

Application Number: F/YR12/0542/O

Minor

Parish/Ward: Wisbech St Mary

Date Received: 03 July 2012

Expiry Date: 13 September 2012

Applicant: Mr & Mrs M Wright

Agent: Mr Ken Elener, KL Elener Architectural Design

Proposal: Erection of 3no dwellings

Location: Land North of Greenacres, Gull Road, Guyhirn, Cambridgeshire

Site Area/Density: 0.19ha

Reason before Committee: This application is before the Planning Committee as the Officer recommendation is at variance with comments received from the Parish Council.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

The site is located beyond the established settlement of Guyhirn in an area which is characterised as open countryside. Given the position of the site, away from the village hub, the proposal does not comply with the Development Strategy for the area nor does it contribute to the vitality or sustainability of the community or the locality in general. By virtue of the poor and inefficient use of the land available the proposal would result in a piecemeal form of development to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. The application fails to adhere to sustainability principles, contrary to policies contained within the Development Plan. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is refused.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1 F/YR12/0164/O	Erection of 3 dwellings	Withdrawn 30/05/12
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F/0355/89/O	Erection of a cottage	Refused 06/09/89
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3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraphs 2 and 11: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Core planning principles, paragraph 17: Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 109: The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible.

3.2 **Draft Fenland Core Strategy:**

CS1: Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

CS2: Growth and housing

CS10: Rural Areas Development Policy

New development in villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside. Any proposal will need to satisfy policies CS1 and CS2 as well as specific criteria:

- Site is in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village
- Would not result in coalescence with neighbouring villages;
- Not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of surrounding countryside and farmland;
- Proposal is of a scale in keeping with the shape and form of the settlement
- The proposal will not adversely harm the settlements character and appearance
- Site retains and respects natural boundaries
- Not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land

Not put people or property in danger from known risks and would not result in unacceptable nuisances to residents and businesses.

CS14: Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.

3.4 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

E8: Proposals for new development should:
respect the scale, style and character of the surrounding development;
allow for protection of site features;
provide adequate access.

H3: To resist housing development outside DABs. To permit housing development inside DABs provided it does not conflict with other plan policies.

H16: Outside the DAB new dwellings must be justified as required for agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations.

E1: To resist development likely to detract from the Fenland landscape.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

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|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 4.1 | Parish/Town Council: | Support the development and recommend approval |
| 4.2 | CCC Archaeology: | Not received at time of report |

- 4.3 **CCC Highways:** Full details of siting, access, parking and turning are required. Requests conditions relating to the construction of the access and reserving space on site for parking and turning. Require the upgrading of the footpath to 1.8m, which should be completed prior to the occupation of the dwellings.
- 4.4 **Environment Agency:** No objection, requires condition relating to foul water drainage.
- 4.5 **FDC Environmental Protection:** The site falls within the buffer zone of a former landfill and as such an investigation aimed at soil gases is required.
- 4.6 **Neighbours:** None received

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The site is located on the western side of Gull Road, beyond the established settlement of Guyhirn. The current use of the site is as paddock/grazing land in association with the residential dwelling at Green Acres to the south of the site. The east and north boundaries are defined by landscaping and post and rail fencing respectively and the west and south boundaries are open. There is some housing within the vicinity however the character of the site and immediate surroundings is undoubtedly countryside.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The key considerations for this application are:
- Principle and policy implications
 - Design and layout
 - Other matters

(a) Principle and policy implications

Members will recall visiting this site for a similar proposal which was intended to be put forward to the Committee in May 2012. The current submission contains the same drawings, for the same proposal, on the same site, but additional information and a planning assessment have been included within the Design and Access Statement.

The site is located outside of the village core. The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas where it will maintain the vitality of rural communities. This is the general thrust of policies contained within the Local Plan and Core Strategy where new development in villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of the settlement and does not harm the wide, open character of the countryside.

