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**Proposed retail unit,
Gates Garden Centre**

Applicants F. A. Gates and Sons Ltd

Accompanying Highways Report

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1 Background

- 1.1 Edwards and Edwards Consultancy Ltd. is a 'Highway and Transportation Consultancy' specialising in giving advice to clients on highway development control matters. Our dedicated team have over 200 years' combined experience dealing with development control matters in both the public and private sectors. We have been engaged by Gates Garden Centre to provide a Highway Report to support their current planning application.
- 1.2 Gates Garden Centre is a family run business who have been operating for over 50 years. During that time that time the business has expanded and is now a very popular garden centre with a restaurant which has a very good reputation.
- 1.3 The Garden Centre is served by a separate vehicular access and egress arrangement from Westmoor Lane. Both the access and egress have been designed to cater not only for the volume of traffic that the Garden Centre generates, but also to cater for coaches and for large delivery vehicles that service the site. This access/egress arrangement was approved by Melton Borough Council on 26 August 2015 (LPA ref: 15/00530/FUL). The approved access/egress plan is attached as **Appendix A** to this report for information. The following photographs show firstly the approved access (Figure 1) and secondly the approved egress (Figure 2) onto Westmoor Lane:-



1.4

Figure 1



1.5

Figure 2

1.6 The planning application that was submitted for the proposed access/egress arrangements, also included an increase in off-street car parking spaces with the site. The approved car parking scheme shown on the access/egress plan

increased the amount of parking spaces from 454 to 788 (including disabled parking spaces). The following photographs (Figure 3 & Figure 4) shows the car parking facilities available within the site:



1.7

Figure 3



1.8

Figure 4

- 1.9 As part of the continued growth of the business, Gates Garden Centre are proposing a new retail unit on land immediately adjacent to a unit that was granted planning approval on 9 July 2018 (LPA ref: 18/00407/FUL). The following photograph (Figure 5) shows this retail unit which has now been built and brought into use.



1.10

Figure 5

- 1.11 This current proposal seeks a new retail unit with a floor area of 375 sq metres. The proposed building will be sited adjacent to the car park however it will not result in any loss of car parking spaces. The proposed development is shown on the plan attached as **Appendix B** for information.
- 1.12 This report considers the potential highway impacts of the proposal and seeks to address these issues and to demonstrate that this proposal should not lead to any unacceptable highway safety or capacity problems.

2 SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Gates Garden Centre is located on the southern side of Somerby Road and Westmoor Road, Cold Overton. Somerby Road and Westmoor Lane form part of a Class C public highway, that runs from Somerby to the west of the site to Langham to the east. The speed limit on the road changes on the site frontage from 30mph to 60mph. The following photograph (Figure 6) shows the site egress which is located within the 30mph speed limit:



2.2

Figure 6

- 2.3 Gates Garden Centre has been positively signed by Brown Tourism signs, that directs customers from the major road network to the site. The following photograph (Figure 7) shows the brown tourism sign directing vehicles into the site access:



2.4

Figure 7

- 2.5 As mentioned previously, the access and egress arrangements that serve the site have been designed to a very high standard, including their use by large goods delivery vehicles that regularly visit the site. The design and location of these accesses were granted approval by Melton Borough Council in 2015. The Local Highway Authority were consulted on that application, and were happy with the proposed arrangements, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.
- 2.6 An investigation into the accident record for Somerby Road and Westmoor Lane using CrashMap, shows that there has been no recorded personal injury road traffic accident at or within 500 metres of the site access within the last 5 years covered by CrashMap. In fact according to the information contained in CrashMap, there has not been a recorded road traffic accident in Cold Overton in the last 5 years
- 2.7 CrashMap uses data collected by the police about road traffic accidents on British roads, and the data is approved by the National Statistics Authority and reported on by the Department of Transport each year. Their data currently includes accidents up to the end of June 2020.

3 CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application seeks approval for the erection of a new retail unit at Gates Garden Centre. The proposed new building will be sited adjacent to a recently built retail unit. The previously approved building had an approximate floor area of 550 sq metres.
- 3.2 The proposed unit will have a floor area of 375 sq metres. The proposal will not be a stand alone retail unit, but will form part of an extension of the Garden Centre. It is not necessarily anticipated that the proposal will generate an increase in customer numbers, but will provide a greater range of goods available and help enhance the shopping experience for existing customers.
- 3.3 Whilst the level of traffic movements that the applicants are expecting as a result of the new building will be negligible, in order to provide a robust assessment an analysis of the likely level of trips that a retail use could generate reference has been made to the Trip Rate Computer System (TRICS). TRICS is widely used as a reasonable and reliable tool for estimating the likely peak hour flows for various categories of land uses
- 3.4 An analysis of the TRICS data for likely levels of traffic generated by a retail use has been made, by choosing the main land use as Retail and the sub land use as Retail Park (excluding food).
- 3.5 TRICS does not contain comparable information to that which is being proposed, as the size of the buildings that have been surveyed are much larger, with the minimum floor area of the sites available is 2809 sq metres. The information available does not contain many if any comparable locations, and in order to obtain a suitable number of sites, sites that were located in more urban locations have been selected.
- 3.6 For the retail use, TRICS has highlighted the 85th percentile rate and this suggests that the trip rate per 100 sq metres of floor area would be

