

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**  
**PAYSANNE, GODSHILL WOOD, FORDINGBRIDGE, SP6 2LR**



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## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The subject site is situated on the south side of a narrow rural lane on the south facing hill slope of a tributary of the River Avon in an area known as the Western Escarpment, a designated Conservation Area within the New Forest National Park. It forms part of the loose knit hamlet of Godshill Wood. It is a remote and tranquil location within an area of high scenic quality.

1.2 The purpose of this statement is to evaluate the impact of a new dwelling on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and any other heritage assets within the effective setting of the development. The subject site is a recently completed house, on the site of a white painted bungalow which it has replaced. The building was approved in 2018 (Planning Permission No. 18/00262). However, although the overall design concept is unchanged, the as built scheme varies from the consented scheme in orientation and enlargement. The Conservation Officer in her Consultee Response to the Application has considered these variations in her summary to constitute less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area:

*“The proposed alterations to the approved design of Paysanne, particularly to the fenestration, have made the property more conspicuous by the increased the levels of light pollution and solar glare. This considered to cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area, which is characterised by its rural tranquillity, dramatic topography and dwellings that nestle comfortably into the landscape. “*

## 2.0 Background

2.1 Paysanne is an oak framed house, clad with horizontal oak boards with steep pitched plain clay tile roof. It is set into the terraced site on the hillside and occupies an east-west position on the upper section of the plot, running parallel with the contours of the hillside. The lane, known as the Lower Track arches around the house to the north of the site, and given the step rise in the hillside, this creates an area of raised garden between the lane and the house. Mature trees and a native hedgerow define the extent of this northern boundary as it follows the lane. The approach is via a narrow gravel access way connecting at an angle to the lane on the north eastern side.

2.2 The building form comprises two primary elements with the main accommodation located in the two-storey principal section to the west stepping down to a lower, single-storey kitchen wing. The essentially rectilinear form is modulated by a fully glazed stair well feature on the north elevation and a gable with adjacent balcony accessed by paired dormer openings on the south elevation, the fenestration of which takes advantage of the stunning unrestricted views out over the valley below. These open views out from the south elevation are in contrast to the more enclosed, secluded character to the north of the site defined by banks of trees rising up the hill side.

2.3 The architectural form of the house is in the vernacular tradition using local materials re-interpreted in a contemporary form. It is stylistically similar to other developments locally and as advocated by The Planning Authority Design Guidance (New Forest National Park Local Development Framework SPD Design Guide 2011 page 8 and front page of the Design Guidance web site page Fig. 18).

2.4 The application site is situated within the designated West Escarpment Conservation Area, Sub Area E: Castle Hill and Escarpment edge and scattered isolated development (Designated 2008). There are no other designated heritage assets within the area. There are 16 Local Building of Interest (non-designated heritage assets) as defined by the local authority list 2021 as being of local, vernacular or cultural interest within character Sub Area E. However the local authority Conservation Officer report of February 2021 in relation to application 20/00096 does not make specific reference to this designation in her analysis of those heritage assets affected by the proposals. Blue Bell Cottage and Jubilee Bungalow immediately to the north of Paysanne are not identified as Local Buildings of Interest.

2.5 In line with the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, this statement identifies the significance of those heritage assets affected by the proposals, including any contribution made by their setting, and evaluates the impact of the proposals on their significance.

## 3.0 Methodology

3.1 The scope of this Statement is based on the advice contained in Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2; Conservation Principles (2008) and BS 7913:1998 Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings; Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets; the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and National Planning Practice Guide (2014 – Updated July 2019); The Western Escarpment Conservation Area Character Appraisal was published in March 2009; Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan 2018 – 2023; New Forest National Park List of Undesignated Heritage Assets 2021; New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted August 2019).

3.2 A site visit was made on 18th April 2021 and on line archival resources have been consulted.



Fig 1. The dwelling viewed from the northeast (front elevation)

(Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 2. The dwelling viewed from the northwest (Source: SGA April 2021)



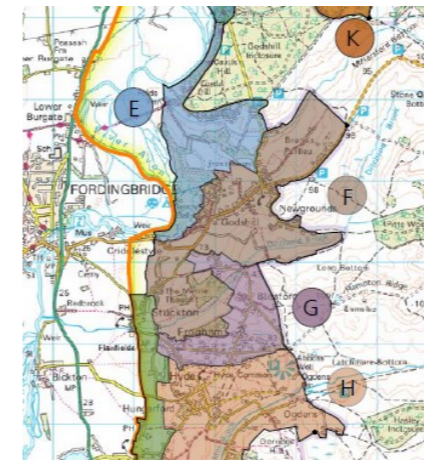
Fig 3. The dwelling viewed from the southeast (Source: SGA April 2021)

#### 4.0 Site Location and Context

4.1 The appeal site refers to a detached property located to the south of an unmade road, which is known as the Lower Track, within Godshill Wood, and located 1km to the north of Godshill.

