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**F/YR21/0508/O**

**Applicant: Ms T Hughes**

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

**Land North East Of 80, Coates Road, Eastrea, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect up to 5 x dwellings and the formation of new accesses (outline application with all matters reserved)**

**Officer recommendation: Refusal**

**Reason for Committee: Number of letters of support received contrary to officer recommendation.**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The proposal is an outline application for the construction of up to five dwellings on the land. The application site lies adjacent to but beyond the existing built-up edge of the settlement of Eastrea.
- 1.2. The application site forms part of a larger agricultural field between the villages of Eastrea and Coates.
- 1.3. Planning policy for villages such as Eastrea limits the scale of development to residential infilling, and sets out a range of criteria that development proposals must comply with in order to be considered acceptable.
- 1.4. The location and scale of the proposal are beyond that permitted by the detail of policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, with the scheme resulting in development that would be harmful to the transitional character of the area and that would result in coalescence of the two villages.
- 1.5. In addition to the adopted development plan, the emerging Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan opposes development of the application site, identifying it as part of a green buffer between Eastrea and Coates.
- 1.6. There are no material considerations that indicate why the development should be approved contrary to the requirements of those policies, and so the recommendation is for refusal.

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site is part of a wider agricultural field located on the eastern edge of the village of Eastrea. There is limited boundary planting separating the field from the highway running between Eastrea and Coates. The land to the south and east of the site is agricultural land forming the remainder of the field, is also within the applicant's ownership. To the immediate west boundary of the site lie the

existing buildings associated with the agricultural operation and an electrical substation.

2.2. The site is within flood zone 1.

### **3. PROPOSAL**

3.1. The application proposes the construction of up to five dwellings on the land. The application is made in outline with all matters reserved, although an indicative site plan is submitted indicating how the applicant considers the level of development proposed could be satisfactorily accommodated on the site. This shows a row of five dwellings in large plots with individual accesses, albeit there are two side by side accesses, giving three access points proposed in total onto the A605.

3.2. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QS16KXHE06P00>

### **4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1. There is no site planning history.

### **5. CONSULTATIONS**

#### **5.1. Whittlesey Town Council**

No substantive comment made by the Town Council however comments received from Cllr Whitwell, approved by Cllr Miscandlon:

*Recommend refusal. LP3 categorises Eastrea as a small village where development will be considered on its merits but will normally be of a very limited nature and normally be limited in scale to residential infilling. This is not infilling and not of a limited nature. It is over intensification of the site.*

*LP12 states that for 'small' villages only infill sites will normally be considered favourably. It also states that it should not extend existing linear features of the settlement or result in ribbon development. LP12 contains other statements that do not support this application.*

#### **5.2. Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (Archaeology)**

No objection but the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured by condition

#### **5.3. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority**

*The paired accesses should either be shared accesses or all single accesses located to the west or east of each plot arrangement to ensure the access junction spacing is maximised on what is currently a 40mph road.*

*There is also a policy argument for a footway to be delivered along the southern side of Coates Road to link the development accesses up with the existing footway network in Eastrea.*

*And, given this development will result in frontage development both sides of Coates Road, there is justification for the speed limit TRO to be amended and the 30mph limit extended beyond the development frontage.*

## *Defer for amended plans*

### **5.4. Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Four responses have been received (Coates Road & Thornham Way) in relation to the scheme citing the following objections to the proposals:

- Development should make provision for enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife
- Impact on amenity from vehicular access
- Removal of green space
- Increased traffic
- Potential for future development
- Loss of semi-rural character
- Lack of proposal details
- Why wasn't the land to the rear of Roman Gardens chosen instead?
- Unsafe access
- Development should look at previously developed land first
- Additional strain on public services
- Development proposals are joining the two villages, which need to be kept separate – permission already given by committee on a further site to the east.
- Object to building on agricultural land
- Archaeology survey should be required if permitted
- No footpath to front of site
- Speeds of up to 92mph have been recorded in front of Eastrea Hall

10 letters of support have been received from nine distinct sources (Minuet Village, Coates Road, Nobles Close, Roman Gardens, Feldale Lane & Wype Road) in relation to the scheme. The responses made the following points:

- Need good housing in the area to help the villages survive
- No negative impact – would balance the roadside developments out
- Good visibility for building on filling in land
- Clearly infill but still leaves a substantial gap between Eastrea and Coates.
- Gap between villages on north side of road has had no detrimental effect

## **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**

### **7.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Para 2: NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Para 7: Purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

Para 11: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

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

Para 79: Housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Para 92: Promote healthy and safe communities through layouts, routes through sites and public spaces etc.

