



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 8 March 2011
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2010/1092: **Erection of 40 dwellings with associated parking and play area (as amended by revised plans received on 9th February 2011) at Land adjacent to covered reservoirs, Boughton Green Road**

WARD: Boughton Green

APPLICANT: Orbit Homes (2020) Ltd and AWG Land Holding

AGENT: CSJ Brooke Smith Ltd

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Major Development

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the Council resolve to grant planning permission in principle subject to:

- (1) The prior finalisation of a Legal Agreement to secure:
 - The provision of 35% affordable housing
 - The long term maintenance of the play area / open space

- (2) The planning conditions below and for the reason that:

The proposed residential development offers suitable compensation for the loss of green space and the former function of the open space has been superseded by events, therefore the terms of saved Policy E6 of the Northampton Local Plan are met. The development is of acceptable layout and appearance, has suitable access and parking and amounts to sustainable development in accordance with saved Policies H7, E19, E20 and

E40 of the Northampton Local Plan and PPS3 Housing and no other material considerations indicate otherwise.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for 40 dwelling units with a single access road joining the northwest side of Boughton Green Road. The development is largely two storey with a single 2 and half storey detached building containing 4 flats. The scheme is put forward by Orbit Homes as a primarily affordable scheme consisting of 25 No. 2 bedroom houses, 11 No. 3 bedroom houses, 2 No. 1 bedroom flats and 2 No. 2 bedroom flats.
- 2.2 The house types are shown in a variety of forms including semi-detached elements, short terraces and longer terraces. The adoptable road through the centre of the site branches off to a minor arm and ends in a dead end hammerhead. Parking is provided in a range of formats including driveway parking, normally side by side, a number of off-street parking bays and in two small parking courts. Overall provision is for 49 off-street spaces with some opportunities for residents to park on-street also, but most of the roads have been designed to prevent on street parking, particularly in relation to overspill parking from the University.
- 2.3 The entire layout is centred around a play space in the middle of the site, which is overlooked by every dwelling in the development. The play area is also clearly visible to the public passing on Boughton Green Road and although it would be managed by the Housing Association it will be open to public use.
- 2.4 The housing is laid out to create a strong frontage to Boughton Green Road with the dwellings on this aspect fronted by a stone wall providing private front gardens and parking areas. The houses facing Boughton Green Road have been designed to give a sense of place and in consultation with the case officer revisions have been added to improve their distinctive appearance. All the units on site have integral bin storage, bike storage, front gardens and useable rear gardens measuring from 7 to 12 metres in length.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site is part of Anglian Water's land next to the grass-covered reservoirs west of Boughton Green Road directly opposite the University Park Campus. The wider land is memorable as it also hosts a large water tower and telecoms mast as well as the reservoir mounds.
- 3.2 The land is on the northern edge of the Borough with Daventry District beyond. It is on the northern aspect where there are the only residential neighbours of the scheme, as to the west and south there is

the remaining Anglian Water land and to the east over Boughton Green Road there is the University campus with schools either side.

- 3.3 The site itself is a grassed area measuring 7500 square metres (roughly 2 acres) that is entirely private land with a chain link fence on the Boughton Green Road aspect, a small control building, some minor trees and shrubs.
- 3.4 In general terms the site is within the urban boundaries, in a busy location close to schools, university, business parks and with relatively easy access to Kingsthorpe District Centre.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 No relevant planning history beyond operation developments to the water supply infrastructure and the telecoms equipment on the adjacent tower.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3 – Housing
PPG13 - Transport
PPS23 – Planning & Pollution Control
PPG24 – Planning and Noise
PPS25 – Planning and Flood Risk

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E20 – New development
E6 – Greenspace
E19 – Implementation/ obligations
E40 – Crime
H7 – Housing outside of primarily residential areas

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Designing out Crime SPG
County Waste Implementation SPD

