

## AGENDA

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2026**

**1.00 PM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,  
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH, PE15 8NQ**

Committee Officer: Jo Goodrum  
Tel: 01354 622424 (committee only)  
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1 To receive apologies for absence.

2 Previous Minutes (Pages 5 - 30)

To confirm and sign the minutes from the previous meeting of 7 January 2026.

3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified

4 To receive Members declarations of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.

5 F/YR25/0496/F

Land South West Of 2 Beechwood Yard, Cattle Dyke, Gorefield  
Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling (Pages 31 - 52)

To determine the application

6 F/YR25/0843/PIP

Bunkers House, High Road, Bunkers Hill, Wisbech  
Permission in principle for 7 x dwellings (Pages 53 - 68)

To determine the application.

7 F/YR25/0784/F  
Land At School Grounds Farm, School Grounds, March  
Erect 1 x dwelling and 1 x agricultural building and the retention of existing agricultural building (Pages 69 - 84)

To determine the application.

8 F/YR25/0878/F  
Land West Of Prospect House Farm, Whittlesey Road, March , Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire

Erect 2 x dwellings with garages and formation of a new access involving demolition of existing buildings (Pages 85 - 102)

To determine the application.

9 F/YR25/0808/RM  
Land North Of, 2 - 8 Gibside Avenue, Chatteris Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR22/1186/FDC to erect up to 4x dwellings and associated works (Pages 103 - 118)

To determine the application.

10 F/YR25/0860/F  
Land East Of 26, Turf Fen Lane, Doddington  
Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling (Pages 119 - 134)

To determine the application.

11 F/YR25/0782/A  
18 Broad Street, March  
Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective) (Pages 135 - 146)

To determine the application.

12 F/YR25/0378/O,br/>>Cherryholt Farm, Lewis Close, March  
Erect up to 9 x dwellings involving the demolition of existing agricultural buildings (outline application with all matters reserved) (Pages 147 - 162)

To determine the application.

13 F/YR25/0852/F  
39 Broad Street, March  
Installation of external shutters to existing shop front (retrospective) (Pages 163 - 174)

To determine the application.

14 F/YR25/0726/PIP

Land South of 29 Primrose Hill, Doddington

Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings (Pages 175 - 190)

To determine the application.

15 F/YR25/0729/PIP

Land North of 10 Primrose Hill, Doddington

Permission in Principle for 4 x dwellings (Pages 191 - 208)

To determine the application.

16 F/YR25/0730/PIP

Land North of The Quadrant, Primrose Hill, Doddington

Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings (Pages 209 - 224)

To determine the application.

17 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

Monday, 26 January 2026

Members: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor S Imafidon and Councillor M Purser

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## PLANNING COMMITTEE



**WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2026 - 1.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs J French and Councillor M Purser, Councillor P Murphy (Substitute)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor R Gerstner and Councillor S Imafidon

Officers in attendance: David Grant (Senior Development Officer), Matthew Leigh (Head of Planning), Danielle Brooke (Senior Development Officer), Alan Davies (Principal Planning Officer), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer), Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer) and Hayleigh Parker-Haines (Senior Development Officer)

**P83/25      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes from the previous meetings of 19 November and 10 December 2025 were approved and signed as accurate records.

**P84/25      F/YR25/0586/F**  
**PHASE B, LAND EAST OF BERRYFIELD, MARCH**  
**ERECT 15 X DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE**  
**FORMATION OF 1 X BALANCING POND AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Shanna Penney, the agent. Ms Penney stated that the application is for 15 dwellings, and a previous scheme was presented to the committee last year which was for 18 dwellings alongside balancing ponds and areas of public open space. She explained that the application was refused for two reasons including a failure to satisfy a sequential test in terms of flood risk and the absence of the biodiversity net gain information but that the principle of development, the overall design approach and matters relating to surface water drainage were all found to be acceptable.

Ms Penney added that the reasons for refusal have been considered, and a revised scheme has been submitted which addresses the concerns highlighted, making the point that the development is located entirely in Flood Zone 1 removing the requirement for a sequential test and ensuring the full compliance with both the local and national flood risk policies. She explained that both the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency have raised no objections which, in her view, means that flood risk matters have been satisfactorily addressed.

Ms Penney explained that the application has also been accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal and a biodiversity net gain report and metric which have been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist and have been accepted with appropriate conditions recommended, therefore, the previous reason for refusal relating to biodiversity has now been fully overcome. She added that all outstanding issues arising from the earlier refusal have now been resolved and the application is capable of being supported and will deliver much needed housing in a primary market town with excellent sustainable transport links and the prospect of imminent delivery.

Members asked Ms Penney the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French expressed concern that there is a lack of Section 106 contributions and no affordable housing attributed to the application and she questioned who is going to contribute towards the schools and GP services? She added that there are likely to be at least 35 residents plus children who will require education facilities as well as doctors and dentists and she questioned who is going to pay for those services? Councillor Mrs French stated that she does not think it is fair for the Local Authority to have to pick up the additional costs when the applicant will be making money. Ms Penney stated that she appreciates and understands the point made by Councillor Mrs French, however, the difficulty is that as the parcel of land is very large, and due to the flood risk constraints, only a third of the piece of land is developable which is making the proposal as only just being viable. She expressed the view that it should not be a cost for the Local Authority to have to pick up but there are no funds available which is regrettable.
- Councillor Connor stated that he agrees with the point made by Councillor Mrs French. He added that there are 15 dwellings proposed in a market town and there is no inclusion of affordable housing or Section 106 contributions which is very disappointing.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that the site has already had development which has been built out and there was a management plan included at that time. She explained that when that was built out, she had cause to attend the site repeatedly with regards to issues being caused due to mud on the road and made the point that should the application be approved it is essential that a strong management plan is included. Councillor Connor added that he attended the site on numerous occasions and met with residents due to parking on the path as well as mud on the road and pavements which residents were having to endure. He made the point that he notes that one of the proposed conditions is for a wheel wash facility but, in his view, that condition needs to be strengthened and needs to include a sweeper on site as well. Matthew Leigh stated that the condition officers are imposing is a standard condition and he understands that there may well have been issues on a previous development but that is not a reason to look to go beyond that as part of this. He added that obviously the construction management statement and the plan would require that mud is not on the road and if that becomes apparent then the developers will be contacted and have to ensure it is cleaned. Matthew Leigh expressed the view that he is not convinced that by imposing a condition requiring a sweeper to be available would be proportionate for a 15 dwelling unit and is not something that is normally requested. He added to go above and beyond the standard condition there would need to be some specific reason relevant to this planning application rather than the harm that has happened previously.
- Councillor Connor stated that the standard condition was included on the previous application, but it was not adhered to resulting in complaints to the Council but until he attended the site along with Councillor Mrs French no action was taken. He stated that he would like some reassurance and comfort that if there is only a wheel wash condition then it will be monitored. Matthew Leigh stated that if the condition was not adhered to previously that would be a separate matter to what is being requested with this application. He added that by stating that there is the need to provide a strong condition with this application, in his opinion, is a bit paradoxical because if the harm was from not complying to a condition, then why would a more robust condition mean that the developer would be compliant. Matthew Leigh added that the officer's report does deal with the control of emissions of dust and dirt during construction and, therefore, should a breach happen then this is an enforcement breach but whether or not they comply with the condition is a separate matter to what the wording of the actual condition is. He added that he feels that the frustration was with the previous application and that appears to be more to do with compliance rather than the actual condition.
- Councillor Connor added that he does have sympathy with what officers are saying but there were vehicles parked on the side of the road and lorries delivering were going onto the path as well. He stated that he would like some comfort for a sweeper to be there once a week, which he would be happy with, but he does want the residents' concerns to be taken

into consideration. Matthew Leigh stated that by having a sweeper on site once a week during construction, in his view, does not necessarily meet the test because having it there once a week is quite arbitrary. He explained that it may mean that there are trades people working inside the dwellings and, therefore, the point is about protecting dirt on the road, and the proposed condition does do that. Matthew Leigh made the point that if a sweeper attends once a week for example and then 5 minutes after that sweeper leaves mud appears on the road then this condition would still resolve that because there is an issue around dirt. He made the point that harm needs to be demonstrated, and the harm appears to have been from not complying with the condition not because the condition was not robust enough originally. Matthew Leigh explained that there is a difference and making the condition more onerous does not mean that the developer will more likely comply with it.

- Councillor Murphy referred to the large-scale development which took place in Whittlesey which also caused significant problems with regards to mud on the road during development.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has listened to the points made by officers and is not requesting that a sweeper is on site all day every day. She recalled an incident in December where she had to contact Matthew Leigh where the same issue arose in The Avenue as the roads were absolutely appalling and there is the same problem in Upwell Road and when there is mud on the road and it starts to rain it becomes treacherous. Councillor Mrs French made the point that why should the residents who live in Berryfield and Burnet Gardens have to put up with any more of this mess that is happening because they are driving through it and walking through this mud as well which then goes into their houses. She stated that there is no reason to refuse the application, but it does need to be monitored carefully and if enforcement is needed it should not be weeks later when there is a report and has to be dealt with immediately.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she does not think that the committee have any choice other than to approve the application and reluctantly support it but she is really concerned about the state of the roads again and the lack of affordable houses and the lack of section 106.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Purser and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per the officer's recommendation.**

*(Councillor Marks declared that he has had previous business dealings with the applicant and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon)*

*(Councillors Mrs French and Purser declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that they are members of March Town Council but take no part in planning)*

**P85/25      F/YR25/0750/F**  
**BROMSGROVE HOUSE , HONEYSOME ROAD, CHATTERIS**  
**CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL USE, SITING OF A MOBILE**  
**HOME TO BE USED AS AN ANNEXE AND REMOVAL OF EXISTING MOBILE**  
**HOME**

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that an application was refused on this site in 2025, but since that time, he has reduced the size of the annexe significantly and reduced the amount of extended residential curtilage. He made the point that he is not applying for a separate dwelling as it is an annexe in conjunction with the existing dwelling, which can be conditioned as such.

Mr Hall added that, at the present time, the applicant lives on site with her husband and children in a static caravan to the side of the existing property, which they have lived in for 14 years and the applicants' parents live in the host property at the front but the static caravan is leaking and is in a poor condition so something needs to be done. He stated that the applicant's mother is struggling with mental health so the applicant is living on site to assist and they do eat together as a family in the host property during the week at times and the applicant runs the Willows Day Nursery in Chatteris and the after-school club at Westwood School as well as the day nursery at Knights End Road.

Mr Hall explained that there are no objections to this application from any of the consultees or from members of the public. He stated that as the officer has stated a previous Planning Committee did approve an annexe on this site which was a permanently built one which also extended the curtilage more than this current application, with it being approved by the committee about 3 years ago and was also in Flood Zone 3, which was not constructed due to the actual cost of doing so, but also given the uncertainty with regards to the land use type for the land that is to the north and the northwest next to this site so it was put on hold and it has just expired.

Mr Hall made the point that during a previous planning committee 3 years ago, with regards to a previous annexe, located right next door to this site there is already an annexe located in Flood Zone 3 with no justification on the Public Access system and that was approved under delegated powers. He stated that this application is for a residential annexe, not a separate dwelling and there is a caravan on site now that has been there 14 years that the applicant's family live in.

Mr Hall explained that should approval be given then the existing caravan will be removed and a new caravan will be sited further to the rear of the site which is in Flood Zone 3 just like the existing and it will be built out of the ground. Mr Hall explained that the Environment Agency have not objected to the application which is for the betterment of the family.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Benney stated that he recalls when this came before Planning Committee several years ago and at that time permission was given to build an annexe that was going to be a brick-built building and that was also up for officer's recommendation for refusal, adding that the house next door had an officer's recommendation of approval for exactly the same thing which does confuse matters. He explained that he does not know the applicant, but he does know of them, and he is aware that the lady runs a daycare centre and, in his opinion, this application appears to be a very genuine case, making the point that the uninhabitable caravan will be removed and will be replaced with something better but it will not alter the family unit. Councillor Benney expressed the view that the proposal is for people, and, in his view, it is where the committee should be considering the human element, as there is a family here and a family should not be split up. He made the point that he does not consider this building to be in the open countryside, which was the same scenario when Tesco was developed, it is not extending the curtilage and the development is not being taken out into the open countryside, it is just replacing what is already there with something better to improve the quality of life of the residents. Councillor Benney added that he can see where the policies maybe do not fit and where the site could be considered as being in the open countryside, but he does not share that view. He made the point that he appreciates that it is not ideal to put a caravan in Flood Zone 3, but there is already one on the site and the application will be built out of the ground which will make it safer and better. Councillor Benney made the point that he believes that this application deserves support, and he will be looking to grant this application.
- Councillor Marks stated that families get bigger and as families get bigger, they need more space and currently the applicant is living in a cramped caravan and this is going to give them a better living environment and more living space. He added that the issue of Flood Zone 3 and caravans has arisen previously and an application came forward over the past

few months which was for a traveller family whose application was approved in Flood Zone 3 and that was also for a caravan. Councillor Marks added that the committee look to be consistent, and he cannot see that this is doing anything to the detriment and believes that it will make a difference to their lives and he would be happy to see the application approved.

- Councillor Purser stated that by removing a dilapidated caravan it will provide a far better living accommodation for the residents and a new caravan is being provided which appears to be a like for like situation and he will fully support it.
- Councillor Murphy questioned whether Middle Level Commissioners ever provided a response to officers? Hayleigh Parker-Haines confirmed that no response has been forthcoming. Councillor Murphy stated that the Middle Level Commissioners are not concerned about the proposal, and he added that he has lived in Chatteris for his whole life, and he has never known that area to flood.
- Councillor Mrs French explained that Middle Level Commissioners are not statutory consultees and if there is a drain there then it is probably not theirs which is why no response has been received.
- The Legal Officer explained that this was subject to refusal in 2025 for a similar development and he drew members attention to the Planning Code of Conduct which forms part of the Constitution and that requires any members who wishes to support a recently refused application to identify the significant change in planning circumstances which justifies the approval.
- Matthew Leigh stated that it is his understanding that there is an existing caravan on site which is within the residential curtilage and has been in place for over 10 years. He explained that irrespective of that if it is being used as an annexe the siting of a caravan within a residential curtilage is not development. Matthew Leigh added that when members are making reference to the removal of an existing caravan, it needs to be understood that the caravan did not require permission and is lawful because if it is an annexe and is within the residential curtilage they could replace that existing caravan with this caravan without the need for planning permission, however, this application is materially different to just replacing the caravan because it is on a new site and it is expanding the site where if they wanted to take the existing caravan away and just put a new one in place it would not be before committee. He stated that the application is not like for like which is why there is a planning application because it does require planning permission due to the change of use of land and it is materially different to just placing a caravan on the site. Matthew Leigh explained that if they were just replacing the existing one then it would not require permission, but it cannot be argued that replacement of the caravan on a residential site that does not require planning permission is a material consideration as it is a development that changes the location and expands the residential character. He added that in policy terms it is an elsewhere location.
- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that as a councillor this is the right decision for members to make, and he appreciates that the caravan is changing and is being moved albeit within the curtilage of the property, it is not going outside of the land and is staying within the land that is in the ownership of the applicant. He expressed the opinion it is making peoples lives better with no detriment to anybody else.
- Hayleigh Parker-Haines referred to the presentation screen which highlighted the application site, and she pointed out the existing caravan and that is within the existing residential curtilage. She pointed out to the committee the land to which this application relates which does not fall within the existing residential curtilage associated with Bromsgrove House and whilst it is the same ownership it is separate piece of land outside of the residential curtilage. Hayleigh Parker-Haines added that, in terms of the neighbouring property and their annexe, when that obtained planning permission it was a garage and it was the conversion of an existing building within the established residential curtilage and the previous approval granted by members pertained to an existing building on site as well as it was reusing that building and it was not a completely new annexe on site as it was utilizing existing buildings.
- Councillor Benney stated that the main point here is not the building next door, but it did

have an approval on it and whilst an annexe is acceptable there in some way it sets the principle. He added that not only is it in the curtilage it is also in the ownership of the land of the applicant and as it is their land they should be able to do what they want but he does appreciate that there is a planning process.

- Councillor Marks stated that he will be happy to second Councillor Benney's proposal, there are no objectors to this application, and it is a temporary structure which is tied to the main property and if the family move then the likelihood is this will be taken away. He added that by approving the application it is actually bettering the facility that is on site and whilst it is being moved across the site, it is not at the detriment of anybody. Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that it is not really an elsewhere location.
- Councillor Connor stated he also supports this application as it is going to improve the lives of the residents who are living in an existing caravan which is leaking, which cannot be right in the 21st century. He added that there are no objections to the application and it is tied to the property and, therefore, if the property gets sold then the caravan will have to be moved as well. Councillor Connor made the point that the committee have stated on many applications that they endorse families living together.
- The Legal Officer stated that he does not believe from what he has heard that there is any identification of the substantial change in planning circumstances that has arisen since the last application and the Constitution does not make any distinction between decisions made by committee or by officers.
- Hayleigh Parker-Haines referred to the presentation screen, identifying the previously refused scheme on the site plan, which included a larger change of use of land and included the strip running along the rear and then she identified the current application site on the presentation screen.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and stated that he may have misunderstood but it appears that there is a whole building and, therefore, surely that is a material change. He added that on the top right of the boundary they are going to refurbish those out buildings, but a whole building has been gained from somewhere else. Hayleigh Parker-Haines explained that the building shown at the top of the site is an existing building and when this application was previously approved it was to utilize that building as an annexe and the previously refused scheme included the provision of another building to the south which is shown on that plan. She added that this application proposes a building in the siting of a caravan in a similar location to the previously refused site construction of an annexe and the building that is on site currently is going to be retained and they are going to put in the caravan.
- Councillor Connor stated that it is most definitely materially different from the last application.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation with conditions delegated to officers to apply appropriate conditions.**

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application site to be in an elsewhere location as the adjacent land has also been developed, the caravan will just be replacing the existing caravan already sited in Flood Zone 3, it is not believed that it will be harmful to the rural environment and the proposal will benefit a family.

*(Councillor Benney declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he attends Chatteris Town Council meetings but takes no part in planning)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

**P86/25 F/YR25/0814/PIP**  
**LAND NORTH OF 10 ASKHAM ROW ACCESSED FROM HOSPITAL ROAD,**  
**DODDINGTON**  
**PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 4 X DWELLINGS**

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that in the officer's report it states that this is an elsewhere location but since the application was refused planning approval has been given by the committee for three plots directly to the north of the site shown on the map on the presentation screen which also highlights some change in the character of the area. He added that when he looked at this, he recalled an application for which he was the agent for in 2018 under delegated powers which was 380 metres to the west and the bungalow was much further out of Doddington but on the same side of the road on Benwick Road and that was given approval, which was not a replacement and was considered under delegated approval.

Mr Hall explained that all of this site is in Flood Zone 1 and he has considered the Cambridge County Council Highway's comments who have no objection to the application, he has discussed them with the applicant and should the application be approved, like with the other applications there, it will be a requirement to provide a passing place, and they agree that it can be provided within the highway verge. He stated that should the application be approved then that passing place would have to be included and would form part of the technical part of the application and the applicant is aware that some improvements need to be undertaken.

Mr Hall expressed the opinion that since the first application was refused three years ago there are material planning changes and the actual site area red line has been reduced by about a quarter, and it brings it away from some of the back gardens in Askham Row. He explained that he knows it is indicative but he has also increased the number of dwellings because on the first application that was refused he was told it was under development and he made the point that the second reason for refusal in the officer's report is incorrect because it says the proposal is for three dwellings but on the application form and the indicative drawings submitted it states four.

Mr Hall added that directly to the north of this site, further plots have been approved, and the application site has not been used for agricultural use for at least 10 years. He referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the application site in relation to the other sites and made the point that there are lots of approvals that have been given in the vicinity since about 2020 and he does not consider this not part of Doddington.

Mr Hall explained that to the north of the site Mega Plants is located and there are numerous planning approvals, some of those are already built out, some sold and some of them are being built. He added that to the east Doddington Hospital is located and to the left there is Askham Care Home as well as further residential dwellings further past there.

Mr Hall added that earlier in 2018, he obtained a delegated approval for a further dwelling, which was not agriculturally tied, not a replacement dwelling and that was approved under delegated powers and, in his opinion, the application site abuts residential development. He made the point

that it is all located in Flood Zone 1 and is linear development, which is the same as Askham Row and the same as the plots that were approved to the north.

Mr Hall expressed the view that there have been numerous planning approvals here in the last six years and he knows that the highway improvements cannot be conditioned but they would have to come forward if the application is approved under a technical matters application because if not it would attract a highways objection. He expressed the view that the properties on Askham Row are very nice large properties which is what this application is for, and he is trying to match in with the character of the area and the map, in his opinion, demonstrates that it is not an elsewhere location and it does form part of Doddington.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is aware it is a planning in principle application and that Mr Hall has explained that the applicant would be prepared to contribute to the upgrade of passing places, however, she is concerned with regards to it being a 60mph area, which needs to be reduced and asked Mr Hall whether the applicant would consider applying for a speed reduction? Mr Hall confirmed that it is something that the applicant would do.
- Councillor Connor stated that he believes a speed reduction has already been applied for by Mr Cutteridge from Mega Plants as that formed a condition as part of one of his applications. Mr Hall stated that he believes that to be the case. Councillor Connor stated that it maybe another year before it is implemented and he added that this is a PIP application and this is only the first step obviously as there are still several hurdles in which to overcome to get full planning permission on this site.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Marks stated that there have been numerous planning applications in this area or around this area and he stated that with regards to material changes from three years ago when this first came in front of the committee there have been other approvals given around it and he does believe there are changes here. He made the point that it is not the greatest road in the world but, in his opinion, you would not be able to drive 60 mph down there on a good day. Councillor Marks added that a passing place is a community benefit which he thinks is a good thing and he welcomes the fact that it is something that the applicant is already aware of. He added that with regards to land usage, there are already some nice houses at the front and if the application mimics that regarding space, he can see very little wrong with the application, and he would be happy to support it.
- Councillor Benney stated that he noticed on his site visit that there are bungalows being built down there and bungalows that have been built out already which are further out in the open countryside than this is and they have all been approved. He added that the application will bring with it some betterment on the road and Mega Plants is nearby who have received approval for a café and that means there will be more people using the area. Councillor Benney expressed the view that if this improves the safety of the road by putting highway improvements along here, with a speed reduction, it will make the development better and will makes it safer for people using the road.

**Proposed by Councillor Marks, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation.**

Members did not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they believe that there has been material change in the area due to the number of planning approvals which have been given in the last three years and that the proposed highway improvements as well as the speed reduction will bring benefit.

*(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

**P87/25**

**F/YR25/0594/O**

**LAND NORTH OF 450 TO 454 MARCH ROAD, TURVES**

**ERECT 3 X DWELLINGS INVOLVING THE FORMATION OF ACCESSES**

**(OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED)**

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked how officers can state that the ecological test has failed because, in his opinion, it cannot have failed, it just has not taken place at the right time and questioned whether the application should be deferred. Hayleigh Parker-Haines responded that insufficient ecological information has been submitted and, therefore, that does form a reason for refusal.
- Councillor Mrs French expressed the view that the time to do the survey would have been through the breeding season from March and, therefore, it would be unreasonable to refuse the application before it can be completed.
- Councillor Connor stated that he recalls that officers did advise members previously, recommending to the committee that the breeding season was from March to September, but the committee placed a three-month timeframe on the application which was incompatible with the breeding season. He made the point that as a result the applicant is unable to undertake the survey as it does not fit in with the prescribed timescale anyway.
- Councillor Marks stated that as it appears that there is a grey area he would suggest that the application is deferred for another six months.
- Councillor Connor stated that it is evident that there is nothing new from the last application and the committee are in the same position as they were when the application was last considered and he asked the committee whether they agree to further defer the application.
- Councillor Benney made the point that if the application is deferred then it is likely that it will be considered under the new planning rules, which means it will not come back before the committee. Matthew Leigh stated that, as it currently stands, he does not know as at the current time there is no legislation at the moment, it normally takes over two months for secondary legislation to be laid, and the transitional arrangements are not yet known. He made the point that it is also not yet clear how the transitional arrangements will work.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the application is going to be deferred there are two reasons for refusal and if the application is deferred for an ecological report that may never come back to the committee then that would then be down to officers to decide on the reason for refusal in relation to Flood Zone 3. He questioned whether the application is deferred on both points or should the committee consider the Flood Zone element now.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen, pointing out the applications which have already been given permission in Flood Zone 3, and he presumes that an ecology report would have already been undertaken. He asked when the other dwellings were given approval? Hayleigh Parker-Haines confirmed that it was in 2023 and any ecological report that was submitted as part of that application would be out of date now and reference to that as part of the current application cannot be made. She added that since the determination of that application the guidance used on flood risk has changed as well.
- Councillor Marks stated that mitigation measures can be undertaken with regards to flood risk, so the concern is the ecological report if the committee wish to consider the application and make a determination.

- Matthew Leigh stated that the Legal Officer gave advice to the committee previously with regards to the habitat's regulations and as an authority it cannot be conditioned that it is likely to be acceptable in the future and that is the reason members deferred it previously. He added that those circumstances have not changed but if members are wishing to not have two issues stand up in the future it may be in their best interest to refuse it only on ecology grounds rather than deferring the application. Matthew Leigh stated that if the Council find that the only issue with this application is ecology that would be a material consideration in any future application.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and indicated that there is a blue line around an agreed build already which has not taken place yet and there is an out-of-date ecology report. He added that the builder could commence works tomorrow and badgers could have moved into there, but it seems that whatever wildlife would be on that site can be ignored, and there is the need to wait for an ecology report on the site next door. He added that the likelihood is that nothing has probably changed or if it has the adjacent site can still commence building whilst a development with a red line around it has to be stalled whilst an ecology report is undertaken and, in his view, there needs to be an element of common sense.
- The Legal Officer stated that the planning system requires that the Council considers each application as it comes in and the fact there may have been previous applications next door is a matter of planning history, but members could not today approve this application in the absence of the ecology report simply because there is a site next door which has an existing permission. He stated that the ecology report for the adjoining site is out of date and it would be entirely wrong for members to rely on that to approve this application.
- Matthew Leigh explained that the application next door was an outline application and if there has not been a reserved matters then there would still be the need for additional information. He made the point that there have been more case law recently which states that even on a same site you cannot rely on the fall back of an outline application for a full application when it comes to ecology. Matthew Leigh stated that the reality is that there is the requirement that officers need to have an ecology report to be able to support a scheme as a Council and without that members should not be looking to support this scheme.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the committee refuse the application solely on ecology and feel that Flood Zone 3 is acceptable here then Flood Zone 3 would not be an objection. He added that when the application comes back with an ecology report which is favourable then the application should be approved. Matthew Leigh stated that the decision of the committee would be a material consideration for any determination of a future application, with the planning history being a material consideration of significant weight.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the committee accept that it is a suitable site to build on, and members accept the Flood Zone 3, with everything built in Turves being in Flood Zone 3 then mitigation measures can be attached to the application. He added that if members deem that to be acceptable and then only refuse the application on ecology grounds and if it came back with a ecology report which was favourable then that can be overcome. Councillor Benney stated that if this came back and it had been refused on the flood zone, the fact it is in Flood Zone 3 cannot be got around and he would be minded to refuse the application on the ecology alone which would mean that an application could come back with the correct paperwork which could be approved. He stated that if the application is deferred with the changes that are coming in with the planning, it could be that this application goes straight to officers and then as it is in Flood Zone 3 it will get refused.
- Councillor Connor asked if the committee could make a strong recommendation which states that when the ecology has been completed that it comes back to this committee irrespective of whatever the new law planning laws states? Matthew Leigh stated that his understanding of the points that Councillor Benney has raised is that with any application members are not bound to follow the recommendation and they are able to look at the various reasons of refusal and consider whether they think some or all of them have merit. He added that if members agree with some but do not agree with others, members can refuse a scheme only on some of the reasons for refusal. Matthew Leigh explained that as

with any application, no decision means that automatically another application will have the same outcome or because of material considerations situations can change.

Members asked questions, made comments received responses as follows:

- Councillor Benney stated that if there had not been the other adjacent development then he may have agreed with officers. He added that from the public's perspective when the committee have already granted three dwellings and they are considering refusing the three dwellings next door, in his opinion, it looks poor but that is planning and that is how it works. Councillor Benney added that he does not want to see the dwellings refused and he would like to approve them, making the point that the issues of ecology can be overcome or another application would get round the ecology because they could undertake the ecology report. He stated that if the committee agree that it is Flood Zone 3, this may never come to planning committee again and in which case he believes it will be a flat refusal with Flood Zone 3 and the ecology. Councillor Benney expressed the view that it seems a cruel thing to do if the committee want it approved, but, in his view, the application needs to be refused but only on the ecology because the applicant can bring the paperwork forward to comply with the ecology aspect of it.
- The Legal Officer stated that he needs to caution members, he understands the rationale about the way forward but if members feel that Flood Zone 3 is not an issue then members should not be relying on the change in the future rules to defer or refuse the application and members should focus only on the planning issues. He added that members should not be making a decision based upon the future changes in the scheme of delegation because that is not a reason for making a planning decision.
- Councillor Connor stated that he believes the point that Councillor Benney was making is that there are three dwellings with extant planning permission and just for consistency's sake it would look odd if consideration was not given to the three next door on the same site.
- Matthew Leigh stated that he totally agrees with the point that the Legal Officer has made and added that what he has always said is that he would encourage members to refuse things on one reason when it would need to be deferred for a long time rather than deferring it, which would be consistent because it does become problematic. He added that if the site is in a flood zone that is fact and it cannot be changed and in officers' opinion there is not the level of detail to pass the sequential test. Matthew Leigh added that if members consider that the fact that the application is in the flood zone is not problematic, there will still then need to be consideration in the debate around the exceptions test and why it is acceptable and that would then form part of any minutes for the meeting as well.
- Councillor Benney stated that all of Turves is in Flood Zone 3 and, therefore, this means no development, with it not being good for a village to not have development, because villages die if they have no development and all the residents suffer from that. He added that he recognises the benefits of passing this application in Flood Zone 3 because if not Turves will die and there has been development throughout Turves including on the site of the old Public House. Councillor Benney made the point that he views the sequential test as a block to development and whilst he appreciates that it is policy, it does not look at all land usage. He asked officers what would happen if the application was approved without an ecology report? The Legal Officer explained that it would be a legally flawed decision because members are not taking into account the ecological information. Matthew Leigh stated that it would be as legally flawed as is possible when the legislation says do not do this, with the legislation around the considerations being just about ecology full stop and is around any decisions the Council makes, which, in his view, is dangerous.
- Councillor Marks made the point that members have an application in front of them, there is approval for the site next door and advice has been given by the Legal Officer, but the developer could start building tomorrow on the site next door. He added that the whole of Turves is in Flood Zone 3 but based on previous recently approved applications mitigation can be undertaken in flood zones. Councillor Marks acknowledged that there is not an ecology report but reiterated that there is approval for the site next door and as Councillor

Benney referred to, the former pub closed because there was not enough people supporting it due to there not being enough residents in Turves to support. He expressed the view that the most logical thing would be to approve this application, but he understands that legally it cannot be done without a favourable ecology report, so he feels that a mechanism needs to be found to bring this back, ideally to committee.

- Councillor Connor stated that he does not disagree with anything Councillor Benney or Marks have said but drew attention to the fact that seven or eight properties were approved opposite on the other side of the road, which has resulted in him being in favour of the other three and it was only this side of the road where there were any building plots left in Turves without going outside the village envelope, with the village envelope being from the second crossing gates in Turves all on that side of the road, right up past Burnthouse Lane until it meets agricultural land. Councillor Connor reiterated that seven or eight properties were approved approximately four or five years ago on the other side of the road so he does not see too much wrong with this application, it is in a flood zone, and this is never going to change but feels that he can support it. He added that he feels that the application should only be refused on the ecological report which he hopes can be carried out and can be brought back to the committee.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that it is only a few months away to get this survey undertaken and to be fair to the applicant and officers she would prefer to see the application deferred for 3 months to let them get their surveys carried out and then hopefully it will resolve the issue that is there.
- Councillor Connor stated that he would be minded deferring for 6 months.
- Councillor Benney asked for clarification as to whether it is being deferred only on the ecology? Councillor Connor stated that yes for it then to come back before the committee with the right paperwork and then the application could be approved.
- Matthew Leigh stated that the committee cannot partly approve an application, explaining that if it is deferred like other items have on a single issue that may well be resolved or not there will be an officer's recommendation based on that information and members will get to debate and make the decision. He explained that the judgment of the committee cannot be fettered through partly implying they are approving aspects of that application and his advice to members would not to be putting a time restriction on the deferral to allow the applicant to get the ecology report undertaken and then for officers to consider.
- Councillor Marks stated that there was an application in Manea for seven houses where the committee refused it and the Planning Inspector came along and said that he could not see a problem. He added that if the Inspector looked at this with the properties next door that already have permission and if it had to go to an appeal for whatever reason, it has been turned down because it has come back to the planners as opposed to the committee again so he would hope logic would prevail.
- Councillor Benney stated that he is minded to approve the application and he added that members are content with the Flood Zone 3 issue and the committee accept the application without ecology and, therefore, approve it. He made the point that members have been given advice that to choose that course of action is dangerous, but that is down to a committee to decide. Councillor Benney expressed the view that if the committee does not feel that is acceptable then that is down to the committee.
- The Legal Officer added that if members decide to go ahead and want to approve the application, notwithstanding they are completely as it were blind in relation to the ecology, his advice would be that is a clear unlawful decision and he would have to report members decision to the Monitoring Officer. He stated that it would be an unlawful if it was challenged and it would be successfully challenged.
- Councillor Benney stated that he has reflected on the legal advice given by officers and as the proposal seems to be unlawful, he will withdraw that proposal.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she suggests that the application be deferred and for the committee to consider the advice provided to the committee by the Head of Planning. She added that the committee disregarded his advice previously when he had advised members that a three-month period was not sufficient timescale to defer the application. Councillor

Mrs French added that the Head of Planning is now advising the committee not to add a time frame but that does concern her. She added that she would still like to see the application deferred so that officers work with the applicant in order to allow the survey to come out.

- Councillor Connor asked Councillor Mrs French to clarify her proposal. Councillor Mrs French stated that the application is to be deferred in its complete entirety on the two reasons as that is the advice given by officers.
- Councillor Marks asked for confirmation that the issue of Flood Zone 3 cannot be removed from the deferral? Councillor Connor stated that it must be included.
- Councillor Benney asked how long the application is likely to be deferred? Councillor Connor stated until the end of September.
- Councillor Benney stated that his suggestion was going to be the end of the year which gives the applicant 12 months and then if they have not brought it back in 12 months then it needs refusal.
- Matthew Leigh stated that reports have been brought back for items that had been deferred by the committee from before he was in post and where they have not progressed, they were brought back to the committee with a recommendation of refusal, and he recalls that they have been refused. He explained that there does not necessarily need to be a time per se because once the opportunity for the ecology report has been undertaken it should come to officers in a timely manner. Matthew Leigh stated that if members do want to add a time limit then he would encourage the end of the year would be a reasonable time.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Murphy and agreed that the application be DEFERRED until the end of the year.**

*(Councillor Connor declared, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he had been lobbied on this application)*

**P88/25**

**F/YR25/0807/PIP**

**LAND SOUTH OF 6 BRIDGE LANE, WIMBLINGTON**

**PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE TO ERECT UP TO 7 X DWELLINGS**

Alan Davies presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that all of this site is in Flood Zone 1, just like the land that was given approval three months ago directly to the west of the application site and it does abut residential development to the north and is situated, in his opinion, within the development footprint of Wimblington which is a growth village under LP3 allowing for a small village extension and the application is for up to seven dwellings. He expressed the opinion that the site is within the development footprint of Wimblington and he referred to the map on the presentation screen which shows that it is immediately adjacent to an approval that was given 3 months ago to the west.

Mr Hall stated that he has discussed the Highways comments with the applicant himself and if the application is approved, there will be the need to be some highway improvements, with the site directly to the west having to also do some highway improvements which include a layby shown in the highway verge on this side of Bridge Lane which can be achieved and the applicant knows if this goes forward and if it is approved at the technical matters application stage, the highway improvements would need to be shown. He referred to the adjacent site to the west that was approved three months ago by members, with that site also being in-depth development and there was no reason for refusal on that one for it being located back from the public highway, but on this site, there is, and the application is not going as deep in-depth development as that site there.

Mr Hall explained that, if approved, the application would also eventually lead to the shed on site being demolished. He referred to the presentation screen, and pointed out that in this area of

Wimblington, there has been numerous approvals in the last six years and a lot of those are being built out and some of them have been built out to the north and directly to the west.

Mr Hall made the point that those applications are off Bridge Lane, Eaton Estate, March Road, with the character and the area having changed and is changing. He stated that all of the site is in Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's map and it is within the built-up form of Wimblington, with there being numerous other approvals in very close proximity and a lot of those have started.

Mr Hall made the point that the applicant is fully aware about the highway improvements having spoken to the applicant about that and, in his opinion, he does not believe that the site could be classed as overdevelopment either as the proposal is for up to seven dwellings which all have at least a third garden area. He added that he knows it is indicative, but it shows members what might come forward if it were to be approved, with the technical matters application leading to the shed being demolished and the highway improvements to Bridge Lane, which will benefit everybody who is going to use Bridge Lane.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is pleased to hear that if the application is approved then the shed will be demolished as that has caused issues over many months. Mr Hall stated that he agrees with that point.
- Councillor Marks stated that, with regards to the shed and access, he is aware that a large steam engine was being kept in the shed which was moved by transporter on numerous occasions and, therefore, it must be possible to get a lorry up and down the road, and, therefore, the road is not that narrow. He added that there are passing places as well and with the removal of the shed he questioned whether that would mean that the steam engine may actually go elsewhere which would stop HGV access? Mr Hall confirmed that is correct, explaining that the site that has been approved recently to the west has had to undertake highway improvements to the site on the other side to the north owned by MJS and the HGV movements would also stop as the steam engine will be moved elsewhere.
- Councillor Marks asked for confirmation that on the opposite side of the road there was Clark's haulage company with a number of lorries as well. Mr Hall confirmed that this is the site that is owned by MJS, which has permission for 16, which was a haulage yard quite a few years ago.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Benney stated that he has reviewed the reasons for refusal and does not consider 7 dwellings to be large-scale in-depth development. He made the point that when the bypass went around Wimblington all of the land will eventually come in for building at some point. Councillor Benney stated that the committee approved 81 houses at the top on the Belway site and there have been other applications approved a few months ago along with an application on the site adjoining this that has been approved. He stated that this parcel of land will come forward for development at some point and the committee have an application in front of them which needs to be determined. Councillor Benney referred to the second reason for refusal and stated that reason has already been broken due to the application next door to the current site already being approved as it has changed the character of the landscape and every house that the committee passes has changed that. He expressed the view that Wimblington has changed in this whole area, and he does not see that this application will do any more harm as it is just for seven houses. Councillor Benney stated that Bridge Lane is narrow, but the committee have been advised that there will be highway improvements as the applicant is quite happy to pay for them, and if he does not bring those forward then it will not get built out either. He stated that he has reviewed the three reasons for refusal and, in his opinion, they do not add up and as a local councillor he is pleased to see that the shed will no longer be an issue and by it no longer being there it must improve the quality of life for the people who live in the area. Councillor Benney added that nobody wants anything built and always wants a field behind their home

but that is not achievable, expressing the view this is a much better scheme and a better solution for some of the problems that have been on the site since day one. He expressed the view that by getting rid of the shed he hopes that it will improve the quality of life for neighbours, and he hopes that this application will go some way to pleasing the residents that live around there. Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that the application should be approved especially as there was an application approved on the adjacent site last year. He added that he does not believe it is large scale development, it is for seven houses and if it was for 20 then he would consider it as large scale.

- Councillor Marks stated that he wholeheartedly agrees with everything that Councillor Benney has stated as this site has been a nightmare ever since he became a member of the committee with there always being issues with the shed so by removing the shed the neighbouring properties will be happier. He stated that when he saw the initial photograph and went on site it almost becomes a gated community which may be a benefit as it is developed. Councillor Marks made the point that for seven houses there is likely to be seven to fourteen vehicles per day up and down the road but there are highway improvements that are likely to be undertaken. He stated that the committee approved the houses next door and that part of Wimblington is changing quite drastically and he will be happy to support the application.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has noted that one of the concerns of the Parish Council is drainage and flooding, but this issue has been discussed at length at previous meetings concerning other applications and, in her view, if this is approved the three developers should get together and actually improve the drainage system down there.
- Councillor Connor stated that it just seems a natural progression to him and to remove the shed it will make neighbouring properties far easier down there and will be a community benefit so he will be supporting this scheme.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the application be APPROVED against officer's recommendation.**

Members do not support the recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application to be in-depth large-scale development, other applications have been approved adjacent to the site and there are proposed highway improvements which will assist with traffic flow in Bridge Lane.

*(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally. He further declared that he did meet with the applicant when he was a Portfolio Holder for the port but has not had any further dealings. He stated that he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Connor declared that he knows the applicant as he owns a scrap metal recycling yard and he used to own one but has since retired but he has never had any business dealings with him or socialised with the applicant. He further declared that he did meet with the applicant along with Councillor Marks on another matter that was not connected to planning. He stated that he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Marks declared that he met with the applicant once along with the Chairman but the meeting was not in relation to planning or planning issues and he does not know the applicant socially)*

P89/25

F/YR25/0863/PIP

LAND NORTH EAST OF 134 LONDON ROAD, CHATTERIS

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR UP TO 4 X DWELLINGS

David Grant presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that there have been numerous approvals given in this location since 2019, one of those was under delegated powers, and there have been 17 dwellings approved at the location already which, in his view, proves that the area forms part of Chatteris due to the number of adjacent approvals. He added that some of the dwellings on the site have been completed and are occupied and some are under construction.

Mr Hall explained that he is working on some of the development at the current time and it is at the building regulation stage as people have purchased them as they want to move to the area. He referred to the Google map and added that the development could be considered as infill between the Four-Seasons Garden Centre and the dwelling next door.

Mr Hall explained that all of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and there are no objections from the Town Council or from members of the public. He referred to the presentation screen indicating the application site, explaining that all of the other approvals in this area in the last six years include those that are built, lived in and sold which, in his view, demonstrates that there is a need.

Mr Hall explained that southwest of the application site is the Four Seasons Garden Centre and café which needs the support to succeed. He expressed the opinion that the area is part of Chatteris so the character of the area has changed and continues to do so.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Marks stated that it has been mentioned that there is no pavement, however, a new garden centre has been built, and people like to walk to a garden centre more than they like to walk to their houses. He added that he agrees with the point made by Mr Hall that the proposal could be almost classed as infill and made the point that the Chatteris boundary seems to move further to the bottom of Ferry Hill as you come round the corner where the Chatteris sign is. Councillor Marks explained that he is aware that it is in a 50mph area, but Chatteris Town Council are looking to apply for a speed reduction. He added that several self-build properties on Stocking Drove have been approved behind Ferry Farm and there is a footpath there but there is not one along Stocking Drove which is a busy road, and he will look to support the application.
- Councillor Benney stated that members keep being told that this location is not within Chatteris but, in his opinion, if you travel to the bottom of Ferry Hill, there is a sign which says 'Welcome to Chatteris and Welcome to Fenland' so Chatteris starts at the bottom of Ferry Hill rather than where the new Hallam Land development is. He explained that all of the other dwellings have been approved on the basis that members feel Chatteris is further out. Councillor Benney expressed the view that it is a shame that the footpath was not introduced when the garden centre was built as it should have been incorporated but it appears to have been missed. He expressed the opinion that it is located in Chatteris, and he will be supporting the proposal.
- Councillor Murphy stated that the photographs shown in the officer's presentation did not demonstrate any development at all, however, there are several dwellings located along the road with more development taking place. He made the point that Chatteris is expanding out towards Ferry Hill and the development is filling up the land all the way through and he welcomes the development. Councillor Murphy added that once the development starts of those applications which are yet to commence building then there will be homes all the way along the road and he wholeheartedly welcomes this development. He added that Chatteris Town Council would like to see a footpath from Sutton Goult which is already positioned down one side, but it would be nice to see it extended down one side of the road to the Four Seasons Garden Centre. Councillor Murphy expressed the opinion that he believes the application is a great application and it should be approved.
- David Grant stated that members have made reference to other developments in the area and they have referred to the 'Welcome to Chatteris' sign which is where they consider the built-up settlement starts. He added that if members chose to approve the application and

other schemes of three and four dwellings are considered to be infill dwellings in an unsustainable location, there will be no Section 106 contributions offered. David Grant added that members have made reference to an application determined by members in December, F/YR25/0796/PIP, and explained that this application was 350 metres from the built-up settlement and was served by a footpath on the opposite side of London Road to the south. He made the point that the proposed application is more than twice the separation distance from the built-up settlement and is not served by a pedestrian footpath on either side of the highway which has a speed limit of 50mph. David Grant stated that the examples given on the plan within the officer's presentation including Gaul Tree Lodge and the area to the south continuing past 120 London Road towards what is considered to be the built-up settlement of Chatteris is served by a footpath and some dwellings have been approved in outline, PIP and full. He stated that no footpath is proposed for this development and concerns have been expressed by the Highway Officer and Chatteris Town Council.

- Councillor Mrs French stated that there is no expectation for Section 106 contributions for 4 dwellings and as it is a PIP application they would like a footpath, but it cannot be requested under a PIP.
- Councillor Benney stated that as it is a PIP a footpath cannot be requested. He added that he would like a speed survey to be undertaken in order to justify a speed reduction along with the introduction of a footpath if it is feasible.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Murphy and decided that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation.**

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application to be in an elsewhere location.

*(Councillor Benney declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he attends Chatteris Town Council meetings but takes no part in planning)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

P90/25

F/YR25/0834/O

LAND WEST OF 78-88 STATION ROAD, MANEA

ERECT UP TO 8 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

Tracy Ranger presented the report to members

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent, and Archie Hirson, the applicant. Mr Hall stated that the applicants have lived in Manea for 30 years and there is a material planning change with the application due to the fact the proposed dwellings are smaller 2 and 3 bedroomed properties which are more affordable rather than the larger dwellings which were applied for and refused previously. He made the point

that smaller properties have been approved previously, such as Lavender Mill Bungalow at Fallow Corner in the last 18 months, which are in Flood Zone 3.

Mr Hall stated that there are no objections from the Highway Authority, Environment Agency or Ecology and all of the buildings will be located outside of the Middle Level Commissioners 9 metre strip. He explained that the application site is located within 390 metres of easy walking distance to the train station and there is an adoptable footpath from the site all the way to the north.

Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen and identified other planning permissions which have been approved in Manea and are located in Flood Zone 3, located both to the north and the south of the site, with the map demonstrating that there are a lot of properties to the north, east and south of the site and the proposal is not in an elsewhere location which the officer has also confirmed in their report. He made the point that in the officer's report it states that the principle of development is acceptable given its location and the proposal complies with LP15 and LP16 and, in his opinion, there have been other planning approvals given to dwellings much further out and to those adjacent to the site.

Mr Hirson explained that he has lived in Manea for the last 30 years and planted the hedge on the Wimblington Road and whilst both himself and his brother are not developers they wish to seek an opportunity to give back to the community. He stated that it is a modest development in an area of Manea which suits this type of development and will bring the opportunity forward for families to live together which suits the village of Manea as it is a multigenerational area.

Mr Hirson stated that the proposal is the ideal opportunity to bring honest housing forward for honest people at a time where it is fundamentally and crucially needed in a location where it benefits from the infrastructure invested in Manea Train Station and the surrounding area.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that there had been two previous applications, one in March 2024 for four dwellings refused and November 2022 for four dwellings which was also refused and she asked for clarification as to what has changed since the last application was refused in 2024, particularly now the number of dwellings has doubled. Mr Hall explained that the previous applications were for large four and five bedroomed dwellings, there has been a compete rethink on the proposal and smaller dwellings have been put forward, which has meant more of a dense development and had the application been for a smaller number of dwellings it would have meant a significant under development of the area.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French referred to 5.7 of the officer's report relating to the Middle Level Commissioners and stated that if planning permission is granted it does not necessarily mean that it will get built out as there are strict rules with regards to the 9-metre access strip.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Connor and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per the officer's recommendation.**

*(Councillor Marks declared that the applicant is his former doctor and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon. He further declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Manea Parish Council but takes no part in planning)*

*(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

**P91/25**

**F/YR25/0739/O**

**LAND SOUTH WEST OF 176 HIGH ROAD, GOREFIELD**

**ERECT UP TO 1 X SELF-BUILD/CUSTOM DWELLING, INVOLVING THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)**

This application was withdrawn.

**P92/25**

**F/YR25/0806/PIP**

**LAND SOUTH OF LAVENDER MILL CLOSE, FALLOW CORNER DROVE, MANEA**

**PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR UP TO 9 X DWELLINGS**

Danielle Brooke presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that the site has been in the ownership of the family for over 50 years and they farm 750 acres of land. He added that a yield map was submitted for the application site but unfortunately was not submitted on time, however, officers have included it to demonstrate the part of the field where the black grass is grown is of a poor yield compared to the rest of the field.

Mr Hall stated that Manea is a growth village under Policy LP3, where a small extension may be appropriate and the application site, in his opinion, abuts permanent development to the west, and he stated that over half of the objections are not from Fenland residents whereas all of the supporters are from Manea residents. He referred to the presentation screen and pointed out that to the north of the application site there is continuous residential development comprising of large individual houses and the hatched areas demonstrate the approvals given with some of them being in flood zones, with the dwellings located to the east being far closer to the Ouse Washes and pointing out that the blue hatched area received planning in principle approval for 5 dwellings, and the outline application has been submitted.

Mr Hall stated that he appreciates that there needs to be an ecology report submitted as there must be biodiversity net gain. He explained that along one side of Fallow Corner Drove to the west there have been properties which have already been built out and referred to the presentation screen, pointing out a hatched area in green located in the corner which was approved by the committee and that in 2018 a large dwelling was built out of the ground by 1.82 metres, with landscaped surroundings, which, in his view, looks extremely nice where it has been built on Fallow Corner Drove.

Mr Hall stated that Anglian Water and the Environment Agency raise no objections to the application, and he added that the applicants are members of Drainage Boards and are, therefore, aware of their responsibilities with regards to drainage. He added that houses along Fallow Corner Drove have septic tanks and treatment plants and the application site is a large site and it is expected that it will also be on the same method of disposal to negate extra pressure on Anglian Waters foul water treatment plant in Manea.

Mr Hall explained that on the indicative plan which was submitted he has not shown the layout of houses, but he has included all the large highway verge and there has been no objection from the

Highway Authority. He explained that it will allow for some community benefit such as the widening of Fallow Corner Drove or the introduction of a large layby if the application was approved and it would form part of the technical matters stage of the application process.

Mr Hall reiterated that Manea is a growth village, this is a small village extension in his opinion and is compliant with policy LP3. He expressed the view that there are numerous other approvals much further east and further down Fallow Corner Drove.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked for clarification as to where the location to Lavender Mill is sited? Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen, explaining that the yellow hatching located directly opposite the application site is an area of land which has a bungalow on it which has approval for several dwellings, with the green hatched area being the mill and the area further to the west is where there are two further houses which have already been built out.
- Councillor Purser asked for clarity with regards to the agricultural land which is believed to have a poor yield. Mr Hall explained that the land is still used for agriculture and referred to the yield map pointing out the area which has a poor yield.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Marks explained that the application site is located within his ward and he has undertaken a great deal of work with Lavender Mill and the residents who live in the area and whilst he appreciates that people can look at the view across a field, he also notes that the piece of land falls into an area that could be built on. He added that it is only a PIP application and members do need to be consistent when they are considering flood zones and they have approved other applications in the vicinity. Councillor Marks made the point that the land has black grass on it which is dreadful to get rid of and he questioned what the land will be producing in years to come. He stated that when considering land usage, the Lavender Mill application has resulted in an improvement in drainage and there are no longer any flooding issues on the corner, with the Lavender Mill site discharging into the Anglian Water system and he highlighted the area to members by referring them to the presentation screen. Councillor Marks added that for those dwellings which are connected to septic tanks, in his view, that is a bonus and for the proposed dwellings to be connected to septic tanks is a bonus as it is not putting more pressure on Anglian Water for the sewage work. He referred to the presentation screen and indicated an area which has been given permission for 115 houses and the water from those homes will be discharging directly into the mains system which is going to cause issues. Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and pointed out that the area is a disused mill which is being used as a garage and he added that he understands that, in time, it will be removed and become a barn conversion.
- The Legal Officer stated that the application is subject to an objection from Natural England, and the habitats regulations requires that a planning authority has to conduct a screening exercise considering the ecological information that it is provided with. He added that as a result of the screening exercise it then must undertake an appropriate assessment as there are the SPA and SSI areas nearby, however, at the current time, members do not have any environmental information to support the application or any ecological information. The Legal Officer explained that if members are minded to approve the application, the habitat regulations would prevent an approval from being granted in the absence of ecological information. He explained that it would not only be a breach of guidance, but it would also be a breach of the regulations and as a result would mean it is an unlawful decision being taken against the regulations if approval were to be granted.
- Councillor Connor stated that as this application is for a PIP which is only concerned with land usage, the SSI and SPA can be considered at a later stage in the application process. The Legal Officer stated that is not correct as members are being asked today to determine an application in principle and conditions cannot be imposed on a PIP and even if they could it would not be possible to override the need to consider whether screening is

required. He added that members cannot grant permission and further down the line it may become apparent that there is going to be an adverse impact on the SSI or area of special conservation.

- Councillor Connor questioned that if the further detail does not meet the required specifications then it will not get built out anyway. The Legal Officer explained that the regulations stated that the Council does not grant a PIP application in the absence of any ecological supporting information. Matthew Leigh added that it is his understanding that the legislation is not solely based on planning and it is about any decision that the Council makes and it is the legislation which impacts on any decision that the Council makes. He added that the legislation imposes its own restrictions on planning outside of the normal decisions. The Legal Officer added that is correct and he is focussing on the application before members and the committee cannot lawfully grant the application but it can be deferred or refused but it cannot be granted otherwise it would be in breach of the regulations.
- Councillor Marks questioned that if the committee voted to defer the application it could be deferred on just the one item? The Legal Officer stated that technically yes, but the whole application would have to come back to members for reconsideration.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that there appears to be anomalies when considering PIP applications. The Legal Officer explained that he is advising the committee that English Nature have pointed out that the committee do not have the ecological information before them to make a decision in principle to approve the application. He added that if the applicant supplies the missing information then English Nature may then be happy but at the current time the information is not present.
- Councillor Connor stated that the Legal Officer has advised the committee that they can refuse or defer the application based on the legal advice provided.
- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that based on the legal advice provided the application should be deferred in order to receive the ecological information and he questioned whether it can just be deferred on that aspect. The Legal Officer clarified that the application cannot be split into different elements for deferral and the application needs to be deferred in its entirety.
- Councillor Mrs French questioned whether there is going to be a timescale added to this application to allow the applicant to provide the missing information? Matthew Leigh explained that the advice that he would give the committee would be not to place a restriction on a deferral because if there is an issue to be resolved then that needs to be overcome.
- Councillor Murphy requested clarification that the advice that members are being given is to defer the application. Councillor Connor confirmed that is correct.

It was proposed by Councillor Murphy to refuse the application, which did not receive a seconder and, therefore, this proposal failed.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be DEFERRED for the applicant to provide ecological information.**

*(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he has been lobbied on this application. He further declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Manea Parish Council but takes no part in planning)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

P93/25

F/YR25/0802/PIP

**LAND NORTH WEST OF 176 HIGH ROAD ACCESSED FROM HASOCK HILL  
DROVE, GOREFIELD**

**PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 9 X DWELLINGS**

Danielle Brooke presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Lorena Hodgson of Gorefield Parish Council. Councillor Hodgson explained that she is the Chairman of Gorefield Parish Council and she has lived in the village for 25 years whilst other councillors have lived there all their lives. She stated that the Parish Council support the officer's recommendation of refusal as per the executive summary in relation to location, land and the number of dwellings.

Councillor Hodgson stated that the location is in the open countryside and Hassock Hill Drove is a 60mph road, with the site having been a horse field for at least the last 25 years since she has known it, with flooding in that end and there is always a big pool there. She stated that the site is located outside of the Council's own Local Plan and is located in the highest flood level, with Anglian Water having commented on sewage and surface water and, in her view, it relates to the flood zone, and the water needs to go somewhere.

Councillor Hodgson referred to the issue of individual cess pits, which if you have got 14 houses means there will be a lot of tractors coming to collect a lot of sewage and the waste plants attributed to the houses are going to be small and will require regular emptying. She stated that the reason the application is before the committee is due to the letters of support and they refer to the proposal improving the street scene, infill, vitality, viability and the local economy, but at 9.4 of the report there is no previous improvement when that has been brought up in the past and those who are supporting the application are not supporting it with any planning consideration as referenced earlier.

Councillor Hodgson made the point that Gorefield is a small village in the Local Plan and the threshold has already been breached from 33 dwellings and now there are 85 already further into the village nearby with the five that are being built now which are already causing problems as they are large houses and access is already a problem as well as speeding cars. She explained that was approved last year and the Parish Council also objected to that application for the same reasons as today and they were disappointed with that decision last year because they have seen that the problems that they had objected to have now come true.

Councillor Hodgson made the point that the application is for nine dwellings but with the inclusion of the other five dwellings that will mean that there are 14 dwellings. She expressed the view that the sequential test should be district wide, but it is not and, in her view, that makes a difference as there are plenty of other places that can take development.

Councillor Hodgson added that she finds it interesting that the application amounts to 18 dwellings per hectare as locally it is 3.2 one side of the road and 8 to the other and density is part of the consideration for planning in principle applications. She stated that the Gorefield village sign was moved last year by one of the developers for the recent development, but it was right at the edge of the village with a factory opposite.

Councillor Hodgson highlighted that the view for people all coming out onto that road is a factor as the road is bouncy and visibility to the left will be difficult and using the crossroads will also be

problematic. She made the point that the committee have refused other applications with less issues than this application has and she asked the committee to consider refusing the application.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that the site has been in the applicant's family for over 50 years, which also used to include 167 High Road, which was sold a while ago, and has not been used as agricultural land for over 20 years and he referred to the presentation screen and pointed out the site which he considers to be part of Gorefield. He referred to Policy LP12 of the Local Plan where there are properties all at the front that are not shown on the map that were approved and he referred to policy LP16d which refers to making a positive contribution to the area.

Mr Hall sated that the site to the south was given planning approval by the committee and works have commenced on those plots which have all been sold with one already being built out, with these properties being approved in 2023 in Flood Zone 3 and they have been sold as people want to live there. He explained that he has reviewed the highway comments with the applicant and they are fully aware that a speed survey would need to be undertaken for the site and they will engage with a highways consultant to consider a possible reduction in the speed limit.

Mr Hall made the point that it is an indicative arrangement which has been submitted, and the Planning Officer has referred to that in her presentation, and the layout does show members what might be allowed on this site if it is approved, with there being more than adequate access within the site for a bin lorry, parking, turning, a fire engine and to exit in a forward gear within the site. He stated that one of the reasons for refusal is overdevelopment and the indicative proposal he has submitted for nine dwellings clearly shows that all those properties would have much more than a third garden area, adequate parking and be a mixture of properties.

