

# A21 Tonbridge to Pembury

## LBC Supporting Information

**Draft**

**16th March 2010**

### Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely for the Highways Agency's information and use in relation to the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury scheme.

ATKINS Ltd assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

### Document History

JOB NUMBER: 5081037			DOCUMENT REF: LBC Supporting Info.docx			
B	Draft for circulation to TWBC and EH	AC / KS / SW	SW	AC	AC	15/03/10
A	Draft for internal circulation to HA and Atkins	AC / KS / SW	SW	AC	AC	09/03/10
Revision	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date

# Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Affected Buildings	4
3. Reasons for demolition	7
4. Relocation Options	9
5. Review in relation to PPG15	13
6. Conclusions	20

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Layout of complex

## Appendices

Appendix A - AOC Report	22
Appendix B - Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement	23
Appendix C - Letter from English Heritage 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2002	24

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides information to support the already submitted Listed Building Consent application for the demolition of the Grade II listed Burgess Hill Farm and Barn (application TW/09/03911) and the separate consent application for the demolition of the associated curtilage structures (submitted with this document in March 2010). Application TW/09/03911 was submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in December 2009.
- 1.2 The demolition of the buildings forms part of the proposed A21 Tonbridge to Pembury scheme being promoted by the Highways Agency.
- 1.3 The objectives in the Highways Agency Scheme Requirements, for this project are:
- To relieve congestion;
  - To improve safety for all road users;
  - To improve journey time reliability;
  - To mitigate the impact of the scheme on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
  - To minimise the adverse impact on the RSPB Nature Reserve and the Castle Hill Scheduled Monument; and
  - To minimise the impact on Ancient Woodland.
- 1.4 This document clarifies which buildings are to be demolished, outlines the reasons why the demolition is required and examines this in the context of PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994). It also seeks to address the comments received from English Heritage and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on the Burgess Hill Farm and Barn Listed Building Consent application (TW/09/03911). These mainly related to the requirement to assess the application in accordance with the criteria in PPG15 and to include the curtilage structures. These are fully addressed in this report.

**Note: this document is a draft and is for comment only**

## 2. Affected Buildings

- 2.1 The two listed building consent applications relate to the demolition of the Burgess Hill Farm complex. A location plan can be found on Figure 1. Figure 2 identifies the locations of the building within the complex. These include:
- Farmhouse (Grade II listed – application TW/09/03911);
  - Barn (Grade II listed – application TW/09/03911);
  - Stables (also known as a Byre) (Grade II listed as part of Barn);
  - Oast House (curtilage listed structure) (new application); and
  - Garages (also known as a storage building) (curtilage listed structure) (new application).
- 2.2 All of these buildings were subject to a detailed historic building survey by AOC in 2009. This is included in Appendix A (under separate cover).

### Summary description of Buildings

- 2.3 The following provides a summary description of each building, fuller details can be found in Appendix A:

#### **Farmhouse (Grade II listed)**

- 2.4 The farm house, is a two storey brick faced building of three window bays, with an attic lit by two dormers and gable windows and localised basement. It has a partially surviving internal timber frame, and a two storey gabled rear extension at its south end adjacent to a single storey rear outshot, both of these extensions dating to late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A northern single storey extension dates to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house is two rooms deep and has a chimney stack at its south east end. The gable ends are partly tile hung and the front elevation is decorated with flared headers and a plait band. The earliest parts of the building date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although the brickwork was first added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Barn (Grade II listed)**

- 2.5 The barn is probably 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. It is a three bay timber framed structure, with weatherboard cladding, a brick plinth and a gabled queen post truss roof with peg tile cover. There is a southern three bay outshot extension, built in two phases, dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century

#### **Stables (Grade II listed as part of Barn)**

- 2.6 The stables adjoin the south west corner of the barn's latest, 20<sup>th</sup> century extension. It is a low timber framed weatherboarded building, with a brick plinth, with a hipped, peg tile covered roof. It has a southern late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century brick lean-to extension and its main section is divided into two main rooms

#### **Oast House (curtilage listed structure)**

- 2.7 Much of the structure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century oast house was rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two storey building has a northern circular brick tower, with a characteristically conical roof, and a rectangular barn to its south, with brick side walls, lined with concrete blockwork, and a weatherboarded south gable end wall. The first floor of the building was converted into a flat in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and is accessed by an external south west staircase

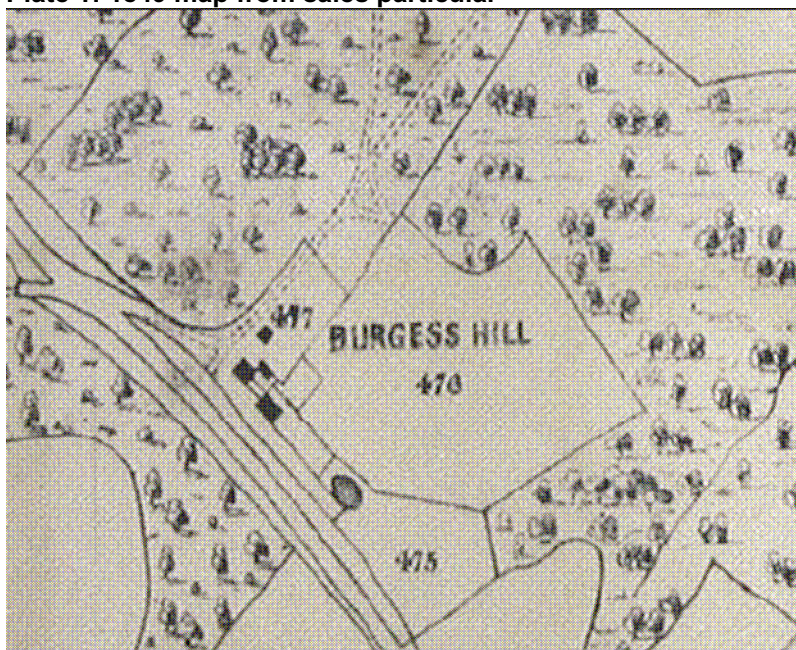
### Garages (curtilage listed structure)

- 2.8 The garage at the northwest corner of the complex is an L-shaped, simple single storey weatherboarded structure, with a corrugated steel covered roof supported on simple A frame timber trusses.

