

F/YR18/0028/FDL

Applicant: Mr S Green

**Agent : Mr Ted Brand
Brand Associates**

15 Station Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8LB

Erection of 1 x retail unit and up to 34 x flats involving demolition of existing building (Outline application with all matters reserved)

Reason for Committee: Officer recommendation is at variance to that of the Town Council

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an outline application with all matters reserved for the demolition of the freezer centre on Station Road to be replaced by a new retail unit fronting onto Station Road, an underground parking area consisting of 10 car spaces, bin storage, cycle parking and the erection of 34 flats over 4 storeys.

The Fenland Local Plan and March Neighbourhood Plan support the redevelopment of the site. However, the scheme before Members does not provide sufficient certainty that 34 flats can be accommodated on the site without detriment to the area, occupiers and neighbours, or that the underground parking would create a safe environment in terms of flooding/ drainage and impact on the surrounding area.

The report has considered the issues relevant to the proposal and concluded that in its current form the development would not be consistent with Policies LP1, LP2, LP5, LP14, LP15, LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, and TC2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2016.

The recommendation is therefore for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 This 0.07 hectare town centre site comprises a vacant and somewhat dilapidated shop unit (former freezer centre) with vacant land to the rear on the south side. From the signage on site this was previously a parking area for visitors to the shop. Currently it appears to be an unauthorised general parking area. To the west is a pub with accommodation at first floor level facing onto the site, and a parade of shops, separated from the site by a wide footpath. The pub's outside drinking/ smoking area with seating also occupy the walkway. To the east is Jim Hocking Court, a large 2 1/2- 3 storey flat complex laid out with an internal courtyard, comprising 34 flats. Further to the east is a large Sainsbury's supermarket and associated car parking areas.

- 2.2 The road running adjacent to the southern boundary is owned by FDC and facilitates access and deliveries to the shops fronting onto Broad Street, such as the Tesco Express and Greggs. The rear entrances to the Fenland Walk shops are also accessed directly from this road. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is adjacent to the Conservation Area.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This is an outline application with all matters reserved for the demolition of the freezer centre to be replaced by: a new retail unit fronting onto Station Road; an underground parking area consisting of 10 car spaces, bin storage and, cycle parking; and 34 flats over 4 storeys. Although in outline elevational drawings and floor plans have been provided along with a sketch of the proposed street scene. Additional drainage information has been provided in response to the Local Flood Authority's comments
- 3.2 The parameters to be set by this application are:
1 x large retail unit of 146sqm with the potential to convert to 3 x smaller units; and 34 flats comprising 4 x 1 bed studios; 20 x 1 bed flats; and 10 x 2 bed flats.
- 3.3 The existing retail space is 235sqm. Two full time employees are proposed. The illustrative drawings are very similar to those provided as part of a pre-application enquiry submitted in 2016. Full details of the response are set out below in **Section 9 BACKGROUND**.

Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=P28QT6HE06P00>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
F/YR08/0123/F	Erection of 2 units for mixed use (A2 Finance and Professional and A4 Drinking Establishments) with 8 flats above comprising 3 x 3-bed 4 x 2-bed and 1 x 1-bed involving demolition of existing freezer shop 15 Station Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8LB	Granted	26/03/2008
F/YR07/0045/F	Erection of 2 units for mixed use (A2 Finance and Professional, A3 Restaurants and Cafe, A4 Drinking Establishments and A5 Hot Food Takeaway) with 11 flats above comprising of 7 x 2-bed and 4 x 1-bed involving demolition of existing freezer shop 15 Station Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8LB	Refused	04/03/2007
F/YR06/1245/F	Erection of 2 units for mixed use (A2 Finance & Professional Services, A3 Restaurants & Cafe, A4 Drinking Establishments and A5 Hot Food Takeaway) with 11 x 2-bed flats above, involving demolition of existing freezer shop 15 Station Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8LB	Withdrawn	22/11/2006
F/YR05/1359/F	Erection of a retail unit involving demolition of existing freezer shop 15 Station Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8LB	Granted	02/10/2006
F/YR00/0834/F	Erection of freezer centre with 14 flats over 15 Station Road March Cambs PE15 8LB	Approved	01/09/2001
F/95/0312/F	Erection of freezer centre with 14 flats over 15 Station Road March Cambs PE15 8LB	Approved	09/06/1995
F/93/0644/F	Erection of freezer centre with 14 flats over 15 Station Road March Cambs PE15 8LB	Refused	07/11/1994
F/1381/89/O	Erection of buildings comprising supermarket (27 000sqft) shop units (17 000sqft) and new scout hall together with 400 car parking spaces and new vehicular access Ridgeons Mill View Site, Creek Road, March, Cambridgeshire, ,	Approved	10/04/1990
F/0881/88/F	Erection of a new freezer centre with 14 flats over the site of the freezer shop (to be demolished)	Granted	15/12/1988
F/0635/83/F	Layout and construction of car-park and rear service road to shops Broad Street And Station Road Mill View/Johnsons Square Mill	Deemed Consent	13/10/1983
F/0311/76/O	Demolition of existing residential & shop premises & the erection of a supermarket	Granted	16/07/1976

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **March Town Council:** Recommend approval

5.2 **FDC Housing Strategy Officer:** Off-site contribution equivalent to 25% (8 dwellings) should be provided.

5.3 **CC Designing Out Crime Officer:** Support the application

5.4 **FDC Tree Officer: OBJECT.** The scheme will require the removal of all vegetation at the site and whilst it is of low value, the development proposal has very little provision for planting. With a smaller footprint, there would be space for fastigiated trees (upright clustering branches that taper towards the top) within the scheme.

5.5 **FDC Environmental Health:** The Environmental Health Team note and the submitted information and have 'No Objections' to the principle of the proposed development. The development is on a busy junction, the applicants should consider if noise from road traffic (or the adjacent public house) will impact upon the development. Depending on what the commercial use is within the development this may also have an impact upon the proposed scheme (for a food business extraction may be required). As there is little amenity space ground

contamination is unlikely to affect the development although I would suggest that the unsuspected contamination condition is added if permission is granted.

