



## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Supplementary Report by Development Management Manager

#### 1 DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Application for permission in principle for a 3.4 ha garden centre, incorporating indoor and outdoor display and sales areas and car parking at 20 Houstoun Mains Holdings, Uphall.

#### 2 DETAILS

<b>Reference no.</b>	0469/P/09	<b>Owner of site</b>	Williamson Design Florist Ltd
<b>Applicant</b>	Williamson Design Florist Ltd	<b>Ward &amp; local members</b>	<b>Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh</b> J Campbell A Davidson E Glass G Morrice
<b>Case officer</b>	Wendy McCorriston	<b>Contact details</b>	01506 775218 wendy.mccorriston@westlothian.gov.uk

**Reason for referral to committee: referred to meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010 by Councillor Glass and continued at that meeting to allow for the applicant to submit additional information.**

#### 3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Grant planning permission in principle, subject to conditions/legal agreement.

#### 4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

- 4.1 The application was referred to committee in April 2010 with a recommendation to refuse planning permission in principle, as per the details set out in the attached report. Committee requested that the application be continued, in order for the applicant to undertake the following:
1. Submit a business plan to allow a more detailed assessment by the council of the viability of the expansion proposals. This information was also to be forwarded to Dechmont and Uphall Community Councils
  2. Submit further details on the proposals for the overall business, including more details on the rationalisation of the uses at the existing garden centre site at no 17 Houstoun Holdings;
  3. To resolve the issues/objections in respect of the house at no 20.

<b>5 COMMENTS ON THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>
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5.1 The applicant has undertaken all the necessary actions and comments on the submitted information is set out below:

1. The submitted business plan was referred to council economic development officers for comment. Further financial information was subsequently requested and a response from economic development has been made in the following terms:

*a) The current garden centre is a well-established, well-known and popular local attraction for both residents and visitors. The business has shown steady and sustainable growth over the past five years and has grown its market share accordingly.*

*b) The business has reached a sales ceiling that cannot be broken without continued expansion. From an operational perspective, the current layout of certain aspects of the business is causing difficulties for the company, its staff and suppliers. The floristry side of the business is unable to expand services without first occupying more space. The opportunity to increase the space for the floristry business, as well as improving the layout, allows the company to expand ranges, services, and provide a customer experience not currently available. An increase in the range of products and services will also allow the business to remain as competitive as possible in a difficult market.*

*c) The garden centre currently provides a `destination` experience, with a massive range of products and services available in one location. It is imperative that the business continues to monitor the market place and keep up with ever changing customer demands. It has, to date, done this very successfully. There is a need for the business to react in a positive manner to new developments in the area and their market research backs up their belief that a relocation and improved layout will further enhance the experience for existing and new customers. The company currently employs 89 people, 30 of these in West Lothian. The proposal projects the safeguarding of existing employment, plus the creation of a further 15-18 full time jobs, and seasonal employment opportunities it will afford the local area. The company is of sound financial stability and has encountered no difficulties in financing their future plans.*

*d) The proposals show a sustainable modernisation and expansion plan to keep an indigenous West Lothian business competitive in a changing marketplace, allowing them to increase products and services and potentially increase market share.*

A summary of the business information was forwarded to the two community councils, as requested by members. No further comments have been received. A copy of the summary business plan/review is available in the Members Lounge.

2. Further proposals showing rationalisation at no 17 have been submitted. The plans show the intention to consolidate and expand the cut flowers division at no17, together with green waste recycling and flower growing. The biggest physical change will be the removal of the conservatory sales area and hoardings/signs, along the road frontage and the introduction of a landscaped frontage to the site. This will represent a significant environmental and visual improvement for this part of the A89 corridor.

3. The proposals at holding no 20 have been amended to take into account the objection from the residents in the adjacent house at no 20, and to remove the access onto the A89. The proposals show the outdoor sales area to the south, as

preferred by the residents. The service yard has also been reduced and pulled away from the road frontage onto the A89. A landscaped frontage, including the existing hedge, can be maintained along the roadside.

## **6 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 With the submission of a detailed business plan the applicant has been able to illustrate that there is a demonstrable need for the business to modernise and expand to compete in the current marketplace. Economic development officers are satisfied that the current location of the business is a well known "destination" for customers and that there are evident benefits from maintaining and expanding the business at or, as in the case of this application, adjacent to the existing site.
- 6.2 The applicant has therefore been able to demonstrate that there is a locational need for the business expansion at the application site, in accordance with the requirements of ENV23 (countryside belts) of the West Lothian Local Plan.
- 6.3 The proposed improvements to the frontage of the existing garden centre site, and the removal of the service yard fronting the A89 at the proposed site, will result in the retention and improvement of a landscaped corridor fronting the A89. It will be important to ensure that the improvements at no17 are secured through a legal agreement, so that they are undertaken prior to the opening of the new garden centre. As this is permission in principle the landscape details for the proposed development can be submitted and agreed at the detailed stage.
- 6.4 The proposal, as amended, satisfies the locational requirements for the expansion of an existing business. Approval is recommended, subject to appropriate conditions and a legal agreement to secure improvements and rationalisation, as detailed in the applicant's submission, at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings.

## **7 ATTACHMENTS**

- Previous committee report
- Location plan
- Proposals at no 20 and no17
- Representations

CHRIS NORMAN  
**Development Management Manager**

**Date:** 22 September 2010



**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report by Development Management Manager**

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**2 DETAILS**

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<b>Case officer</b>	Wendy McCorrison	<b>Contact details</b>	01506 775218 wendy.mccorrison@westlothian.gov.uk

**Reason for referral to Committee: requested by Councillor Glass**

**3 RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 Refuse planning permission in principle.

**4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The application site is a field located on the south side of the A89 that was formerly part of the agricultural holding at number 20 Houston Mains. The dwelling associated with that holding is now in separate ownership and there are currently two small businesses operating from that house. There is a mature tree belt along the east side of the site fronting Station Road. The application site lies within the Livingston Countryside Belt as identified in the West Lothian Local Plan.
- 4.2 This application is for the construction, in principle, of a garden centre to the rear of the dwelling house. The indicative site proposals have been amended twice to take into account objections from the Heath and Safety Executive in respect of the proximity of a high-pressure gas main that runs across the southern end of the application site.
- 4.3 As amended, the current indicative plans show a building of approximately 3,800sqm, comprising warm and cold sales areas, a storage area and a café, located to the south of the house. The proposal also shows open outdoor sales and servicing areas to the west side of the house, fronting the A89. New access points are proposed off Station Road to the east and off the A89 to the north, with a 200 space car park to the south of

the building. The main entrance to the garden centre is to be to the south from the car park.

