

FORMAL OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION DC/26/0945

Reference: DC/26/0945

Proposal: Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application reference DC/22/0773 (Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/19/1707) – Amendment to buffer strip to reflect an additional swale with landscaping (part retrospective).

Site: Abingworth Meadows Phase 3, Thakeham

Objector: [REDACTED] Plot 69, 22 Springett Close

1. INTRODUCTION

I submit a formal objection to Application DC/26/0945 on behalf of affected residents of Springett Close and adjoining properties.

For the avoidance of doubt, residents **accept the principle of necessary flood mitigation measures**, including the installation of additional SuDS infrastructure and swales where demonstrably required for flood alleviation and surface water management.

However, residents strongly object to those aspects of the application which:

- materially alter the approved landscaping scheme;
 - introduce public access opportunities into the buffer zone;
 - introduce or retain the proposed vehicular gate at the Springett Close Hammerhead;
 - remove or dilute previously approved boundary protections;
 - fail to adequately show all required SuDS works and ecological measures;
 - fail to honour approved and agreed landscaping commitments;
 - fundamentally alter the purpose of the buffer zone from a protected ecological and amenity area to one susceptible to public access and intrusion.
-

2. STRONG OBJECTION TO THE GATE AT THE HAMMERHEAD

The revised Bellway drawings include a:

"1.2m high vehicular access five bar timber gate. Approx 4m width" (Drawing BELL23356-11 Sheet 4 of 8)

Residents strongly object to this proposal.

The introduction of this gate represents a significant and unacceptable departure from purchaser expectations, the approved development concept, and the protective function of the buffer zone.

Prior to these retrospective amendments:

- Springett Close terminated in a secure hammerhead arrangement.
- There was no open gateway encouraging movement between the development and the buffer zone.
- The boundary treatment acted as a clear separation between the residential estate and ecological land.

Residents purchased their homes based upon:

- approved planning layouts;
- Bellway sales information;
- landscape plans;
- site representations;
- the understanding that the buffer zone formed a private ecological separation zone.

The introduction of a substantial access gate retrospectively changes the character and function of this area.

The Local Planning Authority should therefore require:

Immediate removal of the proposed gate.

Reinstatement of:

- original post and rail fencing;
- livestock/stock-proof fencing;
- continuous secure boundary treatment.

The revised proposal materially reduces:

- residential security;
 - safeguarding of children;
 - protection of pets and animals;
 - privacy;
 - amenity.
-

3. BUFFER ZONE MUST REMAIN CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

Residents strongly object to any proposal which would permit:

- public access;
- permissive access;
- informal access;
- future Public Right of Way creation;
- recreational use;
- pedestrian use;

within the buffer zone.

The buffer zone was approved as:

- ecological mitigation land;
- landscape screening;
- visual separation;
- flood mitigation infrastructure.

It was never approved as public open space.

4. THAKEHAM PARISH COUNCIL POSITION

The Local Planning Authority should note the unified objection submitted to Thakeham Parish Council dated 23 December 2025.

That representation records the collective objection of residents to any public access within the buffer zone.

The letter states:

"All affected households are aligned in this objection."

The letter further states:

"The buffer zone was never intended for public access."

and:

"Residents purchased their homes with reasonable and legitimate expectation based on all provided documentation that this land would remain an ecological buffer intended to protect residential amenity."

Those representations remain entirely valid.

5. EXISTING FENCING MUST REMAIN

Residents support the following annotation on Bellway's marked-up landscape plan:

EXISTING FENCE / BARRIER TO REMAIN

and

FLOOD WATER MITIGATION PROVISIONS TO BE MAINTAINED – ALL OTHER AREAS TO BE LEFT TO NATURE

The existing fence line must remain intact.

Only flood mitigation works should be permitted.

The remainder of the buffer zone should be left in its intended ecological state.

6. THAKEHAM PARISH COUNCIL BOUNDARY FENCING POSITION

Particular weight should be given to the approved boundary fencing principles.

The submitted attachment states:

"the buffer area, which will be managed for nature with no right of pedestrian access."
(Boundary fencing arrangements, east edge of sub-phase).

It further records:

"Members agreed that it is essential that clear agreement is reached that this fence line should be 1.8m close-boarded fence with no resident right to put gates in this fence."

This statement is directly contrary to any proposal facilitating access through the buffer area.

The retrospective application should therefore be amended to explicitly confirm:

- no public access;
 - no permissive access;
 - no pedestrian access;
 - no future connection to a PROW;
 - retention of secure fencing.
-

7. PRIVACY, SAFEGUARDING AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The buffer zone sits on elevated land behind residential properties.

Opening this area to public access would result in:

- overlooking of private gardens;
- overlooking of habitable room windows;
- increased trespass risk;
- increased burglary risk;
- safeguarding concerns for children;
- loss of residential amenity.

The Council is required to consider these impacts under:

- NPPF residential amenity principles;
- Horsham District planning policies;
- Human Rights Act 1998 considerations.

Particularly relevant are:

Article 8 ECHR

Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 Protocol 1 ECHR

Peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Whilst these rights are qualified rights, the planning authority must have regard to them when considering impacts upon adjoining residents.

8. MATERIAL CHANGE FROM APPROVED LANDSCAPING SCHEME

The revised drawings introduce substantial changes from earlier approved revisions.

Drawing BELL23356-11 Sheet 4 Revision J and later Revision N show material alterations to:

- boundary treatment;
- swale arrangements;
- access arrangements;
- planting proposals;
- buffer zone layout.

Residents relied upon the approved scheme when purchasing their properties.

The Authority should therefore scrutinise whether the cumulative changes remain consistent with:

- approved planning objectives;
 - purchaser expectations;
 - landscape character;
 - ecological objectives.
-

9. LANDSCAPING COMMITMENTS MISSING FROM THE REVISED DRAWINGS

The revised plans fail to include planting previously agreed with Bellway and confirmed through discussions with Carolyn Davies and Ross Gillespie.

The following agreed planting remains absent from Plot 69:

Shrub Relocation

- 10 No Skimmia japonica 'Fragrans'
- 13 No Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo'
- 10 No Viburnum tinus 'Eve Price'
- 10 No Hypericum 'Hidcote'
- 8 No Camellia japonica 'Apple Blossom'

Boundary Hedge

Native hedge planting along the full rear boundary of Plot 69 comprising:

- double staggered rows;
- rows 500mm apart;
- plants at 400mm centres.

This planting should be incorporated into the approved drawings to ensure Bellway's commitments are formally recorded and enforceable.

10. INSUFFICIENT SUDS INFORMATION WITHIN THE RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION

Whilst residents support necessary flood mitigation works, the application drawings appear incomplete when compared with the design intent of the SuDS proposals.