5.6 **March Society:** On the whole these comments are neutral in that the Society recognises the need to do something with the site, the need for "regeneration" and housing. Normally to replace the present structure with the proposed buildings would produce objections given the increase in the height of the new build and also the number of dwellings proposed with the increase in traffic that would be generated in an area that is often congested. However the Skoulding offices opposite and Jim Hocking Court are both higher than original buildings and neither of good design. The proposal for an underground car-park acknowledges that parking could be a problem but its construction and security will present challenges and increased costs. Given the location of the site an archaeological search would be a pre-requisite. .As a civic society seeking to preserve what is best and unique in the built environment in March it is difficult to see how the demolition of a building with a unique roof will according to 6.4.1 " enhance and respond to the character and local distinctiveness of the area". Also according to the heritage paragraph 8 the demolition and the new build will " enhance the conservation area"

5.7 **CCC Highways:** FDC need to consider who currently uses this site for off road parking and where will this parking will get displaced to? The flats come forward with 10 basement parking spaces. Who will have access to these spaces? A free for all arrangement will create a problem. A 34 flat development should have 43 (1bed) or 51 (more than 1 bed). I accept that this site is in a sustainable location but a 30-40 space shortfall will inevitably impact the availability of town centre parking and displace other kerb parking in the area. I question whether it is acceptable for public car parks to be used for residential parking when town centre parking is often in high demand and saturated. Reducing parking at destination works, reducing at source doesn't! A comprehensive parking survey could be requested if there is any doubt whether this development will result in unacceptable harm.

5.8 **CC Lead Local Flood Authority 13.02.2018:** Whilst we appreciate the development site is small, we require the following information as a minimum before we are able to accept the proposals:

1. Evidence of how the site is currently drained
2. An indication of potential attenuation volumes required (based on impermeable area) and where/how this can be provided within the site boundary.
3. An indication of proposed runoff rates.

The Design & Access Statement states that the highway drain is an option for surface water discharge. Please note that the local highway authority is unlikely to accept any surface water from anything other than the highway discharging into their system.

Further comments to be reported

5.9 **FDC Refuse Collection Team:** In broad principal we have no objection to this development, however, the following issues should be addressed before the application could be agreed from our perspective:-

- Bin Store for the 34 flats would need to be of sufficient size to store 12 x 1100 litre wheeled bins (6 recycling, 6 general waste, 1.3m x 1m), the bin store on the plans does not appear to be large enough.

- Bin Collection point does not appear on any of the plans.
- Bin Store for retail unit does not appear to be of sufficient size.
- New residents will require notification of collection and storage details by the developer before moving in and the first collection takes place.
- Refuse and recycling bins will be required to be provided as an integral part of the development.

5.10 **CCC S106 Officer:** Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development it will not generate a significant number of early years, primary or secondary aged children and consequently no education contributions are sought. We do however seek a contribution of £2,148.12 towards expansion of facilities at March Library.

5.11 **FDC Conservation Officer**
Comments to be reported

5.12 **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Four letters of objection have been received. Concerns include:

Design is inappropriate, more like a prison block;

Lack of landscaping;

4 storey development will overshadow and block light to surrounding properties and premises;

Overdevelopment;

Too close to rear of shops on Fenland Walk;

Insufficient parking therefore cars will park on the service road;

Will cause deprivation of town centre and increase crime;

Decrease property values;

Be a threat to businesses on Station Road;

Traffic congestion on Station Road.

Representations

One other letter received from Tesco Stores stating: No issue with the principle of residential or commercial development on this site. However, appropriate conditions should be attached to any consent to ensure that acoustic issues are addressed in any reserved matters application. As highlighted by the council's Environmental Health Officer this is a busy area with associated noise levels. There are various commercial premises in close proximity to the site, including the Tesco Express on Broad Street. These premises take deliveries earlier in the morning and into the evening and without appropriate acoustic measures being included in the proposed development there is a risk of complaints from future residents, which could be detrimental to the operation of the existing commercial premises. We also consider there is the potential for vehicles associated with the proposed development blocking delivery vehicles for the existing commercial premises, including the Tesco Express. We therefore request that a condition is included in any consent to ensure delivery vehicles are tracked and appropriate parking controls introduced to ensure there is free movement.

6 STATUTORY DUTY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Paragraph 2 - Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise;

Paragraph 7 - The three dimensions to sustainable development.

Paragraph 11 Applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

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.

Paragraph 32, 34 – 37, 39: Promoting sustainable transport

Paragraph 47 – Housing land supply

Paragraph 56-61- Requiring good design

Fenland Local Plan 2014: LP1, LP2, LP3, LP5, LP14, LP15, LP16, LP18, LP19

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017: Policy TC2- Regeneration Sites (Site 2)

8 KEY ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Design and Amenity
- Affordable Housing/ S106 Contributions
- Five Year Housing Land Supply
- Sustainability
- Planning Balance

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1 Pre-application discussions were provided in 2016. Very few changes have been made to the scale, massing and appearance, so the pre-app scheme very closely resembles this application. However, the underground parking was not put forward as part of this pre-app. The applicant was advised:

Whilst it appears that the site can take some quite substantial development, I consider that the overall height, scale and bulk of the proposal will need reducing to give a better transition between the built form of Jim Hocking Court and the more traditional form of the town centre i.e. 2-storey development.

One of the key viewpoints is actually from Station Road looking south west as you approach the site where views of the development site can be seen between Jim Hocking Court and The Coachmakers Arms PH. This view clearly shows the potential effect that two similar height developments will have on this section of the street scene.

To this end, whilst appreciating your aspirations for developing this site as shown on your plans, I do consider that a better transition between the two neighbouring buildings is necessary. Policy LP16 seeks to achieve high quality environments across the District and states that development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and respond to the character of the local built environment. Part of this local built environment is the traditional nature of the town centre and it is not possible to discount the character of the area from The Coachmakers Arms PH into the town centre.

I appreciate that to reduce the scale and bulk of the proposal is likely to result in a reduction in numbers however given that the site does present some parking issues, this may assist with achieving a better level of parking provision per flat. As mentioned at our meeting on site, Fenland does not benefit from particularly good transport links although March does offer a station and the site is close to bus links. The reality is that the District does have high car ownership due to its rural nature and location. I am not aware of any existing car share schemes in Fenland and expect some alignment with the requirements of the Local Plan.

