



**Bath & North East Somerset  
Core Strategy Examination**

**Representation Reference 106/5**

**Respondent  
Issue 2 Sub Matter:**

**Pro Planning  
Somerset Valley**

**Q 9.1 9.4 9.6 9.7 9.8**

**December 2011**

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## ISSUE 2 SUB MATTER: SOMER VALLEY

### Balancing Jobs and Housing in Radstock

#### **9.1 The vision is to create greater self-reliance in the area (a closer balance between jobs and housing). Is this closer balance the most appropriate aim and is it likely to be achieved by the proposed strategy in SV1?**

1. The representations no. 106/5 submitted by Pro Planning on 26 January 2011 highlighted the inconsistencies in Policy SV1. Under the heading “Housing Growth” in paragraph 4 reference was made to the following points.
  - The Core Strategy and Policy SV1 in particular, needs to take a more realistic approach and accept that out-commuting will continue from Radstock. This is not only realistic, but practicable, pragmatic and consistent with emerging national policy guidance as explained later in this statement.
  - The Core Strategy gives no justification for treating Radstock differently from Keynsham, where out-commuting is to be reinforced by the scale of residential development proposed within and surrounding the town, but without significant balanced employment provision.
  - The largest employment allocation within BANES in the Local Plan is at Bath Business Park, in Peasedown. The Core Strategy recognises the importance of bolstering public transport along the A367 corridor between Radstock, Peasedown St John and Bath. There is no valid justification to stifle housing development at Radstock when new employment opportunities have been and are continuing to be made available at a sustainably accessible site on a major transport corridor.
  - The greater affordability of housing in Radstock is a significant consideration against the inflated prices in Bath and the limited availability of supply. The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 19 bullet 3, provides for land values to be taken into account in preparing the housing strategy.

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NPPF paragraph 19.3

“Planning policies and decisions should take into account local circumstances and market signals such as land prices, commercial rents and housing affordability.”

3. For reasons which are elaborated under the Inspector’s question no. 9.4 below and as covered in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the January 2011 Representations, it is demonstrated that Policy SV1 will not achieve the objective of a closer balance between jobs and housing. The further point is made however, that given the circumstances of employment and housing provision in Radstock, it would be inappropriate to seek to do so.

***Economic Development***

**9.4 Is the protection of existing business use/employment land (SV1 3c) consistent with national policy in relation to economic development? Is it likely to maximise the potential to create jobs in the area? Is it consistent with the expectation in SHLAA of the loss of some former employment sites to housing (e.g. Alcan site, MSN10)?**

4. Policy SV1 is inherently inconsistent. Part 3B allows for a planned reduction in industrial/warehouse floor space between 2006 and 2026, whereas Part 3C requires all land in existing business use to be protected and alternative use only to be allowed where there is employment benefit.
5. There is also inconsistency between Part 2a, which encourages the redevelopment of vacant and underused industrial land and factories, with Part 3c which protects land in existing business use, including by inference, vacant and underused premises.
6. Specifically in response to the Inspector’s question the protection of existing business use/employment land is not consistent with national policy in relation to either PPS4 or the NPPF.
7. The draft NPPF at paragraph 75 expressly precludes long term protection of employment land and floor space.

“Planning policy should avoid the long term protection of employment land or floor space, and applications for alternative uses of designated land or

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buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to the market signals and the relative need for the different land uses.”

9. The approach proposed in the Core Strategy is seeking to tie housing numbers to employment delivery in a manner which is likely to prejudice the delivery of both types of development.
10. There is therefore a need not just to amend Policy SV1 so that it becomes inherently consistent, but also the safeguarding of employment land and premises and the delivery of housing sites should be largely separated out, with only identified key employment sites being identified and safeguarded in that use.
11. In PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth the plan making policy EC:2 (h) requires:

“Existing site allocations should not be carried forward from one version of the development plan to the next without evidence of the need and reasonable prospect of their take-up during the plan period. If there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated economic use, the allocation should not be retained, and wider economic uses or alternative uses should be considered.”