AM peak hour (8am-9am)	0.880 arrivals	0.453 departures	total 1.333
PM peak hour (5pm-6pm)	2.372 arrivals	3.252 departures	total 5.624
Daily flow (7am-7pm)	19.263 arrivals	18.947 departures	total 38.210

3.7 Based on these trip rates, a retail use with a total floor area of 375sq metres would generate

AM peak hour	3.300 arrivals	1.699 departures	4.999 total
PM peak hour	8.895 arrivals	12.195 departures	21.090 total
Daily flow	72.236 arrivals	71.051 departures	143.288 total

3.8 It should be noted that the proposed retail use is not a 'stand alone' use and is intended to offer existing customers a wider range of products rather than to generate new customers. Also the above figures in TRICS are based on much larger buildings than the one for which this application seeks approval. Therefore the figures quoted in TRICS will provide a very robust set of results and can be considered a worst case scenario.

3.9 Given the fact that the existing floor area of the buildings and outdoor plant sales area is around 10,000 sq metres, the proposed extension will only represent an increase floor area of 3.75% which is insignificant.

3.10 The previous planning application for the retail unit with a floor area of 550 sq metres did not cause the Local Highway Authority any concerns. In their formal response to that application, they considered that the access arrangements serving the site were acceptable, and that there were no highway safety concerns in the surrounding area.

3.11 The Local Highway Authority also stated that the amount of car parking spaces available far exceeded the minimum number of spaces required and therefore were happy that the amount of parking and indeed servicing available within the site was more than sufficient.

3.12 Using the 1 space per 20 sq metres requirement mentioned in their previous response, this latest application would generate a further requirement of 19 spaces. To meet their minimum standard a minimum of 523 parking spaces were required as a result of the previously approved retail unit. Therefore the addition of a further 19 spaces that this new retail unit would require, the site would need to achieve a minimum of 542 spaces. Given that the existing car parking area exceeds that level already, it should be accepted that no further parking provision is required for this relatively small extension.

- 3.13 Given that this current application is for a smaller sized unit, I am of the opinion that there should be reason to consider that this proposal would lead to any unacceptable level of harm to highway safety nor would it lead to any severe highway capacity issues.
- 3.14 I consider that this report has demonstrated that the proposed site access will be safe and suitable to serve the proposed development, and that the level of parking available within the site will cater for any small increase in demand that the proposal may generate. Vehicles will be able to enter and leave the site using its very high standard access/egress arrangements, furthermore the additional level of traffic generated will not create any highway capacity problems on to the public highway Road. Consequently, I consider that it should be considered acceptable to both the Local Planning Authority and the Local Highway Authority.
- 3.15 As such it meets the requirements laid out in paragraph 108 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019, and there should be no reasonable grounds to refuse the application on the basis of paragraph 109 of the revised NPPF 2019.

