

South Norfolk VCHAPs Examination

HEARING STATEMENT

**Matter C: Allocations & Settlement Limits – Cluster 29
Rockland St Mary, Hellington & Holverston**

**Allocation ROC1: Land south of New Hill Inn, Rockland St
Mary**

**Prepared by: John Long Planning Ltd for
Mr Heathcote, Mrs Davies and Mr Loades (the
Landowners)**

25 November 2025

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1 Introduction

1.1 This hearing Statement has been prepared by John Long Planning Ltd, on behalf of Mr Heathcote, Mrs Davies and Mr Loades, the Landowners of Allocation ROC 1: Land south of New Hill Inn, Rockland St Mary. The Statement provides information and responses to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions For examination published on 10 October 2025. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not been used in the preparation of this Statement, although editing, grammar and spell-checking tools have been used.

2 Response to Inspector's Issues

Matter C: Allocations & Settlement Limits – Cluster 29 Rockland St Mary, Hellington & Holverston Allocation ROC1: Land south of New Hill Inn, Rockland St Mary

Question:

a) Has the site been allocated previously or is it a new allocation?

2.1 The site has not previously been formally allocated in an adopted Local Plan. It is a new site allocation proposed in the VCHAPS.

b) Does the site have planning permission and/or are there current applications under consideration?

2.2 The site does not have planning consent, and there are no current/pending planning applications for the site.

c) What is the land currently used for, what is the ownership position and is the site currently being promoted by a developer? Are there any site occupiers/leaseholders who would be affected, if so how?

2.3 The land identified for allocation is presently used as farmland for arable crop production. It is owned by three separate landowners who have agreed to collaborate in promoting the site through the Local Plan process and, ultimately, to sell it to a developer. The front part of the site is farmed by Mr Loades and is currently left fallow. The rear part of the site is farmed by the Claxton Manor Estate (Mr Heathcote) as part of a larger farming operation and currently in arable production. There are no other site occupiers, leaseholders, or tenants who would be affected by this proposal.

2.4 The landowners can advise that the site is free from restrictive covenants, a position that has been confirmed by their legal advisors (April 2023). The previous restrictive covenant referred to in earlier neighbour consultation responses was intended expressly for the benefit of the named purchaser of Old Hall (in June 1960), not future occupiers of Old Hall. The Landowner's legal advice is that the restrictive covenant fell away once the named purchaser parted with possession of Old Hall. Old Hall is no longer owned by the named purchaser, therefore the land is unencumbered by any restrictive covenant.

2.5 At present, no formal contract has been entered into regarding the sale of the site or its promotion with a developer. However, several developers have expressed interest in acquiring the land. The landowners' have an agreement to continue promoting the site through the Development Plan process, and once formal allocation is secured, they will jointly enter into discussions with prospective developers or purchasers.

d) Is the site sustainably located in relation to village services and facilities? Where is the nearest (a) primary school (b) convenience shop (c) village hall (d) recreation ground (e)

other key facilities? How accessible are these for walkers and cyclists, in the case of walkers for example by continuous footways?

2.6 The site is well positioned in relation to local village services and facilities, offering sustainable access. The primary school, local shop, village hall/parish rooms/community hall, and the doctors' surgery/pharmacy are all within walking and cycling distance, approximately a 13–18 minute walk along a continuous footway (based on a typical walking speed of around 80 metres per minute) or a 4–5 minute cycle ride from the site. The New Inn public house (currently pending refurbishment), the village staith, and the recreation ground at Green Lane are located less than a 5 minute walk away.

2.7 Additional facilities within the village include a private swimming pool available for hire and the Barn at Rockland Rectory. Beyond the village, further services and amenities are available in Surlingham, including a swimming pool, farm shop, and patisserie, all accessible via public footpaths in approximately 35–40 minutes walk. Two public houses in Surlingham can also be reached on foot in around 50 minutes to an hour..

2.8 The village is served by the number 85 bus route, which provides a regular daytime service with a direct connection to Norwich City Centre. School buses also serve the village. The nearest bus stop is situated about a 5-minute walk from the site along a continuous footway. In addition, a new section of footpath will be constructed along the site frontage, creating a direct link to the existing footpath at Eel Catcher Way adjacent to the site.

e) **Would the landscape and other physical impacts of the housing allocation be acceptable? Would it be acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the area? How does it relate to the existing built-up area of the settlement? Are there any other significant constraints?**

2.9 The landscape and other physical impacts of the proposed housing development are considered acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In response to local concerns regarding the scheme's potential effect on nearby heritage and landscape assets, the landowners commissioned a heritage advisor to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to evaluate the likely heritage implications of a future development and identify appropriate mitigation measures. The Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by Charlotte Evans in October 2024, is included as an appendix to this hearing statement.

2.10 The HIA supports the Council's own Heritage Impact Assessment and confirms that the development of 25 dwellings will not cause any direct harm to built heritage assets. However, it acknowledges that there may be a low level of harm to the setting of these heritage assets. Importantly, this harm is assessed as being less than substantial. Overall, the residual effects of developing the site are expected to range from nil to minor adverse.

- 2.11 The HIA confirms that the setting of the heritage assets has evolved over time as the farmstead complex and village have developed. It acknowledges that whilst important to retain as much of the open, agricultural setting of the listed farmstead buildings as possible, this is not the sole factor contributing to their significance. A careful balance must therefore be struck between the limited harm to the assets' setting and the significant benefits of delivering new homes in a sustainable location, which will also support the continued viability of local services and facilities.
- 2.12 Mitigation measures include a policy requirement to maintain an undeveloped area at the western end of the site to safeguard the setting of nearby heritage assets and preserve long views from the listed building and the agricultural land to the south. This requirement is accepted as an appropriate and proportionate response to heritage impact concerns.
- 2.13 It is anticipated that the extent of this open space will be determined at the planning application stage, taking into account the policy requirement, the Council's Heritage Impact Assessment and the landowners' own heritage advice. Pre-application discussions with the Council will provide an opportunity to agree the extent of the open space and ensure a sensitive site layout. Additionally, the design of new dwellings will be carefully considered to respect the character of the area.
- 2.14 The site is outside of the 'Nutrient Neutrality Surface Water Catchment (River Yare)'; and the 'Waste Water Treatment Works within the Catchments' zone. Consequently, no issues are anticipated in relation to Nutrient Neutrality.

f) Is the access and site acceptable in highway terms?

- 2.15 Access to the site is considered acceptable in highway terms. A detailed vehicle access plan has been prepared and included as an appendix to this hearing statement. The accompanying drawing illustrates that a 5m wide vehicular access, flanked by 2m wide footpaths on either side, can be accommodated along the site frontage. This design complies with the required visibility splays of 2.4m x 59m as set out in Manual for Streets. Additionally, a continuous 2m wide footpath can be provided along the frontage on both sides of the access.

g) Is the estimate of site capacity justified?

2.16 The policy requirement to deliver approximately 25 dwellings on the site is considered justified. This figure represents a density of around 17 dwellings per hectare. When factoring in the need to retain an undeveloped area at the western end of the site to protect the setting of nearby heritage assets, the overall density would increase slightly. However, this increase would not be significant enough to result in a scheme that appears out of character with the surrounding area. The precise extent of the open space will be determined at the planning application stage. Even if 20% of the site were left undeveloped, the resulting density would still be approximately 21 dwellings per hectare, which is appropriate for the site's location and consistent with local character. For comparison, the adjacent site at Eel Catch Close accommodates 10 dwellings on approximately 0.45 hectares, equating to a density of around 22 dwellings per hectare. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling numbers will help ensure that the required level of affordable housing can be delivered.

h) Are the site-specific requirements for development of the site justified, consistent with national policy and would they be effective?

