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HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of

**Land at 19 Estcots Drive,
East Grinstead**

On behalf of

Mr E. Harradine

AHC REF: 10362

Date: March 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by Sarah Watt, MCIfA, Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of Mr E. Harradine.
- 1.2 Its purpose is to provide an assessment of the potential impact on the historic built environment of developing a parcel of land currently forming part of the garden to the side of No.19 Estcots Drive, East Grinstead (hereafter referred to as 'the site' or 'the application site') with a pair of semi-detached dwellings.
- 1.3 A pre-application enquiry was submitted in 2024 by a previous owner, which proposed a terrace of three houses on the site. The Council's response indicated that any application for the development of the site would need to be accompanied by an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement that considers the application site's contribution (as an element of physical setting) to the significance of the adjoining Estcots and East Court Conservation Area and two Grade II listed buildings (Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn) to the north.
- 1.4 The report thus considers the heritage significance of the application site, specifically with regard to any contribution it makes to the significance of these designated heritage assets and their settings. Informed by the appraisal of the site's relationship to these heritage assets, the report then considers the potential impact of the proposed development on heritage significance.
- 1.5 The assessment of setting is based on the guidance provided by Historic England in *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3* ('GPA3'; 2nd edn December 2017). This document explains that setting is not itself a heritage asset; its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance. As the PPG accompanying the NPPF amplifies, an assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 1.6 This two-part approach of properly understanding significance and then evaluating the potential impact of proposals upon it is in line with good

conservation and planning practice advocated in English Heritage's (as was) Conservation Principles (2008) and formally expressed in the government's policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2.0 THE SITE: DESCRIPTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Description

- 2.1.1 The application site (**Plates 1-9**) comprises a rectangular plot between Nos.17 and 19 Estcots Drive and currently serves as a garden to No.19, built in the early 1980s.
- 2.1.2 The plot has a frontage to the south onto Estcots Drive, where there is a close-boarded fence and a partial line of conifers behind it on the garden side. To the west, against No.17's garden, the boundary comprises a high brick wall; this is largely covered in climbing vegetation, but where parts are exposed a Flemish Garden Wall Bond can be discerned. It is possible that the wall is a remnant of the western boundary wall of the large rectangular garden enclosure shown on the historic maps (presuming that the latter's boundaries were indeed walled).
- 2.1.3 The northern boundary comprises a 2m high buttressed brick wall behind which is a dense growth of laurels, forming the shared boundary with the rear garden to the Grade II listed Estcots Farmhouse. This boundary is also part of the southern boundary of the adjoining Estcots and East Court Conservation Area. The wall is of late 20th-century date, built in the 1980s when the site was sold out of the Estcots Farmhouse ownership. It stands some distance south of the original northern boundary of the historic garden (which does not survive).
- 2.1.4 The eastern boundary comprises a line of mature conifers, the ground banking down beyond them to the level of the driveway to No.19.
- 2.1.5 There are several level changes within the site. The natural topography of the area slopes down to the east and south and it appears that the lawn encompassing the majority of the site has been terraced down into the slope to make it level. In this area there is a stone-lined cruciform pond with raised sides (the current owner advises that a previous owner raised the height of the sides of the pond in the 1980s). The stone of the pond walls is laid in a style reminiscent of 'crazy paving.'
- 2.1.6 North of the pond there are four steps up to a paved terrace also surfaced with crazy paving with dwarf parapet. Beyond this is a battered and buttressed stone retaining wall of c.1.5m height with a curved niche above two steps centred on

the pond's axis. These steps may originally have continued into the rest of the garden to Estcots Farmhouse but are now blocked off: a gravel terrace lies above, upon which stands the 1980s' brick wall forming the northern boundary of the site. This means that the level of the lawn within the site is substantially lower than the level of the retained garden to Estcots Farmhouse.

- 2.1.7 On the west side of the site there is another battered and buttressed stone retaining wall, over 1m high, incorporating a statue niche and forming the edge of a wide, paved terrace along the western edge of the garden. This is accessed via curving paved steps at both the south-western and north-western corners of the garden, and includes a balustraded seating area at the northern end, and two small ponds connected by a bridged water channel, and various planting beds.
- 2.1.8 At the north-eastern corner the garden is open into the space to the rear of No.19, accessed down a flight of steps. This space (which is not part of the application site) is also at different levels, including a high level terrace at the northern end, where there is a modern lean-to glazed conservatory (in the same location as an early 20th-century glasshouse) and a small brick outbuilding (**Plate 10**).

2.2 Historical background

- 2.2.1 The application site was formerly part of the grounds of Estcots Farmhouse, a 16th-century or earlier hall house that is now listed at Grade II and which stands to the north adjoining an associated Grade II listed barn.

The 18th century

- 2.2.2 In the mid-late 18th century the farm became associated with East Court, a large mansion house built to the north in 1769 by John Cranston, a London lawyer of Scottish descent who had been Assistant Warden of Sackville College from 1767 to 1769. In 1759 Cranston had married Catherine Green of Estcots Farm, and East Court and its estate were thus developed on the family's farmland. The farmhouse then became the Cranston family's dower house and later on the Home Farm.

The 19th century

- 2.2.3 Both East Court and what was then called Eastcourt Farm can be seen on a map of 1808 (**Fig.1**). This shows the farm and its large barn (also now listed at Grade II) on the south side of the unnamed lane onto which they still front, with other buildings directly opposite on the north side of the lane, and other buildings to the south. To the north is East Court and its parkland. The principal farm buildings stood within a large rectangular parcel of land that encompassed the application site.



Fig.1: 1808 map

- 2.2.4 The 1841 tithe map (**Fig.2**) is at a larger scale and clearly delineates the various farm buildings. It should be noted that the large rectangular plot south of the farmhouse does not represent the application site - the latter lay within it, but represents only a small surviving fragment of it. At that time Estcots Drive did not exist and so the land to the south comprised agricultural fields and a stream, with a small group of outbuildings associated with the farm. The accompanying tithe award records the Executors of Thomas Cranston as the owners of the farm (plot 2458), which was then tenanted by Marry Pattison, and is described as 'East Gate Farmhouse Barns Driftways Yards and Hovel.' The large fields to either side (numbered 2491 and 2491a) were in the same ownership but tenanted, along with much other land in the area, by John Smith.

