

IAN WIGHTMAN
HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANTS



HERITAGE AND SETTING ASSESSMENT

LAND ON TODDINGTON LANE

Wick

Littlehampton

West Sussex

BN17 7PN

Client: Worthing Homes

Project: Construction of 10 dwellings

Date: August 2024

Heritage Consultant: Ian Wightman BA Hons MSc PhD IHBC

ian@wightman.ltd

© IAN WIGHTMAN LTD

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Description of the site and its setting	3
3.	Historic context	5
4.	Landscape context	10
5.	Significance	10
6.	Proposed scheme	14
7.	Setting assessment	15
8.	Conclusion	25

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage and Setting Assessment has been prepared to inform a proposed planning application to Arun District Council on behalf of Worthing Homes.
- 1.2. The application is for 10 small dwellings located on Toddington Lane to the east of Wick in West Sussex.
- 1.3. The proposed site abuts two listed buildings to the north-west with a further listed building situated to the south-east. Given the potential of any development to harm the setting of these assets, a setting assessment has been undertaken as part of this statement. The site is not within a conservation area, or a national park.

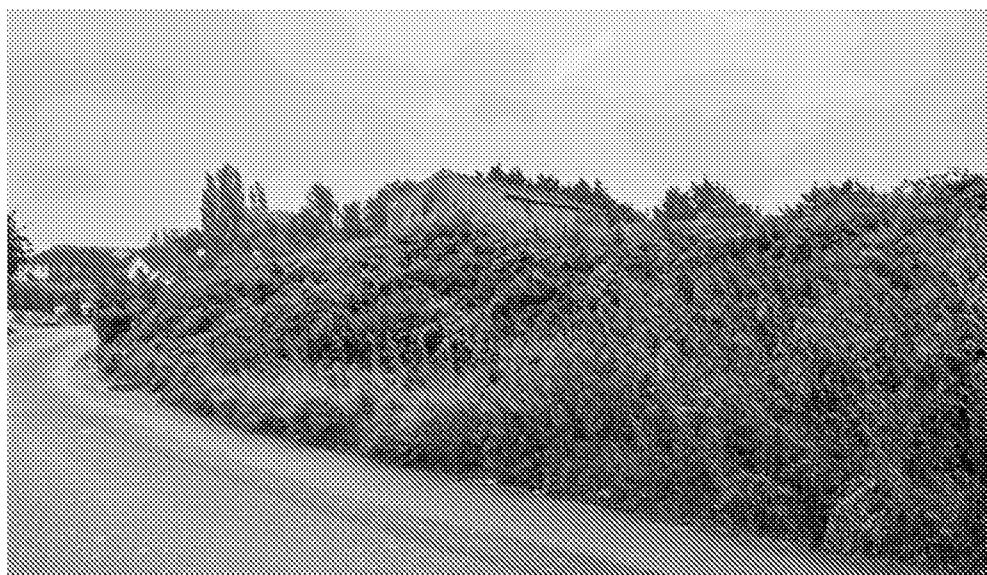


The proposed development site on Toddington Lane. ©Google

2. Description of the site and its setting

- 2.1. The proposed site is located on an area of redundant land to the east of Wick village and between Toddington Lane and the railway line which runs east-west.
- 2.2. The northern boundary abuts the lane which runs east-west from Wick and then curves southwards towards Littlehampton. The western boundary runs largely north-south and abuts commercial premises.
- 2.3. The eastern boundary runs southwards and then turns west along a track in front of a row of dwellings situated immediately to the south of the site.

- 2.4. Within the centre of the site is a modern barn which is of concrete construction with asbestos coverings. The building is not any architectural merit, or historic interest.
- 2.5. The northern and eastern boundaries are well defined by vegetation which largely obscure views onto the site from Toddington Lane. The site is visible from the track and terrace to the south.
- 2.6. To the north of the site and beyond the lane there are modern dwellings set back and to the east of these is Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecot, which are both listed building. The Dovecote is situated immediately to the east of the farmhouse. A lane branches off to the east here creating a junction and to the south of this is a further modern building facing westwards onto the lane, though is set also back.
- 2.7. The railway line runs to the south of this dwelling and the terrace opposite. Beyond this to the south is Toddington House, a listed building and opposite this, modern development. The east edge of the proposed development site is just visible from the road to the front of the house.



The proposed site viewed from Toddington Lane to the north-west.



The proposed site viewed from Toddington Lane to the north.



The proposed site viewed from the junction with Toddington Lane to the north-east.



The proposed site viewed from Toddington Lane to the south-east.

2.8. As is suggested in the photographs above the ground level of the proposed site is raised compared with that of the land which appears lowest at its north-eastern corner. This rises quickly when approaching the railway line to the south and provides a slightly elevated view of the site with the farmhouse beyond. As seen from the south-east, the site is largely screened by mature trees which also conceal the modern houses to the south of the site.

3. **Historic context**

OVERVIEW

3.1. The village of Wick and the Hamlet of Toddington were, prior to the mid 20th century, individual settlements, though have been quickly consumed by the expansion of Littlehampton from the south as it developed from a village into a town.

