

HANDFORTH

HERITAGE

Pickeridge Farm, Ardingly
Heritage Impact Assessment

April 2026

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Historic Development	4
3.	Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment	11
4.	Proposals and Assessment of Impact	17
	Appendix 1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance	19

1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment ('report') has been prepared by Steven Handforth, MSc, IHBC of Handforth Heritage to accompany an application for retrospective consent to retain solar panels installed on a modern workshop at Pickeridge Farm, Cob Lane, Ardingly.

Pickeridge Farm is a dispersed historic farmstead located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At its core is the Grade II listed 16th-century farmhouse, designated in 1957 for its architectural and historic interest.

The proposals relate solely to the retention of photovoltaic (PV) panels installed on a late 20th century workshop. No works have been undertaken to the listed farmhouse itself and no historic fabric is affected. The key heritage consideration is therefore whether the presence of the solar panels on a non-historic structure results in any impact on the significance of the listed building through changes to its setting.

In accordance with Historic England's *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3), this report assesses the contribution made by the farmhouse's setting to its significance. GPA3 defines setting as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced' and emphasises that setting is not itself a heritage asset but may contribute to significance depending on how views, relationships, and the character of the surroundings inform understanding of the asset. This assessment therefore considers whether the installed solar panels alter the way the listed farmhouse is experienced, appreciated, or understood.

Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) requires that the significance of affected heritage assets, including any contribution made by setting, is understood in order to assess the impact of development proposals. This report has been prepared in line with Historic England *Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance*, which provides guidance on proportionate analysis of significance and impact.

The applicable legislative and policy framework, including the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF (2024), and relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan, is set out in Appendix 1.

All plans are orientated north unless otherwise stated.



Figure 1 Showing the farmstead with the workshop site highlighted in red and the listed farmhouse immediately to the north marked as '1'.

2. Historic Development

The landscape surrounding Pickeridge Farm forms part of the High Weald, one of the most intact medieval countryside environments in northern Europe. Its characteristic pattern of small, irregular fields, ancient woodland, sunken lanes and dispersed farmsteads derives from early medieval land-use practices. From the Saxon period onwards, communities used the Weald seasonally: livestock was grazed on coastal pastures in summer and driven into the dense Wealden Forest in winter. Over time, these temporary woodland pastures; known as 'dens' developed into permanent farmsteads, each surrounded by enclosed fields carved out of the forest. This process created the distinctive settlement pattern still visible today, where isolated farmsteads sit within a mosaic of pasture, woodland shaws, ghylls and ponds. The geology of alternating sandstone and clay beds shaped this evolution, producing a landscape of steep ridges and narrow valleys that limited large-scale arable farming and reinforced the dispersed, pastoral character of the area.

Pickeridge Farm lies between the historic settlements of West Hoathly and Ardingly, both of which have medieval origins and contribute to the wider historic context of the site. West Hoathly developed as an early hilltop settlement centred on St Margaret's Church, founded around 1090. The village expanded along a north-south ridge, with open-hall houses built in the 15th and 16th centuries and later prosperity driven by the Wealden iron industry. Ardingly, meanwhile, grew around St Peter's Church, established in the 14th century, and along a Roman drove road that later became the village High Street. Although the 19th century brought Ardingly College and the railway, the surrounding countryside including the land around Pickeridge remained predominantly agricultural, with farmsteads continuing to operate within long-established field systems.

Within this wider landscape, Pickeridge Farm developed as a traditional Wealden farmstead. The farmhouse itself dates from the 16th century, originally constructed as a timber-framed building with an L-shaped plan typical of the period.

