
F/YR23/0491/O

Applicant: Mr M Henson

**Agent: Mrs A Watson
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

Land East Of 137, Upwell Road, March, Cambridgeshire

Erect up to 6no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations received contrary to Officer recommendation.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 6 dwellings with all matters reserved for future consideration.
- 1.2 There are no issues to address in relation to highways, residential amenity, flood risk, ecology and archaeology; subject to conditions and full details being submitted.
- 1.3 However, the site sits at the transition between the existing built form of March and the open countryside and is considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape. It is considered that this development would detrimentally exacerbate ribbon development that would allow an unnecessary and harmful urban sprawl of development into the open countryside and would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area. Furthermore, the indicative layout, with one point of access, would result in a development at odds with the existing character of built form as it would be set back behind a shared access, which is not characteristic of the area and there has been no demonstration that an alternative access arrangement to that put forward could be successfully achieved.
- 1.4 As such, it is recommended to refuse the application as per the previous decision of the Council on this site, noting that there has been no material change in circumstance in this respect which could lead to an alternative conclusion.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises approx. 0.5ha and is located on the southern side of the Upwell Road (B1099) extending into the open countryside. It is located adjacent to 137 Upwell Road extending eastwards.
- 2.2 The land is in agricultural use (Grade 3) and there is an existing field access onto the site from Upwell Road, there are drainage ditches along the site frontage orientated east-west and within the site orientated north-south, extending into the field beyond. The mature street trees lining both sides of Upwell Road, along with the green verges and drainage ditch are key characteristics of the area resulting in

a verdant character. The site is located predominately in Flood Zone 1, with the eastern most section of the site falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 6 dwellings with the access utilising the existing field access, along with a footpath linking to the existing pedestrian infrastructure at the access with 137 Upwell Road to the west. All matters are reserved for future consideration and as such at this stage all details submitted are indicative.

3.2 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:

[F/YR23/0491/O | Erect up to 6no dwellings \(outline application with all matters reserved\) | Land East Of 137 Upwell Road March Cambridgeshire \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR21/1343/O	Erect up to 9no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)	Refused 23/11/2022
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5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Town Council

Objection; part of the site falls within flood zone 3 and the FRA deems the eastern part of the site to be “at risk”. Development considered to impact adversely on highway safety and drainage and represents over-development on the more rural outskirts of town.

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology

I am writing you to regarding the archaeological implications of the above referenced planning application. The proposed development lies in an area of archaeological potential. The eastern edge of the March fen island is known to have extremely dense cropmarks indicating Iron Age and Roman Settlement overlying Rodden deposits, silted fen channels. This is particularly true for the north east of March where the Major Roman routeway, the Fen causeway extends out in to the fen (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record CB15033, 08458, 09376, 08974) and extending south towards to the development (CHER 08981, 09378, 09377). To the east of the proposed development further cropmarks have indicated a circular enclosure of probable Roman date with possible internal hut circles (CHER 03796) and possibly associated roman spot finds (CHER03173). To the south of the proposed development possible further linear features (CHER 08982).

Whilst we do not object to development from proceeding in this location, we consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a negative condition, such as the example condition approved by DCLG.

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 (MHCLG 2019).

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.

5.3 Projects Officer (Homes for Ukraine/Housing Strategy & Enabling) (FDC)

As this application is below the threshold for affordable housing, I have no comment to make.

5.4 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways (29/6/2023)

As this is an outline application with all matters reserved, I can only comment upon the principle of the development.

Key to achieving a safe development is safe access. The indicative plans submitted shown a single access with 2.4m x 43m inter-vehicular visibility splays. However, part of Upwell Road is subject to a 30mph limit while the rest is subject to a 40mph limit meaning in order to demonstrate a safe access can be achieved, a visibility splay of 2.4m x 120m is needed to the east. Based upon the application boundary and highway boundary, I am content that such a visibility could be achieved but it may result in loss of existing established trees which the LPA may wish to consider.

On this basis, I do not object to the application.

Should the application be permitted, I recommend that the applicant consult CCC's General Principles for Development when preparing any future reserved matters applications, particularly in relation to the access proposals.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highways-development>

Please append the following Conditions to any permission granted:

- *Construction Facilities: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved adequate temporary facilities area (details of which shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.*

- *Wheel Wash Facilities: Development shall not commence until fully operational wheel cleaning equipment has been installed within the site. All vehicles leaving the site shall pass through the wheel cleaning equipment which shall be sited to ensure that vehicles are able to leave the site and enter the public highway in a clean condition and free of debris which could fall onto the public highway. The wheel cleaning equipment shall be retained on site in full working order for the duration of the development.*

- *Off-Site Highway Works: No development shall take place until details of works for a new footway along Upwell connecting the development to the existing footway to the west have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied/brought into use until all of the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details.*

5.5 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways (18/7/2023)

The access is within the 30mph limit but vehicles will be approaching at 40mph. In theory, vehicles should already be travelling at 30mph when they pass the sign but we know this is often not the case. Should the applicant wish they could undertake a speed survey to capture approach speeds but in absence of this information I must assume vehicles will be approaching at 40mph.