The application should include:

Detailed SuDS Information

- swale cross sections;
- maintenance corridors;
- management responsibilities;
- ecological planting schedules;
- long-term maintenance arrangements;
- safety provisions;
- fencing requirements around drainage features;
- ownership and management responsibilities.

The Authority should not approve retrospective amendments without complete information enabling the public and consultees to fully understand the development.

11. BUFFER ZONE SHOULD REMAIN A NATURE AREA

The revised proposals should incorporate a condition confirming:

- the buffer zone shall remain ecological land;
- no recreational use shall occur;
- no public access shall occur;
- no future permissive path shall occur;
- existing fencing shall remain;
- flood mitigation infrastructure only shall be managed and maintained.

The buffer zone should therefore remain:

"managed for nature with no right of pedestrian access"

consistent with the previously agreed position.

12. CONCLUSION

Residents support the necessary flood mitigation works and additional swale infrastructure.

However, residents strongly object to the application unless it is amended to:

1. Remove the proposed five-bar gate at the Hammerhead.
2. Reinstate the original secure fencing arrangement.
3. Confirm the buffer zone shall remain closed to public access.
4. Confirm no PROW or permissive path will be permitted.
5. Retain existing fence and barrier arrangements.
6. Incorporate all agreed Plot 69 landscaping.
7. Include complete SuDS information and maintenance details.
8. Preserve the buffer zone as ecological land managed exclusively for nature.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that Horsham District Council either:

(a) refuse Application DC/26/0945 in its current form; or

(b) require Bellway to amend the application to incorporate the above safeguards before any approval is granted.