2.17 The site-specific requirement for a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the detailed design of the development appears to satisfy the necessary tests.

2.18 The need to protect the mature trees located to the east of the site is acknowledged. However, these trees are outside the site boundary, separated by a farm/field access that is to be retained. They are now protected in their own right by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The landowners consider that this policy requirement may duplicate existing statutory protections but have no concerns should the policy requirement remain in place.

2.19 The requirement for appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments also appears to meet the relevant tests, although such matters are already addressed by other policies within the Development Plan, including South Norfolk Development Management Plan Policy DM 3.8: Design Principles Applying to All Development, criteria (e) and (f), which state: *“...Visually attractive frontages and hard & soft boundary treatments are created to adjoining streets and public areas, public spaces and the open countryside....Landscaping of the development is designed to retain important existing natural features, reflect the surrounding landscape characteristics of the area.”*. These requirements may eventually be replaced by nationally prescribed development management policies. However, the landowners have no concerns should the policy requirement be retained.

2.20 The requirement to provide a footpath along the site frontage is acknowledged and the access plan confirms that this can be accommodated, meaning the requirement appears to meet the test. The requirement for a secondary pedestrian access to the east of Old Hall Barn is also noted. However, it is important to understand that this access currently serves as a field access for farm vehicles and machinery and will need to continue in that role; it cannot be exclusively designated for pedestrian use. As an alternative and given that the footpath network lies to the east of the site, access to the network might better be achieved by using the proposed footpath required to be installed along the site frontage. The landowners therefore question whether the secondary access is needed.

2.21 The requirement to retain an area of open space at the western part of the site to preserve long views between the group of listed buildings and the agricultural land to the south is acknowledged and accepted as an appropriate mitigation measure to reduce impacts of the proposed development on the setting of heritage assets.

2.22 The final requirement for the Historic Environment Record to be consulted to determine the need for any archeological surveys is also acknowledged. This requirement is perhaps more generic, and covered by other policies in the Development Plan, including Policy DM 4.10 Heritage Assets which requires all development proposals to *“....have regard to the historic environment and...Proposals must show how the significance of the heritage asset has been assessed and taken into account by reference to the Historic Environment Record, suitable expertise and other evidence/research as may be necessary...”*. The Landowners have no concerns should the policy requirement be retained.

i) **Would development of the site be viable, including the delivery of policy compliant affordable housing?**

2.23 The Landowners' can confirm that based on current available information, there are no identified issues that would render the site unviable, and it is anticipated that the required level of affordable housing (33%) can be achieved.

j) **Overall, is the site deliverable within the plan period? When is development likely to commence? Has the landowner/developer confirmed this?**

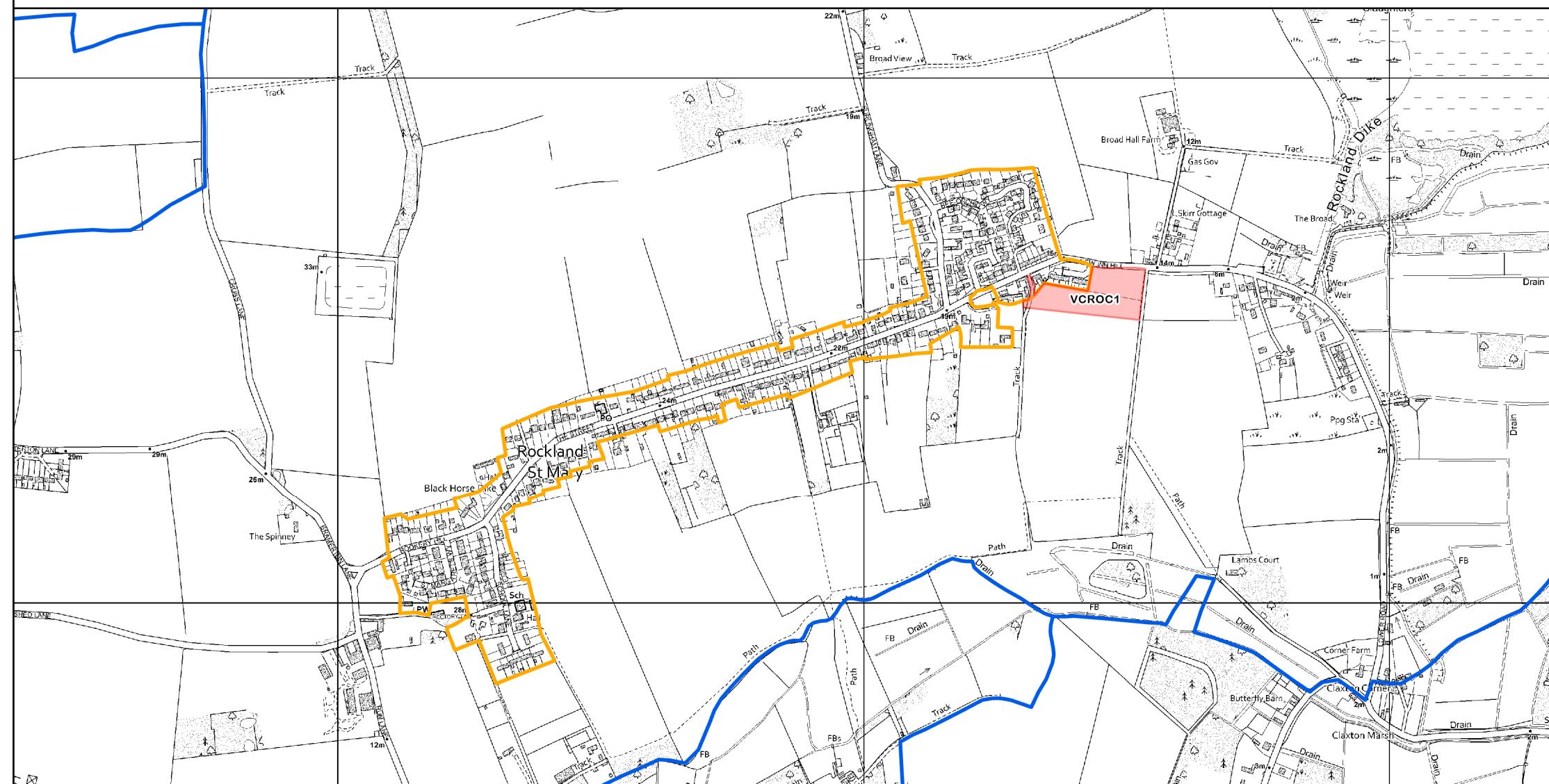
2.24 The landowners anticipate that negotiations with prospective developers or purchasers will be concluded by the end of 2026, following the adoption of the Plan. It is likely that a planning application will be submitted by developers in 2027, with construction expected to commence in 2028 or 2029 after planning approval and the discharge of conditions. Completion of the 25 dwellings is anticipated within 18 to 24 months of commencement, subject to the developer's programme and prevailing housing market conditions at the time.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The land at Rockland St Mary (Site ROC1) remains available, suitable for development and deliverable. The landowners have confirmed that the site is free from legal or physical constraints, and based on current information, there are no viability concerns. The proposed allocation for approximately 25 dwellings is justified and achievable, with density levels appropriate to the site's location and character. The site benefits from sustainable access to local services and facilities, and mitigation measures, such as the retention of open space and sensitive design, will ensure that heritage and landscape impacts are appropriately addressed.
- 3.2 The landowners support the policy requirements and acknowledge the need for detailed assessments at the planning application stage, including LVIA, heritage considerations, and landscaping, and have no objections to these requirements being retained.
- 3.3 Importantly, the site offers a realistic and deliverable development trajectory: negotiations with developers are expected to conclude by late 2026, with a planning application anticipated in 2027 and commencement in 2028/29. Completion of the 25 dwellings is likely within 18–24 months of commencement, ensuring timely delivery of housing to meet local needs.
- 3.4 In summary, the allocation of Site ROC1 represents a sustainable, viable opportunity to deliver new homes, including affordable housing, in a location that supports the vitality of Rockland St Mary and its surrounding village cluster. The landowners therefore strongly support the continued allocation of ROC1 within the Local Plan.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan and Photographs

