



APP/M3645/W/25/3372747: Land South of Barrow Green Road, Oxted

HERITAGE PROOF OF EVIDENCE

THOMAS COPP

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. My name is Thomas Copp and I am a Director and founding partner of TCMS Heritage Ltd. Prior to establishing TCMS, I was a Senior Director and Head of the London Built Heritage Team at RPS, where I worked for a total of ten years. I have also previously worked in local government.
- 1.2. I hold an undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts with Honours) in History and a postgraduate degree (Master of Arts with Distinction) in Urban Conservation, both from the University of Leicester.
- 1.3. I have acted as an expert witness in the Magistrates Courts, at numerous Public Inquiries, Appeal Hearings and Examinations in Public. My current role includes advising various housebuilders, developers and other clients on heritage matters at all stages of the planning process. This includes pre-purchase advice, heritage-related design advice, the provision of reports for applications, and expert witness advice at site promotion and appeal stages. I am also a member of the Essex Design Review Panel, providing advice on heritage-related matters for various major developments across that county.
- 1.4. I have been engaged with this Site since 2022. My involvement has included the provision of heritage-related design advice, the production of the draft Heritage Impact Assessment (CD1.22.AF) and Environmental Statement Chapter (CD1.22.K), together with pre-application engagement with Historic England. It should be noted that, while I prepared drafts of the submitted heritage reports, they were not finalised by me and I had no involvement with the submission of the application following design freeze, having left RPS in November 2024. I have set out my involvement with the pre-application process in more detail at Section 2 of this Proof of Evidence.
- 1.5. I have visited the Site on four separate occasions, in November 2022, February 2024, August 2024 and most recently on 15 October 2025. I have included photographs from my site visits within the main body of this Proof and at Appendix E. All photographs are taken from the October site visit, unless otherwise stated.
- 1.6. My evidence for this Appeal relates to reason for refusal 6 which states:

The proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of St Mary's Church, a Grade I listed building, and Court Farm House a Grade II listed building and is thereby contrary to paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014) policy DP20 because it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the public benefits of the development would outweigh that harm.

- 1.7. Heritage matters were also identified as a main matter by the Inspector at the Case Management Conference and subsequent note.
- 1.8. Two listed buildings are relevant to this Appeal, namely:
 - Church of St Mary; Grade I listed building (NHLE 1189608). The building was listed in 1958 and lies approximately 90m south-east of the Site
 - Court Farm House; Grade II listed building (NHLE 1029739). The building was listed in 1984 and lies approximately 105m south-east of the Site. It sits to the south of the church
- 1.9. The two listed buildings are shown on Appendix F and the list descriptions for the buildings are included at CD13.2 and CD13.3.

1.10. This Proof of Evidence describes the significance of the listed buildings, assesses the contribution that their settings make to this significance, and assesses any impacts to their significance arising from the Appeal Scheme. This assessment is provided in accordance with the "5-step" process set out by Historic England in *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (included in full as CD13.5 and at paragraph 3.19 of this Proof of Evidence).

1.11. This Proof of Evidence is structured to:

- Set out the main heritage issues and matters in dispute
- Set out the methodology I use within this Proof of Evidence and summarise the relevant legislation, policy and guidance
- Describe the historic development of the listed buildings, their settings and the local area (with reference to the historic mapping and images included at Appendices A and C)
- Provide a setting assessment of the listed buildings, based on Historic England guidance
- Summarise the findings of this Proof of Evidence (a Summary Proof is provided separately)

1.12. The evidence I have prepared and provide for this Appeal and all opinions expressed are my true and honest professional opinions.

1.13. My evidence relates to the impact to the heritage significance of the listed buildings only. Related planning matters, including the paragraph 215 balance and the wider planning balance, are set out in the Appellant's planning evidence, including Mr Brown's Proof of Evidence.

1.14. A Summary Proof is provided separately, with all Appendices also bound separately.

2. Main Heritage Matters

Main Issues

2.1. At the Case Management Conference held on 11th November 2025, it was confirmed that one of the main matters relates to:

The effect of the development upon the setting of St Mary the Virgin Grade I Listed Building and Court Farm House Grade II Listed Building

2.2. This follows on from Reason for Refusal 6 which identifies “less than substantial harm” to the significance of the Church of St Mary and Court Farm House. It is agreed that no other designated or non-designated heritage assets will be affected by the Appeal proposals.

2.3. The Council’s Statement of Case (CD7.1) considers heritage matters at paragraphs 15.1-6. This largely repeats the assessment provided by the Council’s Senior Historic Building’s Officer, which is summarised below. Paragraph 9.1 of the Council’s SoC also states that the Site contributes to purpose (d) of paragraph 143 of the NPPF, which relates to green belt. The Council state that:

This is a change from when the application was originally considered by officers in that it was not then considered that the site contributed to purpose (d), that is “to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns”. Preparation of the evidence base for the new Tandridge Local Plan has identified that the urban area of Oxted/Limpsfield/Hurst Green is an historic town and the appeal site forms part of the setting of that historic town. More detail will be provided in the Council’s evidence.

2.4. Although matters of landscape and planning are addressed by others, I consider whether the *urban area* of the three settlements constitutes a historic town within Section 4 below.

2.5. Heritage matters were discussed at paragraphs 98-102 of the Officer Report (CD3.1). The Report quoted, in full, from the Senior Historic Buildings Officer’s representation, provided on 5 August 2025 (CD3.2A). I have included relevant sections of this consultation response below:

- The Church of St Mary is of “*great historic significance not only as the medieval parish church of Oxted, but also as evidence of the patronage of the Cobham family in the mid-15th century, which shows its strong links to the area’s manorial history*
- The significance of Court Farm House “*lies in its status as a high-status 17th century vernacular building which contains the most fashionable features of the time including decorative features, fenestration and method of heating. This is evident in its form and scale and also in its location close to St Mary’s Church. The building also draws significance as a structure rebuilt on the site of an earlier manor house, although it is unknown for certain whether this function continued when the house was rebuilt. It is a very large and impressive vernacular house for the period*
- “*The setting of both buildings is informed by the fact that neither were built as part of a village or urban settlement. Both buildings were located in rural, open and isolated surroundings, which continued until the late 19th century when the railway arrived. This is due to the early date of the church which pre-dated the*

nucleated development of Old Oxted and the desire to build on good quality agricultural land. The separation of the church and manor house from the village reflects their construction at a time when the parish consisted of small-scattered settlements”

