
F/YR24/0783/O

Applicant: Mr & Mrs B Morley

**Agent : Mr Gareth Edwards
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

Land North East Of Highfield Lodge, Doddington Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

Erect up to 2 x dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations received contrary to Officer Recommendation

Government Planning Guarantee

Statutory Target Date For Determination: 25 November 2024

EOT in Place: Yes

EOT Expiry: 22 January 2025

Application Fee: £1734

Risk Statement:

This application must be determined by 22nd January 2025 otherwise it will be out of time and therefore negatively affect the performance figures.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning approval, with all matters reserved for the erection of up to 2 dwellings on Land North East of Highfield Lodge.
- 1.2 The site sits within the open countryside outside the existing built form of Chatteris. It is closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape for the reasons given above. Given the existing characteristics of the site, the proposal would change the overall character of the area to its detriment. The introduction of two dwellings (illustrated in a linear orientation) either side of the existing access to Highfield Lodge would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area and would set an unacceptable precedent within the area and would consequently represent urban sprawl in this particular location. This would be contrary to Policy LP12 and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and DM3 of the High Quality Environments SPD.
- 1.3 Accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises 2 parcels of paddock land either side of the access road which serves Highfield Lodge.

- 2.2 The southernmost plot is enclosed via post and rail fencing, with sporadic vegetation on the front boundary adjacent to Doddington Road. The southern boundary features more dense vegetation.
- 2.3 The northernmost plot is also enclosed via post and rail fencing, with dense vegetation on the front boundary adjacent to Doddington Road.
- 2.4 The application site is situated within Flood Zone 1. The frontage of the site is situated within an area of medium and high risk for surface water flooding, which runs parallel to the highway.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is in outline for the erection of 2 dwellings with all matters reserved. The illustrative layout and design and access statement submitted indicates the provision of 2-storey dwellings with detached garages. Indicative parking and turning has also been detailed.
- 3.2 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR23/0730/O	Erect up to 6 x dwellings and the formation of 2 x accesses (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at Land South East Of Highfield Lodge, Doddington Road	Granted 21/11/2023

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Chatteris Town Council

Rec Refusal, development is an encroachment into the countryside, there are no paths proposed and no infrastructure. There are also concerns about more vehicles using the access on to a busy, fast road.

5.2 FDC Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Team note and accept the submitted information and have 'No Objections' to the proposed scheme as it is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or be affected by ground contamination.

Due to the close proximity of noise sensitive receptors including those approved under a 2023 scheme, it is recommended that the following condition is imposed in the event that planning permission is granted:

WORKING TIMES

No construction work shall be carried out and no plant or power operated machinery operated other than between the following hours: 08:00 hours and 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 08:00 hours and 13:00 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

5.3 CCC Highways

Recommendation

On the basis of the information submitted, from the perspective of the Local Highway Authority, I consider the proposed development is acceptable.

Comments

Whilst it is accepted that the proposals seek outline planning consent, with all matters reserved, a review has been undertaken of the access arrangements from Doddington Road and within the site. The proposals seek to achieve access through the improvement of the existing access arrangements, as part of the full planning consent, full details will be required of the internal carriageway width and materials, junction radii and visibility splays.

Visibility splays of 2.4m by 215m will be required either side of the access arrangement, which are required to be free from any obstruction over a height of 600mm. The inter vehicles visibility splays must be within the existing adopted public highway or land under the control of the applicant. The requirement for 2.4m x 215m inter-vehicle visibility splays may be overcome if the applicant were to provide empirical data in the form of a speed survey and volume count so that the Y distance of the inter-vehicle visibility splays can be interpolated in relationship to the measure 85%ile speeds.

The applicant has not demonstrated that the site can be sustainably accessed by pedestrians as there is no connectivity between the proposed site and existing / consented footway links along Doddington Road. It is therefore considered that a pedestrian footway along Doddington Road is to be provided as part of the full planning submissions to link with committed infrastructure. It is unclear how the footway link may be provided with due regard to the drains adjacent to the existing verge / carriageway which will not form part of the public highway, further information will be required in this respect.