The policies of the Local Plan require consideration as the application site lies beyond the village core where new development should be resisted (H3) unless justified. In terms of emerging policy the general good practice criteria set out in Policy CS10 of the Draft Core Strategy should be observed. This document is emerging policy therefore only limited weight can be attached to the policy at this time. However, it is important to note the direction of travel of the emerging core strategy and its conformity to the policies of the NPPF in terms of the approach to rural housing and the requirement for sustainable development which is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The site lies outside of the established, and as such the proposal is contrary in principle to policy H3 of the Local Plan and the thrust of the NPPF which seeks to provide sustainable development. The hub of Guyhirn village is located along High Road and, although Guyhirn can accommodate growth of 2 to 3 dwellings (CS1), the position of the site along Gull Road fails to contribute to the village sustainability given its distance and relationship with the village hub. The proposal therefore also fails on its inability to promote sustainable development due to the location of the site. CCC Highways have stated that an upgrade to the footpath would be necessary should permission be granted which further demonstrates the unsuitability of the location of the site.

Policy E1 of the Local Plan aims to protect the open character of the Fenland Landscape. The Local Plan acknowledges that there are existing housing developments along Gull Road however the Development Strategy states that it is necessary to protect the character of the open countryside by restricting further linear development along Gull Road. Given that the layout of the site is that of linear development, the proposal fails to comply with Policy E1 and the Development Strategy for Guyhirn.

The site forms the north eastern corner of the field within the applicants ownership and accounts for 0.18ha of the 1.09ha available. The site is positioned on the part of the field which is furthest from the established settlement and will leave a gap between the proposed dwellings and the existing development to the east. It is therefore contended that the proposal does not make best use of the land, nor does it constitute a natural extension to the existing built form. The proposal therefore fails yet again on sustainability grounds.

(b) Design and layout

The application is for outline planning permission with only the 'layout' committed for consideration at this stage. The layout of the scheme is what would typically be expected for three dwellings on a piece of land this size and shape and therefore no concerns are raised with regard to this aspect of the proposal. There is insufficient detail within the submission for CCC Highways to ascertain whether highway safety would be compromised as a result of the proposal. Although it is acknowledged that the siting and access of the proposal is not committed at this stage and the omission of these details would not be reason enough for refusal, it would be within the applicants interest to be forthcoming with these details as the principle and layout of the scheme could be compromised if these details were found to be unacceptable at the Reserved Matters stage.

The elevational details and the scale of the buildings have not been committed for consideration therefore Officers are unable to comment on the impact on neighbouring residents.

(c) Other matters

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council has commented in support of the application however has given no reasons for their support despite the proposal being a departure from the Development Plan.

The application submission includes examples of other residential development along Guyhirn which have been granted despite the land being located outside of the village core. These examples have been noted however

as most of the sites were comprehensive developments on land which physically adjoined the existing built form or were agricultural dwellings or satisfied the, now deleted, infill policy, it is considered that none of the examples represent a fair comparison to the current application. The most recent examples cited were granted planning permission in December 2010 and as such prior to the introduction of the NPPF. Meadow View, located to the immediate north of the site, is restricted by an agricultural occupancy and therefore does not set a precedent for the proposal.

The submission includes a Biodiversity statement which is considered sufficient to address the biodiversity considerations.