4 CONCLUSIONS

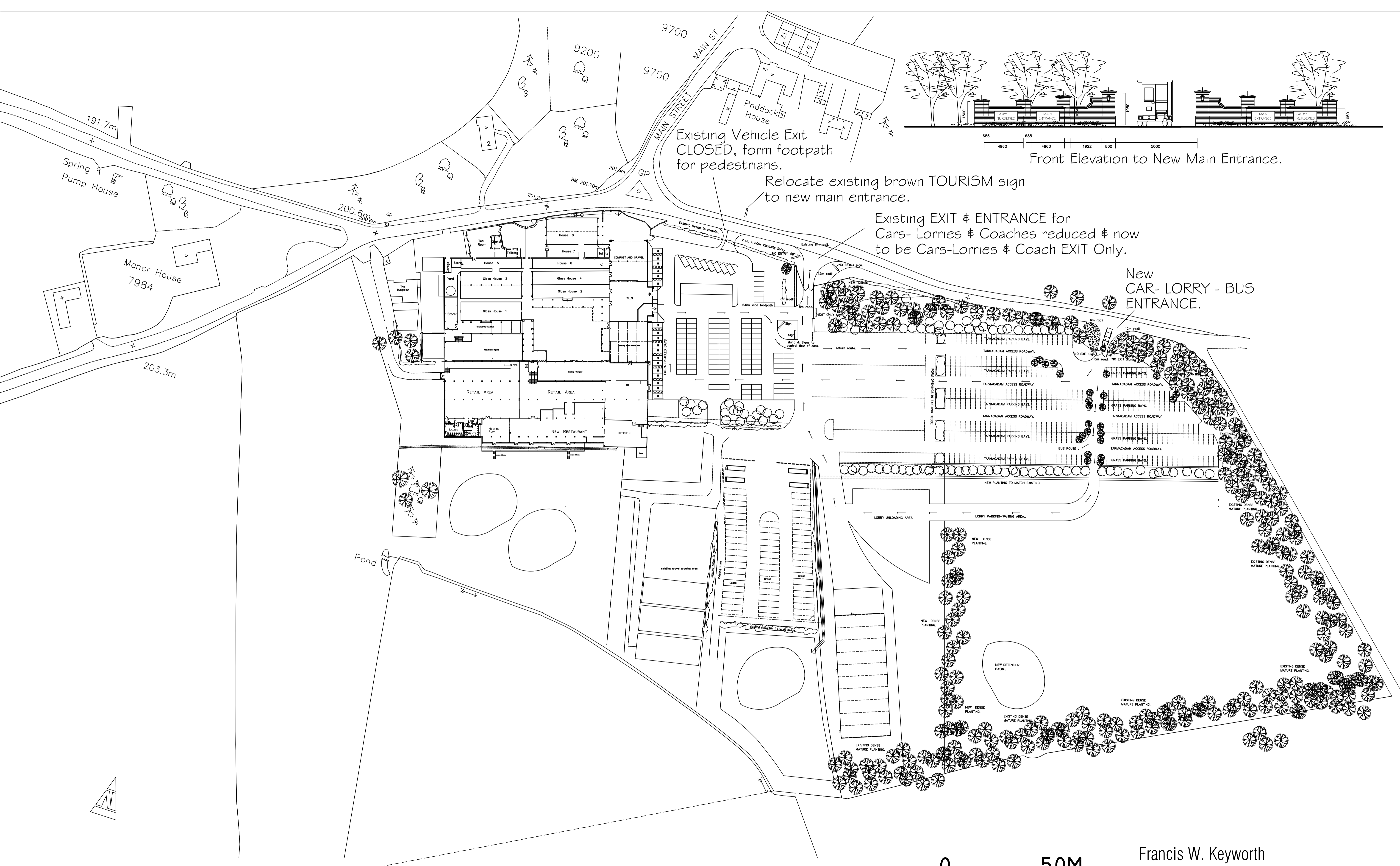
- 4.1 Gates Garden Centre are seeking planning approval for a relatively small extension to its existing retail area, with the addition of a new retail unit with a floor area of 375sq metres.
- 4.2 This unit will be an extension to the Garden Centre and will not be a stand alone retail outlet. It is intended to serve the existing customer base, and not intended to generate additional customers. The proposed unit will result in an increased floor area of less than 4% of the existing Garden Centre, and therefore will not be expected to generate a significant increased volume of traffic.
- 4.3 The existing access and egress arrangements serving the site are more than suitable to cater for any increase in traffic. The existing car parking area is more than suitable to cater for any increased demand that may arise from such a small extension.
- 4.4 A previous application for a slightly large extension was considered by the Local Highway Authority and they accepted that the access arrangements and level of car parking was more than suitable. I am of the opinion that this current application will not have any adverse effect on either the access arrangements or the car parking on the site.
- 4.5 The level of traffic that the proposed development is likely to generate will not result in any highway capacity issues, nor should it lead to any unacceptable level of harm to highway safety.
- 4.6 I am therefore of the opinion that this supporting highway report has demonstrated that the proposal will not lead to any unacceptable increased level in harm to highway safety nor result in any severe capacity issues on the local road network.. On that basis I am of the opinion that there should be no reasonable grounds to refuse the application on the basis of paragraph 109 of the revised NPPF 2019

Duncan Clarke

Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd

Date May 2021

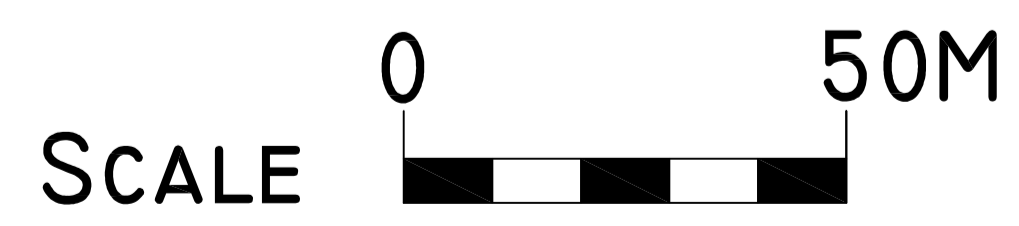
Appendix A. Approved access/egress plan



LOCATION PLAN .

