
F/YR20/0441/O

**Applicant: Mr B Warner
Postland Development**

**Agent: Mr Gordon Smith
Matrix Planning Ltd**

Land south of 127-141 Coates Road, Eastrea, Cambridgeshire

Erection of up to 20 dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to the Officer Recommendation.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The proposal is an outline application for the erection of up to 20 dwellings, with all matters reserved for later approval.**
- 1.2. Indicative plans have been submitted showing a layout incorporating bungalows, 2-storey dwellings and self-build plots.**
- 1.3. A previous outline proposal for up to 21 dwellings on the site was refused under delegated authority in 2018, and the current application was preceded by a pre-application enquiry showing a similar scheme. The outcome of that enquiry was that officers would be unlikely to recommend approval for the proposal.**
- 1.4. The site is located adjoining the existing built edge of the settlement of Coates, and is located within a 380m gap between the current edge of the settlement and the neighbouring village of Eastrea. The development would result in a reduction of the gap between the settlements by 80m.**
- 1.5. Planning policy LP12 within the Fenland Local Plan states that proposals need to demonstrate how they will not result in coalescence with neighbouring villages if they are to be deemed acceptable.**
- 1.6. The evidence within the application is clear that the scheme does result in coalescence with the neighbouring settlement and is therefore contrary to policy LP12.**
- 1.7. The application is recommended for refusal.**

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is an agricultural field to the west of Coates. It has a frontage along Coates Road of approximately 90 metres, which is part of an existing 380m separation between the existing edge of the built up part of the settlement and Eastrea to the west. The two settlements are connected by continuous built form to the north side of the road opposite the site.**

- 2.2. Immediately to the east is located a residential development that is currently under construction (largely completed), comprising 12 dwellings. To the west boundary is a field hedge, with further agricultural land to the west and south of the site.
- 2.3. The application site is located within flood zone 1, the area designated as being at the lowest level of flood risk equivalent to a 1 in 1000 year event.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal is an outline application for residential development with all matters reserved for later approval. Indicative plans submitted alongside the application show a 20-plot layout including 5 plots marked as 'Over 55s bungalows' and 4 self-build plots to the rear of the site.
- 3.2. The indicative plan also shows an area of informal open space to the west of the proposed dwellings, with several of the properties maintaining views out over the area.
- 3.3. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QAZUJ6HE01U00>

4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR18/0405/O	Erection of up to 21no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)	Refused 25/10/2018
F/0484/85/O	Residential development – 2 plots	Refused 11/7/85

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1. **Whittlesey Town Council:**
No objection and therefore recommend approval
- 5.2. **Anglian Water:**
Layout will need to take into account Anglian Water assets affected. Whittlesey Water Recycling Centre does not currently have capacity to treat flows from the site. It is obligated to accept foul flows from the development if consent is granted and would therefore take the necessary steps to ensure sufficient treatment capacity. Request a condition requiring a phasing plan and/or on-site drainage strategy for foul water drainage works.
- 5.3. **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority:**
No objections. Condition requested detailing a 1.8m wide footway along Coates Road.
- 5.4. **Cambridgeshire County Council Development and Policy Team**
Request contributions towards the provision of places for Early Years, Primary and Secondary level education provision.
- 5.5. **Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority:**
No objection. Conditions requested regarding surface water drainage scheme and maintenance arrangements.

- 5.6. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (Archaeology)**
No objections or requirements
- 5.7. **Cambridgeshire Constabulary**
Wish to be consulted in regards to design and layout, boundary treatments and lighting.
- 5.8. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services**
Request adequate provision is made for fire hydrants should permission be granted.
- 5.9. **FDC Environmental Health:**
No objection in principle. Recommend a condition requiring a construction management plan to regulate the impact of construction activities.
- 5.10. **FDC Environmental Services**
No objection in principle. Details required to be provided during reserved matters application relating to road construction and layout.
- 5.11. **Local Residents/Interested Parties:**
Responses in support of the application were received from 10 separate properties (on Barnfield Gardens, March Road, Roman Gardens, Springfields, Coates Road, Minuet Village and Crescent Road (Whittlesey), Nene Close (Whittlesey)) in relation to the application. The matters justifying that support of the application were as follows.
- Layout indicates over 55's bungalows with a safe, pleasant community environment
 - Whittlesey continues to be developed and the neighbouring villages are forgotten and left behind.
 - Coates Primary School needs pupils to remain open.
 - Village needs to grow and offer a range of properties.
 - Adjacent Minuet Village development was successful and see no reason why this will be any different.
 - Proposal offers a range of properties.
 - Substantial informal open space proposed.
 - Would create a visual balance on the approach to Coates from Whittlesey

Responses objecting to the application were received from 7 separate properties (on Minuet Paddocks and Coates Road) in objection to the proposal. The matters identified in relation to those objections were as follows.