- 3.2. During the medieval and into the early modern periods Littlehampton was a village, known in the 14th century as the 'Villata de Hamton' with a population of just over 100. This did not change dramatically over the following centuries and was a similar number in the early 18th century.¹
- 3.3. Situated on the mouth of the River Arun, Littlehampton developed into a port from the early 18th century and by the early 1730s much larger boats were able to gain access to the wharves at Arundel through a new channel.
- 3.4. From the late 18th century Littlehampton had become a resort for bathers with new facilities appearing along the seafront from the early 19th century. By the 1830s Littlehampton had two breweries and a malthouse. Its population of c135 in 1724 had increased to 2270 by 1841.
- 3.5. The arrival of the railway had a huge impact on the inland waterways associated with the Rivers of Arun and Wey and a corresponding reduction in ship building. This was largely replaced by fishing in the late 19th century. The coming of the railway to the town in 1863 triggered a rapid expansion of Littlehampton with new housing and hotels.
- 3.6. Littlehampton's popularity as a seaside resort carried well into the 1930s and with-it, large-scale development, both in the form of visitor facilities but also housing which consumed fields across the north of the old village. Between 1931 and 1961 the population doubled.²
- 3.7. A cartographic assessment of the town beginning in the mid-19th century shows that the development of Littlehampton grew rapidly from the late 19th century.
- 3.8. By the time of the 2nd Edition OS map surveyed in 1896, development around the train station to the west and to the north of the High Street had encroached into fields. By 1938, when the 4th edition OS map was revised, development north of the train station had begun to consume Wick to the north and started to move eastwards.
- 3.9. At the time of revised OS mapping between 1954 and 1960, Wick can be seen as a part of Littlehampton, however Toddington had not changed drastically. It is only in the late 20th century that the agricultural character of the hamlet changed; first with the surrounding land being heavily developed for commercial purposes other than agriculture (see below) and then by large-scale housing development which has largely replaced it in the 21st century.



The context of the site in 2001 following the commercial development of the area. ©Google

¹ Ibid.,

² Ibid., pp.18-19.

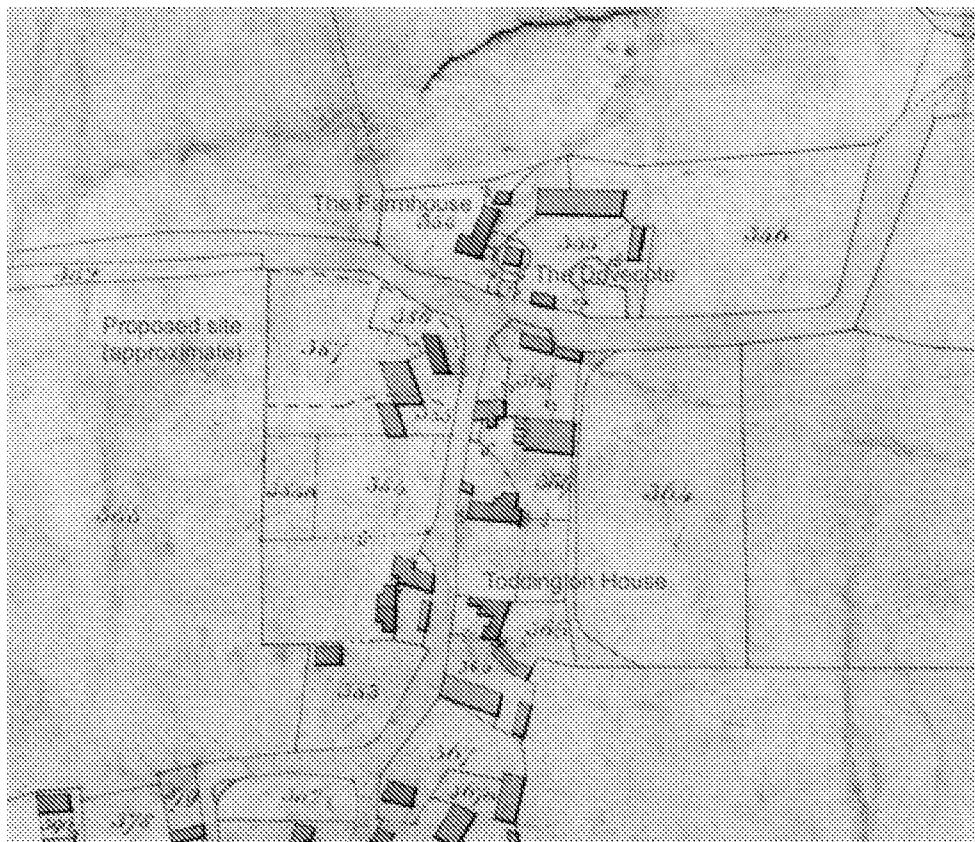
TODDINGTON

3.10. The most detailed historic mapping of Toddington is the Lymminster Tithe Map of 1837 (see below) which shows the scope of the hamlet centred on the junction of Toddington Lane and included the proposed site and lane to the south. As one would expect, the buildings were primarily farms and cottages and include the listed buildings of interest in this assessment: the Farmhouse and Dovecote to the north and Toddington House to the south-east.

3.11. The tithe apportionment tells us that at this time the Farmhouse (no.355) was owned by an Anne Hollist though occupied by a Mr Stephen Stammer. The tenancy included the farm buildings immediately to the east and fields to the north.

3.12. Toddington House (no.366) as it is known today, was described as a farmhouse and included outbuildings to the south and fields to the west. This was owned by William and Kinleside Gratwicke and occupied by a Mr John Batcock. There was a further farmhouse and outbuildings to the north owned and lived in by John Hide. The intensity of farms in this small hamlet illustrates the importance agriculture played to the area and the broader coastal plain.

3.13. The area of land which is now the proposed site was also partially developed, more so than it is today and included a cottage and two barns located mainly to the south of the site. These were owned by a Thomas Duke, however the cottage was occupied by a Sarah Etherington.



