

Technical Briefing Note

Ref: 1004567 BN02 SSE1 dv1

Saltbox, Bognor Regis (1004567)

Ecological Consideration of Proposed Topsoil Relocation / Stock-pile

Date: March 2019

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Aspect Ecology is acting on behalf of Landlink Estates in regard to ecological matters relating to the site at Saltbox, Bognor Regis, located approximately at OS grid reference SU 935 016 (see Plan 4567/SSE1).
- 1.2. The current site forms the southern part of a single, larger arable field, which forms part of a wider landholding at the north of Bognor Regis (see Plan 4567/SSE1) and in particular is located immediately adjacent to the west of an existing development site (Saltbox Field), currently formed by a further arable field.
- 1.3. The adjacent (offsite) development site (Saltbox Field) is in receipt of hybrid planning permission (ref: BE/102/17), comprising outline planning permission for the development of employment units, warehouse, hotel, 2 No. drive-thru units, public house, gym with associated engineering, landscaping and associated works and full planning permission for a class B8 warehouse, fuel island, car parking, access roads and entrance with engineering works, open space, landscaping and associated works. Subsequently a revised layout has been developed for the scheme, and accordingly, a further hybrid planning application relating to the revised layout has been submitted to Arun District Council (ref: BE/135/18/PL).
- 1.4. In order to facilitate the permitted works within the adjacent offsite land, considerable earthworks are understood to be required, including the removal of substantial topsoil, for which temporary storage and stock-piling is required until such time as it can be appropriately distributed elsewhere (it is understood that similar measures would be required in respect of the revised layout such that this requirement would remain following any approval of the revised scheme). As such, the proposals are for the creation of a temporary topsoil stockpile and associated working area within the current site boundary, accessed directly from the adjacent (permitted) development site via the existing field access (see Appendix 4567/SSE1), for which a separate planning application is therefore understood to be required.
- 1.5. Accordingly, this note sets out consideration of the ecological implications of the proposed topsoil stockpile and associated works in order to inform the proposals and associated planning application, with reference to the previous survey information and adjacent permitted development works.

2. Existing Ecological Information

- 2.1. The permitted development was informed by considerable ecological survey and assessment work undertaken over a considerable period, the results of which are set out most recently within Aspect Ecology's report entitled: "Saltbox, Bognor Regis (1004567): Ecological Appraisal", dated December 2018, which has been submitted to inform the most recent planning application relating to the adjacent development area, and therefore provides existing ecological information of relevance to the site and proposals. In addition, further ecological information of relevance to the current proposals is set out within Aspect Ecology's report entitled "Saltbox, Bognor Regis (1004567): Landscape and Ecological Management Plan", dated December 2018. The documents provide existing ecological information in relation to the adjacent development site, which is similarly of relevance to the current site, as discussed below:
- 2.2. **Desktop Ecological Information.** The previously reported information includes background ecological information obtained in relation to the development area and surrounding search area, including in particular ecological records from within a search radius of 1km. Accordingly, the current site area (forming an adjacent land parcel within the same ownership), along with a corresponding buffer of surrounding land is contained entirely within the previous search area. Similarly, information set out in relation to other sources, including the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database relating to the adjacent permitted development area remain relevant, as reported within the previously submitted information.
- 2.3. **Ecological Survey Work.** Specific ecological survey work of the adjacent offsite areas situated east of the current site boundary was undertaken by Aspect Ecology in order to inform separate development proposals relating to the adjacent land (Saltbox Field), the results of which are set out within the previously submitted information. The previous survey work did not include the internal land within current site area itself, albeit did include the field boundary vegetation forming the eastern boundary to the site (which therefore also forms the western boundary to the permitted development area, from which the current proposed works would be accessed).
- 2.4. **Survey constraints/limitations.** Specific constraints/limitations associated with the previous survey work remain as reported within the previously submitted information.
- 2.5. As set out above, no further site survey work has been undertaken in order to inform the current works, which are intrinsically linked to the previously permitted scheme. Accordingly, with the exception of the eastern boundary vegetation/corridor (which was included within the previous survey, forming the western boundary to the permitted development area), no specific site survey work has been undertaken of the land within the current site boundaries, which therefore clearly represents a significant limitation in regard to the current considerations (albeit considerable surveys have been undertaken within the immediately adjacent land to the east, including the eastern site boundary). However, it is clear that the land contained within the site (with the exception of the eastern boundary vegetation discussed above) is composed entirely of the internal areas of a larger arable field (specifically chosen in order to minimise any potential impact on more valuable areas or other vegetation types), which is understood (pers. Comm. Landowner) to be subject to intensive arable management (including ploughing and cropping) on a regular basis, and therefore would not represent any more longstanding or important habitats. This position is consistent with views obtained during surveys of the adjacent land, and has therefore informed the current consideration (see below).