Mr Hall referred to an earlier application in Doddington where it was considered by officers to be inefficient use of land, but with this application it is over development and there was a time where the ratio was 30 dwellings per hectare, but this is obviously a lot a lot less. He referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the site in red, and pointed out that to the east, north and south there a number of properties right next to this site, directly to the south a site was approved in 2023, and all of the properties have been sold, making the point that it is up to the members to decide whether the proposal forms part of the built-up form of Gorefield.

Mr Hall added that to the west of Hassock Hill Road it is open Fen land, even to the south here there are factory buildings, and dwellings all continuous to the east. He explained that, during the application process, the applicant was proactive and he provided an email which was sent to officers from Jonathan Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of Diamond Learning Partnership Trust and read from this e-mail which stated "the heads have forwarded me your latest email and ask me to respond. You'll understand this is a tricky situation for us to work in. So, I think the planning application and any support for the school need to be separated. However, if it's helpful, I thought it might be sensible to point you towards the document below on the County Council's website that shows in the future we are likely to have a falling pupil role and therefore growth in the area would help ensure we can continue to provide the high quality education we want for the community. You can open the document etc. the building is in a poor state of repair through age, not neglect and some much-needed investment required."

Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen which showed a table of data taken from the County Council website and that information was provided by the applicant and it shows for 2024 to 2025 total school places are 100 for Gorefield Primary School then numbers decrease between 2029 to 2034 from 100 to 84, with in the small print it states that major changes in future house building will also impact intake and cohort changes. He stated that there is an opportunity here, where a development such as the proposal with a mixture of homes, could support this school.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that this is a planning in principle application for nine dwellings and if it is approved, they do not have to supply any section 106 contributions. She added that she has listened to the point made concerning the school and stated that she is unsure whether those figures provided would be correct. Councillor Mrs French added that the speed reduction is badly needed, and she asked whether the two houses at the top form part of the ownership of this site or is a separate applicant? Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen and explained that the properties just below the red line to the south were owned by this applicant and he sold all those plots off. He added that he did formerly own those five plots and he has sold all of them off. Councillor Mrs French made the point that it appears it was the applicant's whole site which then makes the number of dwellings 11 which would then make it subject to Section 106 contributions.
- Councillor Benney questioned whether the applicant intends to provide anything to the school to help with the poor state of repair? Mr Hall explained that the applicant has spoken to the school and Jonathan Lewis, the Chief Executive Officer, has responded. He added that a speed reduction has been discussed and as Councillor Mrs French has stated that if the application is approved then it would be necessary to look at affordable housing and Section 106 contributions which he would be happy to go to the school and for an amount to be agreed with officers.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she was under the impression that the number of dwellings was 11 but Mr Hall has confirmed that it is 14 and, therefore, that means it is now subject to Section 106 and affordable housing contributions, and she asked officers for clarification. Matthew Leigh explained that, when considering planning in principle (PIP) applications and legislation, if it is seen that an applicant has intentionally split a site to avoid financial contributions the Council can either refuse or seek additional contributions. He added that as this is a PIP, additional contributions cannot be sought because there is no legal mechanism in which to do so. Matthew Leigh explained that that there is case law on this aspect which looks at matters such as ownership, whether it could be classed as one development or was it one planning unit, which is more complex and there is a requirement to actually look at this in a whole way and assess the planning balance. He expressed the opinion that if members are concerned about this, he would advise that the best thing the committee can do is to defer it on this one item and officers can bring back a supplementary report that explains the case law, which will give officers time to look into this point and provide members with some information.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to the earlier application in Berryfield where there are 15 additional dwellings and not one penny towards any kind of affordable home or Section 106. She expressed the view that it appears that there is a policy for one application and there is another policy for another one and the planning policies appear to be contradicting each other. Matthew Leigh stated that they are not contradicting each other, and the policy acknowledges when a scheme is not viable and it is evidenced and independently reviewed then the NPPF accepts that there may be times where contributions are not sought. He added that the Council are trying to work with statutory consultees to have a better understanding of the harm that has happened from this ongoing shortfall in contributions. Matthew Leigh added that Full Council has now agreed to move forward on a new Local Plan and as part of that officers will be looking to bring forward an IDP (Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and other aspects which will give officers a lot more information and will actually be infinitely more helpful for officers to advise members and come to recommendations on viability. He explained that when considering this application there is no viability in front of the committee because that has not been looked at.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that there will be no new Local Plan until at least 2027/28 and it will not resolve the applications that are being submitted. Matthew Leigh stated that the IDP will help because that will give officers evidence and it is the evidence base which is needed. He added going forward as soon as any application is submitted it will mean that officers will be able to be a lot stricter because the evidence based on the new Local Plan is

still material consideration.

- Councillor Benney asked for confirmation as to whether a Section 106 Agreement can be undertaken in conjunction with a PIP and he was advised that you cannot. He added that if it came back in as a full application then if it was felt at that stage with the information provided, an assessment could be made as to whether there are any 106 contributions from that. He added that there is a live document within the Council that says that north of the A47 contributions do not need to be provided. Matthew Leigh stated that this document is no longer valid as this was an evidence base for the previous plan and the evidence basis for the new Local Plan is a material consideration, they are not policies but if a new housing needs assessment is undertaken and the evidence shows that there is a need for four bed houses or a need for one bed houses or whatever a new housing needs assessment would help the Council change the housing mix it was looking for. Matthew Leigh added that when considering infrastructure delivery, if information arises that shows that certain areas have a unbelievable shortfall in education or NHS and schemes in that area are not able to be self-sustaining in relation to contributions, it is much more likely that they will be refused because there is clear demonstrable harm whereas at the moment the IDP is relatively out of date itself.
- Councillor Benney stated that with this application as a PIP, whether it has got five houses or 15 houses on it, it does not make any difference at this stage, and it will be dealt with in a later application that follows on from this. Matthew Leigh explained that there is a cap on the number of dwellings that you can submit in a PIP and that goes hand in hand with the guidance on NPPF in relation to majors because of that requirement. He explained that the issue with this application is to ascertain whether or not arguably they have intentionally split the site and provided two different schemes and that is what Councillor Mrs French has asked. Matthew Leigh explained that is something that could be used as a reason to recommend refusal on a PIP if committee think that actually the site could accommodate more or that they have brought forward two schemes that are separate. He added that if members accept this is nine dwellings and do not look any deeper then that is the end of the matter but if members recommend approval and go against officer's recommendation and approve the scheme, Councillor Mrs French has raised an issue that has not formed a consideration and he explained that he is not comfortable in really going into too much detail on the specifics of this application because information is not before members as a committee.
- Councillor Marks stated that the gentleman has sold some plots but it is not known what has happened historically or what could happen in the future. Matthew Leigh stated that is correct to some extent but there is case law in relation to certain matters that mean that is not the case and there is case law that says if you split a site consciously then that should be read as one site irrespective of the number being considered.
- The Legal Officer stated that site aggregation is a known issue, a known problem for most planning authorities and he has not looked into this in detail either and he explained that if members are concerned that is what has happened with this application then it should be deferred so that officers can give proper advice when it is reconsidered.
- Councillor Marks stated that the committee are considering the application before them and if it is felt that there is some underhand action which has gone on behind the scenes previously then surely that is for Legal and Planning Officers to consider and, in his opinion, the committee should move forward with the application.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she went to the application site and from what she saw and read in the report she would have agreed to go with the officer's recommendation to refuse but considering the houses that are already there along with the two being finished off, the proposed nine dwellings, in her opinion, will finish off that part of the village. She added that next to that there is another dwelling so it could be classed as an infill.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that there has been a great deal of focus on historic matters in relation to the site and members need to consider what is proposed in front of

them and whether it is acceptable or not. He added that there has been some properties sold off previously, but that along with more houses will probably enhance the area. Councillor Marks made the point that the report from the school makes interesting reading, and there are local facilities which need supporting so he is minded to grant the application.

- Councillor Benney stated that he was in support of the other houses and when he visited the site he was really surprised how nice they look and nice houses on the entrance to a village sets the scene for the village and the houses that are being built there look really nice. He stated that the application that is in front of committee is what members should be focussing on and Section 106 agreements cannot be tied to a PIP and if it comes back in with a later application with speed reductions introduced here he thinks it is only right, but planning is about land usage. Councillor Benney added that there is community benefit which comes with the application when considering the school numbers and the school needs support as the numbers are projected to fall and the only way the school number are likely to improve is to build houses and bring people here. He added that schools need to be retained as they are a major part of any development in any town or village and if you do not put houses there, schools will close and all the children in the village will end up being bussed off to somewhere else like Wisbech. Councillor Benney stated that the Parish Councillor stated that Gorefield has been overdeveloped as it was earmarked for 33 and it has got 85, yet the school numbers are falling still and that does not make sense in his view. He added that the school is a major part of an area and once a school is lost, it will never return and, in his opinion, he thinks the people of Gorefield deserve this to see the village grow, keep the pub open if it has one and the shop open.
- Councillor Connor stated that he likes to see villages grow by keeping local facilities open and he added that other villages have suffered as they have lost so many of their facilities. He added that the speed reduction is also a benefit to be considered, and Councillor Mrs French stated that cannot be included under a PIP. Matthew Leigh stated that Councillor Mrs French has suggested that there are material considerations that weigh in favour and as this is a PIP, it has to be looked at just on land use as to whether it is acceptable or not.
- Councillor Mrs French stated if the application is approved, when it goes for outline reserved matters then the fact of keeping the school open is a community benefit by keeping it open.
- Councillor Benney stated that the map demonstrates that the application is infill development as it is in Hassock Hill Drove which is a defining boundary line. He added that if you accept that this is a boundary line then it is not in the open countryside and is within the village of Gorefield.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Benney and agreed that the application be GRANTED against officer's recommendation.**

Members did not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they feel that the community benefit of trying to keep the school open outweighs any objection and they do not consider the application to be over development but a good use of land.

*(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

*(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)*

F/YR25/0496/F

**Applicant: Mr and Mrs Humphrey**  
**C/o Swann Edwards Architecture Ltd**

**Agent : Swann Edwards**  
**Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

**Land South West Of 2 Beechwood Yard, Cattle Dyke, Gorefield, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for a detached, self-build three-bedroom dwelling on land to the east of Cattle Dyke, within Flood Zones 2 and 3, outside any defined settlement.
- 1.2 The development would introduce a large dwelling into an undeveloped rural site, resulting in the loss of openness and significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The scale, massing, and design, including the attached garage, fail to reflect the local context or integrate with the surrounding pattern of development, appearing incongruous and poorly considered.
- 1.3 The applicant has not demonstrated compliance with limb (a) of the Flood Risk Exceptions Test, meaning the proposed development would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding.
- 1.4 While the proposal would provide limited economic and social benefits through supporting an established rural business, these benefits are considered insufficient to outweigh the environmental harm and the failure to satisfy flood risk policy.
- 1.5 For these reasons, the application is considered contrary to Policies LP2, LP3, LP12, LP14, and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF and is recommended for refusal.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site sits to the eastern side of Cattle Dyke and currently comprises a parcel of paddock land with post and rail fencing. To the northwest of the site is a collection of buildings, with the surrounding area predominately comprising open countryside.
- 2.2 The application site benefits from a number of bushes and shrubs to the southern and western boundary of the site with a willow tree to the southwestern corner and is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a three bedroom, detached self-build dwelling, to serve as a workers dwelling. The proposed dwelling would have a maximum height of approx.. 8.9 metres with an eaves height of 5.1 metres, a width of 12.02 metres and a maximum depth of 9.55 metres. The proposal includes a link attached garage to the eastern side elevation, the link would have a width of 3.15 metres and the garage would have a width of 6.06 metres and a depth of 6.4 metres with a maximum height of 5.83 metres and an eaves height of 3.175 metres.
- 3.2 The proposed dwelling would provide a total floor area of 210m2 and would provide an open plan living, dining and kitchen, a utility room, lounge, study, hallway, WC and garage at ground floor and three bedrooms (two benefitting from ensuites) and a bathroom at first floor.
- 3.3 The proposed dwelling will benefit from a facing brick finish with black concrete tiles and PB panels to the rear roof slope. The existing access serving the wider site will be utilised to provide access to the dwelling.
- 3.4 The wider application site as outlined in blue benefits from an established lawful industrial use.
- 3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:  
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### **4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The below planning history includes applications for the wider site as outlined in blue, to give appropriate context, there is no site history pertaining to the site as outlined in red:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
F/0747/80/F	Erection of an agricultural building	Permitted
F/0740/82/F	Erection of an agricultural building	Permitted
F/YR09/0345/F	Erection of an industrial building	Granted
F/YR12/3005/COND	Details reserved by condition 2 of planning permission F/YR09/0345/F (Erection of an industrial building)	Approved
F/YR20/0012/F	Erect a storage building	Granted

### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

#### **5.1 Gorefield Parish Council**

Object – development in the Countryside with no justification

#### **5.2 FDC Ecology**

No objection

#### **5.3 FDC Environmental Health**

No objection

#### **5.4 Environment Agency**

No objection, subject to works being carried out in accordance with details in the FRA.

#### **5.5 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Seven letters supporting the application has been received from residents on Wolf Lane, St Paul's Close, High Road, Back Road, Pleasant View and Harold Bank Gorefield and the comments are summarised below:

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Supports Local Business	Comments noted and discussed in the Principle section of the following report
Employment Opportunities for Local People	Comments noted and discussed in the Principle section of the following report
Improve Security	Comments noted and discussed in the Principle section of the following report
In keeping with the local area	Comments noted and discussed in the Design section of the following report

### **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) 2024**

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

#### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Uses

Homes and Buildings

## **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

- LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
- LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
- LP4 – Housing
- LP5 – Meeting Housing Need
- LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail
- LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy
- LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
- LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
- LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District
- LP19 – The Natural Environment

## **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

- DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes
- DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area
- DM4 – Waste and Recycling Facilities

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Countryside**
- **Flood Risk**

## **9 BACKGROUND**

- 9.1 The wider application site as outlined in blue on the submitted location plan benefits from an established lawful industrial use. Further information has been provided within the accompanying design and access statement in regards to the nature of the company.
- 9.2 The business Humphrey Contracting Ltd operates from a site of around 40 acres with no residential dwellings linked to it. As a demolition and site clearance company holding valuable and sensitive equipment, the justification statement advises that it is essential for Mr Humphrey to live on site for security and rapid alarm response and to support their 24/7 emergency call out service as the business provides immediate response to local businesses, councils, including building control departments, which can require urgent access to the yard at any time to prevent danger to the public.
- 9.3 A land registry search has been carried out on the adjacent land where the commercial premises operates which confirms that the father of the applicant owns the land in full although many of the units are tenanted by separate companies, with the Applicants company operating the rearmost part of the site.
- 9.4 During the determination of the application, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) worked constructively with the Agent to address a number of concerns. However, it later came to the LPA's attention that the incorrect ownership certificate had been submitted: Certificate A was completed, whereas the land is in fact owned by the

applicant's father. This issue was raised with the Agent, who subsequently submitted Certificate B. Following this, the solicitor acting on behalf of the Applicant provided confirmation of the land registry transfer to the Applicant. The application, along with the corrected Certificate A (dated appropriately), was then received and re-consulted upon accordingly.

9.5 As detailed in the following sections of this report, this ownership discrepancy introduces further complications which are considered to be significant. These matters directly affect the assessment of the proposal and contribute to the conclusion that the amended submission cannot be accepted.

## 10 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

10.1 Policy LP1 is the overarching policy supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development, planning applications that accord with the policies within the LDP will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy. The application site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, with the closest village being Gorefield approximately 900m to the north of the site (as the crow flies). Gorefield is defined as a 'Small Village' whereby very limited development would be supported normally limited in scale to residential infilling or a small business opportunity.

10.2 Policy LP3 advises that development will be restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services and to minerals or waste development.

10.3 The applicant, who is currently in rented accommodation to the north of the site, has provided a detailed supporting statement outlining the functional justification and essential need for the proposed on-site residential accommodation. Key points, some of which are included within the background section, include:

- A continuous on-site presence is essential for business operations, particularly for security and rapid alarm response.
- The business operates a 24/7 emergency call-out service for local authorities, building control departments and other commercial entities.
- Many call-outs require immediate, round-the-clock access to the yard and plant machinery, including urgent works to prevent structural collapse (e.g., Phoenix Hotel, Wisbech).
- The site has been subject to multiple break-ins, resulting in thefts of high-value items such as a lorry, diesel, batteries, and scrap metal.
- Mr Humphrey is responsible for opening and securing gates at various times, often during unsociable hours.
- He is the designated keyholder and first responder in the event of alarm activations, requiring on-site attendance to reset systems, assess security footage, and support police investigations.
- Despite modern security infrastructure, the physical presence of a responsible person remains essential.

- The scale of operations and frequency of emergency call-outs has grown to the extent that the business cannot operate effectively without a permanent on-site presence.
- Proximity to equipment and yard facilities is vital to enable efficient and timely response.
- Delayed response times pose a risk to the viability of the business and would constrain its natural growth trajectory.

10.4 Whilst the above is noted, during the determination of the application, namely the signing of a Unilateral Undertaking in regards to securing the self-build nature, it was revealed that the Father is the owner of the land and not the son as on the Application Form. As discussed above, the issue was subsequently rectified and re-consulted upon.

10.5 Notwithstanding the resolution, this ownership discrepancy introduces ambiguity regarding the relationship between the proposed dwelling and the existing business operations. Limited information has been provided on the father's current living arrangements, his connection to the site in terms of ownership or tenure, and the justification for the self-build nature of the proposal in relation to the ongoing operation of the business, which has been successfully operating for over 30 years, as stated within the supporting documentation and justification for the development.

10.6 Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages sustainable development in rural areas, stating that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 84(a) further states that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there is an *essential* need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work.

10.6 Policy LP12 (Part D) of the Local Plan sets out specific criteria for assessing proposals for new dwellings in the open countryside. These include:

- Demonstration of a functional need;
- Number and role of workers required to live on site;
- Length of time the enterprise has been established;
- Evidence of financial viability;
- Availability of alternative accommodation locally;
- Justification for the proposed dwelling size in relation to the business.

10.7 The submitted information provides some background regarding the operation of the business but does not sufficiently address all the relevant policy requirements. In particular:

- The evidence of a functional need for a full-time on-site presence is limited, especially given the business has operated for over 30 years without residential accommodation on the site.
- There is ambiguity over who the dwelling is intended to serve, given the difference in land ownership and occupation details.
- No clear or robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the absence of an on-site dwelling would compromise the ongoing viability or operation of the business.

- Details regarding alternative accommodation and its potential to meet operational needs have not been adequately explored.

10.8 While Policy LP6 and the NPPF encourage support for rural economic development, this must be balanced against ensuring proposals meet the functional and locational criteria set out within the Local Plan. Limited information has been provided regarding the father's current living arrangements, his connection to the business, or whether other individuals are involved in its operation. This ambiguity, combined with insufficient evidence of a genuine operational need or how the absence of an on-site dwelling would affect the viability of the business, significantly undermines the claimed necessity for the proposed dwelling. Without robust justification addressing business ownership, occupation, and the operational requirements of the enterprise, the proposal cannot be considered to fully comply with the functional and locational requirements of LP12 (Part D) or the broader planning policy framework.

10.9 It is acknowledged that demolition, site clearance, and construction businesses often require sizeable storage areas for plant and machinery, which can be challenging to accommodate within settlement limits. However, in this case, insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that a permanent on-site dwelling is essential to the continued functioning of the enterprise, particularly given the long-standing nature of the operation and its apparent ability to function effectively without such accommodation to date.

10.10 The site's isolated location, limited access to services, and absence of sustainable transport connections further weigh against the proposal. In the absence of clear and compelling evidence of an essential need directly linked to the business, the proposal cannot be justified as a sustainable form of rural development.

10.11 Given:

- The lack of clear evidence of functional need;
- The long-established nature of the business operating successfully without on-site accommodation; and
- The limited justification regarding alternative accommodation and the self-build rationale;

10.12 It is concluded that the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with Policy LP12 (Part D), Policies LP3 and LP6 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), and Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF.

10.13 Taking into account the above, based on the information provided, it is not considered that the proposal is policy compliant. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the dwelling is required in a functional relationship to the existing business. The ambiguity around land ownership, self-build justification, and operational necessity calls into question the validity of the claimed need. Accordingly, the proposal cannot be supported in principle.

#### Self-Build and Custom Housing

10.14 Policy LP5 of the Local Plan also seeks to ensure that housing solutions are provided which meet market expectations, this included self-build homes. Under section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to

duties under sections 2 and 2A of that Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.

10.15 As set out in the Regulations, Part 1 of a register comprises those people and organisations who meet all the eligibility criteria, including the local connection test. Part 2 comprises those people and organisations who meet most, but not necessarily all, the eligibility criteria. The Council has a duty to 'give suitable development permission in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area' (i.e. to meet the demand for the number of applicants on Part 1 of their register) within a 3 year period, post the end of the base period.

10.16 The permissions granted demonstrate that the demand for self-build and custom housing (as identified by the register) is comfortably being met in Fenland. Therefore, no weight will be given to the delivery of self/ custom build housing at this time

### **Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area**

10.17 Policies LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, sets out a number of criteria which proposals are required to meet, to ensure that high quality environments are provided and protected. Policy LP12 focuses on development in rural areas with Policy LP16 focusing specifically on design criterions.

10.18 Further guidance is provided within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Developments SPD.

10.19 The introduction of a dwelling on this site would result in the domestication of what is currently a functional, rural plot. While there is some sporadic agricultural, commercial, and limited residential development along Cattle Dyke, the prevailing character remains open and distinctly rural. This openness is a key component of the area's visual identity and contributes to the rural landscape setting. Policy LP12(d) requires new development to be in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement; in this case, the introduction of a new dwelling would represent a domestication of the site, eroding its open character and altering the rural appearance of both the immediate setting and the wider landscape.

10.20 The proposed dwelling would be located in a prominent roadside position. In combination with its scale, the siting would result in a marked visual change and an interruption to the established rural character of Cattle Dyke. Although commercial buildings are present to the rear of the proposed location, these are set back within the site and visually softened by existing landscaping, meaning they have a reduced presence in the public realm. The proposed dwelling, by contrast, would present as a more conspicuous feature in the landscape.

10.21 In terms of architectural quality, the proposed design is relatively limited. While the gable feature on the front elevation offers some articulation, the overall form and massing are considered unduly dominant for this location and lacking in contextual sensitivity. In its current form, the dwelling would read as an overtly domestic element within an otherwise rural frontage. Given the lack of a demonstrated essential functional need for the dwelling, its scale and design further exacerbate its inappropriateness within this setting.

10.22 In summary, as the principle of a dwelling has not been justified in policy terms, and given the proposed design and siting fail to respect the area's rural character, the development would result in the unjustified domestication and visual intrusion of an open countryside plot. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP3, LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan and the design guidance contained within the Fenland Design SPD, which together seek to ensure that new development is appropriately justified, sensitively designed, and in keeping with its rural context.

### **Neighbouring Amenity**

10.23 Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan seeks to promote high levels of residential amenity. Similarly, Policy LP16 requires development proposals to not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users such as noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and loss of light.

10.24 Given the generous plot size and separation distances, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The orientation and design of the dwelling would ensure sufficient levels of natural light to all habitable rooms, and the site layout would provide an appropriate level of private outdoor space, thereby ensuring acceptable living conditions for future occupants.

10.25 The proposed dwelling would be sited in close proximity to a number of commercial and industrial activities associated with the established business operating from the site. As the proposal relates to a worker's dwelling directly tied to the operation of this business, the relationship between the residential and commercial uses is considered acceptable in principle. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable amenity impacts and is compliant with Policy LP16 in this regard.

10.26 The site is located in close proximity to commercial units to the east, which form part of the established business that the dwelling is intended to support. A basic noise statement has been submitted which confirms that while the business operates a 24-hour call-out service, its normal working and opening hours are typically between 07:00 and 17:00. Outside these hours, activity would only occur in the event of a call-out. The site does not operate generators or other continuously running machinery during the night, and there are no neighbouring businesses in the immediate vicinity that would give rise to significant noise impacts.

10.27 Given the functional link between the dwelling and the adjoining business, and the ability to secure occupancy by persons associated with the enterprise via a planning condition, the proximity to the commercial use is not considered to present an unacceptable impact on residential amenity. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would provide sufficient, high-quality, and usable private amenity space for the intended occupants, and is compliant with the relevant requirements of Policies LP2 and LP16.

### **Amenity Space**

10.28 Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan seeks to promote high levels of residential amenity. Similarly, Policy LP16 seeks to ensure development proposals result in high quality environments for residents, most relevant:

(h) provides sufficient private amenity space, suitable to the type and amount of development proposed; for dwellings other than flats, as a guide and depending on the local character of the area, this means a minimum of a third of the plot curtilage should be set aside as private amenity space.

10.29 The proposed dwelling would benefit from an amenity area exceeding one-third of the total plot, and is therefore compliant with this aspect of Policy LP16.

### **Landscaping and Ecology**

10.30 Policy LP16 requires all development to contribute to high quality environments; in respect of landscaping criterion c) and d) requires proposals to retain and incorporate nature and historic features of the site, such as trees, hedgerow and field patterns, to retain and preserve landscape character and settlement pattern of the surrounding area

10.31 The submitted plans indicate that the existing hedgerow along the front boundary of the site is to be removed, with no replacement planting proposed in this location. While supplementary soft landscaping and planting are proposed along the northern boundary, this would not mitigate the loss of the established front boundary vegetation. The removal of the hedgerow would increase the visual exposure of the site to the public realm and reduce its contribution to the rural character of Cattle Dyke. Although the northern boundary planting would provide some localised enhancement, it would not address the change in character and openness caused by the unmitigated loss of the front boundary hedge.

10.32 An ecological appraisal by Glaven Ecology has been provided in support of the application. This report concludes that there are no habitats of substantive importance within the site and that it has limited ecological or botanical value. While it is considered unlikely that water voles are present, the site's connectivity to the wider ditch network means that occasional transient individuals cannot be entirely ruled out. The report confirms that the proposed works would not pose a significant risk to protected species or habitats, provided appropriate mitigation measures are implemented. These measures include:

- Covering any trenches overnight, or providing a shallow-graded slope or animal egress board if coverage is not feasible, with all excavations inspected before filling.
- Barricading areas of wet or drying concrete to prevent animal entrapment.
- Storing building materials in skips or raised off the ground on pallets to avoid creating refuges for wildlife.

10.33 This ecological evidence is considered sufficient to demonstrate that the development would not result in harm to protected species or habitats, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above. These requirements can be secured via planning condition should permission be granted. The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and raised no objection to the proposal.

10.34 The proposal is acceptable in ecological terms, with no significant risk to protected species or habitats identified and mitigation measures proposed to safeguard wildlife during construction. However, the removal of the front

boundary hedgerow without any replacement will result in a permanent loss of a key landscape feature that currently contributes positively to the site's integration within its rural setting. While the proposed supplementary planting to the northern boundary is welcomed, it will not mitigate the increased visual prominence of the site or the erosion of rural character along Cattle Dyke.

## Flood Risk

10.35 Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and paragraphs 170-182 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out the approach to developing land in relation to flood risk, with both documents steering development in the first instance towards land at a lower risk of flooding. This is achieved by means of requiring development proposals to undertake a sequential test to determine if there is land available for development at a lower risk of flooding than the application site and only resorting to development in those higher flood risk areas if it can be demonstrated that there are no reasonably available sites at a lower risk of flooding.

10.36 The application site is located within Flood Zone 3. The supporting Design and Access Statement contends that the Sequential Test is satisfied due to a purported need for the dwelling in association with the existing business. While it is acknowledged that it may be challenging to identify sites within the Market Towns capable of accommodating both the business and residential accommodation, the submitted information does not provide sufficient justification for a dwelling in this location. Accordingly, the Sequential Test has not been robustly demonstrated and the approach of the Applicant is fundamentally flawed.

10.37 The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that a Sequential Test is required for all development in areas at risk of flooding, including Flood Zones 2 and 3. Its purpose is to steer development to areas at lowest risk (Flood Zone 1), in line with paragraphs 173 and 175 of the NPPF. The presence of potential flood mitigation measures does not remove the requirement for the Sequential Test; such measures are considered only under the Exception Test.

10.38 Updated guidance published on the Council's website (June 2025) clarifies the approach to the Sequential Test. It confirms that the applicant must define and justify an appropriate area of search, which will vary depending on the settlement type and scale of development:

- For Market Towns and Growth Villages, the search area will normally be limited to land within or adjacent to the settlement.*
- For all other locations—including Small Villages, Limited Growth Villages, and Elsewhere locations—the search area will normally be districtwide.****(emphasis added)*

*To pass the Sequential Test, applicants must demonstrate that no reasonably available sites exist within the defined area of search at lower risk of flooding.*

10.40 Since the publication of the updated guidance outlined above, further revisions to the PPG have been introduced to provide additional clarification on the application of the Sequential Test. In this case, given the proposal is for a new dwelling in an elsewhere location, the area of search should appropriately be district-wide, reflecting the strength of housing supply and the spatial strategy. No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that lower-risk sites are

unavailable. Several sites within the district, including those with extant consents, exist at lower risk (Flood Zones 1 and 2). Consequently, the Sequential Test is not met.

- 10.41 Notwithstanding the above, it is acknowledged that a degree of flexibility may be justified in certain circumstances. Where proposals are specifically intended to address an identified local housing need, a more localised area of search may be appropriate, provided it is proportionate to the scale and purpose of the development. In the absence of robust evidence demonstrating that this application is required to meet a defined local housing need, it is not considered appropriate to apply a reduced search area in this instance.
- 10.42 It should be noted that there are a number of sites within the District (With extant consents and sites readily available on land which is categorised at a lower risk of flooding (in particular Flood Zones 1 and 2), the proposal essentially involves the construction of a new dwelling on land which is at greater risk of flooding and the Sequential Test has not therefore been met), with a lower risk of flooding than the application site. It is therefore, not considered the sequential test has been met.
- 10.43 Notwithstanding the above, the NPPF confirms that where it is not possible to locate development in zones of lower flood risk, the Exception Test may be applied. This test provides a framework for assessing whether development can proceed safely, whilst recognising the wider sustainability needs of a community.
- 10.44 The Exception Test comprises two elements, both of which must be satisfied:
  - a) Development to demonstrate that it achieves wider community sustainability benefits having regard to the district's sustainability objectives, and
  - b) That it can be made safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere ('flood risk management')
- 10.45 The first limb of the Exception Test requires that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that clearly outweigh the flood risk. The second limb requires that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where possible, reducing overall flood risk.
  - a) Wider community sustainability benefits
- 10.46 Given the proposal is to provide one dwelling, in an elsewhere location it is not considered that the proposal, in isolation achieves a wider community sustainability benefit, the supporting design and access statement advises that the wider sustainability benefit would be means of retaining and supporting an existing established business and maintaining Fenland District Council's rural economy, alongside the use of solar panels however, as this is an existing established benefit and the proposal does not increase employment opportunities, this is of limited weight in the assessment.
  - b) That it can be made safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere ('flood risk management')

10.47 Section 5 of the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment sets out the mitigation measures proposed which are summarised below:

- Floor level a minimum of 0.3 metres above ground level of the site with a 0.3 metre flood resilient construction above finished floor level
- Occupiers should register to receive flood warnings

10.48 Based on the information submitted, the development can be made safe for its lifetime and therefore this part of the exception test. However, the Sequential Test has not been satisfied, and the proposal fails to meet the Exception Test due to a lack of wider public or community benefit. As such, the development is contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, the NPPF, and associated Planning Practice Guidance.

### **Access, Parking and Highway Safety**

10.49 Policy LP15 requires all new development proposals to contribute to the delivery of the sustainable transport network by providing well designed, safe, convenient access for all. Development proposals should provide well designed car and cycle parking appropriate to the amount of development proposed, ensuring parking provision is provided in accordance with the standards. Appendix A sets out that parking provision for two vehicles is required for three bedroom dwelling. Appendix A also sets out that a garage can be counted as a parking space provided the size of the garage exceeds 7.0m x 3.0m (internal dimensions).

10.50 Sufficient space is provided to the front of the dwelling to accommodate adequate parking provision for a minimum of two vehicles. Furthermore, the driveway area is of a sufficient size to enable vehicles to manoeuvre safely and therefore, enter and exit the site in forward gear

10.51 The proposed scheme provides a driveway area to the front of the dwelling capable of accommodating at least three vehicles in accordance with the minimum parking requirements. The layout also allows for adequate turning space within the site to enable vehicles to enter and exit in a forward gear, thereby ensuring safe manoeuvring. A garage is also proposed; however, its internal dimensions fall short of the minimum requirements set out in Appendix A of the Local Plan and, as such, it cannot be counted as contributing towards the usable on-site parking provision in policy terms.

10.52 Vehicular access to the dwelling would be taken from the existing private track serving the commercial buildings to the rear of the application site. This arrangement would not involve any alterations to the public highway. Furthermore, as the dwelling is intended for occupation by the business owner and is linked to an established functional need, it is not expected to result in a material intensification of vehicular use along this track. It is noted that the Local Highway Authority has not been consulted in this instance, given the absence of changes to the public highway network.

10.53 The proposal meets the parking standards set out in Appendix A of the Local Plan and provides a safe and functional access arrangement without impacting the public highway. While the proposed garage does not meet the dimensional standards to count towards formal provision, sufficient on-plot parking and manoeuvring space is available. The scheme is therefore considered acceptable in terms of Policy LP15.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

10.54 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

10.55 There are statutory exemptions, transitional arrangements and requirements relating to irreplaceable habitat which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. In this instance, one or more of the exemptions / transitional arrangements are considered to apply and a Biodiversity Gain Condition is not required to be approved before development is begun because the nature of the development being self / custom build is exempt from statutory net gain, and should the application be approved, this could be secured via a unilateral undertaking.

### Unilateral Undertaking

10.56 Recent appeal decisions have consistently dismissed proposals where there was no enforceable mechanism in place to ensure that the approved dwelling would be delivered and occupied as a genuine self-build or custom-build project. These decisions reinforce the importance of securing the self-build nature of such developments through a legally binding agreement.

10.57 In this instance, a completed Unilateral Undertaking has now been submitted and is considered to be satisfactory. The UU provides an enforceable mechanism to ensure that the approved dwelling will be constructed and occupied as a genuine self-build project in accordance with the definition set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended).

10.58 As a result of the satisfactory legal agreement now in place, the proposal is confirmed to contribute to self-build housing and is therefore eligible for the associated policy benefits, including the Biodiversity Net Gain exemption referenced above.

### **Other Matters**

10.59 Within the supporting justification statement, reference to a number of recent planning approvals within the district is made to further support the proposal, each one is addressed in turn below:

F/YR24/0365/F – Sims Contract Furniture. 3-bedroom dwelling tied to the furniture business. This provided security and timely access to the business due to thefts and break-ins.

F/YR24/0193/F – 5 Bedroom Dwelling, tied to an existing horticultural business.

F/YR25/0006/F – 5 Bedoom Dwelling, Tied to the agricultural business due to the constraints and safety relating to the independent drainage board.

10.60 It is a fundamental principle of planning law that each application must be determined on its own merits. Previous decisions, including F/YR24/0193/F, F/YR25/0006/F, and F/YR24/0365/F, related to different circumstances, site contexts, and operational needs, and are therefore not directly comparable to the current proposal. Each of these cases was considered individually, with appropriate weight afforded to factors such as demonstrable need, scale, design, and impact on local character. While committees in those instances sometimes concluded that a proven need outweighed officer concerns, this does not set a precedent.

10.61 In the context of the current proposal, the specific circumstances differ, and no robust evidence of demonstrable need has been provided. Accordingly, the principle of a larger dwelling cannot be assumed acceptable, and the assessment must be based on the merits of this case alone, with all relevant policies and material considerations carefully applied.

### **Planning Balance**

10.62 In terms of sustainability the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)

10.63 This stance is supported by Local Plan Policy LP1. In respect of the economic objective, the proposal would generate limited short-term benefits during the construction phase through the use of local labour and materials. While it is acknowledged that the provision of a dwelling could, in theory, support the continued operation of the existing business, the lack of a demonstrable essential functional need and the ambiguity surrounding this, as discussed throughout this report, weaken this justification. Consequently, the claimed economic benefits carry very limited weight.

10.64 In respect of the social objective, the proposal would deliver one additional dwelling. However, given that the dwelling is not supported by robust evidence of an essential occupational need and there is uncertainty regarding who the occupier would be, the social benefits are also considered limited.

10.65 In environmental terms, the proposal would introduce a domesticated and visually intrusive form of development into an open countryside location, eroding the area's rural character and openness. The site lies within an 'Elsewhere' location under Policy LP3, which is not identified for growth and has limited accessibility to local services and facilities. The reliance on private motor vehicles would further reduce the sustainability of the proposal. These environmental harms carry significant weight against the scheme. Furthermore, the Applicant has failed to adequately satisfy the sequential test and no compelling wider public benefits have been identified to satisfy the requirements of limb (a) of the Exceptions Test in relation to flood risk considerations.

10.66 Taking all matters into account, and applying the planning balance, it is considered that the limited economic and social benefits of the proposal are clearly outweighed by the environmental harm, policy conflict, and lack of

demonstrable essential need. The development therefore fails to represent sustainable development when assessed against the policies of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Taking the above into account, the proposed development is considered unacceptable. The applicant has not demonstrated a clear or essential functional need for a dwelling in this location, and there remains significant ambiguity regarding the purpose of the dwelling and the justification for its self-build nature. The design, scale, and siting of the dwelling are unsympathetic to the rural context, resulting in harm to the visual amenity and character of the countryside. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, and the applicant has not adequately satisfied the sequential test or demonstrated that the proposal would deliver wider sustainability benefits sufficient to satisfy limb (a) of the Exceptions Test. Furthermore, no legal mechanism is in place to secure the self-build nature of the dwelling.

11.2 Taken together, these issues outweigh the limited economic and social benefits of the scheme. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP1, LP2, LP3, LP6, LP12, LP14 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, and is recommended for refusal.

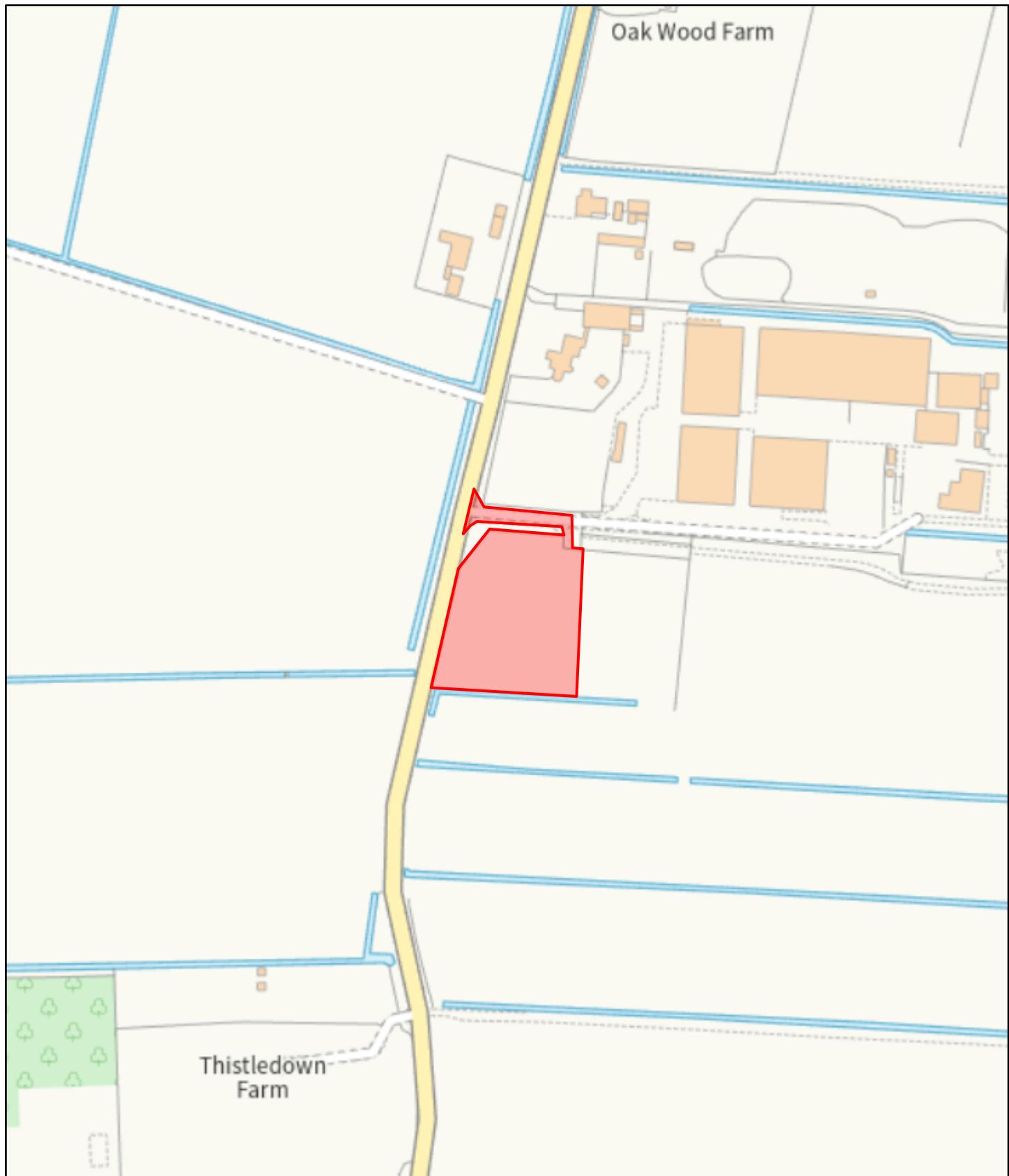
## 12 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1	The proposal fails to demonstrate an essential functional need for a permanent dwelling in association with the existing business, which has operated for over 30 years without on-site residential accommodation. Consequently, the proposal represents an unjustified form of residential development in the open countryside, contrary to Policies LP3, LP6, and LP12 (Part D) of the Fenland Local Plan and Paragraph 84(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2	The proposed development, by virtue of its nature, scale, form, and overtly domestic appearance, would introduce a visually intrusive and incongruous feature into the open countryside. The design and massing fail to respond sensitively to the rural context or reflect the local vernacular, resulting in the domestication and erosion of the area's open and rural character. In the absence of a demonstrated essential functional need, the siting and appearance of the dwelling represent an unwarranted form of development that fails to integrate appropriately with the surrounding landscape. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP3, LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, which collectively seek to ensure that new development is justified, sensitively designed, and preserves local distinctiveness and countryside character.
3	The applicant has not adequately satisfied the sequential test or demonstrated that the proposed dwelling would deliver sufficient wider public or community benefits to justify the flood risk associated with its location. The benefits put forward relate solely to private occupational need and to support an existing established business, which is not considered to constitute wider sustainability benefits under the guidance. Consequently, the proposal fails to

satisfy limb (a) of the Exceptions Test.

The development is therefore considered contrary to Local Plan Policies LP12, LP14, and LP16, and the guidance contained within the NPPF, which seeks to direct new development away from areas at highest risk of flooding unless exceptional circumstances can be justified.



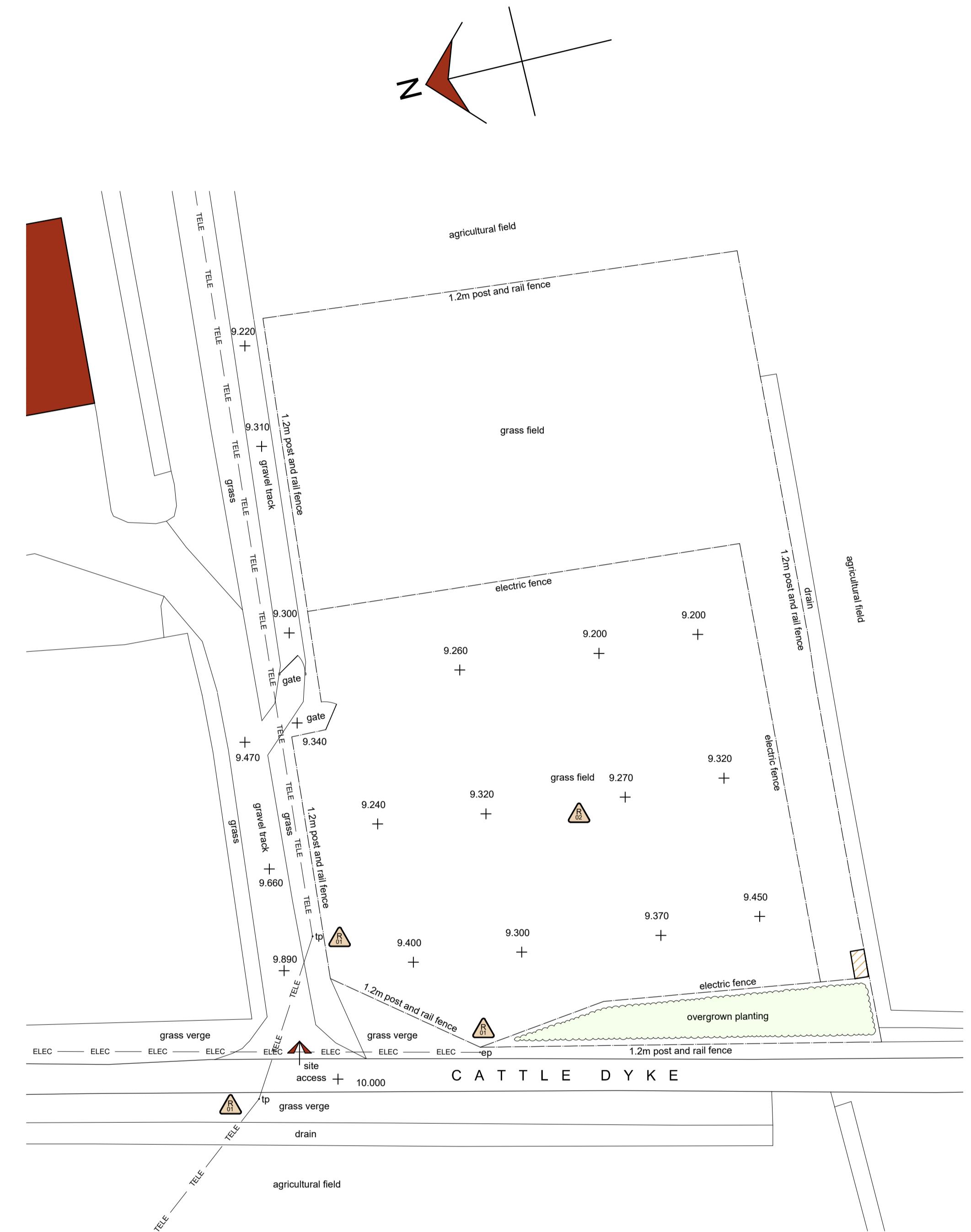
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1:2,500  
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0 35 70 140 m

 Fenland District Boundary



Location Plan  
Scale: 1:2500  
metres



Site Plan  
Scale: 1:500  
metres

General Notes  
1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.  
2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.  
3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.  
4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

#### SITE KEY

	Indicates unsurveyed stable on site
	Indicates unsurveyed buildings taken from OS map
	Indicates unsurveyed overgrown planting
	Indicates existing site access
	Indicates site risks
	Indicates site levels

#### SITE RISK NOTIFICATION KEY

To be used with reference to the accompanying Project Risk Register

R01	Overhead Cables	R02	Unknown Services
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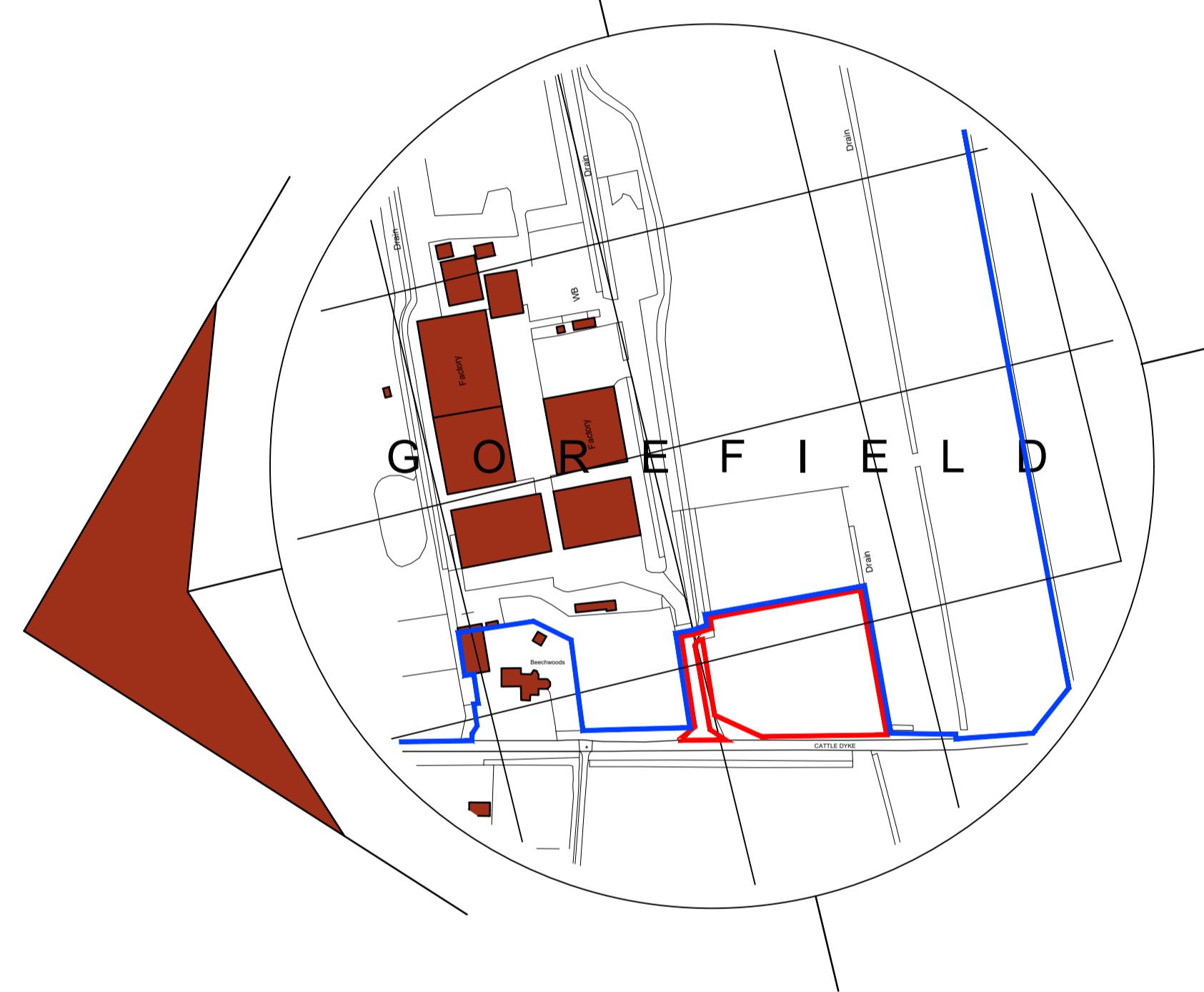
Status

AS EXISTING

**SWANN EDWARDS**  
A R C H I T E C T U R E

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road,  
Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4AA  
01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

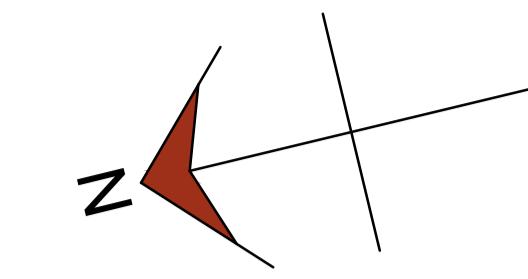
Proposed New Dwelling Beechwoods, Cattle Dyke, Gorefield, Wisbech For: Mr D Humphrey	Date February 2025	Drawn by BR Checked by GE
Survey Drawing	Job No. SE-2266	Dwg No. 100
Drawing Title Survey Drawing	Sheet Size A1	Revision 1



Location Plan

Scale: 1:2500

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metres



Site Plan

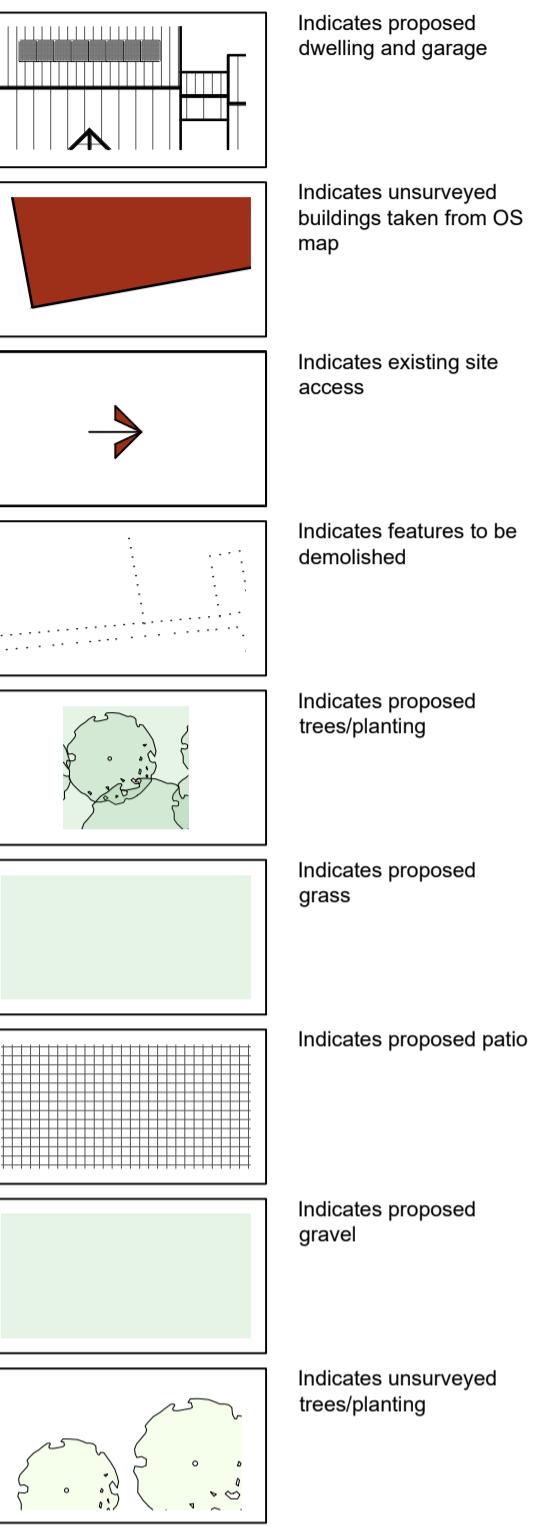
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metres

**General Notes**

- All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
- The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
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- Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

**SITE KEY**



**Revisions**

A	May 2025	Revisions following clients comments
B	June 2025	Revisions following planners comments
C	June 2025	Revisions following planners comments
D	Sept 2025	Revisions following planners comments
E	Sept 2025	Revisions following clients comments

