
Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed Mixed-Use Development on Land off Sunnyhills Road, Cornhill, Leek

Section 73 Minor Material Amendment Application & Reserved Matters Application

August 2021

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For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

1. Introduction

The Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by Avison Young on behalf of the Casey Group Ltd ('the Applicant') to accompany the following two applications, relating to the Cornhill Regeneration Project in Leek, which are being submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ('SMDC') in tandem:
- Application under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary and delete several conditions attached to the outline planning permission for the Cornhill Regeneration Project (ref. SMD/2014/0750) , including varying the approved access drawings so that they are consistent with the proposed layout of the scheme; and
 - Reserved matters application, submitted pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750 (as proposed to be amended by the above section 73 application), which seeks detailed approval for all parts of the Cornhill Regeneration Project, except for the employment zone in the northern part of the site, which is the subject of a reserved matters approval (ref. SMD/2019/0502) for layout.
- 1.2 This Statement also provides further clarification and justification for amendments to a current application to vary the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline consent (ref. SMD/2020/0552) that was submitted on 2nd October 2020.
- 1.3 The Cornhill Regeneration Project relates to land off Sunnyhills Road, approximately 1.2 km to the south of Leek Town Centre, which was previously used as a concrete batching plant.

Structure of this Statement

- 1.4 The Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 outlines the background to the s73 and reserved matters applications being submitted;
 - Section 3 provides a brief description of the Cornhill site and its surroundings;
 - Section 4 describes the changes to the outline planning permission that are proposed as part of the section 73 application;
 - Section 5 describes the development proposals that are the subject of the reserved matters application being submitted;

- Section 6 summarises the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken by the Applicant; and
- Section 7 sets out the conclusions and summarises the key benefits of the proposed Cornhill development.

2. Background to the Applications

The Cornhill Regeneration Project

- 2.1 The Cornhill Regeneration Project involves the redevelopment of the former concrete batching plant on land off Sunnyhills Road in Leek for up to 175 residential units, employment and tourism uses.

2015 Outline Planning Permission

- 2.2 An outline planning application (ref. SMD/2014/0750), reserving all matters for future approval except for access, was submitted by the owner of the site, Barnfield Hughes Ltd on 5th November 2014 for the following development proposal:

'Demolition of former industrial buildings and redevelopment of site comprising: residential (Use Class C3 up to 175 dwellings) with associated open space, play areas and cycle links; live/work units 2,000m², employment (Use Class B1c and B2 up to 1,847m² gross including mezzanine); tourism and leisure uses including a marina / basin and associated boating facilities (up to 20 berths), railway station with associated heritage/railway activities building including tourist/local needs retail unit (Use Class D2/A1 up to 394m² gross); public house / restaurant (Use Class A3 / A4 up to 340m²) and associated car parking and servicing; reserve land for future highway including associated landscaping.'

- 2.3 This outline application was approved on 17th August 2015.

Section 106 Agreement

- 2.4 The outline permission was subject to a section 106 Agreement, which was signed on 14th August 2015. This secured a number of developer contributions including requirements to:

- provide a Public Recreation & Open Space Scheme and Management Plan for open spaces and children's play facilities;
- obtain a Network Access Agreement from Canal and River Trust (CRT) to connect the marina to the Caldon Canal. Casey's must achieve this through a 'CRT New Marina Process' which in turn requires the Trust's agreement to a full business case, including evidence of funding for costs and confirmed arrangements for subsequent revenue / management obligations. The controls within the S106 are as follows:
 - i. No more than 25% of the houses can be occupied before a Network Access Application has been submitted to the CRT
 - ii. No more than 50% can be occupied before the Marina has been constructed

- reserve an area of land identified for a railway station hub for a minimum period of 7 years following the commencement of development;
- prepare and submit a Viability Reassessment (given the significant viability issues associated with the development) for agreement prior to the occupation of any more than 50% of the dwellings;
- reserve for a minimum period of 7 years following the commencement of development the necessary land required to accommodate part of a future link road connecting the A53 to the A520 via Sunnyhills Road, which is being delivered by Staffordshire County Council; and
- make a financial contribution of £200,000 towards education provision in the local area.

Approved Access Arrangements

- 2.5 The access arrangements that were approved as part of the outline planning permission are shown on the Proposed Primary Access Arrangement drawing (ref. CBO-0158-004 Rev C) and the Principle of Secondary Access Arrangements drawing (ref. BCO-0158-007), which are both listed in planning condition no. 4.
- 2.6 The approved arrangement provides for the main part of the development site to be accessed by vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians via two primary accesses: a new priority junction off Sunnyhills Road and the existing Barnfield Road / Sunnyhills Road junction. It also provides for the creation of four new secondary access points off the southern section of Barnfield Road.

2017 Development Agreement

- 2.7 Having secured outline planning permission for the development, Barnfield Hughes subsequently signed a development agreement with the Casey Group in May 2017 to bring forward the scheme.
- 2.8 The Casey Group has delivered a number of high-quality developments including residential schemes and has extensive experience and technical knowledge in relation to site remediation and geotechnical matters. The company is therefore ideally placed to deliver the redevelopment of the land off Sunnyhills Road, which does contain some areas of contamination requiring remediation.

Reserved Matters Application for Employment Development

- 2.9 On 8th August 2019, a reserved matters application was submitted by the Casey Group pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750, which sought approval for the layout of the employment zone of the development (ref. SMD/2019/0502). This application was approved on 15th November 2019.

- 2.10 This application discharged the requirement set out in condition no. 2 of the outline consent for an application for approval of first reserved matters to be made to the Local Planning Authority no later than the expiration of 4 years from the date of the outline permission (i.e. before 15th August 2019).
- 2.11 A further application seeking approval for all outstanding reserved matters (scale, appearance and landscaping) is being submitted alongside the two applications which this Planning Statement supports.