4.2 The dwelling is centrally located within a plot of 0.227 hectare in size. The footprint comprises some 99sq-m and thus occupies 4.3% of the plot area. In addition, there is a swimming pool on site and associated outbuildings. The site is bounded by existing fencing. There are a number of mature trees on the site, the majority of which are located on the site's periphery, together with soft landscaping.

4.3 It is situated within the Hundred of Fordingbridge.



#### Western Escarpment Character Areas

- A: Hatchet Green
- B: Hale Park
- C: Dispersed dwellings and associated agricultural land
- D: Woodgreen
- E: Castle Hill and Escarpment edge and scattered isolated development
- F: Godshill and surrounding agricultural encroachment into the Forest
- G: Frogham, Blissford and scattered isolated development
- H: Hungerford, Hyde Common, Gorley Common and Ogdens
- I: Edge of floodplain development – Stuckton, North Gorley, South Gorley, Mockbeggar and Rockford
- J: Highwood and Hangersley
- K: 20th Century Dispersed Settlement Within Woodland

Fig 4. Western Escarpment Conservation Area extract showing sub area E Castle Hill and Escarpment in context. (Source: New Forest National Park Published map [https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/03/nfnpa\\_241\\_08\\_annex\\_5\\_2\\_\\_character\\_areas\\_wesmallersize.pdf](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/03/nfnpa_241_08_annex_5_2__character_areas_wesmallersize.pdf))



Fig 5. Godshill Wood, the site is indicated (Source Google Earth 2021)



Fig 6. Extract from 1871 6 inches to the Mile Series Ordnance Survey Map  
 (Hampshire & Isle of Wight LIV (includes: Breamore; Rockbourne; Wh...  
 Surveyed: 1871, Published: 1872, Scale 6 inches to the Mile source:  
<https://maps.nls.uk/>)

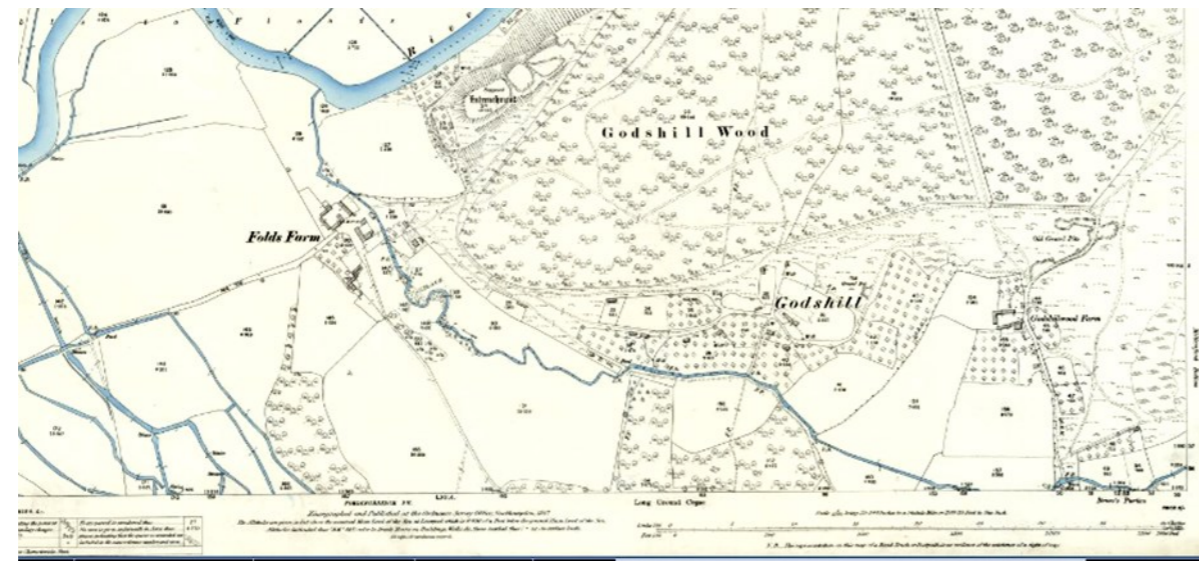


Fig 7. Extract from 1897, 25 inches to the Mile Series Ordnance Survey Map  
 (Hampshire and Isle of Wight LIV.16 (Breamore; Fordingbridge; Wood...  
 Revised: 1895, Published: 1897 Source <https://maps.nls.uk/>)

