



WINCHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

www.winchfield-pc.org.uk

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FAO: Mr Tim Lawton
Assistant Director of Highways, Engineering and Transport
Hampshire County Council

BY EMAIL TO: tim.lawton@hants.gov.uk

27 July 2023

Dear Mr Tim Lawton

Pale Lane / A323 Junction

Winchfield Parish Council wishes to register a serious concern about the safety of the junction of the A323, Fleet to Hartley Wintney road, at the junction with Pale Lane. Recently there have been two serious accidents, requiring police attendance and the hospitalisation of a casualty. The junction is outside the boundary of Winchfield parish however it is the route that most of the inhabitants use to go to Fleet and Elvetham Heath as it is a less congested route than driving through Dogmersfield and Crookham village. Many other road users also use this junction to traverse via Pale Lane to Winchfield Station and to access Edenbrook Country Park.

The Parish Council wrote to Mr Stuart Jarvis on 24 January 2019 raising concerns at the design of the new junction, a copy of the letter is attached at enclosure 1. We received a response from Ms Kathie Murray on 25th February 2019 (attached at enclosure 2) , which stated categorically that the design of the new junction had been thoroughly assessed and that no further action was required subject to there being no accidents. We are now at the point when two serious accidents have occurred within the last month let alone several minor collisions or near misses since its construction.

In the letter of 25 February 2019, from HCC Highways, it states that a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit would be carried out in the event of any accidents being reported. We request that this audit is carried out at the earliest opportunity and we are pleased to understand that discussions are already ongoing between your department and Councillors Forster, Davies and Parker who represent our locality.

In conducting the Stage 4 Audit we would ask that consideration is given to the circumstances that pertained in early 2019. As the Brickyard Plantation was being completed, which brought about the changes to the original Pale Lane junction, there was also a major planning application from Wates, designated Elvetham Chase, for some 800 houses, either side of Pale Lane down to the railway bridge. The proposed design for the new development included the closure of a stretch of Pale Lane from the railway bridge and diverting traffic to a new roundabout on the A323 nearer to Fleet. The alterations made to the junction at Pale Lane are exactly as per the plan submitted as part of the planning application, a design which was based on the junction only being used by a bus service and as a cyclist and pedestrian access, whereas the majority of traffic from/to the new estate and from/to Winchfield would be redirected along a new road built by the Elvetham Chase developers to join the A323 at a new roundabout. I have attached, at enclosure 3, a copy of the

proposed highways layout which clearly illustrates this point. Given that the Secretary of State only finally dismissed the appeal for the Elvetham Chase development on 4 November 2019 it begs the question whether a judgement was made by HCC Highways at the time that the revised design for the Pale Lane junction would be adequate for the limited use given that most traffic would have been diverted to this new roundabout.

The residents of Winchfield rely on Pale Lane as a major artery accessing Fleet and other points east including the M3. The Parish Council is concerned that the layout of the Pale Lane junction with the A323 is inappropriate, with poor sightlines due to an unnecessary earthen bund, and a high probability of cars overtaking those slowing down to turn left hitting oncoming traffic which in turn is intending to turn right from the Hartley Wintney direction, as has happened in the recent accidents.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that an audit will take place and that appropriate action will be taken to safeguard the travelling public.

Yours sincerely

O M Williams

Meyrick Williams
Chairman
Winchfield Parish Council

Encs.

CC: Cllrs Davies, Forster and Parker (HCC) and Cllr Farmer (HDC)

Enclosure 1
WPC Letter to HCC
24 January 2019



WINCHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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24 January 2019

Mr Stuart Jarvis
Director of Economy, Transport & Environment
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

Stuart.jarvis@hants.gov.uk

Dear Mr Jarvis

Roadworks - s278 scheme - Brickyards Plantation - Pale Lane - Fleet

Winchfield Parish Council (WPC) wish to register a formal complaint on the inaction and lack of judgement by HCC Highways Department regarding a series of complaints lodged by both the Parish Council and members of the public in relation to the design and layout of the junction at the end of Pale Lane with the A323 from Fleet to Hartley Wintney.

WPC first raised its concerns on 17 May 2018 with County Councillor David Simpson who in turn took up the issue with Richard Fowke of HCC Highways. Several subsequent representations were made by Cllr Simpson and local residents with HCC Highways on 24 September, 1 October, 17 October, 26 November and finally on 14 January. It is apparent from this series of communications that HCC Highways kept deferring any action until the final safety audit review.

