- 4.19 Wickham Farmhouse is of architectural interest as a well-preserved late 16th century Wealden farmhouse which demonstrates the evolution of a prosperous rural dwelling through successive 17th century additions and later alterations. Although the site has medieval origins, with documentary evidence of occupation from at least 1279, the principal significance of the building lies in its survival as a lobby-entry house, subsequently enlarged with an early 17th century parlour wing and later 17th century extensions that reflect the increasing prosperity and changing domestic aspirations of its occupants.
- 4.20 The building displays a palette of traditional Wealden materials and construction techniques, including a timber-framed structure set on a sandstone plinth, red brick, decorative tile hanging, and substantial Horsham stone slab roofs, together illustrating the regional vernacular traditions of the High Weald. Its architectural interest is further enhanced by the survival of exceptionally high-quality historic fabric and craftsmanship, and, according to the list description, including exposed 17th century timber framing, jowled posts, late 16th century square framing, queen-post roof construction with carpenter's marks, spine beams and joists with lamb's tongue stops, a series of historic plank and panelled doors with elaborate mouldings, a number of rare internal features, including a surviving powder closet with its original wig-transfer hatch.
- 4.21 The 17th century chimney stacks and the sequential development of the building provide tangible evidence of its adaptation over time while retaining its essential historic character.

Historic Interest

- 4.22 Wickham Farmhouse is of high historic interest as a well-preserved example of a prosperous Wealden farmstead whose evolution reflects changing patterns of rural settlement, agriculture and domestic life from the late medieval period onwards. Occupying the site of a building recorded in 1279, the farmhouse illustrates the development of a dispersed agricultural landscape characteristic of the High Weald and retains strong evidential value for understanding the evolution of farming practices and

rural prosperity during the 16th and 17th centuries. Its successive phases of enlargement demonstrate the increasing status and wealth of its occupants while preserving the legibility of its historic development.

- 4.23 The building's historic interest is enhanced by the survival of rare internal features and historic fabric, providing important evidence of domestic arrangements and agricultural life. Although the former agricultural holding has been substantially fragmented and the farmhouse no longer functions as part of a working farm, it continues to illustrate the historic development of the Wealden landscape and the long-term transition of former farmsteads into private residences following the decline of their agricultural function.

Setting

- 4.24 Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3) recognises that setting comprises the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and that its contribution to significance changes over time. In the case of Wickham Farmhouse, the significance of the listed building is derived principally from its architectural quality and the exceptional survival of its historic fabric. Its setting contributes to an understanding of the building's former agricultural function, although that contribution has evolved considerably as the use of the property has changed and the surrounding landscape has changed.

Immediate Setting

- 4.25 The immediate setting comprises the listed farmhouse, its domestic curtilage, surviving historic access, mature vegetation and associated landscaping. Historically this area would have functioned as the centre of the farmstead, containing agricultural buildings, yards and working spaces directly associated with the surrounding farmland. Whilst the listed building retains its historic relationship with its immediate curtilage, the character of this space has changed considerably. Agricultural activity has been replaced by domestic use, with ornamental gardens and recreational features now defining the immediate surroundings. Nevertheless, the immediate setting continues to make an important contribution to the significance of the listed building by preserving the historic relationship between the farmhouse and its curtilage.

Extended Setting

- 4.26 Historically, the extended setting comprised the wider agricultural holding surrounding Wickham Farmhouse. The Application Site formed part of this wider landscape and, during the 19th century, shared a functional relationship with the farmhouse as agricultural land within the same holding. Over time, however, the contribution of the wider setting has changed. The railway, suburban expansion and fragmentation of the former agricultural holding have substantially altered the surrounding landscape, with the remaining areas of open land now surviving as isolated remnants of the former agricultural landscape rather than as components of an active farmstead. Whilst these remaining fields continue to assist in understanding the rural origins of the listed building, they no longer perform the role that they historically fulfilled.

Physical Surroundings

- 4.27 The physical surroundings of Wickham Farmhouse comprise a mixture of surviving rural features and modern suburban development. Mature hedgerows, trees and areas of open land continue to

provide a degree of rural character immediately surrounding the listed building. However, residential development now surrounds the former farmstead on several sides, whilst the railway forms a strong western boundary. The wider landscape has therefore evolved from one of extensive agricultural land into a suburban-edge environment in which isolated parcels of open land survive between areas of modern development.

Experience of the Asset

- 4.28 Historically, Wickham Farmhouse would have been experienced as the centre of a working agricultural holding, approached through farmland and associated with the activity of the farm. That experience has fundamentally changed. The farmhouse is now experienced as a historic dwelling within a suburban-edge location, with its agricultural origins understood primarily through the survival of the building itself and the remaining areas of open land surrounding it. Whilst the wider landscape continues to provide some appreciation of its rural origins, the experience of the listed building is now derived principally from its immediate domestic setting rather than the extensive agricultural landscape that historically surrounded it.
- 4.29 Overall, the setting of Wickham Farmhouse has evolved considerably since its origins. The immediate setting continues to make an important contribution to significance through the survival of the farmhouse and its historic curtilage. The contribution of the wider setting has reduced over time as the agricultural holding has become fragmented, agricultural activity has ceased and the surrounding landscape has become increasingly suburban in character.

Contribution of the Application Site to Significance

- 4.30 The Application Site lies immediately to the north of Wickham Farmhouse and historically formed part of the agricultural holding associated with the listed building. The 1840 Lindfield Tithe Map demonstrates that the Site was held within the same agricultural unit as Wickham Farmhouse and formed part of the productive farmland supporting the operation of the farmstead. At that time, the Site made a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building through its direct functional relationship with the farmhouse, illustrating the agricultural enterprise of which the farmhouse formed the centre. However, that relationship has changed over time through development within the surrounding area.
- 4.31 The Site nevertheless retains a clear historic association with Wickham Farmhouse and continues to provide evidential value by illustrating the former extent of the agricultural holding. However, that historic association should not automatically be equated with the contribution the Site now makes to the significance of the listed building. As discussed above, the contribution made by setting evolves over time. Whilst the Site continues to assist in understanding the historic development of Wickham Farm, the functional, visual and experiential relationships that once underpinned that association have substantially diminished.
- 4.32 The visual and experiential relationship between the Application Site and the listed building has also changed over time. Historically, the farmhouse would have been experienced within an extensive agricultural landscape, with the surrounding fields reinforcing its function as the centre of a working farm. Today, mature hedgerows, trees, domestic boundary treatments and the intervening curtilage limit intervisibility across much of the Site to the extent that the immediate setting of the listed building is now well defined by mature boundary planting. More fundamentally, the wider landscape has become increasingly suburban, with residential development surrounding the former farmstead

on several sides. Wickham Farmhouse is therefore experienced principally as a historic dwelling within a suburban-edge setting rather than as the focal point of a working agricultural landscape. Whilst the remaining openness of the Application Site assists in illustrating the building's historic rural origins, it no longer conveys the operational relationship that historically existed between the farmhouse and the surrounding farmland.

- 4.33 It is also important to distinguish between the significance of the listed building itself and the contribution made by individual elements of its setting. Whilst the Application Site assists in understanding the historic evolution of Wickham Farmhouse, the principal significance of the listed building derives from its architectural quality, surviving historic fabric and immediate historic curtilage. The Site therefore contributes to that significance by providing historical context, but it is not fundamental to the appreciation of the building's special architectural or historic interest.
- 4.34 Overall, it is considered that the Application Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse. This contribution derives principally from its historic association with the former agricultural holding. Conversely, that contribution has been substantially reduced through the loss of the historic functional relationship between the Site and the farmhouse, the transition of the farmhouse from a working farmstead to a private residence, and the progressive suburbanisation of the surrounding landscape. Accordingly, the Application Site retains historical and evidential value as part of the former agricultural holding. However, because the historic agricultural function has ceased, the former landholding has been fragmented and the surrounding landscape has evolved, that historical association now makes only a limited contribution to the significance of the listed building.

Wickham Farmhouse: Assessment of the Contribution of the Application Site (following Historic England GPA3)		
Attribute of Setting (GPA3)	Assessment	Contribution to Significance
Physical surroundings	The Site forms part of the remaining open land north of the farmhouse but is now experienced within a fragmented suburban-edge landscape rather than an extensive agricultural holding.	Limited
Functional relationship	Historically formed part of the agricultural holding associated with Wickham Farmhouse, but no longer shares any agricultural, operational or ownership relationship with the listed building.	Limited
Visual relationship	Views between the Site and the farmhouse are limited by mature vegetation, intervening curtilage and the orientation of the listed building. The Site is not critical to appreciating the architectural qualities of the farmhouse.	Limited
Experiential relationship	The Site contributes to an appreciation of the surviving openness surrounding the farmhouse but the experience of the listed building is now predominantly that of a historic dwelling within a suburban-edge environment.	Limited
Historical and associative relationship	The Site retains a clear historical association as former agricultural land belonging to Wickham Farm. This assists in understanding the evolution of the historic farmstead. However, following the loss of its agricultural function and subsequent changes to the wider landscape, that historical association now makes only a limited contribution to the significance of the listed building.	Limited

Overall Contribution

- 4.35 Drawing these attributes together, the Application Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse. The contribution derives principally from its historical associations, which assist in understanding the evolution of the former agricultural holding, together with its retention as part of the remaining open landscape surrounding the listed building. Conversely, the functional, visual and experiential relationships between the Site and Wickham Farmhouse have been substantially diminished through the cessation of agricultural use, fragmentation of the historic landholding, and the progressive suburbanisation of the surrounding landscape. As recognised by GPA3, the contribution made by setting is not static but evolves over time; in this instance, the Site's present-day contribution is materially less than that which existed when Wickham Farmhouse functioned as the centre of an active agricultural enterprise.

Summary of Significance

- 4.36 Wickham Farmhouse is a heritage asset of high significance, reflected in its Grade II* designation. Its significance derives principally from its architectural interest as a well-preserved late 16th century Wealden farmhouse, together with its evidential value as a building that clearly illustrates successive

phases of development from the late medieval period onwards. The survival of its historic plan form, timber frame, roof structure, high-quality internal features and historic fabric provides important evidence of the evolution of a prosperous rural dwelling and contributes significantly to its special architectural and historic interest. The building also has considerable historic value through its association with the development of the dispersed agricultural landscape characteristic of the High Weald.

- 4.37 The setting of Wickham Farmhouse contributes to its significance by illustrating its historic agricultural origins and reinforcing an understanding of the building as the former centre of a working farmstead. However, the contribution made by setting has evolved considerably over time. The fragmentation of the historic agricultural holding, cessation of agricultural activity, construction of the railway and successive phases of suburban expansion have fundamentally altered the wider landscape and diminished the historic functional relationship between the farmhouse and its surrounding land. Whilst the immediate setting continues to make an important contribution through the survival of the historic curtilage, the wider setting now contributes principally through historical and evidential associations rather than through an active functional relationship. Consequently, the Application Site is considered to make a limited contribution to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse.
- 4.38 It is the architectural and historic significance of the listed building, rather than the historical association between the Site and the former agricultural holding, that principally survives. The two concepts should not be conflated.
- 4.39 Whilst the Site continues to illustrate the historic evolution of Wickham Farmhouse, the contribution it now makes to the significance of the designated heritage asset is limited because the agricultural, functional, visual and experiential relationships that formerly existed have substantially diminished.