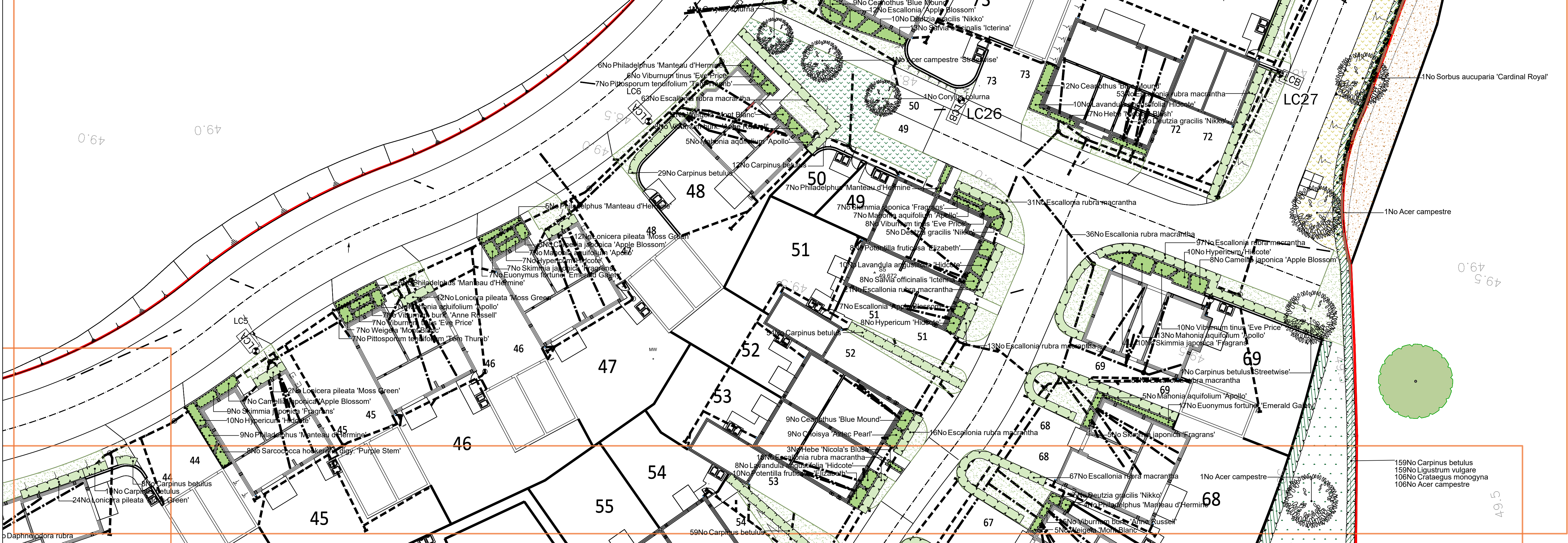
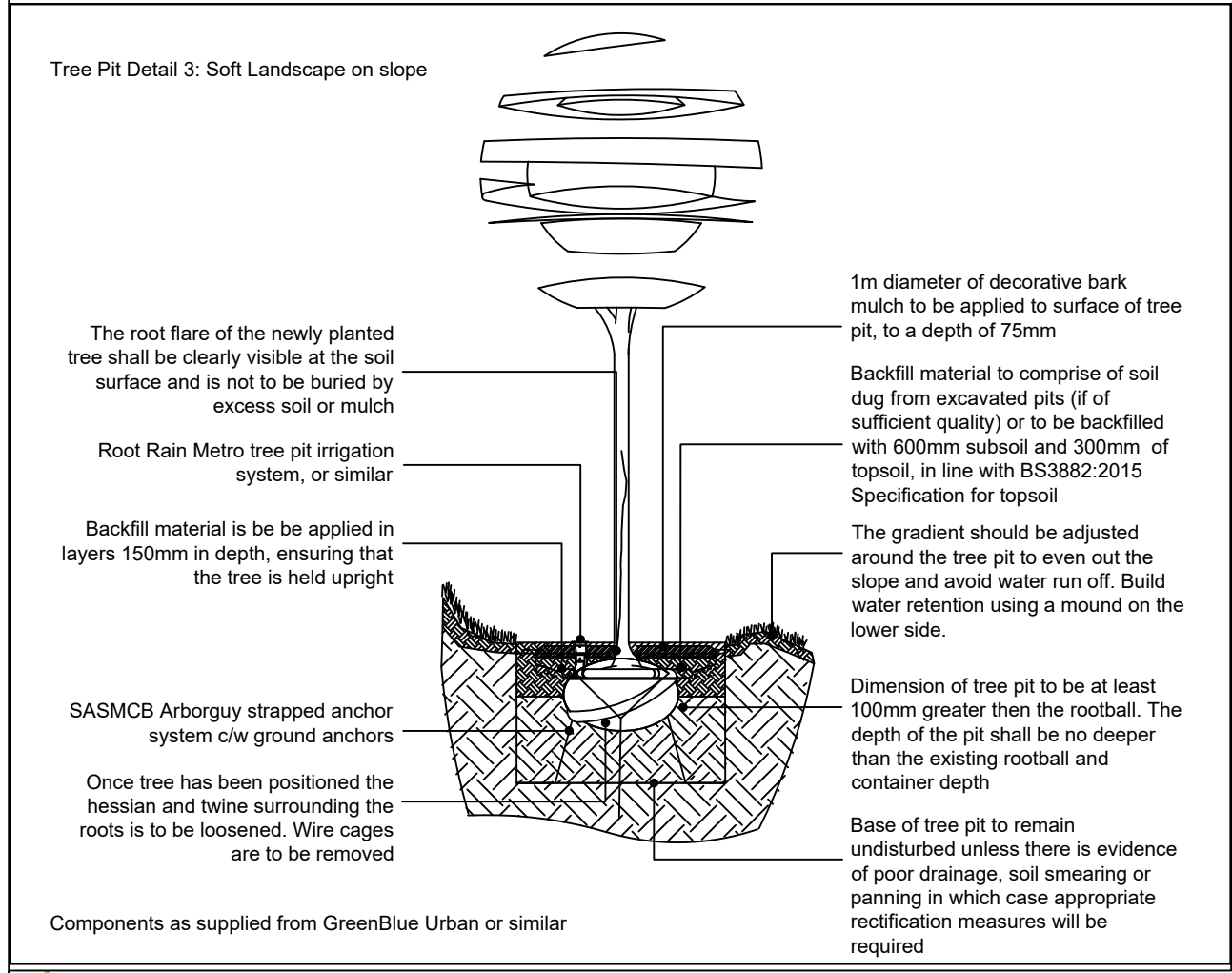
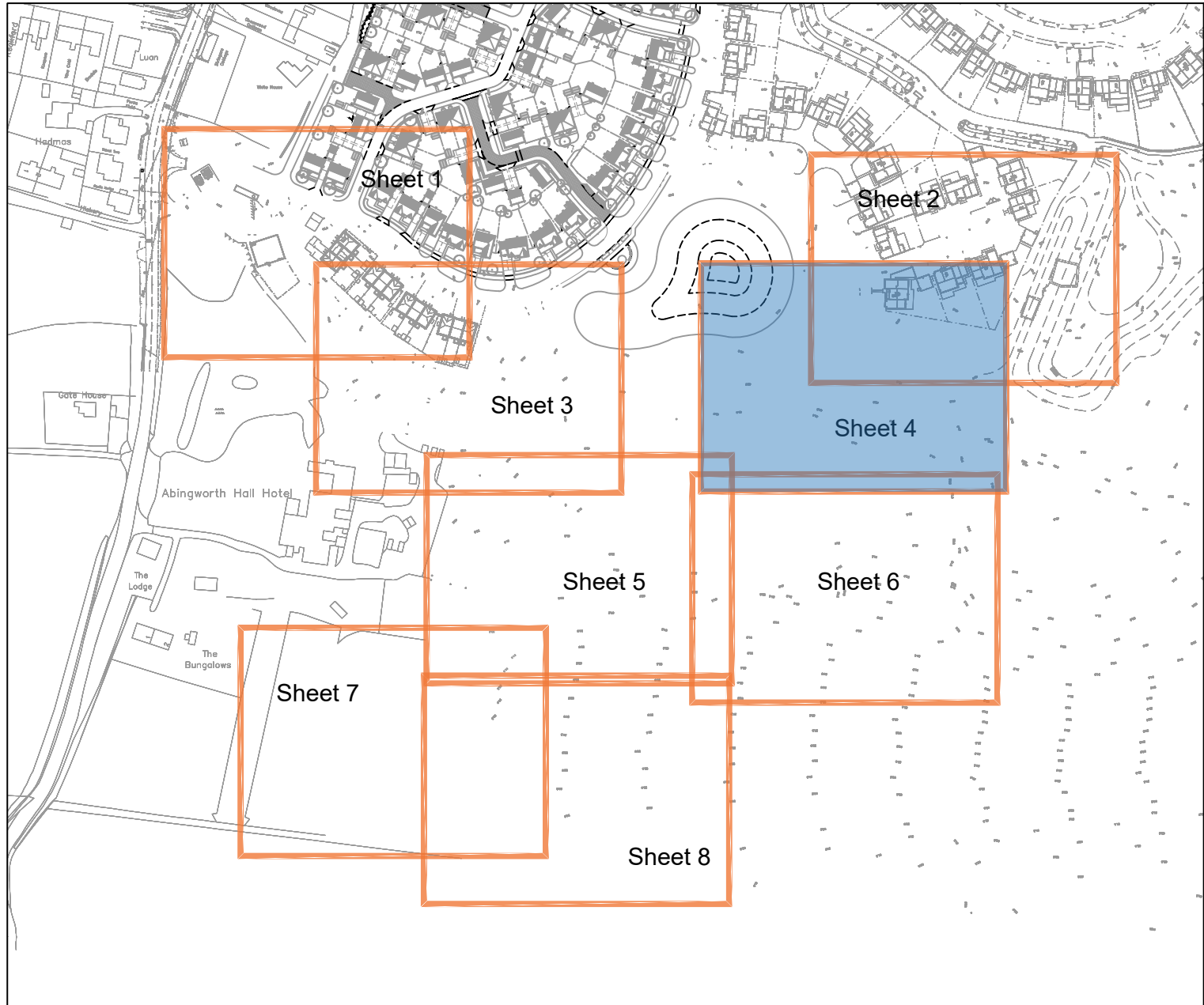

22 Springett Close (Plot 69)
Abingworth Meadows
Thakeham RH20 3RF

Evidence References

- Thakeham Parish Council Representation Regarding Proposed PROW dated 23 December 2025.
- Bellway Landscape Drawing BELL23356-11 Sheet 4 of 8 (showing proposed 1.2m high vehicular access five-bar timber gate).
- Bellway Landscape Drawing BELL23356-11 Sheet 6 of 8 landscape proposals.
- 4.1 Boundary fencing arrangements: "the buffer area, which will be managed for nature with no right of pedestrian access."

4.1. Boundary fencing arrangements, east edge of sub-phase.

- i) *Rear fencing of plots 59-69.* The current DC-19-1707 specification of 'post-and-rail fence with hedgerow planting' for the long curve of rear fences for plots 59-69 is inconsistent with the established norm of 1.8m close-boarded fencing of gardens throughout the existing development. Also, from TPC's viewpoint as the prospective owner of the buffer area, a properly fenced boundary is needed to create appropriate separation between gardens **the buffer area, which will be managed for nature with no right of pedestrian access**. It will not be workable in practice to have a porous post-and-rail fence that encourages trespass and the dumping of garden waste. Members agreed that it is essential that clear agreement is reached that this fence line should be 1.8m close-boarded fence with no resident right to put gates in this fence



SPECIFICATION
All works generally, to comply with the written Soft Landscape Specification.