With regards to the retail unit provision, my comments are as set out at our meeting namely, evidence will need to accompany any application to show how the size of the retail unit(s) has been decided. The LPA needs to ensure that the retail offer meets a demand. We are presently setting up a partnership working with a company called Opportunity Peterborough and you may wish to seek their views as part of your retail assessment. The scheme, as submitted, could not be supported without the changes mentioned above.

Any submission will need to include the following:

Design and Access statement;

Planning statement;

Ecology report;

Drainage strategy;

Heritage statement;

Flood Risk Assessment;

Retail statement.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1 The site is within March Town Centre. Historic permissions and planning appeals support mixed use development on the site. Therefore the principle of A1/residential use is acceptable subject to compliance with other policies within the development plan.
- 10.2 Furthermore, the March Neighbourhood Plan (NP) identifies the site (Site 2) as a regeneration site under Policy TC2. The NP has removed the building from the Primary Shopping Frontage as defined in the Fenland Local Plan. It further states that the building is in a significant state of disrepair with blacked out frontages and severe structural damage to the roof, which has started to collapse. The site is in effect in a gateway location on the northern approach to the Town Centre, which comes into view as the bend in the road opens up. It also has well used public footpaths along its eastern and western sides that lead onto Mill View, which compound the harm. The land to the rear is used informally for parking. Previous attempts to redevelop the site have been resisted due to the potential loss of A1 retail frontage. Whilst Policy TC1 provides exception criteria for the loss of A1 retail frontage in situations where the unit has been vacant long term and/or is harming the environment, the situation here is such that the site merits special attention as a regeneration site in its own right.
- 10.3 The NP states that for Site 2 – Land to the south of Station Road:
The redevelopment of this site for town centre uses will be supported where the following is achieved:
- a) Where a shopping use is proposed, the length of frontage is maximised;
 - b) The quality of the built environment is improved;
 - c) The pedestrian links to the east and west are maintained;
 - d) The design will complement the character and appearance of the adjacent

conservation area;

e) Provide well-designed car and cycle parking appropriate to the amount and type of development proposed, reflecting the parking standards provided by Fenland District Council; and

f) Vehicular access is from the rear.

10.4 Therefore, the principle of the redevelopment of the site with an A1/ residential scheme can also find support within the March NP. However, the details of the policy are dealt with below.

Design and Amenity

10.5 Although all matters are reserved for consideration later, the following comments are made on the illustrative drawings:

Basement- access ramp; 10 car parking spaces; various cycle stores; 34 storage units; and a communal bin store. The flats come forward with 10 basement parking spaces. Who will have access to these spaces? A free for all arrangement will create a problem. A 34 flat development should have 43 (1bed) or 51 (more than 1 bed). Although, this site is in a sustainable location a 30-40 space shortfall will inevitably impact the availability of town centre parking and displace other kerb parking in the area. In this instance a comprehensive parking survey should be submitted as there is sufficient doubt whether this development will result in unacceptable harm to the surrounding area and prevent access to businesses as a result of the increased parking requirement generated by the development.

The development will require 12 x 1100 litre wheeled bins The allocated area is not large enough to accommodate the bins. No details have been provided with regard to how the bins stored in the basement will be collected, and also how their location will impact on residents with regard to travel distance to deposit refuse.

Ground floor – retail unit fronting onto Station Road; 3 x flats facing onto Jim Hocking Court and a small internal amenity space; main entrance door and stairwell; 1 x flat looking onto Fenland Walk and Jim Hocking Court. The bin storage area for the retail unit is adjacent to the amenity area. It is unclear how these will be emptied. Furthermore the Refuse Team states that the bin areas are not large enough. 3 x flats will look out onto the walkway adjacent to the pub. One of the rooms is a bedroom window. This area is used for outside drinking and smoking so people are likely to linger in the vicinity. There is the potential for noise to become an issue. No information has been submitted with regard to noise attenuation measures with regard to pub noise or traffic noise in general. A large access ramp leads down to the basement parking.

First Floor – 3 x flats fronting onto Station Road with Juliet Balconies, and a full balcony to the central flat; 6 other flats, the one to the south eastern corner has a balcony supported by a column. A communal balcony overlooks the flat roof to flats 1 and 2 on the ground floor.

Second Floor- will deliver 9 x flats with the front elevation set back from Station Road. The flat to the south eastern corner has a balcony supported by a column. A communal balcony overlooks the flat roof to flats 1 and 2 on the ground floor, similar to the first floor. A stairwell is evident but no lifts are evident.

Third floor – more or less identical to the third floor.

- 10.6 Policy LP16 seeks to achieve high quality environments across the District and states that development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and respond to the character of the local built environment. Policy LP18 also requires development to conserve, protect or enhance the historic environment. The NP requires any redevelopment proposal to: complement the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area; and provide well-designed car and cycle parking appropriate to the amount and type of development proposed, reflecting the parking standards provided by Fenland District Council.
- 10.7 As previously stated in the pre-application response, whilst it appears that the site can take some quite substantial development, the overall height, scale and bulk of the proposal does not relate to the street scene in this highly visible, landmark location and does not provide a transition between the built form of Jim Hocking Court and the more traditional form of the town centre i.e. 2-storey development.
- 10.8 One of the key viewpoints is from Station Road looking south west through to the Conservation Area. Views of the development site can be seen between Jim Hocking Court and the Coachmakers Arms PH. This view clearly shows the potential effect that two similar height developments will have on this section of the street scene.
- 10.9 Therefore the applicant has not demonstrated that 34 dwellings can be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the character of the area and the Conservation Area contrary to LP16, LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan and TC2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan. The parking provision would also be contrary to the parking standards provided by Fenland District Council in Appendix 1 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 which on this occasion would also impact detrimentally on the surrounding area contrary to LP16, LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan and TC2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.10 Policy LP2 and LP16 (e) seek to ensure that development does not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring or future occupiers. The illustrative proposals have not demonstrated that:
- the provision of living accommodation, including a bedroom window, adjacent to the outside area enjoyed by drinkers at adjacent public house; and
 - the inclusion of balconies in this busy town centre location;
- would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers.
- 10.11 Similarly, the scale, bulk and massing shown on the illustrative drawings would result in a loss in outlook and amenity to the occupiers of the upstairs accommodation in the pub and the occupiers of the flats overlooking the application site at Jim Hocking Court.
- 10.12 The principle of the provision of underground parking in March has not been proposed previously. Notwithstanding the highways officer's concerns about the level and nature of the parking proposed underground, Officers consider that the applicant has not demonstrated through the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment or other supporting documentation that such a scheme would be viable and safe. As such the proposal fails to comply with LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 which requires development to be safe from flooding and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Affordable Housing/ S106 Contributions