- 4.4 Landscaping is proposed to the south and surrounding the car park. Some tree felling will be required to form the access and a bus lay-by on Station Road.
- 4.5 The applicant has submitted a supporting planning statement with the application, and supplementary information about proposed rationalisation of the existing uses on the applicant's current garden centre site at 17 Houston Mains Holdings. This latter site is to the west of the application site and contains a garden centre, with former plant nursery buildings, and a number of unconnected commercial uses, ranging from conservatory and soft furnishing sales to dog grooming and storage buildings.
- 4.6 The applicant has indicated that Williamson Design Florists Ltd wish to recommence growing flowers at 17 Houston Mains and propose to convert a number of the existing buildings back to growing and distribution uses and then transfer the garden centre function and some of the other sales operations, such as conservatory sales, over to the new site.
- 4.7 In November 1990 outline consent was granted, on appeal (ref: P259/90), for the erection of a single storey dwelling on the application site. An occupancy condition was attached to this consent, requiring the occupants to be employed in agriculture or horticulture in the area. This consent was never implemented.
- 4.8 At the current garden centre site there have been the following relevant applications:
- 0738/96: consent granted for the redevelopment/extension of the garden centre, including level changes and the formation of car parking.
  - 0142/02: consent granted for alterations and an extension to the garden centre to form a coffee lounge.
  - 0414/04: consent granted for the part change of use (in retrospect) from nursery uses to garden centre uses, formation of a car park and cladding/alterations (in retrospect) to an existing stable.
  - 1217/FUL/06: consent granted for the erection of an extension to the existing conservatory show site.

<b>5 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT</b>
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Plan	Policy	Assessment	Conform?
Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan (ELSP)	RET 1 and RET 2 (Sequential approach to the location of retail and commercial leisure uses)	These policies require a sequential approach to be taken to the location of retail development. In the supporting statements the applicant has stated that he has looked at other sites around Broxburn, though does not specify which. The main justification for the proposal is to allow for the expansion of the florist growing, preparation and distribution side of the applicant's business at 17 Houston Mains Holdings (HMH). The transfer of the retail uses to 20 Houston Mains Holdings will allow this expansion. Whilst some rationalisation is planned at 17 HMH the applicant has stated that he is unable to end the tenancies of a number of the existing non-horticultural uses. The terms of these retail policies have	NO

Plan	Policy	Assessment	Conform?
		not been met by the submitted information.	
ELSP	ENV1d (Regional and local natural and built environmental interests)	The application site lies within an area designated "countryside belt" under the terms of the WLLP. Part b of policy ENV1d presumes in favour of development in such areas where the "social and economic benefits to be gained from the proposed development outweigh the conservation interests of the site". There will be some economic benefits from this proposal; however, the very limited visual and amenity improvements at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings do not justify overturning the presumption against development in this case.	PART
ELSP	ENV3 (Development in the countryside)	The application site lies within land allocated as countryside. The proposal is contrary to the terms of this policy. However, although there are material considerations detailed under ENV1d that support the proposal, these are not sufficient to justify overturning the policy presumption against development in this case.	NO
West Lothian Local Plan (WLLP)	TC1 (Sequential requirement)	Policy TC1 requires that a sequential approach be taken to retail development, with the preferred area for retail development being town centres in the first instance. The applicant has not submitted sufficient information to adequately demonstrate that a retail use in this location is justified in the terms of this policy.	NO
WLLP	ENV 22 & ENV23 (Countryside belts)	Policies ENV22 and 23 are designed to protect the rural areas between settlements and prevent settlement coalescence. The applicant advises that there is a locational need on the basis of their business plan and their aim to relate to the current operations at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings. However, no business plan has been submitted with the application, there is no overall master plan to link the two development sites together and no evidence has been submitted to identify alternative sites in accord with the requirements of the sequential approach.	NO
WLLP	ENV24 (Road corridors)	The A89 is identified as a key transport corridor. Development that is visually intrusive and impairs the appearance of the countryside, outwith urban areas will be resisted under the terms of this policy. The proposed development, despite the opportunities for landscaping and visual screening, will result in visual intrusion and a poor relationship with the adjacent house and the A89, which it will back onto. It is considered that the appearance of the countryside will be impaired by the introduction of substantial buildings within this greenfield site.	NO
WLLP	ENV31 / 32 and 33 (Development in the countryside)	These policies generally resist development in the countryside. Of the exceptions, where development may be acceptable, criteria vii is the most applicable in this instance, relating to business proposals within rural areas. The terms of criteria vii support small-scale farm diversification projects or other business proposals appropriate to a rural area where these would help sustain the rural economy or create significant social	NO