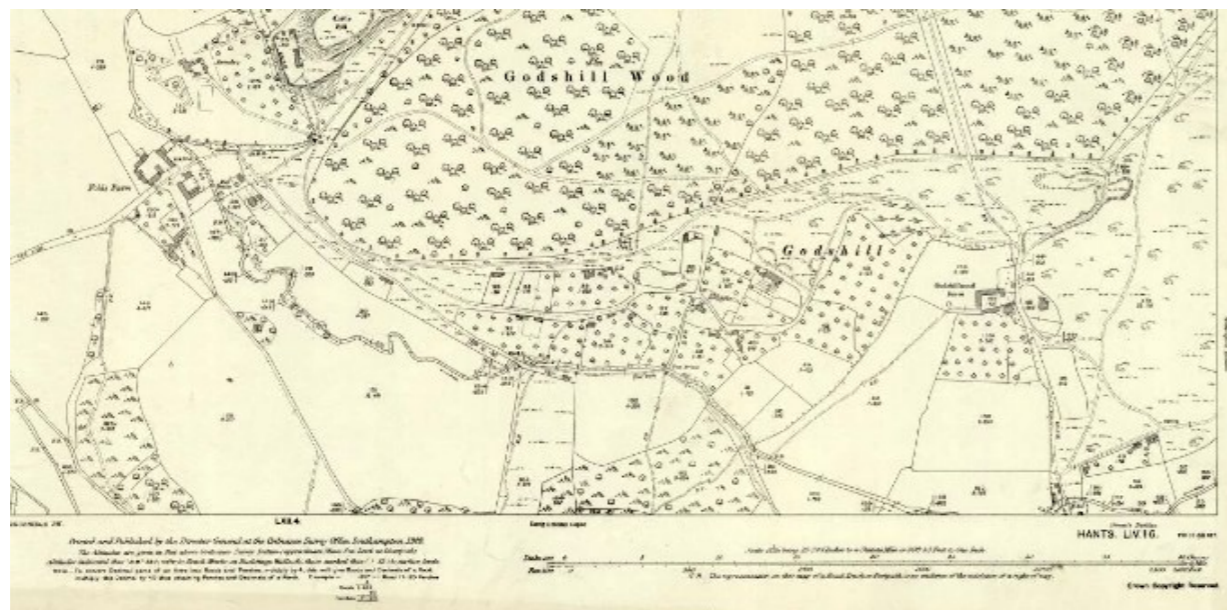


Fig 8. Extract from 1926, 25 inches to the Mile Series Ordnance Survey Map  
 (Hampshire and Isle of Wight LIV.16 (Breamore; Fordingbridge; Wood...  
 Revised: 1924, Published: 1926 <https://maps.nls.uk/>)

## 5.0 Significance of the Conservation Area

5.1 In considering any proposals for development Paragraph 128. of the NPPF requires that:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting.*

*The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”*

5.2 In describing the elements that comprise significance, reference has been made to the criteria outlined in ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance,’ 2008 These are in summary:

- *Evidential Value – relating to the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity;*
- *Historical Value – relating to ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life;*
- *Aesthetic Value – relating to the ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;*
- *Communal Value – relating to the meanings of place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience*

5.3 The subject site is situated within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Sub Area E. Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The Character Appraisal 2009 identifies the following characteristics:

- *The shallow valley is characterised by more open small irregular fields, with wooded areas providing a backdrop in places along the valley side. (para 4.7.4 )*
- *There is very little built environment within the area, restricted to isolated dwellings, mainly within the shallow valley created by the tributary of the River Avon. This built development is represented by a variety of building sizes and styles and has developed predominantly in the 19th and early 20th centuries on the intermittently wooded northern valley side (para 4.7.6).*
- *Views into the character area are restricted to those gained east from the Avon Valley to the steep escarpment edge. Views are also afforded from the Godshill area in the south, across the shallow tributary valley. Within the character area, views are restricted by the tree and hedge roadsides in many places, but again, there are views south across the shallow valley and through the edge of the undulating Forest heathland area, directly to the south of Godshill Inclosure. (para 4.7.7)*

5.4 Paysanne is situated on the south slope of an east west facing hillside, set back from a narrow unmetalled road and shrouded in views along the lane by mature trees.

