

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSALS AND JUSTIFICATION

Repairs

In relation to Pond Cottage a feasibility study and overview condition survey was carried out by Hiraeth Architecture and MJB Associates in April 2022. This developed a previous schedule of repairs and proposals for Pond Cottage by Neath Port Talbot Council. The proposed repairs are summarised as follows and should be read in conjunction with the repair drawings accompanying this application by Hiraeth Architecture:

Roof

- Replace approximately 10 Nr. broken or slipped slates
- Renew lead flashings to valleys and chimney
- Allowance for timber repairs to structural members and fascias
- Replace gutters and downpipes in cast iron
- Provide insulation to roof void

Justification

The roof covering to Pond Cottage is currently not wind and weather tight. Whilst there is currently no sign of this internally, there is the potential of this to start displaying itself imminently as damp ingress to the interiors, diluting their quality and significance. The existing roof covering has extended well beyond its expected design life of 100 years. To extend this further, and address the issues that have arisen, the roof requires patch repairs to the identified elements. These will be carried out on a like for like basis and will include addressing all flashings and upstands so that a fully wind and weathertight installation is achieved, therefore alleviating the potential deterioration of the building fabric and interior spaces. In prescribing this it is pertinent to allow for any

unforeseen repairs that might be required to roof timbers that currently can not be inspected.

In order to ensure that a degree of longevity is introduced into the repairs, it is proposed that the existing plastic rainwater goods are replaced in a heritage cast iron. Such rainwater goods would have been prevalent on the original building, but have previously been removed. The plastic rainwater goods are incongruous with the building and their replacement will lead to a conservation enhancement as well.

External Walls

- Clean out and replace missing covers to drainage channel
- Hack off cement render to rear elevation and bay windows and replace with lime render
- Rake out cementitious pointing to stonework and replace with lime mortar
- Clean window heads and cills

Justification

The proposed external wall repairs to Pond Cottage involve general cleaning, together with the removal of non-breathable renders and mortars. The walls are generally of a solid wall construction. These use lime mortar to the north, east and west elevations, although this has been pointed over in a hard, cementitious mortar in several areas. This is leading to accelerated weathering of stonework in places. In particular, evaporation of moisture, absorbed from the environment into the

stonework, is occurring predominantly through the stone and not the mortar joints. This means that during frosts, moisture within the stonework freezes just below the surface of the stone, expands and blows the face of the stone off. In order to improve this situation, the mortar should be more porous than the stone to encourage evaporation to happen through the mortar joints which can much more readily be maintained. Consequently the hard mortar should be removed and the affected areas repointed using a lime based mortar.

Similarly to the south elevation, a cementitious render has been applied over the masonry. Cementitious renders are brittle. Over a period of time, the wall in this area has and will continue to move and settle in response to the various environmental conditions it has faced and faces. The render is unable to accommodate this movement and has consequently fractured in places. Although small initially, through these fractures, moisture and water have entered the building fabric. However, the presence of the cementitious render is then preventing the effective re-evaporation of the moisture. In cold weather this moisture will freeze and expand, leading to blown render. As the render fails it will ultimately detach and the situation will become self perpetuating - i.e. the loss of render will allow further moisture to enter the building fabric, leading to further loss of render. This will ultimately lead to health and safety issue. Consequently the cement render should be removed and renewed in a lime based render.

Harder mortars and renders such as Natural Hydraulic Limes and cementitious mixes should largely be avoided going forwards in favour of hot mixed lime mortars. Hot mixed air lime mortars were the ubiquitous lime mortar of traditional construction, only falling from general use as the 20th century wore on, when the use of Portland cement displaced them



External walls to the property are extensively pointed in cement mortar with cements renders also being prevalent. These stop the fabric from 'breathing'

from most building sites. These mortars were quickly and efficiently prepared and delivered mortars of eminent workability and usefulness. They enjoy unparalleled water retentivity and excellent bond, and display maximum cohesiveness and adhesiveness. Furthermore they are much more effectively porous than other mortars, keeping building fabric dry, and are more durable and frost resilient.

