

Assessment of Impact - Setting

in connection with

Climping Mill, Littlehampton



INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

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The site lies on the boundary of the South Coast Shoreline and Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain Landscape Character Areas as defined by the 2003 Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex.

The South Coast Shoreline characterisation identifies the area as:

“long narrow Character Area between West Wittering and Shoreham and comprises the majority of West Sussex coastline. It is a distinctive low, open and exposed landscape which has overriding visual and physical association with the sea. Its wide gently curved bays are further defined by the protruding shingle headland of Selsey Hill, the chalk headland of Beachy Head in neighbouring East Sussex. This is a dynamic character area whose key characteristics are linked by coastal evolution, weather and tides. The character varies considerably according to the weather conditions and seasons.”

One of the key characteristics is the influence of extensive linear urban coastal resort development. Far reaching views from the site illustrate the almost continuous conurbation of Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham particularly evident from the public footpaths which bound the site to the East and the North, albeit the latter, to a lesser extent.



DSC03024: Distant views across golf course of Littlehampton illustrating the flat topography of the surrounding landscape

Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain characterisation identifies the area as:

extending *“from Chichester in the west to the edge of the Arun Valley in the east, and around Bognor Regis to the south. Over time a large part of this area has been reclaimed from the sea, and remains below the current high spring tide level. It comprises a mainly flat, open landscape crossed by meandering rife.*

Dominated by highly productive arable fields and modern farm buildings, it has a fragmented hedgerow and hedgerow tree pattern. The spire of Chichester Cathedral is a widely visible feature. Rows of large light reflecting glasshouses, equestrian facilities, horse paddocks and industrial buildings, for instance in the Ford and Tangmere areas, are strong suburban elements. Where these occur, they create visual confusion and poor definition between town and countryside, and erode distinctive landscape character. Major suburban settlements in the area are Tangmere, Barnham, Yapton, and Westergate. In contrast, there are areas of a smaller scale, more varied rural landscape with quiet hamlets and traditional villages enclosed by small pasture”



DSC03096 & DSC03098: Distant views showing the topography of the landscape interspersed with scattered farmstead buildings

The key characteristics include low lying flat open landscape giving far reaching views which is clearly evident on the approach to Climping Mill with the scarp foot hills of the High Weald beyond visually separated by areas of established and mature trees which appear to define the change in landscape.

Within these glimpses on the approach to the site, isolated and scattered roof tops emerge above the plain introducing a built form which contributes to the visual character of the area but also the historical association of the buildings with the land.

Both areas fall within the overall South Coast Plain Character Area.

Climping mill site is indicative of the area screened from far reaching views because of the natural planting which surrounds the site, particularly to the South West and the approach.



DS03094 & DS03095: Distant views from the private approach

Whilst the white painted weatherboard is just discernible rising above the canopy its form and thereby legibility as a historic Smock Mill has been substantially and harmfully impacted by the truncation of the upper section.



DSC03100 : Distant views from the private approach

DSC0310 View when zoomed in.

The Mill remains obscured from the views to the East, although the historically smaller and modest form elements of construction, including the two storey Mill House, are evident emerging where there is a break in the tree canopy.

These views provide only glimpses of the historic form and as such provide no legibility to the function of the buildings associated with the site.



DSC03024: Distant views looking into the site across the golf course.

The landscape characterisation of the area has been impaired, on the East side by the golf course, separated from the site only by the footpath which bounds the property. The artificial landscape of the man-made undulating golf course contrasts with the low lying, flat open qualities of the surrounding natural landscape. This impact is further heightened by the urban sprawl visible in the distance.

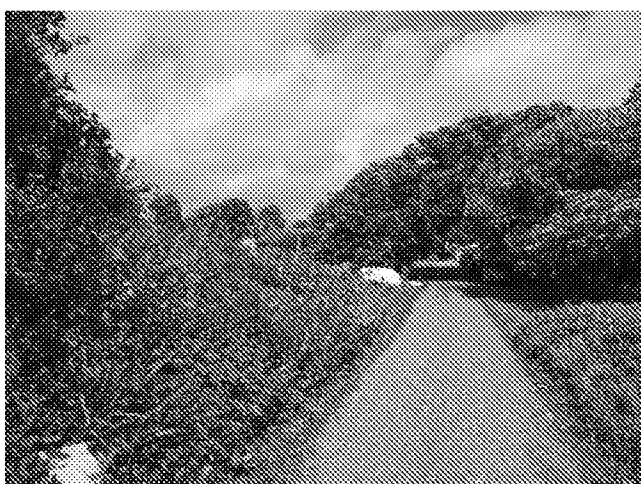
The reinstatement of the Smock Mill to its original form and height will have a dramatic and positive impact upon the landscape announcing its presence, providing context and legibility to its function. The increased height will ensure that the structure rises above the canopy and will not be reliant upon breaks in the screening for the occasional and glimpsed view. It will, as it did historically announce its presence in the landscape, influencing the far-reaching views panoramically, providing a fixed focal point within the open and low lying coastal plain.

