

Application Number: F/YR12/0815/F

Minor

Parish/Ward: Wisbech Town Council/Hill Wisbech

Date Received: 22 October 2012

Expiry Date: 17 December 2012

Applicant: Mr F Watson

Agent: Mr R A Pitt

Proposal: Change of use from retail to 3 x 1-bed flats

Location: 30 Norwich Road, Wisbech

Site Area/Density: 93.75 sq m

Reason before Committee: The recommendation is contrary to the views of the Town Council.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for a change of use from a retail unit to three one bed flats. The proposal is situated within the Wisbech Conservation Area.

The key issues to consider are:

- Policy and Principle
- Design.

The key issues have been considered along with current Local and National Planning Policies and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle and in design. It is considered that there will be no adverse environmental impacts on the character of the surrounding Conservation Area. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval.

2. HISTORY

F/1222/89/F: 2-storey extension to rear of flat salon. Granted 29/01/1990

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan,

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 23: Ensuring the vitality of town centres.

3.2 East of England Plan

Policy ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment.

3.3 Fenland Communities Development Plan Draft Core Strategy July 2012:

CS2: Growth and Housing,

CS14: Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.

3.4 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

E1 – Conservation of the Rural Environment,

E8 – Proposals for new development.

E9 – Alteration and Extension of existing buildings

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 **Parish/Town Council** Members recommend refusal as they feel this is an inappropriate use for this property. They would recommend approval for the change of use if the property was to be used as a single dwelling.
- 4.2 **Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land)** No objections or observations
- 4.3 **Conservation Officer** I note the proposal to insert uPVC windows. However, this is part of the Conservation Area and is protected by an Article 4 Direction. Windows should therefore be timber. I note that while some other properties within the CA have uPVC windows and doors, these are presumably unauthorised.
- 4.4 **CCC Archaeology** No objection and no requirements.
- 4.5 **The Wisbech Society** Object to the use of upvc windows but not to the change of use

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The proposal is situated within the Wisbech Conservation Area and is protected by an Article 4 Direction. The property is a vacant former retail sales and storage premises, which was part of the adjoining shop. It is two storey with a two storey rear flat roof extension. The front elevation is in poor condition and the whole premises require major repairs and refurbishment. Access to the rear serves the lower ground floor. The upper floors were connected to No 28 through openings which have been sealed in the past. The staircase linking the upper floors has also been removed. The refurbishment will create one bed sit and two flats. Access to the lower ground floor bed sit will be as existing, access to the ground floor and first floor flats will be from Norwich Road. Household waste and recycling bins – one of each per unit – are to be sited in a compound at the rear of the bed sit garden with access from the front. Originally, it was intended to install uPVC windows and doors to the front elevation but following the Conservation Officer's advice a revised plan has been received proposing wooden windows. The premises are reasonably close to the Town Centre where car parking can be found, if required.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The key issues for this application are:
- Policy and Principle
 - Design.

Policy and Principle

The NPPF recognises the need to support the viability and vitality of town centres for retail and residential purposes (and others) in the correct locations. It is recognised that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and that residential development should be encouraged on appropriate sites. This site is in a peripheral town centre location where there is little demand for retail units as is evidenced by the poor condition of the building. The loss of a potential retail unit at this location is, therefore, acceptable and no objections have been raised in consultation to the principle of residential development which is acceptable under the policies outlined above. However, the Town Council have raised an objection to the use of the premises for 3 flats – but not for a single dwelling. No reason for this stance has been given. It is unrealistic to assume that the significant investment required to renovate this run down property for a single dwelling house in this location will be forthcoming. The proposed flats will add three units to the housing stock in a town centre location, assist its vitality and refurbish a decaying property within a designated Conservation Area. As such, the principle of this proposal is acceptable.

