

Conservation Area Character Appraisal
and Management Plan

Nepcote

May 2020



Summary of Significance

Nepcote is an unusual Conservation Area in the sense that its as much about space as buildings, if not more so.

The two main spaces are Nepcote Green and the Cissbury Estate. Both are attractive parts of the wider landscape in their own right and also have a degree of historic interest which is more specific to each.

Sheep husbandry is fundamental to the formation and maintenance of the downs landscape and Nepcote Green is home to one of the most significant sheep fairs in the downs, giving it a particular resonance in the locality and region.

This is reinforced by the survival on the Green of the Wattle House, a building purposely built in the late 18th century to house the wattles used to create sheep pens during the fair. It is a rare building type and one in which function and location are inextricably linked.

The Cissbury Estate comprises a relatively modest country house, 18th century in origin but much altered in the 19th century, which sits within a designed parkland of early 19th century date. This is a relatively late manifestation of the parkland tradition. Together, the house and designed landscape form an attractive and distinct entity in the historic landscape.

Having said that Nepcote Conservation Area is a lot about space, it is also true therefore that both important spaces have a key building which links to their role in the landscape.

Between the Green and Cissbury is a single street of mainly modest dwellings which appears to have originated as a squatters settlement. The architectural quality of the houses is mixed but does include three which are listed buildings and a number of others which can be said to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Each of these three elements makes its own contribution to the Conservation Area but the 'whole is greater than the sum of the parts' in the way in which they illustrate, in one relatively small area, some of the ways in which the downland landscape was used, managed and enjoyed in the past.

Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

1.2 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has a duty to determine which parts of the Park have that special architectural or historic interest, to designate those parts as Conservation Areas, and to keep the existing Conservation Areas under review.

1.3 When it came into being, the SDNPA inherited 166 Conservation Areas that had already been designated by the various Local Planning Authorities that preceded it. These included nearly all the villages and other areas that obviously merited such designation. As a result, the SDNPA has so far, in its ten-year life, not designated any additional ones; the designation of Nepcote Conservation Area by the Planning Committee on (date to be inserted) is its first.

1.4 In considering the possibility of making Nepcote a Conservation Area, the SDNPA was responding to an initiative from the Findon Neighbourhood Planning Group and Section 3.3.7 of the First Neighbourhood Plan notes that:

A second Conservation Area centred on Nepcote is under consideration at the request of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group ...This addition was welcomed by the residents when presented at the open events.

These words are repeated in the Updated Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2035 and it seems clear that there is considerable local support for the designation.

1.5 This Appraisal seeks to set out what the National Park Authority considers are the most significant elements which define the character of the Conservation Area; it has an important role in making informed and sustainable decisions about the future of the area. Whilst comprehensiveness may be sought, the omission of any particular feature should not be taken as meaning that it is of no significance.

1.6 It sits within a wider policy context, including:

- The Purposes and Duties of the South Downs National Park;
- The National Planning Policy Framework,;
- English National Parks and the Broads. UK Government Vision and Circular 2010;
- The South Downs National Park Local Plan;
- Findon Neighbourhood Plan, both the original version of September 2016 and the amended version of January 2020.

1.7 In looking at the area, issues which pose a threat to the quality of the area and any possibilities for improvement and enhancement have also been identified.

1.8 A public consultation process, which ran from 16 March 2020 to 27 April 2020, sought views on:

- the principle of designating the area as a Conservation Area and, should that be generally supported,
- the contents of this document.

Specific consultations were also sent to Findon Parish Council, Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council, and the Sussex Gardens Trust, and the document was available on the SDNPA website.

1.9 Where appropriate, the initial document was amended to reflect comments received and the revised document was adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority for the purposes of Development Management and to inform other activities of the SDNPA and other agencies on *Date to be inserted*.

Nepcote in the Landscape

2.1 Nepcote is a small hamlet forming part of Findon parish and about half a mile south-east of the main village centre of Findon. Both lie just to the north of Worthing, on the A24 running towards London. The road now by-passes the village.

