

Stone Hall, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe
Heritage Statement
September 2025

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Report

Heritage Statement

Site

Stone Hall, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe

Client

Penelope Greenwood

Planning Authority

Mid Sussex District Council

Grid reference

TQ 32214 28829

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Executive Summary

This heritage statement considers the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412), Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe (hereinafter referred to as the “subject building” or “site”). The report assesses the potential impact of the proposed re-wiring and electrical installation works, including a fire alarm system within the subject building and the potential impact this may have on the significance and setting of the subject building and those designated and non-designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and local planning policies, this report first identifies and describes the historical development of the site and subject building and outlines the significance of those designated and non-designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity of the site before going on to consider the impact of the proposals on that significance.

In summary, the proposal is compliant with the relevant heritage paragraphs contained in Section 16 of the NPPF and relevant local heritage policies.

The site contains one designated asset; the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412). Within a 1km radius of the site there are 10 listed buildings or structures. These are shown in Figure 2.

Owing to limited intervisibility through tree screening, local topography, intervening built form, historic relationships and the nature of the proposals being predominantly internal to the subject building, it is not considered that the proposals will impact on the setting or significance of those designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity of the subject building.

Stone Hall is statutory listed as Grade I for its exceptional special interest, indicating its high sensitivity to changes within its setting or to its historic fabric. This assessment and that of the Statement of Significance (Orion 2024) outline the values that contribute to the subject buildings significance which principally relates to the historic/associative and aesthetic/ architectural value generated by the historic core of the building and its immediate setting.

Based on a review of the proposals, they are considered to be detailed and sensitive in their approach to the proposed works and will ensure that impacts to the subject building’s significance will be negligible, with a minimal amount of potentially historic fabric being affected. Furthermore, the proposed work may also allow for a better understanding of the subject building’s history and construction methods where areas of the building are to be opened up as part of the proposals.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a level 2 photographic record is produced as a minimum, so that those areas that are to be affected by the works are thoroughly recorded prior

to work commencing. It is also recommended that a watching brief be held on any opening-up works so that any areas or details of the building that have historic interest are also recorded for prosperity.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** This heritage statement considers the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412), Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe (hereinafter referred to as the “subject building”). The report assesses the potential impact of the proposed re-wiring and electrical installation works including a fire alarm system within the subject building and the potential impact this may have on the significance and setting of the subject building and those designated and non-designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity. The subject building is located at National Grid Reference TQ 32214 28829 (Figure 1).
- 1.2** In accordance with the Paragraph 207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2024) and the requirement for applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets including contribution to setting, the report draws together available information on designated and non-designated built heritage assets. The assessment includes the results of a site survey, an examination of published and unpublished records, charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise and considers relevant local and national policy and guidance.
- 1.3** Several site visits have been undertaken to assess the subject building’s fabric and setting. Site visits were carried out on 11th January 2024, 1st February 2024, 13th May 2024 and 25th July 2025.
- 1.4** The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of designated and non-designated built heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site, thus enabling potential impacts on these assets to be identified along with the need for design solutions.

Location and Description

- 1.5** Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412) is Grade I listed and is the principal building within the historic farm complex of Stone Hall Farm. The grouping of buildings that form this complex are located at the end of lane which runs in a north-easterly direction from Stonehall Lane in the west (Figure 1). Though Stone Hall is the only designated building within the plot, several of the other more historic ancillary building located in the immediate vicinity would likely be considered curtilage listed and/or non-designated built heritage assets. These other buildings consist of a mixture of barns, kennels, smaller outbuildings and dwelling houses. All of these significantly contribute to the immediate setting of the subject building by providing an historic ancillary and functional context. The wider environs of the subject building largely consist of open agricultural land to the west interspersed with blocks of mature woodland and hedge lined fields and lanes. Located c. 265m to the north-east is the Grade II* listed Balcombe Place (NHLE 1025775) which has historic and current connections to the subject building. The fields, gardens and parkland associated with Balcombe Place form the rural context of Stone Hall to the north and east. A summary of the key elements of the subject building is

provided below with a more in-depth analysis provided in the Statement of Significance produced by Orion Heritage in 2024.

- 1.6** Based on background research and a review of the historic mapping, the more historic sections of Stone Hall were constructed sometime during the second half of the 17th century, before being significantly extended during the mid-1960's (Figure 14). The 1839 Balcombe Parish Tithe map (Figure 4) shows the subject building as having a sub-rectangular planform with a projecting wing on its south-west corner. Its principal (east elevation) is formed by two further projecting bays on the north-east and south-east corners of the façade. To the west of the building, several barn structures are shown which address a central courtyard/farmyard and correspond to footprints of extant buildings on the site. To the east of Stone Hall, a rectangular garden plot is depicted which is enclosed by a paled fence line. Interestingly, the principal routeway towards Stone Hall is shown as running in a north-east direction to the east of the building. This routeway would later become the southern driveway to Balcombe Place.
- 1.7** As noted, the original planform of the building has undergone a level of change over the succeeding years, most notably with the construction of an H-shaped range connecting to the north-west corner of the building during the mid-1960's which related to the provision of a staff flat, guest rooms, drawing room and playroom. These later alterations to the historic core of the building are characterised by a coursed sandstone base with timber weatherboarding on all elevations up to eaves level. The eaves have exposed rafter ends which support a Horsham stone tile roof. Fenestration is symmetrically set out at ground and first floor levels and consists of double-glazed timber framed casements. There are two prominent chimney stacks constructed in a red brick laid in a stretcher bond which service the kitchen and drawing room.
- 1.8** The historic core of Stone Hall is raised in an orange brick with blue vitrified headers and laid in a Flemish bond. Similar to the later additions, this brickwork is formed on a coursed sandstone base. The local sandstone is utilised further in the form of a broad string course at first floor level and in the formation of prominent V-jointed quoins on the corners of the building which are particularly prominent on the principal (east) elevation. In contrast, the north and west elevations are finished with a clay tile hanging which reaches from ground to eaves level.
- 1.9** The eaves are relatively decorative and consist of a timber moulding beneath a boxed fascia and soffit with timber modillions forming a corbel table. The roof is covered with Horsham stone tiles and punctuated by three pitched dormers on the principal (east) elevation. Rising above these and set centrally within the building are two fluted brick chimney stacks with corbelled tops.

- 1.10** The fenestration of this section of the building is symmetrically laid out at ground and first floor level and consists of timber framed casement windows with segmented glass panes. The principal (east) elevation has a timber entrance door centrally set between the two protruding bays on the north-east and south-east corners of the building and is topped by an over-light and recessed curved pediment. The subject building is shown in Plates 1 – 6.



Plate 1

Principal (east) elevation of the historic core of Stone Hall which dates to the late 17th century.



Plate 2

North-east elevation of Stone Hall. The image illustrates the point at which the historic core of the subject building (left arrow) and the 1960's extension interface (right arrow).



Plate 3

South elevation of the historic core of Stone Hall, noting the modern (20th century) brick buttress on the south-west corner of the range (arrowed).



Plate 4

South-west elevation of Stone Hall showing the timber clad 1960's extension to the historic core of the subject building.



Plate 5

West elevation of Stone Hall. The central courtyard is formed by the two timber clad ranges that were constructed during the 1960's. This period of construction is commemorated by a carved date plaque (centre of image) and monogrammed 1967, JRG, PAG.



Plate 6

North elevation of Stone Hall. The weatherboarded sections date from the 1960's with the prominent brick chimney stack of the historic core of the building visible above the ridge line (arrowed).

2.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.1 The *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out broad policies and obligations relevant to the protection of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and their settings.

2.2 Section 66(1) states:

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

2.3 Section 69 of the Act requires local authorities to define as conservation areas any *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* and Section 72 gives local authorities a general duty to pay special attention *to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* in exercising their planning functions. These duties are taken to apply only within a Conservation Area. The Act does not make specific provision with regard to the setting of a Conservation Area, that is provided by the policy framework outlined below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.4 Government policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Section 16 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* December 2024 (NPPF), entitled *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development;
- understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
- conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long

term. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In relation to the historic environment, paragraph 18a-001 states that:

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

- 2.6 Paragraph 207 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.7 A key aspect of NPPF paragraphs 212-215 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm to a designated asset. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-017 (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723) of the PPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. The following quote refers to listed buildings but the same principles applies to archaeological designated heritage assets. It states:

“Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework’.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

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

- 2.8 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the

proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the PPG (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723) outlines what is meant by public benefits:

“Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.”