F. A. GATES & SON, NURSERY, SOMERBY ROAD, COLD OVERTON.

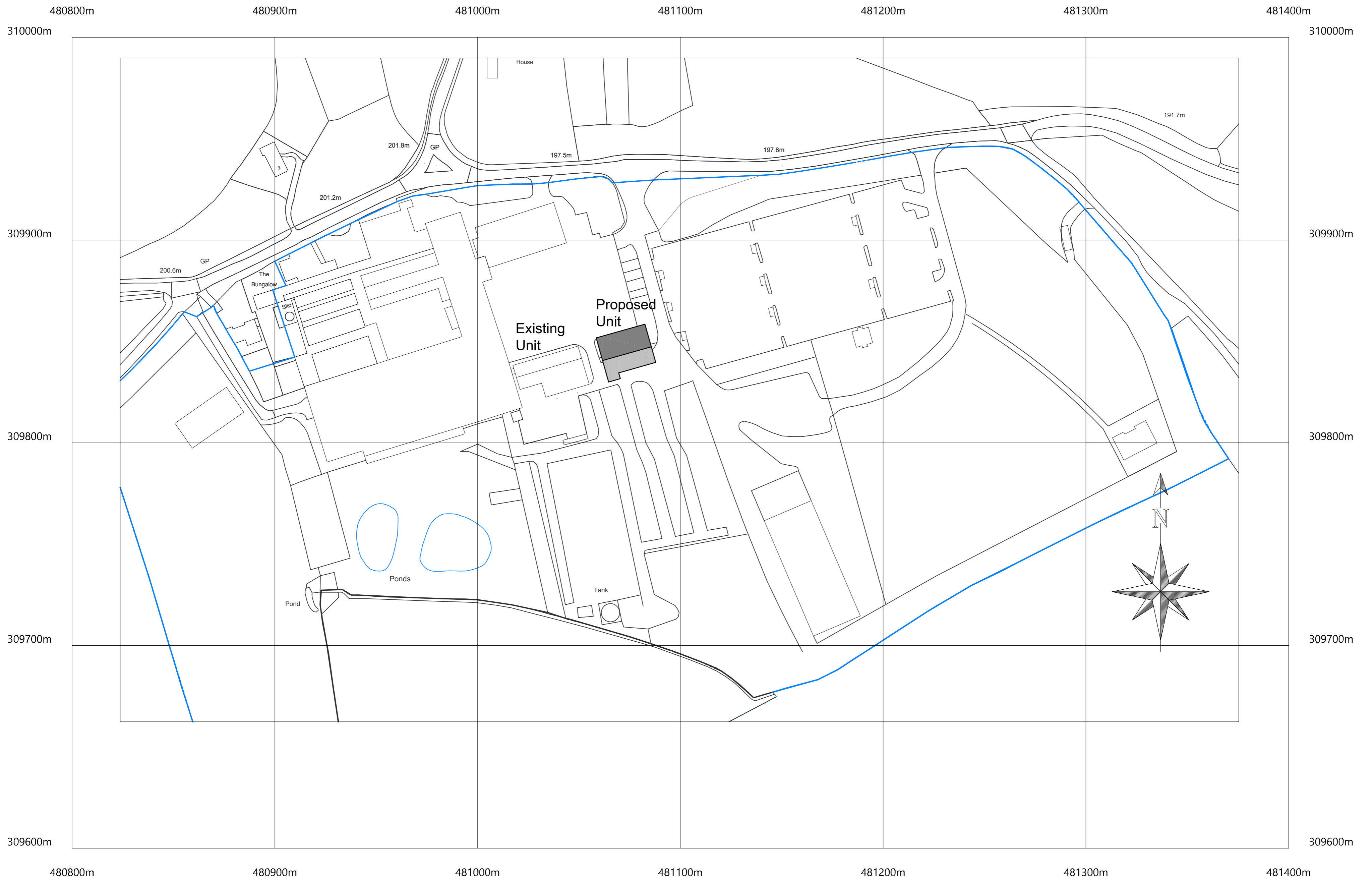
This plan has been part derived from ordnance survey data and not from a full measured survey.



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Appendix B. Proposed site layout plan



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Site Plan
Scale 1:1250 at A2