**Status**

**FOR APPROVAL**

**SWANN EDWARDS**

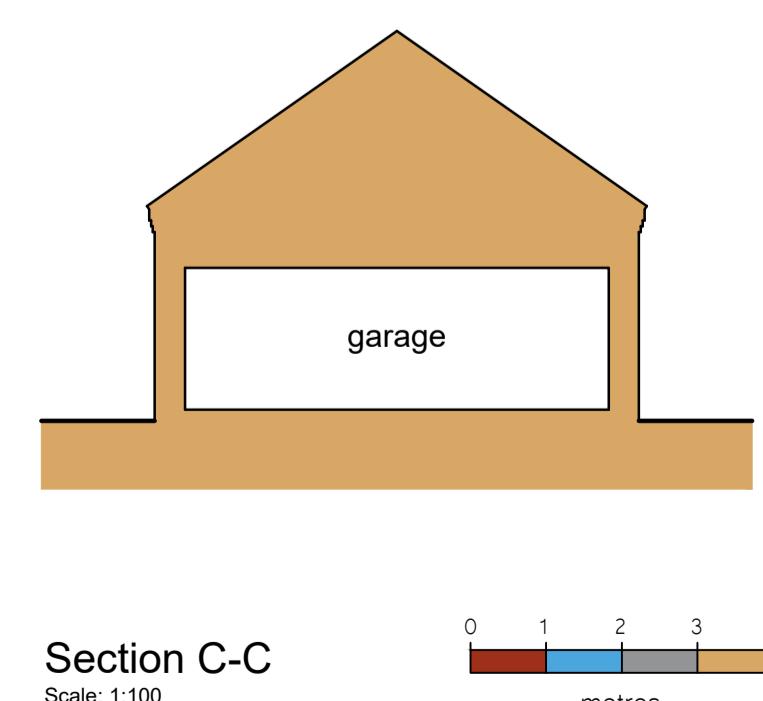
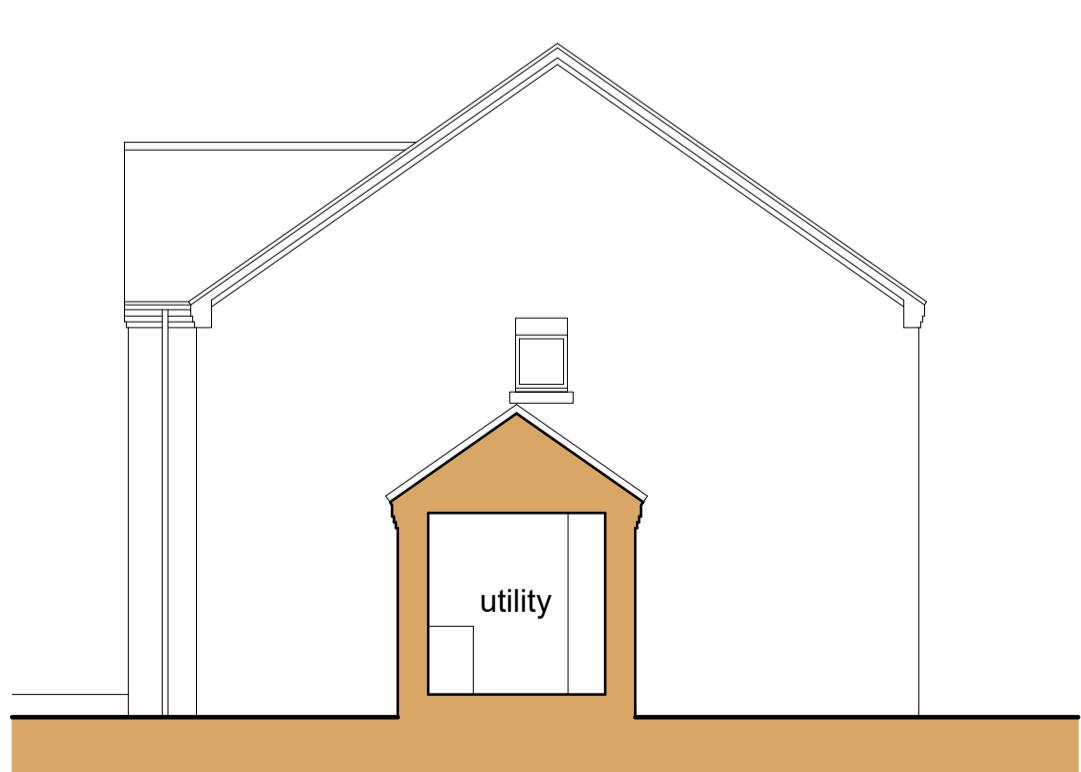
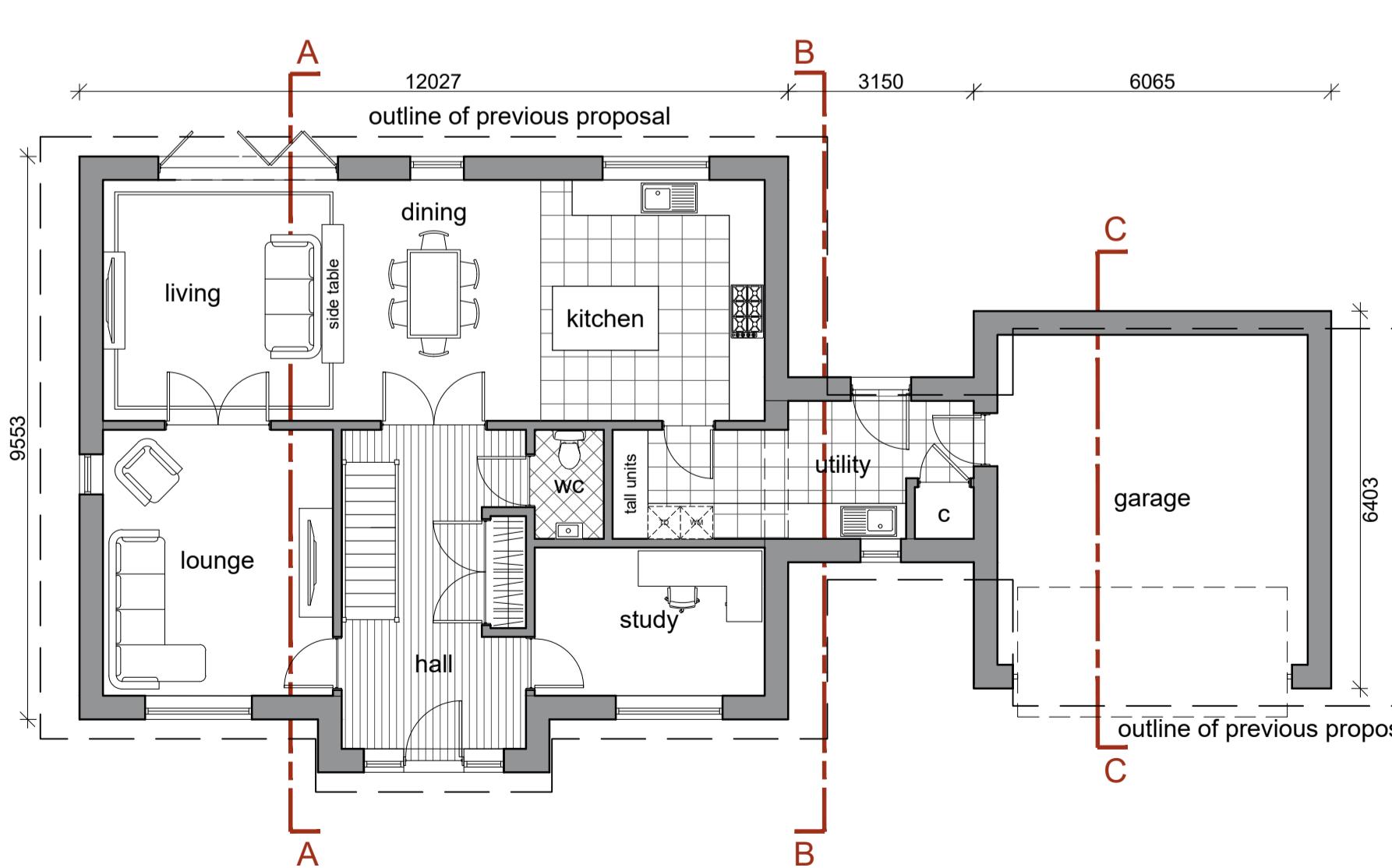
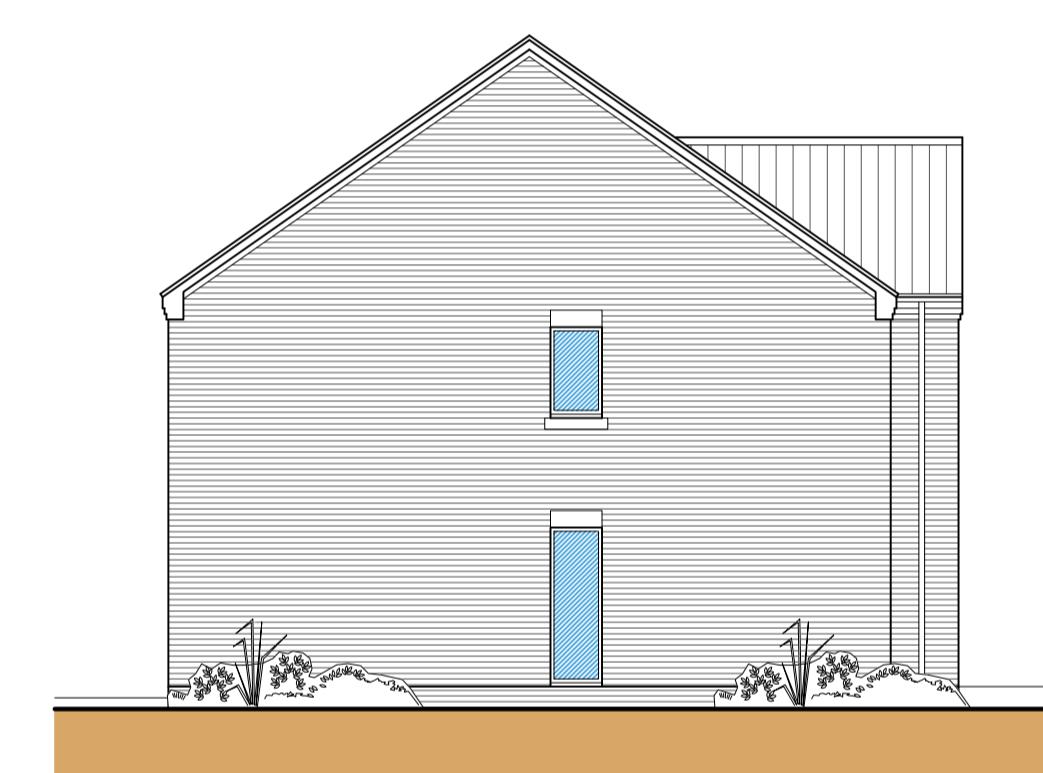
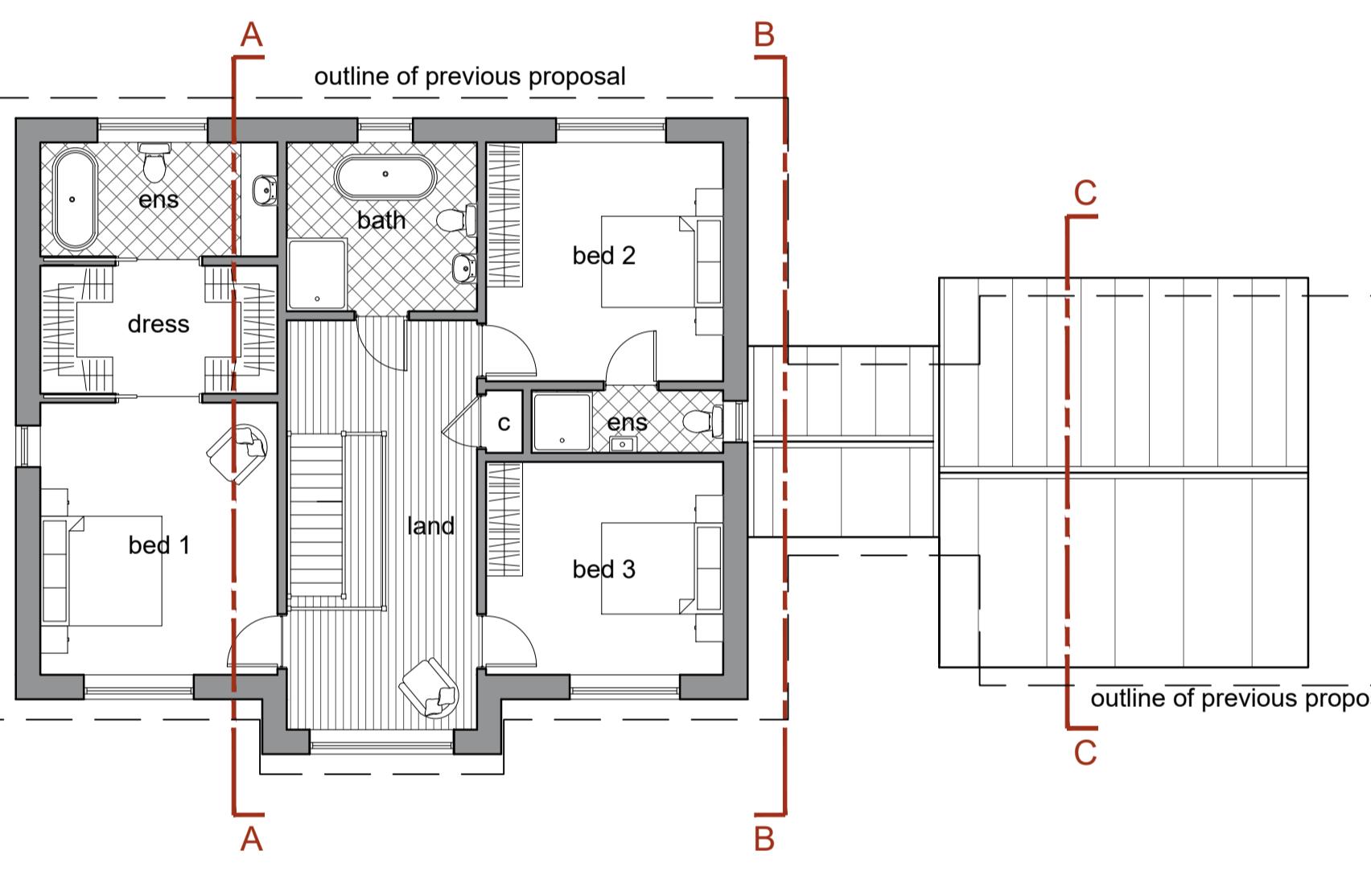
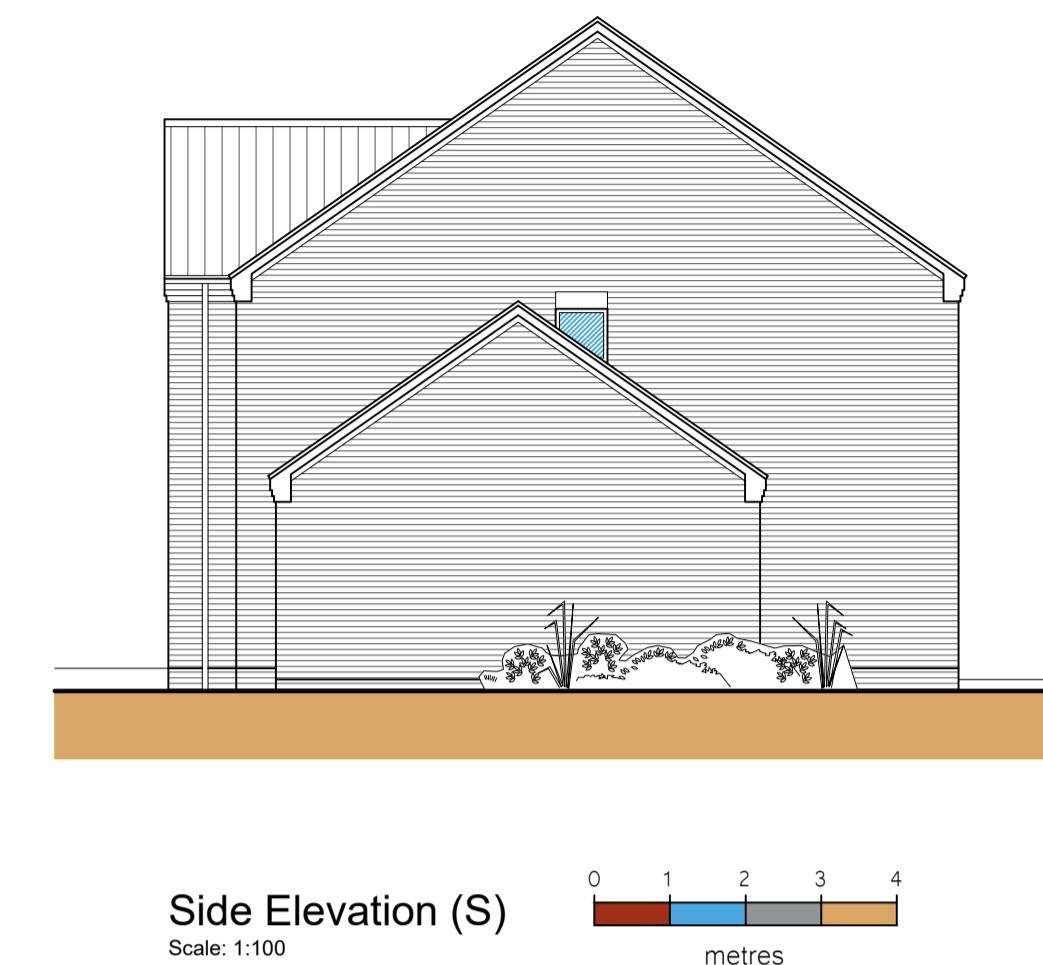
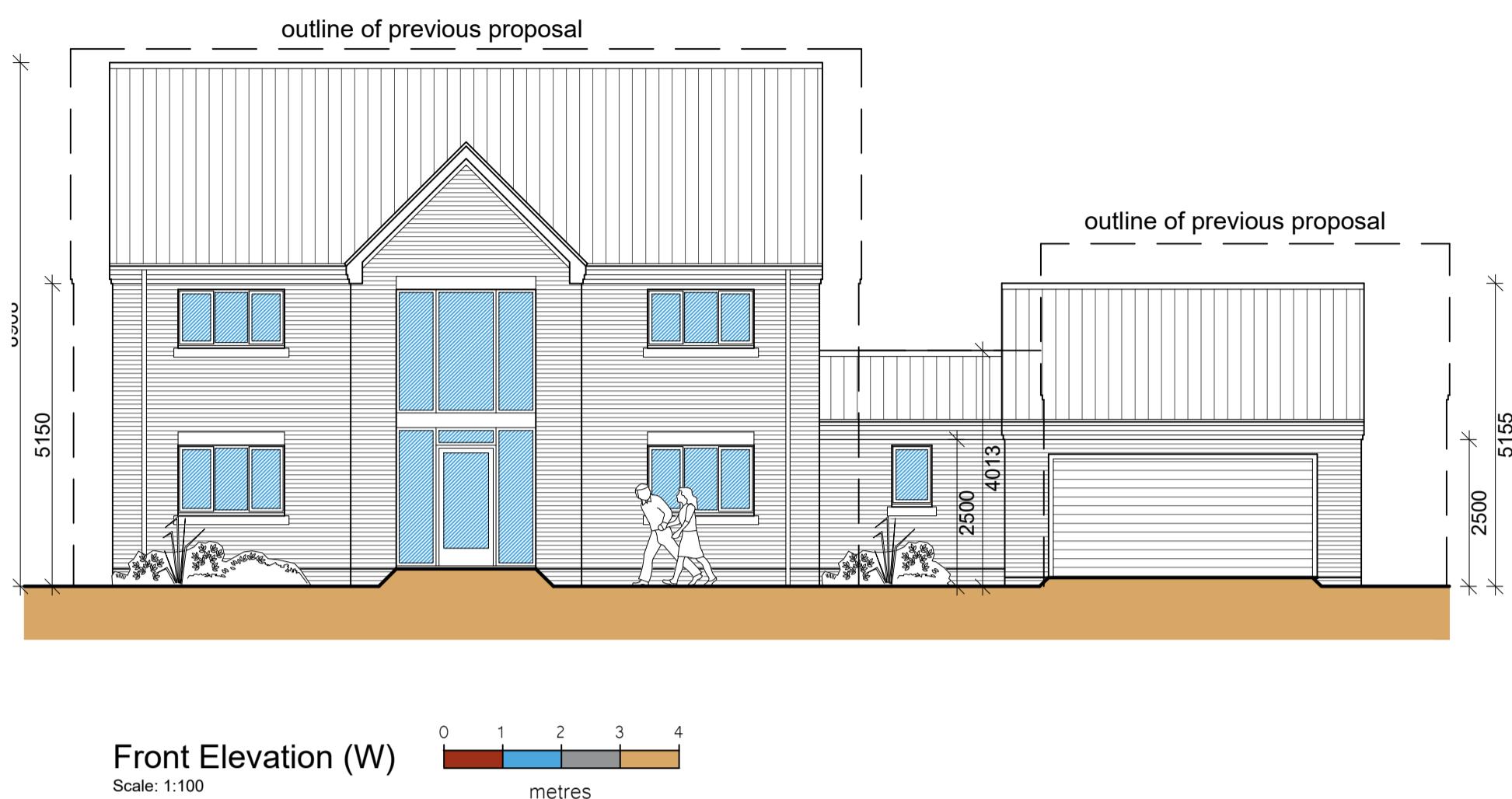
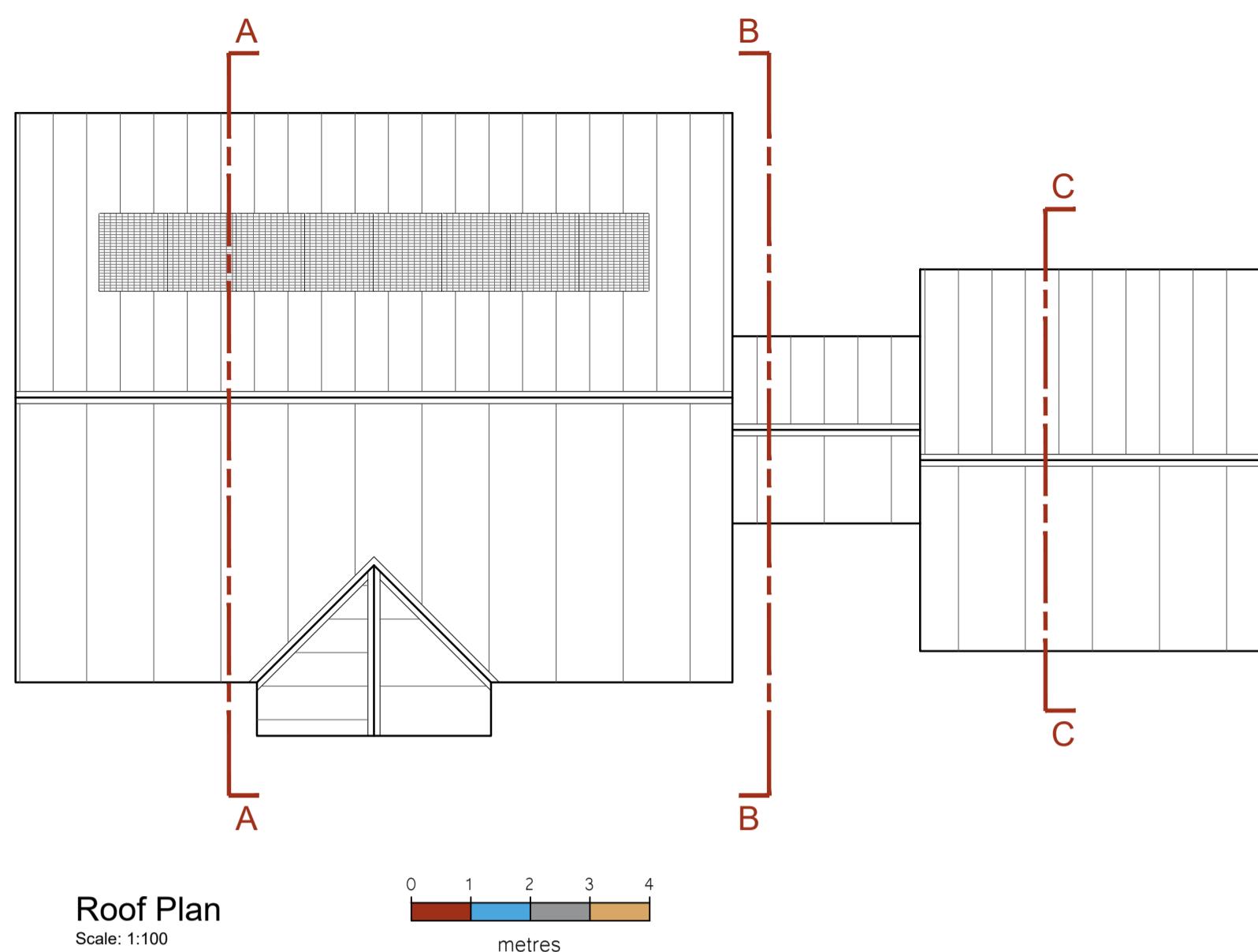
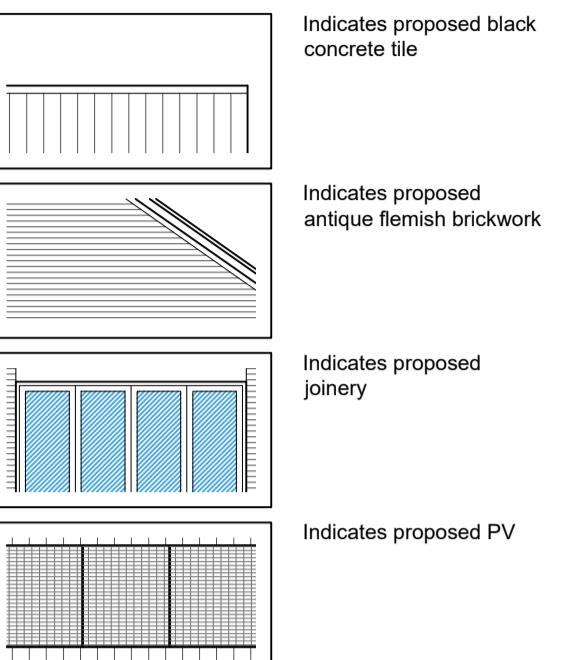
**ARCHITECTURE**

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road,  
Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4AA  
01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Proposed New Dwelling Beechwoods, Cattle Dyke, Gorefield, Wisbech For: Mr and Mrs Humphrey	Job Title Planning Drawing Site and Location Plan	Date April 2025	Drawn by BR Checked by AK
Drawing Title SE-2266	Job No. Dwg No. SE-2266 Dwg 1000	Sheet Size A1	Sheet Size A1
Planning Drawing Site and Location Plan	Revision E	Revision E	Revision E

General Notes  
1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.  
2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.  
3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.  
4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

#### ELEVATION KEY



Revisions	
A	May 2025
B	June 2025
C	Sept 2025
D	Sept 2025

Revisions following clients comments  
Revisions following planners comments  
Revisions following planners comments  
Revisions following clients comments

Status	
<b>FOR APPROVAL</b>	
 <b>SWANN EDWARDS</b> A R C H I T E C T U R E	
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4AA 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk	
Proposed New Dwelling Beechwoods, Cattle Dyke, Gorefield, Wisbech For: Mr and Mrs Humphrey	Job Title Date April 2025 Drawn by BR Checked by AK
Planning Drawing Floor Plans, Roof Plan, Elevations and Sections	Job Title Drawing No. SE-2266 Sheet Size A1 Dwg No. PP1100 Revision D

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F/YR25/0843/PIP

**Applicant: Mr A Udell & Mr E Hackett**

**Agent : Mr Robert Papworth**  
**Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

**Bunkers House, High Road, Bunkers Hill, Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4SQ**

**Permission in principle for 7 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Referred by Head of Planning on advice of Committee Chairman.**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of up to seven dwellings on land to the rear of Bunkers House and Mizpah, located off High Road, Bunkers Hill. The site comprises approximately 0.96 hectares of agricultural land situated outside the defined settlement hierarchy within an Elsewhere location and lies within Flood Zone 3.
- 1.2 Bunkers House is a non-designated heritage asset, with historic use as a poorhouse/workhouse from 1818 and important surviving features, making it a strong candidate for the Cambridgeshire Local List. The site forms part of the agricultural setting and visual transition of the hamlet, which contributes positively to the significance of Bunkers House.
- 1.3 The development is considered unacceptable in terms of location and heritage impact, due to its unsustainable position beyond the established developed footprint of the hamlet, its encroachment into open countryside, the associated harm to rural character, and the detrimental impact on the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. In addition, the applicant has failed to satisfactorily demonstrate compliance with the Sequential Test and part (a) of the Exception Test in flood risk terms.
- 1.4 Whilst the proposed residential use is, in principle, compatible with surrounding land uses and would not give rise to unacceptable amenity impacts at this stage, the proposal fails the location requirements of Permission in Principle.
- 1.5 For these reasons, including the harm to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset, the unsustainable location and flood risk concerns, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is located to the north of High Road, to the rear of Bunkers House and Mizpah. To the east, the surrounding area is predominantly residential

in character, while to the south-west and south the landscape is largely rural with limited built development. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is therefore classified as an 'Elsewhere' location, with Wisbech St Mary as the closest settlement. It is also situated within Flood Zone 3.

2.2 Bunkers Hill is a small hamlet comprising approximately 25 dwellings. The existing built form is predominantly individual in nature, with varied architectural styles that reflect the incremental and organic evolution of development within the hamlet.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

3.1 The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this "first stage" establishes whether a site is suitable in principle only and assesses the "principle" issues, namely;

1. Location
2. Use, and
3. Amount of development proposed

3.2 Should this application be successful the applicant would have to submit a Technical Details application covering all the other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle does not constitute the grant of planning permission.

3.3 The applicant is only required to submit minimum information to accompany the application. However, an Indicative Site Plan has been submitted. Permission in principle is sought for the erection of seven dwellings. From the Indicative Site Plan provided, the development would utilise the existing access serving Bunkers House, with the access road wrapping around the site and three dwellings positioned on each side, with the seventh located to the west of the existing dwellings, fronting High Road.

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

<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### **4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There is no recent relevant planning history regarding the site as outlined in red.

### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

#### **5.1 Wisbech St Mary Parish Council**

The parish council recommends refusal on the following grounds:

- Does not comply with policy LP12 given elsewhere location
- Amount – too large for backland development
- Concerns regarding traffic

#### **5.2 Conservation Officer**

Bunker House is a non-designated heritage asset and its historic use as a poorhouse/workhouse from 1818 alongside important historic features makes it a

strong candidate for the Cambridgeshire local list. A housing development to the rear would negatively impact the building's setting and countryside views.

### **5.3 FDC Environmental Services – Refuse**

Does not object in principle but raises a number of recommendations for consideration at technical details stage should this application be approved.

### **5.4 Anglian Water**

No objection but raises a number of recommendations for consideration at technical details stage should this application be approved

### **5.5 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Twenty Five letters of objection have been received from residents of Bunkers Hill, plus from Magazine Lane, Mile Tree Lane and Common Road, Wisbech, Stephensons Close, March, New Peached Lane, Crowley and Riverdale Road, Erith. These comments are summarised below:

<b>Objecting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Anti social behaviour	Comments noted. However, this does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.
Cramped/ Out of Character	Comments noted and discussed below where relevant. However, detailed design does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.
Lack of Demand	Comments noted.
Traffic and Highway Safety	Comments noted and discussed below.
Loss of Privacy	Comments noted. However, this does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.
Noise nuisance	Comments noted. However, this does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.
Value of properties impacted in the area	Comments noted. However, this is not a material planning consideration
Additional pressure on local services and water supply	Comments noted and where relevant discussed below. However, this is something that could be dealt with at the Technical Details stage should the application be approved.
Impact on natural features	Comments noted and discussed

	below.
Impact on Heritage Assets – The Poor House	Comments noted and discussed below.
Housing mix/type inappropriate	Comments noted and discussed below.
Overshadowing	Comments noted. However, this does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.
Impact wellbeing of special characteristic.	Comments noted and discussed below.
Air Quality concerns	Comments noted. However, this does not form part of the consideration at this stage and would be addressed at technical details stage should this application be approved.

Twenty-Two letters of support for the proposal have been received from residents at Limes Avenue (Elm), Atlantic Close and Upwell Road (March), High Road and Church Road (Wisbech), Wildfields Road (King's Lynn), High Street (Long Sutton), Topcliffe (Thirsk), Caistor Road (Corby), Chapel Street (Stanground), Shepherds Mouth Lane (Huyhirn), Beech Lane (Barrow), Main Street (Wetherden), Main Street (Melton Mowbray), Elm Park (Whittlesey), Frankel Way (Biggleswade), and Headingley Close (Coalville).

It is worth noting that Four letters pertain to the named Applicants and/or occupants of Bunkers House itself (listed as the applicants address)

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
More Housing in the area / Appropriate growth	Comments noted and discussed below.
Benefit to local services and economy	Comments noted and discussed below
Effective use of land / improvement to area than overgrown unkempt land	Comments noted and discussed below
In keeping with surrounding area	Comments noted and discussed below
Will slow traffic	Comments noted. However, this is largely a matter that would be informed by detailed matters at the Technical Details Stage.
Sustainably located.	Comments noted and discussed below
Larger homes required in the area.	Comments noted and discussed below
Disproportionate number of objections compared to others	Comments noted.
Outlines the purpose of a PIP and confirms nothing about the final for is fixed at this point	Comments noted.
The land can accommodate well-proportioned plots.	Comments noted.
Objections relate to non-material	Comments noted.

planning considerations for this type of application

## 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) 2024**

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4 – Decision-making  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy  
Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land  
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context  
Identity  
Built Form  
Movement  
Nature  
Public Spaces  
Uses  
Homes and Buildings  
Resources  
Lifespan

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need  
LP8 – Wisbech  
LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in

Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP17 – Community Safety

LP18 – The Historic Environment

LP19 – The Natural Environment

### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

DM4 – Waste and Recycling Facilities

DM6 – Mitigating Against Harmful Effects

### **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount of Development Proposed**

## **9 ASSESSMENT**

### Location

9.1. Policy LP3 establishes the settlement hierarchy within the District. Bunkers Hill is not identified as a settlement within this hierarchy and is therefore classified as an 'Elsewhere' location. In such locations, development is strictly limited to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services. The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for seven dwellings, a form of development that is not supported in Elsewhere locations under LP3.

9.2. As stated above, the application site is situated in a rural Elsewhere location beyond the defined settlement hierarchy, with limited access to local services and facilities. The site lies approximately 1.25 km (0.78 miles) from the centre of Wisbech St Mary, which offers only a limited range of services, and around 3 km (1.86 miles) from Murrow, the next nearest village, which similarly provides few facilities. A footpath runs through the hamlet; however, it ends close to the equestrian centre, leaving an approximately 500 m (0.31 mile) stretch without formalised pathing before it reemerges around Rummers Lane. This gap means the route does not provide a convenient or safe link to Wisbech St Mary. While a primary school and a small convenience store lie within approximately 0.8–1 km (0.5–0.6 miles), most key services, including secondary education, GP and hospital provision, supermarkets, major employment areas, and public transport links, are located 2–4 km (1.2–2.5 miles) away. These distances are generally not practical for walking or cycling, meaning residents would be largely reliant on private vehicles. Accordingly, the site performs poorly in sustainability terms with respect to access to services and facilities, consistent with its classification outside the established settlement pattern.

9.3. The site occupies a sensitive edge-of-hamlet position, adjoining open countryside to the west and north. These open fields form part of the rural setting of Bunkers

Hill and make a positive contribution to its small-scale, dispersed character. The proposal would introduce a substantial quantum of built development into an otherwise open agricultural landscape, contrary to LP12 Parts A(c) and (d), which require development to respect settlement form and prevailing landscape character.

- 9.4. The indicative layout demonstrates that the proposal would extend built form west and north into open countryside, resulting in an uncharacteristic encroachment and an erosion of the loose, organic pattern of development that defines the hamlet. The proposal would therefore represent an unsustainable outward expansion rather than a natural consolidation of the existing settlement.
- 9.5. The site is highly visible from High Road and performs an important transition function between the open countryside and the small cluster of dwellings that form Bunkers Hill. The development would result in a marked change from open agricultural land to a built frontage, disrupting this visual transition and materially harming the rural approach to the hamlet.
- 9.6. As the site is within the 'Elsewhere' category of LP3 where residential development is not supported. The proposal is not essential to any rural economic or operational need and is therefore unacceptable in principle.
- 9.7. The proposal is in conflict with LP16 and fails to achieve the high-quality placemaking objectives of paragraph 135(c) of the NPPF, as the back land form of development in an isolated countryside location would neither enhance the sense of place nor respond positively to local character.
- 9.8. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF seeks to recognise and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. By introducing a significant quantum of residential development into a visually sensitive rural edge-of-hamlet location, the proposal would undermine this objective.
- 9.9. The planning history of nearby sites is noted as a material consideration. However, the approved schemes within Bunkers Hill are generally located within the more established built-up part of the hamlet. In contrast, the application site occupies a more exposed edge-of-settlement position where open views and agricultural character are fundamental to the setting of the hamlet. The impact of the current proposal is therefore materially different and more harmful in landscape and visual terms.
- 9.10. While matters such as detailed design, access, biodiversity and archaeology could be addressed at the Technical Details stage, they cannot overcome the fundamental objection to the principle of residential development in this location. The harm identified arises directly from the site's location and relationship with the surrounding countryside and therefore remains decisive at the Permission in Principle stage.
- 9.11. The Council can demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land and the relevant policies are consistent with the NPPF. As such, the tilted balance does not apply. There is no overriding housing need that would justify a departure from the Development Plan.
- 9.12. Bunkers House is identified by the Council's Conservation Officer as a non-designated heritage asset. Its historic use as an early 19th-century

poorhouse/workhouse (established 1818), together with surviving architectural features and its relationship with the surrounding rural landscape, give it appreciable historic and communal significance. These characteristics also make it a strong candidate for inclusion on the Cambridgeshire Local List. The open agricultural land to the rear and wider countryside views contribute materially to the ability to understand and appreciate its origins, function, and evolution

- 9.13. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including impacts on its setting. This assessment must be informed by the best available evidence and proportionate to the importance of the asset.
- 9.14. Paragraph 211 of the NPPF states that, in weighing applications affecting non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement must be made having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.
- 9.15. Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan require development to respect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings
- 9.16. The NPPF Glossary defines setting as "*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*," noting that its extent is not fixed and may change as surroundings evolve. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG para. 013) confirms that assessments of setting should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the degree of change proposed. Key considerations include:
  - all heritage assets have a setting, designated or not;
  - setting may be influenced by views (long, short, designed or incidental),
  - environmental factors, and historical or functional relationships;
  - public access is not required for setting to contribute to significance;
  - cumulative change must be considered, as incremental harm can erode an asset's significance over time.
- 9.17. Historic England guidance highlights that significance is often conveyed through views, designed, incidental, historical, or cultural and that cumulative development can sever or diminish these relationships.
- 9.18. The proposed housing development would introduce built form into currently undeveloped countryside that forms part of the building's rural historic backdrop. The open fields to the west and north provide an important spatial relationship that reinforces the asset's former institutional function and its historic separation from clustered domestic development. The erosion of these open views and the encroachment of suburban character would diminish the ability to appreciate the building's historic function and its rural context. Accordingly, the proposal would result in harm to the significance of the NDHA through harm to its setting.
- 9.19. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 211, the level of harm is assessed as moderate adverse, falling within "less than substantial harm" in NPPF terms but still carrying significant weight in the planning balance given the asset's local historic importance. Policies LP16 and LP18 require development to respect and conserve the setting of heritage assets, whether designated or not. The introduction of up to seven dwellings in this sensitive rural position would conflict with those requirements.

9.20. While detailed design matters are reserved, the location and amount of development sought under the PIP inherently result in encroachment into the sensitive rural setting of Bunker House. The harm arises from the choice of site and scale of development rather than the absence of detailed design, and therefore cannot be mitigated at Technical Details stage. Having regard to NPPF paragraph 211 and Local Plan Policies LP16 and LP18, the identified heritage harm weighs significantly against the proposal.

9.21. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and paragraphs 170–182 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out the approach to development and flood risk. Development should be directed to land at the lowest risk of flooding through the Sequential Test and only permitted in higher risk areas where no reasonably available lower risk sites exist.

9.22. The site lies within Flood Zone 3. A Sequential and Exception Test dated 6 November 2025 and a Flood Risk Assessment dated 3 November 2025 by Morton and Hall Consulting were submitted. A further search of Public Access, Rightmove and estate agents identified four permitted sites, none of which were suitable as they were also in Flood Zone 3, not comparable or already completed. No other sites were identified within Bunkers Hill, with the nearest at Tholomas Drove which was not suitable for seven dwellings.

9.23. Updated Council guidance published in June 2025 clarifies that for Small Villages and Elsewhere locations the Sequential Test search area should normally be district-wide. Applicants must demonstrate that no reasonably available sites exist within this area at a lower risk of flooding. Given the proposal is in an Elsewhere location and the Sequential Test has not been undertaken on a district-wide basis. Given the scale of development exceeds that envisaged for the settlement, a district-wide search remains appropriate and reflects the adopted spatial strategy and housing supply position.

9.24. Although some flexibility may apply where development meets a defined local housing need, no robust evidence has been provided to justify a reduced search area.

9.25. As lower flood risk sites are available elsewhere in Fenland, the Sequential Test is not satisfied. The proposal therefore conflicts with the NPPF, PPG and Policy LP14. Where development cannot be located in lower risk zones, the NPPF allows the Exception Test to be applied. The Exception Test requires:

- a) Wider community sustainability benefits
- b) Development to be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere

9.26. In relation to limb (a), seven open market dwellings provide negligible wider sustainability benefit, particularly given a 6.6 year housing land supply. Proposed energy efficiency measures are standard and do not constitute substantial public benefits. Limb (a) is not satisfied.

9.27. In relation to limb (b), proposed finished floor levels 0.6 metres above ground level are capable of ensuring the development is safe and does not increase flood risk. Limb (b) is satisfied.

- 9.28. As both limbs of the Exception Test must be met and the Sequential Test has failed, the proposal does not comply with Policy LP14 or national policy. Although the Environment Agency raises no objection, this does not remove the requirement for a compliant Sequential and Exception Test. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate the site is appropriately located in flood risk terms and the proposal remains contrary to Policy LP14 and the NPPF.
- 9.29. For the reasons set out above, the proposal is contrary to Policies LP3, LP16(c) and (d) and LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and paragraphs 135, 170–182 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme is therefore unacceptable in principle due to its unsustainable and harmful location in the open countryside and the failure to satisfactorily demonstrate that the location of the site is suitable for residential development in flood risk terms.

#### Use

- 9.30. Policy LP12 ((i) states that development should not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land or if so comprehensive evidence is provided to justify the loss. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside....including the economic benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land fall within this category. A large proportion of agricultural land in Fenland District is best and most versatile land. While there is insufficient information upon which to assess whether the loss the land might mean loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, the Council has rarely refused applications for this reason, given the quantity of such land within the District, and it is not considered that this issue could therefore be used as a reason for refusal in this instance.
- 9.31. In considering the proposed residential use in the context of surrounding land uses, it is noted that the immediate area comprises a mixture of residential properties with adjacent agricultural land beyond the hamlet. The introduction of residential development on the site, in principle, would be compatible with the prevailing character of nearby land uses and would not, by its nature, give rise to unacceptable impacts on surrounding occupiers by reason of noise, disturbance, or other environmental harm, nor would the proposed use be unduly affected by neighbouring activities.
- 9.32. As assessed above and notwithstanding the identified locational harm, the application site lies within Flood Zone 3. However, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that appropriate mitigation measures can be provided to address flood risk. This position is supported by the Environment Agency, which has raised no objection to the proposal. Accordingly, in respect of flood risk and the proposed residential use in principle, this matter does not give rise to an objection at the Permission in Principle stage.
- 9.33. The assessment at the Permission in Principle stage is limited to the principle of use only. Accordingly, more detailed matters relating to the protection of residential amenity, including but not limited to privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, layout, scale, and boundary treatments, can be appropriately addressed at the subsequent Technical Details Consent stage should Permission in Principle be granted, as could the amenity afforded to future residents. Any future application would be required to demonstrate full compliance with Policy

LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan and all other relevant amenity and design policies.

Amount

- 9.34. The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for up to seven dwellings on a site measuring approximately 0.96 hectares, equating to a density of approximately 7.3 dwellings per hectare. Whilst the scheme remains under development, it is noted that, given the site's location and rural context, support for a significantly higher density form of development would not be appropriate or acceptable in planning terms. Policies LP12(c) and (d), LP16(d) and paragraph 135 of the NPPF require development to respond positively to local character, which in this location places clear constraints on the intensity of development that could reasonably be supported.
- 9.35. Residential densities within the wider area vary but are generally low, averaging approximately 5.3 dwellings per hectare. Any attempt to materially increase the density on this site in order to maximise land use would risk eroding the established rural character and would conflict with local and national design objectives. As such, the scope to increase density is inherently limited by the site's location and surroundings.
- 9.36. Although the planning system seeks to achieve the efficient use of land as part of the overarching objective of sustainable development set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, this objective must be applied in a manner that is sensitive to context. Paragraph 11 of the Framework does not require higher density development in locations where it would be inappropriate or unsustainable. In this case, the site is not in a location where intensified development would support sustainable growth or align with the spatial strategy.
- 9.37. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF seeks development that makes prudent use of natural resources and contributes positively to the environment. In rural locations such as this, prudent use of land does not equate to maximising density where doing so would undermine character, harm the landscape setting or introduce an incongruous form of development.
- 9.38. Accordingly, whilst the proposal remains under development, it is clear that the site's location does not lend itself to a higher density form of development. Any increase in the amount of development beyond that proposed would be unacceptable in principle and would conflict with local and national policy requirements relating to character, design and sustainable development.
- 9.39. Notwithstanding the above, as discussed within the location section of this report, in terms of the landscape and spatial impacts identified, the amount of development proposed, would also intensify the degree of encroachment into the open rural land that forms an important part of the setting of Bunker House, a non-designated heritage asset. The scale of built form envisaged would materially erode the open agricultural backdrop that contributes to the appreciation of the building's historic function and rural character. As the harm arises from the quantum and disposition of development rather than from matters of detailed design, it cannot be mitigated at Technical Details stage. Accordingly, when considering the amount of development sought under the PIP, the proposal would result in harmful change to the setting of Bunker House contrary to Policies LP16

and LP18 and the approach to non-designated heritage assets set out in paragraph 211 of the NPPF.

#### Matters raised during consultation

##### Equality Impact Assessment

9.40. Representations have been received noting that the proposed development could result in specific disadvantage to an individual with a protected characteristic. The concern relates to the potential general change in the environment and character of the locality as a result of the development, and the possible impacts this may have on their well-being.

9.41. In response, a bespoke Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in line with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. This assessment is held on the planning record and considers the potential for the development to adversely affect individuals with autism or other protected characteristics through changes to noise, visual character, or local activity patterns.

9.42. Given the nature of the concerns, it is acknowledged that the development would introduce a significant change to the open and rural setting of the site, which could have impacts. However, no specific mitigation is proposed as the impacts relate to the general change in environment rather than a manageable or technical measure. The assessment has therefore informed the planning considerations, recognising the need to weigh potential impacts on protected persons alongside the overall planning balance.

9.43. Subject to these considerations, the Council has taken account of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The presence of this potential impact is a material consideration to be weighed in the decision-making process.

## 10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The application site is located beyond the defined settlement hierarchy in an Elsewhere location and forms part of the open agricultural setting of Bunkers Hill. The proposed residential development would result in the unjustified encroachment of built development into open countryside, would fail to integrate with the established settlement pattern and would erode the rural character and visual transition into the hamlet.

10.2 The site also forms part of the open rural setting of Bunker House, a non-designated heritage asset whose significance derives in part from its historic function as an early 19th-century poorhouse/workhouse and its relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape. The introduction of up to seven dwellings on this open land would result in harmful encroachment that would erode the asset's rural backdrop and diminish the ability to appreciate its historic context. This harm arises directly from the location and amount of development and cannot be mitigated through detailed design at Technical Details stage. As such, the proposal conflicts with Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan and with paragraph 211 of the NPPF, which requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

11.3 The site also lies within Flood Zone 3 and the applicant has failed to demonstrate, through a robust Sequential Test based on the appropriate district-wide search area, that no reasonably available sites exist at lower risk of flooding. In addition, the proposal does not deliver the wider community sustainability benefits required to satisfy part (a) of the Exception Test.

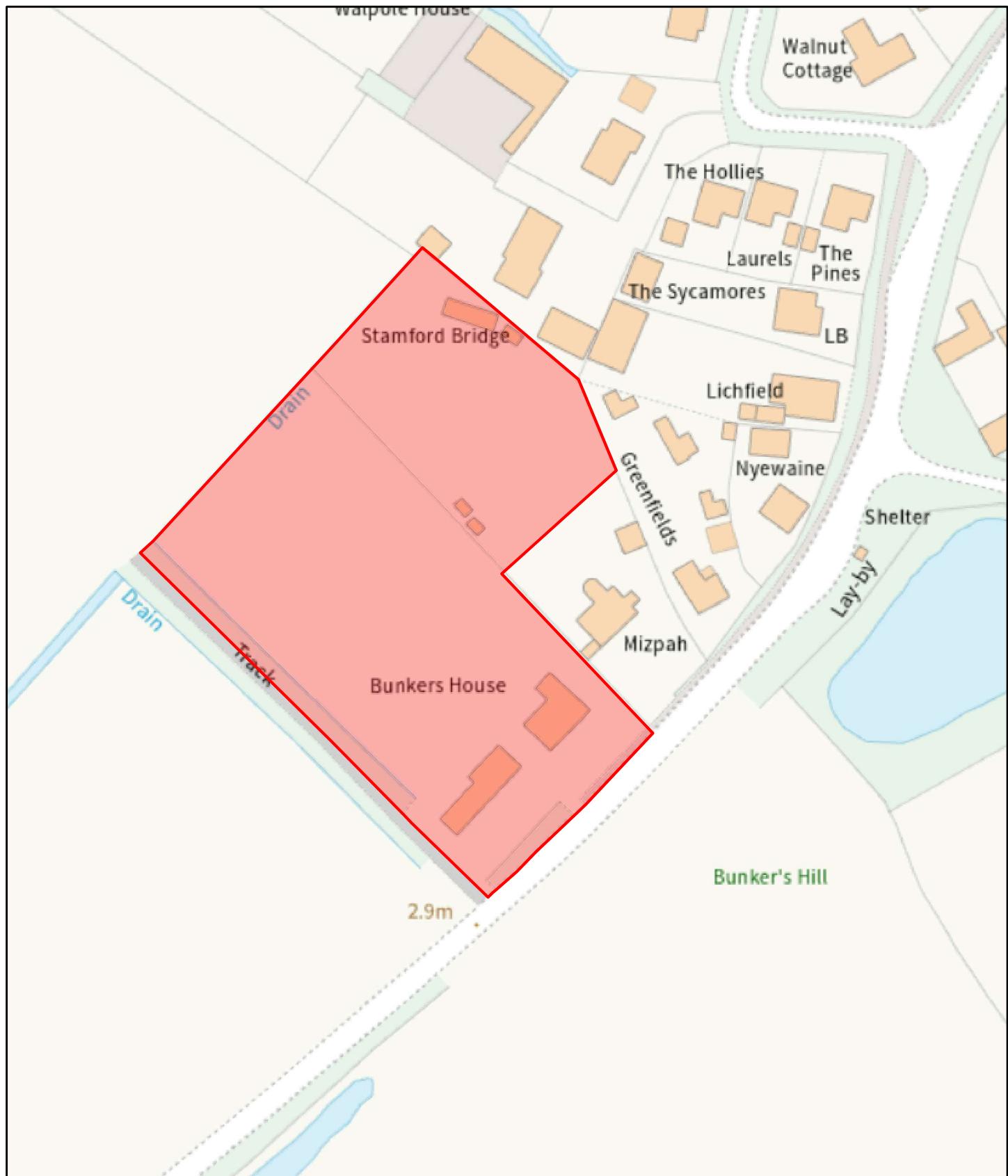
11.4 Whilst the proposed residential use would not, in principle, result in unacceptable amenity impacts and the technical flood mitigation measures proposed may be capable of making the development safe, these matters do not overcome the fundamental policy objections to the site's location and flood risk vulnerability.

11.5 Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies LP3, LP14 and LP16(c) and (d) of the Fenland Local Plan, and to paragraphs 8, 11, 130, 135, 170–182, 187, and 211 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore unacceptable in principle and should be refused.

## 11 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse**, for the following reasons:

1.	<p>The application site is located outside the defined settlement hierarchy in an area classified as an Elsewhere location and lies beyond the established developed footprint of Bunkers Hill. The site forms part of the open agricultural setting of the hamlet and performs an important visual and rural transition function when approaching the settlement along High Road. The proposed residential development of seven dwellings would result in the unjustified encroachment of built development into the open countryside, would fail to integrate with the established settlement pattern, and would erode the rural backdrop of Bunker House, a non-designated heritage asset, thereby harming its setting and the ability to appreciate its historic function. The proposal does not relate to a use that is essential to the effective operation of a rural enterprise and is therefore unacceptable in principle for the purposes of Permission in Principle.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP3, LP16(c) and (d) and LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and to paragraphs 135(c), 187, and 211 of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
2.	<p>The site lies within Flood Zone 3 and the applicant has failed to satisfactorily demonstrate through the Sequential Test that no reasonably available sites exist at a lower risk of flooding within the appropriate district-wide search area. Furthermore, the proposal fails to deliver the wider community sustainability benefits required to satisfy the first limb of the Exception Test. As such, the site has not been demonstrated to be suitable for residential development in flood risk terms at the Permission in Principle stage.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and to paragraphs 170–182 of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>



11/11/2025, 11:50:16 AM

1:1,250  
0 15 30 55 110 60 m  
0 15 30 55 110 220 ft

 Fenland District Boundary





F/YR25/0784/F

**Applicant: Mr S Bushell**

**Agent : Mr Gareth Edwards**  
**Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

**Land At School Grounds Farm, School Grounds, March, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect 1 x dwelling and 1 x agricultural building and the retention of existing agricultural building**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer Recommendation**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of 1no. worker dwelling, the erection of a building and retention of an existing building for agricultural purposes.
- 1.2. The submission detail fails to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a rural worker dwelling on site in terms of the responsibilities of the worker to live on site, nor that there are not alternatively available properties in the area that could fulfil this need. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12(d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and therefore unacceptable in principle.
- 1.3. Further, given that the principle of development is considered unacceptable, the location of the site in such a rural location would inherently result in actual harm to the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
- 1.4. The site is also located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The development fails to pass the sequential test due to the 'elsewhere' location requiring the area of search to be district wide. Therefore, there is an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of flooding associated with the development, contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).
- 1.5. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Local and National Planning Policy and is unacceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission is refused in this instance.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site is located on land at School Grounds Farm, March. The site is accessed via a long agricultural track (approximately 1km in length) that runs to the north of Creek Road, situated between a residential property and a poultry farm.

The site is approximately 750m as the crow flies from the nearest edge of the built form of March.

- 2.2. The site currently comprises 2no. barn style buildings of metal construction, one with a regular pitched roof, the other in the style of a nissen hut. The land on which the buildings are situated forms part of a “yard”, with the location of the proposed dwelling immediately to the south of this on a parcel of agricultural land.
- 2.3. The area surrounding the site is predominantly agricultural in nature, with the nearest built form approximately 450m to the North-East.
- 2.4. The site is predominantly in Flood Zone 3, with the northwestern corner being in Flood Zone 1. There is a very low risk of surface water flooding on the site.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1. The proposal seeks the erection of 1no. worker dwelling, the erection of a new building and the retention of an existing building.
- 3.2. The building proposed for retention is the smaller building that exists on site in the form of a nissen hut. The building is open at the front and measures approximately 5.2m in height, 11.1m in width and 29.5m in length.
- 3.3. The proposed building is to be situated on the northwestern corner of the site. The proposed materials for this building consist of concrete plank walls and green corrugated metal sheets on the roof and upper portion of the walls. Two large roller shutter doors are proposed on the front elevation, with two pedestrian accesses immediately adjacent to these. The building measures approximately 5.6m in height to the eaves, 8.7m in height to the ridge, 19.8m in width, and 30m in length.
- 3.4. The proposed dwelling is predominantly two-storey in nature, with a single storey side projection proposed to include an office space and a double garage. The submitted plans identify that the dwelling will be 3-bed and will be constructed using facing brickwork, vertical timber cladding, and roof tiles, although no specific materials or colours are identified.
- 3.5. The submitted design and access statement indicates that the dwelling is proposed in relation to the applicant's business that operates on site. A supplementary agricultural appraisal has also been submitted which details that the dwelling is required to allow the supervision of crop storage and security of equipment due to unsociable and random working hours.
- 3.6. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### **4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

F/YR21/0624/AG1	Erect an agricultural storage building with concrete apron	Further details not required 06.07.21
F/YR24/0999/F	Erect 1 x dwelling and 1 x agricultural building and the retention of existing agricultural building	Refused 07.03.25

### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

## 5.1. March Town Council – 04.11.25

*Recommendation; Approval*

## 5.2. Environment Agency – 23.10.25

No objection

## 5.3. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology – 24.10.25

No objection subject to condition securing scheme of archaeological work

## 5.4. Environmental Health – 26.10.25

No objection

## 5.5. Councillor Paul Hicks – 05.11.25

Objects- Inadequate access, and site in Flood Zone 3

## 5.6. Councillor Steve Count

Objects-

08.11.25

- Inaccurate information relating to need for dwelling
- Site within Flood Zone 3
- Creation of dwelling on greenfield site in countryside contrary to policy
- Unauthorised operations on site, such as storage and movements of mobile crusher
- Access track inadequate
- Potential impact on bats and owls through demolition of agricultural building

19.11.25

Highways comments received contradict those previously received – proposed intensification of use of single track agricultural access will be detrimental

## 5.7. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – 17.11.25

No objection

## 5.8. Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 17no. letters of objection were received from residents of Creek Fen, Estover Road, Flaggrass Hill Road, Creek Road & Brook Close, March; and Green Road, Stowmarket. The comments raised the following points:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Poor quality of surrounding road network	See 'Parking Provision and Highway Safety' Section

Narrow roads with no passing places	See 'Parking Provision and Highway Safety' Section
HGV's using roads at unsociable hours	See 'Amenity Impact' Section
Danger to pedestrians and other users of highway	See 'Parking Provision and Highway Safety' Section
Large parts of land owned by applicant are away from site	See 'Principle of development' Section
Site in Flood Zone 3	See 'Flood Risk and Drainage' Section
Unauthorised non-agricultural activities taking place on site	See 'Other Matters' Section
No public data to evidence break-ins	See 'Principle of Development' Section
A number of alternative properties for sale in close proximity of the site	See 'Principle of Development' Section

A total of 12no. letters of support were received from residents of Creek Fen, Flaggrass Hill Road & Creek Road, March; Hook Road, Wimblington; Queens Drive, Fridaybridge; and Fifty Road, Manea. The comments raised the following points:

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Security need arising from break-ins	See 'Principle of Development' Section

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1. 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) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

### National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement  
Nature  
Uses  
Homes and Buildings

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

- LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
- LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
- LP4 – Housing
- LP5 – Meeting Housing Need
- LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail
- LP9 – March
- LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy
- LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
- LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
- LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District
- LP17 – Community Safety
- LP19 – The Natural Environment

### **March Neighbourhood Plan 2017**

#### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

### **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Character and Appearance**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Parking Provision and Highway Safety**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**
- **Other Matters**

## **9 BACKGROUND**

- 9.1. The application is a re-submission of that which was previously refused under F/YR24/0999/F. The built form proposed as part of the development is identical to that which was previously approved. However, an additional agricultural appraisal has been submitted in support of the application to try and establish the principle of development for a rural worker dwelling.

## **10 ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 10.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of 1no. worker dwelling, the erection of a new building and retention of an existing building on-site for agricultural purposes.

10.2. The location of the site is in a rural location and divorced from the services and facilities of the town of March, as well as its somewhat isolated nature from other built form, which is considered to render it an 'Elsewhere' location, as identified by Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.

10.3. Development in these locations is restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture.

10.4. In order for a proposal for a rural worker dwelling to comply with Policy LP3, it must also comply with the requirements set out in Policy LP12(d), which states that such proposals should be supported by the following evidence:

- a) The existing functional need for the dwelling
- b) The number of part-time and full-time worker(s) to live in the dwelling
- c) The length of time the activity has been established
- d) The financial viability of the enterprise
- e) The availability of other suitable accommodation on site or in the area
- f) How the proposed size of the dwelling relates to the viability of the enterprise

10.5. In relation to the above criteria, the submitted design and access statement states that "the Applicant's company has been established for a number of years and the provision of a dwelling on the site will provide additional security to the business". This is further supported by supplementary information that states that the applicant currently farms "485 acres in hand. Additionally, the Partnership has 1,000 acres under contract farming agreements in the locality. In 2025, the Partnership has been contracted to drill an additional 500 acres of maize, taking the total farmed area to 1,985 acres. All farming operations are based out of School Grounds Farm but extends up to 15 miles from this base."

10.6. In this respect, it should be noted that the farming operations are approximately 75% contract farming and only 25% farming land owned by the partnership.

10.7. Unlike the previous submission on the site under reference F/YR24/0999/F, the application is supported by an agricultural appraisal prepared by Brown & Co. The report provides the following information in respect of each of the aforementioned criteria relating to Policy LP12(d):

- a) The following duties have been detailed to establish essential functional need:
  - Tending to sugar and fodder beet at antisocial hours to prevent frost damage and overheating
  - 24-hour presence to monitor conditioning of cereals
  - Presence to take deliveries and storage of agri-chemicals
  - Spraying due to specifically required weather conditions
  - General logistics
  - Future expansion plans of business for contract farming
  - Physical security arising from increased theft and arson across the country
- b) The number of part-time and full-time worker(s) to live in the dwelling
  - One full-time worker and their family to occupy dwelling
- c) The length of time the activity has been established
  - Farming enterprise established on-site for five years

d) The financial viability of the enterprise

- The submitted agricultural appraisal states that the enterprise is viable but, aside from stating the area of land farmed by the enterprise, provides no financial evidence to support this claim.

e) The availability of other suitable accommodation on site or in the area

- The agricultural appraisal states that the applicant can build out the proposed dwelling for £250,000.
- The farm manager who will occupy the property currently lives 12 miles away from the site.
- A Rightmove search carried out by the authors of the appraisal state that properties within a mile of the site guided between £400,000 - £600,000.

f) How the proposed size of the dwelling relates to the viability of the enterprise

- The appraisal states that the proposed dwelling is a modest 3-bedroom property with ground floor office for the business and sleeping accommodation at first-floor level to account for flood zones.

10.8. In respect of criterion a), the main justification for requiring a dwelling on-site, as was also the case with the previous application F/YR24/0999/F, is for additional security due to theft of machinery. However, no data for crime numbers or correspondence with the police has been provided to support this justification.