Regarding the setback of trees, the above is key to determining if they could obstruct visibility.

5.6 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways (14/8/2023)

Based upon my previous comments, the applicant has provided a revised visibility plan demonstrating 2.4m x 120m inter-vehicular visibility splays from the site access. On the basis of this plan, the first tree immediately to the east of the access will need to be removed. The LPA may wish to consider the loss of this established tree and the applicant is encouraged to mitigate this loss within their site.

I maintain that the principle of development is acceptable in highway terms. Please append the following Conditions to any permission granted:

- *Construction Facilities: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved adequate temporary facilities area (details of which shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.*

- *Wheel Wash Facilities: Development shall not commence until fully operational wheel cleaning equipment has been installed within the site. All vehicles leaving the site shall pass through the wheel cleaning equipment which shall be sited to ensure that vehicles are able to leave the site and enter the public highway in a clean condition and free of debris which could fall onto the public highway. The wheel cleaning equipment shall be retained on site in full working order for the duration of the development.*

- *Off-Site Highway Works: No development shall take place until details of works for a new footway along Upwell connecting the development to the existing footway to the west have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied/brought into use until all of the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details.*

5.7 Ecology Officer

Thank you for your consultation letter received on 13 June 2023 regarding the above planning application.

The proposal is acceptable on ecology grounds, providing that off-site compensation (for loss of priority habitat), as shown DRAWING D2 MITIGATION/ENHANCEMENT PLAN / described in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal can be secured through suitably worded planning conditions / obligations.

AND that the follow information to protect and enhance biodiversity is secured through suitably worded planning condition(s):

- 1. Construction Environment Management Plan / compliance with mitigation measures set out in PEA*
- 2. Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme*
- 3. Lighting Design Strategy for Biodiversity*
- 4. Time Limit on Development - Further Biodiversity Surveys Required*
- 5. Informative – breeding birds*

Please find further details below

1. Construction Environment Management Plan (condition)

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal recommends mitigation measures to protect the following biodiversity features / species during construction:

- *Nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, bats, hedgehogs and other mammals*

If planning permission is granted, we recommend these mitigation measures are secured through suitably worded planning conditions for either:

- (a) Compliance condition for mitigation measures set out in the PEA; or*
- (b) incorporation into a Construction Environment Management Plan, as suggested below:*

*SUGGESTED DRAFT CONDITION: Construction Environment Management Plan
No development shall take place until a construction environment management plan has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved plan/statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall provide for:*

- a) ecological mitigation measures recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*
- b).....*

Reason: Fenland Local Plan 2014 policies LF16 & LF19 (to protect biodiversity)

2. On-site and Off-site Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme (condition)

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal recommends mitigation / compensation measures to be incorporated into the landscape scheme to address adverse impact and enhancement for:

- *Arable field margins and hedgerows*
- *Nesting birds, bats, reptiles and invertebrates*

Details of these mitigation / enhancement measures and their management should be secured as part of a Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme, secured through a suitably worded condition:

SUGGESTED DRAFT CONDITION: Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme (on-site and off-site)

Within 6 months of the date of this approval, a scheme for the landscaping and biodiversity enhancements and habitat improvements as set out within the approved Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Philip Parker Associates Ltd, March 2023) at the site and adjoining land (off-site) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The landscaping and biodiversity enhancement details to be submitted shall include:

- a) Planting plans to all areas, retained hedge and trees, species, numbers, size and density of planting; the planting shall be sufficient to result in overall no net loss of biodiversity,*
- b) Placement, type, number and details of any recommended biodiversity enhancements and habitat improvements as described within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,*
- c) means of enclosure noting that all new garden fencing should be designed to allow hedgehogs to be able to pass through the fencing.*
- d) details of siting and timing of all construction activities to avoid harm to all nature conservation features*
- e) [Additional details from landscape officer....]*
- f) A timetable for landscaping and biodiversity enhancement implementation.*
- g) management and maintenance details*

The approved landscape and biodiversity enhancement scheme shall be carried out within 6 months of the approval of the scheme. The approved landscape scheme shall be carried out within the first available planting season following approval of the scheme and in accordance with the timetable for implementation approved as part of the submitted scheme.

The approved landscape and biodiversity enhancement scheme shall be maintained thereafter in perpetuity.