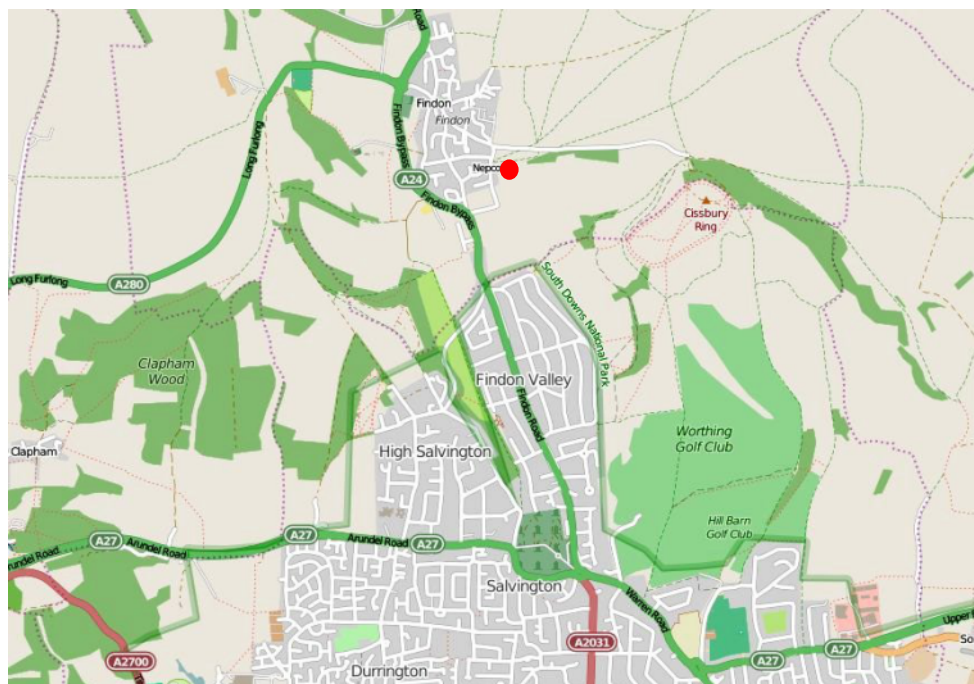
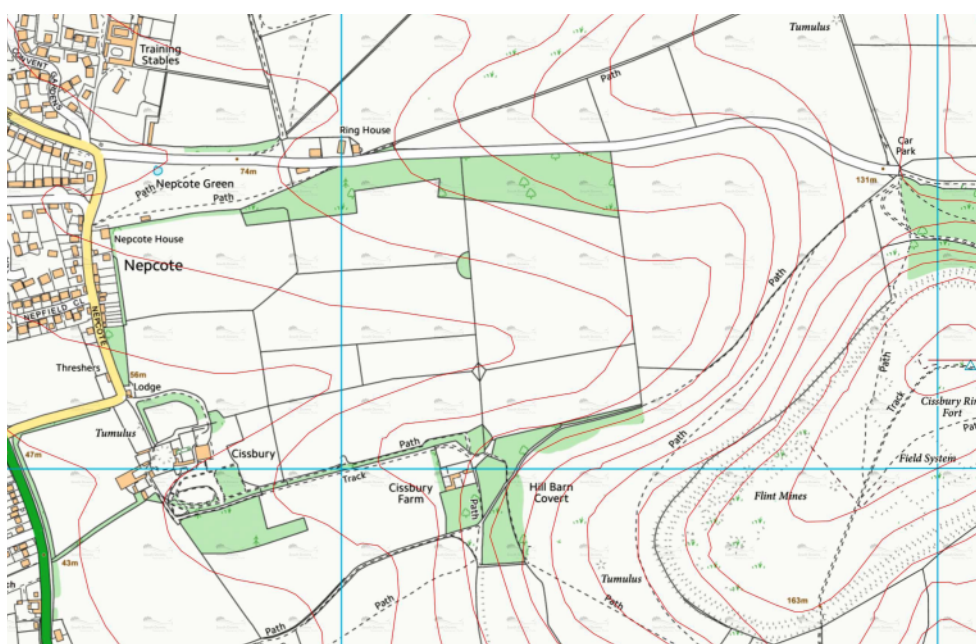


Figure 1: Findon and Nepcote in a wider context (above). - the latter is indicated by the red dot - and the topographical setting of Nepcote (below).



2.2 In topographical terms, the main settlement of Findon sits in a dry valley bottom and Nepcote is on a relatively flat piece of land on the side of that valley and below the largest hillfort in Sussex, Cissbury Ring.

2.3 Figure 2 below shows a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), a landscape analysis tool which indicates from where sites can in theory be seen. This particular example has been constructed using a series of points from within the Conservation Area and helps to demonstrate its visual relationship with the surrounding landscape. The red and orange areas are the most visible, with yellow and blue being less so.

2.4 The importance of the views northwards from the Green towards the open downland to the north (Figure 7 top), and across the dry valley, (largely in blue) to the wooded downland ridge beyond to the west (Figure 7 middle) are



Figure 2: A 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' constructed using a series of points from within the Conservation Area. The triangle indicates the position of Nepcote Green

obvious and these areas are particularly important to the landscape setting of the Conservation Area.

2.5 Having noted the significance of the view northwards from the Green, however, it must also be recognized that the open downland character of this part of the landscape has been degraded by equestrian activities and, in particular, by the boundaries which are untypical of this landscape type. Any more encroachment of this nature would further degrade the setting of the Conservation Area. (This subject is returned to in paragraphs 5-6 - 5.7). This area also has the modern settlement edge.

2.6 The land to the north, north-east and south-east of the Conservation Area retains its downland character and plays an important role in defining the setting of the Conservation Area.

2.7 West and south-west of Cissbury are open fields, associated with the estate, which play an important 'gap role' separating the Conservation Area from the suburban development beyond. From parts of this area, there are important views across the valley to a wooded downland ridge beyond, which are all red on the ZTC graphic. Although this view crosses developed areas, in practice those areas are lost in the valley bottom and the view is unobstructed; this low visibility is reflected in the blue on the ZTV.

Historical Background

3.1 Nepcote has always formed a part of the wider Findon parish but has long existed as a separate settlement node, along with East End, to the south east of the main village. Its origins may lie with squatters moving onto low-grade land alongside the road, with their occupation becoming more formal through time. The distinct character of Nepcote survives even as the gap between it and the main village has been slowly in-filled by 20th century housing of a rather suburban character.

3.2 The focus of the hamlet is Nepcote Green, which has great historic significance both to the immediate vicinity and the wider downland as the site of one of the most important sheep fairs.

3.3 This use of Nepcote Green seems to have emerged at the end of the 18th century, when George Holford received the agreement of the lord of Findon manor to hold a fair. Holford paid a rent for booths pitched there and on every head of cattle penned, and by 1814 the fair was an annual September event. The Wattle House was built to serve the event by 1803. In the later 19th century the fair was the great village holiday of the year and also served for the hiring of labour. Local auctioneers Churchman, Burt and Son of Steyning, ran the fair from 1910 through to 1977, with the number of sheep peaking at about 10,000.