Para 119: Promote effective use of land

Para 124: Making efficient use of land (density - need & character)

Para 125: Where land is limited, avoid building at low densities

Para 159: Development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding.

## 7.2. **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

## 7.3. **National Design Guide 2019**

Context

Identity

Nature

Uses

## 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

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. **Whittlesey Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

Due to the current stage of progression of the plan it carries little material weight in any planning decision, however the following policies would be relevant to the proposal.

Policy 1: Spatial Strategy

Policy 2: Local Housing Need

Policy 11: Coalescence of Villages

## 8. **KEY ISSUES**

**Principle of Development**

## 9. **BACKGROUND**

9.1. There is no relevant background to the application site or proposal,

## 10. **ASSESSMENT**

**Principle of Development**

10.1. The application is made in outline with all matters reserved, and therefore the principle of development is the only issue for consideration at this time. The site itself is on the edge of the settlement of Eastrea, which is identified within the Fenland Local Plan as a Small Village.

10.2. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) states that development in small villages *“will be considered on its merits but will normally be of a very limited nature and normally be limited in scale to residential infilling.”*

10.3. The application is not considered to be of a 'very limited' nature and as it extends the built-up part of the settlement out into the countryside it does not fall for consideration as infill. The scheme is therefore at odds with the limitations on development set by policy LP3.

10.4. Policy LP12(a) of the Local Plan re-inforces that when considering development within a small village only infill sites will normally be considered.

#### **Character of area**

10.5. The application site forms part of the only remaining 'gap' between Coates and Eastrea. Policy LP12 (b) requires development proposals to not result in coalescence with neighbouring villages, LP12 (c) to not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and farmland, while LP12 (d) requires development to be in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement and in keeping with its character and part (e) that development would not extend linear features or result in ribbon development.

10.6. The proposal indicates that the development would result in a degree of coalescence with the neighbouring settlement to the east (particularly in view of the resolution taken to approve a development on the western edge of the settlement of Coates), and would extend the linear aspect of the village in a ribbon style along Coates Road.

10.7. The application site is flanked by agricultural premises to the west, with residential development beyond towards the core of Eastrea. The introduction of residential development beyond the current extent of the village in a position where the settlement currently transitions from a built-up character to a more open countryside appearance would fail to respect the core shape and form of the settlement and would adversely harm the character of this location.

10.8. Despite carrying limited weight at this stage in its adoption process, the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan states in its Policy 1 that development proposals adjoining the built area of the settlement must demonstrate that they are designed to minimise visual impacts upon the landscape. Policy 11 states that the villages of Eastrea and Coates should have a distinct separation, and that development will not be permitted if it would result in the loss of that separation. The application site is located within an area identified on Map 8 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan as a Green Buffer between the two settlements.

10.9. It is therefore considered that the proposed development of this site would be to the detriment of the character of the area and conflict with several of the requirements of Policy LP16.

#### **Highways**

10.10. The Highway Authority have raised no objections to the principle of the development but have commented on the indicated points of access. It is considered that these issues could be addressed at a detailed submission stage.

#### **Residential Amenity**

10.11. The application is in outline only and there are no details committed and consequently detailed relationships and amenity provision would need to be considered at a later stage. However, it is not considered that there are any indications that a detailed scheme could not be suitably designed in this regard.

#### **Flooding and Drainage**

10.12. The application site is located in Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding. The application indicates that surface water will be disposed of via soakaways and this would need to be considered under the Building Regulations.

#### **Loss of agricultural land**

10.13. The application site is agricultural land classified as Grade 2 (Very good). Policy LP12 Part A (i) requires development to not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land. While no evidence has been submitted to justify that loss it is not considered, given the abundance of such land within the District, that a refusal could be justified on these grounds.

