

**Application Number: FYR13/0439/O**  
**Minor**  
**Parish/Ward: Leverington Parish Council**  
**Date Received: 14 June 2013**  
**Expiry Date: 9 August 2013**  
**Applicant: R Stevens, L Stevens and E Clark**  
**Agent: Mr J Burton Swann Edwards Architecture**

**Proposal: Erection of 4 no dwellings**  
**Location: Land West of 116-124 Sutton Road, Leverington, Cambridgeshire**

**Site Area/Density: 0.39ha/10dph**

**Reason before Committee: Level of Support contrary to Development Plan and Officer Recommendation**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of 4 dwellings at Land West of 116-124 Sutton Road, Leverington, Cambridgeshire, with details of the access and layout committed.

The key issues to consider with regards to this application include –

- Principle and Policy Considerations;
- Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land;
- Design, Layout and Impact on Character of the Area;
- Highways, Access and Parking;
- Drainage and Flood Risk;

The proposed site is located within close proximity to the existing developed footprint of the village however it is not considered to be located in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village as defined within Policy CS12. Furthermore, in view of the location the overall sustainability of the proposed site performs poorly, particularly in terms of distance from the town centre and the proximity to other local and community facilities and service.

Policy CS12 criteria (e) states that new development should not extend existing linear features of the settlement, or result in ribbon development. The grouping of agricultural buildings to the south forms an appropriate visual stop to the built form of this part of Wisbech. Development of the proposed site would result in ribbon development further into the countryside. Therefore, the proposal which was subject to pre-application advice would be contrary to criteria (e) of Policy CS12.

The proposal would also result in the loss of Grade 1 Agricultural Land which is amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land in the country. No comprehensive evidence as outlined in local and national policy has been provided to justify this loss and therefore the proposal is contrary to local and national policy.

In terms of flood risk assessment, policy sets out that (i) there are more suitable sites for residential development within the district and (ii) it has not been demonstrated that the proposal meets an identified need. Accordingly, the proposal fails to meet with Policy CS14 Part B of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

Therefore, taking all of the above matters into account the proposal is recommended for refusal.

## 2. **HISTORY**

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- 2.1 F/1130/88/O – Residential Development-2.49ha – Refused (16/03/1989)

## 3. **PLANNING POLICIES**

### 3.1 **National Planning Policy Framework:**

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that applications 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.

Paragraph 112: Best and most versatile agricultural land.

Section 7: Requiring Good Design

### 3.2 **Emerging Fenland Core Strategy:**

CS1: Presumption of Sustainable Development

CS3: Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside.

CS4: Housing

CS12: Rural Areas Development Policy

CS13: Supporting and Mitigating the Impact of a Growing District

CS14: Flood Risk

CS15: Development Schemes and Parking Requirements

CS16: High Quality Environments

### 3.3 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

H3: Development should be within existing settlement

E1: Protect Unique Open Character of Landscape and New Development in Rural Location

E3: Retention of Existing Trees and Hedgerows

E8: Landscape and Amenity Protection

## 4. **CONSULTATIONS**

### 4.1 **Parish Council**

Check required on existence of public footpath at this location.

### 4.2 **Environment Agency**

No objection in principle to the proposed development, subject to condition.

- 4.3 **North Level IDB**
- 4.4 **CCC Highways**

Comments awaited – Full update at meeting Reservations with regard to the location of the site with direct access to the A1101 and on the extremity of the built environment of Sutton Road, where adequate vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility exists, appropriate pedestrian linkage can be made and adequate access/turning and parking can be achieved; however no objection in principle.

- 4.5 **FDC Environmental Protection**
- 4.6 **EDF Energy**
- 4.7 **National Grid**

An amended plan was requested and received as access is proposed to be committed. CCC Highways have indicated that the amended plan is now acceptable from a highway point of view subject to conditions.

No objection

Comments awaited – Full update at meeting  
No objection - the National Grid apparatus that has been identified as being in the vicinity of the proposed works is a Low or Medium pressure (below 2 bar) gas pipes and associated equipment. As a result it is highly likely that there are gas services and associated apparatus in the vicinity.

- 4.8 **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

7 letters of support have been received with comments including;  
- 'good sized family living quarters';  
- 'housing aimed at families' and 'growing professional families';  
- Respects building line;  
- Enhance the entrance to Leverington and Wisbech.