Scheme Viability Issues

- 2.12 After signing the Development Agreement with Barnfield Hughes, the Casey Group undertook a significant amount of due diligence on the scheme including comprehensive site investigation work and other assessments, in order to inform a detailed development appraisal.
- 2.13 On undertaking this work, it became clear to the Casey Group that it would not be feasible or viable to fulfil the obligation within the section 106 Agreement to deliver the new marina basin and its connection to the Caldon Canal.
- 2.14 Since the middle of 2019, the Casey Group has therefore been in discussions with SMDC about how it might redevelop the site in accordance with the extant outline permission, but excluding the delivery of the marina basin.
- 2.15 The Casey Group acknowledges that the creation of a new marina basin on the Cornhill site is still an important objective for the Council and is therefore proposing to safeguard the potential to deliver a marina by reserving land for the facility for a defined period and set aside any planning surplus arising from an agreed updated viability appraisal to cross-fund it. Relevant clauses in the S106 that bind the housing scheme to the implementation of the marina would consequently be replaced by an obligation on the developer to reserve land for a marina and to commit to the land being drawn down (subject to a satisfactory Business Case) by a relevant entity. This preserves the opportunity for the Council to achieve its vision for a marina.
- 2.16 To enable the housing scheme to progress in the short term and with certainty, the amended S106 would also incorporate the following milestone provisions in relation to the delivery of the marina and clarify what would happen if it was not constructed within an agreed timeframe:
- the 'Marina Land' would be reserved for two years from the commencement of development / reclamation or until an entity that promotes the marina secures a Network Access Agreement (NAA) from the CRT (whichever is the lesser);

- the Land must then be physically drawn down simultaneously with entering a construction contract for the Marina within 12 months of securing the NAA; and
- If these milestones are not achieved, the developer would be obliged to implement a landscaping scheme on the Marina Land and transfer it to the Council as Public Open Space with the planning surplus arising from this Viability Appraisal.

2.17 Should the marina not materialise, the Council would also have the ability to utilise any agreed planning surplus to fund off-site affordable homes or education / off-site highway / community uses. Once the land has been transferred, the Council would still have the ability to implement a Marina / Canal basin on the land if a future business case comes forward and subject to planning etc.

2.18 In summary and in line with this strategy, the Casey Group is proposing to undertake the following steps:

(1) amend the existing section 106 Agreement to:

- i. remove the relevant obligations placed on the Casey Group / the landowner to physically deliver the new marina basin;
- ii. place new obligations on the Casey Group / the landowner to reserve land for the new marina basin and to set aside any surplus funding to subsidise its delivery; and
- iii. include new milestone provisions in relation to the delivery of the marina and what would happen if it were not constructed within an agreed timeframe.

(2) submit a section 73 minor material amendment application to delete two of the planning conditions that are attached to outline planning permission ref. SMD/2014/0750, which are related to the delivery of the marina basin.

(3) submit a reserved matters application which delineates an area of land within the site which could accommodate a marina and provide design detail of the marina facility to show its layout, appearance and scale in relation to the wider housing scheme, other leisure and commercial uses on site, and the land and water assets related to the Caldon Canal. Although the marina will not be delivered by the Casey Group, they are committed to reserve land for the future delivery of the marina or, if not implemented within an agreed period of time, an area of public open space.

2.19 This approach has been discussed and agreed in principle with the Local Planning Authority.

2.20 In parallel with these steps, the Casey Group understands that SMDC intends to explore opportunities to obtain grants / financial assistance through the Levelling Up Fund to help subsidise the development of the marina basin.

- 2.21 Whilst the Casey Group is not in a position to commit to delivering the marina, it is considered that the above approach provides a workable mechanism to explore funding in the short term to deliver the marina basin, whilst also ensuring that the development of the wider scheme can be brought forward.
- 2.22 In the event that it is ultimately not feasible or viable for the marina basin to be delivered as part of the Cornhill scheme, the above approach would at least ensure the preservation of a physical link to the Caldon Canal and a space where the marina basin could be constructed in the future.
- 2.23 On 2nd October 2020, an application was submitted to vary the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline consent (ref. SMD/2020/0552) in line with step (1) above. This was accompanied by a viability statement which at that time did not include cost and value assumptions associated with the marina and mixed-use elements (live/work units and the public house/restaurant) that were referenced within the Outline Planning Permission. The cost and value assumptions for all other scheme elements were peer-reviewed and agreed with the Councils advisors (Keppie Massie) in March 2021. Casey's have updated the viability appraisal which incorporates a position on the agreed input cost and value assumptions but with an updated assessment of the development economics of the scheme with the incorporation of a marina, and the inclusion of the live work units and a public house/restaurant. This application is currently pending determination by the Local Planning Authority.

Detailed Design Development

- 2.24 In recognition of the requirement set out in condition no. 2 of the outline consent for the last application for reserved matters approval to be made to the Local Planning Authority no later than the expiration of 6 years from the date of the outline permission (i.e. before 17th August 2021), the Casey Group has spent the better part of 2021 developing a detailed design proposal for all parts of the development site.
- 2.25 This detailed design process has given rise to a requirement to make a series of minor amendments to the access arrangements that were approved as part of the outline consent. Linked to this is an additional requirement to amend another condition to provide for more flexibility in the delivery of the scheme.

Planning Strategy

- 2.26 The matters outlined above provide the context and rationale for the section 73 and reserved matters applications being submitted by the Casey Group.