3.4 The Green itself was given to the Parish in 1856 and is was allocated for recreation use in the Inclosure Award of 1859. From 1887, the Parish has received the tolls.

3.5 Refreshment for visitors to the fair was provided by The Running Horse Public House, now Nepcote Lodge, and a series of 'bough houses' (private houses allowed to sell drink on fair days).

3.6 Nepcote was a centre of protestant non-conformity from the mid-19C – with Mormons, Plymouth Brethren and other sects represented – and a Chapel was built by Particular Baptists in 1881.

3.7 The Wattle House was given to the Parish Council, along with the Lordship of the Manor of Findon, by Col. Margesson in 1937. In its time the

building has been used as a meeting room, a library and as cottages in addition to its original function.

3.7 The wider parish of Findon has had a number of important park-lands since the middle ages. For Nepcote this is Cissbury Park. This estate has its origins in Foster's Farm which was held freehold of the manor of Findon. By 1726, East End House was in existence as a five bay, two storey, house with hipped roof. Renamed as Cissbury House by 1811, it was enlarged on a number of occasions and reached its present form by 1897.

3.8 The accompanying park- and was laid out between 1808 and 1839, and was enlarged on its east side before 1875. It is clearly distinguished from the surrounding downland on 19th and early 20th century OS mapping (Figure 3), and can be seen on aerial photographs (Figure 4).

3.9 Nepcote has for some time played an important role in the horse racing industry and this has had a visible influence on the landscape. Nick Gifford followed his father in the stable on Stables Lane, just outside the Conservation Area, and Philip Hide trained his horses from stables within the Cissbury Estate until recently.

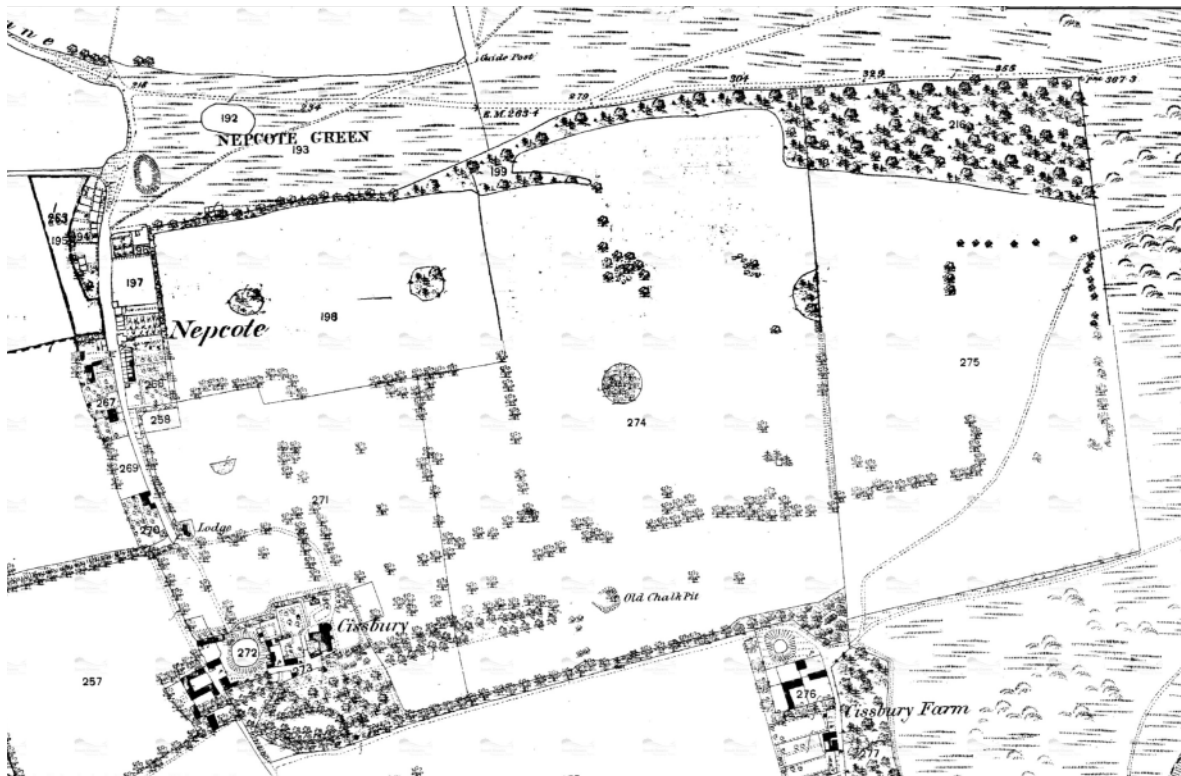


Figure 3: Nepcote in 1875 (above) and in 1914 (below).

