

# Heritage Appraisal

## Clays Field, Clays Hill, Steyning, Horsham

### Introduction

1. This Heritage Appraisal provides information for the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority with regards to Clay Fields which is currently being proposed for allocation by the draft Bramber Neighbourhood Plan as an area of 'Local Green Space'.
2. The Site is a roughly triangular shaped field laid to grass which is located between the Steyning By-Pass to the east, Clays Hill to the south, Goring Road to the west and Castle Lane to the north. A public right of way diagonally crosses the site and connects Clay Hill to Goring Lane to the west.
3. This document<sup>1</sup> forms part of a submission to the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority as part of the consultation phase to rebut this draft allocation and consider implications of the allocation of the Site for residential development in accordance with current proposals by DMH Stallard. This appraisal seeks to provide the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority with additional information regarding:
  - The 'historic significance' of the Site within the meaning of paragraph 100 of the NPPF;
  - The contribution the site makes to the significance of surrounding designated heritage assets; and
  - Potential built heritage implications arising from any future development of the Site.

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<sup>1</sup> Alongside a site visit (undertaken on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in overcast weather), the West Sussex HER has been consulted (via Heritage Gateway) and relevant historic maps reviewed.

4. Relevant heritage legislation, policy and guidance is contained within **Appendix 1** of this report.

## Historic Significance of the Site

5. Available historic mapping suggests that the site has a long history in use as agricultural land. At the time of the 1839 Bramber Tithe Map (**Figure 1**) the Site was divided into a series of fields owned and occupied by Richard Lidbetter who appears to be a substantial landowner in the area. The associated Tithe Apportionment lists the plots comprising the Site as both arable and pasture and identifies one of the fields as being named 'Clays'.



**Figure 1:** 1838 Bramber Tithe Map © The Genealogist

6. The Tithe Map and associated Apportionment also confirms that:
  - Bramber Castle was in the ownership of the Duke of Norfolk and occupied by a Charles Marshall

- Burletts was in the ownership of 'The President & Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford' and occupied by the Reverend Thomas Grantham<sup>2</sup>
7. As such, there was no historic shared ownership between these assets and the Site.
  8. The map also shows that the present day footpath has been in existence since at least this date and that a linear run of 19th century or perhaps earlier<sup>3</sup> drainage ditches was present within the Site. Later historic mapping from the 19th century shows a similar arrangement with the introduction of the Horsham and Steyning Railway Line to the east of the site effectively severing links between the site and castle (**Figure 2**).
  9. Later mapping also shows the introduction of housing surrounding the site and, subsequently in the 20th century, the introduction of the Steyning By-Pass on the former railway line (**Figures 3 and 5**).



**Figure 2:** 1897 OS Map (surveyed 1896) © NLS

<sup>2</sup> A strip of land to the south of the Site and adjacent to Burletts (though on the north side of Clays Hill) was in the same ownership and occupation as Burletts and this appears to remain the case today.

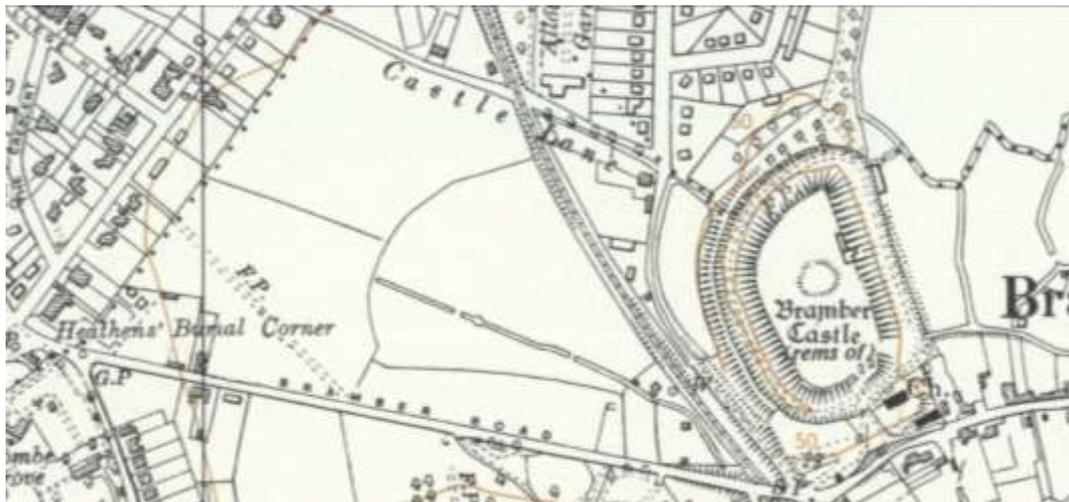
<sup>3</sup> The Bramber Historic Character Assessment Report (August 2004) suggests that this waterway may be Norman in date but no evidence for this has been sourced.



