

# PLANNING CONTEXT & STATEMENT

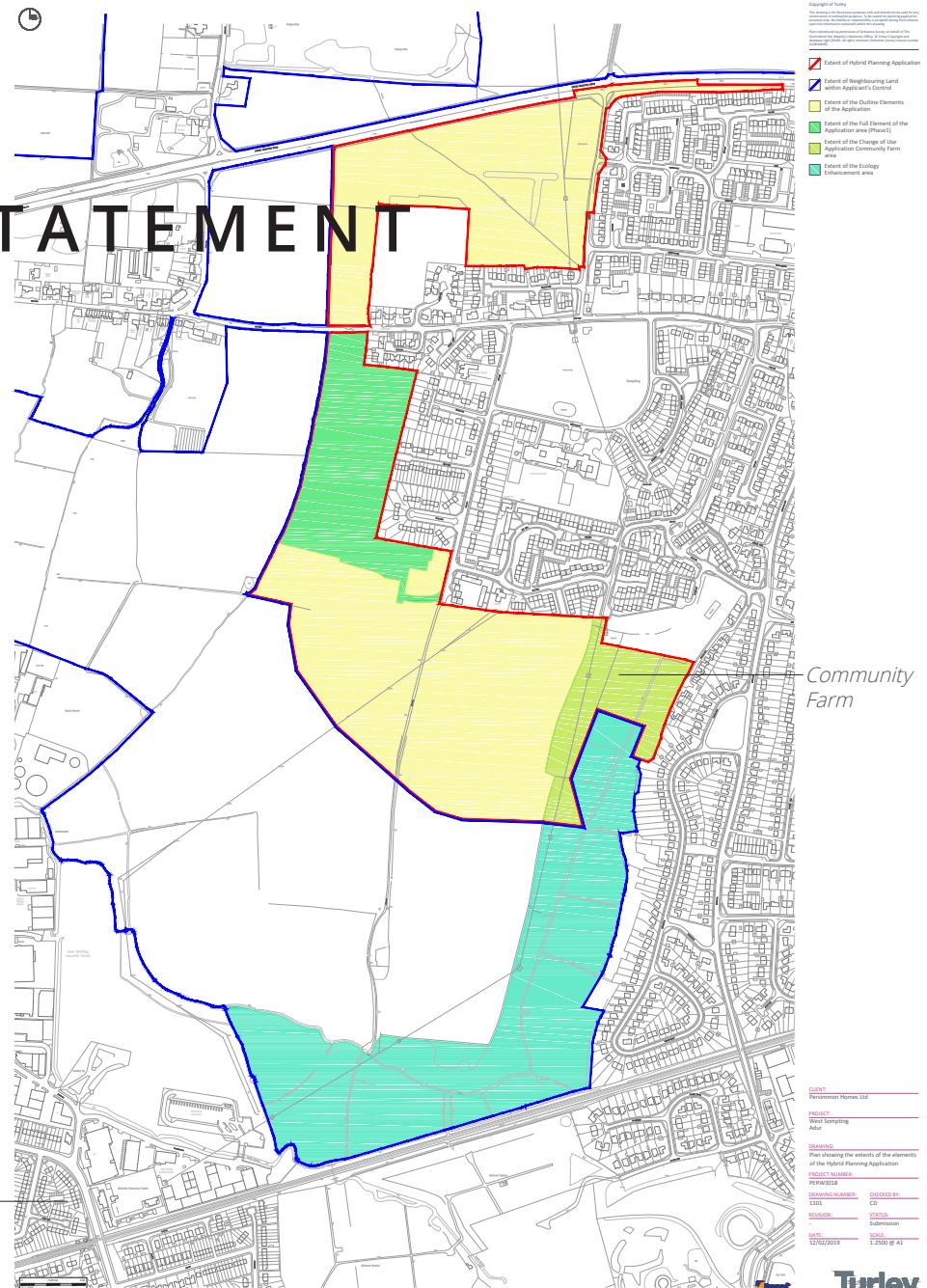
The site is located within the Sompting designated Neighbourhood Area and outside the South Downs National Park.