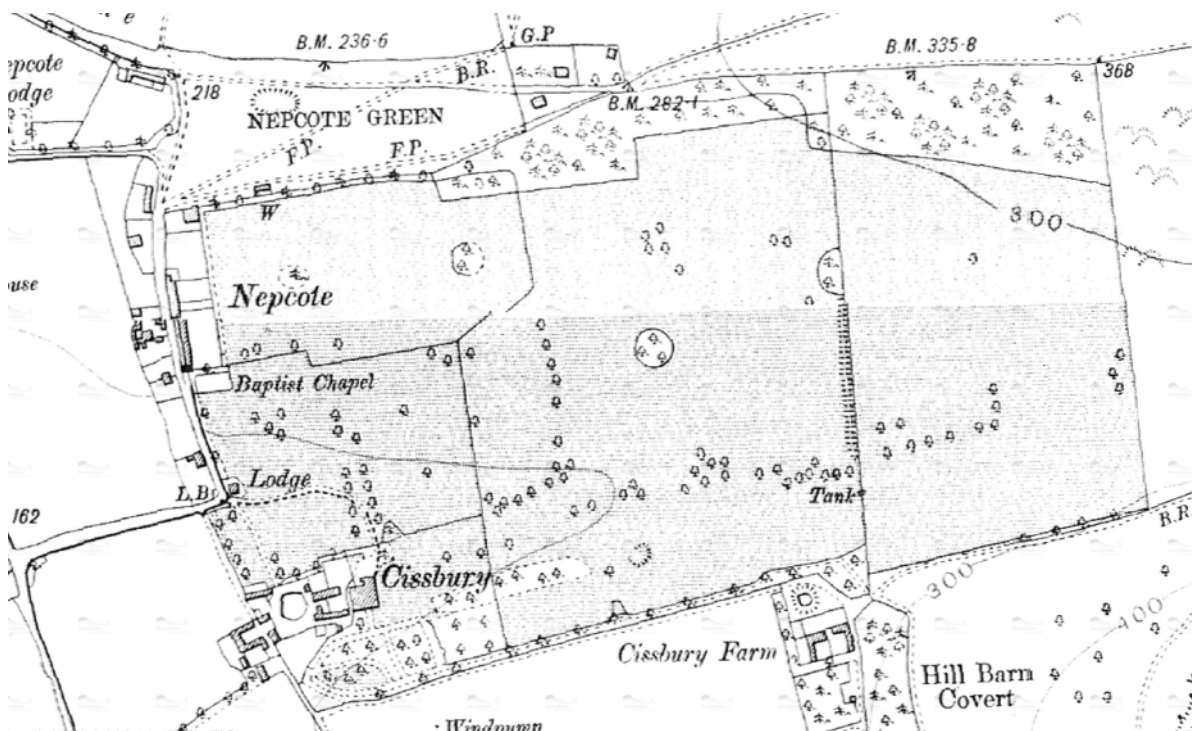




Figure 4: Aerial photographs showing the Cissbury Parkland in 1947 (above) and 2013 (below) (both courtesy of West Sussex Historic Environment Record)



Character Analysis

4.1 The Conservation Area falls into three distinct elements or character areas; the Green itself, the historic house and parkland of Cissbury, and the small settlement between the two.

4.2 The elements which make a positive contribution to those character areas are identified on a Figure 18 which can be found at the back of this document, with the small settlement being shown in more detail on Figure 19.

Nepcote Green

4.3 There are usually important open spaces within Conservation Areas but this is particularly true of Nepcote

4.4 Nepcote Green, in particular, is the rock on which the Conservation Area designation sits. Sheep husbandry has been of great significance to Sussex and the Downs through history and the role of Nepcote Green as home to one of the largest sheep fairs gives it a local and regional resonance. (Figure 5).

4.5 This is reinforced by the presence on the Green of the Wattle House, a building purposely built in the late 18th century to house the wattles used to create sheep pens during the fair (Figure 8). It is a rare building type and one in which function and location are inextricably linked. The building has been restored by the Parish Council in recent years.

4.6 At the other end of the Green, and prominent in views across it to the east, is an attractive Arts-&-Crafts house (Figure 8 bottom).

4.7 The Sheep Fair is a living tradition and is held annually on the Green, although it has grown beyond its original role. into a village fair. The Green is an important amenity for the immediate community and for people from further away and is particularly well used for dog walking.

4.8 There are important views from the Green to the areas beyond, which have already been discussed (Figure 7 top and middle).

The Settlement

4.9 The settlement itself is a very simple line of dwellings either side of Nepcote Lane. This perhaps reflects the creation of the house plots by squatters occupying marginal land along the roadside.

4.10 A series of period buildings survive on the northern part of Nepcote Lane, particularly on its east side, and these form the residential core of the settlement. They include two of the listed buildings; Coachmans (Figure 9) and Greenside Cottage (Figure 10). Nepcote Lodge (Figure 10) make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The former Chapel is the only non-residential building (Figure 12).

4.11 A newly built house next door to Coachmans and Greenside Cottage reflects the form of those buildings in its design. Figure 6 shows the view prior to, and after, construction of the new house as well as a closer view of the house. The overall impact of the new development is an enhancement of the Conservation Area and, for this reason, the new house is identified as a building making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

4.12 Modern residential development has encroached into the area west of Nepcote Lane and this has blurred the edge of the historic settlement in this area.

4.13 Further down Nepcote Lane, Millbrook Cottages and York Terrace (Figure 11) still make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. To the south, beyond the Chapel, development is much more limited, with only three buildings on this part of the lane; 1 & 2 Elder Cottages (Figure 12), the Grade II Threshers (Figure 13), and the Lodge to Cissbury (Figure 14 bottom). Otherwise, there is open land on either side of the lane.

Cissbury House and Parkland

4.14 At its southern end, Nepcote turns sharp right and leads down the A23. From that sharp bend, a private drive leads to a small country house, Cissbury which stands with its estate buildings in one corner of a parkland. Cissbury is a Grade II listed building, with 18th century origins but much extended in the 19th century (Figure 14 top).