## Overview of the farm complex

- 2.9 The farm buildings at Burgess Hill reflect approximately 400 years or so of development. The physical evidence from the farmhouse suggests that a timber-framed building was established on the site in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This may, or may not, relate to the development of the Somerhill Estate in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century by Frances Walsingham and her third husband Richard Burgh the Earl Clanrickard. They built the Jacobean mansion at Somerhill and may have also had a hand in developing the estate; however there no documentary evidence has been identified to link them or other parties with the development of the complex. It is therefore currently unclear as to when the complex was founded and developed.
- 2.10 The surrounding field pattern of assarts and woodland is typical of the Weald and its basic form could date from any time in the medieval or post-medieval period. The location of the complex on the edge of the assarted area i.e. in the woodland / field interface, is also relatively typical and common for the area; consequently the nature and form of the surrounding fields provides no real clues as to the development of the complex. Whilst the complex could be seen to be slightly more isolated than other similar complexes in the wider area it does not have a particularly unusual landscape setting and its position in and relation to the local landscape of fields and woodlands is typical of patterns of occupation in the Weald.
- 2.11 What is clear, is that by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the complex formed part of the Somerhill estate. A September 1849 sales particular for the estate lists Burgess Hill Farm and gives the following brief description: *'The buildings comprise a house divided into two tenements, barn, cattle lodge and stabling for four horses'*. The plan with the sales particular shows buildings in the location of the present farmhouse, barn and stables with an additional building towards the north-east corner of the farmyard. From the description, it is assumed that the building in the north-east corner was the cattle lodge and that the other buildings were those present on the site today.

**Plate 1: 1849 map from sales particular**



- 2.12 The 1838 tithe map of the Parish of Tonbridge shows the layout of the farmhouse, barn and stables to be the same as present (and as per the 1849 map above). A fourth building to the north is also shown but this was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The farm is described as having numerous fields for use as both arable and pasture some of which, including 'hop garden' and 'clay pit field' give an indication of their use. The field immediately to the south of the farm is listed as 'garden', that to the east as 'Horse shoe field' and a field to the north-east as 'Little meadow'. The area of the farm itself is listed simply as 'homestead'.
- 2.13 Examination of the house and the barn indicate that they are predominately 18<sup>th</sup> century in date (suggested by the chequered brickwork used in their construction); albeit with earlier antecedents in the house. It is therefore considered likely that the arrangement of house, barn and stables emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century probably as a result of an expansion in farming activity in the period 1750-1880<sup>1</sup>, although it could be earlier. More detailed phasing analysis, supported by dendrochronology, could help establish the most likely dates for the site's primary phases of development.
- 2.14 The layout of the complex is of a relatively typical plan form that would be expected of this and earlier periods, being the 'loose courtyard' type in that the arrangement of house, barn and stables forms a courtyard which would have provided a focus for agricultural activity. This arrangement reflects its likely age and its location in the south-east "*The loose courtyard plan, formed by a collection of detached structures arranged around a yard, usually with the farmhouse located on one side of the yard, is the predominant farmstead type in the Region [South-east]*"<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.15 This core was supplemented in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the addition of yet another typical feature of the Weald, the Oasthouse. The 1865 Ordnance Survey shows the farmhouse, barn and stables (plus extension) with a fourth building which has a rounded north end suggesting that it is the oasthouse (the current structure is however largely a 20<sup>th</sup> century rebuild). Oasthouses are common in the Weald with the majority of English examples being found in the Kent / Sussex areas<sup>3</sup>. The addition of this structure in the c .mid 19<sup>th</sup> century would have been a relatively standard response by the estate owner to local economic factors.
- 2.16 The complex continued to evolve and the garages were added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century along with numerous extensions and alterations to the main buildings. This too reflects fairly typical patterns of response to economic and social conditions.
- 2.17 The complex is therefore typical in terms of its form and constituent parts. It still has a recognisable relationship with the local agricultural landscape and its history as a roadside farm complex can still be appreciated even though it is no longer used for agricultural activity. Whilst the complex is a feature of the local area's landscape it is visually screened by trees to the west and north, which restricts its visual contribution. It is also only one of a number of roadside farm complexes, albeit a relatively attractive one. Overall, its form and character reflects local vernacular traditions and therefore it fits well in the local landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: South East Region English Heritage 2006, 27

<sup>2</sup> Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: South East Region English Heritage 2006, 42 & 46

<sup>3</sup> Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: South East Region English Heritage 2006, 57-59