- 10.13 Policy LP5 seeks the provision of an element of affordable housing on all housing development sites of 5 dwellings or more (whether new-build or conversion). However, following an appeal decision (APP/D0515/W/17/3171513) which determined that substantial weight should be attached to the Written Ministerial Statement introduced as national policy that affordable housing should not be sought on schemes of fewer than 10 dwellings, Fenland will no longer be seeking provision of affordable housing on these sites. However, on sites of 11 or more 25% affordable housing (rounded to the nearest whole dwelling) is required.
- 10.14 On sites of less than 37 dwellings, an offsite financial contribution can be made. In this instance a contribution equivalent to 8 dwellings is required by way of a S106 agreement. Although the applicant has indicated that a Viability Assessment is to be prepared, nothing has been submitted. The proposal is therefore contrary to LP5.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 10.15 Under the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities are required to have and to be able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing. The Council's five year land supply was recently tested on appeal in relation to a proposal for 6 dwellings on land south west of Syringa House, Upwell Road, Christchurch (reference No. F/YR16/0399/O). The Inspector in upholding this appeal and granting planning permission concluded, on the basis of the evidence presented to him, that the Council is currently unable to robustly demonstrate a five year land supply (the supply available is approximately 4.93 years).
- 10.16 The Inspector concluded that applications must be determined in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing. Paragraph 14 states that for the purposes of determining planning applications, this means that applications for housing can only be resisted where the adverse impacts of approving a scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole. In considering which policies are 'relevant policies' for the supply of housing, regard needs to be had to the outcome of the decision in *Richborough Estates Partnership LLP v Cheshire East Council and Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes Limited* (2017) which was considered in the Supreme Court.
- 10.17 In summary this decision concluded that only those local plan policies relating to housing distribution and numbers are out of date and all other local plan policies remain relevant.
- 10.18 Whilst initially in response to this appeal decision the LPA took the view that Policies LP3, LP4 and LP12 were policies that influenced the supply of housing and as such were rendered out of date this view has been revisited given the outcome of an appeal decision which comes after the Syringa House decision.
- 10.19 This most recent decision in respect of 2 no dwellings at land north-east of Golden View, North Brink, Wisbech (reference No. F/YR16/1014/F) clearly highlights that whilst LP3 and LP12 may have an effect on the supply of housing they are

primarily concerned with directing most forms of development, including housing, to the most sustainable locations and limited development in the countryside for its protection and on this basis neither is a policy for the supply of housing. Based on the above, there are no policies which influence the supply of housing for consideration in this case.

Sustainability

10.20 For the sake of completeness the scheme has also been assessed against Paragraph 7 of the NPPF. Paragraph 7 states:

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** – *contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*

- **a social role** – *supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*

- **an environmental role** – *contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

In respect of this proposal the development of this site will further the sustainability objectives as follows:

Economic Role

10.21 The provision of housing, especially in light of the current deficiency in supply will contribute to the economic success of the District. It is recognised that the construction of the development would provide some employment for the duration of the work contributing to a strong responsive and competitive economy. It is also recognised that there would be a potential increased expenditure within the local shops and pubs and other services, from the occupants. The proposal also has the potential to increase the retail offer within March Town Centre, although a Retail Statement identifying possible end users has not been submitted. Notwithstanding this the principle of redeveloping the site with a mixed use development could score highly in terms of its economic role.

Social Role

10.22 The development would provide 1 and 2 bed flats to assist in meeting the needs of existing and future generations. It would also support community facilities. Policy LP2, LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 remain relevant with regard to residential amenity, good design and safe and convenient access. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF also sets out the core planning principles. As discussed in the report, although the design is illustrative, what has been submitted has the potential to impact detrimentally on the outlook and amenity of occupiers and neighbours, and

also the general appearance of the street scene due to the scale, massing and bulk of the illustrative scheme submitted. The positive aspects of the scheme, namely the provision of housing, are neutralised by the detrimental social impacts. The lack of affordable housing provision would also go against the scheme. Therefore, the current scheme would have a slightly negative impact in terms of its social role.

Environmental Role

- 10.23 There are a number of concerns raised by consultees in terms of its impact on the environment (some as a result of the lack of supporting information). These include: parking, trees/ landscaping, drainage/ flood risk, noise and refuse storage and collection. In addition, the harmful impacts of the illustrative scheme on the street scene and Conservation Area have not been addressed following the pre-application discussions. The proposal would score negatively in terms of its environmental role.

Planning Balance

- 10.24 Key to the overall evaluation is Paragraph 14 of the NPPF which states where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, the LPA should grant permission unless: *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted*
- 10.25 The report has considered the issues relevant to the proposal and concluded that in its current form the development would not be consistent with Policies LP1, LP2, LP5, LP14, LP15, LP16, LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.
- 10.26 In the absence of a five year land supply where relevant policies which restrict the supply of housing can be considered out-of-date (Paragraph 14 of the NPPF) the weighted planning balance is tipped in favour of granting planning permission for sustainable development. For the above reasons, the balance of sustainability would be against the development.