- *“the open, green and rural setting of the application site makes an important contribution to the significance of St Mary’s Church”*
- *“While the views are largely obscured, there is a strong kinetic appreciation of the rural surroundings as one moves from the application site to Court Farm. The wider views from the first and attic floors of the building also look on the countryside (albeit the application site is largely screened) and this makes an important contribution to its setting”*
- *“the scheme will see the entire redevelopment of the last vestige of the rural setting of both St Mary’s Church and Court Farm. While the impact on Court Farm will be lower, there will be quite a significant impact on St Mary’s Church”*
- *“I consider the harm to St Mary’s Church to be a moderate degree of less than substantial harm. This is specifically from the loss of the last vestige of its rural setting, which reveals its nature as an early medieval building constructed at a time when the parish had a widely dispersed settlement pattern with no nucleated centre. This will be evident from the buildings, roads, boundaries, vehicles, domestic paraphernalia, noise and lighting which will all be experienced from the church, as well as the impact on approaches to and from the building across the application site. In coming to this conclusion, I have taken into account the existing tree screening which is present during the summer months. The proposal will fully urbanise its surroundings and it will no longer be experienced as the rural parish church it has been since the 12th century”*

2.6. The key issues therefore relate to:

- The contribution the Site makes to the significance of the listed buildings as a part of their rural settings
- The changes to the settings of the listed buildings over time
- The role the Site plays in retaining the perceived isolation of the listed buildings
- The impact that development would have on the setting and significance of the listed buildings, with reference to the design and any relevant mitigation measures

2.7. Section 5 of this Proof provides an analysis of the Site, its historic development and relationship with the listed buildings, to understand the character of their settings and relevant changes over time. Section 6 subsequently assesses the significance of the listed buildings and the potential impacts in accordance with Historic England guidance (as described more fully at paragraph 3.19).

Consultation with Historic England

2.8. As part of the pre-application process and the development of the design, engagement was held with Historic England. Historic England are statutory consultees for the application, due to the impacts to the setting of the Church of St Mary, which is a Grade I listed building. However, no formal consultation response was provided by Historic

England on the application and the Council have confirmed that Historic England were not formally consulted.

- 2.9. Their pre-application advice was informed by site visits conducted by two different Inspectors at Historic England. The first site visit was undertaken on 1 June 2023. Following this site visit, I held a phone call with Historic England and they confirmed that they did not have any particular concerns with the draft layout, as then proposed. No formal pre-application response was issued by Historic England at that time because further design work was being undertaken.
- 2.10. Following this meeting, there was a pause with the project and design development work until 2024. After work resumed, I undertook a further site visit in February 2024 and resumed discussions with Historic England. Due to changes in personnel at Historic England, a new Inspector (Rachel White) was assigned to the case. I met Ms White on site on the 21 August 2024 to discuss the proposals, design response and what further information may be required as part of a planning application. Following our meeting, I provided additional photographs (taken in February 2024 to illustrate winter views) and we agreed that additional viewpoints from Master Park would be assessed as part of the planning application.
- 2.11. Following this, Historic England issued a formal pre-application response on 27 August. They confirmed that they were “*broadly content*” with the development of the Site, along the lines proposed. They confirmed that their principal considerations remained views from Master Park noting that:

the glimpsed views of the tower obtained from within the site are incidental and contribute to a sense of place rather to the setting or significance of St Mary’s

- 2.12. Historic England concluded their advice by stating that:

We consider your proposals have now reached a stage where they address any heritage considerations we may have
- 2.13. Following this, I sent an additional viewpoints plan to Historic England to confirm which viewpoints should be assessed as part of the application. They confirmed that the additional viewpoints were acceptable on 4 September 2024.
- 2.14. No further consultation was subsequently undertaken between the applicant and Historic England. I understand that they were also not consulted by the Council during the determination of the planning application and there is no reference to Historic England in the Officer’s Report (CD3.1).

Design Process

- 2.15. The pre-application process with Historic England aided in the design of the development proposals. I was also closely involved in this process, with the heritage constraints identified at an early stage to inform the evolution of the masterplan.
- 2.16. This was undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by Historic England in *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* and within the PPG. GPA3 states at paragraph 37 that:

Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development likely to affect its setting are considered from the project’s inception. Early assessment of setting may provide a basis for agreeing the scope and form of development, reducing the potential for disagreement and challenge later in the process

2.17. The PPG states at paragraph 008 Reference ID: 18a-008-20190723:

Understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Analysis of relevant information can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it, and their relative importance

2.18. This included meeting the scheme architect on site in November 2022, following which a series of workshops were held to refine the design. This included the identification of key design principles, notably (see para 3.2 of the HIA (CD1.22.AF)):

- *Careful consideration has been given to the impact on existing public views of the church both from within the Site and from the wider area (including from Master Park). Where possible, the proposals will seek to provide new views of the church*
- *Native planting will be provided to screen activity within the Site from the church and surrounding land, including the modern cemetery to the north which now forms part of the church's setting.*
- *Appropriate landscaping, in the form of additional planting and open space, will be provided to soften views from the church into the development and retain its sense of visual enclosure.*

2.19. These measures form an intrinsic part of the design proposals and have been included to minimise impacts to the significance of the relevant heritage assets and aid in producing a well-designed place that responds to local character and distinctiveness.

3. Methodology and Approach

3.1. In providing my assessment, I have given due regard to the relevant legislation, policy and planning guidance, which is set out below. The weight to be given to the relevant policies and the planning balance is provided in the Planning Proof of Evidence.

3.2. Section 66(1) of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990** (as amended) states that:

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

3.3. The Act is supported by the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, which states at paragraph 212 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.

3.4. Conservation is defined in the NPPF as:

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

3.5. Significance is defined in the NPPF as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

3.6. Paragraph 213 states that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

3.7. Paragraph 215 states:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

3.8. The NPPF is clear that protection should be afforded to designated heritage assets and their settings.

3.9. On 16 December 2025 a revised consultation draft of the NPPF was published. The weight to be afforded to this draft document and the policies within it is addressed by Mr Brown.

3.10. Section 20 of the revised NPPF addresses heritage matters and continues the key objectives and much of the language of the 2024 NPPF. It states that *substantial weight*

should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with paragraph HE6.3 requiring any harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.