- 2.9** No harm occurs where a proposed development will have no direct physical effects on heritage assets and/or where a proposed development is outside of the setting of a designated heritage asset. In such instances, there will be no adverse effects on the significance of designated heritage assets.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.10** Paragraph 216 requires the decision-maker to take into account the effect on the significance of non-designated heritage assets and to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset(s) potentially affected.

NPPF Definitions

- 2.11** *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 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).
- 2.12** *Archaeological Interest* is defined as a heritage asset which holds, or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
- 2.13** *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Parks and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.
- 2.14** *Significance* is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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

Setting

- 2.16** Paragraph 18a-001 of the PPG makes a clear statement that any decisions relating to Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.
- 2.17** Paragraph 18a-013 outlines that the assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset needs to take into account and be proportionate to the significance of the asset being considered, and the degree to which the proposed development enhances or detracts from the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate the significance.
- 2.18** The NPPG outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each other. This may be historic as well as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.
- 2.19** Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:
- “The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.*
- When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset’s significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.”*
- 2.20** Where a proposed development is located within the setting of a designated heritage asset, it potentially can reduce the contribution that the setting makes to the significance of a designated heritage asset(s). However, change (for example visual change) within an asset’s setting is not necessarily in itself an impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset. An adverse

impact will only occur if the change from a proposed development affects the contribution made by setting to overall significance of an asset. Development within the setting of a designated heritage asset can be a perceivable/appreciable change but one that does not affect the contribution that the setting makes to the significance of the asset or assets. In such a scenario, this effect can be described as having a negligible effect, which in NPPF terms is an effect below less than substantial harm.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.21** The site is located in the planning area for Mid Sussex District Council. The Mid Sussex District Plan (2014 – 2031) was adopted in March 2018 and is the relevant local planning document in relation to the site. It contains the following policies which are relevant to this assessment:

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

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

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

Listed Buildings

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

- *A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- *Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- *Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*

- *Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;*
- *Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- *Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.*

Other Heritage Assets

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

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

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

Other Guidance

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

2.22 The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants, and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a six-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development:

- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and

- 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.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)

- 2.23** Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.
- 2.24** The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.25** The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a five-stage process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:
1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
 2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
 3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
 4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
 5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes
- 2.26** The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting of heritage assets result in a level of harm to significance, this harm, whether substantial or less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

3.0 Historical Context and Location of Heritage Assets

Introduction

- 3.1** The following section presents a historical development of the site and wider area through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.
- 3.2** The location of designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the site are also discussed below; the designated assets are shown on Figure 2.

Historical Background

Introduction

- 3.3** The following section presents a historical development of the subject building through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation, including historic plans and relevant planning decisions.

Historical Background

Stone Hall: summary

- 3.4** Stone Hall is a Grade I listed country house (NHLE 1286412) in the parish of Balcombe in West Sussex. No documentary evidence has been found to confirm the date of construction of the house, beyond the description in Historic England's listing which dates it to around 1700, with elements from earlier periods including a back staircase and iron fire-back dated 1598. Historic England's listing text describes it as the 'Dower House' for nearby Balcombe Place and formerly occupied by the Bray family. However, this description appears to be misleading based on the available documentary evidence, and Pevsner's description of it as 'Surprisingly always a farmhouse.' Pevsner also describes it as 'A quietly perfect late C17 brick house, nothing specially inventive yet everything satisfying.'¹
- 3.5** After descending through the Bray and Chatfield families, the lands that comprised the Balcombe Estate were purchased in the mid-19th century by John Alexander Hankey, who initially lived at Naylands but then commissioned the construction of nearby Balcombe Place.² Stone Hall was at this point just one of the farms comprising the estate, and remained a tenanted farm until its sale to Sir Weetman Pearson (Lord Cowdray) in 1905, who gifted the estate to his daughter Lady Gertrude Denman. Stone Hall continued to be let to tenants during the first half of the 20th century, until after the Second World War when

¹ Pevsner p 126

² Historic England, List Entry Number: 1025775

it was settled on Lady Denman's granddaughter, Penelope Anne Greenwood, who remains in residence.

Ownership and Occupation of Stone Hall

- 3.6** An unfinished report compiled as part of the Historical Manuscripts Commission held at East Sussex Record Office (ESRO) lists the Balcombe Estate papers held in the Balcombe Estate Office (ESRO AMS 6991/1/5/70). These include a conveyance in 1571 from George Culpeper of Balcombe of 16 acres of land called Firmine in Balcombe (believed to be part of Stone Hall) to John Braye and then an Inquisition postmortem following the death of John Braye in 1592. No further papers appearing to relate to Stone Hall are listed in the document. Although no documentary evidence has yet been found to confirm the descent, and it isn't mentioned by name in the will of John Braye (1581, PROB 11/63/417) it seems likely that Stonelands/Stone Hall remained in the hands of the Bray family and descended by inheritance through to the Rev Henry Chatfield (d. 1819), incumbent of Balcombe Parish, via his grandmother Sarah Bray.³
- 3.7** Although the property is not mentioned by name in the will of Henry Chatfield's father John Chatfield (ESRO Pbt 1/1/63), it does include a reference to 'undivided messuages or tenements land and premises ... in the parishes of Balcombe ...', a phrase that appears in relation to Stone Hall in later documents.
- 3.8** By 1779, a 'Farm called Stonehall or Stonelands in Ardingly and Balcombe' is included in the marriage settlement of the Rev Henry Chatfield (later incumbent of the parish of Balcombe) and Elizabeth Clutton (West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) Add Mss 44589 – 44590). And in 1799, Rev Henry Chatfield obtained a land tax redemption on undivided third part of a farm 'formerly called by Stonelands and Fermine but now by Stonehall', which is described as a capital messuage, barn, buildings, outhouses and land of 140 acres in the occupation of John Comber (WSRO SAS-F/28).
- 3.9** The same 'undivided third part ... and in all that Capital messuage or tenement, barns, buildings, outhouses, farms, lands ...commonly called ... Stonelands and Fermine and then ... lately by the name of Stonehall ... late in the tenure of Thomas Barden and John Comber' is also named in the will of Rev Henry Chatfield (PROB 11/1615/162). At his death in 1819, Chatfield's estate also included the significant properties of Balcombe House and Naylands in the parish of Balcombe as well as multiple farms in the parish and neighbouring parishes. He left his estate to his widow Elizabeth and surviving daughters, Mary, Harriett and Caroline. In 1826, Balcombe House along with the adjoining farms that had become part of the Balcombe Estate were advertised for sale in the Morning Post, 10th June 1826;

³ VCH Sussex vol 7 pp132-6

*VALUABLE FREEHOLD and COPYHOLD ESTATES, lying compact, and advantageously situate in the parishes of Balcombe, Ardingly, and Cuckfield, a fine sporting part of the county of Sussex, intersected by the new and excellent turnpike road to Brighton, by Red Hill, Worth and Balcombe, and bounded by the navigable river Ouse, about thirty-three miles from London, four from Cuckfield, and eighteen from Brighton; comprising an excellent Family Residence, called BALCOMBE HOUSE, erected on a delightful eminence in beautiful park-like grounds, ornamented with a red variety of fine timber, pleasantly grouped and scattered, and refreshed by an expansive lake well stored with fish, and skirted by coppice woods, large walled gardens with suitable forcing houses, orcharding and fish ponds, and the adjoining farms of Bowders, Naylands, **Stone Hall**, Bachelors, Pearments, Edmonds, Woodward, Cooper's Corner, West-up, Brook, Spicers, &c.; containing altogether near two thousand acres of meadow, pasture, arable, and wood land, well adapted for the growth of oak timber, and abundantly stocked with game, particularly pheasants; suitable farm houses, and husbandry buildings. Part now in the occupation of Messrs. Steyning, W. Turner, Coomers, Potter, Holman, Booker, Mitchell, Ewart, and Ewens, yearly tenants, at low and reduced rents; the remainder held in hand with the house, forming a most desirable residence for a respectable family, or a Gentleman fond of field sports. Immediate possession may be had. Part of the Copyhold is subject only to small fines certain, consequently equal in value to Freehold.*

