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HERITAGE STATEMENT: Burgess Hill, Sussex

Savills Heritage and Townscape has been instructed by Hill Holdings (hereafter 'the client') to provide a Heritage Statement in relation to a Reserved Matters Application (RMA) at Burgess Hill, West Sussex (hereafter, 'the Site'), denoted in **Figure 1**. The Site is located on the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill and is bound by Isaac's Lane to the west and the River Adur to the east.

The Site forms the south-easternmost portion of the wider masterplan known as Northern Arc (Brookleigh), which was granted outline planning permission on 4th October 2019 for a comprehensive mixed-used development (planning ref. DM/18/5114). This granted approval for 3,040 homes, 13 permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, sports and healthcare facilities, two primary school campuses, a secondary school campus, public open spaces and recreation areas, along with all associated landscaping and infrastructure. The area covers approximately 188.34 hectares and is bounded by the existing built up area along Jane Murray Way, Sussex Way and Maple Drive to the south, Bedelands Nature Reserve to the east, Goddard's Green Waste Water Treatment Works and Gatehouse Lane to the west and undeveloped arable land and countryside to the north. Subsequently, a planning application was approved under Section 73 for alterations to, and removal of, several conditions (planning ref. DM/21/3279).

This Heritage Statement relates to Condition 18 of the approved Section 73 planning application:

18. For each relevant reserved matters application (relevance to be determined in accordance with confirmation sought from the local planning authority) no development within that reserved matters area shall take place until appropriate mitigation measures are submitted to and approved in writing, detailing how the impact of the development within that reserved matters area will mitigate the effects of the development on nearby heritage assets. No development within that reserved matters area shall be occupied until the mitigation measures have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

This RMA for the Site seeks approval for details relating to the Eastern Neighbourhood Centre for delivery of up to 270 residential and extra care units, commercial floorspace, landscaping enhancements, parking and associated development, and parkland to the north-east. The description of development has been reproduced below:

Reserved matters application pursuant to Condition 2 attached to outline application ref. DM18/5144 as amended by (DM/21/3279)(dated 09/12/2022) to consider access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for parcels 1.7, 1.7b, 1.8 and OS1.8 comprising:

- a. Eastern Neighbourhood Centre: 270 residential dwellings and extra care units; commercial floorspace; the community building, the neighbourhood square, cycle and pedestrian connections, parking and associated infrastructure.*
- b. Eastern Parkland comprising open space, multi-use games areas (MUGA), public art, green circle cycle link and associated infrastructure.*

Heritage considerations

The Site is not located within or part of any locally or nationally designated heritage assets. However, it is located within the setting of the Grade II listed building of Firlands Court (NHLE: 1194002), situated immediately south-west of the Site. The proposals therefore have the potential to impact the setting of the listed building.

The Grade II listed building of Hook House Farmhouse is situated approximately 700m north of the Site. Due to distance and lack of intervisibility with the Site, this heritage has been scoped out of this assessment.

Within the wider vicinity there are several listed buildings between 500m and 1km west and north-west of the Site. However, due to distance and intervening vegetation / built form there is no-intervisibility between these heritage assets and the Site, and these assets have therefore been scoped out of this assessment. The same can also be said for the conservation areas of Fairfield and St Johns, over 850m to the south of the Site.

No further heritage assets have been identified as having the potential to be impacted by the proposals.

Historic development

Burgess Hill developed from the historic Saxon parishes of Clayton and Keymer, both recorded in the Domesday Book. The town's name is most likely derived from the Burgeys family, who were taxed in the area in 1296, 1327, and 1332, with John Burgeys appearing in the Subsidy Rolls during those years. From the 14th century, the annual St John's Sheep Fair was held on St John the Baptist day on June 24th until 1912. This was held on St John's Common where its name is likely to originate from.

The subsequent development of the area centered around agriculture. In addition to the two villages, numerous farms were spread across the parishes, and several of their original farmhouses still exist within the current town limits. To the south and just west of London Road stands Hammonds Place, significantly rebuilt by the

Michelborne family in 1565, though parts of an earlier 16th-century structure remain. On the eastern edge of town, Pollards Farmhouse and part of Freckborough Manor House date back to the Tudor period. Grove Farmhouse, located slightly further east and south of Station Road, was constructed around 1600, around the same time as Farthings on Keymer Road. Likely the oldest building in the area, Chapel Land Farmhouse dates to approximately 1480. Other extant farmhouses include High Chimneys on Keymer Road (formerly Woodwards) and West End Farmhouse, constructed in the late 17th to early 18th centuries. Originally built in the 17th century, Burgess Hill Farmhouse and its outbuildings were demolished in the 1950s and replaced by the Chanctonbury Road housing development. Farmland once stretched across the area now home to the Chanctonbury Estate and Oakmeeds Community School. The land around the school, once encircled by oak trees, previously housed a large pottery works owned by the Meeds family—giving rise to the name "Oakmeeds."