- Site plan is incorrect.
- Impact of vehicles exiting the site directly opposite residential dwellings.
- Advised when purchasing a property adjacent to the site that the site would be developed with bungalows – sold their property under false pretence.
- Privacy impact both into and out of the development.
- No informal green space between the site and Minuet Paddocks as was promised when purchasing property.
- Existing open rail fencing cannot be changed for 5 years (as per property deeds), resulting in open relationship with the site.
- Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the hedgerow?
- Safety risk of children walking to school along Coates Road due to bus times being unsuitable.

- Funds should be provided to install average speed cameras along Coates Road and provide a school bus service.
- Local school, GP surgery and dentists are over-subscribed.
- Adverse impact on views.
- Devaluation of neighbouring and nearby properties
- Adverse impact on traffic and noise pollution in the area.
- Already too many side roads off the A605 – highway safety impact.
- New proposal does not resolve previous reason for refusal.
- Drainage is poor in the area & water pressure is low.
- Over development of the area.
- Adverse impact on wildlife.
- Who would be liable if dogs escape from the existing site due to inadequate fencing?
- How long before the development would be completed – building work has already been ongoing for some years at the adjacent site.
- Will the informal open space be developed in the future?
- Proposal is over-bearing, out of scale and out of character with the area.
- It won't improve the look of the village more than the existing open field.

5.12. Devaluation of neighbouring properties and loss of a view are not material considerations in relation to a planning application, nor are any statements made in relation to the purchase of adjacent dwellings. The length of time of the construction of the adjacent site is also not material to the consideration of the current application.

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).

7. POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para 2: NPPF is a material consideration

Para 8: 3 strands of sustainability

Para 11: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para 12: Conflict with an up-to-date plan should not usually be granted

Para 78: Housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Para 97: Existing open space should not be lost unless replacement or improvement in provision is proposed.

Para 117: Promote effective use of land

Para 165: Major development should incorporate SUDS.

Para 170: Contribution to and enhancement of the natural and local environment.

National Design Guide 2019

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Nature
Homes and Buildings
Resources
Lifespan

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a planning application

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

LP5 – Meeting Housing Need

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

LP17 – Community Safety

8. KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Impact on the Character of the Area**
- **Impact on Residential Amenity**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Highway Safety**
- **Developer Contributions**
- **Other Matters**

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. The application site has previously been the subject of an outline application for the construction of up to 21 dwellings. This application was refused under delegated authority for three reasons. These reasons were the harm to the open character of the area and reduction of separation between Coates and Eastrea, the lack of agreement to the Developer Contributions required by policy LP13 and the Developer Contributions SPD, and the lack of compliance with the requirements of policy LP14 demonstrating appropriate arrangements for attenuating surface water run-off.
- 9.2. Subsequent to that decision, a pre-application enquiry was submitted for the erection of 20 dwellings on the site, which included an indicative layout similar to the current proposal incorporating an area of open space along the western boundary of the site. The advice given in response to the enquiry was that the benefits of the scheme did not outweigh the harm caused to the openness and character of the area, and the coalescence with the nearby settlement of Eastrea and that as such it would be unlikely to receive a favourable recommendation from officers.

10. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. The application site is located adjacent to the settlement of Coates, which is defined as a Limited Growth Village in the Fenland Local Plan under policy LP3. Policy LP3 states that for limited growth villages, a small amount of development and new service provision will be encouraged and permitted, and that such development may be appropriate as a small village extension. In principle therefore, there is no presumption against development in areas such as the application site and the specific impacts of the proposal on the site must be considered.

