

**LAND TO THE SOUTH OF THE A271 AND EAST OF THE A22,
LOWER HORSEBRIDGE**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
HERTFORDSHIRE HOLDINGS LTD
DECEMBER 2022



TERENCE
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Contents

Executive summary	2
1 Introduction	3
2 The site and location.....	4
3 Planning history of the site	5
4 Design considerations	6
Opportunities and constraints.....	6
Design principles and evolution	7
Landscape setting.....	7
Access and site orientation	8
Contextual response	8
5 The proposals.....	9
Use, amount and scale.....	9
Layout	9
Landscape and open space	9
Access, movement and parking	10
6 Relevant planning policy and pre-application advice	11
7 Planning considerations	13
The need for housing.....	13
Access, transport and parking.....	13
Landscape	15
Flood risk mitigation / drainage.....	15
Road noise	16
Ecology and biodiversity enhancements	16
Heritage	18
Balance of economic, social and environmental issues.....	18
8 Conclusion.....	20
Appendix 1: S106 Heads of terms.....	21

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Environmental designations
Figure 3	Site constraints and opportunities (drawing P012)
Figure 4	Parameters of the development (drawing P011)
Figure 5	Illustrative masterplan (drawing P010)

Executive summary

- ES.1 Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd is seeking outline planning permission for a development of up to 124 dwellings and associated infrastructure and open space on land to the south of the A271 Horsebridge road, Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham.
- ES.2 The proposals provide details of vehicular access to the site for approval, with matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for later determination. Nevertheless, a parameters plan is submitted to confirm the built development areas and maximum development height zones and an illustrative layout has been prepared to indicate how quantum of development proposed may be achieved.
- ES.3 The proposals take advantage of the location of the site immediately adjacent to the town of Hailsham and the village of Lower Horsebridge with direct access to a main local movement route.
- ES.4 The principal purpose of the proposals is to contribute to the supply of housing within Wealden District in a sustainable manner, including policy compliant levels of affordable housing.
- ES.5 Given the proximity of the site to the Cuckmere River, a flood model has been prepared to establish a good understanding of the extent of flood risk zones in the area. The proposed development area of the site is wholly within flood zone 1 (low probability).
- ES.6 The subject site is not subject to any major landscape designations. Landscape and visual studies have been undertaken to establish appropriate development siting and landscape mitigation.
- ES.7 The approach to landscape and greenspace provision also ‘future proofs’ the development to meet biodiversity net gain requirements within the site boundary. The approach therefore ensures the delivery of attractive green amenity space residents and enhanced local ecology.
- ES.8 In addition to the access, flood risk and landscape considerations, the design has also had regard to other opportunities and constraints including road noise, heritage and local utilities / telecommunications infrastructure.
- ES.9 Taking into account the current position with regard to housing land supply in Wealden district, and national planning policy, permission should be granted for these proposals which can provide much needed sustainable residential development, the limited adverse effects of which are considered to be substantially outweighed by the social, economic and environmental benefits that the scheme will deliver.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd is seeking outline planning permission for a development of up to 124 dwellings and associated infrastructure and open space on land to the south of the A271 Horsebridge road, Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham (figure 1).
- 1.2 This planning, design and access statement has been prepared in support of the submitted application. It provides background on the site and the proposals, explains how the design of the scheme has been influenced by the constraints and opportunities of the site, specifically the technical studies covering landscape, natural heritage, drainage and hydrology and transport / access.
- 1.3 The submitted planning application content comprises:
- Application form
 - Site location plan (red and blue lines)
 - Highway access drawing
 - Parameter plan – indicating the development zone, maximum building height and access location
 - Illustrative masterplan
 - Illustrative landscape strategy
 - This planning, design and access statement (including affordable housing statement/planning obligations draft heads of terms)
 - Topographic survey plans
 - Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy (including findings of flood modelling)
 - Landscape and visual appraisal
 - Ground conditions assessment (Phase 1)
 - Heritage desk-based assessment
 - Ecological appraisal, including phase 2 surveys and wintering birds survey
 - Biodiversity net gain calculation
 - Transport assessment and travel plan
 - Tree survey, arboricultural implications
 - Noise impact assessment
 - Air quality assessment
 - Utilities appraisal report

2 The site and location

- 2.1 The 7.67-hectare (ha) site comprises a large, grazed field with low level hedgerows on the boundaries and a small area of woodland on the south eastern side of the site. The site lies to the south west of Lower Horsebridge village and is separated from the northern Hailsham urban area by the Cuckmere River and its floodplain. The site is adjacent to the Boship Roundabout and associated development on the A22 concentrated in this location.
- 2.2 The eastern and southern boundaries of the site are formed by a stream (Lower Horsebridge Stream), which is a tributary of the Cuckmere River. The river itself is approximately 50m to the south of the application site at the closest point. The northern site boundary is formed by the A271 between the Boship Roundabout on the north western corner of the site and the village of Lower Horsebridge to the east. The A22 Hailsham Bypass lies along the western boundary of the site.
- 2.3 There are no environmental designations on or in the immediate vicinity of the application site (figure 2). A portion of the eastern and southern areas of the site lie within flood zones 2 and 3, however most of the western half of the site is in flood zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- 2.4 The site is in close proximity to a number of village services and facilities, including the recreation field and associated sports clubs, the two village public houses / restaurants and local bus stops. The closest shop is the Co-op convenience store on Upper Horsebridge Road (approximately 1.2km to the east) and the closest school is Hellingly Community Primary School approximately 900m (by road) to the north of the application site.
- 2.5 Hailsham town centre is approximately 2.5km to the south east of the site, with local and national shops, a leisure centre, supermarkets, theatre / cinema and the district council offices. There is a local clustering of development nearby at Boship Roundabout including a petrol station and convenience retail store (Budgens), coffee shop and food on the go outlet (Starbucks and Greggs), Travelodge and hotel (Boship – Lions – Farm Hotel). The centre of Lower Horsebridge village is within 500m of the proposed site access and includes sports clubs and public houses. Hellingly Community Primary is the nearest school.

