

01/5303A/EIAScreening

Adam Birkett
Principal Planning Officer
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

16 February 2021



Dear Adam

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)
JUNIOR TRAINING CENTRE, BROCKHALL VILLAGE, LANCASHIRE BB6
FIRST REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION**

This first request for a screening opinion ('First Request') under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('EIA Regulations') has been prepared by Peacock + Smith Limited on behalf of The Blackburn Rovers Football and Athletic Limited ('Applicant'), the freehold owner of the Junior Training Centre ('Site') in Brockhall Village, to seek a formal view from Ribble Valley Borough Council ('Council') as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') is likely to be required in respect of the following outline application for planning permission which is anticipated to be submitted in late-March 2021:

'The demolition of existing buildings and the construction of indoor training facilities, ancillary residential accommodation, grounds maintenance building and car parking' ('Proposed Development').

With the exception of the vehicular access point, all detailed matters will be reserved for future consideration.

This letter should be read in conjunction with the request for formal pre-application advice submitted on 01 February 2021, which is currently being considered by the Council under reference: RV\2020\ENQ\00010.

Context

The Applicant proposes to amalgamate their senior and junior football coaching operations and facilities together on the Site. It would create a new purpose-built academy accommodating all teams/age groups and provide state-of-the-art training and educational facilities. Allied to this, the Senior Training Centre ('STC') which falls within the settlement boundary as defined by the adopted Proposals Map (**Appendix 1**) would be redeveloped with a residential-led scheme.

Approach

To progress matters expeditiously, we adopt the following 'two-staged' approach for requesting an EIA screening opinion –

First Request: this letter provides an analysis of all the relevant considerations at the pre-application stage and requests an 'interim screening opinion' from the Council.

Second request: the detailed and comprehensive second request for a ‘final’ EIA screening opinion from the Council will be submitted alongside, or shortly after, the submission of the outline planning application. It will be supported by all the relevant technical documentation.

Under the cover of a separate letter, a first request for a formal screening opinion has been submitted to the Council in relation to a simultaneous application for outline planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of up to 170 dwellings with associated infrastructure, a local convenience store, open space and children’s play area on the STC.

Specialist Consultant Team

The Applicant has appointed a team of specialist consultants to consider planning and environmental matters in relation to the Proposed Development as listed in the table below.

TABLE 1: SPECIALIST CONSULTANT TEAM	
Topic	Consultancy
Planning	Peacock + Smith
Architecture and masterplanning	BE1
Ecology	Delta Simons
Flood Risk	Delta Simons
Archaeology	Delta Simons
Transport	Delta Simons
Ground Conditions	Delta Simons
Arboriculture	Delta Simons
Legal advice	Eversheds Sutherland

Description of the Site and Surroundings

The Site is located on the northern edge of, but outside, the defined settlement boundary of Brockhall Village and, technically, it lies in the ‘countryside’ as defined by the adopted Proposals Map (**Appendix 1**). The village is equidistant (approximately 11 kilometres) between Blackburn to the south and Clitheroe to the north. The main regional corridor (A59) is circa one kilometre to the south at Northcote.

The Site is the existing youth training and educational facility used exclusively for the development of junior players both on and off the pitch. As shown by the blue line in the **Appendix 2**, it comprises a broadly ‘diamond-shaped’ parcel of land measuring 7.82 hectares directly accessed from Franklin Hill. There is predominantly agricultural land to the north and east with the River Ribble beyond. Three large and prominent residential properties are located to the west of the Site.

The southern part of the Site comprises previously-developed (brownfield) land accommodating a purpose-built (single-storey) sports hall that has been extended; grounds maintenance building and storage facility; and some hardstanding for vehicular access and car parking (79 spaces). The northern part of the Site is a swathe of open playing fields. The topography is broadly level and there are established and dense lines of predominantly evergreen trees and shrubbery along the perimeter of the Site.

Proposed Development

The defined site area for the application for outline planning permission is shown by the red line on the illustrative Framework Plan (**Appendix 3**), which is primarily sited on the existing academy building and areas of hardstanding. It measures 0.72 hectares and is capable of accommodating the following development –

- a purpose-built building accommodating state-of-the-art indoor training facilities for all teams/age groups, including an indoor football pitch and swimming pool;
- ancillary residential accommodation (similar to The Lodge);
- a grounds maintenance building; and
- a car park (including a coach space) accessed from the existing vehicular access point on Franklin Hill.

