

Date: 26 January 2026

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

### Heritage Statement of Common Ground

#### Introduction

1. This Heritage Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by TCMS Heritage, on behalf of Croudace Homes Ltd (the Appellant) in relation to the above appeal and agreed with Tandridge District Council (the Council).
2. It has been prepared to provide additional detail regarding those heritage matters that are agreed, and those not agreed, between the parties and is supplementary to the main Statement of Common Ground which deals with overarching planning matters.
3. This SoCG specifically relates to heritage matters recited in 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.*

#### Matters of Agreement

##### Relevant Heritage Assets

4. There are two listed buildings cited in the reason for refusal, namely:
  - Church of St Mary the Virgin
  - Court Farm House
5. The Church of St Mary the Virgin is a Grade I listed building. It was listed in 1958 with the list entry number 1189608. The church is a multi-phased building with medieval origins. The list description notes that it has a 12<sup>th</sup> century west tower, 13<sup>th</sup> century chancel, 14<sup>th</sup> century aisles and 15<sup>th</sup> century porch. It was restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building is constructed primarily from rubble stone, with some brickwork and render also used. The tower is constructed from Bargate stone.
6. Court Farm House is a Grade II listed building. It was listed in 1984 with the list entry number 1029739. The farmhouse is described in the listing as a 16<sup>th</sup> century building with a late 19<sup>th</sup> century extension. However, the Surrey Archaeological Society note that the earliest part of the building dates to 1613, with the 19<sup>th</sup> century extension and remodelling probably occurring in 1861. The building is now faced primarily with brick, with hung tile also used.
7. The two buildings are located close to the south-east corner of the appeal site and lie opposite one another. The listed buildings are connected to the appeal site by a public footpath, which is a

historic path that continues across the appeal site. The two listed buildings represent the earliest development within this part of Oxted.

### **Relevant Legislation, Policy and Methodology**

8. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory duty for development that affects the setting of listed buildings. It states:

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

9. It is agreed that the correct methodology to assess any such changes are the processes set out by Historic England in *GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2015) included as CD13.4, and *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2<sup>nd</sup> Editon; 2017) included as CD13.5. GPA3 provides a staged approach to assessing changes to the setting of heritage assets and identifying any impacts to the significance of heritage assets arising from changes within their settings.
10. It is also agreed that, where harm occurs to the significance of a heritage asset, this will be less than substantial, as defined by the NPPF.
11. The finding of less than substantial harm engages paragraph 215 of the NPPF. This requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
12. Paragraph 212 of the NPPF is relevant to this Appeal and states:

*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.*

13. The Church of St Mary the Virgin is a heritage asset of the highest significance, as defined by paragraph 213 of the NPPF.
14. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF is also relevant to this Appeal and states:

*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.*

15. The NPPF Glossary defines the Setting of a heritage asset as:

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

16. This Appeal relates only to changes within the settings of the heritage assets, with no physical changes to the assets. The appeal site falls within the setting of both the Church of St Mary the Virgin and Court Farm House.

## **Significance of the Listed Buildings**

17. 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.*

18. The significance of both listed buildings is primarily bound in their physical fabric. However the settings of both listed buildings contribute to their significance.

19. The Church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building and is of exceptional interest. The Grade I listed status means that Historic England are statutory consultees for development that affects the setting of the listed building. The Appellant undertook pre-application discussions with Historic England who confirmed in their letter dated 27 August 2024 that they were:

*broadly content with the concept of developing the site at predominantly 2 stories, subject to further assessment supporting the presumption this would not lead to harm to the setting of St Mary's Church*

20. The Appellant has not been able to provide the information that was provided to Historic England at the time of the pre-application consultation. This information is not before the Inquiry. Historic England's more recent comments are addressed below.

21. The significance of the building is drawn from its historic interest as a multi-phased, medieval parish church which contains historic fabric and illustrates historic construction methods and religious practices. It also played an important role in the medieval manor of Oxted. The building possesses architectural interest, drawn from its rich detailing, including good quality tracery, and its phased construction.

22. The significance of Court Farm House is drawn from its historic and architectural interests as a relatively high-status, late medieval farm house which illustrates historic construction methods, and the status of its owners. The refacing of the building in the Victorian period also provides historic interest. The building historically served as the grange for the Manor of Oxted and replaced an earlier, medieval complex. It was historically associated with the appeal site. Documentary sources indicate longstanding and enduring functional relationships and associations between Court Farm House and the appeal site, for a period of at least 220 years.

## **Setting**

23. Both listed buildings were historically located within an isolated setting, with the church, Court Farm House and its associated outbuildings providing the only development in this part of the Manor of Oxted. The Site historically formed part of the Manor of Oxted and is recorded in the same ownership as Court Farm House as far back as c. 1690, and remained in the ownership of Court Farm House for a period of at least 220 years as evidenced by the 1809 Plan of Oxted Court Farm, the 1839 tithe map, and the 1910 Lloyd George Domesday Survey. Court Farm was redeveloped in the 1980s.

24. The local area has seen significant changes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century which has included the construction of the railway line and railway station to the north-east of the listed buildings, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century development surrounding the railway station, with further early 20<sup>th</sup> century

development, and post-war development added to the settlement. More recently (in the 1980s), the majority of the historic outbuildings associated with Court Farm House were demolished with new dwellings constructed on St Mary's Close and Court Farm Lane.