- 2.27 The Casey Group is hopeful that these two applications, in combination with the pending application to vary the section 106 Agreement, will help to unlock the Cornhill Regeneration Project, facilitating the site's remediation and enabling work to start on the delivery of a high quality residential-led development which meets the aspirations of the Applicant, the landowner, the Local Planning Authority and the wider local community.
- 2.28 This reserved matters application is being submitted pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750 as proposed to be amended by the section 73 application (i.e. as opposed to being submitted pursuant to the outline permission consent in its current, approved form). That is to say that the detailed design proposals which form the basis of the reserved matters application take account of the changes to the access arrangements and other minor amendments that are being proposed as part of the section 73 application. It is therefore acknowledged that the section 73 application would need to be approved, and a fresh outline planning permission granted, before the reserved matters application could be permitted. This planning strategy has been discussed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority as part of the pre-application discussions that have taken place.
- 2.29 A separate reserved matters application for the employment zone seeking approval for appearance, scale and landscaping is also being submitted pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750 (as proposed to be amended by the above section 73 application).
- 2.30 The application to vary the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline consent (ref. SMD/2020/0552) that was lodged in October 2020 will also be amended to incorporate the proposed modified terms outlined in 2.15 to 2.18 above.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 The Cornhill site is located on land off Sunnyhills Road in Leek, within the administrative district of Staffordshire Moorlands. The site comprises former concrete batching plant that was previously occupied by Hughes Concrete Ltd. This facility has been derelict and effectively vacant for several years.
- 3.2 Sunnyhills Road forms the northern boundary to the site, with a food factory and other industrial units of the Barnfield Industrial Estate located beyond this. Industrial units adjoin the site to the west and a scrap metal facility borders the site to the south east. Ladderedge Country Park is located to the south of the site.
- 3.3 The site lies approximately 1.2km south of Leek Town Centre and is located within the Development Boundary for Leek, as defined by policy SS2 of the Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

Site Location and Accessibility

- 3.4 Leek Town Centre is accessible to the west of the site via Sunnyhills Road and to the north via Barnfield Road, connecting with Newcastle Road (A53). It is around 1 mile from the site which would represent a 30 minute walk time for most people. Leek is the principal town within Staffordshire Moorlands District and offers a wide range of local services and facilities including several supermarkets, retail outlets, Leek Moorlands Hospital, primary and secondary schools, further education facilities and leisure facilities. It is also well connected to the rest of the District and to Stoke-on-Trent via the A53, A523 and A520 road network.
- 3.5 The site is approximately 470m from the closest bus stops located on the A53 (Newcastle Road). These stops are served by bus services 18, 118 and 166 which run between Leek, Hanley and Buxton. The number 18 bus service runs every 20mins and offers excellent opportunity for travel by bus for employment, retail or leisure purposes.
- 3.6 The site is also well located in terms of pedestrian and cycle connectivity, which provide a realistic alternative to the car for educational, shopping, employment, retail and leisure journeys from the site.
- 3.7 Overall, the site is therefore in a sustainable and accessible location.

Site Characteristics

- 3.8 The site comprises previously developed land and is identified on the Council's Brownfield Land Register (reference LE260) so is a recognised priority for regeneration and the delivery of new homes. It is split across two distinct areas separated by Barnfield Road running north/south, which terminates

in a turning circle located adjacent to the adjoining site to the south east which is utilised for a scrap metal business.

- 3.9 The land to the east of Barnfield Road is occupied by a number of buildings comprising former offices with the remainder of the land comprising hard standing/ former open storage areas. The land to the west of Barnfield Road comprises a number of buildings including former concrete processing/storage and utility buildings. The central and western portion of this part of the site was mainly utilised for the storage of concrete pipes and comprises hardstanding.
- 3.10 There are a number of mature trees along the northern boundary of the site, running parallel to Sunnyhills Road and to the south along the River Churnet, which act as a natural buffer.

Site Surroundings

- 3.11 The surrounding area comprises a mix of industrial and commercial uses. The overall site is bound to the north by a mixture of industrial/commercial uses, including a site operated by Croda Chemicals, modern food manufacturing buildings operated by the Kerrygold Group and a separate facility occupied by Adams Food. The site is bound to the extreme west by further commercial uses.
- 3.12 The eastern boundary of the site is bound by a raised embankment which formerly contained a railway line. Further to the east is a cattle market operation, open fields, sports pitches and the Britannia Building Society headquarter buildings.
- 3.13 The south east corner of the site is bound by an existing scrap metal business, whilst the remainder of the southern boundary bound by the Ladderedge Country Park which is accessible through Barnfield Road via a public right of way.
- 3.14 The River Churnet also flows past the southern boundary of the site in an easterly direction. The Caldon Canal currently terminates outside the southern boundary, although historically it fed into the town. The Canal traverses the River Churnet in this location via an aqueduct which is a Grade II Listed structure.
- 3.15 The Caldon Canal Conservation Area and Special Landscape Area are located to the south of the site.

Existing Vehicular Access Arrangements

- 3.16 The site has two existing vehicular access points located off Barnfield Road, one accessing the eastern part of the site and the other accessing the western portion.