10.9. Notwithstanding this, the matter of security being a main means of justification for a rural worker dwelling has been tested at appeal. Appeals relating to a site in Bucklesham, Ipswich (APP/X3540/W/22/3291082) and Great Easton, Dunmow (APP/C1570/W/23/3329214) considered this point. In both cases, the Planning Inspector concluded that there are alternative means of providing security on site, such as CCTV cameras or nightwatchmen, that could provide adequate security to a site without the need for a permanent dwelling to be constructed on-site.

10.10. It is therefore generally accepted that security in its own right is not adequate justification to meet the exception for isolated homes in the countryside, as set out in Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF (2024).

10.11. In respect of the other responsibilities set out in the agricultural appraisal, it is considered that a dwelling on-site or nearer to the site would provide greater convenience to the rural worker in carrying out their responsibilities within the enterprise in reducing travel and response times, but it is not considered to have been demonstrated that the provision of a dwelling on-site would be "essential" to these responsibilities being carried out.

10.12. It is noted that the site has operated as a base for the wider enterprise for a period of 5 years, but that the area of land farmed by the enterprise is dispersed, with the furthest being 15 miles away from the site. It has not been demonstrated how much land in the immediate vicinity of the site is farmed by the enterprise.

10.13. In this regard, no evidence has been provided in respect of instances where the presence of a worker on-site overnight would have prevented financially damaging events from occurring in terms of the tending to beet and cereals etc farmed by the enterprise.

10.14. Further to this, in the event of such instances on areas of land farmed away from the application site, the presence of a dwelling at the application site would have no bearing on the ability of the farm manager to act, particularly in instances where they are still required to travel to land up to 15 miles away from the application site.

10.15. On this basis, it is not considered that the submission demonstrates that there is an essential functional need for the development, and therefore criterion a) is not considered to be satisfied.

10.16. In respect of criterion b), it is noted within the submitted agricultural appraisal that the dwelling is proposed to be occupied by the farm manager. As the property is 3-bed in nature, it is assumed that the dependents of the farm manager will also occupy the property. It is not considered that the scale of dwelling is disproportionate to the number of workers that will occupy it. Therefore, criterion b) is considered to be satisfied.

10.17. In respect of criterion c) and d), the submission detail identifies that the enterprise has been in operation for a period of 5 years. It is therefore considered that the enterprise is established, albeit that no details have been provided to demonstrate its financial viability, other than to state that the enterprise has been contracted to farm additional land this year. On balance, it is considered that these criteria are satisfied.

10.18. In respect of criterion e), the submission detail states that no alternative accommodation on site or in the area is available, with properties within a mile of the site guided at £400,000 - £600,000. It is acknowledged that there are no alternative dwellings on site that could reasonably be obtained.

10.19. Notwithstanding this, at the time of writing this report (04/12/25), a search of Right Move using a maximum £250,000 price returns a total of 15no. 3-bed properties within a mile radius of the site, all within the settlement of March. When the search area is extended to cover the entirety of the settlement of March (3 miles), a total of 66no. properties matching these criteria are currently listed for sale, all within a reasonable driving distance that would allow quick response from the occupier should such circumstances arise.

10.20. On this basis, there are a significant number of alternative properties available that could be purchased, and as such it is considered that Criterion e) is failed.

10.21. Finally, in respect of criterion f), the proposed dwelling as a 2-storey, 3-bed property is not excessive in scale in relation to the enterprise that it would serve. Therefore, this criterion is satisfied.

10.22. By way of summary, the proposal fails to satisfy the requirements of Policy LP12(d), specifically criteria a) and e) and fails to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a rural worker to live on site. Further, the proposal is not considered to satisfy the exception for isolated dwellings in the countryside as set out Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF.

10.23. The proposal to erect a rural worker dwelling is therefore considered to be contrary to local and national planning policy and is therefore unacceptable in principle.

10.24. The remaining elements of the proposal, i.e. the retention and erection of buildings is considered to be acceptable on the basis that there are existing buildings and operations on site.

## **Character and Appearance**

10.25. The buildings proposed for retention and construction are situated in close proximity to an existing building on site. The buildings that form part of this development proposal carry an agricultural vernacular, similar to the existing building on site.

10.26. It is noted that the location of the buildings is within an existing yard area used for the storage of various items of machinery. As such, it is not considered that the further development of this part of the site would result in any further incursion into the open countryside.

10.27. Due to the rural nature of the site and surrounding area, it is not considered that the proposed development of these buildings would be detrimental to the landscape character of the area.

10.28. In terms of the erection of a new dwelling, this is located on a separate parcel of land that is currently undeveloped agricultural land. On the basis that it is not considered to constitute a rural workers development, as set out above, the proposal should be assessed against Policy LP3, LP12 and LP16.

10.29. The site is in an elsewhere location where development will be restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local enterprise, and therefore the proposal is considered contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

10.30. Whilst the location of the dwelling is in relatively close proximity to the existing buildings on the site, it is considered that the creation of a dwelling on a greenfield site would result in an encroachment on the landscape character of the area. The location of the site in such a rural location result in a site that is not related to a settlement or pattern of development. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LP12, Part A (a), (c) & (d) in this regard.

10.31. Whilst it is considered that the design of the dwelling is acceptable and appropriate details of materials could be secured via condition this is not sufficient to outweigh the landscape character harm that would inherently arise from the development of the site.

10.32. On this basis, it is considered that the development of this part of the site for residential purposes would inherently result in a detrimental impact on the open landscape character of the area, and area that currently benefits from largely uninterrupted views.

10.33. It is overall considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable changes to the area that would fail to enhance its local setting and adversely impact the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.

## **Residential Amenity**

10.34. The application site is sufficiently sized to accommodate a dwelling and provide sufficient private amenity space for future occupants. The submitted site layout plan identifies a generous plot size and suitable private amenity space provision.

10.35. Further, the relationship between the site and the nearest dwellings is considered to be sufficient to avoid any detrimental impacts in terms of overlooking, over-dominance, or overshadowing.

10.36. The nearest residential property to the site is approximately 760m away. As such, the residential element of the proposal will not result in any detrimental amenity impact.

10.37. The proposed buildings are stated as to be used for storage. This proposed use would not result in any additional impacts on residential amenity.

10.38. The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in respect of its residential amenity impacts.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

10.39. The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.

10.40. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seeks to direct development away from areas at high risk of flooding, unless the sequential and exception test can be met.

10.41. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which has been considered by the Environment Agency with no objections raised, subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Flood Risk Assessment.

10.42. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment incorporates a sequential test which states that the sequential test is passed on the basis that the application is for a rural worker dwelling and therefore represents a solution for the site.

10.43. As set out in the 'Principle of Development' section above, the site is considered to be located in an 'Elsewhere' location, as defined by Policy LP3. As per the conclusions of this section of the report, it is not considered that Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, or Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF is met on the basis that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposal is essential for agricultural purposes.

10.44. The Council's adopted approach to the Sequential Test states that the area of search will be "determined by considering the proposal's objectives, linked to the spatial policies of the Local Plan. For proposals that demonstrate a clear objective to sustain particular settlements or the countryside, the area of search will be:

- For developments within or adjacent to Market Towns and Growth Villages, the area of search will normally be limited to land within or adjacent to the settlement in which the development is proposed.
- For all other locations – including Limited Growth, Small and Other Villages, or Elsewhere Locations – the area of search will normally be expected to be district-wide.

10.45. As the application site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location with insufficient justification, it is considered that the search area for the sequential test must cover the whole of the rural area. Accordingly, the sequential test is deemed to be failed.

10.46. As the sequential test has been failed, it is not necessary to consider the exception test.

10.47. Overall, on the basis of the site's location in Flood Zone 3 and considered that the sequential test is not met, it is not considered that the development is in a

suitable location in flood risk terms, and therefore the application is considered contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).

### **Parking Provision and Highway Safety**

10.48. The proposal seeks the use of an existing track to the application site. The access is over an adopted track extending north from Creek Road measuring approximately 630m. After this point, the track becomes a private drive up to the application site at a length of approximately 230m.

10.49. The Highway Authority have considered the proposal and have raised no objections to the scheme on the basis that the access as existing is used for agricultural purposes, with the proposal unlikely to result in a substantial negative impact on the highway arising from the proposed development.

10.50. The application is not supported by details about existing or proposed traffic movements. However, given the nature and scale of the proposed structures, and their proposed use for storage in association with the existing farming operations, it is considered that it is unlikely that any significant or material increase in traffic movements would occur as a result of the development.

10.51. As a result, it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of its highway safety impact.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

10.52. The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

10.53. In this instance a Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun.

## **11 CONCLUSIONS**

11.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of 1no. worker dwelling, the erection of a building and retention of an existing building.

11.2. The submission detail fails to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a rural worker dwelling on site in terms of the responsibilities of the worker to live on site, nor that there are not alternatively available properties in the area that could fulfil this need. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12(d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and therefore unacceptable in principle.

11.3. Further, given that the principle of development is considered unacceptable, the location of the site in such a rural location would inherently result in actual harm to the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

11.4. The site is also located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The development fails to pass the sequential test due to the 'elsewhere' location requiring the area of search to be district wide. Therefore, there is an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of flooding associated with the development,

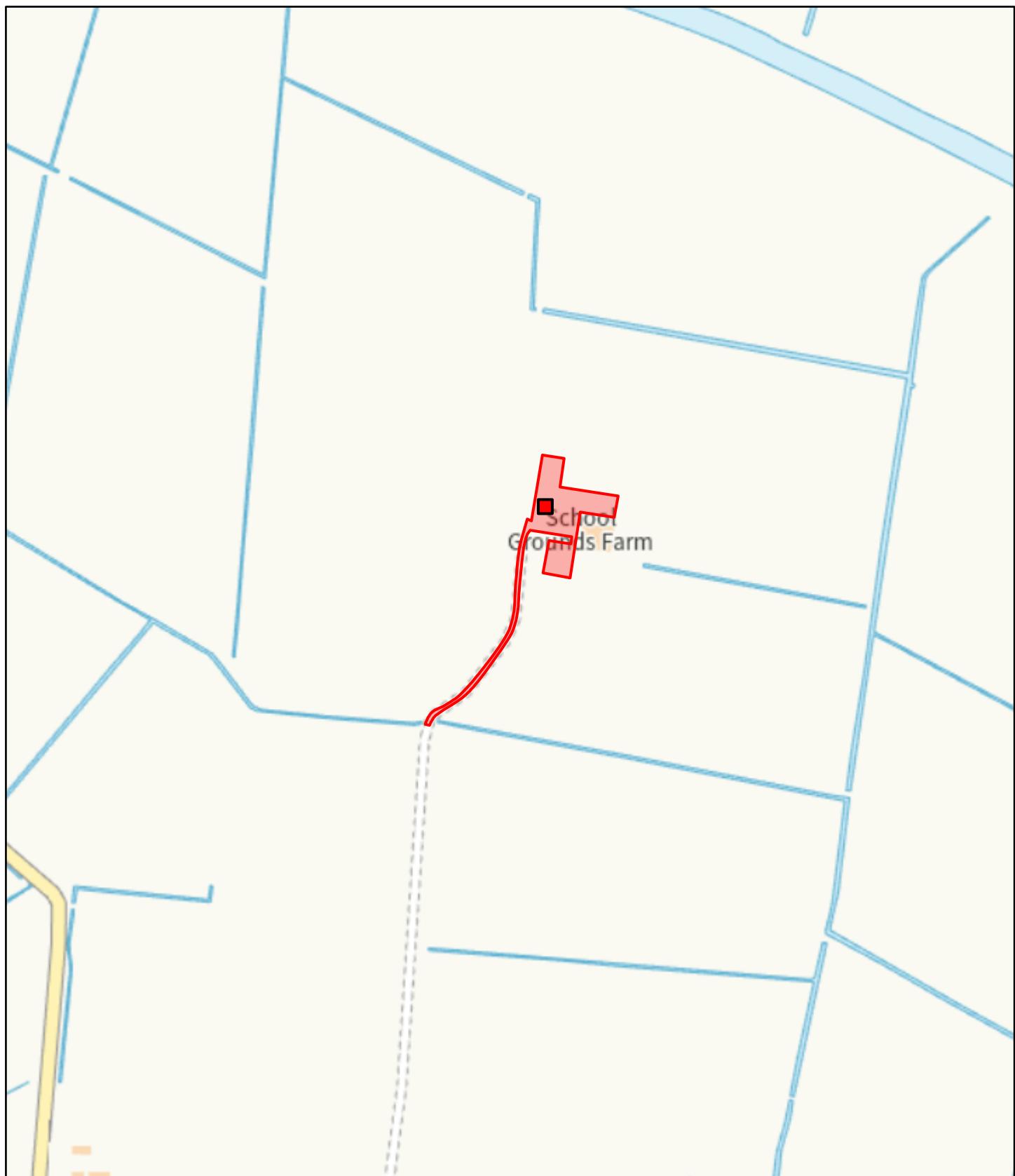
contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).

11.5. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Local and National Planning Policy and is unacceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission is refused in this instance.

## 12 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1.	The application site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location as identified in Policy LP3, where development is restricted to that which is essential for agriculture, or other uses requiring a rural location. The proposal is supported by insufficient justification to demonstrate that there is an essential agricultural need for the development as required by Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF 2024. The proposal would therefore result in unwarranted development in an unsustainable rural location contrary to the aforementioned policies.
2.	The proposal, by virtue of the development of a greenfield site in a rural location, would be harmful to the character of the open countryside, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.
3.	The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 and fails to meet the sequential or exception test. It is considered that the proposal is at an unacceptable risk of flooding that would fail to be suitably mitigated against. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2023).

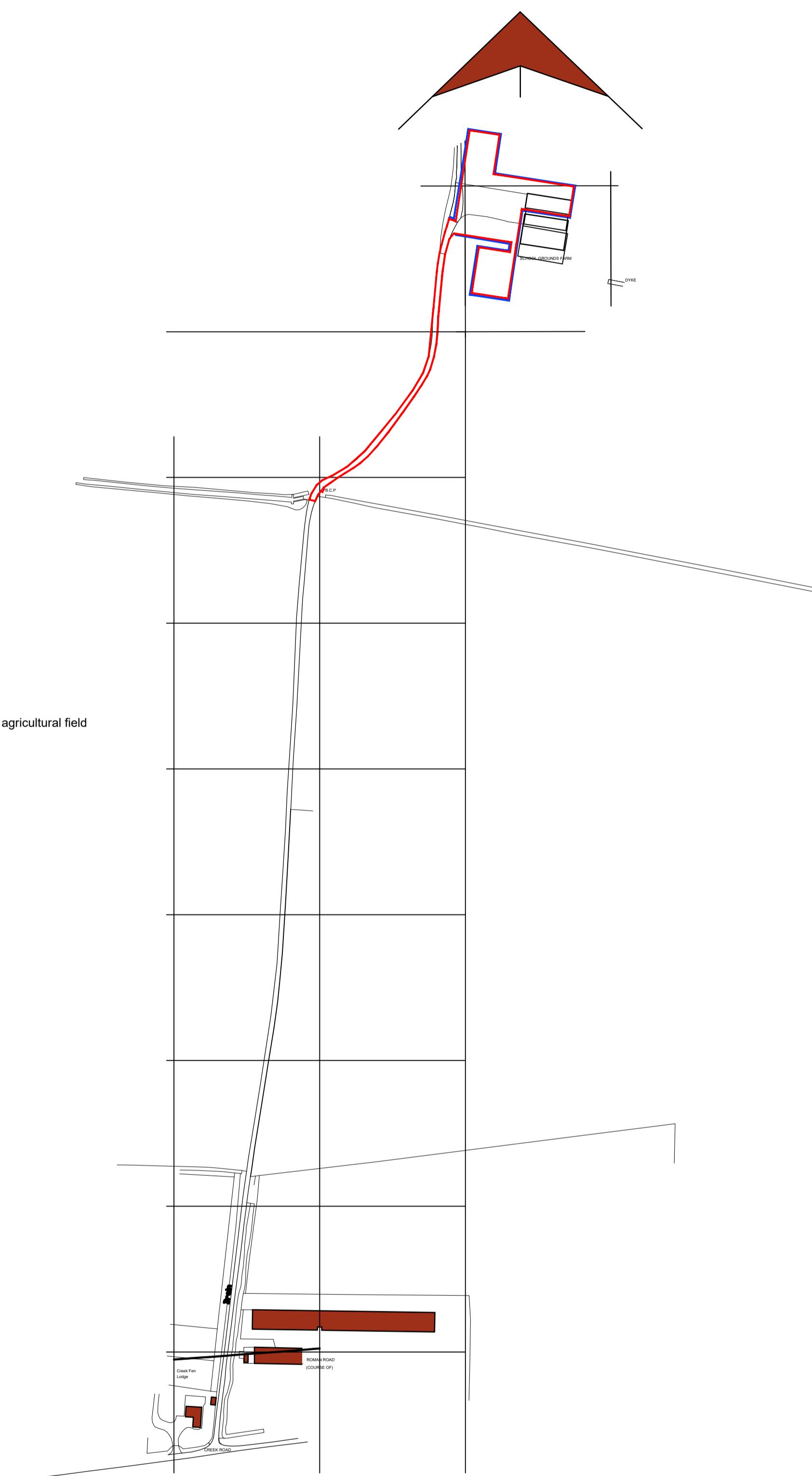
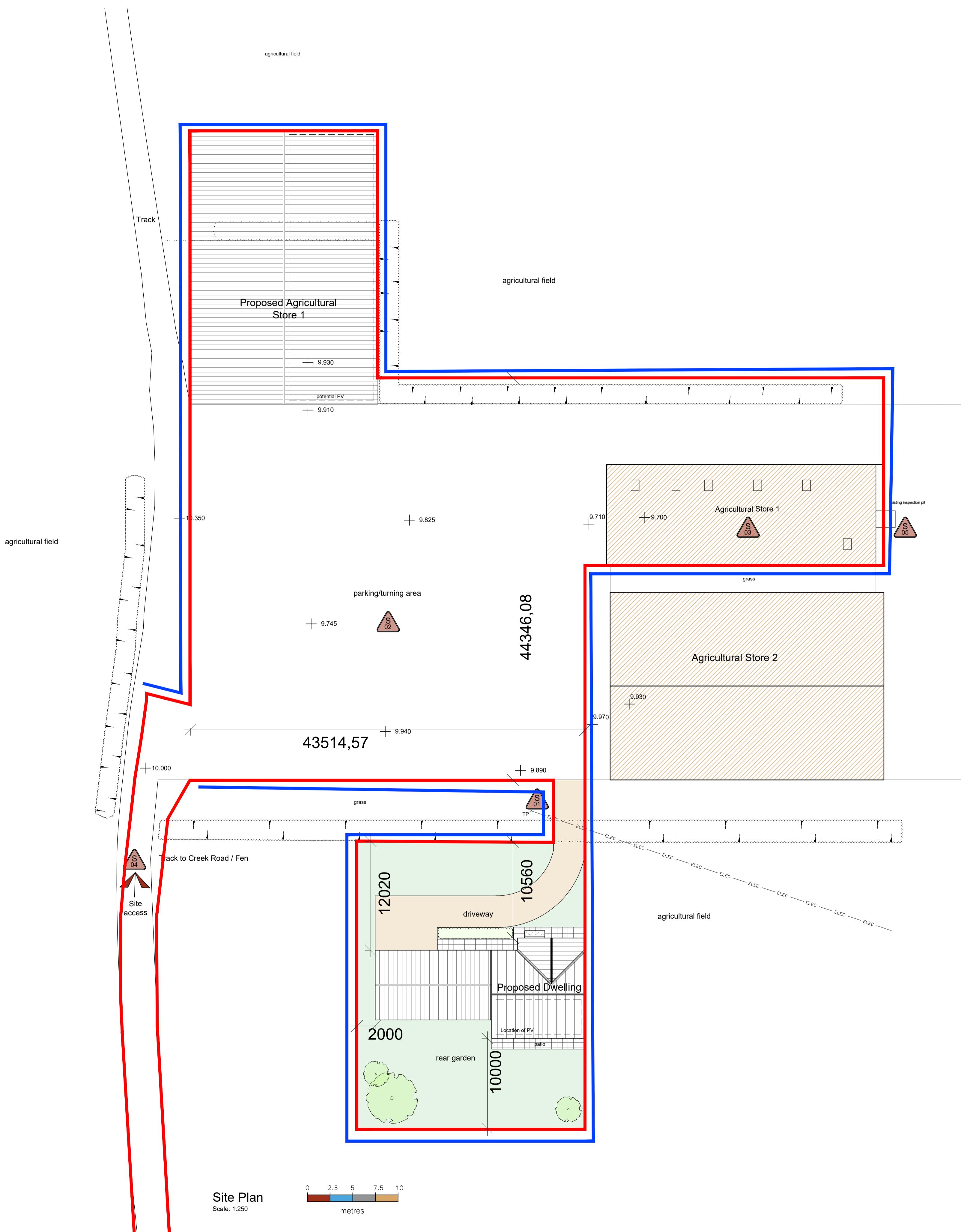


10/23/2025, 3:01:32 PM

 Fenland District Boundary

1:5,000  
0 70 140 210 280 ft  
0 70 140 210 280 m

Fenland District Council



**General Notes**

- All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
- The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions, sizes and levels prior to starting work.
- This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.
- Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designer's attention.

#### SITE PLAN KEY

	Indicates existing surveyed agricultural building to be retained
	Indicates proposed buildings
	Indicates existing site access
	Indicates risks identified on site during physical site survey and risks introduced by the proposed scheme
	Indicates proposed site levels
	+ 9.745
	Indicates approximate position of proposed soft landscaping
	Indicates proposed grass
	Indicates proposed gravel
	Indicates proposed patio slabs
	Revisions
	Dimensions Added

#### SITE RISK NOTIFICATION KEY

S01	Overhead Cables	S02	Operating Site
S03	Potential Asbestos	S04	Limited Site Access Road
S05	Exposed Inspection Pit		

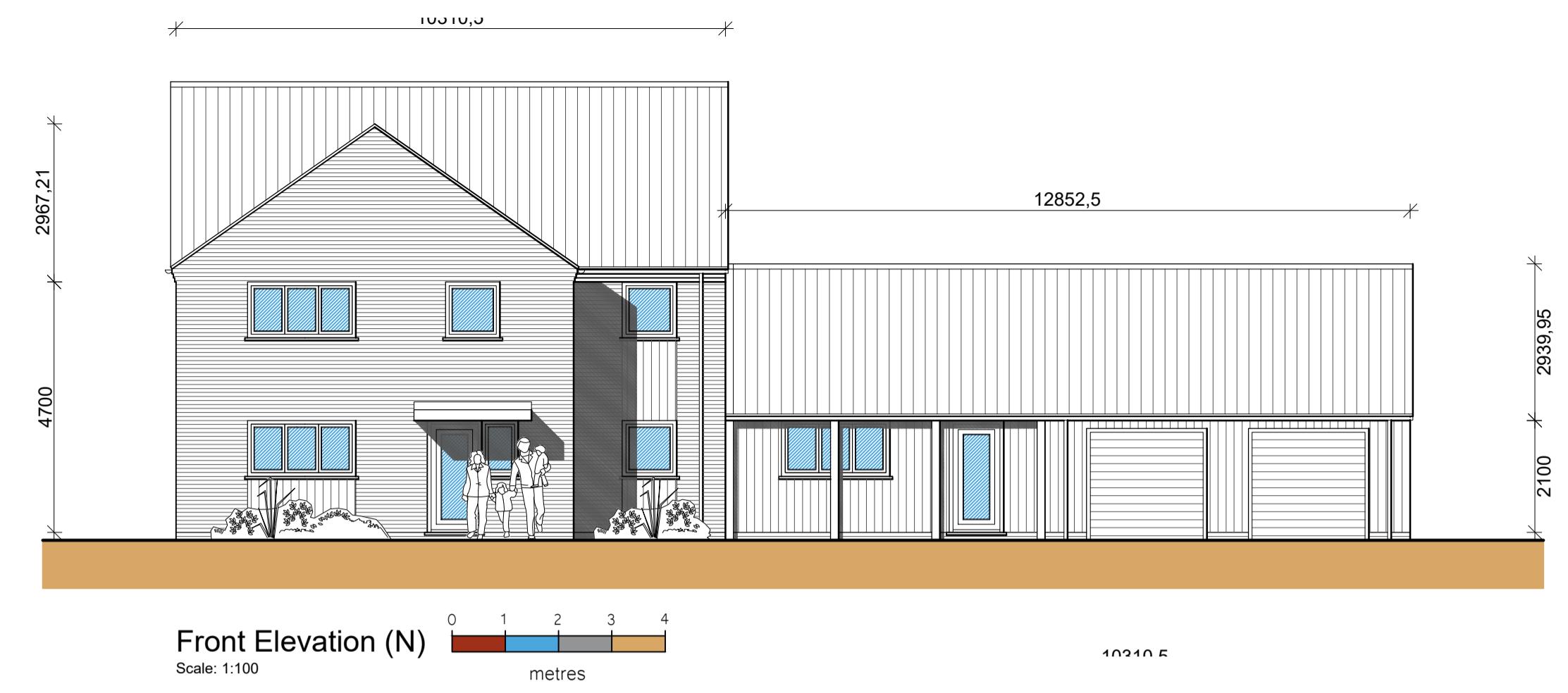
**Status**

**FOR APPROVAL**

**SWANN EDWARDS**  
A R C H I T E C T U R E

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA  
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

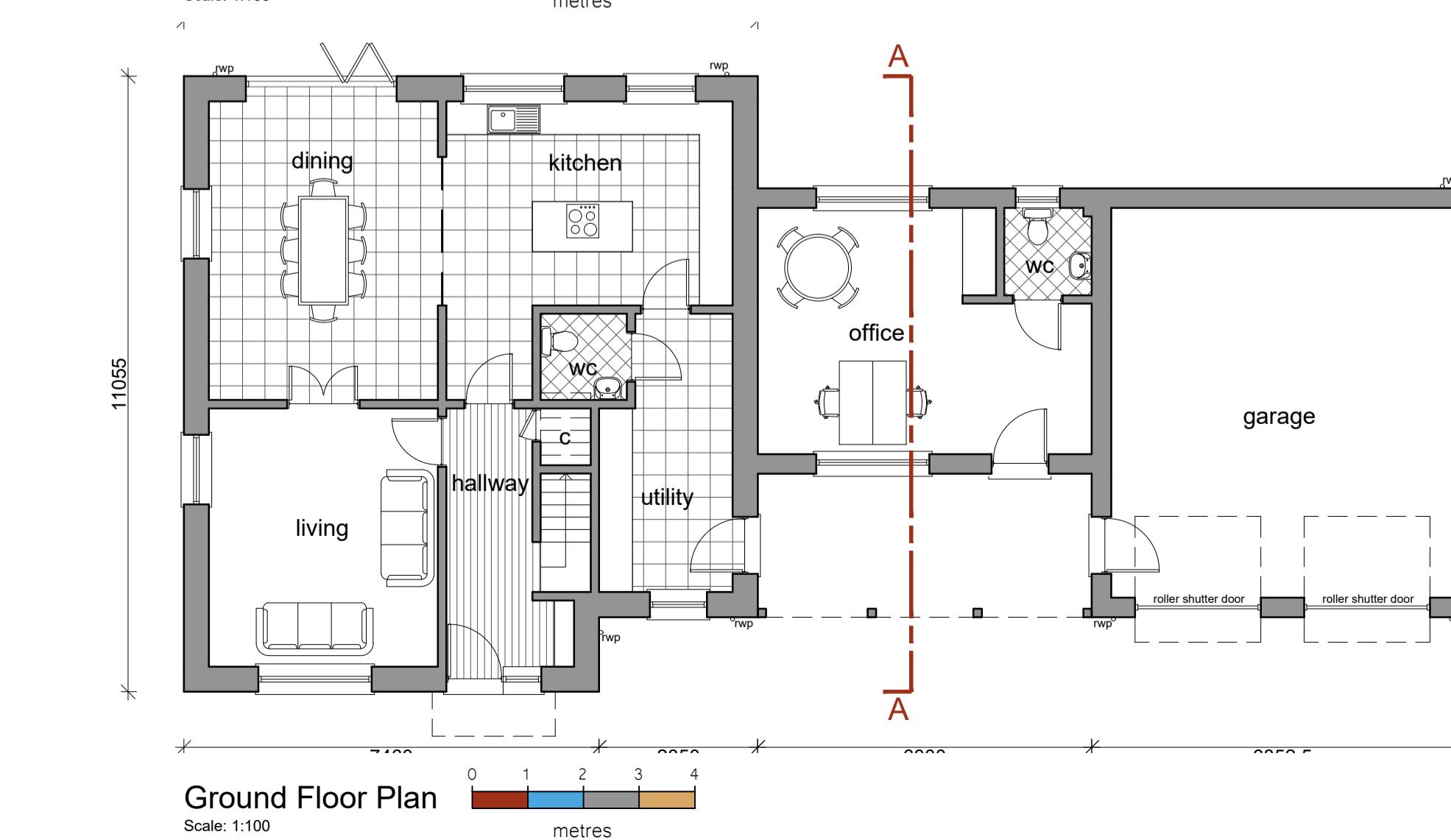
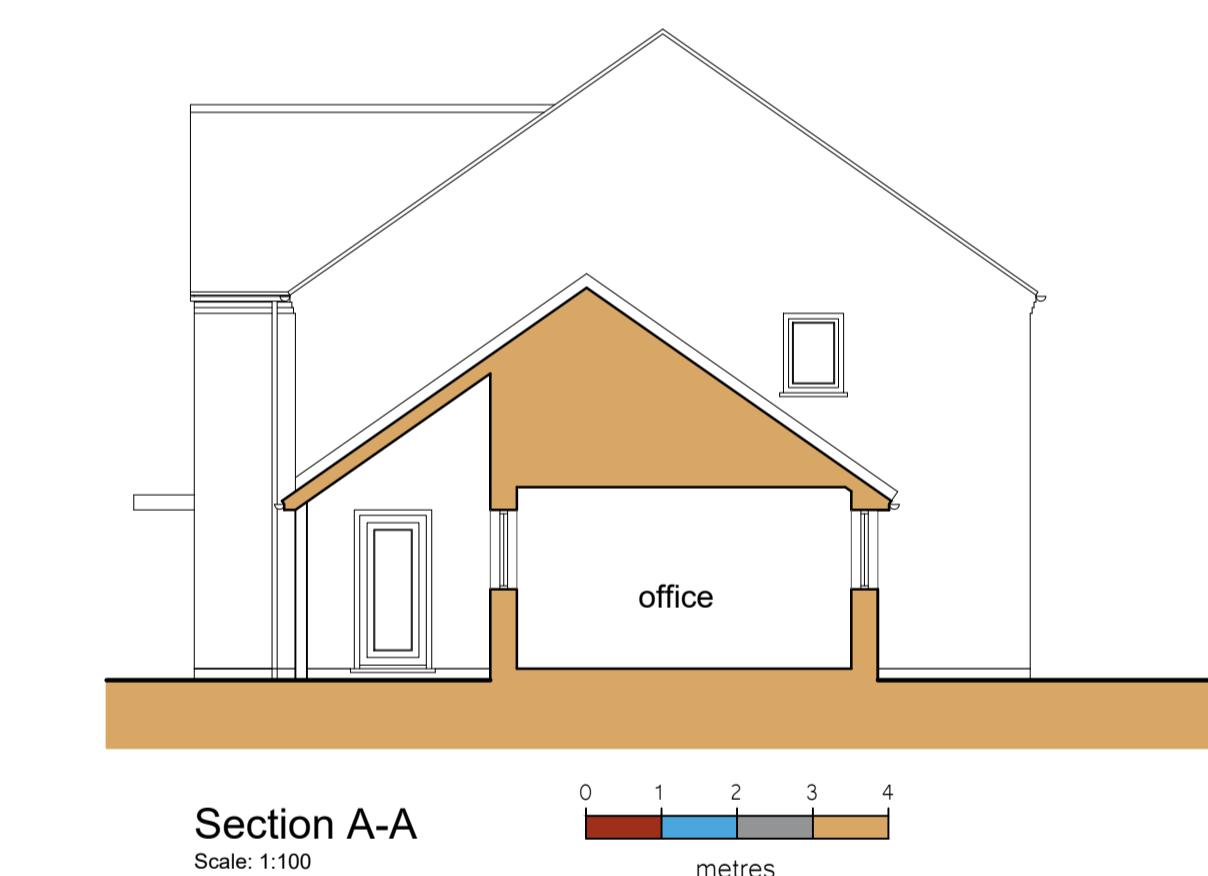
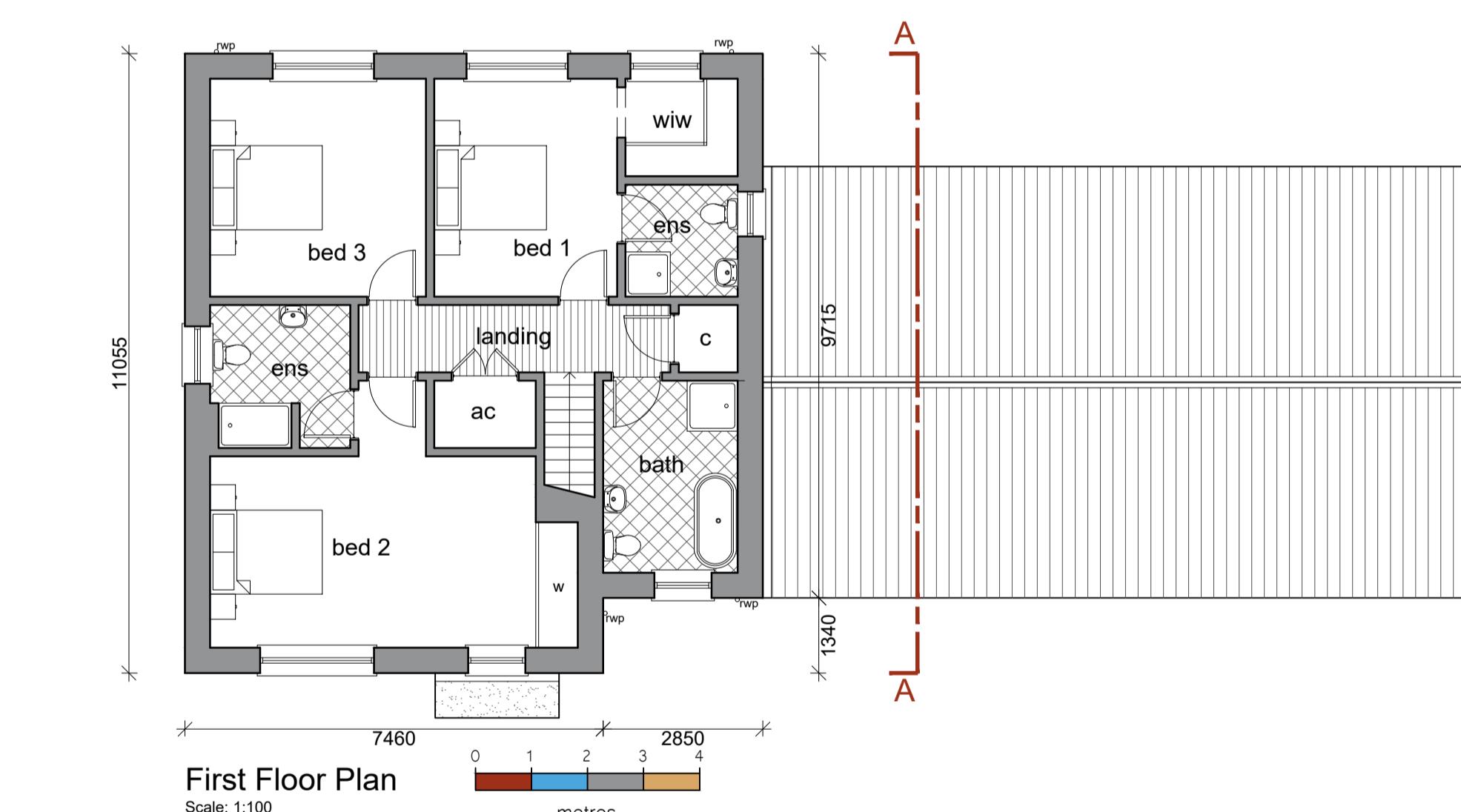
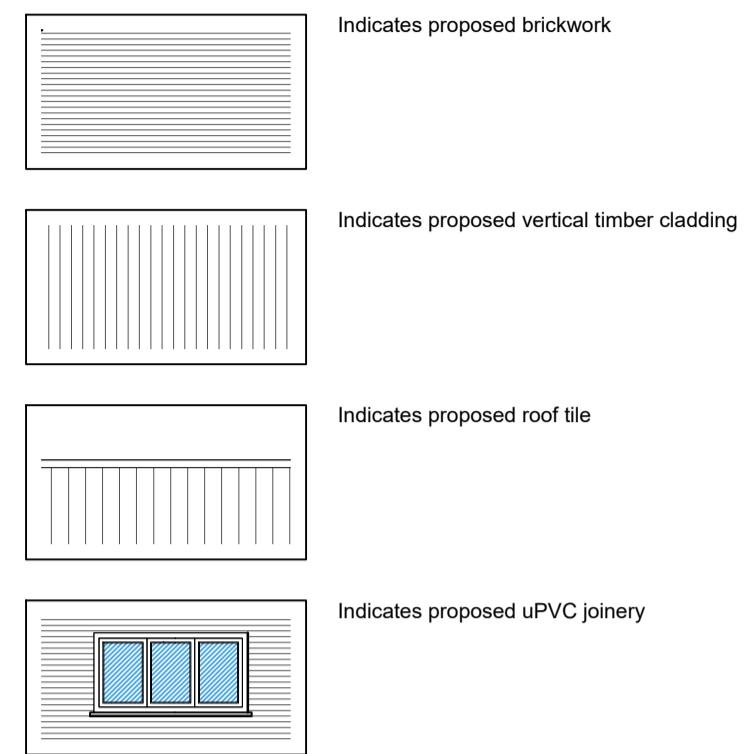
Proposed Development Creek Fen, March For: Mr Bushell	Date September 2024	Drawn by GT
	Checked by G.E.	
Drawing Title Planning Drawing Site & Location Plan	Dwg No. SE-2167	Sheet Size A1
	Dwg No. PP1000	Revision B



General Notes

- All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
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- This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.
- Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

#### MATERIAL KEY



FOR APPROVAL

**SWANN  
EDWARDS**

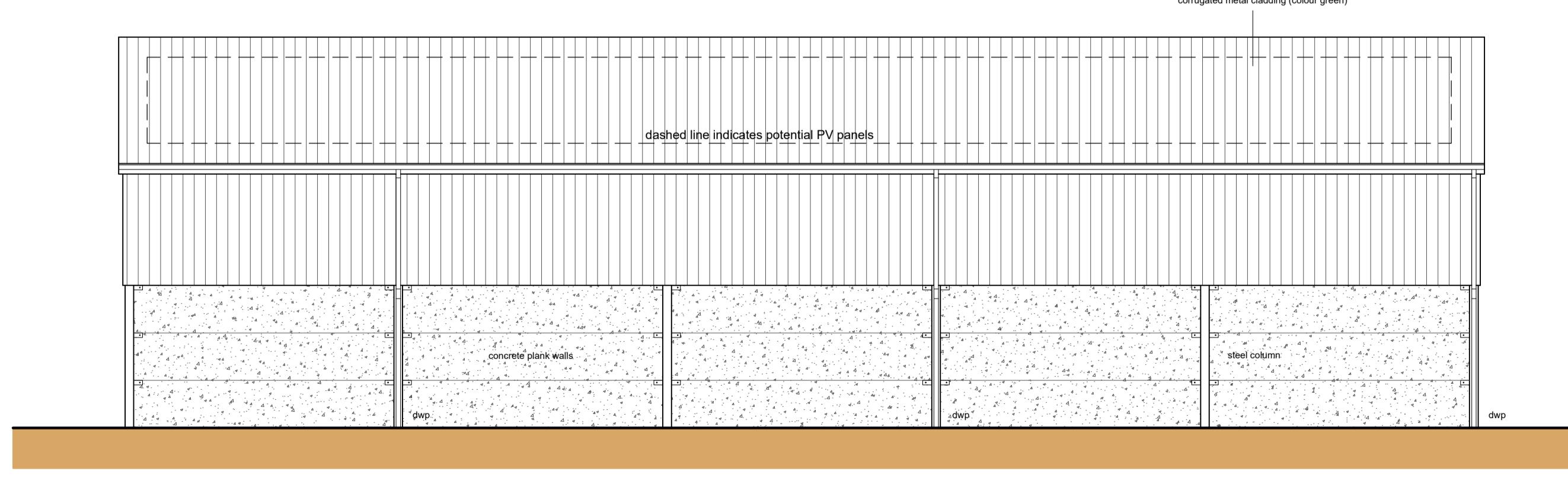
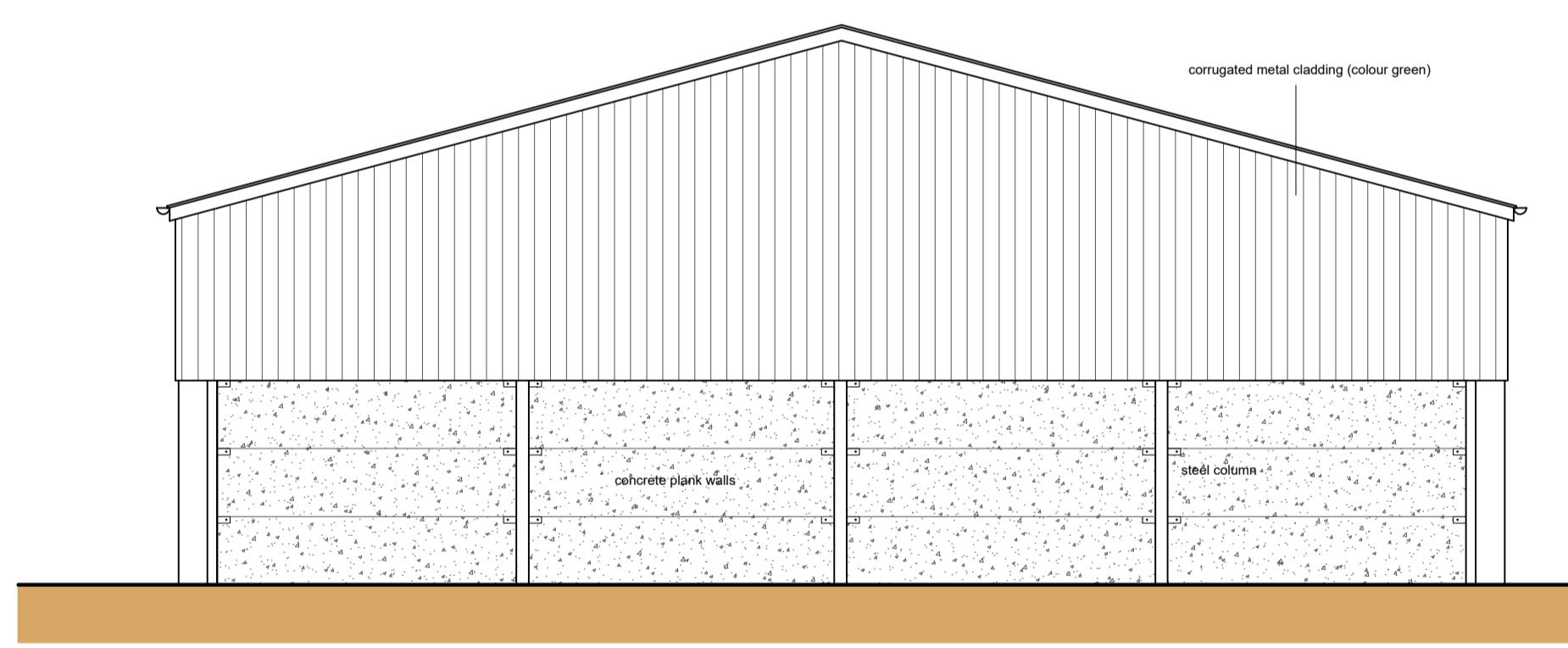
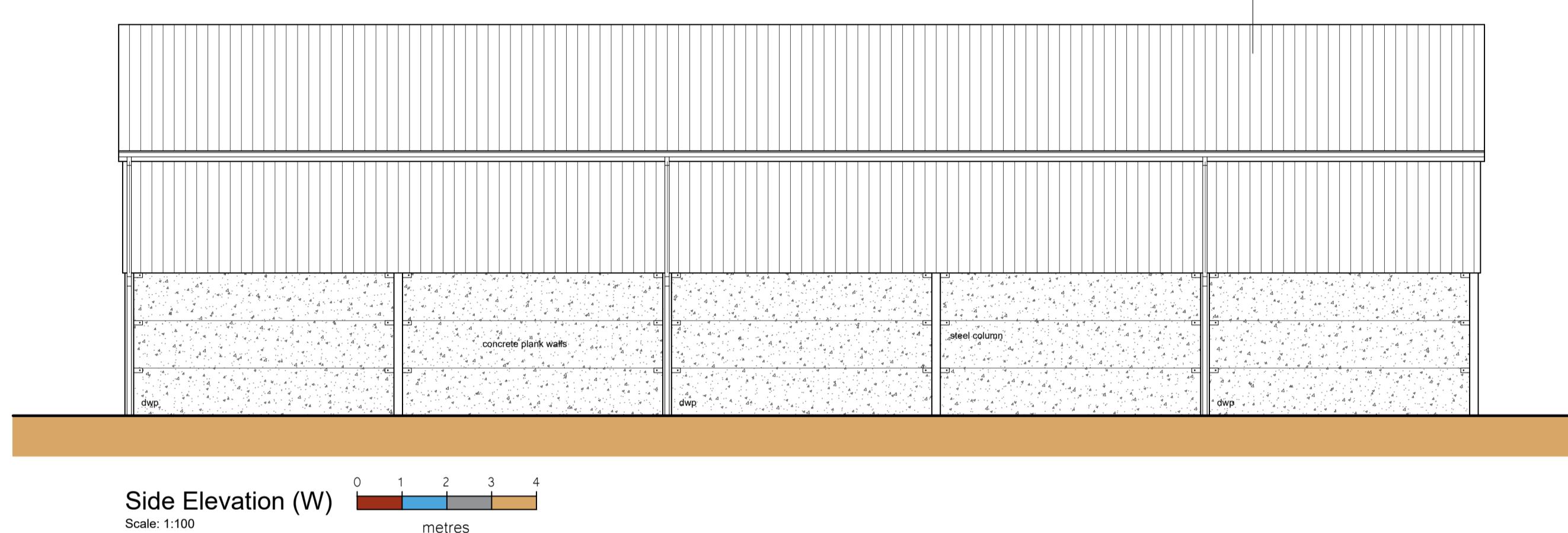
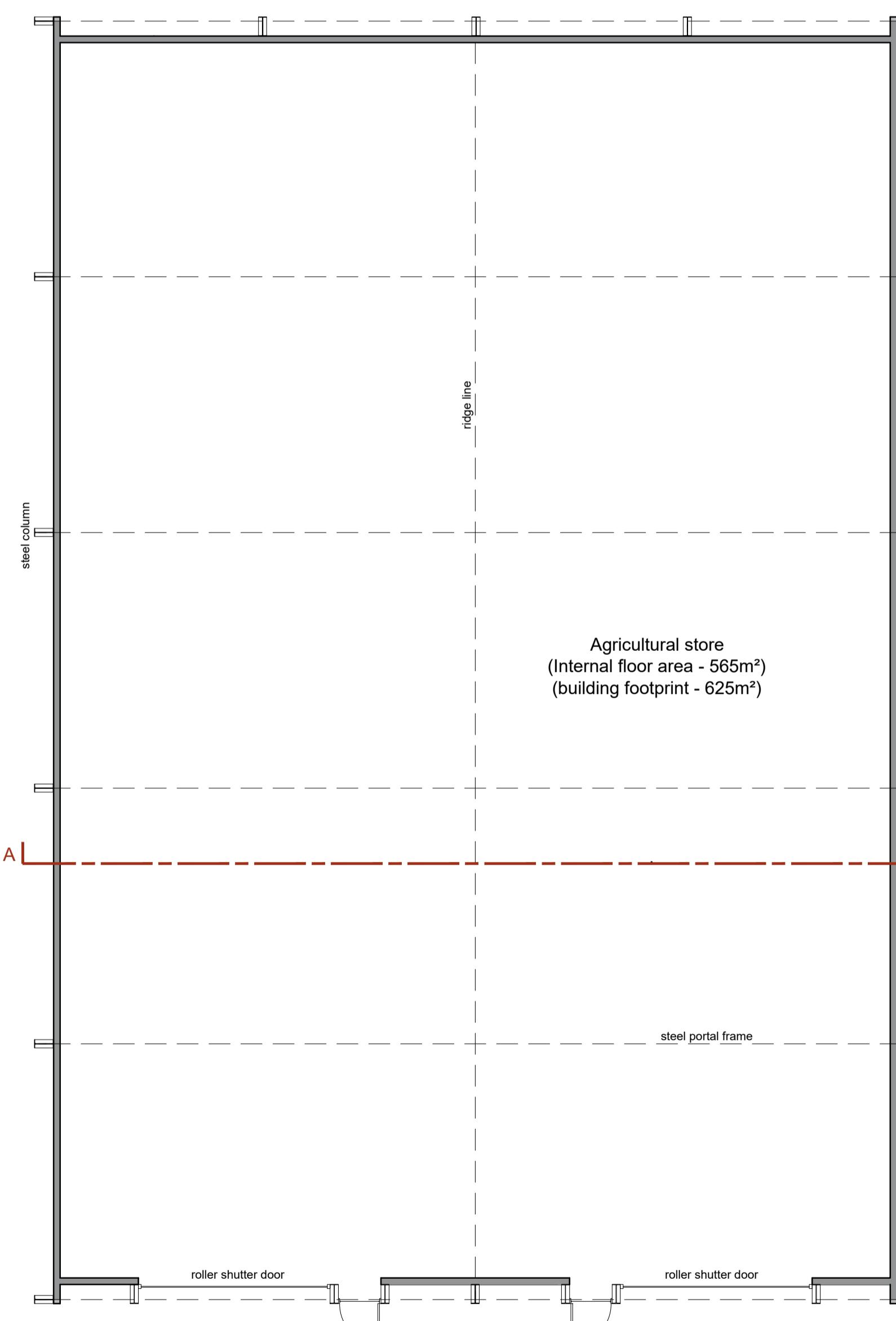
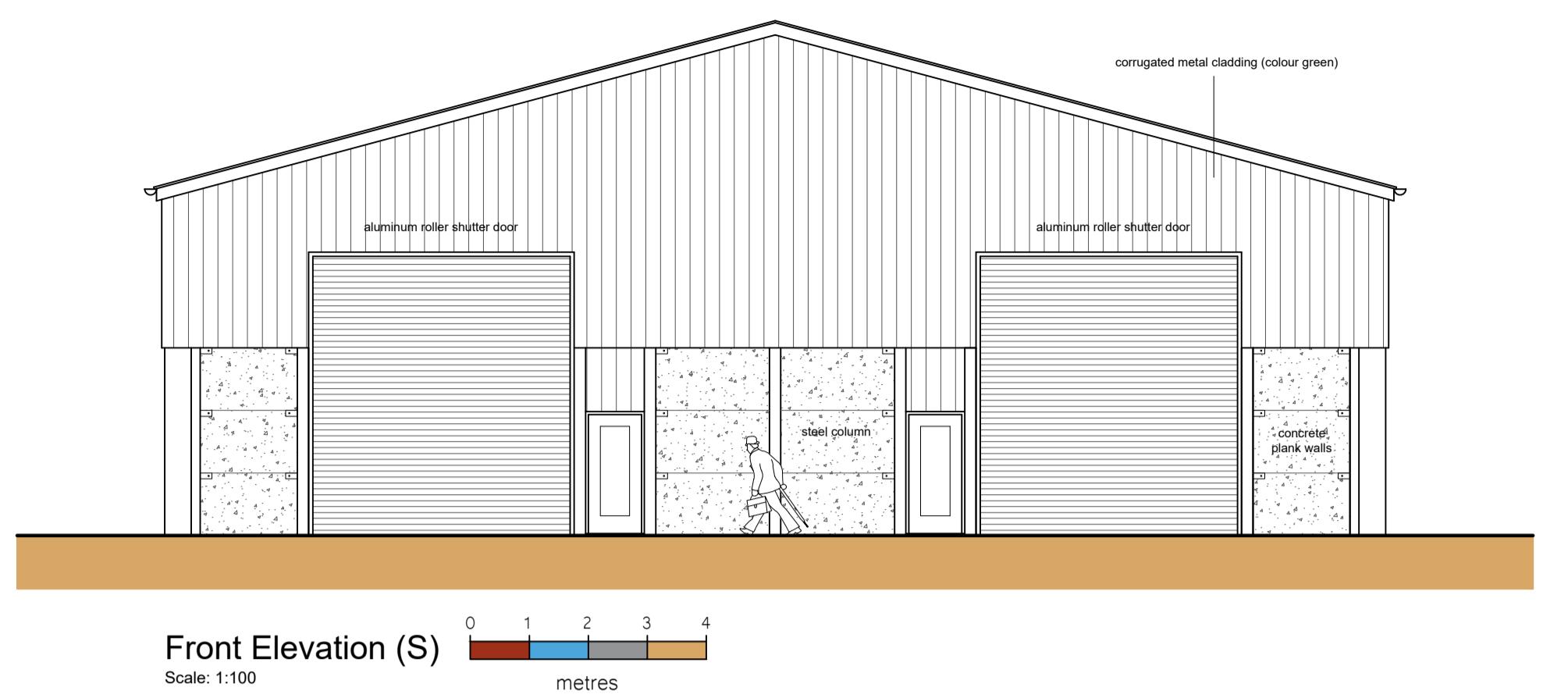
ARCHITECTURE

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road,  
Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4AA

t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Proposed Development	Job Title	Date	Drawn by
Creek Fen, March	September 2024	GT	Checked by
For: Mr. Bushell			G.E.
Planning Title	Drawing Title		
Proposed Dwelling	Proposed Dwelling		
Dwg No.	Job No.	Sheet Size	
PP1100	SE-2 167	A1	
Rev No.	Dwg No.	Sheet Size	
Revision A	PP1100	A1	

**General Notes**  
 1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.  
 2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.  
 3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.  
 4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.



**Revisions**  
 A Nov 24 Agricultural Barn to be retained

**Status**  
**FOR APPROVAL**

**SWANN EDWARDS**  
**ARCHITECTURE**

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road,  
 Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4AA  
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Proposed Development	Job Title	Date	Drawn by
Creek Fen, March		September 2024	GT
For: Mr. Bushell			Checked by
			G.E.
Planning Drawing	Drawing Title	Date	Drawn by
Proposed Agricultural Store 1		September 2024	GT
			Checked by
	Sheet Size	Date	Drawn by
	A1	September 2024	GT
	Dwg No.	Date	Checked by
	PP1101	September 2024	G.E.
	Revision	Date	Drawn by
	A	September 2024	GT

F/YR25/0878/F

**Applicant: Mr & Mrs J White**

**Agent: Mr Gareth Edwards**  
**Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

**Land West Of Prospect House Farm, Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect 2 x dwellings with garages and formation of a new access involving demolition of existing buildings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no dwellings and detached double garage.
- 1.2. The proposal is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, and it is therefore not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development. Whilst there is an extant Class Q approval on-site for the conversion of a building into 2no. dwellings, the significant increase in site area proposed by this application is considered to render the fallback position irrelevant. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
- 1.3. Subsequently, the development of the site would also result in an adverse landscape character impact through the erection of relatively large dwellings in terms of scale and massing in a rural location that currently benefits from largely uninterrupted views. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in this regard.
- 1.4. The site is located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The proposals fails both the Sequential and Exception Test as it is not demonstrated that the development could be accommodated elsewhere, nor that there are wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm arising from the flood risk associated with the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.
- 1.5. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, having regard to Local and National Planning Policy, and is accordingly recommended for refusal on this basis.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site is located on Land West of Prospect House Farm, Whittlesey Road in March.

- 2.2. The site is located in a rural location approximately 1km from Turves and comprises three buildings that are of agricultural vernacular. There is a residential dwelling immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, with the next residential property located approximately 200m south of the application site.
- 2.3. The site is located within Flood Zone 3 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.

### 3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal seeks the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings on site and the erection of 2no. dwellings that are two-storey, 4-bed in nature.
- 3.2. The proposed palette of materials comprises timber cladding and slate roof tiles. The proposed dwellings measure 13.4m in width, 11.6m in depth, 5m in height to the eaves and 7.6m in height to the ridge.
- 3.3. Each dwelling would also benefit from a detached double garage with matching materials that measures 7.2m in width, 7.85m in depth, 2.4m in height to the eaves and 5.3m in height to the ridge.
- 3.4. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR16/0902/PNC04	Change of use from agricultural building to 2-storey, 5-bed dwelling	Prior Approval Granted 17.02.17
F/YR22/0712/PNC04	Change of use from agricultural building to 2 x dwellings	Prior Approval Refused 08.08.22
F/YR23/0567/PNC04	Change of use from agricultural building to 2 x dwellings	Prior Approval Refused 24.08.23
F/YR24/0414/PNC04	Change of use from agricultural buildings to 2 x dwellings	Prior Approval Granted 18.09.24

### 5 CONSULTATIONS

#### 5.1. March Town Council – 03.12.25

*Recommendation; Approval*

#### 5.2. Environment Agency – 21.11.25

No objection

#### 5.3. Environmental Health – 24.11.25

No objection subject to condition securing Contaminated Land mitigation

#### 5.4. FDC Ecology – 26.11.25

*I have no overall objections to the proposals on Ecology grounds. I would accept that the development could achieve the required biodiversity net gain on-site by the*

*provision of the new garden spaces on land which is currently rather species-poor agricultural land.*

*The buildings to be demolished have been shown to be used occasionally by Barn Owls and Kestrels as day-perches, although there were no signs of nesting. I would advise that prior to any demolitions commencing the buildings should be re-inspected for any signs of nesting. If birds are found to be nesting in the buildings, no works should commence until any young birds have fledged. All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Barn Owls are further protected from disturbance by the same legislation.*

#### **5.5. Natural England – 03.12.25**

No objection

#### **5.6. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – 12.12.25**

No objection subject to conditions securing suitable construction of access points

#### **5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties**

A total of 10 letters of support were received from residents of Turves, Whittlesey and March. Five of the letters received provided no detailed reasons for support, with the remaining letters raising the following points:

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Opportunities for families to move to area	See 'Principle of development' section of report
Development will enhance village	See 'Character and appearance' section of report
Converting barns into dwellings	Proposal is for demolition of buildings, not conversion of building
Makes efficient use of previously developed land	See 'Principle of development' section of report

### **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) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

### **7 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024**

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

### Determining a Planning Application

#### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context  
Identity  
Built Form  
Movement  
Nature  
Uses  
Homes and Buildings

#### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need  
LP9 – March  
LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland  
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District  
LP18 – The Historic Environment  
LP19 – The Natural Environment

#### **March Neighbourhood Plan 2017**

H2 – Windfall Development  
H3 – Local Housing Need

#### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

#### **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

### **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Fallback Position**
- **Character and appearance**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Parking Provision and Highway Safety**
- **Biodiversity Impact**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

### **9 BACKGROUND**

- 9.1. There was a previous Class Q Prior Approval granted under reference number F/YR24/0414/PNC04 for the conversion of the easternmost agricultural building on site to be converted into 2no. residential dwellings.
- 9.2. There have also been several earlier Prior Approvals for the same building, with applications in 2016 (Approved), 2022 (Refused) and 2023 (Refused).