3 Planning history of the site

3.1 The site itself has not been subject to any recent planning applications.

3.2 Other recent notable planning applications in the local area include:

- WD/2019/1575/MAO. Land east of North Street, Lower Horsebridge. Outline planning application for up to 130 residential units, approved 27 August 2021.
- WD/2021/2056/MAO. Land west of North Street, Lower Horsebridge. Outline planning application for up to 55 dwellings. Committee resolution to grant planning permission, March 2022.
- WD/2021/3029/MAO. Land at Upper Horsebridge Road, Upper Horsebridge. Erection of up to 28 dwellings. Received 8 December 2021. Deferred by planning committee, 11 August 2022 in view of a Full Council motion of 20 July 2022 requesting reporting on the impact of development on watercourses, including sewage discharges.

4 Design considerations

Opportunities and constraints

4.1 Key influences on the design content of the proposal are shown on figure 3 (drawing P012) and can be summarised as follows:

- **Flood risk** – as set out in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment for the site, zones have been identified on the site indicating the potential flood extents for 100 year and 1,000-year average return intervals, with a 32% allowance for climate change, based on up-to-date flood modelling. Built development (dwellings, gardens, roads and parking areas) have been excluded from both the flood zones 2 and 3, though drainage attenuation features have been included within the 1,000-year average return zone, in line with national and local policy.
- **Access** – the accompanying Transport Statement identifies the frontage to the A271 as the most suitable location for the new vehicular access point for the site. It is well set back from the Boship Roundabout to ensure that it will not affect traffic queuing at the roundabout. The A271 at this point is relatively straight and suitable visibility splays can be created to accommodate the new site junction.
- **Landscape and views**– The site boundaries are clearly defined by the A271 and A22 (and their associated existing vegetation hedges/trees) and the Lower Horsebridge stream along the eastern and southern boundaries. Although the site is predominantly arable grassland, it is significantly influenced by the surrounding development and adjacent highways
- **Developable area** – Following assessment of the developable area as defined by the site extent beyond flood risk zones, the location of the proposed site access and the need to create landscape buffers, a potential built developable area of approximately 2.9 ha is established. This area would contain dwellings, garages, associated vehicle and pedestrian access routes. An additional approximately 0.9ha within flood zone 2 has been identified as suitable for surface water drainage features, landscape planting and ecological enhancements. A further 2.8ha of the site in flood zone 3 with has additional planting and ecological enhancements
- **Overhead power lines** – 11kv power lines on wooden field poles currently cross the site southwards from the A271 near to the Boship Roundabout towards the small area of woodland, before continuing off site in an eastern direction to the south of the bowls club.
- **Telecoms mast** – on the western boundary of the site adjacent to the A22. The telecoms mast is enclosed by fencing and a 40m stand-off distance between the mast and any buildings has been incorporated into the scheme design.
- **Ground conditions** – the submitted ground conditions assessment did not identify any issues in relation to ground conditions (contamination or stability) within or immediately adjacent to the application site.
- **Foul drainage** – Southern Water confirmed that there is currently inadequate capacity in the nearby foul water network to support the proposed development and that once planning permission is obtained off-site improvements/upgrades will need to be made.

Design principles and evolution

- 4.2 From the analysis described above, a number of key issues arose which needed to be addressed through the design approach. These can be summarised as follows:

Landscape setting

- Where possible, retain existing vegetation along the boundaries for both screening and outlook
- Provide infill and new planting to support existing vegetation along the boundaries and new vegetation within the open space along the southern and south eastern aspects of the site to create a visual screening and an attractive amenity area
- Retain and enhance/rejuvenate the area of mature woodland within the site
- Retain where possible and enhance boundary vegetation
- Consideration of scale and form of built development to minimise impacts on the wider landscape and views
- Consideration of set-back distances and relationship of buildings on A271 frontage to minimise impacts on properties on north west side of A271, including Grade II listed building Brook House
- New strategic planting to include strong landscape and visual mitigation role to help screen and/or absorb effects of development in terms of identified sensitive landscape and visual receptors
- New strategic planting including new hedgerows and new areas of scrub and woodland to have biodiversity/wildlife corridor role, linking surrounding habitats with the river corridor and enhancing or providing new habitats site-wide.
- New landscape corridor along the A271 boundary including new species rich hedgerow and woodland belt to replace existing hedge removed to enable visibility splays
- Enhancements to the Lower Horsebridge stream corridor including new areas of streamside planting to enhance its biodiversity value
- Ensuring that the site landscape makes a positive contribution to the wider River Cuckmere corridor, to maintain the river corridor character and enhance biodiversity with a range of appropriate habitats and spaces replacing the current agricultural land use
- Provision of new green infrastructure to provide important amenity space and play space incorporating opportunities for ecological enhancement
- Enhancement of the surface water attenuation features to provide areas of damper grassland habitat and planting
- Creation of two wildlife ponds
- Tree planting within developed area to help absorb massing of development and create a greener environment

Access and site orientation

- Site access fixed by the higher speed limit on the A22 meaning the access point could not be onto this road. On the A271, the location of the access point was determined by the necessary set back from the Boship roundabout and the required visibility spays for the site access
- The illustrative masterplan shows inward facing perimeter apartment block adjacent to Boship roundabout that seeks to provide an acoustic buffer to the wider development
- Alongside the A22 a near continuous frontage has been created, with the built form providing acoustic screening to the gardens at the rear
- To the east of the proposed entrance, the illustrative masterplan shows a smaller scale of development, with rear gardens orientated towards the stream in order to reduce the impact of built form upon the aspect from the grade II listed Brook House to the north
- Site configuration and plots to maximise opportunities of southerly aspect in terms of solar access where possible
- Dwellings on the south eastern side of the developable area have been orientated to optimise views over the Cuckmere River corridor and enhanced landscaped area provided by the scheme