NOTES:
DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWING
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION, FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY

- Legend
- Existing trees to be retained and protected during construction
 - Proposed tree planting within soft landscape. See detail on sheet 1
 - Proposed hedge planting to be planted in a double staggered row 500mm apart and at 400mm centres in each row. To be maintained at 1m height
 - Proposed mixed native hedge planting to be planted in a double staggered row 500mm apart and at 400mm centres in each row. To be maintained at 1m height and 1.8m height adjacent to site boundaries
 - Proposed shrub planting to receive 75mm bark mulch after planting operations
 - Proposed decorative mix shrub planting to be planted in groups of 5-7no. of each species and as above
 - Proposed grass areas to receive good quality amenity grass turves laid in line with good horticultural practices
 - Proposed tussocky mix, to be seeded with EM10 Tussock mixture as supplied by Emorsgate Seed and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
 - Proposed amenity grassland areas, to be seeded with EL1 Flowering Lawn mixture as supplied by Emorsgate Seed and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
 - Proposed wet tolerant meadow mixture, to be seeded with EM8 seed mix as supplied by Emorsgate Seeds and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
 - 1.2m High Timber Post & Rail Fence
 - Self draining Breerton Gravel, 200mm thick, applied to PROW
 - Proposed 2m wide hoggin footpath. To be No-Dig. Laid to engineers detail.

