

Planning Statement

Erection of a Storage Building and associated
works

Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Bragenham Lane,
Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, LU7 0EE

On behalf of:
Jonjo Strickland

December 2023

Ref: 1296

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Contents

	Page	
1	Introduction	1
2	Site Description and Background	5
3	Proposals	8
4	Planning Policy	12
5	Planning Assessment	15
6	Summary and Conclusions	22
Appendix 1	Sequential Site Assessment of Alternative Premises	
Appendix 2	Pre-application Advice	
Appendix 3	Ecology Screening Opinion	

1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage on behalf of Jonjo Stickland ('the Applicant') in relation to the proposed development at Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Bragenham Lane, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, LU7 0EE ('the site'). Full planning permission is sought from Buckinghamshire Council for:

"Erection of a storage building and associated works"

1.2 This Statement provides an assessment of the proposals against the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF').

1.3 The application follows two rounds of pre-application advice from the local planning authority (LPA), initially in December 2022 (22/04263/COMM) and a follow-up pre-application in July 2023 (23/01484/COMM). The proposal hereby submitted addresses the comments received and provides all of the information necessary for the LPA to positively determine the application.

1.4 The application comprises the following: Kingswell

- Full Planning Application Forms
- Site Location Plan – SD.CTB.01
- Site Plan Proposed – SD.CTB.02
- Proposed Plan – SD.CTB.02
- Proposed Building Elevations – SD.CTB.04
- Proposed Section - SD.CTB.05
- Storage Equipment Inventory
- Sequential Site Assessment (see Appendix 1)
- Ecology Screening Report (see Appendix 3)

1.5 The remainder of this Statement is set out as follows:

- Section 2 – Background: provides information relating to the background to the proposals, the need for the building and the demand in the local area;
- Section 3 – Site Context and Planning History: provides a detailed description of the site and its surroundings and sets out other useful background information to the application including relevant planning history.
- Section 4 – Proposals: provides a detailed description and explanation of the proposed development.
- Section 5 – Planning Policy: sets out the planning policy framework against which the planning application should be assessed.
- Section 6 – Planning Assessment: provides a detailed justification for the development against relevant planning policies, and taking account of all other material considerations.

- Section 7 – Summary and Conclusions: summarises the key benefits of the proposed development and the reasons why planning permission should be granted.

Overview

- 1.6 Planning permission is sought for a storage building on land adjacent to Cherry Tree Barn. Cherry Tree Barn is owned by the applicant, Mr. Stickland, who requires additional storage space to accommodate the needs of his business.
- 1.7 Mr. Stickland is the founder of Marine Department, a company which operates in the television and film industry, specialising in all aspect of filming on, under or around water. The company has a large inventory of boats, filming equipment, diving and scuba equipment, safety equipment etc. required for television and film production work.
- 1.8 The equipment is currently stored in two locations in Suffolk and West Moseley (around 70 miles from the application site). The proposed storage unit will enable the applicant to transport the equipment directly to set, rather than driving to a storage location (in Suffolk and/or West Moseley) and then driving from the storage location(s) to the set.
- 1.9 Equipment is transported from the storage locations to various filming locations. The equipment then stays on set for a prolonged period of time, ranging from around 6-weeks to 6-months. The company generally works on a maximum of two projects at any time, therefore, the number of trips to and from the site will be minimal – at most 10 trips per week. Evidence of trips is provided within this Statement.
- 1.10 Notably, equipment is very often taken to film production studios in Buckinghamshire. There are various film studios in Buckinghamshire near to the application site. Pinewood Studios near Slough is the largest film studio in the United Kingdom and includes studios equipped with water tanks and underwater stages for aquatic filming. Marine Department regularly work at Pinewood, WB Leavesden Studios, Sky Elstree Studios and Bovingdon Studios, all of which are within 50 miles of the application site.
- 1.11 The application site is the optimal location for the storage facility given it's proximity to filming locations and studios. The applicant has searched for a suitable premises for the business for the past four years – no suitable sites have been identified. In line with the pre-application advice, this Statement provides evidence of searches for alternative storage units within north Bucks on allocated and non-allocated employment sites. The Sequential Site Assessment is given in Appendix 1, it assesses the sites against the applicant's criteria and explains why these sites are not preferable to the application site.
- 1.12 Whilst the proposed site is in the 'open countryside', the Development Plan supports proposals for business in rural areas where it is proven that it is 'essential' for the business to be located there. This Statement will demonstrate that it is indeed essential for the business to be located at Cherry Tree Barn, principally due to the following reasons:

- a) Security – the equipment is very expensive, it is essential that this is stored in a location which is secure. Having the equipment stored on land adjacent to where the owner lives offers the highest level of security. Effectively there will be a 24/7 presence at the site. In this most important regard, the applicant has been unable to find other suitable premises for the storage of the equipment.
 - b) Sustainable Travel – having the equipment stored adjacent to the applicant’s home enables a reduction in travel when moving the equipment. The proposed storage unit will enable the applicant to transport the equipment directly to set, rather than driving to a storage location (in Suffolk and/or West Mosely) and then driving from the storage location(s) to the set. Cherry Tree Barn is also optimally located to access studios and filming locations which are generally in the southeast. This makes the proposed building a much more sustainable location which will reduce journey times and vehicle emissions.
 - c) Commercial Viability – to deliver the level of security and quality of facility required, the applicant would need to rent a storage unit. There are no viable premises available at present. The applicant owns the land where the storage unit is proposed, it is much more viable for the business to build a bespoke unit, rather than acquiring new land to build a unit, or seeking to buy an existing unit. These options have been explored and are not considered viable.
- 1.13 None of the sequentially assessed site were able to meet the businesses requirement in terms of the above considerations. As such, it is considered essential for the business to located in the open countryside.
- 1.14 The applicant would be happy to have permission granted subject to a condition that the site is used only for the purposes of storage in association with their business. This would effectively make the permission ‘personal’. Such an approach would ensure that the proposed use – which is low intensity and neighbourly – will only operate from the site, i.e., the building will not be occupied by another storage and distribution operator whereby an intensification of use may have an adverse impact on the character of the site and wider surrounds and the local highway network. Should the council agree to this approach, a suitably worded condition could be imposed to any permission.
- 1.15 In terms of design, the proposed unit has a traditional rural aesthetic, appearing as a traditional farm building or agricultural barn. This type of building is in-keeping with the rural character of the area, indeed, there are numerous agricultural buildings of similar appearance in the surrounding area.
- 1.16 In terms of unit’s size, the proposed unit is modest and at a scale which is similar to a small agricultural barn. The size of the building is dictated by the storage requirements. The Inventory List supplied with the application and the plans which show the equipment within the proposed building demonstrate that the size of the building is justified.
- 1.17 In terms of access, the existing access is of a sufficient size to accommodate the type of vehicles – a 4x4 and trailer - which will be accessing and egressing the site. Given the minimal number of trips the unit will generate, there will be no noticeable impact on the highway network. The application includes details of the number of trips predicated from the storage building, this provides evidence that the use will not have an unacceptable impact on roads.

- 1.18 The applicant is committed to delivering an environmentally sustainable proposal. To this end, the building incorporates renewable technologies and other sustainable measures. The applicant has also obtained an Ecology Screening Opinion from Buckinghamshire Council; this confirms that some assessments may be necessary (reptile survey), however these surveys can be conditioned to any planning permission.
- 1.19 The proposal provides commitments to on-site renewable energy which would exceed the policy requirement for a development of this scale. The applicant would be willing to provide the precise details by condition.

2 Site Description and Background

- 2.1 The 0.16ha site is situated within the hamlet of Bragenham on the northern side of Bragenham Lane, south of Bragenham Stables, within the Civil Parish of Soulbury. The applicant owns and resides at the main dwelling on the site – Cherry Tree Barn, the application site is on land which is owned by the applicant.
- 2.2 The wider site is bounded by dense woodland to the east, agricultural fields to the south, and by some mature trees to the west. Residential dwellings, Bragenham Manor, and their associated land are located to the north. Beyond these dwellings there is open land and woodland.
- 2.3 The site comprises a 0.16ha parcel of land which is located in the western most part of the site, close to the entrance on Bragenham Lane. The topography of the site rises to the east from a lower level near Bragenham Lane. The application site is at the lowest level. Access to the site is via an existing road off Bragenham Lane, which also serves the residential property.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the proposed site with approximate building location (Google Maps)

- 2.4 The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) places the site outside of any defined settlement boundary, allocating it in 'Open Countryside'. The site is situated within an Area of Attractive Natural Landscape (AAL).
- 2.5 The site does not contain, nor is it adjacent to, any statutorily or locally listed buildings. The site is not within a conservation area and does not contain any trees.
- 2.6 The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1, land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%) and is mostly at very low risk of flooding from surface water.

Planning History

- 2.7 There are no relevant records of other planning applications at the site. As mentioned in the introduction, there have been two pre-application enquiries submitted to Buckinghamshire Council relating to the proposal.

- 2.8 Pre-application advice was initially sought in December 2022 (22/04263/COMM) for the erection of an outbuilding for storage including stable block and hard standing. The local planning authority assessed this pre-application on the basis that the building was for personal storage use, rather than for a commercial business. The response did not consider the principle policy which guides commercial developments of this nature.
- 2.9 Subsequently, further pre-application advice (23/01484/COMM) was sought from Buckinghamshire Council in May 2023 for the erection of an outbuilding for use as commercial storage unit. The written pre-application advice was received on 30 June 2023. The summary of the advice is given as follows:

“The proposed commercial storage use is generally not acceptable in the open countryside, unless significant justification is provided as to why B8 use would be an exception relative to Policies S1, S2, S3 and D6 of the VALP. As mentioned previously in 22/04263/COMM, the proposed stables for personal use would be acceptable in principle given its location and relatively common use in the open countryside. However, as mentioned in this report, further information is required to demonstrate the need for the stables and the lawful use of the land around.”

Principle of Development

- 2.10 In terms of the storage unit, the Council outlined that there would need to be significant justification as to how the proposed commercial use meets the relevant policies of the VALP. The pre-application advice also highlighted that the proposal would need to ensure the development is in a sustainable location and justify why other employment sites within the north of Buckinghamshire are not suitable or viable to move the business to another location.
- 2.11 With regard to the proposed stable block, the Council confirmed the stable block would be considered acceptable in principle subject to the justification of the need for the stables and the number of horses that would be housed in the stables.

Design, Character and Appearance

- 2.12 The pre-application advice confirms that the most appropriate location for the proposed buildings would be towards the bottom of the slope to prevent adverse impact on the AAL and local character.