Impact on the Character of the Area

- 10.2. Policy LP12 sets out a series of criteria for development to be deemed acceptable in such locations. These are considered as follows:
- 10.3. The application site is considered to be adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village and therefore satisfies LP12 (a).
- 10.4. LP12 (b) notes that for a site such as this to be supported, it must not result in coalescence with any neighbouring village. There is no separation between the settlements of Coates and Eastrea on the north side of Coates Road, and to the south there is a separation of only 380m. The proposal would reduce the remaining agricultural land separating Coates and Eastrea by 80m. This is considered to be a significant degree of coalescence with the nearby village of Eastrea that would be contrary to part (b) of policy LP12.
- 10.5. LP12(c) requires the proposal to not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland. The application site is part of the countryside setting to the village in this location and the openness and character of the area is enhanced by the long distance views that are possible across the land to the wider countryside to the south.
- 10.6. LP12(d) requires proposals to be of a scale and in a location in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement, and LP12(e) requires proposals to not extend linear features of the settlement or result in ribbon development (the building of houses along a main road, especially one leading out of a town or village). Coates is a settlement of modest scale, with the A605 between March and Whittlesey forming a significant feature in its development as it runs right through the centre of the village. The majority of the settlement is focused around a 90 degree bend in the A605, with residential development accessed via a modest number of roads leading off this main route. Residential development does extend along the A605 to the west and east of the village, although these elements are generally of a more historic nature pre-dating the resistance to ribbon development. The proposed scheme would result in a 130m deep residential development, matching the depth of the adjacent development, although the two schemes are not directly comparable. The adjacent development was in part located behind existing residential dwellings, and there is a farmyard and farmhouse beyond that site to the south. Although the layout and scale of the proposal are not submitted for approval at this stage, its location would exacerbate the spread of development along Coates Road in direct contravention of policy LP12 parts (d) and (e).

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 10.7. Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to promote high levels of residential amenity, and policy LP16 requires development proposals to demonstrate that they do not adversely impact on the

amenity of neighbouring users whilst providing sufficient amenity space for the proposal, with the guideline for non-flat development being one third of the plot area.

- 10.8. The outline nature of the proposal means that the detailed matters relating to impacts on residential amenity of the neighbouring properties and the amenity levels of the proposed properties are not available for consideration at this time, as these will relate to the final layout and design of the scheme to be considered at the reserved matters stage. It is considered on the basis of the information supplied alongside the application however that it would be possible to ensure a satisfactory impact on residential amenity.

Biodiversity

- 10.9. Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) states that the Council will conserve, enhance and promote the biodiversity and geological interest of the natural environment throughout Fenland, protecting designated sites, refusing permission for developments that cause demonstrable harm to a protected habitat or species, and ensure opportunities are taken to incorporate beneficial features into new developments.
- 10.10. As noted in paragraph 10.11 above, the existing site is an agricultural field and therefore is of limited ecological merit. The proposal indicates an area of informal open space is to be provided and therefore there would be an ecological benefit to the area as a result of the scheme, details of which could be secured by a suitably worded planning condition either for submission alongside the reserved matters or separately.
- 10.11. LP12 (f) and (g) require schemes to respect and retain existing natural boundaries and ecological features. The application site comprises the full width of the existing field and in that respect complies with the requirements of this part of the policy, though it would result in the creation of a new boundary approximately halfway across the full depth of the existing field. As an open field in agricultural use, there are few ecological features affected by the scheme.

Highway Safety

- 10.12. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development to provide a well-designed, safe and convenient access for all, giving priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, people with impaired mobility and users of public transport.
- 10.13. The outline nature of the application means that detailed consideration of the proposed means of access to the site is reserved for consideration until a later date. The Local Highways Authority has indicated that they have no objection in principle to the scheme however, which would be accessed from a straight road with good visibility in both directions that already serves similar developments to both the east and west of the site.
- 10.14. The scale of the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on traffic levels along the road to the north of the site.
- 10.15. There is no justification for the refusal of the application at this stage on highway safety grounds.

Developer Contributions

- 10.16. The Design and Access Statement accompanying the application acknowledges that as the scheme proposes more than 10 dwellings, there would be a

requirement for a contribution towards affordable housing and a likely request for contribution towards education facilities. The statement does not indicate however that such contributions would be acceptable to the developer and no heads of terms for a legal agreement, or viability evidence demonstrating that these could not be reasonably delivered, have been provided.

