

## OAKCROFT LANE STUBBINGTON, HAMPSHIRE

HERITAGE ADDENDUM  
SEPTEMBER 2021

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document has been prepared by Cotswold Archaeology to present heritage evidence in respect of an appeal against refused planning consent for a residential development on land at Oakcroft Lane, Stubbington, Hampshire (application ref. P/20/0522/FP). The reasons for refusal did not relate to heritage, however a consultee response from Historic England cited a small impact to the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church, though did not raise an objection. Third party objections also referred to impacts on the church and the adjacent Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel.
- 1.2. Following the refusal of planning consent, Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by the appellant to undertake a Settings Assessment to determine the potential effects of the development upon designated heritage assets, arising through the alteration of their settings (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a). This provided a robust and proportionate assessment of nearby designated heritage assets and their significance, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 194 and Policy DSP 5 of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2. It was informed by the approaches set out within key guidance documents, in particular 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets' (Historic England 2017). This Settings Assessment was followed by a Heritage Appeal Statement (Cotswold Archaeology 2021b).
- 1.3. Since the preparation of the Settings Assessment, the NPPF was reissued in July 2021. However, aside from changes to the paragraph numbers, the wording and approach set out in the relevant sections remains the same as for the previous 2019 iteration.
- 1.4. This document does not present new evidence, but provides further clarification to the conclusions reached in the aforementioned Settings Assessment and addresses

the comments made by Historic England in relation to the application. It has been prepared in the context of current heritage-related statute, policy and guidance, details of which are presented in the Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a).

## 2. Issues for consideration

2.1. The main heritage issue for consideration is the effect of the development on the significance of the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church and Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel, as a result of changes to their settings. This is assessed in detail in the Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a), with the key elements presented below.

2.2. As part of Step 1 of the settings assessment methodology set out by the Historic England guidance (2017), no other designated heritage assets were identified as being potentially susceptible to harm as a result of the development proposals.

### *Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church*

#### Description of the asset and its setting

2.3. The Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church lies approximately 70m to the west of the Appeal Site boundary. The structure is thought to date to the 14th century, with some possible earlier surviving fabric, and is built of ashlar rubble and brick with a tiled roof. Later alterations include a square bell turret, thought to date to the early 18th century.

2.4. Historically, Crofton Old Church appears to have functioned as a chapel of ease to the parish church of St Peter, Titchfield, serving the dispersed rural community of Crofton. Late 18th century mapping depicts the church within primarily agricultural surroundings, with a cluster of buildings associated with Crofton Farm situated to its west. The character of these surroundings changed substantially with the expansion of Stubbington, to the south, in the later 20th century.

2.5. The current setting of the Church is formed by its associated churchyard, which appears to have been extended northwards at some point in the early 20th century. This is abutted to the east by the modern Crofton Cemetery. The surroundings to the south and south-west of the Church are defined by modern residential development. The Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel lies immediately to the west of the churchyard.

### The significance of Crofton Old Church

- 2.6. In accordance with Step 2 of the Historic England settings guidance (Historic England 2017), the significance of the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church has been defined, including the contribution made its setting. Significance has been described with reference to the four heritage values (*evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal*) set out in Historic England's 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment' (2008). Examination of the assets setting included consideration of its physical surrounds and the way in which it is experienced, in order to identify those attributes of setting which contribute to its significance.
- 2.7. As identified by the Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a), the principal significance of the Grade II\* Crofton Old Church is overwhelmingly derived from the building's physical fabric as a medieval church with later alterations. The building interior in particular retains a number of features and fixtures of interest which, alongside the surviving 14th and 15th century fabric and possible 13th century components, provide a high degree of evidential, as well as aesthetic, value. Historical value is derived from the Church's illustrative status as an element of the history and development of the settlement of Crofton, and from its association with Titchfield Abbey, as documented in the 13th century. The Church also holds a high level of communal value through its continuing function as a focal point and place of worship for the local community.
- 2.8. The Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a) determined that the aspect of setting which contributes most highly to the significance of the Church is the associated churchyard. These verdant surrounds, situated at the edge of the settlement and bounded by trees, represent the immediate historical and functional setting to the Church, and it is from here that the asset's architectural and historic interest can be most clearly and fully experienced. The strongest contribution is made by that part of the churchyard part closest to the Church, which formed the historic churchyard prior to its expansion in the 20th century and is from here the best appreciation of the Church's physical form is offered.
- 2.9. The Church has an important contextual relationship with the Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel, immediately to its west, with the two buildings representing surviving

and key elements of the medieval settlement of Crofton. This association can be appreciated in views from directly east of the buildings from within the churchyard, looking westwards.