21.10.24				Planting amended around drainage	JO
11.09.24				Council Comments	JO
Rev	Date	Details			Drawn

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Bellway

scheme: Abingworth Nurseries,
Phase 3, Storrington Rd

client: Bellway Homes

drawing: Soft Landscape Proposals

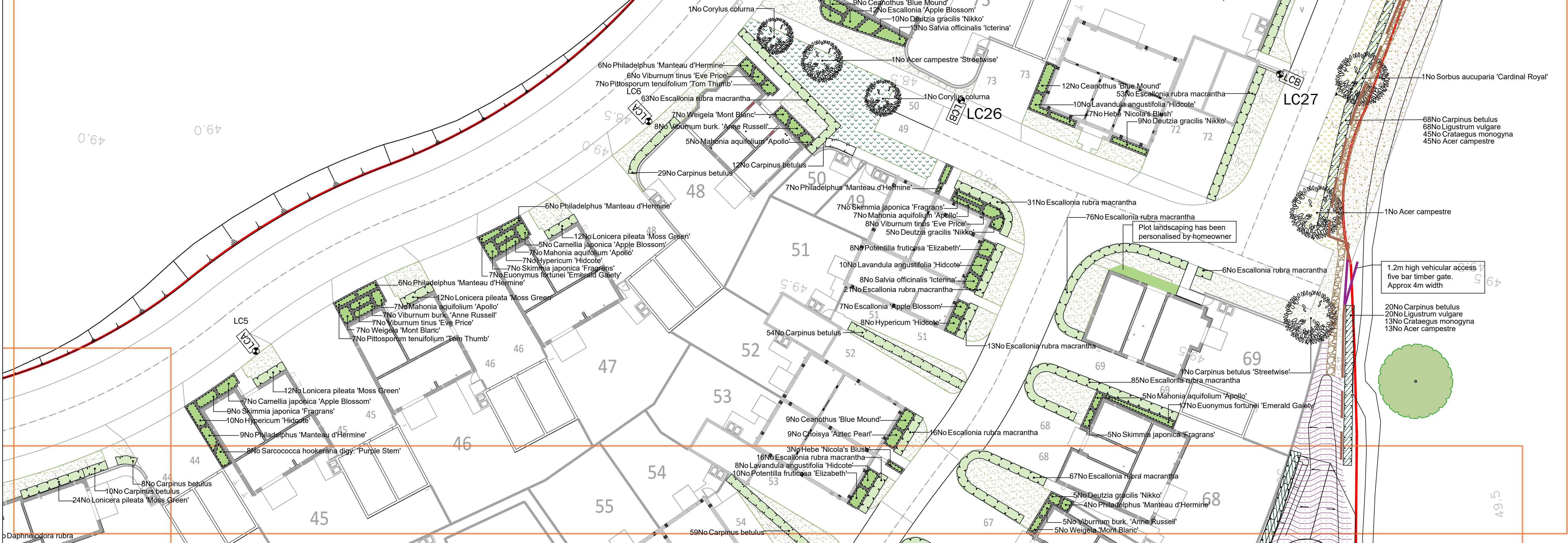
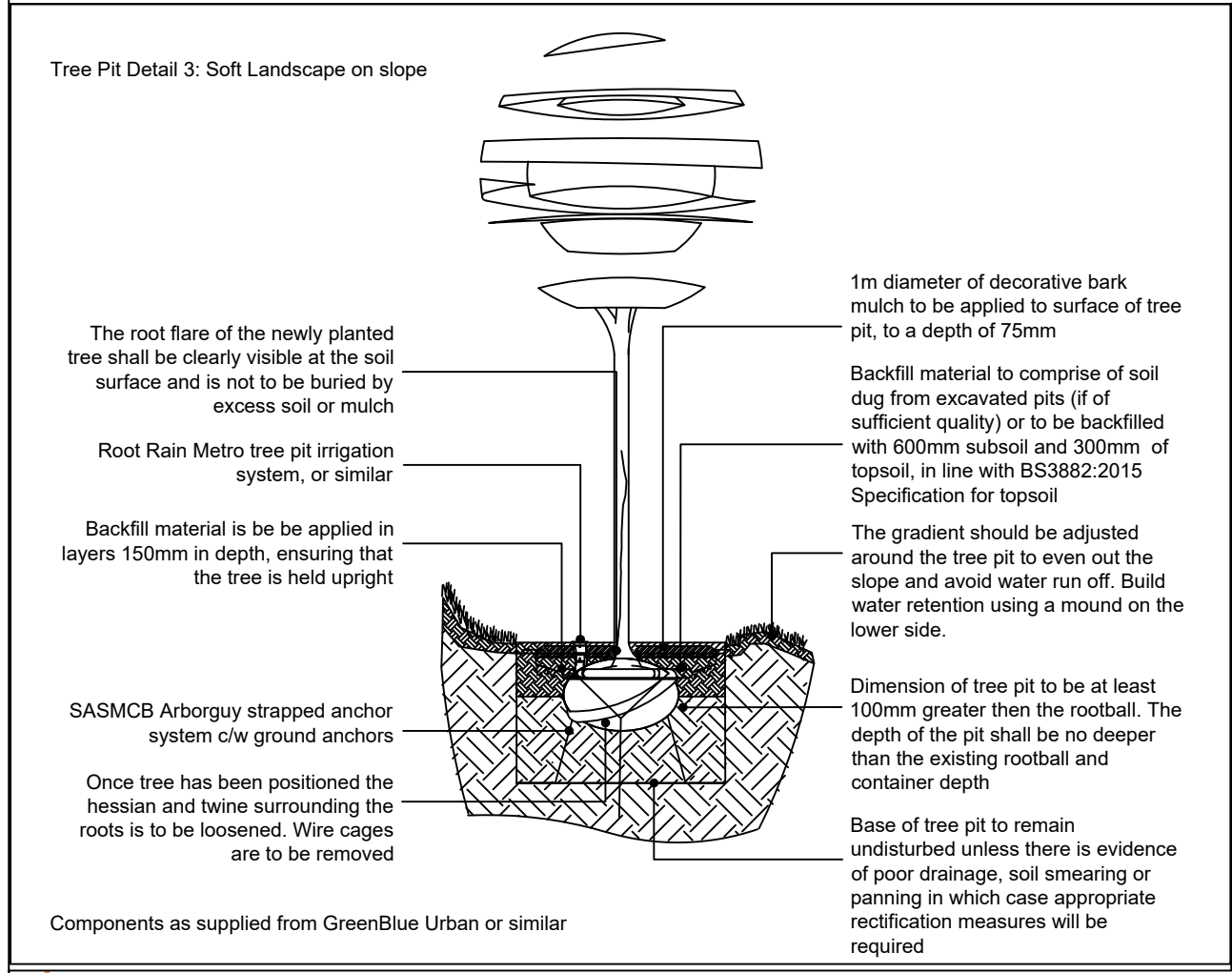
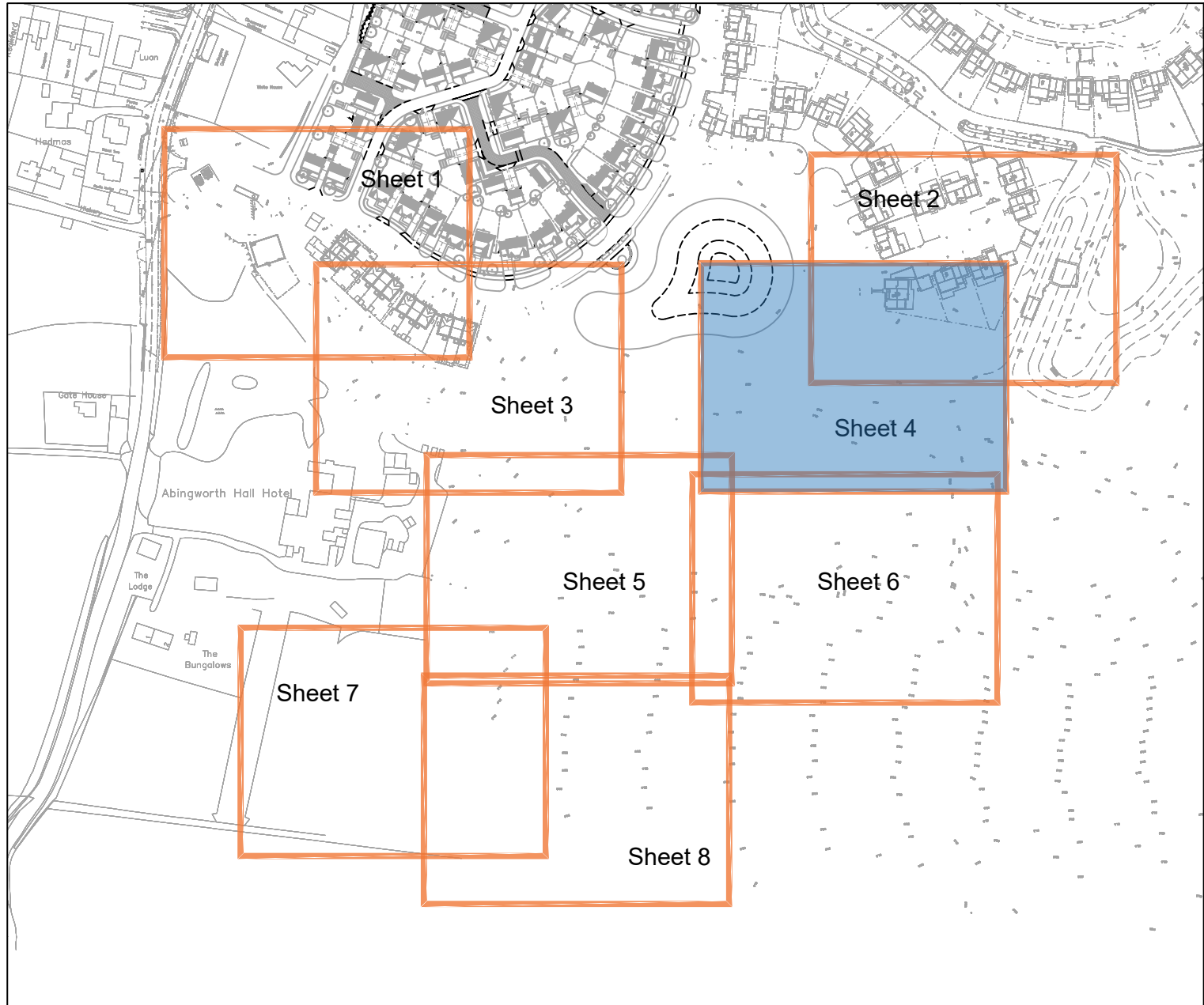
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drawing no: BELL23356 - 11 Sheet 4 of 8

drawn: JO checked: JM

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- Proposed shrub planting to receive 75mm bark mulch after planting operations
- Proposed decorative mix shrub planting to be planted in groups of 5-7no. of each species and as above
- Proposed grass areas to receive good quality amenity grass turves laid in line with good horticultural practices
- Proposed tussocky mix, to be seeded with EM10 Tussock mixture as supplied by Emorsgate Seed and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
- Proposed amenity grassland areas, to be seeded with EL1 Flowering Lawn mixture as supplied by Emorsgate Seed and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
- Proposed wet tolerant meadow mixture, to be seeded with EM6 seed mix as supplied by Emorsgate Seeds and sown at 4 grams per msq, or similar and approved
- 1.2m High Timber Post & Rail Fence With livestock wire mesh
- 1.8m High Closeboard Fence
- Existing chain link fence
- Self draining Brendon Gravel, 200mm thick, applied to PROW
- Proposed 2m wide hoggin footpath. To be No-Dig. Laid to engineers detail
- Proposed wet areas to be seeded with 'BS Waterlogged and Wet Soils Grass Seed' mixture as supplied by Boston Seed and sown at 35 grams per msq, or similar and approved
- Proposed grassland meadow to be seeded with 'BS Species Rich Wild Grass Seed' mixture as supplied by Boston Seed and sown at 20 grams per msq, or similar and approved
- Pea shingle as drainage route
- Proposed marginal aquatic planting mix to base of swale