## 10 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

- 10.1. The application site is located in proximity to the settlement of Turves, which is identified as a 'Small Village' in Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). Such settlements are capable of supporting a small amount of development, although this will generally be restricted to residential infilling or small business opportunities.
- 10.2. However, the location of the application is considered to fall outside of the built form of Turves by approximately 360m with no pedestrian access to the limited facilities of that settlement. The site therefore has limited access to services and facilities and would rely entirely on the private motor vehicle. The Market Towns of March and Whittlesey would be likely to provide the majority of service provision to the proposed dwellings, both of which are located approximately 6km from the site.
- 10.3. On this basis, the site is considered to fall within an 'Elsewhere' location, where development is restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of local, rural enterprise.
- 10.4. The proposal is for the erection of 2no. dwellings, with no evidence submitted to demonstrate that it is required for the effective operation of a rural enterprise. As such, the principle of the development conflicts with Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.
- 10.5. It is not considered that the proposal would benefit from the exception for isolated homes in the countryside as set out in Paragraph 84(c) of the NPPF (2024) as this requires the re-use of redundant or disused buildings and would enhance its immediate setting. It is acknowledged that the site in its current condition is not of any particular aesthetic merit. However, it is not considered that the aesthetic improvement on the site would be dependent on the proposed development, nor any suburbanising that would likely have a far greater impact on the landscape character of the area. As such, it is not considered that the exception afforded by the NPPF would apply in this instance.
- 10.6. It is acknowledged that there is a general emphasis throughout the NPPF on the re-use of previously developed land. However, the NPPF must be read as a whole in assessing development proposals. In this instance, it is not considered that the presumption in favour of the re-use of previously developed land would, in itself, be sufficient to override the need for development to be sustainable, nor would it override considerations of environmental harm, sustainability, or the impact on the character of the area. In any event, the glossary of the NPPF advises land occupied by agricultural buildings is exempt from the definition of previously developed land and, as such, such emphasis would not apply to this development proposal.
- 10.7. As previously noted, the site is located approximately 360m from the built form of the settlement of Turves, which in itself has limited service provision, and 6km to

the service provision found in Whittlesey and March, and does not benefit from any pedestrian access links such as footways etc. As such, the development would be entirely reliant on the private motor vehicle to access services and facilities. It is also noted that the historic use of the site for agricultural purposes would generally be more suited to a rural location.

10.8. As such, it is not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development, and the re-use of previously developed land would not outweigh the harm previously identified. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

### **Fallback Position**

10.9. It is noted that there is an extant Class Q Prior Approval for the conversion of one of the agricultural buildings into 2no. residential properties, and it is on this basis that the applicant asserts the principle of development is established and acceptable.

10.10. The relevant legal principles in assessing a fallback position is set out in the case of *R v Secretary of State for the Environment and Havering BC (1998)*. In this case, the judge set out three elements to the fallback test:

*“First whether there is a fallback use, that is to say whether there is a lawful ability to undertake such a use; secondly, whether there is a likelihood or real prospect of such occurring. Thirdly if the answer to the second question is “yes” a comparison must be made between the proposed development and the fallback use.”*

10.11. Consideration of the fallback position offered by Class Q Prior Approvals was given under Court of Appeal decision Mansell vs Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council [2017], which allowed consent for the demolition of a barn and bungalow and erection of 4no. detached dwellings in their place.

10.12. Turning back to the three tests of a fallback position mentioned previously, it is established that residential development could take place on site by virtue of the approved Class Q approval on site. The first element is therefore considered to be passed.

10.13. In terms of the second element, the submission of this current application demonstrates a desire of the applicant to maximise the value of the site and therefore demonstrates that there would be a likelihood or real prospect of the fallback occurring. The second element is therefore considered to be passed. It should be noted, however, that no justification has been provided as to why the conversion of the building approved under the Prior Approval is no longer being pursued. The commentary on this point in the submitted Design and Access Statement is limited to the author’s considered “betterment to the local area”.

10.14. In respect of the third, and perhaps most crucial element, a comparison must be made between the fallback use and currently proposed development.

10.15. In this regard, the Class Q approval for the conversion of one of the buildings on site on a far smaller site area (260m<sup>2</sup>) compared to the site area of this application (5561m<sup>2</sup>). Whilst it is noted that the red line on the Class Q is restricted by the regulations, the site area for this current application represents approximately a 2140% increase in area subject to development, with the increased site area

resulting in an additional sprawl of development measuring 90m in this rural countryside location.

10.16. Furthermore, the dwellings proposed as part of this application are far larger in size and scale than those approved in the Class Q scheme and would therefore also result in a significant increase in landscape character impact, conflicting with the aims of the Local Plan and principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.17. Consequently, it is not considered that the Class Q Prior Approval represents a fallback position that would justify the approval of this scheme contrary to the aims and principles of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

10.18. The principle of development is therefore considered to be unacceptable in this instance.

### **Character and Appearance**

10.19. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, sets out a number of criterions in which proposals are required to meet, to ensure that high quality environments are provided and protected. Most relevant to the proposal are:

(d) *makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, responds to and improves the character of the local built environment, provides resilience to climate change, reinforces local identity and does not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape character of the surrounding area.*

10.20. Further guidance is provided within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Developments SPD.

10.21. The dwellings proposed are two-storey, 4-bed in nature and are proposed to be constructed with timber cladding and slate roof tiles. It is considered that these details are acceptable in principle and that suitable details could be secured via a suitably worded condition.

10.22. As mentioned in the 'Principle of Development' section of this report, the site is located in a rural, countryside location with largely uninterrupted views from the surrounding area.

10.23. Whilst the proposal would result in the removal of some disused buildings on site that would provide improvement to the landscape character of the area, these buildings to be removed are modest in size and scale, and as such have a limited visibility and subsequent landscape impact.

10.24. The proposed dwellings are significantly larger in both size and scale, due to their two-storey nature, and will therefore be highly visible on the landscape, resulting in an erosion and incongruous intrusion on the largely open and undeveloped landscape. Furthermore, the proposed dwellings cover a far larger area than the existing buildings to be removed, and the domestication of the site with any residential would result in further erosion of the landscape character of the area.

10.25. It is therefore not considered that the benefit arising from the removal of disused buildings currently on site would outweigh this harm that has been identified.

10.26. It should be noted that the proposed designs of the dwellings, as shown on the submitted floor and elevation plans, is not objected to.

10.27. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would result in actual harm to the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and is therefore considered to be unacceptable in this regard.

### **Impact on Amenities**

10.28. Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan seeks to promote high levels of residential amenity. Similarly, Policy LP16 seeks to ensure development proposals result in high quality environments.

10.29. There is limited development in the surrounding area, with a single dwelling immediately adjacent to the site the only development within circa 230m of the site.

10.30. The existing dwelling to the east of the site is separated by a number of well-established trees that provide screening from the proposed units. Further, there is a separation distance of approximately 30m to the proposed dwellings. It is considered that this distance is sufficient to avoid any detrimental impacts on the amenities of the existing dwelling.

10.31. The proposed dwellings are separated by a paddock area that offers a separation distance of 25m between the plots. This separation distance and fenestration arrangement is such that no adverse amenity impacts will occur as a result of the development.

10.32. Both dwellings benefit from rear private amenity spaces measuring 23m and 26m in depth respectively, therefore providing ample space for future occupants of the dwellings.

10.33. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of amenity impact.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

10.34. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024) set out the policy approach towards development in areas of flood risk. Both of these policies seek to encourage development first within areas of lower flood risk, before considering development in areas at higher risk of flooding. They also seek to ensure developments remain safe from all sources of flooding.

10.35. The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3. The site is, however, at very low risk of surface water flooding.

### **Policy Considerations**

10.36. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out the policy approach towards development in areas of flood risk. Policy LP14 states that all development proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk from all forms of flooding and development in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding will only be permitted following:

- A) The successful completion of a sequential test, having regard to actual and residual flood risks

- B) An exception test (if necessary)
- C) The suitable demonstration of a meeting an identified need, and
- D) Through the submission of a site-specific flood risk assessment, demonstrating appropriate flood risk management and safety measures and a positive approach to reducing flood risk overall, and without reliance on emergency services.

10.37. The National Planning Policy Framework includes an over-arching principle that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. As such, a sequential, risk-based approach is to be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from flooding. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms that this means avoiding, where possible, development in current and future medium and high flood risk areas. The PPG confirms that the underlying purpose includes placing the least reliance on measures like flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience features. Therefore, even where a flood risk assessment shows the development can be made safe throughout its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere, the Sequential Test still needs to be satisfied.

#### Sequential Test

10.38. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment by Ellingham Consulting concludes that the Class Q Prior Approval on site establishes the principle of residential development on site and therefore negates the need for the Sequential Test to be passed. These conclusions are echoed in the Design and Access Statement by Swann Edwards.

10.39. Notwithstanding these conclusions, in assessing a planning appeal under reference number APP/D2510/W/24/3343480 (Mablethorpe Road, Theddlethorpe) for a proposal to erect 2no. detached dwellings on a site that benefitted from Class Q Approval, the Planning Inspector concluded as follows:

*"The appeal site is within Flood Zone 3 and the proposed residential use falls within the 'More Vulnerable' flood risk classification. The form of development proposed is not of a type that is exempt from the Sequential Test as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance for the Framework.*

*The Flood Risk Assessment submitted by the appellant suggests that the Sequential Test is not applicable in this instance as the approved Class Q conversion provides for 2 dwellings on the site, and the appeal proposal is in effect seeking permission for 2 replacement dwellings. However, the appeal proposal cannot be considered to be for replacement dwellings as the Class Q permitted dwellings have not been created, even if that was a justification for not applying the Sequential Test.*

*Although the Class Q permission establishes the principle of 2 dwellings on the site, this was for a change of use rather than new-build development. The Framework sets out that application for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the Sequential Test. Whilst that may apply to the Class Q conversion, it does not apply to the appeal proposal.*

*It is therefore clear that the appeal proposal should be subject to the Sequential Test in respect of flood risk."*

10.40. The proposals and circumstances considered in the aforementioned planning appeal and current proposals are identical in nature, with no material considerations to suggest that a departure from the approach of the Planning Inspector would be appropriate. Therefore, it is concluded that this application would also be required to satisfy the Sequential and Exception Test.

10.41. It is for the decision-maker to consider whether the Sequential Test is passed, with reference to information held on land availability and an appropriate area of search. The latter should be determined by the Local Planning Authority. Accordingly, clarification on the LPA's expected area of search for a Sequential Test is now provided on the Council's website, which states:

*"Applicants must define and justify an appropriate area of search when preparing the Sequential Test. The extent of this area will depend on the location and roles of the settlement, as well as the type and scale of development proposed:*

- For developments within or adjacent to Market Towns and Growth Villages, the area of search will normally be limited to land within or adjacent to the settlement in which the development is proposed.*
- For all other locations – including Limited Growth, Small and Other Villages, or Elsewhere Locations – the area of search will normally be expected to be district-wide.*

*To pass the Sequential Test, applicants must demonstrate that there are no reasonable available sites, within the defined search area, with a lower probability of flooding that could accommodate the proposed development. A poorly defined or unjustified area of search may result in the Sequential Test being considered invalid.*

10.42. The above is clear that the area of search applied to a Sequential Test will normally be based on a district wide search area, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a particular need for the development in that location.

10.43. As the site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, the search area should be district wide. The PPG makes it clear that 'reasonably available' sites are not limited to single plots. This may include part of a larger site if it is capable of accommodating the proposed development, as well as smaller sites that, individually or collectively, could meet the development requirement. Sites do not need to be in the ownership of the applicant to be considered 'reasonably available'.

10.44. As set out above, the application is not supported by a detailed interrogation of any sites to determine whether these may or may not be available and capable of accommodating the proposed development. Further, the assertions of the applicant that the re-development of this site provides sufficient justification that the development cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

10.45. On this basis, it cannot be considered that the Sequential Test is passed in this instance.

#### Exception Test

10.46. Notwithstanding the failure of the Sequential Test, had this been passed it would then be necessary for the application of the Exception Test, which comprises demonstration of the following:

- a) The development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and
- b) The development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

10.47. In respect of a); the most recent Fenland District Council Five Year Housing Land Supply (June 2025) demonstrates a 6.6-year supply of housing land over the five-year period within the district. As such, the Council has a sufficient supply of housing delivery land and is meeting its requirements as demonstrated through recent housing delivery test results. The submitted FRA provides no commentary as to how the proposal satisfies the Exception Test, save for commenting that mitigation measures can be incorporated to ensure the safety of the development and to avoid the increase of flood risk elsewhere. Notwithstanding this, the SPD explicitly states that "*the general provision of housing itself would not normally be considered as a wider sustainability benefit*". Therefore, it is considered that the aforementioned benefits would carry very limited weight in this context.

10.48. In addition, the "tilted balance" as set out in the footnote to paragraph 11 of the NPPF (where Councils are unable to demonstrate a sufficient supply of housing) specifically excludes development in high flood risk areas from any presumption in favour of development. This clearly indicates the government's objective of avoiding development in areas of flood risk, unless demonstrably necessary, even when a Council is unable to deliver the housing its residents need.

10.49. In respect of the latter (b); the inclusion of flood mitigation measures, such as setting the finished floor level of the dwelling 0.4m above surrounding ground level and a further 0.3m of flood resilient construction above finished floor level, are considered to be sufficient to ensure that the development would be safe for its lifetime, with the Environment Agency raising no objections in this regard.

10.50. Notwithstanding this, the proposal fails part a) of the exception test as per the above assessment.

#### Drainage

##### *Surface Water*

10.51. The submitted application form states that surface water will be discharged via soakaways. The site is located in an area of low surface water flood risk and it is therefore considered that this is an acceptable means of surface water drainage.

##### *Foul Water*

10.52. The submitted application form states that Foul Water will be discharged via a package treatment plant. It is considered that this is an acceptable means of discharging foul water.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage Conclusion

10.53. To reiterate, Policy LP14, supported by the NPPF and NPPG, states that development proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk from all forms of flooding, and development in areas known to be at risk of any form of flooding will only be permitted following the successful completion of the Sequential Test and Exception Test.

10.54. The above assessment concludes that the development fails the sequential test by virtue of a failure to provide a detailed assessment of any alternative sites. It is therefore not possible to positively determine that there are no reasonable alternative sites at lower flood risk that could accommodate the development. As such, the schedule fails the sequential test.

10.55. The proposal also fails the Exception Test on the basis that there are no wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm caused by the location of the site in an area of flood risk.

10.56. In summary, the site lies in an area at risk of flooding, and the application fails the sequential test and is unable to demonstrate that development of this site is necessary, nor provide sufficient justification that the benefits accrued would outweigh the flood risk. Development of the site would therefore place people and property in an unwarranted risk of flooding for which there is a strong presumption against, both through policies of the development plan and national planning policy. The proposal is therefore in direct conflict with local policy LP14 and the NPPF and should therefore be refused.

### **Parking Provision and Highway Safety**

10.57. The Highway Authority have considered the proposals and have raised no objection to the scheme in terms of highway safety impact, subject to conditions securing the suitable construction of the proposed access points to ensure highway safety.

10.58. The site currently has a lawful use for agricultural purposes, a use that would likely generate a number of traffic movements for much larger vehicles and the private car, although no specific details of these are provided. It is, however, considered likely that the traffic generations would be comparable with that generated by 2no. residential dwellings.

10.59. It is therefore considered that safe access can be provided to and from the site, having regard to the visibility splays that could be achieved.

10.60. The proposal includes the provision of a detached double garage for each dwelling, with further space available for parking in front of the dwellings. It is considered that the level of parking provided is far in excess of that which would be required in the parking standards set out in the Fenland Local Plan.

10.61. The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of parking provision and highway safety.

### **Biodiversity Impact**

10.62. The application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Appraisal by Glaven Ecology that concludes that there will be no adverse impacts on protected sites or species arising from the development that could not be mitigated through precautionary construction methods or subsequent enhancement measures.

10.63. The report has been considered by the Council Ecologist, with no objections forthcoming. However, it has been recommended that the buildings are re-inspected for any signs of nesting prior to demolition works taking place, with no further works to be undertaken until young birds have fledged if evidence of nesting birds is found.

10.64. It is therefore considered that the proposal has appropriate regard to Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of its biodiversity impacts, subject to a suitably worded condition requiring mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated in the development.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

10.65. The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

10.66. In this instance a Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun.

## **11 CONCLUSIONS**

12.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no dwellings and detached double garage.

12.2. The site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, and it is therefore not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development. Whilst there is an extant Class Q approval on-site for the conversion of a building into 2no. dwellings, the significant increase in site area proposed by this application is considered to render the fallback position irrelevant. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

12.3. Subsequently, the development of the site would also result in an adverse landscape character impact through the erection of relatively large dwellings in terms of scale and massing in a rural location that currently benefits from largely uninterrupted views. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in this regard.

12.4. The site is located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The proposals fails both the Sequential and Exception Test as it is not demonstrated that the development could be accommodated elsewhere, nor that there are wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm arising from the flood risk associated with the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

12.5. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, having regard to Local and National Planning Policy, and is accordingly recommended for refusal on this basis.

## **12 RECOMMENDATION**

**Refuse:** for the following reasons:

1.	The application site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location as identified in Policy LP3, where development is restricted to that which is essential for agriculture, or other uses requiring a rural location. The proposal is not for a rural workers dwelling, nor does it involve the conversion and re-use of existing buildings, as required by Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan
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	(2014) and Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF 2024. The proposal would therefore result in unwarranted development in an unsustainable rural location contrary to the aforementioned policies, with no material planning considerations to suggest otherwise.
2.	Notwithstanding the removal of existing buildings on-site, the proposal, by virtue of the development of a site in a rural location for 2no. two-storey dwellings would be harmful to the character of the open countryside arising from the scale and massing of the dwellings, and the domestic appearance and urbanisation of the rural location, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.
3.	The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 and fails to meet the Sequential or Exception Test. It is considered that the proposal is at an unacceptable risk of flooding without sufficient justification. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), Section 14 of the NPPF (2024), and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2016).



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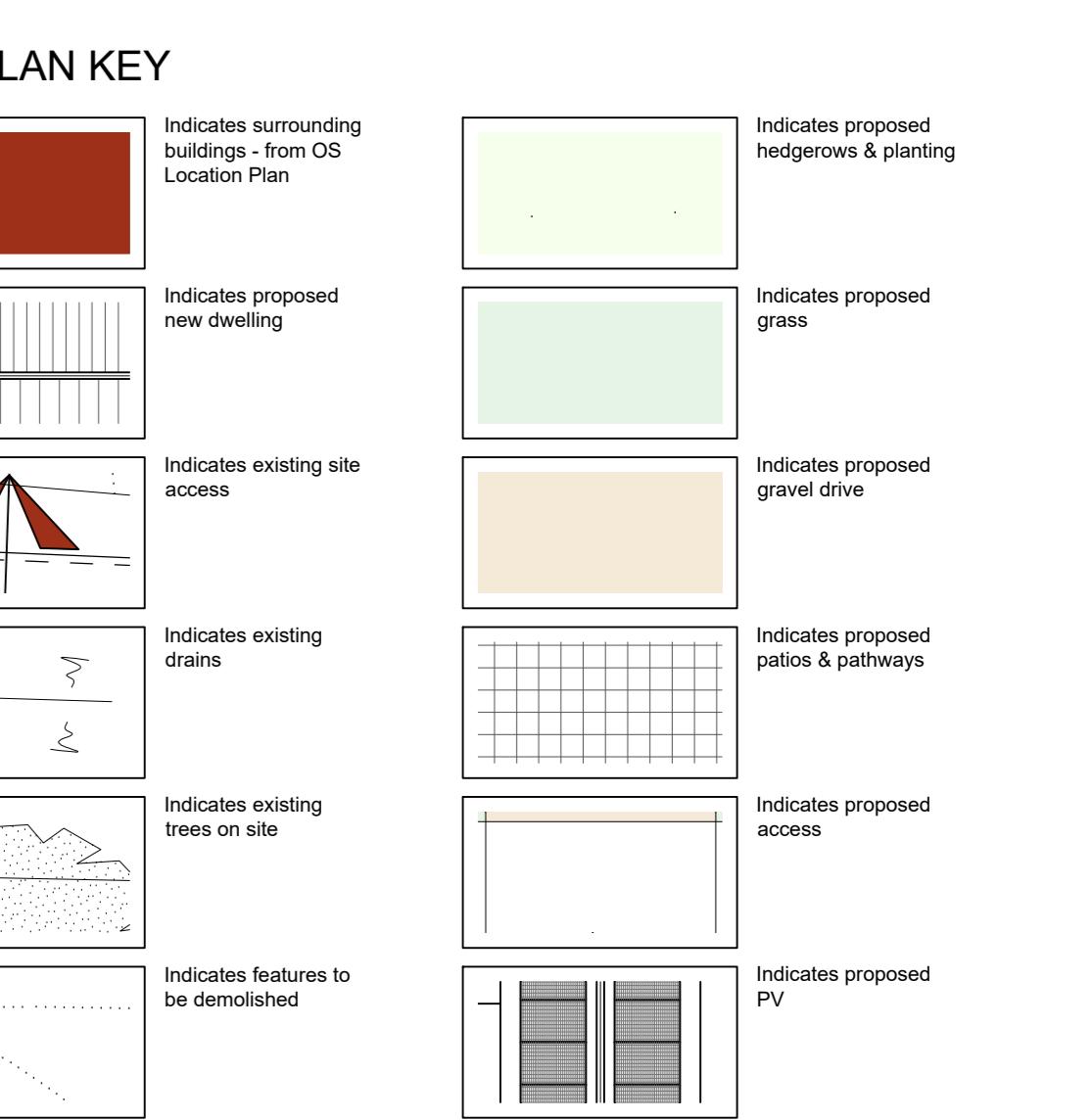
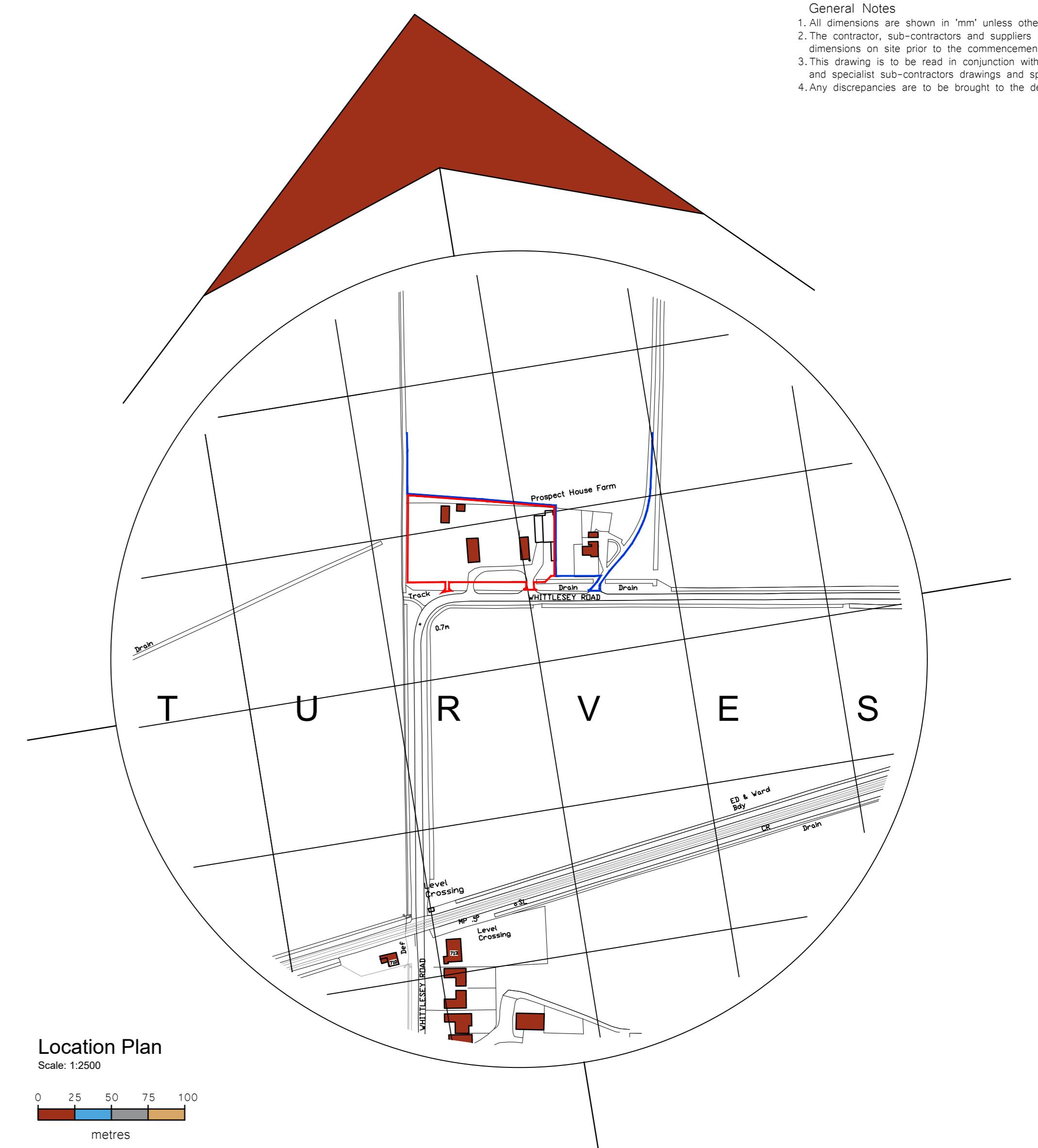
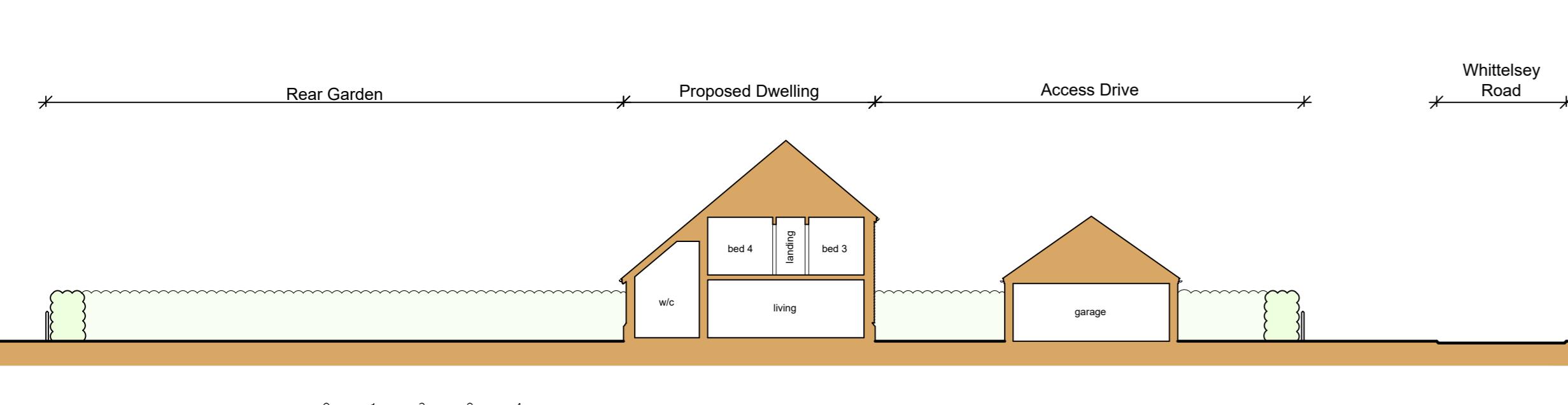
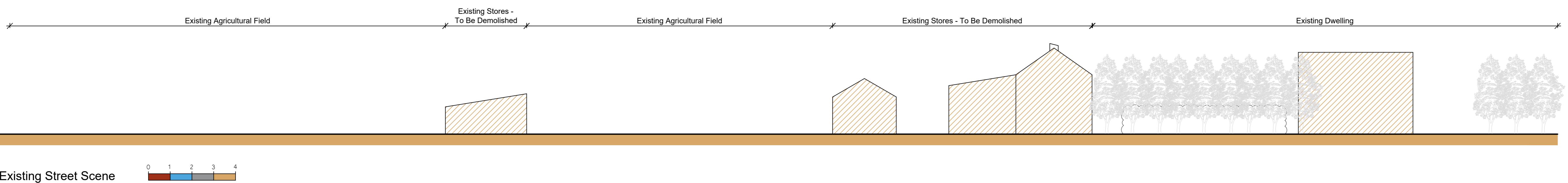
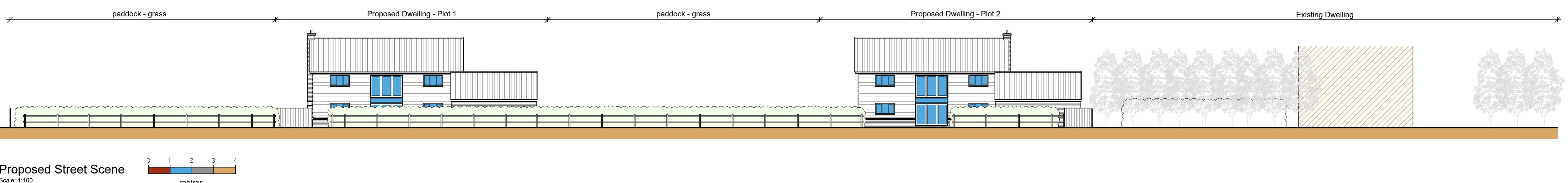
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Dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.

Contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.

Drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.

Irregularities are to be brought to the designers attention.



## Changes following planning comments

## OB APPROVAL

SWANN

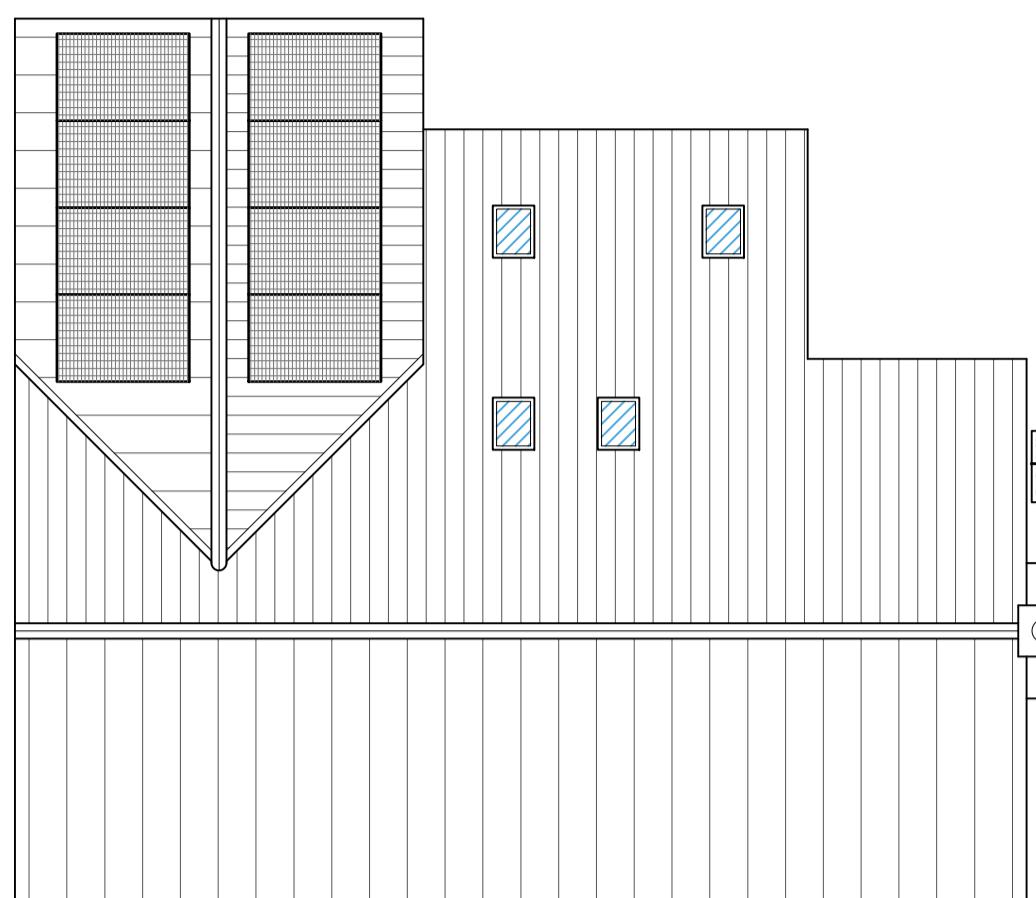
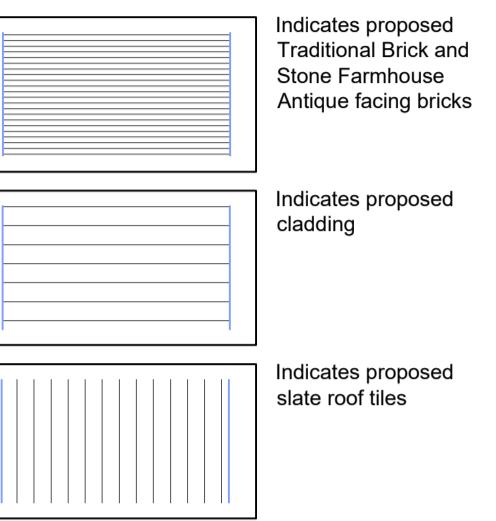
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Drawing Title Planned Drawing	Job No.	Sheet Size

Planning Drawing  
Site & Location Plan,  
Scenes & Site Section  
or: C/O Swann Edwards

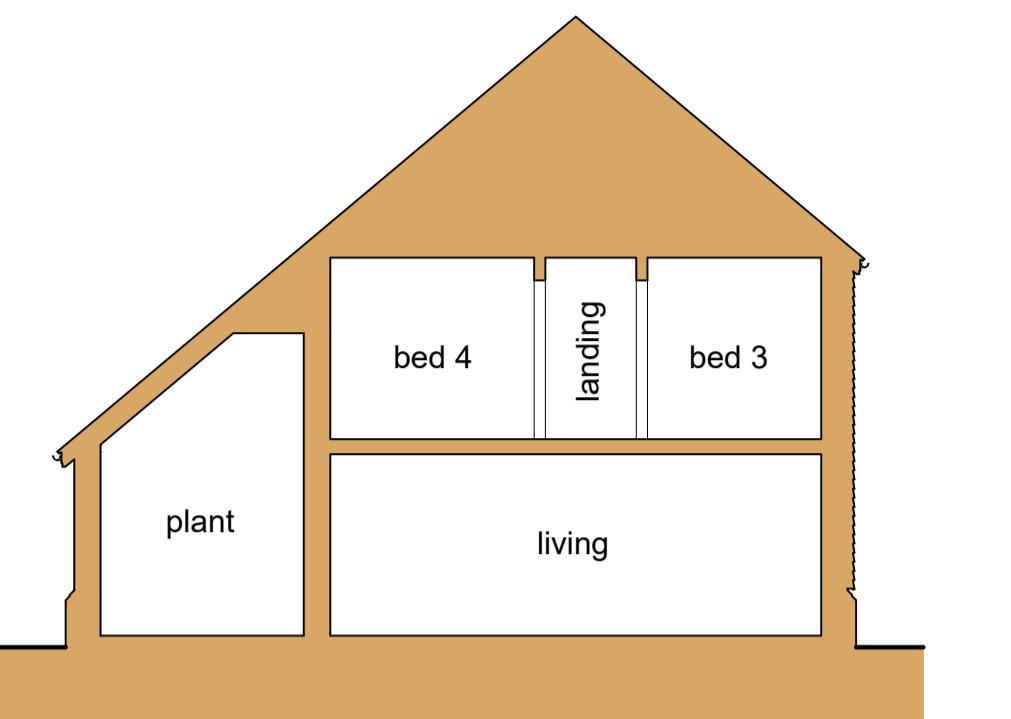
SE-2209	A0
Dwg No. PP1000	Revision B

**General Notes**  
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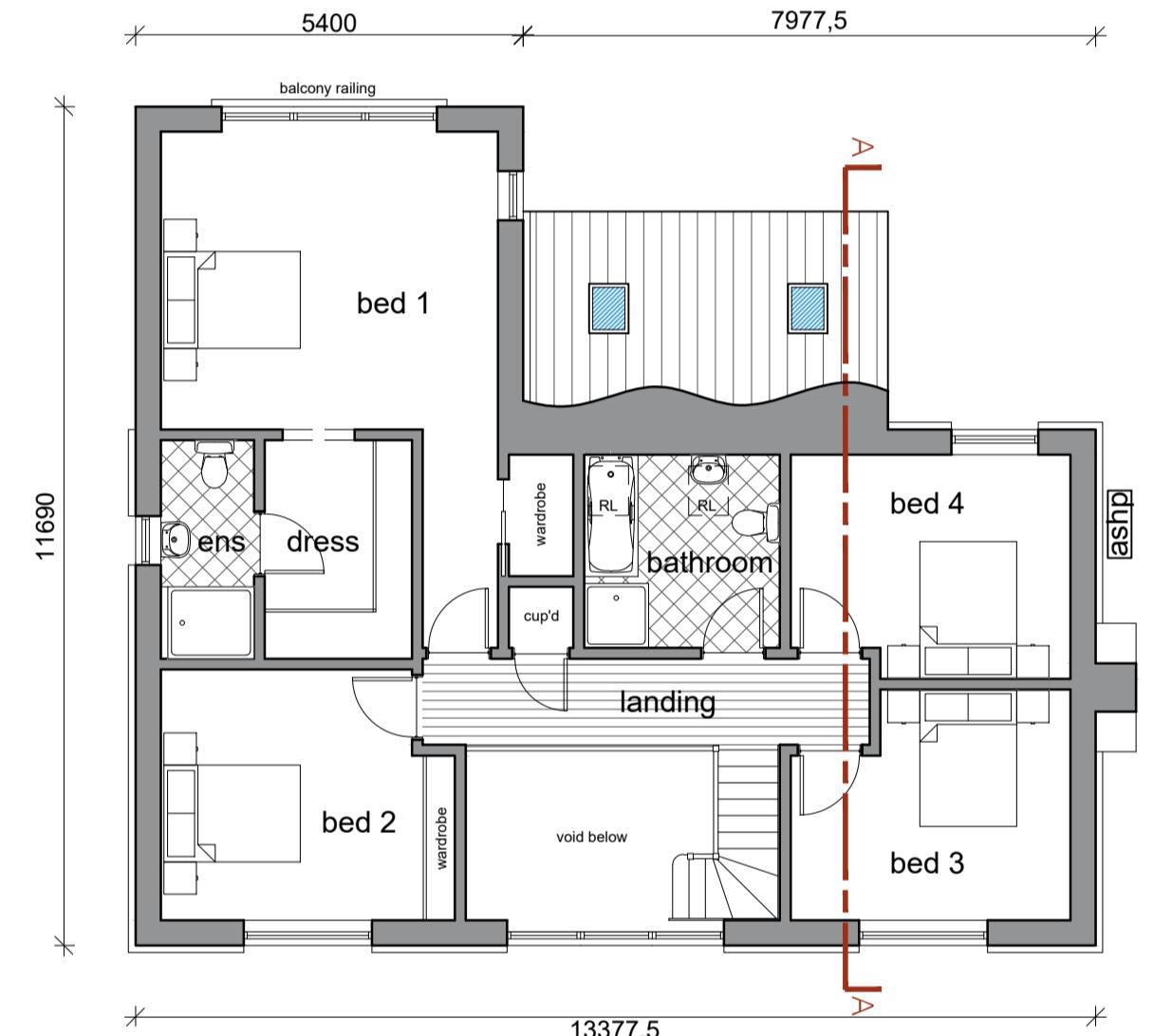
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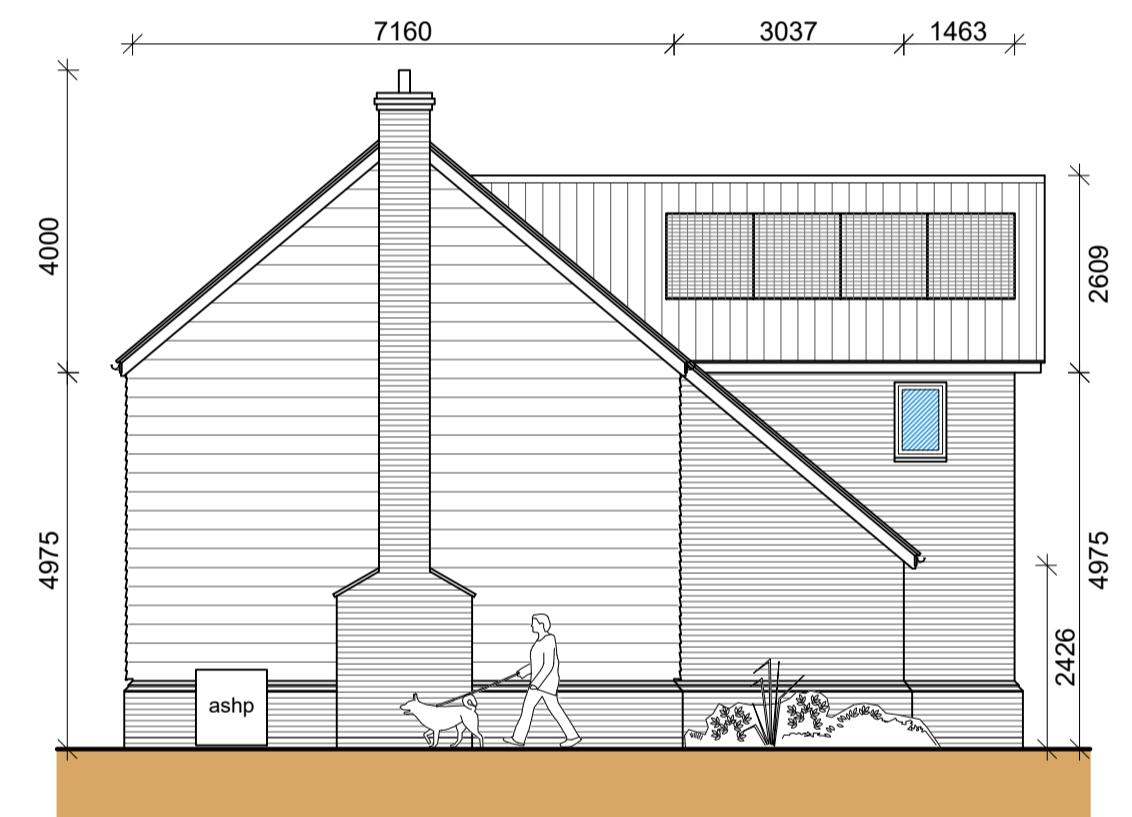
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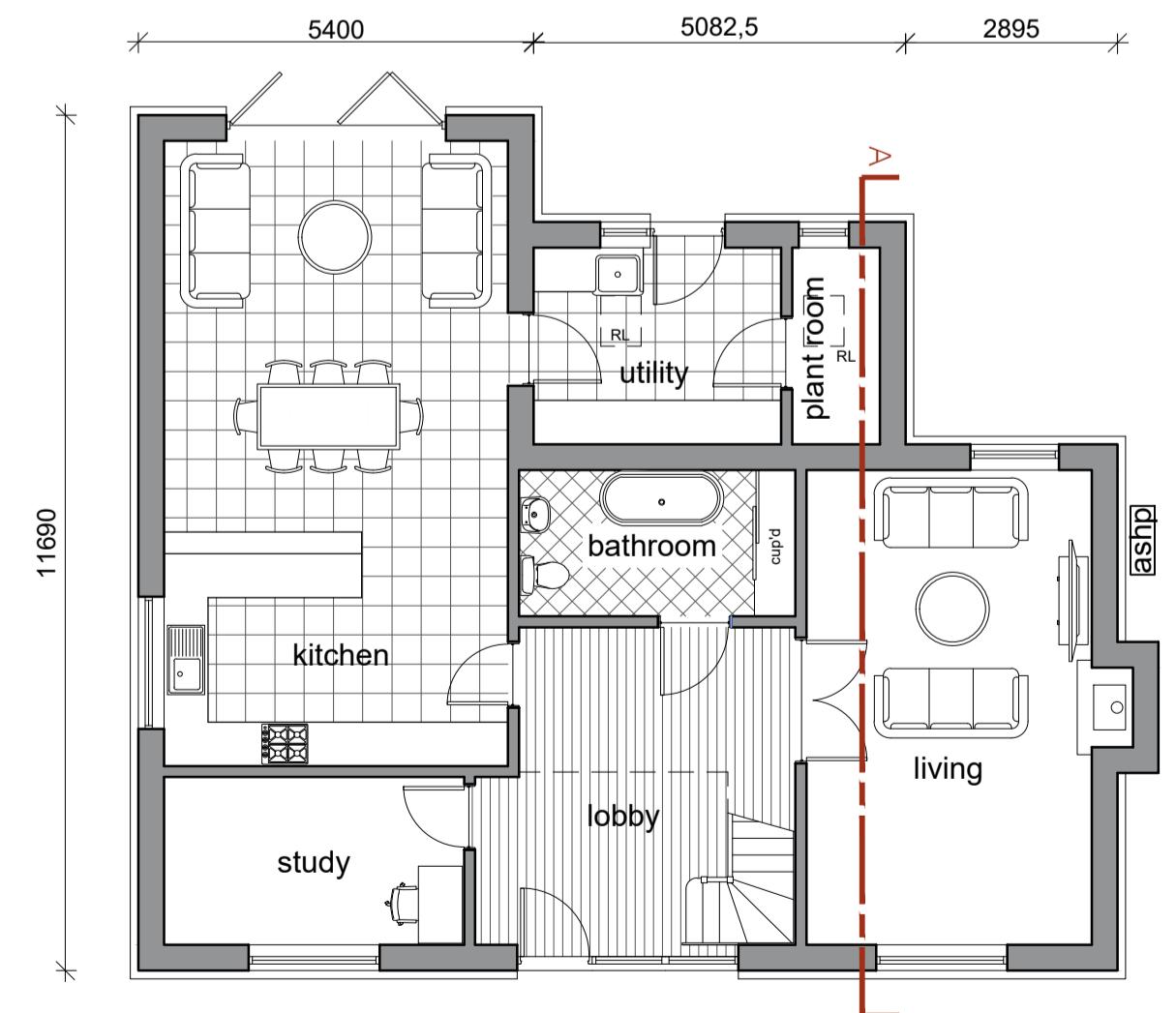
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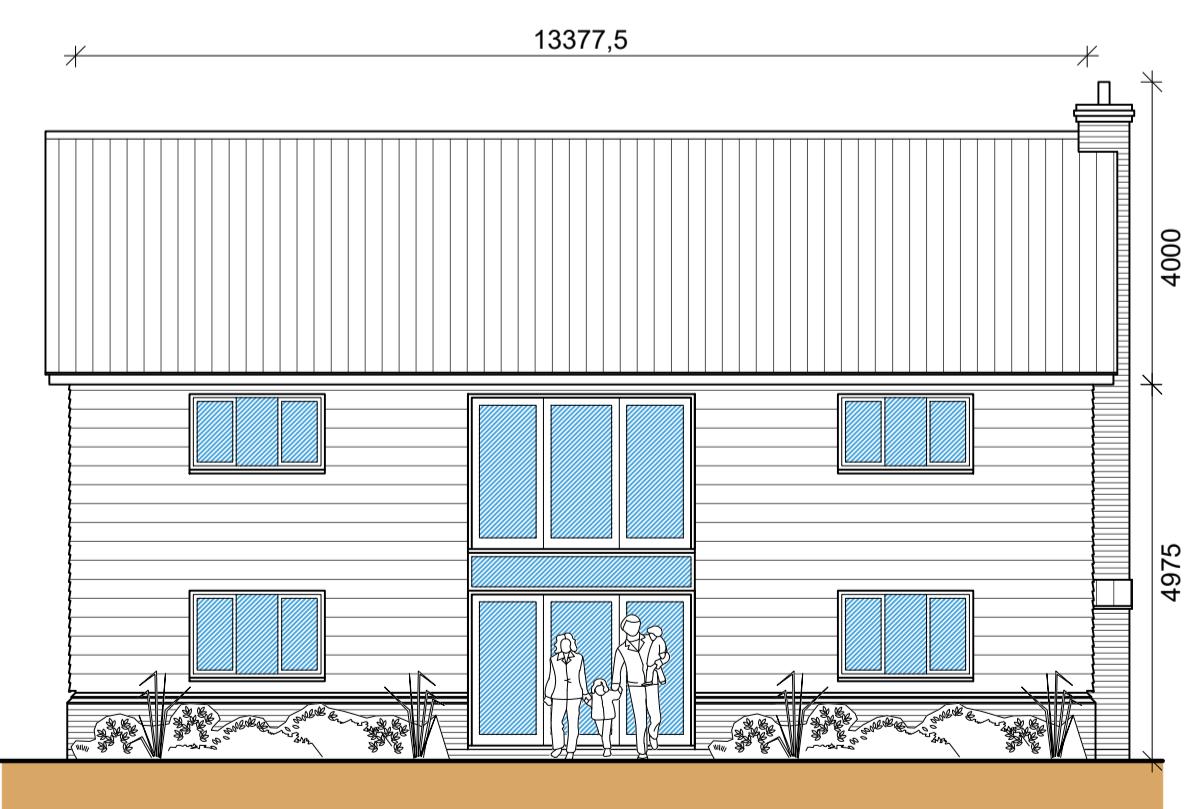
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**Side Elevation (W)**  
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**Ground Floor Plan**  
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**Front Elevation (S)**  
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**Rear Elevation (N)**  
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**Revisions**  

A	Nov 2025	Changes following planning comments
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**Status**

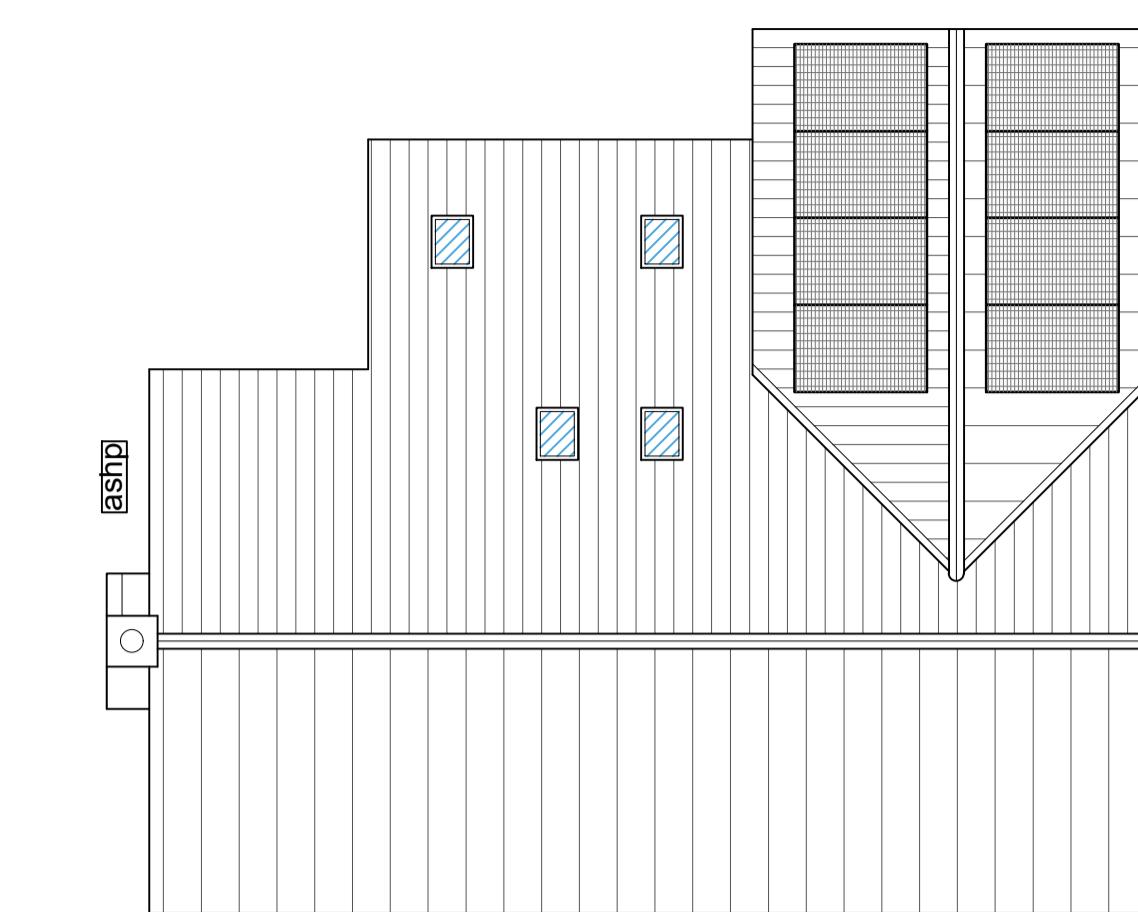
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**SWANN EDWARDS**  
A R C H I T E C T U R E

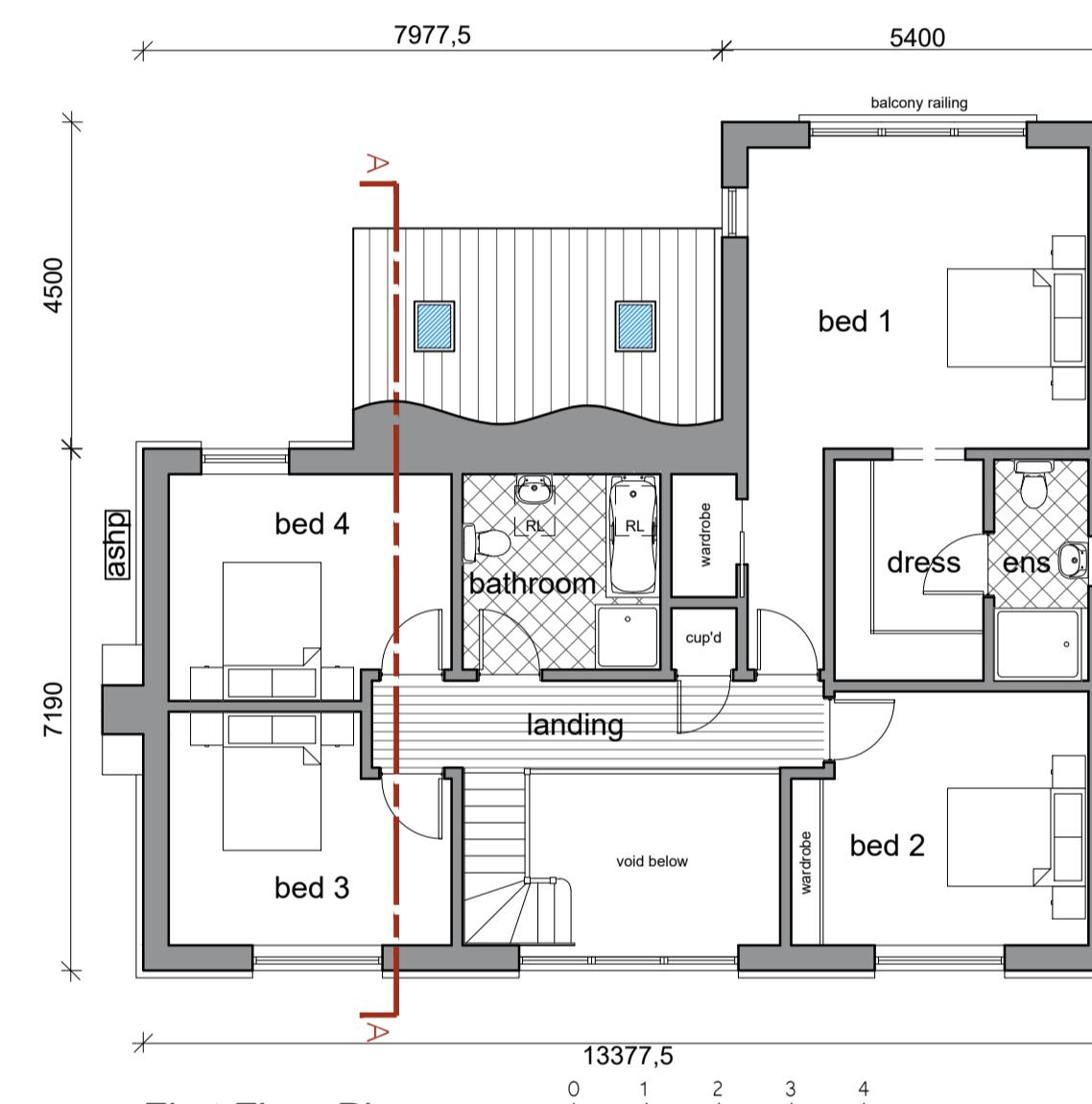
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhine, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA  
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Job Title	Drawn by	Date
Proposed 2no. Dwellings	CW	May 2025
Barns at Prospect House		
WWHittlesey Road, March,		
Cambs. PE15 0AP		
Drawing Title	Checked by	
Planning Drawing	GE	
Plot 2		
Dwg No.	Sheet Size	
SE-2209	A1	
Plot 2		
Dwg No.	Revision	
PP1200	A	