Windows and External Doors

- Re-decorate windows and doors
- Overhaul front and rear entrance doors
- Repairs to lead flashings to bays

Justification

The doors and windows are suffering from a lack of maintenance over a number of years and have consequently deteriorated. Their repair will enable their aesthetic virtues which cannot be duplicated, together with their historic interest and character, to be retained.

Internal Works

- Strip out all internal fittings and finishings
- Strip anaglypta wall paper and remove Artex ceilings
- Hack of defective wall plaster and replace with new
- Remove skirtings
- Internal Doors
 - Remove existing and provide new internal doors
- Wall Finishes
 - Lime plaster skim coat and mineral based paint to all walls
 - Glazed tiling to bathroom

- Floor Finishes
 - Ceramic tiling to bathroom
 - Vinyl flooring to kitchen / dining area
 - Carpet to remaining rooms
 - New skirtings
- Ceiling Finishes
 - New plasterboard ceilings with mineral paint finish
- Fittings
 - New kitchen installation
 - Allowance for new wood burning stove, flue liner and hearth

Justification

The fixtures and fittings to the interior of the cottage have been modernised with new wall finishes applied that are both incongruous with the building and detrimental to the building fabric due to their lack of breathability. The repair proposals will reintroduce more appropriate fixtures and fittings together with addressing the requirements for the building fabric to breath. This will ensure the preservation of the historic fabric, ensuring it remains in good condition for future generations.

Services

- New sanitary appliances to bathroom
- Plumbing, electrical and ventilation installation and drainage
- Replace heating, hot and cold water installation
- Replace electrical installation
- New fire alarm installation
- New security alarm installation

Justification

The existing services and sanitary ware to the building have been added in a haphazard fashion to respond in a reactionary manner to historic requirements. Consequently they are modern additions of little significance, and do not reflect a coherent and considered intervention. This is to the detriment of the building overall. In order to address this, in conjunction with the Architect all existing exposed electrical and mechanical services will be repositioned to minimise the impact on the historic fabric of the building. Amendments are to minimise intervention, damage and loss of historic fabric, with services to be installed with as little disruption as possible – e.g. existing spaces and voids being used rather than cutting in new. All new work will aim to be reversible, allowing the fabric to revert to its former state where appropriate and achievable in the future. All new fittings will also minimise the impact on the environment by being energy-efficient. Unused fittings will be carefully removed. Similarly new sanitary ware will follow the same approach.

External Works

- General site clearance and demolition of out buildings
- Repairs to fencing / gates
- Repairs to boundary wall
- Repair and redecorate veranda
- New patio
- Provision of hot tub
- New bike store and storage shed
- Upgrade parking area adjacent to cottage
- New footpaths
- Allowance for planting
- Allowance for rodding drains

Justification

The external areas to Pond Cottage have been poorly maintained over a number of years. This has led to the deterioration of any original features to such a point that they are no longer distinguishable, or indeed never existed. In this context the approach has been taken to re-landscape the garden to provide a more appropriate setting coherent scheme for the Pond Cottage that draws on historic references, allied with ecological, biodiversity and arboricultural gains. In this manner the setting of the building will be enhanced.



The interior of Pond Cottage has been 'modernised' with a variety of inappropriate materials, all of which serves to reduce the breathability of fabric



Pond Cottage, viewed from the north east

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIVES OF GOOD DESIGN

Changes to the historic and traditional environment (whether designated or not) are somewhat inevitable in order to maintain and secure our heritage for future generations. Such development is often born in response to social, cultural and economic changes within society, and in this case include the evolution of the Pond Cottage to provide tea room facilities and toilets at Gnoll Estate Country Park. This will ultimately facilitate the management of the wider registered landscape so it can be retained and enhanced as a large scale designed landscape, celebrating its associations with Neath, its pioneering development of industrial processes, and as a valuable asset to its surrounding community.

The proposal therefore seeks to enhance the offer of Gnoll Estate Country Park, in terms of its evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal value. It looks to remedy the inaccessibility of the building by opening it to the public, and to improve accessibility and facilities throughout the parkland generally.

The proposed scheme sets out to achieve this by enhancing the importance and interpretation of the most significant elements of the existing site, whilst removing those elements that detract from it. To realise this successfully, the site has to be considered both as a composition in its immediate context, and through its relative significance within the wider parkland.