Contextual response

- The scale and form of the residential development responds to the adjacent properties
- The open space on the south and south east of the site supports the feeling of the openness along the Cuckmere River corridor and its floodplain and maintains visual separation between Lower Horsebridge and the proposed development
- Tallest elements of built form are distributed along the north western edge of the development, facing the Boship roundabout and west of the proposed entrance road
- Lower building heights are proposed opposite the grade II listed building
- The illustrative masterplan indicates development parcels within the area have been typically configured to have a perimeter block arrangement to create defensible space and maximise opportunities for visual surveillance

5 The proposals

- 5.1 The proposals are submitted in outline (the principle of the development), with all matters reserved for later approval apart from access. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are proposed to be subject to separate later reserved matters approval when details are confirmed, although a parameters plan (figure 4) is submitted to show the area of the site that is to be subject to built development and the maximum development height zones within this area. An illustrative layout (figure 5, drawing P010) has been prepared to indicate how the proposed quantum of development proposed may be achieved, and has informed some of the technical studies.
- 5.2 At this stage, a number of principles for the development of the site are proposed to be confirmed by use of documents, plans and strategies which may be approved and linked to the planning decision by the use of planning conditions.

Use, amount and scale

- 5.3 The application proposes residential uses for the site, providing for up to 124 dwellings (houses and low-rise apartments) with associated gardens, parking, bin stores and shared open space, including surface water attenuation features. Houses will be typically two or 2.5 storeys, with the apartments being 2.5 to three storeys in height.

Layout

- 5.4 The illustrative masterplan demonstrates how the residential development could come forward for the site, addressing the opportunities and constraints noted in the previous section.
- 5.5 The street network involves a single main access route, with a series of short cul-de-sac side roads (with appropriate turning space for emergency services and waste collection vehicles). This essentially creates six smaller residential parcels within the site.
- 5.6 The apartment buildings, which are slightly taller (up to three storeys) than the proposed houses, are located along the northern and north-western boundaries between the Boship roundabout and the proposed site access point, with parking contained within a courtyard to the rear (internal to the site). Dwelling houses in the form of semi-detached and detached properties are located towards the south eastern part of the developable area.
- 5.7 The proposed built area opposite the grade II listed Brook House has been carefully considered to minimise impacts on the setting of this building and to retain views into the open landscape north of the proposed development.

Landscape and open space

- 5.8 The proposed landscape and biodiversity strategy has been informed by the ecology and landscape studies and was designed in association with the architects and engineering consultants. It has been formed to address all of the landscape issues identified in the appraisal and to optimise biodiversity net gain.

- 5.9 The existing hedgerow planting on the northern site boundary along the A271 will be strengthened with tree planting surrounded by areas of wildflower meadow and flowering lawn habitat. Trees along the A22 will be strengthened with native scrub planting and sections of new native hedgerow.
- 5.10 The main area of open space will be located on the south eastern part of the site. The area of existing woodland will be augmented with new blocks of native woodland, scrub, new hedgerow and specimen tree planting throughout the open space and in amenity space around the site. New areas of grassland will replace the low diversity semi-improved grazed grass. The new grassland areas will have varied characteristics and species composition, including long meadow grass, wildflower meadow and lowland grassland maintained at a short height to provide amenity space. Additionally, around the drainage features, mixes suited to damper conditions such as wetland grass and a pond edge seed mix will be sown.
- 5.11 A network of paths (footpaths and potentially a cycle path) will be provided through the open space area. A play area will also be located in the open space, it is likely to be in a location close to the main access road of the site and the residential dwellings.
- 5.12 Future management and maintenance of the landscape, open space and biodiversity areas will be secured via a private management company or, alternatively, through adoption by the district or parish council.

Access, movement and parking

- 5.13 The new site access from the A271 will be in the form of a ghost island priority junction (as detailed in the Transport Assessment). The junction layout and location has been designed in accordance with the relevant design standards based on the existing speed limits on the A271. Its location was determined through the consideration of the design requirements in terms of visibility splays, deceleration length for right turning vehicles into the site and junction separation.
- 5.14 The illustrative masterplan layout shows the suggested internal access roads of the development (to an adoptable standard), with vehicular to properties / parking areas within the site will be via cul-de-sac roads leading from the main access road. It also shows that typically houses will be provided with on plot including a number of garage and carport parking spaces, while apartment parking will be located in adjacent parking courts. An appropriate level of street lighting will be provided along the internal roads and the new access junction.
- 5.15 The illustrative layout also shows pedestrian and cycle route provision within the site and demonstrates how policy compliant parking levels can be readily accommodated within the development area.