Design

The site is part of the Conservation Area and is protected by an Article 4 Direction. The design of the proposal should, therefore, be in keeping with Conservation Area policies. Originally, it was intended to install uPVC windows and doors to the front elevation, but following the Conservation Officer's advice a revised plan has been received proposing wooden windows. This is acceptable for the front elevation, but not required on the rear elevation which is of an entirely different character. No car parking is proposed, but the premises are situated reasonably close to the Town Centre where car parking can be found, if required. The benefits to be gained by the refurbishment are welcomed and the proposal accords with the policies outlined above.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The key issues have been considered along with current Local and National Planning Policies and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle and in design. It is considered that there will be no adverse environmental impacts on the character of the surrounding Conservation Area. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

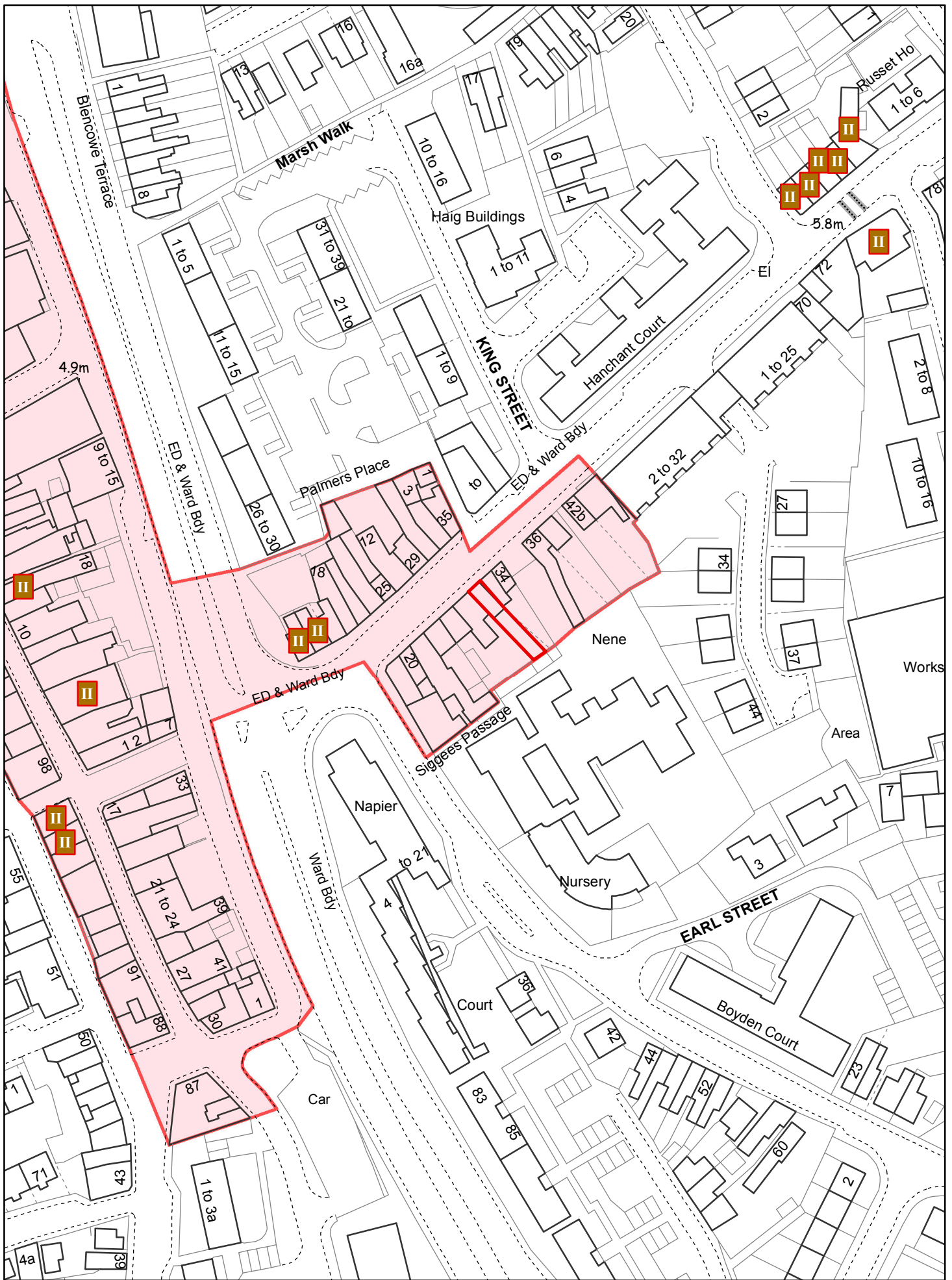
- 1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