3.11. The **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** provides further information regarding those interests and defines them as follows:

Archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

Historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

3.12. The PPG also provides additional information related to the meaning of harm and the scale of harm that may be caused to the significance of a designated heritage asset. This is set out at paragraph 018 which states:

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

3.13. In respect of substantial harm, the PPG goes on to state that:

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

3.14. The range of harm was also considered in the Hall judgment (R.(oao James Hall and Company Limited) v City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Co-Operative Group Limited [2019] EWHC 2899 (Admin)) in which Her Honour Judge Belcher stated that:

In my judgment the three categories of harm recognised in the NPPF are clear. There is substantial harm, less than substantial harm and no harm. There are no other grades or categories of harm, and it is inevitable that each of the categories of substantial harm, and less than substantial harm will cover a broad range of harm. It

will be a matter of planning judgement as to the point at which a particular degree of harm moves from substantial to less than substantial

3.15. It is therefore possible to establish the following key principles for assessing harm:

- The spectrum of harm is a broad one
- Harm, and substantial harm, can arise both from changes to a heritage asset and changes within its setting
- When assessing harm, it is the impact to the significance of the heritage asset that is relevant
- The extent or magnitude of change is not necessarily a determining factor
- Substantial harm is a high test, which may not arise in many cases
- The spectrum of less than substantial harm can encompass a broad range of impacts, leading from impacts that have a minimal (though still material) impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset, up to impacts that come close to seriously affecting a designated heritage asset's significance

3.16. In this case, it is agreed that any impacts will be less than substantial, although there is disagreement regarding where on the spectrum of less than substantial harm any such impacts will fall.

3.17. Policy DP20: Heritage Assets of the ***Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014 – 2029*** (adopted July 2014) is also cited in reason for refusal 6. The relevant sections are included in full below:

A. There will be a presumption in favour of development proposals which seek to protect, preserve and wherever possible enhance the historic interest, cultural value, architectural character, visual appearance and setting of the District's heritage assets and historic environment. Accordingly:

1. Only where the public benefits of a proposal significantly outweigh the harm to, or loss of a designated heritage asset or its setting, will exceptional planning consent be granted. These benefits will be proportional to the significance of the asset and to the level of harm or loss proposed...

B. In all cases the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that:

1. All reasonable efforts have been made to either sustain the existing use, find viable alternative uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the asset; and

2. Where relevant the works are the minimum necessary to meet other legislative requirements.

C. With the granting of permission or consent the Council will require that:

1. The works are sympathetic to the heritage asset and/or its setting in terms of quality of design and layout (scale, form, bulk, height, character and features) and materials (colour and texture)...

3.18. The consistency of this policy with the NPPF and the weight to be afforded to it are both addressed by Mr Brown in the Planning Proof of Evidence.

3.19. Historic England provide guidance related to assessing change within the setting of heritage assets within **GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets** (CD13.5). The methodology requires the following:

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

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

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

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

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

3.20. The settings assessment provided at Section 6 follows the 5-step process set out above. Further explanation of each of these steps is provided in GPA3.

3.21. For Steps 2 and 3, the document also provides a list of certain characteristics, or matters that should be considered when undertaking the assessment. This includes, for example, consideration of land-uses, historic associations, views, the orientation and aspect of the asset, noise, odours and other non-visual effects.

3.22. The guidance document is clear (see paragraph 9) that:

Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation [...] Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.

3.23. To understand the contribution that an asset's setting makes to its significance, it is first therefore important to understand what significance the asset holds.

3.24. Paragraph 9 also notes that:

Settings of heritage assets change over time. Understanding this history of change will help to determine how further development within the asset's setting is likely to affect the contribution made by setting to the significance of the heritage asset. Settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed or formed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance

3.25. Under the sub-heading cumulative change, the guidance notes that:

Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development affecting its setting, to accord with NPPF policies consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset. Negative change could include severing the last link between an asset and its original setting

3.26. Paragraph 10 notes that setting is often expressed in terms of views, but that setting also incorporates additional non-visual elements of setting.

3.27. The inset box included at page 7 notes that:

Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even

then, such an impact is more likely to be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view.

- 3.28. This guidance document is utilised within the assessment provided at Section 6 of this Proof of Evidence, with additional references also made to the guidance document where necessary within Section 6.
- 3.29. GPA3 should be read alongside the separate advice document *GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision Making in the Historic Environment* (CD13.4). This advocates a similar, staged approach to assessing the significance of heritage assets and how changes to them, or their settings, may affect that significance.
- 3.30. Paragraph 4 of the document notes that:

Development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect. The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest.

- 3.31. This is supported by paragraphs 7-12, with paragraph 7 stating that:

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting early in the process is very important to an applicant in order to conceive of and design a successful development and to the local planning authority in order to make decisions in line with legal requirements and the objectives of the development plan and the policy requirements of the NPPF

- 3.32. These guidance documents were used to produce the HIA that formed part of the application and have been used to inform the assessment I provide at Section 6 of this Proof of Evidence.

4. Historic Development of Oxted

4.1. Paragraph 9.1 of the Council's Statement of Case (CD7.1) states that "*the urban area of Oxted/Limpsfield/Hurst Green is an historic town and the appeal site forms part of the setting of that historic town*". I have provided an analysis of the development of Oxted below to understand firstly whether Oxted does constitute a historic town, and secondly (and notwithstanding my conclusions on the first point) whether the Site serves the purpose of preserving "*the setting and special character*" of Oxted, if it is considered to be a historic town. Reference should be made to the historic maps included at my Appendix A, with relevant plans also included below.

4.2. When undertaking the Extensive Urban Survey of Old Oxted (CD13.6)¹, the study area was identified based on the inclusion of both the nucleated settlement at Old Oxted (or Oxted Street) and the separate, smaller focus of settlement at the Church of St Mary (see Figure 1 below. Old Oxted is indicated by the green shaded area, with the Church of St Mary shown in red and Court Farm in purple). It should be noted that the Survey identified Old Oxted as a "*Medieval Village*". The accompanying text explains that the survey "*enabled the definition of a number of distinct elements within the plan of Old Oxted*".