12. It is reasonable to expect that this principle should be applied to existing, as well as safeguarded employment sites, but neither aspect has been adequately reflected in the Policies of SV1. PPS 4 is published rather than just draft policy and the Core Strategy has an obligation to be consistent with it.

### **Summary**

13. In relation to questions 9.1 and 9.4 therefore it is considered that the planned reduction of industrial floor space in Somer Valley, the identification of employment sites to be safeguarded, and the allocation of suitable and available housing sites should be addressed as separate policies in the interests of clarity for both housing and employment uses, and deliverability.

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## *Housing*

### **9.6 Are the major commitments relied on for delivery likely to be achieved, bearing in mind the lack of development since being allocated in Local Plan? What barriers to implementation remain to be overcome?**

14. This issue was addressed in the January 2011 106/5 representations under the heading “Housing Growth” at paragraph 4. In response to the Inspector’s specific question, although the Core Strategy is not to be concerned with specific sites, in this case his forbearance is sought because site specific examples and case studies are helpful to illustrate and support the point. This statement focuses in this response on the SHLAAs Coomb End North A and B: RAD13a and b and RAD12.
15. RAD12 was a BANES Local Plan allocation on the site of an existing employment use. It was therefore allocated for completion by 2011. As with the majority of the Local Plan allocations, the timing of the Core Strategy Examination is pertinent to this end date. It is considered that where a site has not even become the subject of a planning application during the Local Plan period, it is inconsistent with national policy to continue to allocate that site.
16. This is particularly the case in the light of the useful definitions in the draft NPPF. The footnote to paragraph 109 on boosting supply of housing states that:

“To be considered deliverable, sites should at the point of adoption of the Local Plan be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable...”
17. It is understood that the development of this site RAD 12 is not viable, but more particularly it does not meet the national government test set for establishing availability. The site continues in employment use, no attempt has been made to bring it forward and it should not be retained.
18. Conversely however, the site RAD13.b (RAD13.2) has been the subject of two planning applications, one in 2010 prior to the January 2011 Core Strategy representations (Local Planning Authority reference 10/03295/FUL) and one subsequently during 2011 (Local Planning Authority reference 11/04249/FUL). It

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is a former garage workshop site. The first application was refused for a number of technical reasons and on the grounds of the sustainability of the location because it lies outside the Housing Development Boundary. This reason was included notwithstanding it immediately adjoins the Housing Development Boundary and is therefore permitted by the Joint Replacement Structure Plan which remains current development plan policy. It also however, immediately adjoins the allocated site RAD12. To conclude therefore that RAD12 is sustainably located and RAD13.2 is not is somewhat spurious. This is encroaching on the issue in the Inspector's question 9.8 and is developed in later paragraphs.

19. The second application is yet to be determined, but the Officer has made it clear that it will continue to be refused on the basis of lying outside the Housing Development Boundary, even if all other issues are addressed which is nearly the case.
20. In relation to question 9.6 however, the same point is relevant to a number of the SHLAA sites in the Core Strategy which have been allocated through the Local Plan, have not delivered housing units, remain active employment sites and should not therefore be carried forward as Core Strategy commitments unless there have been demonstrable changes in the prospects for delivery in recent months.

**9.7 Are the constraints set out in SV1 4b justified/consistent with National Policy?**

21. The constraints in paragraph 4b are neither justified nor consistent with national policy. Radstock is designated as a major settlement in BANES where housing and employment growth are to be encouraged. It is essential that the Core Strategy makes provision for a review of the Housing Development Boundary through the preparation of subsequent Placemaking Plans.
22. The additional requirements that all housing has to have employment benefit or contribute to the implementation of the Town Park has, in the case of the former, already been shown to be inconsistent with national policy. It is accepted that there are some larger sites with capacity to accommodate mixed use schemes, where an element of employment use should be retained. Many of the sites, however such as those along Coomb End are unsuitable for continued

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employment use, indeed employment use would not be approved because of the footpath, highway and junction geometry limitations, so that to impose this restriction would in effect rule out even that development along Coomb End which lies within the current Housing Development Boundary.