5.5 The character and appearance of this part of the conservation area is of sporadic, informal development stretching across the hillside in band of individual buildings framed between the meandering valley floor and a belt of woodland which forms a backdrop across the brow of the slope.

5.6 There is a wide palette of materials whilst building forms and dates vary. Materials include, flint, cob, timber frame and cladding and render. Roofing materials are mixed but plain tile is common. A unifying characteristic is therefore more the space between buildings rather than building typology. These spaces serve to create a patchwork of stepped gardens framed by banks, trees and native hedges. The individual gardens and plots merge to be indistinguishable in views.

5.7 Given the topography and pattern of development, the appearance of the Conservation Area can be defined as having two key characteristics. When experienced from within the settlement, there is a strongly intimate character with views principally focused along the lanes and verges which run parallel with the contours of the slope. The second characteristic is by contrast, of an open, almost exposed nature in which the settlement can be read as a whole, encompassed within the wide, open panoramic views afforded from the opposite side of the valley.

5.8 Within the immediate environs of the hamlet on the north side, buildings tend to be only partially revealed in views, often as solitary dwellings screened from each other by vegetation or changes in level, with occasional distinctive views onto glimpsed roofscapes on the hillside below. This loose village scape is abruptly punctuated periodically by a few key buildings, often in white painted render. Some of these are included on the local list of non-designated heritage assets (2021). It is however, in the long range, wide views of the hillside from the south that the cumulative predominance of these rendered houses is appreciated, their bright elevations having a significant visual impact in drawing the eye and punctuating the otherwise natural setting.

5.9 There are no designated heritage assets within the immediate area. Most of the development dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and is vernacular in form rather than designed architectural pretention (with the exception of Godshill Wood House which retains its strong Arts and Crafts architectural expression). Nearly all houses are of two storeys, although some appear taller given their elevated position on the hillside. There is only one property which dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2009 (referred to as the Character Appraisal) para 4.7.9 16 makes specific reference to the following as notable locally listed buildings (non – designated heritage assets) of local vernacular or architectural value : Godshill Wood House, Flintstones and its associated outbuilding, Armsley Lodge, Brook Cottage and Godshill Wood Farmhouse and buildings.



*Fig 9 Paysanne in its wider Conservation Area setting when viewed from the hillside to the south. Note the white painted elevations of Long Orchard , The Homestead and Godshill Wood House (left to right) (Source: SGA April 2021).*

5.10 Many of the houses have extensions and extensive glazing to their southern elevations to make the most of the dramatic aspect and to counteract the restrictive hillside to the north. This includes ranges of windows, patio doors and balconies. As noted there are a mix of building types and sizes with several large houses such as The Homestead and Godshill Wood House, which are prominent in long range views as demonstrated in Figure 9.

5.11 Some evidence survives for Prehistoric activity on the escarpment. This includes remnants of Bronze Age barrows, the large Iron Age hill fort of Frankenbury on the promontory northwest of Godshill.

5.12 It could be argued that within this context and setting of the Conservation Area generally, and in respect of the effective setting of Paysanne in particular, when viewed from the south, that the existing dwellings by day do not necessarily nestle comfortably, or unobtrusively into the landscape as described in the Conservation Officer Consultation response (para 11.8).

5.13 By night the Conservation Area is a dark and tranquil place.

5.14 In summary the significance of Conservation Area has moderate -high aesthetic value based on the interaction of buildings within the New Forest landscape and the contrition of the spaces between them. It has low-moderate historic and evidential value with a limited number of buildings and archaeological features of historic or evidential local significance and remnant features of the evolution and settlement of this part of the area.