In the event that the LPA are mindful to approve the application, please append the following Conditions and Informatives to any consent granted:

Conditions

Prior to the commencement of the development full details (in the form of scaled plans and/or written specifications) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to illustrate the following:

- a) The layout of the site, including roads, footways, cycleways, buildings, visibility splays, parking provision and surface water drainage.*
- b) The siting of the building(s) and means of access thereto.*
- c) Visibility splays*
- d) Parking provision*
- e) Turning Area(s)*

Prior to commencement of the use/or first occupation of the development hereby approved, visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of the new vehicular access and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600 mm

within an area of 2.4 metres x 215 metres measured along the edge of the carriageway

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

Subject to confirmation as required above:

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a footway of a minimum width of 2 metres shall be provided along the western side of Doddington Road, in accordance with a detailed engineering scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the development proposed.

Informatives

Works in the Public Highway

This development may involve work to the public highway that will require the approval of the County Council as Highway Authority. It is an OFFENCE to carry out any works within the public highway, which includes a public right of way, without the permission of the Highway Authority. Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that, in addition to planning permission, any necessary consents or approvals under the Highways Act 1980 and the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 are also obtained from the County Council.

Watercourse Management

If you are planning to undertake works within a watercourse within the UK, you need permission to do so by law. It is essential that anyone who intends to carry out works in, over, under or near a watercourse, contacts the relevant flood risk management authority to obtain the necessary consent before starting work.

Please refer to this web page for further information;

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/watercourse-management/>

Ecological Impacts of Highway Works

The proposed works to the public highway which are required as part of the highway mitigation, will result in a material loss of established vegetation and / or damage to existing ecosystems (including potentially both habitats and protected species) within existing highway or adjoining land. Notwithstanding any consent granted under the Town and Country Planning Act, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their works comply with relevant legislation and that any supplementary permits or permissions are secured prior to undertaking the highway works.

5.4 CCC Archaeology

I am writing in regards to the archaeological potential of the above referenced planning application.

Our records indicate that the development lies in an area of archaeological potential, on the northern fen edge of Chatteris, an area of higher ground often exploited prior to fen drainage. Cropmarks are known to the adjacent south of the

development area which show a yet undated series of linear features (Cambridge Historic Environment Record reference 09670). Although the cropmarks are undated, find spots of Roman pottery have been recovered in the Doddington Road area, in particular an imitation Samian ware vessel dating to the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, indicating a Roman presence in the area (CHER ref. 01513). A possible medieval moated site has been identified through cropmarks to the north-west (CHER ref. 09671). Later activity is known from the route of the 18th century toll road which the site abuts to the east (CHER ref. MCB31386). Archaeological investigations have taken place along the route of the toll road to the south, medieval to post-medieval activity was recorded indicating gravel extraction took place within the area (CHER ref. CB15314).

Due to the archaeological potential of the site a programme of investigation and recording is required in order to provide more information regarding the presence or absence, and condition, of surviving archaeological remains within the development area, and to establish the need for archaeological mitigation of the development as necessary. Usage of the following condition is recommended:

Archaeology Condition

No demolition/development shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has implemented a programme of archaeological work, commencing with the evaluation of the application area, that has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than under the provisions of the agreed WSI, which shall include:

- a. The statement of significance and research objectives;*
- b. The programme and methodology of investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;*
- c. The timetable for the field investigation as part of the development programme;*
- d. The programme and timetable for the analysis, publication & dissemination, and deposition of resulting material and digital archives.*

REASON: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any demolitions or groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely preservation and/or investigation, recording, reporting, archiving and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC 2023).

Informatives:

Partial discharge of the condition can be applied for once the fieldwork at Part c) has been completed to enable the commencement of development. Part d) of the condition shall not be discharged until all elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI. A brief for the recommended programme of archaeological works is available from this office upon request. Please see our website for CHET service charges

5.5 Local Residents/Interested Parties

8 letters of support have been received with regard to this application. The letters were received from address points in Chatteris at Cricketers Way, Fenton Way,

Blackthorn Close, Hunters Close, London Road and Horseway. The remaining 2 letters were received from address points in Doddington at address points at Eastalls Close and Dykemoore Drove. The reasons for support are summarised as follows:

- Improve the aesthetic approach from Doddington Road
- Executive housing
- Reservoir development
- Desirable location
- Enough land to accommodate both dwellings
- Access
- No overlooking

Whilst one letter of objection has been recorded as having been received (from a registered supporter of the proposal), the contents of the comments appear to provide further support for the scheme and it appears therefore that this letter may have been submitted in error.