23. The policy is inconsistent with national policy which seeks to encourage and facilitate additional new housing development.
24. Finally the Core Strategy is, as was pointed out in the January 2011 representations, unsound in that it allows for Housing Development Boundaries to be revisited in villages where development would be less sustainably located, but at present, precludes any revisiting of the Housing Development Boundary at the more major settlements of Radstock and Midsomer Norton. This contravenes policies for encouraging growth to the larger settlements within the district.

**9.8 Does the existing Housing Development Boundary exclude potentially sustainable sites, including previously developed land, potential mixed use employment sites, or sites included in the SHLAA as part of the housing supply? If so, is Policy SV1 4b justified or should the Core Strategy signal the intention to review the Housing Development Boundary?**

25. The Housing Development Boundary in the northern part of Radstock has to date been relatively arbitrarily defined. In the BANES Local Plan it was amended to include the allocated site RAD12, as the attached proposed amendment to the Local Plan confirms. Although of only historical interest, the revised deposit draft of the Local Plan extended the Housing Development Boundary along the length of Coomb End to link Radstock and Clandown, at the request of the Local Councillor. This was in my view, a better reflection of the reality along Coomb End and also enhanced the opportunities for bringing forward comprehensive regeneration development which could ease the access problems along Coomb End. This had been the commendable forward thinking of the Councillor at that time.
26. An anomaly arising from the arbitrary designation was that part of the Radstock Conservation Area lies outside the Housing Development Boundary. This has meant that schemes to improve unused and derelict areas within the Conservation Area are being refused because they lie outside the Development Boundary. It highlights an ongoing inconsistency in the Development Plan



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documents that is not currently proposed to be corrected through the Core Strategy review process.