Plan	Policy	Assessment	Conform?
		benefits. It could be argued that the proposal will help sustain the current operation at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings, however, the lack of a business plan makes this difficult to assess and in any event the proposal is not considered to be small scale and the proposed layout is principally a retail use.	
WLLP	TRAN 2 & TRAN 5 (Transport impacts/travel plans)	A TA was submitted for the site. Following amendments, and subject to conditions, Transportation is satisfied with the parking and access arrangements and the traffic impacts on the surrounding network. The requirements of these policies are therefore met.	YES
WLLP	TRAN 7 & TRAN 8 (Pedestrians and cyclists)	The development, as amended, meets all the requirements for cycle and pedestrian access, including the extension of a cycle/foot path south of the site to the railway station and also to the north to a new bus stop, which is to be provided by the applicant.	YES
WLLP	IMP 14 (SPG)	In line with supplementary planning guidance certain developments are required to contribute to public art. Given the location of the site on the A89 this requirement would have to be met either by 'on site' provision or an appropriate contribution to be agreed with the council's public art officer. The delivery of the public art can be a condition or agreement of any consent.	YES
	HOU 9 (Residential and visual amenity)	Following the amendments to the proposals to address health and safety issues, the buildings will be located only 9m from the rear of the house at 20 Houstoun Mains and the development will back onto the A89, wrapping around this house and placing the service yard on the A89 frontage. The site does fall away from north to south and therefore can be designed to be at a lower level to ensure normal daylight and privacy standards are met. Nevertheless, this is a prominent location on the road network near the junction of the A89 with Station Road. This junction currently has open fields/landscaping on all sides. The introduction of buildings into this field, and the poor relationship between these and the existing house, will be detrimental to the visual amenity of this prominent rural location, and to the residential amenity of the house. The number and variety of uses and buildings at 17 Houstoun Mains creates a visually intrusive frontage when viewed from the A89. The applicant has agreed to undertake some improvements and rationalisation at this site to improve the overall visual amenity of this transport corridor, but due to the constraints of existing tenancies, these improvements are likely to be limited in scale and effect and not sufficient to justify introducing a further building group in the countryside belt.	NO

## 6 REPRESENTATIONS

Five letters of objection have been received, three from local residents, one from Dechmont Community Council and one from Uphall Community Council. The grounds of objection are summarised below; the full letters are attached to this report. The Broxburn & Uphall Traders Association has advised that it has no objections to the application.

	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Response</b>
1.	This is a purely retail development which is contrary to the provisions of the West Lothian Local Plan which identify this site as countryside belt.	Noted. Refusal recommended in line with countryside policies.
2.	The applicant states that there are existing commercial uses on adjacent sites which set a precedent for allowing this proposal. However, these are long established uses, which pre-date the WLLP. Approving this proposal would undermine the policies in the local plan and set a dangerous precedent.	Noted. Refusal recommended in line with countryside policies.
3.	The scale of the development, which retains little of the original field, is out of keeping with the character of the area.	The proposal has been amended to reduce the scale of the buildings and position them to the north of the site, which is more in keeping with other development in the area. However, this proposal backs onto the A89 rather than fronting it. There is, nevertheless a large area of land to the south retained as open space/landscaping.
4.	The proposed site access onto Station Road, which is close to a major traffic light junction, is likely to result in road safety and traffic congestion issues. It also does not take into account future proposals for access into the allocated employment site at Beugh Burn.	Following further traffic assessment work, Transportation is satisfied that the proposal is acceptable, subject to appropriate sight lines and improved pedestrian access routes into the site. Transportation recommends that the site is accessed only via Station Road and that the A89 access is deleted.
5.	The north/south road infrastructure will not be able to cope with the increased volume of traffic that would result. It is notable that the traffic survey work was carried out at the start of the holiday period in June when traffic flows are greatly reduced.	Supplementary traffic work has been undertaken and Transportation is satisfied that the proposal, as reduced in scale, is acceptable.
6.	A new garden centre in this location would have an adverse impact on the smaller garden centres which already exist in West Lothian.	Noted, though the proposal is to be a replacement for an existing garden centre, however, a full retail /sequential assessment has not been carried out.
7.	The proposal will have a detrimental impact on the cottage located to the south-east of the application site, particularly the access proposal and the resultant increase in traffic.	As amended, there is now a large area of open space/landscaping to the south of the buildings. The access point has also been relocated further north. With these amendments the amenity of the cottage to the south will not be adversely affected.
8.	The amended proposal will bring the buildings close to the rear of the dwelling at 20 Houston Mains resulting in a loss of privacy and daylight.	Noted. The proposals as submitted are likely to be detrimental to the amenity of this property, however, given that this is an application in principle only it is likely that these technical issues could be resolved at the detailed stage.

## 7 CONSULTATIONS

This is a summary of the consultations; the full documents are contained in the application file.

Consultee	Objection?	Comments	Planning Response
WLC Development Planning	YES	<p>The site lies within an area allocated as 'countryside belt' where there is a presumption against development. Whilst the applicant advises that the proposal will help strengthen the current business, no evidence has been presented in terms of a business case or sequential testing. The proposal in its current form could operate without link to the existing operation at 17 Houstoun Mains, a legal agreement to tie the operations of the existing site with this proposal site may be one way forward. The proposal will result in significant intrusion into a greenfield site.</p> <p>The amended proposals and the additional supporting information remain insufficient to overcome the policy presumption against development. There are also issues of significant tree loss and the potential detrimental impact on the existing dwelling to the north.</p> <p>A comprehensive rationalisation and redevelopment of the existing site at 17 remains the most appropriate way forward of expanding the applicant's business.</p>	<p>Noted. The applicant has advised that they have looked for other sites in and around Broxburn town centre (though does not specify which) and have not been able to find any. There are, however, a number of sites allocated as part of the East Broxburn CDA which could be suitable, including the Candleworks site, which is specifically allocated for uses including retail.</p> <p>The applicant states that the current florist business is constrained on the existing site and the only way of expanding this is to concentrate distribution and preparation work at 17 HMH and transfer over 200 sqm of retail to 20 HMH. There are a number of non-horticultural/florist uses at 17HMH, and whilst some may transfer to the new retail area, a number will remain. A further rationalisation of these uses to allow both the florist/distribution and garden centre uses to operate from 17HMH would be more appropriate.</p>
WLC Transportation	NO	<p>Following the submission of a Transport Assessment (TA) and further traffic information the proposals are acceptable, subject to there being only one access/egress, which shall be taken from Station Road in the form of a priority junction. Traffic signals will need to be changed; appropriate visibility splays provided, a bus lay-by formed and footway / cycleway connections constructed. A Stage 2 Road Safety Audit and a travel plan shall be submitted with any future application.</p>	<p>Noted. These requirements can be made conditions of any consent.</p>

