



Application Number:	2026/0067	Application Type:	Permission In Principle
Proposal:	Permission in Principle: Erection of 2 no. dwellings.	Location:	Land at Moss Farm, Greens Lane, Stacksteads, Bacup, OL13 0HQ
Report of:	Head of Planning and Building Control	Status:	For publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	19/05/2026
Applicant:	H Crook, J Duckworth	Determination Expiry Date:	22/05/2026
Agent:	Mrs Sarah Jones – Maybern Planning and Development		

Contact Officer:	Harry Turner
Email:	planning@rossendalebc.gov.uk

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications

REASON FOR REPORTING	
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	No
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	No
3 or more objections received	Yes
Other (please state):	N/A

arising from the following rights:

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be approved.

2. APPLICATION SITE

The application site extends to approximately 0.27 hectares and comprises an undeveloped parcel of land forming the northern extent of a wider field. The land is predominantly

grassed, with a single mature tree located toward the south-eastern part of the site. The site slopes gently from south to north and sits at a slightly higher land level relative to the adjacent residential development to the north and east.

Access to the site is taken via an existing gated track from Greens Lane, which runs along the southern edge of the Stacksteads settlement.

The site is located within the countryside, positioned immediately outside the defined urban boundary of Stacksteads. To the east, the site is bounded by the detached property Lumley House, with further established residential development comprising terraced properties along Springhill Avenue and Springhill Villas to the north, and Unsworth Street and Cutler Lane to the east. To the south and west, the site adjoins open agricultural land, including fields and buildings associated with the wider farm holding and alpaca enterprise. Additional sporadic residential development and farm buildings are located along Greens Lane to the south, including a small cluster of detached dwellings and Greens Lane Farm.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history specific to this site.

4. PROPOSAL

This application seeks permission in principle (stage 1) to construct two dwellings on the land. The application is for permission in principle only, and therefore the plans and drawings submitted are for illustrative purposes only.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2	Achieving sustainable development
Section 4	Decision-making
Section 5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 9	Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11	Making effective use of land
Section 12	Achieving well-designed places
Section 14	Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Development Plan Policies

Policy SS: Spatial Strategy

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy SD2: Urban Boundary and Green Belt

Policy HS1: Meeting Rossendale's Housing Requirement

Policy HS5: Housing Standards

Policy HS8: Private Outdoor amenity space

Policy ENV1: High Quality Development in the Borough

Policy ENV3: Landscape Character and Quality

Policy ENV4: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecological Networks

Policy ENV6: Environmental Protection

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

RBC Forward Planning	No objection – Advice provided acknowledges the site’s edge-of-settlement position and SHLAA inclusion. Concerns are raised regarding the low density of development and potential highways and landscape impacts.
LCC Highways	No objection – Advice provided for requirements at Technical Details stage.
Environmental Protection (Land Contamination)	No objection – Advice provided for requirements at Technical Details stage.
United Utilities	No objection – Advice provided for requirements at Technical Details stage.

7. REPRESENTATIONS

In order to publicise the application, consultation letters were sent to surrounding neighbours on 19/03/2026, with a site notice posted at the site on 19/03/2026

Nine objections have been received with these raising the following matters:

- Principle of development – development on greenfield land in the countryside outside the urban boundary, conflict with the Local Plan/NPPF, and site not allocated for housing
- Highways and access – Greens Lane is a narrow, single-track road with no footways or passing places; concerns regarding increased traffic, pedestrian safety, and access for emergency/refuse vehicles
- Flood risk and drainage – presence of natural springs, surface water runoff, historic drainage infrastructure and concerns that development could increase flooding to nearby properties
- Ecology and biodiversity – harm to wildlife habitats and species (including bats, owls and amphibians) and loss of a wider ecological corridor
- Trees – potential impacts on existing trees (including those subject to protection) and associated root systems
- Neighbour amenity – overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing impact and reduced daylight, particularly due to the elevated position of the site
- Landscape and character – harm to the rural setting, openness and visual amenity of the area
- Heritage – potential impact on historic features including underground reservoirs and associated infrastructure
- Infrastructure and construction impacts – noise, disturbance, and adequacy of local infrastructure

