

**Application Number: F/YR13/0233/F**

**Minor**

**Parish/Ward: Wisbech St Mary Parish Council (Parson Drove/Wisbech St Mary)**

**Date Received: 9 April 2013**

**Expiry Date: 4 June 2013**

**Applicant: Mr A White**

**Agent: Mr David Broker, David Broker Design Services**

**Proposal: Erection of a 4-bed 2-storey dwelling with detached triple garage with store over**

**Location: Willock Farm, Willock Lane, Wisbech St Mary**

**Site Area/Density: 0.14 ha**

**Reason before Committee: Agent is an Elected Member**

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION**

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 2-storey 4-bed dwelling with detached triple garage with store over at Willock Farm, Willock Lane, Wisbech St Mary.

The key issues to consider are;

- Site History;
- Policy Implications;
- Layout, Design, Appearance and Impact upon Amenity;
- Impact on Trees and Biodiversity;
- Flood Risk.

The site to which this application relates benefits from an implemented planning permission (F/YR93/0607/F) for the erection of 1 x 4-bed house with detached garage and the change of use of existing barn and outbuildings to 1 x 5-bed dwelling with detached garages and store. The barn conversion has taken place, thus leaving the dwelling which has not yet been constructed.

The previously approved dwelling was based on the design of a traditional farmhouse and featured some quality detailing. The dwelling within this application proposes a different design and character. The area and site itself holds a particularly rural character. The proposed dwelling within this application has resulted in a mismatch of styles – predominantly urban with some artificial interpretations of rural features. The proposed dwelling in terms of design, scale, appearance and massing does not reflect the character of the setting and the area. An opportunity was provided to the applicant to negotiate and amend the design and appearance of the proposal to enable a favourable recommendation from Officers; however, unfortunately this opportunity was declined.

In addition, Officers have requested a tree report and associated revised plans to assess the impact of the proposal on the trees both within and surrounding the site. However, no details have been submitted (at the time of writing) by the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed development will retain or respect the trees. Therefore, the proposal has not adequately demonstrated that it meets policy requirements.

In summary, taking all matters into account including the strong rural character and appearance of the area, the previous approval, the proposed plans, and the policy requirements it is considered the proposal adversely harms the character and appearance of the area and fails to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

As a result this application is recommended for refusal.

## 2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

### 2.1

- F/YR01/0759/F– Change of use of paddock to builders yard – Refused (17/10/2001);
- F/YR96/0123/F – Erection of domestic garage car port with store at first floor – Granted (11/07/1996);
- F/YR93/0607/F – Erection of 1 x 4-bed house with detached garage and change of use of existing barn and outbuildings to 1 x 5-bed dwelling with detached garages and store – Granted (26/09/1994).

## 3. PLANNING POLICIES

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

### 3.2 Emerging Fenland Local Plan - Core Strategy (Proposed Submission) Feb 2013:

CS1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CS3: Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside.

CS12: Rural Areas Development Policy

CS14: Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

CS16: High Quality Environments

- 3.3 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan (1993):**  
H3: Development should be within existing settlement  
E3: Retention of Trees, Hedgerows and Landscaping  
E8: Landscape and Amenity Protection

#### 4. **CONSULTATIONS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 4.1 <b>Parish Council</b>                | Support this development and recommend approval |
| 4.2 <b>FDC Tree Officer</b>              | Awaiting Submitted Report/Details to comment    |
| 4.3 <b>FDC Contaminated Land Officer</b> | Attach unsuspected contamination condition      |
| 4.4 <b>Environment Agency</b>            | No objections, request condition                |
| 4.5 <b>North Level IDB</b>               | No comments received at time of report          |
| 4.6 <b>Neighbours/Interested Parties</b> | No comments received                            |

#### 5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The site is located in the rural hamlet of Bunkers Hill, which is physically detached from the established settlement of Wisbech St Mary. The site currently is set out to garden land in association with Willock Farm Barn which benefitted from a residential conversion in the past. The area is characterised by the scale, design and appearance of the surrounding rural buildings and the trees/planting on and surrounding the site contribute significantly to the rural character and appearance of the area.