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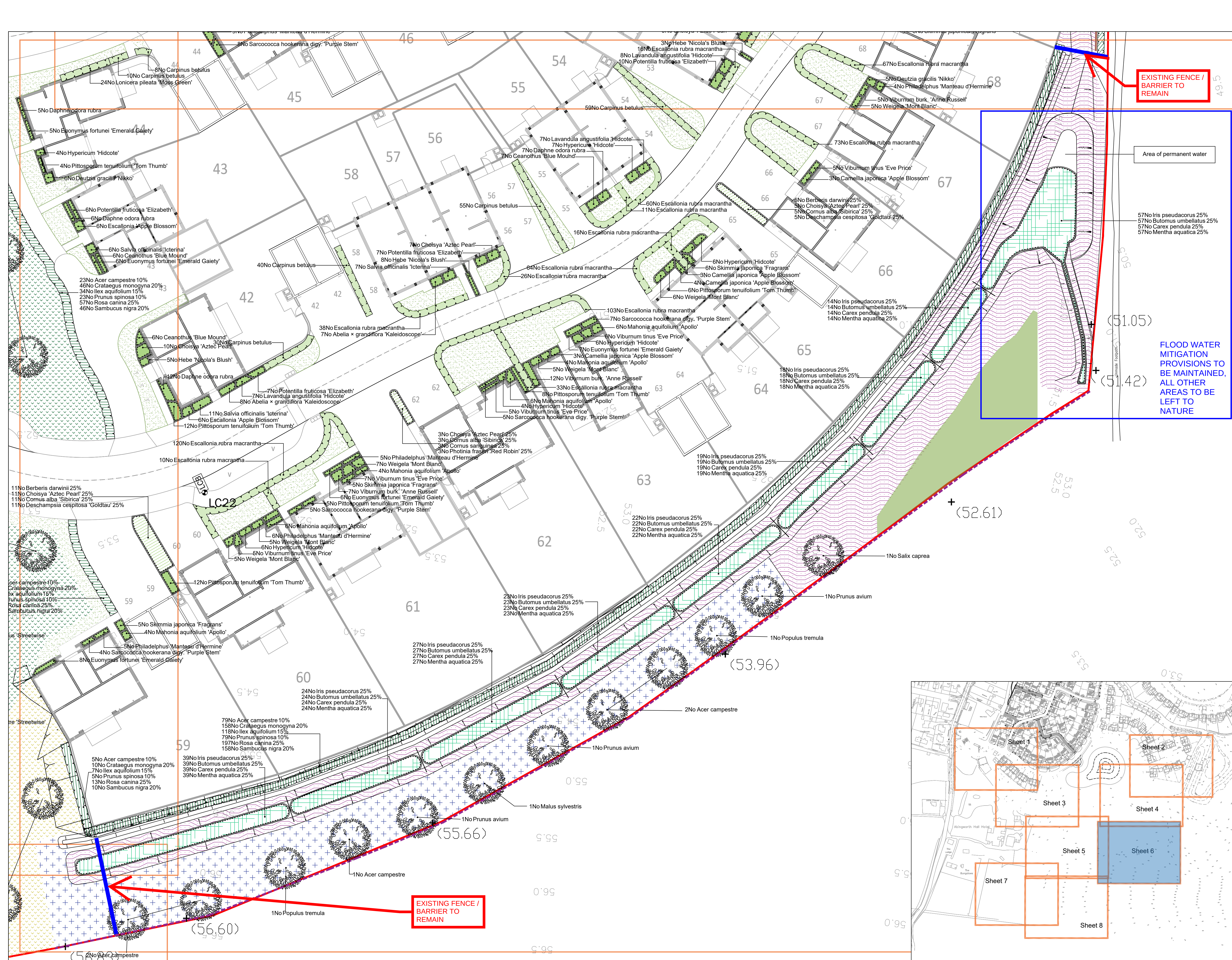
Revision Table