## 5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site, which is situated on Sutton Road is agricultural land currently set out to crop. To the east of the site across Sutton Road there is some sporadic commercial development. Immediately to the south of the site is a grouping of agricultural buildings which are screened by mature trees and vegetation. To the north and west of the site is the open Fenland countryside. The site is in a visually prominent location when entering Wisbech along the A1101 from the North. In addition, the proposed site is situated within Flood Zone 2 and 3.

## 6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

### 6.1 **Principle and Policy Considerations**

Policy CS3 of the Emerging Core Strategy – Local Plan (Feb 2013) sets out that the overall strategy is for sustainable growth, with the focus for the majority of the growth in and around the four market towns including Wisbech.

The emerging Core Strategy sets out that the majority of new housing growth in Wisbech will be delivered in the form of urban extensions (Policy CS7 and Policy CS8).

In view of the location the overall sustainability of the proposed site is poor, particularly in terms of distance from the town centre and the proximity to other local and community facilities and service. This would be at odds with the overarching settlement strategy and Policy CS15 which sets out that development should be in locations that will support and encourage a modal shift to sustainable transport modes and help increase the use of non-car modes

Along with CS3 proposals must meet all of the criteria within Policy CS12 'Rural Areas Development Policy'. Policy CS12 Part A sets out that new development will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of the settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside.

Under Policy CS12 new development will need to satisfy the applicable thresholds (including the thresholds set in Policy CS3) as well as all of the applicable criteria set out in Policy CS12.

It is considered that the site is not located in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village (as defined within Policy CS12) contrary to criteria (a).

Policy CS12 criteria (e) states that new development should not extend existing linear features of the settlement, or result in ribbon development. They applicants have indicated that 'the proposed development will effectively complete the ribbon development on this side of Sutton Road and follow the natural development boundary created by the existing residential development opposite the site'. However, upon entering Wisbech from the north along Sutton Road development opposite the proposed site holds a predominantly commercial appearance as opposed to a residential appearance. In addition to this natural stop, the grouping of agricultural buildings to the south of the proposed site forms an appropriate visual stop to the built form of this part of Wisbech. Development of the proposed site would result in ribbon development further into the countryside. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to criteria (e).

There are also concerns raised about satisfying criteria (i) within Policy CS12 regarding the loss of high grade agricultural land. These concerns will be addressed in detail in the following sections of this report. However, the principle of developing this site is considered to be unacceptable and contrary to local policy.

In addition design policies within the existing Local Plan (Policy E8), the emerging Core Strategy (Policy CS16) and guidance contained within the NPPF (Section 7) stipulate that new development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area in terms of scale, layout, materials and landscaping and should not have an adverse impact on highway safety, neighbouring amenities and the natural environment.

#### **Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land;**

Policy CS12 Part A (i) seeks to ensure that proposals do not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land or if so comprehensive evidence is provided to justify the loss.

This is in line with the NPPF which outlines where significant loss of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary Local Planning Authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

The site subject of this application is currently in crop and is classified by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as Grade 1 Agricultural Land. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. It helps underpin the principles of sustainable development. Grade 1 land is the most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and can best deliver future crops for food and non food uses such as biomass and pharmaceuticals. Current estimates are that Grades 1 and 2 together forms about only 21% of all farmland in all of England, therefore it is clear that the land subject of this application is an important natural resource and its use is vital to sustainable development.

The proposal results in the loss of Grade 1 Agricultural Land which is amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land in the country. However, no comprehensive evidence policy has been provided to justify this loss and therefore the proposal is contrary to local and national policy.

## 6.2 **Layout and Impact on Character of the Area;**

The site is located along Sutton Road in a visually prominent location when entering Wisbech from the North along the A1101. At present the site is set to crop and visually the mature trees along the southern boundary of the site are a dominant feature.

This application is outline with only access and layout committed. The layout indicates the proposed 4 dwellings in a linear form fronting Sutton Road. The Applicants Design and Access Statement (DAS), states that the proposal will 'enhance a gateway to Wisbech'.

It is noted that scale, appearance and landscaping are not detailed within this application. However on the basis of the proposed layout and indicative plans and in consideration of the site as an enhancement of a gateway to Wisbech it is likely that upon arrival to Wisbech from the north the most visually dominant element of the proposal will be the gable end of the dwelling on Plot 1.