6 Relevant planning policy and pre-application advice

- 6.1 The statutory development plan comprises the adopted Wealden District Local Plan, February 2013, the saved policies of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan May 2016 and the Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan, February 2021.
- 6.2 Pre-application advice was sought from Wealden District Council for a larger area proposal incorporating this application site in April 2020. In relation to the site that is the subject of this planning application, the written pre-application advice received on 14 April 2020 raised a number of matters, the principal comments of the planning officer being as follows:
- The site is outside the development boundary within the Wealden Local Plan (1998)
 - Policies within the 1998 plan resist new housing development in the countryside which is not essential for agriculture or forestry needs or has some other similar justification for a rural location (such as rural affordable housing exception sites) as set out in saved Policies GD2 and DC17. Outside of the development boundaries, residential development is generally resisted in accordance with Policy GD2 of the 1998 Wealden Local Plan.
 - The site is not within any strategic development area identified within Policies WCS4 and WCS6 of the Core Strategy.
 - There is no explicit planning policy that would support residential development on the site in either the 1998 Plan or the Core Strategy, although the Council's current position with regard to housing land supply is a material consideration that weighs in favour of sustainable residential development. There are however clear issues relating to the sustainability of the site with regard to the environmental impact.
 - The site forms part of the wider River Cuckmere corridor which continues to the north towards Hellingly and to the south towards Upper Dicker. This corridor is an important swathe of undeveloped land which separates the village of Lower Horsebridge from the urban area of Upper Horsebridge and Hailsham.
 - Development of this site would have a significant impact on the landscape character of the area
 - The Council's data on the extent of flood zones shows that flood zone 2 and 3 extend further into the proposed sites, reducing the area of land within flood zone 1.
 - A site-specific assessment will need to be undertaken so all forms of flood risk at the site are fully addressed. This should allow for the maximum conceivable flood extent corridor derived through flood modelling.
 - The development would need to demonstrate that it can meet all three overarching objectives for sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.
- 6.3 Subsequent to the receipt of the pre-application advice letter, the neighbourhood plan for Hellingly has been 'made' following a referendum. The following policies, 'recommendations' and paragraphs of the Neighbourhood Plan are of particular relevant to the current application proposals:

- Policy HNBP4 – flood risk assessments
- Policy HNBP5 – related to the enhancement of green and blue infrastructure
- Policy HNBP6 – for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Policy LHB1 – which sets out requirements for development at Lower Horsebridge to protect the historic development pattern and key views and vistas
- Policy LHB2 – which sets out specific design criteria for Lower Horsebridge.

7 Planning considerations

7.1 It is considered that the key planning considerations related to this development proposals are:

- The need for housing
- Access, transport and parking
- Landscape
- Flood risk mitigation
- Road noise mitigation
- Ecology and biodiversity enhancement
- Heritage
- Balance of social, economic and environmental issues

The need for housing

7.2 The latest published housing land supply figure was 3.66 years as of 1 April 2021 (Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement – as of 1st April 2021). As Wealden District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the tilted balance contained in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is engaged. For decision making, this means granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

7.3 The proposal will deliver up to 124 dwellings across a range of dwelling sizes and types. The applicant is committed to providing a policy compliant level of affordable dwellings, which it is understood to currently stand at 35% (as per policy AFH1 Affordable Housing in the adopted WDC Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, May 2016), and would welcome the opportunity to further discussions with WDC on the preferred nature of the affordable element. The applicant is also content to incorporate a small element of self or custom build housing within the scheme at the detailed design stage if this is formally required and is keen to understand WDC's specific current requirements in this regard.

Access, transport and parking

7.4 The submitted transport assessment confirms that the proposed development would not have significant residual impacts on the transport network. Based on the expected trip generation and improvement measures outlined in the transport assessment, the proposal would be sustainable in transport terms and in accordance with both national and local policy.

7.5 The highway impact assessment considered the implications on the highway network in both terms of road links and junctions in the future assessment year of 2030. On all links assessed, the proposal was found to have only a very minor impact in both the AM and PM peak hours.

- 5.16 The operation of the following local junctions has been assessed to determine how the addition of the development traffic may affect the junction capacity and queuing lengths / delays.
- A271 Horsebridge Road / proposed site access junction
 - Boship Roundabout
 - A271 Horsebridge Road / B2104 North Street
 - A267 New North Street / B2104 North Street
 - A271 Horsebridge Road / B2104 London Road
- 5.17 When the with development scenario was tested the results showed that the proposed access junction and the A271 Horsebridge Road / B2104 North Street junction are expected to operate with significant spare capacity and no queuing issued.
- 7.1 The proposal is considered to have a minimal impact (not material) on the A267 New North Street / B2104 North Street junction, which already experiences issues. The A271 Horsebridge / B2104 London Road junction, there are expected capacity and delay issues by 2030 in the absence of the proposal, with only a very minor increase as a result of the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal will not have a material impact on the operation of this junction.
- 7.2 At the Boship Roundabout, which has existing capacity issues (expected to be worse in 2030 even without the development), the development traffic is expected to result in a very minor impact on the west and southern (A22) arms but alleviate issues on the A271 arm.
- 7.3 The proposed development will include onsite provision for walking and cycling along with the widening of the existing footway on the southern side of the A271, which will also connect to ESCC's future planned improvements to Boship Roundabout, which includes improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7.4 The proposed development is located within walking distance to a number of existing bus stops, which provide access to frequent bus services to Hailsham and beyond, including the closest railway station at Polegate (approximately 6.4km to the south). In initial discussions, ESCC requested that contributions should be made towards a pair of bus stops in close proximity to the site, provision of a pedestrian crossing facility on the A271 to enable use of new bus stops and towards improving the bus services.
- 7.5 The internal road layout shown in the indicative master plan has been designed to accommodate the necessary turning areas for emergency services and waste collection vehicles, which will be carried forward to the detailed design.
- 7.6 At the detailed design stage, the development will provide the appropriate level of vehicle and cycle parking, in accordance with ESCC's Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development (2017) and the final housing mix.
- 7.7 A framework travel plan for the proposed development has been submitted as part of the planning application. This sets out the overall strategy for sustainable transport which will be taken forward to the detailed stage.