Future Proposals in the Local Area

- 3.17 The future link road connecting the A53 to the A520, which was referenced in Section 2 of this Statement, would run along Sunnyhills Road and transect the site east of Barnfield Road before crossing the railway lines to the east of site. The Cornhill Regeneration Project safeguards the land required for the road link to allow the future delivery of the link road and the widening of Sunnyhills Road to provide ghost island junction arrangements into the site and the existing Adams Food accesses on Sunnyhills Road. This link road, which is being delivered by Staffordshire County Council, is intended to improve vehicular access across the southern side of Leek and relieve pressure on Junction Road. The current programme for delivery of this new link road is unknown, although the s106 obligates the County Council to deliver the link road within seven years of the commencement of development.
- 3.18 There is a proposal to extend the Churnet Valley Railway (a heritage railway that operates along part of the former North Staffordshire Railway's Churnet Valley Line) into Leek, along the route of the former railway lie located along the eastern boundary of the site. The outline planning permission reserves an area of land within the Cornhill site for a railway station hub that could be delivered as part of this extension. The layout plan prepared by MPSL includes the most recent indicative layout of the Churnet Valley railway station area, including the indicative location of the heritage railway activities building and associated car parking. It is important to note that the design of the platform and track is still ongoing, and the exact location and reconfiguration of the building/s and car parking will change once the design is further developed.

4. Proposed Changes to Outline Permission (s73 Application)

- 4.1 As set out in Section 2, there is a requirement to delete two of the planning conditions that are attached to outline planning permission ref. SMD/2014/0750, which are related to the delivery of the marina basin, on the basis that the marina is not viable and the Casey Group is not able to commit to its delivery. An application to vary the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline consent to remove this obligation is currently pending determination (ref. SMD/2020/0552) and the Casey Group intends to submit an updated financial viability and proposed variation appraisal shortly in order for the Council to determine the application on the basis of the varied terms outlined at 2.15 to 2.18.
- 4.2 There is also a requirement to make a series of minor amendments to the access arrangements that were approved as part of the outline consent, which has arisen as a result of the detailed design process.
- 4.3 Approval for the deletions of and variations to the planning conditions that are required is being sought through the section 73 application. This Section provides details of the deletions and variations proposed.

Proposed Deletion of Planning Conditions

- 4.4 The section 73 application proposes to delete conditions 10 and 19.

Proposed Deletion of Planning Condition no. 10

- 4.5 Planning condition no. 10 states that:

No development except for works of site clearance and demolition shall take place until a structural review and construction methodology has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating the feasibility and method of constructing the link from the proposed marina via the aqueduct to the Caldon Canal. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 4.6 On the basis that it is not feasible or viable for the developer to deliver the new Marina basin and its link via the aqueduct to the Caldon Canal, it is proposed that condition no. 10 is deleted.

Proposed Deletion of Planning Condition no. 19

- 4.7 Planning condition no. 19 states that:

Development of the marina (apart from works of site clearance / demolition) shall not commence until a detailed scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority for the design proposals for the marina, including the location and layout of moorings, access, materials and buildings for all ancillary features as appropriate. The development thereafter shall only be carried out as approved.

- 4.8 On the basis that it is not feasible or viable for the developer to deliver the new Marina basin, it is proposed that condition no. 19 is also deleted.

Proposed Variation of Planning Conditions

- 4.9 Variations are proposed to the wording of conditions 4 and 13.

Proposed Variation of Planning Condition no. 4

- 4.10 Planning condition no. 4 states:

'The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in accordance with the access details shown on the following submitted plans:

- *Boundary Plan (Dwg ref. PL1249.M100)*
- *Proposed Primary Access Arrangement (Dwg ref: CBO-0158-004 Rev C)*
- *Principle of Secondary Access Arrangements (Dwg ref: BCO-0158-007)*
- *Proposed Junction Improvements: A53 Newcastle Road / Sunnyhills Road (Dwg ref: CBO-0158-008)*
- *No more than 175 dwellings shall be developed on the site.'*

- 4.11 As a result of design development, it is necessary to relocate the proposed new priority access point off Sunnyhills Road a short distance to the east. It is also necessary to replace the existing Barnfield Road / Sunnyhills Road junction with another new priority access point off Sunnyhills Road, taking account of the alignment of the proposed new link road connecting the A53 to the A520.
- 4.12 Additional changes need to be made to the secondary access points off the southern section of Barnfield Road to take account of the new layout that is proposed in this part of the site.
- 4.13 A revised access drawing (ref. 3454-F01) incorporating these proposed changes is being submitted with the section 73 application, as a replacement for the Proposed Primary Access Arrangement drawing (ref. CBO-0158-004 Rev C) and the Principle of Secondary Access Arrangements drawing (ref. BCO-0158-007), both of which were approved as part of the outline planning permission.
- 4.14 Providing the changes shown on this revised access drawing are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority, it is proposed that condition no. 4 is reworded to read as follows:

'The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in accordance with the access details shown on the following submitted plans:

- *Boundary Plan (Dwg ref. PL1249.M100)*
- *Proposed Site Access Plan (Dwg ref: 3454-F01)*
- *Proposed Junction Improvements: A53 Newcastle Road / Sunnyhills Road (Dwg ref: CBO-0158-008)*
- *No more than 175 dwellings shall be developed on the site.'*

4.15 The applications are supported by a Transport Statement prepared by Eddisons, which demonstrates that the revised access arrangements that are proposed would be acceptable in highways terms.

Proposed Variation of Planning Condition no. 13

4.16 Planning condition no. 13 states:

No development except for works of site clearance and demolition shall take place until such time as a plan including full details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- *Location, geometry, construction details, visibility splays, detailed design at proposed junctions and private accesses off Barnfield Road and,*
- *Geometry, construction details, detailed design and reconstruction at proposed access off Sunnyhills Road;*

which shall all incorporate further two-dimensional and three-dimensional revisions as recommended by a Stage 2 Safety Audit and in accordance with engineering details. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, fully implemented and subsequently maintained in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangement embodied within the scheme.