### 3. Reasons for demolition

- 3.1 The need to improve the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury is well recognised and supported by the Highways Agency, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, South East England Partnership Board and the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) (see Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Committee Report JTEW001 prepared for Planning Application Ref: TW09/03909). Improvements to the A21 section between Tonbridge and Pembury have effectively been under consideration in various forms since 1986. A previous version of the scheme which comprised a dual three lane offline scheme received consent under the Highways Act 1980 through made orders in 1993.
- 3.2 Following a change in National Government in 1997, the 1998 Roads Review announced a Multi-Modal Study for Access to Hastings (A2H), to which the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling scheme was remitted. Consideration was given to whether the dual three-lane standard was appropriate, given the effects of the scheme on the landscape and to its contribution to improving access to Hastings and Bexhill. The A2H Multi-Modal Study concluded that an off-line scheme was too damaging to the environment and that an on-line two lane dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury had the strongest case for addressing safety and congestion concerns in the most sustainable manner.
- 3.3 Following the A2H study, WS Atkins Consultants Ltd was commissioned by the Highways Agency in August 2001 to carry out a feasibility study of an on-line dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury. The result of this study has resulted in the current Scheme submitted by the Highways Agency.
- 3.4 Chapter 6 of the recently published Environmental Statement (December, 2009) details the development history of the scheme and the extensive range of options considered in comparison to the current Scheme. This is reproduced for convenience in Appendix B as it provides a clear overview of the historic development of the Scheme.
- 3.5 It is clear from this (see Appendix B) that the current Scheme is the least worst of the considered options in terms of its overall environmental impact. It is largely on-line or close to current alignment and this helps minimise impacts on the wider landscape, Ancient Woodland and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The alignment of the Scheme reflects the need to meet safety standards and design speeds, one of the key objectives of the Scheme. However, maintaining a broadly on-line configuration of the scheme coupled with the requirement to meet key safety standards does require the scheme either to pass through the Castle Hill Scheduled Monument or through the Burgess Hill Farm complex.
- 3.6 This difficult issue has long been recognised and has involved extensive dialogue with English Heritage and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The Highways Agency (through its agents) consulted English Heritage on this matter in 2002 when the feasibility study for the Scheme was being developed. A copy of the letter from English Heritage in response to those consultations can be found in Appendix C.
- 3.7 This clearly indicates that English Heritage agreed with the Highways Agency's assessment that it was preferable (although regrettable) to demolish the listed buildings at Burgess Hill Farm rather than damage the Castle Hill Scheduled Monument. As stated in that letter:

I can confirm that your report accurately reflects our past conversations and I think it appropriately assesses the heritage issues inherent in an on line dualling of the A21. There is an inevitable difficulty as the road passes the scheduled monument of Castle Hill and the grade II listed Burgess Hill farmhouse. One or other of these is bound to receive a negative impact due to the pinch point effect. Whilst it is never easy to accept the proposed demolition of a listed building we nevertheless think that your proposal has correctly addressed the relative significance of these two statutorily designated features.

- 3.8 This clear guidance from English Heritage has underpinned the Highways Agency's development of the Scheme including the very difficult decision to demolish the listed buildings rather than harm the Scheduled Monument or to develop an environmentally more damaging off-line solution.



## 4. Relocation Options

### Introduction

- 4.1 The relocation of historic buildings (excluding simple structures such as milestones and some statutes) presents difficult technical and philosophical issues. Relocation usually takes one of two forms. The first involves undermining the building and lifting it whole to a new site. This is the most technically difficult and is not commonly used in the UK although it was used in connection with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link project amongst other projects. More often, relocation involves the complete dismantling of the building and its re-erection using as much of the original material as possible. This is accompanied by detailed analysis and recording work to ensure that masonry units and individual timbers are reassembled in their correct locations within the rebuilt buildings. A first stage of detailed analysis and recording work has been undertaken by AoC for the Burgess Hill Farmhouse and Barn (see Appendix A).
- 4.2 The process of dismantling and re-assembly will inevitably and unavoidably result in the loss of historic fabric. Some elements will need to be replaced due to decay and others will not be sufficiently robust to withstand the process. As set out in *Informed Conservation* “*The process [that of demolishing and rebuilding a building] inevitably results in the loss of much of its historic interest, including its relationship with its original location, the pattern and alteration of use through time, finishes and detailing*” (English Heritage 2001, 52). The dismantling and re-erection of historic buildings therefore inevitably alters their significance. This impact is lessened if the building is moved intact but the historic context and setting will usually still be lost or altered; as can the finer relationships between a building and other associated structures. As this is an aspect of the significance of many historic buildings the complete relocation of whole buildings can still result in a considerable loss of significance.

### Burgess Hill Farm Complex

- 4.3 There are broad issues associated with the relocation of each of the buildings in the complex, either as a whole or on a piecemeal basis.

#### Farmhouse

- 4.4 This is a complex multi-period structure that is partially timber framed but also brick built and brick clad. Due to the nature of the building's construction the dismantling and re-erection of this building would inevitably result in the loss of much of its historic integrity and authenticity as elements of the framing, brick work and infill panels would undoubtedly need to be replaced during re-assembly. The soft brick is particularly prone to damage. There are also issues associated with the dismantling and rebuilding of the basement and the presence of the basement would substantially increase the complexities involved in undermining the building and lifting it whole to a new location. The fact that the basement is localised and the construction of the building responds to the undulating / sloping topography, would further complicate this operation.
- 4.5 The historic and architectural interest of the building lies in:
- The evidence it provides of alteration through time - *this would be degraded by any dismantling and rebuilding.*
  - The survival of key elements such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century timber frame and chimney base – *these would be put at risk during dismantling and rebuilding, especially where the timber frame has brick infilling. These elements are particularly fragmentary and the chimney base was built to fit the unusual topography of the ground around the building.*

- Its relationship with the group of buildings – *this would potentially be lost given the difficulties associated with moving the entire complex and the particular topography of the site, which is not level.*
- Its relationship to the wider landscape – *this would also be lost if it was relocated any distance.*

4.6 Also much of the building's late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century fabric, is not of sufficient interest in its own right to warrant careful removal and rebuilding. Indeed many of the later features and finishes, that are now integral to the building (such as the rear extension to the main parlour, the rebuilt fireplace in the main south parlour and alterations in the northern part of the building) detract from the farmhouse's architectural interest. If the building were to be moved without these detracting elements its structural and environmental cohesion would be affected.