The outline planning application will reserve appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for future determination.

This First Request is based on these proposals and defined parameters.

EIA Screening Criteria

Based on the pre-application submission, the Proposed Development within the defined site area is currently below the screening threshold of one hectare (i.e. 0.72 hectares) for non-residential schemes as set out in the EIA Regulations. Therefore, technically speaking, EIA screening is not required. However, the proposals may evolve and, with this in mind, an interim screening opinion is sought in respect of the land shown in **Figure 1**, which measures 1.965 hectares. This larger site forms Schedule 2 development for the purpose of the EIA Regulations, because it falls within the description of 'urban development projects' (Schedule 2, 10b). The survey work for the environmental technical reports covers this larger site.

FIGURE 1: DEFINED SITE AREA FOR INTERIM SCREENING OPINION



Schedule 3 in the EIA Regulations sets out the criteria to be considered as part of a screening opinion for Schedule 2 development to ascertain whether the development is likely to have significant environmental effects. These are:

- characteristics of development;
- location of development; and
- types and characteristics of the potential impact.

We consider each one, in turn, below.

Characteristics of development

The Proposed Development is not unusually complex and would be homogeneous with the existing land use. A large proportion of the proposals would be sited on the footprint of the existing sports hall building and areas of hardstanding. Therefore, it would ensure the effective re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) land and help to temper the environmental effects of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development would be adjacent to the settlement boundary and not isolated from the village (the site is accessed from Franklin Hill which falls within the settlement boundary). It is noteworthy that three large and prominent residential properties have recently been granted planning permission and constructed within the vicinity of the Site, which fall outside the settlement boundary in the countryside.

Location of development

The Site is neither located within nor adjoins a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites; National Parks; the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and World Heritage Sites and Scheduled Monuments.

Other locational considerations of the Site are:

- a) it falls within the lowest-risk Flood Zone 1;
- b) it is not within an Air Quality Management Area;
- c) the levels of biodiversity and other resources are largely absent;
- d) it accommodates existing built development that generates a level of trips; and
- e) the existing use has not resulted in significant land contamination.

The proposed redevelopment of the Site would complement and respect the existing surroundings, which are not particularly sensitive or vulnerable.

Types and characteristics of the potential impact

Set against the characteristics and location of the Proposed Development, we do not consider it would have significant effects on the environment and any potential impacts would be 'local'. Notwithstanding this, it is acknowledged that a number of impact assessments are required and, accordingly, the following list of assessments are considered necessary to support the outline planning application and inform the second request for a 'final' EIA screening opinion –

- a) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Roost Potential
- b) Flood Risk Assessment
- c) Preliminary Risk Assessment (Geo-Environmental)
- d) Arboricultural Survey and Report
- e) Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- f) Transport Assessment

- g) Framework Travel Plan
- h) (Desk-Based) Archaeological Assessment.

These assessments will be subject to examination by the Council and statutory consultees, who have the capability to impose relevant conditions on the decision notice.

In terms of cumulative impacts, we are not aware of other existing or approved development in the local area that needs to be taken into consideration.

Conclusion

Taking all of the preceding evidence into consideration, it is our judgment that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment which require an EIA.

We trust the above provides the Council with sufficient information at this First Request stage to provide a formal view as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') is likely to be required in respect of the Proposed Development. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Ferguson at the London office of Peacock + Smith.