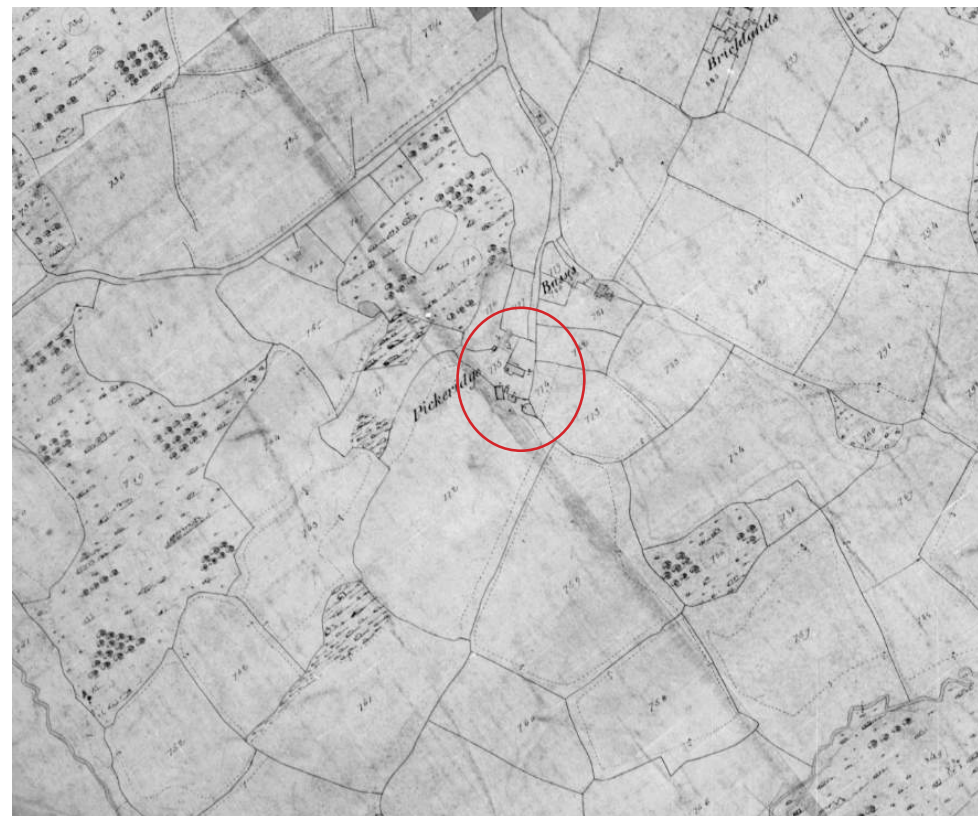


Figure 2 1841 tithe map showing buildings within Pickeridge farm (red) and wider agricultural landscape.

2. Historic Development

The 1841 tithe map presents Pickeridge Farm within its early-19th-century agricultural landscape, capturing the farmstead at a point when its historic form, field pattern and landholding structure were still largely intact. The map shows a dispersed rural environment characteristic of the High Weald, with irregularly shaped fields, winding boundaries and small pockets of woodland. These forms reflect the medieval origins of the landscape, shaped by centuries of piecemeal enclosure and the gradual clearance of woodland for pasture. The tithe map predates the Ordnance Survey and therefore provides one of the earliest detailed cartographic records of the site, offering valuable evidence for understanding its historic development.

Pickeridge Farm itself is shown as a compact cluster of buildings. The footprint is notably smaller than the present day complex, confirming that later 19th and 20th century additions have significantly expanded the built form. A number of buildings to the south of the site are visible which are no longer present. The site itself remains open land at this point.

Pickeridge's landholding was extensive at this point with all the plots shown on map the being recorded as being owned and occupied by Thomas Clifford with the exception of 779, 780, 781 and 804 which are part of 'Basses' farm. The 1841 Census records Thomas as the head of the household with his wife, one daughter, one grandchild, three agricultural labourers and female servant also recorded.

Plot 775 is recorded as 'Buildings, very good and half lane' and plot 772 to the south of this is described as 'barn field'. The land immediately to the west of the farmhouse (776) is recorded as an orchard and plot 777 the garden.



Figure 3 1841 tithe map showing site (red) undeveloped.

2. Historic Development

The 1874 Ordnance Survey shows a number of changes to the main farmhouse, including extensions to the north east and south. An orchard is clearly recorded immediately to the west of the farmhouse (plot 629) and one is also visible in the garden to the north (plot 630). There are also a line of fir trees recorded along the southern edge of plot 629.

The ancillary barn buildings have also been considerably extended at this point with a new linear structure appearing on the eastern edge lining up with the main road and connecting with a smaller structure to the south. The site still remains undeveloped at this point.