Given the prominent location it is considered that the proposed development would not make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting.

It is considered that *if* the site was acceptable in terms of policy (i.e. acceptable principle of development, a justification for the loss of grade 1 agricultural land with no flood risk issues) and the site presented an opportunity to make an enhancement or positive contribution to the area a building of exceptional quality or innovative design would be a more appropriate development.

In terms of layout of the proposed dwellings, it is considered that the proposal would extend ribbon development further along Sutton Road. The presence of ribbon development along Sutton Road towards Wisbech is noted, however as outlined within this report the grouping of agricultural buildings to the south forms an appropriate visual stop to the ribbon development of this part of Wisbech.

Therefore, taking account all of the above, including the prominent location and the policy requirements, it is considered that the proposal fails to either make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting contrary to Policy C16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

### **6.3 Impact upon Residential Amenity;**

It is considered that the proposal affords an adequate level of amenity for future occupants, with sufficient private amenity space to the rear of the dwellings. Issues such as overlooking or overshadowing would require further assessment upon the submission of details of the scale and appearance of the proposal.

### **6.4 Highways, Access and Parking;**

The site is located off Sutton Road, which is an 'A Class' Road. The Parish Council have outlined that a check is required on the existence of a public footpath at this location.

CCC Highways have indicated that whilst they have reservations with regard to the location of the site with direct access to the A1101 and that the site is on the extremity of the built form of Sutton Road they have no objection in principle.

However CCC Highways requested an amended plan with details including; a foot way extension along Sutton Road, amended access and layout details and visibility splays. Amended plans have been received, and are acceptable from CCC Highways point of view.

### **6.5 Drainage and Flood Risk;**

The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 and requires assessment in terms of flood risk. With regards to this application the Environment Agency (EA) have raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. However, notwithstanding such comments, the NPPF and Local Policy requires the Council to steer all development towards areas of low risk and therefore it is necessary to assess this site in terms of local and national policy.

The site does not meet the criteria within Policy CS14 (Part B) of the emerging Local Plan – Core Strategy, as taking into account Flood Zones, Policy CS4 broadly identifies potential for 3000 homes to be delivered across various locations in Wisbech which are lesser flood risk areas. Therefore, there are more suitable sites for residential development within Wisbech and in line with the emerging Core Strategy and the NPPF it has not been demonstrated that the proposal meets an identified need.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

### **7.1** The principle of developing this site is considered to be unacceptable and contrary to the overarching settlement and spatial strategy set out in Policy CS12 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013), Policy H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 and the NPPF.

The proposed site is located within close proximity to the existing developed footprint of the village however it is not considered to be located in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village as defined within Policy CS12.

Furthermore, in view of the location the overall sustainability of the proposed site is poor, particularly in terms of distance from the town centre and the proximity to other local and community facilities and services.

Policy CS12 criteria (e) states that new development should not extend existing linear features of the settlement, or result in ribbon development. The grouping of agricultural buildings to the south forms an appropriate visual stop to the built form of this part of Wisbech. Development of the proposed site would result in ribbon development further into the countryside. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to criteria (e) of Policy CS12.

The proposed development by virtue of its location, form and layout would not make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting contrary to Policy CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).

In view of the location it is considered that the proposed development by virtue of its form and layout would not make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting contrary to Policy CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).

The proposal would also result in the loss of Grade 1 Agricultural Land which is amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land in the country. However, comprehensive evidence as outlined in local and national policy has not been provided to justify this loss and therefore the proposal is contrary to Policy CS12 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

In terms of flood risk assessment, the site does not meet the criteria within Policy CS14 (Part B) of the emerging Local Plan – Core Strategy, as taking into account Flood Zones, Policy CS4 broadly identifies potential for 3000 homes to be delivered across various locations in Wisbech which are lesser flood risk areas. Therefore, in policy terms there are more suitable sites for residential development within the district and it has not been demonstrated that the proposal meets an identified need. Accordingly, the proposal fails to meet with Policy CS14 Part B of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