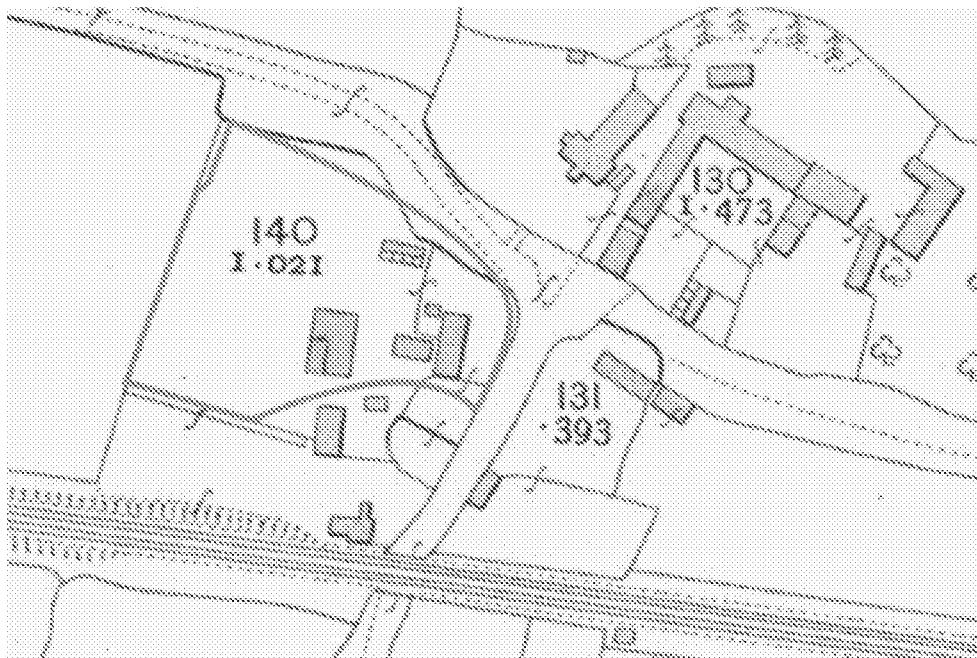
The Lymminster Tithe Map of 1837 showing the hamlet of Toddington with the Farmhouse, Dovecote, Toddington House and the proposed site annotated. WSRO

3.14. By the time of the First Edition OS mapping surveyed in 1875-6 and published in 1879 (see below), the farmhouse and farm buildings to the north of Toddington House (owned by John Hide) had been removed to make way for the London Brighton Railway. The Dovecote had been added to, with a long barn-type structure constructed to the north. This largely survives today.



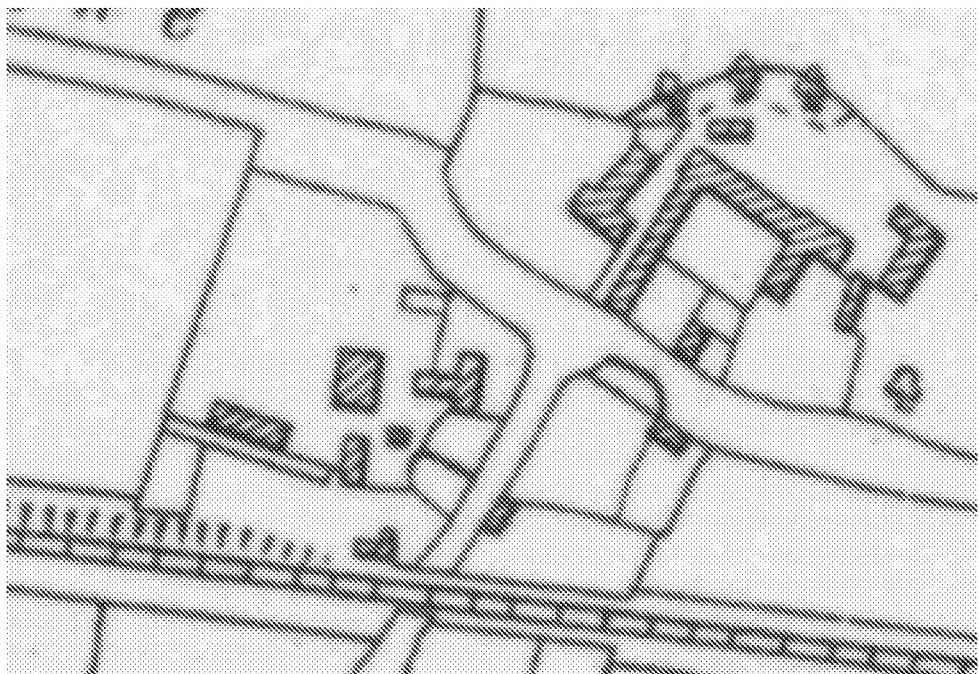
The First Edition OS map (1879) showing the impact of the railway and the proposed site. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

3.15. The Third Edition OS map revised in 1910 shows the site to the west of the cottage further developed with a new building immediately to the rear and what appears to be an animal pen to the north. The suggests that the land here had a continued agricultural use.



The Third Edition OS map (1911) showing development on the proposed site. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

3.16. OS mapping revised in 1932 and published in 1934 (see below) shows that a further building (presumably a barn) was added to the group. The early 20th century development of what is now the proposed site seems to correspond with the growth of Toddington Farm to the north-west which was also expanding during this period.