Several significant residential developments have been approved in close proximity to this site, including:

- AWDM/0323/19: Hybrid planning application for up to and including 469 homes comprising: (1) Outline planning permission (all matters reserved with the exception of access) for the erection of up to and including 373 dwellings, community orchard/growing space, non-vehicular links between the site and Worthing, traffic calming measures, associated landscaping, open space/recreation areas, ecological enhancements including improvements and

extension to Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site, and all other associated development works. (2) Full planning permission for 96 dwellings (part of the overall 469 dwellings comprising 2 no. 1-bed, 37 no. 2-bed, 40 no. 3-bed and 17 no. 4-bed homes, including 30% affordable housing) and all other associated development works, provision of formal playing pitches (Phase 1). (3) Change of use of land south of Hamble Recreation Ground to community/education and agricultural/horticultural uses associated with a new Community Farm. (Development site includes Land West of Dankton Lane leading from the East of Upper Brighton Road Sompting).

## *Plan showing the extents of the elements of the Hybrid Planning Application*



Relevant planning applications approved on the site include:

- AWDM/2022/20: The installation of three shipping containers and a disabled access toilet used as a temporary base for volunteer activities by Sustainable Sussex and the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust's 'EPIC Project' on land to the south of Test Road and provision of 6no. car parking spaces and 6no. cycle spaces. Expiration of period ending on 31st January 2026.

Full planning permission is being sought for the permanent retention of the above approval. These structures, located on the western part of the community farm are currently used for essential purposes including secure storage, staff welfare, and a compost toilet. They are powered sustainably by an integrated solar photovoltaic panel.

The containers play a vital ongoing role in supporting the day-to-day

operations of the farm, particularly in relation to the management and welfare of grazing animals. Their continued presence is essential for the safe and effective functioning of this part of the site. The units are well maintained, in excellent condition, and have demonstrated their suitability over time. These buildings are also used by Sustainable Sussex to support the Sompting Brooks ('EPIC' project) River Rangers volunteers with a base at Fen Farm including storage of tools and equipment, which collaboration is intended to continue indefinitely for the benefit of the local community and environment.

Importantly, the containers are low-impact in nature: they are discreetly sited and screened from public view, with no visual intrusion to neighbouring properties. Their retention aligns with the overall development and operational needs of the farm, where secure and weatherproof storage and welfare facilities are critical amenities.



24

*Shipping containers and compost loo granted under AWDM/2022/20*

Relevant planning applications approved on the site include:

- AWDM/0435/22: Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 4: Cycle Parking Spaces of approved application AWDM/2022/20.
- NOTICE/0035/22: Application for Prior Notification of agricultural development for proposed Poly tunnel for agricultural use (decision - prior approval not required)
- AWDM/0534/23: The erection of a Mongolian Yurt, known as a Ger. 18ft diameter and 10ft height (including the wooden base) to be placed in the well-being garden at The Fen Farm - Sompting Community Farm.



25 AWDM/0435/22  
Bicycle Parking Spaces



26 NOTICE/0035/22  
Poly tunnel



27 AWDM/0534/23  
Yurt

## Proposed New Buildings

This application includes phased construction of three new buildings to support the long-term growth and sustainability of the community farm:

### Phase 1A – The Stable Block

Timber linear structure to replace a dilapidated stable block and include:

- Produce kitchen to process food grown on site.
- Storage for produce and tools.
- Toilets and staff changing facilities.