### **Refuse**

**1**

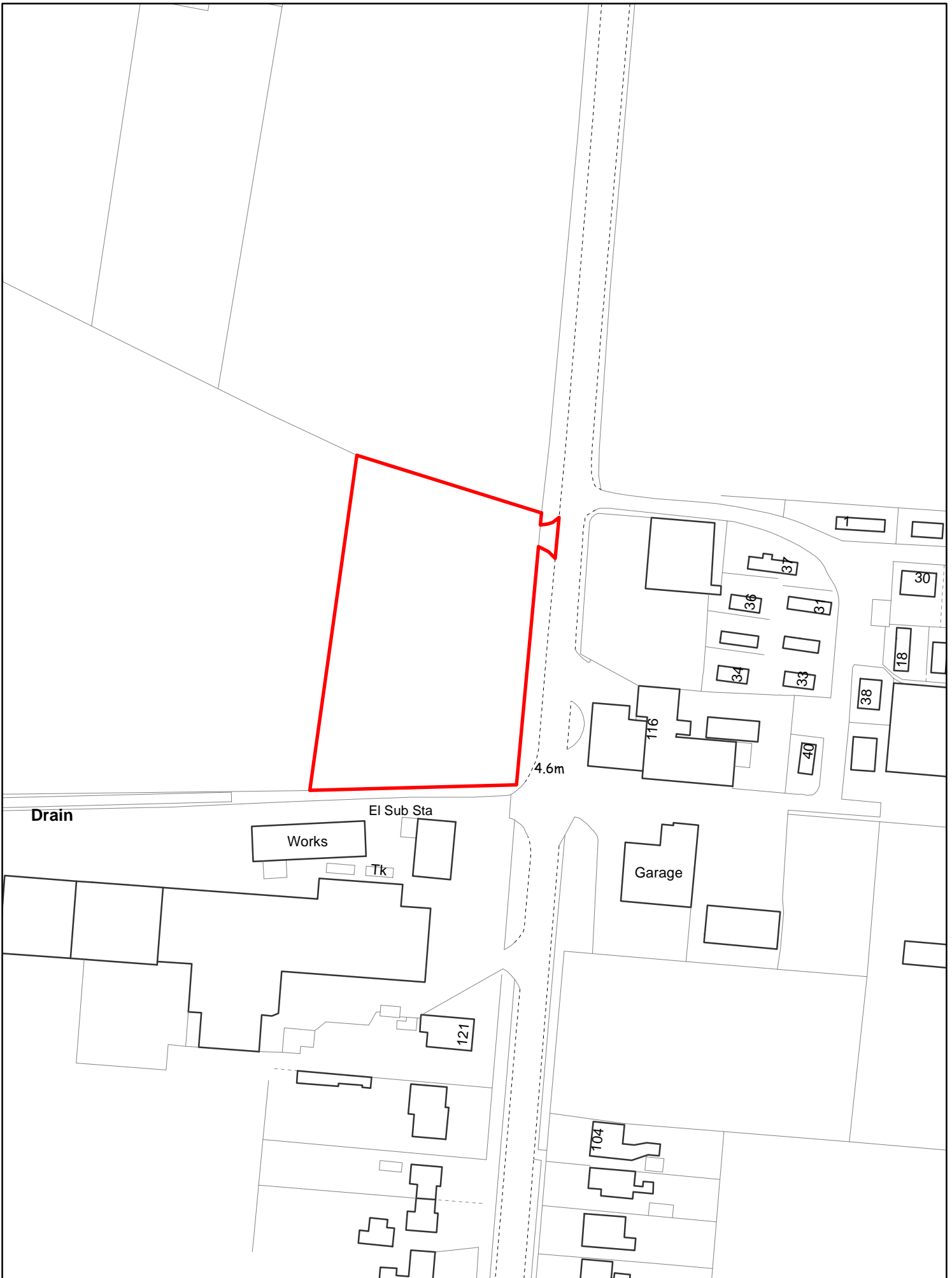
**The proposed site is located outside the existing developed footprint of the settlement and would be contrary to Policy H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, and Policy CS12 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).**

**2**

**In terms of the sustainability of the location the proposed site is poor, particularly in terms of distance from the town centre and the proximity to other local and community facilities and service. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the overall spatial strategy for sustainable growth as set out in the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).**