**Figure 3:** 1934 OS Map (surveyed 1932) © NLS



**Figure 4:** 1950 Aerial photograph of the Site © Historic England, Britain from Above



**Figure 5:** 1961 OS Map © NLS

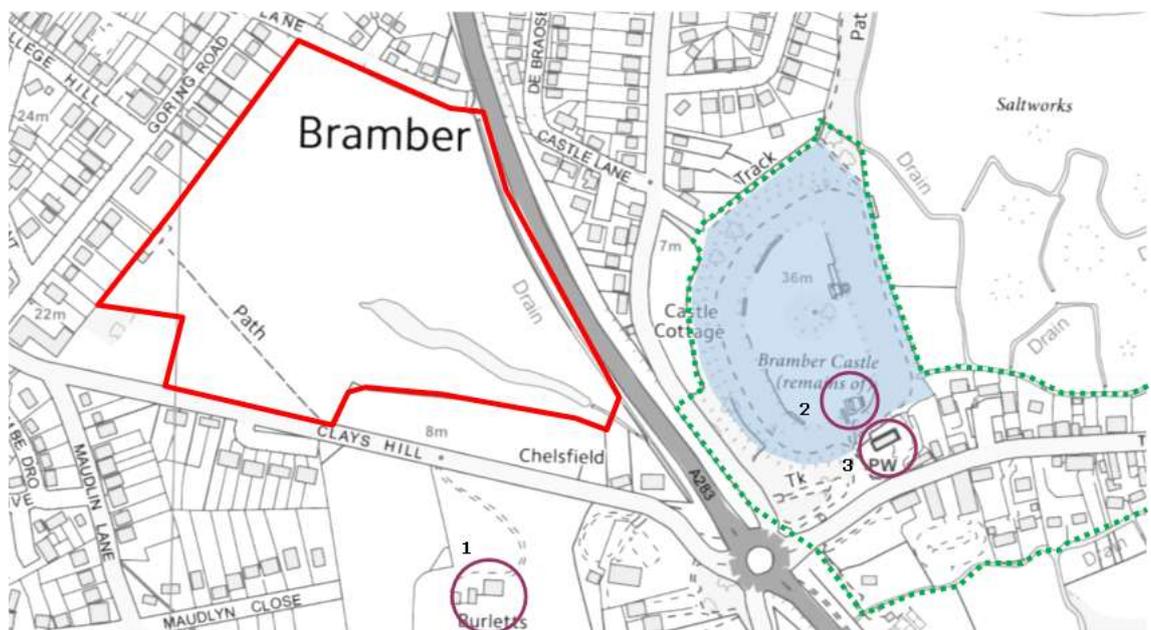
10. An aerial photograph from 1950 (**Figure 4**) shows the Site. A review of this map and historic mapping in comparison to the current arrangement demonstrates that, over time, field boundaries have been eroded leading to the current arrangement where the Site is a single open space. In 1981 the drainage ditch present within the Site was converted into an artificial lake.
11. It is not within the remit of this document to provide a detailed study of the site's archaeological potential. However, HER for the site has been reviewed and it is noted that during the 1980s a Late Bronze Age (1000-700 BC) hoard was during creation of the artificial lake [SMR reference: 3544 – WS1215]. The hoard comprised 98 items of metalwork, mostly spearheads. Searches over a wider area revealed human and animal bones, burnt flint, a flint scraper, a pottery shard and several pieces of possible crucible, and these may or may not be contemporary with the hoard. The archaeological potential of the Site could be fully investigated as part of any forthcoming planning application.
12. Overall, based on the information available the Site does not appear to be of an inherent historic significance in its own right in the meaning of paragraph 100 of the NPPF that would warrant its allocation as an area of Local Green Space.

