

F/YR16/0446/F

Applicant: Mr & Mrs J Clark

**Agent : Mr Ken Elener
KL Elener Architectural Design**

20A Deerfield Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9AH

Change of use from office (B1) to a 3-bed ground floor flat (C3)

This application is a minor application.

Reason for Committee: The property is jointly owned by Cllr John Clark.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application seeks planning permission to change the use of the ground floor offices to a 3-bedroom flat. The existing 1st floor 2-bedroom flat would remain unchanged.

The site lies in the settlement of March approximately 300m east of the town centre boundary and comprises a 2-storey semi-detached, inter-war era building with land to the rear in use as parking.

The proposal would reintroduce a former full-residential use of the site albeit divided into 2 properties in a sustainable area of the district. The area is characterised by residential properties and as such the use would not be uncharacteristic. Furthermore the development would provide adequate in-site parking and would not give rise to highways or amenity harm and would make affective use of this currently redundant element of the building in-line with one of the Core Planning Principles of the NPPF.

As such the development is considered to accord with policies LP2, LP3, LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

The recommendation is to approve the application.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site lies in the settlement of March approximately 300m east of the town centre boundary and comprises a 2-storey semi-detached, inter-war era building with land to the rear and access leading down the left side of the premises. The property is in use as offices (No. 20a) at ground floor with a 2-bedroom flat (No.22 Deerfield Road) over.
- 2.2 The area is predominantly residential in character with a mixture of single storey and 2-storey dwellings fronting Deerfield Road. To the rear of the building is an area of hardstanding serving both the flat and the offices providing 7 parking spaces. Further rear to the property (north) is a group of more modern dwellings making Britannia Close.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission to change the use of the ground floor offices to a 3-bedroom flat. The existing 1st floor 2-bedroom flat would remain unchanged.
- 3.2 The revised internal configuration would result in a lounge area to the front (below the lounge area of the 1st floor flat) and with 2 bedrooms positioned at the rear and with one bedroom centrally within the building.
- 3.3 The 1st floor flat would retain its lobby access with the new ground floor flat served by accesses at the front leading into the Lounge area and a further access towards the rear.
- 3.4 A portion (50m²) of the existing hardstanding at the rear would be enclosed with 2m high fence to provide an amenity area for occupiers of the new flat which equates to approximately 30% of the overall plot curtilage (excluding the parking area). The introduction of this amenity area results in a reduction of parking spaces from 7 to 4 spaces serving both flats.
- 3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=O81J0AHE08000>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
F/YR16/0248/PNC	Change of use from office (B1) to dwelling (C3) 20A Deerfield Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 9AH	Withdrawn	27/04/2016
F/YR10/0100/F	Erection of a 2-storey side extension to existing dwelling 10 Britannia View March Cambridgeshire PE15 9QT	Granted	31/03/2010
F/YR03/1121/F	Change of Use of first-floor flat to offices 22 Deerfield Road March Cambs	Granted	20/10/2003
F/YR00/1144/F	Erection of single-storey rear extension to existing offices 20a Deerfield Road March Cambs PE15 9AJ	Granted	16/01/2001
F/99/0799/F	Erection of 1 x 4-bed detached house with integral garage Plot 5 Land North Of 22 Deerfield Road March Cambridgeshire	Granted	02/07/2000
F/98/0837/F	Erection of 3 x 3-bed 2-storey dwellings and garages and 1 x 3-bed bungalow with detached garage Land North Of 22 Deerfield Road March Cambridgeshire	Granted	28/06/1999
F/98/0696/F	Change of use from offices and flat to a 3-bed dwellinghouse 22 Deerfield Road March Cambs	Granted	15/12/1998
F/97/0437/O	Erection of 4 no. dwellings Land North And East Of 20 Deerfield Road March Cambridges	Granted	11/04/1997
F/94/0177/O	Erection of 4 no. dwellings Land North And East Of 20 Deerfield Road March Cambridges	Granted	18/08/1994
F/93/0743/F	Erection of a 4-bed house and change of use of existing builders yard to car park Land North And East Of 20 Deerfield Road March Cambridges	Refused	15/04/1994
F/93/0744/F	Erection of a workshop/store and change of use of existing builders yard to car park Land North And East Of 20 Deerfield Road March Cambridges	Refused	15/04/1994
F/93/0745/O	Erection of 4 no. dwellings Land North And East Of 20 Deerfield Road March Cambridges	Refused	06/04/1994
F/0515/88/F	Change of use of dwelling to offices on ground floor and flat on first floor 22 Deerfield Road March		09/06/1988