Fig 10. View westwards along the Upper Lane of The Homestead (Local Building of Interest). Houses sporadically punctuate the rural environs, framed by the mature vegetation. Note the varied roofscape and massing. (Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 11. Wood Cottage Local Building of Interest). White painted buildings contrast against their verdant landscape setting, punctuating views. (Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 12. View of the intimate, leafy paths and lanes which dissect the heart of the hamlet and contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. Most buildings as in this case Highfield have seen cumulative alterations and extensions have a high degree of fenestration. (Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 13. View northwards of Flintstones (Local Building of Interest) from the Avon tributary along the valley floor— houses have been orientated longitudinally on the hillside along the contour line, and fenestrated to take advantage of the south facing views afforded by the elevated position. (Source: SGA April 2021)

## 6.0 Impact of the proposal on the significance of the Conservation Area and Non Designated Heritage Assets

6.1 As noted in paragraph 1.1 of the Appeal Statement the Officer's Report identified discrepancies with regard to that which was built and that which was approved (Paragraph 11.3). These however are not a correct summary. Please refer to the Appeal Statement and associated drawings for a detailed and accurate representation of the as built vs consented scheme dimensions and variations. In summary however, the building is 0.480 m longer than the approved and 0.775 m higher, the plan being rotated by 7 degrees to the southsouth east. There are some discrepancies also in the fenestration, most notably an increase in the proposed height and width of the fully glazed stair hall bay. The key issue is however, whether these cumulative changes have resulted in a building which now causes less than substantial harm to the significance of those heritage assets affected by the development with reference to Paragraph 196 of the NPPF; namely the Conservation Area and non designated heritage assets which are within the effective setting of the constructed house.

6.2. The character and appearance the Conservation Area is defined by the sporadic development of detached buildings in extensive grounds. This is best appreciated in the long range wide angled views of the hamlet in context from the south. The scale and appearance of Paysanne, well placed as it is within its large gardens, does not appear out of context or alien to the grain or scale of development of the area. Indeed, in these key views, the oak clad building is less conspicuous, and more recessive than the number of large, white painted houses which dominate the appearance of the hillside and act as focal points. The two-storey building is proportionally consistent in height, bulk and massing with its neighbours, its assimilation assisted by the stepped arrangement of its elements. This articulation is resonant of traditional building typologies with ancillary additions.

6.3 In this respect on the south elevation, the extent of the glazing is again not uncharacteristic in the context of neighbouring dwellings. The change in orientation of the house on its site does not appear inconsistent with the settlement grain, or overly impact on night-time light spill relative to the similar orientation and fenestration of other properties which seek to maximise the views from the hillside. Many of the existing houses are identified by the local authority as non designated heritage assets (Buildings of Local Interest) and therefore given this analysis it is argued that the new dwelling is not detrimental to the setting of these heritage assets.

6.4 It should be noted that the current building replaced a prominent white painted house of little architectural merit which diminished the aesthetic significance of the Conservation Area. There is overall enhancement in this respect. Please refer to Appendix I for photographs of the original house.

6.5 A further notable characteristic of the Conservation Area, derived again from the combination of topography and wooded environs, is the punctuation of the short range views within the hamlet by the buildings. Here buildings appear, as solitary structures or as a tight group of structures around a principal dwelling. Each property is visually isolated in its wider landscape context, rather than in a coherent village scape, appearing sometimes abruptly around a bend, and nearly always framed by trees and hedges. In addition, given the topography and irregular road pattern of the lanes these are often only partial views, whether skewed at angles to the hillside or as partial roof-scapes of houses set into the slope below.

6.6 Given this context, Paysanne can be seen to assimilate into the character and appearance of the area without appearing out of character, having a neutral impact.

6.7 There are three key intimate views from within the hamlet: east and west approaches along the Lower Track and from the upper track over the garden of Blue Bell Cottage.

6.8 The first of these key views is the approach from the east down-hill along the track with the access drive spurring off the left. Here the house is mostly filtered by trees and appears more as a staggered series of gables and outbuildings as is characteristic of a rural area. At night, this is a dark elevation with minimal gazing to produce light spill.

6.9 The second intimate view is along the track from the west. Here the arching curve of the road twists to reveal a glimpse between a gap in the trees of the house set below. This is the most intrusive view of the built form into the rural setting of the track, but given the natural oak cladding and traditional, simple clay tile roof form punctuated by a brick lateral chimney stack it is not out of keeping with the overall pattern or character of development in which such framed views contribute to the variety and interest of the Conservation Area. Again, because it is a building set in isolation and framed within a mature and verdant setting its scale is appreciated relative to its own context- to which it is proportionate and appropriate.