## Contribution of the Site to the Significance of Surrounding Designated Heritage Assets

13. There are a number of designated heritage assets in the area surrounding the Site. Through the application of professional judgement, and following a site visit, those of most relevance include:

- Bramber Castle Scheduled Monument (UID: 1012174)
- Bramber Castle Ruins (grade I, UID: 1286805)
- The Parish Church of St Nicholas (grade I, UID: 1353947)
- Bramber Conservation Area
- Burletts (grade II, UID: 1191946)

14. The location of these assets are shown on **Figure 6**. A review of the baseline confirms that the site is not within the setting of any other heritage assets, designated or otherwise.



**Figure 6:** Plan showing the designated heritage assets. The Site is in red, the Scheduled Monument in blue, conservation area in green and listed buildings circled (1 – Burletts, 2 – Castle Ruins, 3 – Parish Church).

## Bramber Castle and associated assets

15. This section considers the heritage significance of the following assets which have been grouped given their historic associations and shared facets of significance; Bramber Castle Scheduled Monument, Bramber Castle Ruins and the Parish Church of St Nicholas. The scheduled area and listed buildings form impressive remnants of the Norman castle which was constructed in 1073. The scheduled area includes the earthworks and internal area of the castle which was occupied from 1075-1450 by descendants of William de Braose, the listing designation covers above grounds fragmentary remains.
16. The castle was established as a defensive and administrative centre for the newly established rape of Bramber and occupied a strategic position on relatively high ground surrounded by open agricultural and marshy land. Subsidence on a large scale saw the ruin of the castle during the 16th century.
17. Despite this, the castle survives well and illustrates graphically the changes in castle form in the medieval period. Bramber Castle was first constructed as a motte and bailey type before later being converted into an enclosure type. The remains, as an example of a restricted range of monuments representative of the early post-conquest period, are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. In addition, the later conversion to an enclosure type is of particular value as this form is rarer than motte and bailey castles with only 128 examples having been recorded. They represent an important stage in the development of the castle in England.
18. The grade I listed church was constructed in the 11th century by William de Braose for a college of priests. As was common in Normandy, he established a small college of secular canons at the centre of a new settlement outside his castle. Despite this the church had become parochial but 1250. Dissolution had no significant impact on the church, the advowson of which was held by Magdalen College, Oxford, throughout the period. The church was ruinous by the 17th century, much like the Castle, and substantially rebuilt and altered in the 18th and 19th centuries.

19. The church is of considerable significance derived from a combination of its architectural, historic and archaeological interest as a Norman church directly associated with Bramber Castle. Internally, there are numerous examples of 11th century carving details which are a remarkable survival and key component of interest, a 13th century font and various 18th and 19th century monuments.
20. Historically the castle and its surroundings would have enjoyed a tranquil setting that comprised the village to the east and largely agricultural land serving the town. Bramber also had a large salt making industry which continued to the 16th century (a series of salterns to the north of the village are scheduled but scoped out of this assessment as not being within the setting of the Site). The presence of the village today with its historic building stock and linear arrangement and the historic salterns make a strong positive contribution to the significance of these assets.
21. Land to the west of the castle was previously far more visually connected to the castle itself. This low lying undeveloped land would have formed part of the rural surroundings and contributed to the tranquil character of the castle's setting. Castle Lane, to the north of the Site, was a medieval route connecting the castle to Steyning to the west and would have been an important approach to Bramber Castle.
22. The relationship these the assets share with land to the west (including the Site) has, however, been severely compromised by the introduction of the Steyning By-Pass (on the same line as the former railway) which has provided a physical barrier in the form of a large piece of infrastructure. Modern housing also sits between the By-Pass and the castle, further impinging upon the former relationship, and further west demonstrating the modern sprawl of Steyning. As a result of these characteristics of the western setting and the dense tree cover on the scheduled area, there is no intervisibiliy between the castle and the Site. As part of *Steer v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2017] EWHC 1456 (Admin) it was confirmed that, whilst a physical or visual connection between a heritage asset and its setting will often exist, it is not essential or determinative. Despite the changes within the setting of the castle,

some of the sense of tranquillity remains, particularly from within the scheduled area itself.