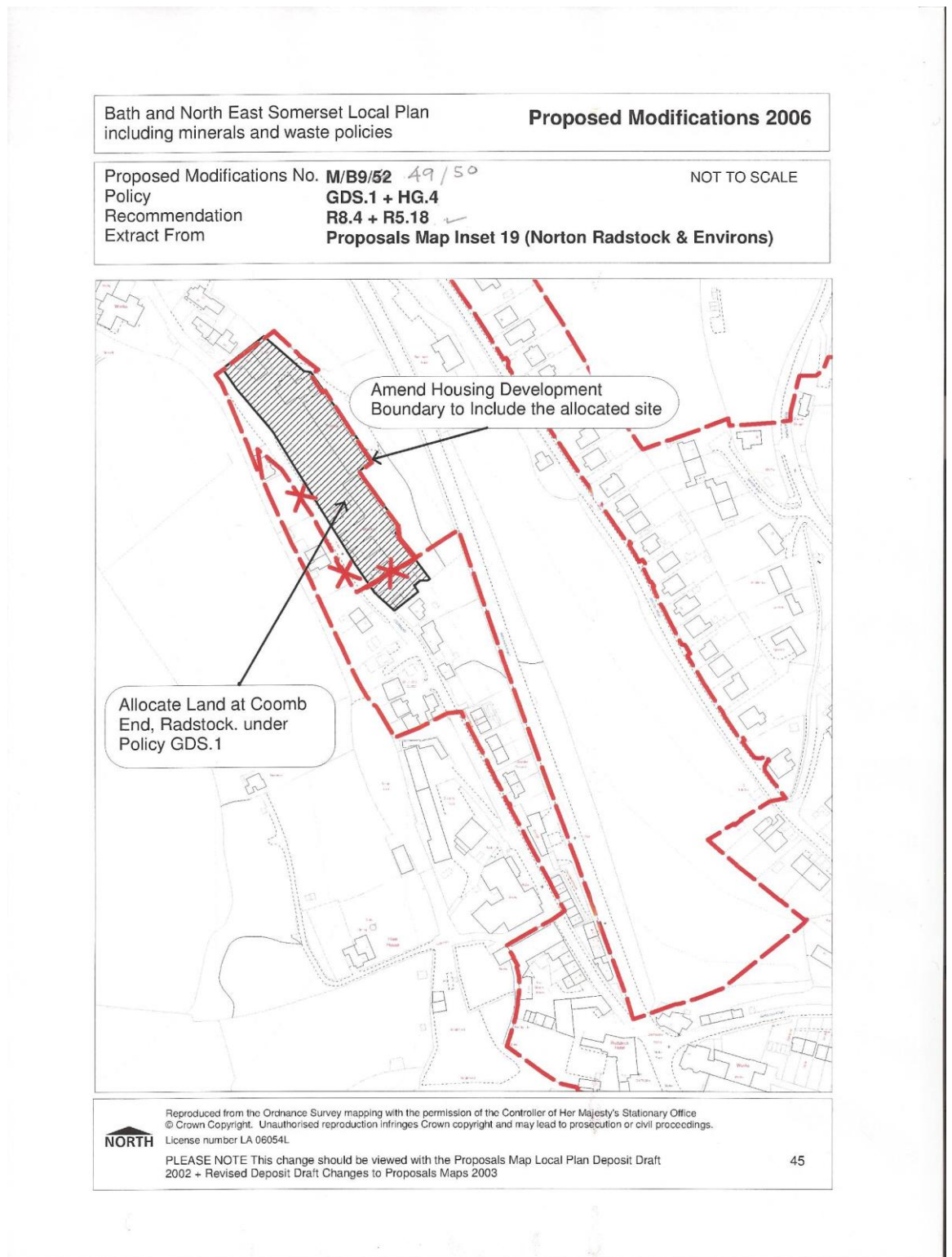
27. In addition, because the consideration of housing sites in the Core Strategy examination is not site specific, it should not be assumed that those identified in the SHLAA are all that are available. The Inspector may wish to be aware that the land hatched blue on the attached plan is under my client's control, is immediately available for development and could be promoted through a planning application at any stage. At present it would be unacceptable to the Council because it is outside the Development Boundary. Furthermore, this site is not subject to sequential test constraints for the flood plain which apply to many of the allocated sites within the Housing Development Boundary for Radstock in and around the town centre.
28. It is only by introducing scope to revisit the Housing Development Boundary that the Core Strategy can ensure it will encourage and achieve the most sustainable housing and employment development for Clandown and Radstock. Failure to make this provision would in effect mean that the Core Strategy has made site specific determinations because there would be no flexibility to consider alternatives thereafter.
29. In my view it is insufficient to make reference in the new paragraph 4.15a, but needs to be included in a much revised version of Policy SV1.

### ***Summary***

30. In relation to housing at Somer Valley therefore, this further statement has amplified the January 2011 representations in relation to:
- The need to review and probably delete Local Plan housing allocations which have not begun to be bought forward during the Local Plan period.
  - Include flexibility to revisit the Housing Development Boundary for Radstock, and particularly in the vicinity of Coomb End between Radstock and Clandown, to facilitate the development of more suitable sustainable sites and particularly those outside the flood plain.