6.10 It should be noted that the stair well is a strong architectural feature in this view. By day it reads as an expression of the oak timber structure, the proportions of which complement the architecture. However, at night the light spill from the tall-glazed opening does present a notable intrusion into the dark lane. This contrasts with other properties in the Conservation Area which have more limited north facing fenestration given their orientation of habitable rooms to the south and the topographical constraints of building into the hillside slope. The stair well in a reduced form was part of the consent design and this impact was not raised as an objection. Nevertheless, the increase in scale and height of the glazed bay does change the degree of impact. The Conservation Officer suggests some form of adaption of the design which would mitigate this one area of less than substantial harm which is agreed.

6.11 The last of the views of house within its wider Conservation Area context is from Castle Hill Road, public verge to the immediate east of Blue Bell Cottage, looking southward. Here the ridge of Paysanne is visible, but not intrusive. The apex of the stair well is only barely visible and highly filtered through the intervening mature vegetation, and there is no night light spill of note. There is a neutral impact in views on the character and appearance of the area.



(Source: SGA April 2021)

Fig 14. View of the new dwelling from the south ; note the prominence of the existing white painted Non designated heritage assets. The oak of Paysanne will continue to Silver and further assimilate the building into its natural, wooded setting. (The Homestead white building background left, Long Orchard left foreground both Local Building of Interest.)



Fig 15. View eastwards of the dwelling in its immediate setting from the Lower Track. It presents a filtered glimpse of a series of traditionally stepped gables, adding interest to the appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. (Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 16. View southwards from the Lower Lane. The house appears in a framed view, between trees as is characteristic of the Conservation Area. Views to the landscape beyond can be glimpsed and set the house in context. The house when aged will be resonant of local timber clad ancillary buildings. (Source: SGA April 2021)



Fig 17. Limited view of Paysanne roof from Castle Hill Road. Given the topography, it is set down discretely behind the garden of Blue Bell Cottage and does not impinge on important views beyond of the countryside. (Source: SGA April 2021)



## 7.0 Conclusion

Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

7.1 The subject house is principally a pegged oak frame structure with plain clay tile roof and oak weather board cladding. As such it is constructed in natural materials, sourced locally and constructed using the traditional vernacular carpentry traditions which are an inherent part of the local character and distinctiveness of the area. We would note that the design is indeed similar to that used to promote the Local Authority Design Guidance web page, included for reference below. The building will continue to weather and mellow or “nestle” into its landscape setting – a characteristic of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area identified as significant by the Local Planning Authority. Such an approach is part of the ongoing evolution of the Forest and in line with English Heritage guidelines on constructive conservation for a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change. The aim is to recognize and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.

7.2 The house as built does not diminish the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in any key view other than a night-time light spill impact from the north facing stair well and this impact is limited in extent and can be readily mitigated with reasonable flexible approach to conservation by the Local Authority as encouraged by Historic England and the local authority Conservation Officer.

7.3 It should be noted that the current building replaced a prominent and un-attractive white painted house on the site. The bungalow had been subject to cumulative alterations and did not reflect the local distinctives of the hamlet setting and diminished the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In this context it is argued that the new dwelling as built, with suitable minor mitigation to the stair well to minimize its localized nighttime intrusion does not cause less than substantial harm to the significance of any heritage asset but rather makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness as required by paragraph 192 of the NPPF and local policies.

## 8.0 Authorship

This report is written by Sarah Homer BA (Hons)TP, Grad Dip TP, Grad Dip AA (Historic Building Cons), BA (Hons) Arch IHBC, Director Sage Gray Architects Ltd

Sarah has qualifications in the fields of planning, architecture, and historic building conservation with a post graduate qualification in Building Conservation from the Architectural Association in 1996. She has focused over the last 30 years of professional practice as a conservation specialist working as a local authority conservation officer for council’s including Test valley Borough Council, Southampton City Council and Wealden District Council where she was head of conservation and Design, and as a conservation architect/ planner for acknowledged historic building architectural practices including and Andrew Townsend Architects and Johnston Cave Associates where she gained extensive experience in working on sensitive and treasured historic buildings, historic parks and conservation areas, including proposals for new buildings within their settings.