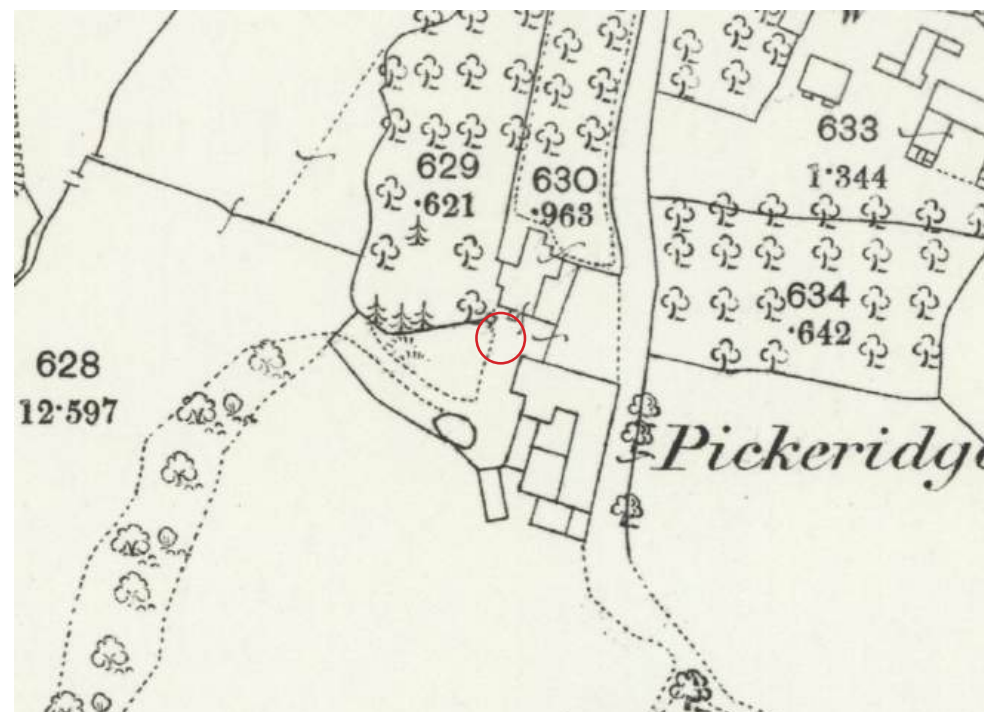


Figure 4 1874 OS map showing site undeveloped.

2. Historic Development

The 1909 Ordnance Survey map shows further changes to the farmstead. The farmhouse appears to have lost its south western additions and gained a northern wing and open sided extension to the south east.

The outbuildings to the south appear to have been modified or possibly completely rebuilt, with brick or timber structures replacing smaller sheds shown on the tithe plan. The site still remains undeveloped at this point.

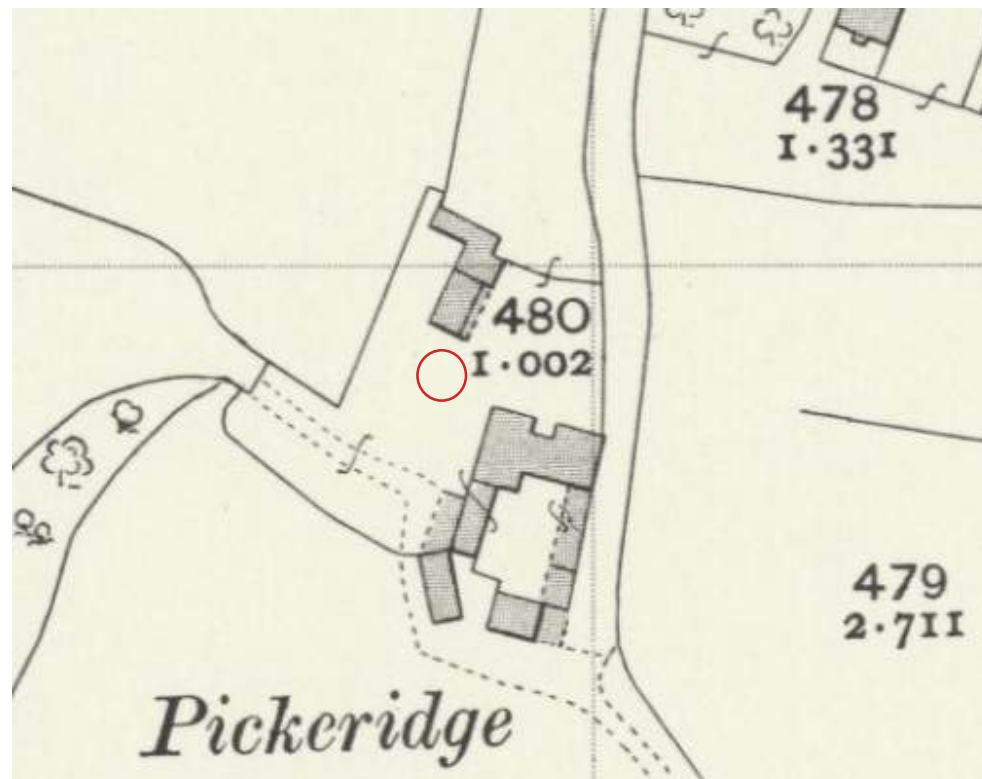


Figure 5 1909 OS map showing site undeveloped.

2. Historic Development

The 1963 Ordnance Survey map appears to show no change to the main listed farmhouse. The most noticeable change when compared to the earlier map is the infilling of the northern section of the ancillary outbuilding and the construction of an open sided barn to the far south of the site which is likely the Dutch barn seen on later photographs. The site still remains undeveloped at this point.