- 3.10** However, papers held at WSRO indicate that Mrs and Misses Chatfield mortgaged much of the Balcombe Estate, including Stone Hall, to William Lambert in December 1826 for £11,000 and interest (WSRO Add Mss 44594-5). And at the time of the Tithe Survey in 1839 (Figure 4), the house, marked as Stone Hall Farm (hereditament 455), is recorded as being owned by Elizabeth Chatfield and occupied by Thomas Comber (TNA IR TNA IR 30/35/17 & IR 29/35/17).
- 3.11** Although no documentary evidence of the sale of the Balcombe Estate to John Alexander Hankey has been identified so far, he is known to have purchased the estate and commissioned the building of Balcombe Place⁴. John Alexander Hankey died in 1866, and the estate was inherited by his son Blake Alexander Hankey. The latter died in 1899. The same bundle of papers at WSRO also includes a plan of the estate in the parish of Balcombe dated 1899 (WSRO Add Mss 44669). Blake Alexander Hankey was unmarried and without children. The residue of his estate was left to his brother Rodolph but was sold shortly after.
- 3.12** Thomas Comber, the tenant farmer of Stone Hall at the time of the Tithe, was at least the second generation of the Comber family to hold the lease of Stone Hall Farm; his father John Comber, being the named tenant in 1799 and 1806

⁴ www.balcombeplace.com

(WSRO SAS-F/28; Add Mss 44592 – 44593). Census records show that over the next four decades Stone Hall was occupied by three successive generations of the Comber family, with the tenancy passed down from father to son, until the 1880s and the house serving as the farmstead for Stone Hall Farm for much of this time. Thomas Comber's son William is recorded in the 1851 census as a farmer of 190 acres. A newspaper article from 1852 ('Melancholy suicide of a farmer' *Morning Advertiser*, 4 Oct 1852) indicated that Comber had given up the farm, the lease of which was taken by John Pennifold, the unfortunate farmer in question. However, Combers appear to have remained at Stone Hall itself as in the 1861 and 1871 censuses, William Comber and family are recorded as resident there, with William's occupation given as land steward and bailiff [for the Balcombe Place estate]. William died in 1871 and his role is in turn taken on by his son William (jnr), who is recorded at Stone Hall, as a farm bailiff overseeing 284 acres, in the 1881 census. William (jnr) retired from his position in 1881, and settled in Haywards Heath where he became an auctioneer. His retirement was marked by a dinner at the Half Moon Inn attended by twenty local farmers and friends, and reported by the *Mid Sussex Times*, stating that the Comber family had lived at Stonehall [sic] for over 100 years.⁵

3.13 After William Comber left, the new tenant farmer at Stone Hall was George Bates (1891 census) who retired in 1898 and the tenancy of the farm presumably changed hands briefly as in 1900 the farm was valued and the outgoing tenant farmer named as Charles Claridge (ESRO BMW/A/2/97), although it is unclear as to whether he occupied the house. At the time of the 1901 census the house's tenant was estate agent Hugh M. Baker, along with his wife, daughter and three servants.

3.14 Following the death of Blake Alexander Hankey in 1899, the ownership of Stone Hall as part of the Balcombe Estate also changed hands and its new owner was Edwin Tate.

"The Balcombe Place estate has been bought by Mr. Edwin Tate, of London, son of the donor of the Tate Collection and the Picture Gallery at Westminster, and a member of the great firm of sugar refiners." Sussex Agricultural Express, 02 May 1899

Edwin Tate was the son of Sir Henry Tate of the sugar firm Tate & Lyle. His ownership of the Balcombe Estate was short lived as it was bought in 1905 by Sir Weetman Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray. Stone Hall Farm was valued again at the point of sale although the valuation excluded the house. The rental value of the farm, excluding the house, was assessed at £170 (ESRO BMW/A/2/149).

⁵ *Mid Sussex Times*, 28 September 1881

- 3.15** Pearson (later Lord Cowdray) had bought Balcombe Place and the Balcombe Estate for his daughter Lady Gertrude 'Trudie' Denman née Pearson. Shortly after purchasing the estate the four cottages to the west of Stone Hall were built for Lord Denman in 1906 (Figure 8) and improved by Lady Denman in 1918. The 1906 deposited plans, held at WSRO show the outline of the house, its outbuildings and the farm buildings (WSRO RC/CU/16/1/2 – 83, 155]
- 3.16** In the Valuation Office Survey of 1910, Stone Hall, one of the four terraced cottages and a field to the NW of the house were assessed as hereditament number 76 in 3 parts. The description states that the plot also includes stables and coach house [TNA IR 124/1/43 & IR 58/40187].
- 3.17** Both Stone Hall and Balcombe Place (assessment number 90 which included all of the farm buildings and surrounding land at Stone Hall) are recorded by the Valuation Office surveyors as being owned freehold by Lord Cowdray. However, in practice, Lord Cowdray's daughter Trudie Denman, had made Balcombe Place her country home from 1905, although from 1911-1914 the Denmans were out of the country whilst Lord Denman served as Governor General of Australia.⁶
- 3.18** The Valuation Office field book indicates that a site visit took place on 12 March 1913 and the surveyor described the house as in good condition but also as a 'very old-fashioned property'. It was noted as having electric light throughout and hot water radiation. The first floor contained five bedrooms (2 large, 2 medium, 1 small) and the downstairs a sitting hall, morning room, small drawing room, dining room, kitchen, larder, butler's pantry as well as boot and wine cellars, WC and woodshed. The dining room was noted as having an 'old chimney corner'. Stone Hall was initially leased to the Grants on a 7-year lease dating from 25 December 1906; Nellie Grant being a friend of Lady Denman who became one of her closest companions.⁷ A later amendment to the field book entry notes that J.G.H. Grant was replaced as the occupant by J.A.H. Stansfeld (TNA IR 58/40187).
- 3.19** James A.H. Stansfeld is recorded as the occupant of Stone Hall in the 1911 census, along with his wife Dorothy, school age son and daughter, five servants and the school age daughter of the cook. James Ashurst Healey Stansfeld was a Brewery Director from London, who later turned to farming. By 1921, the Stansfeld family had moved to Kent.
- 3.20** Stone Hall's new occupants recorded in the 1921 census are 27-year-old Evan Cadogan 'Eric' Smith, his wife Beatrice 'Helen' Smith nee Williams and four servants. Smith was the son of Lindsey Eric Smith, a banker of the Smith banking dynasty. Through his father he was also a second cousin twice removed of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. In the 1921 census Smith's

⁶ Thomas Denman (1874–1954), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

⁷ Huxley, p32

occupation was recorded as Indian Merchant as in 1920 he had become a partner in the firm Hoare Miller & Co⁸ having served as a Captain in the 9th Lancers⁹ during the First World War. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1918. Eric Smith later followed his father into banking and the 'family firm'.

- 3.21** By the beginning of the 20th century there were five Smith family banks which would, through mergers, become part of National Provincial Bank, of which Eric Smith later became Chairman. He also became Chairman of Rolls Royce. Their daughter, Ann 'Fortune' Smith (1920-2021), possibly born at Stone Hall¹⁰, later married Hugh Dennis Charles Fitzroy 11th Duke of Grafton, becoming Duchess of Grafton. She served as Mistress of the Robes to Queen Elizabeth II from 1967 until her death in 2021.¹¹ One of their sons was Sir John Smith, Conservative MP, director of Coutts & Co, deputy chairman of the National Trust from 1980-95 and, with his wife, founder of the Landmark Trust.¹²
- 3.22** By 1934 the Smith family had left Balcombe and moved to Ashfold in Sussex. The 1934 Valuation List for the parish records the occupant of Stone Hall as Major W.J. Agar (WSRO RD/CU/34/1). On the eve of the Second World War, the occupants of Stone Hall were Richard and Audrey Graham-Vivian (1939 Register). Richard Graham-Vivian MC MVO was a long-standing officer of arms at the College of Arms holding several heraldic offices including Bluemantle Pursuivant, the Windsor Herald, and the Norroy and Ulster King of Arms. He served in the army in both the First and Second World Wars and was awarded the Military Cross in 1919.¹³
- 3.23** During the Second World War the house was offered by Lady Denman as an "Emergency Rest Centre for Nervous Mothers and Children." Lady Denman, who owned Balcombe Place (and Stone Hall) from 1905 is perhaps best known as the first head of the Women's Institute Movement and which she led for thirty years.¹⁴ She was also a pioneer of family planning and during the Second World War became the Honorary Director of the Women's Land Army (WLA) having served as the WLA's Assistant Honorary Director during the First World War.¹⁵
- 3.24** Several photos of the house, both interior and exterior, from this time are held at the Historic England Archive (see below). Opened in October 1940,

⁸ London Gazette, 20 Aug 1920

⁹ 29 Dec 1917, Evan Cadogan Eric Smith to Beatrice Helen Williams, Marriage Register St George Hanover Square, Westminster Church of England Parish Registers STG/PR/7/84

¹⁰ 22 May 1920, Baptism of Ann Fortune Smith daughter of Evan Cadogan Eric and Beatrice Helen Smith of Balcombe, Slaugham Parish Register, WSRO Sussex Parish Registers Par 483/1/2/4. Although baptised in Slaugham, the family's address in the parish register is given as Balcombe.