23. While there is no direct intervisibility between the castle and the Site, the Site as part of the rural surroundings adjacent to a historic route is considered to make a minor contribution to the appreciation of the significance of these assets. There are no known historic associations between the castle and the Site (for example ownership or occupation) which would elevate the contribution the Site makes.

### Bramber Conservation Area

24. A details history of the conservation area is provided within the Bramber Conservation Area Appraisal (1997) and this has not been replicated here but should be read in conjunction with this appraisal.
25. Much of the significance of the conservation area derives from the Castle and its associated assets discussed above and the way in which the presence of the Castle provided an impetus for the village's development.
26. The built form within the conservation area makes a valuable contribution to its character and appearance. Elements that are essential the conservation area are listed within the appraisal as:
  - Field flint buildings and walls
  - Vegetation along curtilage margins and in gardens
  - Variety of natural building materials
  - Simple traditional architectural features
  - Walls, fences and hedges
  - Variety of roofs and chimneys
  - Variety of building style, siting and age
  - Close proximity of buildings to the road
  - Discontinuous footways

27. An abundance of trees, shrubs and hedges provide a rural character to the conservation area and the area as a whole is relatively contained and enclosed by greenery. Taking this into account alongside the Steyning By-Pass, there is no intervisibility between the conservation area and the Site.
28. The landscape setting of the conservation area is also an important element of its significance. Of this, the Appraisal notes:

*"The Conservation Area is situated within a broad U shaped chalk valley on reclaimed land on the valley floor. Gently undulating valley sides rise to the east and west. The castle is prominent in the landscape. Spaces between buildings along The Street allow important glimpses across to the Downs. The floodplain separates the Downs from the village. Fields are large, divided by ditches or wire fences and used for grazing. The village is a focal point from the Downs, evident from the network of footpaths in the area."*

29. The Appraisal goes on to provide an assessment of "important views in and out of the Conservation Area to be retained". It is relevant to note that the Site does not feature in any of these views. By virtue of the enclosed nature of the conservation area (limiting views out of it to the west) and the way in which the Site is surrounded by built form on all sides, while part of the rural surroundings of the conservation are the Site only makes a minor contribution to the significance of this asset.

### Burletts

30. Burletts is a grade II listed building (designated in May 1980) located to the south of the Site, south of Clays Hill. Its List Description is one of the older type simply for identification purposes but provides a good summary of the building as:

*"Originally Bramber Rectory. Early C19. Two storeys and attic. Three windows. One dormer. Ground floor stuccoed, above tile-hung. Hipped slate roof. Most glazing bars intact. Architraves over ground floor windows. Porch of solid type."*

31. The building is of both architectural and historic interest as an early 19th century Classically detailed modestly scaled rectory (now private dwelling). Its interest derives from its external form and character and association with the parish of Bramber. No internal site visit has been undertaken but it is likely that internal features also contribute to the special interest of the building.
32. Burletts is located within a context of mature gardens and agricultural fields providing the asset with a spacious and rural character befitting its history and settlement edge siting. While affected by the introduction of the Steyning By-Pass in the 20th century there are links to the village of Bramber to the east associated with the building's past as Bramber's Rectory. Burletts is situated on land rising from the north to the south providing it with an elevation position. While there is a dense planting line to the curtilage's northern boundary some glimpsed views onto the Site are likely, particularly in leafless conditions. In this sense the Site can be considered to make some positive contribution towards the appreciation of the listed building in a semi-rural settlement edge context. There are no historic associations between the Site and Burletts which would contribute to historic interest.