3. Consideration of the Proposed Works in regard to Ecological Receptors

Ecological Designations

- 3.1. In line with the previously submitted information and consistent with the adjacent permitted development area, it is clear that the land within the current site boundary does not contain any existing ecological designations. However, The Brooks (Bersted Brooks) Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located offsite, adjacent to the south of the current site area.
- 3.2. The current proposals are limited to the temporary location of a topsoil stockpile (formed entirely from topsoil arising from the adjacent arable field as part of the permitted works, which therefore would not include the importation of substrate from offsite, distant sources) and associated working area within the internal areas of the existing arable field, such that no direct impacts on the LNR are anticipated. Any potential for effects such as run-off or siltation are unlikely to be greater than regular ploughing in line with the current arable management regime, (whilst indeed there may be reduced potential for chemical run-off due to the resultant temporary cessation in application of herbicides and/or fertilisers associated with arable production). Further, under the proposals, a minimum 8m easement will be maintained between the stockpile and the southern (adjacent to the LNR) and eastern field boundaries, in order to prevent any potential encroachment towards the boundary vegetation as a result of the works (which will also further mitigate any potential for effects such as run-off or siltation as a result of the temporary works).
- 3.3. It is recommended that further protection of the boundary features (and thereby also the offsite LNR) be ensured through the use of temporary protective fencing (e.g. Heras) in order to clearly demarcate the edge of the working area in these directions and prevent any encroachment. In particular, fencing along the eastern boundary corridor should tie in with the associated construction fencing required as part of the permitted development (noting the need to maintain access through the existing field entrance to facilitate the works).
- 3.4. Finally, where possible it is recommended that creation of the topsoil stockpile progress from south west to north east, with removal/disturbance progressing in the reverse direction, such that the southern extent is created first (and retained longest) and will therefore provide a further buffer and effectively screen the majority of works in the direction of the offsite LNR.
- 3.5. Subject to the above measures, the proposed works are unlikely to result in any significant effects on the LNR (particularly in relation to the existing arable management of the site).
- 3.6. Similarly, all other identified ecological designations are well-removed and separated from the site such that (particularly given the limited scale and nature of the proposed works) no further consideration in regard to ecological designations would appear to be required.

Ecological Habitats

- 3.7. The land within the current site has been specifically located in order to ensure that (with the exception of the required entrance via the existing field access) it is limited to the internal areas within a single intensively managed arable field, which is therefore currently understood to be subject to regular ploughing and disturbance associated with crop production (which would be anticipated to resume following the redistribution of soil from the temporary stockpile).

- 3.8. Accordingly, whilst no specific survey work has been undertaken of the land within the current site boundary itself, it is clear that the land is unlikely to include any habitats or features of significant ecological value that could represent a constraint on the proposed works (particularly given the scale, nature and temporary period of the works). Further, the above safeguards and mitigation set out in relation to The Brooks LNR (including in particular maintenance of a minimum 8m easement to the field boundary vegetation and use of suitable protective fencing) will ensure that the existing field boundary vegetation is fully retained and protected, subject to which no further survey or consideration would appear to be required in regard to the current proposals.