- 3 The proposal by virtue of its location and layout would result in ribbon development contrary to Policy CS12 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).**
- 4 The proposed development by virtue of its location, form and layout would not make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting contrary to Policy CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).**
- 5 No evidence has been put forward to justify the loss of Grade 1 Agricultural Land and therefore the proposal is contrary to Policy CS12 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.**
- 6 The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3. The proposal is considered to have failed to demonstrate the acceptability of locating housing development on this site in sequential terms when compared to other sites in the district which have a lower probability of flooding and it has not been demonstrated that the proposal meets an identified need. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS14 Part B of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.**





Created on: 15/07/2013

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 10023778

F/YR13/0439/O

Scale = 1:1,250



**CRITICAL NOTES:**  
 1. The owner shall not be held liable for any errors or omissions in this plan.  
 2. The owner shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and approvals from the relevant authorities.  
 3. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is suitable for the proposed development.  
 4. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is accessible to all users.  
 5. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is safe for all users.  
 6. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is secure for all users.  
 7. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is clean and tidy at all times.  
 8. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is well-maintained at all times.  
 9. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is used in accordance with the approved plan.  
 10. The owner shall be responsible for ensuring that the site is used in a safe and sound manner.

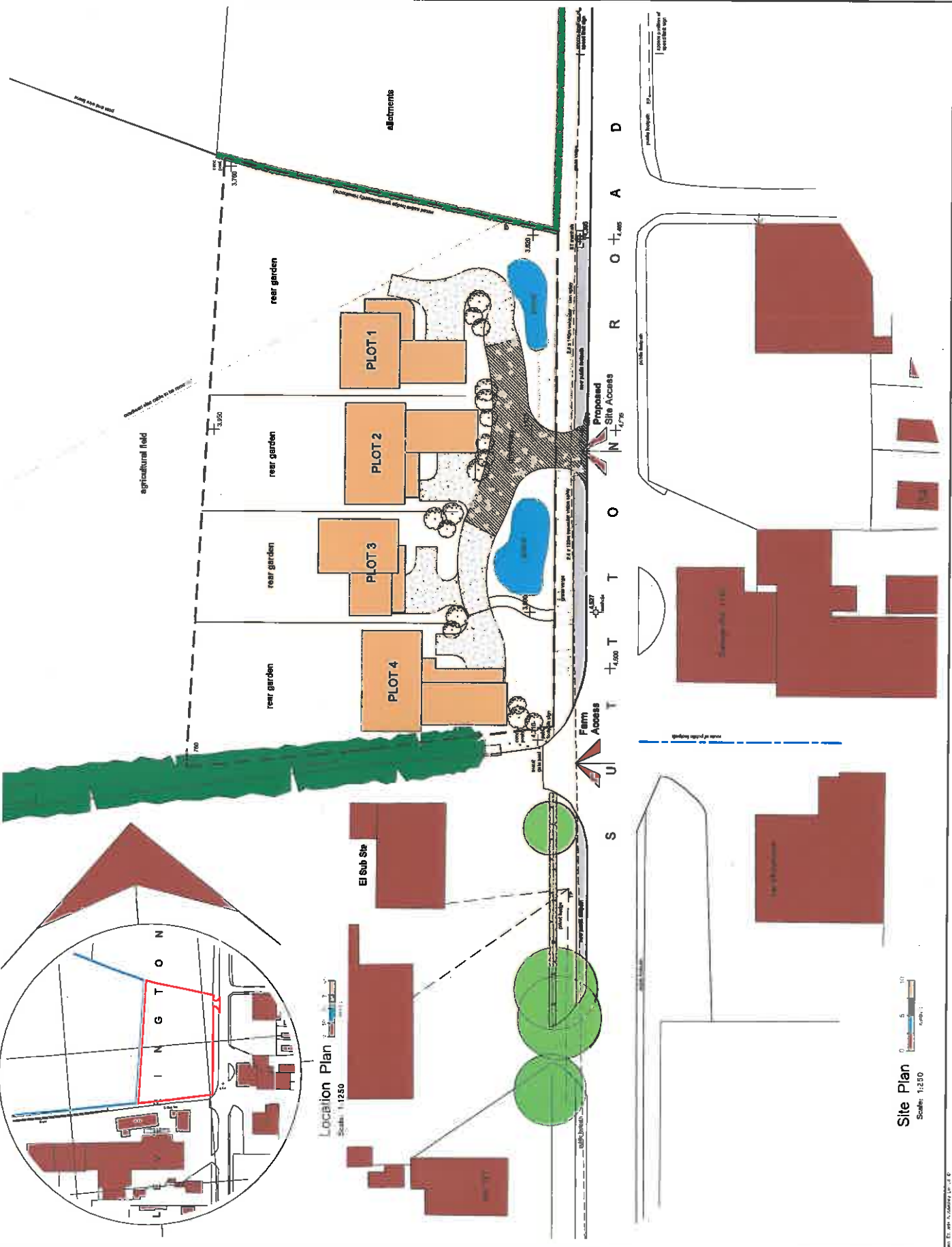
**SITE PLAN KEY**

	Existing trees and vegetation
	Proposed trees and vegetation
	Existing building footprint
	Proposed building footprint
	Existing site boundary
	Proposed site boundary
	Existing paved area
	Proposed paved area
	Existing landscape
	Proposed landscape
	Existing water feature
	Proposed water feature
	Existing utility lines
	Proposed utility lines
	Existing easement
	Proposed easement
	Existing setback
	Proposed setback

Scale: 1:1250  
 Date: 2019  
 Project: [Name]  
 Client: [Name]

**SWANN EDWARDS ARCHITECTURE**  
 11111 1st Street, Suite 100, San Francisco, CA 94103  
 Phone: (415) 555-1234  
 Email: info@swannedwards.com  
 Website: www.swannedwards.com

Drawn by	Checked by
2019	2019
Scale	Scale
1:1250	1:1250



© 2015 Swann Edwards Architecture, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of Swann Edwards Architecture, Inc. This document is the property of Swann Edwards Architecture, Inc. and is loaned to the client for their use only. It is not to be distributed to other parties without the prior written permission of Swann Edwards Architecture, Inc.

**SWANN EDWARDS ARCHITECTURE**  
 10000 15th Street, Suite 100, Golden, CO 80401  
 Phone: 303.440.1500 | Fax: 303.440.1501  
 www.swannedwards.com

Project No.	15-001
Client	Golden, CO
Phase	Conceptual
Scale	1:100
Date	2015
Drawn by	J.E.
Checked by	J.E.
Approved by	J.E.



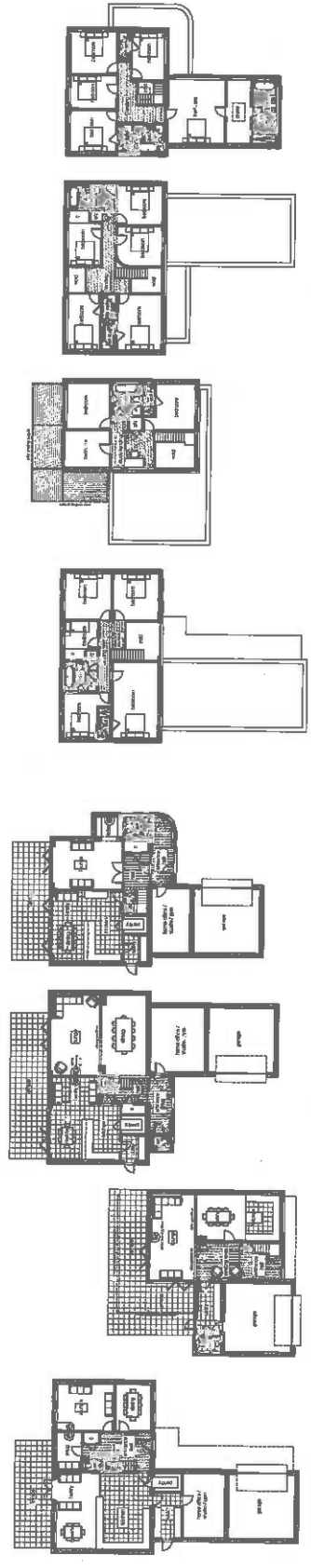
**Birds Eye Views**  
 Demonstrating integration with existing built form and continuation of the ribbon development



**Aerial View**  
 Demonstrating continuation of existing ribbon development and creating spillover site to Whittich



**Street Views**  
 Conveying potential site massing and integration with existing built form



**First Floor Plans**  
 Scale: 1:100

**Ground Floor Plans**  
 Scale: 1:100