The Fourth Ed OS map (1934) showing further development on the proposed site. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

- 3.17. Mapping from the 1960s suggests that there is still development here on the site, though the representation of development is not clear enough to determine whether the cottage and barns still occupied the site as they once did.
- 3.18. What is clear is that since then these buildings were removed at some time in the mid-late 20th century and replaced with a concrete and asbestos barn which is the only structure retained today. In 2001 the site appears to have contained some large trees on its northern boundary, as well as to the east, however these were lost by 2010. Throughout this period the site was used for commercial purposes (see below) however today is redundant.



The proposed development site in 2001 and 2020. ©Google

4. Landscape context

- 4.1. The Coastal Plain is naturally a flat open landscape whose fertile soils give rise to a dense tapestry of arable fields. Its proximity to the coast provides a broad array of habitats with coastal inlets, creeks, marshes and tidal mudflats.
- 4.2. The proximity to the sea, climate and natural resources has attracted settlement to it since prehistoric times and it has many ancient settlements giving the landscape great time depth. Its small villages and medieval churches are a key characteristic of the landscape with long views of church spires, as well as to the Cathedral spire of Chichester.
- 4.3. The settlement pattern of villages and field systems developed during the medieval period with important manorial sites giving rise to field enclosure and woodland management. This has resulted in numerous dispersed farmsteads, some of which have been retained as dwellings and are now important historic buildings. As agriculture developed and modernized throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, the landscape has been subject to much larger open field systems and includes market gardening and most recently solar farms.
- 4.4. In many cases these large, alternative commercial uses have been replaced with housing as at Toddington, completing the change of landscape character from rural to suburban.
- 4.5. The broad distribution of farmsteads in the medieval period is normally based around villages though others developed in the 19th century. The use of loose courtyard plans predominates in the area, though some became more formalized as at Toddington Farm.
- 4.6. The traditional building materials of the Coastal Plain provide the area with its local distinctiveness. Materials include thatch and clay tiles whilst timber framing, brick, stone, flint and in some cases, weatherboarding are used to form the main walls.
- 4.7. Flint varies from the field flints washed down from the Downs to the pebble flints nearer the coast. These 'cobbles' provide distinctive, regular coursing which can be found in many buildings and walls, especially on 18th and 19th century farms and in villages. These are retained within red brick quoins. Flint is a key material found in the three listed buildings in Toddington.

5. Significance

- 5.1. Within Heritage protection, 'significance' is a term that describes a heritage asset's special architectural or historical interest. It is an interest that is understood in terms of values – evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal:

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative.

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

- 5.2. The proposed scheme has the potential to affect the setting of designated heritage assets and in turn the values that make them of interest. Designated heritage assets are an 'irreplaceable

resource' that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and therefore it is important to understand their value before making changes.

- 5.3. Local planning authorities must give 'great weight' to the conservation of heritage assets with any proposals that might affect their significance in a harmful manner requiring 'clear and convincing justification'. Local authorities should also look for and support proposals that enhance or better reveal the significance of an asset and its setting.
- 5.4. It is believed that the proposed development site has the potential to impact the setting of three designated heritage assets situated nearby. Two of these are located adjacent to the north boundary of the site whilst the third, situated to the south, has some intervisibility with the site when approaching it.
- 5.5. There are no direct impacts on these heritage assets in terms of physical alterations to boundaries or structures.
- 5.6. As mentioned above and shown below, the three designated heritage assets which are of concern to this assessment are Toddington Farmhouse; the Dovecote at Toddington Farm and Toddington House.



Location of the designated heritage assets in relation to the proposed site. ©Google (2022).

TODDINGTON FARMHOUSE

5.7. Toddington Farmhouse (also known as 'The Old Farmhouse') was designated as a grade II listed building on the 11 May 1949. It is therefore one of the earliest buildings in the country to be protected with designation beginning in the same year.

5.8. According to the list description the building is believed to date from the 16th or early 17th century, though has later additions including a 19th century north wing. The values that form its significance have been assessed as follows:

5.9. **Evidential value:** the house is thought to possibly date from the 16th century, though could of course potentially reveal an earlier date with more thorough investigation. The building also has the potential to include fabric from earlier buildings with greater time depth. Its evidential value is therefore medium to high.

5.10. **Historic value:** the building has strong historic value as a 16th or 17th century building and former historic farmhouse. Its design and plan adds to its historical interest. Its historical value is therefore high.

5.11. **Aesthetic value:** the building has aesthetic value due to its design and location, though it is not somewhere that is known to have been explored artistically. Its aesthetic value is therefore medium.

5.12. **Communal value:** the building is a private house and therefore its communal value is low.



Toddington Farmhouse.

THE DOVECOTE

5.13. The Dovecote was designated as a grade II listed building on the 6 October 1971. The building is dated 1699 and constructed in square knapped flints reinforcing the quality and status of the farm buildings at this time. The values that form its significance have been assessed as follows:

5.14. **Evidential value:** the building is dated 1699 though could include earlier fabric. This has not been assessed, Its evidential value is therefore considered medium.

5.15. **Historic value:** the building has strong historic value due to its type, age and association with the historic farmhouse. These two buildings have a strong correspondence which informs their joint history and special interest. The building's historic value is therefore considered high.

- 5.16. **Aesthetic value:** the building has aesthetic value due to its scale, design and relationship with the farmhouse, though is not somewhere that is known to have been explored artistically. Its aesthetic value is therefore medium.
- 5.17. **Communal value:** the Dovecote is part of a private property and therefore its communal value is considered low.



The Dovecote at Toddington Farm.