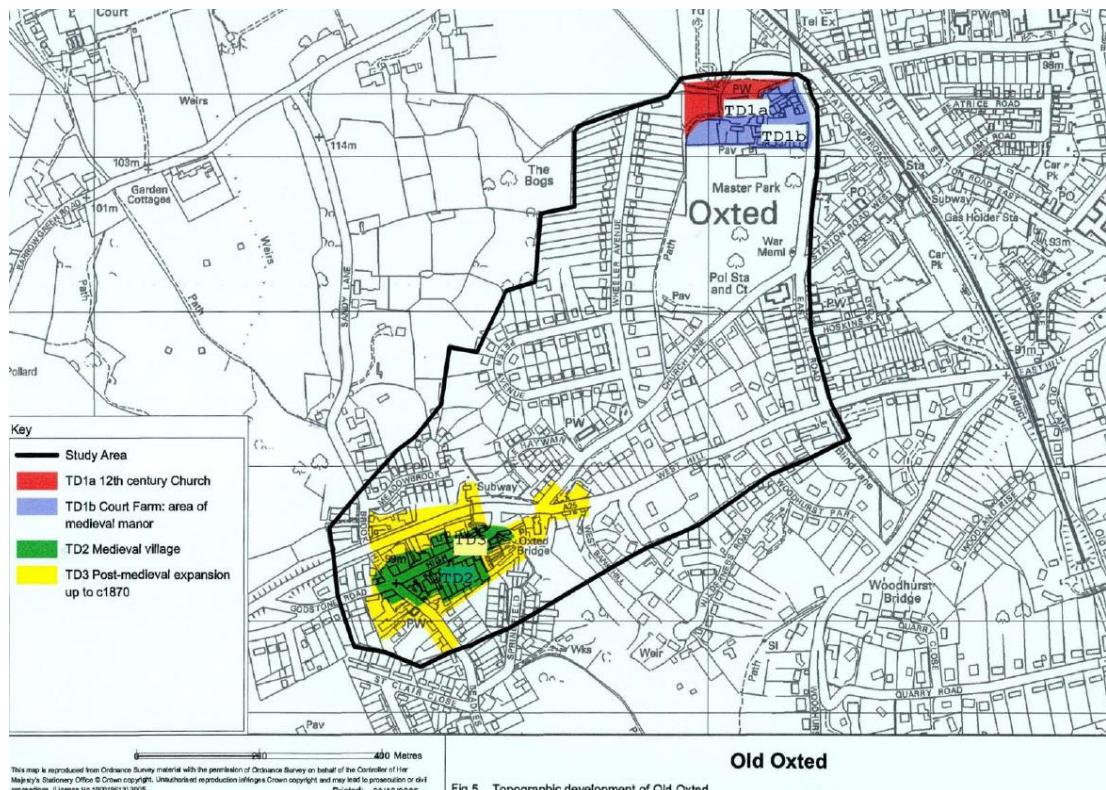


Figure 1: Extract from the Oxted Extensive Urban Survey (Figure 5 of that document) showing the separate historic settlements within Oxted.

4.3. The distinct characteristics of the various historic elements of Oxted is also illustrated by their designation as separate conservation areas. As illustrated by Figure 2 below,

¹ The Extensive Urban Survey of Old Oxted was undertaken by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit in association with English Heritage. It formed one of a number of surveys undertaken across Surrey with the intention of better understanding the County's archaeological resource. It included a review of existing archaeological, documentary and cartographic evidence to understand the historic development of Oxted and its related archaeological resource.

Oxted now includes two separate conservation areas: Oxted, which was designated in 1973 and includes Old Oxted; and Station Road West, which was designated in 1990. Although there is no conservation area appraisal available for either designation, the Council's website confirms that Station Road West includes a:

Street comprised almost entirely of early 20th century 'mock Tudor' buildings, many with elaborate wood carving detail²

4.4. It therefore comprises a single street, which was developed in the 20th century and which has a notably different character to Old Oxted to the south-west. It does not constitute a historic town.

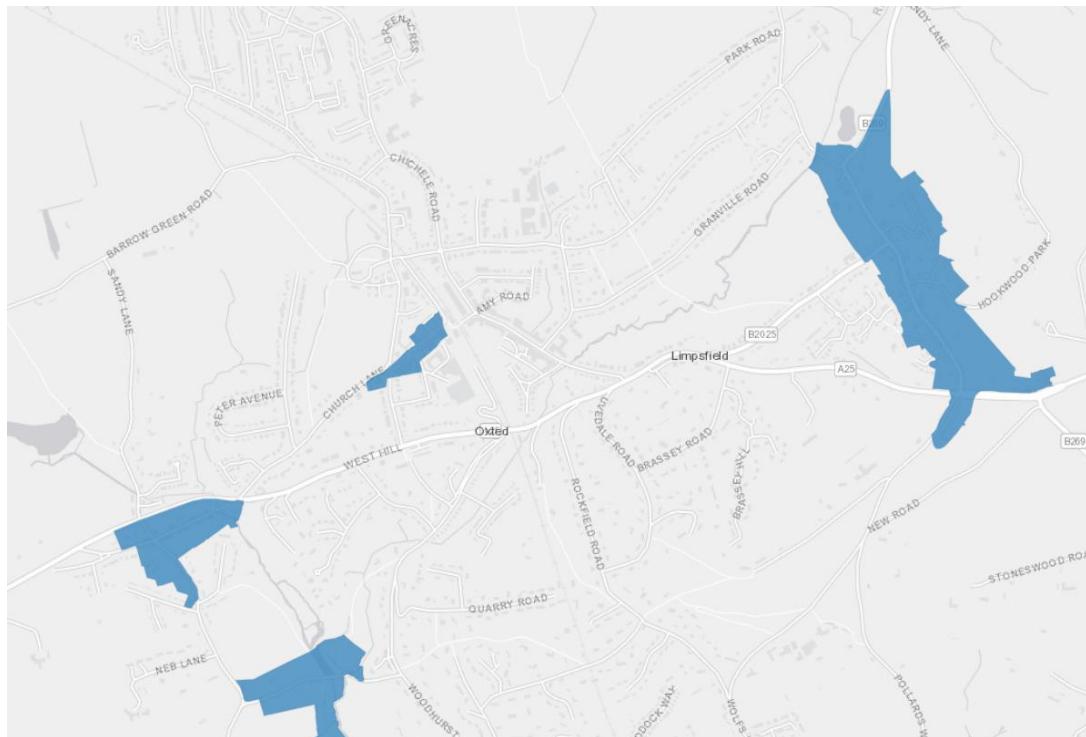


Figure 2: Tandridge District Council planning maps showing the different conservation areas in the local area. I have added the annotations.

4.5. It is clear from the mapping included at Appendix A, the phasing plan included at Appendix B and the plans above that Oxted, Limpsfield and Hurst Green do not comprise a single historic town. Oxted itself developed as a series of separate, nucleated settlements which were conjoined in the 20th century, firstly by development in the early 20th century around the railway station; and latterly by post-war development along Church Lane and West Street. It is only with this post-war expansion (noted on Figure A.8) that the historically distinct areas began to be seen as a single urban area. This was confirmed by the Conservation Officer in their application response (CD3.2A), where they confirmed that the parish historically “consisted of small-scattered settlements”.

4.6. This expansion also led to the amalgamation with Hurst Green to the south and Limpsfield to the east, with Limpsfield comprising a historically distinct settlement, located within a neighbouring parish. These areas all have different characteristics, with parts of them designated as separate conservation areas. They do not represent a “historic town” as defined by the NPPF for green belt purposes.