By the 17th century, brick and tile works were well established in the area of St John's Common, utilising its deep clays and significantly contributing to the growth of the settlement. Notable works included Meeds Yard in Station Road and Dunstall's near Fairfield Road, operating into the 20th century. During the Commonwealth period, several small plots of common land were granted to enterprising individuals eager to build homes and start small businesses. By the early 18th century, four shops and a few alehouses had been established on or near the Common, alongside various tradespeople—such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, weavers, and shoemakers—who practiced their crafts in the area. The enclosure of St John's Common (the Keymer portion in 1828 and the Clayton portion in 1855) paved the way for the area's growth, with the early development around St John's Common shown on the 1841 Tithe map (**Figure 2**). At this time, the northern outskirts of the settlement was largely occupied by farmland, including the Site. To the west of the Site, on the western side of Cuckfield Road, a farmstead is shown and labeled as South Bridge Farm on the Tithe map, to the west of the Site (**Figure 3**).

The Industrial Revolution also resulted in further development of the brick and tile industry, including the establishment of the Keymer Brick and Tile Works in Nye Road. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1884, becoming the property of the Keymer Brick and Tile Company, continuing to manufacture until 2014. The settlement of Burgess Hill continued to grow throughout the 19th century with the opening of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway in 1841, leading to the emergence of the settlement as it exists today. By the late 19th century, the area was transformed into a country town with a population of around 4,500. Nearly all the substantial Victorian middle-class houses constructed in the latter half of the 19th century remain intact, along with most of the terraced workmen's cottages, which have since been modernised. This development is reflected on the 1899 Ordnance Survey map, with development laid out on streets running perpendicular to London Road, including West Street, Leylands Road, Park Road, Church Road, Royal George Road and Station Road (**Figure 4**). To north, the Grade II listed building now known as Firlands Court is visible, with a building to the north-east labelled as "Bridge Lodge", located at the junction of Cuckfield Road and Isaac's Lane. Immediately east of Isaac's Lane, the Site remained as undeveloped farmland at this time.

By 1909, Firlands Court is labelled on Ordnance Survey mapping as "Firlands" (**Figure 5**). By this time, several semi-detached houses had been constructed along the northern stretch of London Road, approaching the junction with Cuckfield Road and Isaac's Lane. A sewage farm is also shown to the east of the Site, reflecting Burgess Hill's development with the establishment of a proper sewage system beyond the main settlement. Elsewhere, the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill remained rural in character with limited development, and "Bridge Hall" labelled to the north-west of the Site.

Between 1900 and 1939, with a pause during World War I (1914-1918), the area experienced steady growth in residential housing, primarily along existing roads. After 1952, when post-World War II building restrictions were lifted and stricter planning and building regulations were introduced, large-scale expansion resumed and has continued uninterrupted to the present day. The population nearly doubled from 7,000 in 1951 to 14,000 by 1961. Much of Burgess Hill's current residential housing dates from this period, with the Martlets Shopping Centre opening in 1972. During the 1950s, an Industrial Estate was developed on the site of the former Victoria Pleasure Gardens. As shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1974 (**Figure 6**), residential development was laid out on existing and newly created roads running perpendicular to London Road. Several schools and libraries were also constructed to the south-east of the settlement during this period. The Site and the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill remained unchanged, retaining its rural character. Firlands Court is labelled on the 1970 Ordnance Survey map, with infill development visible on the northern approach from Burgess Hill along London Road (**Figure 7**).

By the 1980s, residential development was laid out in between Dunstall Avenue and the newly constructed roads of Sussex Way and Merchants Way, marking the northernmost extent of Burgess Hill I. The Site is located north-east of the junction where Sussex Way and Merchants Way meet London Road, forming a roundabout. An industrial estate north of the Sheddingdean Estate was also built to the north of the newly constructed road of Maple Drive, and was named after a nearby 17th-century farm.

The 1990s brought further significant redevelopment, including the creation of the Indoor Market Place Shopping Centre, construction of Jane Murray Way and the A2300 Link Road connecting to the A23/M23 west of the town, and the opening of the Triangle Leisure Centre by Her Majesty the Queen in 1999, alongside several hundred new homes. The Site remained unchanged during this period, as an undeveloped piece of farmland.