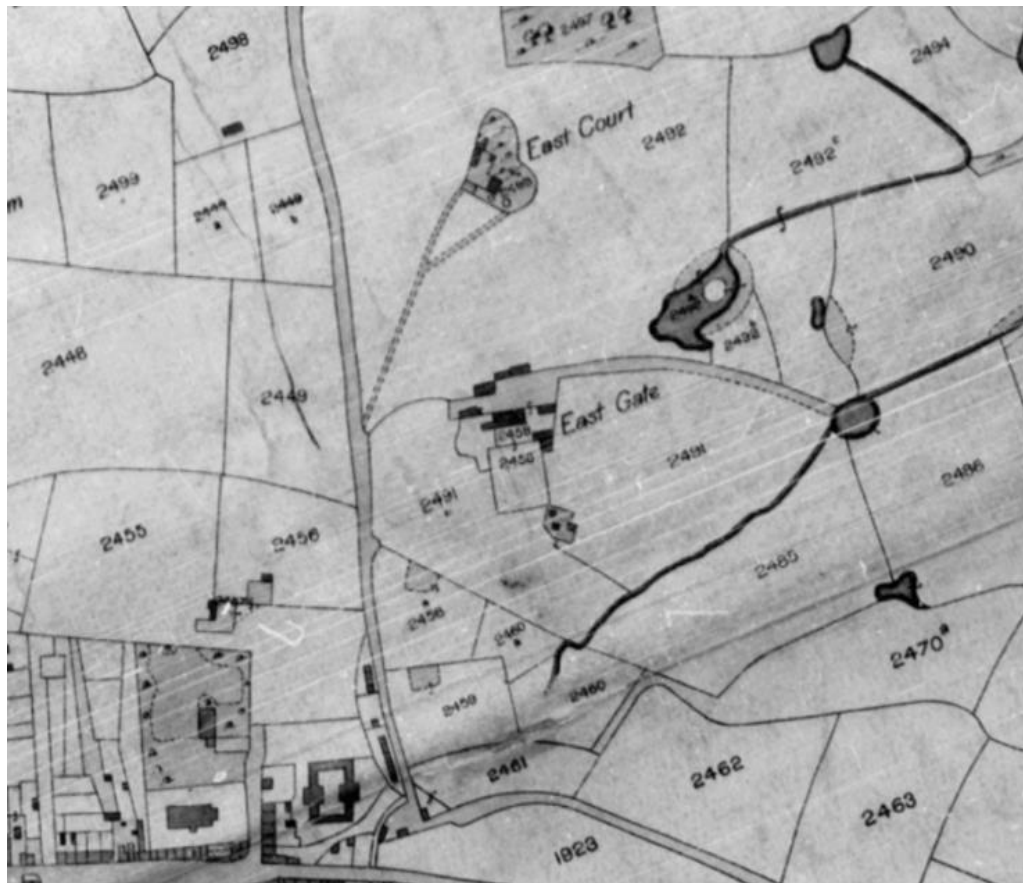


Fig.2: East Grinstead tithe map, 1841

- 2.2.5 In 1863 the Cranston family let East Court to the Rev. Charles Walter Payne Crawford and his family. Crawford became Chairman of East Grinstead Urban District Council and he and his family lived at East Court until 1903.
- 2.2.6 The 1890 OS map (**Fig.3**) labels the farm Eastcourt Cottage. It shows three yards of similar size directly behind the farmhouse and barn, with the main farmyard to the front, divided into two and accessed from the informal lane from the west. A row of buildings, in the location of the present-day unlisted Estcots Cottage, stood on the north side of the yard. To the rear of the smaller yards behind the farmhouse and barn was the large rectangular enclosure depicted on earlier maps. This contained a garden with peripheral and central paths, outbuildings and orchard trees, which suggests it comprised a large, walled kitchen garden.
- 2.2.7 Overlaying the 1993 OS map onto the 1890 map (**Fig.4**) indicates that the present-day application site occupied a small part (less than 25%, within the north-west quadrant) of this garden.

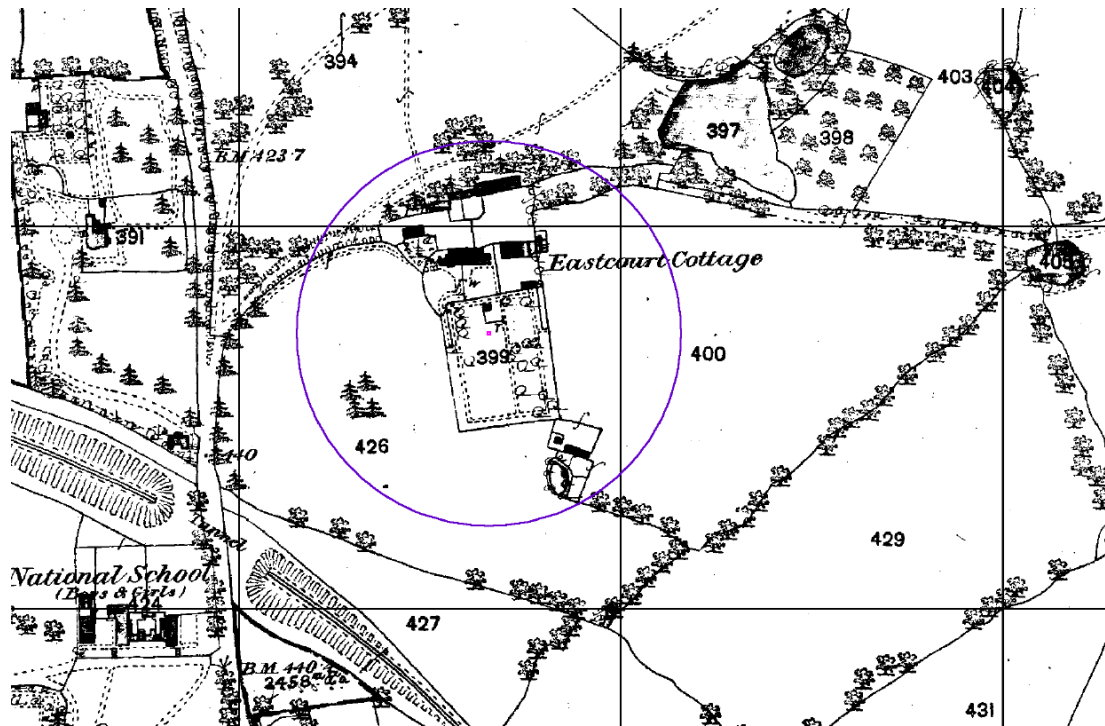


Fig.3: 1890 OS map



Fig.4: 1993 OS map overlaid on 1890 OS map, with approximate extent of application site boundary outlined in red

- 2.2.8 The East Court Estate, which at its peak, consisted of c.900 acres, remained in the Cranston family until 1906.

The 20th century

- 2.2.9 In 1906 the Cranston trustees sold East Court to Ernest Cooper, an accountant from Limpsfield in Surrey. The house had fallen into a state of disrepair and Cooper restored and extended it as well as developing the grounds. Estcots Farmhouse was divided between the bailiff and the head gardener. The Lloyd George Domesday Survey of 1910 records the farm as having a number of wood and tile cart lodges and barn, a thatched barn, a brick-built seven-pen piggery, a brick and half-timbered four-stall stable and a brick and tile store shed. The farmhouse is recorded as being occupied by *'owner's servants in two parts each containing 4 bedrooms, 2 sitting rooms etc. Old fashioned ½ timber build & tiled farmhouse in very good state of repairs inside & outside.'*
- 2.2.10 The 1910 OS map (**Fig.5**) shows the property (now labelled Estcot's Farm) at that time, the large garden apparently largely unaltered but for the loss of some subdivision and the addition of a strip of extra land along its western boundary. Residential development had been taking place to the south-west beyond the Tunbridge Wells branch line of the railway (now the A22 Beeching Way).