### Phase 1B – The Discovery Kitchen

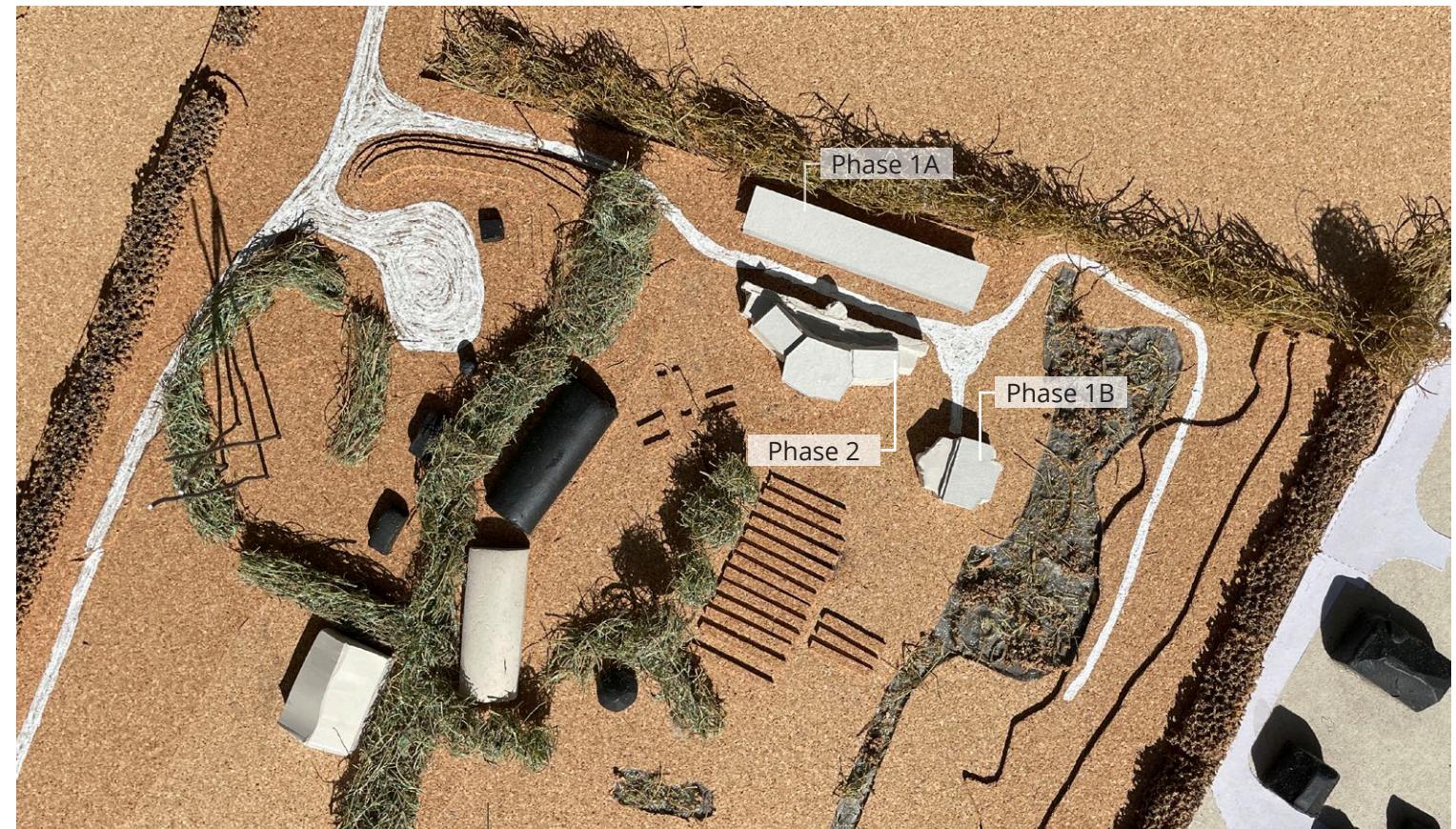
Community and teaching kitchen will:

- Serve meals made from site-grown produce.
- Offer education on healthy cooking and seasonal eating.

### Phase 2 – The Croft

Expanded cooking and support facilities, this final phase will upscale the café and include:

- Farm office.
- Disabled-accessible toilets.
- Staff lunch area.
- Flexible dining space to host community events (e.g. harvest festivals, farm Christmas dinners).



## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal aligns strongly with the NPPF's aims to:

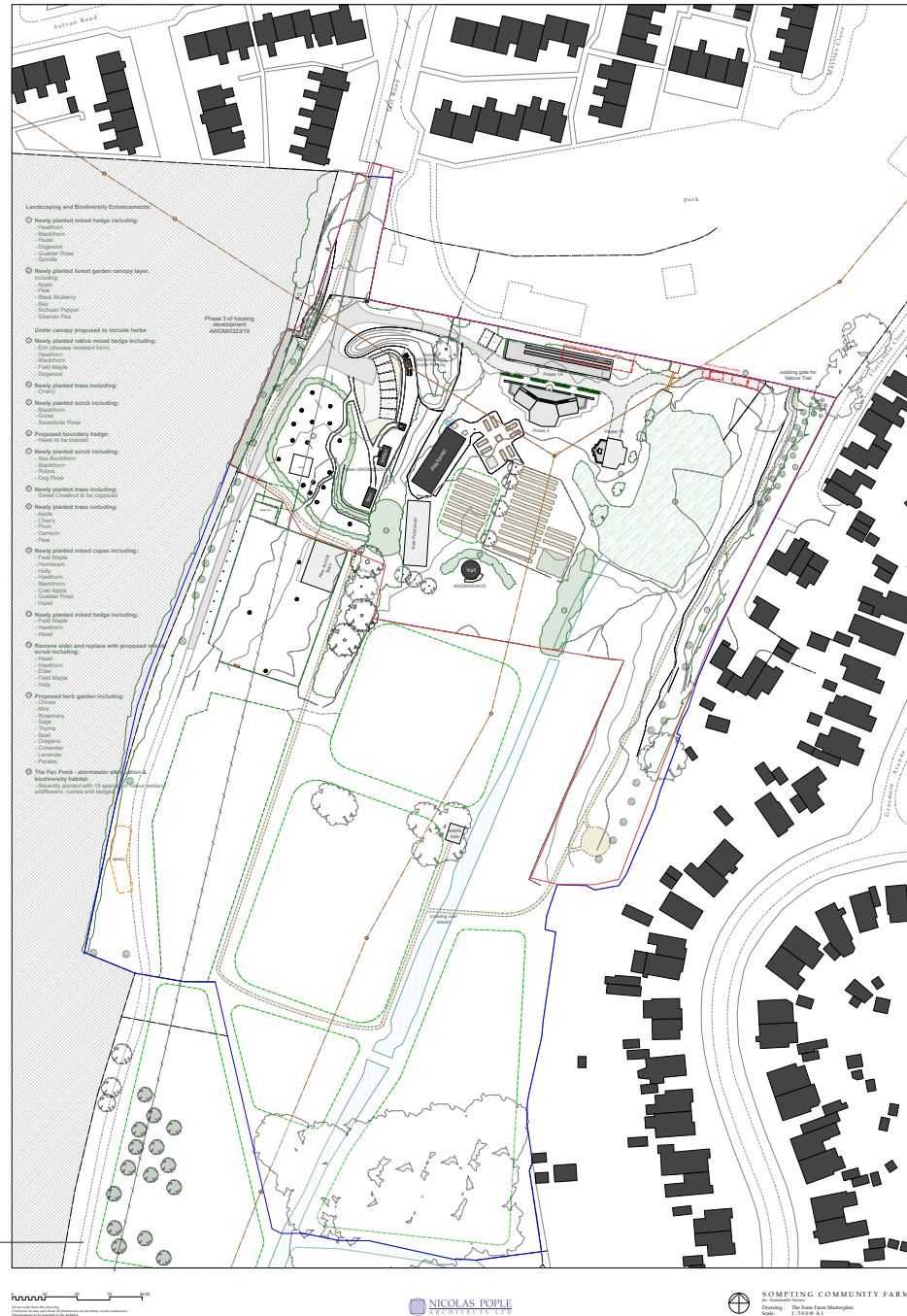
- Promote healthy, inclusive and safe communities (Chapter 8).
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (Paragraphs 88 and 89).
- Encourage sustainable development, including social and environmental benefits (Paragraphs 125, 131, 135, 164)

This community farm initiative directly contributes to public health, food sustainability, and social inclusion.

## Adur & Worthing Local Plan Policies

The project supports key objectives of Adur and Worthing Council's policies, including:

- Policy 15 (Community Infrastructure) – by providing accessible, community-focused facilities.
- Policy 14 (Sustainable Development) – by supporting local resilience, reusing resources, and delivering environmental education.
- Policy 28 (Countryside and Coast) – by sensitively enhancing rural community infrastructure.
- Climate Emergency Policy Commitments – through low-impact construction and promotion of local food systems.