Reason: Fenland Local Plan 2014 policies LF16 & LP19 (to protect and enhance biodiversity)

Lighting Design Strategy for Biodiversity (condition)

The lighting scheme should demonstrate how it's been sensitively design for wildlife (particularly bats) and meet recommendations of the PEA

SUGGESTED DRAFT CONDITION: Lighting Design Strategy for Biodiversity

Notwithstanding the submitted details, and within 6 months of the date of this approval, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" in accordance with ILP Publications' "Guidance Note 8 Bats and artificial lighting" shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for all existing and proposed lighting within the development hereby permitted.

Prior to occupation, a lighting design strategy for biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a. identify those areas /features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and*
- b. show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provisions of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.*

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: Fenland Local Plan 2014 policies LF16 & LF19 (to protect biodiversity)

*Time Limit on Development - Further Biodiversity Surveys Required (condition)
The ecological survey work was undertaken in December 2022. Wildlife is dynamic and therefore, if there is a delay to the development, the ecological surveys will need to be updated to ensure the proposed ecological mitigation is still appropriate. We suggest this is captured through a suitably worded planning condition:*

SUGGESTED CONDITION: Time Limit on Development Before Further Surveys are Required

If the development hereby approved does not commence (or, having commenced, is suspended more than 12 months) within 1 years from the date of the planning consent, the approved ecological measures secured through [INSERT BIODIVERSITY CONDITIONS: e.g. CEMP, Landscape Scheme, Lighting Scheme, Bird / Bat Boxes] shall be reviewed and, where necessary, amended and updated. This review shall be informed by further ecological surveys commissioned to i) establish if there have been any changes in the species / habitats present at the site and ii/ identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes. The amended documents shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Works must be carried out in accordance with the proposed new approved ecology measures and timetable.

Reason: Fenland Local Plan policies LF16 & LF19 (to protect biodiversity)

Breeding Birds (informative)

The PEA identified the potential impact of the scheme on breeding birds. The protection of these birds should be dealt with in the Construction Environment Management Plan (recommended to be secured through planning conditions).

Alternatively, it can be dealt with as an informative to a planning permission, as suggested below:

SUGGESTED DRAFT INFORMATIVE – Breeding Birds

The Applicant is reminded that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August inclusive. Trees / scrub are present on the application site and are to be assumed to contain nesting birds between the above dates, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site during this period and has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present. Reason – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (protection of wild birds, their nests, eggs and young)

5.8 Local Residents/Interested Parties

18 supporting comments have been received (5 from Upwell Road, 1 from Binnimoor Road, 1 from Horsemoor, 1 from Coldham Bank, 1 from Robingoodfellows Lane, 1 from Russell Avenue, 1 from Ireton Way, 1 from Westwood Avenue and 4 from Creek Road, all in March. 1 from Pond Close, Wimblington and 1 from Midlothian), in relation to the following:

- Beneficial visual impact/improvement to one of March's main approaches/mask the approved development to the rear of 137 Upwell Road
- Enhance the approach to town
- Good quality executive homes/well designed/retains habitats
- Will create/provide jobs
- Net gain to wildlife
- Flooding should not be an issue as there is a good ditch network
- New homes needed and important for growth and improvement of town
- Development in central areas of town have caused traffic problems, this would keep traffic on main roads, access to the site good
- No different to what has happened on Elm Road
- Prime location to school/sustainably linked to town

It should be noted that all matters are reserved and as such the details submitted are indicative only.

All other relevant material considerations will be addressed in the sections below.

6 STATUTORY DUTY

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).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

National Design Guide 2021

Context – C1

Identity – I1, I2

Built Form – B2

Movement – M3

Nature – N1, N3

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

LP9 - March

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

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 48 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

Policy LP1 – Settlement Hierarchy

Policy LP2 – Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development

Policy LP5 – Health and Wellbeing

Policy LP7 – Design

Policy LP8 – Amenity Provision

Policy LP18 – Development in the Countryside

Policy LP20 – Accessibility and Transport

Policy LP22 – Parking Provision (Appendix 6)

Policy LP24 – Natural Environment

Policy LP25 – Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy LP28 – Landscape

Policy LP32 – Flood and Water Management

Policy LP39 – Site Allocations for March

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2: Windfall Development

Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014

Policy DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and Character of the Area

Policy DM4 – Waste and Recycling Facilities

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design considerations and visual amenity of area**
- **Highways**
- **Residential Amenity/Health and wellbeing**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Ecology**
- **Archaeology**

9 BACKGROUND

Application F/YR21/1343/O for up to 9 dwellings on a larger site extending further east, was refused by Planning Committee in November 2022 for the following reasons:

1. 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 introduction of 9 dwellings (illustrated in a linear orientation) with new vehicular accesses from Upwell Road along with the likely changes needed to the drainage of the highway in this location would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area. It would represent urban sprawl in this particular location. This would be contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and DM3 of the High Quality Environments SPD. This would also be contrary to Policy H2 (f) of the March Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Part of the site (illustrative Plots 6 to 9) are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where there is a high probability of flooding. The Sequential Test for flood risk has not been passed as there are likely to be available sites within March with a lower probability of flooding that could accommodate the four plots. Allowing the proposed development could therefore place people and property at an increased risk, with no justification, contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), NPPF and Section 4 of the Cambridgeshire Flood & Water SPD (2016).
3. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 requires new development requires development to ensure safe and convenient access for all. In addition, Paragraph 111 of the NPPF (July 2021) states that development proposals should be refused if they result in detrimental impacts to highway safety. By virtue of the lack of sufficient information to demonstrate safe vehicle access to/from Upwell Road and the proposed dwellings, the proposals could result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety in contravention of the aforementioned policies.
4. The application site is bordered to the north by a ditch which are identified as having the potential to be a habitat for protected species and indicates accesses to the development is over this ditch. No ecological surveys or evaluation have been undertaken to accompany the application. As such the local planning authority is unable to undertake its duty to conserve biodiversity due to this lack of information. The application is therefore contrary to policies LP16 (b) and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 which seek to ensure that new development protects and enhances biodiversity including protected species and their habitats.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 defines March 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 March as being a suitable location for housing growth, and Policy LP9 allocates land for new planned urban extensions to March, the site sits at the transition between the existing built form of March and the open countryside. There is a clear defensible boundary represented by the eastern boundary of 137 Upwell Road on the southern side and the agricultural holding to the north, beyond which is open countryside. As such, the site is considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape, and given the existing characteristics of the site, the principle of development in this location is not considered to be acceptable.

10.2 Whilst the policies of the emerging local plan carry extremely limited weight in decision making the following are relevant to this application:

Policy LP1, Part A identifies March as a Market Town; Part B advises that land outside settlement boundaries is defined as countryside where development is restricted (as set out in LP18), this site is outside of the defined settlement; Part C relates to frontage infill development, for which the criteria is not met. LP39 defines residential site allocations in March and this site does not have such an allocation. As such, the proposal would also be considered contrary to the aforementioned policies of the emerging local plan.

Design considerations and visual amenity of area

10.3 The application is in outline with all matters reserved hence detailed design would be subject to a subsequent application should this scheme be successful. It is however necessary to consider the impact of development of this site on the character of the area.

10.4 Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014, paras 130 and 174 of the NPPF 2023 and Chapters C1, I1 and I2 of the NDG 2021 seek to ensure that developments avoid adverse impacts, create high quality environments, which provide a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, are informed by the settlement pattern and local built environment and recognise the beauty and character of the countryside.

10.5 The settlement pattern in Upwell Road to the east of the estate development of Cavalry Park and Smiths Drive and surrounding roads is predominately linear in character, with the exceptions being Upwell Park and the site to the rear of 137 Upwell Road (which has outline permission for up to 9 dwellings (F/YR19/0931/O)) to the west of the application site.

10.6 The site is located on the southern side of Upwell Road and currently consists of agricultural land; there are clear views across the site and to the countryside beyond it. The site sits at the transition between the existing built form of March and the open countryside and is considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape. There is a well-defined character here consisting of tree lined, wide green verges siting above the drainage ditch which

provides an attractive entrance to the town. Given these existing characteristics development of the site would change the overall character of the area to its detriment. As such it is considered that this development would exacerbate ribbon development that would allow an unnecessary and harmful urban sprawl of development into the open countryside and would further erode the openness and rural nature of the area.

- 10.7 Whilst acknowledging that this application is in outline form, the indicative layout, with one point of access would result in a development at odds with the existing character of built form as it would be set back behind a shared access, which is not characteristic of the area, where dwellings are predominantly directly accessed by and front Upwell Road itself. The previous application which sought individual accesses was refused (in addition to a number of other reasons) for failure to demonstrate safe accesses could be achieved, and there is no such demonstration within the current application that an alternative arrangement to that put forward could be successfully achieved.
- 10.8 As such, the application is considered contrary to the policies aforementioned in paragraph 10.4 of this report. The previous application on the site was refused for this same reason and there has been no material change in circumstances since this time to lead to an alternative conclusion.