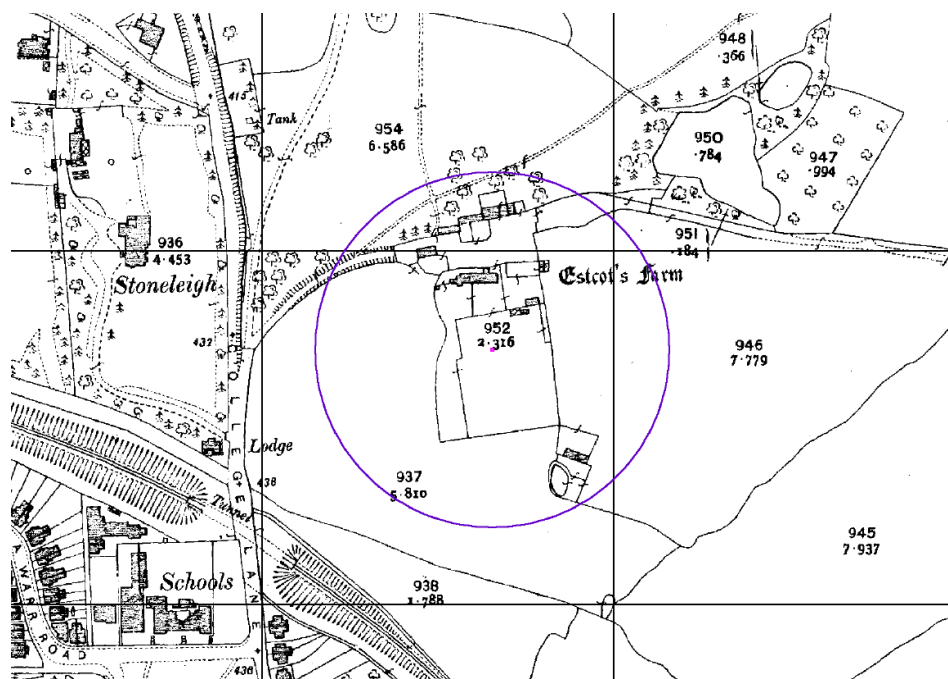


Fig.5: 1910 OS map

2.2.12 By 1929 (and shown more clearly on the larger-scale 1931 OS map; **Fig.6**), the garden behind Estcot's Farm had been reconfigured. While, based on the map evidence alone, the date for this cannot be narrowed down any further than the period 1910 to 1929, it seems likely that these changes were made after the farmhouse was sold into separate ownership after Ernest Cooper's death, giving a much narrower date period of 1926 to 1929. Until that date, the farmhouse had been tenanted by those in Cooper's employ, who are very unlikely to have redesigned the garden themselves.

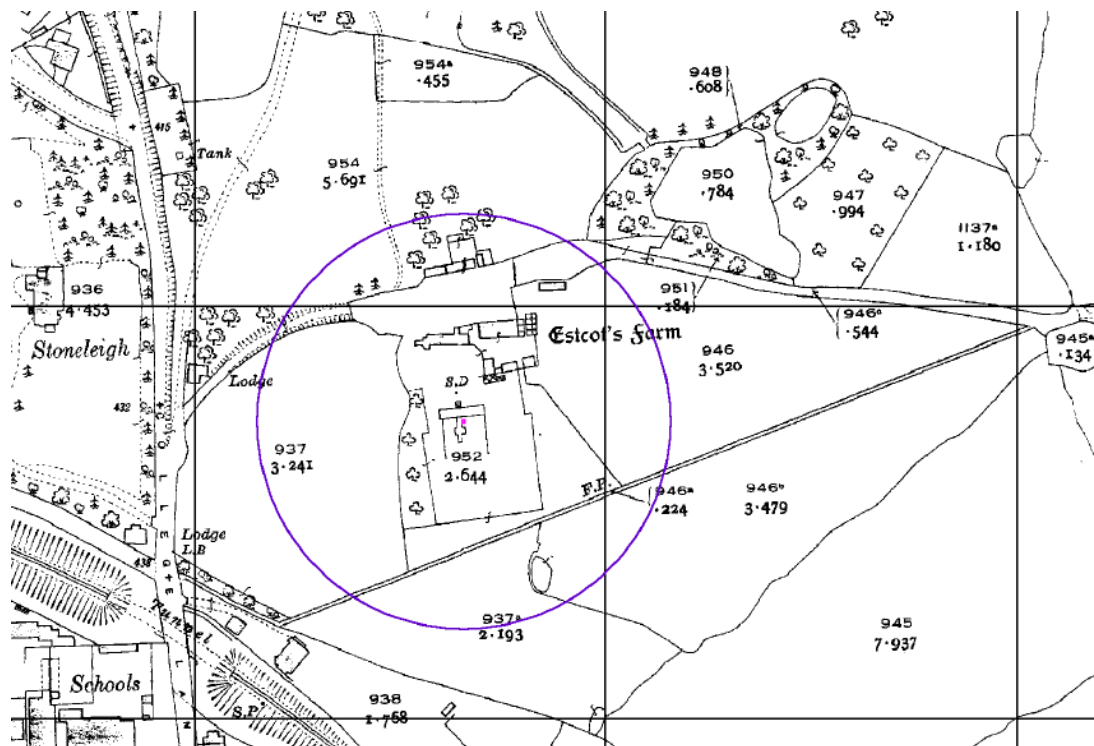


Fig.6: 1931 OS map

2.2.13 The map shows the loss of many of the subdividing boundaries forming the yards in front of and behind the farmhouse, including the removal of the northern boundary wall of the kitchen garden. Within this space a cruciform pond had been constructed with a terrace at its northern end, walls to either side and a short flight of steps up from the terrace to the north. This appears to

represent some, if not all, of the garden features still present on the application site. South of the garden, a very straight linear footpath had been laid out across the fields between College Lane and the lane that passed through the former farmyard.

2.2.14 East Court remained as a family home until the 1940s when it was put up for sale and requisitioned by the army for use as barracks and a training centre for demobilised soldiers. In September 1945 a local merchant banker and philanthropist, Alfred Wagg, through his Manor Charitable Trust, bought the mansion and 48.9ha for £16,700, intending it to become a permanent memorial to the people of East Grinstead who had lost their lives during the war. The house and immediately surrounding 2ha was then sold to East Grinstead Urban District Council for £6,576 for use as its headquarters.

2.2.15 In 1946, the Manor Charitable Trust conveyed the East Court estate to an interim War Memorial Committee. In 1949, East Grinstead War Memorial Limited was set up to own and manage the estate for the enjoyment by the townspeople. Funds were raised to create a small Garden of Remembrance and playing fields in 1950.