Consultee	Objection?	Comments	Planning Response
WLC Flood Prevention	NO	The Beugh Burn lies to the south of the proposed development, though the council has no records to suggest that this site is susceptible to flooding. A Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) will be required.	A DIA can be required as part of any subsequent detailed application.
National Grid	NO	A minimum of 90m must be maintained between the gas pipeline and any new buildings.	Noted, the second amended plans show a distance of 95m between the pipeline and the proposed buildings.
Health and Safety Executive	NO	A 95m-separation zone is required between the sales areas (including outdoor sales) and the pipeline. This is now achieved by the second amended proposals.	Noted. Any consent would have to ensure this separation distance was maintained.
SEPA	NO	No objections, subject to the applicant taking into account best practice environmental principles for SUDS, waste management and landscaping in working up the detailed proposals. The extreme southeast corner of the site lies within the 1 to 200 year flood envelope for the Beugh Burn and may be at risk of flooding. More advice should be sort from council flood prevention officers.	Noted. The reduced scale of the amended proposals mean that the south east corner of the site will not be affected by the development, however, a DIA can be required as part of any subsequent detailed application.
Scottish Water	NO	The developer must meet the standard technical requirements.	Noted.

## 8 ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Development Plan: Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan**

- 8.2 Policies RET 1 and RET 2 require developers to demonstrate a sequential approach to their proposals. No evidence to this effect has been submitted. The supporting statement to the application clearly indicates that retail use is proposed on the site with only a small area to be used for growing. Indeed the main growing area is to be provided by re-opening of the horticultural glass houses at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings, which does not form part of the application site. The proposal fails to meet the terms of policies RET 1 and RET 2.
- 8.3 Policy ENV1d allows for development where there is an operational requirement to locate in the countryside and development cannot be located within an urban area or land allocated for that purpose, and is compatible with the rural character of the area. Acceptable uses include agriculture, horticulture, forestry or countryside recreation. The

proposal as presented is a retail use contrary to the terms of this policy. Some locational justification has been given in terms of retaining and expanding an existing local business and there will be economic benefits from job creation in the area. The applicant has agreed to have the existing and proposed sites linked by a legal agreement to ensure they remain part of the overall business. He has also agreed to look at rationalising the businesses on the existing site and to improve the visual appearance of that site. However, whilst these are positive benefits, they are not considered to be sufficient to justify a departure from the policy presumption against development in this location.

### **West Lothian Local Plan**

- 8.4 Policy ENV23 covering 'countryside belts' states that development that will lead to coalescence between settlements and for which there is no specific locational need will be resisted. Proposals which would result in sporadic development, or the expansion of existing clusters of houses and for which there is no specific locational need, will be similarly resisted. The applicant advises that there is a locational need on the basis of their business plan and their aim to relate to the current operations at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings. However, no business plan has been submitted with the application, there is no overall master plan to link the two development sites together and no evidence has been submitted to identify alternative sites in accord with the requirements of the sequential approach.
- 8.5 The A89 is identified as a key transport corridor. Development, which is visually intrusive and impairs the appearance of the countryside, outwith urban areas will be resisted in terms of policy ENV 24. The proposed development, despite the opportunities for landscaping and visual screening, will result in visual intrusion and it is considered that the appearance of the countryside will be impaired by the appearance of substantial buildings within this greenfield site.
- 8.6 The terms of criteria vii in ENV31 support small-scale farm diversification projects or other business proposals appropriate to a rural area where these would help sustain the rural economy or create significant social benefits. It could be argued that the proposal will help sustain the current operation at 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings, however, the lack of a business plan makes this difficult to assess and in any event the proposal is not considered to be small scale and the proposal is principally retail, inappropriate to a rural area.
- 8.7 In terms of the retail sequential testing requirement in the local plan no evidence has been submitted to meet the terms of this policy, with the applicant simply stating that garden centres of the type proposed "cannot be integrated within or adjoining town centres, or indeed within urban areas, in most cases". The proposals as presented are a retail use, the proposed growing area is very limited in extent and indeed the applicants advise that their intention is to focus the growing of stock on their current site. The proposals therefore fail to meet the terms of this policy.

### **Other Material Considerations**

- 8.8 There are a number of material considerations that need to be taken into account in assessing this application, the most relevant being that the proposal relates to the

expansion plans of an existing successful local business. The supporting statement lists the following specific justifications:

- The land is close to the existing garden centre/distribution site and office; therefore there will be low travel costs in supplying products for the new garden centre.
- There will be a retained customer loyalty as this is an established local business.
- The proposal would not represent a sporadic development due to its location next to other neighbouring commercial uses.
- Together with the Dobbies garden centre proposal (since refused at committee contrary to officer's recommendation) this would mean the A89 corridor would become a garden and outdoor destination.
- Garden centres are usually located in countryside locations. This location also has good public transport links.

8.9 No formal business plan has been submitted with the application but the supporting statement indicates that this proposal will facilitate the following:

- Free up space at 17 HMH to allow for expansion of the horticulture, cut flower and distribution elements of the business.
- Allow the re-use of former greenhouses at 17HMH to allow for growing products on site.
- Allow for the separation of the retail and service/distribution parts of the business.
- Allow the company to add to the existing 11 florists shops/outlets that are already serviced from Uphall, as a direct result of expanding the above elements.
- Capitalise on the growth trend that has been identified in the retail gardening sector.
- Lead to job creation in each of the parts of the business.
- Produce some rationalisation and visual improvement of the site at 17 Houstoun Mains.

8.10 As detailed above, there will be evident economic benefits as a result of the proposal. However, whilst some rationalisation is proposed at 17HMH, the florists business at that site is actually constrained by the existing non-horticultural uses. A more comprehensive rationalisation of these uses, which would also offer significant visual improvements for 17 Houstoun Mains Holdings, would be far more beneficial in terms of the wider environmental and planning aims for the area.

8.11 Committee members recently refused an application for another garden centre (ref:0527/FUL/09) at the west end of the A89 corridor on a number of grounds, including that the proposal was contrary to the countryside and retail policies of the development plan.

8.12 Should committee be minded to grant this application, it should be on the basis of securing far greater visual and environmental improvements at 17HMH and by linking both the existing and proposed sites together through a legal agreement, so that a more comprehensive approach to the business development can be ensured. Additional drainage, tree and natural heritage survey work would also be required to be submitted with any detailed application and together with adherence to the transportation requirements detailed in this report.