7. CONCLUSION

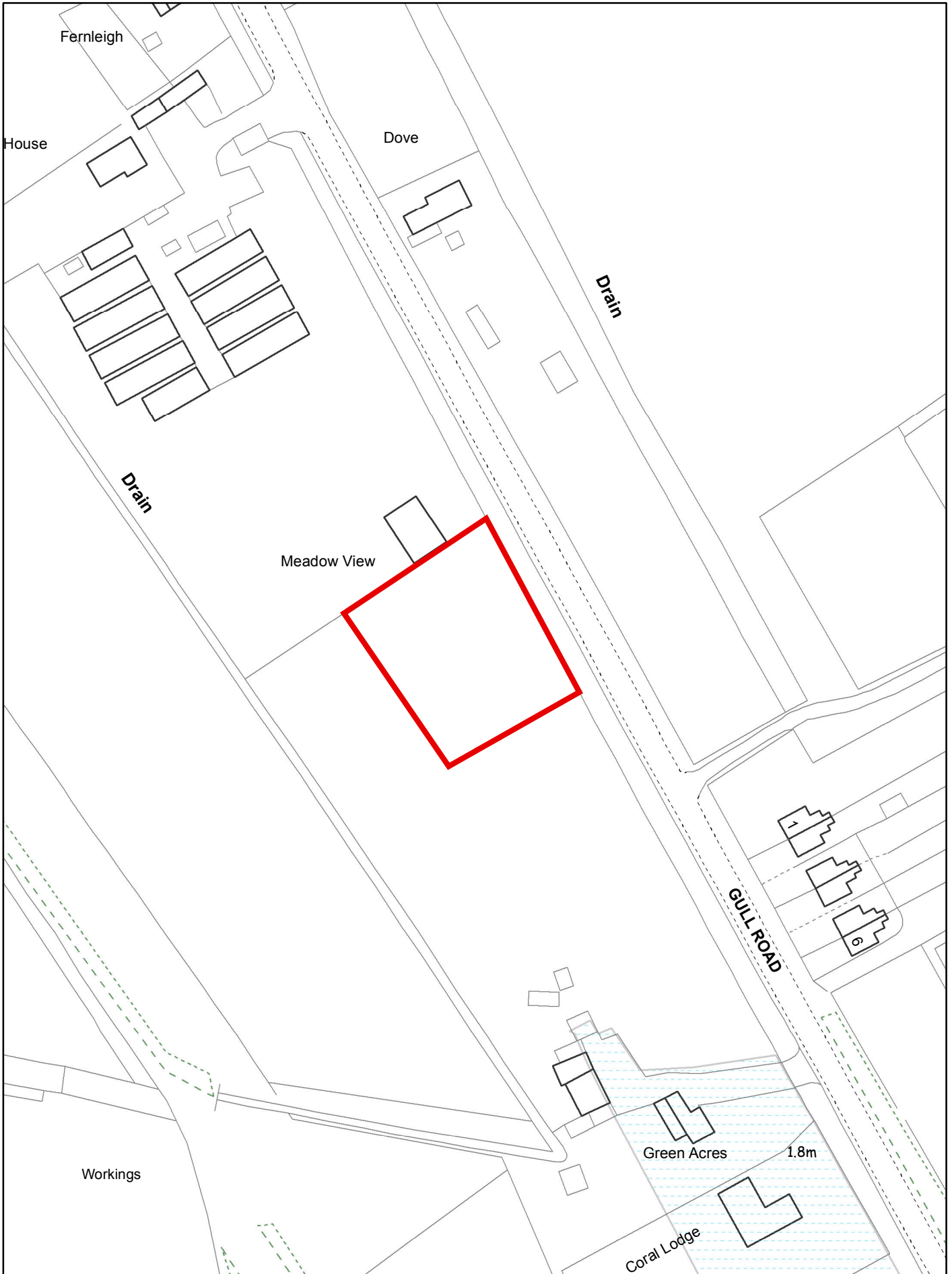
- 7.1 The site is located beyond the established settlement of Guyhirn in an area which is characterised as open countryside. The development does not adjoin the established built settlement, does not comply with the Development Strategy for the area or contribute to the sustainability or vitality of the community. The proposal therefore fails on sustainability grounds and is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal makes poor and inefficient use of the wider land available resulting in a piecemeal development which would detract from the character and appearance of the local area and the visual amenities of the open countryside. The development is therefore contrary to E1 and E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and the principles contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is considered that the proposal would result in a development which is not sustainable and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

1. **The proposal is positioned outside of any core settlement and fails to represent sustainable development, contrary to H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and the general principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
2. **The proposal represents piecemeal development by virtue of the location and under-use of the land available. This would be to the detriment of the development of the area in general and fails to respect the principles of sustainability. The proposal is therefore contrary to the general principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
3. **By virtue of the location of the proposal, within the countryside, the proposal would represent an incongruous feature which would detract from the open character of the landscape, contrary to E1 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan. As a result the proposal fails to respond to the local distinctiveness of the area, contrary to part 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**