¹¹ <https://www.tatler.com/article/queens-mistress-of-the-robies-died-duchess-of-grafton-obituary>

¹² <https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/people/john-smith.html>

¹³ <https://www.thepeerage.com/p7405.htm#i74050>

¹⁴ https://www.thewi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/498264/The-WI-at-100.pdf

¹⁵ Huxley; <https://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/running-the-wla-lady-denman/>

“nervous” mothers and young children were evacuated to Stone Hall for a recuperation period of two to three weeks, before being settled in billets or cottages in the district. Fifteen mothers and over twenty children were accommodated in the centre in December 1940, which had already housed 120 mothers.¹⁶ Similarly, Balcombe Place became the de facto headquarters of the Women’s Land Army.

- 3.25** After the war Lady Denman handed over the running of the Balcombe Estate to her daughter [Anne] Judith Burrell née Denman.¹⁷ Lady Denman died in 1954. Balcombe Place was then used for multiple purposes during the second half of the 20th century including a school, a conference centre and care home. It is now under the management of Denman descendants, along with the Balcombe Estate and used as a venue. Before her death, Lady Denman passed Stone Hall and the Balcombe Estate home farm over to her granddaughter Penelope Greenwood née Burrell who still lives in the property.¹⁸

Alterations

- 3.26** The earliest available mapping clearly illustrating the historic planform of Stone Hall is the 1839 Balcombe Parish Tithe map (Figure 4). The building at this time is sub-rectangular in form with a projecting wing on its south-west corner. Its principal (east elevation) is formed by two further projecting bays on the north-east and south-east corners of the façade. Recorded as Stone Hall Farm on the Tithe, the principal house and ancillary buildings to its west are clearly legible as an historic farmstead that addresses a central courtyard /farmyard at the centre of the plot and has numerous paths and trackways radiating out to the surrounding fields.
- 3.27** Between the Tithe mapping of 1839 (Figure 4) and Ordnance Survey mapping of 1897 (Figure 7), there is no discernible change to the planform of Stone Hall. In the immediate environs of Stone Hall, many of the barns and ancillary buildings to its west have been extended with new ranges having been added. Several smaller buildings have also been constructed to its immediate west and north. Within the wider environs of Stone Hall, the greatest change is in the form of Balcombe Place, which was constructed in 1856 and located c. 240m north-east of the subject building. Between 1949 and 1953 (Figure 9) minor alterations were made to several of the buildings on the site including the conversion of the laundry to a dwelling house and construction of new sheds (WSRO RD/CU/18 MF 671 ff50-63: F/49/339 & F/52/63).
- 3.28** By the mapping of 1956-1958 (Figure 9), there is a level of alteration that has taken place to the subject building, principally on its north-west corner. A block is shown as having been added to the historic core of the building. This

¹⁶ Historic England Archive MED01-/01/1128-38

¹⁷ Huxley, p 194

¹⁸ Huxley

may relate to anecdotal evidence from the current occupiers of the property, who noted that a smaller structure was attached to the north elevation of the building and was subsequently taken down prior to substantial extension to the building being constructed in the mid-1960's.

- 3.29** In the 1960s, the architects Phillimore & Jenkins were commissioned to design an extension for the Greenwoods which stretches to the west of the original house in two ranges (Figure 10 and 14). The drawings for these works, copies of which are held at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Study Room at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) (RIBA PA773/3-4), indicate minimal changes to the original house at the time of these works aside from those necessary to join the new building to the old. Over 60 drawings are held in the RIBA collection, although the vast majority relate to details such as radiator coverings, bookshelves and cupboards. However, a set of floor plans, a block plan (PA773/4/25) and an existing site survey are also included in this collection.

Planning History

- 3.30** The online planning register only includes one application from 2016 relating to Stone Hall (DM/16/0946) comprising minor internal alterations to the attic space. A 1975 application for the construction of 6 stables is also listed but no documents are attached, and the two remaining applications relate to works in the grounds rather than the house.
- 3.31** A pre-1990 Planning History Card was supplied by Mid Sussex Planning Department. Original copies of documents are held on microfiche and only viewable by appointment in person at the council offices. The majority of applications listed on the planning card relate to works to the farm area and grounds including for a grain silo, improving the access road, petrol storage tank. Two applications (F64/635 and F64/636) relate to residential developments of 13.5 acres and 9 acres respectively.
- 3.32** Those relating to the house itself are for the conversion of a laundry into a dwelling (F49/359) and conversion of the western extension 'to provide staff flat, guest rooms/drawing room/playroom' (F64/342) and (F64/341/1). Copies of the architects' drawings relating to the 1960s extension by Phillimore & Jenkins were identified at the RIBA Archive and held at the RIBA Study Room at the V&A.

Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

3.33 The site contains one designated asset; the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412). Within a 1km radius of the site there are 10 listed buildings or structures. These are shown in Figure 2 and listed below;

- Grade II listed The South West Lodge of Balcombe Place with the Gate Piers and Flanking Walls Adjoining (NHLE 1354794), located c. 180m south of the site;
- Grade II* listed Balcombe Place (NHLE 1025775), located c. 265m north of the site;
- Grade II listed Batchelors (NHLE 1025776), located 310m east of the site;
- Grade II listed The North West Lodge of Balcombe Place with the Gate-Piers Adjoining (NHLE 1192833), located c. 370m north-west of the site;
- Grade II listed Naylands (NHLE 1354793), located c. 395m north-west of the site;
- Grade II listed Hook Cottage (NHLE 1192495), located c. 595m north-east of the site;
- Grade II listed Bowders Farmhouse (NHLE 1286441), located c. 595m north-west of the site;
- Grade II listed Numbers 1 And 2 Wharf Cottages (NHLE 1025777), located c. 790m south-east of the site;
- Grade II listed Ryelands Farmhouse (NHLE 1192868), located. 825m south-west of the site and
- Grade II* listed Ouse Valley Railway Viaduct The Ouse Valley Railway Viaduct (NHLE 1366101), located c. 870m south of the site;

3.34 Owing to limited intervisibility through tree screening, local topography, intervening built form, historic relationships and the nature of the proposals being predominantly internal to the subject building, it is not considered that the proposals will impact on the setting or significance of the above designated assets. For this reason, the above assets have been scoped out for further assessment. As previously noted, within the immediate vicinity of the subject building, there are several ancillary buildings which are regarded as being curtilage listed. Potential impacts of the proposals on the setting and significance of these assets will also be considered as part of an assessment of the subject building.

4.0 Proposed Development and Potential Impact on Heritage Assets

Background

- 4.1** This section identifies and assesses the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets located within and in the vicinity of the subject building. In assessing the heritage impacts of the proposal, the relevant policies cited in section 2.0 have been referenced.

The Proposed Development

- 4.2** This report has been produced to support an application for listed building consent for a program of rewiring and associated works within the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412). The program of work includes the following;
1. Rewiring of all the lighting systems within the building.
 2. Rewiring of all the electrical power systems within the building.
 3. Installation of a new Wireless Fire Alarm system within the building.
 4. Installation of a new Wireless WiFi system within the building.
 5. The reorganisation and refurbishment of the rooms within the north wing of the building.
- 4.3** Pre-planning advice has been obtained from Mid Sussex District Council, and an application was made on the 11th March 2025. A site visit with the Planning Conservation Officer took place on the 13th May 2025 and an inspection was made of the interior of the subject building. The following pre-application advice was received from the local authority's Planning Conservation Officer on 27th June 2025;

Stone Hall is a Grade I listed building, dating originally from latter half of the 17th century, but with a substantial extension dating from the 1960s which is in the form of an H shaped block attached to the north west corner of the original building. This block is differentiated from the historic house by its design and detailing, including the facing materials which are of timber cladding above a stone plinth, whereas the historic house is of brick with stone detailing. The submitted Statement of Significance also notes that alterations were made at this time to the interior of the original building, including a new staircase rising from the Old Hall, and replacement of other fabric including part of the floor structure above the cellar, doors and door surrounds, and fire surrounds. The rooms within this part of the Hall appear to have been largely replastered, for example, although it is noted that some historic lathe and plaster ceilings remain in place, and that earlier fabric may in many cases be concealed by later finishes, for example where historic floorboards are covered by modern carpeting. There appears perhaps to be a better survival of obvious historic features at roof level within the attic rooms, where the roof structure is partly exposed to view and some examples of historic plank doors and flooring are evident.

