

F/YR12/0285/F

13 April 2012

Applicant : Roddons Housing Association

Agent : Mrs G Lawrence. The Design Partnership (Ely) Ltd.

Land South of 20 Park Street, Wisbech

Erection of 2 no. 2-storey 3-bed dwellings and 2.1 metre high (max) fencing

This proposal is before the Planning Committee due it being called in by Councillor Cox to ensure compliance with development plan policy and to assess any potential impact on the surrounding area.

The application is a minor application.

Site Area : 0.06ha

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 no. 2-storey 3-bed dwellings and 2.1 metre high (max) fencing around the perimeter of the site.

The site is located in part of the built-up area of Wisbech, in an area which is predominantly residential, but also contains some commercial premises on Norwich Road. Wisbech Park is located at the end of Park Street. The land comprises an area of open ground which is currently being used as a parking area.

The site is accessed off Park Street at two points. The rear gardens of existing houses in Marsh Walk and King Street adjoin the western site boundary. A recently constructed dwelling (20 Park Street) lies immediately to the north of the site. There are also two storey houses on the opposite side of Park Street facing onto the site.

2. HISTORY

F/0646/78/F - Erection of 28 flats with parking spaces (Hanchant Court) – approved under Regulation 4 of T & CP General Regulations (1976) – 12th Oct 1978

3. CONSULTATIONS

Town Council:

Recommend approval but members are concerned of reports that the land was compulsorily purchased many years ago inconveniencing residents, and yet nothing has yet been carried out to date.

Local Highway Authority (CCC)

Amended plans have been supplied and the comments of the highway authority are awaited.

Cambs CC (Archaeology)

Site lies within an area of high archaeological potential. Therefore the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation before any development is commenced.

FDC Contaminated Land Officer

Require contaminated land condition to be included.

FDC Housing Officer

Site is being promoted for social housing as a result of the availability of grant funding this financial year. The need for social housing is considered to outweigh the parking needs.

FDC Property Officer

This area has only really served as parking for local residents. FDC did have aspirations at one time to link it to the redevelopment of park and to provide parking for park users, but in practice there is more than enough land within the park itself if that was required.

Middle Level Commissioners

No comments received.

Local Residents/Interested Parties:

1 letter of objection raising the following concerns:

- Proposal will result in the loss of a much used community facility and contravenes the conditions of the planning permission granted to Fenland DC when it cleared the slums and built Hanchant Court in 1977. It was marked on the approved plans as a "parking area".
- It was designated as a parking area and £60,000 was included in the budget for the purpose of tarmacing the area
- If this application is approved 30 cars will be forced to park on the streets – this parking area is often full to overflowing and is vital to the community and local businesses as well as park users
- When Bob Ollier was preparing lottery bid to improve Wisbech Park he asked for funds to improve and resurface what he termed "the Park car park"
- Roddons HA makes a big thing about supporting the community and improving residents quality of

life, but wants to build on every open space it can find.

A petition containing 40 signatures was also sent in with the above letter. This petitioned that the planning application to build houses on this land be refused and the land retained as parking space designated on the original 1977 planning permission.

It also states that this is one of the most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire and everything should be done to preserve and improve the quality of life for residents. It is the declared policies of both the County and district Council's, to ensure there is sufficient off street parking. This development will deprive the area of more than twenty off street parking spaces.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

FDWLP Policy

- | | |
|-----|---|
| H3 | - Proposal for housing development within Development Area Boundaries will normally be permitted provided it is sympathetic to the character and amenities of the location and does not give rise to serious amenity or highway problems. |
| E8 | - Proposals for new development should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- allow for protection of site features;- be of a design compatible with its surroundings;- have regard to amenities of adjoining properties;- provide adequate access, parking etc. |
| TR3 | - Proposed developments will normally be required to provide adequate car parking in accordance with Council's approved parking standards. |

East of England Plan

- | | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| ENV7 | - Quality in the Built Environment |
|------|------------------------------------|

Emerging LDF Core Strategy (Draft Consultation) – July 2011.

- | | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| | CS1 | - <u><i>Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside.</i></u>
This policy sets out the most appropriate locations for new development in Fenland, using a hierarchy – market towns, growth village, limited growth villages and small villages. The majority of new development should be focussed towards the larger market towns. |
| | CS14 | - <u><i>Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.</i></u>
This policy seeks to deliver and protect high quality environments across the district, within all new development proposals. It includes criteria relating to; the protection of natural features on the site, the need for new development to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, is of a scale that is in keeping with the shape and form of the settlement pattern and does not adversely impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 | Paras 2 & 11 | - Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise |
| | Para 14 | - Presumption in favour of sustainable development |
| | Para 17 | - Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Encourage the effective use of land by using land that has been previously developed. |

5. ASSESSMENT

Nature of Application

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 no. 2-storey 3-bed dwellings and 2.1metre high (max) fencing around the perimeter of the site.

The proposed development will utilize an existing area of open land, which is currently used as a parking area. The houses are sited to face onto Park Street and the frontage of Plot 2 is set back 0.5m behind Plot 1. The proposed houses measure 4.8m to the eaves and 8.0m to the ridge. 2 parking spaces are provided to the side of Plot 1, plus a retained access to the rear garden of 23 Marsh Walk. On the opposite side of the site adjacent to Plot 2 it is proposed to provide 2 parking spaces for this house and also 3 visitor spaces for the development.

The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Principle of Development and Policy Implications
- Design & Appearance and Impact on Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Other issues.

Principle of Development and Policy Implications.

The site is located within an established residential area within the built up limits of Wisbech, and measures approximately 0.06 ha. It comprises an area of land that originally contained houses, which were demolished in the 1960/1970s. The land is currently open and roughly surfaced, and is being used as a parking area. It, therefore, comprises land that was 'previously developed'.

Policy H3 of the Local Plan and guidance in the NPPF encourages the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations such as this one.

Design & Appearance & Impact on Amenity.

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The aim is to achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development. Planning decisions should ensure that developments; function well and add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place and create attractive and comfortable places to live and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

(a) Character and Appearance.

The Park Street/Norwich Road area is fairly mixed in character with building styles from various ages ranging from the Grade 2 listed terrace on the corner of Norwich Road and Park Street, to more recent developments at Hanchant Court and along Park Street. The bottom end of Park Street runs into William Road, where there some mid 19th century buildings facing the park, along with formal gates and piers at the entrance leading into the park

The site has a fairly open appearance with a number of rear garden boundaries now visible and exposed to potential access. It also forms a gap site, which does not have a very attractive appearance in the streetscene. The re-use of this site is thus considered to be an appropriate response, as it will ensure that this land is re-used and the opportunity to complete the built form of the street will improve its appearance, leading down to Wisbech Park.

The house elevations comprise red brick walls and concrete tile roofs, and each property has a sloping porch canopy. The house elevations have been amended to provide a more traditional design style, which better respects the character of the area, rather than the suburban estate style house type that was previously

proposed.

The design and appearance of the amended house designs is, therefore, now considered to be a more appropriate response to the character of the surroundings.

(b) Impact on Amenities of Adjoining Properties.

There are residential properties adjoining the site to the west and north, as well as Hanchant Court to the south.

In terms of critical dimensions:

- The rear elevations of Plot 1 measures 6.9 m from the rear boundary, which adjoins the rear garden of 23 Marsh Walk.
- The gable end of Plot 1 measures 6.3 m from the side elevation of 20 Park Street.
- The gable end of Plot 2 measures 10 m from the nearest corner of Hanchant Court to the south.

The house types have been amended to provide a revised internal layout, moving the bathroom to the outside rear corner of Plot 1. This results in an obscure glaze bathroom window being located at first floor level on the part of this house that overlooks the rear garden of 23 Marsh Walk. Plot 1 has also been re-positioned further away from this boundary by 0.6m to a distance of 6.9m.

It is considered that the amendments, which remove a potential overlooking problem towards the garden of Plot 1, are now considered to be acceptable.

No. 20 Park Street contains two self-contained flats. There are no windows at ground floor level facing the site, but a living room and kitchen window at first floor level at a distance of 6.3m from the gable end of Plot 1. As these windows are at first floor level, some loss of light and outlook to these windows will be experienced, but not to a level that would seriously compromise the amenities of the occupants.