- 10.17. Given the in-principle objections to the proposal the matter of Developer Contributions has not been pursued further.

Other Matters

- 10.18. Several other matters have been identified in relation to the scheme through the public consultation, which are considered as follows.
- 10.19. The incorrect inclusion of an apparent building screening the proposal from the dwellings on the opposite side of the road is noted, however as this building is not present on the land the impact on that property is known and considered as part of the application.
- 10.20. Low water pressure is a matter for the provider to resolve in relation to the provision of new dwellings in the area, whilst the site is in the area of lowest flood risk and the Lead Local Flood Authority has indicated that the surface water drainage proposals are acceptable.
- 10.21. Other matters such as the boundary treatments between the site and other dwellings, landscaping maintenance and the scale of any properties to be built on the land would be subject to detailed consideration at the reserved matters stage or by condition on any permission granted.
- 10.22. Policy LP12(i) requires that the scheme does not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land, or that evidence is provided to justify the loss. The site is located within Grade 1 agricultural land, however it is also noted that a significant majority of the land within Fenland District is classified within the highest categories, and given both the limited areas of poorer quality land available and the overall scale of the proposal, the conflict with policy LP12(i) is considered to not justify refusal of the scheme.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1. The principle of the development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan in terms of the settlement hierarchy, however the location of the proposal results in significant coalescence with the neighbouring settlement of Eastrea to the west that does not comply with policy LP12.
- 11.2. The previous reason for refusal of a residential scheme on the site relating to the lack of an acceptable surface water drainage strategy has been overcome, however it remains the case that there is no legal agreement or Heads of Terms in place to provide Developer Contributions in line with the requirements outlined in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document.