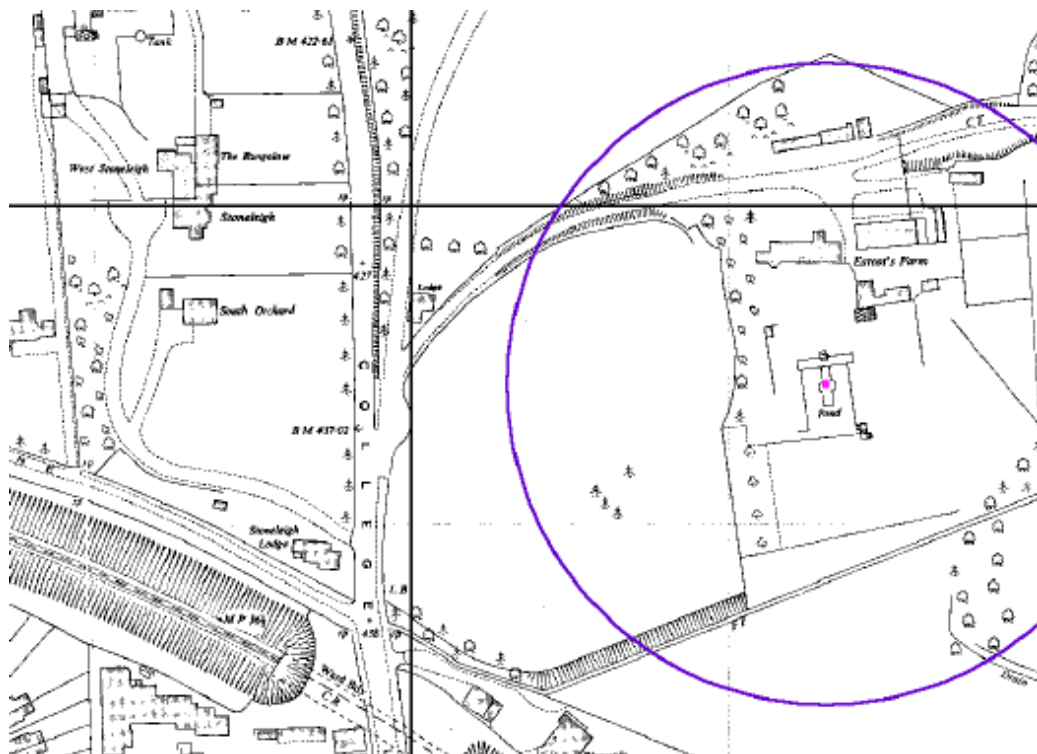


Fig.7: 1956 OS map (map cut off to right as adjoining sheet is of a much later date)

2.2.16 The 1956 OS map (**Fig.7**) shows the further removal of the boundaries of the former kitchen garden at Estcots Farm and the extension of the garden eastwards, creating a large open-plan garden. A new boundary had, however, been erected east-west to the south of the pond.

2.2.17 By 1974 (**Fig.8**), Estcots Drive had been constructed, cutting directly across what had originally been the southern half of the kitchen garden to Estcots Farmhouse. A series of eleven detached houses (Nos.2-22) had been built along the south side of the new road, north of the linear footpath, as had the similar houses on the north side, east of Estcots Farm (Nos.23-49). College Close to the west was under construction and the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the land still belonging to Estcots Farm had been redrawn.

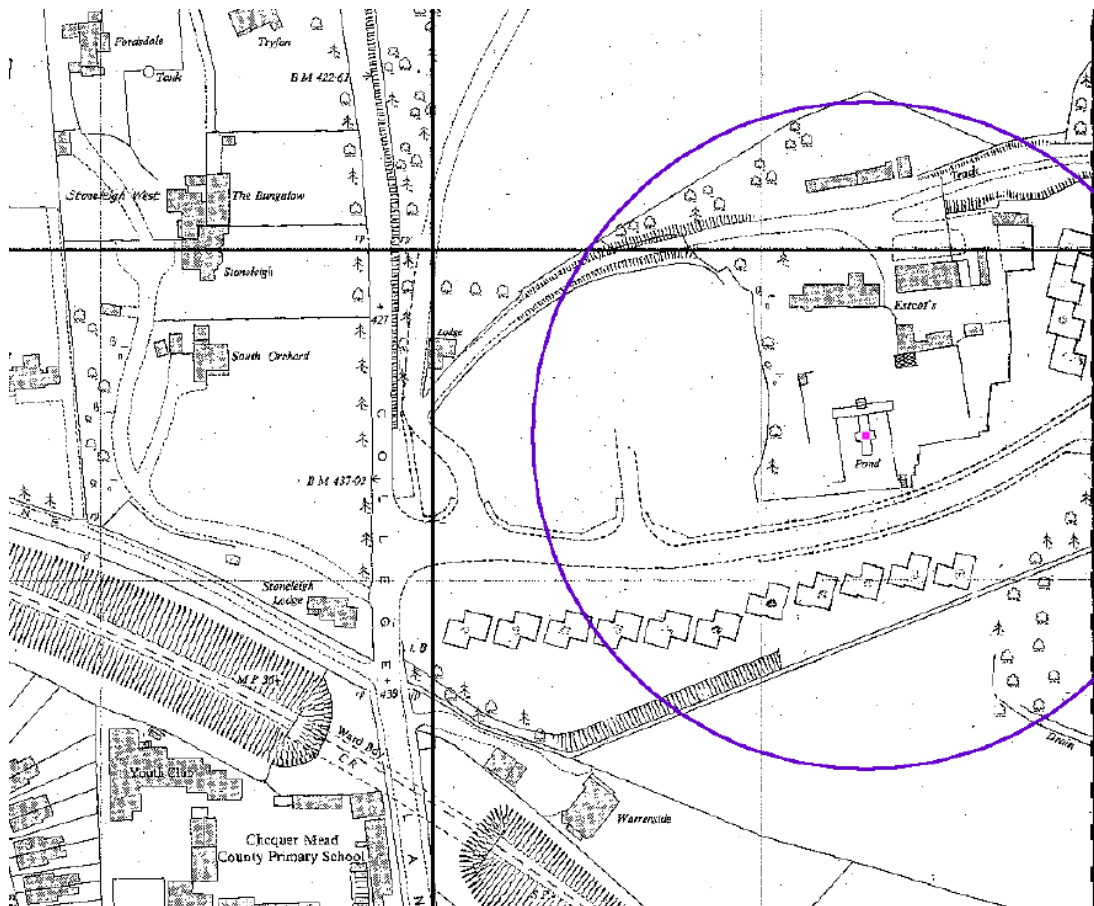


Fig.8: 1974 OS map (sheet to right missing)

2.2.18 By 1980 (**Fig.9**), College Close had been completed and development had continued south of Estcots Drive with Giffards Close and Court Crescent, etc. (the linear footpath having been removed).