6 STATUTORY DUTY

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

7.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

7.3 National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

Built Form

7.4 Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

LP4 – Housing

LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy

LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP19 – The Natural Environment

7.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance**

Delivering & Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD (2014)

7.6 **Emerging Local Plan**

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

LP1: Settlement Hierarchy

LP2: Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development

LP5: Health and Wellbeing

LP7: Design

LP8: Amenity Provision

LP18: Development in the Countryside

LP20: Accessibility and Transport

LP22: Parking Provision

LP24: Natural Environment

LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain

LP27: Trees and Planting

LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 **KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area**
- **Access & Highway Safety**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 **BACKGROUND**

9.1 The application site is situated immediately north-west to extant planning permission F/YR23/0730/O which is an outline application for the erection of 6 dwellings with matters committed in respect of access. This application was overturned and granted at planning committee on 15th November 2023. No subsequent planning applications e.g., reserved matters applications, have been received further to this.

9.2 Officers recommended the above application for refusal for the following reasons:

1 Policy LP12 seeks to support development that does not harm the character of the countryside. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014 requires that proposals for new development should deliver and protect high quality environments which respond to and improve the character of the local built form and respond to the street scene and existing settlement patterns. The proposal is

for the construction of up to six new dwellings with a new access on currently undeveloped grassland with a close relationship to the wider open countryside. Development on this land would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the rural area through increased urbanisation, representing urban sprawl in this location, directly contradicting the current settlement pattern and arguably creating a precedent for further development into the countryside, contrary to the requirements of Policy LP12 and Policy LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and DM3 of the High-Quality Environments SPD.

2 Policy LP15 seeks to support proposals that provide safe and convenient access for all. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is unknown if this is achievable to provide the necessary visibility splays relative to the speed of the road within the highway boundary and / or application boundary, to ensure safe vehicular access to the site. Furthermore, the justification for the proposed pedestrian footpath links appears to be unclear. Therefore, the scheme is contrary to Policy LP15 as it has not been evidenced that a suitable and safe access to the development can be provided.

- 9.3 Members did not support officer's recommendation of refusal of planning permission as they felt that the proposal would not harm the character of the countryside, and that it would enhance and make a positive contribution of the distinctiveness of the area upon entry into Chatteris.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 defines Chatteris as a Market Town where (along with the other market towns) the majority of the district's new housing growth should take place. Although Policy LP3 identifies Chatteris as being a suitable location for housing growth, Policy LP10 states that new development should contribute to retaining its character. The site sits at the transition between the existing built form of Chatteris and the open countryside beyond.
- 10.2 The adjacent six plots approved by committee (F/YR23/0730/O) are regarded as being different in terms of their context as the current application proposes two dwellings to the front of Highfield Lodge which is farm, which would extend residential development past the existing farm. Given that the farm itself is within the national speed limit (60mph) and the paddocks to the front of the site, the site is clearly regarded as being within the open countryside, forming a buffer to the built form of development to the northeast of the town. This is all the more apparent given the lack of development opposite and the sporadic nature of very limited development as you travel north out of Chatteris along Doddington Road.
- 10.3 The application site is therefore considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape, a matter which has not changed since the earlier refusal. As such, given the existing characteristics of the site, the principle of development in this location is not considered to be acceptable.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 10.4 Policy LP12 of the Local Plan provides guidance as to the restriction of rural areas development to ensure that it has an acceptable impact on the settlement and its character.
- 10.5 Policy LP12 requires development to meet certain criteria in order to be supported. The site must not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland. Similarly, the proposal must be in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement, without resulting in the extension of linear features or create ribbon development, and must retain natural boundaries, respect ecological features, important spaces etc. Finally, the proposal must be served by sustainable infrastructure and must not put people or property in danger from identified risks.
- 10.6 The proposed development would extend the existing linear feature of the developed footprint of the settlement, by adding a further two dwellings to a line of ribbon development along Doddington Road, beyond an existing farm which forms a distinct and natural demarcation between the developed built form of Chatteris and the countryside beyond.
- 10.7 Development encroaching into this land would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. Further development to the 6 already approved would perpetuate a damaging precedent of advancing ribbon development along Doddington Road, yet further eroding the rural character, contrary to the requirements of policy LP12.
- 10.8 Policy LP16 seeks to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. Whilst the northernmost plot features dense vegetation to the front of the site, there are clear views across the site from the southernmost plot. Therefore, the impact of the development of up to two dwellings on the character and appearance of the current paddock area would be significant.
- 10.9 Given the above, it is considered that the submitted application remains in clear conflict with policies LP12 and LP16 of the adopted Local Plan in terms of its impact on character.