### **11. CONCLUSIONS**

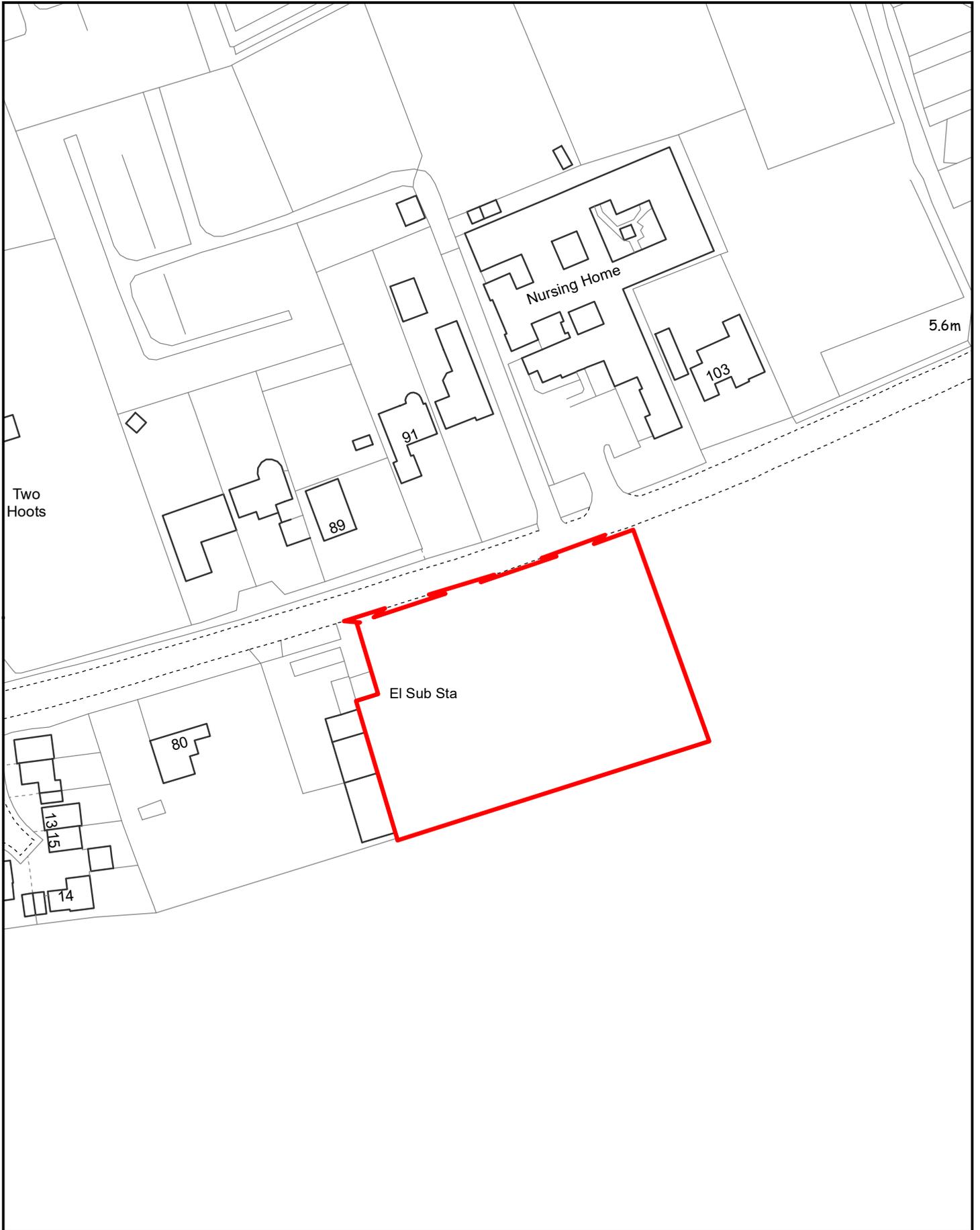
11.1. The application due to the location and character of the site is considered to be contrary to the stated requirements of policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and is of a scale and nature that exceeds that envisaged by policy LP3. It would result in adverse impacts on the character of the area and would result in coalescence between the two villages, which is opposed by both the Fenland Local Plan and the emerging Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

11.2. There would be some limited benefit to the provision of housing within the district from the site and to local employment in the construction industry, however these matters are not sufficient to justify granting permission for the proposals contrary to those policies.

### **12. RECOMMENDATION**

**REFUSAL**, for the following reasons:

1	Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) states that development in small villages “ <i>will be considered on its merits but will normally be of a very limited nature and normally be limited in scale to residential infilling.</i> ” The proposal is for the construction of five dwellings on a site beyond the existing built-up edge of the settlement. This is reinforced by Policy LP12 (a. As such, the application fails to accord with the scale and location of development acceptable under the terms these policies, and the development is therefore contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
2	Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires that development does not harm the wide-open character of the countryside. It also sets out a range of criteria, all of which must be complied with for development to be considered acceptable. The application is in outline for the construction of five dwellings beyond the existing built-up extent of the settlement, encroaching into farmland and resulting in coalescence between Eastrea and Coates and . The proposal details and the supporting information submitted in respect of the scheme fails to accord with the requirements of criteria (b), (c), (d) and (e) of policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and the scheme is therefore contrary to that policy.