Residential Amenity

- 2.13 In terms of amenity, the Council confirmed that due to the secluded location of the application site and distance away from the existing residential dwellings, there would likely not be an unacceptable impact on residential amenity. The pre-application advice did however note that noise activities or external lighting produced as a result of the development would need to be demonstrated to not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity.

Parking and Highways

- 2.14 The pre-application advice recommended further advice should be sought from the Council's Highway's Team to understand issues regarding the capacity of the highways network, visibility splays, trip generation, the number of employees and the level of parking necessary.
- 2.15 It was confirmed that the proposals are highly unlikely to have an impact on existing public rights of ways.

Ecology

- 2.16 The pre-application advice emphasised the impending national requirement to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain and, with the site being located in a amber zone for Great Crested Newts, the requirement to safeguard GCNs.

Flood Risk

- 2.17 In terms of flood risk, the Council stated that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will need to be carried out as the site area is over 1 hectare and no details have been provided in relation to the increase in hard standing. It was also advised that, as with all new development, a surface water drainage system with acceptable flood control must be incorporated alongside demonstration of water supply, foul sewerage, and sewerage capacity can serve the development.

Energy Efficiency

- 2.18 In terms of energy efficiency, it was stated that the development will need to demonstrate resilience to climate change and promote sustainability wherever possible

Infrastructure

- 2.19 It was recommended that the proposals demonstrate how the aims of VALP Policy S5 are met and that sufficient bin storage is provided.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a storage building (Use Class B8) for use in association with the applicant’s business.
- 3.2 The proposal involves the erection of a new storage building measuring 38m (width) x 23m (depth) x 8.6m (height). The building will have an area of 874sqm. In line with the pre-application advice, the building will be located towards the western part of the site, close to the access track as shown on the Proposed Site Plan.

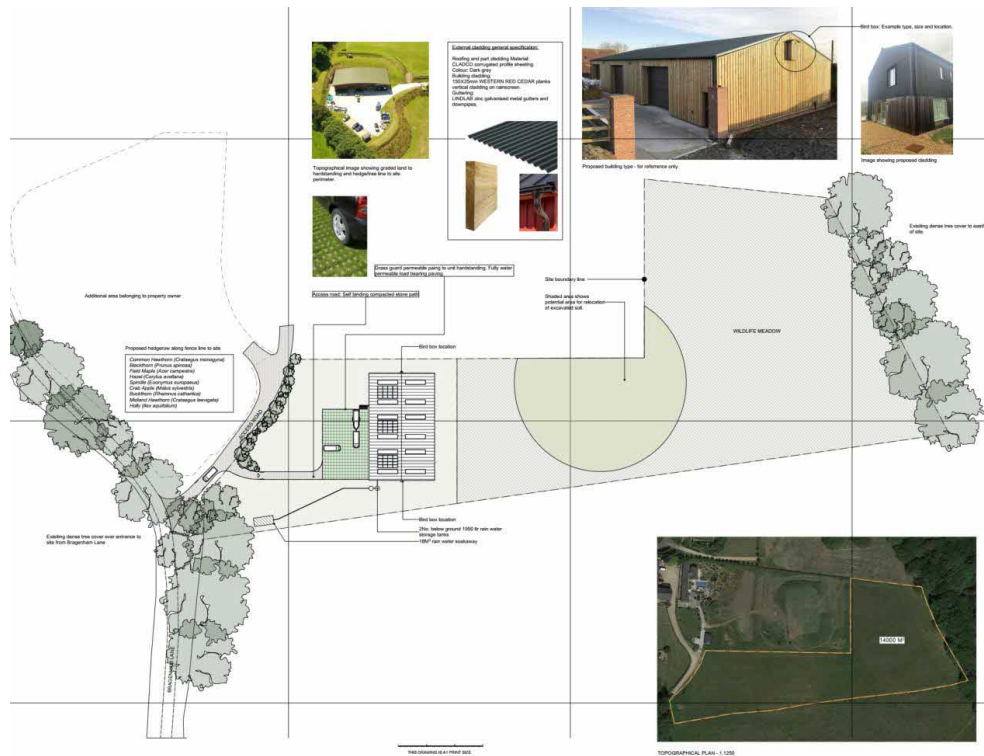


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

- 3.3 In terms of external appearance, the building will have a traditional and functional rural aesthetic, i.e. it will look like a traditional farm building / agricultural barn.
- 3.4 The steel framed building will be timber-clad with a corrugated metal roof, finished in dark grey. The roof will have photovoltaic roof panels.
- 3.5 The building is located at the foot of a hill, closest to the road. As such, it is contained by the natural topography of the landscape. The building will be set within the landscape to minimise any impact on the openness of the landscape.
- 3.6 Additional hedgerow planting is proposed to the west of the building, as per the specification provided by the Council through pre-application. The building forecourt will be paved in permeable ‘grasscrete’.
- 3.7 As show by Figure 3, a new driveway is proposed from the highway and an area of hardstanding is proposed to the front and side of the building.

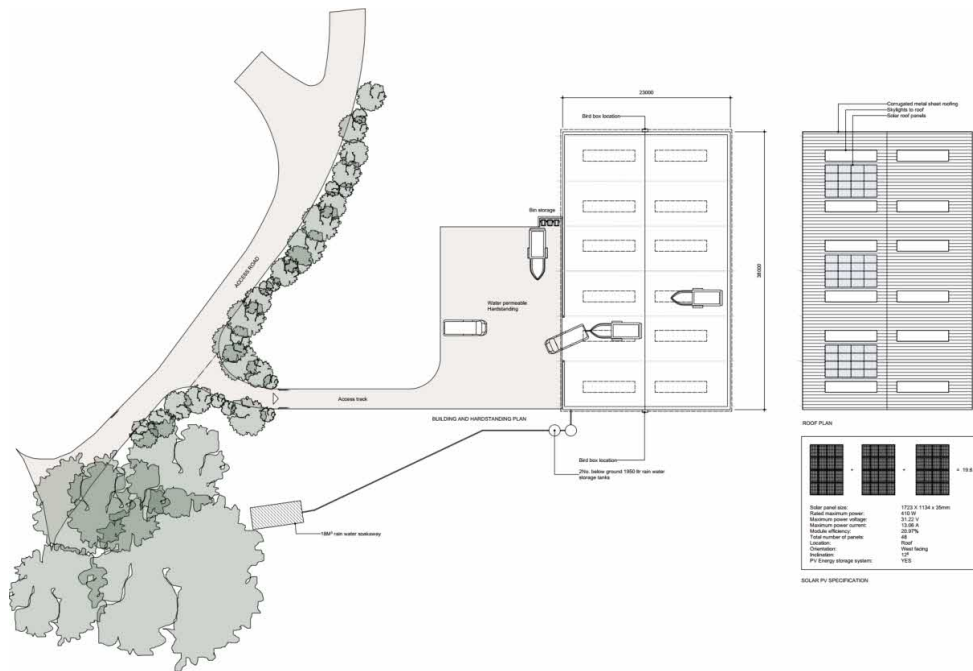


Figure 3: Building Plan and Roof Plan

Proposed Use

- 3.8 The building will be used to store aquatic vehicles (mainly boats) and associated specialist equipment which are used in the film industry. As such, this will fall within Use Class B8 of the Use Class Order.
- 3.9 The inventory of equipment is listed as follows:

Boats

- d) 8m HDPE Fast Open Boat
- e) 7m HDPE Fast Open Boat
- f) 7m Landing Craft
- g) 6m HDPE Fast Work Boat
- h) 5m Camera Boat
- i) 5m Safety Boat
- j) 2x 5m Aluminium Support Boats
- k) 4x 5m Inflatable Safety Boats
- l) 4m Aluminium Safety Boat

List of Equipment

- m) 6m Flatbed trailer
- n) 4m Flatbed trailer
- o) Modular pontoon
- p) Long wheel base equipment van
- q) Safety & Rescue equipment including medical equipment
- r) Servicing tools
- s) 200 Lifejackets
- t) 100 Dry suits

- u) 50 Wetsuits
 - v) 30 Buoyancy Control Devices
 - w) Specialist film related diving equipment
- 3.10 Full details of the inventory are provided in the supporting Equipment Inventory Document, submitted with the application.
- 3.11 The above equipment is currently stored between several sites, a Sailing Club in West Mosley and a farm in Suffolk. These locations are not sufficient for the business's requirements: it does not provide sufficient space for storage (equipment is therefore stored across other locations); it does not provide sufficient security and the site does not benefit from welfare facilities. It also does not have the space to accommodate the business needs.
- 3.12 The boats and equipment will be stored in the proposed building when they are not 'on-location'. When the boats and equipment are 'on-location', they stay there for extended periods of time, ranging from weeks to months. Therefore, the trip-generation associated with the storage building will be minimal, less than 10 trips per week.
- 3.13 The boats are transported on road trailers towed by a standard 4x4 car, enabling them to be easily transported from storage to filming locations.
- 3.14 The storage building will also be used to service the equipment as necessary, however the primary function of the building will be for storage. The building will not require any full-time staff to be present, staff may visit the site as required, however, generally all matters will be dealt with by the applicant who resides at Cherry Tree Barn.
- 3.15 It is essential that the equipment is stored in a secure environment. The most secure environment for the boats within close proximity of the owner's property.

Personal Planning Permission

- 3.16 Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA1990)¹ makes clear that planning permission runs with the land. However, this can be expressly excluded to create a 'personal planning permission' in exceptional circumstances. This is because TCPA1990, s75(1) provides that any grant of planning permission to develop land shall, except insofar as the permission provides, ensure for the benefit of the land and of all persons for the time being interested in it. Accordingly, a planning condition can make an exception to the normal circumstances that permission runs with the land.
- 3.17 Therefore, the Council may impose a condition to make the permission personal to the applicant and their business or the owners of Cherry Tree Barn. If the business ceases trading or the applicant leaves the site, then the B8 Use of the building will cease and it will revert to a domestic storage use.
- 3.18 For example, a condition such as the following could be imposed:

"The B8 Use of the building hereby permitted shall be only for any business operated by owners of Cherry Tree Barn. If the building is not in use for commercial purposes then it shall revert to domestic storage in association with the main dwelling. The B8 building shall not be used for commercial purposes other than by those residing at Cherry Tree Barn"

¹ Section 75 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/75>

- 3.19 Similarly, a condition might be imposed to restrict Heavy Goods Vehicles accessing the site. Such conditions would be considered reasonable by the applicant and would meet the 'tests' for the imposition of planning conditions².

² Use of Planning Conditions - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-planning-conditions>

4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan comprises the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), adopted in September 2021. There is no neighbourhood plan covering the site area.
- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Planning Practice Guidance (PPG); supplementary guidance; and other Council policy documents can all be material considerations.