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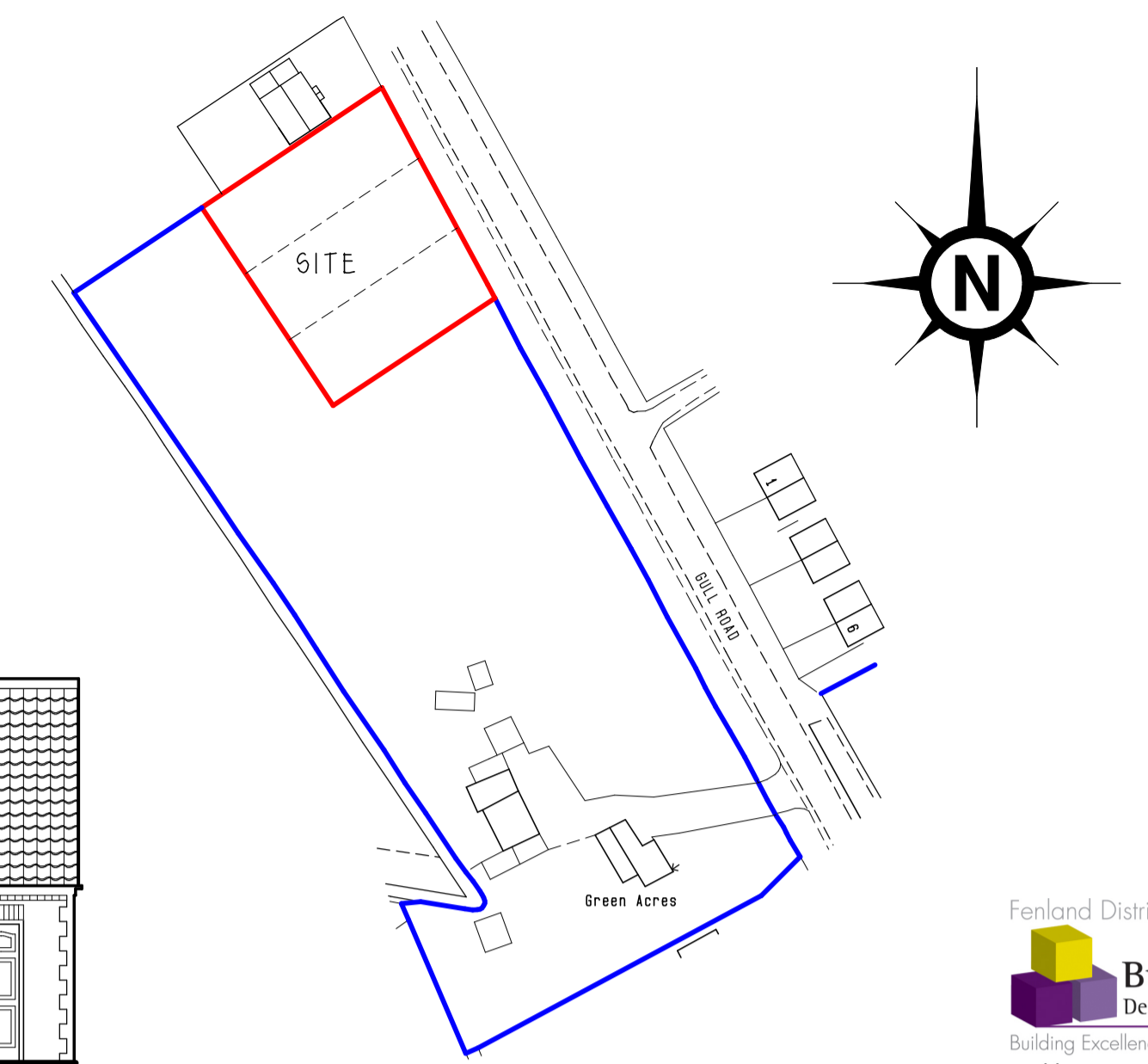




INDICATIVE FRONT ELEVATIONS OF THREE PROPOSED DWELLINGS

EXISTING DWELLING "MEADOW VIEW"