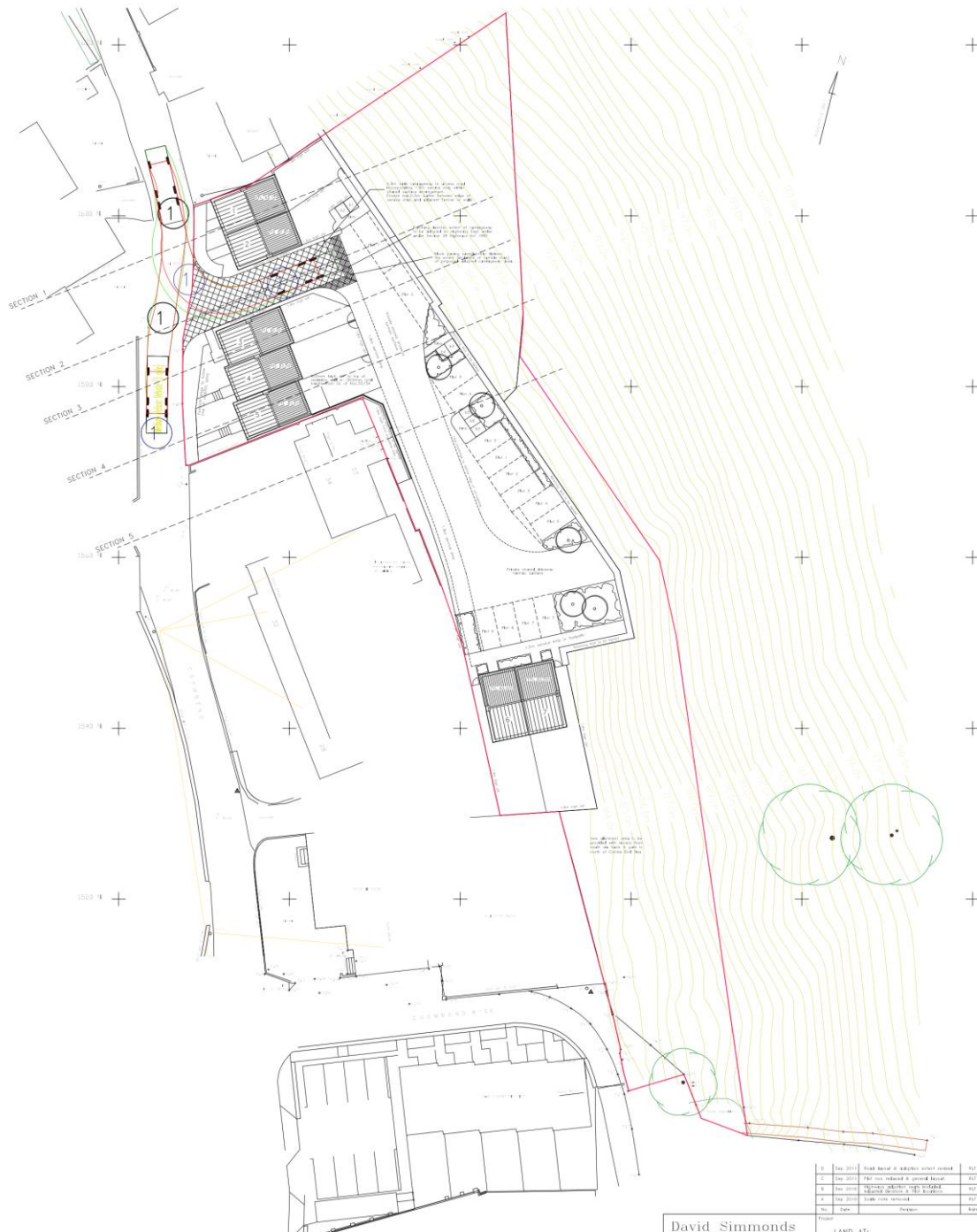
# APPENDIX 1

## 2006 Amendment to Housing Development Boundary, Policy GDS.1



# APPENDIX 2

## SHLAA Site RAD 13.b Planning Application reference 11/04249/FUL



<p><b>David Simmonds Associates</b>                  ARCHITECTS                  2008-2009</p> <p>100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000</p>	<p>1. 01. 2009 Site plan &amp; landscape context plan</p> <p>2. 02. 2009 Site plan &amp; landscape context plan</p> <p>3. 03. 2009 Site plan &amp; landscape context plan</p> <p>4. 04. 2009 Site plan &amp; landscape context plan</p> <p>5. 05. 2009 Site plan &amp; landscape context plan</p>	<p>Rev</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>	
<p>Project:</p> <p><b>LAND AT: COMBEND RADSTOCK, SOMERSET</b></p>	<p>Drawn by: [Blank]</p> <p>Checked by: [Blank]</p> <p>Date: 08.9.2009</p>		
<p>Client:</p> <p><b>Henrietta Matthews House Limited                  c/o John Hitchings                  Bradnich                  Exeter                  EX5 4LH</b></p>	<p>Drawing No: 4908</p> <p>Revision: 02</p> <p>Sheet: D</p>		

## APPENDIX 3

### Potential Unconstrained Development Site at Cladown