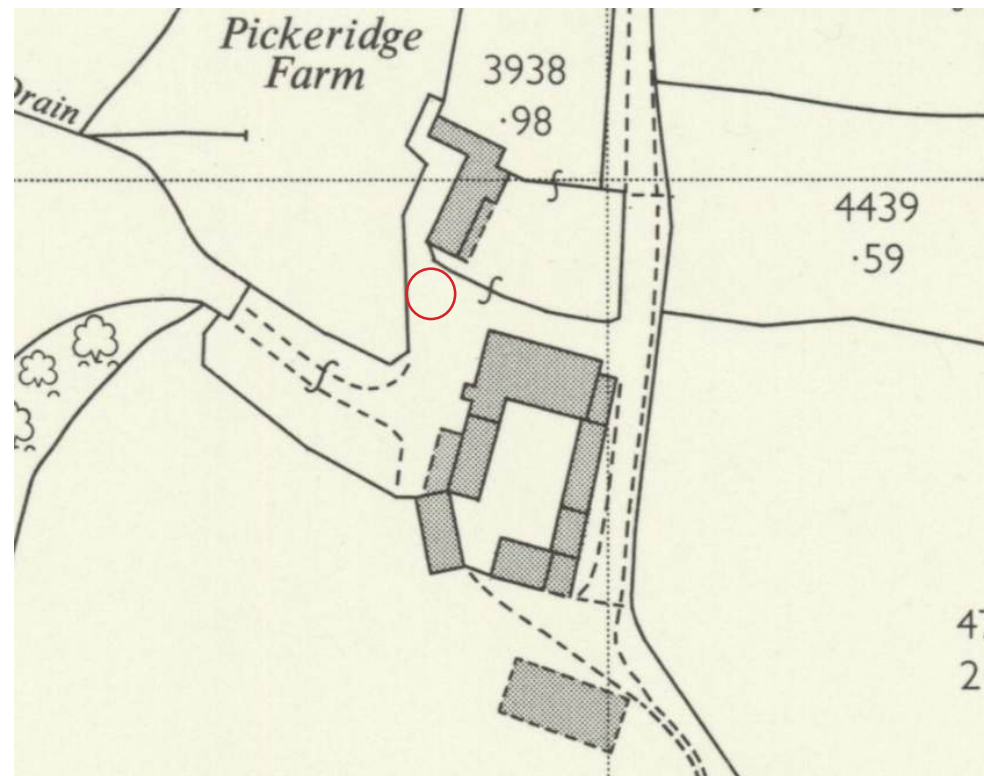


Figure 6 1963 OS map showing site undeveloped.

2. Historic Development

The 1974 OS map shows virtually no change to the main farmhouse, with the exception of the enclosure of the southeastern extension. The ancillary barn buildings to the south remain largely unchanged although the angled barn structure to the southwest corner has been demolished and replaced with a yard. The site still remains undeveloped at this point.