Layout

The proposed layout of the cottage principally looks to work with existing room arrangement that are presumed to be original to the property. This

approach limits the amount of alteration to existing fabric, thereby retaining the historic character and layout. The proposed layout therefore consists of the retention of the two primary rooms to the front at ground floor level, with the single room to the back of the property being subdivided to form a separate kitchen and dining area. This affords additional space to be allocated to diners in the tea room and is arguably how the property may have been arranged originally. The additional wall to form the separation is non-structural and can therefore be removed if required in the future with limited impact on the historic fabric.

In order for this arrangement to function, some new door openings are required. This includes a new opening adjacent to the underside of the stair, enabling a servery to be formed in this area, and the addition of a new door opening between proposed seating areas 2 and 3 to afford improved visibility around the ground floor for staff, who may be working with limited numbers on occasions.

To the rear of the property, the proposed new extension contains both an extended kitchen and servery area to the east side of the plan, with toilets to the west side of the plan. The kitchen and servery will allow the client to consolidate food and drinks preparation in one area that can serve both the internal space and external garden area where additional covers will be located. This enables the building to be controlled by a minimal level of staff.

In order to introduce this layout, it is proposed that the ground floor window to the existing toilet is lowered below cill level to form an opening

between the existing building and the proposed extension. It is felt that this is likely to have limited effect on the overall significance of Pond Cottage, although it is recognised that the ground floor window in this area will be lost as a result of this decision. This is felt to be acceptable in the context of the overall improvement to the operation of the building as it facilitates the use of the garden as part of the offering, thereby encouraging enhancements to be undertaken in this area as well.

The addition of the toilets provides both the requisite accessible features within Pond Cottage, together with benefits to the wider park. By incorporating the additional toilets within the footprint of the building, additional toilets required for users of this end of the park are not subsequently required, thereby removing the necessity for a separate building in the landscape. This was considered as part of the plans originally with toilets being proposed within the ruins. It is ultimately felt however, that by locating them at Pond Cottage, they are more integrated with the general users of the park. The toilets can be accessed both from within the building and externally from the new extension. This means toilet users do not need to necessarily traipse through the building in order to use these facilities, potentially disturbing tea room customers.

At first floor level, the layout of the building similarly remains true to its existing layout. The existing bathroom however is to be used as a store, with the existing modern fixtures and fittings to be removed. New toilets are to be formed in the former bedroom 3, serving to provide a lobbied toilet arrangement. Again it is felt that the addition of the stud work walls to form the new toilets will have a limited effect on the historic fabric, as they can ultimately be removed at a future date with limited impact.

Access

The proposals look to improve the access and circulation within the building, first and foremost by inviting the general public in to experience this historic building through the introduction of the teahouse usage. The existing principal entrance door to the property incorporates a stepped access. It is therefore proposed to address this by regrading the external levels to remove this, however it is noted that it is not proposed to widen the existing doorway which sits at marginally less than 900mm as this would have a detrimental effect on the historic building. In addition to this, landscaping to the new extension to the rear will provide a level access into the building with an entrance door with a clear opening of a minimum of 900mm.

By placing the finished floor level of the new extension at the finished floor level of the existing building hallway, any potential changes in level at ground floor level are removed. Reasonable provision for most people, including wheelchair users, has also been made to access dining rooms and sanitary facilities on the entrance storey. It is further proposed to remove the existing, modern, plain boarded doors at ground floor level. This will facilitate an ease of movement around the space - particularly when users are likely to be carrying food and drinks.

Access for all to the first floor level has not been possible within the constraints of the existing building fabric. The addition of a lift to the first floor would significantly increase the size of the required footprint for the facility, leading to a need for further extensions. If located internally this would impact on the available space at ground and first floor within the footprint of the existing property. If placed externally it would detract from the character of the building as it would need to span both ground and first floor thereby affecting the low eaves of the existing building.