² An extract from the website is included at Appendix H

- 4.7. Even if the combined urban areas were considered to form a single historic town, the Site does not preserve the special character of the area. It is bordered by 20th century housing at Wheeler Avenue and does not relate to the historic character of Oxted. The Site does make some contribution to the significance of the Church of St Mary (as discussed in more detail below) but does not allow for any appreciation of the wider, historic development and no appreciation of Old Oxted.
- 4.8. This wider development has also had the effect of conjoining the historically distinct settlements of Limpsfield to the east with Hurt Green to the south, along with New and Old Oxted. These historically distinct settlements now form a single urban entity, but developed as individual settlements and do not constitute a single historic town, as defined by paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

5. Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

Site Description and Historic Development

- 5.1. The following section discusses the historic development of the Site and local area, with reference to relevant maps and plans. All maps referred to below are included in chronological order at Appendices A and C, with Appendix A providing maps of the Site and its wider context, while those at Appendix C are focused primarily on the Site, the relevant listed buildings and their immediate surroundings.
- 5.2. The Site comprises a single field parcel, located to the north-west of the churchyard associated with the Church of St Mary the Virgin and to the west of the cemetery. Court Farm Lane and a belt of mature planting separates the church from the Site, while there is a narrower band of planting to the cemetery boundary. A Public Right of Way (UK011/97/10) crosses the Site on a south-east to north-west alignment. It is described as the PRoW within this report.
- 5.3. Early mapping of the Site and surrounding area (see Figures A.1-2) appears to show the Site as agricultural land located to the west of the Church of St Mary and Court Farm. Prior to the expansion of Oxted in the 19th century, Oxted developed as a dispersed settlement, with development at Oxted (also sometimes referred to as Old Oxted) to the south-west, and development focused on the church and Court Farm to the north. The late Saxon and early Medieval development of the settlement was typical of other, dispersed settlements in the local area.³
- 5.4. The Manor of Oxted passed through various hands in the Medieval period. The grange was probably in the location of the present-day Court Farm House, with Mumford noting that:

Court Farm may claim to be the site of the grange occupied by the steward; the lord of the manor resided at Sterborough. The present Court Farm has no pretensions to antiquarian interest but its position, its proximity to the church and its name justify the conjecture⁴

- 5.5. The article goes on to state that in 1299 the grange was recorded as comprising:

*a hall and solar, garden and dovecot. In the 1360s the hall was repaired, and ditching and fencing were carried out to separate the house from the cemetery.*⁵
- 5.6. The description of the building as a grange, rather than the seat of the Manor, is consistent with its later use as a high-status farm, set within Oxted Manor, with the Manor House located elsewhere. The courts were presumably held at the grange and overseen by the steward, with the later farmhouse (the current Court Farm House) gaining its name from this. It does not appear to have ever been the location of the manor house for Oxted.
- 5.7. The church and grange provided one focus of development to the north, with the development of Old Oxted, which was probably established by the 13th century, lying to the south. This settlement pattern was essentially unchanged until the construction of

³ Urban Survey, p. CD13.6); p.4

⁴ Mumford, W.F, “The Manor of Oxted, 1360-1420” *Surrey Archaeological Society*, volume 63 (originally published in 1966) (CD13.7), p.74.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.74

the railway station in 1884 and the rapid expansion of Oxted in the latter part of the 20th century, effectively conjoining the historically separated settlements of Old and New Oxted to form a single settlement, as described in Section 4 above.

5.8. The 1809 Court Farm plan (Figures C.1 and C.2) provides a rough plan of Court Farm House and the Church of St Mary at this time, together with the extensive surrounding landholding, which stretched south to Old Oxted and north, well beyond Barrow Green Road. The local area is shown in more detail on the 1839 Oxted tithe map (Figures A.3 and C.3). This shows the Church of St Mary, with Court Farm House (shaded pink to indicate it was habitable) to the south and various outbuildings to the east and north-east. The farm was recorded as owned by Charles Leigh Hoskins Master and occupied by Richard Dartnell. Transcriptions of the related apportionment are provided in Table 5.1 below. However, it should be noted that this is an incomplete transcription with Master's landholding extensive and extending well beyond land immediately surrounding Court Farm. The Masters were the principal landowners in the parish and had inherited the Manor of Oxted, although their primary seat appears to have been at Barrow Green Court, hence why Court Farm was occupied by a tenant at this time.

5.9. As illustrated by Table 5.1, most of the Site was also tenanted by Dartnell and served as a mixture of pasture and arable land, with a small area used to grow hops. The tithe map illustrates the relative isolation of Court Farm and the church at this time, with no adjoining development.

Plot	Name	Owner	Occupier	State of Cultivation	Note
556	Oxted Court Farm	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Richard Dartnell	House, Garden	
555	Farm Buildings	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Richard Dartnell	N/A	
563	Honey Field	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Richard Dartnell	Arable	Within the Site
565	Road to Darney Mead	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Richard Dartnell	Road	Within the Site
566	Darney Mead	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Richard Dartnell	Pasture	
562	Shaw	Charles Leigh	Richard Dartnell	Plantation	Partly within the Site

		Hoskins Master			
564	Little Hop Garden	Charles Leigh Hoskins Master	Joseph Feldwick	Hops	Partly within the Site

Table 5.1: Transcription of 1839 Oxted tithe apportionment

5.10. Ordnance Survey mapping charts the growth of Oxted following the arrival of the railway (first shown on the 1895-98 OS included at Figure C.5). This includes extensive development along West Lane and Church Hill, which were developed to conjoin Old and New Oxted, together with development north of the station at Barrow Green (see Figure C.6). This development was accelerated after the Second World War with the 1960 aerial photograph (Figure C.7) and 1967 OS (Figure C.8) showing further residential development. The aerial photograph also shows the redevelopment of Court Farm to provide larger-scale buildings to the east of the Farm House, with these later redeveloped to provide housing, as shown on Figure C.9.

