



Land at Forty Acre Farm, Havant Road, Havant

Winter Bird Mitigation Strategy



Barratt David Wilson

November 2018

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

WYG was commissioned by Barratt David Wilson Homes to prepare a Winter Bird Mitigation Strategy for Land at Forty Acre Farm, Havant Road, Havant (the Site).

The Site encompasses H04B and H04C which have been monitored for the presence of brent geese as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy. H04B is also listed as a SINC - Forty Acres Farm B – designated due to the historic presence of large numbers of brent geese. Using the latest data from winter bird surveys across the Solent (which incorporates spatial considerations such as movements rather than just numbers), H04B has been listed as 'low use' and H04C as a 'secondary support site'.

It is proposed that the majority of H04C is enhanced and managed in perpetuity for brent geese over the winter period. Dark-bellied brent geese are a qualifying feature of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, along with a broader assemblage of wading birds.

The impact of any future proposals on wintering birds using the site and the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) has been identified as a potential constraint. The potential impacts are likely to consist of disturbance due to increased recreational pressure and loss of foraging habitat over the winter months.

This report identifies a strategy to mitigate for potential adverse effects upon brent geese and to make sure that there is no negative impact upon the integrity of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar.

1.2 Site Location

The site covers approximately 22.9 hectares, located to the south west of Havant in Hampshire, centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SU692057. Directly south of the site is a railway line and beyond this is the A27 and Chichester and Langstone Harbour, a designated RAMSAR Site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A component of the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies 280m south of the site and the Solent Maritime SAC lies 180m south of the site. South west of the site lies Farlington Marshes, a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Directly west of the site lies the residential area of Farlington along with East Lodge Farm and East Lodge Playing Field. To the north of the site lies the A2030 Havant Road beyond which lie further residential areas along with arable fields. North east of the site is a major junction of the A3 with the A3 slip road extending south along the eastern boundary of the site. The western extent of the site has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), known as Forty Acre Farm B, due to the historic presence of dark-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla*).

1.3 Development Proposals

The proposed development is for 320 dwellings (including a 30% provision of affordable homes), 66 bed care home, provision of public open space, habitat mitigation zone, allotments, community building and associated infrastructure.

2.0 Baseline

2.1 Existing Data

The site has been monitored as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy and is identified as Fields H04B and H04C for the purposes of the study.

Using the latest data from winter bird surveys across the Solent (which incorporates spatial considerations such as movements rather than just numbers), H04B has been listed as 'low use' and H04C as a 'secondary support site'. These surveys recorded a peak count of 50 brent geese within H04C and none within H04B (HBIC, 2018).

Wintering bird surveys were undertaken at the site by Havant Borough Council between the years 2012-2015. The survey time was three hours around high tide for three days every month from November to March and consisted of 11 visits to Forty Acre Farm.

No brent geese were recorded utilising the survey area during this period. Two lapwing were observed in the western extent of Forty Acre Farm. These were observed in January so this does not confirm breeding at the site.

A total of 35 species were recorded within the survey area during the WYG wintering bird surveys undertaken between October 2015 and March 2016. Brent geese were noted feeding on the southern extent of the site, west of the industrial area. Red listed curlew were noted along the south eastern extent of the site in the clover ley field, as well as two noted west of the industrial area in the clover ley. Red listed herring gulls were noted flying low over the site. Amber listed oystercatcher were noted on two occasions feeding along the southern boundary of the site, west of the industrial area, as well as seen feeding east of the industrial area in the clover ley field. Amber listed black-headed gull were noted feeding along the southern boundary west of the industrial area.

During bird counts, records were made of the frequency of potential disturbance events to birds within the survey areas. The industrial area within Forty Acre Farm has regular commercial visitors with associated vehicles. One walker with a dog was observed on two occasions, once on 26th October 2015 and again on 4th February 2016 walking the boundaries of the site. No wintering birds were noted utilising the site at the time of these disturbance events.

2.2 Current Management

Current management of the site is poor for wintering birds, with cereal crops not present during the winter which would provide potential foraging habitat. Previous use of the site for car boot sales also led to frequent disturbance events.

Small areas of the site comprise improved grassland which is where birds were recorded during the WYG surveys (north west of the industrial area).

3.0 Potential Impacts of development on Brent Geese

3.1 Habitat Loss

The proposed development will result in a loss of foraging habitat in the form of H04B (approximately 12.6ha) and the loss of a small part of H04C (approximately 2.4ha). However, it should be noted that only minimal use by brent geese or other waders has been recorded in H04B (by WYG in 2015), hence its classification as 'low use'. Those surveys did not record any use of H04C although brent geese have been recorded using this area during more recent surveys (as noted above). The current use of H04C supports the suitability of its enhancement and use as a mitigation site.