Scale

To facilitate the required internal space, the proposal looks to provide a new extension to the south elevation of the main body of the property. Single storey in height, the scale of intervention is subservient to the existing building, ensuring that the prominence of this is not overwhelmed. Whilst the intervention requires the removal of the existing catslide extension to the south west corner, the majority of the original fabric of the main body of the house will remain visible - indeed the cement render in this area will be replaced with a lime based render enhancing the significance of what is otherwise a rather understated and arguably ill considered elevation.

The simple, orthogonal form of the proposed extension aims to complement the principally orthogonal plan of the 'main body' of the property, ensuring that junctions between the old and the new are simple and uncomplicated. The flat roof however will serve to contrast and accentuate the steep pitches of the roofs to the existing building, thereby enhancing their significance by drawing further attention to them. It is noted that a pitched roof solution was considered to the new extension, and whilst the presence of the existing first floor window to the south elevation physically prevented its implementation, it is also felt that this would have obscured the clarity of approach adopted in the current solution between the old and the new.

The form of the new extension is completed by cutting back the south east corner to form an overhang to a surgery area to the garden. This cover both provides protection from inclement weather to people being served, together with a sheltered transition zone through which the building is accessed. In terms of the scale of the intervention, stepping

this area back from the main south facade also helps to reduce the perceived mass of the proposed extension.

Both the east and west elevation of the proposal are set in from the corners of the south elevation of the existing 'main body' of the property. This approach allows the corners of the original building to be seen, therefore enhancing the subservience of the proposal. To the west elevation the existing stone wall is to be incorporated into the scheme, ensuring the prevalence of this element is retained, and thereby defining the separation between the rear garden and the remainder of the parkland.

Character

The philosophy adopted towards Pond Cottage addresses this as follows:

Where new building is to be added into the existing historic landscape, then this, whilst respecting the character of the site, should also be distinct, so it can clearly be differentiated from that which is not.

This approach is perhaps grounded in and best explained by SPAB in their working principles SPAB state:

'Complement not parody

New work should express modern needs in a modern language. These are the only terms in which new can relate to old in a way which is positive and responsive at the same time. If an addition proves essential, it should not be made to out-do or out-last the original.'

However, it does not mean that new additions need be alien to their site. There are many examples of new, contemporary works and alterations



The proposed extension is to be clad in black, heat treated, architectural timber to tie in with the fascias and timber to the existing building

being successfully undertaken to significant historical places. These examples identify that such developments are based on:

- A comprehensive understanding of the impacts on the significance of the existing building.
- The proposal not materially harming the values of the place and where appropriate reinforcing and further revealing the significant historical elements.
- An aspiration for a high-quality design and execution which may be valued now and in the future
- The long-term consequences of the proposals being benign, or that they do not prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

Appearance

The approach to the appearance of the developed extension has therefore been to work towards enhancing the character of the existing building, whilst introducing a new layer of considered development to the site in a style that is both contextual and appropriate to today's society. This takes advantage of the technologies that are available to us and inevitably introduces an element of subjectivity as to where the aesthetic balance should sit.

The extension will consequently be constructed in materials that are of the present day, allowing a clear differentiation between the new and old. It will not be visible from the public spaces to the north. When viewed from the south, the low crisp lines of the new intervention will be in contrast to the rougher, rubble stonework and render to the existing house. Larger areas of glazing will accentuate this, being in contrast to the smaller openings of the existing property. The flat roof finish will largely be concealed however, a wildflower roof finish has been chosen

that will serve to soften the relationship between the existing building and the new extension. Rainwater gutters will be concealed by a small parapet, adding to the simplicity of the design, with downpipes being concealed in the building cladding.

The proposed scheme would be vertically clad in natural timber – derived from the surrounding wooded setting to Pond Cottage and the wider parkland, and black in colour to reflect and tie in with the fascias and bargeboards to the existing property. The timber will provide a contrast to the mass and colour of the stonework and render of the existing building and will importantly be lighter weight in appearance, again enhancing the subservience of the proposed extension to Pond Cottage.

Landscaping

Landscaping proposals have been developed by Davies Landscape Architects. These are based around the provision of external dining space that will allow the tea room to extend its capacity during good weather. The proposals set Pond Cottage within the context of a soft landscaping scheme that draws from the principals of the Arts and Crafts garden, therefore linking the building design with its external space.