4.7 Given all of the above the only viable relocation option that would retain any degree of the building's significance would be to lift the building as a whole, including basement and to relocate it to a new position in the general vicinity of the current site. Ideally the other buildings would be relocated with it. However, the particular topography of the site presents substantial difficulties in this respect. This approach is a very substantial undertaking that cannot be reconciled with the buildings' moderate level of architectural and historic interest; it therefore cannot be recommended.

#### Barn and Stables

4.8 The barn and stables are simpler structures than the farmhouse. It is technically feasible to consider the dismantling and re-erection of the barn and stables, although some fabric would undoubtedly be lost during this process this would not fundamentally degrade the architectural interest of the buildings. However, it must be recognised that without the other buildings in the complex both the architectural interest of these structures, which complement the design of the other buildings in the complex, and their historic interest as part of a representative example of Wealden farm complex would be lost.

4.9 The Highways Agency has not included for the relocation of the barn and stables in the scheme proposals for the A21 and the applications are for the demolition of the listed buildings and curtilage structures. However, the Highways Agency are willing to dismantle the barn and adjoining stables in a manner that will enable their re-erection on another site. This would be accompanied by a detailed recording and monitoring exercise. Materials from other buildings on the site (e.g. roof tile) would also be salvaged to support the re-erection process.

#### Garages

4.10 The garages are of no historic or architectural interest and they are at most of group value, as being functionally ancillary and peripheral to the other buildings within the complex. Given this, their relocation cannot be justified.

#### Oast

4.11 The oast house is largely a 20<sup>th</sup> century structure. As with the garages it is of no (or limited) architectural or historic interest and is only of limited group value, with its value being mainly that it provides visual variety to the complex, and represents a building form that is characteristic of the region.

#### Moving the entire complex

4.12 Given the complex's significance as a group, in that it forms a representative example of a typical group of post-medieval Wealden farm buildings, the most effective way to conserve the complex's significance would be to move it in its entirety. Relocation locally would be preferable in this context as it would retain at least some semblance of its past relationships, as opposed to

relocation further afield, which would fundamentally undermine the complex's significance by removing it from its historic context altogether.

- 4.13 Achieving this would require the relocation (by lifting and moving) of the farmhouse and the dismantling and re-erection of the buildings a short distance to the north outside of the road corridor. This would be a major engineering undertaking and may not be technically feasible given the basement and local topographic constraints. The particular topography of the site and the undulating nature of the ground in its general vicinity would mean that the character of the relocated farm complex and the relationship between its buildings would be radically altered to the extent that its group value would be diminished. Overall, the relation of the entire complex is a major undertaking which would not conserve the significance of the complex and is not justified by its historic and architectural importance.

#### Moving individual buildings

- 4.14 As discussed above it is technically feasible to dismantle the barn and stables in a manner that could enable their relocation, however their authenticity and historic interest would be diminished and they may no longer warrant listed building status.
- 4.15 The garages and oast house are not of significant architectural or historic interest to warrant relocation in their own right.
- 4.16 The farmhouse could be dismantled and relocated some distance away but it would be subject to considerable change and it would not retain its significance. The only alternative would be to move it whole a short distance away from the new road as discussed above this is a major operation and does not reflect the architectural and historic importance of the building particularly given the degradation of significance that would occur.

## Conclusions

- 4.17 Relocation should only be considered as an alternative to demolition; as is the case here. Listed buildings similar to those in the complex have been relocated as part of other major infrastructure projects. Key examples include the Channel Tunnel Rail Link which involved the relocation of c. 12 listed buildings. All of these, bar one, were dismantled and reassembled in new offsite locations. Only one Bridge House at Mersham, a 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse similar in construction to the Burgess Hill Farmhouse, was relocated whole a short distance to one side of the development, this did not seemingly have a basement.
- 4.18 In the case of the Burgess Hill Farm complex a number of options have been considered:
- **Relocation of the entire complex** - This would see the Farmhouse relocated whole, with the barn and other buildings dismantled and re-re-erected to reform the complex in nearby fields. This would be major undertaking which would not fully conserve the significance of the complex and is not justified by its historic and architectural importance as a representative group of traditional vernacular structures that contain no exceptional elements. It is therefore not a viable option.
  - **Dismantling and re-erecting the farmhouse in a more distant location** – this would substantially degrade its architectural and historic interest and consequently is not considered a viable or worthwhile option.
  - **Dismantling the barn and stables for re-erection in an alternative location** – this would conserve some of the architectural interest of these relatively simple buildings but their historic interest would be substantially degraded. It is technically feasible and the Highways Agency is willing to demolish these buildings in a managed way that ensures that the dismantling process is fully recorded and the buildings can be re-erected (with additional works) at another location.

- **Dismantling and re-erecting the oast house and garage in an alternative location** – these building are of insufficient interest to merit relocation in their own right.