Rockland St Mary



Legend

- Allocation (Red)
- Parish Boundary (Blue)
- Settlement Limit (Orange)

Date: July 2024

Scale 1:10,000 @ A4

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1. View of site frontage looking east from Eel Catcher Close access



2. View of the front part of the site looking south east (from south west corner of site)



3. View of site looking west from permissive footpath on eastern boundary



4. View of site looking south from permissive footpath on eastern boundary



5. View of site looking northwest from permissive footpath on eastern boundary



6. View of site looking southwest from permissive footpath on eastern boundary

Appendix 2 – Heritage Report



CHARLOTTE EVANS

Heritage & Conservation Advice

VCROC1 Rockland St Mary, Norfolk

Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment

Date: 24th October 2024

Revision: 01

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- 4.0 Heritage impact assessment
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment has been prepared following the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment" (July 2021), BS:7913 and Historic England's Good Practice in Planning Advice Notes 1, 2 and 3. NPPF states that protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in Paragraphs 7-14). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the core objectives (Paragraph 8c) that underpins the planning system. This is expanded upon principally in Paragraphs 205-214 but policies giving effect to this objective appear elsewhere in the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 The report has been prepared by Charlotte Evans BA (Hons) MSt (Cantab) on behalf of the joint landowners and concerns those heritage assets which might be affected by the emerging site allocation VCROC1: Land South of New Inn Hill. This 1.47 hectares of land (hereafter referred to as the "site") lies towards the eastern end of the village of Rockland St Mary, Norfolk, and is allocated for approximately 25 dwellings. The site contains no built heritage assets and does not lie within a conservation area. There are several listed buildings within the vicinity.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to identify built heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, and to provide an initial assessment of their cultural significance, which will provide an evidence base to inform potential future development and help conserve the assets identified. It provides a baseline of understanding for the heritage impact assessment which evaluates the impact of the proposals upon the value or 'significance' of the heritage assets and their settings. This approach is required in order to satisfy the provisions of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on a heritage asset is being considered (Paragraphs 205-214). This report considers above-ground built heritage only.

1.4 The report provides a brief overview of the historical development of area and an assessment of significance of the surrounding heritage assets. This is followed by a heritage impact assessment which concludes that the proposed allocation will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of a number of surrounding heritage assets and will have a **minor adverse effect** overall. It is anticipated that various mitigation measures might offset some of this perceived harm, and that it should be viewed on balance, alongside benefits that the allocation will provide, including delivering much-needed housing.