11 CONCLUSIONS

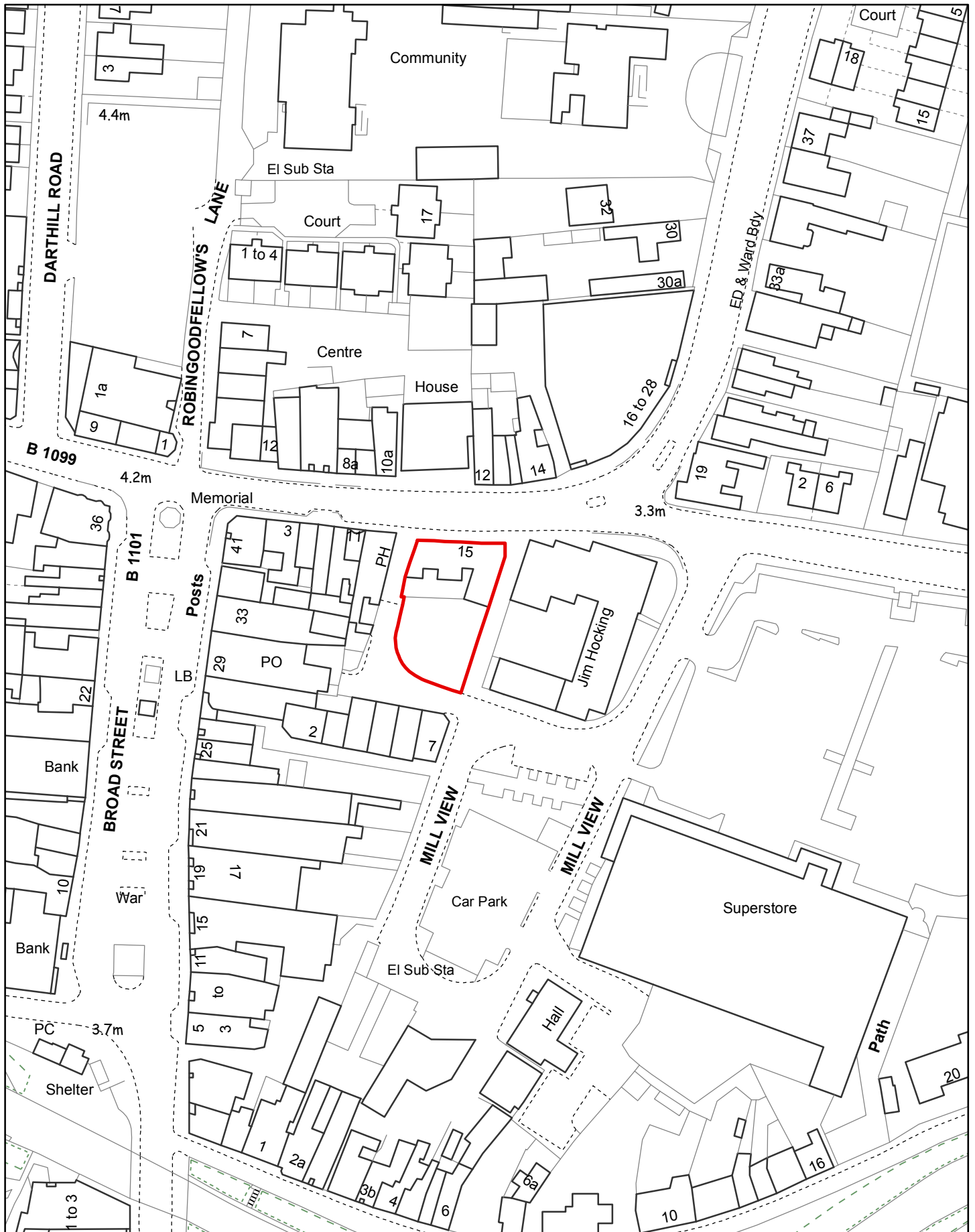
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- 11.2 The Fenland Local Plan and March Neighbourhood Plan support the redevelopment of the site. However, the scheme before Members does not provide sufficient certainty that 34 flats can be accommodated on the site without detriment to the area, occupiers and neighbours, or that the underground parking would create a safe environment in terms of flooding/ drainage and impact on the surrounding area.
- 11.3 The report has considered the issues relevant to the proposal and concluded that in its current form the development would not be consistent with Policies LP1, LP2, LP, LP5, LP14, LP15, LP16, LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, and TC2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan

12 RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation is therefore for refusal

Reason for Refusal

This is an outline application with all matters reserved. The Fenland Local Plan 2014 and March Neighbourhood Plan 2016 support the redevelopment of the site. However, the submitted scheme does not provide sufficient certainty that 34 flats can be accommodated on the site without detriment to the area, occupiers and neighbours, or that the underground parking would create a safe environment in terms of flooding/ drainage and impact on the surrounding area. The proposal in its current form is therefore not considered to be sustainable development and would not be consistent with Policies LP1, LP2, LP5, LP14, LP15, LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, and TC2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2016.



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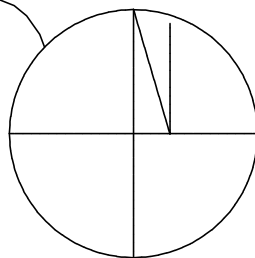
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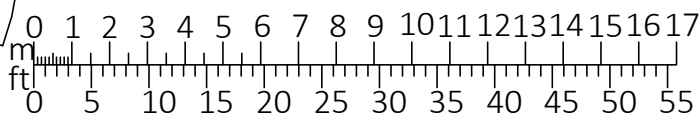
STATION ROAD

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PH



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REVISIONS

ba
brand
associates
architects

2A Dartford Road
March PE15 8AB
tel [01354] 653 818
fax [01354] 651 951
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PROPOSED FLATS
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH PE15 8LB

MARCH PE15 LTD
ILLUSTRATIVE SITE
PLAN

1:100 :NEM :NOV.14
MARCH.14: 1 :



Side (West) Elevation

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PROPOSED FLATS AND
RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