Faunal Species

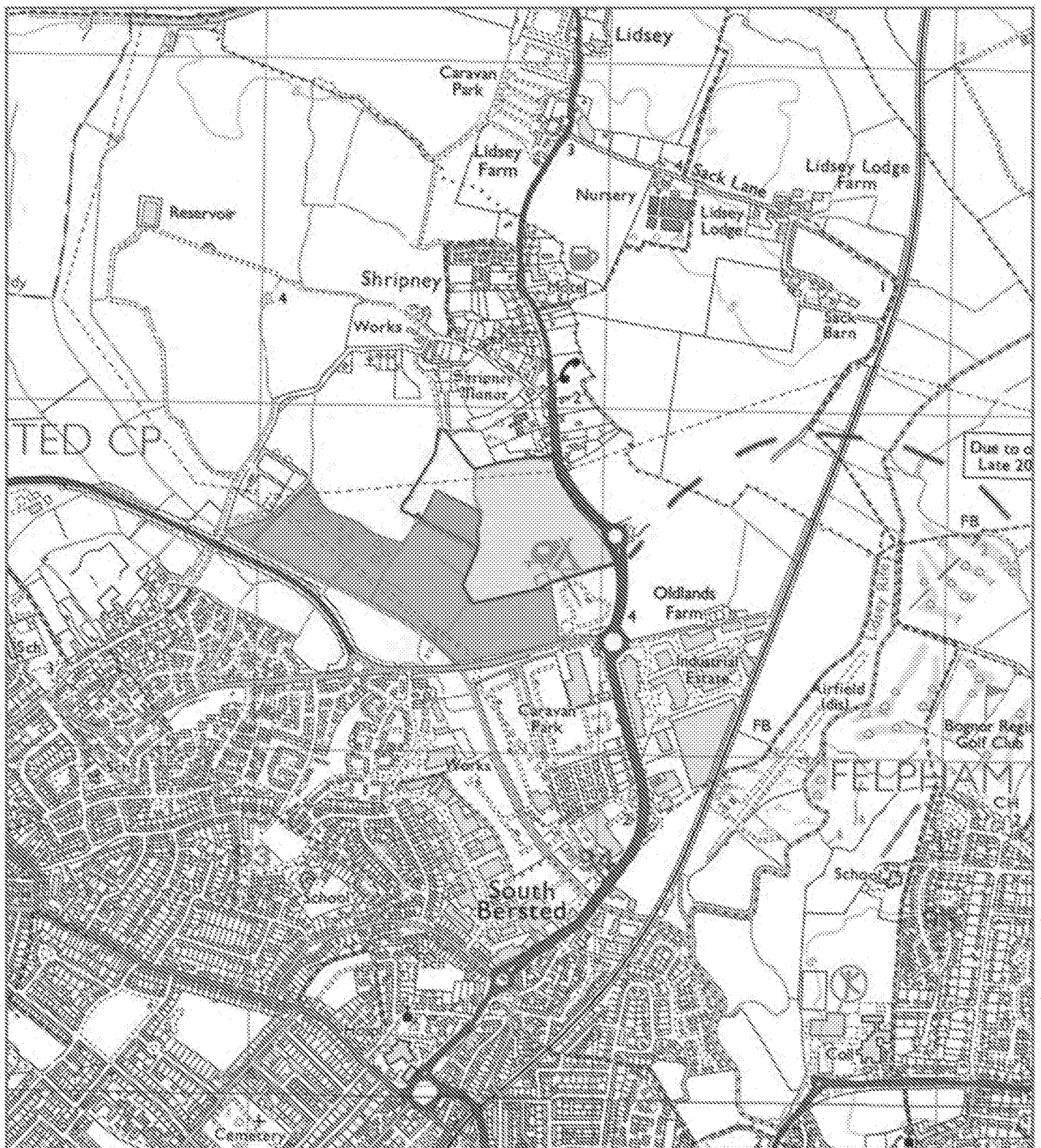
- 3.9. As set out above, the proposed works area (site boundary) has been specifically limited to the internal areas of a single (larger) existing arable field, which is subject to intensive arable management (including regular ploughing and cropping activities). Accordingly, it is clear that the proposed use of the site for storage of topsoil is unlikely to result in any significant short term impacts on faunal species over and above the current arable regime, whilst the temporary nature of the proposals are such that similarly long-term impacts can similarly be safely ruled out in regard to faunal species.
- 3.10. The inclusion of protective measures as outlined above (including maintenance of suitable easements to all field boundary vegetation and use of protective fencing) are such that any existing faunal use of the field boundary vegetation would be suitably safeguarded (whilst the permitted development will incorporate considerable additional habitats for a range of faunal species, which will similarly remain unaffected under the current works).

4. Summary and Conclusions

- 4.1. This note sets out consideration of the potential for the proposed use of the land within the current identified site boundary to result in any significant effects on ecological receptors, in order to inform the proposed works and associated planning application.
- 4.2. As set out above, the identified site boundary has been specifically drawn to contain only internal areas within an existing, intensively managed arable field to avoid potential impacts (with the exception of the site access, for which the existing field access will be used). Minor safeguards are recommended/will be incorporated in order to further safeguard ecological receptors, namely:
- Maintenance of suitable easements/buffers around the topsoil stockpile and associated working area (including a minimum of 8m from existing field boundary vegetation);
 - Use of suitable protective fencing to further prevent encroachment towards existing boundary vegetation;
 - Works to proceed in directional manner so that where possible the southern extent of the topsoil stockpile is created first, and retained longest and therefore provides an additional buffer and screening to the offsite LNR to the south.
- 4.3. Subject to the implementation of the above measures, in combination with the ecological measures and safeguards to be implemented as part of the adjacent permitted development scheme (including as set out within the previously submitted LEMP and Ecological Appraisal documents), the proposed use of the land within the current site boundary is unlikely to result in any significant adverse effects on ecological receptors and no further consideration would appear to be required in regard to ecological matters as part of the proposals.