- 2.10. Beyond the churchyard, the wider setting to the south is formed by the adjacent road (Lychgate Green) and settlement, from where the churchyard is accessed. Although representative of the expansion of Stubbington, which has changed much of the formerly rural landscape surrounding the Church, a degree of communal value is derived from these surrounds on account of the ongoing role of the Church as a place of worship serving the community. Due to a more open aspect to the churchyard here, clear views of the church can be attained from the roadside, enabling an appreciation of its fabric and architectural detailing, as well as its relationship with the Old Manor Hotel which demonstrates the historical role of the Church as part of the settlement of Crofton.
- 2.11. The wider surroundings of the Church to the east, incorporating the Appeal Site, make only a minor contribution to the significance of the Church. Although maintaining the rural character of the church's wider historic setting, these landscape surroundings are physically and visually segregated from the Church by the intervening tree belt which lies along the eastern boundary of the churchyard, as well as the modern cemetery of the north-east, as a consequence of which views from and towards the Church are restricted to heavily filtered glimpses. Such views are not sufficient to offer any clear understanding of the Church's historical and architectural qualities, and prevent any clear understanding of its formerly rural context, with the church appearing against a backdrop of modern development.
- 2.12. The site visit conducted for the Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a) indicated that, due to the presence the tree belt, available views from the churchyard are largely directed towards the south, encompassing modern housing. While a very limited view of the south-west of the Appeal Site is afforded from within the east of the churchyard, the view itself is so constrained as to be inconsequential to the understanding or appreciation of the church or its wider setting. The church is more closely associated with, and perceived alongside, the modern development to its south.

The effect of the proposed development

- 2.13. Assessment of the effect of the development upon the significance of the Church has been conducted in line with Step 3 of the Historic England Settings guidance (2017), and with reference to the language used in the NPPF. The identification of harm relates solely to the effect of the development upon the elements of setting which contribute to the significance of the asset. This is consistent with the Historic England guidance which makes clear that the *'protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change'* (Historic England 2017, 8). Thus, change is not to be necessarily equated with harm to the significance of the asset; rather, it is only when this change alters one or more of those attributes of the setting of the asset that materially contribute to the asset's significance that harm can arise.
- 2.14. As concluded by the Settings Assessment, the proposed development would preserve those aspects of the Church's setting which contribute most strongly towards its significance, comprising (as identified above): its immediate historical and functional setting formed by the churchyard; the relationship with the adjacent Old Manor Hotel; and the experience of the Church from the adjacent Lychgate Green.
- 2.15. The very limited views of the Church from within the Appeal Site, and vice versa, do not allow any clear understanding of the Church or its historically rural setting, which now provides only a very minor contribution towards the building's significance. The church is more readily understood within its present context at the periphery of the modern settlement of Stubbington. The proposed housing would be set back from the edge of the current field, with the retention of the existing tree belt and adjacent area of open space providing a further visual and physical buffer between the development and the Church. These measures would ensure that the existing glimpsed view of the Church from the Appeal Site is preserved. Any slight visibility of the development within heavily filtered views from within the churchyard would not affect the ability to appreciate and understand the Church.
- 2.16. On account of the above, there would be **no harm** to the significance of the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church should the appeal be allowed.

*Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel*

Description of the Asset and its setting

- 2.17. The Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel is situated c. 90m to the west of the Site, and comprises a substantial brick- built, two storey house dating from at least the 17th century with later additions. The building is believed to represent the site of the medieval manor house for Crofton, as recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey.
- 2.18. Eighteenth century mapping depicts the building within an enclosed complex of gardens and ancillary buildings, immediately to the west of the church. These immediate surroundings remained largely unchanged until the second half of the 20th century, when the plot appears to have been divided to separate the farm buildings from the house. The majority of the farm buildings were later removed prior to the construction of modern housing in the late 1990s; the only known surviving element of the former farmstead associated with the house is an east-west aligned barn just to the north of the house, which was first depicted on late 19th century mapping.