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

- 2. The windows and door to be used on the front elevation of the property shall be of wooden construction.**

Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

- 3. Approved Plans**



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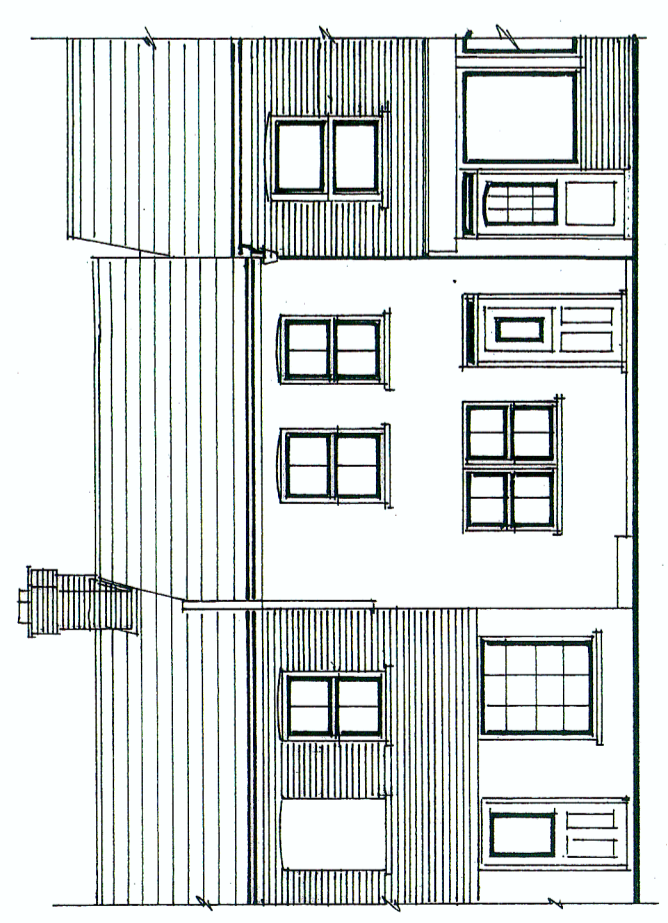
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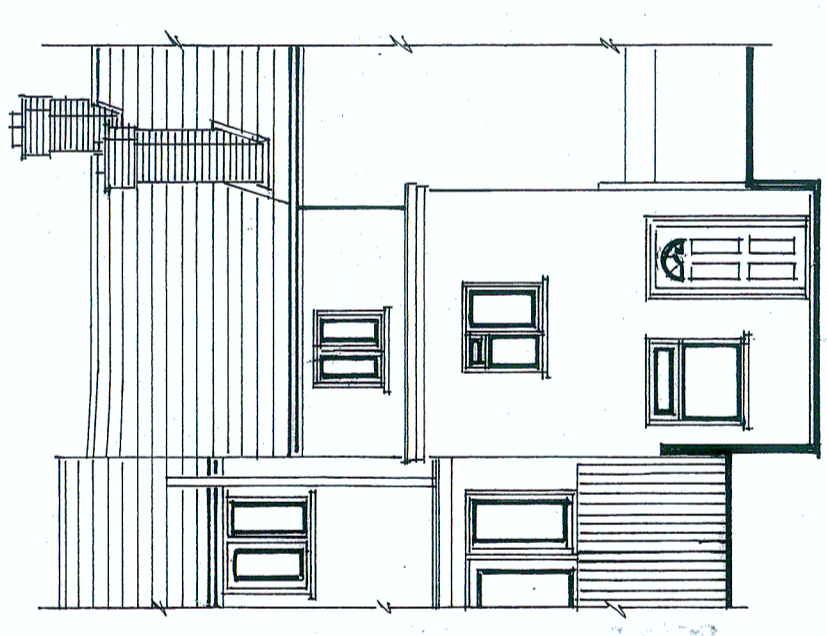