#### 6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

##### 6.1 **Site History**

The site which this application relates benefits from an implemented planning permission. This previous approval (F/YR93/0607/F) on the site was for the erection of 1 x 4-bed house with detached garage and the change of use of existing barn and outbuildings to 1 x 5-bed dwelling with detached garages and store. The barn conversion has taken place thus leaving the dwelling which has not yet been constructed.

##### 6.2 **Policy Considerations**

In terms of policy and the principle of a dwelling on this site it is noted that Wisbech St Mary is designated as a 'Growth Village' within the Fenland Settlement Hierarchy as set out under Policy CS3 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013). However, whilst it is acknowledged that there is an established rural cluster at 'Bunkers Hill', the site is located outside the established limits of Wisbech St Mary and does not physically adjoin the footprint of Wisbech St Mary. Furthermore, it is noted that 'Bunkers Hill' is not designated as an 'Other Village' within the Fenland Settlement Hierarchy. However, this rural cluster holds a functional relationship with Wisbech St Mary and the site itself is located within an established rural cluster which would not encroach into the open countryside.

The previous approval (F/YR93/0607/F) on this site is also a material planning consideration in establishing whether the principle of this development is acceptable.

This permission has been implemented through the conversion of the barn and the applicant could erect a dwelling on the proposed site providing it was in line with the previous approval.

Therefore, taking all of the above into account and giving considerable weight to the previous approval it is considered that 'on balance' in this instance the principle of development is acceptable. However, whilst the principle may have been established it is necessary to ensure that the proposal conforms with policy including policies E3; E8; CS12 and CS16 and addresses issues such as character, design, appearance, layout and amenity.

### **6.3 Layout, Design, Appearance and Impact upon Amenity**

This application is a full application for a 2-storey 4-bed dwelling and a detached triple garage with a store over. As detailed in the site history section above there is an extant permission for a 4-bed dwelling on this site. The previous approval included a barn conversion (which has been carried out) and a dwelling (which has not commenced). The approved dwelling was based on the design of a traditional farmhouse and featured some quality detailing. The proposed dwelling within this application is of a different design and character.

The area and site itself holds a particularly rural character. The proposed dwelling within this application whilst attempting to utilise local design cues such as the use of 'feather edged cladding' and the 'barn' style roof (a gable roof with a change in slope partway up the roof) has resulted in a mismatch of styles – predominantly urban with some artificial interpretations of rural features. Concern is also raised over the scale of the detached triple garage/garden store which is out of keeping with the rural character, form and appearance of the area.

National Policy in the NPPF outlines that permission should be refused for development and design which fails to take the opportunity available to improve the character and quality of an area. In terms of Local Policy, Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 outlines that proposal for new development should be of a design compatible with their surroundings in terms of character, scale, architectural detail materials and landscaping. Criteria (d) of Policy CS16 seeks to ensure that proposals make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhance its setting, respond to and improve the character of the local built environment, reinforce local identity and ensure that proposals do not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms on the form and landscape character of the surrounding area. In addition, the Rural Areas Development Policy (criteria (d) of Policy CS12) sets out that proposal should not adversely harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed dwelling in terms of design, scale, appearance and massing does not reflect the character of the setting and the area.

In terms of layout and impact upon amenity, whilst the layout and physical relationship between both the existing barn conversion and proposed dwelling is undesirable, giving weight to the existing consent, the site characteristics and the traditional form and layout of a farmstead it is considered that the proposed layout is 'on balance' acceptable.

This application was not subject of pre-application advice however an opportunity was provided to the applicant to negotiate and amend the design and appearance of the proposal to deliver a solution and enable a favourable recommendation. However, unfortunately this opportunity was declined.