Environmental Sustainability

In order to meet the UK's commitment for decarbonisation, our construction industry must fundamentally change its approach to design, performance and construction of our built environment. Wales has committed to a framework of carbon reduction which will result in the revision of Building Regulation standards particularly in regard to energy performance but whilst we wait to see the effects on regulations, we believe that we must be delivering projects of today that are future proofed and offer a truly sustainable long-term solution. Consequently

the proposal developed for Pond Cottage seeks to improve on current building regulations and consider the whole life of the development.

In considering the nature of these objectives we have prepared and taken into consideration with the design team a number of factors -

- analysis of the site's physical and environmental constraints and opportunities including sun path and shading, the natural and built environment, accessibility, ecology and vegetation.
- analysis of the project's use and users, considering when the various elements will be in use, for how long and for what type of activities.
- a knowledge of existing construction standards and potential future changes specifically in regards to the national and regional low carbon strategies.
- the client's environmental policy including an objective understanding of its approach to capital and whole life costs.

The proposed scheme has attempted to address sustainable principles from the outset by adopting a general approach that reduces the buildings' carbon footprint by sequentially looking to:

- Reduce the amount of energy that the building uses
- Maximise the free gains that are available to the site
- Address the energy source.

This approach ensures that the proposal addresses the issues that can be realistically achieved and specifically relate to the individual site. The approach subsequently needs to be continued and will have further implications at a detailed level.

Consequently the scheme looks to address the existing fabric of Pond Cottage by reintroducing breathable materials. This will assist the drying out of the masonry, thereby improving the thermal performance of the wall and reducing the required heating.

With regards to the extension, a 'fabric first' approach will be adopted which prioritises a high-performance fabric incorporating high levels of insulation and dramatically reducing drafts and heat loss through air gaps and thermal bridging, in conjunction, a compact plan, form and careful placement of openings where possible has looked to maximise the efficiency of the external fabric.

It is expected that the proposed extension will further act to help heat the existing building to some degree. Larger areas of glazing to the southern elevation will allow sunlight into the extension, the heat from which will travel throughout the existing property. In order to manage this, the servery to the extension is set back from the principal line elevation, with the overhang serving to provide shade in summer, but allow sunlight deep into the plan during the winter when the sun is lower in the sky. The opening windows furthermore allow excess heat to be exhausted from the extension if required.

As well as minimising technical risks, the following guidelines will be adhered to in developing the proposals:

- Avoidance of any actions that might cause the building envelope to deteriorate, particularly those that run the risk of trapping moisture from external or internal sources
- Avoidance of any actions that would compromise the building's use, for example by reducing air exchange to the extent that the quality of the indoor air becomes poor

- A preference to implement the simplest measures practicable as well as possible

In developing proposals for mechanical and electrical installations it is noted that the proposed heating installations will aim to introduce services that minimise the impact on the environment by being energy-efficient, and where possible maximise the use of renewable energy sources. This is set against a primary aim to minimise the amount of intervention, damage and loss of existing fabric. Services will therefore be installed with as little disruption as possible to the existing fabric – existing spaces and voids will be used rather than cutting in new for example. In addition to this, new work will aim to be reversible, allowing the fabric to revert to its former state where appropriate and achievable.

Ecology

Ecological proposals have been generated in consultation with Megan Price of Neath Port Talbot Ecologist (Planning and Consultancy). Existing bat activity has been addressed in the siting of the new extension, whilst biodiversity proposals have been integrated into the building design through the proposed wildflower roof, together with the associated landscaping scheme. This is covered in further detail in the Ecologist's report.

Community Safety

Community safety is likely to be enhanced through the use of Pond Cottage as a tea room. The use will attract further users to this part of the parkland providing a level of natural surveillance in this area that does not currently exist. In addition to this, the provision of toilets as part of the building will ensure that they similarly have a level of natural surveillance

accompanied by appropriate management. This could otherwise prove problematic should the toilets be located separately elsewhere.

The proposals have furthermore attracted the development of a suitable lighting scheme that will further serve to enhance the visibility and safety in the area generally. This must of course be considered in the proposed context of the development of the Kitchen Gardens as rentable accommodation in the park, which will again provide a level of activity that extends beyond the current daylight hours.