6. Setting Assessment

Church of St Mary the Virgin

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

- 6.1. The church is a multi-phased building set on elevated ground to the west of the railway station and New Oxted. It replaced an earlier Saxon church in the parish, although it is not known whether the earlier church occupied the same location as the current building.
- 6.2. The Church of St Mary comprises a broad, 12th century west tower, a 13th century chancel, with 14th century aisles and a 15th century south porch. It is constructed predominantly from stone, with large sections of the chancel rendered, while there are also some brick additions. This provides evidence of the various phases of the listed building's development, with some Decorative finishes used and still extant. The building was heavily restored in the 19th century.
- 6.3. The significance of the listed building is primarily bound in the fabric of the building itself and is derived from the following key elements:

Historic interest:

- Its medieval origins and surviving medieval fabric which illustrate early development of the church and form a key element of the building's significance
- The later phases of development, which include the 14th century chancel arch and 15th century arcade and south porch, which illustrate the ongoing development of the building and provide additional historic interest
- The restoration of the building in the 19th century, which included the removal of historic tracery and other embellishments, is also of some historic interest in displaying the changing fashions and approaches to "restoration" prominent in the Victorian period (although these changes arguably undermined the architectural interest of the building)

Architectural and Artistic Interests:

- Drawn from its good quality, surviving tracery and its illustration of changing building styles and tastes

Archaeological Interest:

- From its surviving historic fabric and multi-phased development which may provide additional information regarding historic construction techniques and changes to the building over time

- 6.4. The setting of the listed building now comprises its churchyard, including the historic cemetery to the north and north-east. Beyond this, it includes the surrounding development on Court Farm Lane, notably including Court Farm House (discussed in more detail from paragraph 6.29 below), and the later adjoining development; the modern cemetery to the north and north-west; the adjacent car park; the neighbouring development within Oxted to the east; Master Park to the south; and the Site and planting to the west.
- 6.5. As noted at Section 5 above and illustrated by Appendix C, the setting of the listed building has been considerably changed during its history. Originally, the building was located in a relatively isolated location, with the manor house complex located to the

south. There does not appear to have been an associated, nucleated settlement at this time. Over subsequent centuries, the setting of the listed building has been changed by the demolition of the grange complex and the construction of Court Farm House, followed by the redevelopment of the farmstead in the 19th century and, more recently, its redevelopment to provide dwellings on St Mary's Close.

6.6. More broadly, the surroundings of the listed building have been considerably changed by the development of Oxted from the 19th century which has included commercial and residential development to the east, residential development to the north, east and south-west and the redevelopment of agricultural land to the south to provide Master Park. The church is no longer in an isolated location and is experienced within the context of this later development. The historic development that does survive, at Court Farm, has also been altered.

6.7. The contribution that these elements make to the significance of the listed building is assessed below.

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

6.8. The following section assesses how, and to what extent, the setting of the church contributes to its significance. Reference is made to certain characteristics or features included in the *Step 2 Checklist* provided in *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*⁶ acknowledging that the checklist is non-exhaustive and that not all items listed there may be relevant. Each relevant attribute is included in bold text below for clarity.

6.9. This assessment firstly considers **other heritage assets** and the relationship with Court Farm House. As described at paragraph 5.29, Court Farm House was likely constructed in the 17th century and replaced the earlier grange, which housed the steward of the manor. Although the building did not serve as the principal manor house for the local manor, it remained as an important local building and, until the latter part of the 19th century, the farmhouse and its neighbouring outbuildings was the only development close to the Church of St Mary. Together the two buildings illustrate the development, and subsequent redevelopment, of Oxted in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The dispersed settlement pattern of Oxted means that the close proximity of the church and grange is notable and illustrates the concentration of power and wealth in the medieval period. However, this connection has been weakened by the demolition of the medieval grange and the construction of the current Court Farm House in the 17th century and, equally notably, the redevelopment of the building in the Victorian period to form a farmhouse. More recently, the surrounding outbuildings have been redeveloped. This means that, while the church and Court Farm House continue to provide some understanding of the development of Oxted from the medieval period, the contribution that the Farm House makes to the historic interest and significance of the church has been reduced.

6.10. These changes illustrate the **History and degree of change over time** of the listed building's setting. In addition to those changes to Court Farm House, the changes to the wider setting of the church are equally important. These have included the rapid development and expansion of Oxted from the 19th century, removing the historic isolation of the buildings and meaning that the church is now experienced within the context of built form within Oxted. This includes views from the east where the building is seen beyond the car park and alongside the neighbouring development on Church Lane and St Mary's Close. The surface level car park forms the foreground to these

⁶ CD9.02, p.11.

views, with the community centre located to the right and housing at St Mary's Close to the left. The elevation of the church, coupled with its architectural detailing and west tower, mean that it remains as the focal point of these views and it is possible to appreciate the building's architectural interest. This later development (both the car park and housing) has, however, reduced the rural context of the listed building while the housing also restricts view of Court Fam House.

- 6.11. Other elements of historic agricultural land have also been changed, with the land to the south altered to form Master Park, while the land to the north is now used as a cemetery. The views from Master Park are discussed below.
- 6.12. The changes to these elements of setting have altered the **land use (and character)** of the local area. The Site remains as part of the agricultural surroundings to the listed building and assists in illustrating the historic development of the local area, with the majority of surrounding land in agricultural use in the mid 19th century (as illustrated by the tithe map). This land use does assist in illustrating the historic development of the area, although any contribution it makes to the significance of the listed building remains modest due to the limited views between the two and the physical separation between the Site and the church, due to the enclosed nature of its setting (as discussed below).
- 6.13. The **openness, enclosure and boundaries** as well as **green space, trees and vegetation** are also therefore relevant to the setting and experience of the church. Historically, the church appears to have possessed a more open setting. It is elevated above the surrounding land, with historic mapping (see for example the 1869-71 OS map at Figure A.6) showing an area of orchard planting to the west (which had been established by the time of the tithe survey in 1839), buildings to the south and south-east, and a more open setting to the north and north-west, with no major planting shown. The ongoing development of the area in the 20th and 21st centuries has enclosed views, although views from the east are still provided across the car park. More notably, the planting to the north and west of the listed building has gradually matured over time and now presents a dense tree belt which separates the church from the Site. This belt of planting runs the length of the footpath that leads into the Site and measures approximately 65m. It provides a strong sense of enclosure to the church's setting, meaning that the listed building is experienced within a relatively tranquil and partly secluded setting, despite the later development.
- 6.14. This planting and development have also affected **views from, towards, through, across and including the asset**. The best appreciation of the listed building remains from within its enclosed setting, with views from the immediately surrounding land allowing for the historic and architectural interests of the church to be appreciated (see Figures C.1 and C.2).
- 6.15. Within the wider area, views are permitted of the church tower from Master Park to the south and from within the Site to the west (see Figures C.7 from Master Park and C.5 and 6 from within the Site).
- 6.16. From within the Site, views of the church tower remain limited and it is not possible to appreciate the architectural interest of the listed building, with the tower experienced only in infrequent, partial views, devoid of context. This was noted by Historic England at pre-application stage, who stated that:

The glimpsed views of the tower obtained from within the site are incidental and contribute to a sense of place rather than to the setting or significance of St Mary's

6.17. This remains the case in winter views. Although views of the listed building are slightly fuller in winter, the church tower is still appreciated only in glimpsed views, with some partial and heavily filtered views of the north aisles also provided in gaps through the planting. Their limited nature mean that it is not possible to appreciate the architectural or historic interests of the church in these views.