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **NBC Open Space Team** – comment that they do not have the resources to take on new play spaces
- 6.2 **NBC Tree Officer** – comments that the trees on site are not significant and should not be protected.
- 6.3 **Northamptonshire County Council Planning** – No education contributions are required as local schools and colleges have ample free spaces available. NCC asks for £6,936 for libraries and £3,680 for fire and rescue services.
- 6.4 **NBC Public Protection** – no objections subject to conditions controlling unexpected contamination if encountered, a noise survey to protect residents from road noise and refuse storage facilities being maintained.
- 6.5 **NBC Housing** – they seek a legal agreement by the applicant to achieve a minimum of 35% affordable housing with 65/35 split between social rented and intermediate housing respectively. 10% Mobility standard is already achieved by the housing and need not be controlled. NBC Housing note that they would prefer a slightly greater mix of units in ideal circumstances.
- 6.6 **Northamptonshire County Council Waste** – waste audit required in line the County Waste SPD. Can be controlled by condition.
- 6.7 **Environment Agency** – Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application is considered acceptable. The EA recommend that two conditions should apply controlling ground infiltration and main drainage from the site.
- 6.8 **Anglian Water** – no objections to the scheme, noting they have sufficient capacity for supply and foul drainage. AW asks for a note to applicant (partly themselves) that there is water supply infrastructure on site that will need to be respected.
- 6.9 **Northants Police** – during informal discussions has requested several additional windows to provide surveillance to certain parts of the site and these have been included. Some concerns about the parking court for plots 3 to 11 but this has been resolved with the introduction of lockable bollards for the allocated users of spaces.
- 6.10 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – No comments received.
- 6.11 **3 objections have been received from local residents** commenting on the following points:
- Traffic congestion and highway safety
 - Loss of green space

- Development is enclosed
- The potential for gating the development
- The play area should be publicly owned
- The reservoir risk has not be assessed
- Development is too dense
- Too little parking
- Objections to the type of tenure
- Drainage is insufficient
- Internal road should not join other local roads (it does not)

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 7.1 The site is identified in the 1997 Northampton Local Plan as Green Space, which is protected by saved Policy E6. Policy E6 states that development will not be permitted where it will prejudice the function of Green Space areas as described in the Plan. The Plan describes this area of Green Space as one that should be retained to resist the outward expansion of the built up area. However, this designation and function has been superseded as Daventry District Council have permitted the residential development beyond what was once the urban boundary to the north thus overtaking the application site and undermining its function as an urban edge. The application site is now effectively a pocket of private green space within the greater town, but that is not to say it has lost its value as an important green space that adds character to the appearance of the wider area.
- 7.2 The original function of the Green Space allocation is now lost and it is considered that the blanket protection of the site to be retained as undeveloped land cannot be sustainable. The Green Space merits of the land in visual amenity terms are not entirely lost, but it is acknowledged that the land is fenced off grass with no public access. It is considered reasonable to allow the land to be developed providing that suitable compensation is offered in terms of green landscaping such as tree planting and that public open space benefits are achieved on site by other means. As the applicant has provided both opportunities from tree planting and a public young peoples' play space in the centre of the site that is attractive to other members of the public, it considered that the application meets the terms of the saved Local Plan Policy E6.
- 7.3 In terms of where the location is in the town and its suitability for development, the site is positioned close to a wide range of social amenities such as schools, colleges and jobs. Furthermore, it is a short bus journey or a slightly longer walk south along Boughton Green Road to Kingsthorpe District Centre. For these reasons, and by virtue of the site's location within the urban fabric of Northampton, it is considered a sustainable location for residential development that goes a considerable way towards providing much needed affordable family

housing. It will also minimise the need to travel by car where people have readily available facilities and amenities nearby that are easily accessed by other means.

Access and Parking

- 7.4 At the time of writing this report, no comments have been received by the County Highway Authority. However, the application has had substantial pre-application discussions including with the County Council and has been designed with roads that could be readily adopted by the County Council on completion. On that basis there are no further controls that need to be applied by means of planning condition unless any comments from the County Council are received prior to the Committee meeting. Any such comments would be reported to Committee via the Addendum.
- 7.5 The scheme has one access point and proposes 40 dwellings around a cul de sac arrangement. This stretch of Boughton Green Road is very busy at peak hours, particularly when the combined trip generation of the University and schools is at their highest. The road into this proposed development enters from Boughton Green Road at a point 50m from a mini roundabout that serves as a junction into the University. The mini roundabout acts to calm traffic to slower speeds and the proposed new junction will have clear visibility in both directions. It is concluded that the new access point is a safe one that has been chosen in consultation with the Highway Authority, albeit it is acknowledged that this adds further traffic into the street at peak times. However, the level of trip generation from 40 small houses in peak hours is unlikely to significantly change the far greater traffic volumes presently experienced at this point. In summary, the additional trips proposed are insignificant in terms of worsening an already congested local highway network that experiences very high volumes at peak hours.
- 7.6 On street parking is a concern for existing residents in this area, in particular due to overflow parking from the University Park Campus increasing pressure for on-street parking in local streets. On street parking restrictions have been implemented by the County Council in recent times and this is inevitably an issue for the proposed development that would be located directly opposite the campus.
- 7.7 A parking provision of 1.2 spaces per unit is proposed with all of this parking off street, within the development, in a mixture of private drives, off-street pull-ins and parking courts. The scattering of parking in this way helps to minimise the visual impact of parked cars in the area and does not group parked vehicles in inconvenient groups on site, remote from their dwellings. All of the spaces have been discussed at pre-application stage with the case officer to minimise their availability to those who may use these spaces at the expense of local residents. The level of resident off street parking is relatively low, but the