The construction of the proposed eco-house will in contrast remain obscured from the far-reaching views because of the surrounding tree coverage which will be intensified as part of the landscaping works. The proposed development will remain discreet within the landscape to the south west, with occasional glimpses to the East. Where the proposed built form is evident, the use of glazed elevations will provide visual relief to the mass and form of the building, reflecting the skyline and treescape of the natural landscape. Similarly, the creation of the 'lake' in which the building resides will ensure further reflective opportunities.

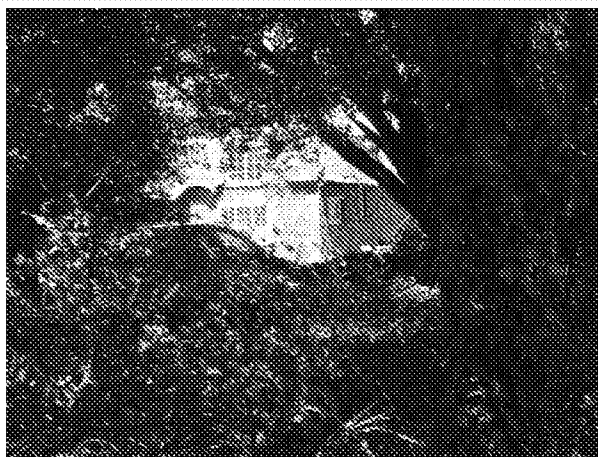
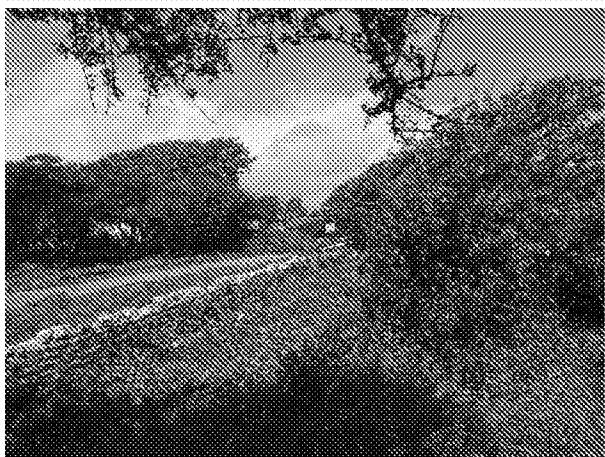
Immediate Views

The immediate views are generally those from the private approach to the site and the public footpaths to the North and East.

Both the approach and the vistas from the public footpath that abuts the eastern boundary provide glimpses of the built form. The clay tiled roofs providing legibility to historic forms characterising the local vernacular.



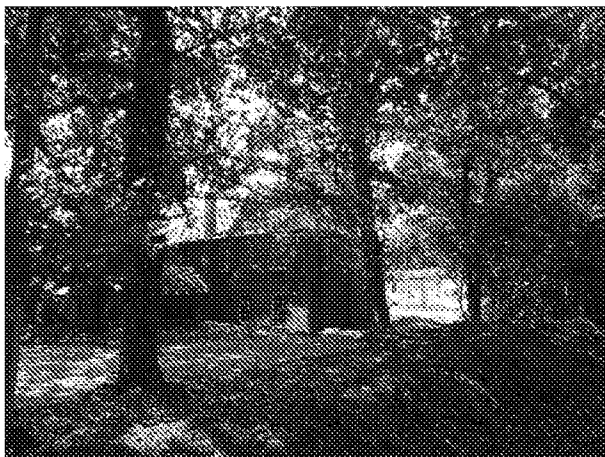
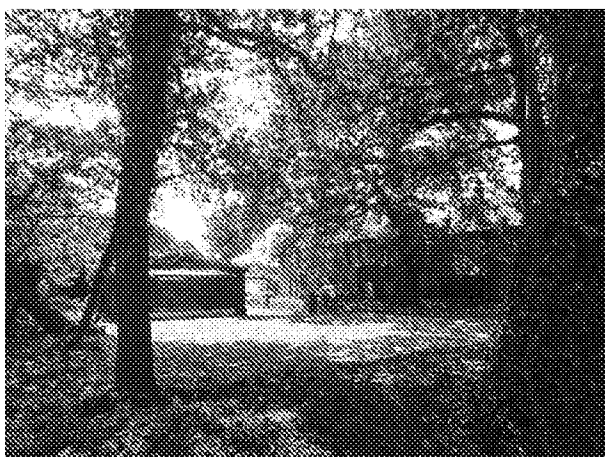
DSC03066: Views from the approach



DSC03031 & DSC03028: Glimpsed views of the built form from the public footpaths immediately to the South East and East.

The roof of Mill House is clearly visible from the approach whilst, through the established hedge screening along the eastern boundary Mill Thatch with its distinct and contrasting vernacular perceives a traditional cluster of buildings characteristic of the landscape.