The house is part of the historic farmstead of Stone Hall Farm, which also includes several historic former farm buildings which would be regarded as curtilage listed.

Sections 4.55 and 4.56 of the Statement of Significance contain an assessment of the level of interest and sensitivity to change of the internal spaces within the historic core of the house and the 1960s extension respectively. I see no reason to disagree with this assessment.

The current pre-application proposal is for works affecting both the historic core of the building and the 1960s wing, comprising the following:

- 1. Rewiring of all the lighting systems within the building.*
- 2. Rewiring of all the electrical power systems within the building.*
- 3. Installation of a new Wireless Fire Alarm system within the building.*
- 4. Installation of a new Wireless WiFi system within the building.*
- 5. The reorganisation and refurbishment of the rooms within the more modern North West wing of the building.*

To consider these works in turn:

1. Rewiring of all the lighting systems within the building.

Given the apparent age of the existing wiring relating to the building's lighting, I would not disagree with the need for an update of these systems to ensure that the building is kept in a safe condition.

With respect to the various works proposed, as we discussed on site, the approach set out in broad terms within the Statement of Significance to rewiring works within the historic core of the building, i.e. to re-use existing cable ducts, routes and voids wherever possible, is considered appropriate, as are the more detailed methodologies set out in the accompanying plans by Perseverance Architects. Loss of or damage to surviving historic fabric and finishes, whether these are currently exposed or concealed, should be avoided. In practice, this is likely to mean a room-by-room, or even wall-by-wall approach, to analyse the fabric which is present, and to arrive at a bespoke solution in each case to ensure that disruption to fabric which is of interest is kept to a minimum. In the context of a formal application, this should be set out in a detailed schedule of works, cross-referenced with the relevant plans. Where it is not possible to be certain before the commencement of work what fabric will be affected (for example where historic fabric may be concealed under modern finishes and cannot be identified by limited, non-invasive works of opening up of the modern material), it may be that a general approach can be agreed as part of such a specification, possibly to be supplemented by further detail to be required by condition.

Works within the 1960s wing will be less sensitive, and consequently a general overview rather than the level of detail described above may be sufficient.

2. Rewiring of all the electrical power systems within the building.

Similar considerations and requirements as for 1. will apply.

3. Installation of a new Wireless Fire Alarm system within the building.

The need for a fire alarm system for the protection of the building, as well as its occupants, is recognised, and the use of a wireless system, which should minimise impact on historic fabric within the core of the building, is welcomed. The positioning of detectors, alarm sounders and call points, as well as the scale and appearance (including colouration where possible) of the various equipment, should be carefully considered to reduce the impact on historic fabric and finishes from the associated fixings, and to minimise the visual impact on the rooms concerned. As for the rewiring works considered above, a room-by-room approach is likely to be required within the older part of the house, which should be set out in a schedule of works cross-referenced with the appropriate plans. Again, works within the 1960s wing are likely to be regarded as less sensitive.

4. Installation of a new Wireless Wifi system within the building.

Similar considerations as for the fire alarm system will apply in terms of the positioning of the various necessary equipment, and the information which should be submitted with a formal application.

5. The reorganisation and refurbishment of the rooms within the more modern North West wing of the building.

This work affects only the fabric and floorplan of the 1960s extension, which is not considered to be of special interest. This work is therefore not generally considered contentious, although further information would be needed as part of a formal application in relation to the proposed enlargement of the window opening to the ground floor of the eastern elevation.

In summary, the principle of the works is not considered contentious, and although more detail would be required with a formal application, the general approach to these works as set out in the pre-application documents appears sensitive to the context of this highly significant Grade I listed building.

Any formal proposal would be assessed against the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34, the full text of which can be found on our website ([link below](#)) as well as the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It should be noted that due to the grade of the listing, Historic England would be consulted in respect of any formal application.

- 4.4** In Point 5, Paragraph 1 of the Planning Conservation Officer's response above, reference is made to the proposed enlargement of the window opening to the ground floor of the eastern elevation in the modern north-west wing of the subject building. It should be noted that, this is incorrect, and no works are proposed to any of the external windows or doors within the proposals.
- 4.5** Following the on-site meeting with the Planning Conservation Officer, a subsequent non-invasive site survey was undertaken on 25th July 2025 to establish as far as reasonably practicable potential cable routes and the materiality of all walls, floors and ceilings within the subject building that are likely to be affected by the proposed works.

Potential Impacts on Heritage Assets

- 4.6** As noted in paragraphs 3.33 and 3.34, there are a number of listed buildings located in the wider vicinity of the subject building. However, owing to limited intervisibility through tree screening, local topography, intervening built form, historic relationships and the nature of the proposals being predominantly internal to the subject building, it is not considered that the proposals will impact on the setting or significance of these heritage assets. For this reason, these assets have been scoped out for further assessment. Due to the internal and intrusive nature of the proposals, there is the potential for the proposed works to directly impact the special interest of the subject building.

Listed Buildings in the vicinity

- 4.7** In order to understand how any new development could affect the significance of the subject building, it is important to understand the specific heritage values which combine to inform its significance. An understanding of the contribution setting makes to its significance is also considered.

Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412)

- 4.8** The subject building (Plates 1 – 19) is described as follows in its listing citation:

BALCOMBE HAYWARDS HEATH READ 1. 5405 Stone Hall TQ 32 NW 11/378 28.10.57 I 2. The dower-house of the Balcombe Place estate. Late C17 house formerly occupied by the Bray family. Two storeys and attic. Seven windows. Centre portion of 3 windows and 2 dormers and projecting wings of 2 windows and one dormer each. Red brick and grey headers on a stone base. Stone stringcourse and long and short quoins to the wings. Wooden modillion eaves cornice. Horsham stone slate slab roof with hips over the wings. Casement windows with wooden mullions and transoms and small square panes. Doorway with rectangular fanlight having small square panes, curved

pediment like a hood and door of 6 fielded panels. Contemporary staircase and older panelling.

- 4.9** It should be noted that Stone Hall was similarly recorded in the 1965 publication of 'The Buildings of England' by Ian Nairn and Nikolaus Pevsner (see section 3). Based on a review of the most current version of 'The Buildings of England' dating to 2003, the physical description of the building remains the same and makes no reference to the 1960's addition to the asset. A current in-depth analysis and description of the subject building is contained with the Statement of Significance (Orion 2024).

Historical Value / Associative value

- 4.10** Although the architect of Stone Hall is unknown, it derives historical value from a variety of sources which includes the material fabric of its structure and the illustrative value of this in terms of historic building practices in the latter half of the 17th century as well as its historic and functional relationship to the nearby Grade II* listed Balcombe Place (NHLE 1025775).
- 4.11** Historical connections to John Alexander Hankey, a prominent Victorian merchant and plantation owner in the West Indies, who commissioned the architect Henry Clutton to construct the nearby Balcombe Place in 1856, generates a moderate level of associative value. John Alexander Hankey bought Balcombe estate sometime in the mid-19th century, which included Stone Hall and was owned by the family until the death of his son, Blake Alexander Hankey in 1899. A further level of associative interest is generated by the purchase of the estate in that year by Edwin Tate, the son of Sir Henry Tate of the sugar firm Tate & Lyle.
- 4.12** A greater level of historic and associative value is provided following the sale of the estate in 1905 to Sir Weetman Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray, a prominent local landowner and politician. Pearson (later Lord Cowdray) had bought Balcombe Place and the Balcombe Estate for his daughter Lady Gertrude 'Trudie' Denman née Pearson. During the Second World War, Stone Hall was offered by Lady Denman as an "Emergency Rest Centre for Nervous Mothers and Children." Lady Denman, who owned Balcombe Place (and Stone Hall) from 1905 is perhaps best known as the first head of the Women's Institute Movement which she led for thirty years. She was also a pioneer of family planning and during the Second World War became the Honorary Director of the Women's Land Army (WLA) having served as the WLA's Assistant Honorary Director during the First World War.
- 4.13** Opened in October 1940, "nervous" mothers and young children were evacuated to Stone Hall for a recuperation period of two to three weeks, before being settled in billets or cottages in the district. Fifteen mothers and over twenty children were accommodated in the centre in December 1940,

which had already housed 120 mothers. Similarly, Balcombe Place became the de facto headquarters of the Women's Land Army.

- 4.14** For the above reasons, it is considered that Stone Hall has a high level of historical and associative value.