4.17 In order to provide more flexibility and to enable development to commence at the earliest available opportunity on the phases of the Cornhill scheme that do not rely on the implementation of the new access arrangements, the Applicant is proposing to reword this condition so that it reads as follows:

No phase of development containing the proposed junctions and private accesses off Barnfield Road or the proposed access off Sunnyhills Road (except for works of site clearance and demolition) shall take place until such time as a plan including full details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- *Location, geometry, construction details, visibility splays, detailed design at proposed junctions and private accesses off Barnfield Road and,*

- *Geometry, construction details, detailed design and reconstruction at proposed access off Sunnyhills Road;*

which shall all incorporate further two-dimensional and three-dimensional revisions as recommended by a Stage 2 Safety Audit and in accordance with engineering details. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, fully implemented and subsequently maintained in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangement embodied within the scheme.

5. The Proposed Development (Reserved Matters Application)

- 5.1 The reserved matters application is seeking approval for the scale, layout, appearance and landscaping associated with the Cornhill Regeneration Project, in accordance with planning condition no. 1 of the outline planning permission (which the section 73 application does not propose to vary).
- 5.2 This reserved matters application covers all parts of the Cornhill site except for the employment zone, which is the subject of a reserved matters approval (ref. ref. SMD/2019/0502) for layout. A separate reserved matters application for the employment zone seeking approval for appearance, scale and landscaping is being submitted pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750 (as proposed to be amended by the above section 73 application).
- 5.3 The formal description of development, for which approval is being sought, is as follows:

'Reserved matters application for approval of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale to provide: 157 residential dwellings (Class C3) providing a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses, and two bedroom apartments; 6 x live / work units (Sui Generis); 1 x public house / restaurant / café (Sui Generis / Class E(b)); a marina / basin and associated boating facilities with 13 berths; associated works including internal road network, associated highway works, drainage infrastructure, landscaping, open space, play area, pedestrian, and cyclist links; land reserved for future railway station with associated heritage / railway activities building/s and car parking; and land reserved for future link road including associated landscaping. The application is submitted pursuant to outline planning permission SMD/2014/0750A site location plan identifying the area which the reserved matters application relates to is provided at Appendix I and a list of the application drawings is provided at Appendix II.'

Approach to Design

- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Importantly, the NPPF requires new development to function well and add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of sites to accommodate development; respond to local character and history; create safe, inclusive and accessible environments; and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 5.5 The reserved matters proposals have been designed with full regard to this national planning guidance, together with the relevant policies of the Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, in particular Policy DC 1 (Design Considerations) and the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

- 5.6 The reserved matters application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, prepared by MPSL, which provides more detail on the approach that has been taken in respect of design.

Land Use and Quantum of Development

- 5.7 The land uses associated with the redevelopment proposals for the Cornhill site have already been approved as a part of the outline planning permission. Planning condition no. 4 states that no more than 175 dwellings shall be developed on the site and condition no. 5 specifies the maximum quantum of floorspace permitted for each of the commercial uses approved. The section 73 application is not seeking approval to vary the wording of either of these conditions.
- 5.8 Table 1 below demonstrates that the reserved matters proposals are within the limits specified by planning conditions 4 and 5, when considered cumulatively with the employment zone proposals that are already the subject of a reserved matters approval.

Table 1: Proposed Uses and Approved Parameters

Land Use	Maximum Quantum (gross floorspace / dwelling numbers) Approved under Outline Planning Permission	Reserved Matters Approval for Employment Zone	Current Reserved Matters Application
Residential (C3)	175 dwellings	-	157
Public House / Restaurant (A3 / A4)	Up to 340m ²	-	134.4m ²
Live / Work Units (sui generis): up to 2000m ²	Up to 2,000m ²	-	133.7m ² each (802.2m ²) total
Employment Units (B1c / B2):	Up to 1,847m ²	715.1m ² approved	-

- 5.9 Further details of the design proposals for each of the land use components of the scheme are provided below.

Residential

- 5.10 Detailed approval is being sought for 157 no. residential dwellings, comprising a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses, and four two bedroom apartments. This proposed mix would ensure that a sustainable well-balanced neighbourhood is created, which offers a mix of smaller starter homes and larger family homes.

- 5.11 Details of the proposed layout of the residential component of the scheme are provided later on in this section of the Statement.

Live/work units

- 5.12 The live/work units feature workspace accommodation on the ground floor, with living accommodation on the upper two floors. There is an increasing demand for live/work units as a result of the shift towards home working.

Public House/restaurant

- 5.13 The public house/restaurant that is proposed in the eastern part of the site would be located within easy walking distance for residents of the development, and would contribute to the creation of a lively and social place which is beautiful and where people will want to live, work and play. It would be strategically positioned between the Heritage Railway Hub and the Marina Basin in order to maximise its commercial attractiveness and help create the sense of place.

Marina Basin Proposals

- 5.14 The drawings that are being submitted in support of the reserved matters application incorporate the details of the marina basin proposal, including access and servicing arrangements and the proposed connection to the Caldon Canal.

Heritage Railway Hub

- 5.15 The heritage railway hub is located on the eastern part of the site and would provide a range of tourism and heritage railway uses and facilities. The expectation is that this area will become a focal part of the scheme and an asset to Leek.

Link Road

- 5.16 The future link road connecting the A53 to the A520 would run along Sunnyhills Road and transect the site east of Barnfield Road before crossing the railway lines to the east of site. The Cornhill Regeneration Project safeguards the land required for the road link to allow the future delivery of the link road and the widening of Sunnyhills Road to provide ghost island junction arrangements into the site and the existing Adams Food accesses on Sunnyhills Road. This link road, which is being delivered by Staffordshire County Council, is intended to improve vehicular access across the southern side of Leek and relieve pressure on Junction Road.