3.2 Disturbance

3.2.1 Occupation

In the absence of mitigation there is potential for recreational disturbance to birds using H04C as a result of the increased number of local residents. In particular increased use by dog walkers is likely to present significant disturbance to foraging brent geese.

There is also a high likelihood of additional disturbance to sites within the wider Solent area from new residents.

Walkers and dog walkers were noted on several of the surveys conducted by WYG during 2015/16.

3.2.2 Construction

The development may also result in disturbance impacts during the construction phase. This will primarily be through noise but visual disturbance may also cause birds in H04C to flush. It is not considered that any disturbance of birds within the SPA or Farlington Marshes is likely due to the intervening M27 and railway line.



4.0 Proposed Mitigation

H04C is currently listed as a Secondary Support Area for brent geese under Policy E17 of the Draft Havant Local Plan. This has long been identified as the proposed mitigation for this development, including in discussions with the Hampshire County Council Ecology team. The mitigation strategy is to secure this area in perpetuity and enhance its foraging habitat. The objective is that these actions, followed by appropriate management in perpetuity, will increase the value to that of a Primary Support Site and adequately mitigate any adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.

4.1 Habitat Creation and Management

In order to maintain and improve the quality of foraging habitat within the mitigation area it is proposed that a suitable improved grassland is established to provide an optimal food source for brent geese. The objective is to create wet grassland with a mix of perennial rye grass and white clover which provides a nutrient-rich food source for foraging geese. It is anticipated that management of the grassland will be through cutting although grazing could be used as an alternative should a suitable local herd be identified. This has been chosen to provide suitable habitat every year. This area will total 4.85ha. The objective is to create wet grassland with a mix of perennial rye grass and white clover which provides a nutrient-rich food source for foraging geese. It is anticipated that management of the grassland will be through cutting although grazing could be used as an alternative should a suitable local herd be identified.

In order to further improve the suitability of the site for brent geese, the existing tree line within the site will be removed to improve visibility (brent geese prefer larger field compartments).

In order to improve the habitat suitability for other wading birds (either qualifying species for the SPA or part of the qualifying assemblage) it is proposed that wader scrapes are created within the open space area south of the site. These will be of irregular shape and depth (up to 0.5m) in order to create a range of conditions and support different species. The primary objective is to hold water during the winter, but it is anticipated that deeper areas will also hold water for part of the summer and provide an enhancement for breeding birds.

The scrapes will be located to the south of the site, adjacent to the proposed SuDS for the Site. This location provides a number of advantages, primarily the possibility of allowing treated surface water from the SuDS basin to top up the water level in the scrapes. Secondly, it is recommended that the scrapes are irregular in shape to maximise the length of edge habitat (more valuable than the central area). They will also collect coastal flood water in this area of the site. Scrapes will total 0.09ha within the open space which totals 9.37ha.

It is proposed that access to the mitigation area is provided via a new farm gate at the north west corner of the site.

4.2 Avoidance of Disturbance

4.2.1 Occupation

The following measures are proposed to reduce disturbance within the mitigation area, and avoid any additional disturbance as a result of the proposed development.



The boundary of the development and mitigation area will comprise a native species-rich hedgerow which will prevent direct access from plots. A footpath will be provided around the periphery of the mitigation area. This will be fenced with a post and wire fence (with stock fencing to prevent dogs from accessing the field). This will allow observation of the area but prevent access into the interior and disturbance of waders. This fence will be reinforced by native species hedgerow planting to further dissuade access and prevent disturbance of birds within the mitigation area.

Interpretation boards will be installed to educate new and existing residents about the conservation status of the SPA and wintering birds and the proposed use of the mitigation area. These will also explain the impacts of disturbance (particularly dogs) and recommend suitable walking routes to avoid disturbing wintering birds. These will be located within the open space south of the development (proposed wildlife area and walking route).

4.2.2 Construction

It is recommended that the Construction Environmental Management Plan for the site include measures to prevent disturbance during construction. The mitigation area will be separated from the construction area by heras fencing for the duration of the construction phase.

This should include restricting works to the summer months (April – September) wherever possible. Any works during the winter months (October – March) should include control measures to prevent noise above 69dB within the mitigation area. Suitable measures may include the use of acoustic enclosures or acoustic fencing along the western boundary of the site.