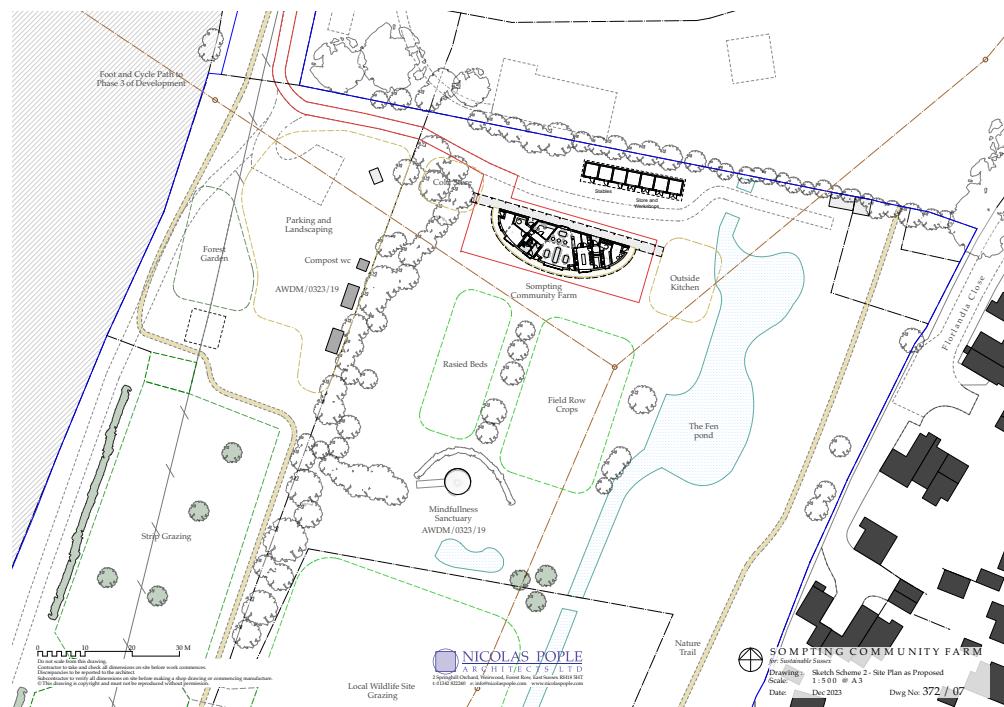
## Pre-application

REF: PREAPP/0092/24

A pre-application consultation was undertaken with Adur and Worthing District Council, including a site meeting attended by a planning officer and representatives of Sustainable Sussex. The proposals discussed included a new single-storey multi-purpose building, stables, a store, and an outdoor kitchen to support the community farm's operations and educational activities. Key areas of discussion focused on the site's rural location and the design and positioning of the proposed new structures. In their written feedback, the planning officer confirmed that: *"There is no objection in principle,*