Employment Units

- 5.17 As discussed previously, the employment zone in the northern part of the site is the subject of a reserved matters approval (ref. SMD/2019/0502) for layout.
- 5.18 A further application seeking approval for all outstanding reserved matters (scale, appearance and landscaping) is being submitted alongside the two applications which this Planning Statement supports.

Scale

- 5.19 The scale and massing of the development seeks to respond and respect the local vernacular. As such, the proposals reflect traditional residential housing within the vicinity of the site, comprising predominantly 2 storey housing, with the inclusion of single storey garages, where indicated.
- 5.20 2.5 storey properties are sited within the development to create interest and terminate key vistas / focal reference points within the development, whilst encouraging varied ridge lines within prominent street scenes. A run of 2.5 storey properties is also positioned adjacent to the Marina, these units form part of a home zone area which take advantage of the water way views.
- 5.21 Further details are provided within the Design Justification Statement.

Layout

- 5.22 The site layout plan and proposed floor plans which are being submitted for approval as part of the reserved matters application show how the various land uses would be distributed across the site and within the different buildings proposed.
- 5.23 The western part of the site is proposed to largely comprise residential development, with a network of shared streets running from the access point off Sunnyhills Road and Barnfield Road. The residential buildings in this part of the site are oriented to have direct access onto the road and create active frontages, giving natural surveillance to the public realm.
- 5.24 As a result of design development, the residential layout has evolved since the original outline indicative masterplan. The proposed scheme incorporates a higher proportion of more spacious properties than illustrated on the indicative master plan. This was skewed more towards semi-detached and terraced properties (84%) and smaller two / three bed properties (92%) whereas the proposed layout is based on 71% semi-detached / terraced / apartments and 83% being in a two / three bed format (with a higher proportion of 3-beds). This will have a better fit with local demand and provide Leek with the type of aspirational homes that are required.

- 5.25 Whilst the number of homes included on the masterplan does not meet the upper limit set by the outline consent (i.e. this permits up to 175 units but 163 – including the live-work properties – are proposed), the overall residential floorspace is higher (176,220ft² compared to 148,818ft²). All homes are also designed to meet National Space Standards. Although the density has increased, the key design principles of an outward facing development with permeability between Sunnyhills Road and the open land adjacent to the Canal and river to the south are however retained.
- 5.26 The marina basin (or the area of public open space that comes forward if the marina basin is not deliverable) would be a key focal point within the development, and the overall masterplan has been designed to provide a number of direct visual and physical links to it, through the provision of shared space and public realm.
- 5.27 The proposed layout of the heritage railway hub has been designed so that the pathways within the linear park in the south of site to link the marina area to the heritage railway area. The public house / restaurant and café has been located on the edge of the heritage railway area to act as a landmark feature on all approaches and to maximise patronage from those visiting the area.
- 5.28 The residential development on the eastern part of the site is accessed off Barnfield Road and has been laid out in a linear pattern. As with the residential development in the western part of the site, the buildings are also oriented to have direct access onto the road.
- 5.29 Provision of reserved land for the potential routing of the new link road is also incorporated into the masterplan. This reserved land will take the form of a temporary landscape treatment, in order to not prejudice the delivery of this potential link road.
- 5.30 The linear park linking the marina to the heritage railway area will provide a play area. This location has been selected as it provides passive surveillance, is integrated within the landscaped open space area and marina and is positioned away from residential properties to minimise noise impacts.

Appearance

- 5.31 A mix of red brick and reconstituted stone facings with grey roof tiles will be used across the site, taking reference from the local vernacular.
- 5.32 The proposed architectural details include, prominent gables, steep roof pitches, artstone detailing and deep window apertures, creating a distinct architectural style which references, not replicates the local vernacular. The proposed restaurant with apartments above has also been designed to stand out from the housing form with a distinctive design and materials palette that provides a reference to historic

railway structures (given its proximity to the Heritage Railway Hub) and the views across to the Marina Basin.

5.33 Further details are provided within the Design Justification Statement.

Landscaping

5.34 A landscaping plan has been prepared by Urban Green, which is being submitted as part of the reserved matters application for approval.

Technical and Environmental Considerations

5.35 The outline planning application was supported by a comprehensive suite of environmental and technical assessments and a number of pre-commencement planning conditions were attached to the approval to ensure that the Cornhill Regeneration Project will not give rise to any unacceptable impacts in relation to external lighting (condition no. 21), trees (condition no. 22), noise (condition no. 23), plant noise (condition no. 25), air quality (condition no. 26), construction phase effects (condition no. 28), contamination (condition no's 29 & 30), flood risk (condition no. 31), surface water drainage (condition no. 32), foul water drainage (condition no. 33) and archaeology (condition no. 34).

5.36 It is anticipated that these matters would also be addressed by similar conditions attached to any fresh outline planning permission that is issued in the event that the section 73 application is approved.

6. Pre-Application Consultation

- 6.1 The Applicant and its team of consultants have held a number of meetings with the Local Planning Authority to discuss the requirement to decouple the delivery of the marina basin from the wider Cornhill Regeneration Project and the strategy proposed to address this matter. Within these discussions, Officers have indicated their support in principle for the strategy which is summarised at paragraphs 2.14 – 2.18 of this Statement.
- 6.2 Pre-application discussions have also taken place regarding the form and scope of the section 73 and reserved matters applications being submitted and the draft design proposals have been shared with Officers for comment.
- 6.3 Both applications take account of the feedback received from Council Officers during these discussions, particularly in relation to the aspirations to preserve the opportunity to ensure that Leek has a potential terminus to the Leek Branch of the Caldon Canal with a turning area and moorings.