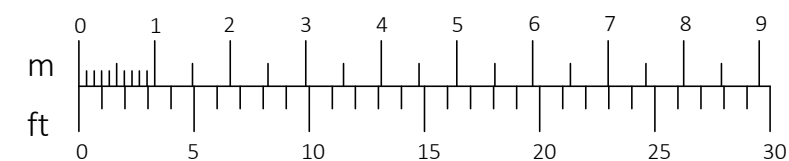
MR S. GREEN

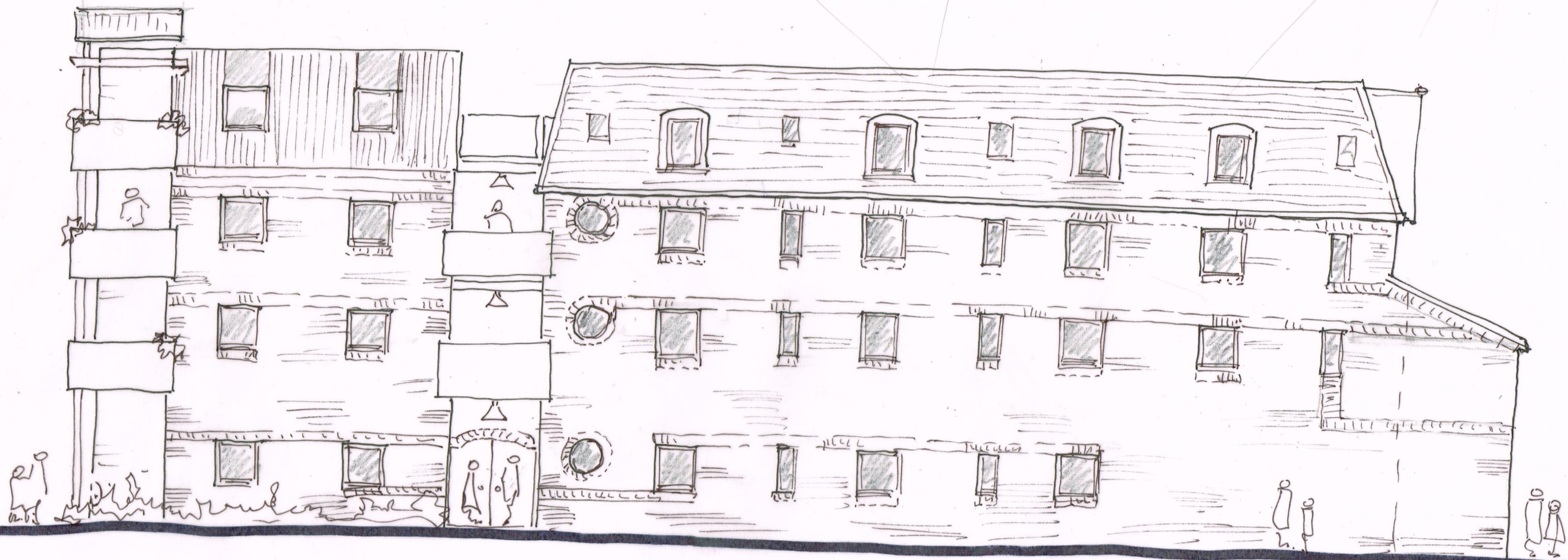
ILLUSTRATIVE ELEVATION

1:100 : ALS : APR '15

MARCH.15: 4.1 : -

Scale 1:100 - A3





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PROPOSED FLATS
AND RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

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ILLUSTRATIVE SKETCH
ELEVATION

1:100 @ A3 : DEC '17

MARCH.15: SK100.B



FRONT (NORTH)



REAR (SOUTH)

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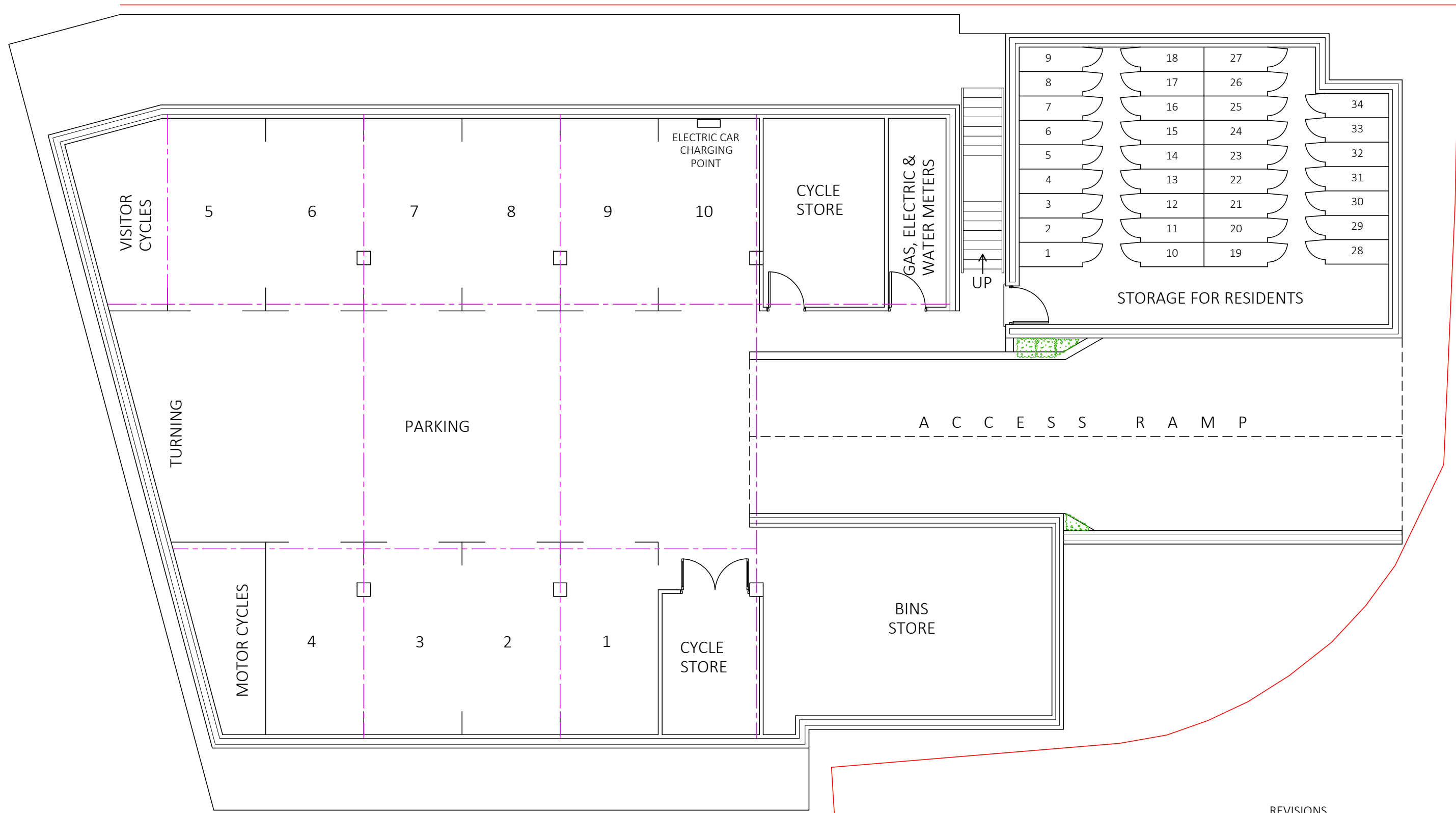
PROPOSED FLATS
AND RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