## **9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 The justification in terms of the expansion of an existing local business, and the evident employment benefits, together with the proposals for some minor rationalisation and visual enhancement at 17 Houston Mains Holdings, are not sufficient to justify the approval of a retail use on this green field site contrary to development plan policies. Refusal is therefore recommended.

## **10 ATTACHMENTS**

- Proposed Reasons for refusal
- Location plan
- Indicative site layout plan
- 6 Letters of representation

**CHRIS NORMAN**  
**Development Management Manager**

**Date:** 7 April 2010

## DRAFT REASONS FOR REFUSAL - APPLICATION 0469/P/09

- 1 The application site lies within Livingston Countryside Belt, as defined in the West Lothian Local Plan. This development is for a retail development in the countryside. The proposal will be detrimental to the rural character of the countryside belt and applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate that there is a specific locational or operational need for the development, or that the social or economic benefits to be gained outweigh the conservation interests of the site.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the following policies of the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan :

- ENV1d (Regional and local natural and built environment interests)
- ENV3 (Development in the countryside)

- 2 The application site lies within Livingston Countryside Belt, as defined in the West Lothian Local Plan. This development is for a retail development in the countryside. The proposal will be visually intrusive and detrimental to the rural character of the countryside belt and the appearance of the A89 transport corridor, and will not protect or enhance the landscape integrity of the area.

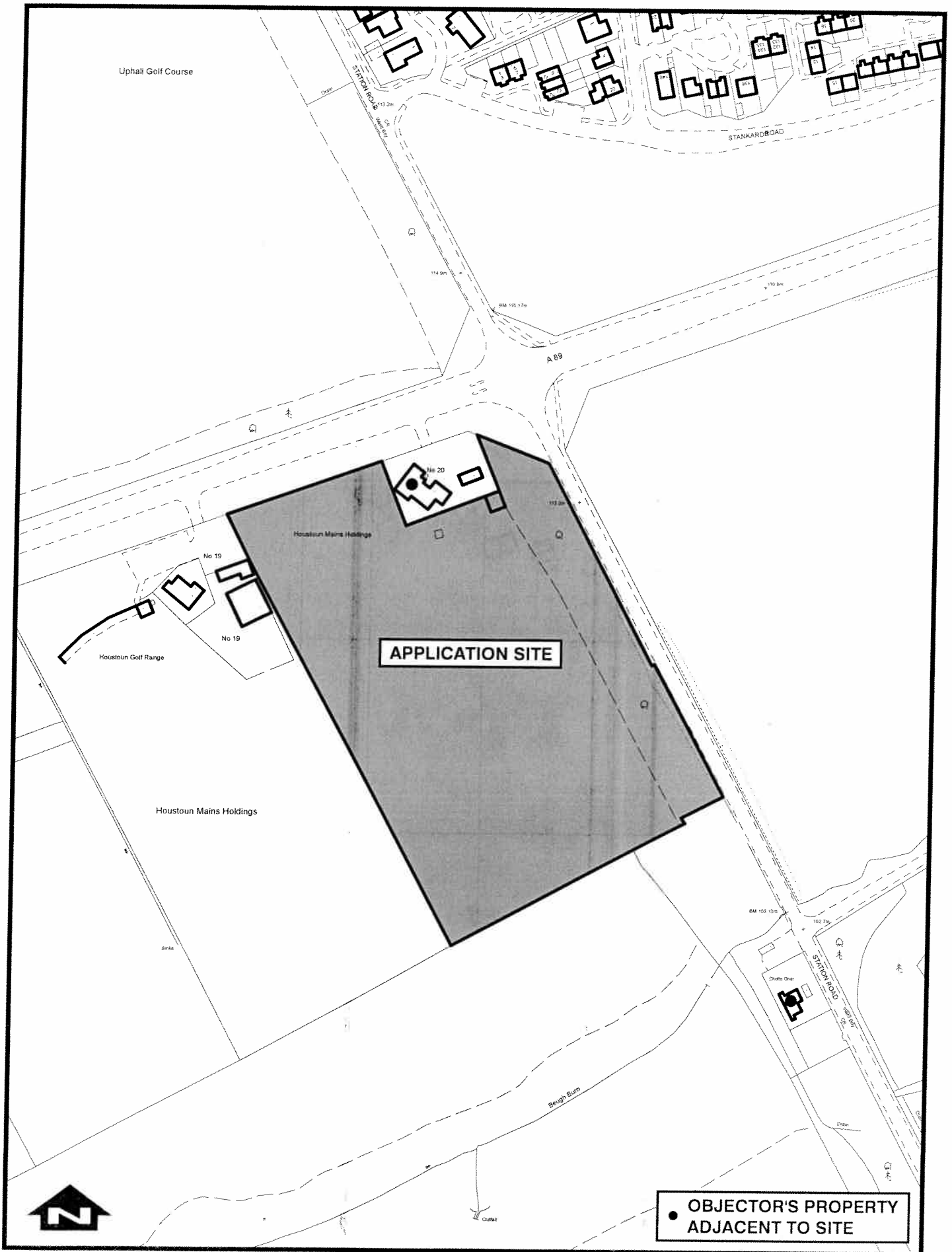
Furthermore, the applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate that there is a specific locational or operational need for the development or that the retail proposal satisfies the principles of sequential testing.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the following policies of the West Lothian Local Plan :

- TC1 (The sequential requirement)
- ENV21 and ENV23 (Countryside belts)
- ENV24 (Road corridors)
- ENV31, ENV32 and ENV33 (Development in the countryside)

- 3 The location of the development, in close proximity to the existing house at 20 Houston Mains Holdings and backing onto the A89, will be detrimental to the residential amenity of adjacent residents and detrimental to the visual amenity and character of the overall area.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policy HOU9 (Residential and visual amenity) of the West Lothian Local plan.