The significance of Crofton Manor Hotel

- 2.19. As identified by the Settings Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2021a), Crofton Manor Hotel derives its significance mainly from its physical fabric. The building retains evidential value relating its potential to inform on its construction, use and later evolution, as well as 17th century and later vernacular architectural styles. Some additional evidential value relates to the potential for archaeological remains and/or surviving fabric associated with the earlier medieval manor. As a component of the local post-medieval landscape, the building also retains historical (illustrative) value.
- 2.20. The immediate surroundings of Crofton Manor Hotel, defined by its enclosed grounds containing an associated barn, garden and courtyard, represent the key aspect of the building's setting. Despite their reduction and alteration in the later 20th century, and subsequent removal of the former outbuildings, these residual grounds provide the immediate historic context to the building, and is from where it can be most clearly seen and understood.
- 2.21. The close spatial and historical relationship with the Grade II\* Crofton Old Church, immediately to the east, also makes an important contribution to the significance of the building. This can be appreciated in views from within the churchyard and along Lychgate Green, where the buildings are seen in close juxtaposition.

2.22. To the south and west, the surroundings of the building have been heavily altered by modern development, which has led to the loss agricultural land formerly associated with the manor. Surviving areas of agricultural land to the east and north-east, including the Appeal Site, are situated at a considerable physical and visual remove, located beyond the intervening churchyard and cemetery and substantial tree belt. As such, the Appeal Site and the building cannot be meaningfully read together and the Appeal Site does not feature within the experience of the building. The considerable amount of change within the more immediate surroundings of the asset have further eroded the contribution made by this wider landscape setting to the significance of the asset. Although a historical relationship has been identified to exist between the former manor house and the Appeal Site, with the two having been under the same ownership at the time of the 1837-38 Tithe map, this is no longer discernible and is not considered to contribute to the heritage significance of the building.

#### The effect of the proposed development

2.23. The significance of Crofton Old Manor stems primarily from its physical form, with contributing parts of its setting identified as its enclosed grounds; it's relationship with Crofton Old Church; and the experience of the asset from the adjacent Lychgate Green. These elements would be preserved should the proposed development proceed.

2.24. Owing to its distance and lack of any clear visual or other landscape associations, as well as the degree of change which has occurred within the asset's more immediate setting, the Appeal Site has not been identified as making any meaningful contribution to the significance of the Crofton Old Manor. Any visibility of the development from the building would be limited to glimpsed and non-specific views attained from the rear elevations, which would in no way alter the intelligibility or appreciation of the asset. As such, **no harm** to the significance of the asset will therefore occur should the appeal be allowed.

#### Consultee comments

2.25. A proposal for the construction of 209 dwellings was submitted in June 2020 (ref. P/20/0522/FP), and subsequently amended to reduce the number of dwellings to 206. This proposal comprised a revision of a previous refused scheme, submitted in 2019 (P/19/0301/FP), for which Historic England and Fareham Borough Council (FBC) had

raised concerns relating to impact on the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church and Grade II Crofton Manor Hotel. In response to these concerns, the proposals submitted as part of the 2020 application (the present scheme) were revised to include a landscaped strip along the western boundary.

- 2.26. Comments received from Historic England in relation to the current proposals<sup>1</sup> stated that, as a result of the revisions to the previous scheme, there would be a *'limited reduction of adverse impact to the setting of the Grade II\* listed Crofton Old Church'*. However, their position was unchanged from that of their previous response, stating that a low level of harm would arise through the alteration of the Church's wider rural setting. The response concluded that while there was no objection from Historic England on heritage grounds, the proposals would have a limited adverse impact to the setting of the Grade II\* Listed Church which should be weighed in the planning balance.
- 2.27. Historic England's response to the application was issued prior to the undertaking of the Settings Assessment by Cotswold Archaeology, and has therefore not been informed by the detailed consideration of the asset's significance and potential development effects presented in the assessment. No updated response from Historic England has been issued following the completion of the Settings Assessment.
- 2.28. The key argument made by Historic England refers to the impact on the *'rural setting, which is a key element contributing to its significance'*. Their comments go on to state that the development would lead to *'a diminution of the current ability to appreciate the original character of the building as a medieval rural church'*. However, it is clear from the conclusions of our assessment that the Appeal Site provides only a very limited contribution to the significance of the Church, with the intervening tree belt and modern cemetery serving to separate the Church both physically and visually from its wider surroundings to the east. Consequently, the relationship with the wider rural landscape is barely perceptible within the experience of the Church, which is instead defined much more closely by the modern settlement immediately to its south, towards which there are open views from the churchyard. The Church is clearly perceived alongside, and as a part of, this modern settlement. It can also be stated

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<sup>1</sup> Consultee comment dated 17 July 2020. [Document link](#).

that the relationship between the Church and existing modern settlement is stronger than that which it has with the wider rural landscape, due to both the church's visual prominence from the adjacent street and its role as a place of worship for the local community.