TODDINGTON HOUSE

- 5.18. Toddington House, with its stables, barn and garden shed was designated as a grade II listed building on the 11 May 1949 and as with the farmhouse (above), is one of the earliest buildings to be protected.
- 5.19. According to the list description, the building is also contemporary with the farmhouse dating from the 16th or early 17th century. The values that form its significance have been assessed as follows:
- 5.20. **Evidential value:** the house is thought to possibly date from the 16th century, though could of course potentially reveal an earlier date with more thorough investigation. The building also has the potential to include fabric from earlier buildings with greater time depth. Its evidential value is therefore medium to high.
- 5.21. **Historic value:** the building has strong historic value as a 16th or 17th century building and former historic farmhouse. Its design and use of materials such as Horsham slate adds to its historical interest as does its stables and outbuildings which are part of the listing. Its historical value is therefore high.
- 5.22. **Aesthetic value:** the building has aesthetic value due to its design and materials, though it is not somewhere that is known to have been explored artistically. Its aesthetic value is therefore medium.
- 5.23. **Communal value:** the building is a private house and therefore its communal value is low.



Toddington House as viewed from the lane.

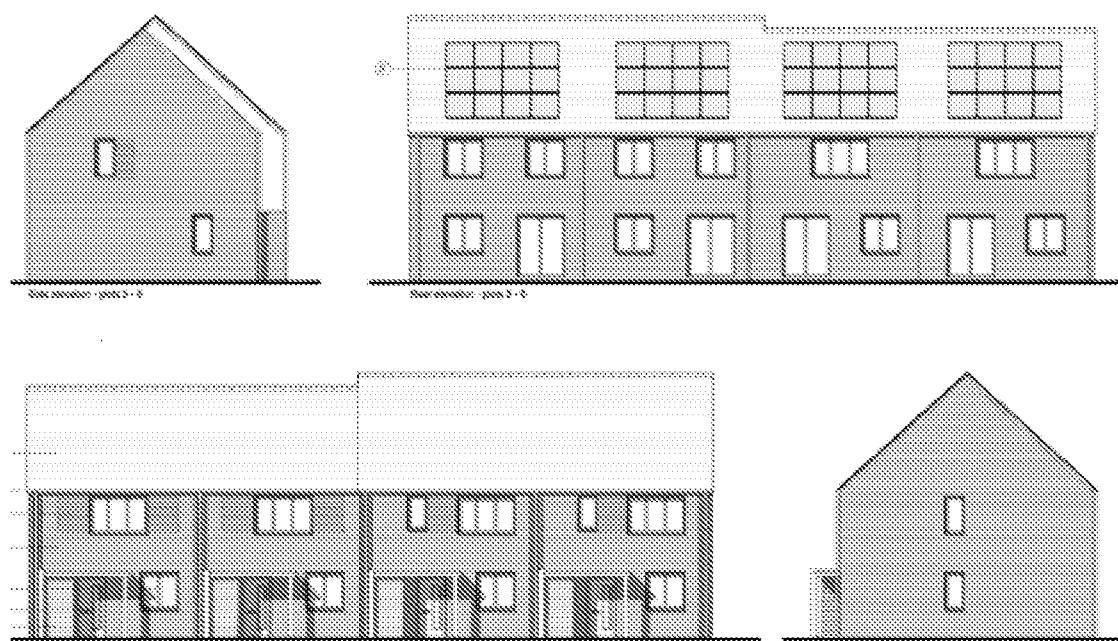
6. Proposed scheme

- 6.1.** The proposed development is for ten dwellings which consists of two terraces of 4 and a pair of semi-detached cottages. The plan below shows how these are laid out across the site.
- 6.2.** The access to the development site is from an existing historic track off Toddington Lane and therefore will not require any further form of access to be created. This also enables much of the boundary vegetation to be maintained and avoid the site becoming too visible from the lane.



Site plan showing the layout of the housing development. ©mharchitects

- 6.3. The terrace to the north addresses the lane with an existing footpath being continued onto the site. This will be visible from the lane, especially because of the raised ground level here. The terrace to the rear is less visible from the public realm.
- 6.4. The pair of cottages to the east are set back slightly which helps to mitigate their impact within the street scene. They are also located approximately where the old cottage once stood and therefore helps to reference the historic layout of the village as it once was.
- 6.5. The form and plan of the houses is quite traditional in scale and appearance, though the design and finish are clearly contemporary. Similarly, the fenestration is generally traditional in scale though the pattern is more 'modern' in places. The dwellings are made from a light, yellowy brick with powder-coated windows. The southern roof slopes are fitted with a solar array. These will not be visible from north where two listed buildings are situated.



Elevations of the terrace. ©mharchitects

7. Setting assessment

- 7.1. Setting can contribute to the significance of a heritage asset by enabling it to be appreciated and experienced in a manner that best reveals its significance.
- 7.2. This setting assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's guidance, 'The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) which understands setting as 'the surroundings in which an asset is experienced'. It also recognises that setting may change with the environment, over time, or due to greater understanding of the asset.
- 7.3. Historic England's guidance recognises that whilst visual considerations are important to setting, the experience of heritage assets can be harmed by other environmental changes such as noise, light, vibration, activity and dust. This harm is the same whether experienced by private owners or members of the public and therefore is not dependent on public accessibility, though where the public are affected, it may be an additional consideration.

7.4. The setting assessment is a staged approach which is described within the guidance as a series of steps.³ These are as follows:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these assets and views 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 the significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement or minimise harm
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

For the purpose of this assessment, the first four steps are being made.