## Potential Impacts Arising from Future Development of the Site

33. The Site is also being proposed for allocation for residential development on up to 20% of the Site. This part of the appraisal considers high level built heritage implications for such future development. For obvious reasons, development proposals for the Site are at present limited to a Concept Development Plan (November 2018), replicated at **Figure 7**. Based on the information this plan provides, professional judgment has been exercised founded on previous experience of what might reasonably be expected of development of residential units on the Site.
34. The concept masterplan demonstrates how only 20% of the site, towards the northern end adjacent to Church Lane, would be developed upon with 80% of the Site to the south being left as open green space.

35. As identified, the land currently being promoted forms part of the rural setting of the heritage assets identified within this report, in part contributing to the ability to appreciate them within a rural context. While limited and broadly positive in nature, the contribution of this land to the understanding of the significance of these assets varies in each individual case.



**Figure 7:** Concept Development Plan for the Site

36. It is important to note that the future residential development of the site would not affect key elements of the setting of the assets (including the relationship between the Castle and village and the majority of rural surroundings and the relationship between Burletts and the village and its rural surroundings, including land historically within the same ownership).

37. By virtue of the limited portion of the site promoted for development the residential development of the site would not necessarily result in harm to the significance of the identified assets. The majority of the rural surroundings of the assets would not be affected and the proposed development has been carefully

designed to ensure that any effects are minimised and mitigated. Design mechanisms employed by the concept masterplan include:

- **The scale of the developable area:** The limited scale of the development area within the Site (20%) ensures that the majority of the Site could remain undeveloped and continue to contribute to the ability to appreciate the identified heritage assets within a rural context;
- **The siting of development:** The siting of the development to the northern portion of the Site pushes the proposed residential development against an already developed boundary along Castle Lane. While development here would have some effect on the experience of Castle Lane, a medieval route to Bramber Castle, the careful siting of development and landscaping proposals could ensure that a rural character to the route is retained.
- **Landscaping:** Buffer planting as shown on the Concept Plan could be incorporated into a wider landscaping scheme. This could provide a screening function reducing the visibility of the proposed residential development, particularly in views from Burletts. This would provide a green edge to the developable zone of the Site which would soften any experience of the residential units in context of the identified assets. The planting would be beneficial in both short and long views where possible;

38. The nature of the effect on the significance of the identified assets (and the ability to appreciate this significance) will depend on the final design of any scheme with key factors including the number and siting of residential units, the form and appearance of development and landscaping and access proposals etc. However, development within the 'developable zone' as shown on the Concept Plan should be possible without resulting in harm to the significance of the identified designated heritage assets.

## Summary and Conclusions

39. This assessment presents an appraisal of the historic significance of the Site and an understanding of built heritage constraints with regards to the being proposed for allocation. Possible effects on these assets as a result of the Site's potential residential allocation and development are also considered.
40. Based on the available information, the Site itself does not appear to be of any historic significance in its own right within the meaning of Paragraph 100 of the NPPF that would warrant its allocation as an area of Local Green Space.
41. With regards to built heritage assets, this assessment identifies that development of the Site makes a broadly positive contribution to the significance of those identified designated heritage assets due to its rural character.
42. However, the nature of the residential development (limited to 20% of the site) and design mechanisms are such that it should be possible to provide development on the Site in a manner which preserves the significance of all heritage assets and so that there is no harm to significance and preservation for the purposes of the decision maker's duty under section 66(1) of the Act. Should any resultant harm be identified to these assets, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 196 of the NPPF, at most only limited effects may be anticipated. Such a low level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, including the provision of housing.
43. The full effect of the scheme and any design mechanisms employed to minimise and mitigate impacts could be considered as part of a Heritage Statement when fully detailed proposals arise.

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## Appendix 1: Relevant Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The decision maker is required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The decision maker must also give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building. There is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm the setting of the listed building, though the presumption will plainly be lessened if the harm is less than substantial within the meaning in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as is explained further below.

Harm is defined by Historic England as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset (paragraph 84 of 'Conservation Principles', 2008).

The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The setting of the heritage asset can also contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:

*"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."*

Historic England advocates that a stepped approach should be taken to the assessment of impacts on setting and significance, as follows:

- Step 1: Identifying the assets affected
- Step 2: Assessing the contribution setting makes to significance
- Step 3: Assessing the effect of the proposed development
- Step 4: Maximising enhancement and minimising harm

Step 5: Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

This guidance is contained in Historic England's document 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (second edition)' published in 2017. It should be noted that it is not a prescriptive methodology and that it forms the basis of advice given by Historic England when responding to consultations.