Our concerns can be summarised as follows:-

- The removal of a slip lane off the A323 as you approached the junction from Fleet.
- The design of the left turn into Pale Lane from the A323 is inappropriate and dangerous. The new kerbstones which have been laid force drivers to turn back on themselves to enter Pale Lane and in so doing need to extend the turn into the lane and avoid the traffic approaching the junction from Winchfield. This is a difficult manoeuvre for any car, let alone a large vehicle. Accidents are now more likely and as there is no slip lane on the A323 the main flow of traffic from Fleet will inevitably make contact with a vehicle that is having a problem negotiating the left turn off the A323.

The Stage 3 audit review report, attached, was made available on 14 January by Mr Fowke. It transpires that a presumption had already been made by HCC that a proposed development at Elvetham Chase would be approved and that a new junction would in time be built and there was no need to worry about a poorly designed junction at Pale Lane. At the time of the final safety audit and the associated response by the junction designers, the formal appeal process for the Elvetham Chase development was still in progress between Hart District Council and the developers and no decision was likely from the Secretary of State until at least early March 2019.

If we now refer to the road safety audit conducted in the document reference BN/JMP/178 and paragraph 2.2.1 – the recommendation from the audit is that a review of the radius of the turning is undertaken as well as the potential for introducing a separate left turn lane. You will note that the designer's response states that at some time or other a HCC S278 officer specified a 6m radius rather than the original 8m radius and that they refer to the proposal for Pale Lane to be stopped up. They conclude that the junction arrangements should not be modified and this seems to be accepted by HCC without further challenge.

Pale Lane is a well-used and busy road not only for the residents of Winchfield but for many others that use it as a cut through to Winchfield station and beyond to J5 of the M3. Authorising a 6m radius and no deceleration lane junction where there is every likelihood that a motor vehicle and most certainly large vans and articulated lorries will inevitably cross over the lane when performing a left-hand turn, will result in accidents. This danger could have been avoided had Hampshire County Council acted on the mountain of evidence and concerns that were placed before them over the past eight months.

WPC considered this matter at its meeting on Monday, 21 January, and instructed me to write this letter to you.

Winchfield Parish Council requests that, HCC holds an independent review of the design of this junction with reference not only to the Parish Council's concerns but with due regard to the presumption made about the lack of need for a safe junction based on a planning application where the outcome has yet to be decided.

We look forward to receiving your comments and proposed next steps.

Yours sincerely

Susan Richardson (Mrs)
Acting Clerk, Winchfield Parish Council



(3) BN-JNP-178 Stage
3 RSA-Pale Lane Hook

Cc Cllr David Simpson

Enclosure 2

Letter from HCC to WPC

25 February 2019



Hampshire County Council

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Mrs S Richardson

By email:
winchfieldparishclerk@outlook.com

Enquiries to

ETE Customer Feedback

My reference

9004792

Direct Line

Your reference

Date

25 February 2019

Email

ete.customer.feedback@hants.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Richardson

Roadworks - s278 scheme - Brickyards Plantation - Pale Lane - Fleet

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January 2019 regarding the S278 scheme at Brickyards Plantation - Pale Lane, Fleet. Firstly, I can assure you that all enquiries regarding this scheme have been responded to within a few days of each enquiry, with each enquiry being considered fully before a response was sent.

I can appreciate that the changes to the junction at Pale Lane do require vehicles to slow down on Fleet Road ready to negotiate the turn into Pale Lane, whereas before they could use the diverge lane. However, the presence of the original diverge and merge lanes at this junction made the junction area overly large. It was felt that reducing the overall size of the junction would help to reduce traffic speeds through the junction and in turn help address the accident history.

The purpose of the revised junction is to address the existing accident history, improve pedestrian/cycle/public transport connectivity and obviously accommodate the additional traffic for the development on the northeast side of the junction. To address the accident issue, right turn lanes have been introduced to enable drivers to wait safely whilst waiting to turn right into either of the side roads. Prior to the works, this manoeuvre required drivers to wait stationary on the mainline carriageway until there was an opportunity to cross the opposing flow. This had resulted in a series of shunt type accidents occurring.

Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
Stuart Jarvis BSc DipTP FCIHT MRTPI

To provide right-turn lanes as well as diverge and merge lanes would have resulted in an even larger junction area which wouldn't help to reduce the speeds through the junction. The road was also widened on the Pale Lane side to accommodate the right-turn lanes so the area used originally for the diverge lane into Pale Lane became the northbound lane of Fleet Road.

The introduction of the ghost islands either side of the turning lanes has enabled the introduction of a traffic island, pedestrian crossing points and footway link to the improved bus stops. They also help to reduce the width of the junction, again helping to influence speeds through the junction.

Diverge and merge lanes are not favoured by Hampshire County Council due to the increased safety risks associated with them. Such lanes are primarily used to avoid the turning traffic from impeding the flow of the major road. However, vehicles utilising the diverge lane restrict the visibility for vehicles emerging from the side roads onto the major road which can then result in vehicles pulling out of the side junctions into the path of a vehicle travelling straight through on the mainline carriageway. Such lanes also increase the risk of accidents for motorcycles and cycles travelling along the mainline carriageway. To have vehicles slowing on the major road to turn into the side road (rather than utilising a diverge lane) also helps to reduce the overall speed of traffic through the junction.

Another aspect of the junction design was to remove the original crossroad effect of the side roads. Crossroads are particularly dangerous because of the "see through" effect from one side road directly into the side road on the opposite side of the major road which can result in the minor road traffic travelling straight across the junction without giving way to/being aware of the major road. The introduction of the smaller radius kerblines has enabled a small stagger to be introduced removing the "see through" effect.

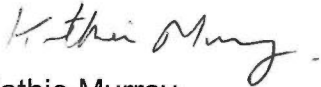
The S278 Team Leader has reviewed the Road Safety Audits produced for the scheme and has identified where the confusion is. A Stage 2 Safety Audit is undertaken at the detailed design stage and the Stage 3 Audit undertaken at the completion of the construction works. Any issues raised by the independent Safety Audit Team must be responded to by the Designer. For this particular scheme, the Road Safety Audit team have reported all of the previous Stage 2 Audit issues in the report (including the Stage 2 Designers Response) – this runs from page 5 to page 9. The Safety Audit Team did highlight the tightness of the Pale Lane kerb at the Stage 2 Audit and the Designer then provided their response. Given this together with the concerns raised through various enquiries during the construction of the works, Richard Fowke did ask the Road Safety Team to consider the as-built alignment of the turn into Pale Lane at the Stage 3 Audit. Whilst undertaking the Audit on site, they did watch several vehicles turn into Pale Lane, however, the Safety Audit Team did not identify any concerns regarding the removal of the Pale Lane diverge or the tightness of the kerblines at the Stage 3 Audit.

I can assure you that the junction has been assessed for the current traffic and the new brickyard plantation traffic. Although the Designer has referred to the development at Elvetham Chase in their response to the Stage 2 Audit, this hasn't influenced the design. The design is to accommodate the existing and committed traffic demand for the junction only. The Auditors categorically state that they have followed standard Audit procedure (cl1.14) ie "examined and reported only on highway safety implications of the scheme as presented".

The Developer's Designer has also provided acceptable tracking drawings as part of the S278 Design Check.

We will continue to monitor the revised junction during the maintenance period. Should any accidents occur during this period, a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit will be held and the Developer's Designer will have to address any items raised in the Audit.