5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Capital works such as the installation of fencing and interpretation boards, scrape creation and landscaping will be completed by the developer during the construction phase.

Upon completion it is proposed that the mitigation area is managed by a suitable 3rd party body or conservation organisation (such as the RSPB). The land will be transferred upon completion of an audit to confirm that all capital works are complete, and the mitigation area is in satisfactory condition.

A commuted sum will be provided for long-term management to cover maintenance of the following: fencelines, footpaths, interpretation boards, scrapes and grassland management. This will be secured as part of the Section 106 agreement. The following costs have been calculated using 2017 Countryside Stewardship Grants. This is considered a suitable approach as it is also used in the draft SWBGS Mitigation Guidance (SWBGS, 2018). This covers an 80-year period. These costs are subject to final agreement with the managing body as part of the legal agreement.

Grassland:

- GS12 Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl – Years 1-10 (£310/ha)
- GS10 Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl – Years 11-80 (£157/ha)
- An additional 2 years of GS12 will be allowed every 10 years to allow for sward improvement and scrape management.
- As the mitigation area measures 4.85ha this will result in a commuted sum of £78,725.

Hedgerow:

- Management on 3-year rotation – cutting of one site every 3 years (£27/100m).
- As there is an estimated 900m of hedgerow requiring management this will result in a commuted sum of £6,480.

Fencing

- Replacement of fencing five times in the life of the strategy – every 15 years (£8/m).
- As the fencing measures 600m this will result in a commuted sum of £24,000.

Interpretation Boards:

- Replacement of two boards twice in the life of the strategy – years 10, 20 (£1,000/ea).
- This will result in a commuted sum of £4,000.

The total commuted sum will be £113,205.

Post development monitoring (see Section 6 below) will be the responsibility of the managing body.



6.0 Management Activities

Management of the main mitigation area will predominately comprise grass cutting. The key objective is to provide forage for brent geese and other waders during the winter, therefore the following timings are recommended:

- Summer cut – July/August leaving arisings to allow nutrients to re-enter soil
- Autumn cut – Late September removing arisings to leave a short sward for foraging geese

Any additional sowing if required should take place in August – September (Spring if including clovers).

Other management activities to be completed will include:

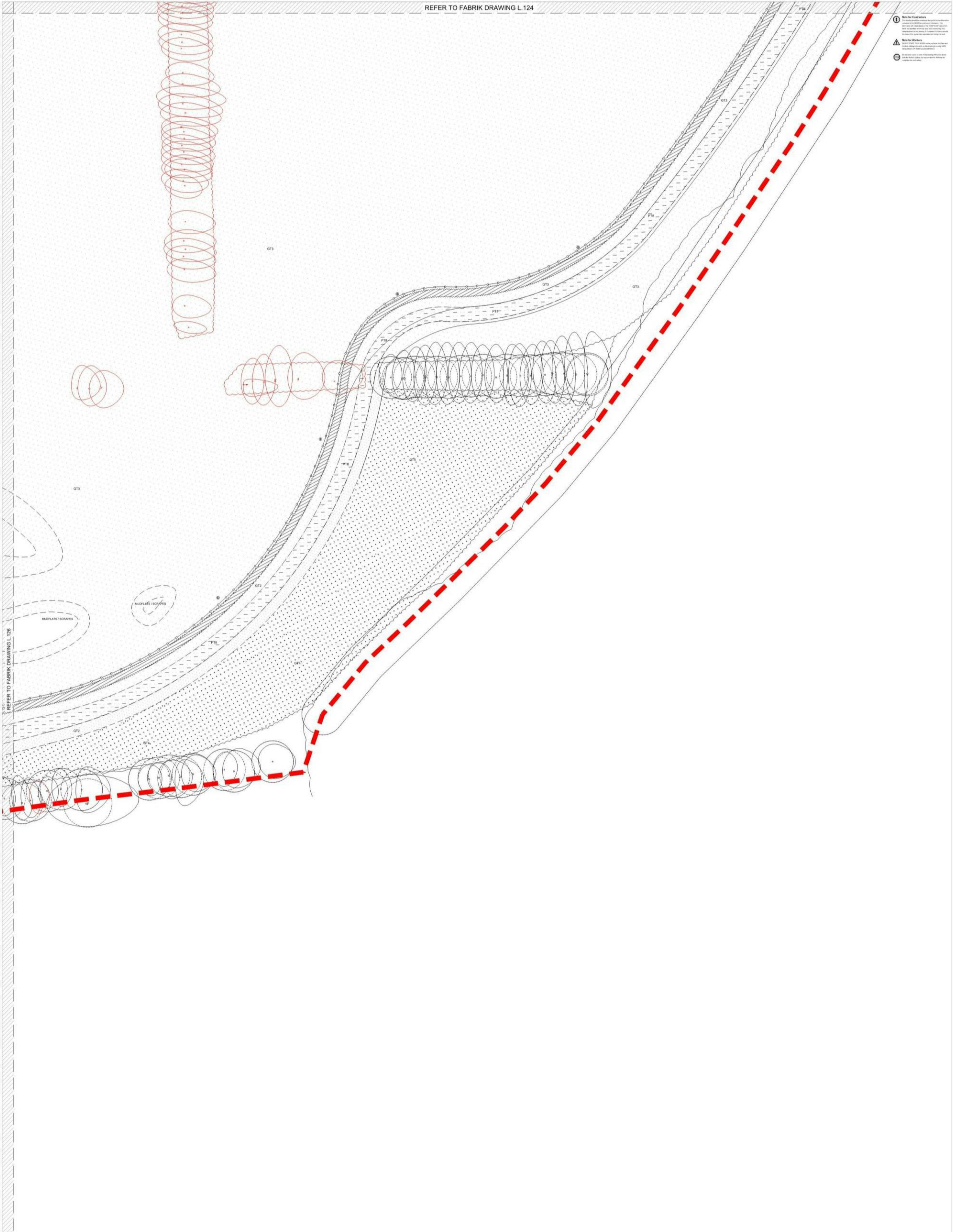
- Hedgerows – to be cut in early October (to avoid nesting birds) on three year rotation (each year to be one side or the top)
- Fences and footpaths – management anticipated to be minimal however fence integrity should be monitored annually and repaired as necessary.
- Interpretation boards – no management anticipated however boards should be replaced if necessary
- Scrapes – management to prevent dense vegetation from establishing in margins to comprise of strimming to ground level every two years in late September – early October.