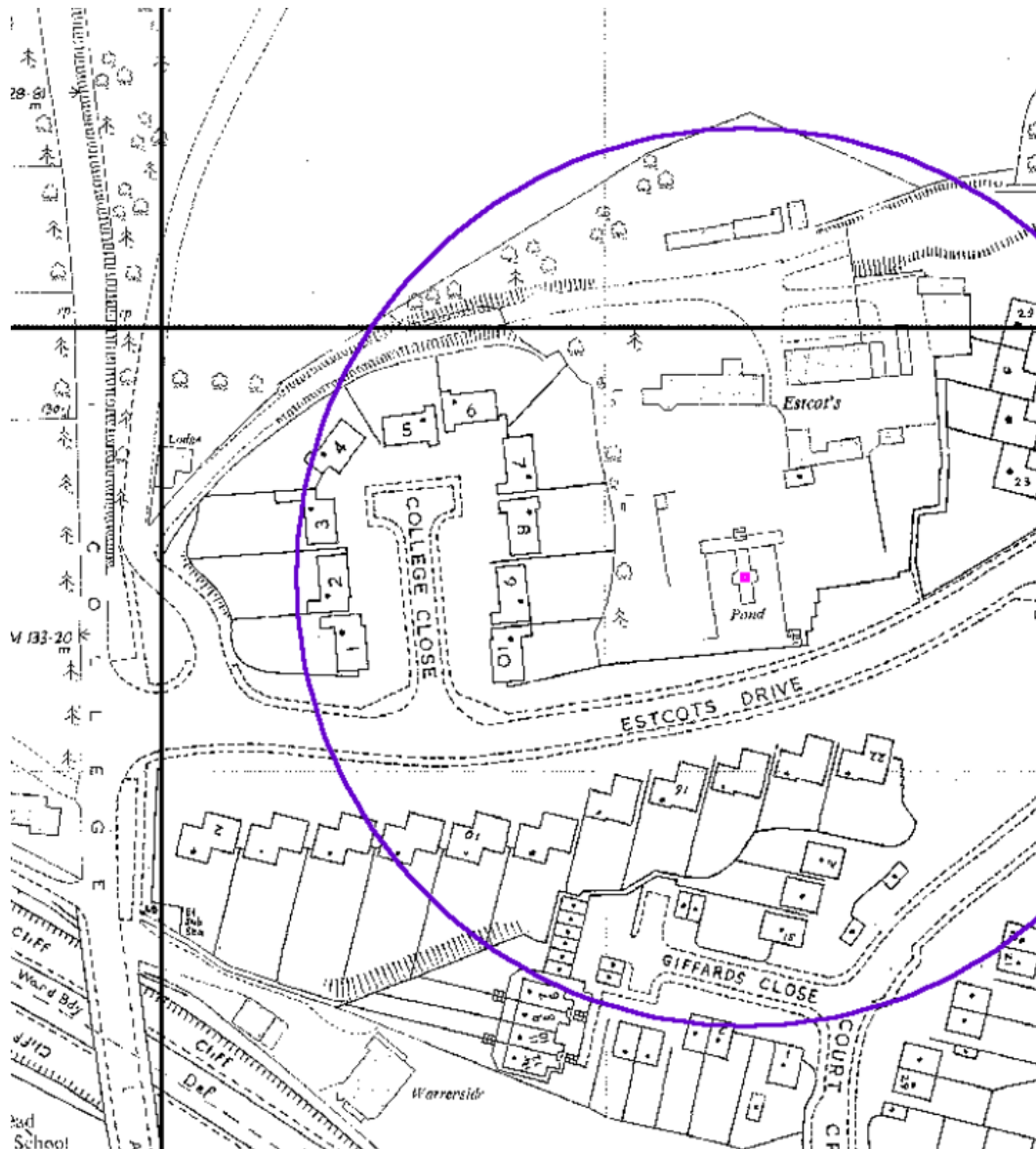


Fig.9: 1980 OS map (sheet to right missing)

2.2.19 A transfer of land was made in 1982, relating to what are now the plots of Nos.19 and 21 Estcots Drive, with a covenant that the northern boundaries of both plots and the part of the western boundary to No.19 north of the cruciform pond and terrace must be fenced with a six feet high close-boarded fence. Nos.19 and 21 were constructed soon after and, at apparently around the same time, the area of garden containing the pond and terrace was acquired by the owner of No.19.

2.2.20 The 1989 OS map (**Fig.10**) shows Nos.19 and 21 in place, and that No.17 had also been built to the west. While the map does not show the northern boundary of the application site, i.e. the division that had been made between it and the

garden land retained with Estcots Farmhouse, it is understood that the site had been sold off from the farmhouse by this date, for the use of No.19, in which use it has remained to the present day.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE AND RELATIONSHIP TO HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section of the report, in line with Steps 1 and 2 of Historic England's 2017 guidance on *The Setting of Heritage Assets* ('GPA3'), identifies those heritage assets and their settings with the potential to be affected by the proposals; and assesses the degree to which these settings contribute to the significance of the respective heritage asset (including the contribution of the application site).
- 3.1.2 The assessment identifies two Grade II listed buildings – Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn – which are in reasonable proximity to the site such that they may have the potential to be affected, and the Estcots and East Court Conservation Area, part of the southern boundary of which is coincident with the northern boundary of the application site.

3.2 The conservation area

- 3.2.1 The conservation area was designated in 2003. There is no published Conservation Area Character Appraisal, but the short note accompanying the map confirms that its boundaries are very closely drawn to include the Grade II listed East Court and its remaining grounds, and the grouping of Estcots Farmhouse, Barn and Cottage at the end of what it describes as an '*attractive sunken lane*.' The note refers to the area's '*open rural quality on the edge of the town*.'
- 3.2.2 This rural quality is appreciable when enjoying open vistas across the East Court grounds east/northeast towards Ashplats Wood and beyond (**Plates 11 & 12**), and when on the 'sunken lane' (narrow and enclosed by high hedgerows) down to the group of historic former farm buildings (**Plates 13 & 14**).
- 3.2.3 In terms of the setting of the conservation area, College Lane to the west contributes to rural quality, having a similarly rural feel as another relatively narrow sunken lane, bounded by stone walls and vegetation. To the east, open land beyond the conservation area, encompassing AFC Grinstead and the East Court pitches, facilitates the open vistas from the conservation area to the east.

To the north, Ashplats Wood forms a strong rural screen against further residential estates beyond.