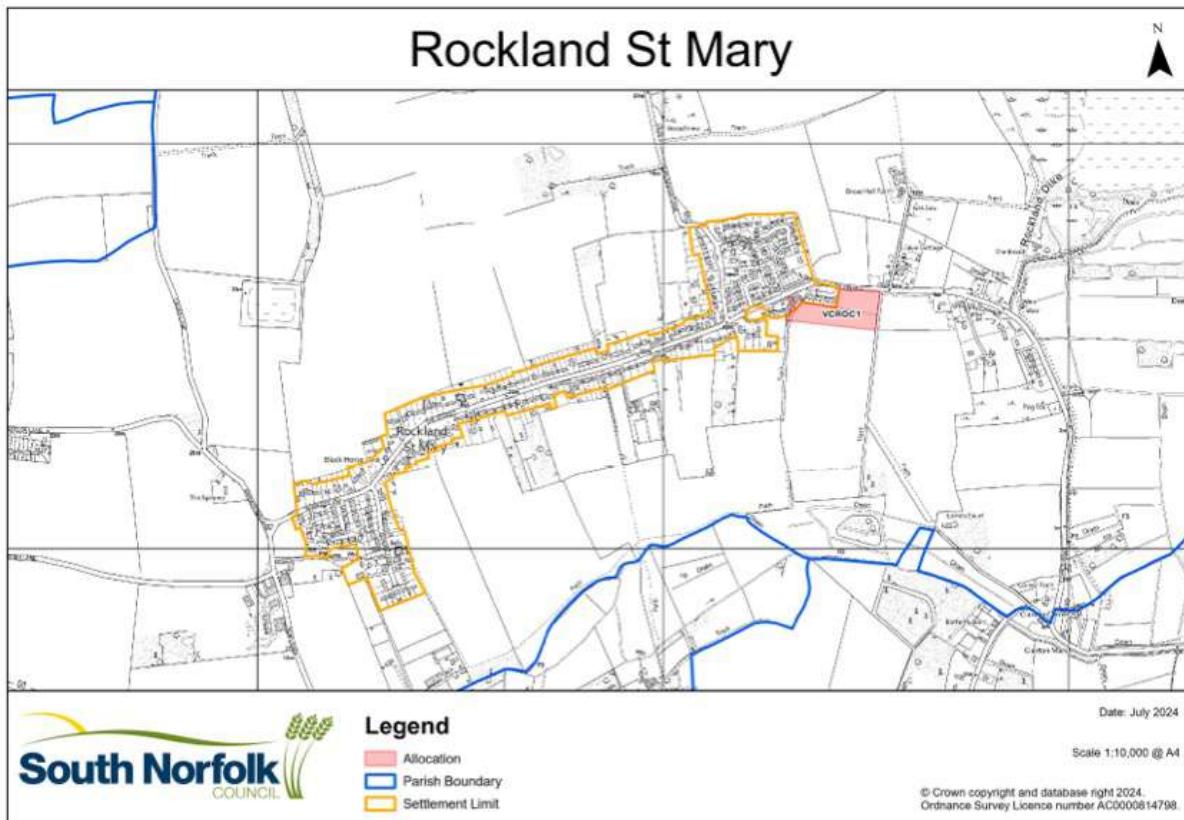


Fig.01 Site location plan

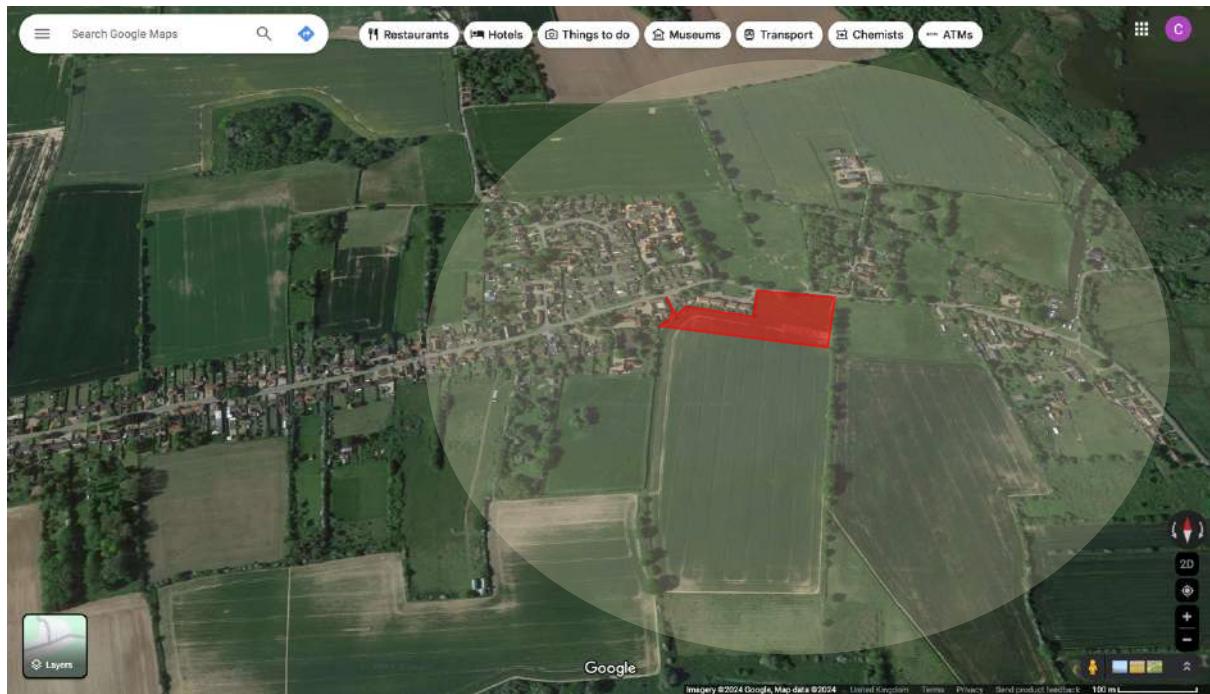


Fig.02 Aerial view of Rockland St Mary showing the allocated site VCROC1 in red, and a study boundary of 0.5km from the centre of the site in a pale green circle. This is considered to be an appropriate boundary for determining the effects of the allocation on surrounding heritage assets. (Image extracted from Google Maps and shown here for illustrative purposes only).

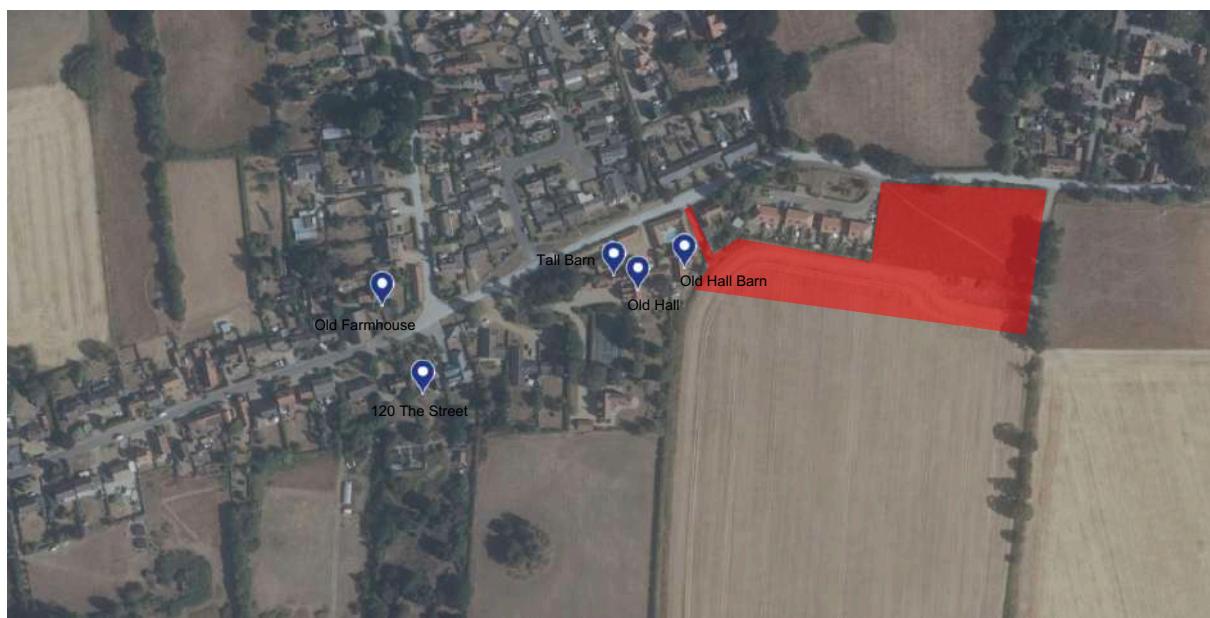


Fig.03 Heritage assets within 0.5km of VCROC1.



2.0 Assessment of the site and surroundings

2.1 Rockland St Mary today remains a peaceful rural village located in South Norfolk, about 6 miles southeast of Norwich. The village has a mix of old and new housing, with much of the newer development extending along The Street, the main road through the village. It maintains a strong connection to the nearby Broads, especially Rockland Broad, which is popular among wildlife enthusiasts and anglers. The village is also part of the Wherryman's Way walking route, offering scenic walks along the River Yare and through marshlands.

2.2 While historically the village was more self-contained, today many residents commute to Norwich or nearby towns for work, with fewer local employment opportunities. However, Rockland St Mary retains its charm with local shops, a post office, and community activities centered around the village hall and church. The staith (a small landing place for boats) is still a hub for visitors and locals, particularly those interested in boating and exploring the Norfolk Broads.

2.3 The historical development of Rockland St Mary in Norfolk can be traced back to its mention in the Domesday Book, where it was recorded under the name "Rokelunda," believed to be derived from the Old Norse for "Rook Grove." This suggests Viking influence in the region. By the medieval period, the village was divided between two patrons, one being the Earl of Norfolk, with the other portion granted to Langley Abbey. The church of St. Mary, still standing today, dates back to the 14th century and was an integral part of the community during this time.

2.4 The village's layout reflects its agricultural roots, with early settlements concentrated along what is now known as The Street. Over the centuries, newer housing has spread from this original core. During the medieval period, the extraction of peat in the Rockland Broad area led to the creation of a significant water feature, adding to the village's rural charm. Several historical structures, including Old Hall and the Old Farmhouse, further highlight the village's architectural and historical significance from the 17th and 18th centuries.

2.5 Rockland St Mary has a rich archaeological record, with finds from the prehistoric period such as Neolithic tools, Bronze Age artifacts, and Roman pottery. It also has some Saxon remains, despite no recorded Saxon buildings. The village's long-standing connection to agriculture is mirrored in its architectural heritage and its strategic location near the River Yare.

HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN THE STUDY BOUNDARY

2.6 There are five heritage assets located within the 0.5km study boundary. A short description of each asset is provided below.

Old Hall, 132 The Street (Grade II listed, entry no. 1050427)

2.7 Old Hall is a 17th century farmhouse, expanded in the early 18th century. It features brick construction, some parts rendered or colour-washed, and pantile roofs. The north side has two gables with a 17th century door in a square frame, and windows from various periods. A notable 17th century stepped chimney emerges from the outshut. The early 18th century southern range ends in a shaped gable with distinct window designs. Additional features include a full-height porch, a ridge stack, and asymmetrical extensions with mixed fenestration styles.