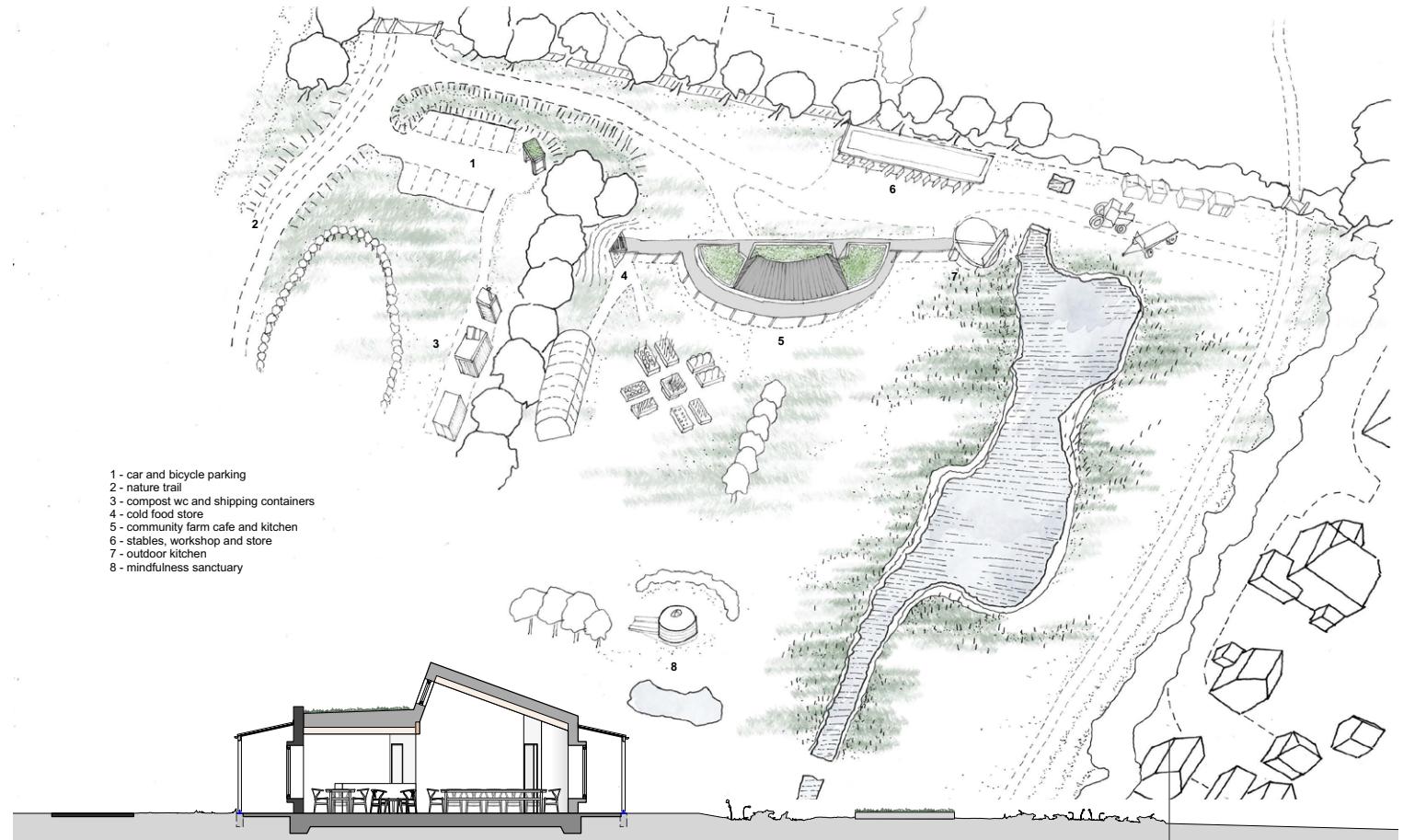
*therefore, to development on the site which meets the essential needs of the farm, and the main considerations will be the impact of any new buildings on the wider landscape and the openness of the gap, and the level of activity associated with the use and its impact on the quiet rural nature of the area."*

It was agreed that siting the proposed building towards the northern end of the site would reduce its visual impact on the surrounding landscape, and this location was supported by the officer. While the building has a relatively large footprint, its low profile, restrained height, and use of sympathetic materials were considered appropriate within the rural setting.



30 Drawing no. 372/07 sketch scheme submitted for pre-application

During the site meeting, the use of a zinc roof was discussed. While the overall design was supported, the officer expressed some reservations about this roofing material and suggested that alternative finishes with a more natural appearance may be more suitable, particularly to complement the proposed timber cladding and sedum roofing areas.



31 *Submitted site plan and section*

# DESIGN APPROACH

The site for the three buildings is defined by the restrictions of existing infrastructure such as; foul water drainage, landscape features, electricity pylons and the proximity of the housing at the perimeter of the site.

These buildings support functions to a specific range of organised activities and should not be viewed as conventionally 'public' or commercial. It is also important to note that all three are a cohesive cluster of buildings that use one architectural language and work together for the needs of the community farm.

The key consideration with creating buildings with an agricultural characteristic is in materiality and this will be further explored in the subsequent sections.

Historically, buildings supporting food production have not formed a significant aspect of architectural history. Nikolaus Pevsner wrote – "A bicycle shed is a building: Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture". However, over the past couple hundred years, there has been less of a distinction between what used to be called vernacular, and the designed, and architects have become increasingly influenced by archetypal forms and simple construction systems.



32 *Proposed site 3D*