Sunte House: Listed Building – Grade II*, including the separately listed Grade II structures of the Garden Wall and Garden Building within Sunte House

- 4.41 Sunte House was added to the National Heritage List for England on 10th September 1951 at Grade II*⁶. The list description is used for identification purposes only and describes the building as:

“Large House. L-shaped building of 1700 having 2 principal elevations with C18 service wing to north east and C19 extension to north west in similar style. 2 storeys and attics, 5 windows to each principal elevation. Diaper pattern red brick and grey headers on cemented plinth. Steeply pitched slate roof with 2 pedimented dormers. Deep wooden modillion eaves cornice. Stone quoins and moulded stone band between floors. 16 pane sashes with rubbed brick arches and scalloped blind boxes. Central doorcase to south elevation with flat wooden hood on enriched scrolled wooden brackets. Double door with rectangular fanlight flanked by sidelights. Attached to south is forecourt wall of 2 courses of sandstone blocks with brick piers with moulded tops and ball caps. East or garden elevation has windows with stone keystones and doorcase has flight of steps with ramped iron handrail. West elevation is largely C19 but in matching style. North east extension is an C18 laundry extension of 1 storey red brick with Horsham stone slab roof and metal casements. Interior contains early C18 principal staircase of elm with 3 turned balusters to each step and scrolled tread ends, service well staircase of painted wood with turned balusters and square newel posts, 2 fireplaces with Delft tiles and a fine late C18 or early C19 fireplace on the 1st floor with elaborate cast iron ducks nest grate. Roof has staggered purlins”.



Figure 4.8. Sunte House. Source: National Heritage List for England.

- 4.42 There are also two other listed structures within the site which are the separately Grade II listed Garden Wall and Grade II listed Garden building. These were added to the National Heritage List for England on 11th December 1987. Their list descriptions are for identification purposes only and describe the structures as:

⁶ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1192455>

Garden Wall

"Garden wall. C18 red brick wall in random bond with some patches of sandstone".

Garden Building

"Garden building. C18 1 storey lean-to built on to side of garden wall. Brick with tiled roof. 1 C19 casement with diamond lights. C17 reused plank door.

- 4.43 Both buildings are noted in the list description for their group value with Sunte House.

Historic Development

- 4.44 Sunte House is a Grade II* listed building whose origins lie in the late 17th century, although it is widely recognised as having evolved from an earlier farmstead occupying the site. Its architectural development reflects the changing aspirations and status of its owners, transforming from a prosperous rural farmhouse into an elegant country residence through successive 18th and 19th century phases of remodelling and extension. Unlike Wickham Farmhouse, whose significance continues to be closely associated with its agricultural origins, the principal significance of Sunte House derives from this architectural and social transformation into a gentleman's house set within designed grounds.
- 4.45 The earliest surviving phase comprises an L-shaped house dating from around 1700. Constructed in finely detailed red brick with stone dressings, the building displays a restrained classical composition with two principal elevations, reflecting the architectural fashions of the period. During the 18th century a service wing was added to the north-east, while the 19th century saw further extensions and remodelling undertaken in a sympathetic architectural style, creating the coherent composition seen today. Internally, the building retains a wealth of historic fabric, including finely crafted staircases, historic fireplaces, decorative joinery and evidence of successive phases of occupation, illustrating the continued evolution of the house over more than three centuries. The associated forecourt wall, walled garden and ancillary garden structures further demonstrate the development of the estate as a high-status country residence.
- 4.46 Early cartographic evidence indicates that Sunte House originally formed part of the dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of the High Weald. Budgen's map of 1724 and Gardner and Gream's survey of 1795 depict Sunte Farm within an agricultural landscape of enclosed fields, woodland and isolated farmsteads. At this stage, the property formed one component of a wider rural landscape, sharing characteristics with neighbouring farmsteads such as Wickham Farm.



Figure 4.9. Budgen's map of 1724.



Figure 4.10. Gardner plan, 1795.

- 4.47 During the 19th century, however, the character of Sunte House changed fundamentally. Historic mapping demonstrates that the property ceased to function principally as a farmstead and instead developed into a country house set within designed grounds. The 1808 Ordnance Survey Drawing shows Sunte Farm occupying an agricultural landscape, while the Lindfield Tithe Map of 1840 records agricultural land extending around the property. Subsequently, substantial remodelling of the house was accompanied by the creation of formal gardens, parkland and an impressive southern approach drive terminating in a carriage circle. These improvements established the estate character that continues to define the significance of Sunte House today. The northern farm buildings and associated working landscape were retained for a period, illustrating the gradual nature of the transition from agricultural holding to country estate.



Figure 4.11. 1808 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Figure 4.12. 1840 tithe plan.

- 4.48 The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1875 clearly illustrates the mature form of the estate. Formal gardens had been laid out around the house, the walled garden had been established to the east and the tree-lined approach and carriage drive formed the principal entrance from the south. Open fields remained around the estate, contributing to its rural setting, although these fields were not arranged as a coherent agricultural holding centred upon the house in the manner evident at Wickham Farmhouse. Rather, they formed the wider landscape setting of a country residence whose significance increasingly derived from its designed grounds and architectural composition.



Figure 4.13. 1875 Ordnance Survey Plan.

- 4.49 Throughout the early 20th century the estate remained substantially intact despite the continued expansion of Haywards Heath beyond its immediate boundaries. The 1910 Ordnance Survey and 1947 aerial photography demonstrate that extensive open land continued to surround Sunte House, preserving its semi-rural character notwithstanding the gradual growth of suburban development to the south and west. Nevertheless, the wider landscape was undergoing progressive change, with increasing urban expansion beginning to reduce the extent of countryside separating the estate from Haywards Heath.



Figure 4.14. 1910 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Figure 4.15. 1947 aerial photograph.

- 4.50 The most substantial changes to the setting of Sunte House occurred during the second half of the 20th century. Successive phases of residential development extended around the estate, progressively replacing former agricultural land with suburban housing. Historic mapping demonstrates that development occurred to the south, east and west of the house, while more recent development has extended northwards. As a consequence, the estate has become increasingly enclosed within the urban area of Haywards Heath. Although the principal house, its formal gardens, walled garden and associated structures survive, the wider landholding has been progressively reduced and fragmented, with only limited areas of open land remaining around the estate.
- 4.51 Previous appeal decisions have recognised this process of landscape evolution. The 2016 Inspector⁷ concluded that the 19th century parkland and approach drive formed an important aspect of the significance of Sunte House and that surviving areas of open land contribute to understanding the former extent of the country estate. At the same time, the Inspector acknowledged that extensive 20th century development has substantially altered the wider setting of the house and that proposals affecting its surroundings must be considered within the context of this already evolved landscape. The Secretary of State similarly concluded that development would result in only limited harm to the setting of Sunte House, recognising that its historic setting had already undergone considerable change.
- 4.52 The historic development of Sunte House therefore illustrates a continual process of architectural and landscape evolution. The building developed from an agricultural farmhouse into a gentleman's country residence, while its surroundings evolved from a dispersed agricultural landscape into a designed estate and, subsequently, into the suburban edge of Haywards Heath. Although surviving areas of open land continue to assist in understanding the historic evolution of the estate and maintain elements of its semi-rural character, the original agricultural landscape and much of the former landholding have been substantially altered through changes in land use, ownership and successive phases of 20th and 21st century development. Today, the significance of Sunte House derives principally from its architectural quality, the survival of its designed grounds and associated

⁷ APP/D3830/W/16/3146504

listed structures, and the legibility of its evolution from farmstead to country house, rather than from the survival of an extensive rural estate.

Architectural Interest

- 4.53 Sunte House is of high architectural interest as a distinguished late 17th century country house which demonstrates the evolution of a high-status domestic residence through successive 18th and 19th century phases of alteration and extension. Its architectural significance derives from the survival of its formal classical composition, with two principal symmetrical elevations constructed in diaper-pattern red brick with grey headers, dressed with stone quoins, moulded string courses, rubbed brick window arches and a deep modillion cornice, reflecting the restrained elegance characteristic of high-quality domestic architecture of the period.
- 4.54 The building retains a wealth of historic fabric and craftsmanship, including finely detailed sash windows, an enriched central doorcase with fanlight and sidelights, an imposing principal elm staircase, secondary service staircase, historic fireplaces incorporating Delft tiles and an elaborate late 18th or early 19th century cast-iron grate, together with evidence of early roof construction.
- 4.55 The successive additions, including the 18th century service wing and 19th century extensions executed in a sympathetic architectural style, illustrate the continued adaptation of the house to changing domestic requirements whilst maintaining a coherent architectural composition. Collectively, these features demonstrate the building's high level of craftsmanship, architectural refinement and evidential value as an evolving country house. Its architectural significance is further enhanced by its surviving relationship with its historic forecourt, formal gardens, walled garden and associated ancillary structures, which together express the designed hierarchy, function and status of the estate.

Garden Building within the Walled Garden (Grade II)

- 4.56 The garden building is of architectural interest as a surviving 18th century ancillary structure forming part of the designed walled garden associated with Sunte House. Although modest in scale, it retains characteristic historic fabric, including its brick construction, tiled roof, 19th century diamond-pane casement and a reused 17th century plank door, illustrating the adaptation and continued use of estate buildings over time. Its architectural significance derives principally from its survival as an authentic component of the historic service and productive garden, contributing to the completeness and legibility of the wider Sunte House estate.

Garden Wall to the North East of Sunte House (Grade II)

- 4.57 The garden wall is of architectural interest as a substantial 18th century boundary structure constructed in red brick with areas of sandstone repair, enclosing the historic walled garden of Sunte House. While architecturally simple, it is an important surviving element of the estate's designed landscape, demonstrating traditional construction techniques and defining the spatial organisation of the formal gardens and service areas. The wall makes a significant contribution to the architectural and functional integrity of the Sunte House complex through its continued enclosure of the historic garden and its association with the principal house and garden building.

Historic Interest

- 4.58 Sunte House is of historic interest as an illustration of the social and economic transformation of a prosperous rural farmstead into a gentleman's country house between the late 17th and 19th centuries. Its successive phases of remodelling reflect changing patterns of wealth, status and domestic occupation, demonstrating the evolution of rural elite housing within the High Weald. The creation of formal gardens, the walled garden, carriage drive and associated ancillary structures illustrates the development of a designed country estate, replacing the earlier emphasis on agricultural production with one of landscape design and polite residence.
- 4.59 Collectively, the house and its associated listed structures provide valuable evidence for understanding the changing relationship between architecture, landscape and social status during the 18th and 19th centuries. Although much of the wider estate has been lost through 20th century suburban expansion, the surviving house, formal gardens and ancillary structures continue to express the historic evolution of the estate and retain evidential value for understanding its former extent and development.

Setting

- 4.60 Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3) recognises that setting comprises the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and that its contribution to significance changes over time. In the case of Sunte House, the significance of the listed building derives principally from its architectural quality as a late 17th century country house and from its evolution within a designed landscape. Whilst the wider landscape contributes to an understanding of its historic development, the principal contribution made by setting is provided by the surviving immediate estate surrounding the house. The setting of Sunte House has evolved considerably over time as the estate has contracted and Haywards Heath has expanded around it.

Immediate Setting

- 4.61 The immediate setting of Sunte House comprises the listed house, its forecourt, formal gardens, walled garden, mature planting and the associated Grade II listed Garden Wall and Grade II listed Garden Building. Together these elements form the surviving core of the historic estate and continue to illustrate the transformation of Sunte House from a prosperous rural farmhouse into a gentleman's country residence during the 18th and 19th centuries. The formal relationship between the principal house and its associated structures remains readily appreciable and continues to provide the principal context in which the architectural and historic significance of the listed building is understood.
- 4.62 The Garden Wall and Garden Building make an important contribution to the significance of Sunte House through their historic and functional association with the principal house. The 18th century walled garden reflects the productive and ornamental functions typical of country estates of the period, whilst the associated garden building illustrates the operation and management of the estate. Although modest in architectural terms, both structures contribute to the legibility of the estate's historic layout and reinforce the hierarchy between the principal house and its ancillary buildings.
- 4.63 The immediate setting therefore makes a substantial contribution to the significance of Sunte House. It is within these surviving spaces that the architectural composition of the house, its historic evolution and its relationship with the ancillary listed structures are principally appreciated.