2.8 Although largely screened from the main road, Old Hall contributes to the local character and street scene through its historical significance as part of a cluster of farm buildings.

2.9 The setting of Old Hall has been somewhat diminished by landscape features in more recent years, including a tennis court and mature hedges, which obscure views of the building from various angles. The development of new housing nearby (Eel Catcher Closer) has also altered its surroundings, though care has been taken to maintain the historical aesthetic of that development with traditional materials.

2.10 In 2015, planning permission was approved for a new detached four bed house with cart shed to be built in the grounds of the property (directly to the south of Old Hall). This building has somewhat disrupted the relationship between Old Hall and the open farmland to the south.

2.11 In summary, Old Hall has some architectural interest and historical importance and contributes to the area's rural character while being shielded from significant visual impact by newer developments.

Tall Barn, 134 The Street (Grade II listed, entry no. 1050429)

2.12 Tall Barn is a converted threshing barn built around 1850, as part of the farm and property of the Old Hall, itself built in the 17th century and subsequently extended in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The barn was converted in the 1980s and is now a family residence. Separate buildings, originally a piggery, are now used as garages and in the garden, there are the remains of an older barn – now derelict. It is constructed of brick with



standard roof-tiles. It has a shared driveway for use by the annex to the Old Hall and two other barns in the complex. There are garages off the driveway and a garden running to the north and west sides. A brick-built wall forms the boundary for the garden. On the south-side of the property is the Old Hall. To the west is a wooded copse.

2.13 The building is markedly altered since its original construction. The western portion has been demolished so that what remains is approximately two thirds of the original building footprint.

Old Hall Barn, 134A The Street (Grade II listed, entry no. 1050428)

2.14 This early 19th-century barn and hayloft is constructed from brick with a pantiled roof. The west gable features a door with a weatherboarded head, above which is a hayloft door, offset to the right. A clock face adorns the gable head, while the east gable is also weatherboarded. The structure includes outshuts on the south flank and a pedestrian entrance on the north. Inside, remnants of the original structure include a floor bridging beam, a tie beam with straight braces, and one tier of purlins with collars, though the floor has been removed. The eastern elevation of the building features later openings, including modern porches.

2.15 The building is not part of the original farmstead and was constructed later than Old Hall and the threshing barn (Tall Barn), in the mid 19th century. It displays some functional agricultural architecture, albeit altered overall.

2.16 The property is connected to a U shaped steading complex which contains a number of residential units with a swimming pool in the central courtyard. This portion does not form part of the listing.

Old Farmhouse (Grade II listed, entry no. 1050470)

2.17 Old Farmhouse is a 17th century brick farmhouse located on Surlingham Lane. Originally part of a farm, it now stands independently. The building is constructed in an L-plan with two stories and attic spaces, featuring two gabled ranges. Its thatched roof and distinctive 17th century zigzag patterned brick chimney add to its historical charm. Although the windows and doors were replaced in the 20th century, the house retains its original 17th century hood moulds. A modern single-story extension has been added to the rear, blending with the historical character of the building.

120 The Street (Grade II listed, entry no. 1169597)

2.18 This mid-18th century house is constructed from colour washed brick with a traditional thatched roof. The building follows a typical lobby entrance plan, featuring one storey with an attic. The front (north) elevation has a door just off-centre, flanked by a mix of late 19th century casement windows. Above, the gabled roof includes a ridge stack over the entrance. The rear has been modified with a 20th century extension, alongside original features such as an 18th century three-light casement with glazing bars and a modern French window. The thatch is notably shaped around one dormer, with the roof swept up.

MAP REGRESSION



Fig.04 1839 Tithe Map (image to be replaced following receipt of full Tithe Map from Norfolk Record Office). This map shows the early 19th century configuration of the farm buildings at Old Hall. Tall Barn to the north is considerably larger and is connected to the outbuildings which themselves adjoin Old Hall. Old Hall Barn and Hayloft to the east has not been constructed at this point, and a cluster of small buildings lie in its place.



Fig.05 OS Map 1882 (source: National Library for Scotland). Old Hall Barn and Hayloft has been built, with a wrap around steading to the north, and the connection between Tall Barn and the house (Old Hall) has been lost. A pair of semi-detached dwellings have been constructed to the north east of the farmstead.

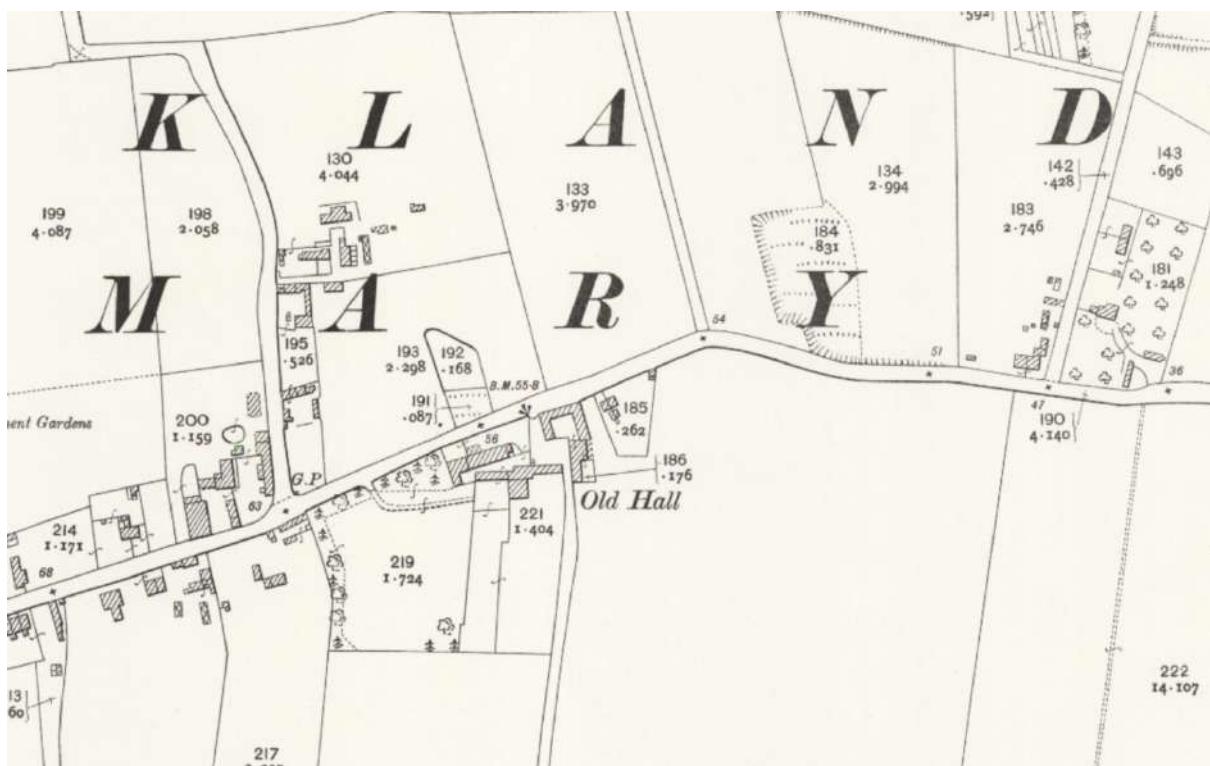


Fig.06 OS Map 1907 (source: National Library for Scotland). A defined U-shaped steading now appears to the north of Old Hall Barn and Hayloft. A small number of new dwellings are constructed in the village.