As previously discussed, outline planning permission was approved on 4th October 2019 for the comprehensive mixed-used development known as Northern Arc (Brookleigh), situated to the north of Burgess Hill. A reserved matters application for the north-eastern portion of the wider masterplan was granted approval on 24th May 2022 (planning ref. DM/21/3870). This granted approval for details relating to the layout and scale of the erection of 247 dwellings and alterations to Lowlands Farm, as well as associated pedestrian/cycle routes. The Site is located immediately south of this approved development, which is currently under construction. Located to the east of the Site on the former sewage works, the Fairbridge Way development is also under construction, providing 307 residential units (planning ref. DM/21/2627).

Assessment of significance

FIRLANDS, now known as Firlands Court (Grade II listed building) (NHLE ref. 1194002)

Description

Firlands Court was designated as a Grade II listed building on 11th May 1983, located on the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill. Constructed in approximately 1840, the building is a two-storey, stuccoed structure with a modern slate roof and a wide eaves cornice. It features four windows with original glazing bars intact. The central portion includes fringed eaves, flanked by lower, flat-roofed wings. Spanning the full width of the ground floor is a trellised wooden veranda with seven arches, a decorative pelmet above and a slate-covered roof.

The property occupies a triangular site that extends northward from the junction of Cuckfield Road and Isaacs Lane, which form its eastern and western boundaries, respectively. Connected to the north of Firlands Court is a building now known as Firlands, orientated towards Cuckfield Road. Positioned along the boundary with Cuckfield Road, stands a two-storey red brick building—likely originally a coach house—now repurposed for domestic use, including a swimming pool within its enclosed courtyard. These structures are visible on Ordnance Survey mapping at the turn of the 20th century and are judged to be curtilage listed to Firlands Court due to their historic association. The original plot of Firlands Court appears to have been subdivided during the mid- 20th century, aligning to the three buildings of Firlands Court, Firlands and Fairplace Bridge House. This appears to have coincided with the significant remodeling and rebuilding of the structures now known as Firlands and Fairplace Bridge House.

Significance

The significance of Firlands is primarily derived from its architectural interest as a good example of a Victorian villa, with the south elevation as its principal façade which showcases its decorative architectural features. A wide veranda spans the entire ground floor frontage, creating a strong visual and functional connection between the house and the garden it overlooks. The north elevation is more utilitarian in character and is largely concealed due to its location directly adjacent to the Site boundary. It is also visually screened by Firlands, which connects to Firlands Court on a perpendicular axis. The materials and scale of Firlands and Fairplace Bridge House reference the architecture of the principal building of Firlands Court. However, due to their heavily modern reconstructions, their contribution to the significance of the listed building is low. The red brick building which aligns to Cuckfield Road is likely to have been used as a coach house, illustrating the historic functional relationship with Firlands Court. The significance of the listed building is further derived from being indicative of the rural development of the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill, contributing to the building'

Setting

The immediate setting of the listed building is broadly defined by the three plots of Firlands Court, Firlands and Fairplace Bridge House. The southern elevation of Firlands Court was clearly designed to have a strong relationship with the garden south of the property, further contributing to its architectural interest. Furthermore, the heavily vegetated boundaries create a sense of enclosure and privacy, adding to the grandiose character of the Victorian villa.

The existing wider setting comprises the settlement of Burgess Hill to the south, and the wider rural context to the north with several isolated historic farmsteads. A courtyard of comparatively aged barns is located immediately north-west of the listed building, on the other side of Cuckfield Road, which have since been converted into a restaurant called The Oak Barn. The barns were previously associated with Bridge Hall, formerly located where the modern development of Riddiford Drive now is, with limited inter-visibility between the listed building and the barn courtyard. Firlands Court is principally experienced within its enclosed boundaries, with limited views out towards its wider setting. It is also physically distinct from its wider setting by virtue of Sussex Way and Isaac's Lane, which denote its western and eastern boundaries. Any contribution made by the wider setting to the significance of the listed building is therefore judged to be limited.

The Site comprises an undeveloped piece of land immediately east of the listed building. Whilst it does form part of the wider rural context, the listed building is principally experienced within its enclosed boundaries, with only glimpsed inter-visibility with the Site. Furthermore, the listed building is physically separated from the Site by Isaac's Lane. The Site is therefore considered to make a negligible contribution to the setting of the listed building

Assessment of impact

The proposals comprise the Eastern Neighborhood Centre for delivery of up to 270 residential and extra care units, commercial floorspace, landscaping enhancements, parking and associated development. Parkland is also proposed to the north-east, comprising open space, multi-use games areas (MUGA), public art, green circle cycle link and associated infrastructure. The buildings are to be of up to four storeys in height.