The Development Plan

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (Adopted September 2021)

- Policy S1 – Sustainable Development for Aylesbury Vale
 - Policy S2 – Spatial Strategy for Growth
 - Policy C3 – Renewable Energy
 - Policy BE2 - Design of New Development
 - Policy BE3 – Residential Amenity
 - Policy D6 – Provision of Employment Land
 - Policy E4 – Working at Home
 - Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Policy NE4 – Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape
 - Policy NE5 – Pollution, Air Quality and Contaminated Land
 - Policy NE7 – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
 - Policy NE8 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
 - Policy T4 – Capacity of the transport network to deliver development
 - Policy T6 – Vehicle Parking
 - Policy T7 – Footpaths and Cycle Routes
- 4.4 The Development Plan is comprised of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), adopted in September 2021. The following policies of the VALP are relevant to the current proposals. The most relevant policies are described in the following paragraphs.
- 4.5 Policy D6 of the VALP – Provision of Employment Land – is the principal policy which should guide the current proposal. This states that employment development will generally be supported in sustainable locations, including (e) “in rural locations where this is essential for that type of business”.
- 4.6 The associated text to Policy D6 states: “Continuing provision of land and premises suitable for employment uses is needed, of a type and scale appropriate to the characteristics of the local area. This should provide sufficient opportunities for employment needs to be met locally, reduce the need to travel to work, and promote economic growth and social inclusion”.

- 4.7 Policy E4 of the VALP – Working at Home – is also relevant to the current proposal. This states “Partial use of a residential property for business use will be permitted where there are no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and it would not have an adverse effect on the character of an area, whilst making appropriate provision for access, parking and noise attenuation arising from the business activity”.
- 4.8 Policy T4 – Capacity of the Transport Network to Deliver Development - states new development will be permitted where there is evidence that there is sufficient capacity in the transport network to accommodate the increase in travel demand as a result of the development. The policy suggests that.

Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.9 National planning policy is provided for by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 5 September 2023, which will be material consideration in the determination of the applications, as is well as the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which was launched on the 6th March 2014 and is regularly updated.
- 4.10 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Paragraph 8 of the Framework recognises that there are three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development, namely, economic, social and environmental. In regard to the three roles, the NPPF states:
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”
- 4.11 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means that unless material considerations indicate otherwise:

“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application area out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i)* The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii)* Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

4.12 Chapter 6 of the NPPF provides guidance on ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’. Paragraph 81 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential”

4.13 Paragraphs 84 and 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provide guidance pursuant to ‘Supporting a prosperous rural economy’.

4.14 Paragraph 84 states that planning policies should enable “the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”

4.15 Paragraph 85 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. “In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport)”.

Other Relevant Guidance

4.16 The following supplementary planning documents are also considered relevant to the determination of this application:

- Biodiversity Net Gain SPD
- Vale of Aylesbury Design SPD (2023)

5 Planning Assessment

5.1 This section of the report provides a detailed assessment of the proposals against all relevant national and local planning policies, as well as addressing all other material considerations. It addresses the following planning issues in turn:

- Principle of Development;
- Design and Impact on the Character of the Area;
- Highways Safety and Parking;
- Landscaping and Trees;
- Residential Amenity;
- Ecology and Biodiversity;
- Flooding and Drainage;
- Sustainability.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 Policy S1 'Sustainable Development for Aylesbury Vale' outlines that all development must comply with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
- 5.3 Policy S2 'Spatial Strategy for Growth' states that provision will be made for employment land. It highlights the location for the strategic levels of growth. It does not however provide any guidance on employment in the open countryside.
- 5.4 Policy D6 'Provision of Employment Land' VALP states development will be supported in rural locations where it is essential for that type of business.
- 5.5 Policy E4 'Working from Home' states partial use of a residential property for business use will be permitted where there are no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and it would not have an adverse effect on the character of an area, whilst making appropriate provision for access, parking and noise attenuation arising from the business activity.
- 5.6 The pre-application advice received from the local planning authority acknowledges that businesses can be located beyond existing settlement and in the open countryside. This follows the guidance in paragraph 84 and 85 of the NPPF.
- 5.7 The principle policy in the determination of the proposal is Policy D6 of the VALP. Accordingly, this states that development will be supported if it is 'essential' for the business to be in a rural location.
- 5.8 Pursuant to the above assessment of whether it is essential for the business to be located in a rural location, the pre-application advice requested that the applicant investigated other employment sites within North Buckinghamshire and discounted those as unsuitable. This exercise has been carried out and is presenting in the Sequential Site Assessment – given in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 The Sequential Site Assessment identified seven potential sites and assessed them on the basis of their availability, viability and suitability. None of the sites were identified as suitable for the businesses needs.

- 5.10 The Sequential Site Assessment will only provide a snapshot of the sites available at the time when the search is undertaken. It is notable that Mr. Stickland has endeavoured to identify a site for four years, without success. The lack of available sites is not unsurprising given the unprecedented demand for storage uses which the market has witnessed in recent years.
- 5.11 The Sequential Site Assessment demonstrates that there are no other site available within the local area which meet the needs of the business. To this end, the application site is preferable.
- 5.12 Further to the above, the pre-application response stated that that the following questions needed to be answered through the full application:
- Are there any particular skill set for the employees that is available within the local catchment area?
- 5.13 On the basis of the building proposed, there will be no need for additional employees other than Mr. Stickland.
- Is the proposed business use due to its nature and possible noise generation will be best suited to the open countryside?
- 5.14 As per the sequential assessment, yes, the proposal is most suited to the open countryside and the location proposed. This location is the most viable, most secure and most sustainable for the business.
- Is the site suitably located near to public transport routes?
- 5.15 The site is not located near to public transport routes. Again, only Mr Stickland will be responsible moving equipment to and from the site, there will be no need for additional employees. The location of the business at the applicant's home will significantly reduce the need to travel and is therefore considered to be the most sustainable location in transportation terms.
- 5.16 Further to the above justification, there are other material consideration which support the principle of development in this location.
- 5.17 The NPPF states planning decision should create conditions in which business can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The applicant's business works within the film and television production industry. This is a specialist sector and one which thrives in Buckinghamshire.
- 5.18 The NPPF states that decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries. The provision building associated with of a film production company in this location, in close proximity to other companies and infrastructure within the industry, is fully aligned with the guidance in the NPPF.
- 5.19 According to recent research by Knight Frank - [UK Film and Television Studios Market Report 2023](#) – spending on UK film and television spending is expected to grow to a spend of £9.2billion in 2028. This additional spend would require an additional 3.2 million square foot of studio space in the same period. Although a relatively modest facility, the current proposal would contribute to this requirement.

- 5.20 It has been clearly demonstrated that it is essential for the business to be located at the application site. The Sequential Site Assessment has demonstrated that there are no other available sites within the local area which are suitable for the business. The Cherry Tree Barn site is suitable, available and viable. Furthermore, the provision of a new floorspace which supports a specialist sector, and meets an acute need for such floorspace, further supports the principle of development.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

- 5.21 Policy BE2 'Design of New Development' sets out the design criteria development should follow including taking into account the site's physical characteristics; setting; local distinctiveness, natural qualities and features; and the effect on views and skylines.
- 5.22 Policy NE4 'Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape' requires development to recognise and respect the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and sets out criteria relating to landscape which development should meet.
- 5.23 The proposed building appears as a traditional farm building, entirely in-keeping with the character of the surroundings. The design of the building has been informed by the recently published Aylesbury Vale Design Guide, in particular guidance on 'Development in the Countryside'.
- 5.24 The building will be clad in traditional materials. It will be positioned in the landscape in such a way which minimises its visibility and impact on the landscape. Accordingly, the proposed building is considered to be entirely suitable and compliant with the relevant policies of the Development Plan with regards to design.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 5.25 Section 9 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Paragraph 110 states that planning decisions should ensure that opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 5.26 Policy T4 'Capacity of the transport network to deliver development' states new development will be permitted where there is evidence that there is sufficient capacity in the transport network to accommodate the increase in travel demand as a result of the development. The policy suggests that B8 uses require a supporting Transport Statement if they are more than 3,000sqm.
- 5.27 Policy T6 'Vehicle Parking' requires all new development to provide an appropriate level of parking in line with Appendix B of the VALP.
- 5.28 Policy T7 'Footpaths and Cycle Routes' sets out the criteria relating to development which will have implications for any public footpaths and cycle route networks.
- 5.29 The proposed storage building will be used to store equipment and machinery associated with the applicant's business. As mentioned earlier in this Statement, for the most part, equipment is taken to filming locations and stays 'on-set' for a duration of at least two weeks, sometimes up to 3-months.

- 5.30 To demonstrate the limited impact of the proposal on the local highways network. Mr Stickland has provided a log of trips for the past three months.
- Week 1 – 6 trips between 0800 – 1800
 - Week 2 – 0 (on-location and away from site)
 - Week 3 – 0 (on-location and away from site)
 - Week 4 - 8 trips between 0800 – 1800,
 - Week 5 - 10 trips between 0800 – 1800
 - Week 6 - 4 trips between 0800 – 1800
 - Week 7 - 2 trips between 0800 – 1800
 - Week 8 - 10 trips between 0800 – 1800
 - Total - 50 trips to and from existing storage facility.
- 5.31 The trips to and from the storage location are therefore limited. The applicant has provided a log of trips made by the company in the past two months. The log demonstrates that the storage facility was visited 50 number of times, equating to 6.25 trips per week.
- 5.32 Furthermore, it is also relevant to note that the storage facility will be provided on the applicant's land. This means the applicant will not have to travel to and from the storage facilities 70 miles away, before the equipment is taken to set. This will effectively reduce distances by 140 miles per trip.
- 5.33 The Local Plan acknowledges at 6.14 that "Using your home as a place of work has a number of sustainability benefits including a reduction in journeys to work", whilst the storage building would not be within the home itself, the same principal applies.
- 5.34 Overall, the proposal will lessen the impact on the highway network compared to the existing situation. The low frequency of trips will have no noticeable impact on the local highway network.
- 5.35 To ensure that the impact remains minimal, the applicant would be willing to accept a condition that the site shall only be accessed by small vehicles, i.e., no HGVs.

Landscaping and Trees

- 5.36 Policy NE8 'Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands' sets out the procedures and protective measures in relation to trees, hedgerows and woodlands that development proposals should undertake.
- 5.37 The application site does not contain any trees, nor will the development affect any trees. The development will provide a new hedgerow as per the specification provided by the Council's Ecologist (see Appendix 3 – Ecology Screening Opinion) and therefore provides an overall gain.