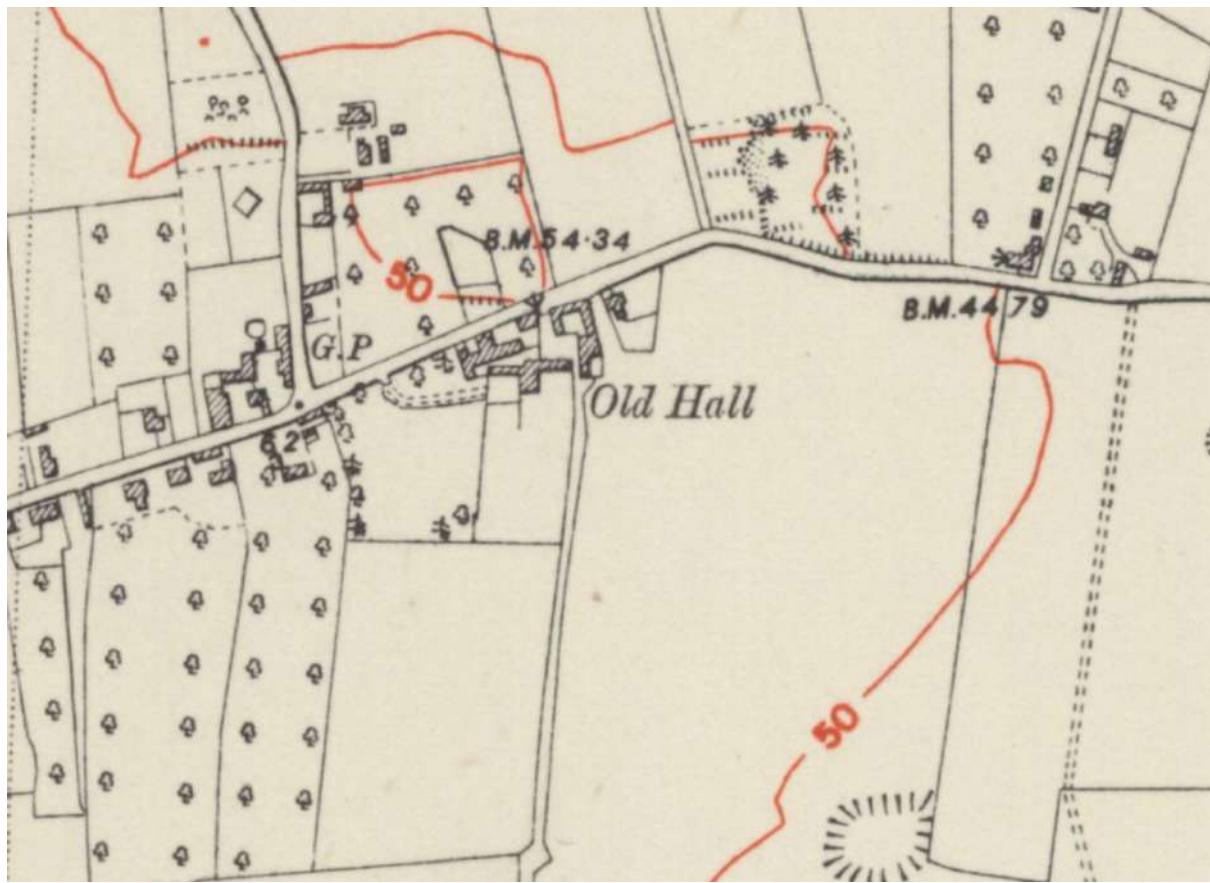


Fig.07 OS Map 1951 (source: National Library for Scotland). A new building is constructed to the north of Old Hall, directly on the roadside between Tall Barn and the U steading.



Fig.08 Aerial view 2024 (image extracted from Google Maps and shown here for illustrative purposes only).

2.19 Map regression shows gradual changes to the farmstead complex over the course of a century and a half, with further and more dramatic change taking place in the latter half of the 20th century. This is when most of the agricultural buildings were converted to residential use, and more modern landscape elements begin to appear, including mature hedging and a tennis court to the south of Old Hall, as well as a swimming pool in the centre of the former U steading. A substantial new house is constructed in the grounds of Old Hall to the south, and a new social housing development at Eel Catcher Close has been built to the east, along New Inn Hill. The former farmstead retains a relationship with open agricultural land to the south and east, but this has been somewhat diminished by the presence of new buildings and changes of use.



3.0 Assessment of heritage significance

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines significance as: Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

3.2 Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 Managing Significance in Decision Making in the Historic Environment (2015) provides guidance on the assessment of significance as part of the application process, and is intended to provide information to assist applicants, decision-makers and other interest parties in implementing historic environment policy.

3.3 Further to this, Historic England's Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (2008) sets out a framework of four inter-related key values for assessing the significance of historic buildings and places, comprising evidential/archaeological, historical, architectural/aesthetic and communal, and it is this framework that forms the basis for our assessment. (This framework is further developed in Historic England's Advice Note 12, October 2019).

3.4 The levels of significance used for this assessment are as follows:

- Exceptionally significant: internationally significant aesthetic, cultural, evidential or communal significance; exceptional areas/elements such as primary elevations or workmanship; nationally and/ or internationally important associations with people or events; unique and intact elements of highest quality; unquestionable group value.
- Highly significant: nationally important historic or architectural features; high quality of workmanship; potential for nationally important archaeology; largely intact and/or rare examples of a particular building type or technique; important positive group value.
- Significant (Medium significance): Formal, heritage or aesthetic significance, architectural character or notable features, including areas with potential for significant enhancement; some group value; surviving decorative features of historic or architectural interest.
- Low significance: Little or no architectural or heritage significance or area of lost significance.
- Not significant (Neutral): Of no heritage interest.
- Detrimental: Features or areas that detract from a building's significance.

3.5 Where a proposal may have an effect on the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced, a qualitative assessment is made of whether, how and to what degree setting contributes to the significance of heritage assets. This is informed by the checklist of potential attributes of a setting, as outlined by the Historic England guidance document Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING / CONTEXT TO SIGNIFICANCE

3.6 In addition to the above values, the setting of a heritage asset can also be a fundamental contributor to its significance - although it should be noted that 'setting' itself is not a designation. The value of setting lies in its contribution to the significance of an asset. For example, there may be instances where setting does not contribute to the significance of an asset at all.

3.7 Historic England's Conservation Principles defines setting as "an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape."

3.8 It goes on to state that "context embraces any relationship between a place and other places. It can be, for example, cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, so any one place can have a multi-layered context. The range of contextual relationships of a place will normally emerge from an understanding of its origins and evolution. Understanding context is particularly relevant to assessing whether a place has greater value for being part of a larger entity, or sharing characteristics with other places" (page 39).

3.9 In order to understand the role of setting and context to decision-making, it is important to have an understanding of the origins and evolution of an asset, to the extent that this understanding gives rise to significance in the present. Assessment of these values is not based solely on visual considerations but may lie in a deeper understanding of historic use, ownership, change or other cultural influence - all or any of which may have given rise to current circumstances and may hold a greater or lesser extent of significance.

3.10 The importance of setting depends entirely on the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset or its appreciation. It is important to note that impacts that may arise to the setting of an asset do not, necessarily, result in direct or equivalent impacts to the significance of that asset.



SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN THE STUDY BOUNDARY

	Evidential value ¹	Aesthetic value ²	Historic value ³	Communal value	Contribution of setting to significance
Old Hall	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Significant
Old Hall Barn (Barn and hayloft 25m north east of Old Hall)	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Significant
Tall Barn (Barn 10m north west of Old Hall)	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Significant
Old Farmhouse	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Low significance
120 The Street	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Significant



Fig.09 View along New Inn Hill looking west across VCROC1. (Image extracted from Google Maps and shown here for illustrative purposes only).

¹ There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

² These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

³ An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity. (Historic England Advice Note 12).



Fig.10 View along New Inn Hill looking east towards VCROC1. (Image extracted from Google Maps and shown here for illustrative purposes only).



Fig.11 View looking south from The Street along the footpath which forms part of VCROC1. (Image extracted from Google Maps and shown here for illustrative purposes only).



Fig.12 View from Old Hall Barn looking south east across VCROC1.



Fig.13 Old Hall Barn looking north west from the footpath which forms part of VCROC1.



Fig.14 Elevated view looking east from Old Hall across VCROC1.



4.0 Impact Assessment

4.1 A heritage impact assessment (HIA) is a “practical assessment of the magnitude of the impact from proposed change on the significance of a heritage asset or historic building.” - BS7913:2013.

4.2 The purpose of a heritage impact assessment is to gain an understanding of the effect of change on a heritage asset and how to manage and mitigate that change.

BASELINE

4.3 The previous sections of this document are intended to provide an understanding of the site, surroundings and significance, and are considered to be the baseline for the heritage impact assessment. This approach to impact assessment is required in order to satisfy the provisions of sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework where the impact of development on a heritage asset is being considered.

4.4 There are a small number of heritage assets within 0.5km of the allocated site (see fig.03). This impact assessment considers the impact of the proposals on these assets.

METHODOLOGY

4.5 The aim of this section of the HIA is to identify and assess any impacts that the proposed development may cause to the value or significance of the identified heritage assets and/or their settings.

4.6 Overall, it is a balanced understanding of the foreseeable likely effect of proposals on significance as a result of predicated impacts which is being sought through undertaking this process. It should be clearly understood that the level of detail provided within these assessments is “proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance” as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

DEFINITIONS OF HERITAGE ASSET SIGNIFICANCE

4.7 It is evident that the significance/value of any heritage asset(s) requires clear assessment to provide a context for, and to determine the impact of, development proposals. This is provided in section 3.0.

4.8 An overall sum of the values is taken into account when ascribing a level of value to a heritage asset.

4.9 In this case, the following levels and values apply:

Levels of significance	Significance ‘value’
Exceptionally significant	Very high
Highly significant	High
Significant	Medium
Low significance	Low
Not significant	Negligible



Value	Criteria	Examples
Very high	Building/site/area of international significance	Likely to be World Heritage Sites, Areas of Natural Beauty and National Parks. Often listed buildings Grade I and II* and their settings, Scheduled Monuments with upstanding remains, registered Historic Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* and their settings.
High	Building/site/area of national significance	May be listed buildings Grade I and II* and their settings, Scheduled Monuments with upstanding remains, registered Historic Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* and their settings.
Medium	Building/site/area of national significance	Often listed buildings Grade II and their settings, Conservation Areas and their settings, Scheduled Monuments without upstanding remains and registered Historic Parks and Gardens Grade II and their settings.
Low	Building/sites/areas of national significance and/or regional significance, or local assets of particular significance	May be listed buildings Grade II and their settings, Conservation Areas and their settings, Scheduled Monuments without upstanding remains and registered Historic Parks and Gardens Grade II and their settings, and buildings of local interest.
Negligible	Buildings/sites/areas with some evidence of significance but in an incoherent or eroded form of local interest and generally with no statutory protection	Often buildings of local interest and dispersed elements of townscape merit. Assets may be so badly damaged that too little remains to justify inclusion into a higher grade.

Definitions of heritage asset significance

4.10 Where a proposal may affect the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced, a qualitative assessment is made of whether, how and to what degree setting contributes to the significance of heritage assets. This is informed by the checklist of potential attributes of a setting, as outlined in Historic England's GPA3.

4.11 Setting is defined in the NPPF as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

MAGNITUDE / SCALE OF IMPACT

4.12 Scale or severity of impacts or changes can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are temporary or permanent, reversible or irreversible. The cumulative effect of separate impacts should also be considered. The scale or severity of impact can be ranked as:

No change	No change to the value of the receptor.
Negligible change	Barely discernible change to the value of the receptor. Very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline.
Minor change	Slight change to the value of the receptor. The proposals are dissimilar to a main component of the receptor but similar to other components. The proposals would not be readily noticeable. Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be temporary and reversible.
Moderate change	A clearly discernible change to the value of the receptor. The proposals are dissimilar to a main component of the receptor but similar to other components. The proposals would be readily noticeable. Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be semi- permanent and partially reversible.
Major change	Considerable change to the value of the receptor. The proposals are a new component, ranging from a notable change in receptor characteristics over an extensive area to intensive change over a more limited area. The proposals would be very noticeable.



	Loss of or major alteration to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline. The duration of this effect may be permanent and non-reversible.
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4.13 Magnitude considers whether the proposed development:

- Conforms with the pattern, scale, mass, grain and historic features of the receptor;
- Creates a loss or restoration of key features of the receptor;
- Contributes to the identified receptor character; and
- Accords with national, regional and local planning policy and guidelines.

4.14 The magnitude of impact of change should be assessed in relation to the value of the heritage asset.

4.15 The table below shows the magnitude of impact set against the value of the heritage asset in order to determine the overall impact of the change proposed.

Value of heritage asset	Magnitude or scale of impact				
	No change	Negligible change	Minor change	Moderate change	Major change
Significance of effect / Overall impact					
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral / Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral / Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight

OVERALL IMPACT

4.16 Following the assessment of magnitude (as summarised above), the overall summary of residual effects of the proposal on receptors can be determined by considering the weight of the magnitude in relation to potential mitigation strategies. Overall residual effects are categorised in the table below.

4.17 A professional judgement is made of the overall impact and whether or not the change proposed is beneficial or adverse.

Major beneficial	The scheme would be in keeping with and would provide a major improvement to or reinforce the value of the receptor
Moderate beneficial	The scheme would be in keeping with and would provide a noticeable improvement to or reinforce the value of the receptor
Minor beneficial	The scheme would be in keeping with and would provide a slight improvement to or reinforce the value of the receptor
Neutral	The degree of effect would be neither beneficial or adverse
Nil	The scheme would have no effect on the value of the receptor
Negligible	The scheme would be barely perceptible or would be in keeping with and would maintain the value of the receptor
Minor adverse	The scheme would have a minor negative effect to the value of the receptor
Moderate adverse	The scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the value of the receptor
Major adverse	The scheme would cause a major deterioration in the value of the receptor



SUMMARY OF IMPACTS ON HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN THE STUDY BOUNDARY

4.18 The below table sets out the impact of proposals on heritage assets within the study boundary (within 0.5km of the applicable site) and gives a summary of the effect:

Heritage asset within 0.5km of site	Designation	Significance value	Scale of impact of proposals	Overall impact	Residual effect
Old Hall	Grade II listed	Medium	Moderate change	Moderate	Minor adverse
Old Hall Barn (Barn and hayloft 25m north east of Old Hall)	Grade II listed	Medium	Moderate change	Moderate	Minor adverse
Tall Barn (Barn 10m north west of Old Hall)	Grade II listed	Medium	Minor change	Slight	Minor adverse
Old Farmhouse	Grade II listed	Medium	No change	Neutral	Nil
120 The Street	Grade II listed	Medium	No change	Neutral	Nil

4.19 The proposed site allocated VCROC1 will result in some level of harm to the heritage assets in question. It is considered that this will be **less than substantial harm to the setting** of the heritage assets. There will be no direct harm to built heritage assets. The overall residual effects of development would likely vary between 'nil' and 'minor adverse'.

