

**Application Number: F/YR12/0677/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: March Town Council
Date Received: 29 August 2012
Expiry Date: 24 October 2012
Applicant: Mr B Harradine
Agent: Mr C Brand**

Proposal: Erection of 4 x 2-storey dwellings with double garages involving the formation of vehicular accesses comprising 2 No. 4-bed dwellings and 2 No. 5-bed dwellings

Location: Land west of 150 Upwell Road, March

Site Area/Density: 0.485 ha

Reason before Committee: The application has been called onto Committee by Cllr Owen who believes the application site is in keeping with and appropriate for 4 dwellings

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 4 detached houses on land west of 150 Upwell Road, March. The site lies outside the Development Area Boundary for March and is on the periphery of the established settlement limits.

The application is to be assessed in line with Policies H3 and E8 of the Local Plan and Policies CS1, CS2 and CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy together with the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies support new development which contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside.

Key issues relate to:

- History of the site
- Policy assessment
- Character of area
- Design
- Impact on trees and street scene.

The development proposed is on the periphery of March and the site is currently agricultural land mainly used for the grazing of cattle. The land is associated with the existing farm at 150 Upwell Road and is currently bound by existing hedging and lime trees along the south boundary and hedging along the west boundary.

The proposal is for 4 large individually designed detached houses set within spacious plots each with garaging, parking and turning within each site. It is proposed to use a mix of materials which include red brick for plots 1 and 3 and cream bricks for plots 2 and 4.

The proposal requires the removal of several lime trees from the highway verge to facilitate vehicular visibility onto Upwell Road and the formation of a public footpath.

The main issue relates to the character and form of the area and the resultant impact of the development on the street scene; resulting from the removal of the existing lime trees along the highway frontage and the introduction of a footpath. These elements will interrupt the existing street vista along Upwell Road, which is particularly rural in nature to the detriment of the overall character of the area.

Existing dwellings along this section of Upwell Road are mainly single-storey, although there are two 2-storey dwellings close to Upwell Park, which are of a smaller scale and form than the dwellings hereby proposed. The introduction of 4 large dwellings of the scale and form proposed will ultimately result in an alien form of development that will not assimilate well into this section of Upwell Road.

The recommendation is to refuse the application due to the impact that the development will have on the street scene and the inappropriate scale of the dwellings.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1	F/YR04/0026/O	Erection of 2 dwellings	Refused 30 April 2004
	F/YR03/1198/O	Erection of 2 dwellings	Refused 5 November 2003
	F/YR01/1106/O	Erection of a dwelling	Refused 16 January 2002
	F/0576/87/O	Residential development	Refused 13 August 1987

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

3.2 East of England Plan 2008:

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

3.2 Draft Fenland Core Strategy:

CS1: Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierachy

CS2: Growth and Housing

CS14: Delivering High Quality Environments

3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

E8: Landscape and amenity protection

H3: Development Area Boundary/Protection of Character and Amenity/Highway Safety

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 **Parish/Town Council:** Recommend approval.
- 4.2 **County Highways (CCC):**
- Any gates to vehicular accesses shall be set back a minimum of 5 m from the edge of the carriageway and hung to open inwards.
 - Vehicular accesses to be constructed in accordance with CCC specification.
 - Scheme for the vehicular crossing of the ditch to be submitted to and agreed with the CCC highways.
 - Sufficient space to be provided to allow vehicles to park clear of the highway and leave in forward gear.
 - Temporary facilities to be provided for the loading and unloading of vehicles during construction.
 - Accesses to be constructed with adequate drainage measures.
 - A 1.8m wide footpath to be provided along the entire frontage of the site.
- To facilitate the provision of the footway along the frontage of the site and to provide suitable vehicle to vehicle visibility at each access point the existing trees within the highway verge will need to be removed.
- 4.3 **Arboricultural Officer (FDC):** The lime trees are on highway land and are healthy and are maintained as pollards by regular pruning. They form a continuous line of similarly maintained trees on both sides of the road and are a prominent and significant landscape feature, their removal would break the continuity of the lines.
- 4.4 **Anglian Water:** The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of March STW that at present has available capacity for these flows. The sewerage system at present has available capacity for flows.
- 4.5 **Middle Level Commissioners:** No comments received.
- 4.6 **Scientific Officer (FDC):** Requests unsuspected contamination condition is attached to any approval.