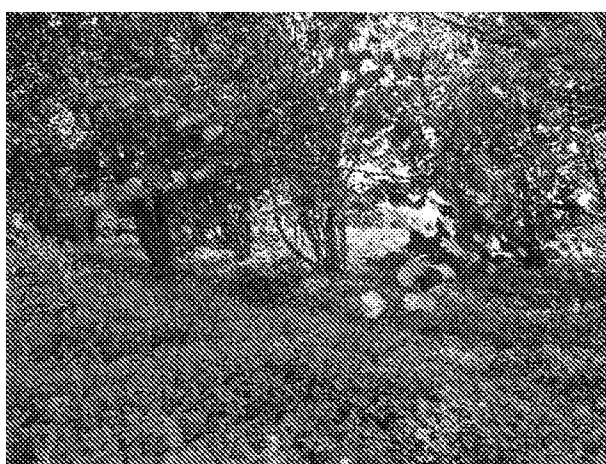
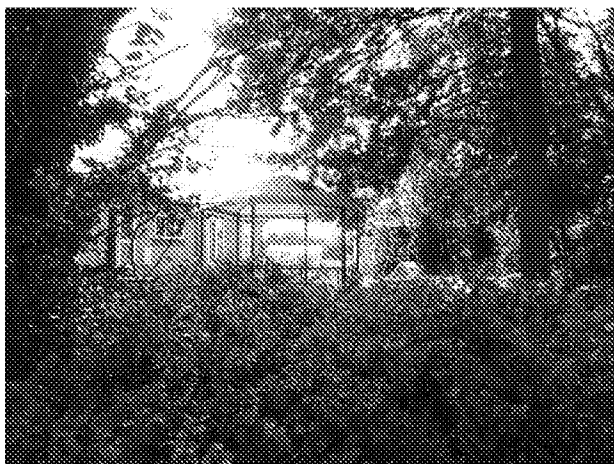
Not until the emergence of the footpaths at the North-East corner of the site is there uninterrupted views of Mill House and its garden wall.



DSC03038 & DSC03039: Glimpsed views of the built form from the public footpaths immediately to the North East

The trees that bound the site are an important feature, both for providing natural screening and enclosure but also adding contrasting light and shade to the built form and providing an opportunity of perceived expectation.

The footpath to the North of Climping Mill continues in a westward direction, offering further glimpses into the site which have been harmed by low grade prefab buildings in varying states of decay and abandonment.



DSC03043 & DSC03048: Glimpsed views of the built form from the public footpaths immediately to the North West

The sense of place and experience associated with the historic building group being replaced by a built form that negatively impacts upon the landscape.

It is this public vantage point which will afford views of the proposed eco-house which will sit in its own surroundings outside of the curtilage of Climping Mill beyond the historic flint wall and further to the south west of the existing, westernmost single storey former classroom dormitory building.

The proposed eco house will be connected to the historic building group by way of a structurally glazed greenhouse and walkway which will abut the curtilage flint wall of the mill utilising the existing opening. The modernist form will provide a clear visual contrast to the traditional vernacular whilst the use of glass will facilitate the cultivation of natural produce. The reflective qualities of the glass will lessen its visual impact upon the surrounding open landscape

Whilst the proposed eco-house is of a size and scale that would be considered visually prominent in the open landscape, the careful siting of the proposed development to an area considered outside of the immediate context of the historic built group and where there is a prevalence of natural screening and established woodland. Further screening and planting is proposed to reinforce the enclosure of this part of the site. The use of glass and water, will reflect the surrounding landscape, providing a pleasing visual contrast between the enclosure of woodland to the rear of the proposed development and the openness of the surrounding landscape to the historic group.

Within the site, it is the views from the south west, looking north east where the proposed development will be seen in context with the historic building group, however the careful siting of the proposed development will ensure that these views are partial glimpses of the eco-house, thus lessening its visual impact.

Currently these views and vistas are marred by unattractive pre-fab and low-cost buildings which neither reflect the local vernacular nor provide definition using high quality contrasting materials and finishes.



DSC03052 & DSC03057 Glimpsed views of the built form from the western & southwestern boundary of the site

The proposed eco-house would be prominent within the views and vistas of the immediate landscape if experienced in context with The Mill in its truncated form. However, the proposal is to fully restore the Mill to its original form and height which will rise up out of the landscape and over the height of the new development.

To minimise the visual impact of the eco house upon the historic group, the proposed development has been carefully sited to the western extremities of the site. Considerable new planting is proposed to provide screening to the approaches of the historic building group and access roads associated with the eco-house have been carefully located to run along the northern boundary in an avenue of trees and dense natural screening to protect the sense of place

The reinstatement of the Mill will restore the significance of the site, removing dilapidated buildings within its immediate setting that are considered harmful to its interpretation, thereby reinstating the legibility of the historic group of buildings and their association with the landscape.

The new development of contrasting form, materials and finish will sit within its own landscape adding a further layer to the morphology of the site. The proposed form of the structurally glazed planted walkway that connects old and new will retain a very simple modernist form, visually subservient to the historic group that will reflect the surrounding external landscape whilst the inner planting will screen the walkway that connects the eco-house with the existing built form.