Landscape

- 7.8 A landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) has been prepared to support the planning application and has informed the landscape strategy of the proposed development. The LVA has reviewed the landscape context and opportunities for the proposals, identifying that the site is not within any landscape designated and is of medium landscape sensitivity. The LVA study shows that whilst the proposed development will give rise to a large change to the character of the site itself, it will have a negligible to small effect on the landscape character of the areas around the site.
- 7.9 Similarly, effects on views from key receptors (local residents, users of local roads and public rights of way) as a result proposal are very localised due to enclosing effects of local vegetation and wider development. Visual changes of large magnitude are expected at a limited number of residential properties close to the development area of the site (notably those along the A271 facing the site and on the western edge of Lower Horsebridge) and in respect to persons using the public footpath that passes along the edge of the recreation ground to the east of the application site.
- 7.10 The proposed development has been shaped by the existing landscape of the application site, with the retention of the existing trees, hedgerows and other vegetation so far as possible. The illustrative landscape planting plan proposes enhanced landscape boundaries of the site, with new hedgerows, scrub planting and trees.
- 7.11 Vegetation planting across the site has been selected for both landscape and ecological value, offering a diverse mixture of habitats, creating distinction between the more formal areas and those of amenity space where a lowland grass mixes suitable of being maintained at a shorter length will be planted amongst the tree and hedgerows.
- 7.12 In addition to tree, woodland and hedgerow planting, the main area of open space along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site will be planted with a mixture of grassland meadow grass (maintained at a longer grass), emergent and marginal planting and a grass mix suitable for wetter conditions around the drainage ponds and the watercourse on the eastern boundary.
- 7.13 A network of footpaths will be woven into the open space to enable future residents to access the area, with one also providing cycle access through the site from the A271.
- 7.14 Removal of hedgerow adjacent to the proposed access point is required to enable the appropriate visibility splays to be obtained. However, the proposal includes the planting of new native hedgerow so there is approximately 510m gain in hedgerow provision on the site.

Flood risk mitigation / drainage

- 7.15 A flood risk assessment (inclusive of detailed modelling) has been undertaken and an outline drainage strategy prepared. The flood risk assessment identifies areas of the site to be at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. The layout and siting of development proposals as presented in the illustrative layout has been informed

by the modelling and mapping of fluvial flood risk zones 2 and 3. No built development (dwellings inclusive of gardens, parking areas or roadways) have been included in flood zones 2 or 3. Surface water drainage features and public open space (inclusive of a play area) have been included in flood zone 2. Areas within flood zone 3 will be utilised for open space, ecological enhancement and landscape planting only.

7.16 The flood risk mitigation and drainage strategy consist of the following elements:

- Residential development and site access are located in flood zone 1 and are at low risk from all sources of flooding
- Proposed ground floor levels are set at a minimum of 17.21m AOD (600mm above the 1 in 100-year flood event including climate change allowance and a suitable freeboard)
- Continuous safe access is provided from the A271 at the 1 in 100 annual probability (including climate change allowance)
- The proposed surface water drainage strategy for the development is managed by a series of surface water attenuation basins on site to provide a reduced peak runoff rate. The drainage strategy will provide betterment in terms of runoff. Attenuation discharge will be to the stream (Lower Horsebridge stream) on the eastern boundary.

7.17 The flood risk assessment concludes that the proposed development is at low risk of flooding, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and is therefore in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy.

Road noise

7.18 The noise impact assessment submitted in support of the planning application identifies vehicle movements on the A22 Hailsham Bypass as the dominant noise source at all locations within the site, with vehicle passing on the A271 dominant when they occurred.

7.19 The report identifies that the majority of the site falls within the 'low noise risk' category, which indicates likely acceptability from a noise perspective provided good acoustic design is followed. However, areas of the site along the A22 and A271 are considered to be within the 'medium noise risk' category. This means that these areas are less suitable from a noise perspective, unless a good acoustic design is followed and is demonstrated in an acoustic design statement. It is anticipated that the requirement for both good acoustic design and an acoustic design statement at the detailed design stage will be established through an appropriately worded planning condition.

7.20 Overall, with appropriate design measures (e.g. glazing specification, internal room orientation/arrangements, orientation of gardens or acoustic garden fence) implementation through an appropriately worded planning condition to avoid any adverse noise effects, the site is considered to be suitable for residential use.

Ecology and biodiversity enhancements

7.21 The application site comprises improved pasture grassland, a woodland block, native hedgerows and a stream along the eastern boundary. The application is

supported by an ecological appraisal, phase 2 protected species surveys and a wintering bird survey, which cover the applicant's wider landholding. Great crested newts, otter and water vole, hazel dormice and badgers were all considered unlikely to be present on the site.

- 7.22 The Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 2.5km to the east of the site and the Lower Dicker SSSI is 1.47km to the west. Additionally, there are two local wildlife sites (LWSs) within 2km of the application site. No direct impacts from the development are anticipated on any of these designated areas. Indirect impacts on the Pevensey Levels SAC are considered in the submitted air quality assessment, which identifies that the increase in road traffic resulting from the proposed development is less than 50 vehicles daily (AADT) and therefore would not result in a significant effect on the protected site.
- 7.23 The site was found to be of local importance for foraging and commuting bats, with common and widespread species using the site. A number of trees within the application boundary were found to contain suitable bat roosting features, however, none of the trees require works or will be removed, therefore the scheme will not directly affect any roosting bats that may be currently using the site. The detailed design of the scheme will include the provision of bat boxes and a low-level lighting strategy will be developed (balancing the safety of the future residents and ecological considerations) to ensure bats continue to utilise the woodland and linear habitat features of the site.
- 7.24 The scrub, woodland, hedgerow and tree habitats on the site are considered likely to support breeding bird assemblages, with six species recorded as breeding across the wider land holding. The fields and riparian habitats on and adjacent to the application were identified as providing suitable habitats for overwintering birds, but the subsequent survey identified a limited species assemblage, with the area proposed for development as being rarely used by overwintering birds. The proposed development is therefore considered to not require any specific mitigation in relation to winter birds, but best practice measures will be employed to ensure minimal disturbance to breeding birds. The proposed planting of the open space incorporates hedgerow, trees, scrub, grassland and standing water, which will provide enhancements for bird species utilising the site. Bird boxes will also be provided at appropriate locations.
- 7.25 Reptiles, low numbers of slow worms and common lizards have been previously recorded on land adjacent to the planning application site. The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of habitat suitable for supporting reptile, as such a precautionary strip and push methodology is proposed (as detailed in the submitted ecological appraisal). The proposed planting of the open space will include grassland mixes, hibernacula and log piles which will enhance the on-site habitat for reptiles.
- 7.26 The proposal includes the provision of open space providing habitats including modified grassland, lowland meadow, ponds, mixed scrub, mixed woodland, urban trees and native hedgerows. These habitats have been assessed in terms of biodiversity benefits and found to represent a 26.46% net gain in respect to habitat units and a 39.13% gain for hedgerow units. The proposal therefore demonstrates biodiversity net gain well in excess of the 10% minimum set out in the emerging national policy.