5 CONSULTATIONS

March Town Council
Recommend Approval

FDC Scientific Officer (Land Contamination)

'No Objections' to the proposed development, as it is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or the noise climate. Contamination is not considered to be an issue.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

3 individual objections received raising the following concerns/ matters;

- Concerns over parking provision/ location
- Guttering of 20A flows into drainage pipes at No. 22A
- Increased noise levels
- Devaluation of property
- Out of character with existing dwellings in vicinity
- One resident at 24 Deerfield Road concerned that they were not notified of the development

6 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Paragraph 17 (Core Principles): encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Fenland Local Plan 2014(FLP):

- LP2: Health and Wellbeing
- LP3: Settlement Hierarchy
- LP4: Housing
- LP15: Sustainable Transport
- LP16: High Quality Environments

7 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Access and layout**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Other matters – resident comments**

8 ASSESSMENT

8.1 Principle of Development

8.1.1 Policy LP3 of the FLP sets out the settlement hierarchy for the district. LP3 identifies March as a main focus for growth and LP4 identifies an ambition to deliver 4,200 new homes across March in the plan period. Therefore the principle of residential development in this location is supported, subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the Development Plan.

8.2 Access & Layout

8.2.1 LP15 requires development schemes to provide well-designed and safe and convenient access. LP16(d) requires development to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of an area, not adversely impacting upon the streetscene or character of an area in general. LP16(h) requires development to provide sufficient private amenity space, suitable to the amount and type of development proposed.

8.2.2 The development would introduce a further residential use of the building which forms the main characteristic use of the area. Furthermore, the development proposes limited alterations to the external appearance of the property (which was originally built as a house) and as such it is considered the development would not be uncharacteristic to the area.

- 8.2.3 The proposed flat would utilise the existing access into the site i.e. via the established driveway alongside the premises leading to the rear parking area. As such it is considered that users of the highway would not be affected by the proposal.
- 8.2.4 The proposal would also introduce a private amenity area for occupiers of the flat. Policy LP16(h) seeks to deliver private amenity areas for residential uses but is not prescriptive when it comes to flats given that there is less expectation to deliver private gardens with flats. As such it is considered that the proposal to introduce an area of private amenity would be a positive contribution to the development.
- 8.2.5 Objections have been received raising concerns over the parking arrangements and the impact of the development in the highway. The proposal would result in the parking area at the rear being reduced to 4 spaces and serving 2 flats. Annex A of the FLP sets out Fenland's current parking standards and stipulates that it expects development comprising of flats with more than one bedroom to provide 1.5 spaces per flat unit. In this scenario this would equate to a required total of 3 spaces whereas the development proposes 4 spaces in total resulting in an overprovision of 1 parking space. As such the development would not conflict with the FLP in this regard.
- 8.2.6 Notwithstanding this, given the scale of development and compared to its former office use, it is concluded that the development would not give rise to highways or amenity issues in respect of the access, layout and parking arrangement and therefore accords with policies LP15 and LP16 of the FLP.

8.3 Residential Amenity

- 8.3.1 Policies LP2 and LP16(e) seek to ensure that development promotes high levels of residential amenity i.e. not causing harm through noise, loss of light or privacy.
- 8.3.2 Concerns have been raised by some residents that the development could result in noise harm. The Council's Environmental Health team do not envisage that the proposal would result in a detrimental effect on noise climate. Furthermore, whilst the use of the building will change – from a commercial Office use to residential, the proposed use would be a characteristic to those buildings it adjoins and as such it is not anticipated that a general residential use of this premises would cause harm through noise.
- 8.3.3 Furthermore, given the development is a ground floor level and with minimal external alterations, the development would not result in loss of light or privacy to adjacent neighbours. As such the proposal is considered to accord with the aims of policy LP16.

8.4 Other Matters – Resident comments

- 8.4.1 Whilst some of the residents' comments have been addressed above, the following require attention;

8.4.2 *Guttering of 20A flows into drainage pipes at No. 22A*

The development does not propose any changes to existing drainage arrangements which utilises main sewerage for foul and surface water drainage which is not uncommon in the Deerfield Road area. Whilst the comments regarding shared gutter flows is acknowledged, this appears to be an historic issue which would constitute a civil matter between land owners. As such this would not constitute a material consideration to the planning application.