To facilitate the development of the building, helpful discussions have been held with Joy Nicholls, Designing Out Crime Officer for South Wales Police. She has advised that it will 'be possible to obtain a Secured By Design Bronze Award for this building if the physical security of the building meets Part 2B of the SBD Homes Guide 2023'. The consultant team will endeavour to address this in a proportionate manner going forwards.



Planting will soften the setting of the existing building



Proposed view of Pond Cottage from the South East showing the proposed extension



P 00201.1 PROPOSED SITE PLAN
SCALE 1:100 @ A1, 1:200 @ A3

Gnoll Park is a Grade II* registered parkland. As a consequence of this designation it is statutorily protected. Extreme care should therefore be taken not to cause any unspecified damage to any fabric or part of structures and landscape on or within the site when undertaking any construction works.

BAT NOTES AND METHODOLOGY

1. There are known bats in the roofs of Pond Cottage. Consequently all works need to be undertaken in accordance with the methodology as set out by the ecologist.
2. All British bat species and their roosts (occupied or not) are legally protected.
It is a criminal offence to kill, injure or take a wild bat, and/or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to, a bat roost. Prosecution could lead to fines and imprisonment. Any involved individual or company could be held liable.
3. All work carried out where bats are or have been found to be present must be supervised by and carried out to the satisfaction of the retained bat expert.

General Notes
Responsibility is not accepted for errors made by others scaling from this drawing.

All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only. Dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.

All dimensions and conditions are to be checked on site prior to preparing drawings or commencing any work.

Any variations or supplementary drawings are to be approved by The Architect.

All details are to be read in strict accordance with GA drawings and construction notes

All steelwork sizes, padstones, blockwork strengths and associated structural design to be in accordance with structural engineers design and requirements. Hiraeth Architecture accepts no liability to any discrepancies in the structural design indicated on these drawings. Any structural related queries should be directed to the project engineer immediately.

SERIES		PROPOSED	
SUITABILITY		S2 - ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	
REV	DATE	NOTE	
P4	14/08/2023	Presentation updated for Planning	
P3	09/07/2023	Landscape updated	
P2	21/06/2023	Issued for information	

job number Zone
2325 03
Neath Port Talbot CBC
Gnoll Park Estate

Proposed:
Site Plan
Pond Cottage
Scale 1:100 @A1, 1:200 @A3 Date 06/23

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The Maltings | East Tyndall St | Cardiff | CF24 5EA

UFRN	Zone	Originator	Role	Type	Sheet number	S Code	Rev
2080	03	HIR	A	DR	00201	S2	P4

(do not scale from this drawing) | all dimensions to be verified on site | not to be used for construction | copyright Hiraeth Architecture



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SERIES		PROPOSED	
SUITABILITY		S2 - ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	
REV	DATE	NOTE	
P6	14/08/2023	Presentation updated for Planning	
P5	25/07/2023	Internal wall reinstated	
P4	09/07/2023	Landscape updated	

Hiraeth.

2325 03

Neath Port Talbot CBC

Gnoll Park Estate

Proposed:

Ground Floor Plan

Pond Cottage

Scale 1:50 @A1, 1:100 @A3

Date 06/23

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UPRN	Zone	Originator	Role	Type	BH number	S Code	Rev
2080	03	HIR	A	DR	01310	S2	P6

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P 01320.1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:50 @ A1, 1:100 @ A3

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BAT NOTES AND METHODOLOGY

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SERIES		PROPOSED
SUITABILITY		S2 - ISSUED FOR INFORMATION
REV	DATE	NOTE
P5	14/08/2023	Presentation updated for Planning
P4	25/07/2023	Green roof added
P3	09/07/2023	Landscape updated

Hiraeth.

2325 03

Neath Port Talbot CBC

Gnoll Park Estate

Proposed:

First Floor Plan

Pond Cottage

Scale 1:50 @A1, 1:100 @A3

Date 06/23

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UFRN	Zone	Originator	Role	Type	Sheet number	S Code	Rev
2080	03	HIR	A	DR	01320	S2	P5

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