- 3.2.4 Immediately south of the conservation area, the physical setting comprises Estcots Drive, part of a 1970s' residential estate spreading down the hill to south and east, from which none of this rural open quality is perceptible, nor indeed is any sense of the presence of the conservation area at all. This area makes no contribution, as setting, to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.2.5 Indeed, it is almost integral to the character of the conservation area that it is an unexpected discovery behind the late 20th-century housing estate; it is only when one turns into the driveway to East Court from Estcots Drive and is confronted by the small brick lodge building in the angle between the road and the 'sunken' lane towards Estcots Farmhouse, that the transformation of character from residential development to parkland and a semi-rural environment is suddenly appreciable (**Plate 15-17**).
- 3.2.6 The exclusion of the application site from the conservation area presumably recognises the fact that, by the time the conservation area was designated, the site had already been in separate ownership to Estcots Farmhouse, and had served as a garden to No.19 as part of the Estcots Drive street scene, for some twenty years.
- 3.2.7 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF Glossary 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.*' The importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of a heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.
- 3.2.8 As an element of physical setting, Escots Drive makes no contribution to the ability to appreciate the character and appearance of the conservation area. The fundamental characteristic of an open rural quality, and the presence of East Court and its parkland, and the narrow lane behind with its group of historic

former farm buildings, simply cannot be discerned from Estcots Drive, and the characteristics of a 1970s' residential estate are far removed from the qualities of the designated area.

- 3.2.9 The application site, as experienced from Estcots Drive, does not contribute to the conservation area as there is no ability to experience, or appreciate the character and appearance of, the conservation area from here, and therefore no legible relationship between the two.

3.3 The listed buildings

- 3.3.1 Estcots Farmhouse was listed on the same date as East Court (on 28th January 1948). The Barn was listed at a later date, on 2nd August 1972. The list entries for both are exceedingly brief. That for the farmhouse merely states, '*Low rambling building of C16 and early C17. Tile hung and half-timber. Modern porch. Some old windows.*' That for the Barn is even briefer: '*Fine barn east of Estcot's Farmhouse. Timber-frame and tarred weather boarding. Thatch roof*'.
- 3.3.2 The farmhouse (**Plate 18**) does comprise a long and rambling building of various phases, with a consequentially interesting front elevation incorporating a mix of timber box framing, close-studded framing and tile hanging, with gabled and half-hipped clay-tiled roofs and tall stacks. It has square-leaded casements, a number of which are historic.
- 3.3.3 The Barn (**Plate 19**) is no longer thatched, its long and steeply-pitched catslide roof now covered with clay tiles. It has a central gabled threshing bay and is clad with weather-boarding.
- 3.3.4 To the rear of the barn are several outbuildings, three of which back onto the shared boundary with the original plot to No.19. The gable end of one of these, built of blue brick between 1910 and 1931, can be seen above the boundary wall, the latter possibly being a remnant of the historic northern boundary wall of the enclosed garden (see **Plate 10**). These outbuildings are likely to be considered listed by virtue of curtilage.

- 3.3.5 North of the listed buildings, on the other side of what was historically a farmyard and is now an extension of the lane combined with front gardens and driveways, is Estcots Cottage (**Plate 20**), an unlisted brick and tile-hung house of uncertain date attached to a timber-clad single-storey range which may be a conversion of a former farm building. It is doubtful whether these buildings could now justifiably be deemed as listed via curtilage, but they have heritage value in association with the farmhouse and barn.
- 3.3.6 The significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, and may also derive in part from its setting. The significance of the listed farmhouse and barn derives primarily from their architectural and historic interest – from their age and survival of historic fabric.
- 3.3.7 The farmhouse is a good example of its period and appears to have a degree of complexity in terms of phasing and plan form that will add to its 'special architectural and historic interest.' It has illustrative value relating to its period and locality, expressing the regional vernacular in its form and materials. It is likely that it also contains internal fittings and features of historic interest.
- 3.3.8 The Barn has been converted to a separate dwelling, and no longer retains the thatched roof it had in the early 1970s. However, its general form and legibility as a former threshing barn has survived the conversion works and the building retains historic character externally.
- 3.3.9 The primary element of the setting of the listed buildings is the relationship between them and with the unlisted extended and converted former farm buildings opposite, on the other side of what was originally a divided farmyard. There is also a historic outbuilding to the rear of the listed barn. This grouping of buildings is distinct and has aesthetic interest and a strong group value as components of the former farmstead.
- 3.3.10 While the character and quality of this setting has been transformed by the cessation of the agricultural use, the subdivision into separate ownerships and conversions to residential use, and the laying out of front drives and gardens for this use, the spatial relationships between the buildings remains and the three can be appreciated in conjunction as a close-knit group with a shared functional

history. Their situation at the end of the narrow lane enclosed by high vegetation also contributes, giving the group a secluded environment and reinforcing their group value as historically a single entity.

- 3.3.11 The secondary element of the setting is the relationship of the buildings to East Court, with which they were associated through ownership from the mid-18th century until 1926. While the farmhouse was constructed perhaps two centuries before East Court was built, the later association of the buildings (the farmhouse initially serving as a dower house to the mansion, as well as the Home Farm) is a well-documented period of their history, which remains legible today.
- 3.3.12 Despite the stand of mature conifers behind Estcots Cottage, dividing the former farm group from the grounds of East Court, there is still some intervisibility between the two, with glimpses from the East Court grounds towards the roofs of the former farm buildings available through a break in the tree screen (**Plate 21**).
- 3.2.10 This is the only aspect of the buildings' setting that retains any open rural quality. To the immediate south, east and west of the listed buildings, the historic setting (which comprised agricultural fields) has been completely lost to 1970s' and later housing development (including Estcots Drive), which envelopes the historic buildings closely on three sides (**Plates 16, 17, 22 & 23**). While this development is now well established, it wholly transformed what had until then been a rural area, east of and divided from the rest of East Grinstead by the branch railway line. The 'saving grace' for the listed buildings is that they are not readily seen in conjunction with it, as the primary experience of them is from the lane concealed behind.
- 3.2.11 The development heavily truncated the grounds of Estcots Farmhouse, which were sold off to developers in parcels, with the last part to be sold off and developed being the plots to Nos.17, 19 and 21 Estcots Drive. The road itself cut right across the middle of what appears to have been a large walled kitchen garden, which had, however, already been 'dismembered' by the removal of some of its boundaries in the post-war period. The road destroyed the vestiges of this enclosure, cutting through its southern half. Nos. 19 and (partly) 21 were then constructed in the space which had previously been occupied by the north-eastern quadrant of the kitchen garden.