Extended Setting

- 4.64 Historically, the extended setting of Sunte House comprised a wider agricultural landscape surrounding the estate. Early mapping demonstrates that the house occupied an isolated position within the rural landscape before its 19th century remodelling as a country residence. During the 19th century, the establishment of formal gardens, parkland and the principal southern approach transformed the character of the estate, with the wider landscape providing an appropriate rural setting for a gentleman's house.
- 4.65 The wider landscape surrounding Sunte House did not contribute through an ongoing agricultural function associated with the principal building. Rather, it provided the rural context to a country residence.
- 4.66 That wider setting has changed substantially during the 20th and 21st centuries. Successive phases of residential development have progressively reduced the extent of the former estate and replaced surrounding agricultural land with suburban housing. Although areas of open land survive around the listed building, these no longer form part of an extensive country estate but instead exist as isolated remnants within the suburban edge of Haywards Heath. As a consequence, the contribution made by the extended setting has diminished over time, with significance now deriving principally from the surviving immediate estate rather than the wider landscape.

Physical Surroundings

- 4.67 Within the immediate curtilage, mature trees, formal gardens, the forecourt, walled garden and associated listed structures preserve the character of the historic estate and continue to provide an appropriate setting for the principal house. Beyond these areas, however, 20th century residential development now surrounds much of the former estate. The historic agricultural landscape has therefore been substantially reduced, with surviving areas of open land separated by modern housing, roads and domestic development.
- 4.68 The Application Site lies outside the surviving immediate landscape and beyond the historic curtilage of Sunte House. It does not form part of the architectural composition of the estate nor does it contribute to the appreciation of the relationship between the principal house and its associated listed structures. Its physical relationship with the listed building is therefore limited and is experienced as part of the wider suburban-edge landscape rather than the historic estate. It must also be noted that in previous appeal decisions (discussed subsequently) development was removed from the land immediately to the north of Sunte House as it was considered to have an impact on the setting of the listed building, however, development further north (which was effectively screened from the listed building through mature boundary planting) was deemed to be acceptable.

Experience of the Asset

- 4.69 Historically, Sunte House would have been experienced as an isolated country residence approached through open countryside via its formal southern drive. The sequence of arrival formed an important component of the designed estate, reinforcing the status of the house through a carefully planned transition from the surrounding rural landscape into the formal forecourt.
- 4.70 That experience has evolved considerably over time. During the 20th century, the historic approach was altered as surrounding development progressively encroached upon the estate and the original approach was lost. More recently, the historic southern approach has been reinstated following

redevelopment of the land to the south, re-establishing the original alignment of the entrance drive and improving the legibility of the designed approach to the house. Nevertheless, whilst the alignment has been restored, the experience of arrival is materially different from that as originally designed. Visitors now approach Sunte House through a modern residential development before entering the surviving estate, rather than through open countryside. The reinstated drive therefore improves the appreciation of the historic layout of the estate, but does not restore its historic rural context.

- 4.71 The experience of the listed building is now centred upon the surviving designed landscape immediately surrounding the house. The formal gardens, mature planting, forecourt and associated listed structures provide the principal setting in which the architectural and historic significance of Sunte House is appreciated, whilst the wider suburban context is generally experienced beyond the estate boundaries.

Summary

- 4.72 The setting of Sunte House has evolved significantly since its origins. Its immediate setting retains a high degree of architectural significance through the survival of the principal house, formal gardens, forecourt, walled garden and associated Grade II listed Garden Wall and Garden Building, which collectively illustrate the architectural and historical development of the estate. These assets possess strong group value, with each contributing to the understanding and appreciation of the estate as a coherent designed composition.
- 4.73 By contrast, the contribution of the wider setting has reduced considerably through the contraction of the historic estate and the suburban expansion of Haywards Heath. Whilst surviving areas of open land continue to provide a degree of separation from surrounding development and assist in understanding the former rural context of the estate, the significance of Sunte House is now derived overwhelmingly from its immediate setting and the surviving designed landscape rather than the wider countryside.
- 4.74 Applying the principles of GPA3, the contribution made by the Application Site is therefore limited, as it lies outside the surviving designed estate, has no historic functional relationship with the listed building or the associated listed structures, and makes little contribution to the appreciation of the architectural composition, group value or historic evolution of Sunte House.

Sunte House: Assessment of the Contribution of the Application Site (following Historic England GPA3)		
Attribute of Setting (GPA3)	Assessment	Contribution to Significance
Physical surroundings	The Site forms part of the wider landscape surrounding Sunte House but lies outside the surviving designed estate and principal curtilage.	Limited
Functional relationship	The Site has no historic or present-day functional relationship with Sunte House.	None

Sunte House: Assessment of the Contribution of the Application Site (following Historic England GPA3)		
Attribute of Setting (GPA3)	Assessment	Contribution to Significance
Visual relationship	Intervisibility is limited by mature vegetation, estate boundaries and the orientation of the house. The Site does not contribute to appreciation of the principal elevations or designed landscape.	Limited
Experiential relationship	Visitors experience Sunte House principally through its immediate gardens, forecourt, approach and walled garden rather than through the wider landscape occupied by the Application Site.	Limited
Historical and associative relationship	The Site formed part of the wider historic landscape surrounding Sunte House, but it did not form part of the designed estate from which the principal significance of the listed building is derived. Accordingly, whilst the Site has a historical association with the evolution of the surrounding landscape, that association makes only a limited contribution to the significance of Sunte House today.	Limited

Overall Contribution

- 4.75 Applying the approach set out in Historic England's GPA3, the Application Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Sunte House. The Site does not form part of the surviving designed estate, has no historic or present-day functional relationship with the listed building, and makes only a very limited visual, experiential or historical contribution to its significance. The significance of Sunte House is derived principally from the architectural quality of the house itself, its surviving formal gardens, walled garden, forecourt and associated listed structures, all of which remain legible and appreciable independently of the Application Site.

Summary of Significance

- 4.76 Sunte House is a heritage asset of high significance, reflected in its Grade II* designation. Its significance derives principally from its architectural quality as a late 17th century country house and from its historic evolution from a prosperous farmstead into a gentleman's residence during the 18th and 19th centuries. The survival of the principal house, together with its formal gardens, forecourt, Grade II listed Garden Wall and Grade II listed Garden Building, provides strong evidential and historic value and illustrates the development of a designed country estate. These associated listed structures possess considerable group value, reinforcing the historic hierarchy and functional organisation of the estate and contributing to the understanding of its architectural composition.

- 4.77 The setting of Sunte House is focused primarily on the surviving designed landscape immediately surrounding the listed building. The formal gardens, mature planting, walled garden and associated listed structures continue to provide the principal context in which the significance of the house is appreciated. Although the wider estate historically extended into the surrounding agricultural landscape, successive phases of 20th and 21st century suburban expansion have substantially reduced and fragmented that landscape, meaning that the contribution made by the wider setting has diminished over time. The reinstatement of the historic southern approach has enhanced the appreciation of the estate's historic layout, although the approach is now experienced through a modern residential environment rather than open countryside.
- 4.78 Consequently, the significance of Sunte House is derived overwhelmingly from its immediate setting and surviving designed landscape, with the Application Site making only a limited contribution to its significance as it lies outside the historic estate, has no functional relationship with the listed building and does not contribute to its architectural composition or group value.

5 Surrounding schemes

- 5.1 It must be noted that there are a number of applications and appeals within the surrounding area where there has been the potential to affect the significance of Sunte House and Wickham Farmhouse.



Figure 5.1. Surrounding schemes

Appeal Decision: Land North of Birchen Lane (APP/D3830/W/15/3137838)

Summary of the Proposal

- 5.2 This appeal related to outline planning permission for up to 40 dwellings with associated infrastructure on approximately 10.2 hectares of land north of Birchen Lane, comprising three agricultural fields extending between Sunte House and Birchen Wood. The application originally proposed development across all three fields; however, following consultation with Historic England, the scheme was amended to remove built development from the southernmost field adjacent to Sunte House. Development was instead concentrated within the two northern fields, with the southern field retained as open space and managed landscape.

Relationship to the Current Application Site

- 5.3 The appeal site lies immediately north of the current Application Site and formed part of the same wider agricultural landscape surrounding Sunte House. Whilst physically separate, both sites contribute to the wider landscape context of the listed building and therefore provide a useful comparison when considering the contribution made by land beyond the immediate designed setting of the house.
- 5.4 Unlike the current Application Site, however, the appeal site did not adjoin Wickham Farmhouse and had a much weaker relationship with that listed building. The appeal was therefore concerned almost exclusively with the effect of development on the setting of Sunte House, together with the medieval assart landscape and the Hollow Way.

Sunte House

Inspector's Conclusions

- 5.5 The Inspector concluded that the proposal would result in only a small degree of harm to the significance through change to the setting of Sunte House. The Secretary of State agreed with this assessment, concluding that whilst considerable importance and weight should be attached to the identified heritage harm in accordance with section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the level of harm was small and clearly outweighed by the public benefits of delivering new housing.

How the Inspector Reached this Conclusion

- 5.6 The Inspector attached significant weight to Historic England's assessment of the contribution made by different parts of the landscape surrounding Sunte House. Historic England distinguished between the southern field, which formed part of the designed approach and immediate setting of the listed building, and the two northern fields, which contributed to the appreciation of Sunte House as a former country house within a rural landscape.
- 5.7 The amended scheme responded directly to this advice by retaining the southern field as open space and restricting development to the two northern fields. The Inspector accepted that the southern field made the greatest contribution to the significance of Sunte House through its association with the historic approach and designed landscape. By contrast, the northern fields contributed principally to the wider rural context of the house and were not part of its designed composition. Mature hedgerows and tree belts further limited visual and experiential relationships with the listed building. Consequently, the Inspector concluded that development confined to the northern fields would result in only a small degree of harm to the significance of Sunte House, which was outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Wickham Farmhouse

Inspector's Conclusions

- 5.8 No separate heritage assessment was undertaken in relation to Wickham Farmhouse and the Inspector did not identify any material effect on its setting. Its significance was therefore preserved by the Appeal Proposals.

Appeal Decision: Sunte House (APP/D3830/W/16/3146504)

Summary of the Proposal

- 5.9 This appeal sought planning permission for the construction of eight dwellings within approximately 2.6 hectares of former paddock land immediately south of Sunte House, together with public open space, flood attenuation works and the reinstatement of the 19th century carriage drive forming the principal historic approach to the house. Unlike the previous appeal, the development occupied only the edges of the site, retaining a substantial central area of open space and restoring the historic avenue leading to Sunte House.

Relationship to the Current Application Site

- 5.10 The appeal site lies to the south of Sunte House, whereas the current Application Site lies to the north west of the listed building, beyond the surviving formal gardens and walled garden and area of open space. The two sites therefore occupy very different parts of the historic setting of Sunte House. The southern appeal site formed part of the designed 19th century approach and parkland associated with the house, whereas the current Application Site formed part of the wider agricultural landscape beyond the principal estate. The Inspector's findings are therefore relevant because they distinguish between the significance of the immediate designed landscape and the contribution made by the wider rural setting.