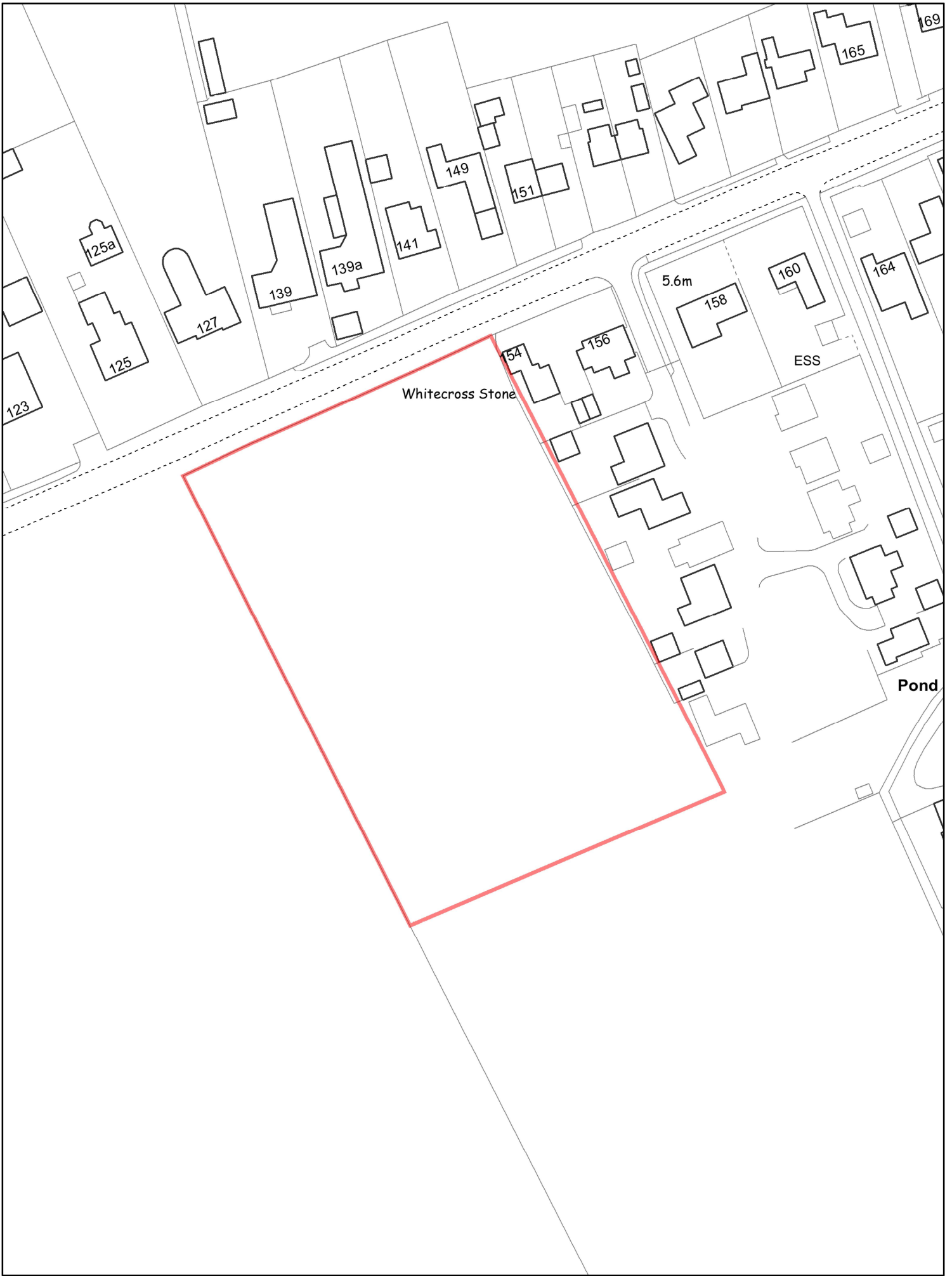
12. RECOMMENDATION

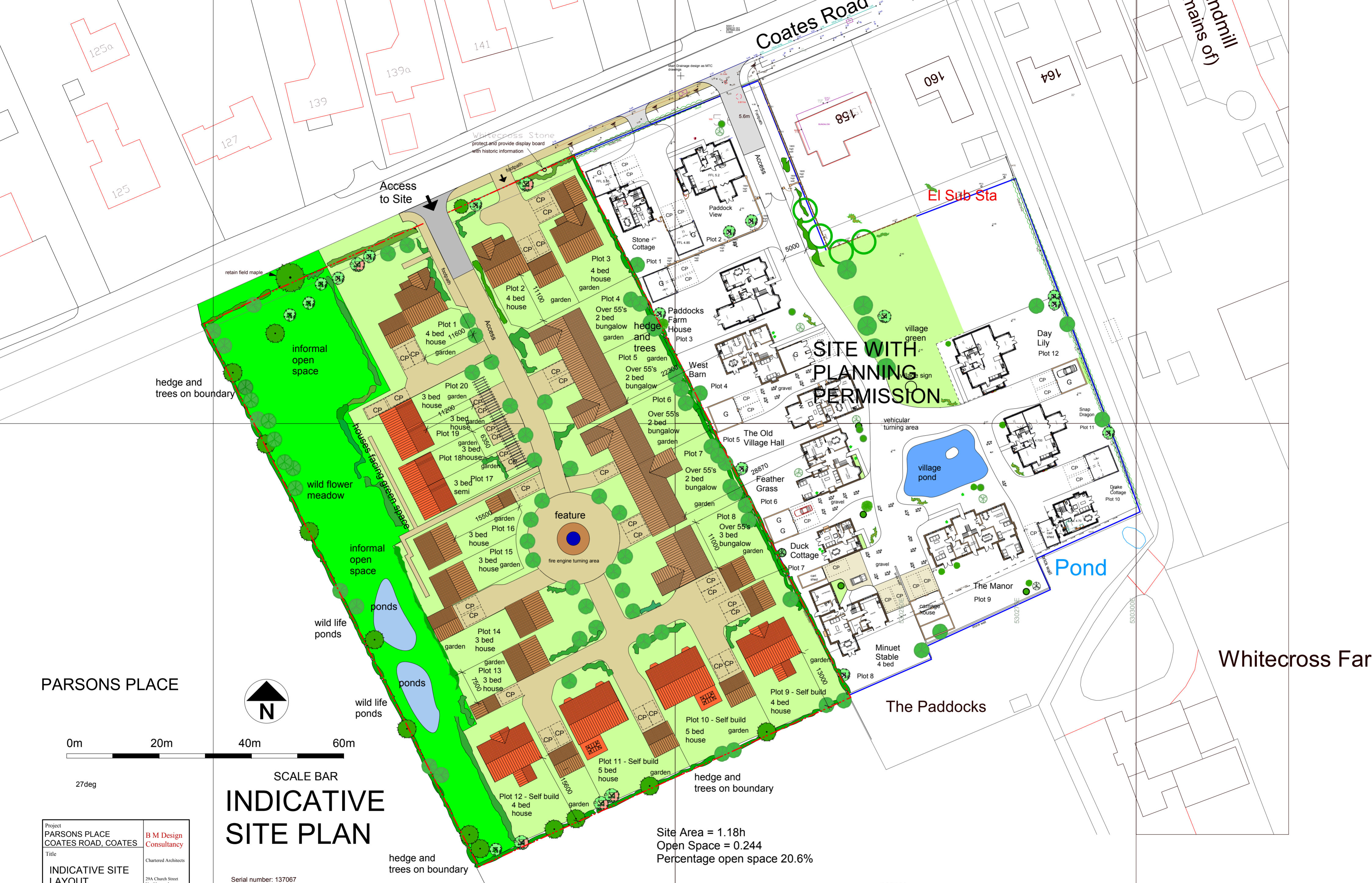
- 12.1. REFUSAL, for the following reasons:

- | |
|--|
| <p>1. Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires new development proposals to contribute to the sustainability of the settlement and to not</p> |
|--|

harm the wide open character of the countryside by meeting a set of defined criteria. The proposal is for the development of an open piece of land that forms part of the rural setting of Coates, adjacent to the existing extent of the built up section of the village between Coates and Eastrea, and will result in harm to the open character of the area, a significant reduction in the separation between Coates and the settlement of Eastrea to the west of the site, resulting in a degree of coalescence between the villages. Such impacts would be contrary to the limitations policy LP12 places on development proposals in such locations and the mitigation shown on the indicative layout plan is insufficient to overcome the harm caused. The proposal is thereby contrary to policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

2. A Section 106 Agreement or Heads of Terms have not been submitted to secure the financial and infrastructure contributions generated by the proposed development. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the requirements of the NPPF, policies LP5 and LP 13 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), the Developer Contributions SPD, and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).



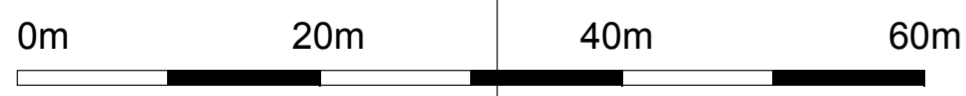


**SITE WITH
PLANNING
PERMISSION**

**INDICATIVE
SITE PLAN**

Site Area = 1.18h
Open Space = 0.244
Percentage open space 20.6%

PARSONS PLACE



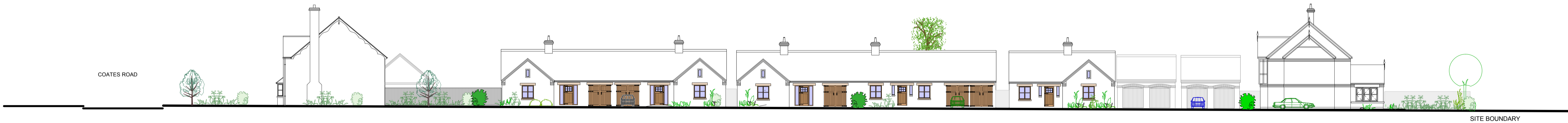
Project PARSONS PLACE COATES ROAD, COATES		B M Design Consultancy	
Title INDICATIVE SITE LAYOUT		Chartered Architects	
Scale 1:500		Date Aug 18	Job No 4528
Category SK	C/S/B Element (--)	Sequential No 12	Revisions

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Whitecross Field



NORTH ELEVATION OF HOUSES IN SOUTH OF SITE



WEST ELEVATION ALONG ACCESS ROAD SHOWING BUNGALOWS



PARSONS PLACE

FRONT ELEVATION FROM COATES ROAD

INDICATIVE STREET ELEVATIONS



SCALE BAR

Project PARSONS PLACE COATES ROAD, COATES		B M Design Consultancy	
Title INDICATIVE STREET ELEVATIONS		Chartered Architects	
Scale 1:200		Date Mar 20	Job No 4528
Category SK	C/S/E Element (-)	Sequential No 10	Revisions
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