FRONT 0815

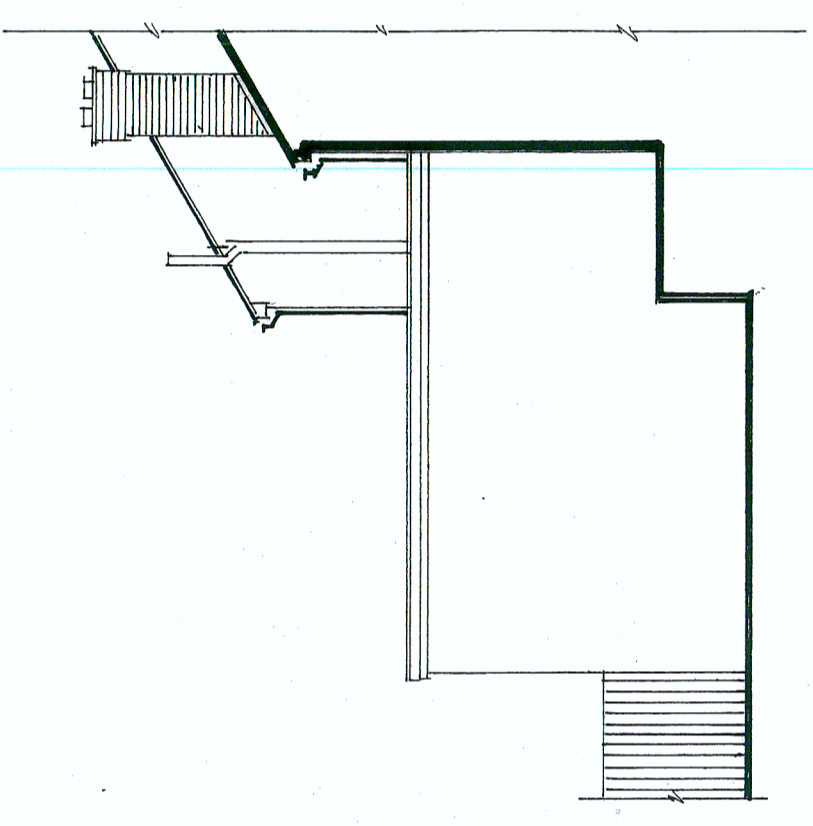
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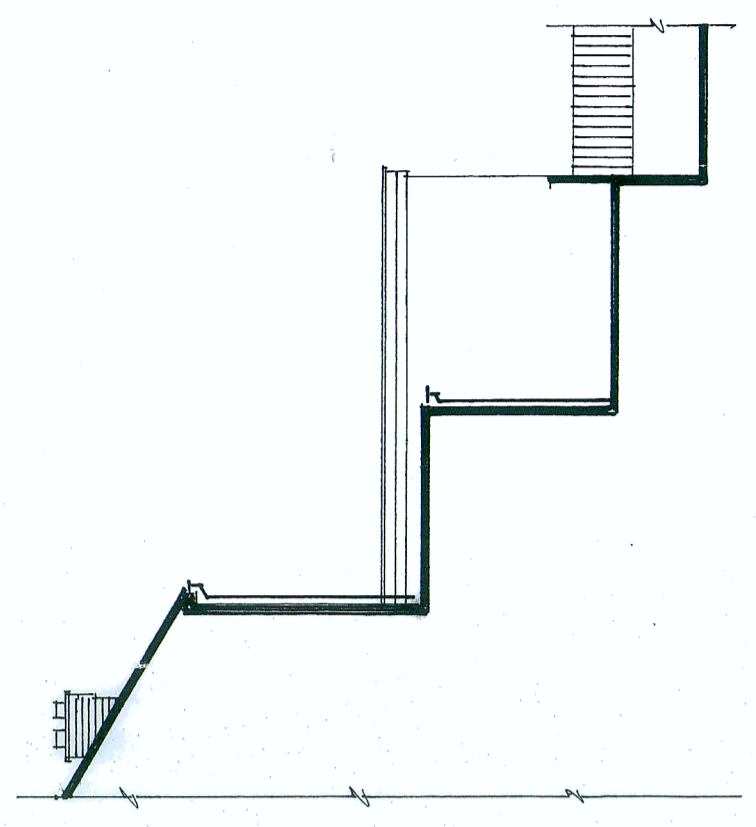
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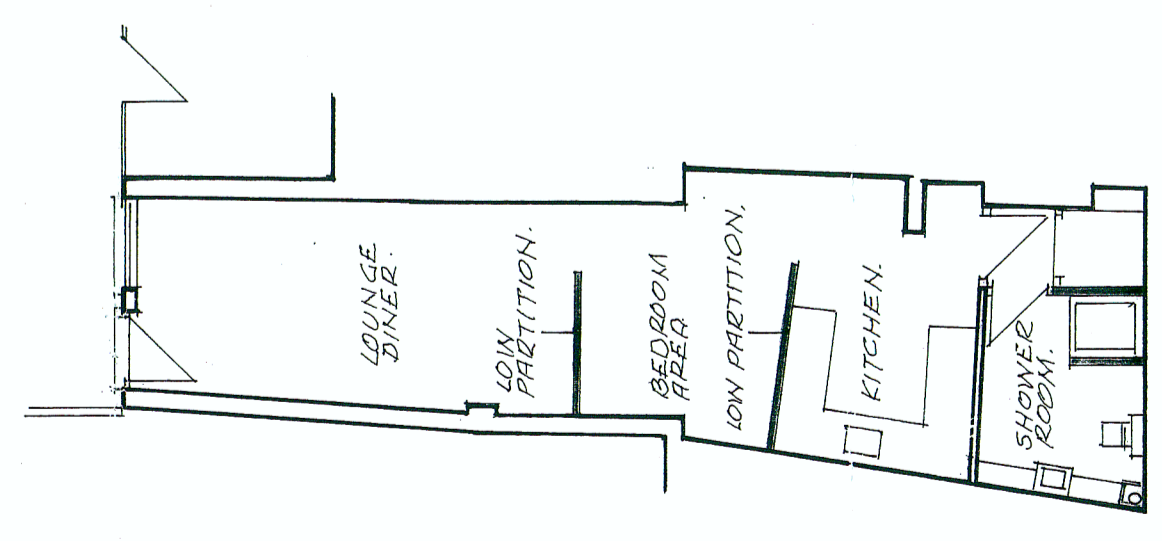
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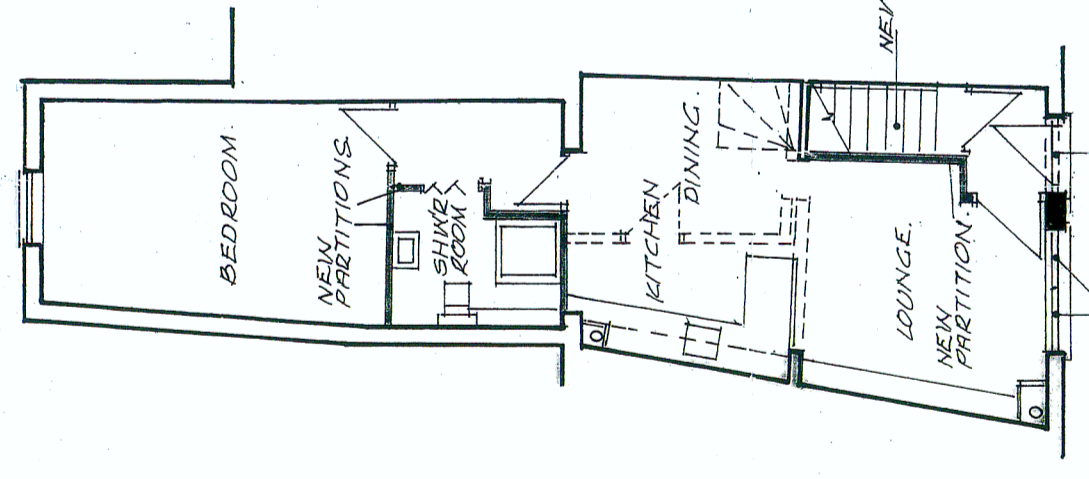