4.15 The parkland associated with Cissbury, lies to the north and east of the main house (Figure 15). This is a largely 19th century creation. Aerial photography and map regression (Figures 3 and 4) show that the parkland has been degraded with the loss of trees since the war but enough survives to recognise the parkland for what it is. It remains a high quality environment and heritage asset.

4.16 Cissbury and its parkland have remained in the current ownership for some time and this continuity has undoubtedly contributed to its survival. The agricultural land is tenanted and has been managed in recent years under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS), which includes management of the trees.

4.17 Like many estates, Cissbury Estate is seeking to diversify and has created a wedding venue in a group of converted farm buildings. This work has been undertaken to a high standard and the additional income it generates should help to maintain the house and the wider estate.

4.18 Beyond the Cissbury parkland, but contiguous with it, are a number of fields which remain undeveloped. The open nature of this area is a significant component in holding the spread of suburban Findon at bay and also allows fine views across to the wider landscape to the west, beyond the A23 which disappears into a fold in the landscape at this point.

4.19 The third open space is the fields to west of Nepcote Lane and Cissbury. The undeveloped and open nature of this land plays a significant buffer role between the Conservation Area and the suburban spread of Findon

4.20 In both the Green and the Cissbury parkland, trees make a significant contribution to the character of the area. They are fundamental components of the parkland but the Green is also fringed with trees and there are other blocks of trees which make their own contribution.

Boundaries of the Conservation Area.

4.21 To a significant extent, the boundaries of the Conservation Area are dictated by the historic arrangement and, to some degree, its survival to the present day.

4.22 The boundary to the north follows that of the Green as shown on the 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping. This takes it beyond the lane, which was originally no more than a footpath, to encompass the whole of the historic extent of the Green.

4.23 To the north- east and east, the boundary follows that of the parkland, which clearly contrasts with the downland beyond, and tree belts. On the southern side of the parkland, the boundary incorporates a block of trees and the buildings of Cissbury Farm, which are incorporated into the Conservation Area in recognition of their historic role as part of the estate.

4.24 To the south and west, of the Parkland, but contiguous with it, are a number of fields which remain undeveloped. The open nature of this area is a significant component in holding the spread of suburban Findon at bay and also allows fine views across to the wider landscape to the west, beyond the A23 which disappears into a fold in the landscape at this point. The importance of this role is such that the land has been incorporated into the Conservation Area boundary.

4.25 Finally, the boundary on the west side of the settlement is drawn to incorporate those buildings which are historic or which otherwise make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area - including the two listed cottages - whilst excluding those which are more recent and neutral in their contribution.

Issues and Opportunities

5.1 The buildings within the Conservation Area are generally in reasonable order and none is a cause of particular concern.

5.2 At the time of the Building at Risk survey undertaken in 2012-13, none of the listed buildings emerged as being at risk, although the Wattle House was identified as being vulnerable. However, the Parish Council has subsequently undertaken a programme of works which have returned the fabric to good order.

5.3 The ground floor of the building remains in its original use as storage associated with the sheep fair, which is welcome, but the upper floor remains largely unused. There is an opportunity to use that floor in some productive manner and the Parish Council may wish to explore this in discussions with the Local Planning Authority.

5.4 In terms of opportunity sites within the settlement, the main possibility is represented by the large, flat-roofed garage set back from the lane on its east side (Figure 16). The existing structure is not attractive and it may be worth examining the feasibility of redeveloping this site with a modest two storey cottage set at the back of the highway.

5.5 The undergrounding of overhead wires, particularly those which run along the northern edge of the Green, would produce a worthwhile enhancement of the Conservation Area.

5.6 The significance of the land to the north of The Green as part of the setting of the Conservation Area and the urban-rural interface has already been mentioned in Section 2. This land accommodates equine activities - a gallop and paddocks - which have quite a long history in the locality.

5.7 Having said that the manner in which some of these activities are currently undertaken does tend to degrade the land visually. This is particularly true for the way in which the paddocks have been carved out of the original downland with inappropriate boundaries. The use of well-managed hedges with fences on either side to divide the paddocks would produce both visual improvement and secure other benefits for the natural environment, whilst

continuing to recognise the on-going contribution of equine activities.

5.8 The historic designed landscape that accompanies Cissbury is an important element in the Conservation Area. However, as the photographs in Figure 4 demonstrate, there has been some decline since the War and a programme of historic landscape restoration could produce significant improvements to the landscape and historic environment.

Photographic Survey



Figure 5 - Important Views across Nepcote Green, looking eastwards (above) and westwards (below).





Figure 6: The design of the new house adjacent to the listed 'Coachmans' cottage picks up on the form of the adjacent listed cottages and, in doing so and by screening the white house to the west (outside the Conservation Area), enhances both the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings.





Figure 7: Important Views out of the Conservation Area into the Surrounding Countryside. That at the top show the view across Nepcote Green into the land to the north which accommodates equine activities, whilst that above is looking westwards to the wooded ridge beyond. Some of the farm buildings of Cissbury can be seen in a closer range view from the road in the photograph below.





Figure 8: The significance of the Wattle House (above) has a particular resonance in its local context, given that the ground floor remains in its original use. It has been renovated by the Parish Council in recent years but still has no productive use for the upper floor. The simple but attractive Arts-&-Crafts elevation (below) acts as an attractive visual stop to the Green.





Figure 9: Coachmans (above) and Greenside Cottage (below). Both cottages are listed at Grade II.





Figure 10: The former Running Horse public house is now a private house, known as Nepcote Lodge, and has been recently restored (above). No. 8 (Judens) and No. 10 (Hillbank Cottage) (below) stand more-or-less opposite on the other side of the road and are built using a typical combination of brick and flint.