Aesthetic Value / Architectural value

- 4.15** The aesthetic/architectural value of Stone Hall resides primarily in the architectural special interest generated by the historic core of the building which dates to the late 17th century. The core of the building is a good example of a type of small country house designed to a variation on the Palladian style which was becoming popular and being constructed in the latter half of the 17th century, by such architects as Colen Campbell.
- 4.16** The overall integrity of the north, east and south elevations of the historic core of the building are largely uncompromised by later change and are considered to generate a high level of aesthetic and architectural significance. As a whole, these elevations and their material form are in a relatively good state of preservation.
- 4.17** Internally, the historic core of Stone Hall and its internal layout appear to have changed little since the original construction date. This is particularly relevant to the ground floor. It is possible that a level alteration has taken place to the rooms surrounding the existing main staircase when it was altered during the mid-20th century.



Plate 7

View down into the northerly of the two cellars. This image shows the underside of the of the main staircase which leads from the Old Hall up to first floor level. Note that these stairs are relatively modern (20th century) based on their materiality and method of construction.



Plate 8

Image detailing the ceiling structure of the more northerly of the two cellars. The image illustrates that the floor above (that belonging to the Old Hall) has possibly been replaced (c. mid-1960's) with modern circular saw cut beams (left arrow) set into the

historic (c. C17) adze hewn timbers (right arrow). The floorboards above have also been backed with hardboard panels.

- 4.18** However, few of the principal rooms within the historic core of the building have any obvious fixtures or fittings or structural elements that would indicate the age of the building except where historic timberwork has been left exposed in the cellars and attic rooms.



Plate 9

View down into the southerly of the two cellars which are located beneath the historic core of the subject building. Note the timber studwork on the right of the image which has been exposed and springs off a coursed sandstone block wall.



Plate 10

View east along the second-floor landing towards the south-east corner attic room bedroom. Note the exposed historic timber framing on the left of the image which likely dates to the c. 17th century. The linear marks on the timber studding indicate that this once had a lathe and plaster covering (left arrow). Carpenter's marks are also apparent on the supporting beam beneath (right Arrow).

- 4.19** The majority of the rooms have been re-plastered (c. 1960's), though some appear to retain their historic lathe and plaster ceilings. Other more historic elements of the building consist of the retained fireplaces in the office, sitting room and Old Hall. However, in the case of the office and sitting room, these have been partially re-built. The fire surround in the Old Hall likely dates from the earlier part of the building's history and is of more significance. The hearth in the Playroom was installed as a mock and in a location where no flue or chimney stack existed.



Plate 11

View south-east in the Office. Though the fireplace and corresponding flue are historic and connect to one of the principal chimney stacks, the brick hearth and surround have been re-built.



Plate 12

View south-west in the sitting room illustrating the historic inglenook fireplace. Note that the brick hearth has been re-built at a later date.



Plate 13

View north-west in the Old Hall illustrating the historic oak panelling and exposed structural timberwork. Note that the staircase has been largely re-built and likely dates to the mid-1960's.



Plate 14

View north-east in the Playroom. Note that the hearth and fire surround on the left of the image was installed as a mock and in a location where no flue or chimney stack existed.



Plate 15

View west in the south-east corner bedroom (First Floor). Note that the doors and surrounds are of a later date (c. mid-1960's). The hearth space is of an earlier date, but the timber fire surround likely dates to the mid-1960's. The undulating nature of the ceiling indicates that it is of lathe and plaster and more historic in nature.



Plate 16

View north in the central bedroom (Four Poster – First Floor). Note that the door and its surround are of a later date (c. mid-1960's). The hearth space is of an earlier date, but the timber fire surround likely dates to the mid-1960's. The ceiling has a Trompe-L'oeil decorative finish of clouds and sky. The date of this is unknown, but based on its condition, it is unlikely to be particularly historic in nature and contemporaneous with the other wall finishes.

- 4.20** It should be noted however that much of the historic fabric of the building, be it structural or decorative will likely be concealed in whole or in part by later finishes to the building. The extant structural timberwork within the building is considered to contribute to the high level of architectural significance of the building by providing an insight into historic building techniques and choice of materials in the latter half of the 17th century.
- 4.21** Regarding the mid-1960's extension to the north-west corner of the building, it is considered to have been executed in a sensitive manner in terms of the palette of materials used and the way in which it is oriented. The higher elements of the extension, namely the northern and southern ranges are largely absent in key views of the principal (east) elevation of the historic core of the building. The set-back nature of the extension and the way in which it reduces in height to a single storey to the immediate north of the historic core ensure that it does not compete visually with the core.
- 4.22** Due to its date of construction and materiality, this section of the building is not considered to contribute to the historic and architectural special interest of the historic core of Stone Hall.



Plate 17

View west from the landing (First Floor) at the approximate point where the historic core joins the mid-1960's extension to the building.



Plate 18

View north in the north-east corner bedroom (First Floor) of the northern range of the mid-1960's extension to the building. All fixtures and fittings date from this period or later.

- 4.23** Whilst it is acknowledged that it is illustrative of continued occupation of the building and is clearly legible as a separate phase, it makes a very limited contribution to the high level of significance of the building as a whole.

Furthermore, with the construction of the extension, the historic usage patterns and materiality of the western elevation of the historic core of the building has become less legible following its alteration and loss of historic fabric. This in turn is considered to have had a negative effect on the architectural significance of the building.

Setting

- 4.24** The Immediate setting of Stone Hall relates principally to that of its farmyard context provided by the courtyard to its south and west and its formal gardens to the east. Due to the mature trees, vegetation and ancillary buildings to the south and west of the subject building, the immediate setting is relatively enclosed. The eastern part of its setting provided by the formal gardens is more open and due to the topography allows for wider ranging views out to the surrounding landscape. Stone Hall's proximity and historic association to several of the other ancillary buildings located in the immediate vicinity generates a further level of illustrative value. These buildings consist of a mixture of barns, kennels, smaller outbuildings and dwelling houses (Plate 19).



Plate 19

View south-west from the edge of the former farmyard illustrating Stone Hall's (left of image) proximity to its historic barn range (right of image). From this location, the subject building is clearly legible as forming part of an historic farm complex.

- 4.25** Many of these buildings and structures significantly contribute to the immediate setting of Stone Hall by providing an historic ancillary and functional context. The wider environs of Stone Hall largely consist of open agricultural land to the west interspersed with blocks of mature woodland and hedge lined fields and lanes. Located c. 265m to the north-east is the Grade II*

listed Balcombe Place (NHLE 1025775) which has historic and current connections to Stone Hall. The fields, gardens and parkland associated with Balcombe Place form the rural context of Stone Hall to the north and east and positively contribute to its significance through the provision of an historic rural/agricultural context.

Impact of Development Proposal

- 4.26** Stone Hall is statutory listed as Grade I for its exceptional special interest, indicating its high sensitivity to changes within its setting or to its historic fabric. The above assessment and that of the Statement of Significance (Orion 2024) outlines the values that contribute to the subject buildings significance which principally relates to the historic/associative and aesthetic/architectural values generated by the historic core of the building and its immediate setting.
- 4.27** The core of the subject building is a fine example of a type of small country house designed to a variation on the Palladian style which was becoming popular and being constructed in the latter half of the 17th century. The overall integrity of the north, east and south elevations of the historic core of the building are largely uncompromised by later change and are considered to generate a high level of aesthetic and architectural significance. Internally, whilst largely maintaining the historic planform of the rooms, particularly at ground floor level, they have been largely re-decorated and renovated in terms of wall and ceiling finishes. The exception to this is the wood panelling in the Old Hall, though this too has modern (c. 1960's) timber flooring and a modern plasterboard ceiling.
- 4.28** Whilst the planform of the historic core of the building at first floor is still legible, a level of alteration has taken place with the insertion of stud walls to produce further bedrooms and bathrooms. These alterations were likely undertaken during the 1960's refurbishment of the house. Similarly to the ground floor, the rooms at first floor level were largely re-plastered though there appears to be a greater survival of the more historic lathe and plaster ceilings.
- 4.29** The mid-1960's extension connecting to the to the north-west corner of the historic core of the building is considered to have been executed in a sensitive manner in terms of the palette of materials used and the way in which it is oriented. However, due to its date of construction and materiality, this section of the building is not considered to contribute to the special interest of the historic core of Stone Hall.
- 4.30** The proposals consist of the rewiring of the dated (c.1960's and possibly earlier) lighting and electrical power systems within the building. As part of these works, a new wireless fire alarm system and wireless WiFi system are

also proposed. The works also include the reorganisation and refurbishment of the rooms within the modern (c. mid-1960's) north wing of the building.