applicant as a Housing Association is happy that this reflects the level of car ownership that their occupiers normally need in these types of small dwellings. The chances of resident car parking being pushed off site into surrounding streets are very low. The remainder of the kerb sides in the development away from dropped driveway kerbs will be restricted by yellow lines that will be a part of the adoption process with the County Council. Put simply, there would be enough off-street and on-street car parking spaces for residents, whilst the risk of other commuters getting or seeking to get a parking space would be minimised. The layout is such that parked cars would be scattered largely off street creating a better street scene.

- 7.8 The application site is well located for local bus services and cycle routes. All of the dwellings have cycle storage for future residents as a matter of course. It is considered that this is a particularly accessible development that encourages fewer car journeys and thus accords with PPG13 Transport.

Layout and appearance

- 7.9 The application layout provides for 40 dwellings ranging from 1 to 3 bedrooms mainly in 2 storey houses with a single flat block. The site is three quarters of a hectare resulting in a density of 53 dwellings per hectare, which is relatively dense. The housing to the north is a density of around 35 to 40 dwellings per hectare. However the application development does include an element of flats and would only be slightly more dense in appearance overall. It is considered that the proposals amount to good use of the land without resulting in a cramped or poorly designed layout.
- 7.10 The general form of the layout places 12 houses facing out onto Boughton Green Road presenting a strong and attractive frontage that relates well to the activity outside. The frontage is lined by a stone wall that reflects the wall on the opposite side of Boughton Green Road and is intended to give a sense of place and identity to the development. This wall also creates a well defended and hidden parking area and defensible private gardens to the dwellings. In front of this a public footpath is extended along the street as far as the southern tip of the development until pedestrians are obliged to cross over to the opposite side of Boughton Green Road where the footpath continues. The frontage of the units proposed overlooking Boughton Green Road are a mixture of types with full hipped, half hipped and gable ended roofs, with porch covers, render, quoins and keystones all helping to add architectural interest. At the advice of the case officer, the windows on this elevation only have been modified with 150mm reveals and additional casements to improve the appearance of the most visible part of the scheme.
- 7.11 Further into the site and away from Boughton Green Road the scheme is made up of largely semi detached units. The units avoid adverse

overlooking entirely and all of the plots have good sized outside amenity areas. The majority of the units are 2 storey height which is in keeping with nearby residential buildings. The set back from the roads outside leave plenty of room for front gardens and the overall street appearance is pleasant and not cramped.

- 7.12 In the centre of the site, the applicant proposes to put a play space directed at young people. This space is clearly visible to the passing public on Boughton Green Road and is overlooked in one or another by every dwelling in the scheme. This high level of surveillance produces a particularly safe and focused open space that if maintained properly will be a great local asset. Such maintenance is proposed to be controlled by means of a legal agreement and managed by the housing association.
- 7.13 The development has been assessed by the Borough Building For Life Assessor with a score of 11.5 out of 20. This score is considered good for a small affordable housing scheme. The strengths in the Building For Life assessment were local environment and community created, the strong sense of character, discreet parking and good location. Weaknesses were found in general accessibility, design and environmental sustainability.
- 7.14 The general layout and design will create a distinctive and focussed development which should ensure a good quality environment for future residents. Although dense, it is not too dense and does not cause overlooking or a poor layout and appearance as a result. Gating the entire development, as suggested by objectors, would result in numerous highway issues and for such a large development would be impractical for most residents who would no doubt, find ways of avoiding the constant opening and closing of the gates.
- 7.15 The on-site parking is discreetly positioned within the streets and wider layout, lowering the prominence of the parked car and giving less opportunities for opportunistic commuter parking associated with the University. All of the parking is well surveyed and supported by the Police consultation officer.