Therefore, taking account of all of the above including the strong rural character and appearance of the area, the previous approval, the proposed plans, and the policy requirements it is considered the proposal adversely harms the character and appearance of the area and fails to either make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

#### **6.4 Impact on Trees and Biodiversity**

A strong feature of the site is the presence of the trees both within and surrounding the site. Therefore, given the dominance and contribution of the trees to the character of the area further information including a tree report and revised plans was requested by Officers.

Officers have been proactive and given sufficient opportunity for such details to be submitted; however, at the time of writing this report no such details have been received.

Therefore, in light of policy and in the absence of any supporting documentation it is considered that the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal will retain or respect the trees within and adjoining the site which form a significant feature of the area. As such the proposal Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, and Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).

In terms of biodiversity, the biodiversity checklist submitted with the application indicates that no surveys have been carried out by the applicant. In view of the site and nearby landscape characteristics (e.g. trees, pond etc.) there may be some potential for biodiversity. The Wildlife Act protects species and taking into account all matters including the extant permission, it is considered a biodiversity condition requiring a mitigation and compensatory strategy would be an appropriate solution if required.

#### **6.5 Flood Risk**

The site is partly located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and requires assessment in terms of flood risk. The site does not meet the criteria within Policy CS14 (Part B) of the emerging Local Plan – Core Strategy, as taking into account Flood Zones, Policy CS4 broadly identifies potential for 1200 homes to be delivered across various locations in the district which are lesser flood risk areas. In addition, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal meets an identified need. Although there are other more suitable sites for residential development within the district, in this instance some weight must be attached to the previous approval on this site. Furthermore, the Environment Agency (EA) has raised no objection to the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and has recommended a planning condition.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal has been assessed taking account of all of the above including the strong rural character and appearance of the area, the previous approval, the proposed plans, and the local and national planning policy requirements.

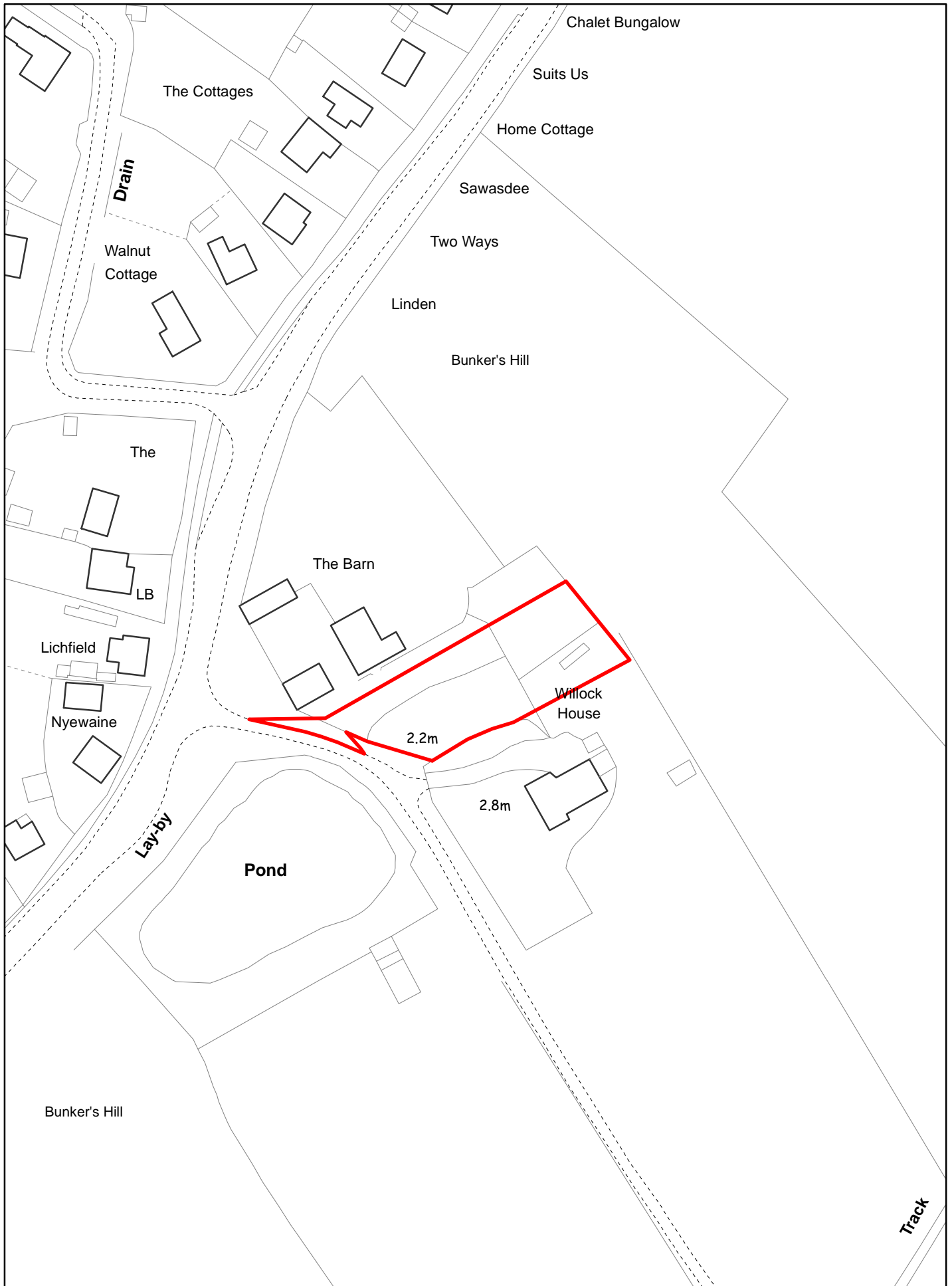
It is considered the proposal adversely harms the character and appearance of the area and fails to make either a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area or enhance its setting. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF.