- 4.31** As part of preparing a schedule of works and methodology for the proposals, several site visits have been undertaken including a non-invasive survey of potential cable routes and assessment of wall, ceiling and floor finishes. Subsequently, a detailed schedule of fixtures/fittings and finishes for each room and area to be affected by the proposed work has been produced including details of how the new fittings will be installed (Perseverance Architects 2025). In summary, existing cable routes will be used or new ones will be created by 'fishing' new cables through existing wall and floor voids. Where it is not possible to employ the above methods, in the first instance, wireless switches are to be used to limit any unnecessary interventions to the building's fabric.
- 4.32** However, there will be instances where in the case of installing some new electrical sockets, cable routes will need to be established from the first or second floor to the rooms below. This is likely to involve a minimal amount of intervention to the fabric of the building and include the careful removal of flooring to access the ceilings and walls of the rooms below as well as utilising existing risers and boxing between floors. Based on a site survey in June 2025, much of the flooring on the first and second floors has been previously lifted and, in some cases, cross-boarded with modern (c. 1960's) timber to strengthen the floor structure. Of the key areas that were surveyed, it appears that some of the floorboards date from the late 19th - early 20th century, with some more historic boards being present in the tank room at second floor level. The principal corridor at landing level has been completely re-boarded with modern (c. 1960's) pine floorboards.
- 4.33** In some cases, where no pre-existing cable routes exist or the orientation of structural timberwork and masonry does not allow for the 'fishing' of cables underneath or down to a room, a level of chasing of walls would potentially be required to install conduit, cabling and new sockets. The locations of these areas are outlined in the supporting documents (Perseverance Architects – Schedule of Fixtures/Fittings and Finishes 2025). Whilst it is acknowledged that this process is likely to result in a loss of the building's fabric, this is considered to be minimal (a depth of 25mm) and will largely be restricted to modern plaster wall finishes. Where wireless units are to be employed to reduce interventions to the building's fabric in terms of creating new apertures for cable routes, recesses will need to be 47mm in depth. As such, this may require a small amount of the brickwork behind the modern plaster to be chased out to accommodate the new switches.
- 4.34** Whilst the proposed works are predominantly internal to the building, as part of creating a new compliant mains cupboard at ground floor on the internal wall of the existing Boiler Room, a steel ventilation cowl will be installed. The cowl will provide ventilation to the mains cupboard and will also create a route

for new cabling to run through. Similarly, a new electrical service riser will need to be created above the Boiler Room to allow for cabling to run from the new mains cupboard up into the attic spaces. This would be located externally on the modern (c. 1960's) section of the building and materially matched to the surrounding weatherboarding. The cowl will be situated on the flat roof immediately above the existing Boiler Room which dates to the 1960's and, like the proposed riser, will not impact any historic building fabric. Furthermore, the location of the cowl and riser ensures that they are unlikely to be visible from ground level.

- 4.35** Based on the above assessment and the predominantly internal nature of the proposed works, it is not considered that the proposals will have any impact on those designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity of the subject building. In terms of impacts on the significance of the subject building, it is considered that the detailed and sensitive approach to the proposed works will ensure that impacts to its significance will be negligible, with a minimal amount of potentially historic fabric being affected.
- 4.36** Furthermore, the proposed work may also allow for a better understanding of the subject building's history and construction methods where areas of the building are to be opened up as part of the proposals. It is recommended that a level 2 photographic record is produced as a minimum, so that those areas that are to be affected by the works are thoroughly recorded prior to work commencing. It is also recommended that a watching brief be held on any opening-up works so that any areas or details of the building that have historic interest are also recorded for posterity.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1** In summary, the proposal is compliant with the relevant heritage paragraphs contained in Section 16 of the NPPF (2024) and relevant local plan policies.
- 5.1** The site contains one designated asset; the Grade I listed Stone Hall (NHLE 1286412). Within a 1km radius of the site there are 10 listed buildings or 50 structures. These are shown in Figure 2.
- 5.2** Owing to limited intervisibility through tree screening, local topography, intervening built form, historic relationships and the nature of the proposals being predominantly internal to the subject building, it is not considered that the proposals will impact on the setting or significance of those designated built heritage assets located in the vicinity of the subject building.
- 5.3** Stone Hall is statutory listed as Grade I for its exceptional special interest, indicating its high sensitivity to changes within its setting or to its historic fabric. The above assessment and that of the Statement of Significance (Orion 2024) outlines the values that contribute to the subject buildings significance which principally relates to the historic/associative and aesthetic/architectural value generated by the historic core of the building and its immediate setting.
- 5.4** Based on a review of the proposals, they are considered to be detailed and sensitive in their approach to the proposed works and will ensure that impacts to the subject building's significance will be negligible, with a minimal amount of potentially historic fabric being affected. Furthermore, the proposed work may also allow for a better understanding of the subject building's history and construction methods where areas of the building are to be opened up as part of the proposals.

Recommendations

- 5.5** It is recommended that a level 2 photographic record is produced as a minimum, so that those areas that are to be affected by the works are thoroughly recorded prior to work commencing. It is also recommended that a watching brief be held on any opening-up works so that any areas or details of the building that have historic interest are also recorded for prosperity.