# DM COMMITTEE LOCATION PLAN

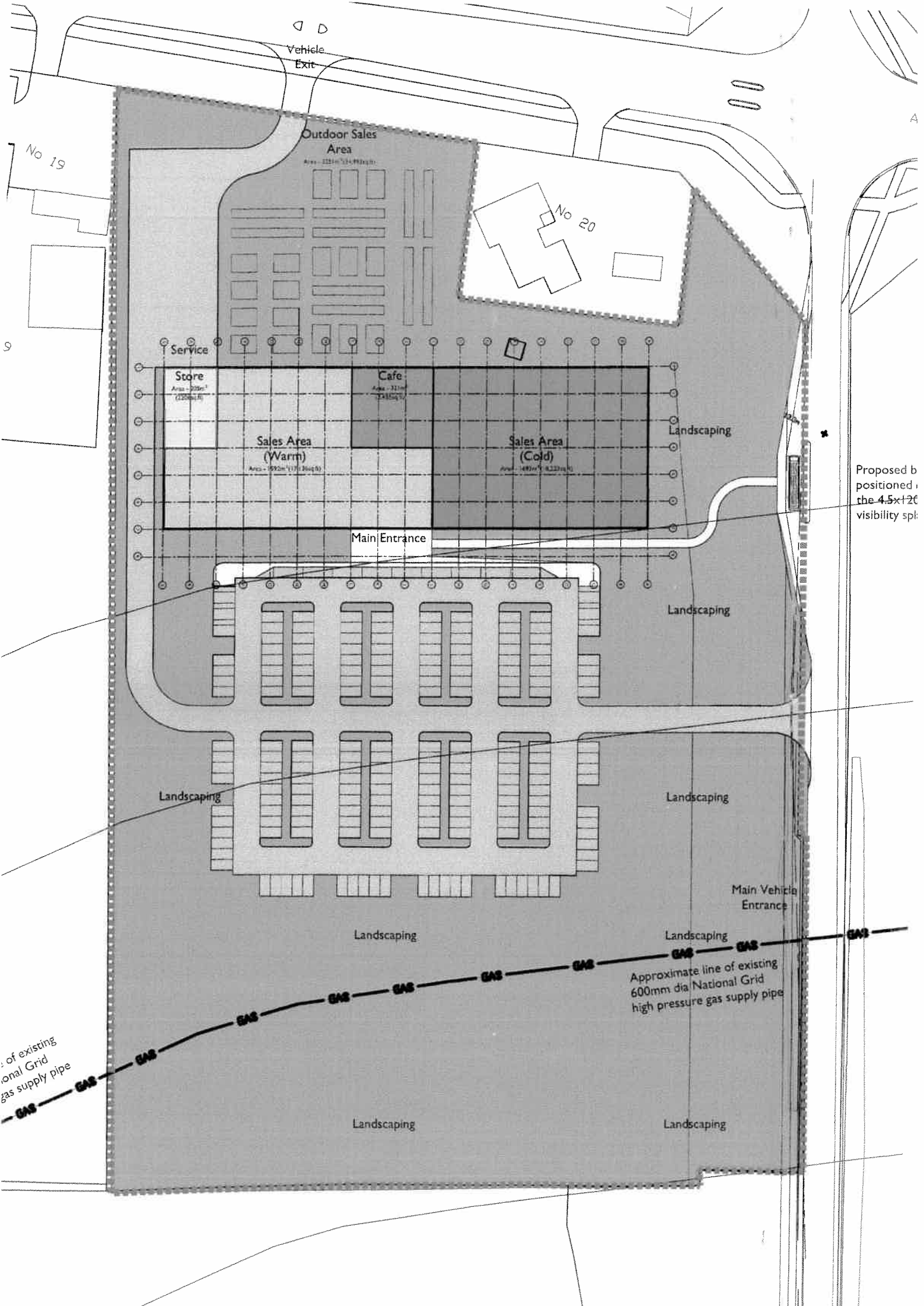
Date : 7/4/10

Application No. : 0469/P/09

Scale : 1 : 2500



West Lothian  
Council



Vehicle Exit

Outdoor Sales Area  
Area - 225m<sup>2</sup> (2448sqft)

Service

Store  
Area - 202m<sup>2</sup> (2186sqft)

Cafe  
Area - 31m<sup>2</sup> (333sqft)

Sales Area (Warm)  
Area - 592m<sup>2</sup> (6384sqft)

Sales Area (Cold)  
Area - 483m<sup>2</sup> (5223sqft)

Main Entrance

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Main Vehicle Entrance

Landscaping

Landscaping

Approximate line of existing 600mm dia National Grid high pressure gas supply pipe