As previously discussed, the Site is considered to make a negligible contribution to the setting of the listed building. The proposals are in keeping with the wider emerging development within the setting, including Riddiford Drive on the western side of the building. The proposals will not reduce the ability to appreciate the significance of the listed building, principally experienced within its heavily vegetated boundaries. This results in limited inter-visibility with the Site, with anticipated limited visibility of the proposed development from the listed building due to retained and proposed planting along the western side of the Site. The proposed parkland is also in keeping with the wider rural context. Overall, the proposed development will therefore not adversely affect the setting of the listed building, causing **no harm** to its significance.

This Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and provides sufficient information in regards to heritage considerations relating to the proposal, as currently known.

References

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024. *National Planning Policy Framework*, s.l.: MHCLG

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019. *Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, s.l.: MHCLG

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Mid Sussex District Council, *Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031* (Adopted 2018)

Figures:



Figure 1 - Aerial view with the approximate Site boundary highlighted in red, with the Grade II listed building of Firlands denoted by a yellow triangle





Figure 3 - 1841 Tithe map of northern outskirts of Burgess Hill, with the approximate Site location circled in red



Figure 4 - 1899 Ordnance Survey map of Burgess Hill with the approximate Site location highlighted in red



Figure 5 - 1909 Ordnance Survey map of the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill, with the approximate Site location highlighted in red