For the above reasons, the proposal is considered to demonstrate an acceptable design quality for the area, and, is also considered to have an acceptable relationship to existing residential dwellings adjoining the site. The proposal is, therefore, considered to accord with Policies H3 & E8 in the adopted Fenland Local Plan (1993), emerging Core Strategy Policy CS14 and the NPPF.

Access and Parking.

Cambridgeshire CC (Highways) raise no objection to this proposal in principle, but recommend that the bushes in front of Plot 1 is removed on visibility grounds and the parking spaces for Plot 1 are re-positioned so that they don't overhang the highway. These changes have been incorporated into the amended layout plans.

Bin storage areas are shown within the rear garden area, which can be accessed via a side entry gate.

The level of parking shown in the development proposal exceeds the Council's adopted standards for 2 dwellings in this location. 2 parking spaces are shown for each dwelling, plus 3 visitor spaces adjacent to the Hanchant Court site boundary. These spaces could be used for visitors to either Hanchant Court or

the two new dwellings.

The highway authority is satisfied that the proposal is acceptable from the highway point of view. The access and parking arrangements for this proposal are, therefore, considered to comply with Policy TR3 in the adopted Fenland Local Plan (1993).

Other Issues.

An objection and petition has been received raising concerns about the loss of the existing parking area, which this site is currently being used.

The parking area is currently an open piece of ground which was occupied by 9 cars at the time of the planning officer's site visit (Friday afternoon - 3.00pm) and was approximately one third full. Access to and from this parking area was uncontrolled and no signs were on this land advising users of its status.

The ownership of this land has been confirmed with the applicant's agent, and it is solely in the ownership of Roddons Housing Association. Notwithstanding the existing usage of the site, Roddons HA could close off access to this car park at any time, preventing access to the existing users. The Council has no powers of control over this as it is a private land ownership matter.

The historical development of Hanchant Court (F/0646/78/F - which comprises 1 and 2 bed flats) has also been researched. The approved layout plans show that 24 parking spaces were provided for Hanchant Court – 15 in a separate parking area accessed off King Street and 9 spaces on the application site. The approved plans also show a "future parking area" on the northern part of the application site.

There were no conditions placed on the above permission at the time, which could now prevent the loss of these parking areas. The proposal would result in a net loss of 6 parking spaces serving Hanchant Court, plus the area of land identified as a future parking area. Roddons HA has confirmed that they do not require the parking spaces on the application site. A parking survey has recently been carried out to demonstrate the number of tenants at Hanchant Court that require parking spaces, and the findings will be reported to your meeting.

While the loss of available off-street parking, which is being used by local residents on an informal basis is regretted, it is not a justifiable reason to refuse in this instance given the particular circumstances.

Conclusion

The amended scheme is now considered to be acceptable in terms of its design and appearance as well as its potential impact on the amenities of adjoining neighbouring properties.

The loss of an existing informal parking area, which is in private ownership, cannot in effect be controlled and this also has to be balanced against the need to re-use previously developed land and provide much needed social housing.

It is now considered that the amended proposal complies with emerging development plan policy and forms an appropriate re-use of 'previously developed' land within the urban area of Wisbech.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to suitable conditions:

1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of the materials to be used for the external walls and roof shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

3. Prior to the first occupation of the development, the proposed on-site parking and turning area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled and surfaced and drained in accordance with the submitted plan thereafter retained for that specific use.

Reason - In the interests of highway safety to ensure that satisfactory off-road parking is provided.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a scheme and timetable to deal with contamination of land and/or groundwater shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall then be implemented on site in accordance with the approved timetable.

The scheme shall include all of the following measures unless the Local Planning Authority dispenses with any such requirement specifically and in writing:

- a) A desk-top study carried out by a competent person to identify and evaluate all potential sources and impacts of land and/or groundwater contamination relevant to the site. This should include a conceptual model, and pollutant linkage assessment for the site. Two full copies of the desk-top study and a non-technical summary shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

IF during development any previously unsuspected contamination is discovered then the LPA must be informed immediately. A contingency plan for this situation must be in place and submitted with the desk study. If a desk study indicates that further information will be required to grant permission then the applicant must provide, to the LPA:

- b) A site investigation and recognised risk assessment carried out by a competent person, to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land and/or groundwater contamination, and its implications. The site investigation shall

not be commenced until:

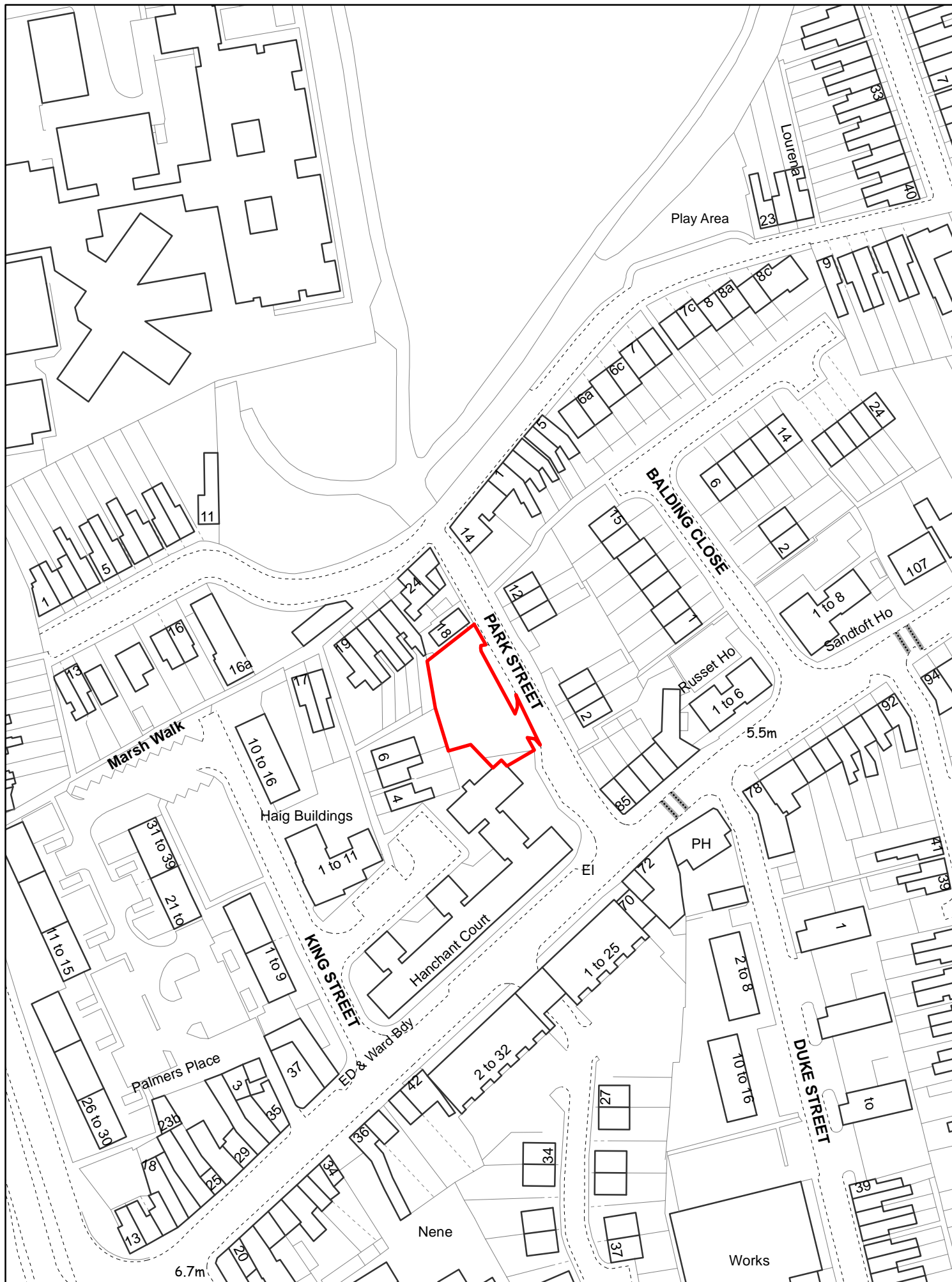
- (i) A desk-top study has been completed, satisfying the requirements of paragraph (a) above.**
- (ii) The requirements of the Local Planning Authority for site investigations have been fully established, and**
- (iii) The extent and methodology have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Two full copies of a report on the completed site investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Following written LPA approval of the Site Investigation the LPA will require:

- c) A written method statement for the remediation of land and/or groundwater contamination affecting the site. This shall be based upon the findings of the site investigation and results of the risk assessment. No deviation shall be made from this scheme without the express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.**
- d) The provision of two full copies of a full completion report confirming the objectives, methods, results and conclusions of all remediation works, together with any requirements for longer-term monitoring and pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason- To control pollution of land or water in the interests of the environment and public safety.