Sunte House

Inspector's Conclusions

- 5.11 The Inspector concluded that the proposal would have an overall neutral to beneficial effect on the setting of Sunte House and therefore would cause no harm to its significance.

How the Inspector Reached this Conclusion

- 5.12 The Inspector accepted that the appeal site formed part of the historic landholding of Sunte House and contributed to its setting as open land separating the estate from surrounding residential development. However, rather than considering only the loss of undeveloped land, the Inspector assessed the proposal as a whole.
- 5.13 The scheme retained the majority of the site as open space, confined development to the site edges, incorporated extensive landscaping and, importantly, reinstated the historic 19th century carriage

drive. The Inspector considered that restoration of the historic approach, together with improved public access and long-term management of the landscape, better revealed the significance of Sunte House and enhanced public appreciation of its historic development. These heritage benefits were considered to outweigh the limited reduction in the extent of open land, resulting in an overall neutral (i.e. preserve) to beneficial (i.e. enhance) effect upon the setting of the listed building.

Wickham Farmhouse

Inspector's Conclusions

- 5.14 The Inspector concluded that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm, towards the lower end of the scale, to the setting of Wickham Farmhouse. However, this harm was outweighed by the heritage benefits associated with Sunte House together with the wider public benefits arising from the scheme.

How the Inspector Reached this Conclusion

- 5.15 The Inspector distinguished the position of Wickham Farmhouse from that of Sunte House by considering the historic relationship between the appeal site and the listed building. A key finding was that the appeal site had no historic functional relationship with Wickham Farmhouse and had never formed part of its landholding. Consequently, the contribution made by the site was limited to the wider rural character surrounding the farmhouse rather than any historic operational or associative relationship.
- 5.16 Although the development would introduce built form closer to Wickham Farmhouse, the Inspector found that the effect would be moderated by the substantial separation distance, mature tree belts and hedgerows, and the low-density layout of the scheme. Whilst the proposal would reduce the sense of rural isolation experienced from the farmhouse, the resulting effect was considered to amount only to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale. This harm was then balanced against the heritage benefits delivered through restoration of the historic approach to Sunte House and the wider public benefits associated with the provision of housing, flood mitigation and associated infrastructure.

Previous Appeal Decisions – Summary and Conclusions

- 5.17 These two appeal decisions relating to land surrounding Sunte House provide an important context for the assessment of the significance and setting of both Sunte House and Wickham Farmhouse.
- 5.18 The first appeal (APP/D3830/W/15/3137838) related to residential development on land immediately north of the current Application Site. Following amendments to the scheme (in response to comments from Historic England), development was removed from the southern field adjacent to Sunte House and confined to the two northern fields. In reaching a decision, the Inspector distinguished between the contribution made by the immediate designed setting of Sunte House and that made by the wider agricultural landscape beyond. The Inspector concluded that the southern field formed an important part of the historic approach and designed setting of Sunte House, whereas the northern fields contributed principally to the wider rural context of the listed building. Consequently, development within those northern fields was found to result in only a small degree

of less than substantial harm to the significance of Sunte House. Importantly, the appeal did not identify any material effect on Wickham Farmhouse, reflecting the limited relationship between that appeal site and the listed building.

- 5.19 The second appeal (APP/D3830/W/16/3146504) considered residential development on land immediately south of Sunte House, including the reinstatement of the historic 19th century approach drive. The Inspector concluded that, whilst the proposal introduced development within land historically associated with Sunte House, the restoration of the historic approach, retention of substantial areas of open space and extensive landscape planting resulted in an overall neutral to beneficial effect on the setting of Sunte House. In contrast, the Inspector identified a limited degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of Wickham Farmhouse arising from the reduction in its rural setting. However, this harm was found to lie at the lower end of the spectrum and was outweighed by the heritage benefits associated with Sunte House together with the wider public benefits of the scheme.
- 5.20 Taken together, these appeal decisions demonstrate a consistent approach to assessing the contribution made by the surrounding landscape to the significance of the two listed buildings. In respect of Sunte House, the Inspectors consistently distinguished between the immediate designed landscape—which makes the greatest contribution to its significance—and the wider agricultural land beyond, whose contribution is more limited and contextual. The decisions also recognise that the setting of Sunte House has evolved over time and that proposals which preserve or enhance the surviving designed estate can positively contribute to the appreciation of the listed building.
- 5.21 In relation to Wickham Farmhouse, the appeal decisions demonstrate that the assessment of setting should focus on the nature of the relationship between the listed building and the surrounding land. The second appeal recognised that development affecting the remaining rural surroundings of the farmhouse could give rise to a limited degree of harm, but that the significance of the listed building derives principally from the farmhouse itself and its surviving historic character, rather than the entirety of its former agricultural landscape. The Inspector's conclusions also demonstrate the importance of considering the extent of functional, visual and experiential relationships when assessing the contribution made by setting.
- 5.22 Accordingly, whilst neither appeal predetermines the outcome of the current application, both provide a relevant and consistent framework for assessing significance in accordance with Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*. Collectively, these decisions are consistent with the approach adopted in this Heritage Statement, namely that the contribution made by setting is not static but reflects the evolution of the listed buildings and their surroundings over time, and that the significance of each heritage asset is principally derived from those elements of setting that continue to make a meaningful contribution to their architectural and historic interest.

6 Assessment of Proposals

- 6.1 The heritage legal and planning policy relevant to the consideration of the application proposals set out in Appendix A of this report. This legal and policy context includes the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF as well as regional and local policy for the historic environment.
- 6.2 In accordance with Policy HE5 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated heritage assets that may be affected by the application proposals have been set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 6.3 In line with Policy HE4, heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Development proposals should maintain or secure a use consistent with an assets' conservation, and avoid or minimise harm to their significance. This should take into account the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including economies, and the desirability of the new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.4 When assessing effects on all heritage assets, Policy HE5 requires that an identification is made of whether proposals: have a positive effect on; have no effect on; result in harm to; or result in the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset. Where a development results in harm to an asset, the degree of harm should be identified, with 'substantial' harm occurring where a proposal would seriously affect a key element of an asset's significance. The policy also clarifies that assessment should be based upon the effect on an asset's significance, rather than the scale of development.
- 6.5 When considering the impact of proposals on the significance of designated heritage assets, the NPPF requires (Policy HE6) that substantial weight should be given to their conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is consistent with high court judgements based upon previous iterations of the NPPF (Barnwell Manor, Forge Fields), where great weight should be attached to the statutory duty.
- 6.6 Concerning designated heritage assets, Policy HE6 states that developments resulting in a positive effect on an asset should be supported. Any harm resulting to a designated asset should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposals (including securing the long-term reuse of a listed building or enabling energy efficiency), with 'substantial' harm or the total loss of an asset requiring demonstration that this is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits outweighing the harm or loss. 'Substantial' harm or total loss may also be permitted if: the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; no suitable medium-term use of the asset can be found through appropriate marketing; there is no possibility of conservation through grant-funding or charitable/public ownership; and the level of harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of the asset being brought back into use.
- 6.7 The Site is identified as proposed allocation MM67 within the emerging Mid Sussex District Plan. The allocation requires development to preserve or enhance the setting of Wickham Farmhouse (Grade II*) and Sunte House (Grade II*) and to respect the historic field pattern, informed by a Heritage Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The assessment below considers the proposals against these specific heritage requirements as well as national policy.

Impact of Application Proposals

Design Evolution and Heritage Response

- 6.8 The proposed masterplan has evolved through an iterative design process informed by a detailed understanding of the significance and setting of the statutorily listed Sunte House and Wickham Farmhouse. The design has sought to respond positively to the heritage constraints of the site by retaining those elements of setting which make the greatest contribution to significance, whilst directing development towards those parts of the Application Site where potential effects on the historic environment are minimised as far as possible. This landscape-led approach has been a fundamental design driver throughout the evolution of the proposals.
- 6.9 A key objective of the masterplan has been to ensure that new development is perceived as a logical extension of the existing urban area at Gatesmead, rather than an encroachment towards the surrounding heritage assets. Consequently, built development has been concentrated within the northern and central parts of the site adjacent to the existing residential edge, where it naturally relates to the established pattern of development. This approach avoids extending built form towards Wickham Farmhouse and instead retains the southern part of the site as a substantial area of multifunctional open space, creating a clear landscape transition between the existing settlement and the historic farmstead. The layout therefore reinforces the existing urban edge whilst ensuring that the immediate surroundings of the listed building remain predominantly open in character.
- 6.10 In relation to Wickham Farmhouse, particular emphasis has been placed on maintaining an appropriate relationship between the proposed development and the listed building. The masterplan retains a substantial area of open space along the southern edge of the site, creating a landscape buffer of approximately 61 metres between the proposed built development and the boundary adjoining Wickham Farmhouse. This buffer, which falls away from the listed building, incorporates public open space, ecological enhancements, retained mature vegetation and new structural planting, ensuring that development is set well back from the listed building and that its immediate surroundings remain open and undeveloped. The retention of this extensive landscape corridor reinforces the existing vegetated boundary and maintains a clear physical and visual separation between the historic farmstead and the proposed development.
- 6.11 The design also responds positively to the site's natural topography. Wickham Farmhouse occupies higher ground along the southern edge of the site, whilst the Application Site falls away to the north and north-east. The proposed development is therefore located on land at a lower level than the listed building, reducing the visual prominence of the new housing when experienced from Wickham Farmhouse and preserving the farmhouse's elevated position within the landscape. The natural landform assists in limiting intervisibility between the proposed development and the listed building and ensures that the perception of openness immediately surrounding the farmhouse is retained. This is shown in the section below taken through the site, with Wickham Farmhouse on the right hand side.



Figure 6.1. Section through the site showing the relationship with Wickham Farmhouse and the use of the topography.

- 6.12 The landscape framework further strengthens this design response. Existing mature hedgerows, trees and boundary vegetation have been retained wherever possible and are supplemented by additional planting throughout the site. These features reinforce the existing landscape structure, filter views between the development and Wickham Farmhouse, and ensure that the transition from the suburban edge to the historic farmstead is defined by landscape rather than built form. Together with the retained open space, these measures substantially reduce the influence of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building.
- 6.13 The landscape-led approach similarly responds to the significance of Sunte House. Development has been directed away from the historic estate and its surviving designed landscape, ensuring that the proposals do not encroach upon those elements of setting which make the greatest contribution to the significance of the Grade II* listed building. Existing tree belts, hedgerows and areas of open space maintain the physical and visual separation between the Application Site and Sunte House, whilst preserving the relationship between the principal house, the Grade II listed Garden Wall and the Grade II listed Garden Building. The proposals therefore respond directly to the conclusions of previous appeal decisions, which recognised that the greatest heritage sensitivity lies within the immediate designed setting of Sunte House rather than the wider agricultural landscape beyond.
- 6.14 Overall, the masterplan demonstrates a heritage-led evolution. Heritage considerations have informed the fundamental structure of the layout from the outset, influencing the location of development, the retention of substantial landscape buffers, the use of the site's natural topography, the preservation and reinforcement of mature vegetation, and the concentration of built form adjacent to the existing settlement edge. The result is a scheme that responds positively to the significance of the surrounding heritage assets, preserves the significance of Sunte House and minimises effects on Wickham Farmhouse, limiting any impact to a low level of less than substantial harm.

Assessment of Heritage Impact

Sunte House (Grade II*)

- 6.15 The significance of Sunte House derives principally from its architectural interest as a late 17th century country house and from its historic evolution into a gentleman's residence set within a designed landscape. The greatest contribution to its significance is provided by the immediate setting, comprising the principal house, formal gardens, forecourt, Grade II listed Garden Wall, Grade II listed Garden Building and mature landscape setting. These elements collectively illustrate the historic development of the estate and possess strong group value through their physical, functional and historic relationship.