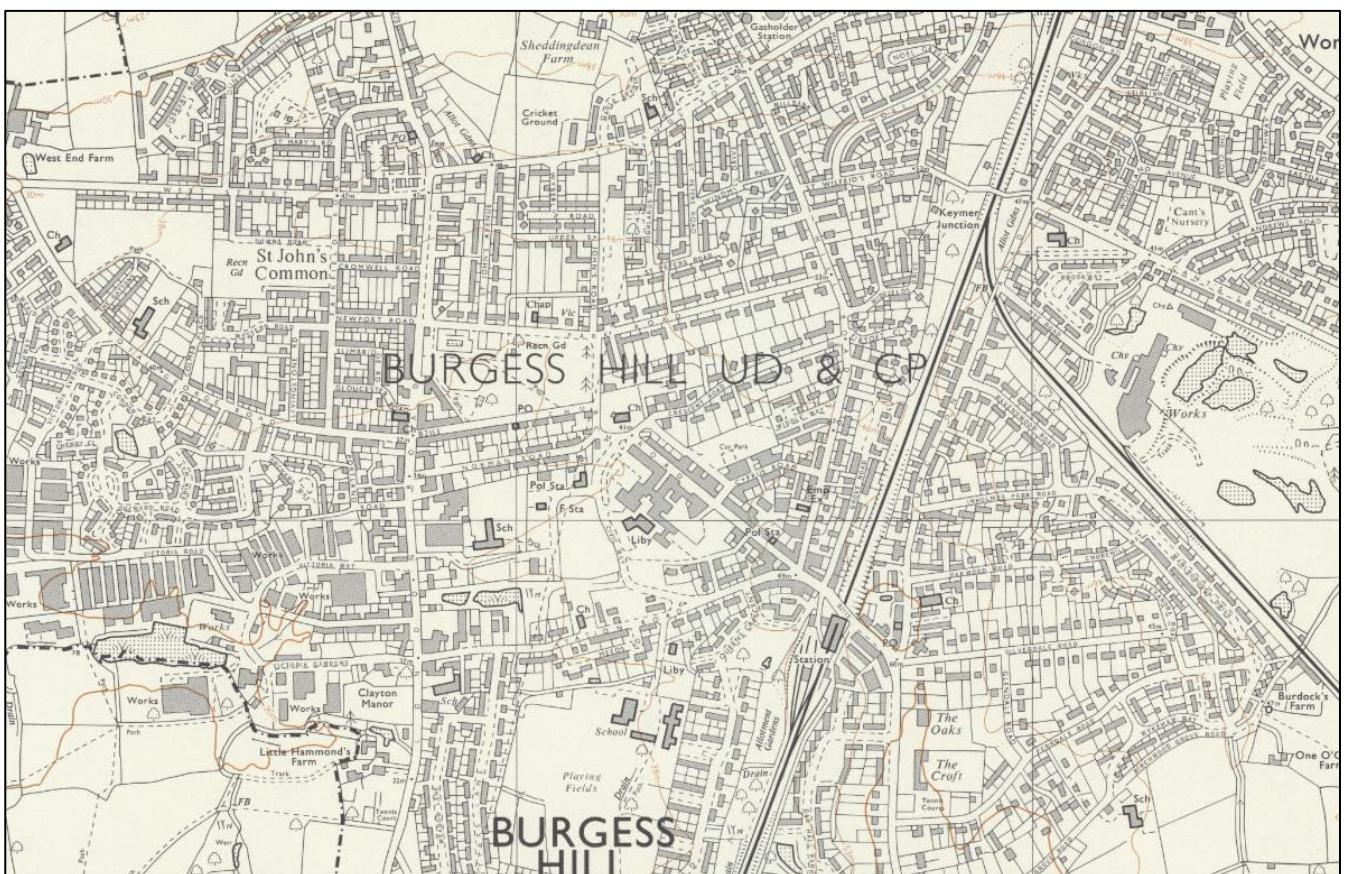


Figure 6 - 1974 Ordnance Survey map of Burgess Hill

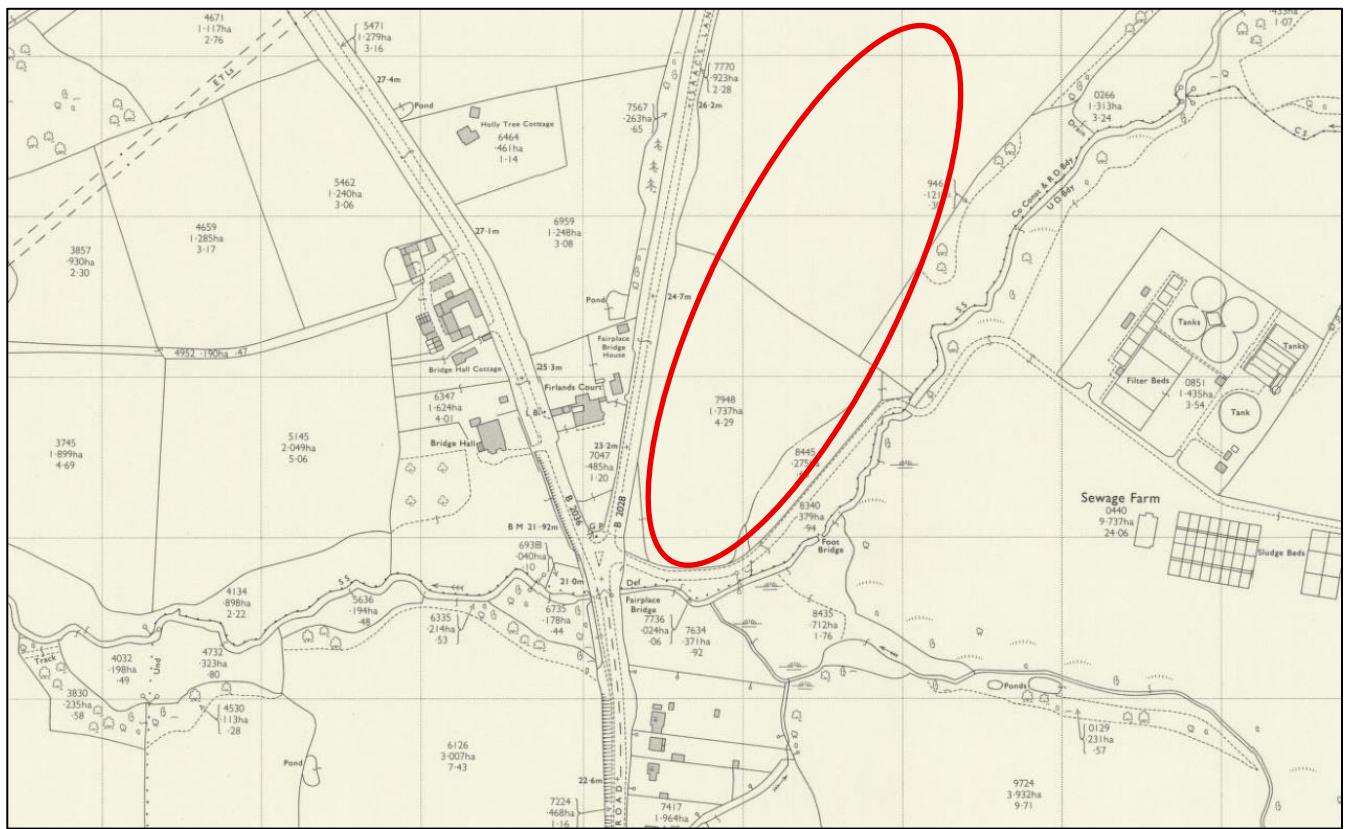


Figure 7 - 1970 Ordnance Survey map of the northern outskirts of Burgess Hill, with the approximate location of the Site highlighted in red

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