5. Approved Plans Condition



Created on: 24/04/2012

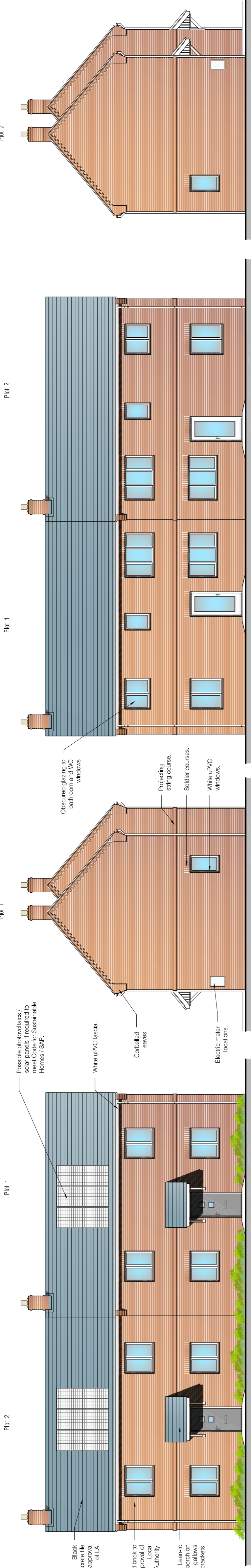
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Scale = 1:1,250



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING
THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR IS TO CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE AND REPORT ANY DISCREPANCIES TO THE SUPERVISING OFFICER.
ALL DIMENSIONS ARE SHOWN IN METERS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

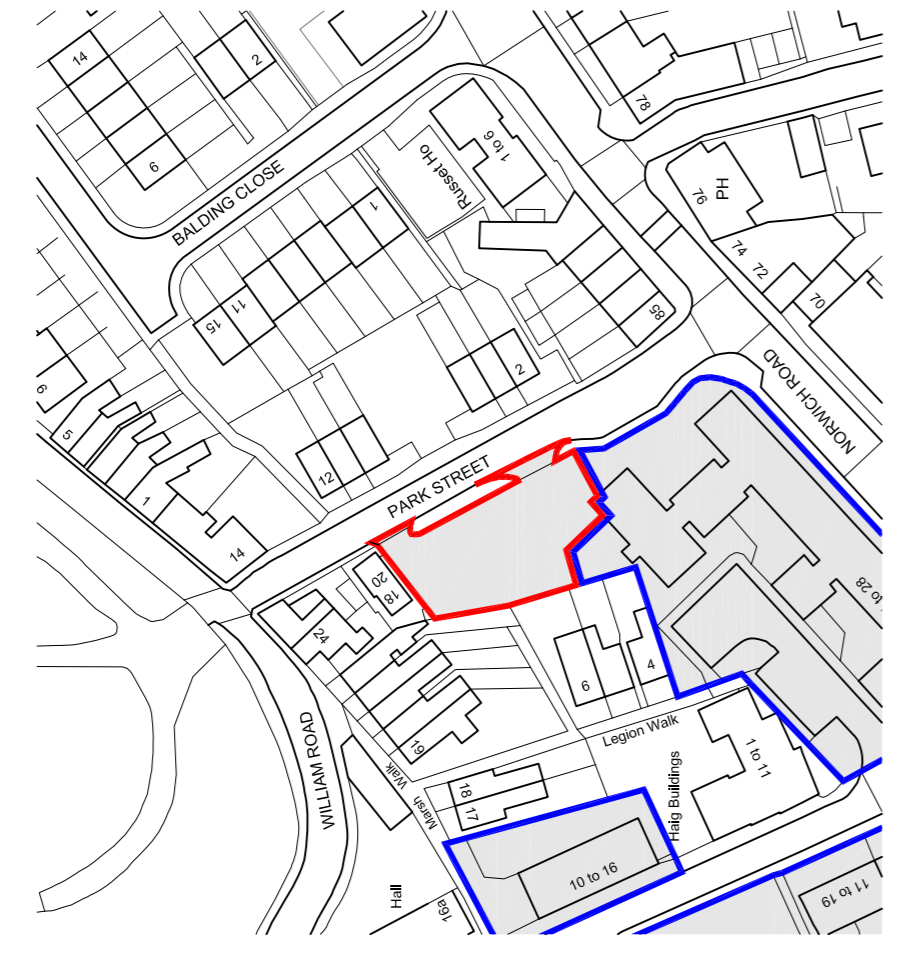
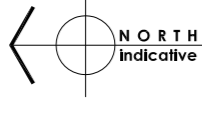