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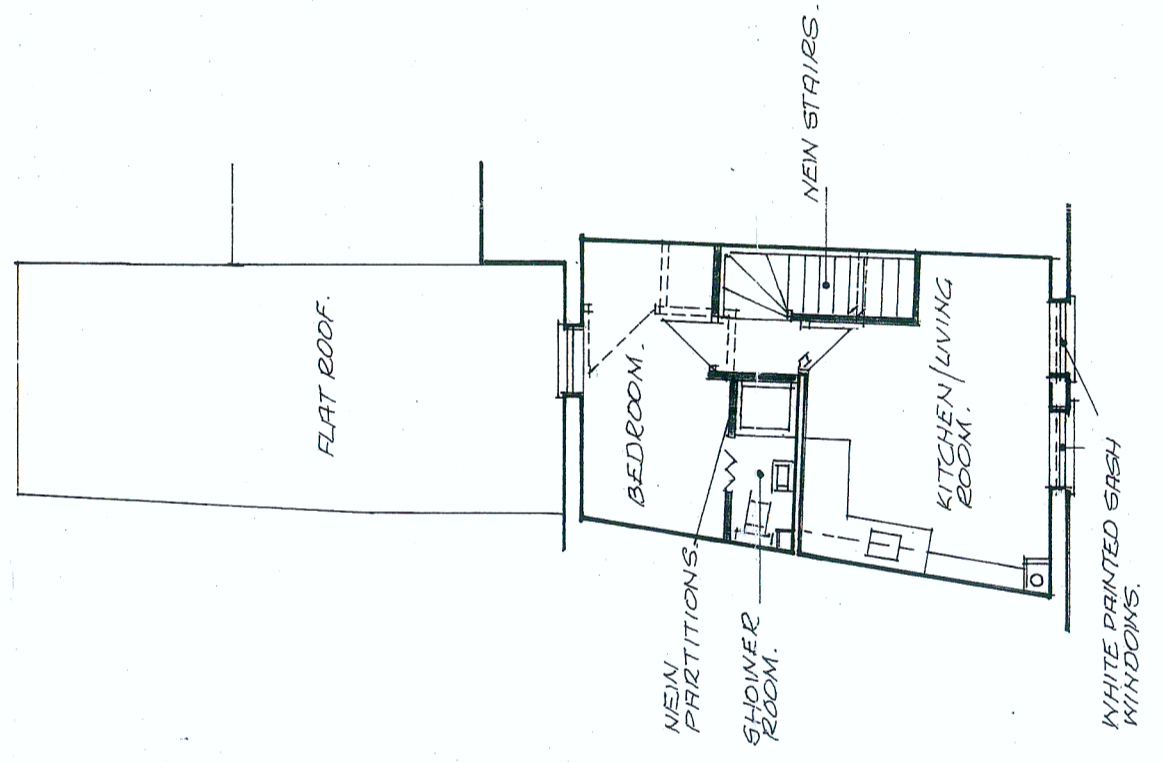
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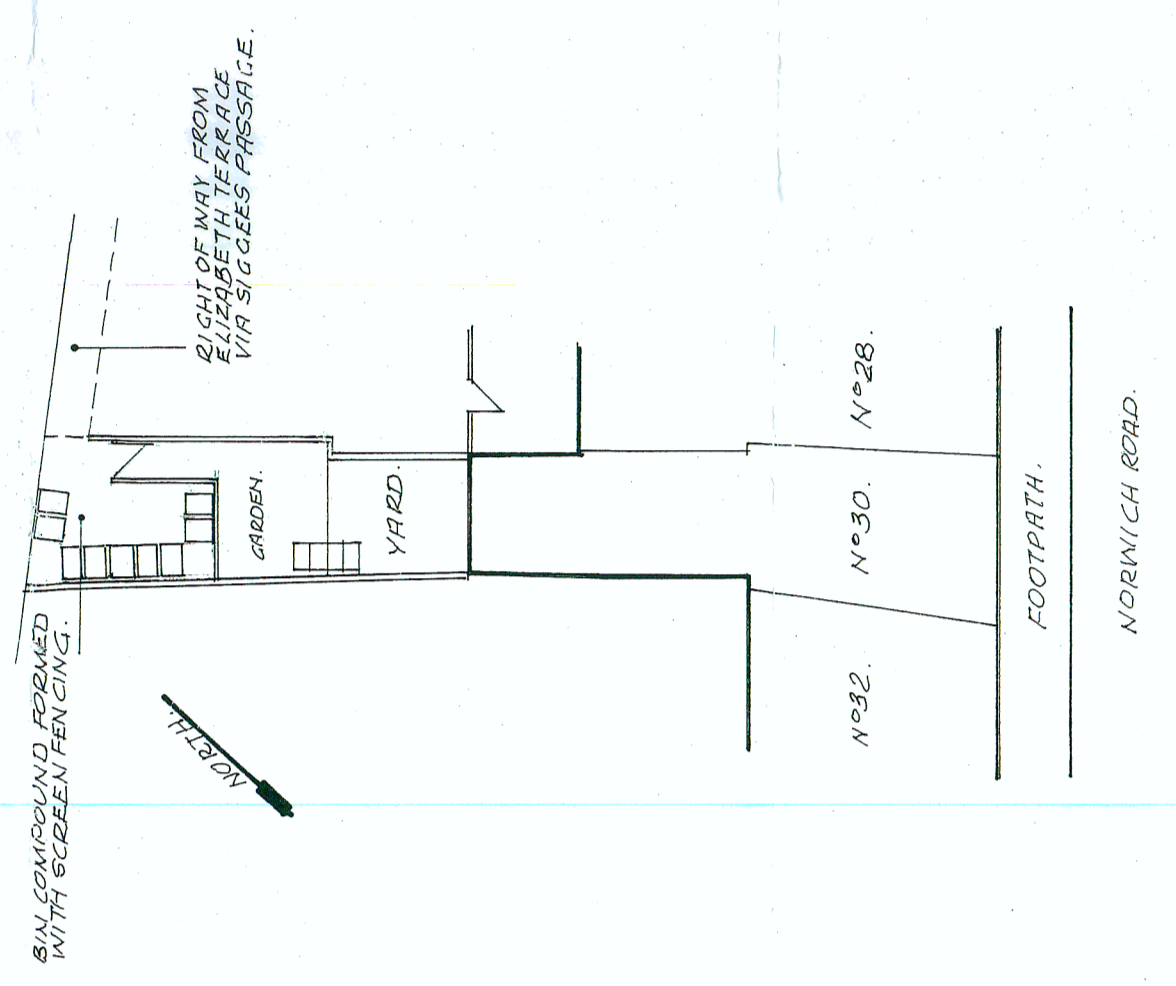
LOWER GROUND FLOOR. BED-SIT.



UPPER GROUND FLOOR. FLAT.



FIRST FLOOR. FLAT.



SITE PLAN.

FINISHES TO ELEVATIONS.

FRONT - BRICKWORK MADE GOOD & PAINTED. COLOUR TO BE AGREED. WHITE PAINTED TIMBER-SASH WINDOWS. WHITE PAINTED BRICKWORK. WHITE UPVIC WINDOWS. WHITE UPVIC DOOR. SIDES - PAINTED RENDER.

REVISIONS.

- A. 3 BINS PER UNIT.
- B. WHITE PAINTED TIMBER-SASH WINDOWS & STAINED TAMBER DOOR TO FRONT ELEVATION.

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE & ALTERATIONS TO FORM 3 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, 30, NORWICH ROAD, WISBECH, CAMBS PE15 2AP.

PLANS & ELEVATIONS AS PROPOSED. REVISED.

SCALES. 1:100 & 1:200.

22 Nov 2012