- 3.2.12 The application site occupies part of what had been the north-western quadrant of the kitchen garden (the northern part of that quadrant was retained within the garden to Estcots Farmhouse), but which is now, and has been for the last forty years, part of the garden to No.19 Estcots Drive. It is possible that a section of the western wall of the application site may belong to the original garden enclosure, but there is no remaining sense that this was ever part of a much larger garden enclosure (more than four times the size of the current garden), the southern half now lying beneath Estcots Drive and the houses on its southern side.
- 3.2.13 While the application site retains late 1920s' garden features (presumed to have been constructed by the new owners of Estcots Farmhouse following the sale of the farm out of the East Court Estate after 1926), there is no surviving legibility of the relationship of the site to the listed farmhouse on the higher ground to the north, as it is divided from it by a high brick wall, with high mature laurel and other planting lining it on the farmhouse side.
- 3.2.14 All that can be seen of the listed farmhouse from within the site, and only in longer views from the high-level terrace in its south-western corner, are the tops of two chimneystacks, a glimpse which probably disappears altogether in the summer months when deciduous trees add to the screening effect already provided by the laurels behind the shared boundary wall (**Plate 24**).
- 3.2.15 From Estcots Drive, looking directly north across the application site boundary (**Plate 25**), the two stacks can be seen along with a short section of the building's roofline – again, a view that will largely disappear in the summer months. Also visible is part of the 1980s' northern boundary wall (as it stands on the higher terrace level), behind which the laurels are prominent. The presence of this wall and the dense laurel screen makes it evident that the site is not associated with the farmhouse behind.
- 3.2.16 This is not a view of the listed building that contributes anything to its significance. It is a transient glimpsed view of part of its roof only, seen from the context of a late 20th-century housing estate with which it has no positive relationship. There is no ability to appreciate the age or significance of the listed building in this glimpse, and no legibility of its former relationship with the application site – noting that the application site forms only a small fragment of

the original large walled garden associated with the listed building, of which there is no surviving legibility at all.

- 3.2.17 Looking north-east from Escots Drive, there is a transient view of the gable end of the early 20th-century outbuilding with part of the barn roof behind it (**Plate 26**). Again, this is a glimpsed transient view which is without meaningful context.
- 3.2.18 As the experience of the listed farmhouse in conjunction with the site is so limited (only a small part of the roof can be seen across the site and there is no ability to appreciate the significance of the building), the site's value as setting, in the sense that setting is '*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*,' is negligible.
- 3.2.19 The historic association of the site with the listed farmhouse is of some interest, but given it has been four decades since that association ceased in terms of ownership and use and the two were physically separated, and as the site represents only a fragment of the original large enclosed garden associated with the building, this too must be considered very limited. The site now appears as a garden to No.19 and has lost its association with the listed buildings. While it is possible to understand the former association from a map regression exercise, it is not possible to appreciate it from the position of a casual observer on Estcots Drive.
- 3.2.20 The garden features on the application site were associated with a much later phase of the farmstead's use, and do not contribute to what makes the listed buildings significant in terms of their 'special architectural and historic interest.'
- 3.2.21 In summary, it is clear that the setting of the listed former farm buildings has changed very substantially and that the aspects of it which make a positive contribution to an appreciation of the significance of the listed buildings are now very closely-defined, and do not include any part of Estcots Drive. The application site, while within the physical setting of the buildings and formerly associated with them, does not contribute to the ability to appreciate their significance.

4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 For the reasons discussed in the preceding section of this report, it is my view that the application site does not contribute to the significance (or ability to appreciate the significance) of the listed buildings, and does not contribute to the experience of the character and appearance of the conservation area. It therefore follows that the development of the site is unlikely to affect the significance of these heritage assets and that, in terms of Step 3 of Historic England's GPA3 (which is to assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on significance or the ability to appreciate it), there should be no requirement to proceed to this step.
- 4.2 However, to ensure a robust planning submission and to consider the comments made in the pre-application response to a previous proposal for a terrace of three houses on the site, the proposals are here assessed in line with Step 3 of GPA3.
- 4.3 The proposals comprise a residential development of two 1.5-storey semi-detached dwellings fronting onto Estcots Drive, with a shared vehicular access from the road.
- 4.4 The front and rear building lines of the proposed new dwellings will respect those of the neighbouring dwellings to either side, with off-street parking provided to the front of each dwelling, and a garden for each plot to the rear. The 1.5-storey height, with the upper floor contained partly within the roof space, enables the buildings to respond to the topography in relation to No.19, while not appearing too high in relation to the uncharacteristic bungalow at No.17.
- 4.5 Because of the changes in levels within the site, further terracing will be required, cutting into the western part of the site and installing a new retaining wall in place of the existing. Plot 1 will have a slightly higher ridgeline than Plot 2, reflecting the existing topography of the natural slope down to the east.
- 4.6 The majority of the existing garden features would be removed. However, the c.1.5m high battered and buttressed stone retaining wall which retains the gravel terrace on which the fenced boundary against Estcots Farmhouse stands

will be retained, including the semi-circular niche with steps that once led up to the higher garden level that is now separated off (see **Plates 5 & 6**). This will preserve something of the former connection of the site to the land behind.

- 4.7 The design and materials of the proposed new dwellings is more influenced by the traditional vernacular of the area than by the prevailing and rather generic 1970s' style of the rest of Estcots Drive. Nos.2-22 step down the hillside on the south side of the road and are of a very particular type, each property forming a broad 'L'-shape, set at an angle to the road, with a deeply projecting wide front gable set in front of a wider gabled section behind, incorporating a garage. The ground floors are rendered and the upper floors tile hung. The type is used again further eastwards on the northern side of Estcots Drive.
- 4.8 The design of the terrace of three dwellings previously proposed for the site was influenced by this form, using a similar staggered frontage and tile-hung upper floors, but also with box dormers above the principal two storeys.
- 4.9 The houses on Court Crescent and College Close are of more conventional plan, and of an aesthetic typical of their time, also incorporating tile hanging to the upper floors. No.17 is a bungalow, while Nos.19 and 21 have no similarity either with each other or with the prevailing generic house types found elsewhere on the road. No.19 is effectively of three storeys, with two storeys above an integral garage, constructed in an orange-toned brick, painted white on the lower levels of the facade, while No.21 is effectively of two storeys, but with the upper storey contained within a long roof-slope incorporating a box dormer over an integral garage.
- 4.10 As the built form on the north side of Estcots Drive in the vicinity of the site is so mixed in terms of style and materials, and so evidently of its time, it is considered that it would be a negative step and too contrived to attempt to replicate any of this. Instead, an attractive design has been conceived which uses half-hipped clay-tiled roofs and red brick and gabled timber-clad frontages, with large glazed screens to the gables.
- 4.11 These forms and materials, while used in a contemporary design, have much more in common with the historic buildings to their north than with the late 20th-

century developments to either side and opposite. This higher quality of architecture and materials, rather than blending in with late 20th-century forms of little merit, will instead make a visual connection with the local historic vernacular and help to maintain a distinction of the application site in the streetscape.