Yours sincerely

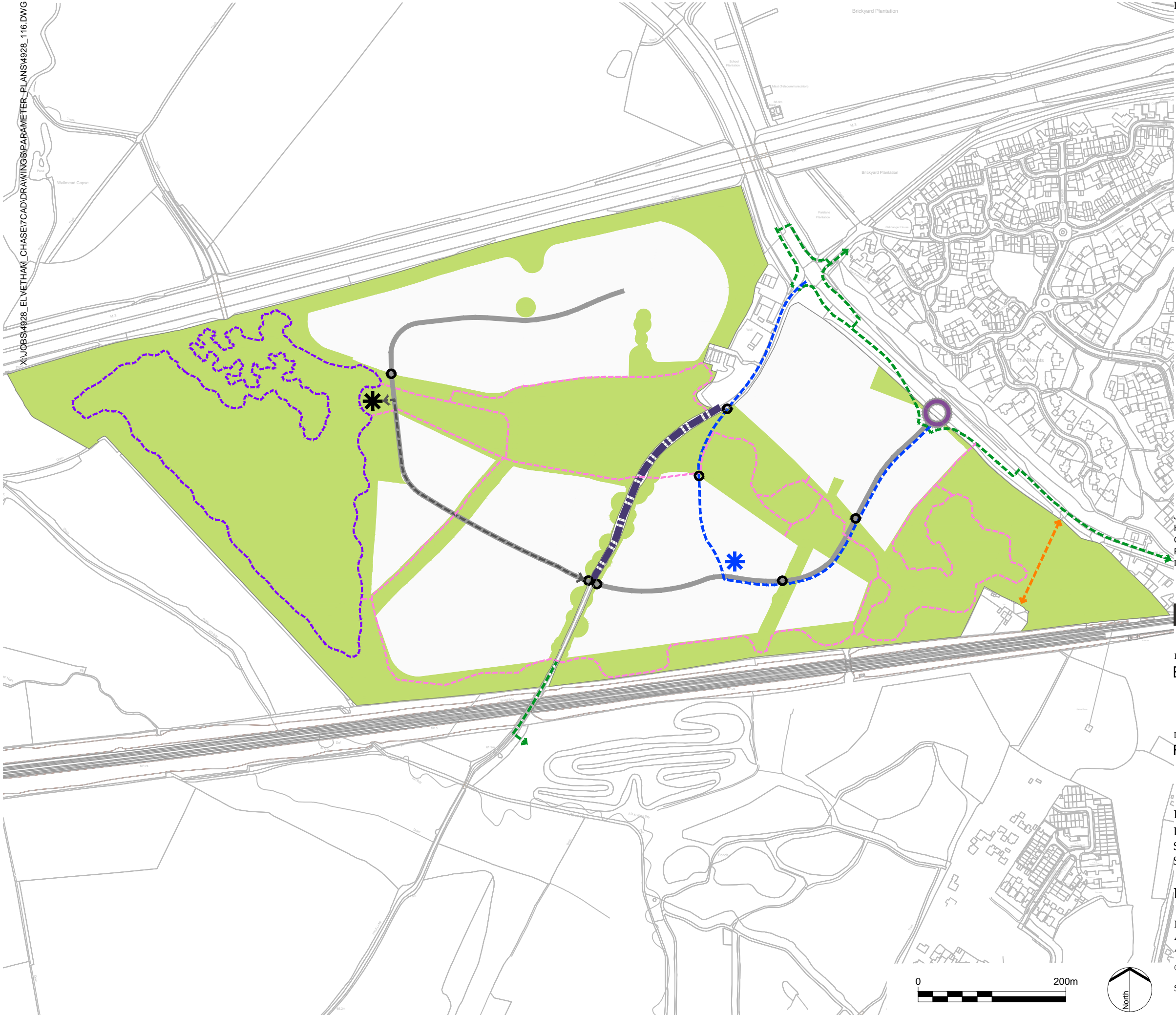
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kathie Murray'.

Kathie Murray
Group Engineer

Enclosure 3

Proposed Highway Layout for New
Roundabout on A323 and Closure of
Section of Pale Lane

Date: May 2016



- LEGEND
- Green Infrastructure
 - Primary vehicular access
 - Fixed road point through hedgerow
 - Primary street (indicative alignment)
 - Bus route (indicative alignment)
 - Closure of Pale Lane to through traffic
 - External pedestrian / cycle routes
 - Retained access to Bog Cottages
 - Proposed bus stop (indicative location)
 - SANG car park
 - 2.4km SANG footpath
 - Site wide footpath/ cycleway (indicative alignment)
 - Vehicular access to SANG car park

J	General amendments	NL	10.11.16
H	General amendments	NL	01.11.16
G	General amendments	NL	20.10.16
F	General amendments	NL	19.10.16
REV.	DESCRIPTION	APP.	DATE

LD&DESIGN

PROJECT TITLE
ELVETHAM CHASE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

DRAWING TITLE
Figure 4.6: Access and Movement Parameter Plan

ISSUED BY	Peterborough	T: 01733 310 471
DATE	May 2016	DRAWN JR
SCALE@A3	1:5,000	CHECKED CMi
STATUS	Final	APPROVED CMi

DWG. NO 4928_116_J

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.
All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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Sources Ordnance Survey