She is a founding Co Director of Sage Gray Architects Ltd and has been an active member of the Institute of Historic Buildings South Branch Committee since 1990 (formerly the Association of Conservation Officers) and has held the post as the Oxfordshire Representative for over 20 years, as well as formerly a position on the IHBC Technical Panel. She has been a member of the SPAB for over 30 years and held a post on the former Southern Regional Group.

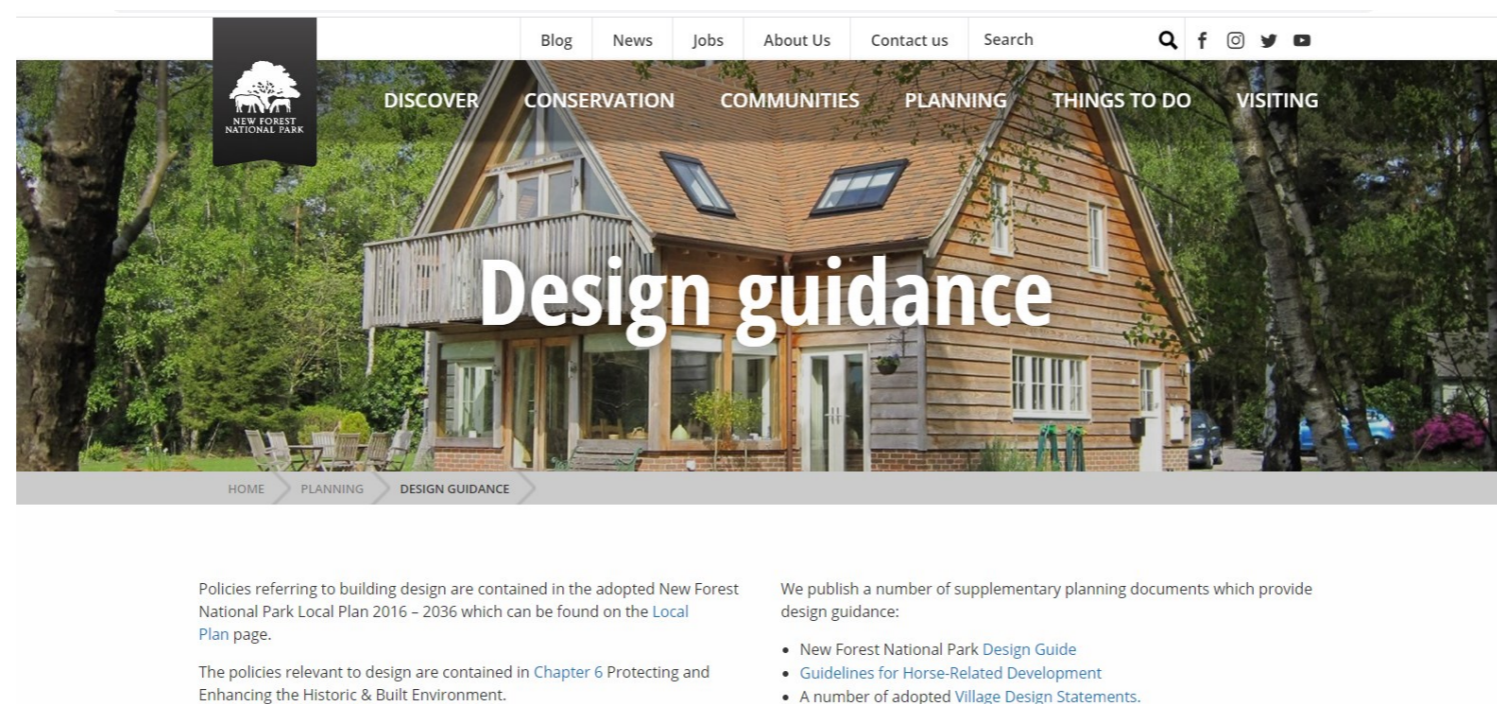


Fig 18 Source New Forest National Park Design Web Page

## APPENDIX I

### Paysanne Bungalow Prior to Demolition

Images from the Consented Scheme showing the visual impact of the original bungalow in the Conservation Area



Existing



Proposed

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date printed: 22/08/2018

Drawing No • 102-P-12  
Scale @ A3 • nts

Paysanne, Godshill Wood, Fordingbridge • Project  
Perspective Visual Comparison • Title  
Mr & Mrs Vickers • Client



Paysanne Cottage prior to demolition. Rear North elevation top left and top right; south elevation bottom.