Residential Amenity

- 5.38 Section 12 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.39 Policy NE5 'Pollution, Air Quality and Contaminated Land' requires the minimisation of noise impacts, external lighting, air quality and air quality if relevant to the proposed development.
- 5.40 Policy BE3 'Protection of the amenity of residents' aims to protect the amenity of existing residents and states that planning permission will not be granted for development proposals which unreasonably harm residential amenity.
- 5.41 The site is remote from any other residential properties in the immediate area. Notwithstanding, the proposed use of the building is not noisy and would not have an unneighbourly impact.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.42 Policy NE1 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' sets out the biodiversity and geodiversity criteria development proposals must follow including the protection of protected species; protection and enhancement of biodiversity; achievement of biodiversity net gain; and production of ecological surveys where appropriate.
- 5.43 An Ecological Screening visit was undertaken at Cherry Tree Barn on 11th September 2023 by two Ecology Officers - Paul Holton and Emma Foster. The screening visit comprised an ecological walk over to screen out the potential for protected species / habitats to be impacted by the proposed development.
- 5.44 It was noted that the development of the gravel / stone path and building will have limited impact and only if further development is proposed would further survey work be required.
- 5.45 In relation to protected species the site has the potential for reptile present however, due to the scale of the development (as shown on site) it is appropriate to secure this through a precautionary method statement by pre-commencement condition.
- 5.46 As part of NE1 Policy of the local plan the proposed development is required to have some biodiversity gains. This will be achieved mainly through the creation of the new hedgerow on the site. The Ecology Screening Report advised that bird boxes could be erected on site. The bird boxes are shown on the plans and have a northerly aspect orientation (north, north-east and north-west).
- 5.47 The Ecology Screening Report recommended the enhancing of the site by connecting the hedgerows along the western boundary of the site with the following species.
- Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) - 25%
 - Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) - 25%
 - Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) - 10%
 - Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) - 10%
 - Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) - 5%

- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) - 5%
- Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) - 5%
- Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) - 5%
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) - 5%
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) - 5%

5.48 Officers and the application discussed plans to manage the top end of the field (adjacent to the woodland) as a wildlife area to compensate and provide habitat enhancements through the proposed development. To secure this, it was agreed that an ecological design strategy with management and monitoring plans could be secured by condition. For example cut and remove the grass 1-2 times a year.

5.49 Overall, in line with the recommendations of Bucks' Ecology Team, it is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on protected species and will enhance biodiversity across the site.

Flooding and Drainage

5.50 Policy 14 'Flooding' seeks to minimise the impacts of and from all forms of flood risk. The policy requires sites over 1ha in Flood Zone 1 to undertake a flood risk assessment (FRA). The policy also requires all new development to incorporate a surface water drainage strategy to effectively manage surface water run-off on site.

5.51 Policy 15 'Water resources and waste infrastructure' seeks to improve water quality, resource, and sustainability. The policy also requires new development to demonstrate that water supply, foul sewerage and sewage treatment capacity is available or can be made available in time to serve the development.

5.52 The site is in Flood Zone 1 – lowest risk of flooding. The size of the site (0.16ha) is well-below the threshold for any SUDS strategy, however, the proposal will incorporate permeable paving and will incorporate measures such as rainwater harvesting. The applicant welcomes the imposition of a condition to agree these water-saving measures.

Sustainability

5.53 Policy C3 'Renewable Energy' states "all development schemes should look to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources" and sets out the requirements development proposals must meet in terms of sustainability.

5.54 The proposal will include solar PV which will help to power the units. Three 1723mm x 1134mm x 35mm panels will be installed (48 panels in total) on the west facing roof. The max power per panel will be 410 watts, maximum voltage will be 31.22 volts and maximum current will be 13.06 amps. The solar PV array will deliver 19.KW. This will be stored in batteries within the building and should provide sufficient power for the building's needs. Should further details of the solar PV array be required, these can be secured by condition.

- 5.55 Policy S5 'Infrastructure' states that development proposals must provide sufficient bin storage. The proposed use does not generate commercial waste. Bin stores will however be provided on-site and they will be emptied by the applicant as and when necessary.

6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage on behalf of Jonjo Stickland in relation to the proposed storage unit at Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Bragenham Lane, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire.
- 6.2 The Development Plan and national planning policy supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas through well-designed new buildings. It is also recognised that some businesses need to be located in rural areas.
- 6.3 This Statement has explained why it is essential for the business to be in this location. To this end, we consider the proposed development has been demonstrated to comply with the relevant local planning policies, the NPPF and all other material considerations.
- 6.4 Evidence contained in this Statement demonstrates that the proposal will not create an adverse impact on the local highway network. To ensure the development remains acceptable in this regard, the applicant would be willing to accept a condition to ensure that the permission is personal to the applicant and their business.
- 6.5 The proposal will not have any adverse impact on residential amenity. The proposal will also assimilate with the landscape and the prevalent character of the surrounds.
- 6.6 In terms of environmental measures, the proposal will use on-site renewable energy production. The proposal includes landscaping and other measures to increase the site's biodiversity value.
- 6.7 For the reasons set out in this Statement, is respectfully requested that the application be approved and planning permission is granted.

Appendix 1 - Site Assessment

The applicant has a number of essential requirements for the business premises, if these requirements are not met, then the site is unsuitable:

- Security – must be manned 24/7.
- Size – must be 800sqm
- Cost – must be less than £50 per sqm per annum to be viable
- Availability – must be available now and for a minimum period of 3 years
- Accessibility – must be within 10 miles of Cherry Tree Barn.

The available sites are assessed as follows:

Premises	Liscombe Business Park	Suitable	Comments
Address	Liscombe Business Park Ltd 10 Media Village Liscombe Business Park Soulbury Leighton Buzzard LU7 0JL		
Distance	2 miles	Yes	
Size	400sqm	No	
Link	https://liscombebusinesspark.co.uk/office-space-to-let/liscombe-east-warehouse-reserved/		
Cost	£27,000 per annum (£67.5 per m ² per annum)	No – too expensive	
Security	Not manned 24/7	No	
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE		

Planning Statement: Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Soulbury

Premises	Double Arches Business Park	Suitable	Comments
Address	Eastern Way, Leighton Buzzard LU7 9LF		
Distance	3 miles	Yes	
Size	400sqm	No	
Link	N/A		
Cost	NO UNITS AVAILABLE	No	
Security	Not manned 24/7	No	
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE		

Premises	Apex Business Park	Suitable	Comments
Address	Boscombe Road, Dunstable, LU5 4SB		
Distance	11 miles	No	
Size	535 sqm	No	
Link	N/A		
Cost	£47,500 per annum	No	
Security	Not manned 24/7	No	
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE		
Premises	Sparrow Hill Business Park	Suitable	Comments

Planning Statement: Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Soulbury

Address	Leighton Road, Edlesborough, Dunstable LU6 2ES		
Distance	7 miles	No	
Size	Smaller offices only. 850 sqf or 425 sqf	No	
Link	N/A		
Cost	£10,000 or £6500 per annum respectively.	Yes	
Security	Manned 24/7	Yes	
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE		

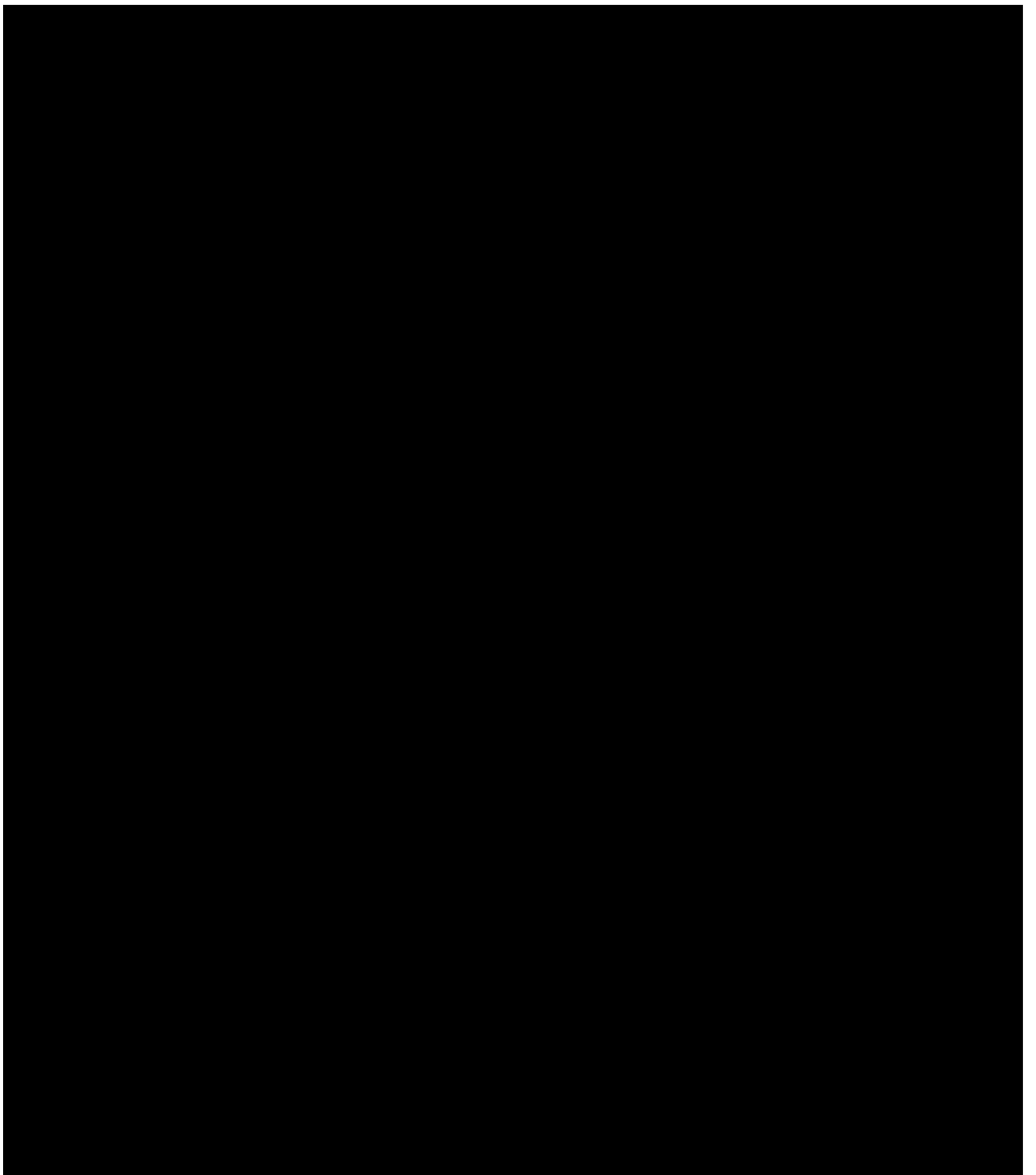
Premises	Broughton Grounds Business Park	Suitable	Comments
Address	Broughton Grounds Lane, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0HZ		
Distance	10 miles	No	
Size	Only small storage units (160sqft)	No	
Link	N/A		
Cost	£150 per month	Yes	
Security	Not manned 24/7	No	
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE		