- Other matters – light pollution, road condition/maintenance, future expansion of development, and concerns regarding the accuracy of submitted information

8. ASSESSMENT

Principle

At the heart of the NPPF and the Local Plan Policy SD1 is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 11 of the Framework makes clear that for decision taking this means:

- “c) Approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*

In the case of applications for residential development such as this, the NPPF adds that policies will normally be considered ‘out of date’ if the Local Planning Authority either cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites or cannot demonstrate that the delivery of housing in the area has met, or has come close to meeting, 75% of its housing requirement over the previous three years. The Council cannot demonstrate the former (see below) and as such its current housing policies must be considered as ‘out-of-date’.

The Council can currently demonstrate a 4.6-year supply of housing land, as set out in the latest 5 Year Housing Land Supply Report published in October 2025. As a result of not demonstrating a 5-year housing land supply position the Council must apply the tilted balance when determining planning applications for new housing. The below assessment is undertaken in light of this.

Sustainability of the Location

Policy SD2 of the Local Plan states that development outside urban boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside, amongst other considerations. This is consistent with the aims of the Framework with regards to the location of development in the most sustainable locations.

The application site is located within the countryside, immediately outside the defined urban boundary of Stacksteads. At its closest point, the site lies approximately 25 metres beyond the urban boundary. The site is in close proximity to residential development to the north and east, including properties along Springhill Avenue, Springhill Villas, Unsworth Street and Cutler Lane, with further sporadic residential development along Greens Lane to the south.

The immediate area surrounding the site does not include any services or facilities. However, a range of day-to-day services, employment opportunities and community facilities are available within the nearby settlement of Stacksteads. A nursery school and an allocated employment site can be found off Farholme Lane to the north, and further beyond (approximately 0.5km from the site) is one of Stacksteads' Neighbourhood Parades, where a range of shops and services can be found (including a public house, retail provision and other services). Further beyond in the settlement of Stacksteads are 2 primary schools less than 1km away.

In terms of accessibility to sustainable methods of transport, a bus stop is located on Newchurch Road (Commercial Street/Toll Bar) approximately 750 metres from the site, providing access to a high-frequency bus service linking the site to surrounding settlements. This route can be accessed on foot via Greens Lane and through the adjacent residential estate to the north-east, connecting onto Acre Mill Road where there are maintained pedestrian routes and street lighting. The route can be taken via Stacksteads Football Ground and benefits from established footways leading to Newchurch Road.

Greens Lane itself is a relatively narrow route and does not benefit from continuous footway provision. However, it connects to the wider highway network where footways and street lighting are present along Acre Mill Road, within the adjacent residential estate, and along Newchurch Road.

Having regard to the above, the proposed location is not considered to be an unsustainable location for the erection of up to 2 dwellings.

Whether the development would result in isolated homes in the countryside

Whilst the site lies outside the defined urban boundary and within the countryside, its close physical relationship to the existing settlement, including its proximity of approximately 25 metres from the urban boundary (as the crow flies), means it is not considered to represent an isolated location for the development of up to 2 homes with regards to paragraph 84 of the Framework. In coming to this conclusion, consideration has been given to the Braintree Court of Appeal Judgement¹, which established that 'isolated' in terms of the Framework refers to physical proximity to other dwellings and settlements.

Visual Amenity and Countryside Impact

¹ Braintree District Council v SoS 28/03/2018

As noted above, Policy SD2 of the Local Plan seeks to direct new development within the Urban Boundaries, except where development specifically needs to be located within a countryside location and the development enhances the rural character of the area.

Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan seeks to promote high quality design in the Borough, and includes a varied set of criteria with which development proposals need to comply.

Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the landscape character and quality of Rossendale. The policy expects development proposals to conserve, and where possible, enhance the natural and built environment, its immediate and wider environment, and take opportunities for improving the distinctive qualities of the area and the way it functions. Development proposals which are in scale and keeping with the landscape character, and which are appropriate to its surroundings in terms of siting, design, density, materials, and external appearance and landscaping will be supported.

The Framework states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) *“will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

Section 15 of the Framework seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment, and paragraph 187 expects planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

First, it should be noted that approval of matters relating to appearance, layout, scale and landscaping is not a consideration at this stage, as only Permission in Principle is sought. The scope of Permission in Principle applications is limited to location, land use and amount of development, and consideration of the development’s design, layout and appearance would therefore be dealt with at a later stage.

The site is an undeveloped area of countryside forming part of an open field on a rising hillside, and the undeveloped nature of the site provides an attractive backdrop for properties along Springhill Avenue and adds to the rural character of the area. The introduction of up to 2 dwellings and associated development would have an urbanising effect that would reduce openness, interrupt views, and result in encroachment of built development into the countryside in this location.

That said, it is acknowledged that the development's potential impact on the wider landscape is limited, given the site's proximity to nearby development and the settlement boundary, and the site's low position within the wider landscape. Views of the development from public rights of way in the local area (to the west and south) would be in the context of existing residential properties, and although views of the trees beyond the site to the north would be interrupted, the development could be designed to reduce the overall impact.

In view of the above, it is considered that development of the site for up to 2 dwellings would result in some degree of harm to the character and appearance of the countryside in this area, however, the harm would be mitigated to some degree by the context of the site and its proximity to the nearby properties. In this context, it is considered that the development would have a limited adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside in this area.

Neighbour and Residential Amenity

Matters associated with the design, siting and fenestration of the proposed dwellings are not for consideration at this stage.

Given the size/density of the site and separation distances involved, there is no reason to believe that a scheme cannot be designed to avoid causing detriment to the daylight, privacy, or outlook of any nearby residential properties.

The separation distances with which any development would need to comply are set out in Section 2.1 of the Council's Alterations and Extensions SPD.

It is acknowledged that there are domestic properties to the immediate east and north of the site, where residents would expect a reasonable degree of privacy. This is in specific reference to Lumley House and the rear gardens of terraces along Springhill Avenue. The potential impact on the amenity of these neighbours would be thoroughly assessed under a Technical Details Consent application.

Highway Safety

The application has been assessed by the Highway Authority, Lancashire County Council, who raise no objections to the proposal. Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Whilst concerns have been raised by third parties regarding the narrow nature of Greens Lane and the lack of footway provision, the Highway Authority has concluded that the proposal for 2 no. dwellings would not give rise to a severe impact on the local highway network.

It is noted that any subsequent Technical Details Consent application would be required to demonstrate appropriate access arrangements, including visibility splays, parking provision in accordance with the Council's standards, and the ability for vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable impacts in terms of highway safety, subject to appropriate design at the next stage.

Land Contamination

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF advises that:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:

- a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);*
- b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and*
- c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.”*

Paragraph 197 also advises that:

“Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.”

Permission in Principle (stage 1) requires only limited information regarding the effect of contamination on the proposal. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has undertaken a preliminary review and identifies that:

- the site is within 250 metres of a historical landfill site;
- small buildings/structures occupied part of the northern boundary in the 1960s; and
- the site is located within a Radon Class 4 area.

Notwithstanding these factors, it is confirmed that none would preclude the proposed development and that any potential contamination risks can be appropriately addressed through further investigation and assessment at the Technical Details stage. A Preliminary Risk Assessment would be expected to accompany any subsequent application.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to give rise to unacceptable risks in respect of land contamination at this stage.

Drainage and Flooding

Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should incorporate sustainable drainage solutions where appropriate.

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, which represents land at the lowest risk of flooding. However, concerns have been raised by third parties in respect of surface water runoff and the presence of natural springs.