MR S. GREEN

ILLUSTRATIVE SKETCH
ELEVATION

1:100 @ A3 : DEC '17

MARCH.15: SK100.A



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PROPOSED FLATS AND
RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

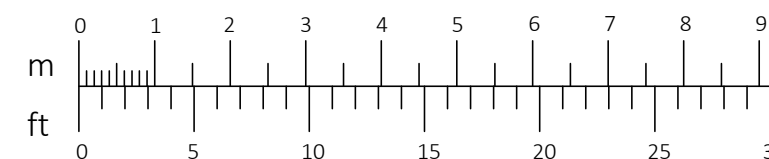
MR S. GREEN

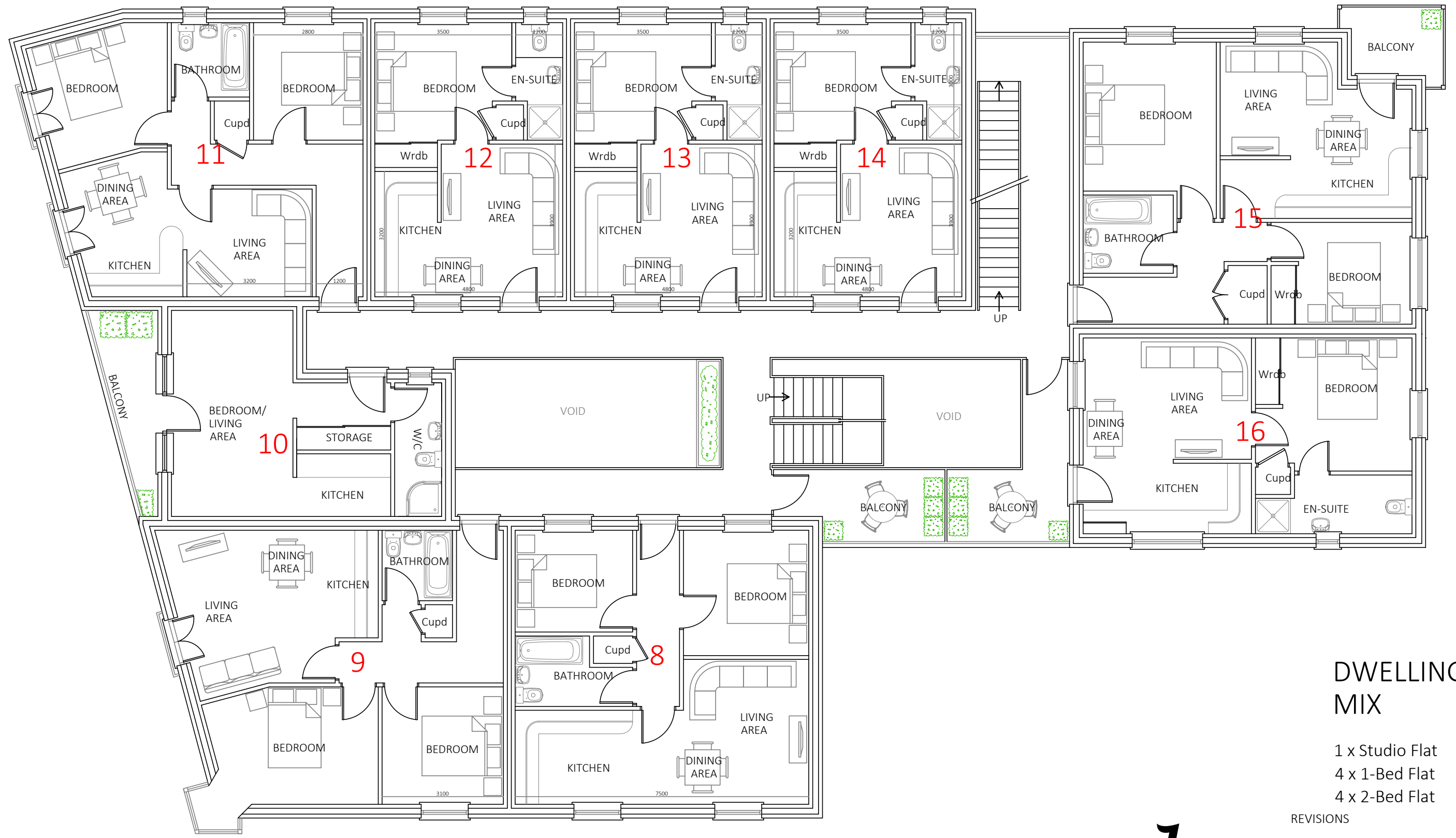
ILLUSTRATIVE BASEMENT
FLOOR PLAN

1:100 : ALS : APR '15

MARCH.15: 3.1 : C

Scale 1:100 - A3





DWELLING MIX

- 1 x Studio Flat
- 4 x 1-Bed Flat
- 4 x 2-Bed Flat

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PROPOSED FLATS AND
RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