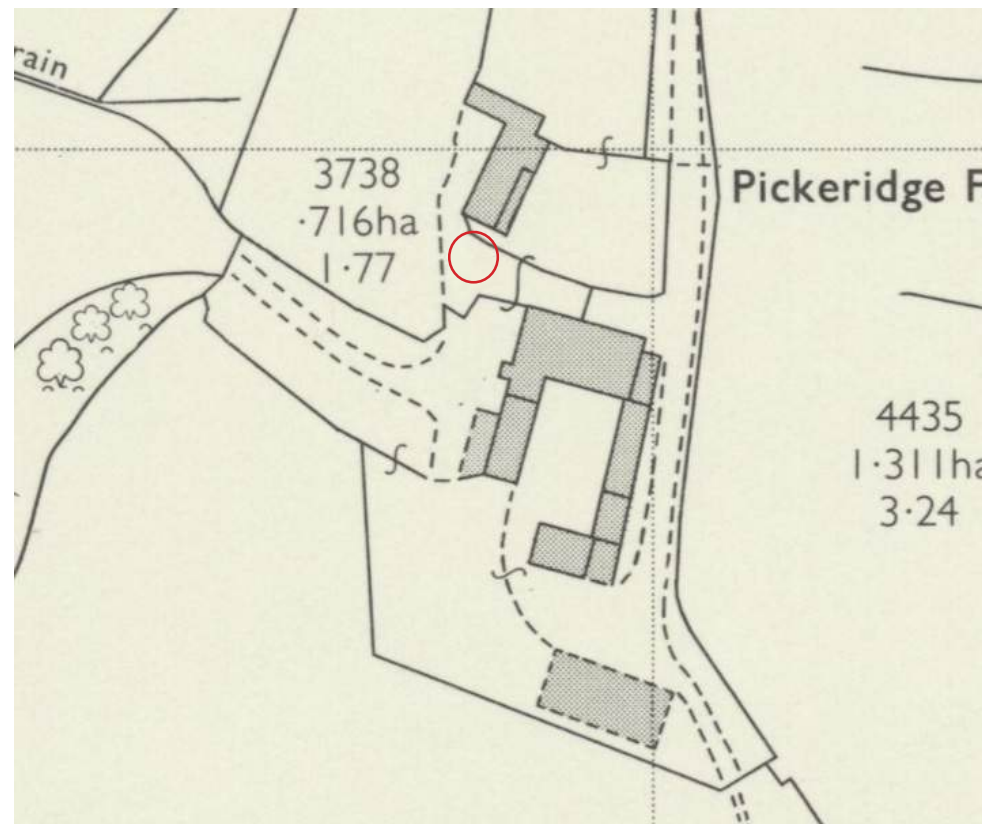


Figure 7 1974 OS map showing site undeveloped.

2. Historic Development



Figure 8 1940s aerial view looking east note dense tree cover between the farmhouse and ancillary structures to the right of the image.



Figure 9 1960s view looking north towards the site. The farmhouse can be seen on the left and ancillary structures to the middle. An open Dutch barn is visible on the right.



Figure 10 1970s showing eastern elevation of the farmhouse.

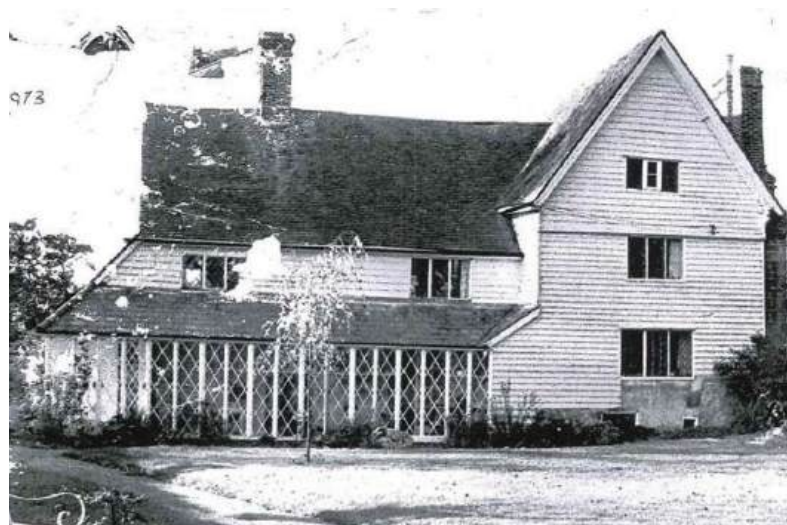


Figure 11 1974 view of eastern elevation of the farmhouse.

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment

A review of the relevant heritage datasets and sources including the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), the Historic Environment Record (HER), and publicly available planning information has identified one heritage asset in the vicinity of the site that may be affected by the proposals. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3)*. Consistent with Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the level of detail provided is proportionate to the importance of the assets and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.

Several other heritage assets exist within the wider rural landscape, but these have been scoped out of the assessment as they have no visual, spatial, or experiential relationship with the site and therefore no realistic potential to be affected by the development.

The heritage asset with the potential to be affected is:

1. Pickeridge Farmhouse, grade II

This asset lies within the immediate vicinity of the site and shares a visual, spatial, or experiential connections that warrant assessment. An aerial view illustrating the site and the identified heritage asset is provided overleaf. The following section sets out an assessment of the significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by their setting and the degree to which the site forms part of that setting.

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment



Figure 12 Showing the site (in red) and the potential heritage asset affected by the proposals through changes to its setting (1). View looking southeast.

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment

1. Pickeridge Farmhouse, grade II

The building was listed on 28 October 1957 and its list entry reads as follows:

L-shaped C16 timber-framed house, now faced with weather-boarding, the west front partly tile-hung. Gable ends to east and west wings. Tiled roof. Casement windows with diamond-shaped panes on first floor. French windows with pointed windows on ground floor. Ashlar and brick chimney breast on north wall. Veranda with slate roof on ground floor of east front.

Pickeridge Farm is a historic farmstead centred on a Grade II listed 16th-century farmhouse, whose timber-framed core, L-shaped plan form, gabled wings and surviving historic fabric remain legible despite later phases of alteration. The building has undergone incremental change over several centuries, weatherboarding, tile-hanging, casement window replacements but its overall massing, form and architectural character remain consistent with its early origins. These changes reflect the typical pattern of adaptation seen in long-established Wealden farmhouses, where functional updating has occurred without erasing the underlying historic structure.