7. Conclusion and Key Benefits

- 7.1 The Casey Group Ltd is submitting a section 73 application and reserved matters application in relation to the Cornhill Regeneration Project, which involves the redevelopment of the former concrete batching plant on land off Sunnyhills Road in Leek for 158 residential units, employment and tourism uses.
- 7.2 The purpose of the section 73 application is twofold. Firstly, it proposes to delete the two planning conditions that are attached to the outline planning permission (ref. SMD/2014/0750) which are related to the delivery of the marina basin as part of the scheme. This is on the basis that it is no longer feasible or viable for the Casey Group to commit to the delivery of this facility. Secondly, it seeks to make a series of minor amendments to the access arrangements that were approved as part of the outline planning permission to take account of the detailed design process, whilst also providing for more flexibility in the delivery of the scheme.
- 7.3 The reserved matters application seeks detailed approval for all parts of the Cornhill Regeneration Project except for the employment zone in the northern part of the site, which is already the subject of a reserved matters approval and a separate application. Approval is being sought for scale, layout, appearance and landscaping. Securing reserved matters consent would represent an important next step towards the delivery of this important regeneration scheme which, on completion, would enable a number of key economic, social and environmental benefits to be realised, including the following:
- Unlocking a large vacant Registered brownfield site for regeneration, which would revitalise this part of Leek and contribute to the Council's aims of achieving its housing supply with minimal incursion into Green Belt or environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Enabling the delivery of new housing in a mixed use setting to help diversify the local offer and meet local need, improving housing choice in the Borough by providing a balanced mix of types of dwellings. In particular, 33% of the homes would be 4-bed homes to help Leek retain and attract families that need and aspire to this type of space and therefore contribute to the economic growth ambitions of the Council.
 - Delivering fiscal benefits to SMDC through New Homes Bonus funding and increased Council Tax revenues. This additional funding could be reinvested into the local economy by the Council to help the District to achieve its economic growth objectives. It could also be used to fund a wide range of local services, projects and activities for the benefit of the local community.
 - Provision of land for the heritage railway area for the proposed Churnet Valley Railway extension, in accordance with the objectives of the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, which promotes the further development of the railway as both an attraction

but also a transport link. We understand that the Churnet Valley Railway (CVR) also now has funding in place so if the reserved matters, the S73 application and the application to vary the Section 106 Agreement (ref. SMD/2020/0552) are approved, this should facilitate the delivery of their exciting proposals in line with their programme and funding commitments.

- Significant job creation during both the construction and operational phases of the development (through the proposed business units and commercial uses, including the live-work proposals).
- Significant landscape benefits which will enhance the setting of the Caldon Canal Conservation Area and Special Landscape Area to the south of the site.
- Bespoke remediation programme to address the contamination issues that have been identified on the site.
- Environmental enhancements through provision of substantial buffer planting, areas of amenity open space and dedicated garden areas to each residential unit.
- Provision of public open space and children's play areas, which will be available for the whole community.
- Reserving land for the new link road between the A520 Cheddleton Road and the Barnfield Industrial estate, which would allow easier access across the southern side of the town and to relieve pressure on Junction Road.

7.4 Although the Casey Group is not able to commit to the delivery of the Marina Basin, the reserved matters application delineates an area of land within the site to be reserved for the future delivery of this facility or, if not implemented within an agreed period of time, an area of public open space. It also provides for a reasonable period to engage potential grant providers to facilitate the Marina in line with the proposed scheme development programme with an already prepared designed and costed proposal, a route to the transfer of the ownership for a nominal sum and evidence for the need to provide public funding to ensure there is no conflict with anti-subsidy obligations.

The reserved matters application is being submitted pursuant to outline permission ref. SMD/2014/0750 as proposed to be amended by the section 73 application (i.e. as opposed to being submitted pursuant to the outline permission consent in its current, approved form). That is to say that the detailed design proposals which form the basis of the reserved matters application take account of the changes to the access arrangements and other minor amendments that are being proposed as part of the section 73 application. It is therefore acknowledged that the section 73 application would need to be approved, and a fresh outline planning permission granted, before the reserved matters application could be permitted. This planning strategy has been discussed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority as part of the pre-application discussions which have taken place.

Appendix I

Schedule of Application Drawings (Reserved Matters Application)