Open Space

- 7.16 As explained earlier in the report, the Local Plan Green Space allocation of the land does merit a requirement from the developer to compensate the local community for the loss of the current open site. The proposed central play space meets a local need identified in the PMP Open Space Audit commissioned by NBC and clearly the 40 new units, especially the 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, will benefit from having a play space in such a convenient place. It is considered that the play area, in addition to landscape planting, is suitable to meet the terms of saved Policy E6 of the Northampton Local Plan.

- 7.17 The Housing Association has confirmed that it is happy to maintain the play open in perpetuity to the general public and will enter into an agreement to ensure this happens.

Affordable Housing

- 7.18 The application is made in part by Orbit Homes housing association and initial indications are that the units will be 100% affordable. Nonetheless, any permission would run with the land and not the applicant and therefore it is advised to seek an agreement that a minimum of 35% affordable housing is achieved on the land. The applicant has already informally agreed to these terms and is in the process of producing a suitable agreement.

Social infrastructure

- 7.19 The County as Local Education Authority have been consulted and advise that there is no need for education contributions due to the surplus spaces in local schools and colleges. Therefore no financial contributions will be sought in this case.
- 7.20 The County did however, request funds for libraries and fire and rescue services, but this is not backed up by a suitably robust case that the residents of this development will create a reasonable need for such infrastructure. Without such necessity being proven the request does not meet the tests for contributions and therefore these requests cannot be supported.

Waste

- 7.21 The County Council as Waste Planning Authority have been consulted on the proposals and point out that a suitable waste audit has not been submitted with the application and that for major sites such waste matters should be considered in line with the County Waste Implementation SPD. It is agreed that a waste audit for the handling of waste during construction and for the houses are occupied should be submitted and controlled by planning condition.

Landscaping

- 7.22 Earlier in this report, the matter of the green appearance of this site and proposal has been identified as a significant planning matter for consideration. The site has had an ecology study showing no nationally significant species, but some unusual finds that would warrant a certain level of control in ensuring native species are planted as part of a landscaping scheme.
- 7.23 The proposed layout shows the opportunity for numerous areas of heavy planting to support the appearance of the site and to act as

compensation for the loss of open green space. A landscape scheme will be required as part of the conditions on any permission.

Drainage

- 7.24 Anglian Water has confirmed that there is sufficient capacity for water supply and foul drainage to and from the site.
- 7.25 The Environment Agency are content with the Flood Risk Assessment submitted and only seek to avoid hastened drainage due to the new hard surfaces being created and suitable drainage from the site overall. These can be controlled by planning conditions.
- 7.26 Questions have been raised by objectors and the case officer about the safety of the site in relation to the large reservoirs and Anglian Water has confirmed these are safe.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The application site is an area of private green space enclosed as part of the Anglian Water Reservoir site. Its special protection as an urban buffer has been superseded by development over the last decade or two and now the site is suitable for sensitive development that compensates for the green space loss. It is a sustainable location for residential development and planning policy encourages new affordable dwellings.
- 8.2 The development is well laid out with a strong frontage, central focal point and a definite sense of place. Although dense, it is not over developed and the road and access is considered acceptable. Parking is controlled in a sensible manner, which will discourage commuter parking and maintain enough spaces for residents.
- 8.3 Affordable housing and the play area can be controlled by a suitable legal agreement.
- 8.4 For all the reasons above, it is considered that the proposed development accords with national planning policy and the policies of the Development Plan.

9. CONDITIONS

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2. The development shall be carried in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning

Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

3. Full details of the method of the treatment of the external boundaries of the site together with individual plot boundaries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, implemented prior to the occupation of the buildings hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the boundaries of the site are properly treated so as to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

4. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings hereby permitted the vehicular access for parking for plots 3 to 11 shall be fitted with bollards. The details of which shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, the free flow of traffic and residential amenity in accordance with Policy E40 of the Northampton Local Plan.

5. Details and / or samples of all proposed external facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

6. Full details of all external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of construction work on site, implemented concurrently with the development and retained thereafter.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

7. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage and surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented and completed fully in accordance with the approved details and the approved implementation programme and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To secure satisfactory drainage of the site in accordance with

the advice contained PPS25 Development and Flood Risk.

8. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site. The scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

10. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance current good practice, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with current good practice, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with current good practice.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with the advice contained in PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control.

11. A site specific Waste Management Facilities Strategy must be submitted to the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development. Waste Management Facilities Strategy must address provisions subscribed in Part A, Section (2.47/2.49/2.50) of the Development and Implementation SPD.