8.4.3 *Devaluation of property*

Although little information has been provided as to why the development would result in the devaluation of property in the area, it has long been held that the planning system does not exist to support property prices. As such this would not constitute a material consideration to the planning application.

8.4.4 *One resident at 24 Deerfield Road concerned that they were not notified of the development.*

The LPA are statutorily obliged to notify certain persons and bodies upon receipt of a valid planning application and this is laid out in Fenland District Council's Statement of Community Involvement and under [Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\)\(England\) Order 2015 \(DMPO\)](#).

8.4.5 Having regard to the nature and scale of development proposed in respect of neighbour consultations, the LPA are statutorily required to either display a site notice for 21 days or notify any adjoining neighbour (as per Article 15(5) of the DMPO). A review of the application file concludes that the LPA met its statutory duty in that it notified all adjoining neighbours. No. 24 Deerfield Road does not adjoin the application site and as such the LPA was not statutorily obliged to notify persons at that address. Notwithstanding this, the comments received from the resident of this property have been given full consideration in the determination of this application.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The proposal would reintroduce a former full-residential use of the site albeit divided into 2 properties in a sustainable area of the district. The area is characterised by residential properties and as such the use would not be uncharacteristic. Furthermore the development would not give rise to highways or amenity harm and would make effective use of this currently vacant part of the building in-line with paragraph 17 of the NPPF.
- 9.2 As such the development is considered to accord with policies LP2, LP3, LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

10 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.

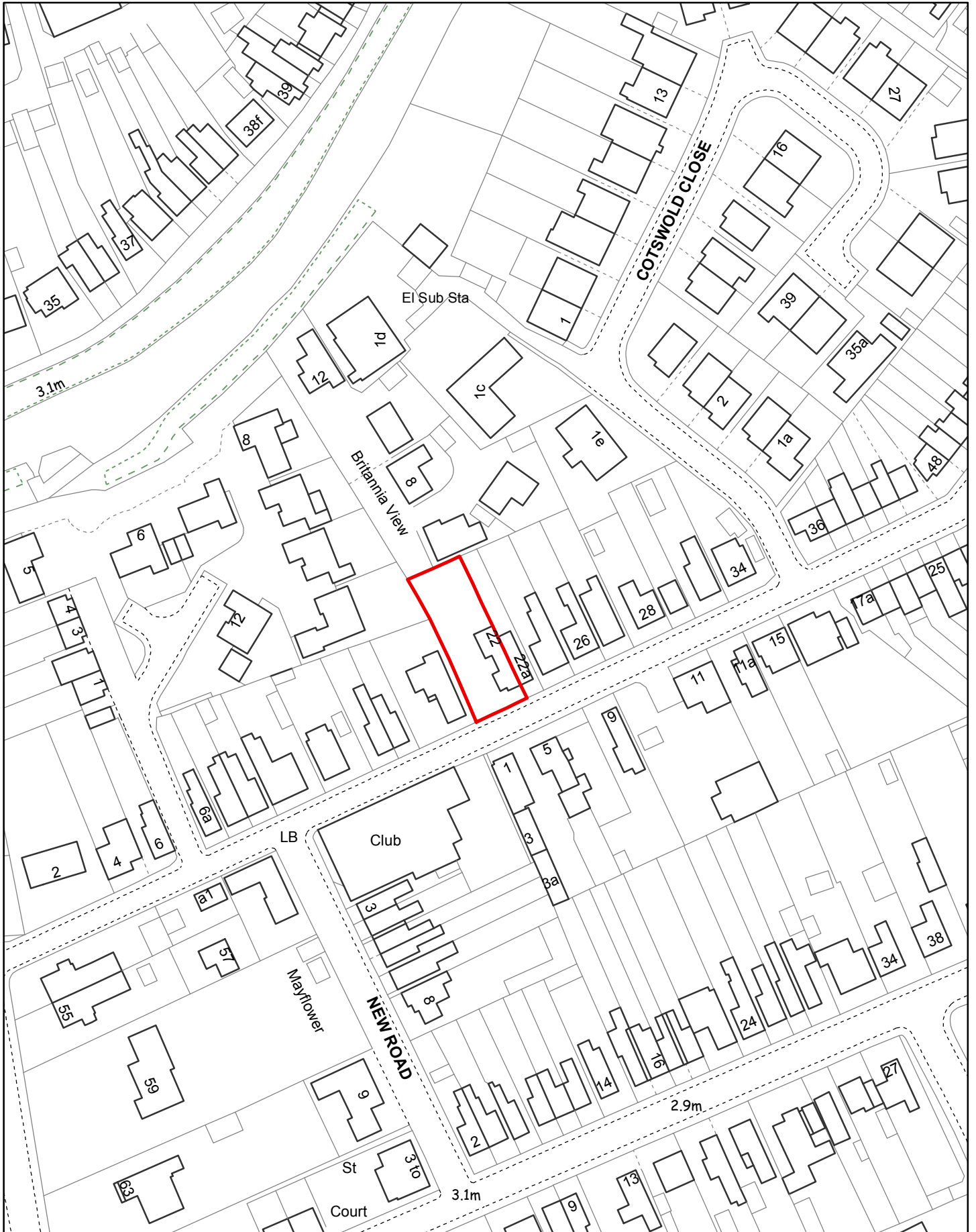
- 2 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015, (or any Order or Statutory Instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), planning permission shall be required for the change of use of the flat from a C3 (Dwelling) use to a C4 (small HMO) use (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L)