Figure 11: Further down Nepcote, Millbrook Cottages (above) and York Terrace (below) have also been modernised but have retained much of their historic character and continue to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area





Figure 12: The former Chapel (above) is the only building on Nepcote not built as a dwelling. Houses on the opposite side of the road (below), 1 and 2 Elder Cottages, have retained some of their historic character and, along with the Chapel, continue to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.





Figure 13: Numbers 1 and 2 Threshers. Despite the numbering, this Grade II listed building is a single dwelling. It has an interesting plan form, unusual for a building of its size, with a central portion and two projecting wings. The list description describes it as 18th century but a closer archaeological examination of the surviving fabric might shed more light on this.



Figure 14 : Cissbury (above) is a Grade II listed building. The centre portion of the east front is an C18 farmhouse of two storeys and five windows in width. Gabled wings, each containing an attic window and with a large projecting bay of three windows on ground and first floors, were later added to the original building. The Lodge (below) to the main house sits at the entrance on Nepcote.





Figure 15: Cissbury Parkland. The house stands within its own parkland, laid out in the first half of the 19th century. The view out from the house over the parkland is shown above and the reverse view, back to the house, is below.





Figure 16: A possible enhancement opportunity: The flat-roofed double garage sits a little set back from the lane and behind a concrete apron. As such it is an alien architectural element within the streetscene and is also not in particularly good order. Redevelopment of the site with a well-designed, modest cottage sitting at the back of the lane could improve the streetscene visually and help to broaden the range of accommodation within the Conservation Area.

Management Plan

6.1 At the beginning of this document the legal definition of a Conservation Area as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” was acknowledged.

6.2 Taking this definition as a starting point, it follows that the proper management of a Conservation Area will have as its objective both the protection of its existing qualities and its enhancement in ways that build upon its special interest. Four broad aims can be defined:

- To ensure that the Heritage Assets (the Conservation Area and its constituent buildings and other historic features) are properly and effectively designated;
- To ensure that the Heritage Assets are in good condition;
- To secure the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage Assets;
- To secure the enhancement of the spaces within and around the Heritage Assets

Proper Designation of the Conservation Asset.

6.3 The rationale for the boundaries of the Conservation Area are set out in paragraphs 4.21 to 4.25 and, as a newly designated Conservation Area, can be assumed to represent current thinking and best practice. Appraisals of this sort should be reviewed on a ten-year cycle and the first review will be the time to consider if the designated boundaries have stood the test of time.

6.4 As part of the appraisal process, the buildings of the Conservation Area were all considered in terms of their status and protection. It was judged that all the buildings worthy of national listing were so designated and the grade of listing also appropriate.

6.5 Many of the other buildings within the Conservation Area make a positive contribution to its character and these are identified on Figures 18 and 19. As part of a designated heritage asset, to which they make a positive input, such

buildings should be regarded as individual non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of Development Management.

6.6 In addition to making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, it is possible that some of those buildings could meet the criteria for inclusion on a Local Heritage List. The National Park Authority does not have such a list at the time of writing but has undertaken a public consultation on the selection criteria to be used with a view to creating one.

6.7 Arun District Council does have a list of 'Buildings or Structures of Character', which was prepared in 2005 before the creation of the National Park and which can be found on its website at:

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n1724.pdf&ver=1373>

6.8 Arun's list included 32 buildings within Findon Parish, of which the following fall within Nepcote Conservation Area:

- 4
- 16
- 18 ('Little House')
- Cherry Croft
- 8 ('Judens')
- 10 ('Hillbarn Cottage')
- 1 and 2 Millbrook Cottages
- Nepcote Chapel
- 1 and 2 Elder Cottages
- Nepcote House

and all were identified as being meeting criteria numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5, which are:

- Buildings which are extremely good examples of traditional or established style, or unusual type.
- In special cases, buildings or structures which contribute towards the local townscape or have important historical associations.
- All buildings must be largely intact and not adversely affected by later extensions or alterations.
- Preferably, although not exclusively, they should make a positive

contribution to their surroundings or the street scene.

6.9 They are embedded within Policy ES5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, which requires *the effect of a proposal on the significance of these non-designated heritage assets to be taken into account in determining an application in order to minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and their contribution to Findon's distinctiveness.*

6.10 In practice, nearly all of the buildings identified in the Arun list are also identified in this document as being buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area ie non-designated heritage assets.

ACTION 1 – that the buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area in this Appraisal and/or as 'Buildings or Structures of Character' in the Neighbourhood Plan be regarded as non-designated heritage assets for the purposes of Development Management.

ACTION 2 - that those buildings within the Conservation Area be considered for possible inclusion on a National Park-wide Local Heritage List once the criteria and list are in place.

Condition of the Heritage Asset.

6.11 The Wattle House has been the subject of a significant repair programme in recent years, undertaken by the Parish Council, and is now in fair condition, though underused.

6.12 Visual inspection of the buildings from the public realm does not suggest that any are in a poor condition and certainly none could be described as being "at risk".

ACTION 3 - that the National Park Authority and the Parish Council monitor the condition of the buildings within the Conservation Area.

ACTION 4 - that the National Park Authority work with the owners of any buildings identified as deteriorating in condition to secure their repair and a sustainable future.

ACTION 5 - that the National Park Authority works with the Parish Council to secure a productive use for the upper floors of the Wattle House.

Management of Trees within the Conservation Area

6.13 The significance of trees to the Conservation Area has already been discussed and this contribution needs management.