- 7.27 A landscape and ecological management plan will be developed (secured by a planning condition) to ensure that the proposed habitats created through the development are managed appropriately and are maintained in a suitable condition for up to 30 years, with a 5-year review period.

Heritage

- 7.28 The desk-based heritage assessment submitted in support of the planning application provides an assessment of the potential effects of the proposal on known and suspected archaeology, built heritage features and the historic landscape character of the site and surrounding area.
- 7.29 The assessment, based on East Sussex Historic Environment Records (HER) database, other excavations in the local area and a LiDAR survey of the site, concludes that the site has a low/negligible potential to contain archaeological remains of no more than local interest. It is possible that the construction of the proposed development could result in possible damage to unanticipated below ground archaeological features. The assessment identifies that if the WDC's heritage advisor deemed it necessary, a watching brief could be implemented during the excavation of the initial stages of the development.
- 7.30 For the majority of the designed built heritage assets in the study area (those in Lower Horsebridge or Boship Farm Hotel to the west of the Boship Roundabout), the site does not form part of their setting and therefore they are unaffected by the proposed development.
- 7.31 The closest designated asset is the mid-19th century, grade II listed Brook House, which is located just north of the site, on the north side of the A271. The rural aspect of the primary elevation/outlook of the property provides the key setting of this listed building. The building heights proposed for this part of the development have been kept to two storeys to minimise the potential effect on the heritage asset and planting along the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the A271 will help soften the appearance of the built form. However, the proposed development will result in a change to the setting of this listed buildings, giving rise to a low level of less than substantial harm. It is considered that this level of harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, notably the provision of market and affordable housing to meet local requirements.

Balance of economic, social and environmental issues

- 7.32 The proposed development would be a positive contribution to addressing the current shortfall in housing in Wealden District, which is a primary consideration. The construction of the proposal will also bring economic benefits to the local area through the creation of construction jobs on the site itself as well as indirect support to additional jobs and businesses in the local area. Once complete, the future residents will also generate additional spending in the local area, supporting local services and facilities, and giving rise to social and economic benefits.
- 7.33 Through the landscape and biodiversity assessment work, the proposed development provides extensive opportunities for environmental gains, though the creation of more varied landscape planting and incorporation of wetland features and a substantial area of open space in the scheme design.

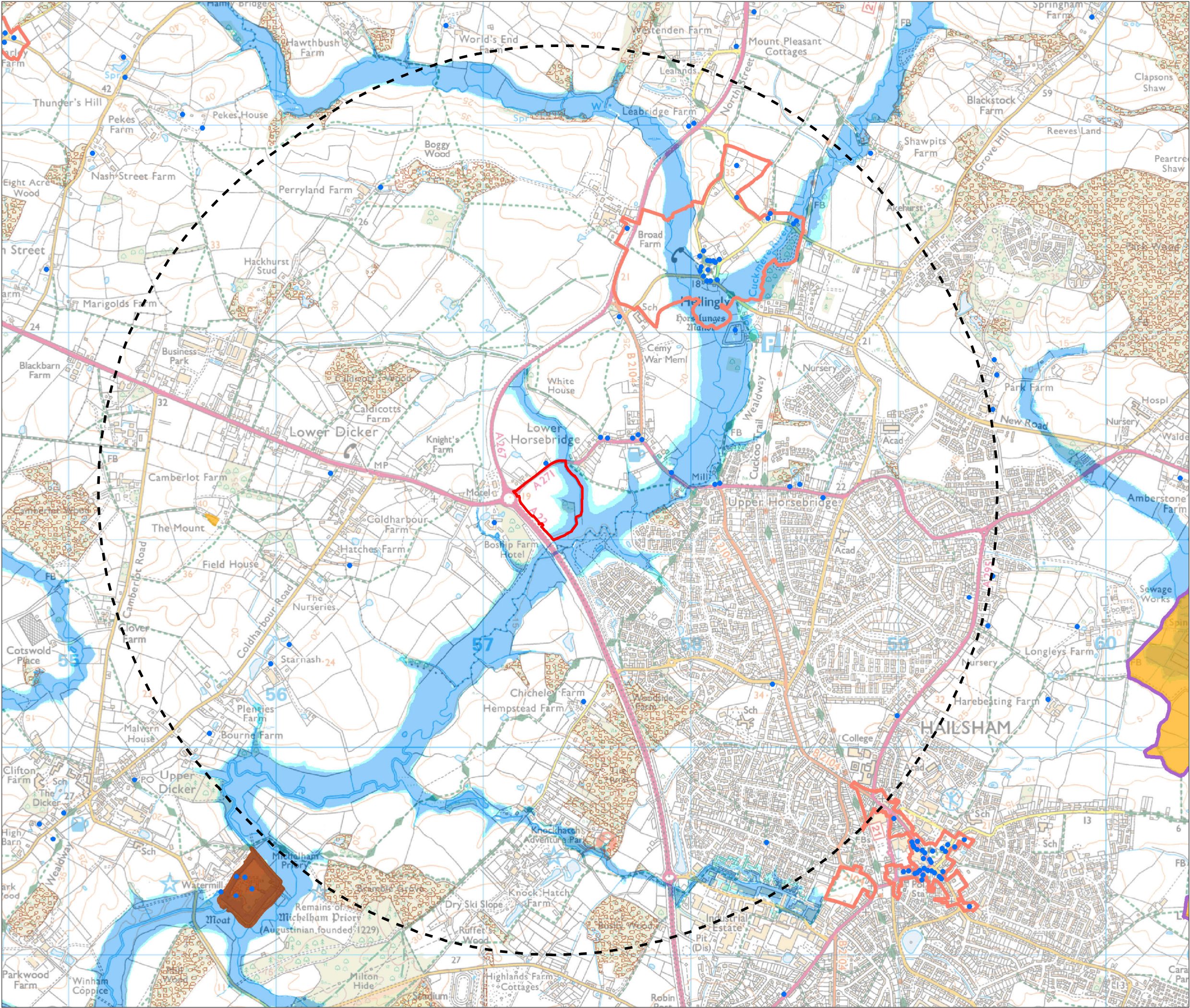
- 7.34 The flood risk assessment concludes that the site is sustainable in terms of flood risk and is compliant with the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 7.35 Overall, it is considered that the balance of economic, social and environmental issues is in favour of the sustainable development of the site.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The site is located within a sustainable location being close to the village of Lower Horsebridge, and with good accessibility to a range of services and facilities in the wider area of Hailsham and Hellingly.
- 8.2 Whilst there is not a current planning policy allocation that would specifically support a residential development on the site, Wealden District Council's current and ongoing position with regard to the lack of housing land supply is a material consideration that weighs in favour of sustainable residential development.
- 8.3 The public benefits of the providing market and affordable housing are considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm to a heritage asset (the setting of the grade II listed building).
- 8.4 The limited adverse impacts of granting planning permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, which include the provision of housing, opportunities for landscape enhancements and the ability to achieve net gain in terms of biodiversity. These are material considerations which indicate that planning permission should be granted.
- 8.5 Significant weight should be given to the benefits in the overall planning balance, which in our view outweigh any conflict with the development plan policies. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