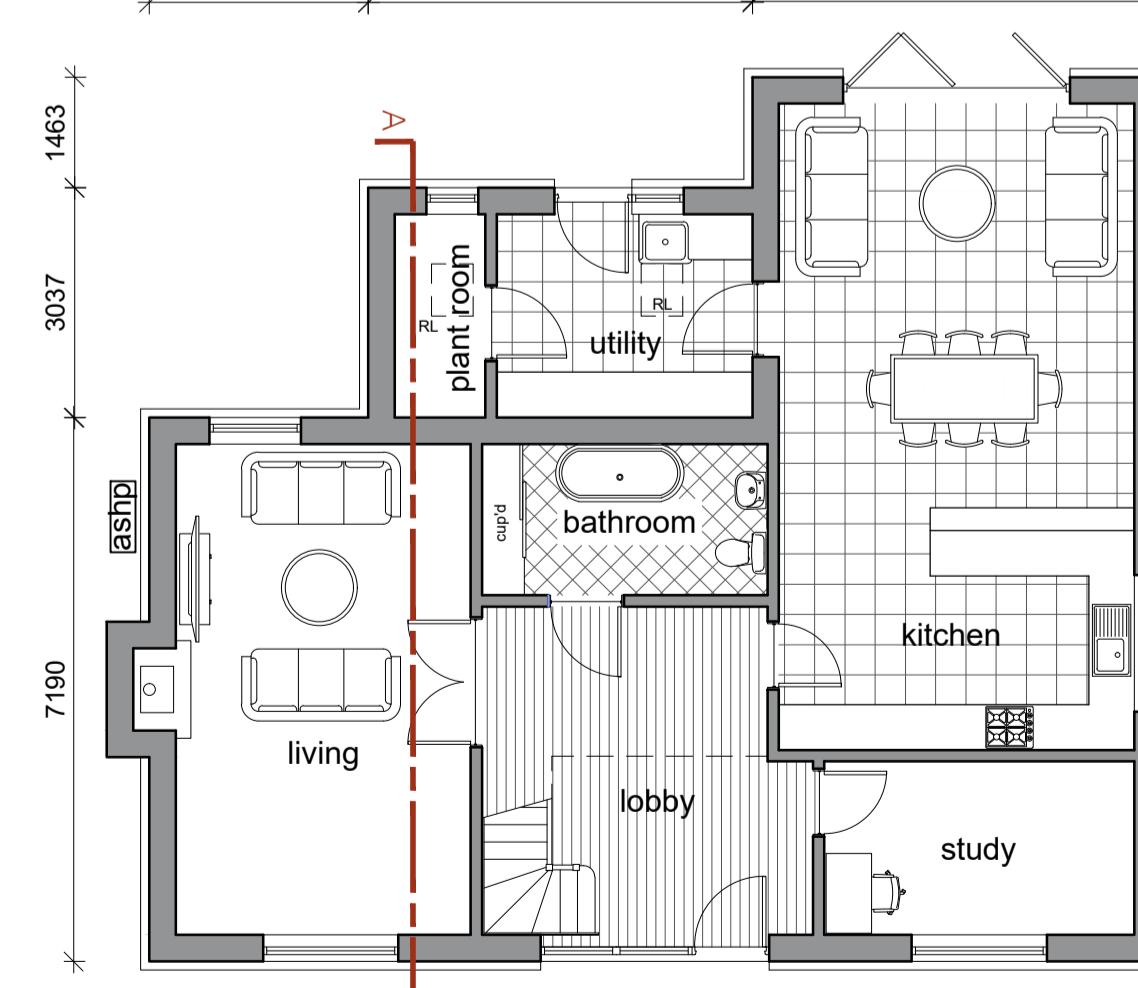
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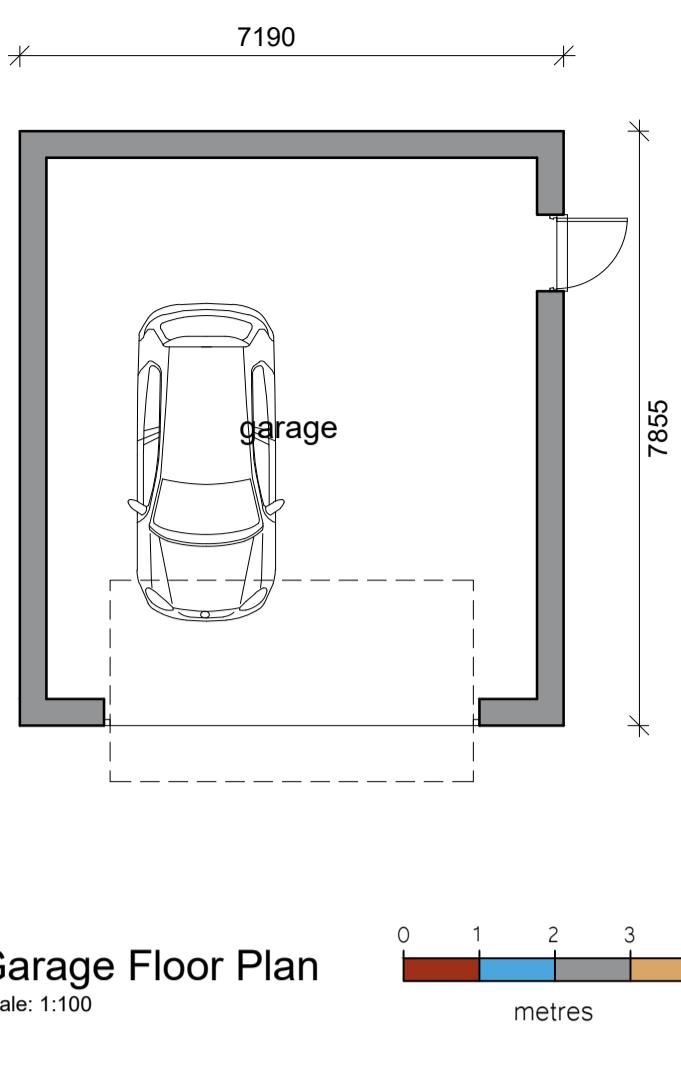
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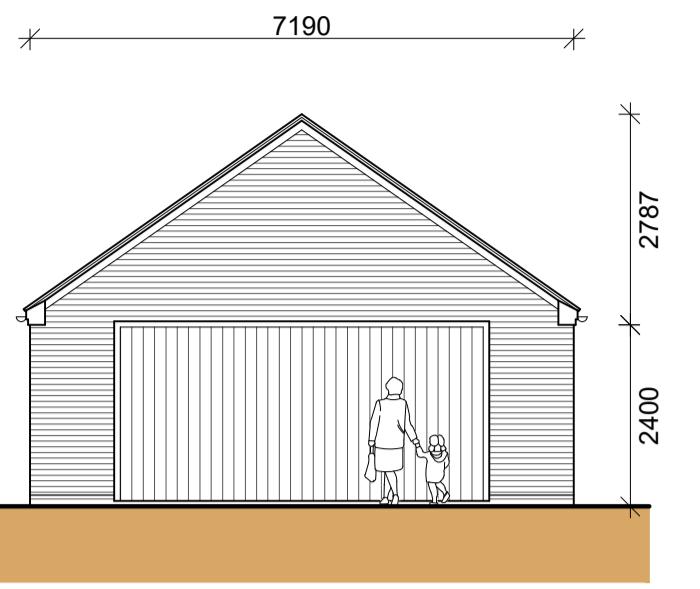
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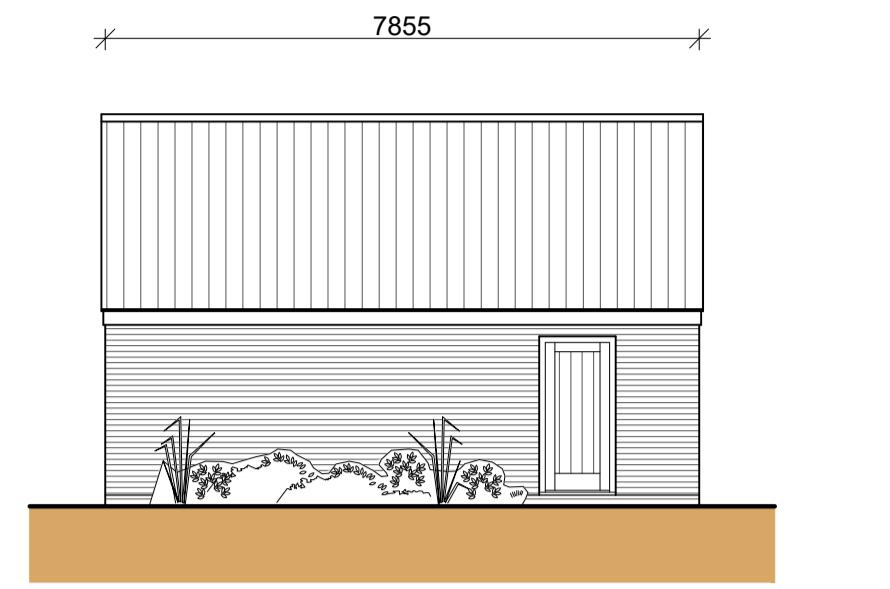
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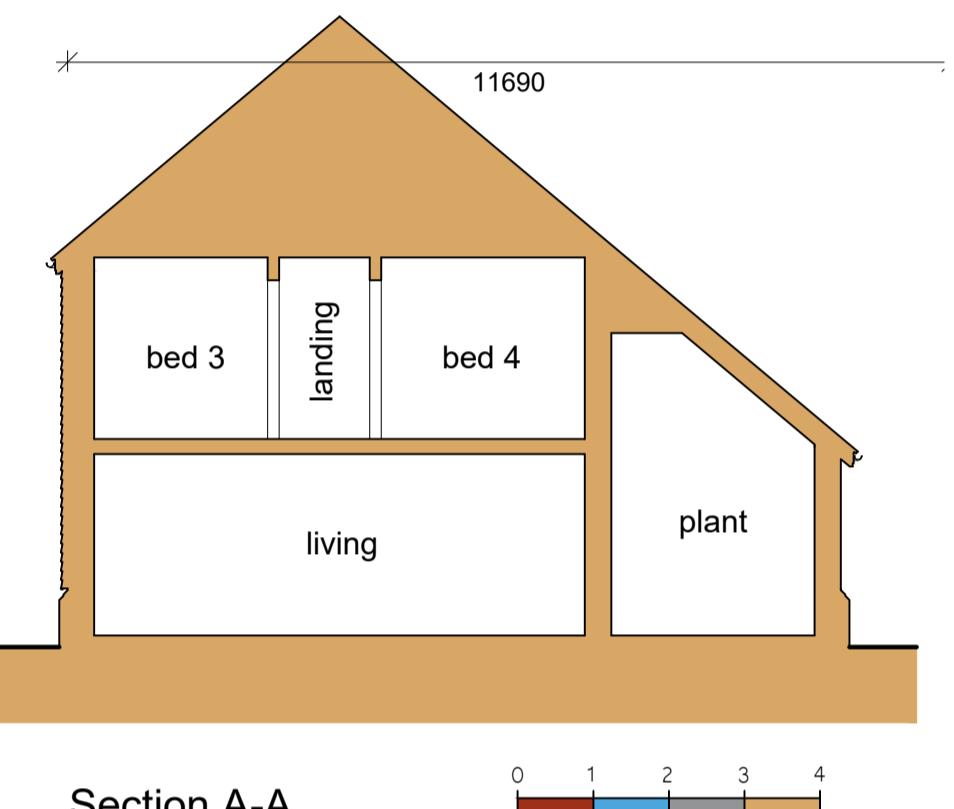
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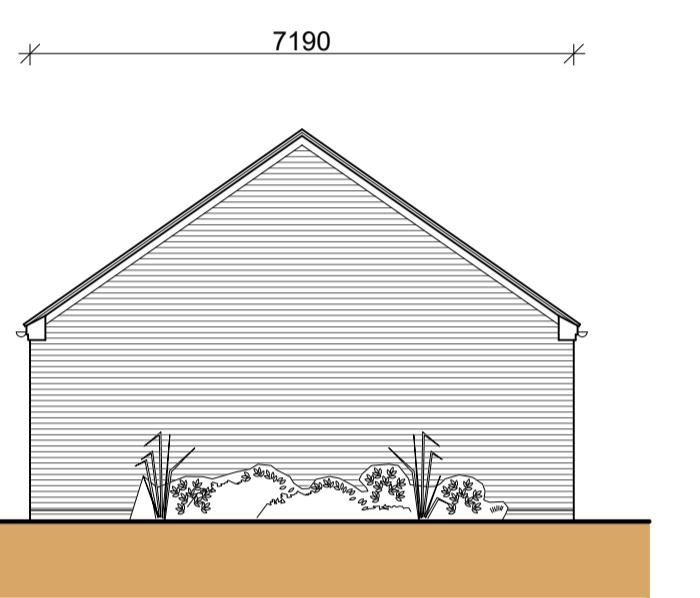
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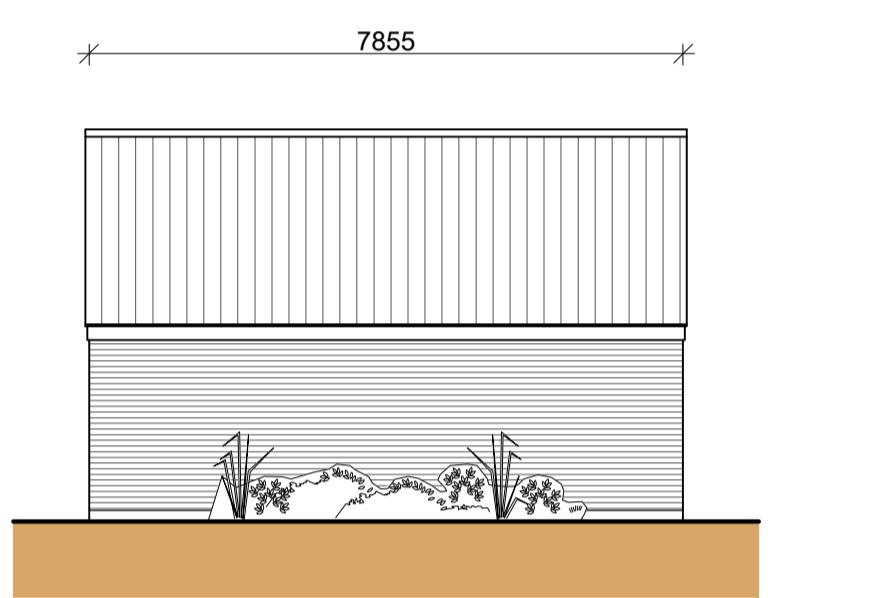
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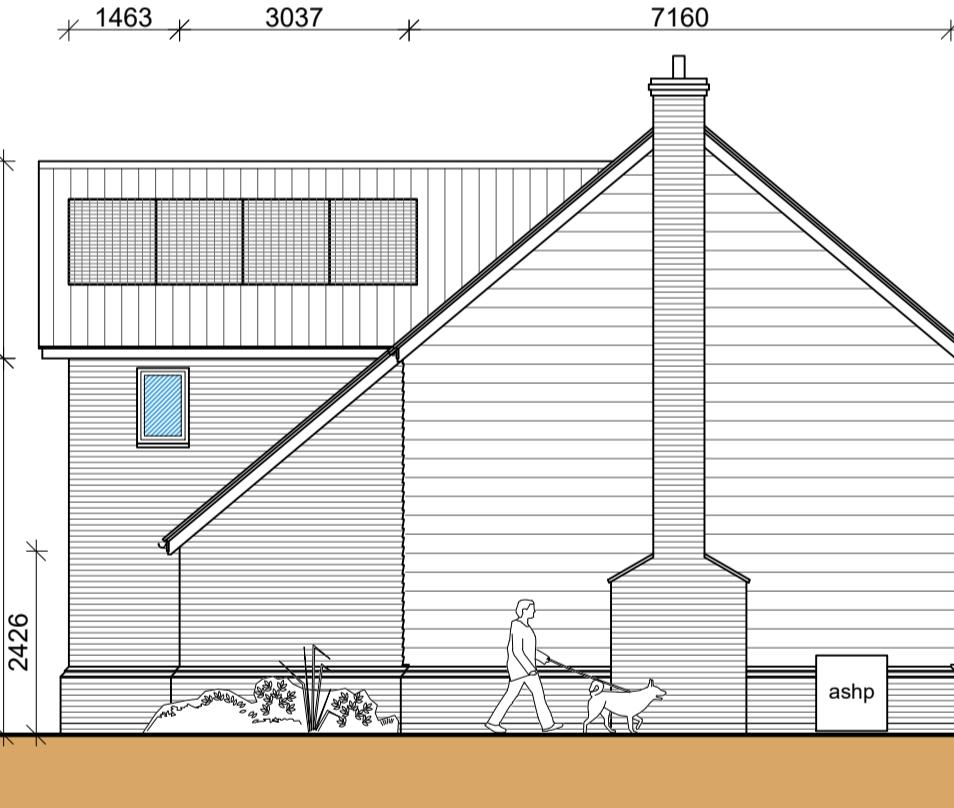
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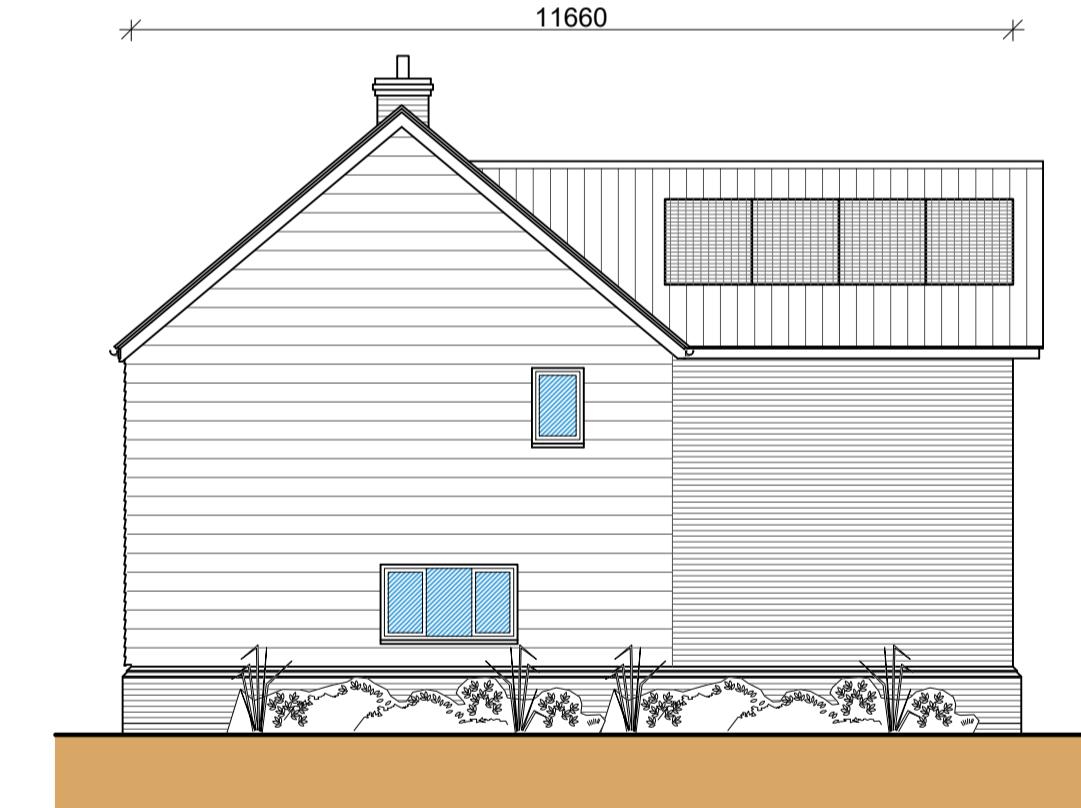
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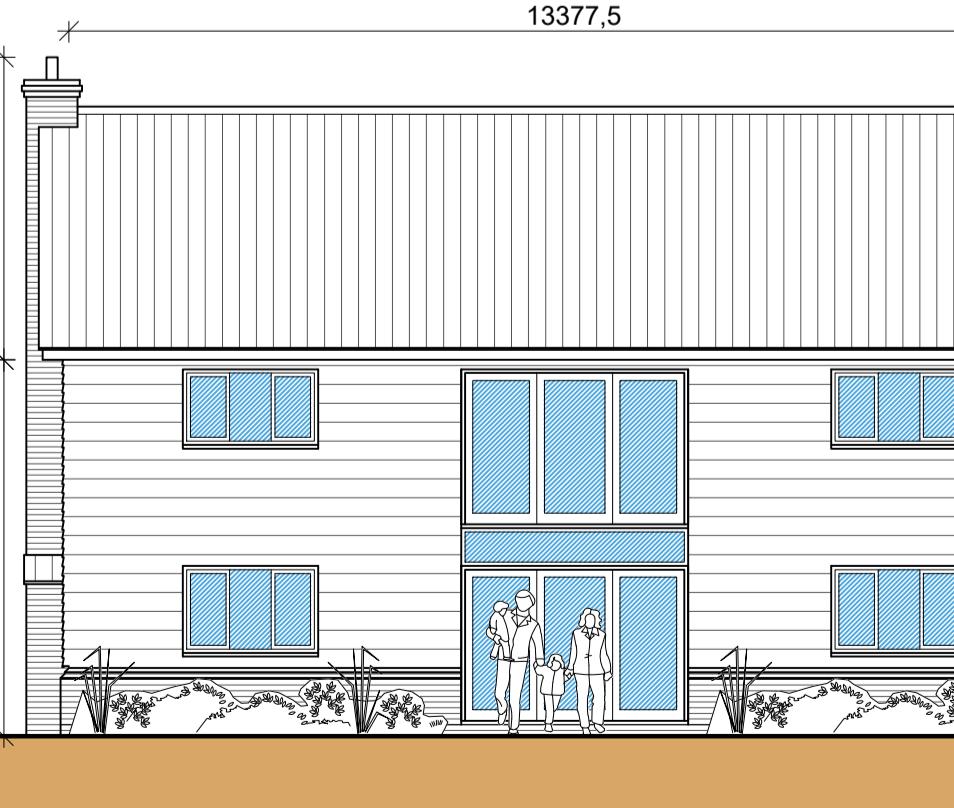
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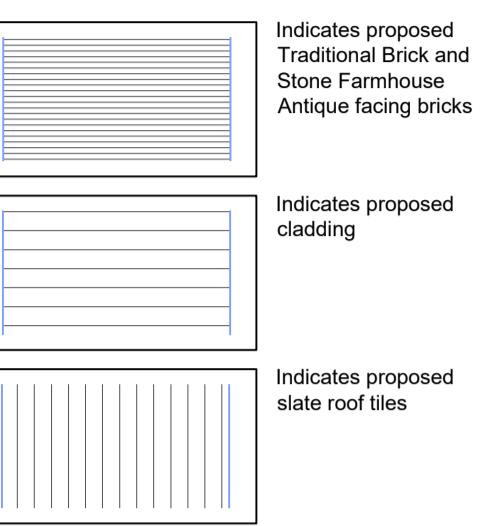
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4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

#### ELEVATION KEY



Revisions  
A Nov 2025 Changes following planning comments

Status

FOR APPROVAL

**SWANN EDWARDS**  
A R C H I T E C T U R E

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhine, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA, t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Job Title Proposed 2no. Dwellings Barns at Prospect House, WWHittlesey Road, March, Cambs, PE15 0AP	Drawn by CW May 2025	Date Drawn by GE Checked by GE
Planning Drawing Plot 1 & Garage	Job No. SE-2209	Drawing Title Job No. Dwg No. PP1100
Sheet Size A1	Sheet Size A1	Sheet Size A1
For: C/O Swann Edwards	Revision A	Revision A

F/YR25/0808/RM

**Applicant: Mr J Akhtar**  
**JA Investments (London) Ltd**

**Agent : Mr R Papworth**  
**Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

**Land North Of, 2 - 8 Gibside Avenue, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire**

**Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR22/1186/FDC to erect up to 4x dwellings and associated works**

**Officer recommendation: Grant**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations received contrary to Officer recommendation**

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application is a reserved matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR22/1186/FDC to erect up to 4 x dwellings. Access was committed at outline stage.
- 1.2 Several objections have been received relating to the proposed development, with reference to site access, parking arrangements, neighbouring amenity and drainage. As aforementioned, site access was committed at outline.
- 1.3 Regarding parking arrangements, the site plan details sufficient parking space for the dwellings proposed and an additional 14 spaces, which reflects the indicative plan provided at outline stage.
- 1.4 In terms of residential amenity, the assessment section below considers all surrounding neighbouring properties, concluding that they are sufficiently distanced away from the site and therefore it is unlikely that any adverse overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts would be introduced.
- 1.5 A drainage strategy was submitted at outline stage which stated surface water drainage could be dealt with by an attenuation tank. No details were submitted regarding foul water drainage, however a condition was secured to the outline permission to require such details to be submitted and approved by the LPA.
- 1.6 As such, the details submitted relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are considered to be acceptable and the application is therefore recommended for approval.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located on the north side of Gibside Avenue to the rear of nos. 8-2 Gibside Avenue and enclosed by rear and side gardens which are fenced.

- 2.2 Along the north side there is a hedge and a mature Ash/Sycamore tree. The site has an existing access directly from Gibside Avenue which takes an informal route through the site, exiting at the north-east corner and then continuing to Fairways to the east.
- 2.3 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) and within the settlement boundary of Chatteris.

### 3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application is a reserved matters application for the erection of 4 dwellings, relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale relating to outline permission F/YR22/1186/FDC.
- 3.2 The submitted site plan broadly reflects the indicative site plan submitted at outline stage. The proposed dwellings would be situated centrally within the site, and would form a row of terraced dwellings, with private amenity space to the rear.
- 3.3 The row of dwellings would have a width of 21.8 metres and a depth of 9.2 metres approx. The roof proposed would be hipped with an eaves height of 5.2 metres and a ridge height of 7.9 metres approx.
- 3.4 Fenestration is proposed predominantly to the principle and rear elevations, with the exception of one first-floor window proposed upon the west facing side elevation of Plot 1.
- 3.5 The submitted site plan indicates the provision of 2 parking spaces for each plot, with an additional 14 parking spaces provided, which reflects that of the outline indicative site plan.
- 3.6 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR22/1186/FDC	Erect up to 4x dwellings and associated works (outline application with matters committed in respect of access)	Granted 01/11/2023
F/YR13/0745/FDC	Erection of 5 dwellings involving the demolition of existing garages	Withdrawn
15/0236/PREAPP	Proposed residential development	Acceptable 16/12/2015

### 5 CONSULTATIONS

#### 5.1 Chatteris Town Council

*Councillors are satisfied that enough has been done to alleviate the concerns of neighbouring residents. The application provides additional parking spaces which can be used by neighbouring residents and there will be a pathway to the rear of existing properties.*

## 5.2 CCC Highways

### *Recommendation*

*Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Local Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, no significant adverse effect upon the public highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of planning permission.*

### *Comments*

*The reserve matters details of the layout are as per previously approved proposed layout F/YR22/1186/FDC. Therefore, I have no objections and can make no further comment to the layout of this. I would recommend that any and all relevant Conditions relating to the highway are attached to any permissions the planning authority is minded to grant.*

## 5.3 FDC Arboricultural Officer

*I have no objections.*

## 5.4 FDC Environmental Services

The FDC Environmental Services noted that private driveways/roads need to be constructed suitably for a 26 tonne refuse vehicle and indemnity would be required against any potential damage. They also requested a swept path plan which was provided. A plan was provided by the agent to which the Environmental Services team confirmed answered previous queries. They did query whether evidence of indemnity had been provided however this isn't required to be submitted as part of the application.

## 5.5 FDC Environmental Health

*I confirm receipt of the above reserved matters application details and have considered the implications of the proposed development in terms of:*

- *Noise*
- *Air pollution*
- *Contaminated land*
- *Artificial light*

*I conclude that there are no 'No Objections' to the proposal from an Environmental Health standpoint.*

## 5.6 Local Residents/Interested Parties

17 letters of objection were received regarding this application from address points within Chatteris. The reasons for objection are summarised as follows:

<b>Objecting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Impact on village services	The provision of four additional dwellings is unlikely to significantly impact upon existing services within a Market Town.

Overlooking	Addressed within the 'Residential Amenity' assessment section
Overdevelopment of the area	Every application has to be considered on its own merits and the fact that there are larger development schemes in the surrounding area cannot be used as a reason to justify this application when the principle has been established under the outline consent.
Drainage	Addressed within the 'Drainage' assessment section
Loss of privacy	Addressed within the 'Residential Amenity' assessment section
Loss of light	Addressed within the 'Residential Amenity' assessment section
Noise pollution	Comments regarding noise from the development are acknowledged, however a condition was secured on the outline permission restricting demolition and construction works to the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.
Traffic and Highways	Traffic within the surrounding area cannot be used as a reason to refuse this application. The site provides sufficient parking space for the development proposed.
Unprofessional contractors	This is not a material planning consideration and therefore cannot be used as a reason to justify refusal of the application.
Insufficient parking	The site provides sufficient parking space for the development proposed, with 14 additional spaces.
Fire safety	Fire safety be considered under Building Regulations.
Lighting	Should permission be granted, a condition can be secured to require details of proposed lighting to be submitted and agreed with the LPA.
Site ownership	Site ownership is not a material planning consideration but rather a civil matter. This cannot be used as a reason to justify refusing the application.
Site management	Should permission be granted, a condition can be secured to require details of site management and maintenance to be submitted and agreed with the LPA.
Parking issues in surrounding area	Parking within the surrounding area cannot be used as a reason to refuse

	this application. The site provides sufficient parking space for the development proposed.
Landscaping	Addressed within the 'Landscaping' assessment section
Impact on property value	Property value is not a material planning consideration and cannot be used as a reason to justify refusing the application.
Loss of right of way	This cannot be used as a reason to justify refusing the application.
Access for refuse vehicles	Addressed within 'Appearance, Layout and Scale' assessment section
Health and safety of site works	This not a material planning consideration.
Access to site	Access to the site was agreed at outline stage.
Adjacent development sites	Each application must be considered on its own merits.
Public footpath	The footpath re-instatement along Gibside Avenue was approved at outline stage and is required to be completed before the first occupation of the development. Footpaths are also provided within the application site.

7 letters of support were received from address points within Chatteris regarding this application. The reasons for support are summarised as follows:

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Visual amenity/tidy up the area	Addressed within 'Appearance, Layout and Scale' assessment section
Improve local amenities	It is unlikely that the addition of 4 dwellings would impact upon local amenities.
Providing new housing	The proposed development would provide 4 3-bedroom homes.
In keeping	Addressed within 'Appearance, Layout and Scale' assessment section

1 letter of representation was received from an address point within Chatteris regarding this application. The comments received are summarised as follows:

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Additional parking needs to be allocated	The submitted site plan indicates the provision of 14 additional parking spaces more than the parking required for the dwellings themselves. Whilst it is acknowledged that surrounding properties have historically parked within the site, as discussed in the outline approval, this was an informal arrangement.

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021).

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4 – Decision-making  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 7.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

### 7.3 National Design Guide 2021

Context  
Identity  
Built Form

### 7.4 Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland  
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

## 8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Appearance, Layout and Scale**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Access**
- **Landscaping**
- **Drainage**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

## 9 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

9.1 Outline planning permission exists on the site for residential development, therefore the principle of residential development has already been established and is acceptable. It should be noted that this point of general principle is subject to broader planning policy and other material considerations which are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

## **Appearance, Layout and Scale**

### Appearance

9.2 The proposed development is for the erection of a row of 2-storey, terraced dwellings. To the south of the site is the bulk of nos. 2-8 Gibside Avenue which offers a degree of screening from the main streetscene of Gibside Avenue. Limited views are also afforded from the access into the site.

9.3 To the north of the site is James Gage Close, which is a cul-de-sac of single-storey dwellings. The proposed dwellings would be visible from the public realm at James Gage Close.

9.4 The local area surrounding the site is characterised by a mixture of dwelling forms and plot ratios and so does not benefit from any prevailing uniformity. Notwithstanding this, the dwellings proposed would not appear significantly out of character given that the dwellings along Gibside Avenue are predominantly 2-storey terraced dwellings, with dual-pitched roofs and chimneys. The dwellings at No 2-8 Gibside Avenue are finished in buff bricks and cladding. The proposed dwellings on site take some design cues from the adjacent terraces through their form, albeit it is noted that the terraces proposed would be finished in a hipped roof. Given the screening surrounding the site, it is not considered that the differing roof style would introduce adverse impacts upon the character of the area.

9.5 The submitted elevational drawings indicate the use of Marley Modern Grey Concrete roof tiles and Forterra Burwell buff brick. Given the lack of uniformity and inconsistent vernacular within the surrounding area, these materials are considered to be acceptable.

9.6 The proposed appearance of the dwellings is therefore considered to be acceptable given that the dwellings would not be highly visible from the surrounding public realm and the fact that there is an inconsistent vernacular within the surrounding area.

### Layout

9.7 The outline application included an indicative drawing which indicated a similar layout as this reserved matters application, albeit Plot 1 now forms part of the terrace, rather than being set forward.

9.8 Private amenity space is provided for each dwelling and the site plan indicates two parking spaces for each dwelling within the wider site. Bin collection points have been provided and the submitted site plan also indicates that a refuse vehicle can enter and turn within the site.

9.9 The proposed layout of the site is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to the detailed assessment of relationships with neighbouring dwellings below.

### Scale

9.10 The consideration of the scale of the proposed dwellings on site must be made on the basis of the outline planning permission being granted. No conditions were

included on the outline consent restricting the scale of the proposed dwellings on site.

9.11 The proposed dwellings would be 2-storey, with a ridge height of 7.9 metres approx. As aforementioned, there is a lack of uniformity in character surrounding the application site. Notwithstanding this, the dwellings along Gibside Avenue, Fairway and West Street are all 2-storey dwellings, therefore it is not considered that the scale of the dwellings would be unacceptable in this location.

### **Residential Amenity**

9.12 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to secure high quality environments, having regard to impacts on matters such as residential amenity.

9.13 The proposed dwellings would sit centrally within the application site. To the south of the site are the terraced dwellings, 2-8 Gibside Avenues. The proposed development would be situated in excess of 13 metres from the rear boundaries of these dwellings and in excess of 21 metres from the rear elevations of these properties. The proposed dwellings would include first-floor windows, albeit three of these windows would be frosted glass as they are proposed to serve bathrooms. The neighbouring properties at Gibside Avenue are considered to be of a sufficient distance away from the proposed dwellings that it is unlikely that the development would introduce any adverse overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts upon these properties.

9.14 To the east of the site is garden space associated with No. 15 Fairway. There is a clearance of approximately 8 metres between the east facing flank wall of Plot 4 and the boundary line of No. 15. No first-floor fenestration is proposed upon the east facing flank wall and therefore it is unlikely that the development would introduce any adverse overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts upon this neighbouring property.

9.15 To the north of the site is James Gage Close. Plots 1 and 2 would face onto the flank elevation of No. 8 and plots 3 and 4 would face onto the turning head and access road. There is a clearance of approximately 11 metres between the rear elevation of the dwellings proposed and No. 8. Upon the flank elevation of the neighbouring property there are two windows and an access door. Plot 1 would directly face onto this fenestration. Plot 2 would predominantly face onto the area of flank wall with no fenestration. Plot 1 includes one first-floor window upon the rear elevation however this would be frosted glass. Plot 2 features two windows at first-floor, however these are not considered to directly overlook the existing fenestration upon the neighbouring property. None of the properties face directly onto the rear gardens of properties along James Gage Close. As such, it is unlikely that the development would introduce any adverse overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts upon this neighbouring property.

9.16 To the west of the site is No 55-61 West Street. The rear boundary of these properties is situated approximately 16 metres from the west facing side elevation of Plot 1. The rear elevations of these properties are situated approximately 26 metres from the side elevation of Plot 1. Given the clearance between the development and these neighbouring properties, it is unlikely that any adverse overbearing or overshadowing impacts would be introduced. A first-floor side window is proposed, however given the clearance between the properties it is unlikely that this would introduce any adverse overlooking impacts. As such, it is unlikely that the development would introduce any adverse overbearing,

overshadowing or overlooking impacts upon this neighbouring property.

## **Landscaping**

- 9.17 Both hard and soft landscaping details have been submitted as part of this reserved matters application. The roadway into the site is to be permeable tarmac, with permeable block paving to the parking spaces. Each dwelling will also feature areas of patio. Each plot is to be enclosed by 1.8 metre high close boarded timber fencing with 0.6 metre close boarded fencing enclosing the front of each dwelling. These details are acceptable.
- 9.18 The landscaping strategy submitted indicates the planting of trees and various shrubs around the application site. The FDC Arboricultural Officer was consulted as part of this application and has raised no objection to the soft landscaping proposed, following an amendment to the strategy to include root deflectors to address potential future issues of the landscaping proposed causing displacement or damage.
- 9.19 As such, the proposed landscaping of the site is considered to be acceptable.

## **Drainage**

- 9.20 The site is within a Flood Zone 1 which is low risk and is therefore a sequentially preferable location for residential development, as detailed within the outline application.
- 9.21 The concerns raised regarding drainage of the site are acknowledged; however, this was discussed within the officer report at outline stage. The outline application was accompanied by a drainage strategy which outlined surface water could be dealt with via SUDs. No foul water details were provided at that stage and subsequently a condition was secured on the outline permission requiring a scheme and timetable for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of any works above ground level on site. Building Regulations would also require details on this matter outside the scope of planning.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

- 9.22 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.
- 9.23 There are statutory exemptions, transitional arrangements and requirements relating to irreplaceable habitat which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. In this instance, one or more of the exemptions / transitional arrangements are considered to apply and a Biodiversity Gain Condition is not required to be approved before development is begun because the application is a reserved matters application.

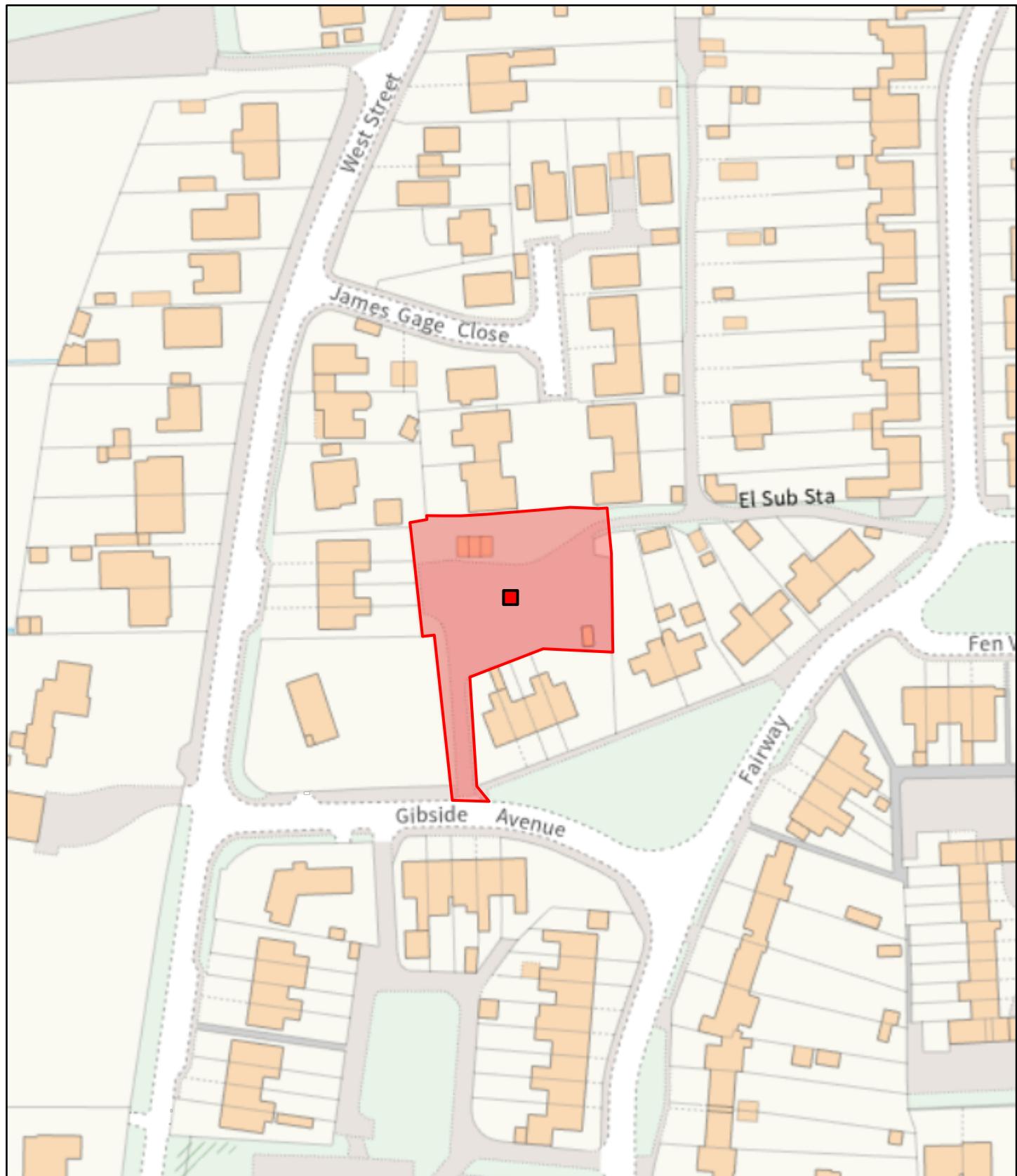
## **10 CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The principle of development was established with the outline permission. The detailed consideration of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping are considered to be acceptable and accord with the relevant policies of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. Site access was approved at outline stage. As such, this application is recommended for approval.

## 11 RECOMMENDATION

11.1 **Approve**, subject to the following conditions:

1	<p>The first-floor bathroom and en-suite windows in the north and south facing elevations of the development hereby approved shall only be glazed with obscure glass and maintained in perpetuity thereafter.</p> <p>Reason - To safeguard the amenities currently enjoyed by the occupants of adjoining dwellings in accordance with Policy LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
2	<p>Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (or any other Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, including dormers, other than those shown on the plans hereby approved shall be placed at first-floor of the north or south facing elevation of the development hereby approved.</p> <p>Reason - To protect the amenities of the adjoining properties in compliance with Policy LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
3	<p>Within 6-months of the commencement of development hereby approved, a scheme for the provision of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the first dwelling hereby approved and retained thereafter in perpetuity.</p> <p>Reason - In order to ensure that the site meets the crime prevention guidelines in accordance with Policy LP17 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
4	<p>Prior to occupation details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed roads and footpaths and shared areas (including lighting) within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (The streets shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved management and maintenance details until such time as an Agreement has been entered into unto Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 or a Private Management and Maintenance Company has been established).</p> <p>Reason - To ensure satisfactory development of the site and to ensure estate roads are managed and maintained thereafter to a suitable and safe standard. In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy LP15 and LP16 of the Local Plan.</p>
3	Approved Plans



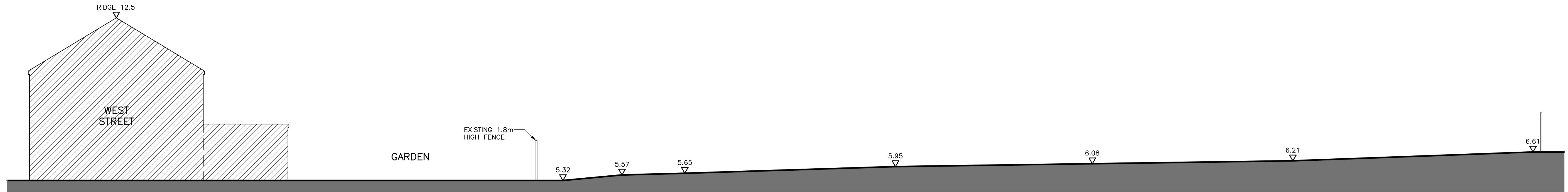
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0 15 30 55 60 ft

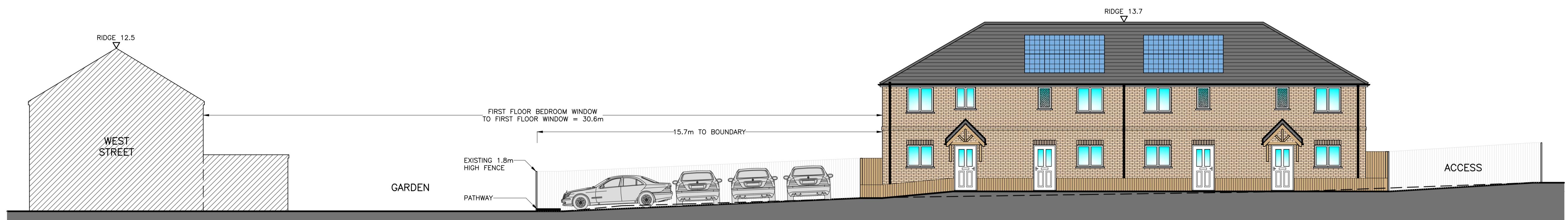
 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council

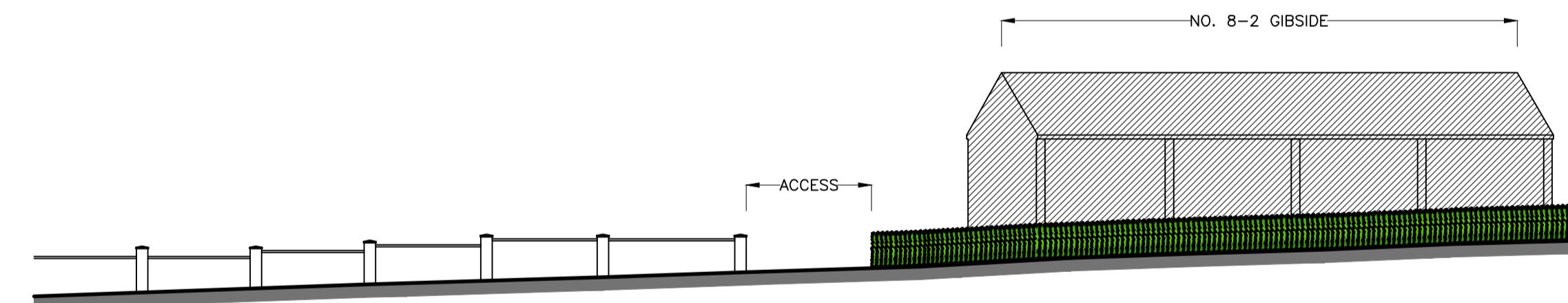




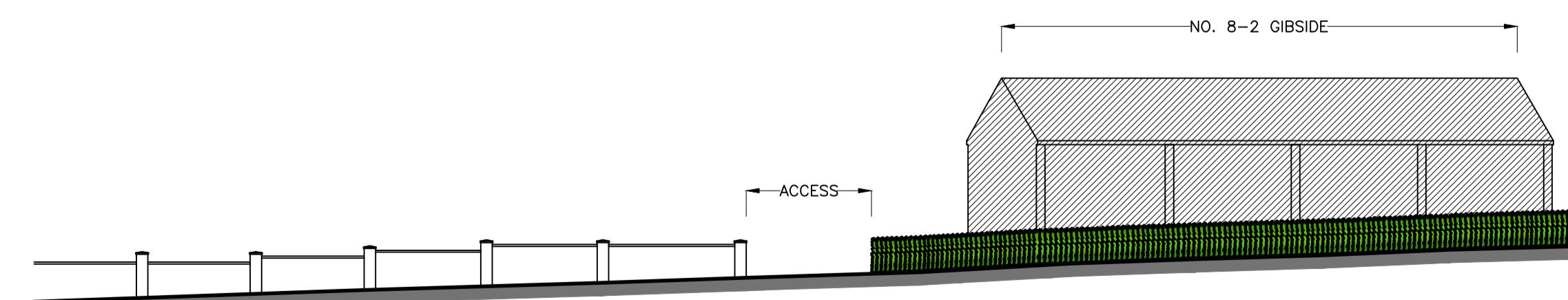
EXISTING SITE SECTION A-A  
(1:100)



PROPOSED SITE SECTION A-A  
(1:100)



EXISTING STREET SCENE AT ACCESS  
(1:200)



PROPOSED STREET SCENE AT ACCESS  
(1:200)

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Where materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they are to be of the standard appropriate to the works and suitable for the purpose stated in or reasonably to be inferred from the drawings and specifications. It is the work to conform with good building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that the recommendations define the quality of the finished work. Materials products and workmanship to comply with all British Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, BS or EC marks.

All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.  
The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.

B	DRAWING UPDATED DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 25
A	REVISIONS	DATE

**MORTON & HALL  
CONSULTING LIMITED**  
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS  
1 Gordon Avenue,  
March,  
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E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk  
Website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk

**LABC**  
LABC BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Winner  
Fenland District Council  
Building Design Awards  
Building Excellence in Fenland

**CLIENT**  
JA Investments  
(London) Ltd

**PROJECT**  
Land off North of  
2-8 Gibside Avenue  
Chatteris  
Cambs

**TITLE**  
Proposed Site Sections

DRAFTER	R.Papworth	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10540/04b



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION  
(1:50)

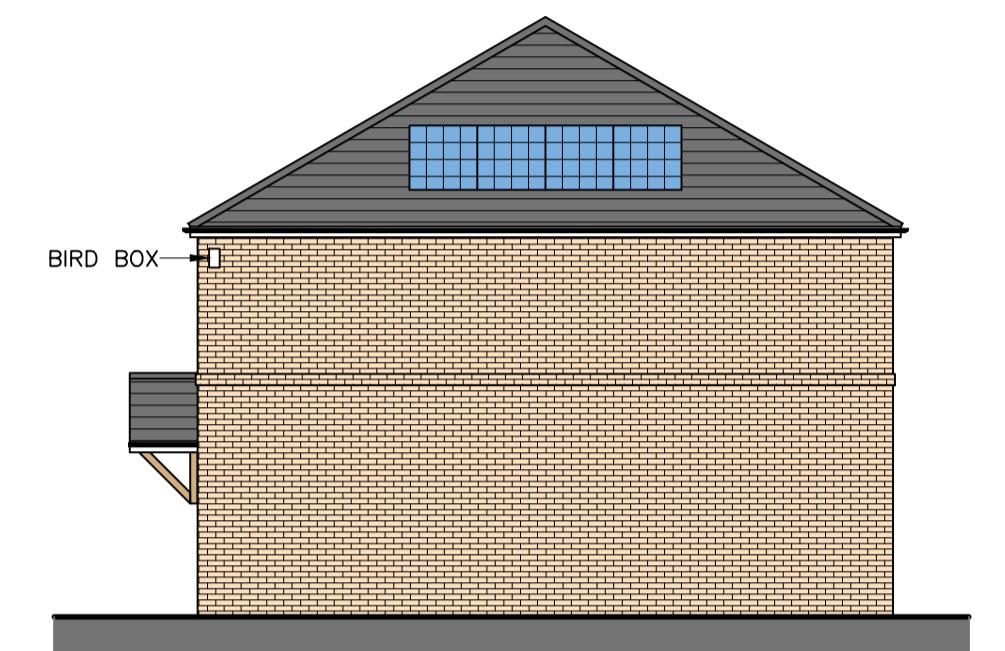
MATERIALS

ROOF : MARLEY MODERN GREY CONCRETE TILES  
WALLS : FORTERRA BURWELL BUFF BRICK  
JOINERY : WHITE UPVC

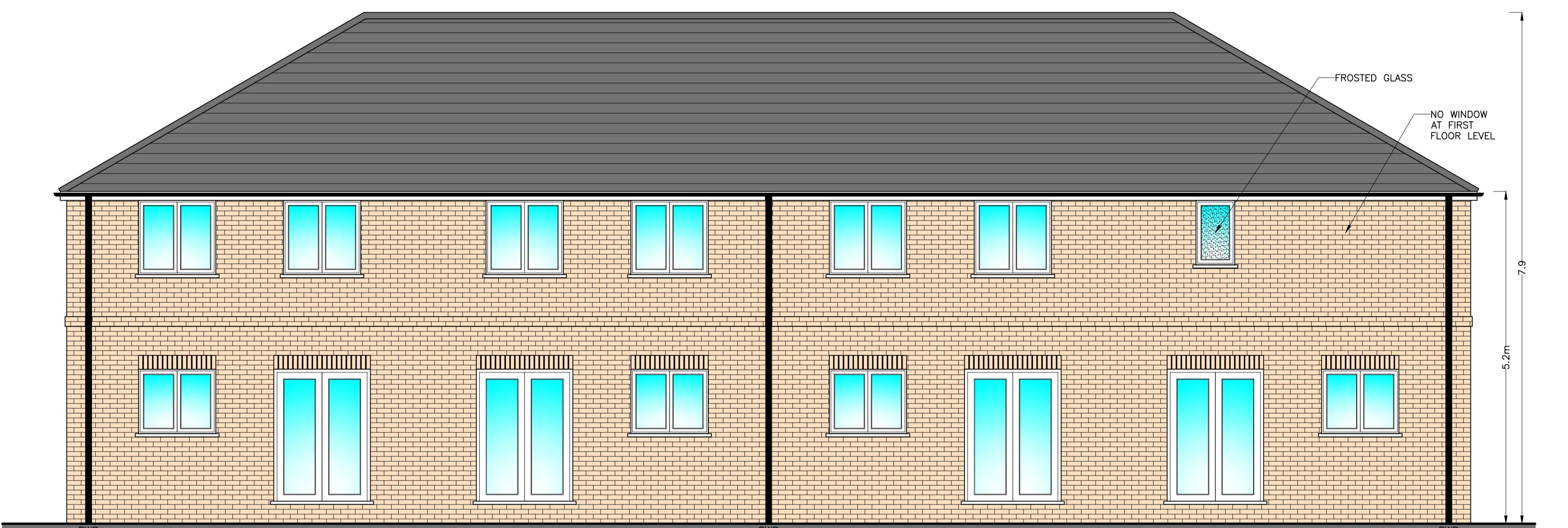
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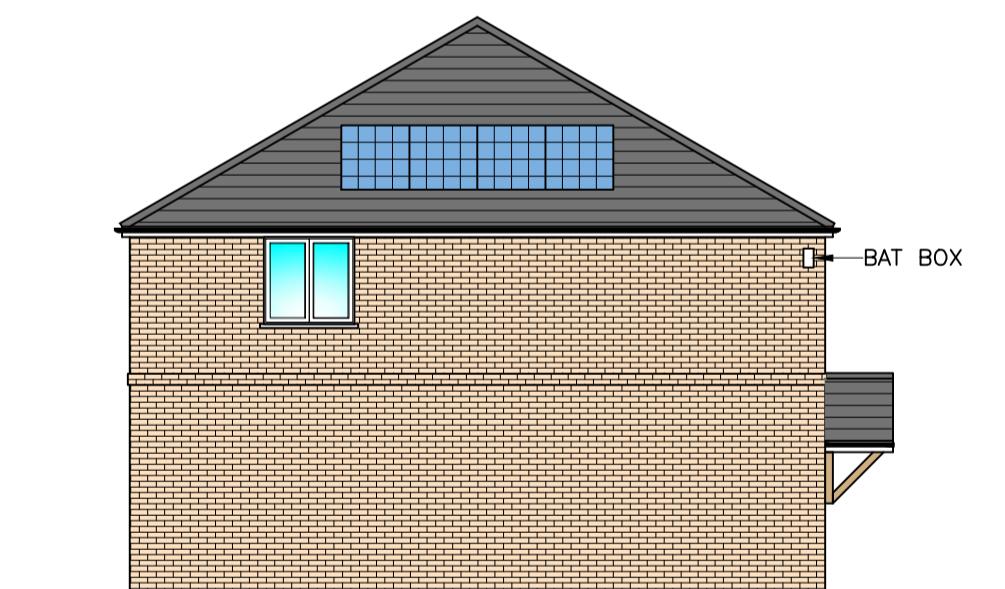
The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer



PROPOSED RHS ELEVATION  
(1:100)



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION  
(1:50)



PROPOSED LHS ELEVATION  
(1:100)

C	PLANNERS COMMENTS	OCT 25
B	DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 25
A	DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 25
	REVISIONS	DATE

**MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED**  
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS  
1, Gordon Avenue,  
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Cambridgeshire,  
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Tel: 01354 655454  
E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk  
Website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk

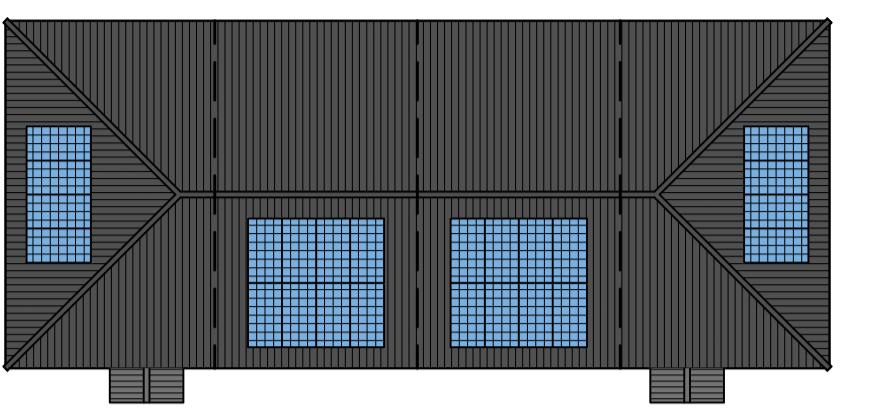
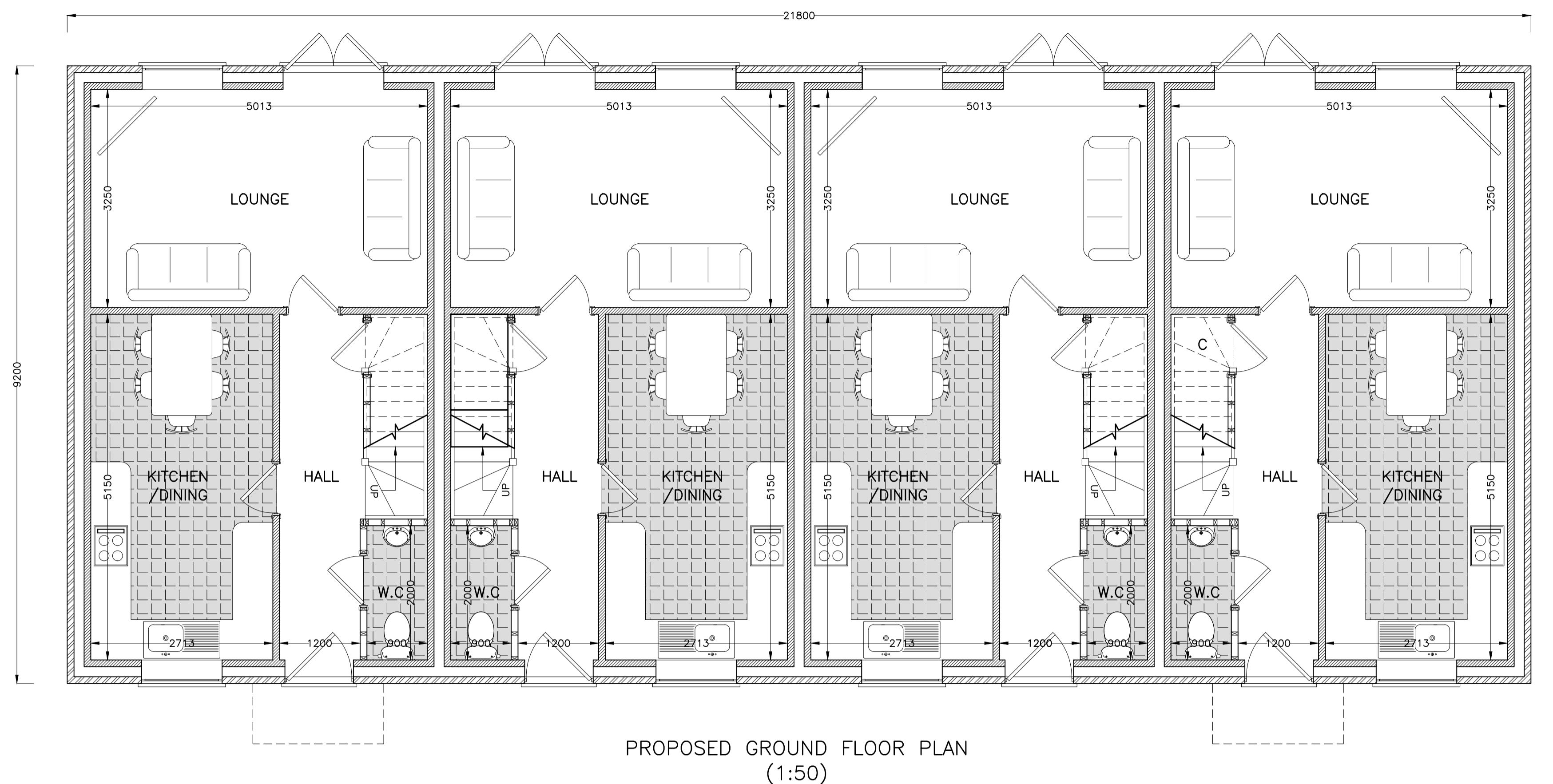
**LABC**  
LABC BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Winner  
Fenland District Council  
Building Design Awards  
Building Excellence in Fenland

**JA Investments (London) Ltd**

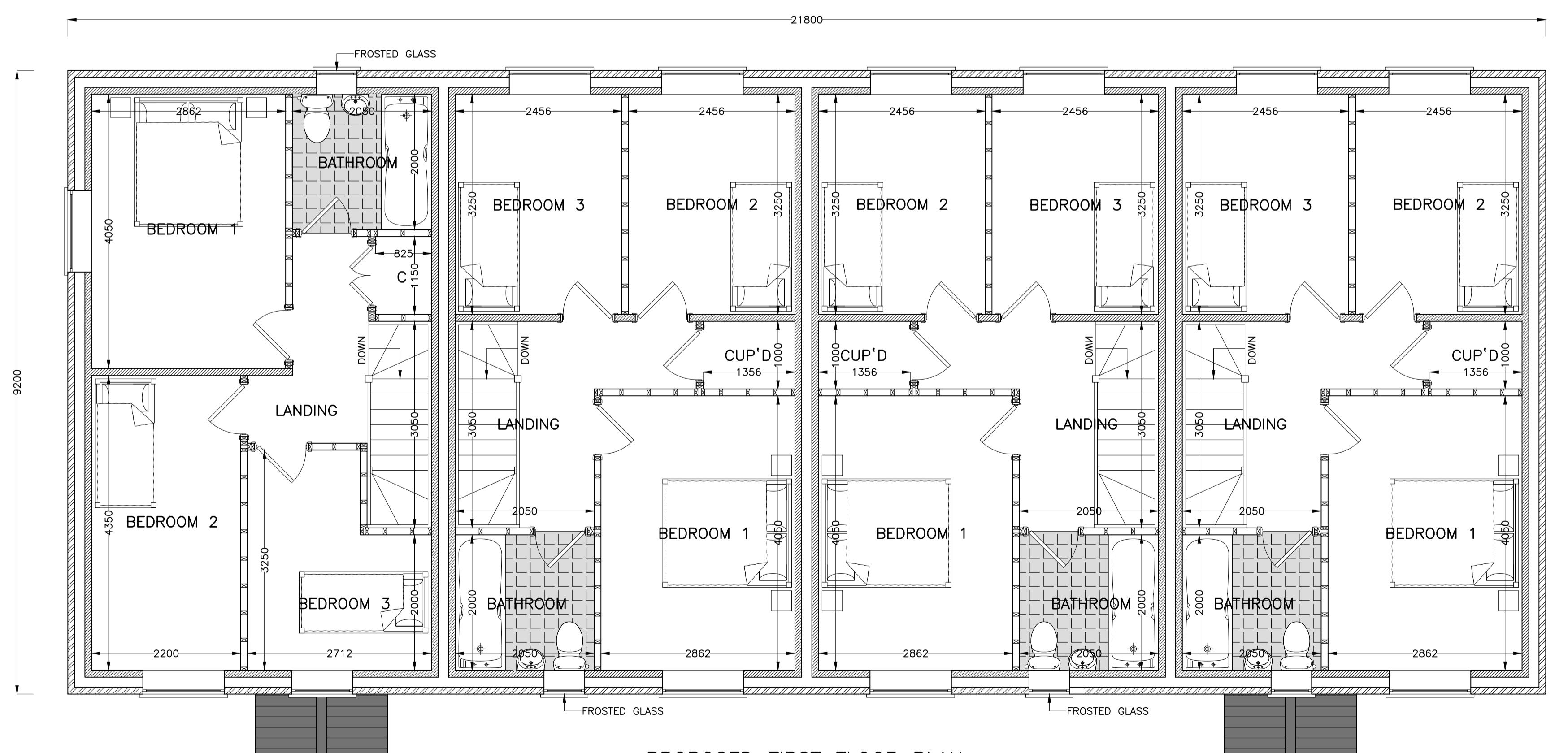
**Land off North of  
2-8 Gibside Avenue  
Chatteris  
Cambs**

**Proposed Elevations**

DRAWN	Oct 2025	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	August 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10540/03c



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN (1:200)

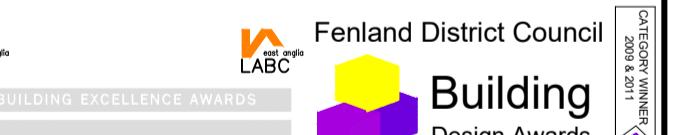


FDC 1-4 DWELLINGS = 212.7m<sup>2</sup>  
THIS APPLICATION = 200.5m<sup>2</sup>  
1-4 DWELLINGS

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The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.