of existing National Grid gas supply pipe

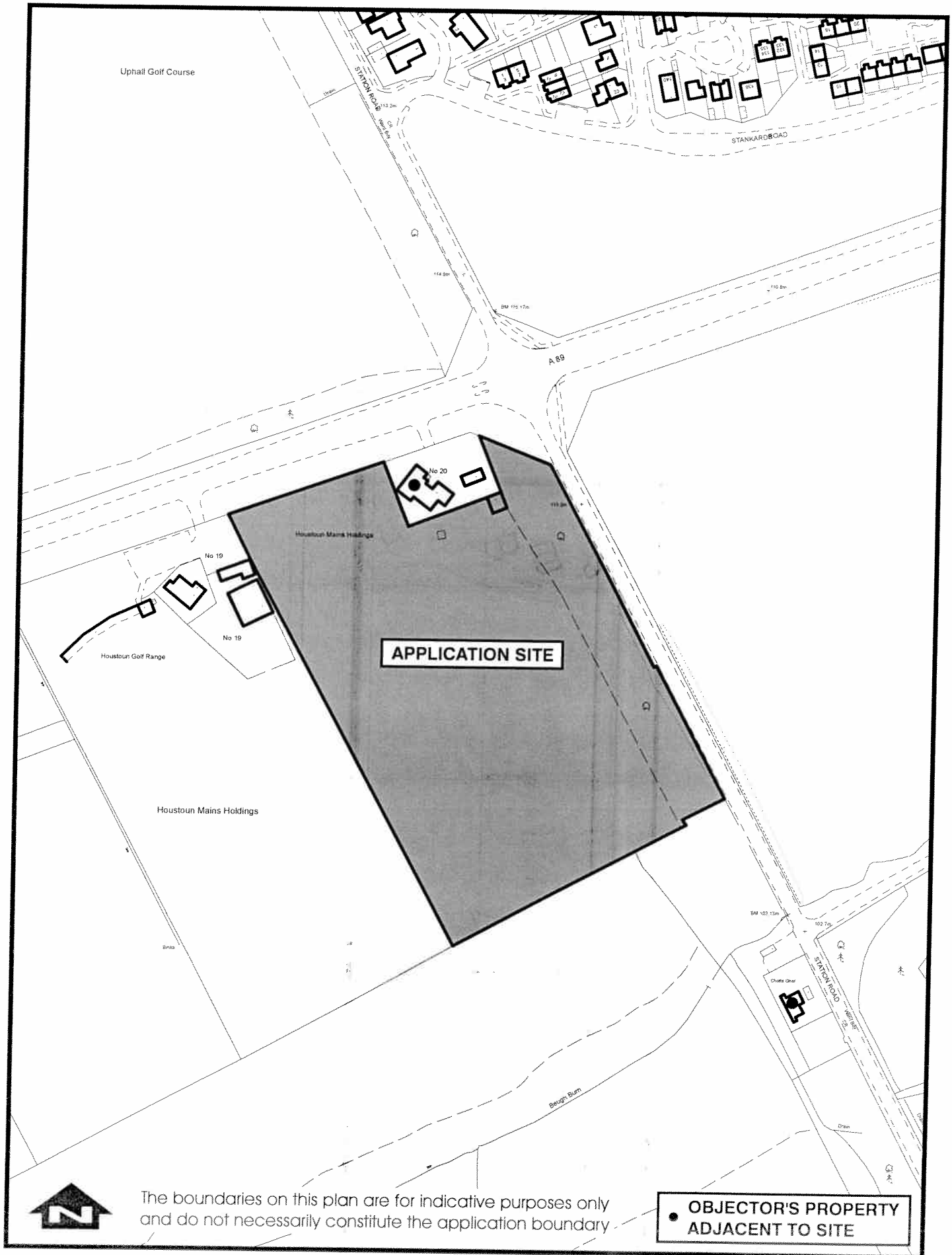
Proposed positioned, the 4.5x12 visibility splint

No 19

No 20

9

A



The boundaries on this plan are for indicative purposes only and do not necessarily constitute the application boundary