Yours sincerely

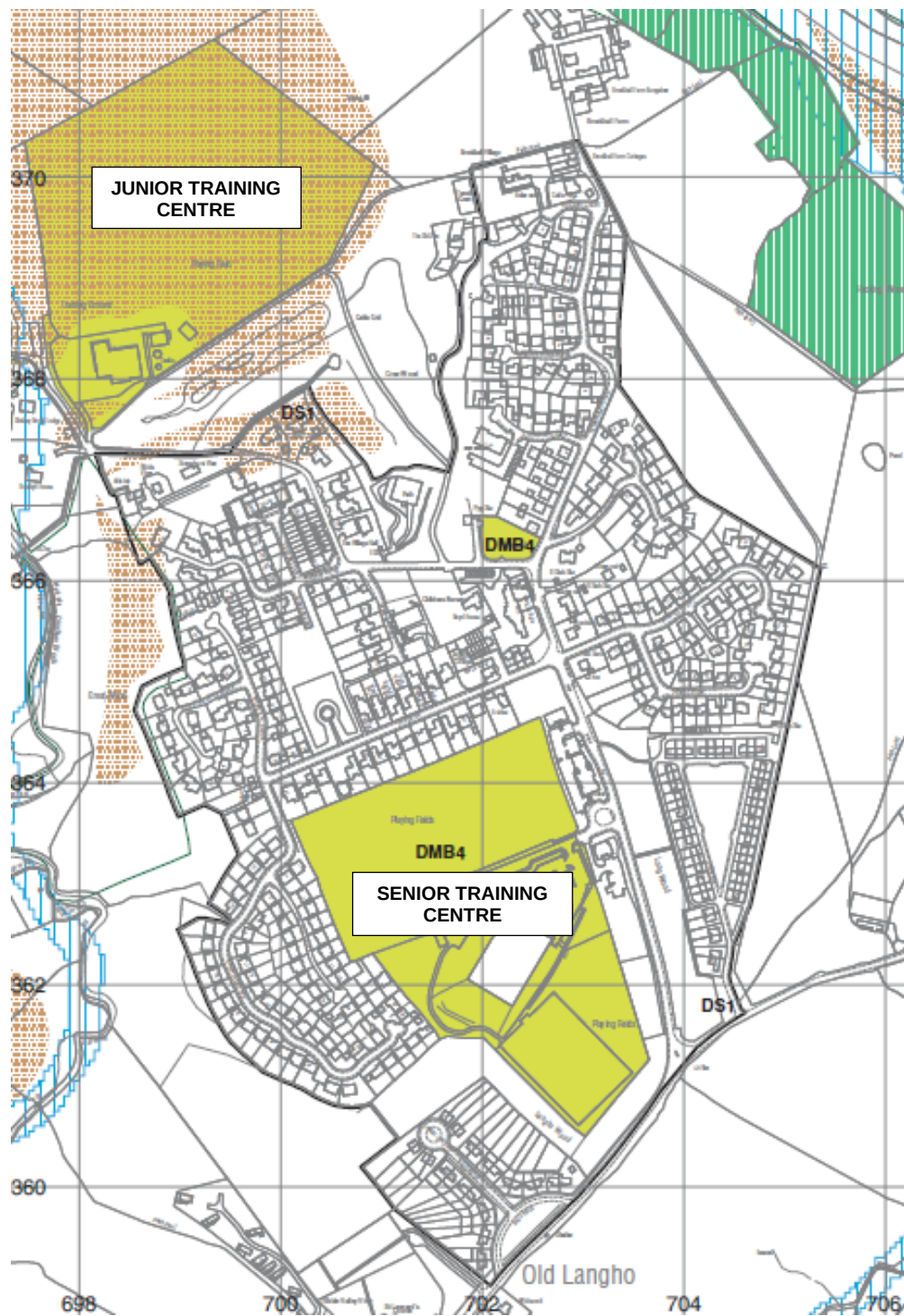


PEACOCK + SMITH

APPENDIX 1

EXTRACT FROM PROPOSALS MAP

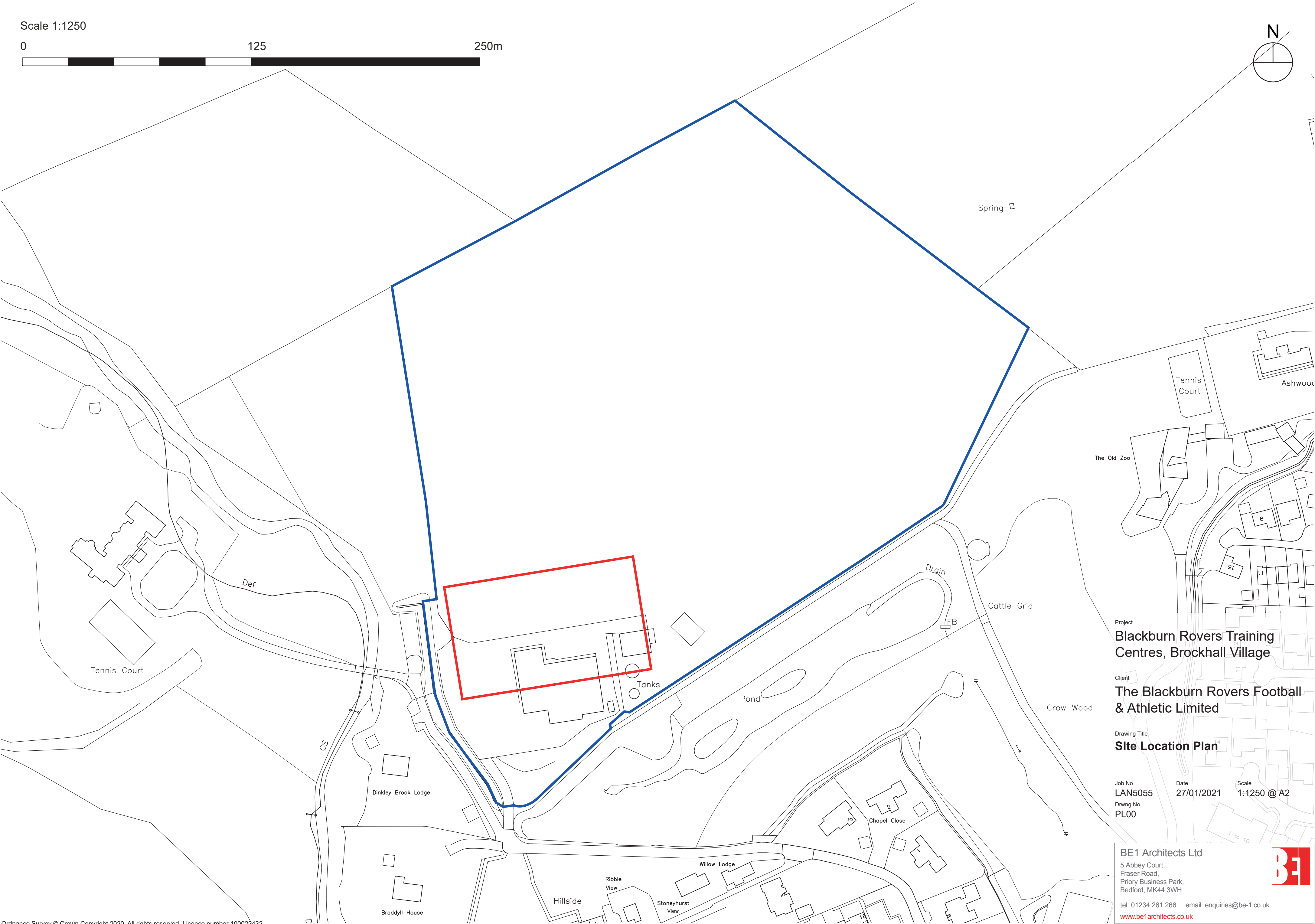
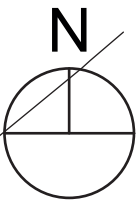
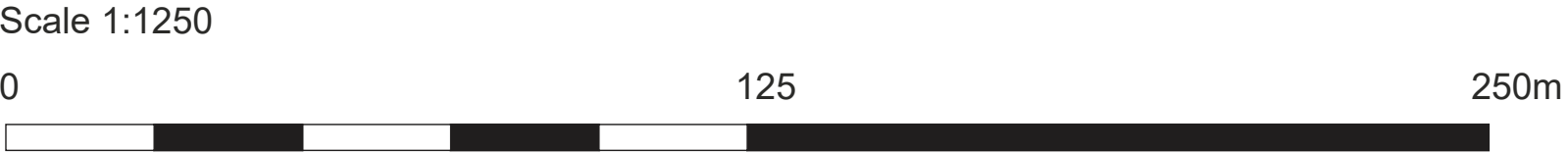
EXTRACT FROM PROPOSALS MAP



Source: Adopted Proposals Map (Brockhall Village Inset), August 2016

APPENDIX 2

SITE LOCATION PLAN



Project
Blackburn Rovers Training Centres, Brockhall Village

Client
The Blackburn Rovers Football & Athletic Limited

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Job No
LAN5055
Drwg No.
PL00

Date
27/01/2021

Scale
1:1250 @ A2

BE1 Architects Ltd
5 Abbey Court,
Fraser Road,
Priory Business Park,
Bedford, MK44 3WH