4.20 The three closest heritage assets (Old Hall, Old Hall Barn and Tall Barn) will all be affected by some degree given their proximity to the site and the fact that the development would be located on land which forms part of the setting of the assets. However, this setting has changed, particularly in more recent decades, as the farmstead complex and the village in general has evolved to meet the changing requirements of its residents. Whilst it is important to retain as much of the open, agricultural setting of the listed buildings as possible, this is not the only element that makes them significant, and there is an important and pragmatic balancing act required between low level harm to the setting of the heritage assets with other benefits, such as delivering much needed housing in the area.



5.0 Conclusion

5.1 When deciding on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means **not harming the interest** in the building/place, **as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged** (Historic England: Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment).

5.2 This outline HIA concludes that on balance, there would be no heritage impacts caused by the land's future development that would be of such a magnitude to indicate that the land should not continue to be proposed for allocation in the Development Plan; and that any potential impacts caused by the land's development can be mitigated (as set out in the proposed Policy VCROC1) to the extent that resulting effects on nearby heritage assets would be no more than minor.



6.0 Additional considerations

6.1 The proposed mitigation strategies as set out in Policy VCROC1 can be supported, the degree of suggested set back and open space in the far western portion of the site can be considered sufficient and appropriate to reduce the impact on the nearby listed buildings and there will be an opportunity to provide further mitigation during the evolution of planning application proposals for the site to propose a sensitive design that respects the historic character of the area. These are likely to be:

Form and layout:

- A mix of housing with a characterful streetscape and a form and layout of varied grain and interest.
- Appropriate boundary treatment of walls, hedging and fencing to define and enhance public and private spaces.
- A simple road network.

Scale and massing:

- Height and massing limited to minimise the visual impact of the development within the wider environment.

Architecture:

- The design should create a carefully crafted and planned extension to the village that has the character of the village at heart. It should reference the scale, quality and detailing of 18th and 19th century architecture found in the village. All the houses should be designed in a unified style informed by the local vernacular. Carefully considered details could add character and variation and draw their cues from the surrounding area.

Materials:

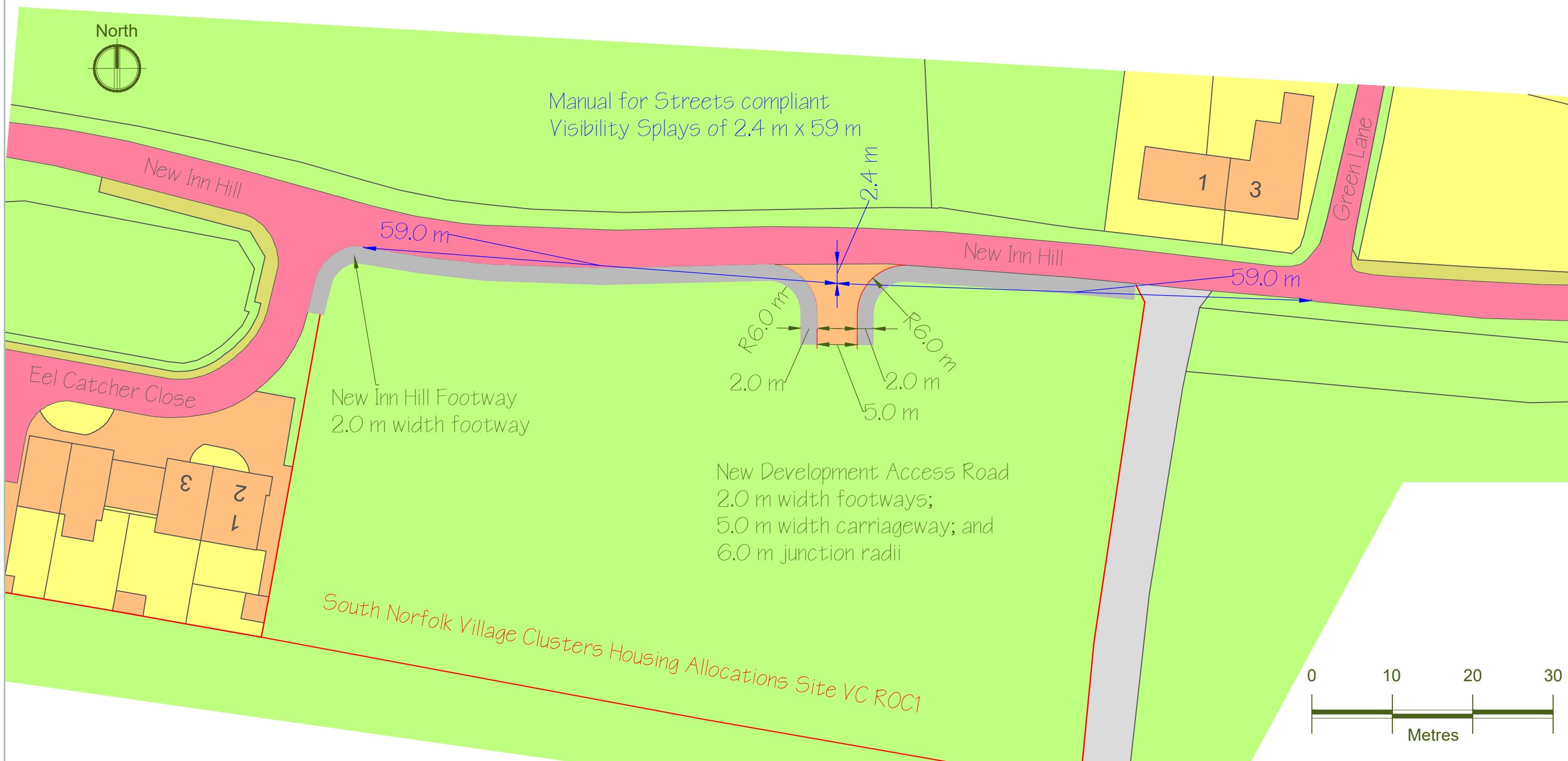
- A simple palette of materials rooted in the local vernacular.

Landscaping:

- Landscape should seek to harmoniously integrate the development with the existing rural character and setting of Rockland St Mary.

6.2 Future planning application proposals can be sensitively designed in a planned and coherent manner that reflects the architecture and character of the locality. The interface between the site; the village; and the countryside are of utmost importance and the scheme should create positive interfaces that respond and integrate with the surrounding context. The scheme should be sympathetic to local character and visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

Appendix 3 – Access Drawing



<p>project South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations</p>		<p>drawing title Rockland St Mary Site : VC ROC1 Proposed new vehicular access</p>		<p>Orari The Enterprise Centre University of East Anglia, Norfolk NR4 7TJ Tel : 077 99 637 839</p>	
client Heathcote, Davies and Loades	project number jl / 2345 / 01	drawn by cl	checked by SC		
Do not scale from this drawing. All dimensions to be confirmed on site by the contractor. Copyright © Orari Limited, 2024 - All Rights Reserved.		scale 1 : 500 @ A3	date 2024 / 10 / 03	drawing number 2345 / 01 / 121	drawing revision 0

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