6.18. Views from within Master Park provide the best opportunity to appreciate the church and its relationship with Court Farm House from the wider area (from outside of the immediate churchyard setting and Church Lane). Although these views are restricted by planting, and include modern development such as tennis courts in the foreground, they do allow for the historic relationship between the two buildings to be appreciated and illustrate the historic development and historic interest of the buildings.

6.19. The Site also forms part of the approach to the church from the west and relates to the **accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement** within the listed building's setting. The Site is crossed by a PRoW, which is evident on historic mapping and appears to have long formed an approach to the building, linking the church with parishioners in the wider area. Today, this forms part of the kinetic experience of the church, with people passing through the Site and tree planting before arriving at the church. When travelling in the opposite direction, there is some sense of leaving Oxted and the church, before travelling into the Site, although the presence of Wheeler Avenue means that there are still some development influences here.

6.20. The Site therefore continues to form part of the rural and agricultural setting to the church and is experienced as such within these sequential views and as part of this journey. It assists in illustrating the historic interest of the listed building as a parish church, historically serving a rural, but now much changed, parish and makes some, limited contribution to the historic interest of the listed building as a result. However, this remains limited due to the physical separation between the Site and the church and the limited nature of views of the church on the approach to the listed building.

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

6.21. The proposals will alter the existing partial views of the church tower provided from within the Site, while also changing the character and land use of the Site. This will be most notable on the approach to the church along the PRoW.

6.22. The alteration, or reduction in views of the listed building from within the Site will not affect the significance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin. The existing views from the PRoW are limited and heavily filtered by trees. They do not provide an understanding or appreciation of the listed building's significance and their removal will result in no harm to the significance of the listed building. The alteration of views from within the southern part of the Site, on lower lying ground, will alter the current experience of the church. However, these views remain limited and their loss, or alteration (with views of the tower still likely to be permitted from within the open space and adjoining areas) will not diminish the ability to appreciate the architectural interest of the building.

6.23. The proposals will have no impact on views from Master Park, from where it is possible to experience the relationship between the church and the neighbouring Court Farm House.

6.24. The proposals will be visible from the churchyard, when looking north across the cemetery (see Viewpoint 08 within the submitted LVIA (CD1.22.L), while the development will also line the approach to the church on the PRoW. This will alter the approach to the listed building from the west and part of the church's rural setting.

6.25. The Council have stated that the development will “*will fully urbanise its surroundings and it will no longer be experienced as the rural parish church it has been since the 12th century*”. However, with the exception of the limited, glimpsed views of the church from within the Site, the church is not appreciated within a rural setting today. It is closely related to neighbouring houses, extensive areas of car parking, with lighting, and a recent cemetery, while additional views are provided from Master Park. The proposals will cause a degree of harm, by further altering the setting of the listed building and reducing the rural context provided by the Site with the resultant introduction of additional noise and activity, but this will remain limited due to the physical and visual separation between the two.

6.26. This change will not alter the fabric of the building and will not affect its immediate setting, including its relationship with the surrounding churchyard and Court Farm House. The proposals will also not alter the best views of the listed building from within this enclosed, more immediate setting, or from Master Park. The development will remain physically distinct from the listed building.

6.27. The alteration to one part of the setting of the church will give rise to a low level of less than substantial harm, principally due to the impact to the building’s historic interest arising from the further change to its setting. The important relationship between the church and Court Farm House, and the ability to appreciate this relationship, both from Master Park and from within the churchyard and immediate setting of the listed buildings, will be unchanged. Although the development will alter a surviving element of the church’s historic, rural setting, the changes seen to the setting of the listed building over time and the separation between the two now meant that this element of setting makes only a limited contribution to the significance of the church, with very little opportunity to experience the building, or appreciate its significance.

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

6.28. The proposals have been developed to respond to the setting and significance of the Church of St Mary. This process is set it in more detail at paragraphs 2.14-18 of this Proof of Evidence and has included the provision of extensive open space within the development. The design approach was discussed and agreed with Historic England at pre-application stage.

Step 5: Make and document decision and monitor outcomes

6.29. The proposed development will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin. This engages paragraph 215 of the NPPF, with the planning balance required under paragraph 215 undertaken in Mr Brown’s Planning Proof of Evidence.

Court Farm House

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

6.30. Court Farm House is described in the list entry as a 16th century farmhouse with a large 19th century extension. However, a study of the building by the Surrey Archaeological Survey (extract included at Appendix G) identifies that the original building dates from 1613, with an additional bay added in the early to mid 17th century, before the building was remodelled in the 19th century (probably round 1861). The earlier appearance of the building is illustrated on Figure D.1.

6.31. It is a timber frame construction, clad in red brick with tile hung gables, a plain tiled roof, an end ridge stack to the right and a large, star shaped, ridge stack to left of centre. The building is now subdivided into two properties, with one occupying the western two bays

and one occupying the eastern end, which also includes a single-storey extension. The entrance door to one of the units is set within a gabled porch between the middle and west bays. This sub-division had occurred by the time the building was listed in 1984.

6.32. The building was remodelled in the 19th century and now has a Victorian appearance externally, including pronounced barge boards to the porch and gables (which were added in the 20th century, but are designed in a late Victorian style). However, as noted by the Council, the distinctive chimney stack to the south end does provide some understanding of the earlier building at its core. Internally, the building also possesses some features of note, including the large central fire place. However, it is not possible to appreciate these features externally and, externally, it largely presents as a Victorian farmhouse that has seen later alterations.

6.33. The significance of the listed building is primarily bound in its historic fabric and derives from:

Historic interest:

- As an early post-medieval building constructed in a traditional style, utilising local materials
- As a relatively high-status dwelling, that replaced the earlier grange and was associated with an extensive landholding
- As an illustration of historic building styles and the evolution of architectural fashions over time, particularly due to the remodelling of the building in the mid 19th century

Architectural and Artistic Interests:

- Drawn from its construction style and the use of the large, double hearth and large, interesting associated chimney
- The changes to the building in the 19th century are of modest architectural interest, while the architectural interest of the building has been diminished by the various 20th century additions

Archaeological Interest:

- From its surviving historic fabric and phased development which may provide additional information regarding historic construction techniques and changes to the building over time

6.34. The setting of the listed building has been changed both by the alterations to Court Farm and the development of Oxted in the 19th and 20th centuries. It now includes the Church of St Mary to the north, the surrounding development at St Mary's Close and Wheeler Avenue, Master Park and the Site.