Proposed Mixed-Use Development on Land off Sunnyhills Road, Cornhill, Leek

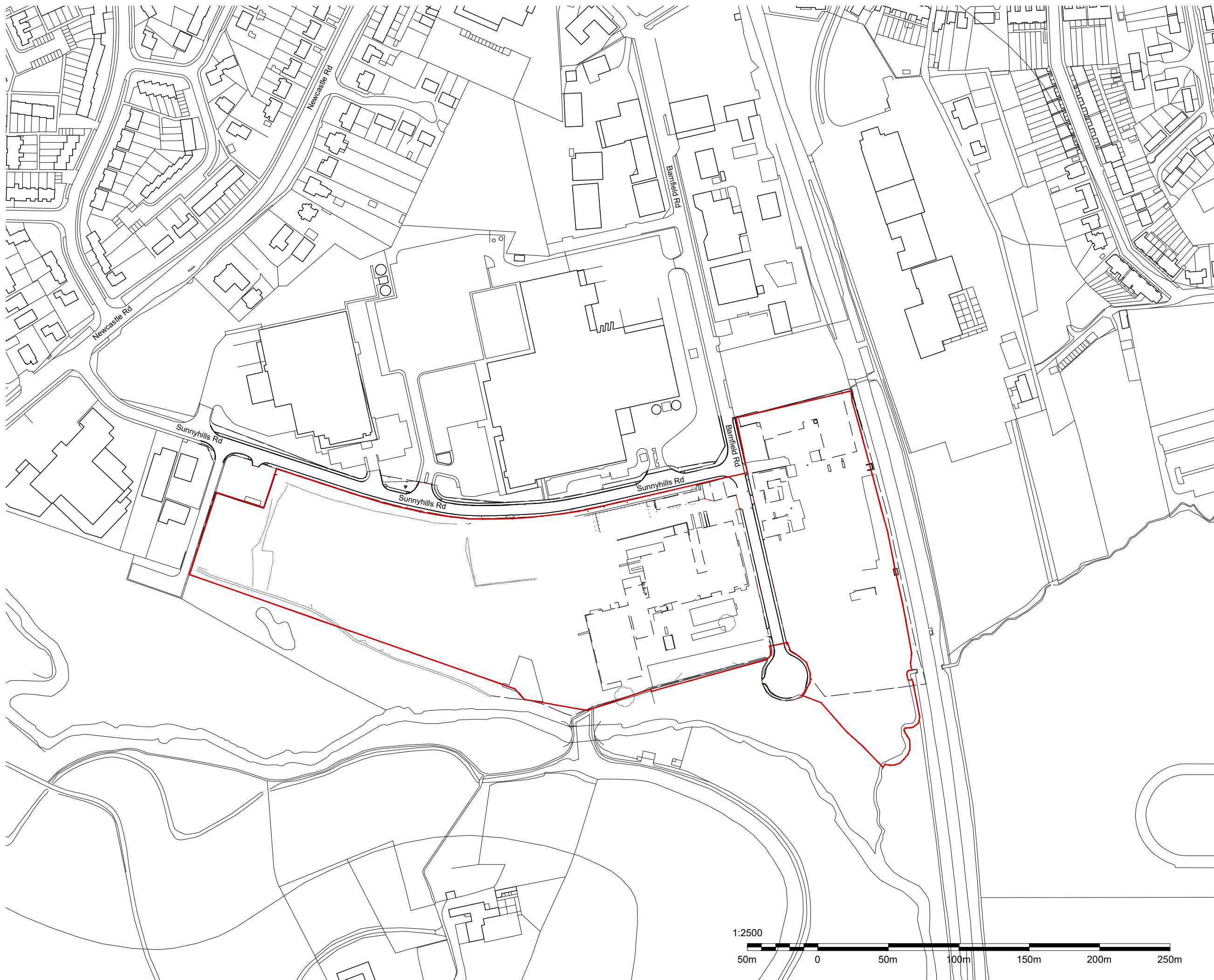
Schedule of Reserved Matters Application Drawings

Drawing Title	Reference	Created By
Site Location Plan	21039_00	MPSL
Proposed Site Layout	21039_01	MPSL
Illustrative Site Layout	21039_02	MPSL
Boundary Treatment Layout	21039_03	MPSL
Illustrative Street Scenes	21039_05	MPSL
Illustrative Site Sections	21039_06	MPSL
Materials Layout	21039_07	MPSL
Drawing Register	21039	MPSL
House Type A Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_01	MPSL
House Type A Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_02	MPSL
House Type B Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_03	MPSL
House Type B Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_04	MPSL
House Type C Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_05	MPSL
House Type D Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_06	MPSL
House Type D Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_07	MPSL
House Type E Floor Plans	21039_HT_08	MPSL
House Type E Elevation Brick	21039_HT_09	MPSL
House Type E Elevation Stone	21039_HT_10	MPSL
House Type F Semi Floor Plan	21039_HT_11	MPSL
House Type F Semi Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_12	MPSL
House Type F Semi Stone Floor Plans and	21039_HT_13	MPSL

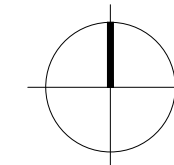
Drawing Title	Reference	Created By
Elevations		
House Type F Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_14	MPSL
House Type F Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_15	MPSL
House Type G Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_16	MPSL
House Type G Stone Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_17	MPSL
House Type H Brick Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_18	MPSL
Single and Twin Garage Floor Plans and Elevations	21039_HT_19	MPSL
Cafe and Apartments_2 Bed Elevations	21039_HT_20	MPSL
Cafe and Apartments_2 Bed Floor Plans	21039_HT_21	MPSL
Live / Work Units – Floor Plan & Elevations	21039_HT_22	MPSL
Sketch Scheme A (Marina Layout)	243-SK-01 Rev A	GJP Marina Developments
General Arrangement Plan (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_GA_DRW_01	Urban Green
Play Area (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_GA_DRW_02	Urban Green
Hard Surface Plan (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_HL_DRW_03	Urban Green
Soft Landscaping 1 of 3 (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_SL_DRW_04	Urban Green
Soft Landscaping 2 of 3 (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_SL_DRW_05	Urban Green
Soft Landscaping 3 of 3 (Landscape)	UG_1145_LAN_SL_DRW_06	Urban Green

Appendix II

Site Location Plan (Reserved Matters Application)



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- For the avoidance of doubt all dimensions are measured to wall structure and not the finishes unless otherwise stated.
- Where any discrepancy is found to exist within or between drawings and/or documents it should be reported to the architect immediately.
- MPSSL Planning & Design Ltd. shall not be liable for any use of drawings and documents for any purpose other than for which the same were prepared by or on behalf of MPSSL Planning & Design Ltd.



KEY



□ Denotes title boundary.

Rev	Date	Revision	Initial
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+ Client



+ Drawing Title

SITE LOCATION PLAN

	+ Project
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Proposed Residential Development
Sunnyhills Road,
Leek

Job No	Drg No	Drawn	Rev
21039	00	ad	--
Scale	Date	Stage	
1:2500 @A3	AUGUST 2021	DRAFT	

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