4.19 In summary, the farmhouse is not suitable for dismantling and re-assembly and the complex is not of sufficient architectural and historic interest to justify the very difficult, complex and expensive process of local relocation in manner that would conserve its group value and key elements. However, the Highways Agency is willing to support the careful dismantling of the barn and stables to enable them to be re-erected at another location.

## 5. Review in relation to PPG15

- 5.1 PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) provides national policy guidance in relation to listed buildings and sets out a number of tests that need to be addressed when considering the demolition of a listed building and its curtilage structures. It also provides guidance in relation to highways schemes.
- 5.2 The following reviews the proposal to demolish the listed and curtilage structures in the context of this guidance:

### Section 3: Listed Building Control

- 5.3 Paragraph 3.5 of PPG15 sets out four general issues that relate to all listed buildings consent applications (including demolitions):

**3.5** *The issues that are generally relevant to the consideration of all listed building consent applications are:*

- i. the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms...;*
- ii. the particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location) which justify its inclusion in the list: list descriptions may draw attention to features of particular interest or value, but they are not exhaustive and other features of importance (eg interiors) may come to light after the building's inclusion in the list;*
- iii. the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, eg. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby;*
- iv. the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).*

- 5.4 Paragraph 3.19 sets out three further considerations in relation to the demolition of listed buildings:

**3.19** *Where proposed works would result in the total or substantial demolition of the listed building, or any significant part of it, the Secretaries of State would expect the authority, in addition to the general considerations set out in paragraph 3.5 above, to address the following considerations*

- i. the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use. Any such assessment should be based on consistent and long-term assumptions. Less favourable levels of rents and yields cannot automatically be assumed for historic buildings. Also, they may offer proven technical performance, physical attractiveness and functional spaces that, in an age of rapid change, may outlast the short-lived and inflexible technical specifications that have sometimes shaped new developments. Any assessment should also take account of the possibility of tax allowances and exemptions and of grants from public or charitable sources. In the rare cases where it is clear that a building has been deliberately neglected in the hope of obtaining consent for demolition, less weight should be given to the costs of repair;*
- ii. the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use. The Secretaries of State would not expect listed building consent to be granted for demolition unless the authority (or where appropriate the Secretary of State himself) is satisfied that real efforts have been made without success to continue the present use or to find compatible alternative uses for the building. This should include the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building on the open market at a realistic price reflecting the building's condition (the offer of a lease only, or the*

*imposition of restrictive covenants, would normally reduce the chances of finding a new use for the building);*

*iii. the merits of alternative proposals for the site. Whilst these are a material consideration, the Secretaries of State take the view that subjective claims for the architectural merits of proposed replacement buildings should not in themselves be held to justify the demolition of any listed building. There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation. Even here, it will often be feasible to incorporate listed buildings within new development, and this option should be carefully considered: the challenge presented by retaining listed buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them.*

5.5 The following examines these seven considerations in relation to the proposals:

**Paragraph 3.5 - i. the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms**

5.6 The Statement of Significance submitted with the Listed Building Consent application for the demolition of the Farmhouse and Barn (application number TW/09/03911) and the AOC report (Appendix A) examine the significance of the listed buildings and complex. In addition to these, English Heritage's Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide (2007) and English Heritage's Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character: Statement South East Region (2006) have also been consulted.

5.7 From an analysis of these sources the following is apparent:

- The complex is of a relatively typical plan form being of the 'loose courtyard' type. This reflects its age (c. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century origins) and its location in the Weald.
- The complex's relationship with the local landscape and the historic field system has been affected to some degree by the development of the A21, however the farmhouse's main façade was always seemingly to the west and would have overlooked the main thoroughfare (now A21) throughout the building's lifetime. The farm complex occupies a relatively isolated position on the edge of an area of typical Wealden assarting at the base of Castle Hill. Whilst it is perhaps slightly more isolated than other similar complexes in the wider area it does not have a particularly unusual landscape setting and its position in and relation to the local landscape of fields and woodlands is typical of patterns of occupation in the Weald.
- The likely dates of the farmhouse and barn (17<sup>th</sup> century origins for the house and 18<sup>th</sup> century for the barn) are typical of the Weald and are not uncommon nationally. It is noted that "substantially complete pre-1750 farm buildings are rare..." (English Heritage 2007, 3), however the Farmhouse is not substantially complete and the early fabric of the building is largely fragmentary.
- The grade II Farmhouse is of typical construction for the region being partially timber framed with brick walls, some completely replacing former timber framed walls, a peg tile roof and hanging tile gable ends, see Preliminary Character Statement (English Heritage 2006 – see [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)) amongst other sources.
- The Farmhouse has been subject to numerous episodes of alteration. Whilst these have denuded the completeness of the early fabric and hence reduced the building's architectural interest they do provide a record of change, which in itself is of interest (as recognised in the Selection Guide – English Heritage 2007 – see [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)). These changes are of the sort commonly found in farmhouses to create more space and comfort and to keep abreast of developments in building fashions.
- The grade II listed Barn is a weatherboarded timber framed structure on a brick plinth, with a queen post truss roof with a peg-tile cover. The building is of 18<sup>th</sup> century origins and contains numerous elements from this period. It has however been subject to much



alteration, as is often the case with this form of building. This has not overly denuded it of its architectural interest as an example of vernacular farm architecture. Its plan form, style, construction techniques etc are all typical of the area and the period, see comparative analysis in Statement of Significance (Atkins 2009) and the Preliminary Character Statement (English Heritage 2006 – see [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)).