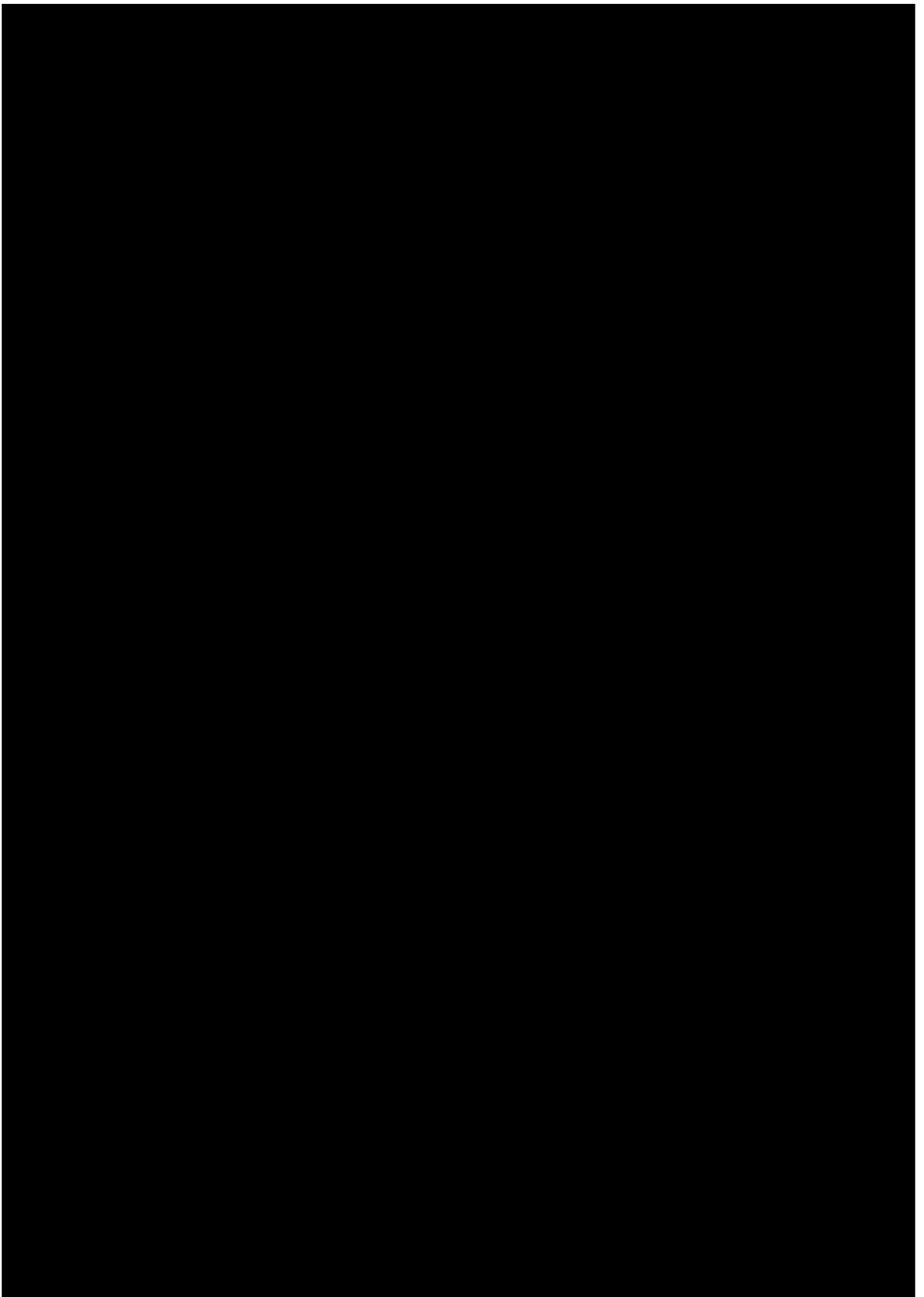
Planning Statement: Land at Cherry Tree Barn, Soulbury

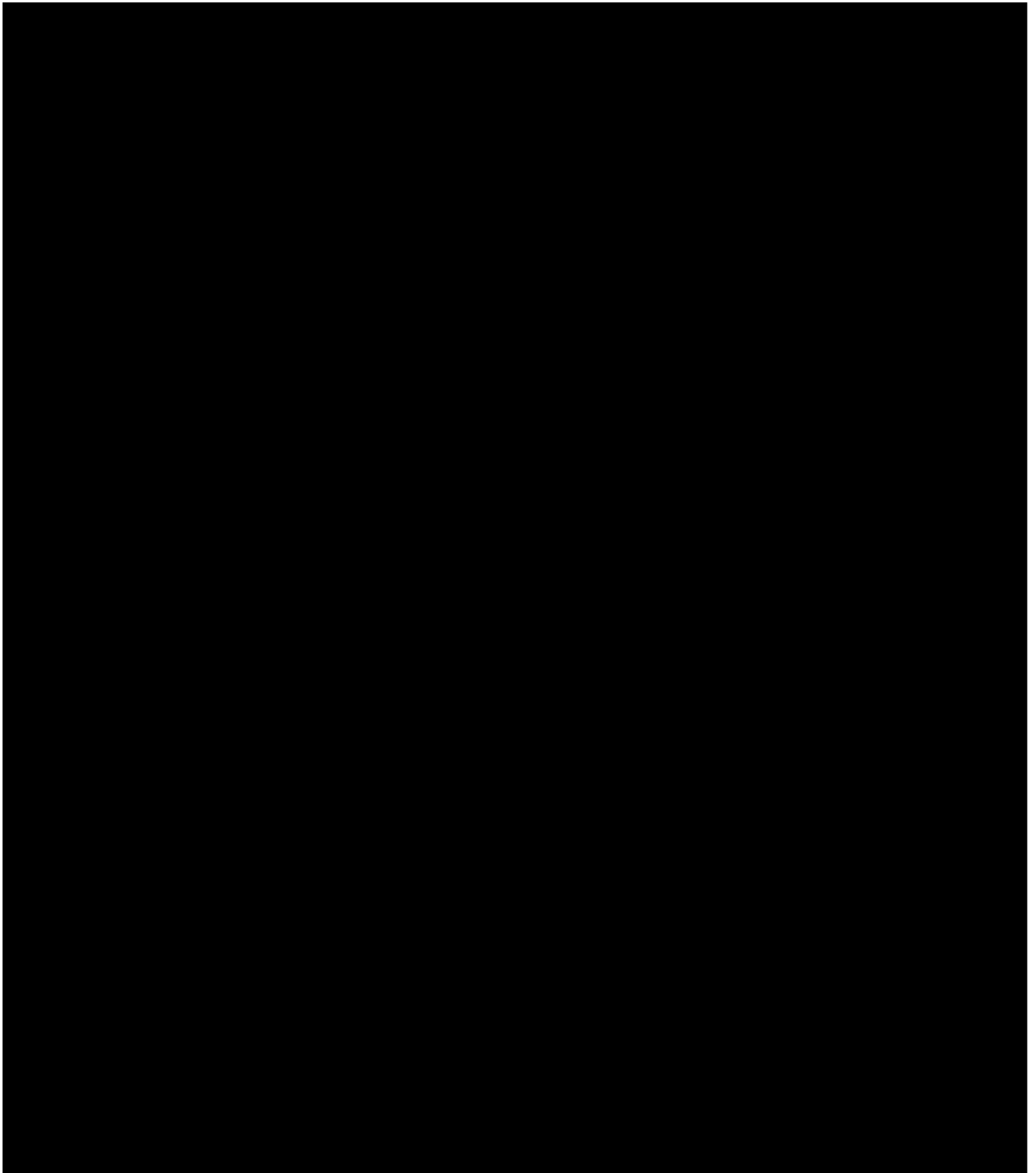
Premises	Bletchley Business Campus	Suitable		Comments	
Address	1-9 Barton Rd, Water Eaton, Bletchley, Milton Keynes				
Distance	5 miles	Yes			
Size	NO UNITS AVAILABLE.	No			
Link	N/A				
Cost	NO UNITS AVAIBALE	N/A			
Security	N/A	No			
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE				

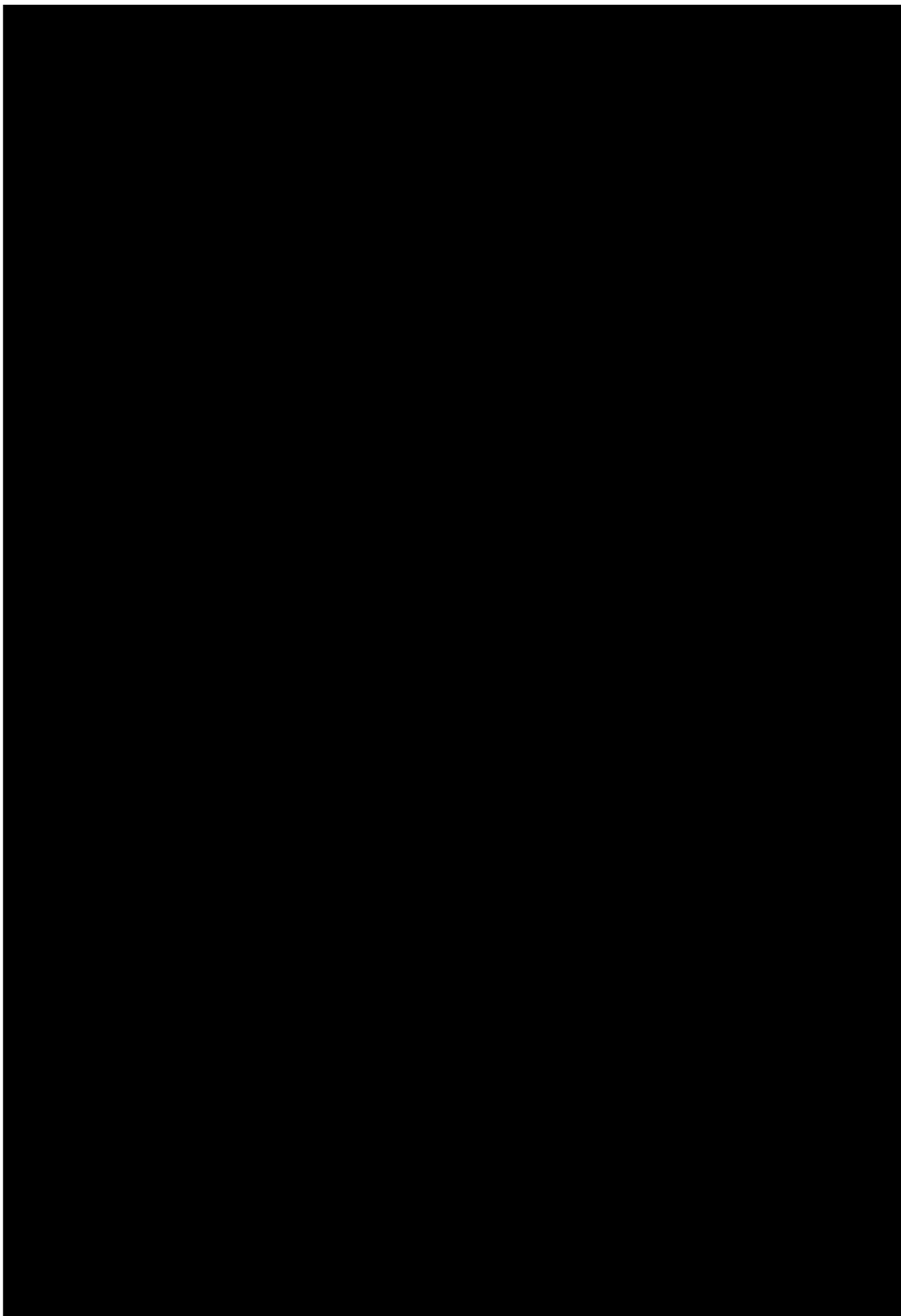
Premises	Chiltern Industrial Estate	Suitable		Comments	
Address	Grovebury Road, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 4TU				
Distance	No units available at Leighton Buzzard site. Nearest available unit 20 miles (Aylesbury)	No			
Size	765 sqm	No			
Link	N/A				
Cost	£96, 785	No too expensive.			
Security	Manned 24/7	Yes			
Conclusion	SITE IS NOT SUITABLE				