The assessments of setting and significance (and the assessments of impact) must be made with primary reference to the four main elements of special significance identified in the NPPF, but there are other elements of setting which may be relevant to varying degrees. In this case it is appropriate to consider aspects such as:

- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- History and degree of change over time
- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Noise, vibration and other pollutants or nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement

- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- The rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- The asset's associative and contextual attributes

When assessing the impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of the heritage asset it is relevant to consider:

*Location and siting of development*: This could include proximity to asset, extent, position in relation to landform and key views and the degree to which the location will physically or visually isolate the asset.

*The form and appearance of the development*: The prominence, scale, and visual permeability of the proposals and whether it competes with or detracts from assets. Diurnal and seasonal change (whether the development will be more visible or in winter) or whether it would cause light spill would also be considered here.

*Wider effects*: This could include changes to skylines, environmental effects (noise/odour/vibration etc.), changes to public access and changes to land use/land cover/tree cover. This could also include changes to ownership arrangements and economic viability.

*Permanence*: The degree to which the proposal will bring about permanent or temporary change.

*Cumulative impacts*: This may include the cumulative effect of the development in conjunction with other developments which are in the planning system, as well as additional effects to baseline conditions.

In this case the impact on designated heritage assets is indirect in the sense that there will be no physical impact but instead a potential effect on their setting. However, for the purposes of paragraphs 194 to 196 of the NPPF (2019) it is necessary to undertake an assessment of the direct impact on significance, not on setting in isolation. Insofar as the Act requires that it is the setting of a listed building to which it is desirable that special consideration should be given, the assessment becomes one in which the focus

is on those elements of significance which are appreciated and understood through the setting of the designated heritage asset.

The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of the heritage asset to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described within paragraphs 194 to 196 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.

Paragraph 018 of the NPPG (ref: 18a-018-20190723) confirms that within each category of harm, the extent of harm may vary and should be clearly articulated. In order to assist with this articulation of the exact level of harm, specifically with reference to the ‘less than substantial’ bracket, the following table has been produced.

<b>Scale of Harm</b>	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level of harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as noticeable or material
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset

In all cases it is relevant to remember that it is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.

This assessment is confined to the significance of heritage assets and the impact of change on that significance. It does not address the planning balance in which public benefit is weighed against the degree of harm, if any.

### Historic England Guidance on Site Allocations

#### **GPA1: Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (Historic England, 2015)**

The purpose of this Historic England Good Practice Advice note is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy. The guidance notes that it does not constitute a statement of Government policy itself, nor does it seek to prescribe a single methodology or particular data sources; alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives.

With regards to site allocations the document states that a conservation strategy can help with site allocations. Paragraph 19 goes on to note:

*"It can identify opportunities to conserve the historic environment, such as site allocations positively addressing heritage assets at risk, and can help to ensure that site allocations avoid harming the significance of heritage assets (including effects on their setting). The strategy can also be used to inform the nature of allocations so development responds to and reflects local character. Site allocations should be informed by an evidence base and an analysis of potential effects on heritage assets."*

The guidance then notes that further advice will be provided in the forthcoming Historic England Advice Note on heritage considerations for site allocations in local plans (now published and detailed below).

### **The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans Advice Note 3 (Historic England, 2015)**

Advice Note 3 is a guidance document published by Historic England and intended to offer advice to those involved in the process of allocating sites for development as part of local plan production. It offers advice on evidence gathering and site allocation policies, as well as setting out in detail a number of steps to make sure that heritage considerations are fully integrated in any site selection methodology.

The document provides a site selection methodology which covers five steps as follows:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets are affected by the proposed development

Step 2: Understand what contribution the site (in its current form) makes to the significance of the heritage asset(s)

Step 3: Identify what impact the allocation may have on that significance;

Step 4: Consider maximising enhancement and avoiding harm;

Step 5: Determine whether the proposed site allocation is appropriate in light of the NPPF's tests of soundness