B	DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 25
A	DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 25
REVISIONS		DATE
<b>MORTON &amp; HALL CONSULTING LIMITED</b> CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS 1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ Tel: 01354 655454 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk		
 		
JA Investments (London) Ltd		
PROJECT Land off North of 2-8 Gibside Avenue Chatteris Cambs		
TITLE Proposed Floor Plans & Roof Plan		
DRAWN R.Papworth CHECKED DATE Oct 2025 SCALE As Shown		DATE OF ISSUE DRAWING NUMBER H10540/02B

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F/YR25/0860/F

**Applicant: Mr Ricky Glowacki**

**Agent :**

**Land East Of 26, Turf Fen Lane, Doddington, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling**

**Officer recommendation: Grant**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations received contrary to Officer recommendation**

---

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application is for the erection of 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling at Land East of 26 Turf Fen Lane, Doddington.
- 1.2 A previous outline application for 2 x self-build/custom dwellings was previously refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal. The inspector concluded that this application would not be contrary to Policy LP12 and LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan, however, would be contrary to Policy LP2, LP14 and LP16(e) on residential amenity and flood risk grounds.
- 1.3 This application has reduced the quantum of development proposed and re-positioned the proposed dwelling further away from the boundary of No. 4 May Meadows, which is considered to have overcome the residential amenity issues raised on the previous application.
- 1.4 The re-positioning of the proposed dwelling within the site and the reduction of the red-line boundary of the site has resulted in the site being contained within Flood Zone 1. As such, this has overcome the flood risk issues previously raised.
- 1.5 The application is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Fenland Local Plan and is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the completion of a legal agreement securing the Self-Build and Custom nature of development.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is situated to the east of No. 26 Turf Fen Lane, within the settlement of Doddington.
- 2.2 The site is accessed off May Meadows and is situated to the south of 3 and 4 May Meadows and currently comprises garden land associated with No. 26 Turf Fen Lane and is partially bound by close boarded fences and post and rail fencing.
- 2.3 The application site is situated within Flood Zone 1.

### 3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application is a full application for the erection of 1 x self-build/custom dwelling.
- 3.2 The proposed dwelling would be a 3-storey, detached L-shaped dwelling with accommodation situated within the roof space. The dwelling would have a width of 16 metres approx and a depth of 12.4 metres approx. The roof proposed would be pitched with an eaves height of 5.4 metres approx and a ridge height of 10.2 metres approx.
- 3.3 Fenestration is proposed upon the front (principle) and rear elevation of the dwelling, with two dormer windows proposed to the front roof slope and four roof lights to the rear roof slope.
- 3.4 The dwelling is proposed to be accessed by a gravel driveway between No. 4 and 5 May Meadows, with parking and turning space situated to the front of the dwelling. Private amenity space is proposed to the rear of the dwelling.
- 3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:  
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 There are a number of applications within the immediate vicinity of the site relating to the wider May Meadows development. There are currently 6 dwellings along May Meadows, with extant outline permission for 2 further dwellings. The following history relates to the current the site itself:

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR25/0010/O	Erect 2 x self-build/custom dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access and layout)	Refused 26/02/2025 Appeal Dismissed 15/08/2025

### 5 CONSULTATIONS

#### 5.1 Doddington Parish Council

*Doddington Parish Council objected to the earlier application to develop this site and were very pleased when FDC refused to grant planning permission which was then confirmed when an appeal was dismissed. Notwithstanding the comments made by the applicants to overcome some of the reasons for their appeal being dismissed, the Parish Council still objects to the current application.*

*Whilst we note that the current application is for one dwelling whilst the original application was for two dwellings, and they have modified its position, the current application is still a back land infill development and as such will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland contrary to policy LP12.*

*I hope that FDC will again refuse to grant permission to develop this area of land.*

## **5.2 FDC Environmental Health**

*The Environmental Health Team note and accept the submitted information and have 'No Objections' to the proposal, as it is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality, be affected by ground contamination or adversely impact the local amenity due to excessive artificial lighting.*

*This service would however welcome a condition on working times due to the close proximity of existing noise sensitive receptors, with the following considered reasonable:*

*No construction work shall be carried out and no plant or power operated machinery operated other than between the following hours: 08:00 hours and 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 08:00 hours and 13:00 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.*

## **5.3 FDC Environmental Services**

*We have 'no objections'*

## **5.4 CCC Highways**

*Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Local Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, no significant adverse effect upon the public highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of planning permission*

## **5.5 Definitive Map Team**

*Public Footpath No.19 Doddington runs vertically to the east of the application site. To view the location of the Footpath please view our interactive map online which can be found at <http://my.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/myCambridgeshire.aspx>. Whilst the Definitive Map Team has no objection to this proposal, the Footpath must remain open and unobstructed at all times.*

## **5.6 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

6 letters of objection were received from address points within March and Doddington. 4 of these letters were from properties at May Meadows. The reasons for objection are summarised as follows:

<b>Objecting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Infrastructure at maximum	The addition of one dwelling is unlikely to significantly impact upon existing village infrastructure.
Request for height increase to fence along May Meadows	This fence is outside of the red line boundary of the application site and therefore cannot be considered under this application.
Scale of development at May Meadows	Addressed within the 'Background' section and 'Character and appearance' assessment section of

	the report.
Previous refusal for two dwellings	The previous refusal was for two dwellings, which was subsequently dismissed at appeal. The appeal is discussed in greater detail within the 'Background' section of the report.
Incorrect ownership certificate	The applicant has filled in Certificate of Ownership – Certificate B. Irrespective of this, land ownership is a civil matter and not a material planning consideration.
Precedent and Outside the developed footprint	Addressed within the 'Background' section and 'Character and appearance' assessment section of the report.
Impact on character	Addressed within the 'Character and appearance' assessment section of the report.
Amenity concerns	Addressed within the 'Residential amenity' assessment section of the report.
BNG not addressed	Addressed within the 'Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)' assessment section of the report.
Non-compliance with existing planning conditions	Objections which relate to previous applications cannot be used as a reason to refuse this application.
Noise pollution	Noise pollution from construction is unlikely to be severe and is temporary and therefore cannot be used as a reason to justify refusal.  The addition of one property utilising the access road is unlikely to introduce significant noise impacts.
Highway safety and access into the site	Addressed within the 'Highways/Parking' assessment section of the report.
Drainage	Addressed within the 'Flood Risk' assessment section of the report.

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021).

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4 – Decision-making  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land  
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

## 7.2 **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

## 7.3 **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

## 7.4 **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need  
LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland  
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District  
LP17 – Community Safety  
LP19 – The Natural Environment

## 8 **KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Character and appearance**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Highways/Parking**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**
- **Other Matters**

## 9 **BACKGROUND**

9.1 A previous application was refused on site (planning reference F/YR25/0010/O) for the erection of 2 x self-build/custom dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access and layout). The reasons for refusal were as follows:

*1 Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) details a range of criteria against which development within the villages will be assessed and Policy LP16 seeks to ensure that proposed development responds to and improves the character of the local built environment. The application site proposes the construction of up to two dwellings located on land to the rear of frontage residential development along Turf*

*Fen Lane. The proposed development would result in detriment of the character and appearance of the area and would create a precedent for further backland development at sites with similar geometry. Thus, the proposal would therefore fail to comply with the requirements of Policy LP12 and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).*

*2 Policies LP2 and LP16(e) of the Fenland Local Plan seek to ensure that the development does not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring users or future occupiers. Due to the proximity of the proposed dwelling at Plot 1 to the neighbouring property at No. 4 May Meadows to the north, there is potential for overbearing and overshadowing to the neighbouring property to the detriment of residential amenity. The site is situated within a backland location, therefore some form of street lighting would be required however this is also likely to adversely impact upon neighbouring property due to the proximity of the proposed dwellings to the neighbouring property.*

*With regard to amenity for future occupiers, the bin storage point will be situated in excess of the recommended 30m drag distance between storage and collection areas which represents a poor level of residential amenity.*

*The creation of such an unappealing living environment for future occupiers and the neighbouring occupiers would be contrary to the above policies*

*3 Policy LP14 (Part B) of the Local Plan and Paragraph 175 of the NPPF require development in areas at risk now or in the future from any flooding to undergo a sequential test to demonstrate that the development cannot be delivered elsewhere in the area at lower risk areas of flooding.*

*The site lies in an area at medium and high risk of flooding and fails to successfully demonstrate through the application of the sequential test that the development could not be located elsewhere in a location at a lower risk of flooding.*

*Consequently, the development would place people and property at an unwarranted risk of flooding contrary to policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and the flood risk avoidance requirements of the NPPF.*

- 9.2 This application was subsequently dismissed at appeal on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025 (appeal reference APP/D0515/W/25/3363282).
- 9.3 Reason for refusal 1 related to the character and appearance. The inspector noted that May Meadows is comprised of large two-storey dwellings of varying design and that there is no prevailing architectural character among these dwellings and the surrounding area. They also noted that the area to the rear of No. 26 appears as pastureland rather than cultivated garden land and that the site is not outside the settlement's development limits, nor does it relate more to the surrounding countryside. The inspector did not consider that the site was a 'backland site'. They concluded that the proposal would comply with Policies LP12 and LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan.
- 9.4 Reason for refusal 2 related to impact on neighbouring users, particularly No. 4 May Meadows. The inspector noted that due to the proximity of Plot 1 to the northern site boundary, along with the depth of the elevation of Plot 1, it is likely that overbearing impact would be introduced upon No. 4 May Meadows. The scale of such impact would be dependent on the height of the elevation. The inspector concluded that the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP2 and LP16(a) on overbearing impacts only. They did not consider that the proposal would introduce

adverse overshadowing impacts. They also noted the lack of information regarding street lighting, however could not conclude that this would represent an issue.

- 9.5 With regard to bin storage, the inspector noted that this could be addressed through planning condition.
- 9.6 Reason for refusal 3 relates to Flood Risk. The inspector concluded that a sequential test would be required and the absence of such is contrary to the requirements of both Policy LP14 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

## 10 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

- 10.1 The application site is situated to the south of the linear development of May Meadows and to the east of 26 Turf Fen Lane. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan advises that Doddington is a 'Growth Village' and that development within the existing urban area, or as small village extensions, such as this location, is acceptable. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable. Application of policy LP12 will be assessed in 'character and appearance'.
- 10.2 Policy LP5 of the Local Plan also seeks to ensure that housing solutions are provided which meet market expectations, this includes self-build homes. This stance is reflected by Policy H3 of the March Neighbourhood Plan. Under Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, Local Authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under Sections 2 and 2A of that Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 10.3 As set out in the Regulations, Part 1 of a register comprises those people and organisations who meet all the eligibility criteria, including the local connection test. Part 2 comprises those people and organisations who meet most, but not necessarily all, the eligibility criteria. The Council has a duty to 'give suitable development permission in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area' (i.e. to meet the demand for the number of applicants on Part 1 of their register) within a 3 year period, post the end of the base period.
- 10.4 The permissions granted demonstrate that the demand for self-build and custom housing (as identified by the register) is comfortably being met in Fenland. Therefore, no weight will be given to the delivery of self/ custom build housing at this time.

### Character and appearance

- 10.5 Local Plan Policy LP16 identifies that proposals for new development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the proposal, inter alia makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, responds to and improves the character of the local built environment, provides resilience to climate change, reinforces local identity and does not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape character of the surrounding area. The

topography of the site is relatively flat with visual screening on the northern boundary of the site provided by the existing May Meadows development and western boundary due to the presence of No. 26 Turf Fen Lane.

- 10.6 Whilst acknowledging that the site is within Doddington and is acceptable in principle, it must also comply with the requirements of Part A of policy LP12. This states that development can be supported where it does not harm the wide open character of the countryside and provides further guidance as to the restriction of such development to ensure that it has an acceptable impact on the settlement and its character. The policy requires development to meet certain criteria in order to be supported. Criterion (a) states that the site must be in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village.
- 10.7 Whilst the previous appeal on site was dismissed, this was not on character and appearance grounds. The Inspector considered that the site was not situated outside of the settlement's development limits and did not relate more to the surrounding countryside and did not consider the site as 'backland' site. The Inspector considered that the development of the site would be compliant with Policies LP12 and LP16(d). As such, it is not considered that the introduction of a single dwelling on site would be out of character with the surrounding pattern of development.
- 10.8 The proposal is for a detached 3-storey dwelling, with a maximum ridge height of 10.2 metres. The dwellings along May Meadows have varying ridge heights, with the greatest currently being approximately 8.8 metres, therefore the proposed dwelling would have a greater ridge height of approximately 1.3 metres. The inspector noted within the previous appeal that there is no prevailing architectural character amongst the dwellings along May Meadows, or within the surrounding area. Therefore, whilst the dwelling would have a greater ridge height than the surrounding dwellings, due to the lack of discernible character, it is unlikely to adversely impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 10.9 In terms of design and appearance of the dwelling, the dwelling be finished predominantly in a cream render, with red brick detailing. The dwellings along May Meadows are finished in buff brickwork and black cladding. However, the dwelling at 26 Turf Fen Lane is finished in a material palette similar to that which is proposed for the dwelling under this application. The design references the architectural style, detailing and visual cues of the adjacent dwelling at No. 26 Turf Fen Lane. Whilst there are some differences between the design of the proposed dwelling and those along May Meadows, it is not considered that such differences would impact visual amenity. As such, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and appearance.
- 10.10 The development is therefore considered compliant with Policy LP12 and LP16 in this regard.

### **Residential amenity**

- 10.11 Policy LP2 states that development proposals should contribute to the Council's goal of Fenland's residents, *inter alia*, promoting high levels of residential amenity whilst policy LP16 states that development should not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users such as noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and loss of light.

- 10.12 The submitted site plan indicates that the dwelling would be situated

approximately 6.3 metres from the rear boundary of 4 May Meadows. There would be a clearance of approximately 19.5 metres between the side elevation of the proposed dwelling and the rear elevation of No. 4.

10.13 Whilst it is acknowledged that the Inspector noted on the previous appeal that the development would likely have an overbearing impact on No. 4, the proposed development under the previous refusal was situated approximately 1.2 metres from the southern boundary of Plot 4. This proposal has therefore situated the dwelling a further 5.1 metres south of this boundary. Given the clearance between the two dwellings, it is therefore unlikely that the development would introduce any adverse overbearing or overshadowing impacts upon No. 4.

10.14 In terms of overlooking, the development proposes fenestration upon the front and rear elevations only. It is therefore unlikely that any adverse overlooking impacts would be introduced upon No. 4. No. 26 Turf Fen Lane is situated to the west of the application site, however there would be a clearance of approximately 22 metres between the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling and the rear boundary of the application site. The clearance between the two dwellings would be in excess of 40 metres. As such, it is unlikely that any adverse overlooking impacts would be introduced.

10.15 With regard to bin collection, the submitted site plan indicates a bin collection point at the top of the gravel driveway, adjacent to No. 4. The FDC Environmental Services team were consulted as part of this application who have raised no objection to the location of the bin collection point.

10.16 No details have been submitted with regard to street lighting, however this can be conditioned should the application be granted.

10.17 FDC Environmental Health were consulted as part of this application and have raised no objection to the proposed development. They have requested a condition regarding restriction on construction times, however as this development is for one dwelling this condition is considered unreasonable as construction noise is unlikely to be significantly adverse.

### **Highways/Parking**

10.18 Policy LP15 states that development proposals should demonstrate that they provide well designed, safe and convenient access for all. It also states that development schemes should provide well designed car parking appropriate to the amount of development proposed, ensuring that all new development meets the councils defined parking standards as set out in Appendix A.

10.18 The submitted site plan details the provision of 5 parking spaces, which is considered to be acceptable.

10.19 CCC Highways have raised no objection to the scheme as it is unlikely to materially impact upon the highway, albeit this relates solely to the public highway and not the private driveway arrangement.

10.20 The application proposes to utilise the existing access into May Meadows which is a private driveway. The access road into May Meadows has a width of approximately 6 metres which is considered to be acceptable.

10.21 The submitted site plan also indicates a gravel driveway to serve the dwellings.

Whilst it is noted that the existing access road into May Meadows is finished in gravel, it does not appear that such material has been approved under previous planning permissions apart from the turning head and the area to the front of Plots 5 and 6. This application proposes to provide a driveway off of this turning head of a length of 55 metres. The use of gravel for this driveway is considered to be unacceptable due to potential residential amenity issues relating to noise and accessing the bin collection point. As such, should permission be granted, a condition will be secured to ensure that details of an appropriate material are submitted for the access driveway. The existing access road into May Meadows will be referred to the planning enforcement team.

10.22 In addition to the above, should permission be granted a condition would be secured to ensure that details of temporary facilities to be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, loading, and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction are submitted and agreed by the LPA prior to the commencement of any development on site. This condition is considered necessary to ensure that construction traffic and vehicles do not obstruct the existing access and roadway. The applicant has agreed to the inclusion of such condition.

10.23 As such, there are no issues to address with regard to Policy LP15.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

10.24 The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) and as such the proposal is considered to be appropriate development and does not require the submission of a flood risk assessment or inclusion of mitigation measures.

10.25 The comments received regarding Flood Risk are acknowledged, however the previous application was a larger site area which incorporated land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This site area under this application has been reduced to be situated outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

10.26 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

10.27 There are statutory exemptions, transitional arrangements and requirements relating to irreplaceable habitat which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. In this instance, one or more of the exemptions / transitional arrangements are considered to apply and a Biodiversity Gain Condition is not required to be approved before development is begun because the nature of the development being self / custom build is exempt from statutory net gain.

### **Other Matters**

#### **Unilateral Undertaking**

10.28 Recent appeal decisions have consistently dismissed proposals where there was

no enforceable mechanism in place to ensure that the approved dwelling would be delivered and occupied as a genuine self-build or custom-build project. These decisions reinforce the importance of securing the self-build nature of such developments through a legally binding agreement.

10.29 In line with best practice and national policy guidance, it is therefore considered essential that a legal agreement; typically in the form of a Section 106 obligation, is secured to guarantee the delivery of the dwelling as self-build. Without such a mechanism, there is no means by which the Council can ensure the dwelling will meet the requirements of self-build housing as defined by the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended).

10.30 As the application is recommended for approval, discussions have taken place between the Officer and Applicant to secure this obligation. However, in the interests of expediency, this does not prevent the Committee from reaching a decision, subject to completion of the agreement.

## 11 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 This application seeks to erect one self-build/custom-build dwelling. A previous application on the site for outline consent for two dwellings was refused on character, residential amenity and flood risk issues. A subsequent appeal concluded that the development of this site would not appear out of character.
- 11.2 This application is for one dwelling which has been positioned further away from the boundary of No. 4 May Meadows, therefore overcoming the previous concerns raised regarding overbearing issues.
- 11.3 The proposed dwelling is also now positioned entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore there are no flood risk issues to address.
- 11.4 As such, the development is considered compliant with the relevant policies of the Fenland Local Plan and is therefore recommended for approval.

## 12 RECOMMENDATION

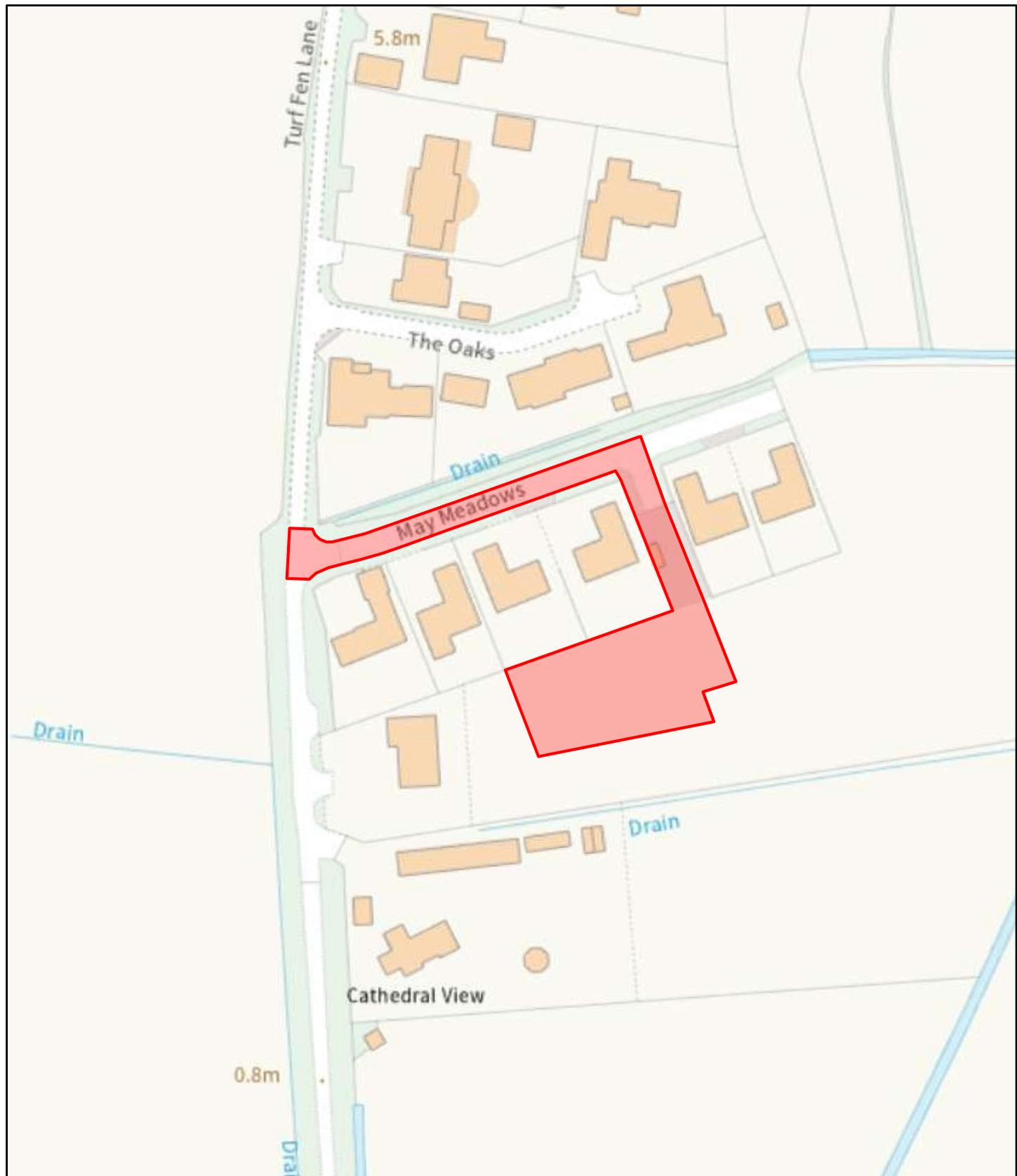
**Members are recommended to GRANT the application in accordance with the following terms;**

1. The Committee delegates authority to finalise the completion of a legal agreement securing the Self-Build and custom nature of the development and planning conditions to the Head of Planning; and.
2. Following the completion of the legal agreement application F/YR25/0860/F be approved subject to planning conditions set out below (or as amended); or,
3. The Committee delegates authority to refuse the application in the event that the Applicant does not agree to any necessary extensions to the determination period to enable the completion of the legal agreement, or on the grounds that the applicant is unwilling to complete the obligation necessary to make the development acceptable.

The proposed conditions are as follows:

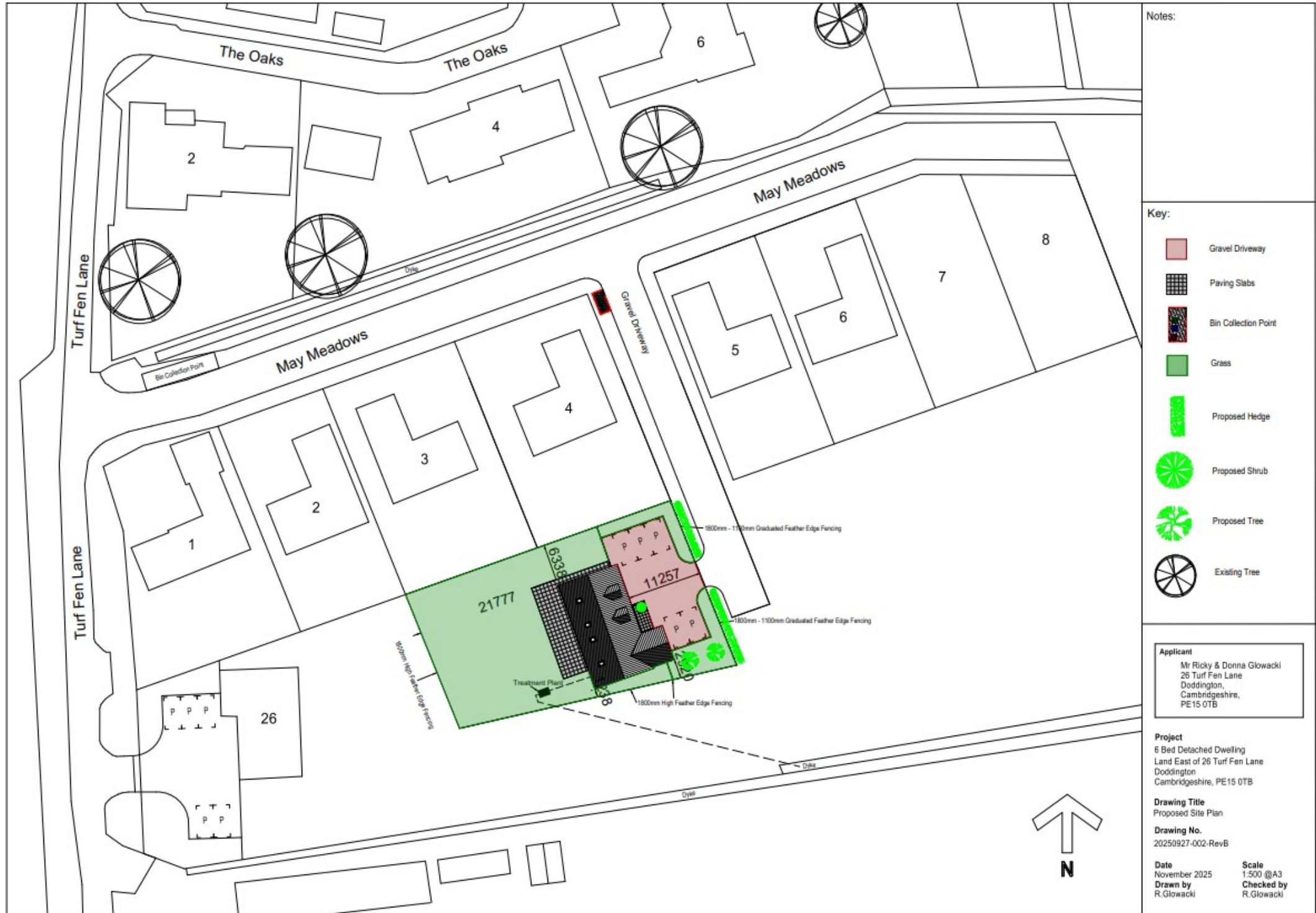
1	The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years
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	<p>from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p>
2	<p>The development hereby approved shall be finished externally in materials as per approved drawing 20250927-004-RevB</p> <p>Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area and ensure compliance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.</p>
3	<p>Within 6-months of the commencement of development hereby approved, a scheme for the provision of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the first dwelling hereby approved and retained thereafter in perpetuity.</p> <p>Reason - In order to ensure that the site meets the crime prevention guidelines in accordance with Policy LP17 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
4	<p>Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a temporary facilities area, details of which shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading, and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.</p> <p>Reason: To minimise interference with the free flow and safety of traffic on the adjoining highway and to ensure compliance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.</p>
5	<p>Notwithstanding the submitted details and prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted a scheme for the surfacing of the private road extension shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme prior to the occupation of the development and retained in perpetuity.</p> <p>Reason - To ensure the environment of the development is improved and enhanced and the amenity of residents is maintained in accordance with Policy LP2 and Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
6	<p>Prior to the first occupation of the development the proposed on-site parking/turning area and access shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans, surfaced in a bound material and drained within the site. The parking/turning area, surfacing and drainage shall thereafter be retained as such in perpetuity (notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part A, Class F of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, or any instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order).</p> <p>Reason - In the interest of highway safety and to ensure compliance with Policies LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
7	Approved Plans

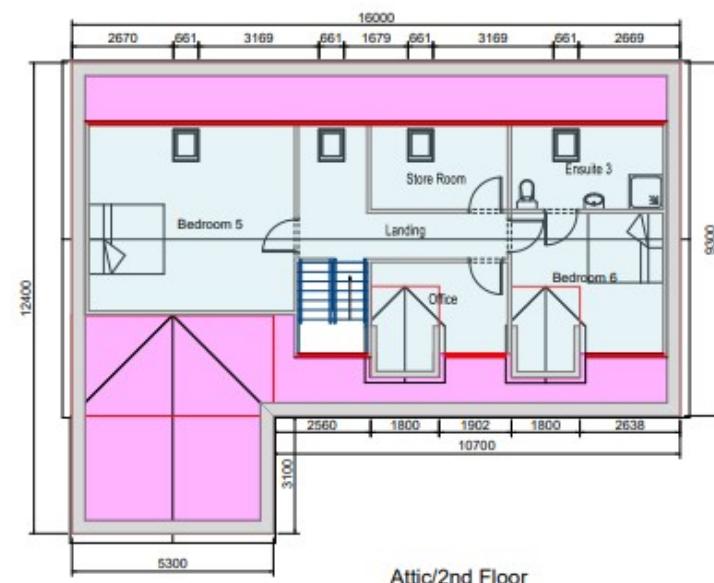
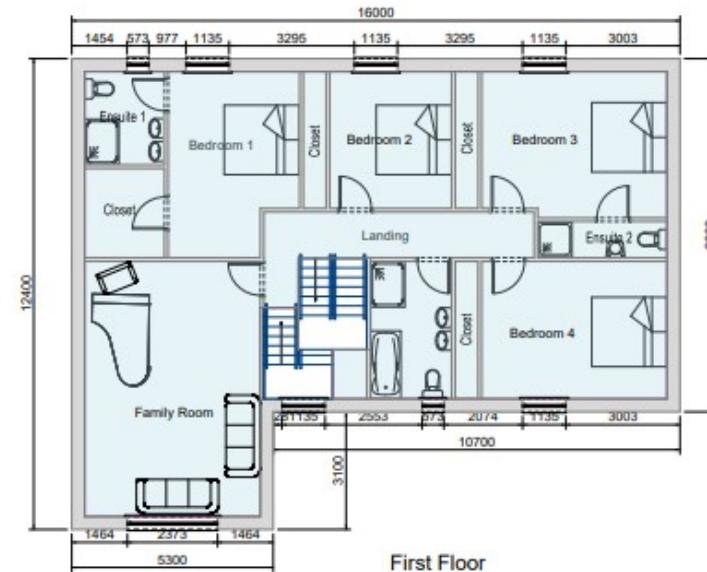
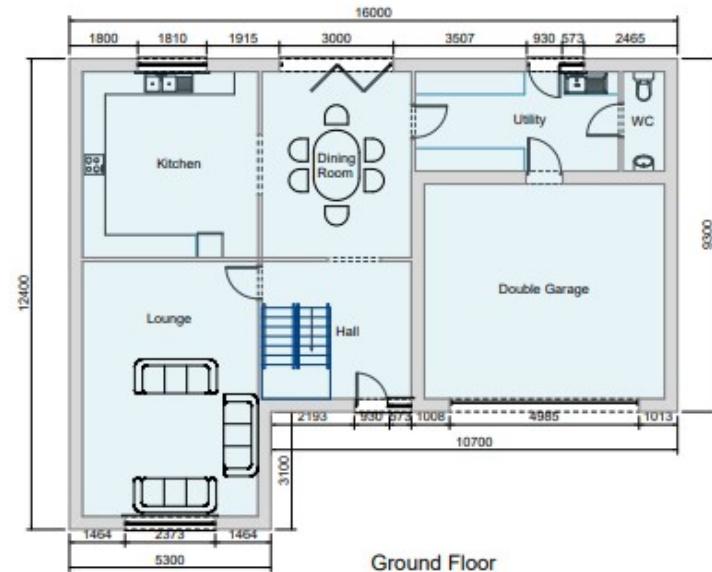


11/14/2025, 10:14:24 AM

1:1,250  
0 15 30 55 110 60 m  
220 ft







Notes:

Key:
Internal Block Wall
External Block Cavity Wall
Floor Space
Insulated rafters

Applicant  
Mr Ricky & Donna Glowacki  
26 Turf Fen Lane  
Doddington,  
Cambridgeshire,  
PE15 0TB

Project  
6 Bed Detached Dwelling  
Land East of 26 Turf Fen Lane  
Doddington  
Cambridgeshire, PE15 0TB

Drawing Title  
Floor Plan

Drawing No.  
20250127-003-RevA

Date  
October 2025  
Drawn by  
R.Glowacki

Scale  
1:100 @A2  
Checked by  
R.Glowacki

F/YR25/0782/A

**Applicant: Bahattin Solak**

**Agent : Mr Hasan Bagcih  
Esen Loft**

**18 Broad Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8TG**

**Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective)**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Referred by Head of Planning on advice of the Committee Chairman**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application is a resubmission of a previously refused application which was heard at the 17th September 2025 Planning Committee. There have been no amendments to the proposal following the previous refusal.
- 1.2 This application is for the display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign at 18 Broad Street, March.
- 1.3 The illuminated fascia sign appears dominant upon the principal elevation of the host building and conceals important architectural features. These include ionic columns that form the termination of the pilasters and keystones to the centre of the window arches. Additionally, the size and scale of the sign, in combination with other advertisements, results in a cluttered frontage to the building.
- 1.4 The fascia sign fails to make a positive contribution and therefore is considered to adversely impact on the streetscene and character of the area and fails to protect and enhance heritage assets. The proposed advertisement is therefore considered contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF and Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.
- 1.5 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is situated on the western side of Broad Street, within the market town of March. The site is situated within the March Conservation Area. There are also a number of Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the application site.
- 2.2 The building is currently occupied by F & S Majestic Turkish Restaurant and was previously occupied by NatWest. The advert is already in situ.
- 2.3 The building is a non-designated heritage asset and forms an entry on the draft Cambridgeshire Local List.

### 3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks advertisement consent (retrospectively) for the display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign. The fascia sign measures approximately 10.275 x 1.1 metres. The sign includes internally illuminated lettering and blue chevron on a high gloss black background. This is made from an aluminium panel fascia painted with high gloss blue.
- 3.2 There are a number of other adverts in situ on the frontage of the building. These include 3 x elevational circular adverts, advertisements upon the Dutch window canopies and retractable canopy.
- 3.3 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:  
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR25/0458/A	Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective)	Refused 18/09/2025
F/YR24/0858/F	Change of use of bank to restaurant, and external alterations including remove signage and installation of extraction equipment (part retrospective)	Granted 12/12/2025

### 5 CONSULTATIONS

#### 5.1 March Town Council

*Recommendation: Approval*

#### 5.2 FDC Conservation Officer

1. *Consideration is given to the impact of the proposal on the architectural and historic interests with special regard paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses according to the duty in law under S16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
2. *Consideration is given to the impact of this proposal on the character and appearance of March Conservation Area with special attention paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area according to the duty in law under S72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
3. *Consideration is given to the impact of the proposal on the architectural and historic interests of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset with special regard paid to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special*

*architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

*4. Comments are made with due regard to Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024, specifically, paragraphs 203, 205, 207, 208, and 210.*

*5. A heritage statement has been submitted with the application that just about meets the requirements of 207 of the NPPF.*

*6. Due regard is given to relevant planning history.*

*The former bank has been turned into a restaurant following the closure of Nat West who previously occupied the site for a number of years.*

*The building is a high-quality structure of architectural and historic significance and is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and forms an entry on the draft Cambridgeshire Local List.*

*The building has been subject to unauthorised works in inclusive of oversized fascia signage, additional 3no. circular signs, 4no. Dutch canopies with advertisement, a retractable canopy with advertisement and a large timber structure to the rear yard.*

*There has been no attempt by the applicant to apply for or discuss the proposals with the LPA prior to their unauthorised installation.*

*The image in fig 3 above is how the frontage looks at present, inclusive of:*

- Oversized and brash fascia signage.*
- Proliferation of further 3no. elevational signage in the form of circular signs*
- 4 no. Dutch canopies over the window that have advertisements*
- A horizontal retractable canopy with further advertisement text to the skirt.*

*Considering the submitted elevation drawing below, the plans are incorrect/inaccurate/misleading as they fail to include all currently unauthorised advertisements.*

*The fascia sign conceals important architectural features, such as the ionic columns that form the termination of the pilasters and the keystones to the centre of the window arches. The signage is considered too large and dominant, detracting from the character and appearance of the building and the conservation area.*

*A further 3 elevation signs depicting 'breakfast', 'lunch' and 'dinner' are large and dominant and result in unnecessary proliferation of brash signage. They further conceal important architectural features in the form of the rhythm of pilasters harming the appreciation of this positive building.*

*The 4.no Dutch canopies are considered to serve little purpose other than providing yet another surface to proliferate advertisement. Additionally, the 3 over the windows further conceal an important architectural feature in the form of the large shell motif forming the window heads.*

*A further advertisement canopy has recently been erected which crudely cuts through the centre of the windows and further detracts from the appreciation of the high-quality architectural form of this non-designated heritage asset that stands prominently within the conservation area.*

**Conclusion:**

*The plans are not representative of the evolving scenario of unauthorised and detracting proliferation of signage that adorns the principal elevation of this important historic building that is considered to firmly meet the criteria of an NDHA.*

*The application should be refused on its detrimental impact on the character, appearance and historic significance of the host building and the wider March conservation area.*

*The harm to the character of the building and the CA is deemed to be less than substantial (medium on the spectrum). It is important to note that the NPPF stipulates that any harm to heritage assets should be met with a strong presumption for refusal unless public benefits outweigh the harm. In this instance there are considered to be few public benefits to be derived from proliferation of poorly designed and oversized signage and canopies.*

*There is also a strong objection to the fact that the submitted plans do not reflect what actually has been installed on site and their cumulative impacts*

**Recommendation: Refuse**

**5.3 FDC Environmental Health**

*I refer to the above application for consideration and make the following observations.*

*The Environmental Health Team note and accept the submitted information and have 'No Objections' to the proposals, as they are unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the local amenity as a result of artificial light overspill and/or glare.*

**5.4 CCC Archaeology**

*Thank you for the consultation with regards to the archaeological implications of the above referenced planning application. We have reviewed the application and have no comments or recommendations on archaeological grounds.*

**5.5 CCC Highways**

*Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Local Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, no significant adverse effect upon the public highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of planning permission.*

**Comments**

*This proposal for an internally illuminated sign and the level of illumination is within the recommended standard for a town centre location. The proposal does not appear to materially impact the public highway. On this basis, this application is acceptable.*

**5.6 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

3 letters of objection from 2 address points within March have been received regarding this application. The reasons for objection are summarised as follows:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Queries over repeat application being accepted	Addressed in 'Background' section
Applicant has not followed Conservation advice	The FDC Conservation Office has provided comment on this application which has been considered within the recommendation on the application.
Queries over other unauthorised works on site and lack of enforcement action	The enforcement team are aware of unauthorised works on site. These other works are not relevant to the decision on this application.
March Conservation Area Appraisal recommended 18 Broad Street for statutory listing	This is correct, however the building is not Listed but is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
Queries over why the above appraisal has not been regularly reviewed	This query is not relevant to the determination of this application.
Not in keeping	Addressed in 'Amenity' assessment section

2 letters of support from 2 address points within March have been received regarding this application. The reasons for support are summarised as follows:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Other illuminated signs in the high street	Addressed in 'Amenity' assessment section
Does not impact on view	Addressed in 'Amenity' assessment section
Design	Addressed in 'Amenity' assessment section
Important to support businesses	This application is for advertisement consent only. The change of use of the building itself was approved as per application reference F/YR24/0858/F.

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

- 6.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England)Regulations 2007 require a Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.
- 6.2 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

## 7.2 **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

## 7.3 **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

## 7.4 **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP18 – The Historic Environment

## 7.5 **March Neighbourhood Plan 2017**

There are no specific policies relating to developments such as this, however the visions, aims and objectives of the Plan is that the quality of the built and natural environment is improved along with the level of provision and quality of recreational land facilities.

## 8 **KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Amenity**
- **Public Safety**

## 9 **BACKGROUND**

9.1 A previous advertisement application was refused by Members at the 17th September Planning Committee. The reason for refusal was as follows:

*1 Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment as well as requiring development to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character.*

*The illuminated fascia sign is dominant upon the principle elevation of the host building, concealing important architectural features such as the ionic columns that form the termination of the pilasters and keystones to the centre of the window arches, as well as due to its size and scale, in combination with other advertisements on the building, creating a cluttered frontage. The fascia sign therefore fails to make a positive contribution and therefore is considered to adversely impact on the streetscene and character of the area and fails to protect and enhance heritage assets. The proposed advertisement is therefore considered contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF and Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.*

9.2 This application is a re-submission of the previous refused application. No amendments have been made.

9.3 One of the letters of objection received has queried why the LPA have accepted a repeat application. Section 70B of The Act (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) (Power to Decline an application) permits the opportunity to decline to determine a planning permission (or permission in principle) when the applicant has a right to appeal against a previous decision, where a similar application has been refused within the appeal period.

- 9.4 However, the same provisions do not apply to applications for advertisement consent and legislation does not provide an equivalent mechanism to decline to determine such an application while the appeal period on a previous decision remains live. Therefore, in this instance, it is not within the LPA's power to decline to determine the advertisement consent application.
- 9.5 As per the previous refusal on site, it is only the illuminated fascia sign that requires advertisement consent. The other advertisements upon the principal elevation benefit from Deemed Consent.
- 9.6 It should be noted that the retractable awning and Dutch window canopies require planning permission as they materially change the appearance of the building. These works are currently unauthorised and the FDC Planning Enforcement team are aware of these works. These unauthorised works are however not relevant to the determination of this application.

## **10 ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 10.1 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF advises that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment if poorly sited and designed. The Local Planning Authority should therefore consider any proposals for advertisements on amenity and public safety grounds only.
- 10.2 While there is further signage on the building this is largely given deemed consent under the Advertisement Regulations and it is only the illuminated fascia sign that requires consent.

### **Amenity**

- 10.3 The fascia sign includes internal illumination. The FDC Environmental Health team were consulted as part of this application. They have raised no objections to the proposal as the proposals are unlikely to have any detrimental impact upon local amenity as a result of artificial light overspill and/or glare. As such, the illumination of the advert is not considered to adversely impact upon adjacent amenity.
- 10.4 Amenity would include the visual amenities of the area and impact of the proposal on the streetscene and character for which Policies LP16 and LP18 would be applicable, as these seek to provide high quality environments and ensure development (including advertisements) make a positive contribution to and do not adversely impact on the streetscene or character of the area, protecting and enhancing heritage assets and their setting.
- 10.5 The building at 18 Broad Street is a non-designated heritage asset and forms an entry on the draft Cambridgeshire Local List, as referenced by the Conservation Officer. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states the effect of an application of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.
- 10.6 The fascia sign appears dominant upon the principal elevation of the host building, concealing important architectural features such as the ionic columns that form the termination of the pilasters and keystones to the centre of the window arches.

- 10.7 In addition to this, additional advertisements have been erected upon the principal elevation of the building. These include elevational circular signs, and advertising upon Dutch window canopies and a retractable awning. Whilst these advertisements don't require advertisement consent, the combination of these advertisements in addition to the size and scale of the fascia sign creates a cumulative visual impact arising from a cluttered frontage. The introduction of such signage is considered to be a regressive step in protecting and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area.
- 10.8 The signage is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the building and therefore is considered to adversely impact on the streetscene and character of the area and fails to protect and enhance heritage assets with a consequent adverse impact upon the visual amenity of the area. The proposed advertisement is therefore considered contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF and Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

## **Public Safety**

- 10.9 Factors to be taken into account regarding public safety include the following: -  
The safety of persons using any highway, or other means of transport; - Whether the advertisement should obscure any traffic signs or signals; - Likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.  
(as indicated within Part 1, section 3(2)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of advertisements)(England) 2007)
- 10.10 In terms of public safety, it is not considered that the advert would introduce any safety issues. It should be noted that CCC Highways have raised no objection to the scheme.
- 10.11 When assessing the advertising signs in terms of safety, as required by the NPPF, there are no reasons to refuse the application.

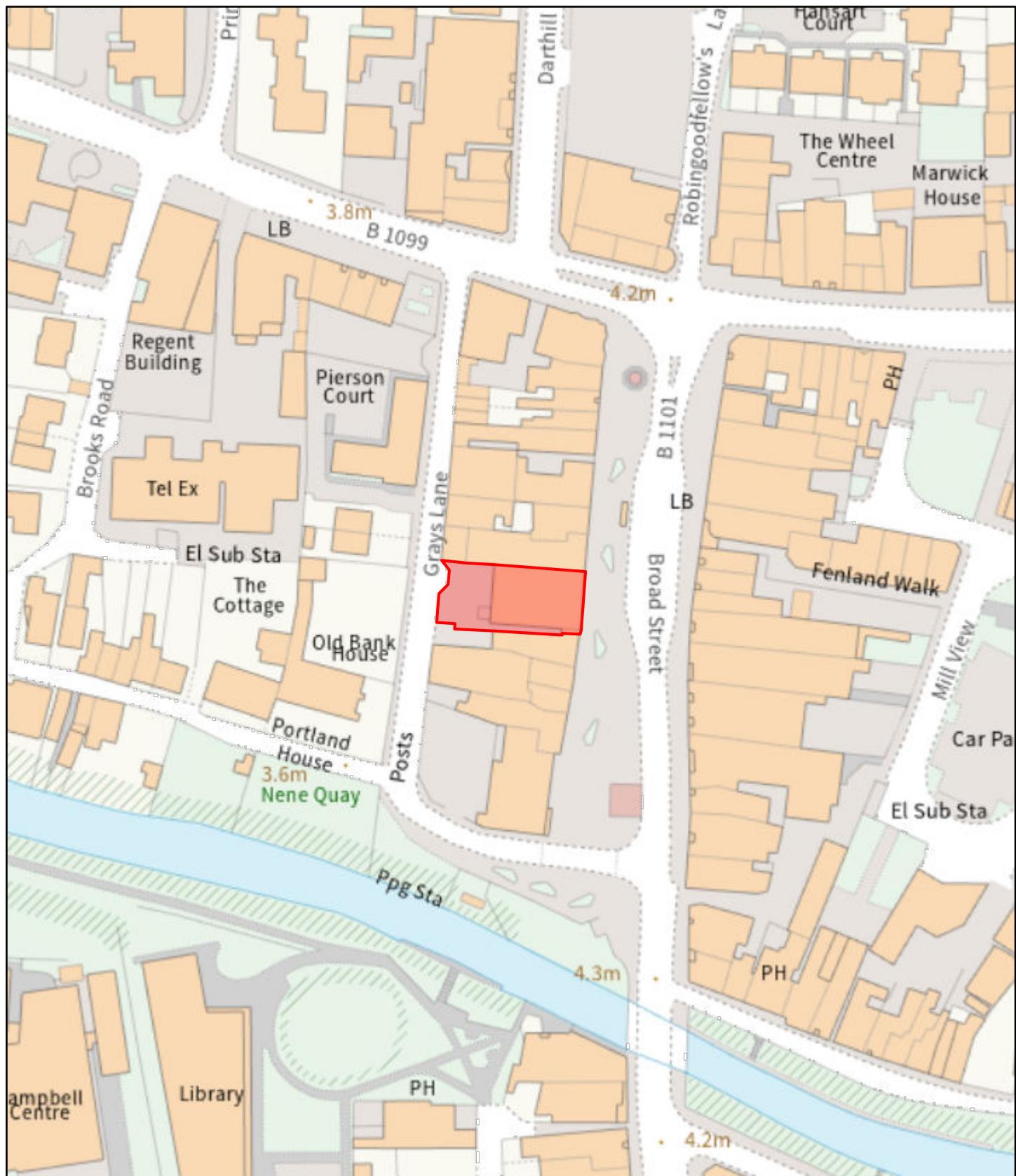
## **11 CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 This application is a resubmission of a previously refused advertisement consent application on 18 September 2025 following the recommendation from the Planning Committee. There have been no amendments to the scheme following the previous refusal.
- 11.2 By virtue of the adverse impact of the fascia sign on the character of March Conservation Area, the scheme is still in contravention of Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan and does not comply with the requirements of the NPPF as the signage detracts from the character and appearance of the building, failing to make a positive contribution to the character of the area and fails to protect and enhance heritage assets. As such, this application is again recommended for refusal.
- 11.3 If advertisement consent is refused, the file will be passed to the Planning Enforcement Team for further action.

## **12 RECOMMENDATION**

- 12.1 **Refuse**; for the following reason:

1	Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment as well as requiring development to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character. The illuminated fascia sign is dominant upon the principal elevation of the host building, concealing important architectural features such as the ionic columns that form the termination of the pilasters and keystones to the centre of the window arches, as well as due to its size and scale, in combination with other advertisements on the building, creating a cluttered frontage. The fascia sign therefore fails to make a positive contribution and therefore is considered to adversely impact on the streetscene and character of the area and fails to protect and enhance heritage assets. The proposed advertisement is therefore considered contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF and Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.
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10/23/2025, 10:56:11 AM

1:1,250  
0 15 30 55 110 60 m  
0 15 30 60 ft

Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council



		ALL WORK TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT BUILDING REGULATIONS AND CODES OF PRACTICE.
		ALL DIMENSIONS IN MM UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
		MEASURED SURVEY DOES NOT INCLUDE FOR INTRUSIVE SURVEY TO DETERMINE EXACT LOCATION OF STEELWORK/SUPPORTING STRUCTURE
		"THIS DRAWING IS PREPARED SOLELY FOR DESIGN AND PLANNING SUBMISSION PURPOSES. IT IS NOT INTENDED OR SUITABLE FOR EITHER BUILDING REGULATIONS OR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR SUCH".
		THIS DRAWING IS COPYRIGHT AND MUST NOT BE TRACED OR COPIED IN ANY WAY OR FORM.
		PLEASE NOTE: PROPERTY OWNER TO ENSURE THAT ALL ASPECTS OF THE "PARTY WALL ETC, ACT 1996" ARE COMPLIED WITH PRIOR TO ANY WORK COMMENCING ON SITE.
		VARIATIONS IN SQUARENESS, DEPTH OF PLASTER ETC, MUST BE CHECKED FOR. WHERE NEW WALLS ARE SHOWN AS ALIGNED WITH EXISTING WALLS, PHYSICAL REMOVAL OF BRICKWORK AND / OR PLASTER TO ESTABLISH THE ACTUAL POSITION OF THE WALL BEING ATTACHED TO MUST BE CHECKED.
		ANY DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS OR PLANNING PERMISSION IS SOLELY AT OWNER'S RISK.
		<b>MATERIALS SHOULD MATCH THOSE OF THE EXISTING DWELLING</b>
<p>KEY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ EXISTING</li> <li>→ PROPOSED</li> <li>→ DEMOLISHED</li> <li>→ WINDOW/GLASS</li> <li>→ BOUNDARY</li> </ul>		
<p><b>DO NOT USE FOR ANY CONSTRUCTION WORK</b></p> <p>DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE USED AS THE DRAWING STATUS DESCRIBED, ANY OTHER USE IS DONE SO AT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE USER.</p>		
Revision	Description	Date
<p><b>ESEN LOFT ARCHITECTURE</b> FULL PLANNING SERVICES</p> <p>70 WHITE LION STREET, LONDON, N1 9PP 02038369450/ 07475122303 Info@esenloft.co.uk www.esenloft.co.uk</p>		
<p><b>ADDRESS</b> 18 BROAD STREET, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE15 8TG</p>		
<p><b>PROJECT</b> ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT</p>		
<p><b>TITLE</b> FRONT ELEVATION</p>		
<p>DRAWN BY HASAN BAGCIH</p>		SCALE <b>1:100 @A3</b>
<p>DRAWING NO <b>S120-02</b></p>		DRAWN BY CHKD BY
<p>REVISION 01</p>		DATE 01-07-2025

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F/YR25/0378/O

**Applicant: Mr A Love**

**Agent: Mr Gareth Edwards**  
**Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

**Cherryholt Farm, Lewis Close, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 9SX**

**Erect up to 9 x dwellings involving the demolition of existing agricultural buildings (outline application with all matters reserved)**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks outline permission for up to 9 dwellings on land that is identified as part of the West March Strategic Allocation and will be accessed from Lewis Close, a cul-de-sac. The existing farmhouse is outside of the site and does not form part of this application.
- 1.2 The principle of developing this site for residential purposes is firmly established by Policies LP3, LP7 and LP9 of the Fenland Local Plan and the proposal would not conflict with the approved West March Broad Concept Plan.
- 1.3 However, the application includes insufficient information to determine whether the proposed development can be accessed in an acceptable and safe manner to prevent a detrimental impact upon highway safety, or to demonstrate that accessing the site would not result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of the occupants of Cherryholt Farmhouse in respect of light, noise and vibration from vehicles, as well as a loss of privacy from these vehicle movements and pedestrians being in close proximity to the dwelling.
- 1.4 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is an existing dwelling which lies at the end of Lewis Close, a small residential cul-de-sac approximately 1km to the southwest of March town centre. Lewis Close is at the end of Cherrywood Avenue, which is also a residential cul-de-sac consisting of a variety of single and two storey mid-to-late twentieth century dwellinghouses.
- 2.2 The application site consists of an existing dwelling, Cherryholt Farm, and associated stables and outbuildings. To the north and west of the existing farm buildings is open countryside, some of which is included as part of the application site, and to the south of the site is an established hedgerow which acts as a field boundary with the farmland to the south, which is outside of the proposal site.