Rev	Date	Details	Drawn
N	30.03.26	Comments	LS
M	23.03.26	Comments	LS
L	17.03.26	Comments	LS
K	13.03.26	Comments	LS
J	21.02.24	Swale added to rear of plots 59-67	LS
I	11.09.24	Planting amended around drainage	JO
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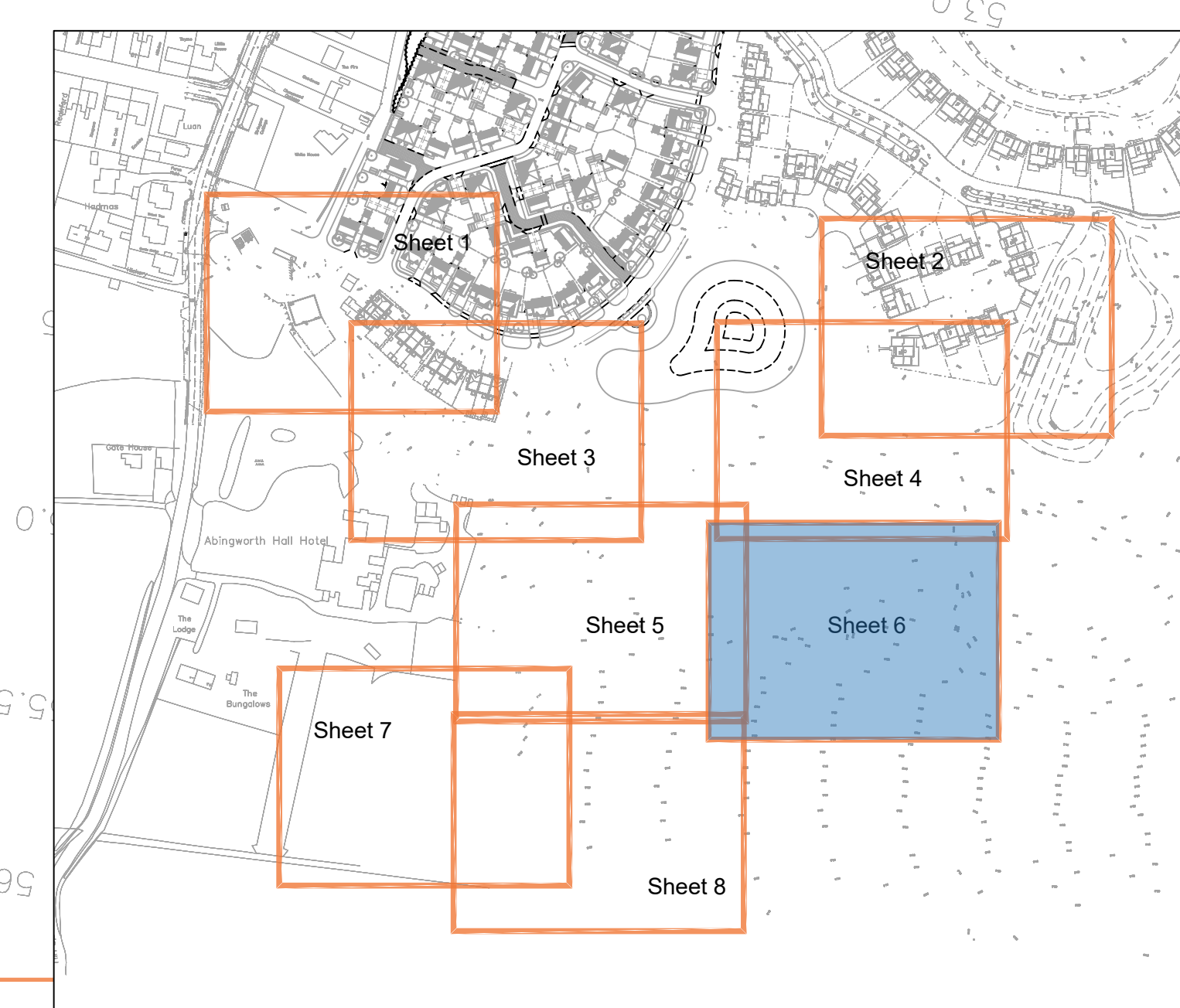
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drawn: JO checked: JM

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Representation Regarding Proposed

Public Right of Way (PROW)

23rd December 2025

Thakeham Parish Office,
Thakeham Village Hall,
1 Abingworth Crescent,
Thakeham,
Pulborough,
RH20 3GW

Dear Members of Thakeham Parish Council,

I am writing on behalf of residents of Springett Close to express our unified objection to any proposal for public access or a Public Right of Way through the buffer zone at Abingworth Fields. All affected households are aligned in this objection, and a coordinated residents' campaign will follow should such a proposal be advanced. Below will form the key basis of our opposition and why such scheme / initiative will not be supported:

1. Overlooking, Privacy Loss and Safeguarding Concerns

The buffer Zone sits on significantly higher ground than the gardens and homes of Springett Close. Opening this elevated land to public access would result in:

- direct and intrusive views into private gardens and windows,
- loss of **privacy** for families and children,
- **Safeguarding** concerns for vulnerable residents,
- and a substantial reduction in the ability of households to enjoy their homes **securely**.

Under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, residents have the right to respect for private and family life. Introducing public access directly behind residential properties would constitute a disproportionate and unnecessary interference with this right.

2. Security Risks and Vulnerable Boundaries

Many rear garden boundaries consist of standard panel fencing installed by Bellway, which can be easily scaled or compromised. Public access immediately behind these fences would:

- increase opportunities for **burglary or trespass**,
- provide concealment behind boundary lines,
- allow individuals to **assess properties** from higher ground,
- and create an entirely avoidable **security risk** for residents.

Creating a predictable access corridor behind private homes is entirely inappropriate in **safeguarding** terms.

3. Highways Act 1980 – Public Interest Test

Any attempt to create a new PROW must satisfy the strict public-interest requirements of the Highways Act 1980. In this case:

- There is no demonstrable public need for a new footpath.
- A **well-used informal route** already exists across the neighbouring field, used daily by walkers.
- This existing route already serves the public desire line effectively and without affecting any homes.
- A second route behind gardens would be duplicative, unnecessary, and detrimental to residential amenity.

The presence of a viable, established alternative route substantially weakens any public-interest justification for creating a PROW within the buffer zone.

4. The Buffer Zone Was Never Intended for Public Access

At no stage in the:

- original planning approvals,
- Bellway sales materials,
- public site plans, or
- legal conveyancing documentation provided to purchasers

was the buffer zone described or identified as:

- a footpath,
- a public access corridor, or
- a recreational route.

Residents purchased their homes with reasonable and legitimate expectation based on all provided documentation that this land would remain a ecological buffer intended to protect residential amenity.

Introducing public access now would:

- contradict the development's approved design principles,
- materially alter the environment residents were sold,
- undermine the amenity value of adjoining homes,
- and represent a fundamentally unfair departure from what purchasers were led to believe.

4A. The Designated Purpose of the Buffer Zone – Material Change of Use

The buffer zone was deliberately designed and approved as:

- ecological mitigation land,
- a visual/green separation zone protecting residential amenity and privacy.

Creating a public right of way constitutes, in law, the creation of a public highway. This would be a clear material change of use from the land's approved purpose

Such a change would:

- contradict the land's established planning function,
- likely require a new planning application,
- trigger full public consultation,
- and be met with formal objections from all affected residents on **safeguarding, privacy, ecological and amenity grounds.**

5. Safety Concerns Following Recent Drainage Works

The buffer zone now contains:

- open drainage channels,
- trenches and uneven ground,
- unstable areas following excavation,
- and significant level changes toward the new watercourse.

Multiple officers from Bellway, the LLFA, and HDC have acknowledged safety concerns. Opening this land to public access would require extensive and avoidable engineering, fencing and safety measures, which are all unnecessary when a safer, better alternative route exists.

6. A More Appropriate Alternative Route

If pedestrian connectivity is under consideration, the existing informal route across the upper field, already widely used by local walkers is:

- **safer,**
- **more direct,**
- **cheaper to enhance,**
- **non-intrusive,**
- **and poses no privacy or safeguarding issues for residents.**

This is the sensible and proportionate location for any future access improvements.

7. Residents Request Formal Assurance

Given the substantial safeguarding, privacy, amenity, planning and legal implications, residents request:

1. Formal confirmation that no proposal exists to create public access or a PROW within the buffer zone, and
2. Reassurance that any future proposal would be subject to full public consultation, enabling residents to submit formal objections.