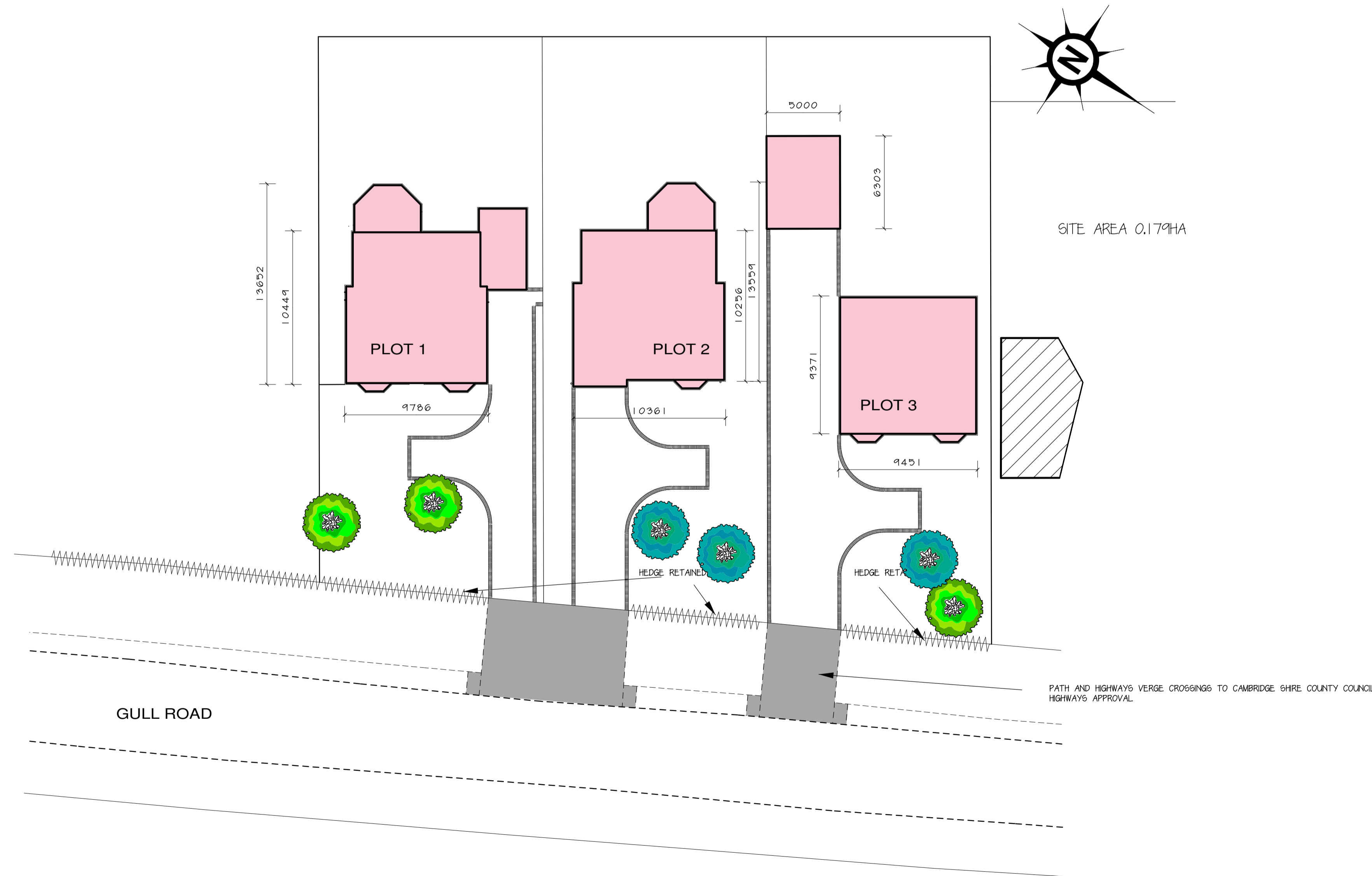
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Project
 THREE DETACHED TWO STOREY DWELLINGS SOUTH WEST OF GULL ROAD GUHIRN

Client
 MR & MRS M WRIGHT

Title
 SITE AND LOCATION PLANS

Ref
 W3045-2

Rev
 Sheet A1
 Scale: 1:200, 1250 Date: FEB 2011