- 4.7 **Local Residents:** 1 letter of objection relating to loss of views and clean air. Increased vehicle movements and loss of rural character of the area. The properties will be an eye sore and other large properties are not selling around March.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site is currently agricultural land used for the grazing of cattle and is devoid of any features within the site. The site is bounded by hedging on the south and west boundaries and the existing farmhouse known as 150 Upwell Road is located on the eastern side of the site. The site is open to the rear. Along the southern boundary is a dry open ditch and along the grassed highway verge is a line of lime trees.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 History of the site

The site has been the subject of 4 previous refusals for residential development, which were assessed under previous policies contained within the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 including Policy H15 (Infill Policy) which has since been deleted.

Policy assessment

Policies H3 and E8 of the current Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 are still relevant to this application together with policies contained within the emerging Core Strategy.

Policy H3 seeks to retain development within existing settlement limits and Policy E8 seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that the design is compatible with their surroundings in terms of townscape/landscape character, scale and architectural detail.

The emerging Core Strategy does not define settlement limits and steers most new development to those larger places that offer the best access to services and facilities that can help reduce the need to travel as well as making best use of existing infrastructure. The site is not located within either a strategic allocation or broad location for growth as shown in the Core Strategy.

Policy CS14 seeks to ensure that high quality environments are delivered and protected throughout the district. It sets out 14 relevant criteria including making a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, requiring development to be of a scale that is in keeping with the shape and form of the settlement pattern and ensuring that it does not adversely harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development that will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and respond to local character whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. It also states that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Decisions should address the connections between people and

places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

Character of Area

The site is on the periphery of March on the northern side of Upwell Road where the existing built limits finish. Whilst there is development on the southern side of Upwell Road the application site is part of the open countryside leading out of the town.

The character in the immediate vicinity close to the application site consists of mainly single storey detached properties set along a highway that is lined with lime trees on both sides which extend out into the countryside.

Design

The proposal is for 4 large individually designed detached houses each with access off Upwell Road. Each property will be set on a generous size plot with ample parking and turning available. It is proposed to use a mix of materials with plots 1 and 3 in red brick and plots 2 and 4 in a cream brick. It is proposed to use solar panels on the roof.

The design is considered to be out of keeping with the character of the area in that the 2-storey dwellings have a maximum ridge height of 10 metres whereas the approximate ridge height of the neighbouring properties are 5.5 metres to the west and 7 metres to the east. The properties opposite have ridge heights ranging from 5 metres to 6 metres. It is, therefore, considered that the dwellings proposed will result in an alien feature in the street scene and will not integrate into the existing built environment.

Impact on trees and street scene

The proposal will require the removal of the lime trees that are located within the highway verge in order to facilitate the introduction of a footpath and the required vehicle visibility splays.

The trees are in the ownership of the County Highways Section and they have confirmed that they have no objection to their removal. The proposal is, therefore, to plant new lime trees set back into the front garden area of each dwelling to compensate for their removal.

The Council's Arboricultural Officer, when consulted, considers that the trees are a prominent and significant landscape feature and their removal would break the continuity of the limes. However, it is noted that the County are not particularly concerned about the potential loss of the trees and, therefore, if the proposal is acceptable the opportunity should be taken to provide trees with a high landscape value.

The removal of these trees will have an adverse impact on the character of the street scene even with the planting of new trees which will be set back from the highway edge by approximately 7 metres.

Also the introduction of a footpath will urbanise the character of this semi-rural location to the detriment of the area.

Refuse collection

Each dwelling will benefit from a roadside refuse collection from the public highway, which runs to the front of the properties.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The development of 4 large detached houses will not integrate into the existing built environment by virtue of their form and scale. The removal of the trees will have an adverse impact on the street scene to the detriment of the built environment.

Whilst the NPPF supports sustainable development it is clear that the integration of new development into the built environment is a clear consideration and, therefore, if the application site is to be considered acceptable for development, the development should be of a form and scale that respects the immediate locality.

As demonstrated in this report, there are serious concerns about the height, massing and scale of the proposal together with the loss of the lime trees, which will have an adverse effect on the character of the street scene.

Pre-application discussions took place where issues relating to the form, scale and tree removal was assessed. Officer advice was that the proposal could not receive support without significant amendments and concerns were raised regarding the location of the development given both its character and relationship with the main settlement. The loss of the trees were highlighted as a negative aspect of the design.