- 6.16 The Application Site lies beyond the surviving designed landscape and outside the historic curtilage of Sunte House. Although it forms part of the wider surroundings of the listed building, it has no historic functional relationship with the house and does not contribute to the appreciation of its architectural composition or the relationship between the principal house and the associated listed structures. As demonstrated by the historic mapping and previous appeal decisions, the wider setting has evolved considerably over time through the contraction of the historic estate and the suburban expansion of Haywards Heath. Consequently, the contribution made by the Application Site to the significance of Sunte House is considered to be limited.
- 6.17 The proposed masterplan has been informed by this understanding of significance and has evolved to respond positively to the heritage constraints associated with Sunte House. Development has been located outside the surviving designed landscape and away from the immediate setting of the listed building. Existing mature vegetation and landscape features are retained and reinforced, maintaining the physical separation between the proposed development and the historic estate. The relationship between Sunte House, the Grade II listed Garden Wall and the Grade II listed Garden Building is preserved, with the proposals having no effect on the appreciation of their group value or the legibility of the surviving estate.
- 6.18 The proposals would not alter the principal views of the listed building within its immediate setting, nor would they affect the experience of arriving at or moving through the surviving designed landscape. Whilst the wider landscape has changed considerably over time, including the reinstatement of the historic southern approach through recent development, the significance of Sunte House continues to be derived principally from its immediate setting. The proposed development does not extend into this area or interrupt the appreciation of the architectural and historic relationship between the house and its associated listed structures.
- 6.19 The proposals therefore represent a further stage in the continued evolution of the wider suburban landscape surrounding Sunte House, rather than a change to those elements of setting which contribute most strongly to its significance. The immediate setting of the listed building remains intact, the surviving designed landscape is not affected and the group value of the listed structures is preserved.
- 6.20 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposals would preserve the significance of Sunte House and the associated Grade II listed Garden Wall and Garden Building.

Wickham Farmhouse (Grade II*)

- 6.21 Wickham Farmhouse derives its significance principally from its architectural interest as a late 16th century Wealden farmhouse together with the evidential value embodied within its historic fabric and the legibility of its architectural evolution. Whilst its setting contributes to an understanding of its agricultural origins, the contribution made by the surrounding landscape has evolved considerably as the former agricultural holding has become fragmented and the farmhouse has transitioned from a working farmstead to a private dwelling.
- 6.22 The Application Site historically formed part of the agricultural holding associated with Wickham Farmhouse and therefore retains a historical association with the listed building. However, that relationship has changed significantly over time. The farmhouse no longer functions as part of an agricultural business, the former landholding has been fragmented through changes in ownership and land use, and the surrounding landscape has been substantially altered by the construction of

the railway and successive phases of residential development. Consequently, the Application Site now contributes principally through its historical and evidential association with the former farmstead, rather than through any continuing functional relationship. Overall, the Site is considered to make a limited contribution to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse.

- 6.23 The proposed masterplan has been developed having regard to these heritage considerations and has sought to minimise impacts on the setting of Wickham Farmhouse wherever possible. Development has been pulled away from the immediate setting of the listed building, with areas of open space and landscape buffers retained adjacent to the farmhouse. Existing hedgerows and mature trees are retained where possible and reinforced through additional planting, maintaining visual containment and reducing intervisibility between the proposed development and the listed building. The layout also maintains substantial separation between new built form and Wickham Farmhouse, ensuring that the listed building continues to be experienced within a predominantly open landscape at its immediate northern edge.
- 6.24 The proposals would not affect the architectural interest of Wickham Farmhouse, its historic fabric, plan form or immediate curtilage. Nor would they alter the relationship between the farmhouse and its surviving historic curtilage, which continues to make the greatest contribution to its significance through setting. The principal change relates to the introduction of residential development within part of the wider agricultural landscape to the north of the farmhouse. This would reduce the extent of surviving open land associated with the former agricultural holding and would therefore affect one component of the listed building's wider setting.
- 6.25 However, the effect of this change should be considered within the context of the substantial evolution that has already taken place. Wickham Farmhouse is no longer experienced as the centre of an extensive working farm but as a historic dwelling situated on the suburban edge of Haywards Heath. Residential development now surrounds the former farmstead on several sides, the railway forms a prominent western boundary, and the former agricultural landscape has been fragmented over many decades. The proposed development therefore represents a change within an already evolved setting rather than a fundamental alteration to the character of the listed building or its surroundings.
- 6.26 The masterplan has also been designed to retain a degree of openness around the farmhouse, ensuring that its rural origins remain legible and that the historic relationship between the building and the wider landscape can continue to be appreciated. Whilst the historic agricultural function of the Application Site has long since been lost, its historical association with the former farmstead remains capable of being understood through the surviving pattern of open land and the documentary and cartographic evidence presented within this assessment.
- 6.27 Overall, whilst the proposals would result in a change to the wider setting of Wickham Farmhouse through the development of land that retains a historic association with the former agricultural holding. However, given the substantial changes that have already occurred to the setting of the listed building, the loss of the historic functional relationship between the Site and the farmhouse, the retention of landscape buffers and separation distances, and the careful design of the masterplan in response to the heritage constraints of the site, the resulting effect on significance is considered to be limited.
- 6.28 It is therefore concluded that the proposals would result in a limited amount of harm to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse through changes to its setting.

Overall Heritage Conclusion

- 6.29 The proposed masterplan has been informed by a detailed understanding of the significance of Sunte House, Wickham Farmhouse and their respective settings. Historic mapping, site analysis and previous appeal decisions demonstrate that the settings of both listed buildings have evolved considerably over time through changes in land use, ownership, infrastructure and the expansion of Haywards Heath. The proposals respond directly to this understanding by retaining the areas of setting that make the greatest contribution to significance, reinforcing existing landscape features, maintaining separation between the listed buildings and new development, and avoiding encroachment into the surviving designed landscape associated with Sunte House.
- 6.30 The proposals preserve the significance of Sunte House, resulting in no harm to the Grade II* listed building or its associated listed structures. In respect of Wickham Farmhouse, the proposals would alter part of its wider setting but would not affect its architectural interest, historic fabric or immediate curtilage. Taking account of the evolved nature of its setting, the limited contribution made by the Application Site and the heritage-led evolution of the masterplan, the proposals would result in a limited amount of harm.
- 6.31 This conclusion is consistent with the methodology set out in Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3* and reflects the established approach taken in previous appeal decisions relating to the surrounding area. In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the identified harm should be given considerable importance and weight in the planning balance. However, it is of a low order and should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme in accordance with paragraph HE6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Concluding harm

- 6.32 It must be noted that the engagement of the paragraphs of the NPPF requires different approaches. Policy HE6 (applicable to designated heritage assets) requires the weighing of harm against public benefits, whereas Policy HE7 (applicable to non-designated heritage assets) is concerned with a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset for any harm up to substantial harm or total loss, which is then required to be outweighed by benefits. In respect of the latter, this reflects the lower level of significance for non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.33 Concluding that the proposals cause an element of harm to significance (in this case by virtue of change to setting) does not automatically equate to refusal. Instead, as the NPPF advocates, harm should be considered alongside and balanced against the wider public benefits of the scheme. Important public benefits are defined in Policy HE6:4 as securing the long-term use of a vacant listed building, as well as enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures.
- 6.34 In considering resulting harm, great weight should be given to the statutory duty, particularly that special consideration should be given to preservation of the asset. It has been established by high court judgements and appeal decisions that consideration should also be given to the means through which that harm can be minimised and mitigated. In this case, mitigation is built into the design. That is, that during design development, when an adverse impact has been identified, consideration is given as to how that impact can be reduced and whether it is absolutely necessary to deliver the scheme and the identified public benefits.

- 6.35 In this respect, it must be noted that the Schedule of Main Modifications to the emerging Local Plan identifies the Application Site under MM67 as one suitable for 49 dwellings. The policy requirements do require that the proposals be informed by a Heritage Statement and LVIA and should preserve or enhance the setting of the listed buildings to the south and east of the site.

Considerations against Legislation and Policy

Statutory Duties

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 6.36 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 6.37 This Heritage Statement has identified the significance of the designated heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed development and has assessed the contribution made by the Application Site to their significance through setting. The assessment concludes that the Application Site makes a limited contribution to the significance of Sunte House and a limited contribution to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse.
- 6.38 The assessment concludes that the proposals would preserve the significance of Sunte House, including the relationship between the principal house and the associated Grade II listed Garden Wall and Garden Building, resulting in no harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building through changes to its setting. In respect of Wickham Farmhouse, the proposals would result in a limited amount of harm, arising from changes to part of its wider setting. This harm has been minimised through the evolution of the masterplan, which has retained landscape buffers, preserved separation distances, responded to existing vegetation and avoided unnecessary encroachment into those parts of the setting that make the greatest contribution to significance.
- 6.39 In accordance with Section 66(1), considerable importance and weight should be given to the identified heritage impacts. However, the assessment demonstrates that the proposals have been informed by a detailed understanding of the significance and setting of the affected heritage assets and have sought to avoid or minimise harm through careful design.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- 6.40 The significance of the designated heritage assets as required by Policy HE5:1 of the NPPF, has been set out in Section 4 of this report. In accordance with Policy HE5:2 and HE5:3 of the NPPF, the application proposals will preserve the significance of Sunte House with a limited amount of harm to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse; taking account of the effect on the significance of the assets as opposed to the scale of the proposals.

- 6.41 The conservation of designated heritage assets has, in line with Policy HE6:1 and HE6:3 of the NPPF, been given substantial weight, and any harm has been taken as a matter of considerable importance and weight.
- 6.42 There would be a limited amount of harm to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse which should be given great weight according to policy H6.3 and in line with H6.4, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. This planning balance is undertaken in the Planning Statement.

Mid Sussex Development Plan

- 6.43 Policy DP34 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of designated heritage assets, including the contribution made by their settings. The emerging District Plan continues this approach through draft Policy DPB2, which similarly requires development proposals to be informed by a proportionate understanding of heritage significance and to conserve those elements of setting which contribute to that significance.
- 6.44 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with those policy requirements. It identifies the significance of the affected heritage assets, assesses the contribution made by the Application Site to their significance through setting and demonstrates how the proposed masterplan has evolved in response to those findings. The proposals have also been informed by the principles set out in Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*, recognising that the contribution made by setting is not static but changes over time as the surroundings of a heritage asset evolve.
- 6.45 The assessment concludes that the proposals would preserve the significance of Sunte House and would result in no harm to its significance. Whilst a limited level of harm has been identified in relation to the setting of Wickham Farmhouse, this has been minimised through the design of the masterplan and relates only to changes within part of the wider setting that already makes a limited contribution to the significance of the listed building. The proposals therefore respond appropriately to the significance of the affected heritage assets and are considered to accord with the objectives of Policy DP34 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan and draft Policy DPB2 of the emerging District Plan.

Summary

- 6.46 Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the proposed development has been informed by a thorough understanding of the significance of the affected heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings. The masterplan has evolved in response to those heritage considerations, retaining those elements of setting that make the greatest contribution to significance and minimising effects on the historic environment through careful layout, landscape design and the retention of key spatial relationships. As a result, the proposals preserve the significance of Sunte House and its associated listed structures and would result in only a low level of less harm to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse. The planning balance exercise is undertaken in the submitted Planning Statement.
- 6.47 The proposals are therefore considered to satisfy the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and to accord with the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan and the emerging District Plan.