7.5. The assessment is in the form of a written narrative which explores and discusses key views and the potential impacts of these. It does not use a scoring system which is often employed to make an assessment appear empirical or factual. This can be misleading. Setting is a complex issue and the experience of it needs to be fully considered. This may include the following:

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting

STEP 1 – IDENTIFYING HERITAGE ASSETS

7.6. Any setting assessment should be proportionate to the potential to harm and given that the development is relatively contained and only affects three designated assets, the assessment is restricted to these:

- Toddington Farmhouse (LEN: 1353802)
- The Dovecote at Toddington Farm (LEN: 1293479)
- Toddington House (LEN: 1027798)

7.7. In undertaking the assessment, the site was considered from a number of vantage points, including views from the approach along Toddington Lane and from outside the listed buildings.

³ Historic England (2017) 'The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition).

Consideration was given to the topography of the surrounding landscape which is relatively flat, however the proposed site is elevated as is the lane which raises up when travelling south towards Toddington House.



Designated heritage assets to be assessed shown in white. ©Google (2022)

7.8. As previously suggested, the key consideration of the assessment is the setting of three designated heritage assets which are identified on the map above. These include:

- A. Toddington Farmhouse, Grade II
- B. Dovecote at Toddington Farm, Grade II
- C. Toddington House, Grade II

7.9. The assessment considers these assets from viewing points along the lane which are largely close to medium range views. Due to the topography and nature of the new housing development which now dominates the surrounding area, there are no long views of the site.

7.10. Views of the site from outside the listed buildings have also been assessed as the openness of the land here will correspond with the former agricultural character of the landscape which was once the dominant characteristic of the area. Those views that were considered are as follows:

- A. view east across to the site from first sight on Toddington Lane
- B. view south-east along the lane towards the Farmhouse
- C. view south onto site
- D. view southwards up Toddington Lane from Toddington Farmhouse
- E. view west onto site from junction with track
- F. view west along track towards site and boundary of listed buildings

- G. view northwards from outside Toddington House towards Farmhouse
- H. view northwards onto site from railway crossing



Keys views identified for the purposes of the assessment. ©Google

7.11. The assessment by Ian Wightman Ltd was undertaken in July when trees and vegetation were in full leaf. Given that trees are a prominent feature within the grounds of Toddington Farmhouse, the assessment is aware of the potential for visual permeability once full loss has occurred.

STEP 2 - SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SETTING

7.12. The setting of a heritage asset can contribute to the significance of that asset and how it may be appreciated, or experienced. Unfortunately, the broader historic settings of all the assets have been changed eroding the agricultural character to which they all once corresponded. This should not however prevent or discourage further change being responsive and sensitive to aspects of a setting which are still positive to the appreciation of an asset.

7.13. Two of the heritage assets of concern here were farmhouses, probably from at least the 17th century, with the Dovecote being part of one of the farms. The corresponding farm buildings and outbuildings contribute to this understanding despite the erosion of the surrounding field systems that the farms once served and which provided their rural setting.

7.14. As we can see from the historic map regression above, the proposed site has contributed to this rural setting with a cottage and barns being part of the cluster of farm groups that made up the historic hamlet. As such, the site can be seen to contribute to the setting of the heritage assets and especially Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote which are situated opposite.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.15. Historic England's guidance on setting provides a useful checklist of attributes that might be found in a development which can in turn be harmful to the historic environment. This might be especially so where the character and nature of the place have not been considered fully resulting in harmful impacts.

7.16. It is also useful for larger developments which can include a multitude of complex changes that might affect the surrounding landscape. These attributes include:

Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset
- Position in relation to key views to, from and across

Form and appearance of development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc)
- Architectural and landscape style and/or design
- Introduction of movement or activity

Wider effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline, silhouette
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc
- Lighting effects and 'light spill'
- Change to general character (eg urbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access, use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover

7.17. It should be noted that these potential impacts here are not being considered against a well-preserved, perfectly managed area of historic environment. The appreciation of this space as part of the historic hamlet is considered within broader modern development which over the last 60 years has harmed the rural character of the area. This has included the loss of historic buildings within the hamlet and the intrusion of modern development, especially from commercial enterprise which has been developed on the former field system and resulted in the incremental loss of green space.

7.18. Where the potential for harm is identified in the assessment below, mitigation is proposed to help reduce the impacts and inform the development.

STEP 3 – ASSESSMENT



A: view east across to the site from first sight on Toddington Lane.

7.19. View A from Toddington Lane to the west looks eastwards across to the site where the gable end of the terrace would be visible. Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote are screened by the trees to the left and certainly during the summer months would not be visible from this angle. Some of the vegetation here also appears to be evergreen. Outcome: There is scope for low level harm here due to the higher ground level of the site and a potential sense of loss of open space which may impact its semi-rural character.



B: view south-east along the lane towards the farmhouse

7.20. View B from Toddington Lane, just to the west of the Farmhouse looks eastwards across the corner of the site. In this aspect the semi-detached dwellings would be partly visible, though not intervisible with the assets due to the tree coverage. Reinstating a building on the corner where the cottage once stood is considered positive. Outcome: the proposed scheme viewed from here will have some impact on the rural character of the village due to the modern feel of the design and different brick colour.



C: view south onto site

7.21. View C from Toddington Lane looks northwards onto the site. From here the terrace and semi-detached properties will be visible. As above, the impact of the development here will impact the semi-rural character of the site, however the house scale is sympathetic. Outcome: the proposed scheme will result in some loss of open space here and its semi-rural character. The reinstatement of built form where the cottage once stood is positive though the design will be clearly contemporary.