Reason - In order to control future development and to prevent the site becoming overdeveloped potentially resulting in residential amenity and highways harm in accordance with policies LP2, LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014).

- 3 Prior to the commencement of the residential use hereby approved the permanent space shown on the plans hereby approved to be reserved on the site to enable vehicles to park clear of the public highway shall be levelled, surfaced and drained and thereafter retained for no other purpose in perpetuity.

Reason - In the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety in accordance with policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014).

- 4 Approved Plans.



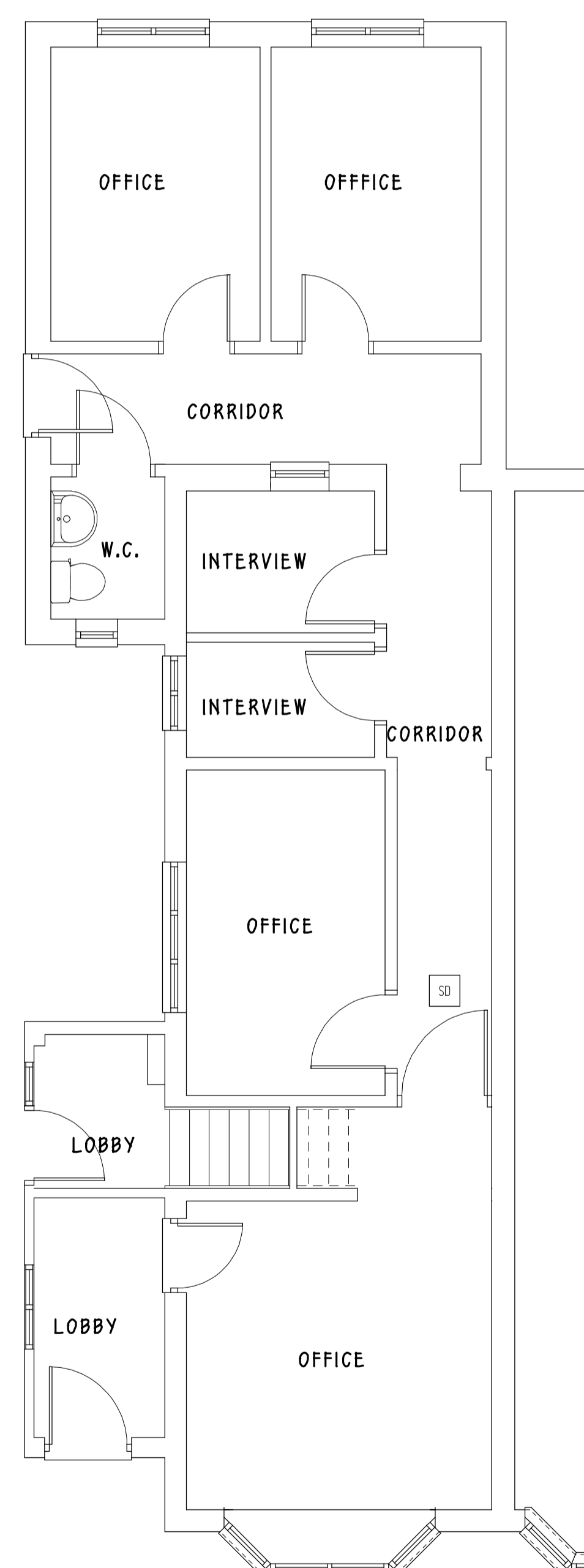
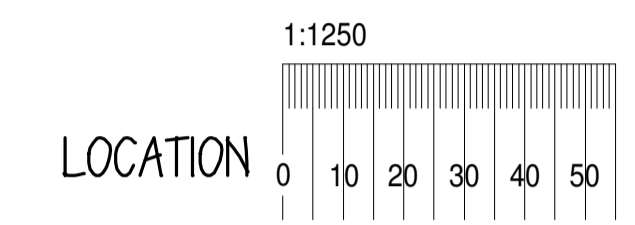
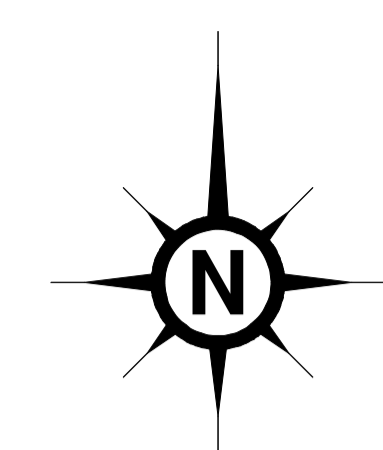
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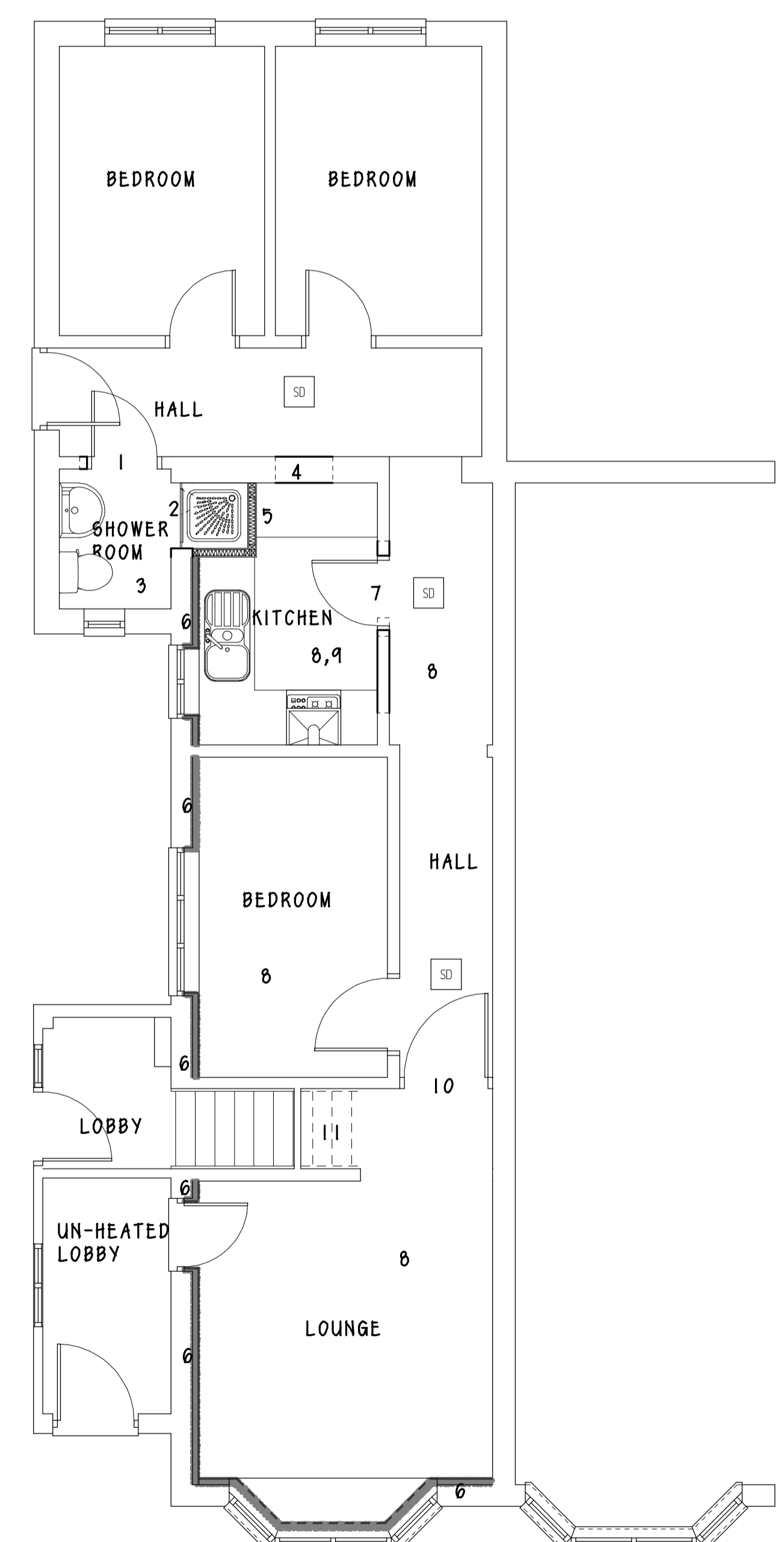
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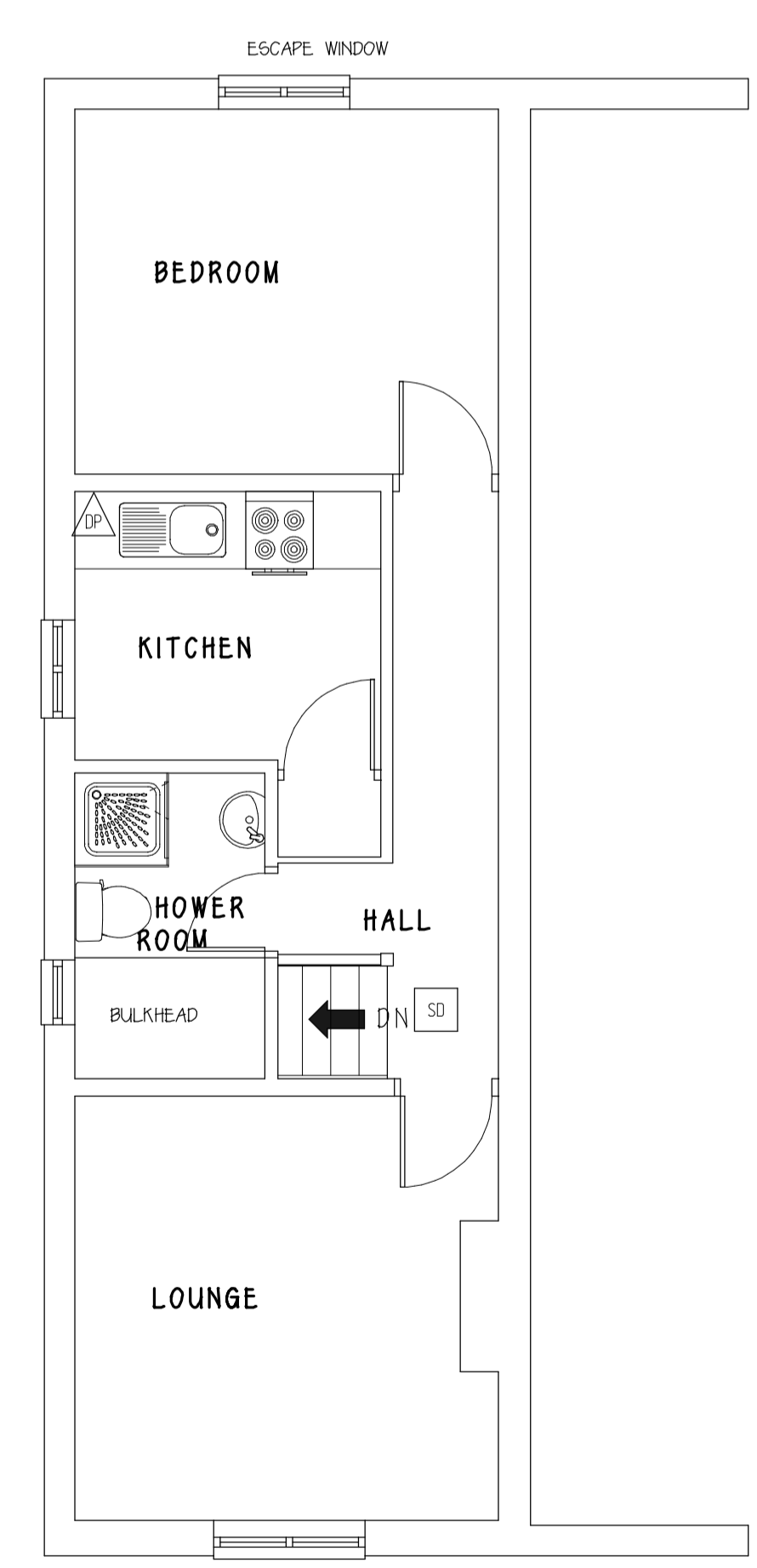