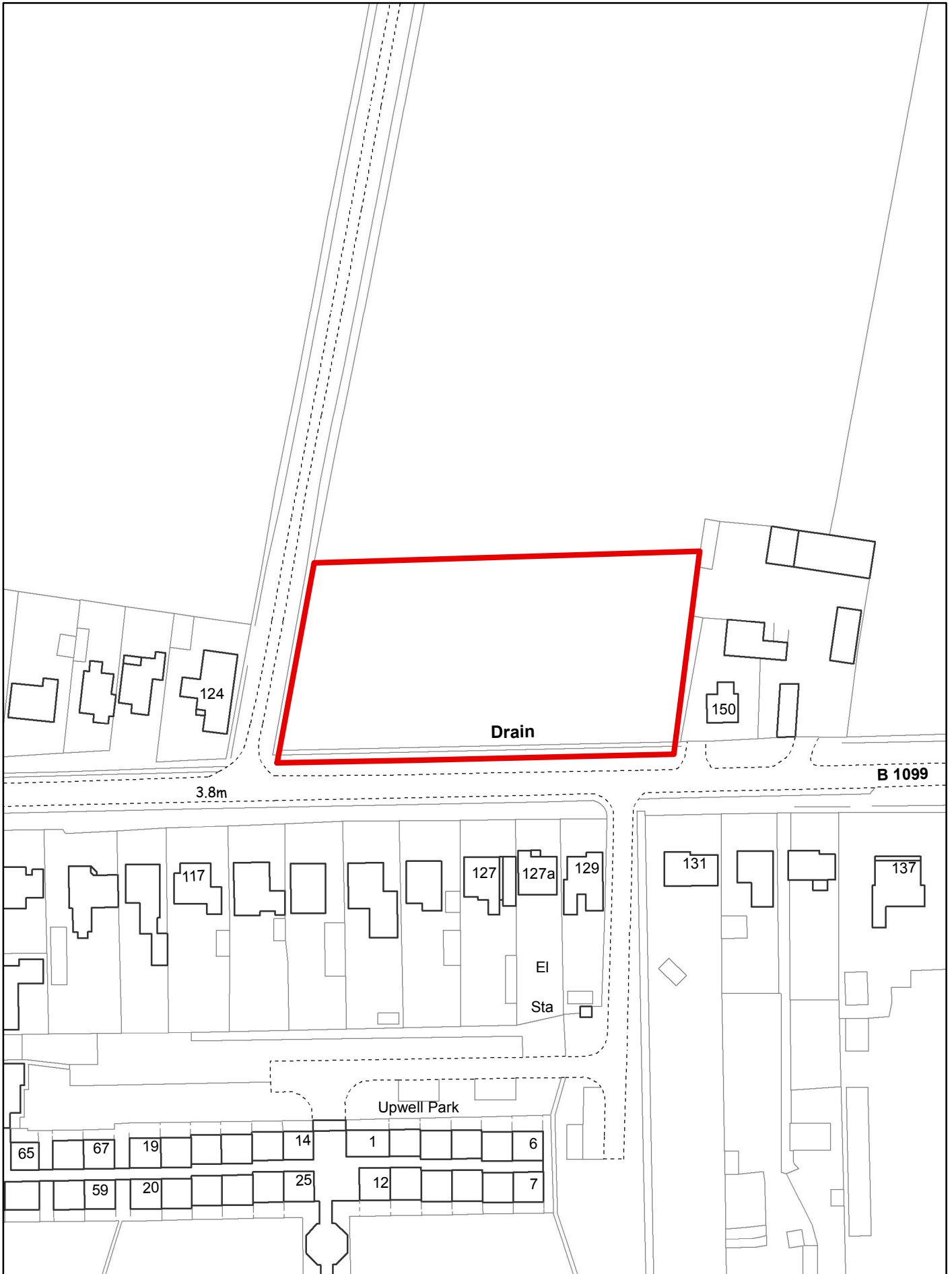
It is considered that the proposal will result in development that fails to integrate into the natural and built environment. The NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunity available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Design is not just the way a dwelling looks, but the overall design of the development includes form, functionality and street presence.

The scale of the proposal together with the loss of the trees will have an adverse impact on the quality of this area and is, therefore, recommended for refusal.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

- 1. The development, by virtue of its size, mass, design and relationship with adjoining properties, will have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and will introduce an incongruous building form into the locality and is, therefore, contrary to Policies H3 and E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 and Policy CS14 of the draft Fenland Core Strategy (July 2012).**
- 2. The removal of the lime trees will result in changes to the street scene to the detriment of the area and their removal is considered contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 and Policy CS14 of the draft Fenland Core Strategy (July 2012).**