Front Elevation
Plots 1 & 2

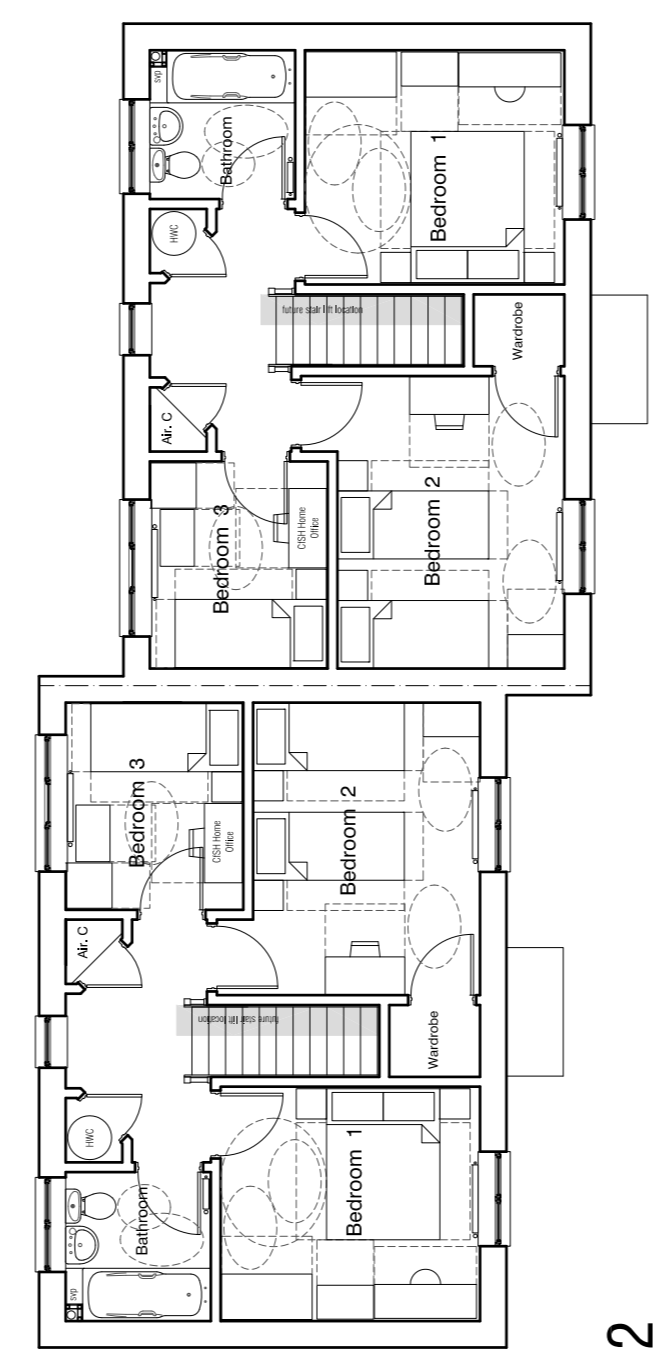
Side Elevation
Plots 1 & 2

Rear Elevation
Plots 1 & 2

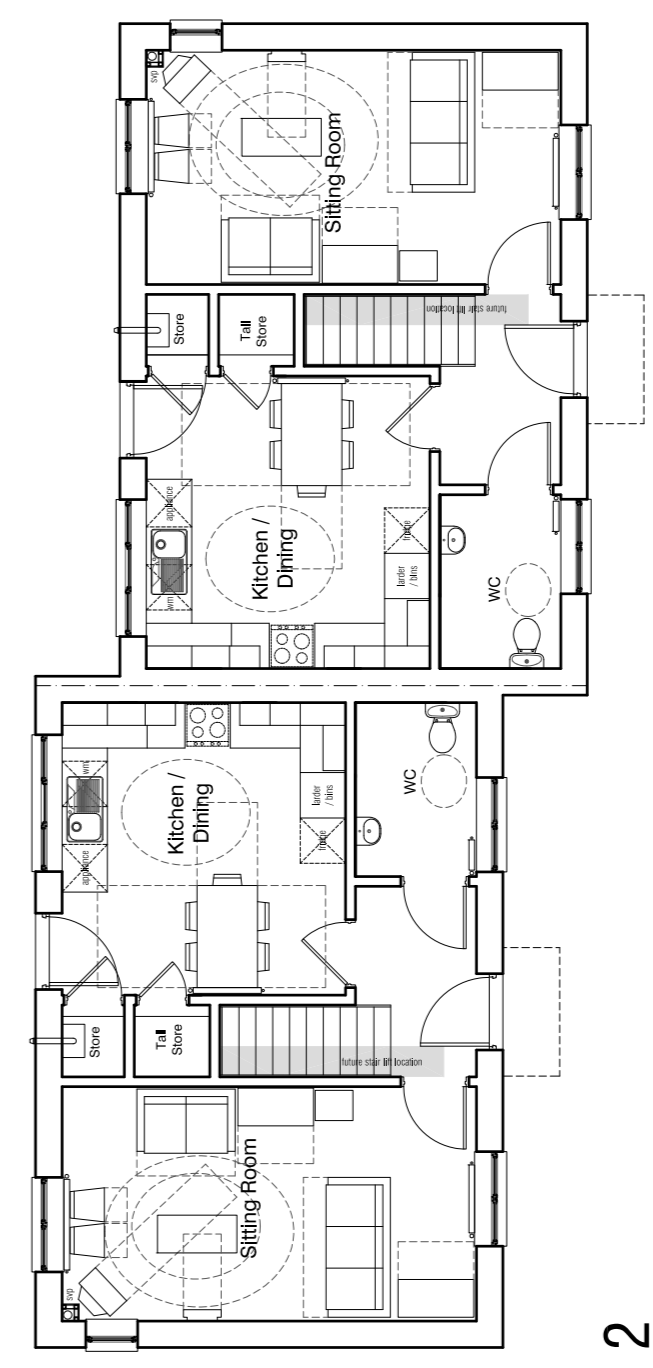
Side Elevation
Plots 1 & 2



Location Plan