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

6.35. As noted at paragraph 6.9 above, the proximity and visual relationship between Court Farm House and the Church of St Mary contributes to the historic interest and significance of both buildings. This remains the case, despite changes to the setting of Court Farm House over time.

6.36. The redevelopment of the farmstead in the 20th century has significantly changed the setting of the listed building. Whereas this land was historically occupied by farm buildings associated with the farmhouse, it now features additional dwellings, which

are set behind boundary treatments and planting. The one building that does survive is a modest outbuilding that has been substantially rebuilt and which is now experienced within a domestic setting. These changes illustrate the **History and degree of change over time** of the listed building's setting.

- 6.37. As a result of these changes, the listed building now presents as a much-altered building, located within a domestic setting that is largely divorced from the surrounding agricultural land.
- 6.38. In terms of **views from, towards, through, across and including the asset**, there are very limited views permitted of the building from one part of the Site (see Figure C.9). These views include the chimney stacks to the building and the barge board to its west gable end. However, the views are distant and limited in nature and do not allow for any appreciation of the listed building's architectural interest, or an understanding of its historic use and role. The historic association between the Site and listed building is not apparent, with the intervening planting physically separating Court Farm House from the Site and limiting views of the building. There is no experience or appreciation of the listed building from across the rest of the Site.
- 6.39. With regard to **accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement**, the Council state that there is a "*strong kinetic appreciation of the rural surroundings as one moves from the application site to Court Farm*". However, in undertaking the journey, the viewer would move from an agricultural field influenced by later development (the Site), through the dense planting and into the domestic setting of the listed building. The comprehensive changes seen to Court Farm House and its setting mean that this wider agricultural land is not appreciated as a core part of the building's setting and now makes no contribution to the significance of the listed building.
- 6.40. In terms of **land use and character**, the Council have described the Site as the "*last vestige of the rural setting of both St Mary's Church and Court Farm*". However, the important consideration, as set out at paragraph 9 of GPA3 remains how this element of setting contributes to significance, or allows that significance to be appreciated. From within the Site it is not possible to appreciate the significance of Court Farm House. When travelling through the Site to the listed building, you only appreciate the listed building within the context of much later, residential development. Therefore, while the Site and its agricultural character do relate to the historic use and historic isolation of the listed building, this use has long since ceased, while the immediate setting of the building has undergone significant alterations and it is not possible to understand the development of the building as a post-medieval grange, or a later farmhouse within these views, while it is also not possible to understand the historic importance of this site as the earlier, medieval grange. The building is now experienced as physically distinct from its agricultural setting and the wider, historic manor. The building has been comprehensively redeveloped and when within the Site and the listed building's setting it is no longer possible to understand its association with the Site, or the surrounding landscape.

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

- 6.41. The proposals will change the character and land use of one part of Court Farm House's setting. As discussed above, the Site is historically related to the listed building (previously forming one part of its extensive landholding) but this relationship is no longer apparent due to the changes to Court Farm House itself, and to the notable changes within its setting. The change to this approach, and to the character of this parcel of land, would not affect the significance of the listed building as a historic

farmhouse once associated with a large landholding, but now in a domestic use and experienced within a domestic setting.

6.42. The limited visual relationship between the listed building and the Site and the physical separation between them mean that the change to this element of setting will not affect the architectural interest of the listed building, or the ability to appreciate that interest. The proposals will have no impact on the historic relationship between the listed building and the neighbouring listed church, and will not diminish the ability to appreciate this relationship, which remains an important element of the significance of both buildings.

6.43. The proposals will have no impact on the significance of Court Farm House.

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

6.44. The proposals will result in no impact to the significance of Court Farm House and no further design or mitigation measures are considered necessary.

Step 5: Make and document decision and monitor outcomes

6.45. The proposed development will result in no impact to the significance of Court Farm House as a designated heritage asset. The proposals therefore comply with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and local plan policy DP20.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The Site lies to the west of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin and the Grade II listed Court Farm House. It forms part of the setting of these listed buildings and historically formed part of the historic landholding associated with Court Farm House.
- 7.2. The significance of the Church of St Mary is drawn from its historic interest as a multi-phased parish church of medieval origins. It has associated archaeological and architectural interest. The building was historically located in an isolated location, with the grange the only development nearby. The grange was replaced by the current Court Farm House in the 17th century, with this building in turn redeveloped in the 19th century, while its farmyard was redeveloped in the 20th century. The 19th and 20th centuries have also seen significant changes to the setting of both listed buildings, sparked by the development of Oxted following the construction of the railway station in 1884, which was accelerated after the Second World War.
- 7.3. The buildings are no longer located in an isolated location, but they can still be appreciated as an important historic grouping, both from within their immediate settings of the churchyard and St Mary's Close, and from Master Park. The Site forms part of the rural settings of the listed buildings. However, any visual connection between the Site and the buildings is limited, with views of the church restricted to glimpsed winter views from the PRoW and limited views of the upper stages of the west tower from the southern part of the Site. These do not provide any appreciation of the building's architectural interest. Views of Court Farm House are even more limited and do not contribute to the significance of the building.
- 7.4. The rural character of the Site, which is evident on the approach to the listed buildings from the north-west, makes a limited contribution to the significance of the church by partly illustrating its historic interest as a church serving a historically rural, though now much changed, parish. It makes no contribution to the significance of Court Farm House. This is because the extensive changes seen to the building, which include its redevelopment in the Victorian period and more recent redevelopment to form two dwellings with the majority of its associated farm buildings demolished, mean that it is not possible to clearly experience the building as a post-medieval grange, historically associated with an extensive landholding. The physical separation between the Site and the listed building also means that it is not possible to appreciate the historic relationship between the Site and Court Farm House.
- 7.5. The proposed development will lead to a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Church of St Mary, with some impact to its historic interest arising from the change in land use and the change in the approach to the building along the PRoW. The proposals will have no impact on the significance of Court Farm House, with the ability to appreciate its significance unchanged.
- 7.6. The harm identified to the Church of St Mary engages paragraph 215 of the NPPF, with this planning balance undertaken within Mr Brown's Proof of Evidence. In undertaking this balance, it should be noted that the proposals include embedded mitigation measures which assist in minimising the harm to the significance of the building. These measures include the provision of open space to retain views of the church, careful consideration of building height within the development and the provision of appropriate landscaping. These measures were discussed with Historic England prior to the submission of the planning application, who confirmed that they were broadly content with the proposed development, which addressed their comments and considerations.

APP/M3645/W/25/3372747: Land South of Barrow Green Road, Oxted

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