To conclude, Introducing public access behind the homes of Springett Close would be incompatible with the design, purpose, safety, privacy and amenity of the buffer zone. There is no public need, no planning basis, a clear alternative route already exists, and all affected households remain united in their objection.

We trust that the Council will acknowledge the significant safeguarding, security and privacy risks involved and will confirm that no such proposal is being considered.

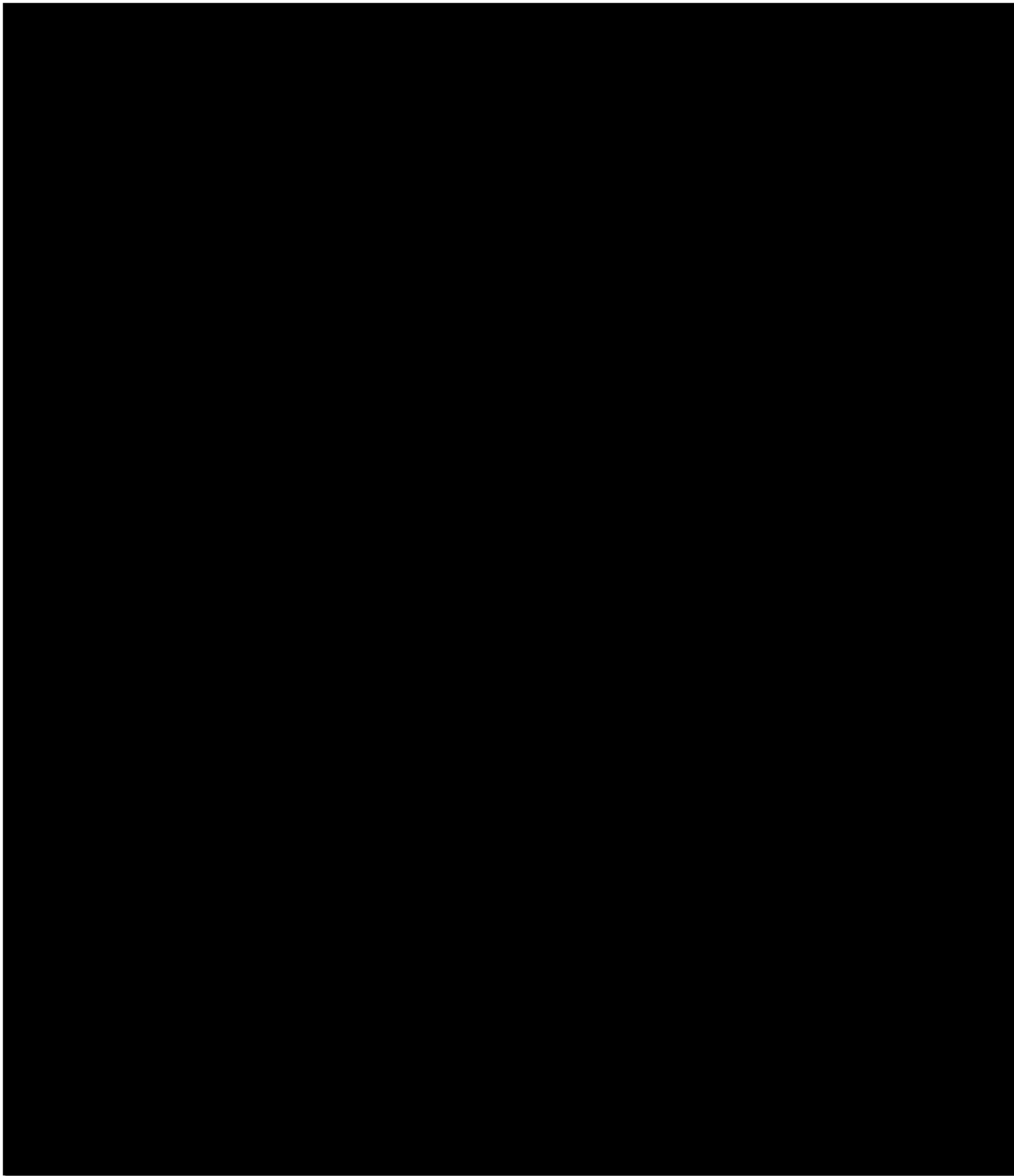
Yours faithfully,

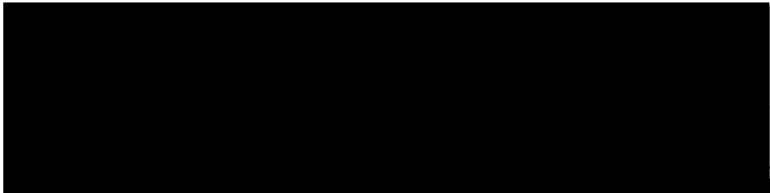
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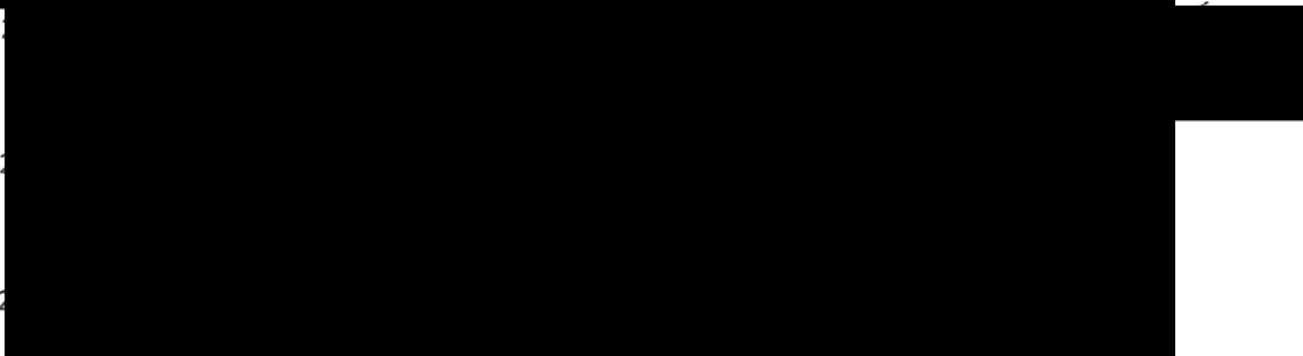
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Below are the signatures of residents who have participated in the initial consultation and who **strongly object** to any proposal to introduce public access or a Public Right of Way within the buffer zone at Abingworth Fields. These residents fully support the contents of this representation and reaffirm the collective opposition of all affected households.





22 SPRINGETT CLOSE



28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

31. _____

32. _____

33. _____

34. _____

35. _____

36. _____