Highways

- 10.9 All matters are reserved for future consideration, hence at this stage the details submitted are indicative. The plans indicate that the existing field access is to be utilised and upgraded, leading to a shared access within the site, behind the existing verge and ditch. A 2m wide footpath is indicated from the access to the site, linking to the existing pedestrian infrastructure to the west.
- 10.10 The speed limit in this location changes from 40mph to the east to 30mph as the town is entered, and visibility is required accordingly. Revised details have been submitted to demonstrate this is achievable and on this basis Highways do not object to the application; conditions are recommended in relation to construction and wheel washing facilities, along with securing footpath provision.
- 10.11 The visibility splays will however result in the loss of the street tree to the east of the access and would require mitigation. Informal comments were sought from the Council's Arboricultural Officer with regards to the indicated footpath and it has been advised that this would be located within the root protection area of the street trees and as such has potential to cause significant damage, hence further details would be required in this regard and could be secured by condition.

Residential Amenity/Health and wellbeing

- 10.12 The application is in outline with all matters reserved, hence detailed design would be subject to a subsequent application should this scheme be successful. It is however necessary to consider whether a policy compliant scheme could be achieved in respect of residential amenity.
- 10.13 The site is of a scale that for the number of dwellings proposed, a scheme incorporating a third of a plot for private amenity space could be achieved for each proposed dwelling, in accordance with Policy LP16 (h).
- 10.14 No waste storage or collection strategy has been indicated, it is unclear whether a refuse vehicle would be able to enter the site and if that is not the case a collection area would be required within 10m of the highway, this would require

residents of some plots to carry bins far in excess of the 30m required by DM4 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD and RECAP guidance.

- 10.15 The closest neighbouring dwelling is 137 Upwell Road to the west and there is a detached garage/car port separating the dwelling from the site. There are windows in the side elevation of this property facing towards the site and should this application be successful consideration will need to be given, at detailed design stage, to ensure appropriate relationships and boundary treatments are achieved. There are no existing dwellings directly opposite the site (north) or to the east, to the south is open countryside.

Flood Risk

- 10.16 The application site is predominantly in Flood Zone 1, with the eastern most section of the site falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The indicative layout demonstrates that the level of development applied for, along with associated infrastructure, can be accommodated within Flood Zone 1 (with only part of the gardens for plots 5 and 6 located in Flood Zones 2 and 3), as such it is considered that the sequential test would not be applicable in this case.
- 10.17 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which indicates that dwellings should have a minimum floor level of 0.3m above ground level and not lower than +0.5OD. The site levels shown within the assessment indicate that the levels within the site would not require the minimum floor level of 0.3m to be exceeded.
- 10.18 The site has a very low risk of surface water flooding.

Ecology

- 10.19 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) which assessed the anticipated impacts on protected species and highlighted that further surveys were required in respect of wintering birds. A Winter Bird Survey was also submitted as a result of this, the outcome of which was that the site was not considered to be important for wintering birds (low value).
- 10.20 Habitat loss was also identified, along with precautionary mitigation measures and enhancement to increase the overall biodiversity value of the site, though the landscaping indicated is indicative at this stage and new arable margin habitat is to be created off site (within the blue line, indicating this is land which the applicant owns/controls).
- 10.21 The Ecology Officer considers that the proposal is acceptable on ecology grounds providing that the off-site compensation for the loss of priority habitat is secured and a number of other conditions are also recommended to protect and enhance biodiversity (some of which, such as the landscaping would need to be secured as part of the reserved matters).

Archaeology

- 10.22 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology have advised that the site lies in an area of archaeological potential, they do not object to the development, however request a pre-commencement condition is imposed to secure a programme of archaeological works, should the application be successful.