scale 1:1250



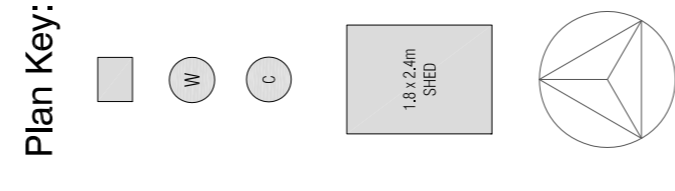
First Floor Plan
Plots 1 & 2



Ground Floor Plan
Plots 1 & 2



Site Plan
scale 1:200

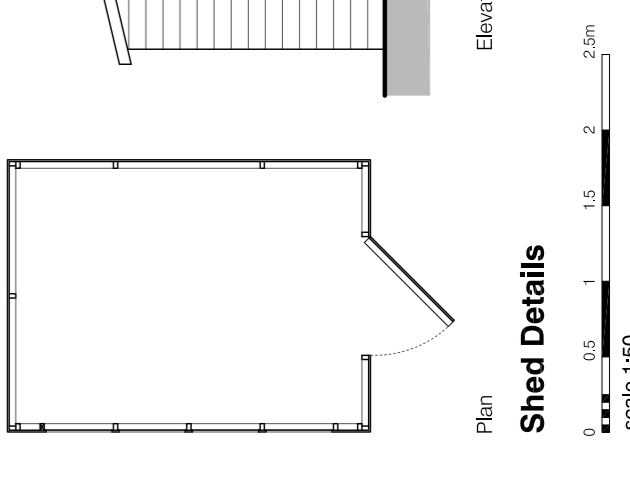


Plan Key:

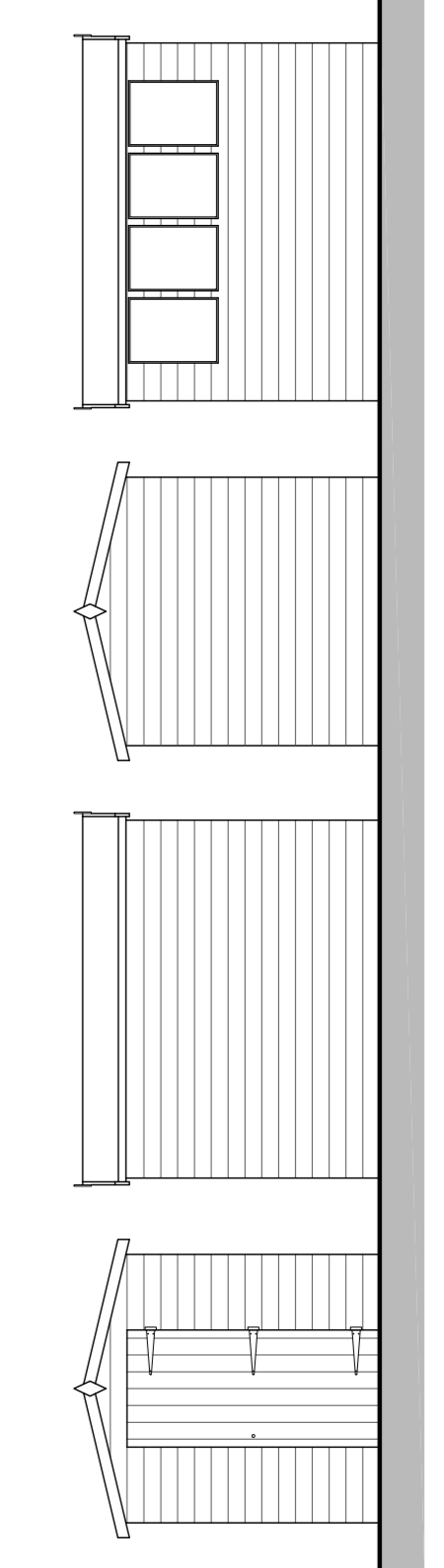
1000mm hoop railings.

1.2m high close boarded fence with 600mm high trellis over.

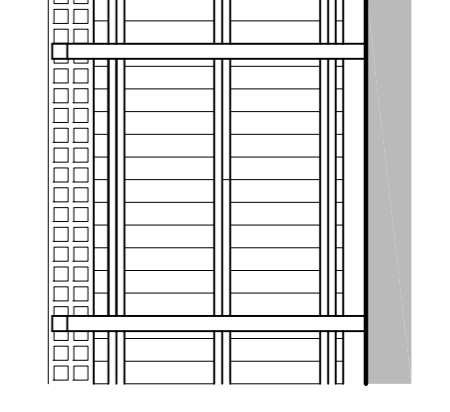
1.8m high close boarded fence with 300mm high trellis over (unless otherwise stated). Matching gates to trellis. Gate shall be 1.8m high and shall be lockable.



Fencing Detail
1.8m high close boarded fence topped with 300mm trellis

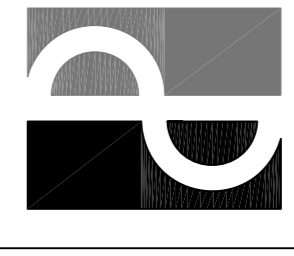


Elevations



Fencing Detail
1.8m high close boarded fence topped with 300mm trellis

Revisions	Date	Amendments
A	April 12	Shed and fencing details added
B	June 12	Planners & Highways Comments



The Design Partnership
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Job Title
Proposed Affordable Housing Development of 2 dwellings to land south of 20 Park Street, Wisbech for Roddons Housing Association

Planning Drawing

Date Feb 12
Scale as above@A1
Drawn gl
Dwg. No. CA-550-P01
Rev. B