Furthermore, in light of policy and in the absence of any supporting documentation it is considered that the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal will retain or respect the trees within and adjoining the site which form a significant feature on the development site. As such the proposal Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, and Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).

The proposal is not considered to be in line with local and national policy. It is therefore recommended for refusal.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

1. **Given the character of the area, the proposed development by virtue of its design, scale and appearance adversely harms the character and appearance of the area and fails to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013) and the NPPF which places a strong emphasis on ‘good design’.**
2. **The proposal has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development will retain or respect the trees both within and surrounding the site. Therefore, the proposal has not demonstrated that it meets the requirements of Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, and Policies CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy (Feb 2013).**



Created on: 17/04/2013

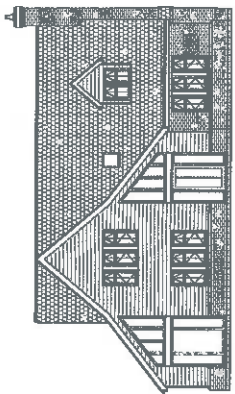
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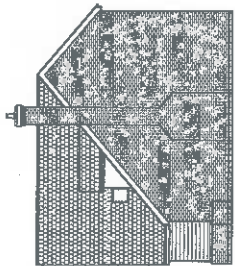




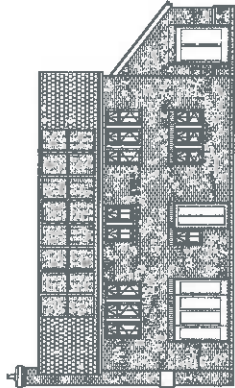




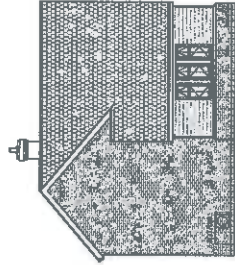
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**SIDE ELEVATION**  
SCALE 1:100