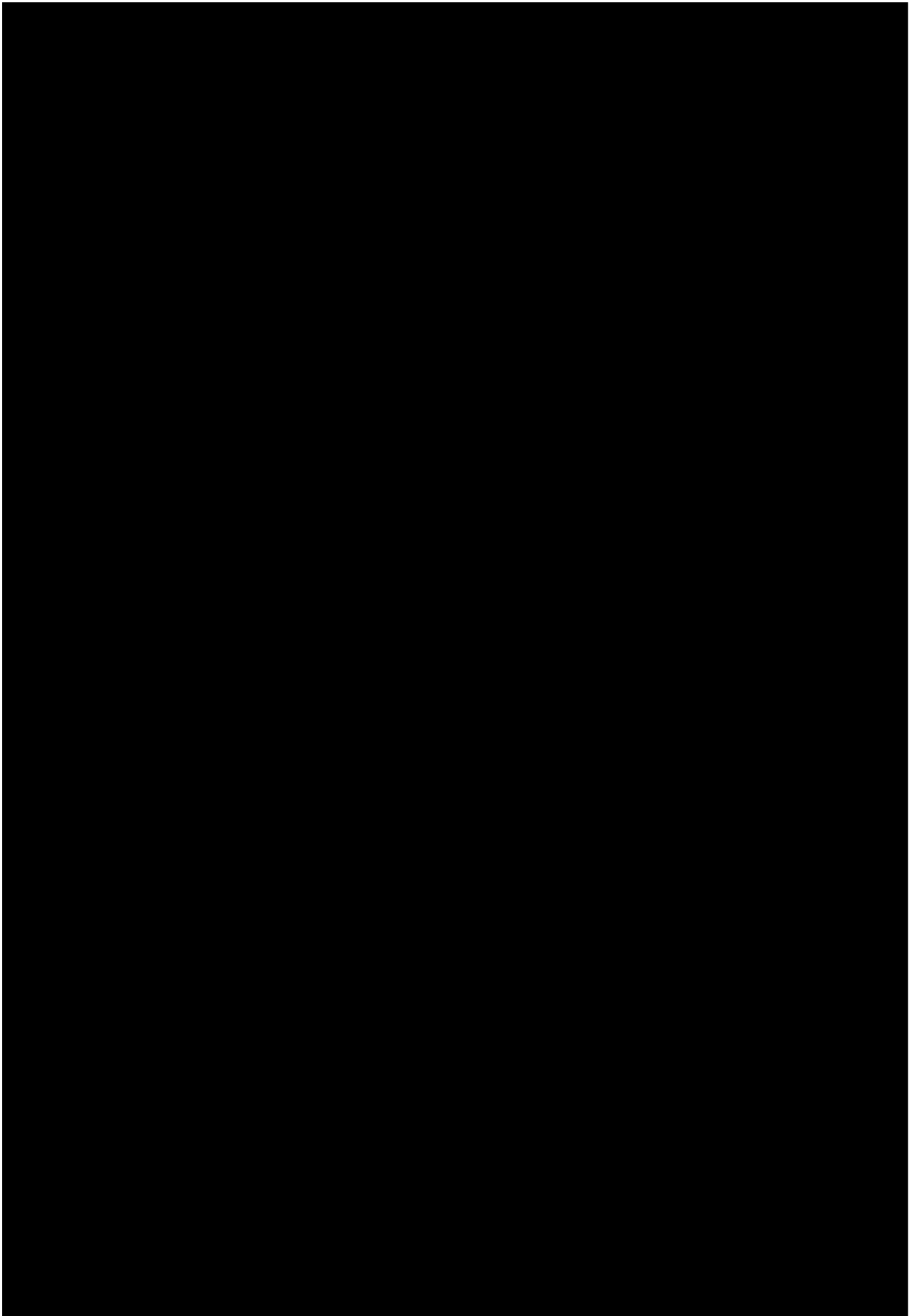
Appendix 2 – Pre-application Response

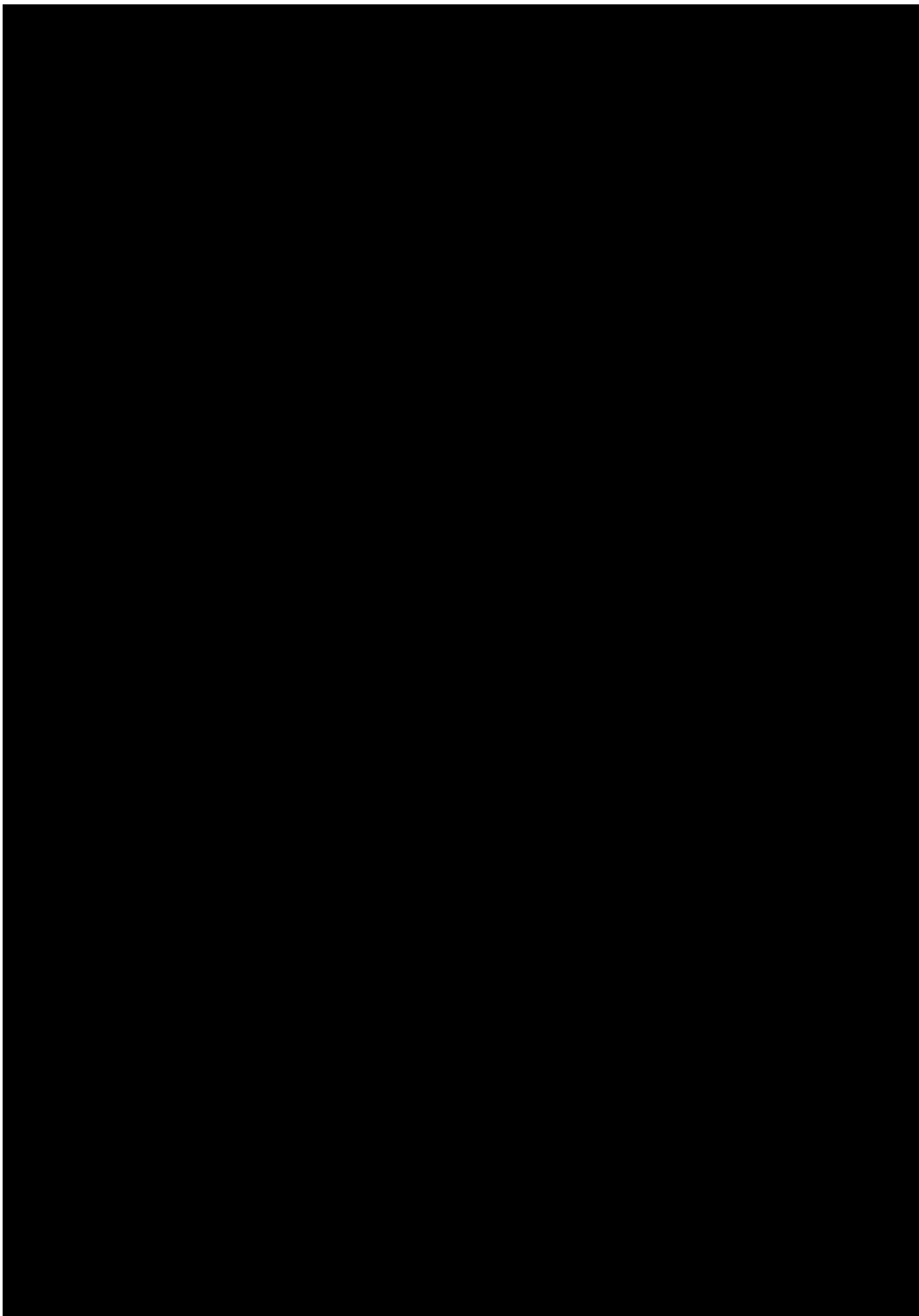


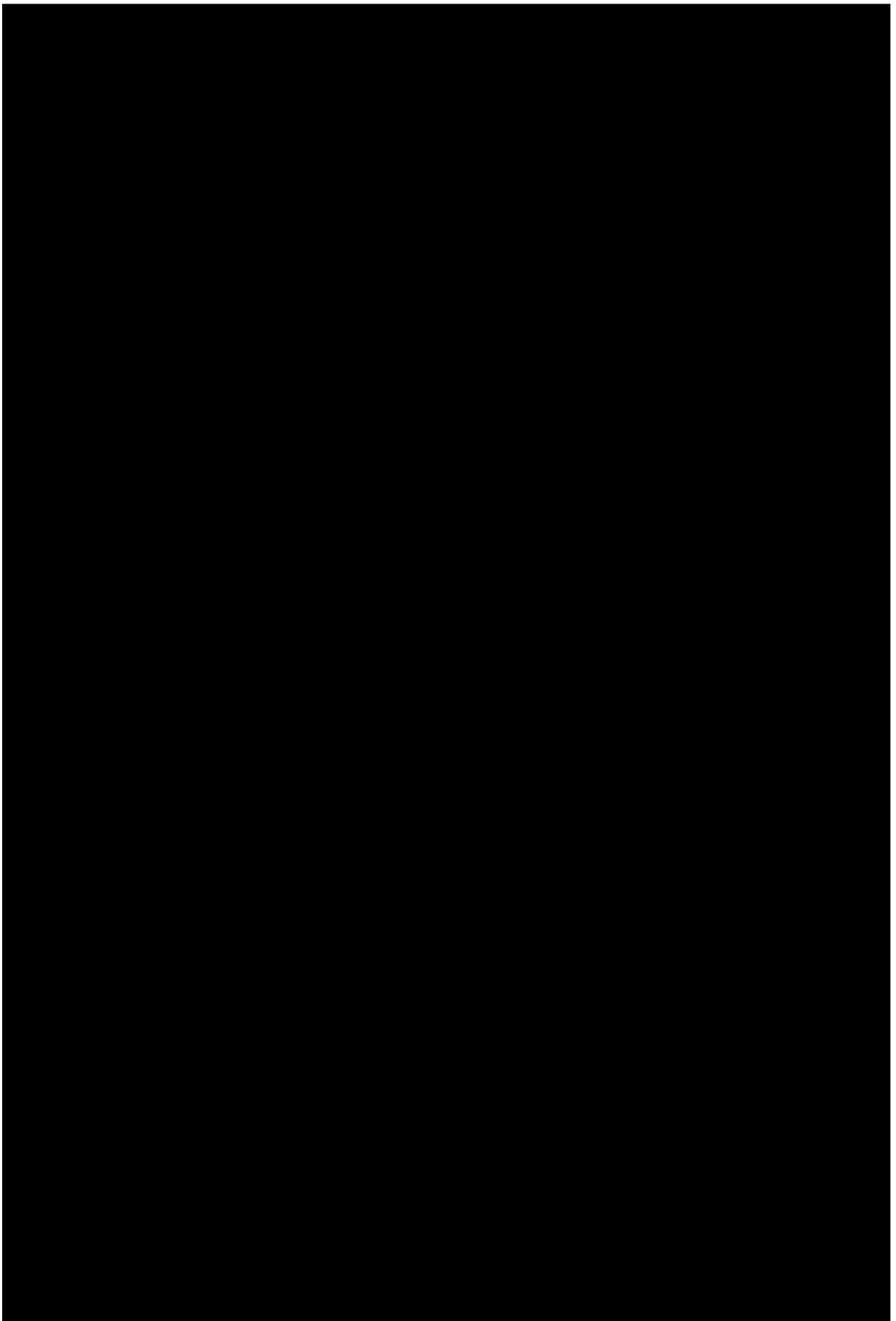


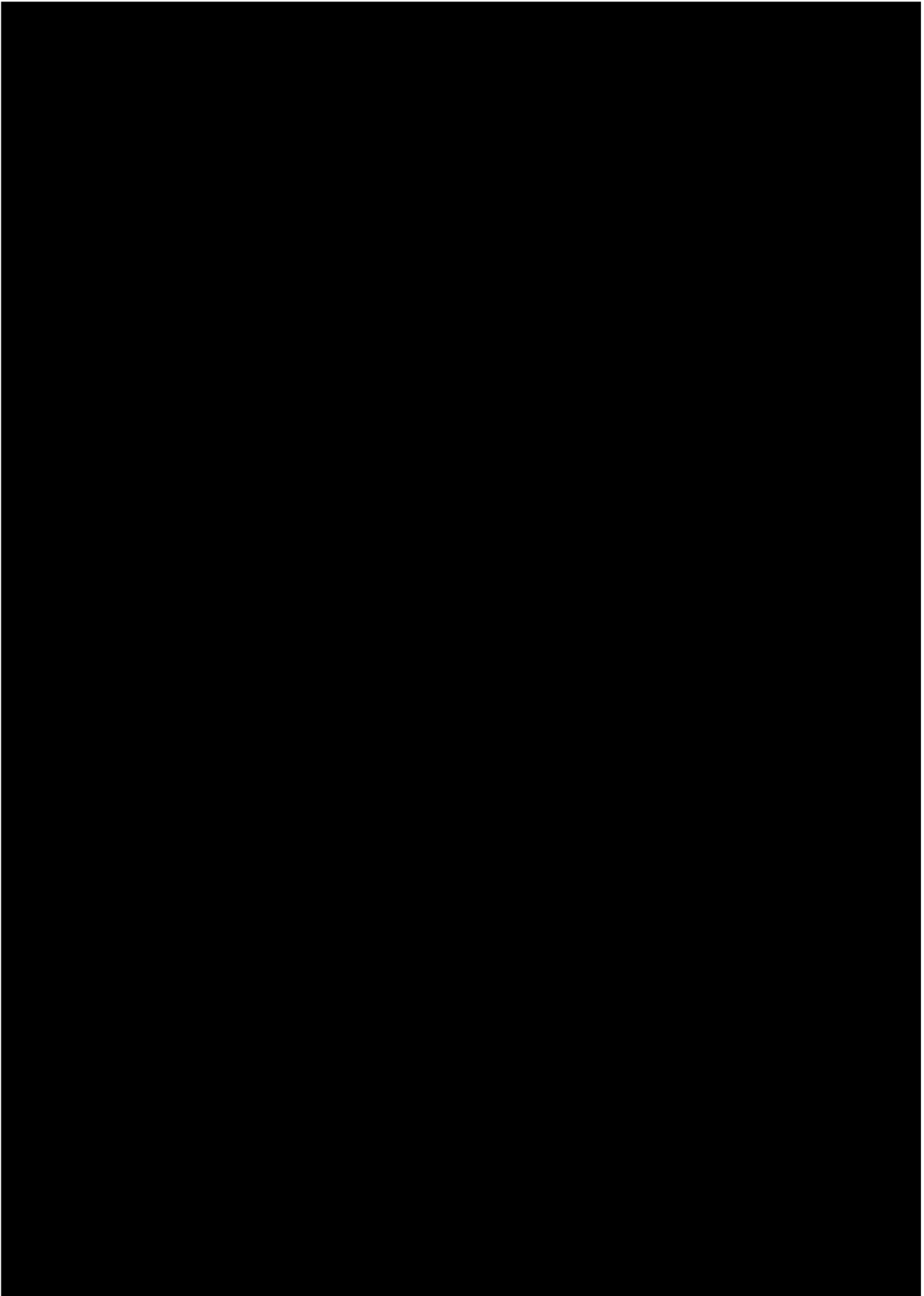


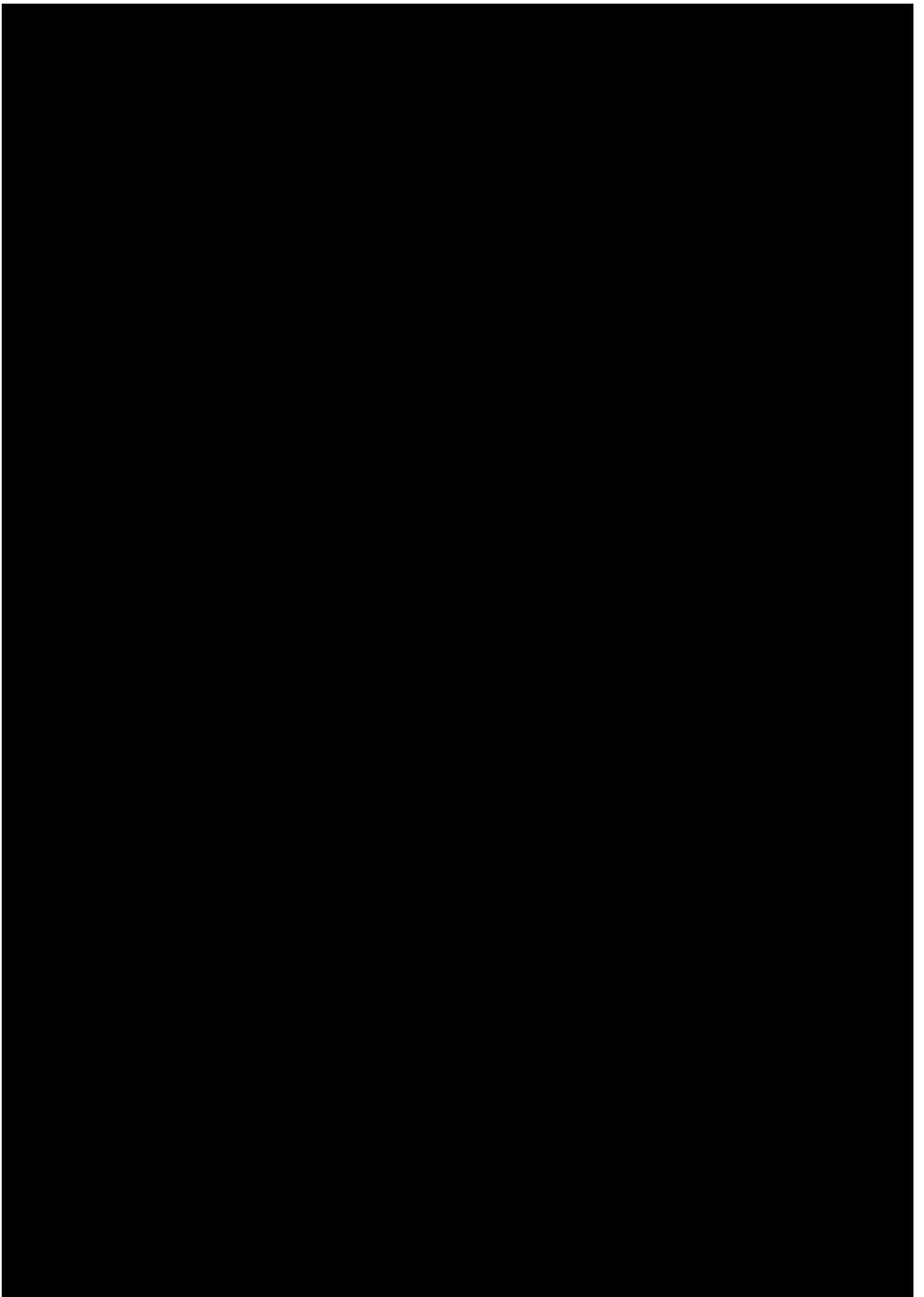


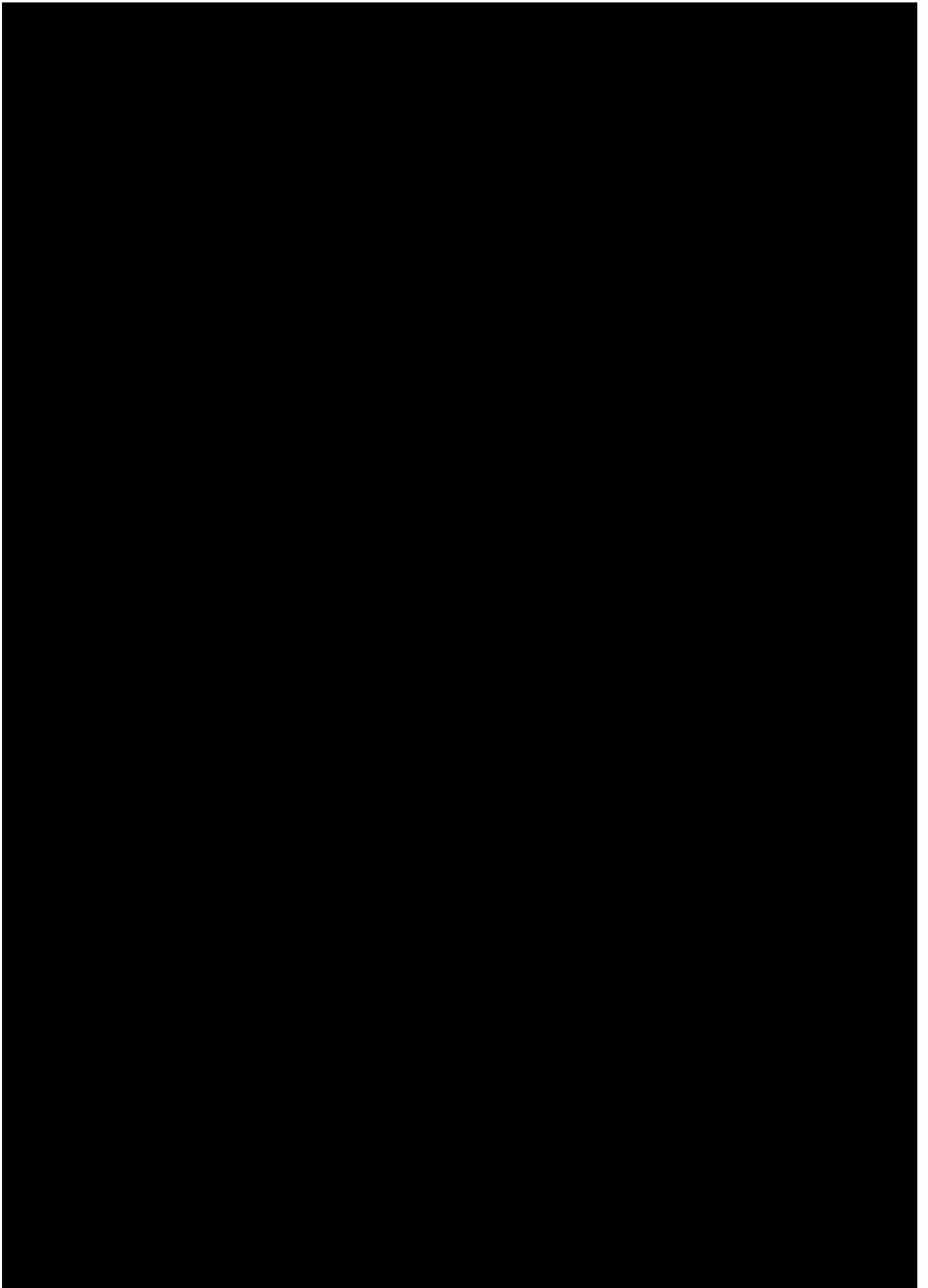


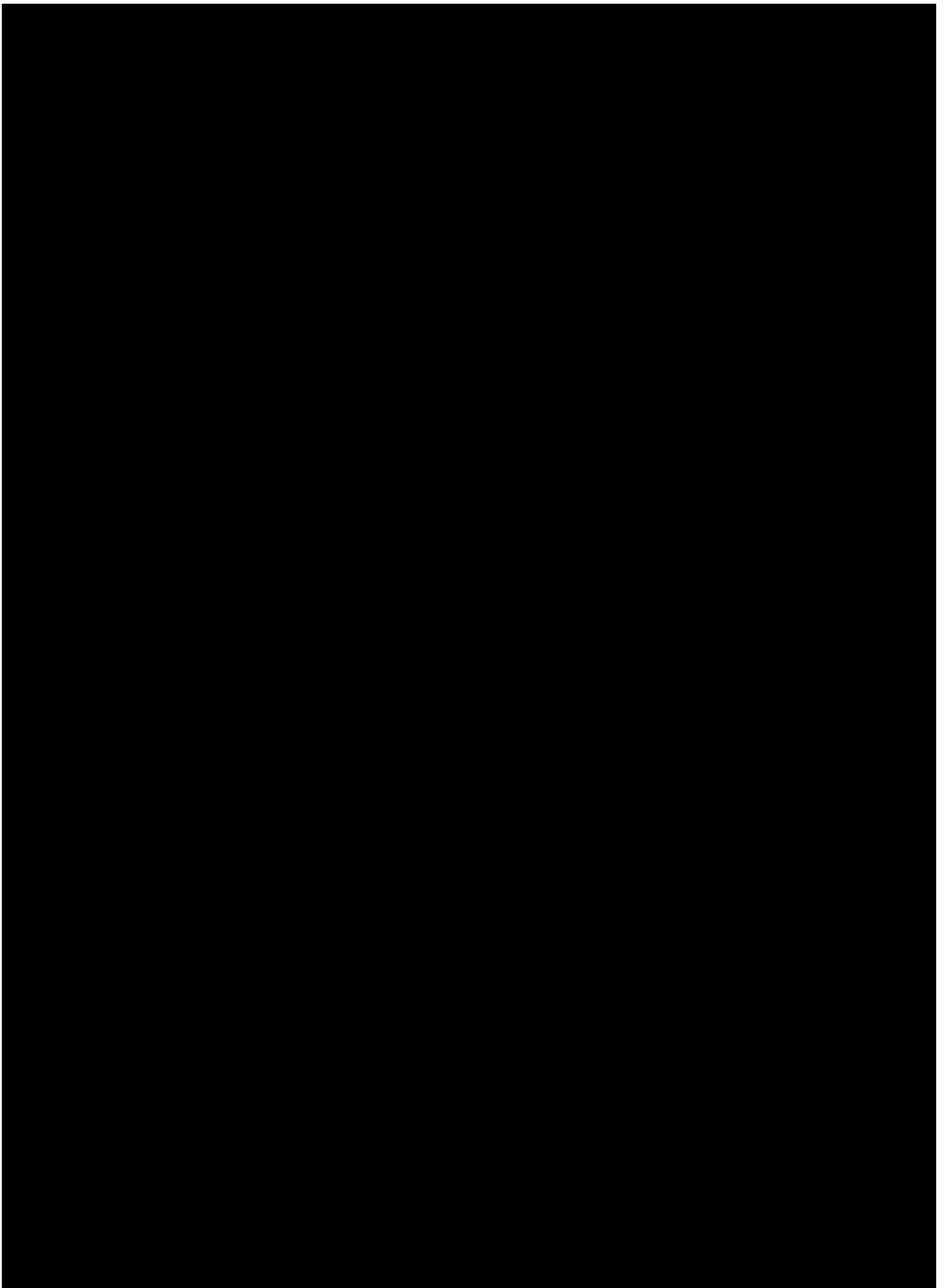














Appendix 3 – Ecology Screening



Directorate for Planning, Growth & Sustainability

Buckinghamshire Council
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Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

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www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

For Ecology Planning Application Response

Date: 22 September 2023

From: Emma Foster, Ecology Officer and
Paul Holton, Ecology Officer

Application reference:	-
Site:	Cherry Tree Barn Bragenham Lane Bragenham
Proposal:	Erection of storage building

Summary

Should the proposed development be submitted it is recommended for the following documents to be submitted as supporting evidence.

- Reptile precautionary method statement
- Ecological design strategy (to secure species specific enhancement features and habitat enhancements)

The above documents are recommended to be submitted with the application however, they can be secured through appropriate pre-commencement conditioning.

Further information in relation to the proposed location of the removed soil will be required to be provided.

It is to be noted that the complete proposed development plans have not been seen at the current stage of writing these comments therefore, any changes or new information which will come to light during the planning application may alter BC Ecology Officer comments during the consultation period.

Discussion

An Ecological Screening visit has been performed on 11th September 2023 by two Ecology Officers; Paul Holton and Emma Foster at Cherry Tree Barn.