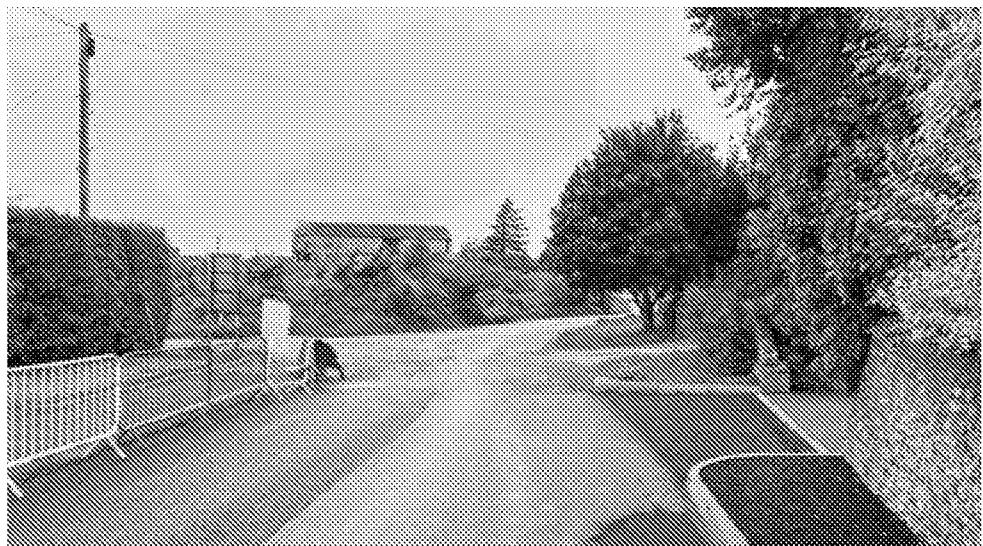
D: view southwards up Toddington Lane from Toddington Farmhouse

7.22. View D looks southwards towards the railway crossing. The Farmhouse and Dovecote are situated behind the viewer and very much part of this scene. The semi-detached dwellings and their boundary treatment are likely to be visible from here though this is not problematic in principle. Outcome: the proposed scheme will result in some loss of open space here. The reinstatement of built form where the cottage once stood is positive though the design will be clearly contemporary.



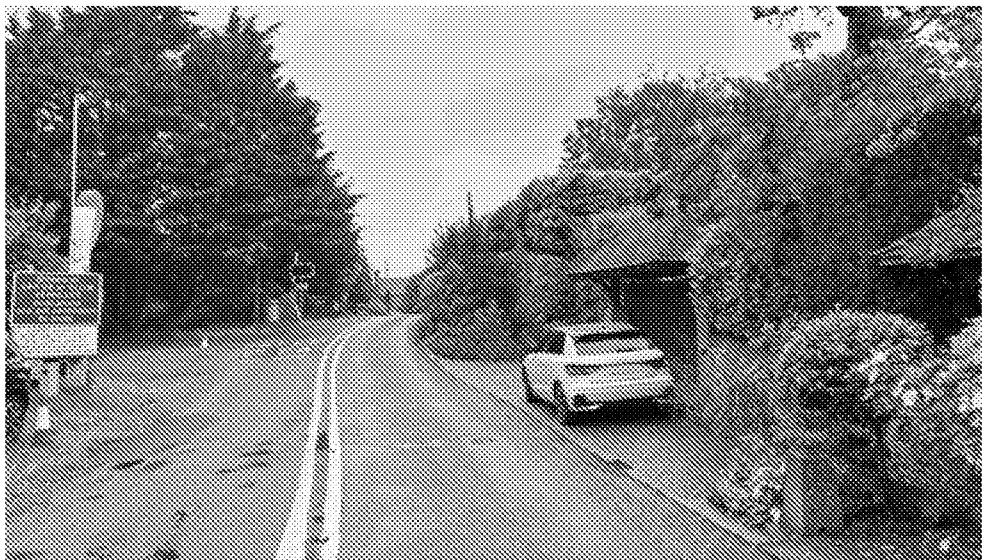
E: view west onto site from junction with track

7.23. View E looks westwards towards the site. The Farmhouse and Dovecote are situated to the right of the viewer and are very much part of this scene. The semi-detached dwellings and their boundary treatment will be visible from here, as will the terrace fronting the lane. Outcome: the proposed scheme is expected to result in a level harm to the setting of the assets due to the loss of openness here and the semi-rural character setting. The scale of the buildings however is appropriate.



F: view west along track towards site and boundary of listed buildings

7.24. View F also looks westwards towards the site. The Farmhouse and Dovecote are situated to the right of the viewer and as above are very much part of this scene. The semi-detached dwellings and their boundary treatment will be visible from here, as will the terrace fronting the lane. The terrace to the rear is likely to be screened. Outcome: the proposed scheme is expected to result in a level harm to the setting of the assets due to the loss of openness here and the semi-rural character of the setting, though as above the scale of the proposed buildings is sympathetic.



G: view northwards from outside of Toddington House towards Farmhouse

7.25. View G looks northwards from the front of Toddington House towards the railway line, with the Farmhouse beyond. The edge of the site is just discernible; however the new development is unlikely to be visible from here. Outcome: the proposed scheme is not expected to result in harm to the setting of the heritage assets.



H: northwards onto site from railway crossing

7.26. View H looks northwards from the railway line to the Farmhouse. The edge of the site is more clearly visible from here however the proposed development is likely to be screened by trees from this angle. Outcome: the proposed scheme is not expected to result in harm to the setting of the heritage assets.