Access and Highway Safety

- 10.10 Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to ensure safe and convenient access for all within the district.
- 10.11 The indicative site plan suggests that there would be sufficient parking/turning room available to service the dwellings.
- 10.12 The proposed dwellings would be accessed via the existing access which serves Highfield Lodge. Upon consultation with CCC Highways, no objections have been raised to the scheme, subject to access upgrade details to be submitted at reserved matters stage.
- 10.13 The comments provided by CCC Highways do note that the applicant has not demonstrated that the site can be sustainably accessed by pedestrians as there is no connectivity between the proposed site and existing footway links along Doddington Road. Therefore, should permission be granted full details of pedestrian footway would be required at reserved matters stage.

10.15 Notwithstanding this, the physical distance of the site to nearest services is of concern, with an evident and incremental regression away from core facilities within Chatteris caused through this piecemeal approach to developments. For example, walking distances to the nearest primary school would be around 2km; the nearest shop (Apple Green service station) nearly 1km away and the Secondary School around 2.5km from the site. These are considerable distances which would discourage sustainable travel and is generally considered poor planning, particularly in the backdrop of the strategic and windfall housing development sites permitted in Chatteris, which continue to provide a sufficient supply of homes in better proximity to key services. The need for 2 homes in this location is simply not justified in this regard.

10.14 In summary, the scheme could likely be served by safe and suitable access and raises no concerns in respect of highway safety in-line with policy LP15, although its sustainable transport options appear to be severely limited due its location away from the settlement, again reinforcing its spatial location conflicts.

Flood Risk and Drainage

10.15 The application site is situated within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). The frontage of the site is situated within an area of medium and high risk for surface water flooding, which runs parallel to the highway, which appears to be a localised drainage issue. Should permission be granted, a condition would be secured to ensure any potential drainage issues are adequately addressed.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.16 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