Monitoring will be required to make sure that the management activities are proceeding and to identify any necessary changes to management to continue achieving the management objective (maintain the mitigation area as a 'Primary Support Area' for brent geese). It is anticipated that three years of winter bird monitoring will take place followed by annual site visits to monitor management actions.



FIGURES

Figure 1 – Mitigation Area



Notes

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Notes

The landscape design is subject to confirmation on all existing and proposed above and below ground services.

External References:

- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Architect\Recvd-19-05-02\Proposed Site Layout PL_060_DRAFT_02.05.19\Proposed Site Layout.dwg
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Architect\Recvd-19-04-20\csmrmap\PA06E_sht
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Engineer\Recvd-19-05-08\p\06E\Pa to Fabrik\XX-Level-Strategy.dwg
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Engineer\Recvd-19-05-08\p\06E\Pa to Fabrik\XX-Highway-Layout-Review.dwg
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Site Survey\Recvd-19-05-08\361 ACT - 1 Forty Acre
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Tree Survey\Recvd-18-04-26\16270 BT2 - Standard\16270 BT2
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, BedhamptonDrawings\Engineer\Recvd-19-05-08\p\06E\Pa to Fabrik\XX-Drainage.dwg

No.

Date

Reason

02

08_05_19

Updated to latest architects base

01

31_06_18

Amended to address officer comments

Project

Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton
for Barratt David Wilson Homes Southampton

Drawing

Combined Hard and Soft Landscape General
Arrangement Plan (Sheet 6 of 10)

Scale

1:200 @ A0

Date

April '18

Checked

pb

Drawn

clk

Drawing No.