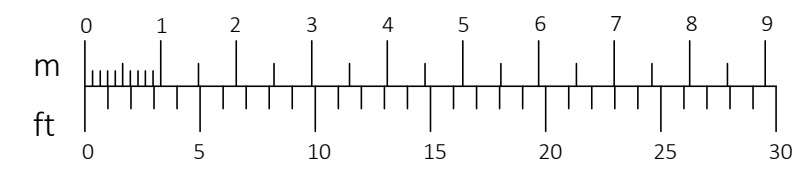
MR S. GREEN

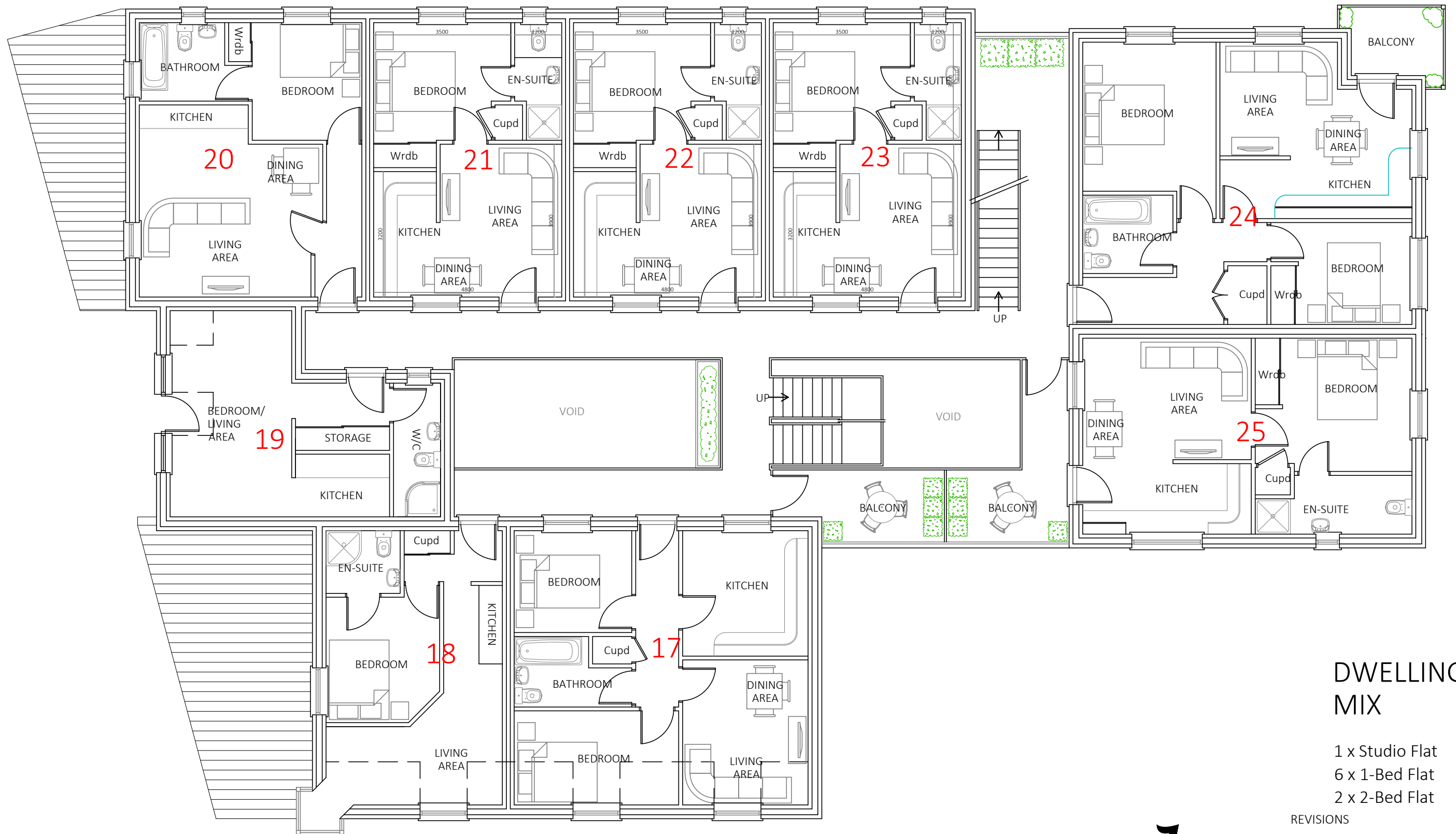
ILLUSTRATIVE FIRST
FLOOR PLAN

1:100 : ALS : APR '15

MARCH.15: 3.3 : C

Scale 1:100 - A3





DWELLING MIX

- 1 x Studio Flat
- 6 x 1-Bed Flat
- 2 x 2-Bed Flat

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PROPOSED FLATS AND
RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

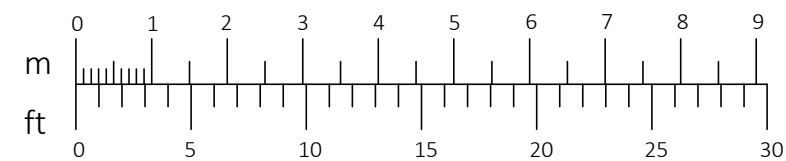
MR S. GREEN

ILLUSTRATIVE SECOND
FLOOR PLAN

1:100 : ALS : APR '15

MARCH.15: 3.4 : C

Scale 1:100 - A3

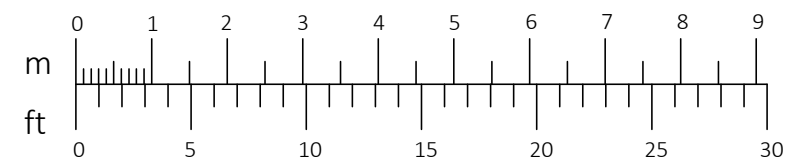




DWELLING MIX

- 1 x Studio Flat
- 6 x 1-Bed Flat
- 2 x 2-Bed Flat

Scale 1:100 - A3



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PROPOSED FLATS AND
RETAIL
15 STATION ROAD
MARCH

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ILLUSTRATIVE THIRD FLOOR
PLAN

1:100 : ALS : APR '15

MARCH.15 : 3.5 : C