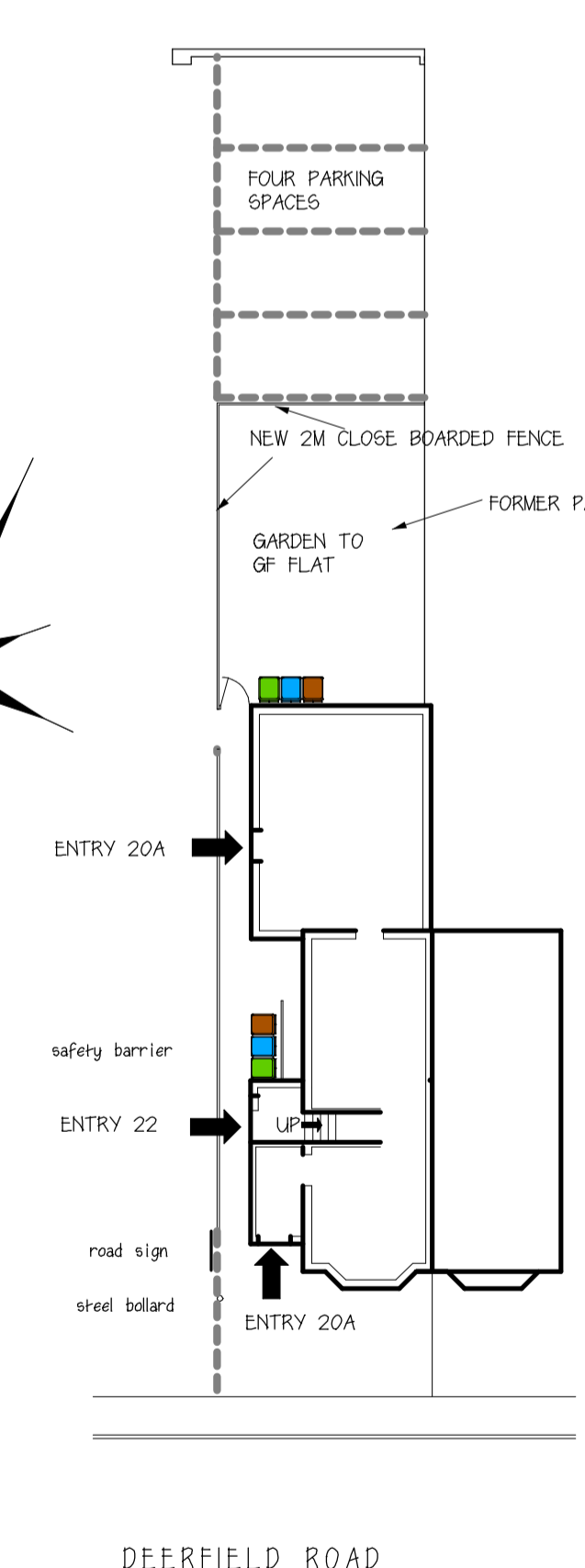
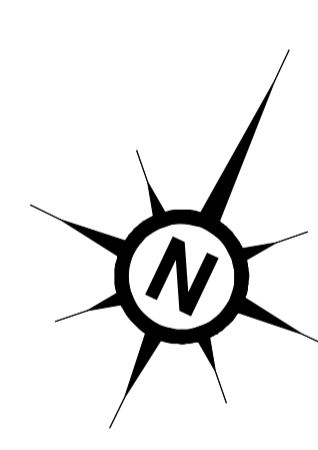
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR OFFICES 1:50



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR FLAT 1:50



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR FOR INFORMATION ONLY



SITE 1:200

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Rev.D	x	x
Rev.C	x	x
Rev.B	x	x
Rev.A	01/06/16	red line revised

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Project
CHANGE OF USE- B1 OFFICE TO C3 DWELLING
20A DEERFIELD ROAD MARCH

Client
MR & MRS J CLARK

Title
WORKING DRAWING

Ref
C3349-1

Rev
Sheet A1
 Scale: x1:200,1250 Date: APRIL 2016