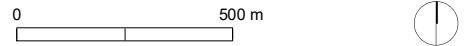
Appendix 1: S106 Heads of terms

- Affordable housing: Policy compliant offer of affordable housing
- Open space maintenance – Consideration of options for the ongoing maintenance of the open space, either through agreement with the Parish Council / District Council or via private management provision
- Transport – TBC following planning application consultation feedback from ESCC



- 2km study area
- Site boundary
- Listed buildings
- Scheduled monuments
- World Heritage site
- Conservation areas
- Ancient woodland
- Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

Land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge
Hertfordshire Holdings Ltd



Designations

Dwg no/231703C/L007	Revision
Status	05 December 2022
Scale: 1:17,500 @A3	Drawn by: JC Checked by: JB

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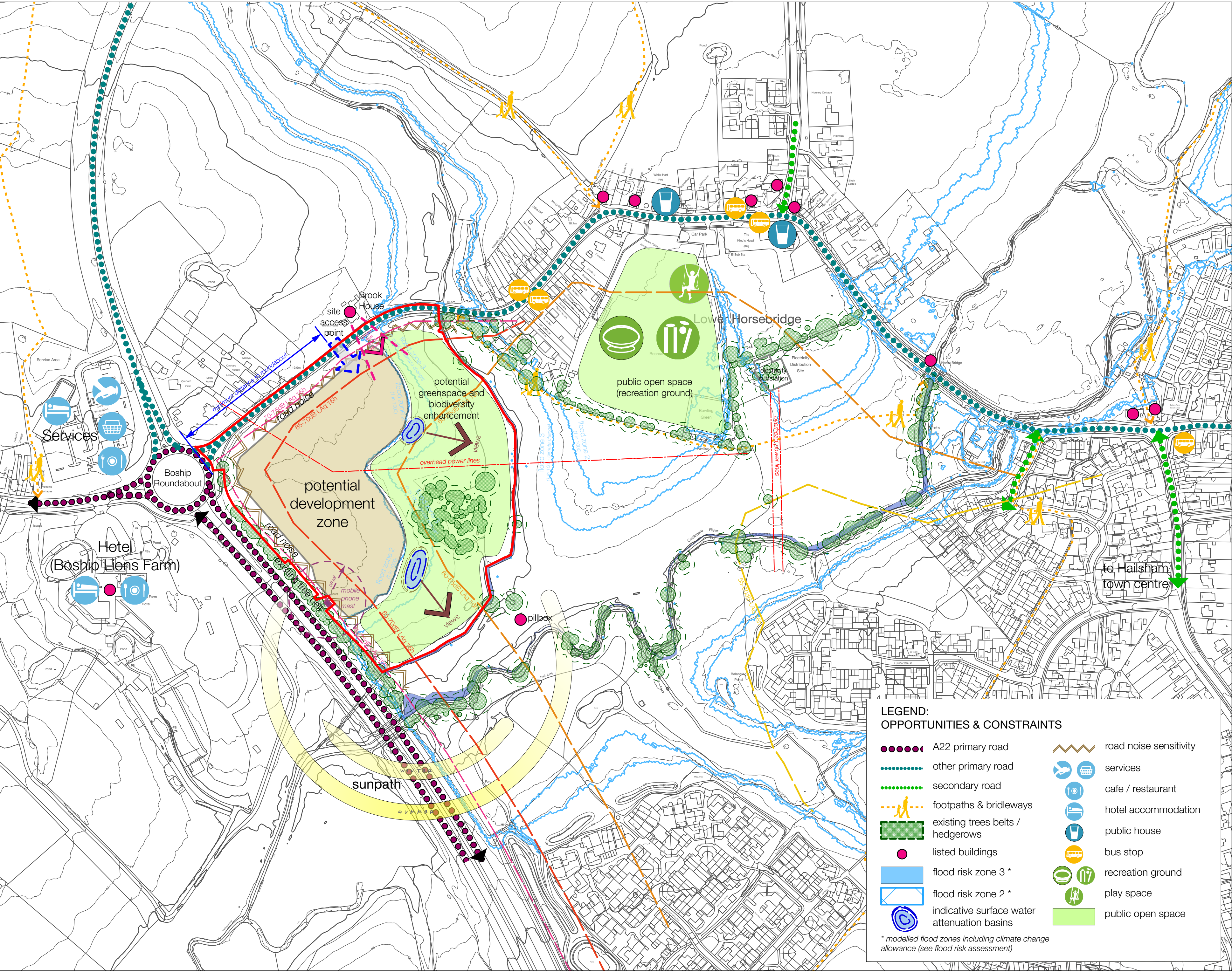
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**LEGEND:
OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS**