11 CONCLUSIONS

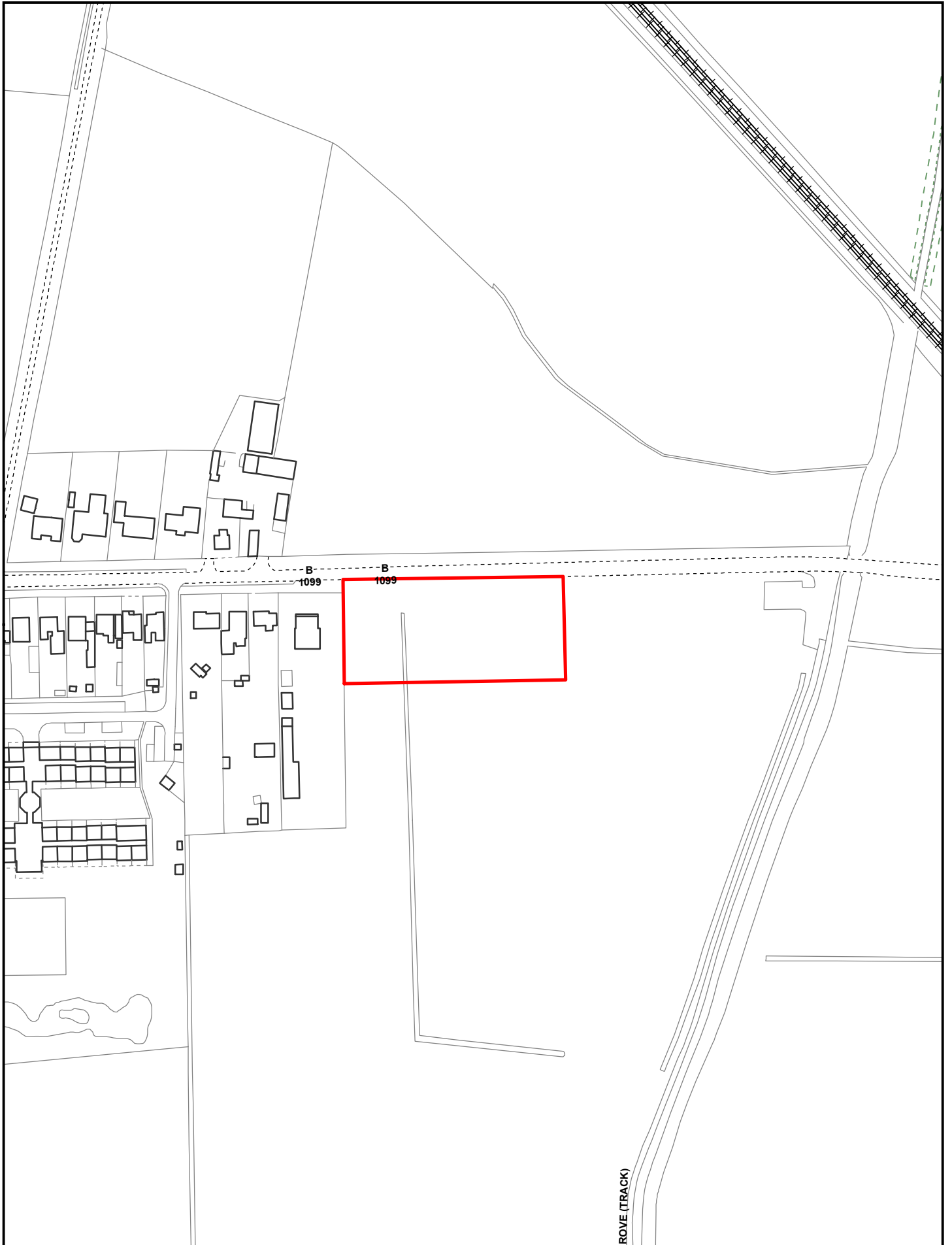
- 11.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 6 dwellings with all matters reserved for future consideration.
- 11.2 There are no issues to address in relation to highways, residential amenity, flood risk, ecology and archaeology; subject to conditions and full details being submitted.
- 11.3 However, the site sits at the transition between the existing built form of March and the open countryside and is considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape. It is considered that this development would detrimentally exacerbate ribbon development that would allow an unnecessary and harmful urban sprawl of development into the open countryside and would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area. Furthermore, the indicative layout, with one point of access would result in a development at odds with the existing character of built form as it would be set back behind a shared access, which is not characteristic of the area and there has been no demonstration that an alternative access arrangement to that put forward could be successfully achieved.
- 11.4 As such, it is recommended to refuse the application as per the previous decision of the Council on this site, noting that there has been no material change in circumstance in this respect which could lead to an alternative conclusion.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; for the following reasons:

1.	<p>Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014, paras 130 and 174 of the NPPF 2023 and Chapters C1, I1 and I2 of the NDG 2021 seek to ensure that developments avoid adverse impacts, create high quality environments, which provide a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, are informed by the settlement pattern and local built environment and recognise the beauty and character of the countryside.</p> <p>The site sits at the transition between the existing built form of March and the open countryside and is considered to be more closely associated with the undeveloped rural landscape. It is considered that this development would detrimentally exacerbate ribbon development that would allow an unnecessary and harmful urban sprawl of development into the open countryside and would diminish the openness and rural nature of the area.</p>
2.	<p>Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014, para 130 of the NPPF 2023 and Chapters C1, I1 and I2 of the NDG 2021 seek to ensure that developments avoid adverse impacts, create high quality environments, which provide a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting and are informed by the local built environment</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that this application is in outline form, the indicative layout, with one point of access would result in a development at odds with the existing character of built form as it would be set back behind a shared access,</p>

<p>which is not characteristic of the area and there has been no demonstration that an alternative access arrangement to that put forward could be successfully achieved.</p>