OTHER SETTING CONSIDERATIONS

7.27. Whilst the identification of key views is helpful in protecting the setting of heritage assets, special consideration is also required for the overall experience of the place. Such considerations in this instance would include noise; light; activity, unaltered settings and landscape character.

7.28. **Noise:** rural locations tend to offer a level of tranquillity which is important to maintain where possible, though here the broader setting is now suburban and noise levels would expect to be higher. Despite this there was still a sense of quietness. Whilst the site itself is now redundant it has had commercial use which will have contributed to noise in the past. The proposed development here is unlikely to have a significant impact.

7.29. **Light:** historically this site has been agricultural, though there has been a dwelling on the site, and then it had a commercial use. There has therefore been some level of artificial light, though any new development is likely to increase this. Fortunately, the majority of this will be to the west of the site and largely away from the heritage assets.

7.30. **Activity:** there is the potential for additional activity with numerous potential car movements affecting traffic levels. This however is unlikely to represent a major impact given the level of new housing in the surrounding area.

7.31. **Unaltered settings:** the site as a setting has not been unaltered and has changed over the years. Firstly, as agricultural land with a cottage and barns and later as a commercial space.

7.32. **Change to surroundings:** the surrounding area has undergone much change and altered the character of the area.

7.33. **Landscape character:** the immediate landscape character is a mixture of commercial and suburban, with housing increasing in the area. The character of the site still retains a semi-rural feel which has informed the scale of the dwellings and boundary treatment.

7.34. The new housing design employs traditional characteristics and build quality to better relate the development to the immediate landscape and historic buildings nearby. The fenestration is traditional in its layout and the windows are not overly large.

ENHANCEMENT AND MITIGATION

7.35. As has been demonstrated in the setting assessment, the visual impact of the proposed development on the setting of Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote has the potential to constitute a low level of harm. This is to the semi-rural setting which currently remains quite open.

7.36. The assessment considers that there is likely to be no harm to Toddington House in purely visual terms.

MITIGATION

7.37. Mitigation can come in a number of forms and can significantly reduce the potential impact of development. Some key factors include building typology; spatial layout; design; landscape treatment; materials and softening of potential impacts through planting and the reinstatement of natural features.

7.38. Good development should not overly rely on screening from trees, but where possible trees and hedges should be used positively to soften impacts and restore historic boundaries. Native

plants and species should be used wherever possible. Here tree planting would help to reinstate trees that have been lost on the site, as well as help the following views:

View 'A' would benefit from tree planting in the north-west corner to reduce the impact of the proposed terrace as seen from Toddington Lane to the west. This would mitigate views when approaching the Farmhouse and Dovecote.

View 'C, E & F' would benefit from tree planting on the north-eastern boundary of the site. This would reduce the impact of the terrace as seen from the east.

- 7.39. The building scale of the individual houses is similar to that of a cottage though the design, colour and finish appear quite contemporary in this context. Their scale however does help to maintain the hierarchy with the historic buildings nearby.
- 7.40. An important feature of the design could be the use of appropriate materials to reflect the nature and local distinctiveness of the place. This would help to reduce the need for too much screening and will mitigate views onto the site from the lane.
- 7.41. The treatment of the landscape should also reflect its former rural context by using soft verges, traditional fencing, hedges and permeable surfaces to avoid a hard urban aesthetic. Using these approaches in a sensitive manner can combine to improve the character and appearance of the site so that any perceived harm is mitigated as much as possible.

ENHANCEMENT

- 7.42. The proposal to locate a pair of dwellings to the east of the site provides an opportunity for a building to replace the former cottage and reinstate the spatial layout here as once was. As mentioned above the site would benefit from carefully considered landscaping and tree planting.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The proposed development site on Toddington Lane is located near to three listed buildings. The site is within the immediate setting of Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote.
- 8.2. A setting assessment was undertaken to determine whether the proposed development would be harmful to these designated heritage assets. It was concluded that the setting of Toddington House would not be directly affected by the development, but that the close setting of Toddington Farmhouse and the Dovecote had the potential to experience harm.
- 8.3. The significance of the heritage assets' setting is as former agricultural land and the site of a cottage which contributed to the historic core of the hamlet. The setting thus contributes to the experience of these assets, but also the understanding of the area as it once was.
- 8.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policy for the Historic Environment. It 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 (para 206).
- 8.5. In assessing applications, the NPPF also stipulates that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be) (para 205).
- 8.6. It goes onto to state that where a proposed development will result in 'substantial harm' to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent (para 207) and

where the harm 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.

- 8.7. Most harmful impacts to designated heritage assets constitute 'less than substantial harm' and are often subject to a further grading which seeks to identify the extent of harm within a spectrum of 'high to low' with justification applied accordingly.
- 8.8. At Toddington Lane there is potential for a level of harm to the setting of the heritage assets due to the loss of open space and the semi-rural character that currently exists. Associated with this would be noise, light and an increased level of activity. This would of course occur with any scheme that was occupying a largely empty area of land.
- 8.9. Despite this, any harm here is likely to be considered *less than substantial harm*, and probably in the lower half of the spectrum. Housing provision as a public benefit would be balanced against this by the council.
- 8.10. In accordance with Historic England guidance, mitigation has been provided here as part of the setting assessment which seeks to reduce the impact of the scheme. As discussed above, this encourages the design to be as sympathetic as it can be within the setting of the heritage assets and suggests the use of traditional materials and design features as part of a holistic approach towards the protection of the setting. This includes improved planting to soften views of built form, especially towards the north.