6.14 The primary legal mechanism for protecting trees is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). These can cover individual trees, defined groups of trees, or any tree within a defined area. Permission is required to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree protected by a TPO, or to cause or permit such actions.

6.15 TPOs can cover trees which are also within Conservation Area but this is not currently the case in Nepcote Green Conservation Area.

6.16 However, there is a degree of protection for those trees which are not covered by a TPO but which are in a Conservation Area. This protection is in the form of a requirement on the owner of the tree to give the South Downs National Park Authority six weeks' notice of any works to the tree. This is to allow the making of a TPO should the National Park Authority feel it necessary to influence the works proposed.

6.17 There are, however, some circumstances in which work can be carried out to a TPO'd tree or a tree in a Conservation Area without gaining permission first. These include:

- If the tree is dead or the work is necessary to remove an immediate risk of serious harm. The risk must be immediate and the onus will be on you to prove this if there are questions. You must let the National Park Authority know in writing that you propose to carry out work on this basis at least 5 days in advance unless the danger is imminent. In this case, you must notify the Council as soon as practical. Removal of dead wood from an otherwise healthy tree is also allowed.
- If you are obliged to carry out work by an Act of Parliament. Most commonly, this applies to trees that overhang a public road where you

have an obligation to maintain reasonable clearance above the road. This usually means 2.5m above a footway or 5.5m above a vehicular carriage way.

- Where the work is absolutely necessary in order to implement a detailed planning permission. Note that this does not apply to outline planning permission or to permitted development rights.
- If the tree is a fruit tree and you prune it in accordance with good horticultural practice, or if the tree is a fruit tree situated in a commercial orchard.
- If the work is to be carried in accordance with a Forestry Commission grant scheme or if a felling licence has been granted by the Forestry Commission. Moreover, the additional exemptions apply to non-TPO'd trees in Conservation Areas:
 - Trees which have a trunk diameter of less than 75mm when measured at 1.5m from ground level
 - Trees which have a diameter of less than 100mm measured at 1.5 m above ground and are being pruned or felled to help the growth of other trees.

6.18 Many of the trees fall within the historic landscape at Cissbury. This land is farmed and has until recently been managed under a Higher Level Stewardship management regime which ran until 31 January 2019. In making the Conservation Area, it is not the wish or intention of the National Park Authority to impose an unreasonable burden of tree management procedure on either land owner or farmer and this is reflected in Action 6.

ACTION 6 - that the National Park Authority works in co-operation with the farmer and landowner of the Cissbury Estate to manage the trees on the Estate in the most convenient and appropriate manner.

ACTION 7 - that the visual amenity and contribution of any particular tree(s) to the Conservation Area be given careful consideration when considering any notification to the National Park Authority.

Conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset.

6.19 Protection of existing quality will be achieved through careful application of the planning system in general and the Development Management process in particular. One way in which this can be facilitated is by the provision of pre-application advice to householders, architects and developers to achieve a high quality of design. The National Park Authority has a system for the provision of such advice, which is explained on its website.

6.20 The National Park Authority's archaeological advisor for Nepcote is Hampshire County Council, which can be contacted at :

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/historicenvironment/planners>

ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which affects Nepcote Conservation Area or its setting should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council Archaeological Service before submitting an application and, ideally, before starting any design work.

6.21 Once an application has been received, it will be assessed against a range of national and local planning policies. At present these include the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Purposes and Duty of the National Park, the South Downs National Park Local Plan, and conservation best practice (including this document).

6.22 Whilst discussing proposals with applicants, both at pre-application stage and in the course of determination, opportunities may arise to achieve improvements both to the proposal itself and its contribution to the wider character of the Conservation Area. These may not originally form part of the proposal. The Local Planning Authority will seek to maximise these opportunities as far as possible.

ACTION 8 – that planning applications be determined in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance, with any opportunities to secure improvements

during that process being secured as far as possible.

6.23 The special character of any Conservation Area can be degraded through the loss of architectural features and traditional materials, particularly roofing materials. Individually these changes may be relatively minor but taken collectively can represent a real threat to the special character.

6.24 This problem can be addressed in two ways. One would be to bring those minor works within the ambit of the planning system using a measure called an Article 4 Direction, which removes 'permitted development rights' from specific domestic properties. The other, complementary, way would be to encourage the reinstatement of architectural features and traditional materials with a grant scheme targeted at such works.

6.25 At present there is some evidence of this problem in Nepcote, which may reflect the fact that it has only recently been designated as a Conservation Area, and it is difficult to retrieve this situation. It must also be acknowledged that the provision of a grant budget is unlikely in the current circumstances and for the foreseeable future. Both factors inform the Action below. Nevertheless, it is important that the historic building stock should be monitored so that an appearance of an emerging problem is identified at an early stage. In reality, this means everyone. National Park and District Council officers and members, Parish Councillors and the community, keeping an eye on what is happening.

ACTION 9 - that the loss of architectural features and traditional materials be monitored by all parties and for the National Park Authority to consider making an Article 4 Direction, in consultation with the community, should it emerge as a problem adversely affecting the special character of Nepcote Conservation Area.

Enhancement of the spaces within the Heritage Asset

6.26 Conservation Area designation is a response to the qualities of the settlement as a whole and it is important to recognise that the spaces between the buildings are a significant component in this.

6.27 Nevertheless, significant improvements to that quality can be achieved by pro-active work. Although it remains difficult to secure finance for such projects, it is by no means impossible to put together a funding package from a number of sources.