- The stables (or byre) adjoin the barn and are seemingly mentioned in the listing description. They are of a similar construction, namely timber framed and weather boarded on brick footings with a peg tile covered hipped roof, although its much simpler timber framing and roof structure with the rafters supported on simple purlins held in place by occasional collars, means that it is of considerably less interest than the barn. The building probably dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its structure has seemingly remained largely unaltered, although its internal features are now largely late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and of no historic interest. Whilst the building now operates as stables there is no evidence, either way, as to whether it always performed this function (it may have been a byre). The nature of construction, form and arrangement in relation to the rest of the complex is typical of functional ancillary buildings of this date in the Weald.
- The oast house was originally constructed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the current building is largely a rebuild dating from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is of no architectural or historical interest and limited group value, although it does complement the visual character of the complex.
- The garage is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century structure typical of ancillary farm buildings being a mixture of brick and timber construction with timber weather boarding and metal roof. It is of very limited architectural or historical interest but does form part of the farm complex and hence is of limited group value.

5.8 The Farmhouse and Barn (with its attached byre / stables) justify their grade II listed building status as representative examples of typical vernacular farm buildings in the Weald. They, and the other buildings in the complex, possess no exceptional qualities and are not unusual in the local, regional or national context. They are predominately of architectural and historic interest for:

- their 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century origins (and the physical evidence of that)
- the evidence of change that their fabric contains (even though this change has significantly denuded the architectural interest of the farmhouse), although such evidence is not particularly unusual or intact
- Their group value (with the stables, garage and oast house) as a relatively intact unplanned farm complex typical of the post-medieval period in the Weald.
- Their relationship to the local landscape and in particularly the assarts and woodland that once formed part of the farm. These relationships are an important aspect of their setting and their significance.

5.9 The stables are a locally interesting example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century structure and are listing as part of the barn. The oast house and garages are not of sufficient historic or architectural interest to justify listing, based on the guidance contained in the Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide, English Heritage (2007). They are both of very limited value.

5.10 Overall, the listed buildings are of historic and architectural interest and with the Oast House and Garages they are a representative example of a typical small-scale Wealden farm complex dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Paragraph 3.5 - ii. The particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location) which justify its inclusion in the list: list descriptions may draw attention to features of particular interest or value, but they are not exhaustive and other features of importance (eg interiors) may come to light after the building's inclusion in the list**

5.11 The following are considered to be the particular features of the farmhouse, barn and stables (the oast house and garages are not considered as they have no significant features):

- Farmhouse
  - Survivals from the 17<sup>th</sup> century phase of the building, such as the timber frame that survives locally and the stone chimney base;
  - The single stopped beam in the south east parlour;
  - Use of typical construction techniques and finishes e.g. peg tile roof and tile hung walls, timber framing and brickwork, employing flared headers; and
  - Evidence of adaptation and change e.g. 18<sup>th</sup> century brick refacing of west elevation, brick nogging to fill the retained timber frames.
- Barn
  - Surviving elements of the original frame that survive; and
  - Characteristic brick footings, weatherboarding and peg tile roof.
- Stables - although of less interest the key features of interest include:
  - Surviving elements of the original frame, albeit simply built; and
  - Characteristic brick footings, weatherboarding and peg tile roof.

**Paragraph 3.5 - iii. the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, eg. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby**

5.12 There are three aspects to consider here:

- **The cohesiveness of the farm complex as a representative example of a 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century Wealden farm complex and the role the individual buildings play in that** – as discussed above the complex as a whole is a typical unplanned dispersed farm that represents a relatively standard form of post-medieval development in the Weald. The complex is a cohesive group of buildings that incorporates the major elements of a farm complex, namely house, barn and ancillary buildings including a locally typical oast house (albeit one that has been extensively rebuilt). The buildings in the complex therefore have a group cohesion and value
- **The contribution that the local landscape makes to the setting of the listed buildings (and wider complex)** – the relationships between the buildings, the historic road line and the A21, the assarted fields and areas of woodland are fundamental to understanding the listed and unlisted buildings and forms a very important element of their historical interest and significance.
- **The contribution that the listed buildings (and wider complex) make to the local landscape** – the complex is a feature in the local area and forms one of a number of roadside farm complexes. It is relatively attractive and its form reflects local vernacular traditions and therefore it fits well in the local landscape. Visually the complex is screened by trees to the west and north, which restricts its visual contribution.

**Paragraph 3.5 - iv. the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).**

- 5.13 The A21 forms the main route from London to the Bexhill, Hastings and Rye section of the south-east coast and forms part of the strategic network in England and Wales. The A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury forms one of the principal links between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, along with the A26, and both experience severe congestion.
- 5.14 The towns of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge are identified in the Adopted South East Plan (2009) and within the Regional Economic Strategy as a Regional Hub which should be the focus for development and economic activity. The South East Plan Policies SP2 and AOSR8 provide for further development in and around Tunbridge Wells Town Centre as part of the Joint Regional Hub proposals, including retail and commercial development. The South East Plan Policies H1 and SP5 also seek to provide 6,000 new dwellings in the Borough up to 2026.
- 5.15 As outlined in TWBC Economic Regeneration Team response to planning application Ref: TW/09/03909 *‘the key aim to smart growth within the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Regional Hub is reduce congestion and pollution levels by improving travel choice, promoting public transport, managing demand and facilitating modal shifts. SEEDA sees this smart growth occurring when there is investment in: key transport corridors, integrated inter-modal transport hubs and Innovative transport funding partnerships – all of which will be developed as part of this A21 improvement Scheme.’*
- 5.16 There is a strategic and local need for the A21 to meet the aspirations of the South East Plan and Tunbridge Wells Local Plan in terms of wider economic development of the area. The Tunbridge Wells Joint East Area and Western Area Planning Committee Report conclude the following:
- ‘The proposals by widening the road and filling in a missing link will help people travel to work faster, reduce stress and increase the amount of productive time available. As well as this, by removing the congestion in this area will encourage more people to visit Tunbridge Wells as a retail and leisure destination. Tourism and the visitor economy is especially important for the Borough, currently this is hampered by the well know traffic problems within the area. Whilst this is a key aspiration it has to be tempered by the ability of the local road network to cope with existing/any additional traffic....*
- ...There is significant positive support for the proposal in terms of the impact that it could have on the Regional Hub, the tourism and visitor economy and the wider economic development of the area. The purpose of the Regional Hub is to be a focus for development and economic activity. These are key aims for the South East Plan, Local Plan and Borough Council and this project would go a significant way to meeting these aims. It is clear that the improvement which this proposal could bring to the Hub and economic development is significant and must be a very positive factor in weighing up the planning balance in this case.’*