United Utilities have been consulted and raise no objection in principle to the proposed development. They advise that surface water from new development should be managed in accordance with the drainage hierarchy, with discharge to the public sewer only considered as a last resort following the investigation of more sustainable options.

It is noted that detailed drainage design has not been submitted at this stage, which is appropriate given that this application is for Permission in Principle only. United Utilities confirm that any subsequent Technical Details application would need to demonstrate that surface water can be sustainably managed on site and that all drainage options have been fully explored.

Accordingly, whilst site-specific concerns have been raised, it is considered that matters relating to drainage and flood risk can be adequately assessed and addressed at the Technical Details stage, and do not preclude the principle of development.

9. Planning Balance and Conclusion

In line with paragraph 11 of the Framework, it is necessary to carry out a balancing exercise to ascertain whether any harm caused by the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Benefits of the development

The proposal would deliver 2 no. dwellings in a location that is not considered to be unsustainable, and as such the development would make a limited contribution towards meeting the Borough's housing requirement at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Accordingly limited weight is attached to this benefit.

Harm caused by the development

The development would have an urbanising effect that would reduce openness and interrupt views across an undeveloped site in a countryside location. As such the development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. However, such harm would be mitigated by the context of the site, its proximity to the settlement boundary, and its low position within the wider landscape. In this context it is considered that the overall harm to the character and appearance of the countryside would be limited.

High quality design, facing materials and landscaping could be secured at stage two, to mitigate the development's visual impact.

Balance

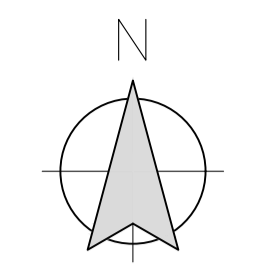
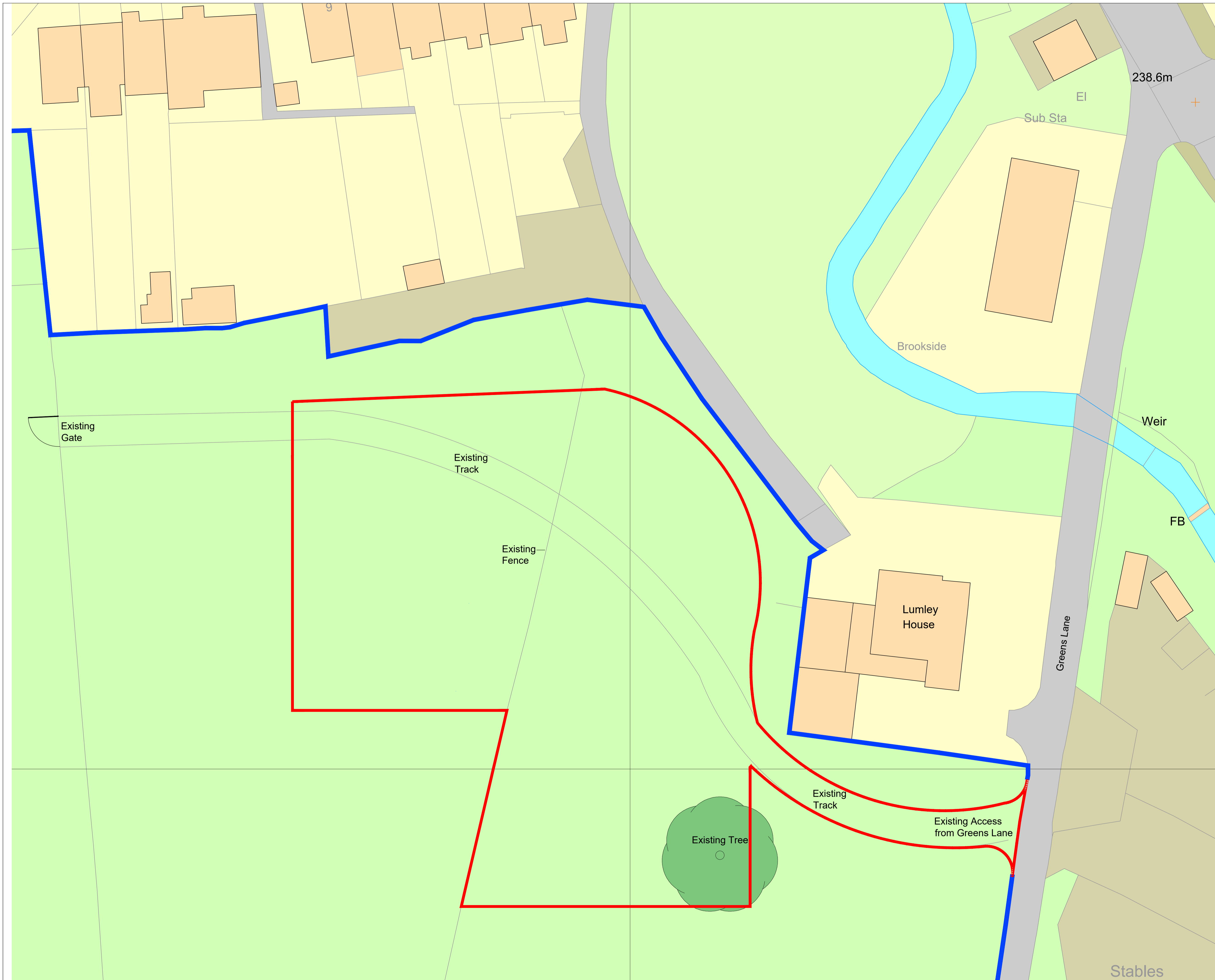
This is a finely balanced case. However, in the context of the Council being unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