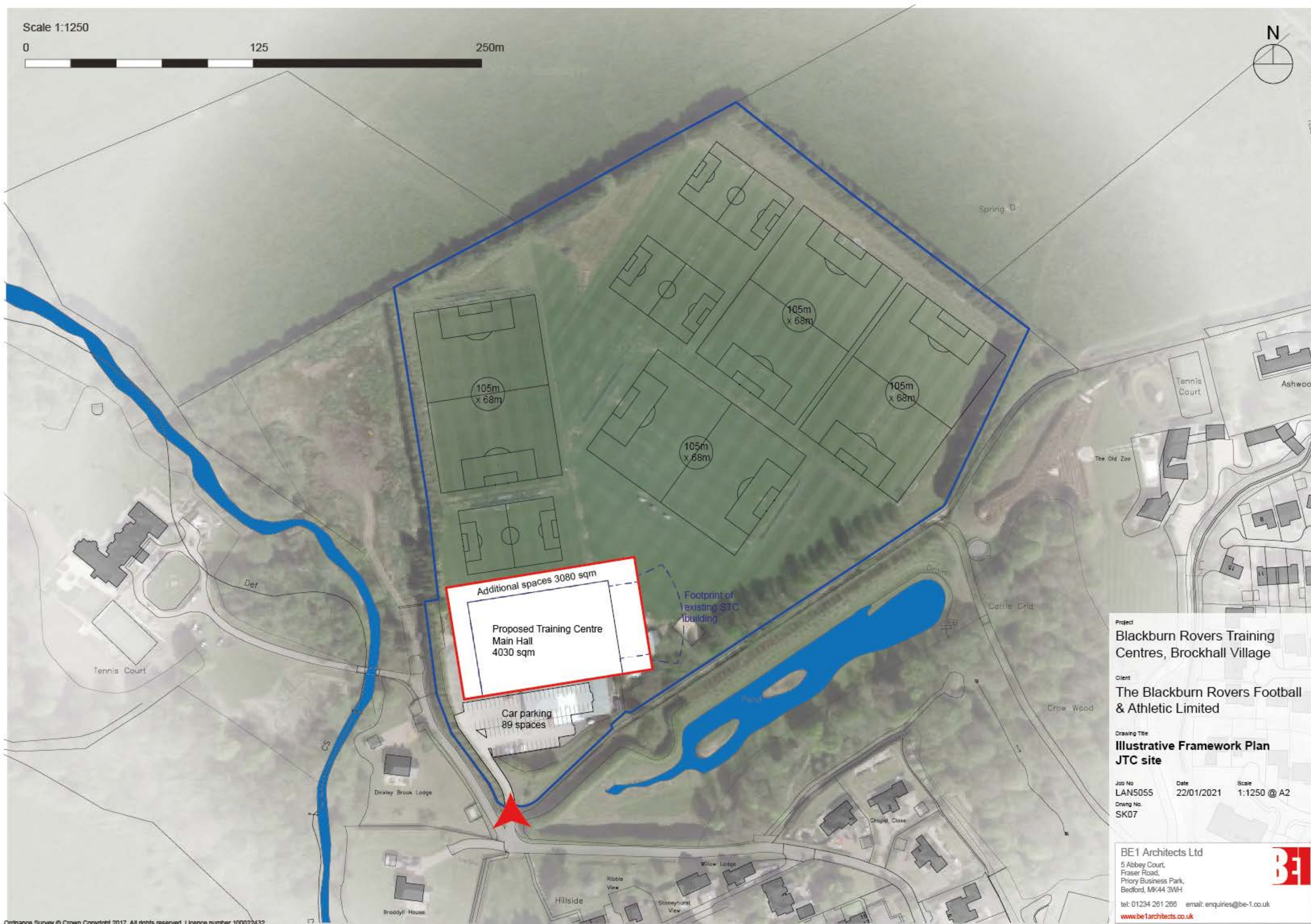
tel: 01234 261 266 email: enquiries@be-1.co.uk
www.be1architects.co.uk



APPENDIX 3

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK PLAN

Scale 1:1250



Project
Blackburn Rovers Training Centres, Brockhall Village

Client
The Blackburn Rovers Football & Athletic Limited

Drawing Title
**Illustrative Framework Plan
JTC site**

Job No	Date	Scale
LAN5055	22/01/2021	1:1250 @ A2
Drawing No	SK07	

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