The Ecological screening visit contained an ecological walk over to screen out the potential for protected species/habitats to be impacted by the proposed development of a storage building.

It was noted that the development of the gravel/stone path and building (as mentioned during the visit) will have limited impact. Should further development as part of the proposed application be applied for further survey effort maybe required.

The proposed development will be integrated into the natural hill therefore, further information during the application in relation to the soil extraction and location will be required.

In relation to protected species the site has the potential for reptile present however, due to the scale of the development (as shown on site) it is appropriate to secure this through a precautionary method statement.

As part of NE1 Policy of the local plan the proposed development is required to have some biodiversity gains.

A bird box can be erected on site as species specific enhancement feature. It is appropriate for the bird box to be erected on a northerly aspect/orientation (north, north-east and north-west). The location and model of the features need to be clearly marked on the approved plans and drawings. Alternatively, these features can be secured by condition if this application is approved.

It was identified on site that no screening was proposed. It is recommended as part of enhancing the site to integrate an connecting hedgerow along the fence with the following species:

- Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) 25%
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) 25%
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) 10%
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) 10%
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) 5%
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) 5%
- Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) 5%
- Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) 5%
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) 5%
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) 5%

It was mentioned onsite plans to manage the top end of the field (adjacent to the woodland) as a wildlife area. This area can compensate and provide habitat enhancements through the proposed development. To secure this it is recommended to provide an ecological design strategy with management and monitoring plans. For example cut and remove the grass 1-2 times a year. Management and monitoring measures will be provided within this strategy.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Encourage Biodiversity

The NPPF (2021) Paragraph 180d states *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles.... development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”*

The Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy states that development in suitable areas should provide bat or bird roosting provision within the fabric of the buildings.

Local Plan Policy 'NE1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity' of the Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 states that: "h. Development proposals will be expected to promote site permeability for wildlife and avoid the fragmentation of wildlife corridors, incorporating features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value on site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors including water courses should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity".

Local Plan Policy 'NE1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity' of the Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 states that: "i. Where there is potential for development, the design and layout of the development should secure biodiversity enhancement and the council will use planning conditions and obligations as needed to help achieve the aims of the biodiversity opportunity area".