In this instance, it is not considered that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Local Plan and the Framework taken as a whole.

It is therefore considered that the principle for the use of the land for housing has been established and this Stage 1 Permission in Principle application should be approved.

10 INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments received on the application from the various consultees - which contain advice relating to the expected level of detail to be submitted alongside an application for Technical Details Consent.



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1:200 Scale

Rev A: Red line adjusted (to line through with rear of proposed Unit 1 Garage, hammer head omit), 09.02.2026 Craig Harrison

Client: M Crooks

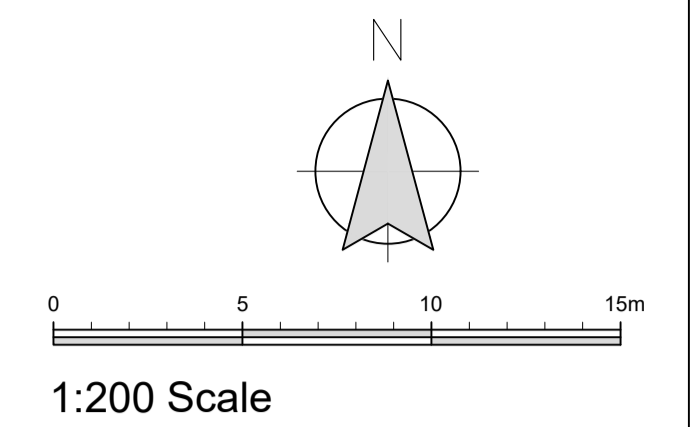
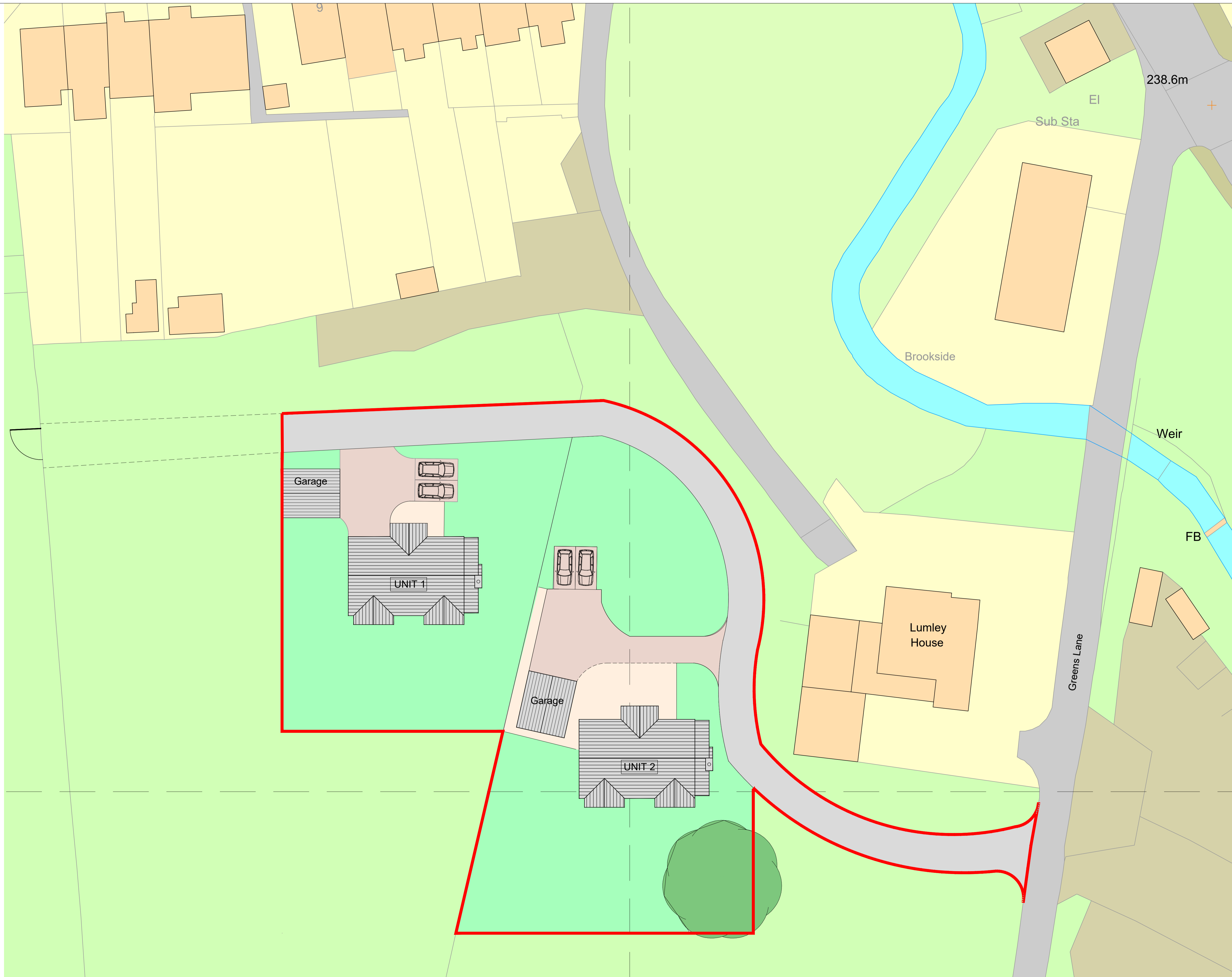
Job Title: Land off Moss Farm Stacksteads OL13 0HQ