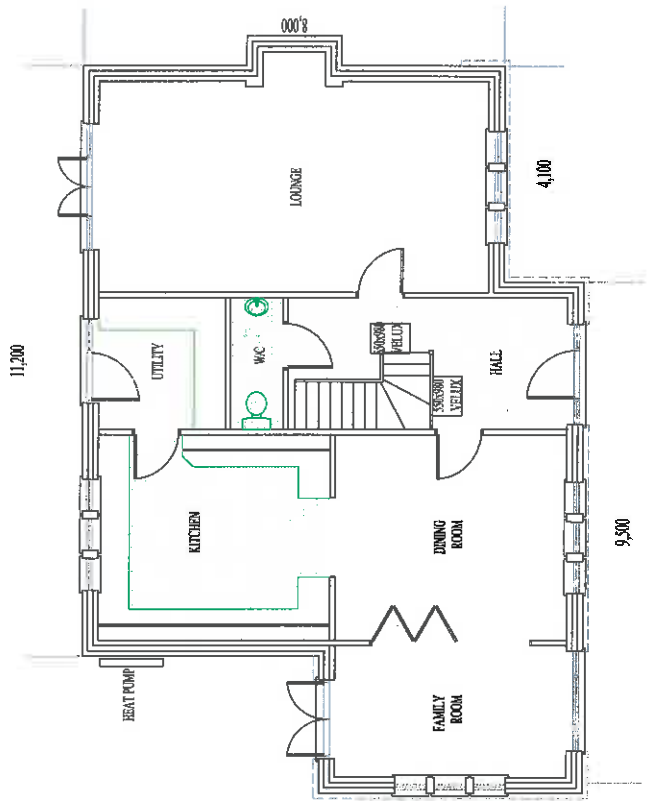
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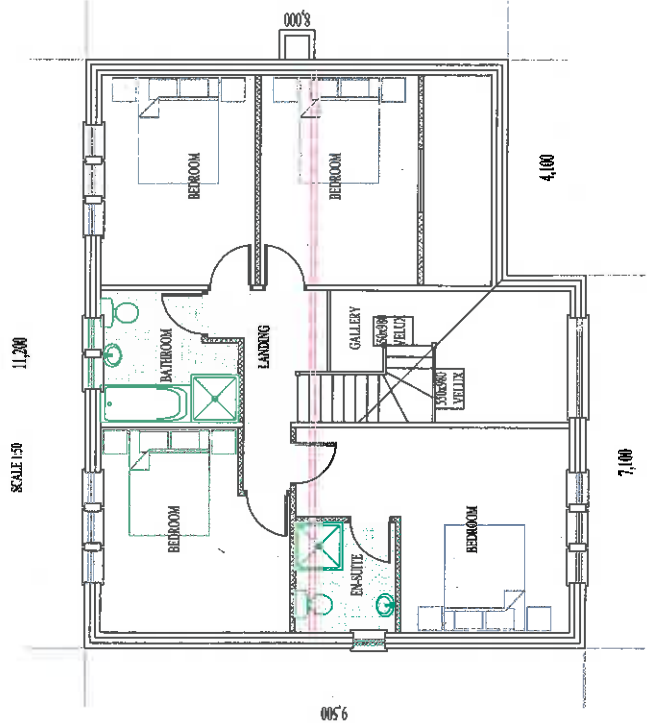
**SIDE ELEVATION**  
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**MATERIALS**

-  FACING BRICKS - TRADITIONAL BRICK AND STONE AUDLEY ANTIQUE
-  ROOF TILES - MARLEY MARQUESS SLATE GREY
-  175mm STAINED FEATHER-EDGE BOARDS
-  SOLAR PANELS



**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**  
SCALE 1:50



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
SCALE 1:50



**BDP**  
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www.bdp.co.uk

**LABC**  
London Approved Building Contractor  
100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF  
Tel: 020 7460 8000  
www.labc.co.uk

PROJECT INFORMATION		CLIENT	
Project Name	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF	Client Name	Mr & Mrs White
Project Address	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF	Client Address	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF
Project Reference	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF	Client Reference	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF
Project Start Date	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF	Client Start Date	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF
Project End Date	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF	Client End Date	100, The Quadrant, London, W1 8PF