7 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to assess the potential effects of the proposed residential development at Land West of Gatesmead on the significance of nearby designated heritage assets, namely the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse and the Grade II* listed Sunte House, together with the associated Grade II listed Garden Wall and Garden Building. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) and Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3)*.
- 7.2 The assessment demonstrates that the significance of both listed buildings is derived principally from their architectural and historic interest, with setting making an important, but differing, contribution to each asset. Historic mapping, documentary evidence and previous appeal decisions demonstrate that the settings of both listed buildings have evolved considerably over time through changes in land ownership, agricultural practices, transport infrastructure and the expansion of Haywards Heath. Consequently, the contribution made by the wider landscape to their significance must be understood within the context of this long-term evolution.

Sunte House

- 7.3 Sunte House derives its significance principally from its architectural quality as a late seventeenth-century country house and from its evolution from a prosperous farmhouse into a gentleman's residence set within a designed landscape. The surviving formal gardens, forecourt, Grade II listed Garden Wall and Grade II listed Garden Building collectively form the immediate setting of the listed building and possess considerable group value. These elements continue to provide the principal context in which the architectural and historic significance of the estate is understood.
- 7.4 The assessment concludes that the Application Site lies outside the surviving designed estate and makes a limited contribution to the significance of Sunte House. It has no historic functional relationship with the listed building, does not contribute to the appreciation of its architectural composition or group value, and plays only a limited role in the experience of the heritage asset.
- 7.5 The proposed development has been designed to avoid impacts on those elements of setting that make the greatest contribution to significance. As a result, the immediate designed landscape, the relationship between the principal house and its associated listed structures, and the principal experience of the listed building would all be preserved.
- 7.6 Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposals would preserve the significance of Sunte House, resulting in no harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building or its associated listed structures.

Wickham Farmhouse

- 7.7 Wickham Farmhouse derives its significance principally from its architectural quality as an exceptionally well-preserved late sixteenth-century Wealden farmhouse and from the survival of its historic fabric and plan form. Whilst the wider setting contributes to an understanding of the building's agricultural origins, historic mapping demonstrates that this contribution has diminished over time as the former agricultural holding has been fragmented, the farmhouse has become a private dwelling and the surrounding landscape has evolved from a rural agricultural landscape into the suburban edge of Haywards Heath.

- 7.8 The Application Site historically formed part of the agricultural holding associated with Wickham Farmhouse and therefore retains an historic and associative relationship with the listed building. However, that relationship is no longer functional, and the contribution made by the Site has been substantially reduced through changes in land use, ownership and the wider landscape. Consequently, the Application Site is considered to make a limited contribution to the significance of the listed building.
- 7.9 The proposed development would introduce residential development into part of this wider setting and would therefore alter one component of the setting of Wickham Farmhouse. However, the proposals would not affect the architectural interest of the listed building, its historic fabric, plan form, immediate curtilage or its principal historic relationships.
- 7.10 The assessment therefore concludes that the proposals would result in a limited level of harm, to the significance of Wickham Farmhouse through changes to part of its wider setting.

Heritage-led Design Evolution

- 7.11 A key consideration throughout the evolution of the proposals has been the need to respond positively to the significance and setting of the surrounding heritage assets. Rather than heritage considerations being addressed through mitigation after the layout had been established, they have informed the structure of the masterplan from the outset.
- 7.12 In particular, the proposals have sought to reduce potential impacts through:
- retaining a substantial landscape buffer of approximately 61 metres between the proposed development and the boundary adjoining Wickham Farmhouse;
 - locating the built development adjacent to the existing residential edge at Gatesmead, ensuring that the proposals read as a logical extension to the existing settlement rather than extending built form towards Wickham Farmhouse;
 - retaining the largest areas of open space closest to Wickham Farmhouse, maintaining a clear landscape transition between the suburban edge and the historic farmstead;
 - responding positively to the site's natural topography, with the land falling away from Wickham Farmhouse towards the north, reducing the prominence of the proposed development in views from the listed building;
 - retaining and reinforcing mature hedgerows, trees and existing landscape features, maintaining physical and visual separation between the proposed development and the heritage assets;
 - avoiding development within the setting of Sunte House and preserving the relationship between the principal house, the Grade II listed Garden Wall and the Grade II listed Garden Building;
 - maintaining the openness of those areas immediately surrounding the listed buildings which make the greatest contribution to their significance; and

- responding to the findings of previous appeal decisions, which recognised the differing contribution made by the immediate setting and the wider landscape to the significance of both listed buildings.

7.13 Collectively, these measures demonstrate that the proposals have been informed by a robust understanding of heritage significance and have sought to avoid or minimise impacts through careful site planning and landscape-led design. Whilst there is an element of harm to the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse, this has been mitigated and reduced as far as possible. The planning balance is undertaken in the submitted Planning Statement.

Overall Conclusion

- 7.14 This assessment demonstrates that the proposed development has been informed by a comprehensive understanding of the significance of the surrounding heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings. It recognises that the settings of both Sunte House and Wickham Farmhouse have evolved considerably over time and that the contribution made by the Application Site must be understood within this changing historic context.
- 7.15 The proposals have been designed to retain those elements of setting that make the greatest contribution to significance and to minimise effects on the historic environment through the careful disposition of development, the retention of substantial landscape buffers, the use of existing topography, the preservation and enhancement of mature vegetation and the maintenance of meaningful separation between new development and the listed buildings.
- 7.16 As a consequence, the proposals would preserve the significance of Sunte House, including its associated listed structures, and would result in no harm to the significance of that Grade II* listed building. In relation to Wickham Farmhouse, the proposals would result in a limited amount of harm, arising from changes to part of its wider setting. That harm has been reduced as far as reasonably possible through the evolution of the masterplan and should be afforded considerable importance and weight in accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 7.17 Overall, the proposals are considered to preserve or cause a limited amount of harm to the significance of the affected heritage assets insofar as possible, minimise harm through good design and accord with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the heritage objectives of Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3*, Policy DP34 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan and draft Policy DPB2 of the emerging District Plan.
- 7.18 The findings of this assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been informed by, and are consistent with, the heritage requirements of the emerging allocation for the Site, which seeks to preserve or enhance the setting of the designated heritage assets whilst respecting the historic field pattern.

Appendix A – Heritage Planning Policy & Guidance

Legislation

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 16 of the 1990 Act which states that in considering applications for listed building consent, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 further states that special regard must be given by the authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Listed Buildings and their setting.

According to Section 69 of the Act a Conservation Area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

Section 69 further states that it shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly. Adding, The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

Further to this Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that in exercising all planning functions, local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Further provisions are detailed in Section 74 of the Act.

Recent case law⁸ has confirmed that Parliament’s intention in enacting Section 66 (1) was that decision-makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings, where “preserve” means “to do no harm”. This duty must be borne in mind when considering any harm that may accrue and the balancing of such harm against public benefits as required by national planning policy. This can also logically be applied to the statutory tests in respect of conservation areas. Similarly, it has also been proven that weight must also be given to heritage benefits.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) August 2026

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on the 17th August 2026, and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It has purposefully

⁸ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited and (1) East Northamptonshire District Council (2) Historic England (3) National Trust (4) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Governments, Case No: C1/2013/0843, 18th February 2014

been created to provide a framework within which local people and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

When determining Planning Applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the approach of presumption in favour of achieving sustainable development; which is the purpose of the planning system and is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-taking activities. It should be noted however, that in terms of plan-making and spatial development strategies, consideration should be given as to whether areas or assets of particular importance (including designated heritage assets) provide a strong reason for restricting scale, type or distribution of development (Policy S1).

Within section 14 of the NPPF, 'Achieving well-designed places', Policies DP1 – DP4 reinforce the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive, sustainable and high-quality places. This section of the NPPF affirms the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local context, character and history to reflect the built identity of the surrounding area.

Section 20, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', lays out Policies HE1 – HE10, which relate to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment. **Policies HE1, HE2 and HE3** provide the guidance to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans. Plans should be informed by a proportionate heritage statement, and should provide a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and should identify heritage assets which are most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Plans should also be supported by a local heritage list.

When approaching conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, local authorities are required to identify opportunities for new development which can enhance or better reveal their significance, as well as safeguarding their long-term future. In addition, conservation areas should be reviewed periodically, with any new or amended areas accompanied by adopted appraisals and management plans. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Policy HE3 specifically relates to Historic Environment Records; requiring local authorities to keep an up-to-date record of the historic environment in their area, which should be publicly accessible.

Policies HE4 – HE10 concern decision-making. **Policy HE4** states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, and that development proposals should maintain or secure a use for heritage assets that is consistent with their conservation, and with regard of the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities and local character. Harm should be avoided, or minimised if harm is unavoidable, and any harm should have clear and convincing justification. Part 3 of the policy adds that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. In addition, proposals for enabling development which would secure the future of a heritage asset should be considered on the basis of whether this securement outweighs other potential disbenefits or policy conflicts within the Framework.

In order to determine applications for development, **Policy HE5** of the NPPF states that development proposals should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the heritage assets affected,

including the contribution made by their setting. Adding that the level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.

Part 2 of Policy HE5 requires assessments to identify whether proposals: have a positive effect; have no effect; result in harm; or cause the total loss of the significance of an asset. Where harm is concluded, the degree of harm should be identified, and if the harm is substantial, this will be where proposals will seriously affect a key element of an asset's significance. Part 3 makes clear that assessment should be based upon the affect of proposals on an asset's significance, and not on the scale of development. In addition, decision makers should be satisfied that the assessment undertaken accurately reflects the effects on relevant heritage assets.

Policy HE6 concerns proposals affecting designated heritage assets. This emphasises that when a new development is proposed, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater this weight should be, irrespective of the effect of the proposals. It is noted within this policy that development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.

Part 4 of the policy advises that where a development will cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the long-term reuse of a vacant building, or enabling energy efficiency. Part 5 of the policy states that where proposals result in substantial harm to, or the total loss of, a designated heritage asset, this should only be permitted if it is demonstrated that it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or if the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable use, no suitable medium-term use for the asset can be secured, there is no potential for conservation grant-funding or ownership, and the harm is outweighed by bringing the asset back into use.

Policy HE7 concerns proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets. As with designated assets, proposals having a positive effect on non-designated heritage assets should be supported. In weighing applications that result in harm to a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Where proposals will result in substantial harm to, or the total loss of, a non-designated heritage asset, this should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposals, again having regard to the scale of impact and the significance of the asset.

Policy HE8 concerns World Heritage Sites; with the aim to secure the long-term future use of these sites and the conservation of their significance and Outstanding Universal Value, and **Policy HE9** concerns conservation areas. Proposals affecting these assets should have regard to their significance and special architectural or historic interest, and retain and conserve features and buildings that make a positive contribution to their significance. Both policies importantly clarify that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, and that assessment should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

The loss or removal of heritage assets is covered within **Policy HE10**. This stipulates that local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred, and that recording should be undertaken by the applicant to advance understanding of the asset and its significance.

The NPPF therefore continues to uphold the philosophy initially introduced within PPS5, of moving away from narrow or prescriptive attitudes towards development within the historic environment, towards intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. English Heritage (now Historic England) defined this new approach, now reflected in the NPPF, as '*constructive conservation*'. This is defined as '*a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.*' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, English Heritage, 2009).

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2019

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was introduced by the Government as a web-based resource on 6th March 2014 and is updated regularly, with the most recent update on 23rd July 2019. The PPG is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF.

It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It also states, conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states, an important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Adding, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is stated to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF.