Drawing Title: Existing Outline Site Plan for PIP

Scale: 1:200 @ A1 Date: Jan 2026 Drawn: Craig Harrison

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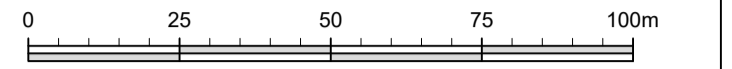
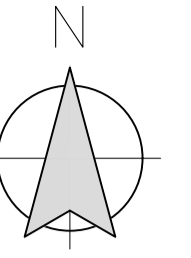
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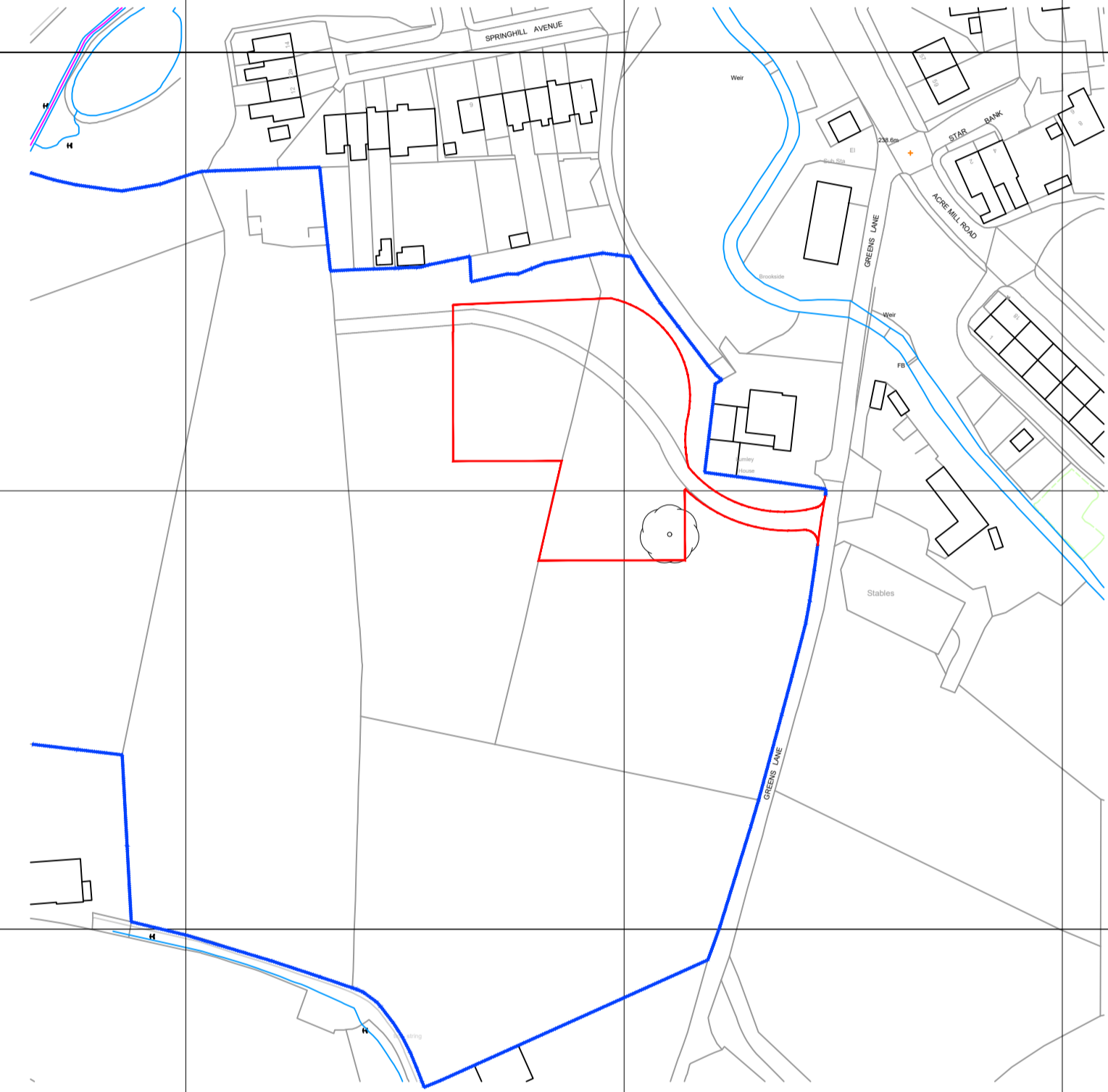
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Rev A: Red line adjusted to line through with rear of proposed Unit 1 Garage (hammer head omit), 09.02.2026 Craig Harrison

Client:
M Crooks

Job Title:
**Land off Moss Farm
Stacksteads
OL13 0HQ**

Drawing Title:
Location Plan

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