10.17 In this instance a Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun.

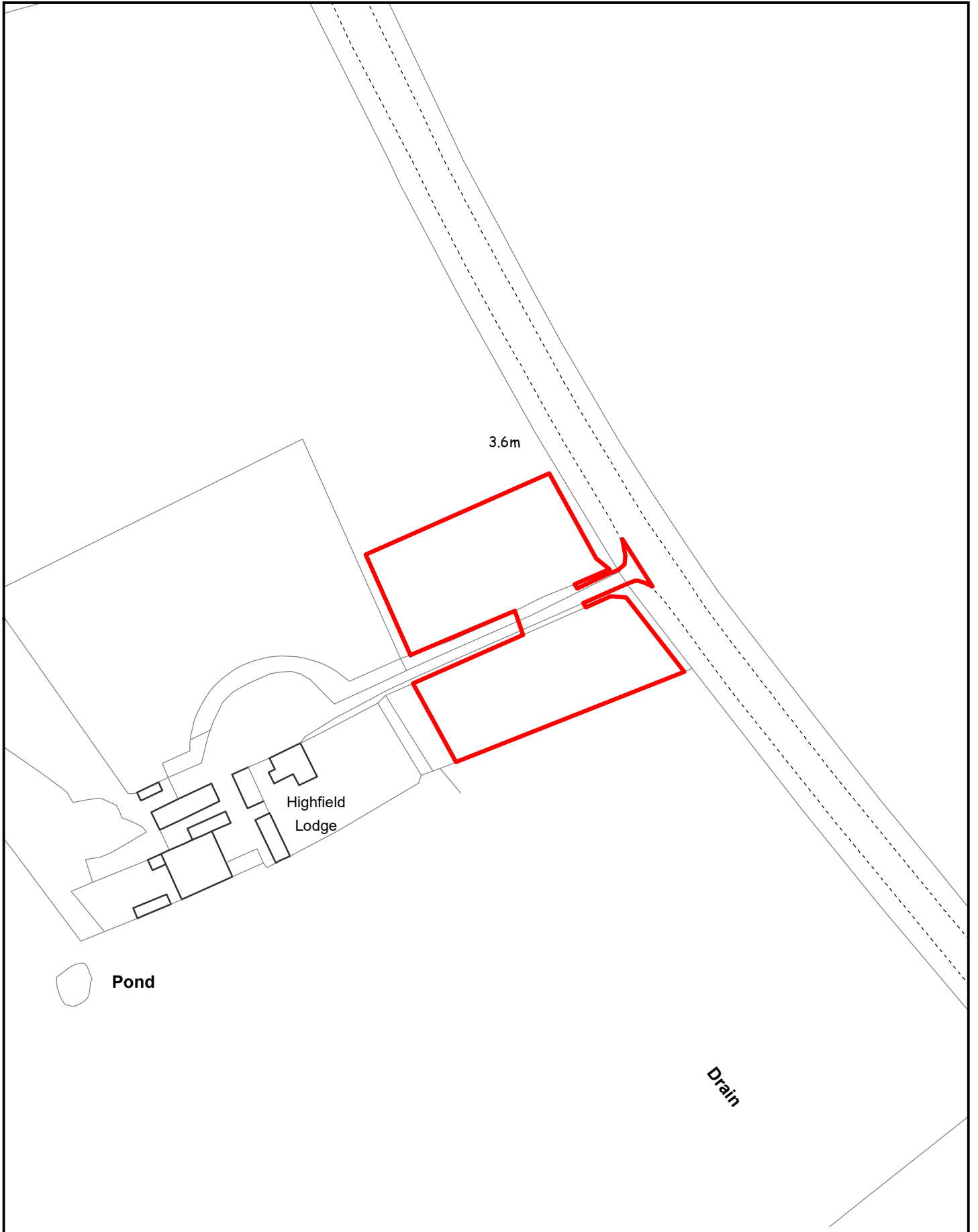
11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The site sits within the open countryside outside the existing built form of Chatteris. It is closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape for the reasons given above. Given the existing characteristics of the site, the proposal would change the overall character of the area to its detriment. The introduction of two dwellings (illustrated in a linear orientation) either side of the existing access to Highfield Lodge would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area and would set an unacceptable precedent within the area and would consequently represent urban sprawl in this particular location. This would be contrary to Policy LP12 and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and DM3 of the High Quality Environments SPD.

12 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 **Refuse;** for the following reason:

1	<p>Policy LP12 seeks to support development that does not harm the character of the countryside. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014 requires that proposals for new development should deliver and protect high quality environments which respond to and improve the character of the local built form and respond to the street scene and existing settlement patterns.</p> <p>The proposal is for the construction of up to two new dwellings on existing paddock land with a close relationship to the wider open countryside. Development on this land would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the rural area through increased urbanisation, representing urban sprawl in this location, directly contradicting the current settlement pattern and arguably creating a precedent for further development into the countryside, contrary to the requirements of Policy LP12 and Policy LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and DM3 of the High-Quality Environments SPD.</p>
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Created on: 01/10/2024