●●●●● A22 primary road	⚡ road noise sensitivity
●●●●● other primary road	🍷 services
●●●●● secondary road	☕ cafe / restaurant
🚶 footpaths & bridleways	🛏 hotel accommodation
🌳 existing trees belts / hedgerows	🍺 public house
● listed buildings	🚌 bus stop
🌊 flood risk zone 3 *	🏡 recreation ground
🌊 flood risk zone 2 *	🎮 play space
🌀 indicative surface water attenuation basins	🌳 public open space

* modelled flood zones including climate change allowance (see flood risk assessment)

Key

0 20 40 60 80 100 m

Notes/Revisions

Land south of the A271 and east of the A22, Lower Horsebridge
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Opportunities & Constraints Plan

Status: PLANNING	Drawn by:	Checked by:
Project Number: 231703C	Scale: 1:2500	Date: 11/2022
Drawing Number: TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P012	Revision:	

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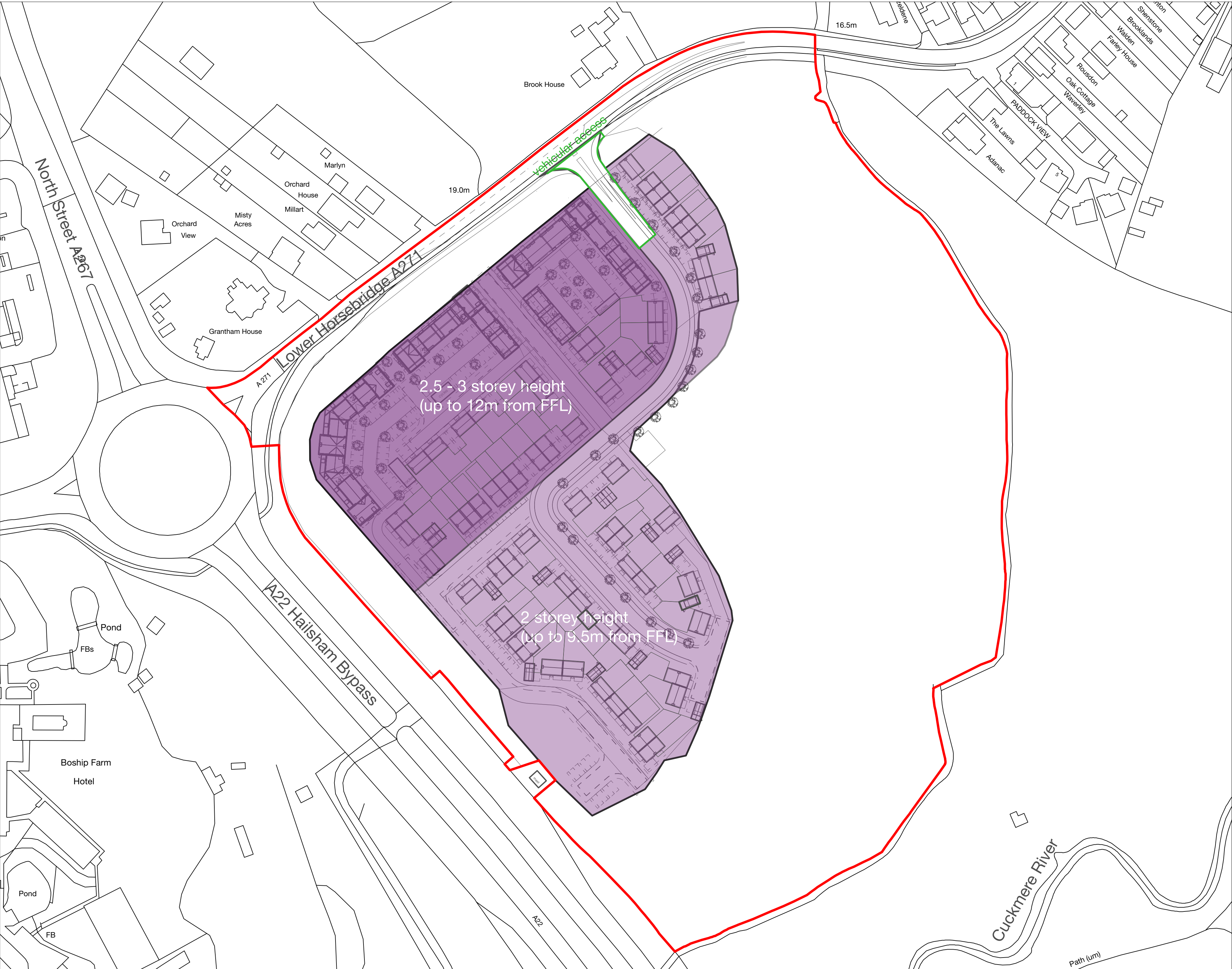
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Key

0 10 20 30 40 50 m

Notes/Revisions

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N

Parameters Plan
Maximum Building Height & Access

Status:	PLANNING	Drawn by:	Checked by:
Project Number:	231703C	Scale @ A2:	1:1000
Drawing Number:	TOR-XX-ZZ-DR-A-P011	Date:	11/2022
		Revision:	

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