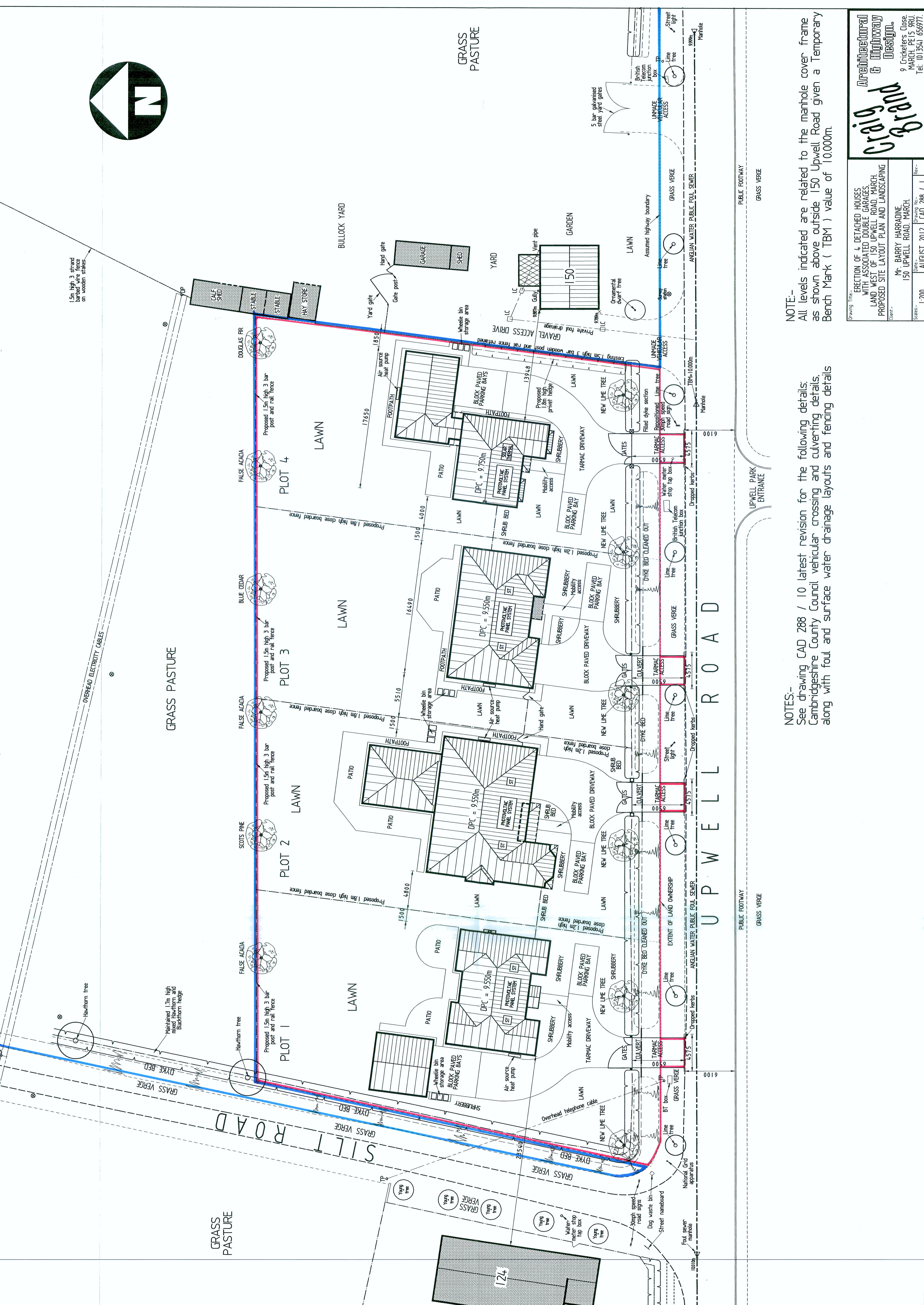
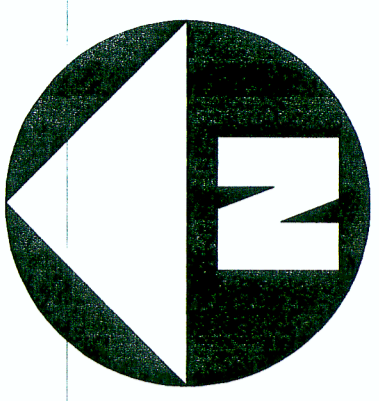
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Scale = 1:1,250





NOTES:-
 See drawing CAD 288 / 10 latest revision for the following details:
 Cambridgeshire County Council vehicular crossing and culverting details,
 along with foul and surface water drainage layouts and fencing details

NOTE:-
 All levels indicated are related to the manhole cover frame
 as shown above outside 150 Upwell Road given a Temporary
 Bench Mark (TBM) value of 10.000m.

Craig Brand Architectural & Highway Design	
Drawing Title:- ERECTION OF 4 DETACHED HOUSES WITH ASSOCIATED DOUBLE GARAGES LAND WEST OF 150 UPWELL ROAD, MARCH PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN AND LANDSCAPING	Client:- Mr. BARRY HARRADINE, 150 UPWELL ROAD, MARCH
Scale:- 1:200	Date:- AUGUST 2012
Drawing No.:- CAD 288 / 1	Rev:- 1

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