Created on: 27/05/2021

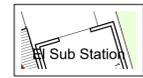
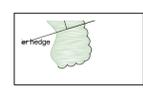
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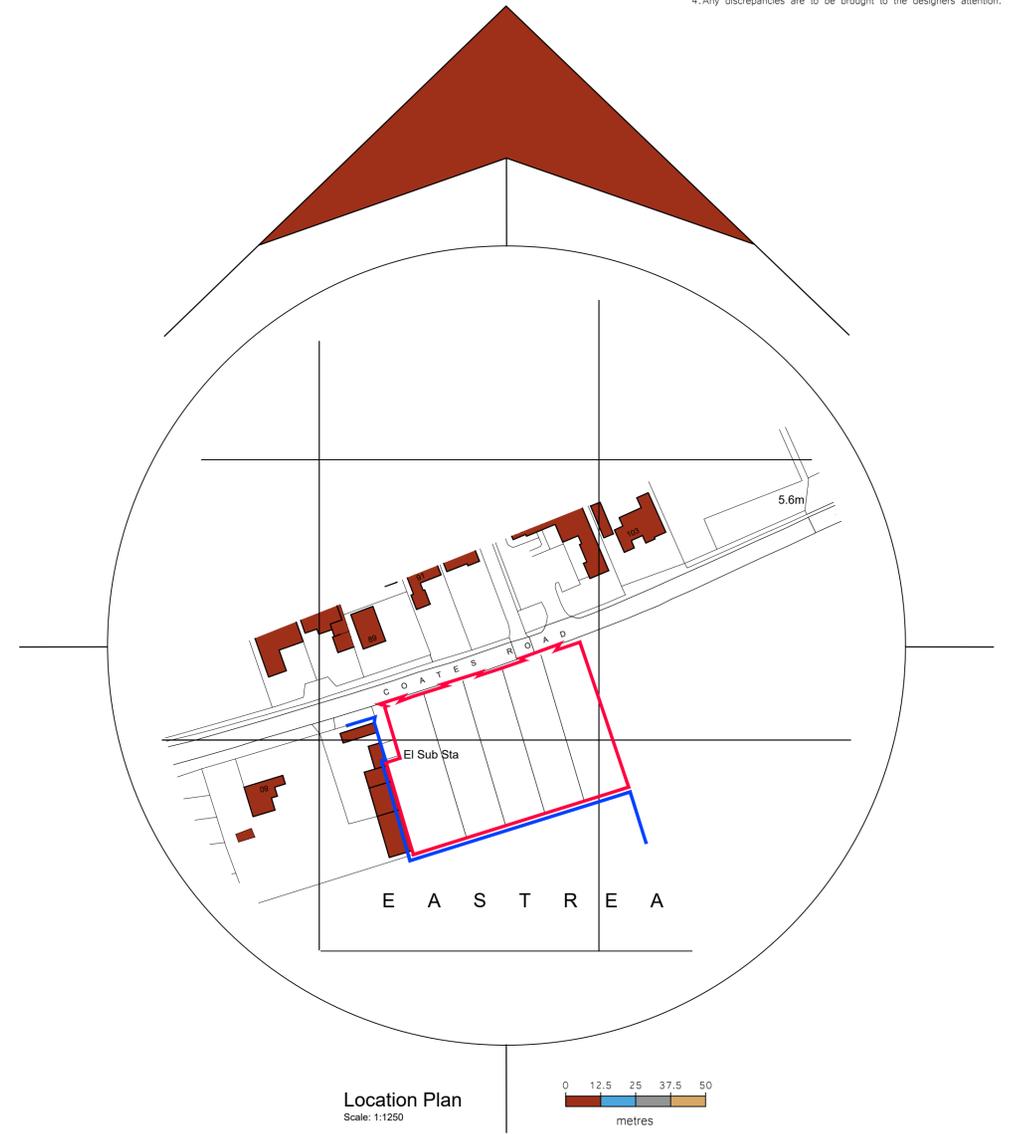
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Scale = 1:1,250



**SITE PLAN KEY**

	Indicates existing surveyed buildings		Indicates un-surveyed buildings taken from OS map		Indicates plot access to Cambs CC Highways specification, sealed and drained on to site		Indicates grassed gardens
	Existing position of hedges		Indicates proposed dwelling		Indicates driveway		



**Indicative Site Plan**  
Scale: 1:200

**Location Plan**  
Scale: 1:1250

- 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.

Status: **FOR APPROVAL**

**SWANN EDWARDS ARCHITECTURE**

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Job Title Proposed Residential Development Land Adj. 80 Coates Road, Eastrea Cambridgeshire	Date March 2021	Drawn by G.E.
Checked by J.B.	Job No. SE-1581	Sheet Size A1
Drawing Title Indicative Outline Drawing Site and Location Plan	Dwg No. PP1000	Revision