- 2.29. In line with the findings of the Settings Assessment, Historic England acknowledges the limited degree of existing intervisibility between the Appeal Site and Church, as well as that of the proposed development, stating that '*...the proposed setback of the housing from the site perimeter and the decreased building scale would diminish its visibility from the church and its churchyard; visibility which is already restricted due to a dense screen of mature trees...*'. Indeed, the inclusion of open space between the housing and the Appeal Site boundary will enable the existing (heavily constrained) views between the Church and the Appeal Site to be preserved. The current experience of this aspect of the wider landscape setting from within the churchyard will therefore remain unchanged.
- 2.30. Historic England's response accepts that the impact to the *setting* of the Church would be limited, but does not clearly discuss this impact in terms of its effect on the significance of the asset. The guidance provided in Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' (2008) is clear that '*change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effect on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is eroded*' (Para 84; Page 43). Our robust assessment, carried out following the approach devised and advocated by Historic England, has not identified any harm to the significance of Crofton Old Church as a result of the development proposals. While Historic England do not object to the scheme, it is considered that, overall, their comments are rather contradictory and provide little clarity with regard to the effect on the significance of the Church.
- 2.31. Comments provided by FBC's Conservation Planner<sup>2</sup> are in agreement with our conclusion of no harm in relation to the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church and the adjacent Grade II Listed Crofton Hotel, explicitly stating '*it is considered that the proposed works would preserve the setting of Old Crofton Church (Grade II\*) and*

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<sup>2</sup> Consultee comment uploaded on 21 July 2020. [Document link](#).

*Crofton Manor Hotel (Grade II)*'. This position is reflected in the final decision by the Committee which did not raise any heritage concerns in relation to the proposal.

#### *Third party representations*

- 2.32. A number of third-party objections were received from local residents in relation to application, with the impact upon the Church cited among the reasons for objection. These objections repeated the comments made by Historic England and are therefore addressed in the above.

### **3. Conclusions**

- 3.1. Through detailed examination of the significance of the Grade II\* Listed Crofton Old Church and Grade II Listed Crofton Manor Hotel, including the contribution made by their settings, it has been determined that no harm would be occasioned in relation to these designated heritage assets as a result of the development proposals. The assets are physically and visually disconnected from their wider rural surroundings by the establishment of the adjacent modern cemetery and the presence of an intervening mature tree belt. The proposals would not meaningfully alter the primary experience of the assets from within their immediate surroundings (i.e. the churchyard and adjacent Lychgate Green), and would have no bearing on the ability to appreciate and understand their heritage significance.
- 3.2. The requirement of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is that '*.....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*' (s.66(1)). The Appeal Site makes no contribution to the identified 'special architectural or historic interest' of these heritage assets, forming only a fringe component to their wider heritage significance. Under the terms of the NPPF, the proposed development would not harm the significance of the assets, and it can be concluded that their special interest is preserved.
- 3.3. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where less than substantial harm is identified in relation to designated heritage assets, this should be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme. Our assessment concludes that there will be **no harm** to the significance of designated heritage assets, and thus para. 202 need not be engaged.

- 3.4. Policy DSP5 of the Local Plan Part 2 states that any degree of harm to a non-designated heritage asset, arising from development proposals, will be assessed against the significance of the asset. It states that harm or loss to designated heritage assets 'will require clear and convincing justification'. The proposed development is considered to result in no harm to the significance of the Listed Buildings through alterations to their settings, therefore the requirements of Policy DSP 5 are met.

## References

- Cotswold Archaeology 2021a *Oakcroft Lane, Stubbington, Hampshire: Settings Assessment*.  
Report ref. AN0339\_1
- Cotswold Archaeology 2021b *Oakcroft Lane, Stubbington, Hampshire: Appeal Statement*.  
Report ref. AN0339\_2
- Fareham Borough Council 2015 *Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies*, adopted  
June 2015
- Historic England 2008 *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable  
Management of the Historic Environment*
- Historic England 2015 *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2:  
Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*
- Historic England 2017 *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3: The  
Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition)*
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021 *National Planning Policy  
Framework (NPPF)*; published July 2021
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019b *National Planning Practice  
Guidance: Historic Environment*, published July 2019
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Act of UK Parliament