To the south and south east of the farmhouse is a loose cluster of ancillary agricultural buildings, historically comprising small timber or brick barns, sheds and service structures arranged around a working yard. Comparison of the 1841 tithe map, the 1874 and 1909 OS maps, and mid 20th century mapping shows that this group has changed considerably over time. Several small outbuildings present in the 19th century were removed by the mid 20th century, replaced by more regularised sheds and, later, by modern agricultural buildings.

The group includes a Victorian barn, retaining historic queen-post trusses and curved wind-braces, alongside later 20th-century structures. These include a workshop which was constructed in 1982 and where the solar panels have been built into the roof, a garage barn, and pool building (1989–1990). These later additions reflect the shift from agricultural production to mixed residential and leisure uses, a pattern common across the High Weald in the late 20th century as traditional farming declined.

The historic pattern of small, irregular structures has therefore been rationalised, with only a limited number of early ancillary buildings surviving. The present arrangement is a mixture of historic, mid 20th century and modern forms, reflecting the evolution of the farmstead in response to changing agricultural needs.

Despite this change, the overall character of Pickeridge Farm as a dispersed historic



Plate 1 View of eastern elevation of the listed farmhouse.



Plate 2 View of western elevation of the listed farmhouse with modern extension on the left and workshop to the red (note solar panels not visible here).

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment



Plate 3 View of farmhouse on main approach from the north. Note majority of visible fabric here is modern.



Plate 4 View showing listed farmhouse (left) and workshop (centre). The solar panels are glimpsed here at roof level.



Plate 5 View towards southern end of the listed building (left) and workshop (centre) showing solar panels to roof.



Plate 6 The solar panels are clearly visible in relation to the ancillary outbuildings which have been extensively altered and extended over time.



Plate 7 View showing solar panels in relationship with the ancillary structures.



Plate 8 More distant view showing solar panels which are not readily appreciable with the listed building, but are more visible with the ancillary structures and modern house in the foreground.

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment



Plate 9 Showing how the solar panels blend in with the dark tones of the buildings within the site.



Plate 10 Showing solar panels from private field with almost imperceptible visible impact.



Plate 11 Long range private view showing almost imperceptible visible impact from a distance.



Plate 12 Electricity cable run from workshop to ancillary structure.



Plate 13 Connection of electricity cable into the ancillary structure.



Plate 14 View of battery storage pack in room feature no fabric of interest and other plant equipment.

3. Identification of Heritage Assets and Significance Assessment

farmstead remains intact. The farmhouse continues to read as the principal building, with the surrounding structures forming a supporting group that illustrates the site's long agricultural use. The survival of the historic field pattern, boundary banks, shaws and the relationship with the adjacent lane all contribute to the legibility of the farmstead's historic setting.

The architectural and historic significance of the farmhouse can be found in its legible timber-framed core, traditional plan form and characteristic massing of a long-established Wealden farmstead. The building has undergone incremental alteration, such as later cladding, window replacements and historic and modern extensions, which have obscured much of its early fabric and historic character. Despite this, these changes reflect the natural evolution of a working rural dwelling and have been undertaken relatively sensitively.

The cluster of agricultural buildings contributes to this significance by illustrating the functional development of the farmstead over time. Earlier maps show a looser, more irregular group of small barns and sheds, many of which were removed or replaced during the 20th century as farming practices modernised. The surviving historic structures, together with the evidence of change visible in the present layout, helps to demonstrate the continuity of agricultural use and the gradual rationalisation of the site.

The setting of Pickeridge Farm is defined by its position within a rural, enclosed landscape of irregular fields, wooded shaws and long-established boundary lines. The approach from the lane, the relationship between the farmhouse and its outbuildings, and the visual containment provided by surrounding vegetation all reinforce the sense of a traditional, inward-looking farmstead. This landscape context makes a positive contribution to the significance of the farmhouse by preserving its rural character, its historic functional relationships and its legibility as a long-standing agricultural holding. The pattern of fields and boundaries visible today reflects the historic structure of the landscape, even though some rationalisation occurred during the 20th century. The farmstead remains experienced as part of a coherent rural environment, and this contributes materially to the understanding and appreciation of its historic form and function.

The workshop that accommodates the solar panels is a later 20th-century addition, constructed long after the period in which the farmhouse and its historic ancillary buildings acquired their significance. Its materials, form and construction are characteristic of modern agricultural or utility structures and bear no architectural or historic relationship to the listed farmhouse or the earlier phases of the farmstead's development. As such, it does not contribute to the significance of the heritage asset or to the character of its setting.