Importantly, it is stated harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

The PPG makes clear that the delivery of development within the setting of heritage assets has the potential to make a positive contribution to, or better reveal, the significance of that asset.

Finally, the PPG provides in depth guidance on the importance of World Heritage Sites, why they are important, and the contribution setting makes to their Outstanding Universal Value. The PPG also provides guidance on the approaches that should be taken to assess the impact of development on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites.

Historic England Guidance - Overview

On the 25th March 2015 Historic England (formerly English Heritage) withdrew the PPS5 Practice Guide. This document has been replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs), 'GPA1: Local Plan Making' (Published 25th March 2015); 'GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment' (Published 27th March 2015); and 'GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017).

The GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents particularly focus on the how good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.

In addition to these documents, Historic England has published several core Advice Notes (HEAs) which provide detailed and practical advice on how national policy and guidance is implemented. These documents include: 'HEAN1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition, February 2019)'; 'HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets' (25th February 2016); and 'HEAN3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans' (30th October 2015). In addition to these, 'HEAN4: Tall Buildings' (December 2015); 'HEAN7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Second Edition, January 2021); 'HEAN10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage' (21st February 2018); and 'HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance' (October 2019). Collectively, these Advice Notes provide further information and guidance in respect of managing the historic environment and development within it.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-taking in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that 'development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.'

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of development proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

Crucially, the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change, its justification, mitigation and any recording which may be necessary. This document also provides guidance in respect of neglect and unauthorised works.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017)

This is used to understand the surroundings of a heritage asset which may contribute to its significance. It aids practitioners with the implementation of national policies and guidance relating to the historic environment found within the NPPF and PPG, once again advocating a stepped approach to assessment.

It amalgamates 'Seeing the History in the View' (2011) and 'Setting of Heritage Assets' (2015) forming one succinct document which focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.

The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the previous documents, albeit now with a greater emphasis on the contribution that views to and from heritage assets make to their significance. It reaffirms that setting should be understood as the way in which an asset is experienced.

The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour, while setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset's surroundings.

This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of proposed development and the setting of heritage assets. It identifies that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, as well as further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It clarifies that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

It highlights that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change within their settings without harming the significance of the asset and therefore setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, noting that any approach should be demonstrably compliant

with legislation, national policies and objectives, Historic England recommend using a '5-step process' in order to assess the potential impact of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset, with this 5-step process similar to that utilised in earlier guidance:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Historic England Advice Note 10 (HEAN10): Listed Buildings and Curtilage (February 2018)

HE10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage provides advice on assessing whether a building has a curtilage and what that curtilage might/may include. It provides hypothetical examples to assist in that assessment and is based on current legislative provisions in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and consideration of listed buildings and curtilage in legal cases.

In general terms, the guidance defines the curtilage of a building (the principal listed building) as any area of land and other buildings that are around and associated with that principal building. It sets out that the courts have stated that there are three key factors to be taken into account in assessing whether a structure, building or object falls within the curtilage of a listed building:

- The physical layout of the listed building and structure;
- Their ownership, both historically and at the date of listing;
- The use or function of the relevant buildings, again both historically and at the date of listing.

It is important to note that the law (Section 1(5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) states that listed buildings identified on the National Heritage List for England also includes any ancillary objects or structures within the curtilage of the building, which forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948. Ultimately, it will be for the Local Planning Authority to reach a conclusion as to whether or not buildings are within a particular curtilage, and ultimately a matter for the courts to determine if that decision is thought unreasonable.

Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEA12): Statements of Heritage Significance (October 2019)

HEA12: Statements of Heritage Significance covers the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets.

The document states that understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals for their buildings and sites, enables owners and applicants to receive effective, consistent and timely decisions. It explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).

Local Policy

Planning Policy Context – Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031

The statutory development plan for the site includes the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031. The principal policy relating to the historic environment is Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets, which seeks to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their settings.

Policy DP34 requires proposals affecting heritage assets to be informed by a proportionate assessment of their significance, including the contribution made by their setting where relevant. Development should protect the special architectural, historic, archaeological or artistic interest of heritage assets and ensure that any harm to significance is avoided or appropriately justified. Where proposals affect the setting of a listed building, the policy requires careful consideration of the contribution that the setting makes to the significance of the asset, reflecting the approach set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The policy also recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and seeks to ensure that development conserves those elements which contribute to their significance, whilst supporting proposals that secure their viable use and long-term conservation. This approach is consistent with the statutory duty under sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the heritage policies contained within Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

In addition, Policy DP35: Conservation Areas seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, including important views into and out of those areas, whilst Policy DP36: Historic Parks and Gardens seeks to conserve the significance and setting of registered historic parks and gardens. Although neither policy applies directly to the Application Site, they reinforce the District Plan's overarching objective of conserving the historic environment and ensuring that development respects the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings.

Overall, the District Plan adopts an approach consistent with national policy by requiring proposals affecting heritage assets to be based upon an understanding of significance and by ensuring that decisions are informed by the contribution made by setting to that significance. This Heritage Statement has therefore assessed the significance of Sunte House, Wickham Farmhouse and their associated listed structures, together with the contribution made by the Application Site to their settings, in accordance with Policy DP34 and the principles set out in Historic England's *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*.

Emerging Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039

Mid Sussex District Council is currently preparing the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039, which, once adopted, will replace the adopted District Plan 2014–2031. The emerging Plan is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, with the weight afforded to individual policies dependent upon their stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections and their consistency with national policy.

The heritage policies within the emerging Plan largely continue the approach established by the adopted District Plan. In particular, Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets is proposed to be replaced by Policy DPB2, with the Council confirming that the aims and objectives of the existing policy remain consistent with national policy and that only minor amendments have been made to improve clarity and update references. Similarly, Policy DP35: Conservation Areas is replaced by Policy DPB3, with no substantive change in policy approach.

The emerging Plan continues to require development proposals to be informed by an understanding of the significance of heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings. Development should conserve designated and non-designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, avoiding harm where possible and ensuring that any impacts are fully justified. As with the adopted policy, the emerging Plan seeks to conserve those elements of setting which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, whilst recognising opportunities for proposals to better reveal significance or secure the long-term conservation of historic assets.

The emerging Plan also reinforces the importance of Heritage Impact Assessments where development has the potential to affect designated heritage assets or their settings. It expects applications to identify the significance of affected heritage assets, assess the contribution made by setting and demonstrate how proposals have been designed to conserve that significance. This reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the statutory duties contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

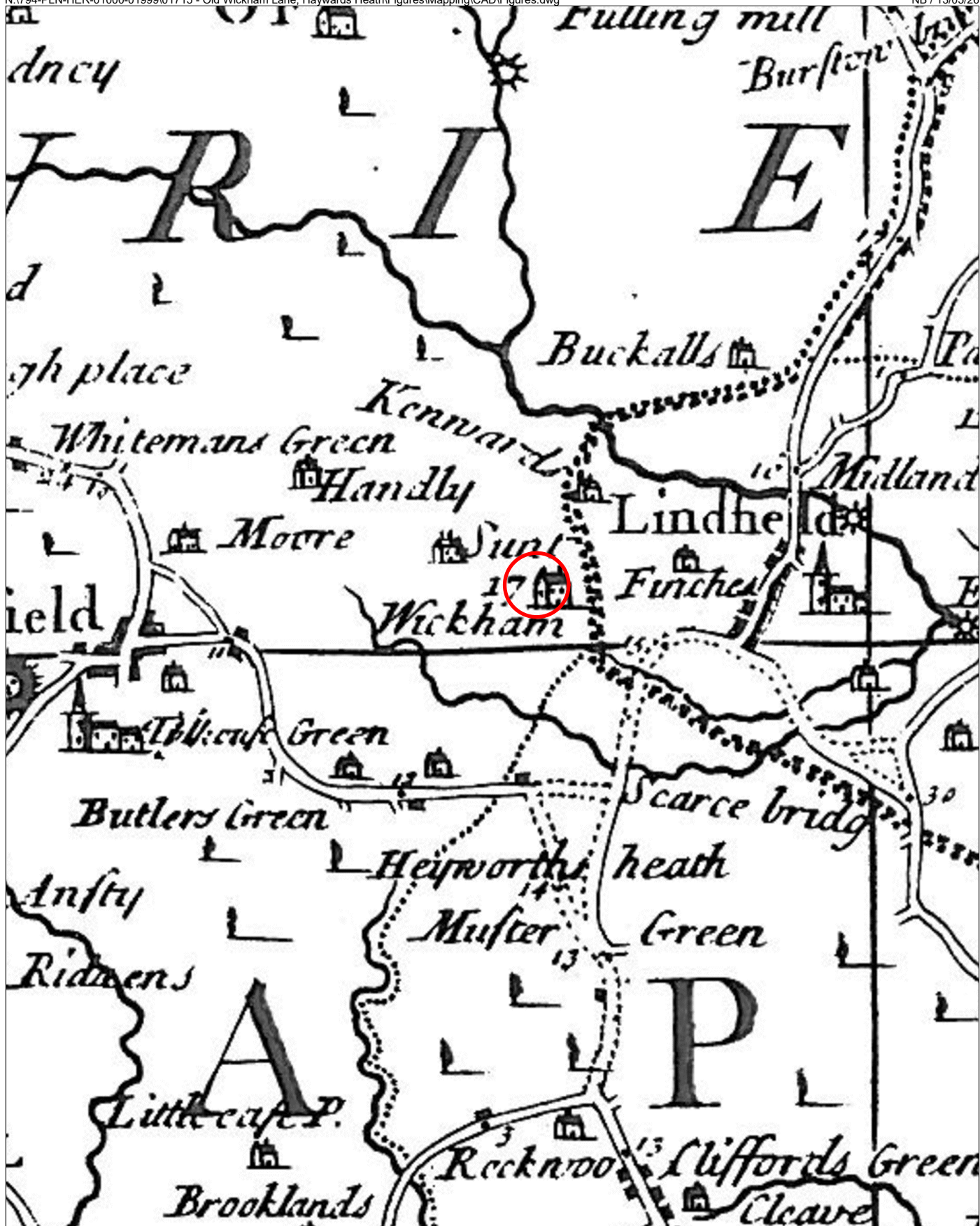
Overall, the emerging District Plan does not represent a significant change in the Council's approach to the historic environment. Instead, it reinforces the established principles of conserving heritage significance through a proportionate understanding of heritage assets and their settings, consistent with national planning policy and Historic England guidance. Consequently, the assessment contained within this Heritage Statement has been prepared having regard to both the adopted Policy DP34 and the emerging Policy DPB2, which together seek to ensure that proposals affecting listed buildings are informed by a robust assessment of significance and the contribution made by setting.

Emerging Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039 (Main Modifications)

The Site is proposed for allocation under Policy MM67: *Land to the North of Old Wickham Lane, Haywards Heath*. The allocation requires development to:

- preserve or enhance the setting of Wickham Farmhouse (Grade II*) and Sunte House (Grade II*) and its associated listed structures through a Heritage Statement; and
- ensure the layout respects the historic field pattern and retains trees and hedgerows marking historic field boundaries, informed by a Heritage Statement and LVIA.