**Paragraph 3.19 i. the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use**

- 5.17 The buildings are in reasonable condition and the requirements for demolition do not relate to this criterion.

**Paragraph 3.19 ii. the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use.**

- 5.18 The buildings cannot be retained in use if the scheme is to proceed. All reasonable efforts have been made to design a scheme that avoids the listed buildings and their curtilage structures (see Appendix B), however this would only be possible by either causing greater environmental harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Castle Hill Scheduled Monument, Ancient Woodland and designated nature conservation sites or by implementing an unsafe scheme; this would not be acceptable.

**Paragraph 3.19 iii. the merits of alternative proposals for the site.**

- 5.19 As indicated in PPG15 paragraph 3.19, iii *“There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation.”* This is one of those cases. There is a strategic and local policy need to improve the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury as this will help secure the long-term economic and social regeneration of the communities that it serves (as outlined above under PPG 15 Paragraph 3.5 iv).
- 5.20 As also stated paragraph PPG15 3.19, iii *“...it will often be feasible to incorporate listed buildings within new development, and this option should be carefully considered: the challenge presented by retaining listed buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them”*. The Highways Agency has actively sought to accommodate the buildings within the scheme but this has not been possible without causing greater environmental harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Castle Hill Scheduled Monument, Ancient Woodland and designated nature conservation sites. The only other option would have been to design an unsafe scheme; this cannot occur. The options for relocation are considered in Section 5 of this statement.

## Section 5: Transport and Traffic Management

- 5.21 Section 5 of PPG 15 provides clear guidance in relation to highways schemes and the historic environment. Paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 state that:

***“New traffic routes***

*5.4 When contemplating a new route, authorities should consider whether the need for it, and any impact on the environment, might be obviated by an alternative package of transport management such as parking and charging policies, park-and-ride schemes, and public transport priority. New roads should not be built just to facilitate more commuting into already congested areas. This is especially true in historic towns where the character and layout cannot easily absorb radical changes such as new roads.*

*5.5 If a new route is unavoidable, authorities should initially identify any features of the historic environment - including parks, gardens, battlefields and archaeological sites as well as buildings and areas - and evaluate their importance. Wherever possible, new roads (and any other transport infrastructure) should be kept away from listed buildings, conservation areas and other historic sites. However, in each case a suitable balance has to be struck between conservation, other environmental concerns, economics, safety and engineering feasibility. Highway and planning authorities should set common objectives wherever possible and are advised to consult each other about transport proposals affecting historic areas. Such proposals are subject to the same constraints as other major development proposals in areas of protection, and authorities will have to obtain listed building consent or conservation area consent where appropriate...”*

- 5.22 The need for the Scheme is clearly set out in the Environmental Statement and the Scheme is a key aim of regional and local policy.
- 5.22.1 The Scheme has been developed through an integrated transport strategy and a regional multi-modal study (Access to Hastings), an approach consistent with PPG13. In addition, it addresses a key problem on the strategic road network according to a New Deal for Trunk Roads in England and presents ‘a scheme to widen major trunk roads at particularly highly stressed points’.
- 5.22.2 The Scheme would facilitate the achievement of key objectives of the Transport White Paper, 2004 in providing a more reliable and freer-flowing service for personal and business travel.
- 5.22.3 Support for the Scheme at the local policy sphere is provided in the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan 2006. Policy TP10 safeguards and supports the proposals to improve the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury, whether the scheme for online widening (‘the Scheme’) or the prior proposal (predating the ‘Access to Hastings’ study) to build on a new alignment to the west of the existing A21 south from the Somerhill Park junction. It states:

*'The Highways Agency proposes to upgrade the A21 between Tonbridge Bypass and Pembury Bypass, through one of the schemes defined on the Proposals Map. The Local Planning Authority will safeguard both of these alignments by refusing proposals which would compromise the implementation of either scheme. Following confirmation of the preferred scheme, the Local Planning Authority will safeguard the preferred alignment by refusing any proposals which would compromise the implementation of the scheme.'*