Plate 15 View of solar panels to roof of farm to east of the site.

4. Proposals and Assessment of Impact

Proposals

The proposals relate to the retention of a solar photovoltaic system on the later 20th-century workshop building to the south of Pickeridge farmhouse. This structure is modern in origin, utilitarian in character and makes no contribution to the architectural or historic significance of the grade II listed farmhouse. The solar array comprises high-efficiency, modern photovoltaic panels installed in June 2024. The system has been designed to maximise output per panel, allowing the overall array size to be kept to the minimum necessary and thereby reducing visual impact.

The panels are arranged in a uniform, low-profile configuration to ensure they remain as discreet as possible when viewed from surrounding areas. All electrical connections between the workshop and the former ancillary barn buildings utilise existing ducts and service routes, avoiding. Associated equipment, including the inverter and battery storage, was installed within an existing plant room already used for mechanical and electrical systems. No works were undertaken to the listed farmhouse itself.

Assessment of Impact

The proposals involve the regularisation of the installation of a solar photovoltaic system on a later 20th-century workshop that forms no part of the historic fabric of the grade II listed farmhouse at Pickeridge Farm. As set out in Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, development affecting listed buildings must conserve or enhance their significance, demonstrate a proportionate understanding of that significance, and ensure that alterations respect the building's historic form, scale, setting and fabric. The policy also states that '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.'

In this case, the proposals fully accord with the intent of DP34. The solar panels have been installed not on the listed farmhouse, but on a modern, non-historic workshop located within the wider curtilage. This approach directly reflects the policy preference for locating renewable energy equipment away from the listed structure itself. The panels are arranged in a uniform, low-profile configuration and represent one of the most efficient panel types available at the time of installation, allowing the array to be kept as small and discreet as possible. Their siting on a modern utilitarian building ensures that they are not visually prominent in relation to the listed farmhouse and do not intrude upon its historic form or appearance.

There is no physical impact on the listed building. All electrical connections between the

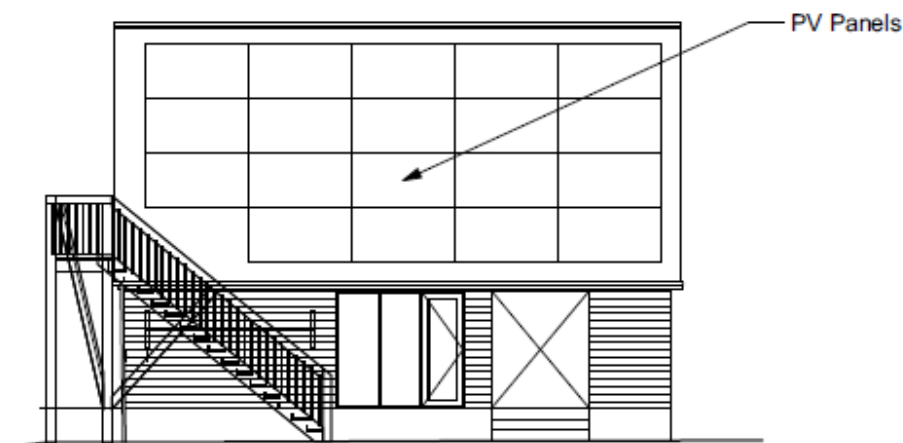


Figure 13 Drawing showing solar panels to roof of workshop.

4. Proposals and Assessment of Impact

workshop and the main house utilise existing ducts and service routes, avoiding any intrusive works to the historic fabric. Associated equipment, including the inverter and battery storage, have been installed within an existing plant room already used for mechanical and electrical systems, meaning no changes to the structure, layout or use of the listed building were required.

The proposals result in **no harm** to the setting or significance of the listed farmhouse. The workshop already reads as a modern addition within the wider farmstead, and the discreet solar array does not alter key views, the approach sequence, or the rural character that contributes to the farmhouse's significance. The historic relationships between the farmhouse, its surviving early ancillary buildings and the surrounding field pattern remain entirely unaffected.

Accordingly, the installation **conserves the significance** of the listed building in line with Policy DP34 and the NPPF. As the works are confined to a non contributing modern structure and have no effect on the listed building's fabric, character or setting, the proposals result in no harm and therefore require no public benefits justification under the NPPF.

Appendix 1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Legislation

Legislation regarding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act).