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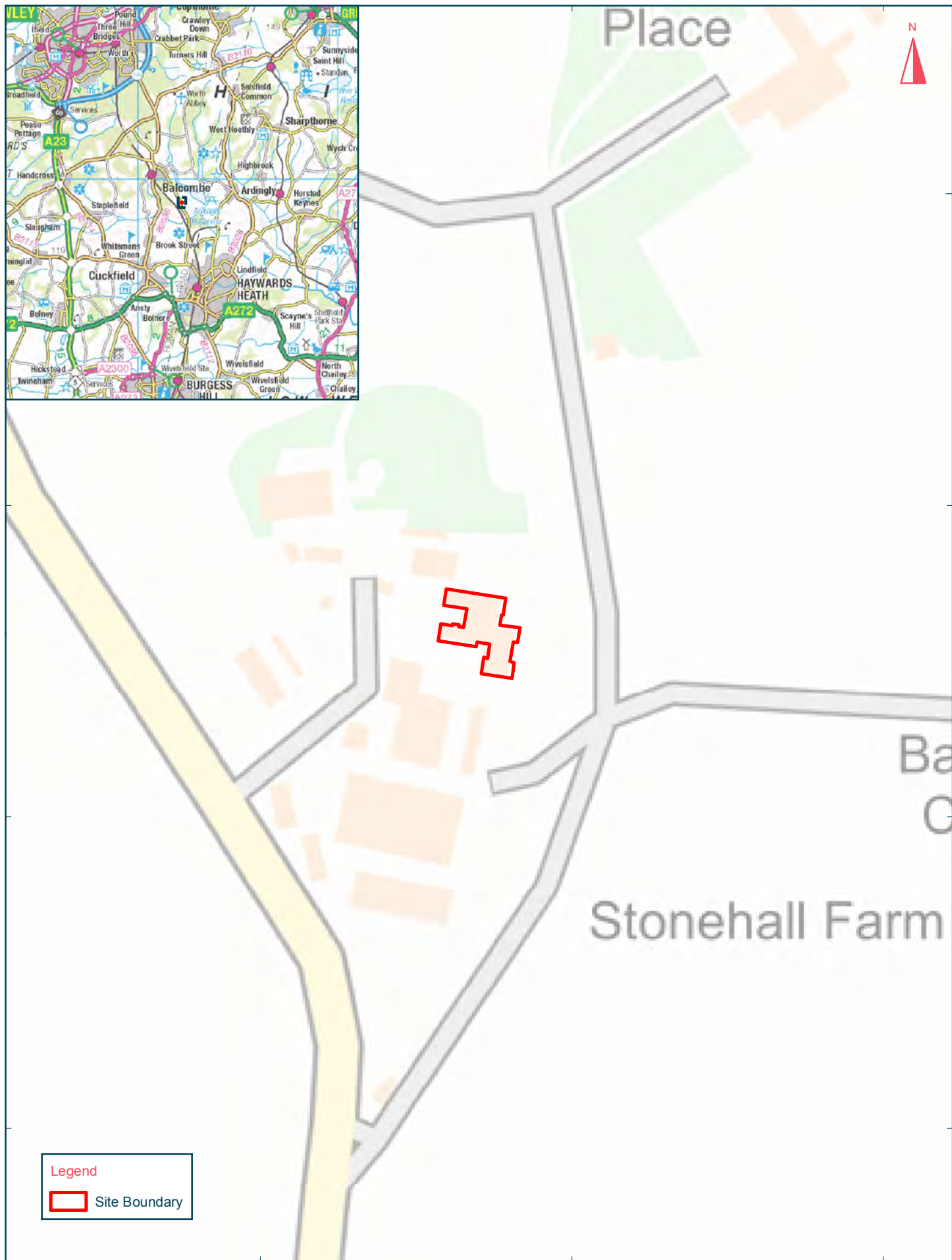
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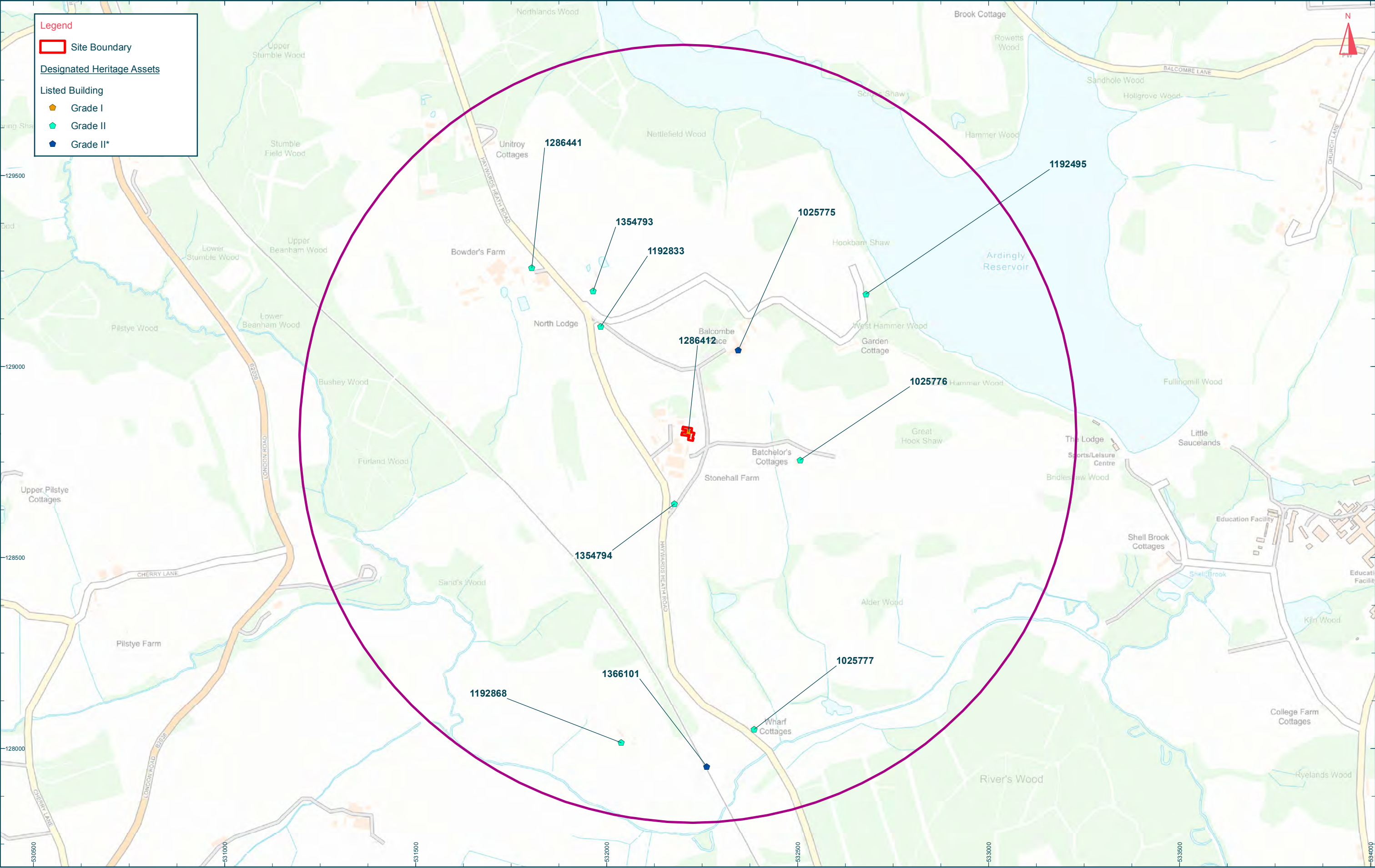
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Title:
Figure 1: Site Location
Address:
Stone Hall

Scale at A4: 1:2,000
0 50m

orion.



Title:
Figure 2 Location of Designated Assets

Address:
Stone Hall

Scale at A3: 1:9,000

0 300m





Legend

 Site Boundary



Title:
Figure 3 Thomas Moule, Sussex 1837
Address:
Stone Hall

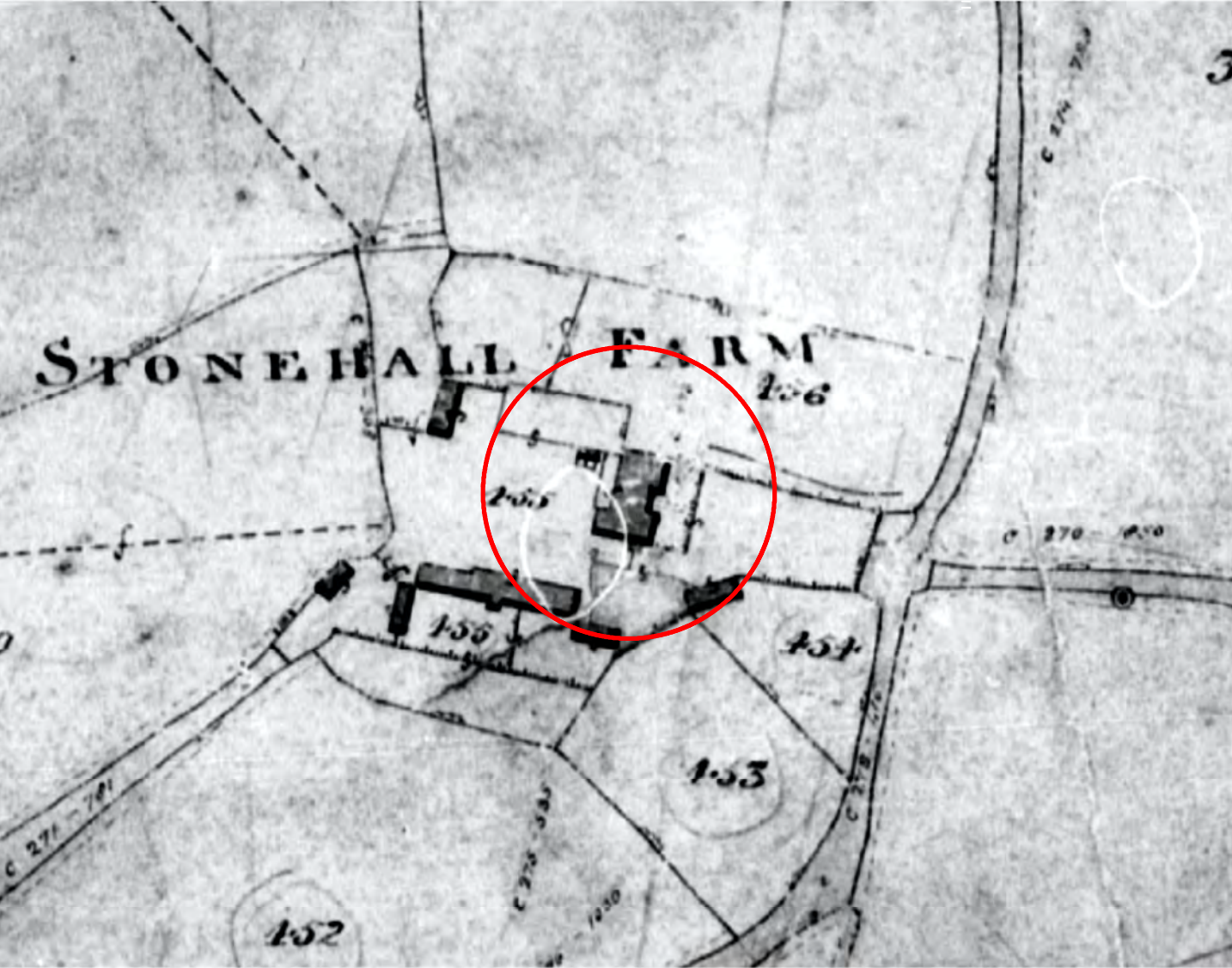
Not to scale.





Legend

Site Boundary



Title:
Figure 4 1839 Balcombe Parish Tithe
Address:
Stone Hall

Not to scale.