- 4.12 The Council's concerns about the previous pre-application scheme included the assertion that the application site *'retains an open and verdant character'* and that it makes *'some contribution to the surviving verdancy of the setting of the farmstead and Conservation Area...'* and that therefore its development as then proposed would *'have a fundamental impact on the verdant and relatively open character of the site, through the introduction of substantial built form, associated boundary treatments and hard landscaping, and will remove and reverse the positive contribution which it currently makes to the settings of the adjacent heritage assets. This will result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the assets mentioned above...'*
- 4.13 As already discussed, the site does not, in my view, make an appreciable positive contribution to the significance of the listed buildings (which are barely seen in conjunction with it) or the conservation area (the existence of which cannot be discerned from here). I am therefore of the view that the development of the site will not result in a harmful impact to the significance of these heritage assets. The present scheme is, in my view, a much more positive one than the scheme which was the subject of the previous pre-application submission and will be an attractive addition to the streetscape, with its own merit.
- 4.14 Much of the vegetation that can be seen when looking towards the site from Estcots Drive comprises that along its western and northern boundaries, which is within the plots to Nos.17 and Estcots Farmhouse behind, and so will not be affected by the proposals. The conifers along the front and eastern boundaries of the site are not native and are effectively an overgrown hedge presumably planted when No.19 was constructed. There will be sufficient gaps between the new buildings and their neighbours such that vegetation will still be visible between buildings, and such that the houses are in keeping with existing densities.

- 4.15 There is of course a degree of openness present, arising from the fact that this is an undeveloped plot. However, this simply presents itself as a garden space and there is nothing 'special' about the gap itself, which is not characteristic of the streetscape here. The garden itself cannot be seen, with the view being of a close-boarded fence with raised trellis behind it, the front boundary conifers, and the laurels along the border with the farmhouse behind.
- 4.16 In conclusion I do not identify any harm arising to the significance of any heritage asset arising from the submitted proposals.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report has assessed the contribution made by the application site at No.19 Estcots Road, East Grinstead, to the significance of designated heritage assets in proximity to the site.
- 5.2 The assessment has followed the guidance set out in Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3* ('GPA3'; 2nd edn December 2017). It has identified and assessed the significance of the Estcots and East Court Conservation Area and the Grade II listed Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn in the vicinity of the site and considered the extent to which the application site could be deemed to contribute to their significance as an element of their physical setting.
- 5.3 This assessment concluded that the application site does not contribute anything of note to the significance of any of these heritage assets, or to the ability to appreciate their significance, and that the development of the site as proposed will not have any harmful impact on them.
- 5.4 For all the detailed reasons given in this report, I am therefore of the view that the scheme complies with the policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the NPPF, relevant local planning policies and, most importantly of all, the statutory tests set by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.



Plate 1: Looking south-west across the application site from northern terrace



Plate 2: Looking south across the application site from northern terrace



Plate 3: Looking south-east across the application site from western terrace



Plate 4: Looking north across the application site towards boundary wall with garden to Estcots Farmhouse



Plate 5: Looking east along the northern terrace towards side wall of No.19 Estcots Drive and No.21 beyond it. Late 20th-century wall to left is the southern boundary to Estcots Farmhouse and the conservation area



Plate 6: Niche with steps up set into retaining wall along northern boundary, now truncated and blocked by brick boundary wall



Plate 7: Looking east across the application site towards houses on College Close



Plate 8: Section of western boundary wall of application site (to left), with No.17 Estcots Drive beyond



Plate 9: Looking south along the western terrace



Plate 10: Looking north across No.19's rear garden towards boundary with Estcots Barn. The boundary wall behind the conservatory is historic; beyond this the gable end of an outbuilding associated with the barn can be seen



Plate 11: East Court – southern and eastern elevations



Plate 12: View east towards Ashplats Wood from the raised terrace on the east side of East Court

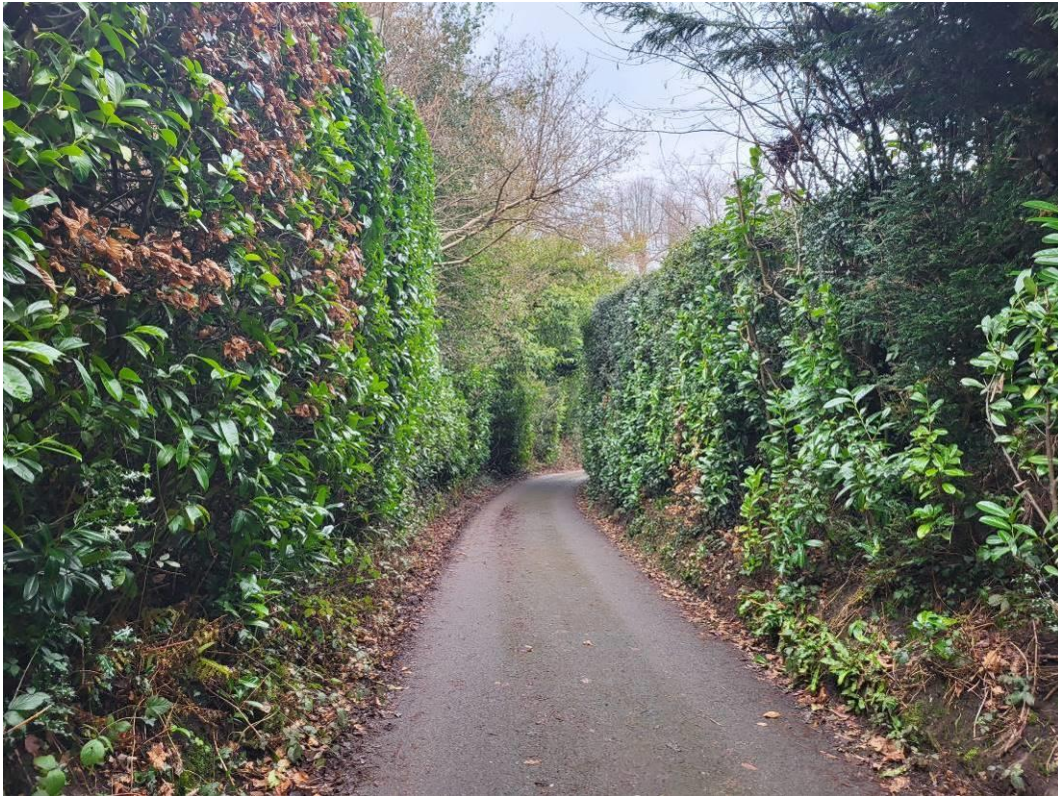


Plate 13: View north-east along first part of lane down to listed buildings



Plate 14: Looking east from lane into former Estcot's farmyard



Plate 15: Looking north towards East Court Lodge, with lane down to listed buildings to right



Plate 16: Looking west along Estcots Drive (No.19 to right, with conifers on southern boundary of application site)



Plate 17: Looking east along Estcots Drive



Plate 18: Grade II listed Estcots Farmhouse



Plate 19: Grade II listed converted barn and farmhouse



Plate 20: Estcots Cottage opposite the listed buildings



Plate 21: Looking south-east across East Court parkland towards listed buildings



Plate 22: Nos.19 & 21 Estcots Drive



Plate 23: College Close to west of application site



Plate 24: Looking north across garden from raised terrace, with glimpse of two chimneys on listed farmhouse beyond boundary wall



Plate 25: Looking north from Escots Drive across application site towards listed farmhouse



Plate 26: Looking north-east from Escots Drive across application site towards gable end of early 20th-century outbuilding behind listed barn