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

Section 72(1) states that, in the exercise of planning functions, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The term “preserve”, within the context of Section 66, has been defined within *South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State [1992]*, where it was held that the “desirability of preserving” creates a presumption against harmful changes, but not a presumption against any change. Case law has established that the preservation of the setting of a listed building requires considerable importance and weight (i.e. the Barnwell Manor judgment) and that a decision-maker who has worked through the paragraphs of the NPPF in accordance with their terms will have complied with the statutory duty set out in the 1990 Act (i.e. the judgment in *Jones v Mordue & Others [2015]*).

In the judgment for *Palmer v Herefordshire Council ([2016] EWCA Civ 106)*, a discussion on the balance between harm and benefit to a listed building was undertaken. It was accepted that “where proposed development would affect a listed building or its settings in different ways, some positive and some negative, the decision-maker may legitimately conclude that although each of the effects as an impact, taken together there is no overall adverse effect on the listed building or its setting”. In essence, where there is some harm and some benefit, these should be given the same weight, and where they are equal in measure, the effect on the listed building would be neutral, and thus its significance would be preserved.

This approach was confirmed in *City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government & Ors [2021]*. In this case Lord Justice Lindblom concluded that ‘the considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preservation [of the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or its setting], should tip the scales to produce an unequal balance in its favour. However, the SoS should still take account of the actual severity of any change, or scale of change as the Mayoral SPG puts it, and so the extent of impact, as well as the relevance to its significance, and the importance of the asset. The overall weight to be given to any harm, and the conflict with policy, should be a product of these factors.’

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The policies relevant to heritage are outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’. The NPPF places much emphasis on ‘significance’ which it defines as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence but also from its setting

The NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting and the level of detailed assessment should be ‘proportionate’ to the assets’ importance. (Paragraph 207).

Paragraph 208 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. This includes any assets affected by development within their settings. This Significance Assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal, ‘to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal’.

Paragraph 212 requires that ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.’

It is then clarified that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, either through alteration, destruction or development within its setting, should require, “clear and convincing justification” (Paragraph 213). This paragraph outlines that substantial harm to grade II listed heritage assets should be exceptional, rising to ‘wholly exceptional’ for those assets of the highest significance such as scheduled monuments, Grade I and grade II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens as well as World Heritage Sites.

Paragraphs 214 and 215 discuss different levels of harm caused to heritage assets and requires a balance to be applied in the context of heritage assets, including the recognition of potential benefits accruing from a development. In the case of non-designated heritage assets. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 requires a Local Planning Authority to make a “balanced judgement” having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

With regards to conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets, paragraph 219 requires Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Planning Practice Guidance

This guidance supports the NPPF and reiterates the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether development proposals adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset’s significance:

‘it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed’. The level of ‘substantial harm’ is stated to be a high bar, which may not arise in many cases. Whether development proposals cause substantial harm will be a judgment in the decision-taking process, having regard to the circumstances of the case and by applying the relevant NPPF policies. Such harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as:

the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage.

A thorough assessment of the harm development proposals will have on this setting needs to consider, and be proportionate to, the heritage asset’s significance and the degree to which any changes enhance or detract from that significance, and the ability to appreciate and experience it.

Local Planning Policy

Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031), 2018

Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets requires that development affecting designated heritage assets must conserve or enhance their significance. Proposals that would result in harm must demonstrate clear and convincing justification, and any harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the development in accordance with the NPPF. It states (*inter alia*):

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;
- Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;
- Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;

Appendix 1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Guidance Notes

Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

This document outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in their own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable. This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with the NPPF and PPG, the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. Guidance within the document describes a range of 'heritage values' that constitute a heritage asset's significance to be established systematically; the four main heritage values include: aesthetic, evidential, communal or historical. The document emphasises that:

considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-making in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that:

...application proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.

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

- 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;
- offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

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

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

GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017) (2nd Edition)

This advice note focuses on managing change within the setting of heritage assets and updates the 2011 English Heritage guidance to ensure full alignment with the NPPF. It continues the same philosophy and approach, confirming that neither the definition of setting nor the method of assessment has fundamentally changed. Setting is defined as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced', with an extent that can evolve over time. It is not a heritage asset or designation in itself; its importance lies in the contribution it makes to the significance of the asset, whether positive, negative or neutral. Although largely visual, setting can also be influenced by other environmental factors and historic associations.

The document emphasises that protecting setting does not preclude change. Decisions should be based on the nature, extent and level of significance of the asset, recognising that different assets have varying capacities to accommodate change. Assessment must therefore be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. Historic England recommend a five-step process for evaluating the effects of development on setting and significance: identifying affected assets and their settings; assessing how and to what degree setting contributes to significance; assessing the impact of proposals; maximising enhancement and minimising harm; and documenting decisions and monitoring outcomes.