D2434 L.125

Revision

02

☐ Preliminary

☒ Issued for Planning Approval

☐ Issued for Construction

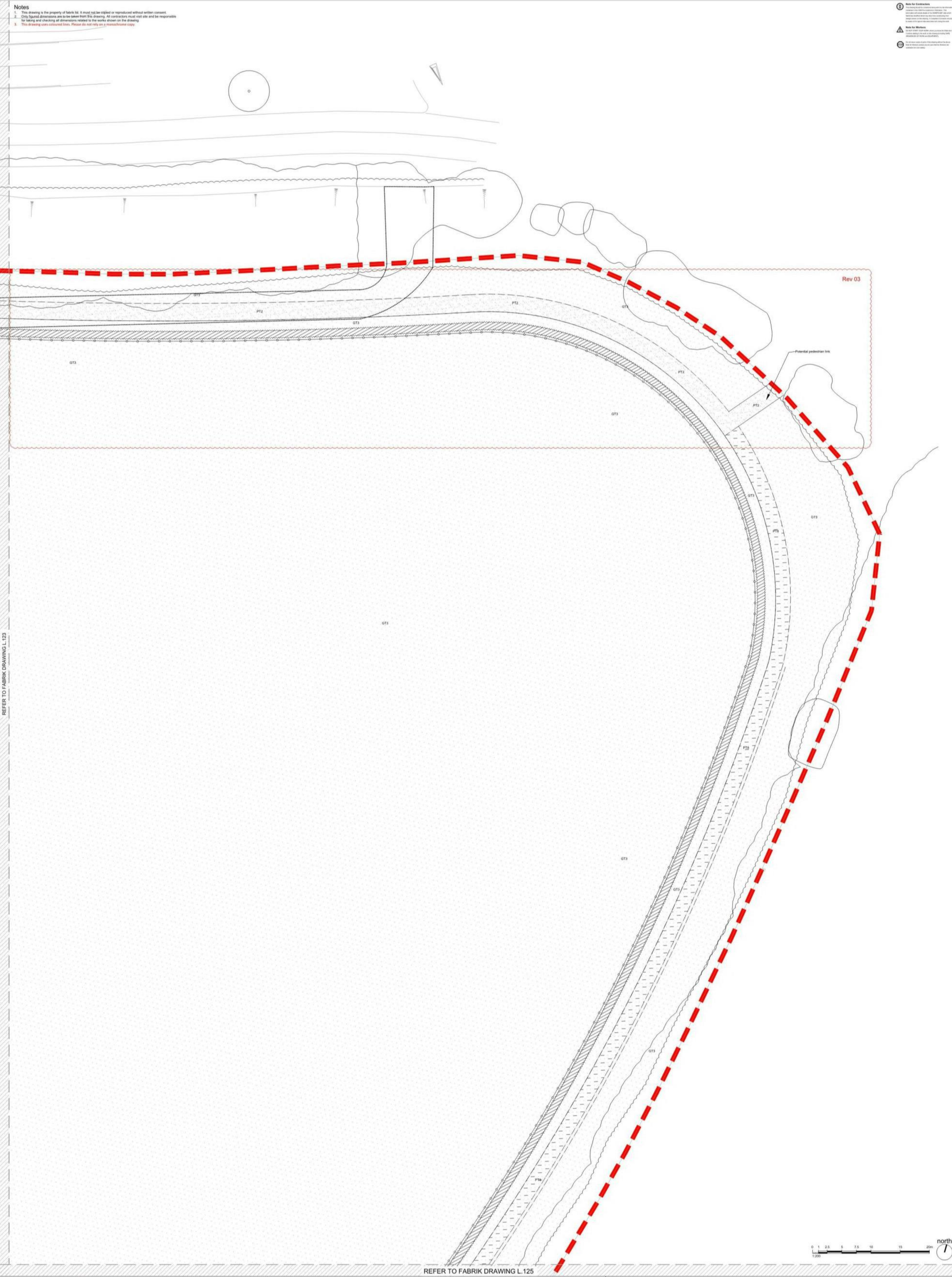
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Drawing sheet size - A0

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120	121	122	123	124
129	128	127	126	125

Notes

The landscape design is subject to confirmation on all existing and proposed above and below ground services.

- External References:**
- D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Architect\19-06-14\withtransfer-18da06\Proposed Site Layout - Standard\Proposed Site Layout.dwg
 - D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Architect\19-06-20\caravan\PA028.dwg
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 - D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Engineer\19-05-09\PA\REF's Issued 190508 to Fabrik\IX-Highway-Layout-Review.dwg
 - D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Site Survey\19-05-09\PA\REF's Forty Acre
 - D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Tree Survey\19-04-26\16275 812 - Standard\16275 812
 - D2434 Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton Drawings\Engineer\19-05-09\PA\REF's Issued 190508 to Fabrik\IX-Drainage.dwg

No.	Date	Reason	By
03	14_06_18	3m footpath/cycleway along the northern edge and pedestrian link onto Havant Road added.	clk
02	09_05_18	Updated to latest architects base.	clk
01	31_08_18	Amended to address officer comments.	cam

Project

Forty Acre Farm, Bedhampton
for Barratt David Wilson Homes Southampton

Drawing

Combined Hard and Soft Landscape General
Arrangement Plan (Sheet 5 of 10)

Scale

1:200 @ A0

Date

April '18

Checked

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Drawing No.

D2434 L.124

Revision

03

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