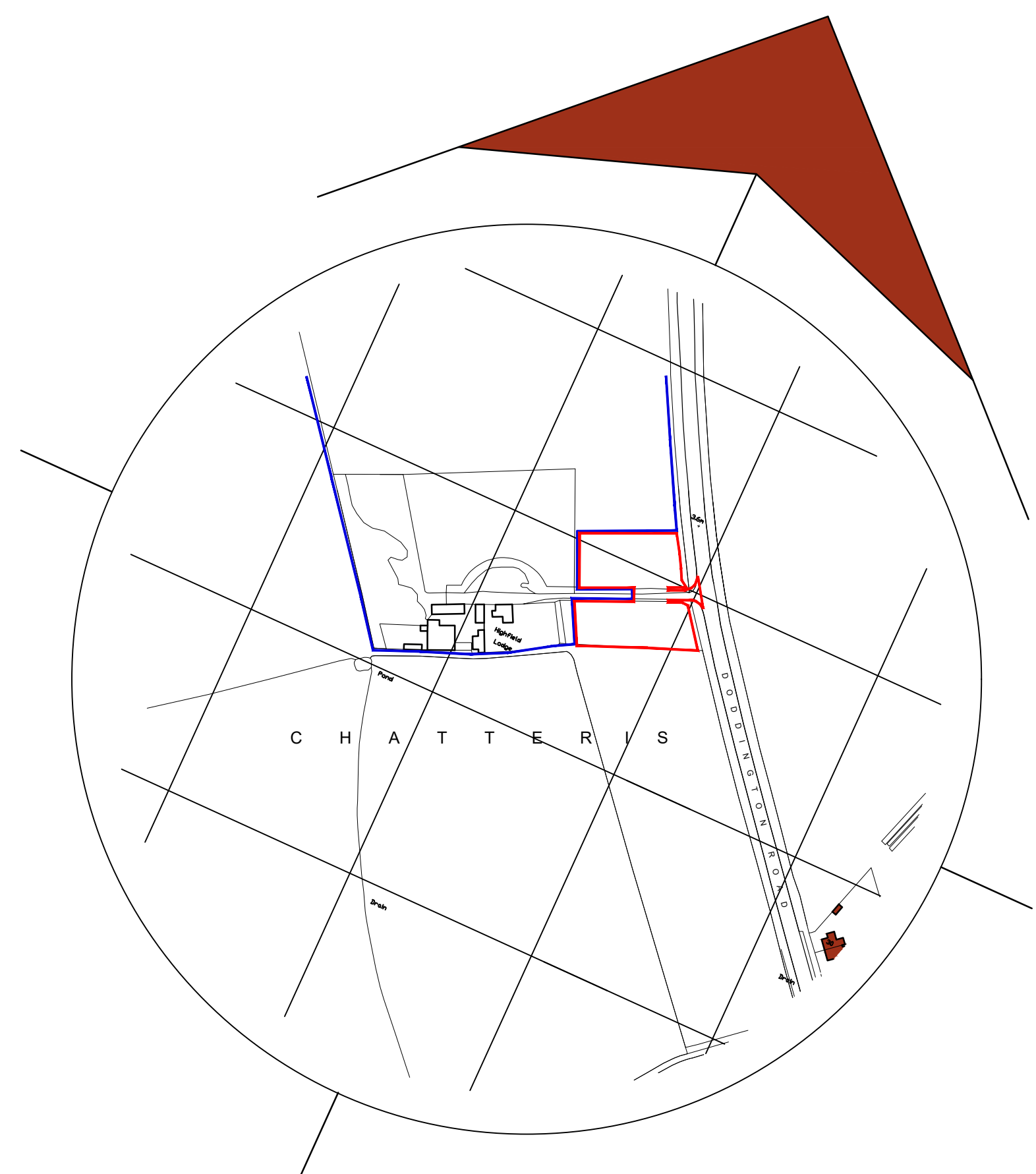
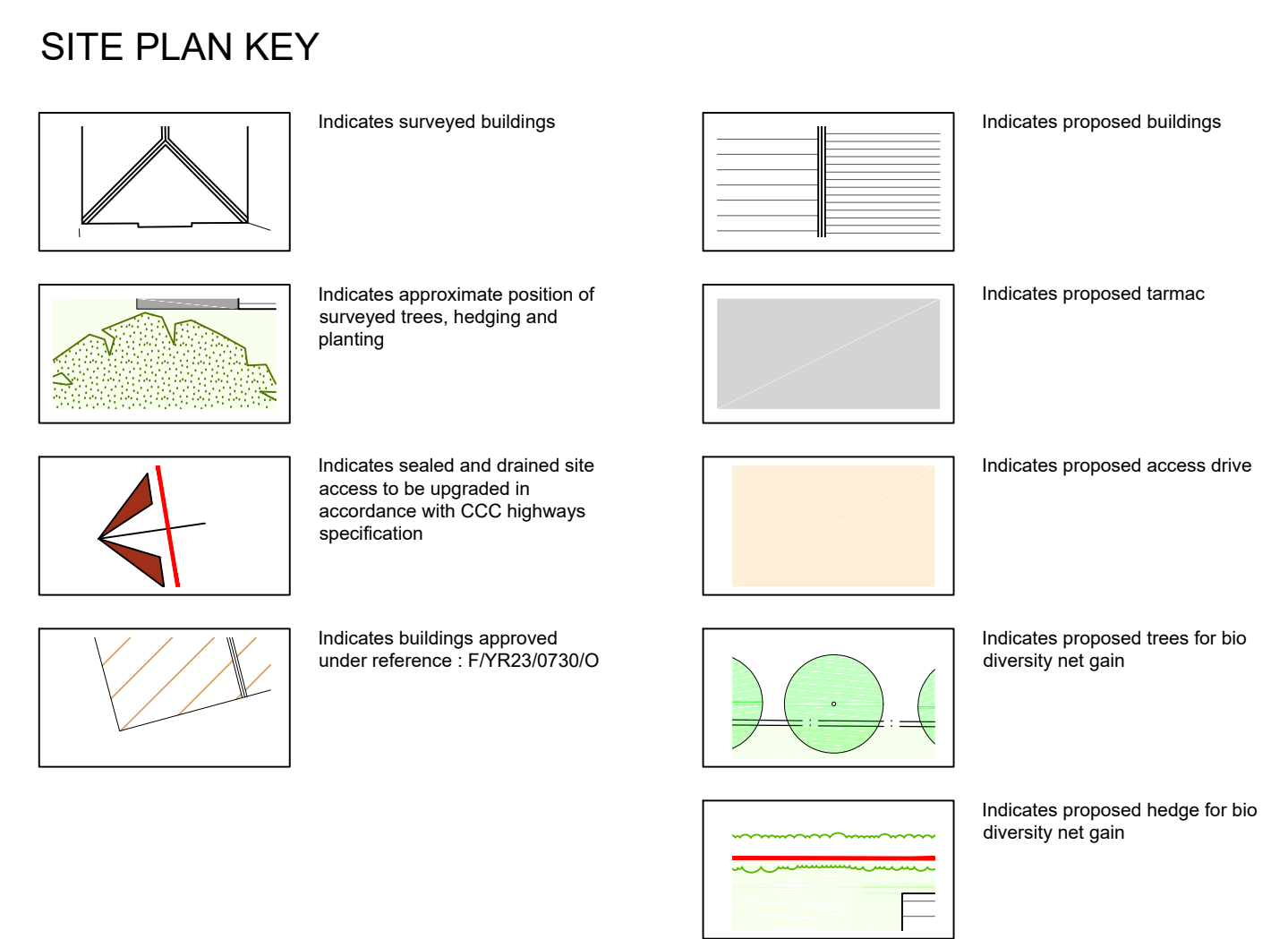
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F/YR24/0783/O

Scale = 1:1,250



General Notes
 1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
 2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
 3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.
 4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.



Location Plan
 Scale: 1:2500

Indicative Site Plan
 Scale: 1:200

Application approved under reference : F/YR23/0730/O

SITE RISK NOTIFICATION KEY
 To be used with reference to the accompanying Project Risk Register

S01	Private Access	S02	Unknown Services
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FOR APPROVAL

SWANN EDWARDS ARCHITECTURE
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Job Title	Date	Drawn by
Proposed 2 No. Dwellings	May 2024	CW
Highfield Lodge, Doddington Road, Chatteris, PE16 6UE		Checked by
For: Mr & Mrs Morley		GE
Drawing Title	Site Plan	Sheet Size
Site & Location Plan	AD	A0
Dwg No.	SE-2093	Revision
PP1000		B