6.28 A number of opportunities to improve the general appearance and quality of the area have been identified in the appraisal, including:

- i. Redevelopment of the site currently occupied by a large domestic garage (Figure 16);
- ii. Removal of poles and overhead wires;
- iii. Replanting of lost parkland trees to reinforce the historic landscape at Cissbury.

ACTION 10 - that the National Park Authority supports, in principle and in association with other partners, the undertaking of the enhancement works identified in paragraph 6.28

Responsible Conservation is a Partnership!

6.29 This document has been prepared by the National Park Authority as the Local Planning Authority for Slindon. However, it is very important to stress, and for other parties to understand, that effective management of any Conservation Area is the responsibility of all organisations and all parties who undertake works which affect the character of the area.

6.30 Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 sets out a range of bodies to which the National Park duties apply.

6.31 At a local level, this includes the residents of the village and the Parish Council. Slightly more removed, it means Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council as the Local Highway Authority and in its other activities, and all those Statutory Undertakers which do works in the public realm.

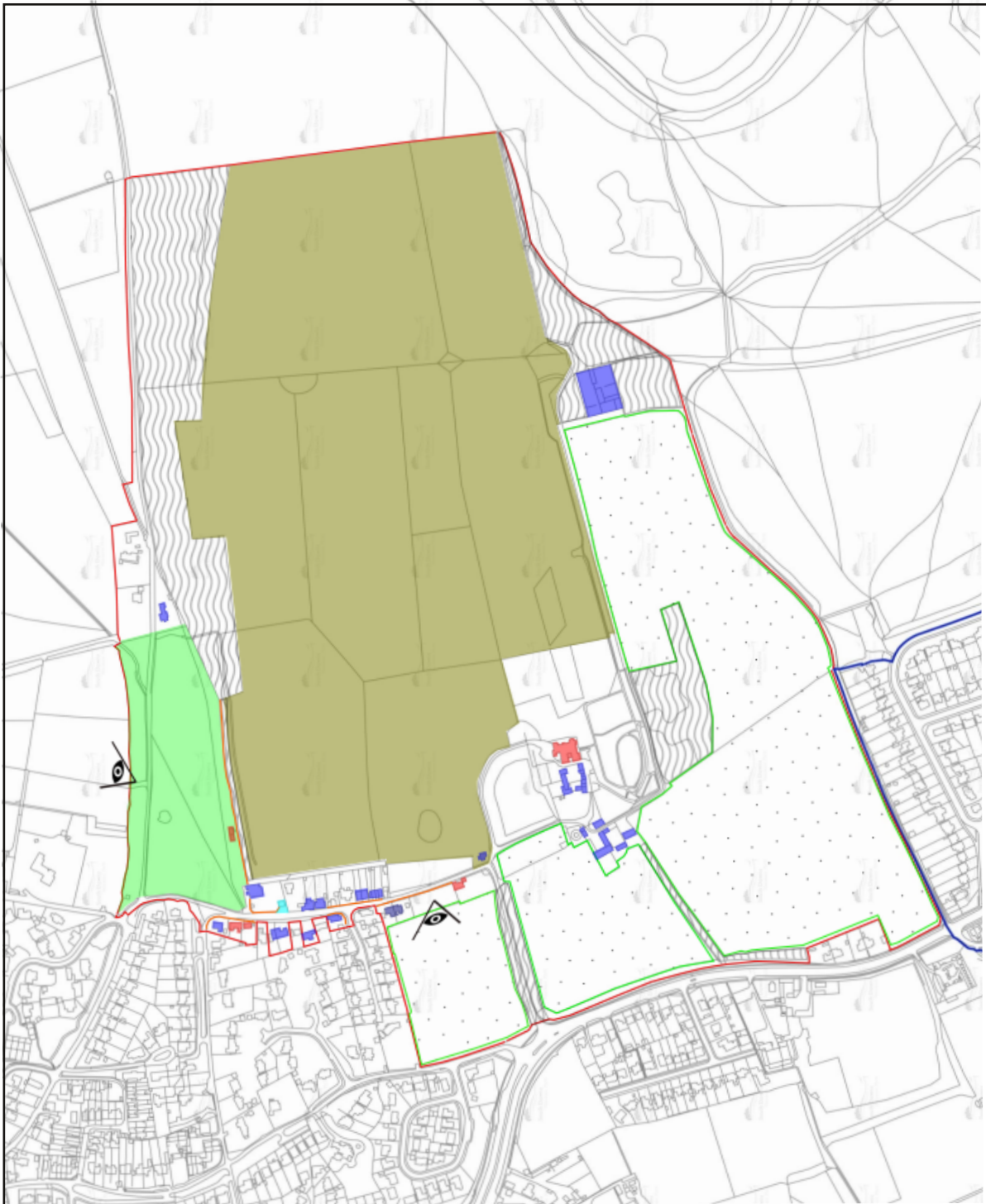


Figure 18: Elements which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, including listed buildings (red), buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area (blue), important boundaries (orange), Nepcote Green (light green), Cissbury Parkland (olive green), tree belts (wavy grey lines), and important open land (small polka dots within a green frame). Important viewpoints are also identified by symbol.

No attempt is made to identify curtilage listed buildings and some of the buildings annotated in blue may fall into that category.



Figure 19: Elements which make a positive contribution to the character of the residential part of the Conservation Area, including listed buildings (red), buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area (blue), and important boundaries (orange),

No attempt is made to identify curtilage listed buildings and some of the buildings annotated in blue may fall into that category.