Reason: Ensure compliance with requirement for site specific detailed Waste Management Facilities Strategy guiding the development.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/2010/1092.

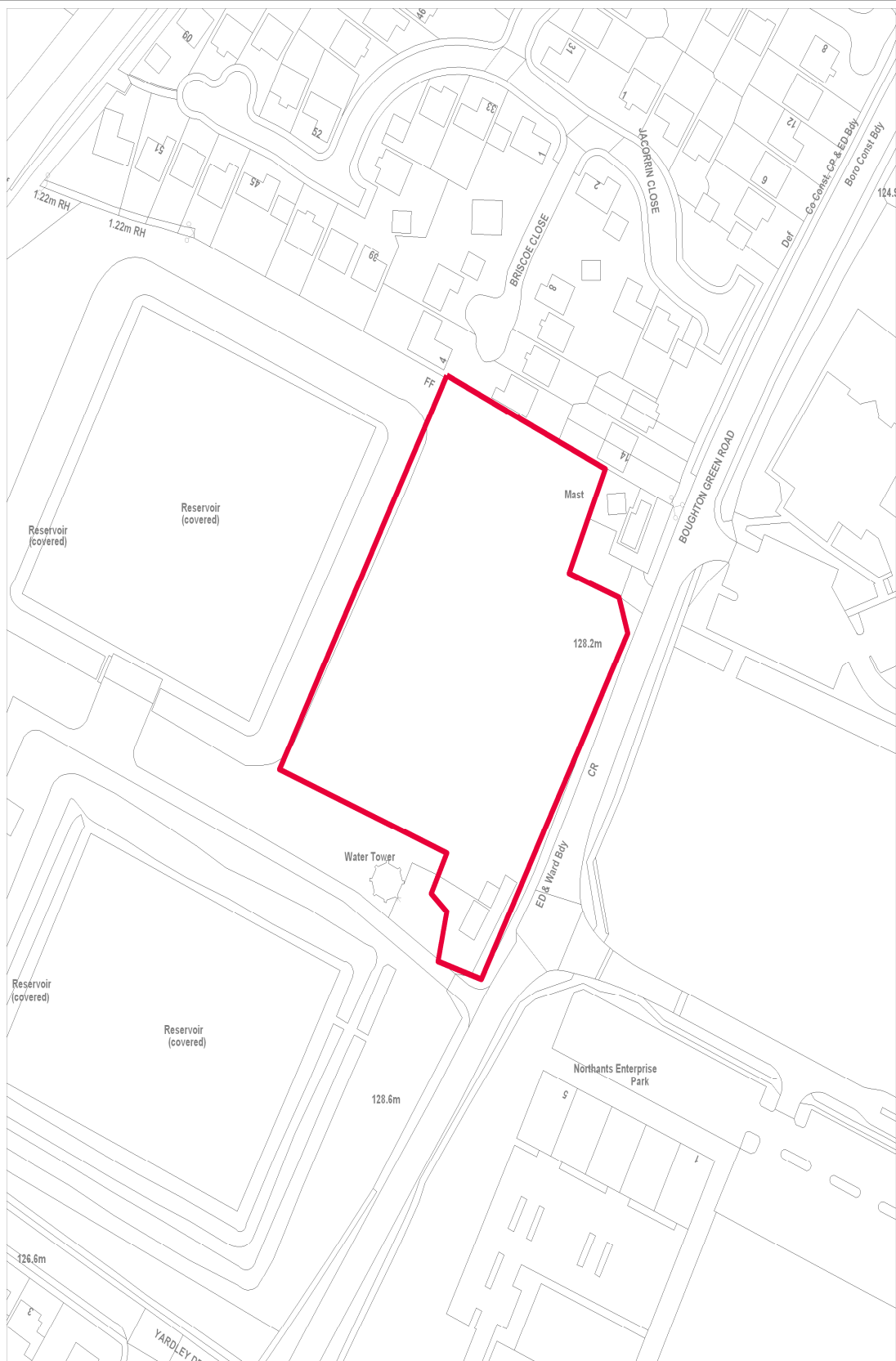
11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	R Boyt	18/02/2011
Development Control Manager Agreed:	G Jones	18/02/2011



Name: SW
 Date: 17th February 2011
 Scale: 1:1250
 Dept: Planning
 Project: Site Location Plan

Title

Land Adj to Covered Reservoirs, Boughton Green Road

Produced from the 2011 Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence number: 100019655