Created on: 13/06/2023

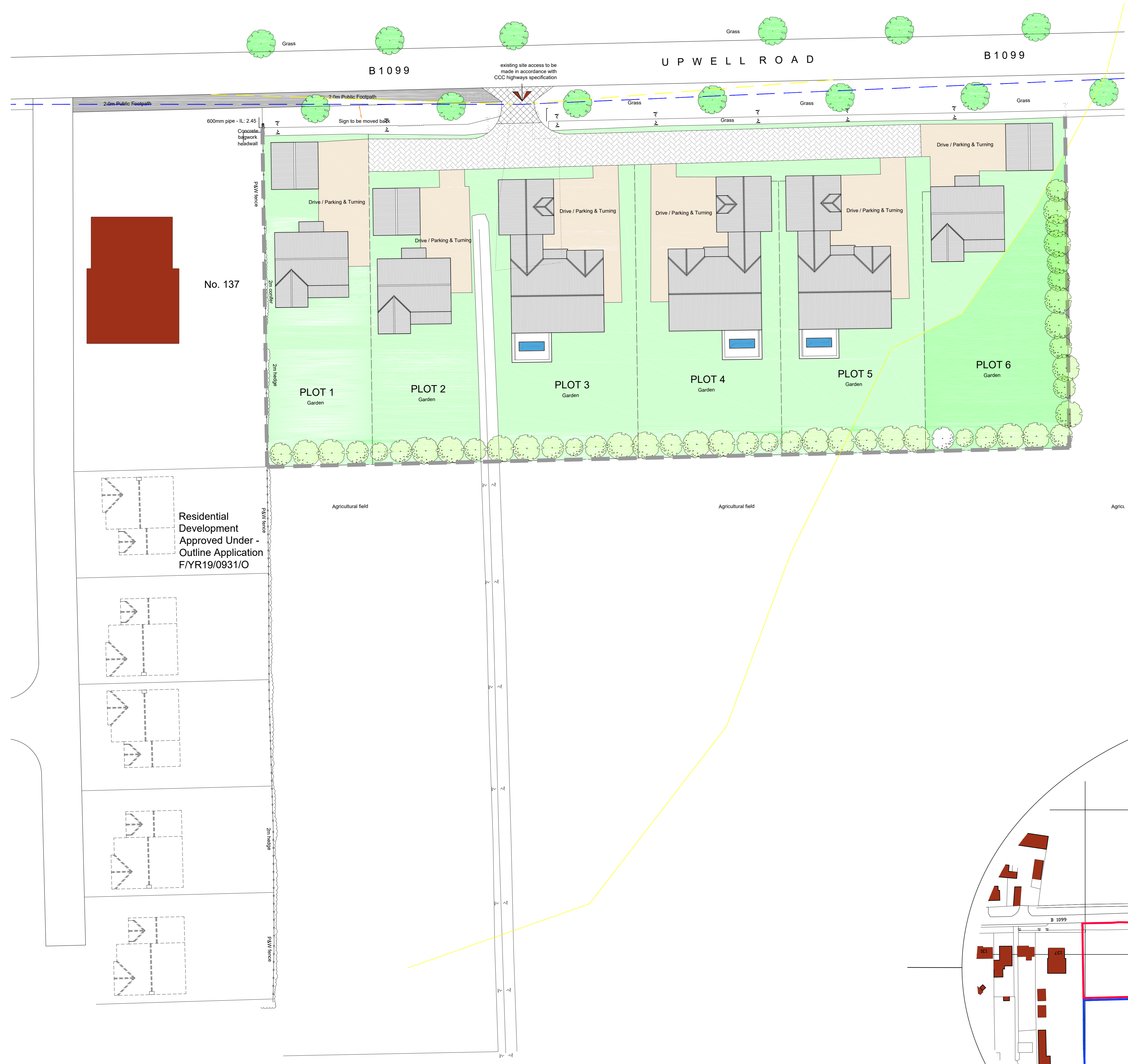
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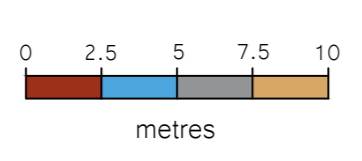
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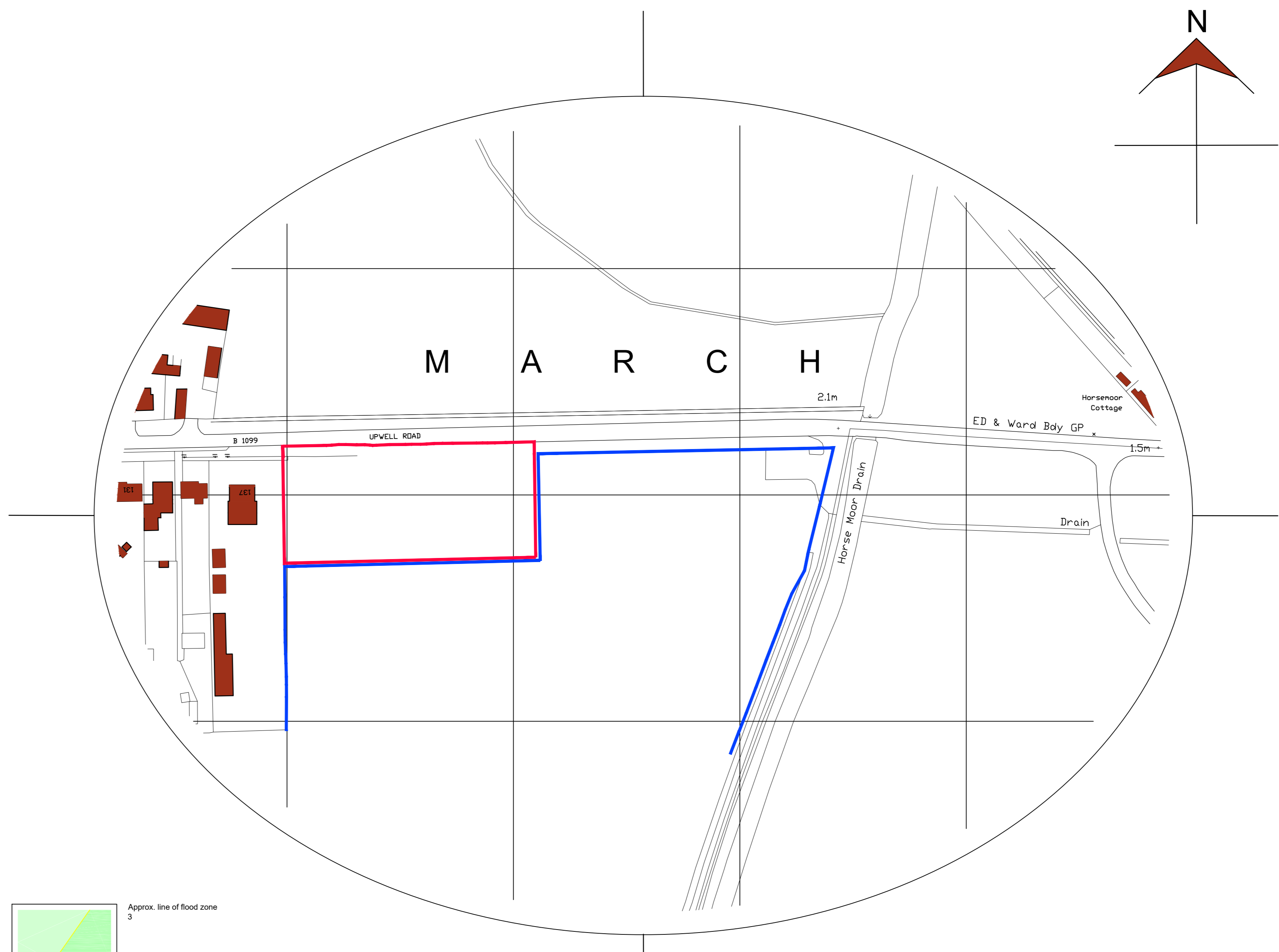
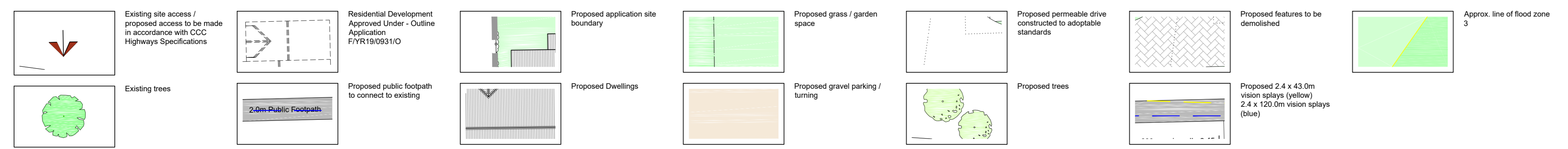
General Notes
 1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
 2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
 3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors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



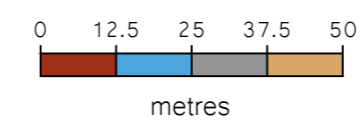
Indicative Site Plan
 Scale: 1:250



SITE PLAN KEY



Location Plan
 Scale: 1:250



FOR APPROVAL

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Proposed Residential Development Upwell Road, March	Job Title Jan 2023	Drawn by G.E.
For: Mr. M. Hanson	Checked by	
Planning Drawing Site and Location Plan	Job No. SE-1657	Sheet No. AQ
	Dwg No. PP1100	Revision C