25. The proximity of the listed buildings to one another is part of their setting and contributes to their significance by illustrating the historic development of the Manor and of the two listed buildings.
26. There is disagreement between the parties whether the appeal site contributes to the significance of Court Farm House.
27. There is planting to the west of the listed buildings which restricts, to varying extents depending on the viewpoint and the season, but does not wholly prevent, views between the listed buildings and the appeal site. The appeal site can be seen as a rural hinterland from the 12<sup>th</sup> century west tower of the Church of St Mary the Virgin.
28. There is evidence, in the form of a series of historic photos, which show that the relationship between the church and the appeal site was historically more open, and unobscured by intervening vegetation.
29. Today, there are still partial views of the tower of the Church of St Mary from within the appeal site. It is common ground between the parties that Historic England described these views in their pre-application advice as *glimpsed views* which:

*are incidental and contribute to a sense of place rather than to the setting or significance of St Mary's*
30. However, there is disagreement between the parties as to the extent to which the appeal site is said to contribute to the significance of the Church of St Mary. Historic England's response to the appeal (9 January 2026, ref. P01602335) states:

*"the contribution that setting makes to the significance of heritage assets does not solely arise from views, but also from less tangible characteristics [...]*

*In this case, although views may only be glimpsed from the church, we think it likely that the development would tend to create awareness of the development's built-form and materials, lighting, activity and noise, and a sense of further enclosure by suburban development. An appreciation of the change of the setting would remain even where it is not visible.*

*In summary, we think that the proposed development would diminish the potential to appreciate the historic rural setting of the church and Court Farm House, which would be harmful to their heritage significance because the rural setting that was of fundamental importance to their historic purpose.*

*We consider that the level of harm is likely to be low on the scale of less than substantial harm; however that is [...] not because the harm is inconsequential but because the setting makes a small contribution to the significance of what is a complex and important church."*

31. The views provided of the church remain limited in winter months (as demonstrated by the Winter Views provided by Bryant Landscape Planning). However, there are views from the appeal site in which the tower can be seen, e.g. Plate 4 on page 10 of the submitted Heritage Statement (CD 1.122AF). Views of Court Farm House from within the appeal site are extremely limited.

32. The Site forms part of the setting of the Church of St Mary and contributes to its significance. However, the setting is a relatively small component of the overall significance of the church.

### **Impacts**

33. It is agreed that the appeal scheme will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the church.

### **Matters of Disagreement**

34. The Council considers that the church did not historically form part of a settlement. It stood isolated, for centuries, along with Court Farm House and its farm buildings (and, before that, the manor house that preceded Court Farm House). The setting of the parish church was entirely rural, until the development of Oxted, following the arrival of the railway in 1884. This history of the church is bound up in its significance, and the ability to appreciate it as a building that has stood for centuries in an entirely rural setting. It would have been approached by parishioners across open countryside during that time. It can still be approached in this way, by means of the footpath across the appeal site. The appeal site is the last remaining rural component of setting of the church, which assists in revealing its significance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin as a once isolated, rural church.

35. The Site historically formed part of the Manor of Oxted and is recorded in the same ownership as Court Farm House. There is documented evidence of that, as far back as c. 1690, and up to the 1910 Lloyd George Domesday Survey. The Council considers that this association would have predated the c. 1690 map, and it would also likely have continued after 1910, up to the time that Court Farm was redeveloped, in the 1980s.

36. The Council considers that the appeal site represents that last remaining rural component of the setting of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, and Court Farm House, and that it positively contributes to the significance of the church and Court Farm House.

37. The Council considers that the appeal site can clearly be seen as a rural hinterland from the 12<sup>th</sup> century west tower of the Church of St Mary the Virgin when the trees are leafless, and it would remain visible when the trees are in leaf. The Council considers that the historic photos **clearly** show that the relationship between the church and the appeal site was historically **much** more open, and unobscured by intervening vegetation.

38. The Council considers that appeal scheme would result in the loss of the last remaining part of the rural setting of the church. The appeal scheme would fundamentally change the nature and experience of the approach to the church from the footpath across the appeal site, from the existing rural character to a suburban character. Likewise, when walking north-eastwards from the church, a suburban development, instead of a rural setting, would be encountered. The appeal scheme would be visible as a suburban development, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century west tower, and in conjunction with the church. The loss of this last vestige of the rural setting of the church would cause harm to its significance.

39. As set out in evidence, the Appellant considers that the church 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 17<sup>th</sup> century, with this building in turn redeveloped in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while its farmyard was redeveloped in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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. 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 appeal site forms part of the rural setting of the church.

40. The appellant considers that the proposals will alter the existing partial views of the church tower provided from within the appeal site, while also changing the character and land use of the appeal site. This will be most notable on the approach to the church along the PRoW. 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 appeal 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.
41. There is common ground between the parties that the appeal site falls within the setting of Court Farm House. However, there is disagreement as to whether the appeal site contributes to the significance of Court Farm House:
  - The Council considers the appeal site positively contributes to the significance of Court Farm House.
  - The Appellant considers the appeal site makes no contribution to the significance of Court Farm House.
42. There is disagreement regarding whether the appeal scheme would harm the significance of Court Farm House.
43. The Council find less than substantial harm to the significance of Court Farm House, which they have assessed as "very low". Historic England agrees that there would be a very low level of harm to the significance of the significance of Court Farm House.
44. The Appellant's case is that there is no harm to the significance of Court Farm House.

**Signed on behalf of Tandridge District Council**



Name...Ignus Froneman.

Dated.....26.01.2026

**Signed on behalf of the Appellant**



Name...Thomas Copp.....

Dated.....26.01.2026.....