Appendix B – Historic Maps



Approximate site location



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 3

1724 Budgen Map



Approximate site location



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 4

1795 Gardner and Gream Map



Approximate site location



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 5

1808 Ordnance Survey Drawing



 Site Boundary

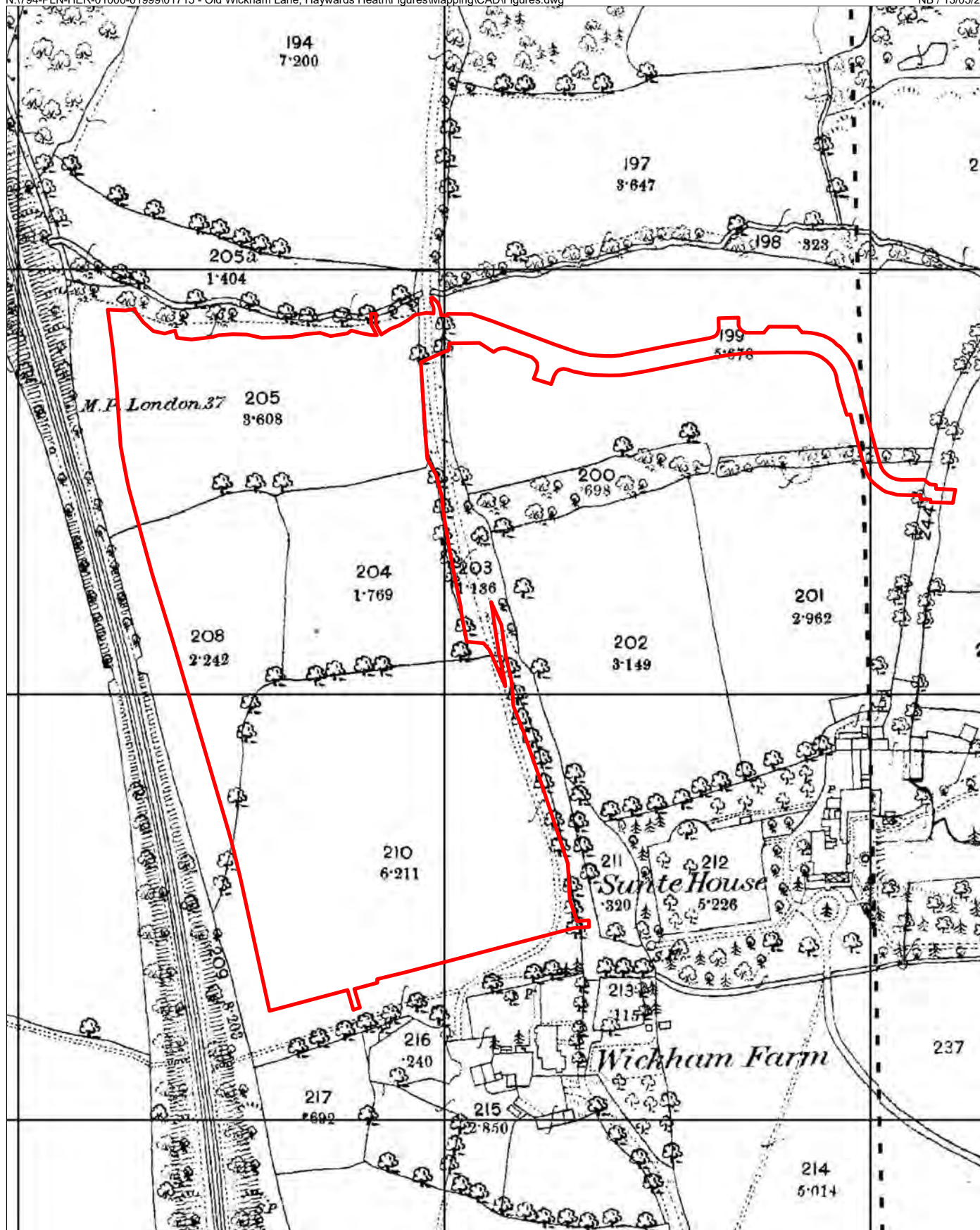


0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

rps
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

Figure 6

1840 Lindfield Sussex Tithe Map



 Site Boundary

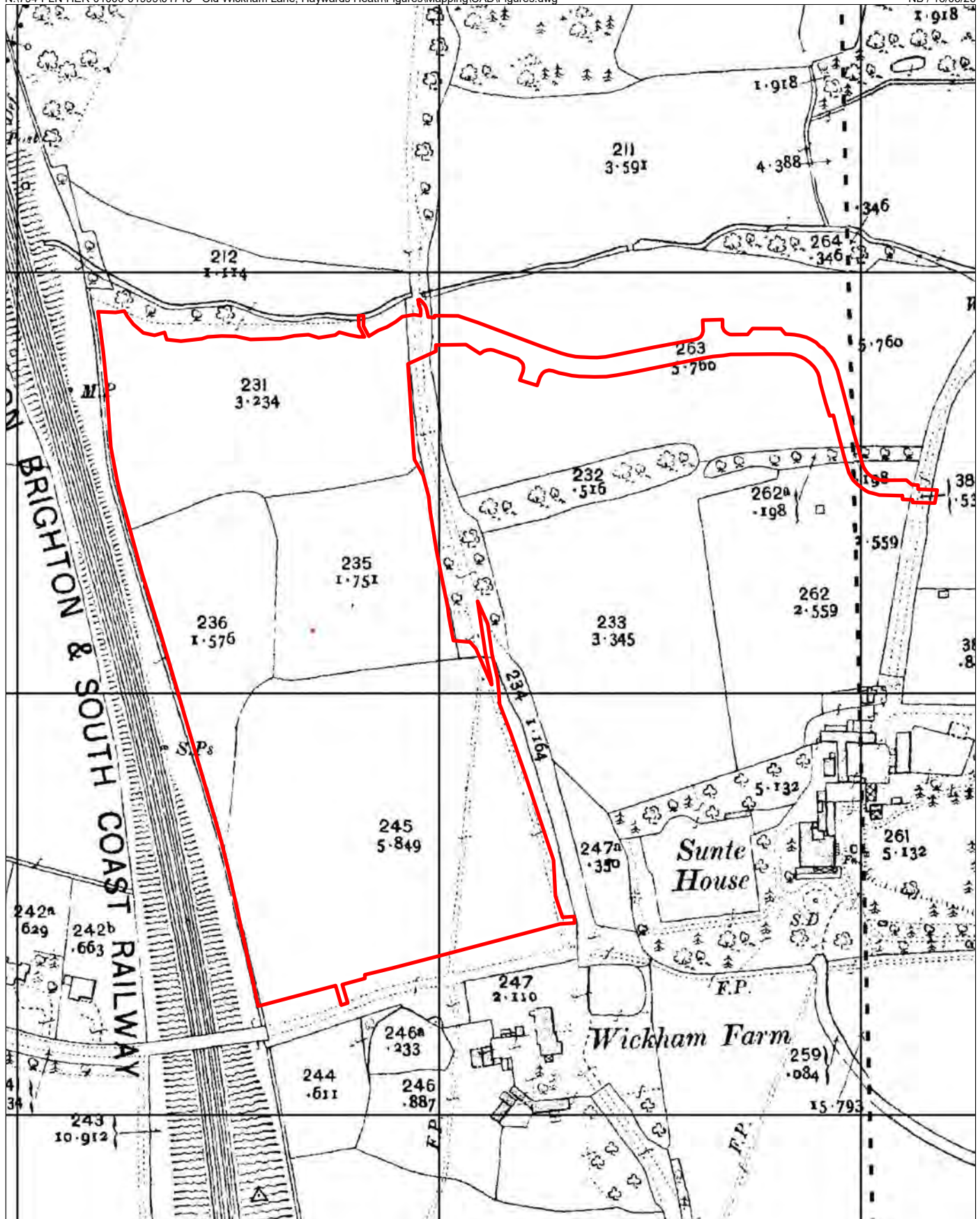


0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

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Figure 7

1875 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

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Figure 8

1910 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

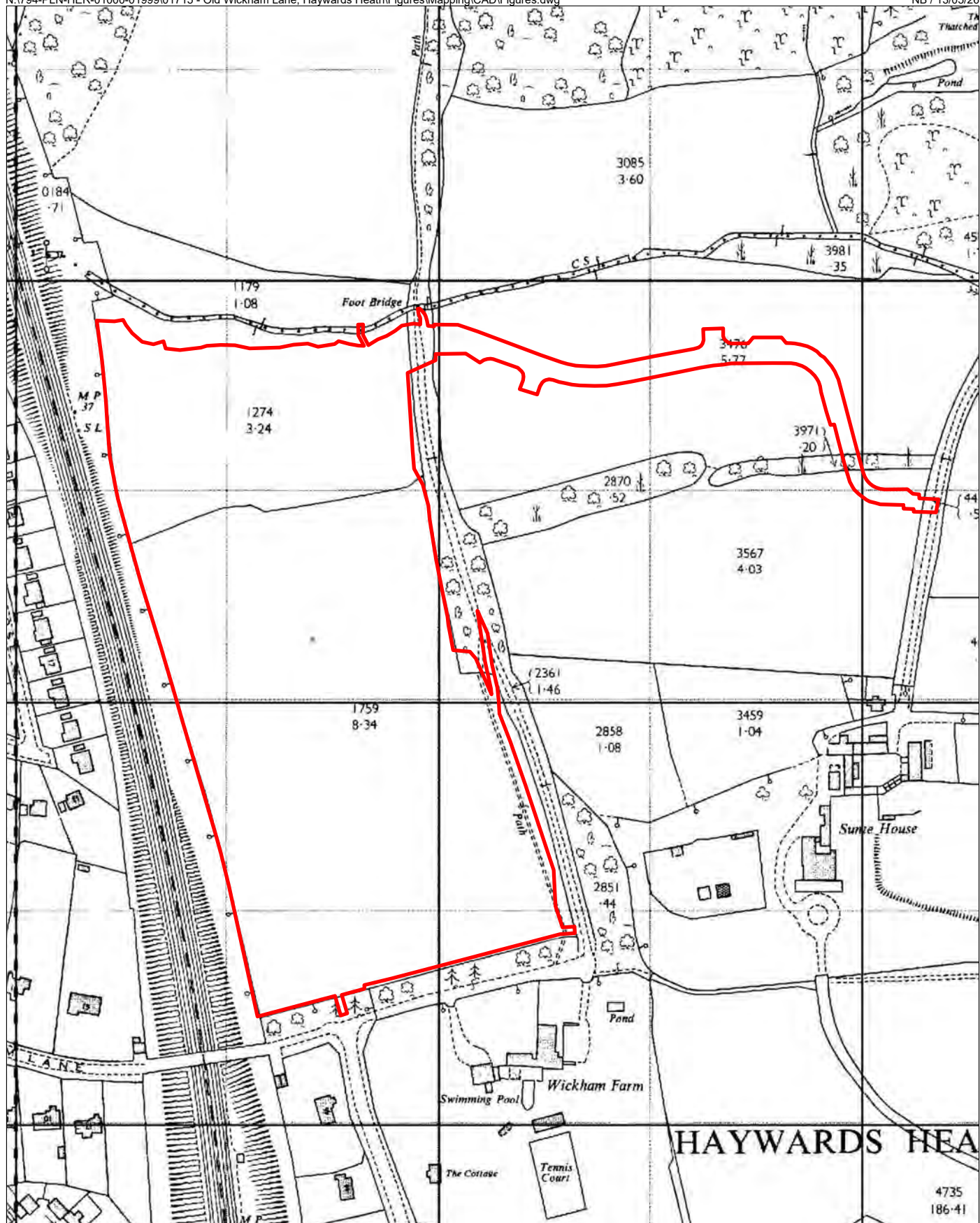


0 50 100m
Scale at A4: 1:5,000



Figure 9

1947 Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

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Figure 10

1966 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

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Figure 11

1993 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500



Figure 12

2001 Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

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Figure 13

2018 Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500



Figure 14

2025 Aerial Photograph