● OBJECTOR'S PROPERTY ADJACENT TO SITE

# DM COMMITTEE LOCATION PLAN

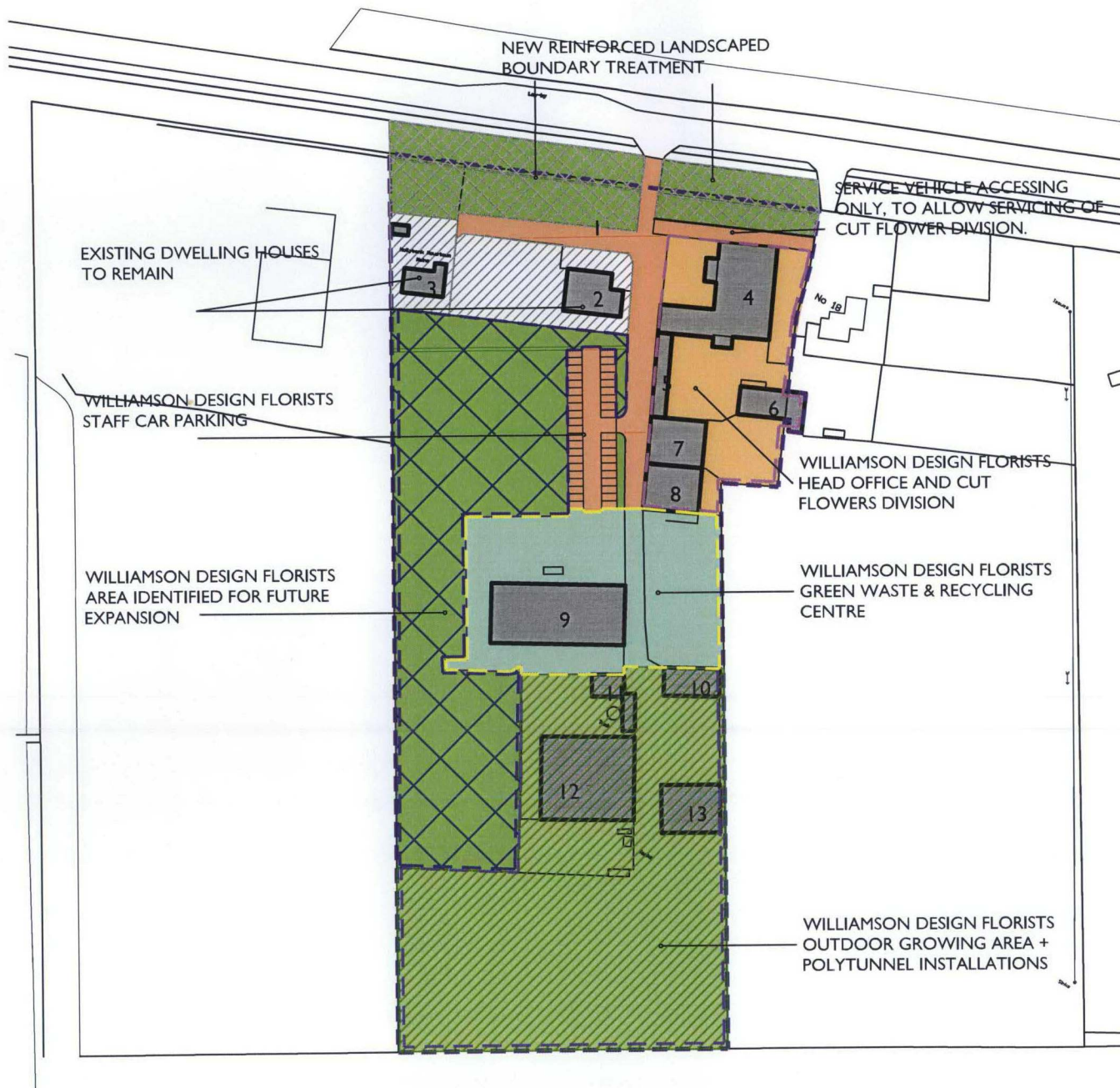
Date : 22/9/10

Application No. : 0469/P/09

Scale : 1 : 2500



West Lothian Council



**NUMBER 17 HOUSTON MAINS FARM - EXISTING**

Boundary Line ———

Total Site Area - 8.32 acres

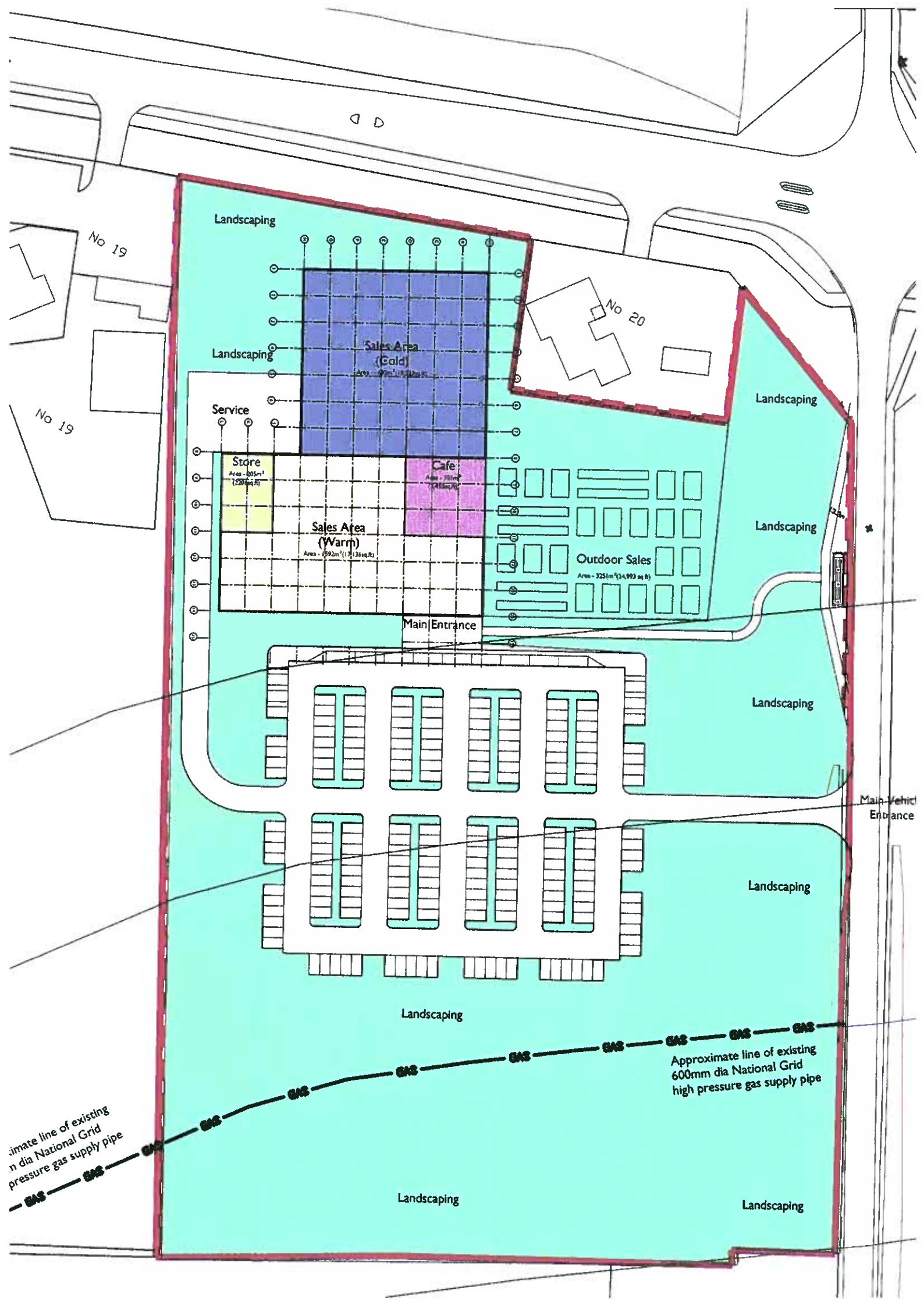
No	EXISTING USE	SQM
1	Conservatory Sales	88
2	Dwelling House	240
3	Dwelling House	122
4	Garden Centre / Florists / Coffee Shop	815
5	Covered Retail Walkway	131
6	Aquatic Centre	215
7	Soft Furnishing Sales	286
8	Kitchen & Bathroom Retail	277
9	Glass House Retail	868
10	Storage Unit	173
11	Boiler Sheds	128
12	Nursery Shed	845
13	Nursery Sheds	310
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4498</b>

**NUMBER 17 HOUSTON MAINS FARM - PROPOSED**

Boundary Line ———

Total Site Area - 8.32 acres

No	PROPOSED USE	SQM
1	Landscaped Boundary	88
2	Dwelling House	240
3	Dwelling House	122
4,5,6,7 & 8	Williamson Design Florists, Head Office and Cut Flowers Division	1724
9	Williamson Design Florists, Green Waste & Recycling Centre	868
10,11,12 & 13	Williamson Design Florists, Outdoor Growing Area	1456
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4498</b>



D D

No 19

No 20

No 19

Landscaping

Landscaping

Service

Store  
Area - 205m<sup>2</sup>  
(2,206 sq ft)

Sales Area  
(Cold)  
Area - 970.15 sq m

Cafe  
Area - 710m<sup>2</sup>  
(7,630 sq ft)

Sales Area  
(Warm)  
Area - 692m<sup>2</sup> (7,436 sq ft)

Outdoor Sales  
Area - 3251m<sup>2</sup> (34,993 sq ft)

Main Entrance

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Landscaping

Approximate line of existing  
600mm dia National Grid  
high pressure gas supply pipe

Approximate line of existing  
600mm dia National Grid  
high pressure gas supply pipe

Main Vehicle  
Entrance