- 5.22.4 To this end, improvements to the A21 have been subject to a comprehensive design process which has been subject to Government and stakeholder consultation and is fully supported at a regional and local level of road traffic policies and plans.
- 5.23 There are no alternative viable approaches.
- 5.24 PPG15 clearly indicates that listed buildings should be protected (see Section 1) and this is reflected in the Highways Agency's approach to the design and implementation of schemes. However, sometimes choices have to be made (a fact recognised in paragraph 1.4 of PPG15) and further articulated in connection with new roads in paragraph 5.5. This states, that (assuming there is a need for the new road) *"Wherever possible, new roads (and any other transport infrastructure) should be kept away from listed buildings, conservation areas and other historic sites. However, in each case a suitable balance has to be struck between conservation, other environmental concerns, economics, safety and engineering feasibility"*. It is this balance that forms the crux of the decision to promote a scheme that requires the demolition of two listed buildings and their curtilage structures.
- 5.25 As set out in Section 3 and Appendix B the scheme has been developed over many years and numerous options have been developed and tested in terms of their environmental impact, safety and acceptability. This included seeking the opinion of English Heritage on the proposed scheme at the feasibility stage in 2002. As set out in Section 3 and Appendix C, their view was that the demolition of the buildings represented an acceptable way forward given the potential impact on the nationally important Castle Hill scheduled monument.
- 5.26 The current scheme has achieved a very difficult balance between impacts on key important environmental assets (e.g. the AONB, designated ecological sites, Ancient Woodland, the Castle Hill Scheduled Monument), road safety (through speed and alignment) and the impact on the Burgess Hill Farm complex. In this instance that balance has, regrettably, fallen against the Burgess Hill farm complex. The retention of the complex cannot be achieved without resulting in greater environmental harm through impacts on other nationally important assets or without compromising the safety of the design
- 5.27 Overall, the Scheme is the least environmentally damaging of all the explored route options even though it involves the loss of the listed buildings. The scheme therefore follows the guidance contained in PPG 15 in that it has struck a difficult balance between a range of complex interrelated factors. Consequently, the Highways Agency have regrettably chosen to apply for the demolition of the listed buildings to help ensure that other environmental impacts are minimised, safety standards are met and that the economic and social benefits of the Scheme are delivered. Their decision also reflects the clear guidance from English Heritage.

## 6. Conclusions

### Justification for demolition

- 6.1 The following extracts from PPG15 clearly indicate that under exceptional circumstances the demolition of listed buildings can be acceptable but only where clear and convincing arguments can be made in the context of the criteria and guidance set out in PPG15.

PPG 15 Para 3.3 *"There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings, except where a convincing case can be made out, against the criteria set out in this section, for alteration or demolition. While the listing of a building should not be seen as a bar to all future change, the starting point for the exercise of listed building control is the statutory requirement on local planning authorities to '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' (section 16). This reflects the great importance to society of protecting listed buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable and insensitive alteration and should be the prime consideration for authorities in determining an application for consent"*

Para 3.16 *"While it is an objective of Government policy to secure the preservation of historic buildings, there will very occasionally be cases where demolition is unavoidable. Listed building controls ensure that proposals for demolition are fully scrutinised before any decision is reached."*

Para 3.19 iii *"There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation..."*

- 6.2 This document has provided robust evidence in relation to the PPG15 criteria and clearly justifies the demolition in the context of those criteria and PPG15's guidance on highways schemes.
- 6.3 In summary, the applications to demolish the Grade II listed farmhouse and barn and the associated curtilage structures are exceptional but necessary. In this rare instance demolition is unavoidable and it would bring very significant social and economic benefits. The decision to promote a scheme that involves the demolition of two listed buildings and associated structures is not one that is taken lightly by the Highways Agency. However, the demolitions are required to deliver a safe scheme and to avoid more damaging environmental impacts on the AONB, Scheduled Monument, Ancient Woodland and other designated ecological sites. The demolition of the listed and curtilage buildings represents the least damaging option for the delivery of this needed and overdue road improvement.

### Conditions

- 6.4 Should Consent be granted, the Highways Agency would be willing to meet standard conditions, such as the following:

#### Sample Condition A

*A) Prior to demolition further analysis and recording of the complex will be undertaken, the scope and methodology for this will be agreed in writing with TWBC before commencement. This would probably include:*

- Further desk-top study and archival research (including review of existing material);



- Further assessment of phasing and dating of different components, including dendrochronological analysis and intrusive investigations, where appropriate;
- The demolition of farmhouse, garages and oast house will be accompanied by a structural watching brief to record key building features as they are revealed. The methodology for this would be agreed in writing with TWBC before commencement of works; and
- The results of these studies/investigations will be combined with the findings of the existing historic building investigation of the farm complex, in a comprehensive historic building investigation report. Copies of the report will be supplied to TWBC, the Kent Historic Environment Record and National Monument Record.

*Reason: To ensure that full records are kept of the original form and content of the listed buildings*

#### **Sample Condition B**

*B): The demolition of the barn and stables will be undertaken in a manner that makes it possible for them to be re-erected at another site. This will include detailed recording and marking of timbers and other masonry units, the careful dismantling of the structures, their storage in an organised way in an environment that ensures the items stability and avoids deterioration during a period of time in which a future site/owner may be found for the buildings.*

*The methodology for this and the procedure and time limits for finding an alternative site for the dismantled structures will be agreed in writing with TWBC before commencement of works. Additional materials from the garages, oast house and farmhouse will be salvaged and retained to provide a source of suitable matching materials to replace those damaged during the dismantling of the barn and stables and to be made available for the barn and stables' re-erection.*

*Reason: To aid the mitigation of the loss of the significance of the listed barn and stables*

#### **Sample Condition C**

*C) The demolition hereby permitted shall not be commenced before planning permission has been granted for the implementation of the Tonbridge to Pembury dualing and a contract for the commencement of the dualling work has been made.*

*Reason: To avoid premature demolition.*

## Appendix A - AOC Report

Under separate cover

## Appendix B - Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement

## Appendix C - Letter from English Heritage 16<sup>th</sup> December 2002