Plan 4567/SSE1

Site Location and Context



Key:

-  Current (Proposed Soil Stockpile/Relocation) Site Location
-  Additional land within the same ownership
-  Saltbox Field (Permitted Development Site - Ref: BE/102/17/OUT)
-  The Brooks Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

aspect ecology

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Proposed Topsoil Relocation/
 Stockpile, Saltbox, Bognor Regis

Site Location and Context

4567/ECO2



March 2019

Appendix 4567/SSE1:

Proposed Topsoil Relocation Site Plan

Mountford Pigott Drawing 1744-TS-P02-A

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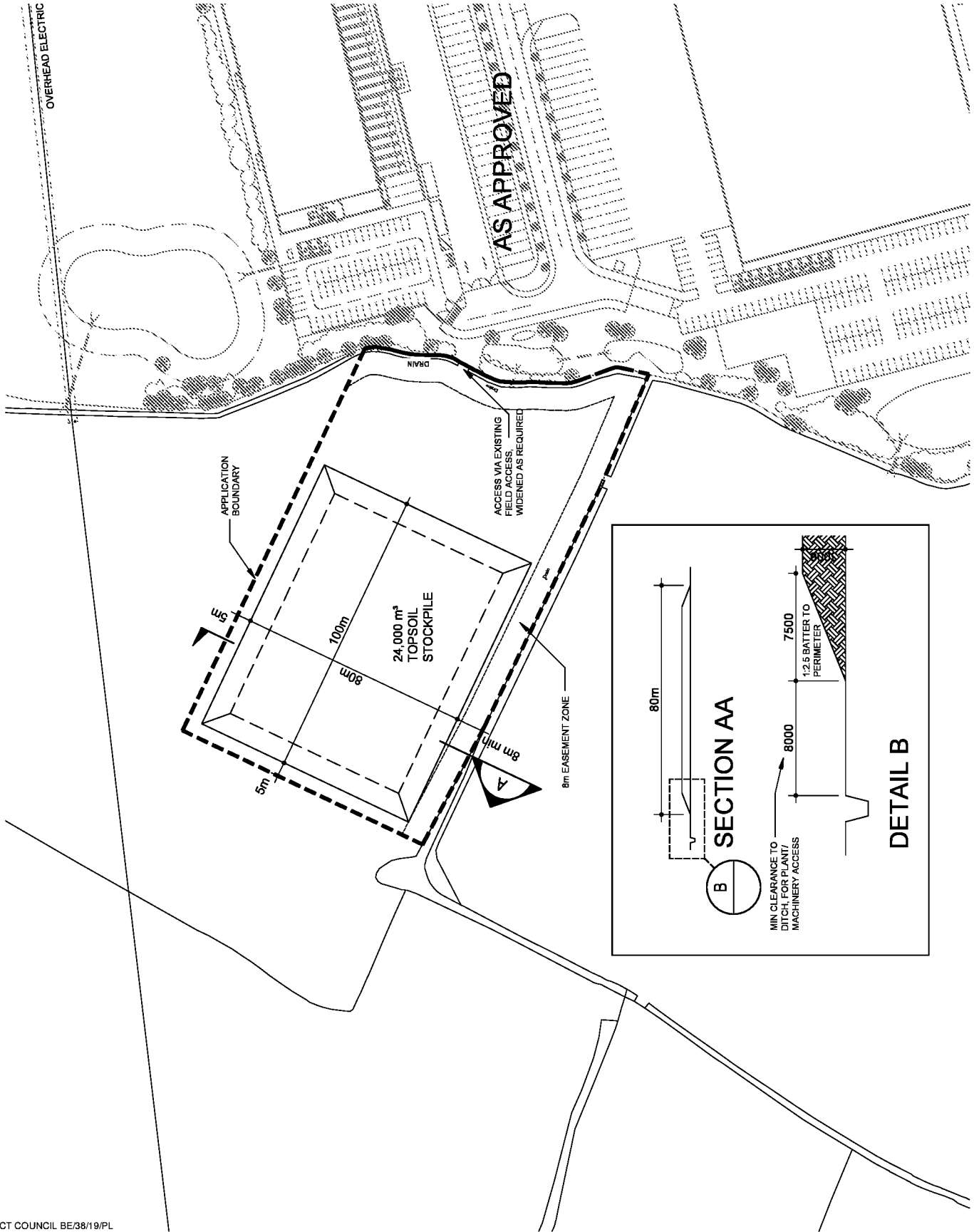
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REV
REV A



SALTBOX, BOGNOR REGIS

TOP SOIL RELOCATION
SITE PLAN
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