## **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of 9 no. dwellings following the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings on site.
- 3.2 The application is supported by an indicative site layout plan showing 9 dwellings clustered around an access road which will extend the existing cul-de-sac of Lewis Close to the west. This spine road is proposed to connect with the existing access point from Lewis Close and will run past the farmhouse, Cherryholt Farm, which is proposed to be retained.
- 3.3 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

#### **4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

23/0081/PREAPP	Erection of 9 dwellings	General advice given	January 2024
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#### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

##### **5.1 March Town Council – 03.06.2025**

*Approval, subject to the provision of satisfactory water attenuation measures, retention and effective maintenance of the culvert and the conditioning of the use of the narrow access-way for construction traffic during demolition.*

##### **5.2 FDC Ecology – 15.05.2025**

*The Ecology surveys undertaken to inform the application have been undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists and to appropriate standards. No further surveys need to be undertaken prior to deciding the application.*

##### **Impacts on Designated Sites and Notable Habitats**

*The proposals will not affect any sites designated for their nature conservation value and will not affect any notable habitats. Impacts on Notable Species Bats Although the surveys have assessed the buildings to be demolished as having negligible potential to support roosting bats, bats are mobile and cryptic in their habits and can turn up in unlikely places. I would advise the applicant that if bats are encountered at any time during the course of any approved works, works must cease, and advice sought from a suitably qualified person about how best to proceed. All UK bats and their resting places carry a high level of legal protection. This advice could be offered as an informative for any permission which may be granted to the application.*

##### **Barn Owls**

*There were signs of roosting Barn Owls within buildings scheduled for demolition. Barn Owls carry a high level of legal protection and are a Priority species for conservation. As part of any future landscaping plans for the site alternative provision for Barn Owls will need to be made (e.g. Barn Owl boxes installed nearby). Detailed landscape plans should form part of any Reserved Matters application.*

## Biodiversity Net Gain

*I would accept that the development could achieve the required 10% net gain in Biodiversity on-site through new landscaping, particularly new and replacement tree planting. I would advise that the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition should be applied to any permission which may be granted to the scheme, to require the submission of a detailed Biodiversity Gain Plan. I would not regard the on-site biodiversity provision to be significant, and therefore landscape management need not be secured for 30 years. Nevertheless, a detailed landscape creation and management plan should be required to be provided as part of any future Reserved Matters application.*

## Nesting birds

*Informative: no vegetation clearance or building demolitions required to facilitate the development should commence during the optimum time of year for bird nesting (March to August inclusive) unless nesting birds have been shown to be absent by a suitably qualified person. All nesting birds their eggs and young are legally protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).*

### **5.3 FDC Ecology (additional comment) – 17.05.2025**

No objection, subject to the imposition of a condition relating to contaminated land assessment being submitted prior to the commencement of development and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

### **5.4 Archaeology – 19.05.2025**

*Whilst we do not object to development from proceeding in this location, we consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a condition.*

### **5.5 Highways – Update 03.12.2025:**

*Further to the revised drawing being submitted and our conversation I have the following comments:*

*This is an Outline Application with all matters reserved therefore the access is not to be decided or approved at this time. Any decision or further comments made on this site by the LHA will be completed during the next stage of the application. Therefore I have no further comments as the applicant has not provided the information I sought in order to make an informed decision and provide the advice needed to propose a suitable access. Should the access not be acceptable to the LHA an objection might be given by the LHA at a later date.*

*In summary, the drawings do not detail the existing highways or development access details as previously stated. As such we will seek this information at a later stage. This includes the redline line works area boundary and land ownership information.*

### **5.6 Highways – 05.06.2025**

*I have no objections to the principal of the development. However, additional and amended information is required to enable the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to*

*establish whether the proposal would be considered acceptable, and what conditions may be required to mitigate the impact of the development on the public highway.*

- 1. I cannot find a Red Line Boundary or Blue Line Land Ownership Plan within the application that shows the area of the application site against the indicatively proposed highways access. Continued below:*
- 2. No dimensions / widths have been shown on the indicative roads / footways either at the access or within the site. As such I cannot confirm if the access would be acceptable where it meets the highway. From an initial review there is a pinch point which is only wide enough for a single vehicle. It therefore does not appear that there is sufficient room for a shared use access, which should be 5m wide for a minimum of 10m into the site. Also, although shown as remain private what width the internal carriageway would be? Whilst this info is not required for an Outline Application with all matters reserved consideration should be given to refuge collection and residents accessibility.*

### Comments

*The development benefits from an existing access with the highway, both vehicle and pedestrian. There is good footway and road links to Lewis Close which has no parking restrictions. I have no objection to the principal of the development; however, it should be established at this stage in the planning process if safe and practical access can be achieved as so not to negatively impact Lewis Close.*

### 5.7 Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 4 no. letters have been received from residents of Burrowmoor Road, Lewis Close, Grove Avenue and Cherrywood Green, March. Two of the letters object to the proposal, whilst the other two state facts, raising the following points:

Comments	Officer Response
Existing culvert will not cope (drainage).	See 'Drainage and Flood Risk' section of report
Land is part of a deceased estate. Agricultural right of way across the land and tenancy agreement on barns.	Not material planning considerations
Traffic impact.	See 'Highways' section of report
Lewis Close would be a tight junction and also would result in overspill parking.	See 'Highways' section of report
Dust and asbestos.	Will be covered by a CEMP condition
Overhanging trees.	See 'Landscape' section of report

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4 – Decision-making  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land  
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 7.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

### 7.3 National Design Guide 2021

Context  
Identity  
Built Form  
Movement  
Nature  
Uses  
Homes and Buildings

### 7.4 Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need  
LP7 – Urban Extensions  
LP9 – March  
LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland  
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District  
LP19 – The Natural Environment

### 7.5 March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall Development  
H3 – Local Housing Need

### 7.6 Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

### 7.7 Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

## 8 KEY ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Highway Impact

- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Design, Character and Appearance**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Landscape**
- **Ecology**
- **Archaeology**
- **Pollution and Contamination**
- **Other Matters**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

## 9 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

9.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy for development within Fenland District, grouping settlements into categories based on the level of services available, their sustainability and their capacity to accept further development. In this policy March is classified as a Market Town, where the majority of the district's new housing, employment growth, retail growth and wider service provision should take place. The site is considered to fall adjacent to the built-up settlement of March and therefore the broad principle of developing this site for housing is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.

9.2 Notwithstanding the fact that the location of the site establishes that it is suitable for residential development when assessed against Policy LP3 of the Local Plan, it also lies within the area of the West March Strategic Allocation, which allocates the land west of March for around 2,000 dwellings, as defined by Policy LP9 of the Fenland Local Plan and provided for by Policy LP7 of the Local Plan. Policy LP7 states that the urban extensions must be planned and implemented in a coordinated manner, 'through an agreed overarching broad concept plan, that is linked to the timely delivery of key infrastructure'. The policy then continues 'With the exception of inconsequential very minor development, proposals for development within the identified growth locations which come forward prior to an agreed broad concept plan being produced will be refused'.

9.3 West March has an approved broad concept plan, which was approved by Planning Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The broad concept plan identifies part of this site for residential development, with the existing overhead power line continuing to run from southwest to northeast across the western section of the site, as indicated by the indicative layout submitted with this application. Therefore, as a result of this proposal, the broad concept plan would remain unaffected, as there are no further requirements from this parcel in order to implement the West March allocation in accordance with the broad concept plan.

9.4 In addition, this parcel is self-contained and discrete and as such would accord with the statement in Policy LP7 that allows for inconsequential very minor development, which this site would be due to it not forming a central part of the West March development. It is therefore considered that the principle of developing this site for residential use is therefore acceptable in respect of policies LP3, LP7 and LP9 of the Local Plan.

9.5 This application is for outline planning permission with all matters reserved. Therefore, detailed matters concerning access, appearance, landscaping layout and scale of the proposal are deferred to reserved matters stage. However, the

following sections of this report consider the material elements of the proposal pertinent to the outline permission.

## **Highway Impact**

- 9.6 The site is located to the immediate west of the town of March and is proposed to be accessed from Lewis Close, although the details of this are indicative as access is a reserved matter. Lewis Close is a cul-de-sac which itself is accessed from Cherrywood Avenue, another cul-de-sac which connects to Burrowmoor Road, which is one of the main roads into March town centre. As such, this proposal would add an additional 9 dwellings onto an existing cul-de-sac.
- 9.7 The site is adjacent to Cherryholt Farmhouse, which is outside of the red line of this application and is proposed to be retained. The rest of the farm buildings are included within the red line and would be demolished to provide access into the site. An indicative site layout has been provided with the application which shows the carriageway of Lewis Close continuing into the proposed development. No continuation of the footways of Lewis Close into the development site are shown, although there may be potential for this.
- 9.8 Due to the retention of Cherryholt Farmhouse the geometry of the proposed carriageway into the site appears to be awkward, resulting in a chicane on the proposed access road. The access plan demonstrates that the carriageway would be 7.9 metres at the entrance to the site and would narrow to 5 metres once within the site. The plans are indicative and the Local Highways Authority has acknowledged this. However, the Local Highways Authority confirms that the applicant has not provided sufficient information regarding the access to make an informed decision regarding whether a suitable access could be achieved.
- 9.9 The drawings provided do not detail the existing highways or development access details and therefore it is considered that the proposal lacks sufficient detail to approve, notwithstanding that access is a reserved matter. As applied for the access can only be in one location and is constrained in terms of where it can be delivered and the form which it can take. As such any more detailed future application is unlikely to be able to deliver any access arrangement which differs significantly from that indicatively shown. The proposal does not include suitable details to demonstrate safe access and egress to and from the site and it cannot be confirmed that this could be resolved at reserved matters stage. It is therefore considered that the proposal fails to comply with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan and Paragraph 116 of the NPPF in that the details submitted are insufficient and do not demonstrate safe access into and out of the proposed development.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 9.10 The site lies within Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk area for fluvial flooding. However, the Environment Agency dataset does identify some risk of surface water flooding along the northern boundary of the site and further to the west. No Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted as part of this outline proposal, but a condition will be implemented to ensure that matters of surface water flooding are addressed at reserved matters stage.
- 9.11 The Internal Drainage Board (IDB) has been consulted as part of this application but has not responded. An objection to the proposal has been received from a neighbouring resident who raises concerns that the existing culvert will not be able to cope with the additional surface water generated from the site, should

permission be granted. As this application is outline in nature, with all matters reserved, a proposed layout that can be assessed for drainage purposes has not been submitted.

9.12 The indicative layout submitted as part of this application does not demonstrate a proposed attenuation pond or any SuDs features and measures how to manage surface water on site will be required at reserved matters stage. Therefore, a Drainage Strategy will be required as part of the reserved matters application in order to ensure that surface water is fully addressed and that the culvert, wider site and surrounding land is not detrimentally affected by surface water run-off from this site in future, in accordance with Policy LP14(B) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

### **Design, Character and Appearance**

9.13 The proposed development is in outline only and all matters are reserved for future consideration. The application is accompanied by an indicative Site Layout Plan and a Design and Access Statement. The indicative layout shows that the site could potentially accommodate 9 dwellings with a mix of housetypes including detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings fronting onto a private access road accessed from Lewis Close and retaining some existing trees and proposing new along the access road.

9.14 The dwellings will each have parking for 2 cars clear of the highway and will have private rear gardens. No examples of housetypes, elevations, scale of dwellings or materials are proposed at this stage. The indicative layout therefore demonstrates that this site could provide for up to 9 dwellings accessed from a private drive and could achieve a design and layout which would comply with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan. In addition, the layout would create a discrete development which would accord with the West March Broad Concept Plan in that it would be a residential development in the R12 parcel, albeit it would be accessed from Lewis Close as opposed to from the wider West March development.

### **Residential Amenity**

9.15 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan requires new development that 'does not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users such as noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and loss of light'. It also requires 'sufficient private amenity space, suitable to the type and amount of development proposed; for dwellings other than flats, as a guide and depending on the local character of the area, this means a minimum of a third of the plot curtilage should be set aside as private amenity space'.

9.16 It is considered that an acceptable layout for this site, along with appropriately designed dwellings, would ensure that there is no detrimental impact upon the amenity of existing residents of the dwellings to the east of the site. The site is large enough to ensure that both distances between proposed and existing dwellings and those proposed will ensure that there is no detrimental impact by virtue of overlooking or loss of light, although this will need to be confirmed at reserved matters stage.

9.17 The indicative access layout suggests that the proposed private drive could potentially result in a detrimental impact upon occupants of Cherryholt Farmhouse, as vehicles and pedestrians accessing the site would head directly towards the front elevation of the dwelling, potentially causing disturbance and loss of privacy, especially from vehicle headlights at night, and vehicles would also drive very

close past the southern (side) elevation of the farmhouse, again causing disturbance to the occupants of the dwelling. Whilst access is a reserved matter, as is layout, the indicative plan demonstrates there are few alternatives but to access the site from Lewis Close, which would inevitably result in detriment to the occupants of the farmhouse.

9.18 In terms of amenity space for the individual dwellings, the indicative layout proposes 9 plots which would have a minimum of a third of the curtilage set aside as private amenity space. However, whilst the indicative layout could be acceptable for the proposed plots the impact upon Cherryholt Farm from vehicles is a concern. Therefore it is considered that the proposal fails to accord with criteria (e) and (h) of Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in respect of amenity.

## **Landscape**

9.19 Landscape is a reserved matter and therefore little detail has been provided at this stage although a number of existing trees are proposed to be retained on site, the access road is proposed to be lined with new trees and each dwelling will have a private rear garden. A Tree Survey has been submitted with the application, but due to the application being in outline form only the application does not confirm which trees are to be removed to facilitate this development.

9.20 However, the Design and Access Statement clarifies that only those trees which are category 'C' will be removed. This would result in the retention of six trees on site and the removal of twelve category 'C' trees which are considered to be in poor condition or are self-set and of no overall significance. No objections to the removal of the category 'C' trees have been received. However, one neighbouring resident has raised concerns with trees overhanging their property. As part of the Tree Survey it has been identified that these trees are poor quality category 'C' trees and would be removed. It is considered that new landscape planting could be achieved at reserved matters stage to mitigate the loss of the category 'C' trees and therefore the proposal accords with Policy LP16 in terms of criteria (c) and (i).

## **Ecology**

9.21 Policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan seek to conserve and enhance the 'biodiversity and geological interest of the natural environment throughout Fenland'. A Baseline Habitat Survey has been submitted as part of this application and Fenland District Council's Ecologist has been consulted on the submission. The Ecologist confirms that no further surveys are required to be undertaken prior to determining the application. In addition, the Ecologist confirms that the proposals will not affect any sites designated for their nature conservation value and will not affect any notable habitats.

9.22 It is confirmed that there were signs of roosting Barn Owls within buildings scheduled for demolition. Barn Owls carry a high level of legal protection and are a Priority species for conservation. As part of any future landscaping plans for the site alternative provision for Barn Owls will need to be made (e.g. Barn Owl boxes installed nearby). Detailed landscape plans will be required at reserved matters stage.

9.23 An informative is proposed to clarify legal protection for nesting birds.

9.24 With the imposition of the abovementioned conditions the proposal is considered to accord with policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan in respect of

ecology.

## **Archaeology**

9.25 The proposed development is located in an area of high archaeological potential towards the southwest of March. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology has been consulted on the application and confirm that there is no objection to development from proceeding in this location; however the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a condition.

## **Pollution and Contamination**

9.26 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan contains criteria (e) and (l) which seeks to ensure that new development does not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring users as a result of noise or light pollution, emissions, contamination, odour and dust, vibration, landfill gas and protects from water body deterioration. Fenland District Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the application and advises that the proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or adversely impact the local amenity due to excessive artificial lighting. However, a contaminated land condition is required, should permission be granted.

9.27 In addition, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is required to ensure protection to the amenity of existing nearby residents during the demolition and construction phases. Should permission be granted it is considered appropriate that both conditions are imposed in order that the development complies with Policy LP16, notwithstanding the concerns raised by a neighbouring resident regarding dust, odour and the potential for asbestos to be present in the existing buildings on site.

## **Other Matters**

9.28 A neighbouring resident has raised concerns regarding the land being part of a deceased estate. There is also an agricultural right of way across the land and tenancy agreement on the barns. None of these are material planning considerations and are instead dealt with under other legislation and not the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) 1990.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9.29 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

9.30 Fenland's Ecologist has assessed the submitted information and concludes that the development could achieve the required 10% net gain in Biodiversity on-site through new landscaping, particularly new and replacement tree planting. The statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition should therefore be applied to any permission which may be granted to require the submission of a detailed Biodiversity Gain Plan. The required on-site biodiversity provision will not be significant and therefore landscape management need not be secured for 30 years. Nevertheless, a

detailed landscape creation and management plan should be required to be provided as part of any future Reserved Matters application.

9.31 In this instance a Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun.

## 10 CONCLUSIONS

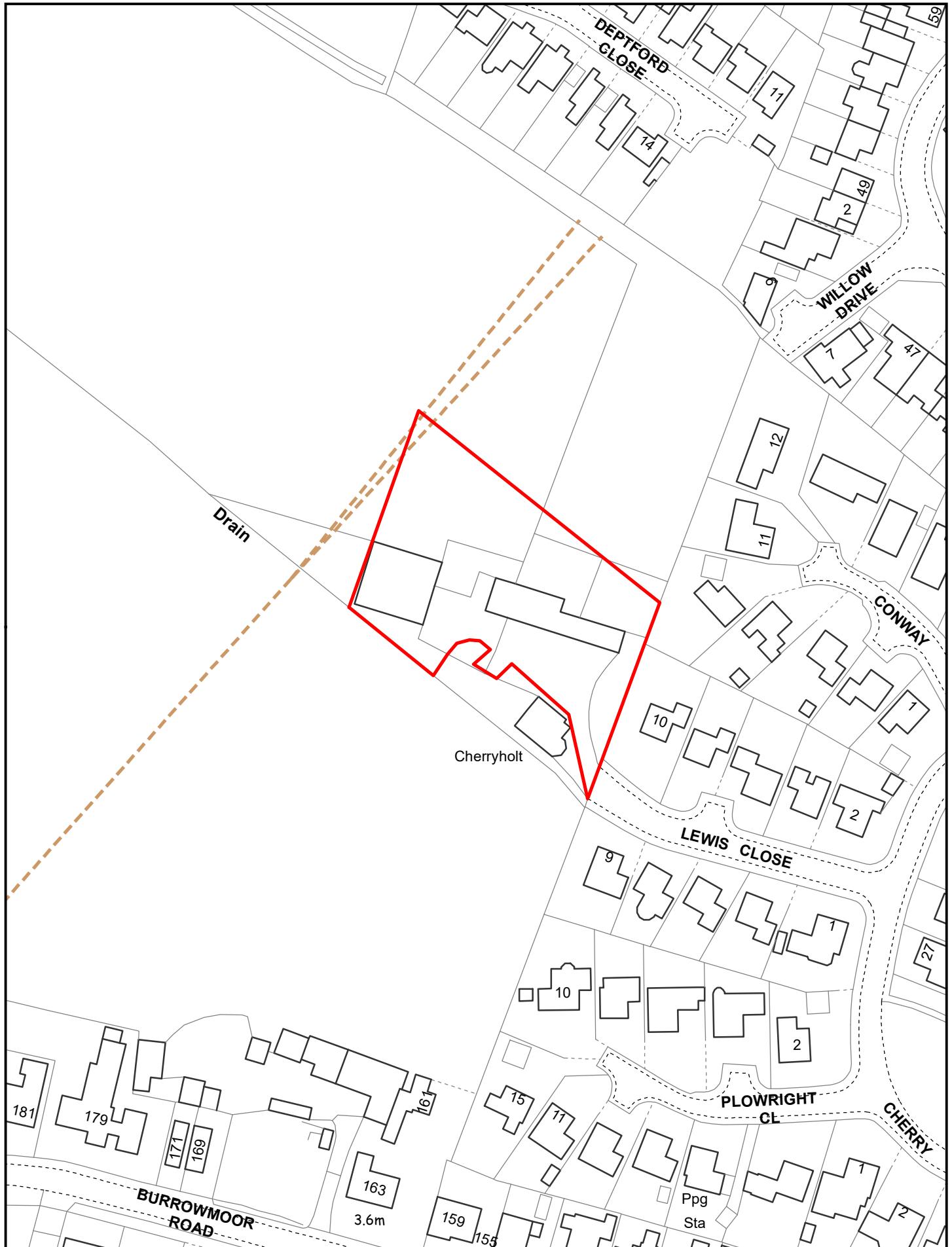
10.1 It is considered that the principle of developing this site for residential purposes is firmly established by Policies LP3, LP7 and LP9 and the proposal would not conflict with the approved West March broad concept plan. However, whilst the development proposed is in outline only, there is insufficient information to determine whether the site could be accessed in a safe and acceptable manner.

10.2 The submitted information demonstrates that up to 9 dwellings could be accommodated on this site without having detriment to future residents of the development. However, it is considered that the indicative layout would result in a detrimental impact upon the occupants of Cherryholt Farmhouse as a result of the proximity in which vehicles will pass the dwelling. As such, the development is considered to conflict with Paragraph 116 of the NPPF and Policies LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

## 11 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reason:

1	The application, as submitted, includes insufficient information to determine whether the proposed development can be accessed in an acceptable and safe manner to prevent a detrimental impact upon highway safety, or to demonstrate that accessing the site would not result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of the occupants of Cherryholt Farmhouse in respect of light, noise and vibration from vehicles, as well as a loss of privacy from these vehicle movements and pedestrians being in close proximity to the dwelling. The proposal is therefore contrary to Paragraph 116 of the NPPF and Policies LP15 and LP16 of the adopted Fenland Local Plan.
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Created on: 15/05/2025

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Scale = 1:1,250



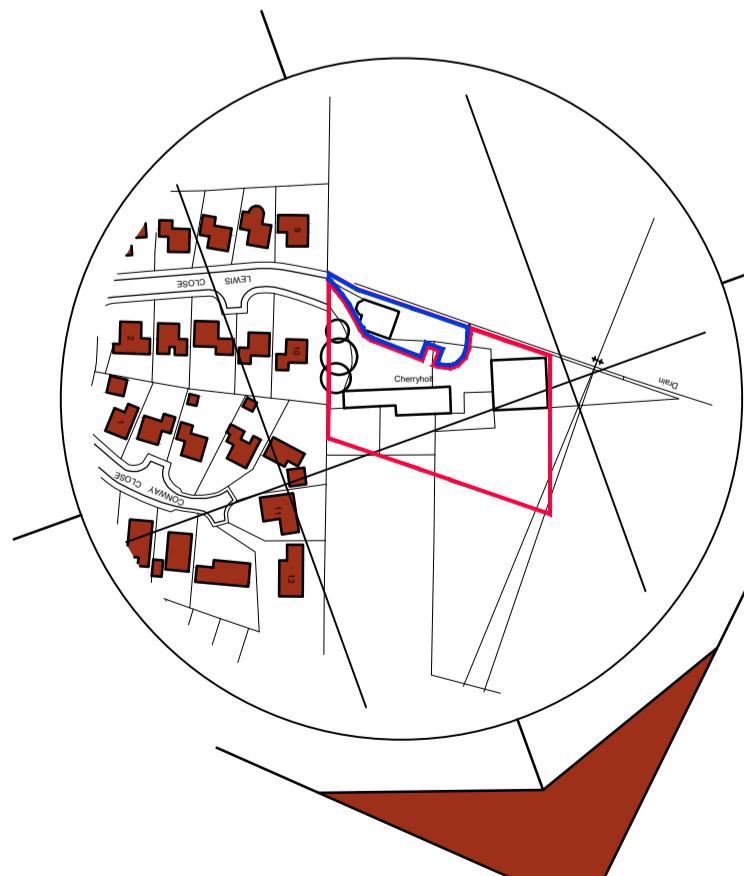
General Notes  
1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.  
2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions and check the drawing for any errors or omissions.  
3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.  
4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.



Indicative Site Plan

Scale: 1:200

0 2 4 6 8  
metres

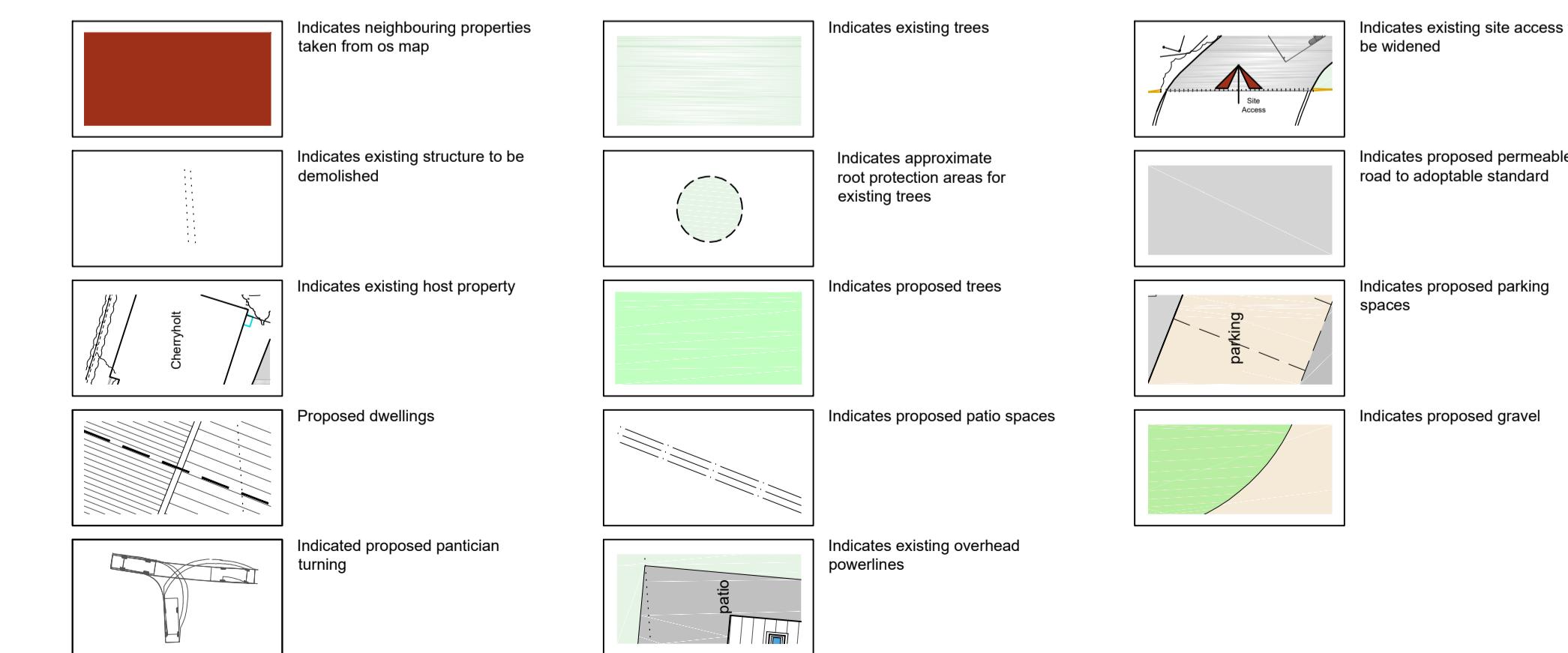


Location Plan

Scale: 1:2500

0 25 50 75 100  
metres

SITE PLAN KEY



Plot Areas	Plot Amenity Space
Plot 1 - 250.00	Plot 1 - 104.30
Plot 2 - 220.70	Plot 2 - 105.30
Plot 3 - 355.50	Plot 3 - 160.30
Plot 4 - 436.80	Plot 4 - 243.30
Plot 5 - 263.15	Plot 5 - 147.70
Plot 6 - 175.05	Plot 6 - 78.00
Plot 7 - 175.05	Plot 7 - 78.00
Plot 8 - 275.00	Plot 8 - 158.72
Plot 9 - 343.45	Plot 9 - 227.04

Landscaping Description

**Hedge Planting to include:**  
Blackthorn Prunus Spinosa, Wild Cherry Prunus Avium, Elder Sambucus Nigra, Dogwood Cornus Sanguinea, Hawthorn Crataegus Monogyna & Holly Ilex Aquifolium  
C3 pot size, planting size 30cm, planting to be species clusters of 3 or 5 at random intervals along hedge for all species.

**Shrub Planting to include:**  
Nottingham catchfly, night-scented catchfly, Bladder campion, Night-scented stock, Sweet rocket, Evening primrose, Tobacco plant, Cherry pie, Soapwort, European honeysuckle, Italian honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, Honeysuckle, White jasmine, Dogrose, Sweetbriar, Field rose, Ivy

**Landscaping Notes -** All planting, seeding or turfing as shown on the above landscaping plan are to be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the dwelling of the completion of the development, whichever is sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion date, are to be removed and replaced with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

**Method statement for protection of trees on site during construction**

- Prior to the commencement of any construction work on site, protective fencing shall be erected around each tree or tree group. Protective fencing in accordance with above table and BS 5837 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local Planning Authority. Please see protected areas marked on proposed site plan.
- No trenches or pipe runs for services and drains shall be sited within 4m of the trunk of any trees retained on the site, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local Planning Authority.
- New hard surfaces or paths in accordance with minimum recommended distances for protective fencing.
- No burning shall take place in a position where the flames could extend to within 5m of foliage, branches or the trunk of any tree to be retained.

**Method statement for nature conservation**

- The existing remaining tree on site is to be protected as above for the duration of the construction to safeguard the habitats of any nesting birds that may be present.

Status

# FOR APPROVAL

**SWANN  
EDWARDS**

A R C H I T E C T U R E

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA  
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Proposed Residential Development  
Land to the rear of Cherryholt,  
Lewis Close, March, PE15 9SX  
For: C/O Swann Edwards

Job Title: July 2024  
Drawn by: CW  
Checked by: GE

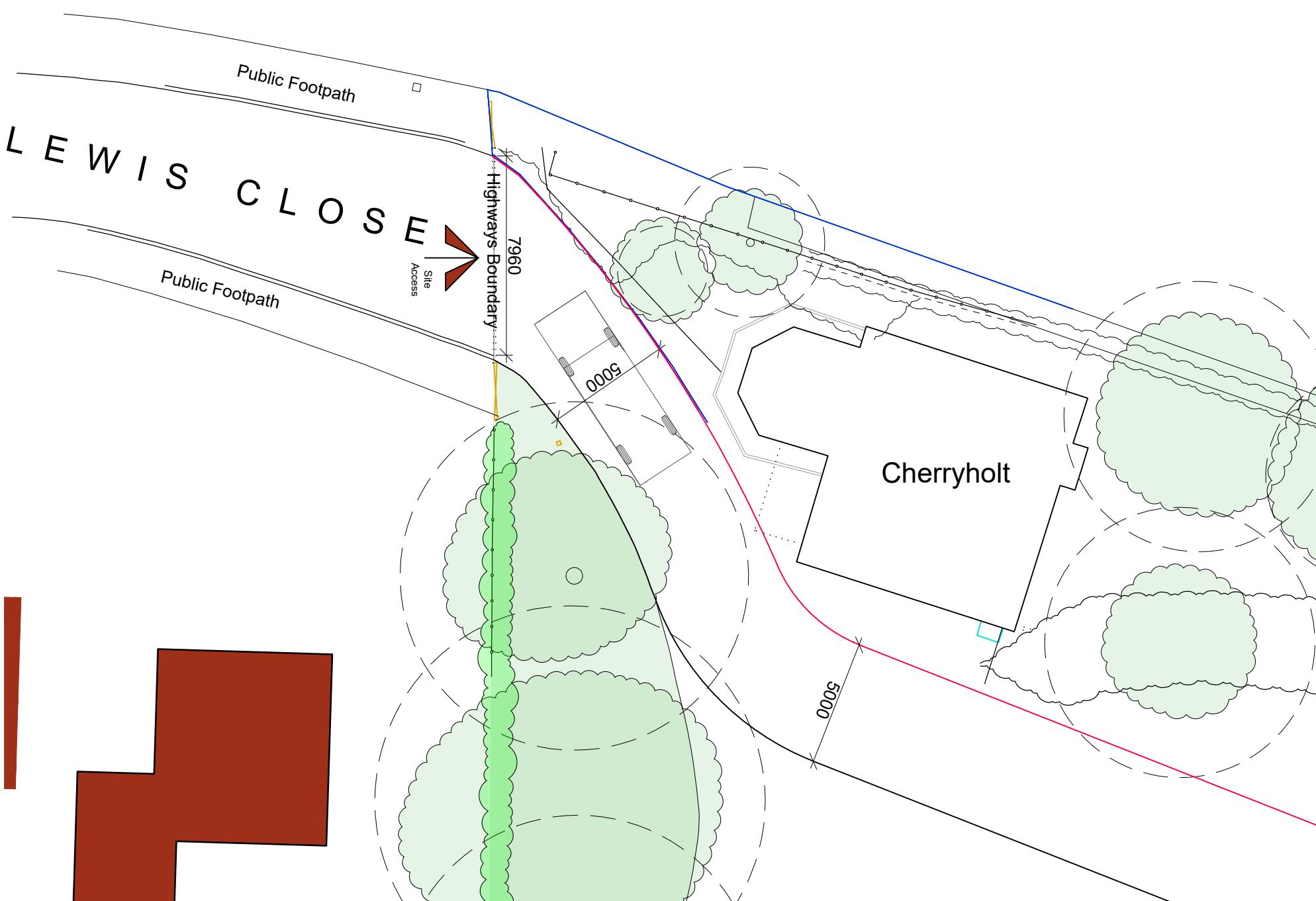
Planning Drawings  
Indicative Site Plan and Location Plan  
Job No. SE-2018  
Drawing No. PP1000  
Sheet Size A1  
Revision B

Job Title: July 2024  
Drawn by: CW  
Checked by: GE

Job No. SE-2018  
Drawing No. PP1000  
Sheet Size A1  
Revision B

## Supporting Document Covered In Another Document

<b>Proposal Number:</b>	PP-13755758
<b>Version Number:</b>	2
<b>Document Type:</b>	The location plan
<b>This document is covered in:</b>	Block plan of the site - SE-2018 - PP1000B.pdf
<b>Document Description:</b>	



#### General Notes

1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.
4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

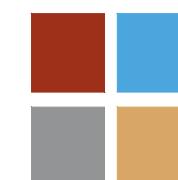
#### Revisions

A	Oct 2025

Highways notes added

#### Status

FOR APPROVAL


**SWANN  
EDWARDS**  
 ARCHITECTURE  
 PART OF  **Collective**  
 BUILT ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

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 Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA  
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Job Title  
 Prop Residential Development  
 Land to the rear of Cherryholt  
 Lewis Close, March, PE15 9SX  
 For: C/O Swann Edwards

Date	June 2025
Drawn by	G.E.

Drawing Title  
 Planning Drawing  
 Access Detail

Job No.	SE-2018
Dwg No.	PP1001
Sheet Size	A3

Revision	A
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F/YR25/0852/F

**Applicant:** Mr Mark Page  
Chloes

**Agent :** Mr G Boreham  
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

**39 Broad Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8TP**

**Installation of external shutters to existing shop front (retrospective)**

**Officer recommendation:** Refuse

**Reason for Committee:** Referred by Head of Planning on advice of Committee Chairman.

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application is for the installation of external shutters to an existing shop front. The proposal is retrospective.
- 1.2 Shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.
- 1.3 Whilst there are some isolated examples of shutters in close proximity to the site, it is important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the Shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.
- 1.4 The proposed external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policy LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.
- 1.5 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is situated on the eastern side of Broad Street, within the market town of March. The site is also situated within March Conservation Area and is within the vicinity of numerous Grade II Listed Buildings. The site is also situated within the Primary Shopping Frontage of March town centre.
- 2.2 The building on site is currently occupied on the ground floor by 'Chloe's Jewellery', which is a double fronted shop unit with a central entrance door. The shop sits within a row of other units with a mixture of retail uses.

### 3 PROPOSAL

3.1 Planning permission is applied for the installation of solid external shutters to the existing shop front. The roller shutters would be black and would cover the windows and entrance door, the whole of the shop frontage. The shutter box would project from the shopfront.

3.2 The proposal is retrospective.

### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
F/YR07/0222/F 07/00031/REF	Change of use from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services)	REFUSE APPEAL ALLOWED	19.04.2007 21.09.2007
F/YR04/3105/F	Erection of part single/part 2-storey rear extension to existing shop	GRANT	05.05.2004

### 5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Parish/Town Council:** Supporting.  
*Recommendation; Approval*

5.2 **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority:** No Objections.

*Recommendation*

*Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Local Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, no significant adverse effect upon the public highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of planning permission.*

*Comments*

*I note the proposal is for the installation of security shutter for a jewellery shop.*

5.3 **Designing Out Crime Officers:** No Objections.

*Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application. I have viewed the documents in relation to crime, disorder, and the fear of crime. I have searched the Constabulary crime and incident systems covering location and ward for the last 2 years and have provided an updated crime analysis of the ward. I would consider the proposed location to be an area of medium to high risk to the vulnerability to crime based on the figures below.*

Wards	March East Ward = 1076	Broad Street = 87
Criminal Damage	113	5
Robbery	9	1
Theft from person	2	0
Bicycle Theft	18	1
Theft from a vehicle	20	0
Theft of a vehicle	27	0
Vehicle Interference	8	0
Public Order	62	10

<i>Burglary Business</i>	14	6
<i>Burglary Dwelling</i>	19	0
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	16	1
<i>Theft other</i>	68	0
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	12	0
<i>Possession of weapons</i>	26	0
<i>Violence (including Stalking/Harassment )</i>	508	17
<b>Incidents</b>	<b>2293</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Rowdy Nuisance / Malicious Nuisance</i>	121	24
<i>Vehicle Nuisance / Stolen Vehicle / Theft other</i>	126	0
<i>Suspicious Circumstances</i>	391	4
<i>Crime Other</i>	18	1
<i>Drugs</i>	22	1

*There doesn't appear to be any crime prevention or a security section within the Design and Access Statement, however, it is evident that both have been considered. It is important that these are considered and discussed at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the security of buildings, amenity space and the environment provide a safe place for people working in and visiting this location.*

*NPPF Para 135(f) states - Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments - create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

*I have no objection to the use of a roller shutter at the above-mentioned premise. Please also consider external LED dusk to dawn lighting and CCTV.*

**5.4 Senior Archaeologist (CCC):** No Comments.

**5.5 Conservation Officer (FDC):** Objection.

*The proposal seeks retrospective consent for roller shutters and associated projecting shutter housing to a building within the March Conservation Area.*

*Shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.*

*Fenland DC's Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements Supplementary Planning and Design Guidance states:*

*Security shutters that cover an entire shopfront or glazed area present a visually unattractive barrier outside shopping hours and can give a street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. Retractable mesh or metal grilles behind the glazed area may be acceptable in shops displaying goods such as jewellery or electronic equipment.*

*There are indeed limited examples of shutters to Mallets (Broad Street) and the pawnbrokers (High Street), however it is very important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.*

*I would suggest the applicant seek to install internal shutters on the basis that these do not require consent and are substantially less detracting to the conservation area than external shutters.*

*The retrospective proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm (medium of the spectrum) and Local Authorities are bound by the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990) and the provisions of the NPPF which considers that any impact on heritage assets (in this case the March Conservation Area) should be met with a strong presumption for refusal unless strong justifications outweigh the harm. In this instance, internal shutters are considered to be appropriate in securing this shopfront.*

*Consistency is key in any planning decision and especially so in conservation areas. In following such planning and heritage legislation and provisions, this application should be refused. It is considered that allowing such would set a precedent for shutters in the conservation areas within the Fenland District Authority Area.*

**RECCOMENDATION:** Refuse.

**5.6 Councillor S Count:** Objection.

*Please note my objection to this application. I am against the further allowance of external shutters in our Town centre location. At night time this ends up ghettoising Town centres, making them appear as no-go-zones prone to graffiti. We are a quiet market town not an inner urban area. Internal grid shutters perform the same role for security purposes but look much better at night time. This is in a Conservation area which adds further cause for objection.*

*I therefore support rejection of this application, but would support the internal mesh type shutters, if submitted.*

**5.7 Councillor P Hicks:** Objection.

*I feel I must object to the external shutters being proposed for this application in my Ward.*

*External shutters makes a town look like a no go area and is prone to vandalism. Having talked to other shop keepers who have asked for this type of shutters and been refused, I think it would also set an open door policy for any further similar applications.*

**5.8 Local Residents/Interested Parties:**

Four letters of support received; 3 from March, 1 from Elm, raising the following (summarised):

4x Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Security shutter is the logical option.	A security shutter is not objected to, however, an internal one would provide the security and would be respectful of the Conservation Area.

Other shops and jewellers have shutters close to the site.	See 'Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area' section of this report.
March should be encouraging new businesses.	Opportunity for the applicant to amend the proposal to include an internal shutter rather than an external one had been made, which would have assisted in developing the new business, whilst respecting the Conservation Area.

One representation comment neither supporting or objecting from March, raising the following (summarised):

1x Representation Comment	Officer Response
<p>One comment made neither supporting or objecting:</p> <p>Security measure is required.</p> <p>However, conservation area measures in place to protect appearance.</p> <p>Other shops have external shutters.</p> <p>If permission is granted, a condition should be in place to paint the shutters black.</p>	<p>A security shutter is not objected to, however, an internal one would provide the security and would be respectful of the Conservation Area.</p>

5.9 One petition in support of the proposal has been received (with 19 signatories).

## 6 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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), the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

6.2 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

## 7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

### National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

## Built Form

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP17 - Community Safety

P18 – The Historic Environment

### **March Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2017)**

There are no specific policies relating to developments such as this, however the visions, aims and objectives of the plan is that the quality of the built and natural environment is improved along with the level of provision and quality of recreational land facilities.

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design Considerations and Visual Amenity of the Conservation Area**
- **Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

## **9 ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

9.1 The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the installation of solid external shutters to existing shop front.

9.2 Policy LP17(e) sets out that external roller shutters should be avoided unless the proposal can demonstrate the necessity for them, and then they should be of an open grille design. The application is not accompanied by any supporting information detailing incidents at the premises or in the vicinity which would justify the need for external shutters. The application would in principle therefore be at odds with this policy.

### **Design Considerations and Visual Amenity of the Conservation Area**

9.3 The planning system promotes high quality development through good inclusive design and layout, and the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities. Good design should be indivisible from good planning. Recognised principles of good design should be sought to create a high-quality built environment for all types of development.

9.4 It should be noted that good design is fundamental to high quality new development and its importance is reflected in the NPPF. The basis of policy LP16 of the Local Plan sets out a number of criterion in which proposals are required to meet, to ensure that high quality environments are provided and protected. Most relevant to the proposal are:

9.5 *(d) makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, responds to and improves the character of the local built environment, provides resilience to climate change, reinforces local identity and does*

*not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape character of the surrounding area.*

9.6 Additionally, Policy LP17 of the Local Plan states that proposals for new shop frontages should avoid the use of external roller shutters, especially those of a solid construction.

9.6 The proposal seeks retrospective consent for roller shutters and associated projecting shutter housing to a building within the March Conservation Area.

9.8 Shutters are generally not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.

9.9 Fenland DC's Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements Supplementary Planning and Design Guidance additionally states:

*Security shutters that cover an entire shopfront or glazed area present a visually unattractive barrier outside shopping hours and can give a street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. Retractable mesh or metal grilles behind the glazed area may be acceptable in shops displaying goods such as jewellery or electronic equipment.*

9.10 The Council's Conservation Officer objects to the proposal and has stated that the proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm (medium of the spectrum) and Local Authorities are bound by the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990) and the provisions of the NPPF which considers that any impact on heritage assets (in this case the March Conservation Area) should be met with a strong presumption for refusal.

9.11 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is not considered that any such public benefits exist to justify the harm identified.

9.12 Attempts were made to seek amendments to the proposal to remove the external shutters and replace with internal shutters. However, the agent requested to continue with the external shutter proposal.

9.13 As such, it is considered that the solid external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policy LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

#### **Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area**

9.14 There are indeed examples of shutters in close proximity to the site (Mallets on Broad Street, the pawnbrokers on High Street, Thai Kitchen on Station Road). However, three examples within a wide area clearly illustrate that these are the exception rather than the rule and that the prevailing character of the town centre and conservation area is for shop fronts not to have external shutters.

9.15 It is also important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.

9.16 Consistency is key in any planning decision and especially so in conservation areas. In following such planning and heritage legislation and provisions, it is considered that the proposal warrants a refusal.

#### **Other Matters**

9.17 Given the nature of the development there are no implications for wider amenity issues, highway safety, flooding and drainage or archaeology.

#### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9.18 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

9.19 There are statutory exemptions, transitional arrangements and requirements relating to irreplaceable habitat which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. In this instance, one or more of the exemptions / transitional arrangements are considered to apply and a Biodiversity Gain Condition is not required to be approved before development is begun because the development is de-minimis for the purposes of BNG.

## **10 CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 External shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent, exacerbated where they are of a solid construction.

10.2 Whilst there are examples of shutters in close proximity to the site, it is important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.

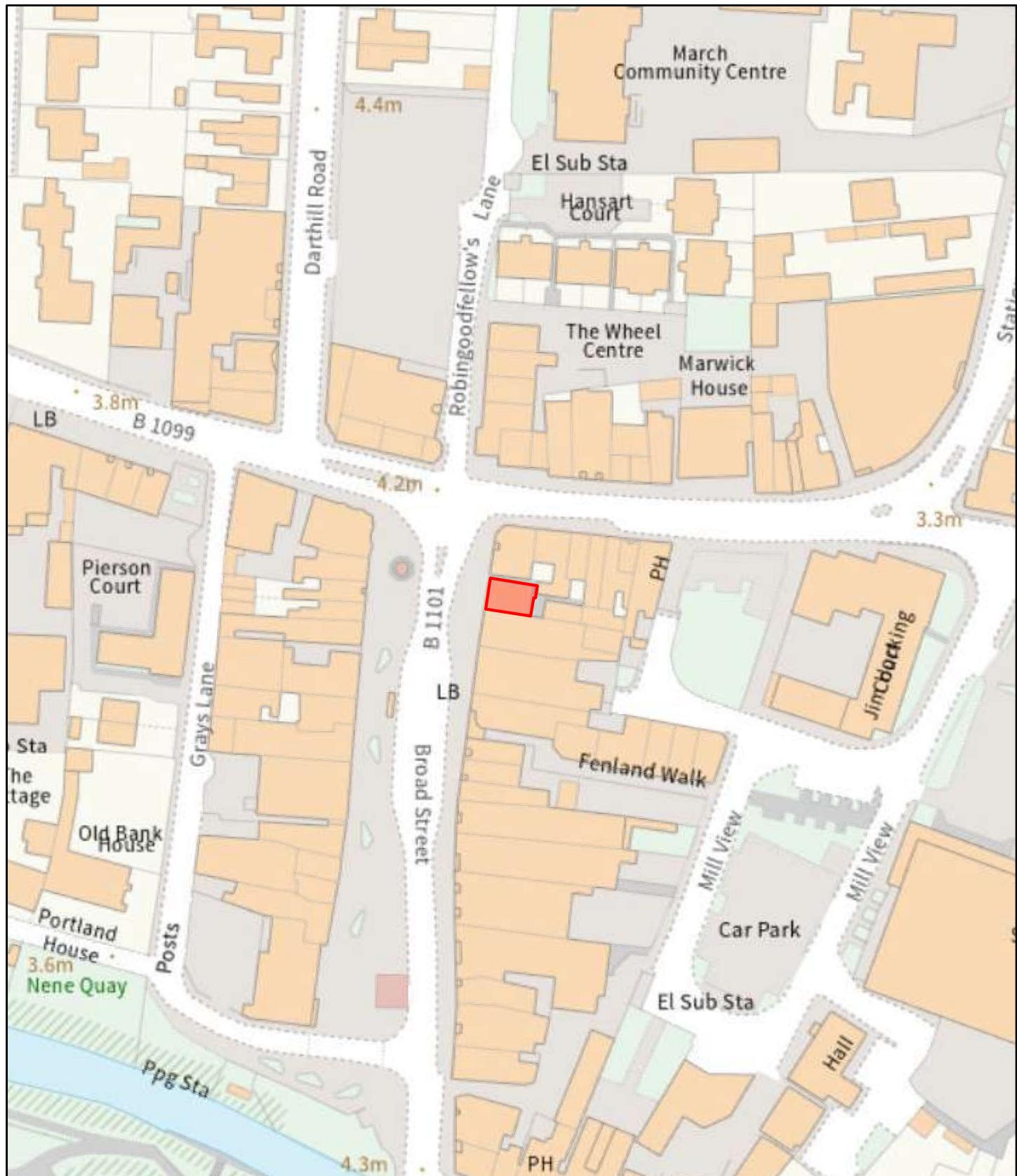
10.3 The proposed external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Policy LP17 of the Fenland Local Plan clearly states that proposals for new shop frontages should avoid the use of solid external roller shutters.

10.4 Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policies LP16, LP17 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

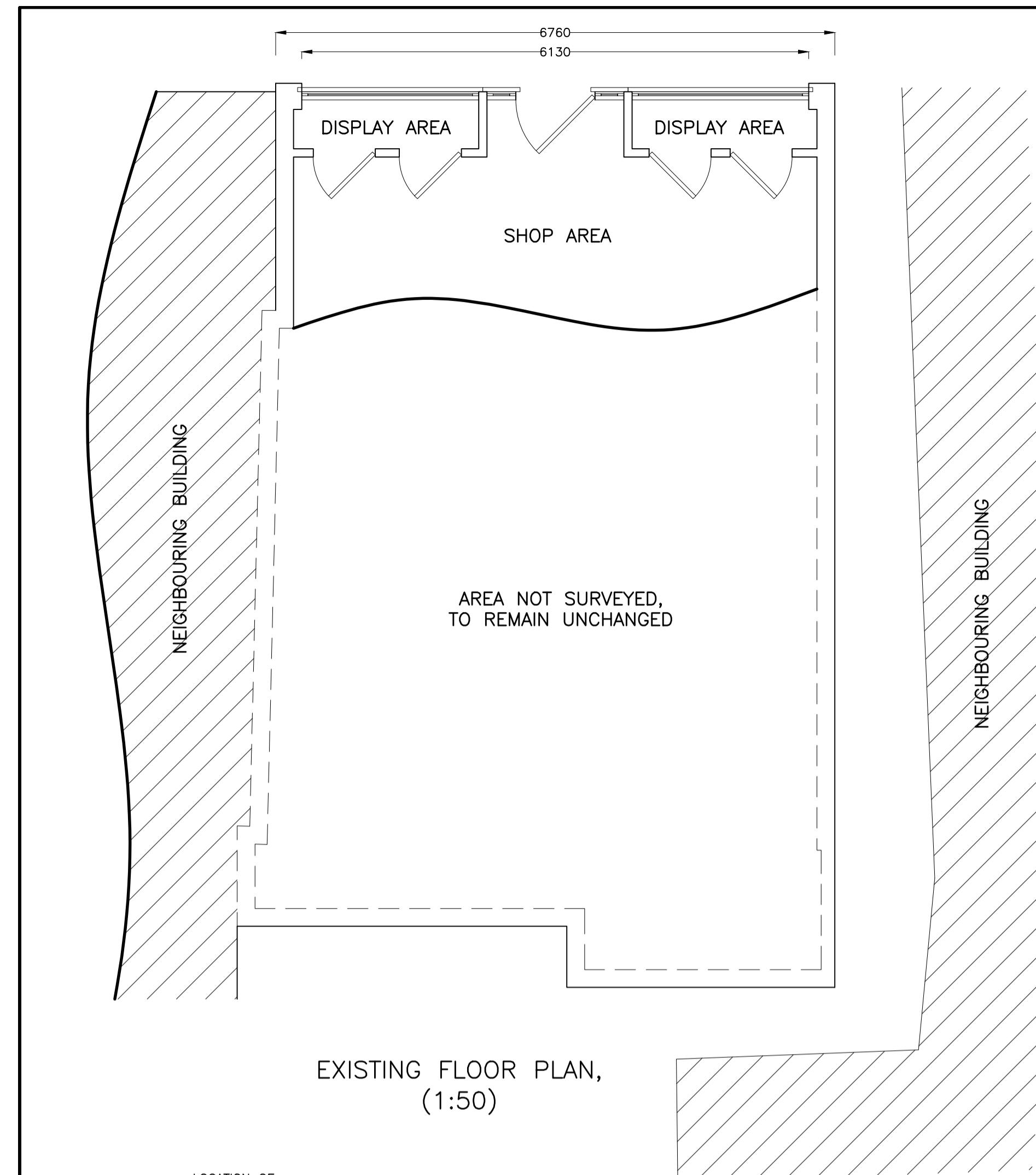
## **11 RECOMMENDATION**

**Refuse;** for the following reason:

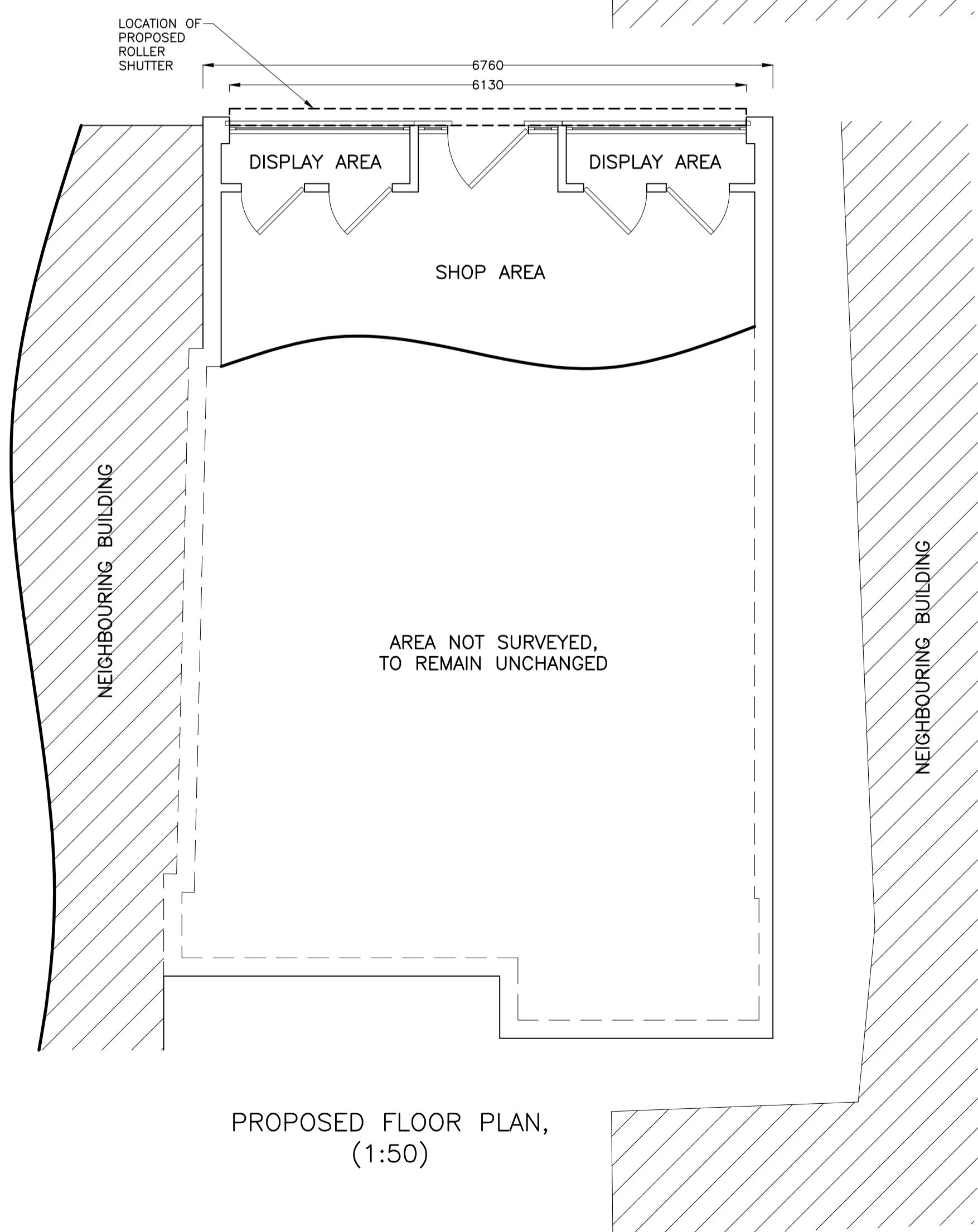
1	The external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the March Conservation Area and town centre which is not outweighed by any public benefit. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP16, LP17 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.
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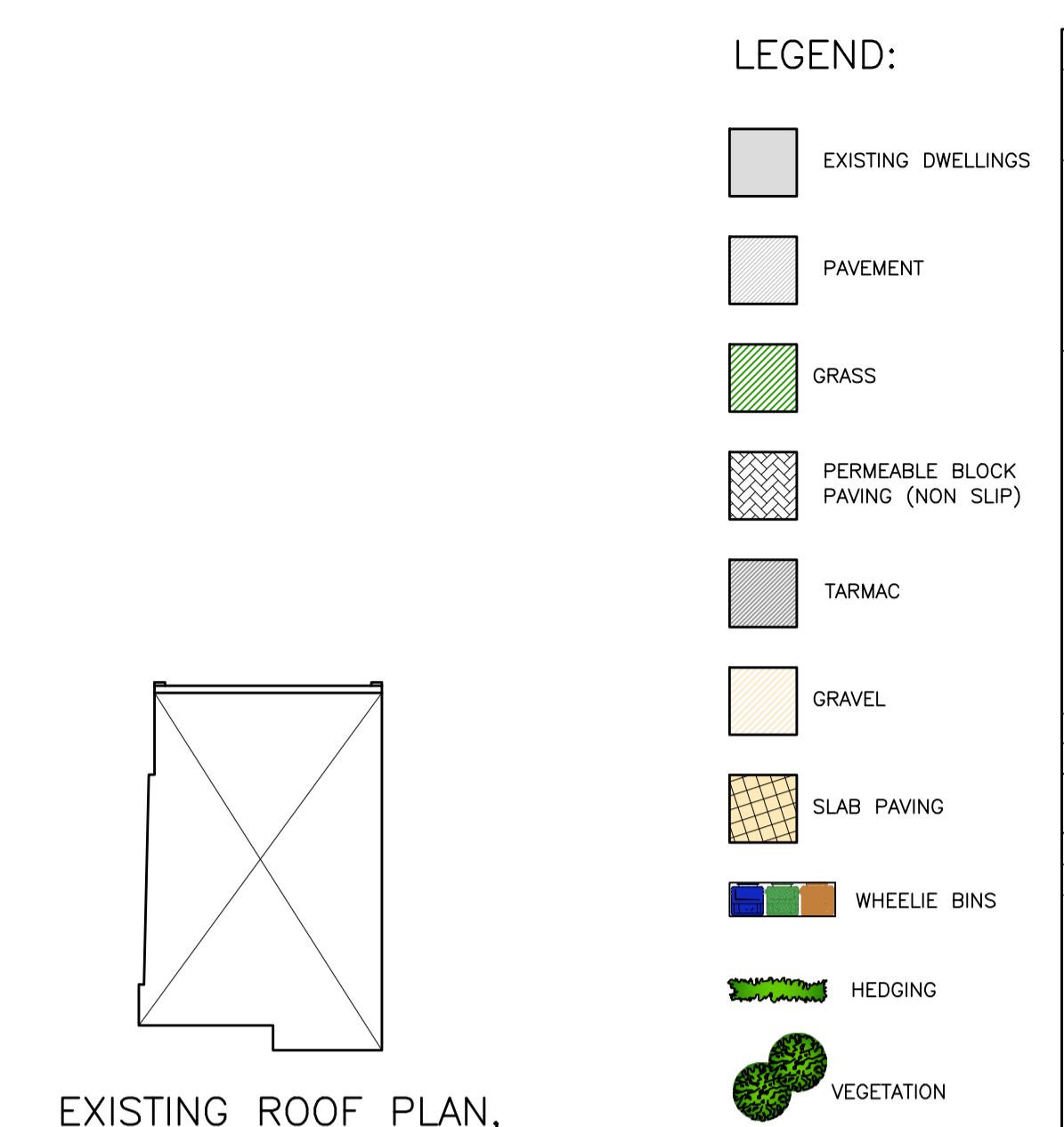


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN,  
(1:50)



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN,  
(1:50)

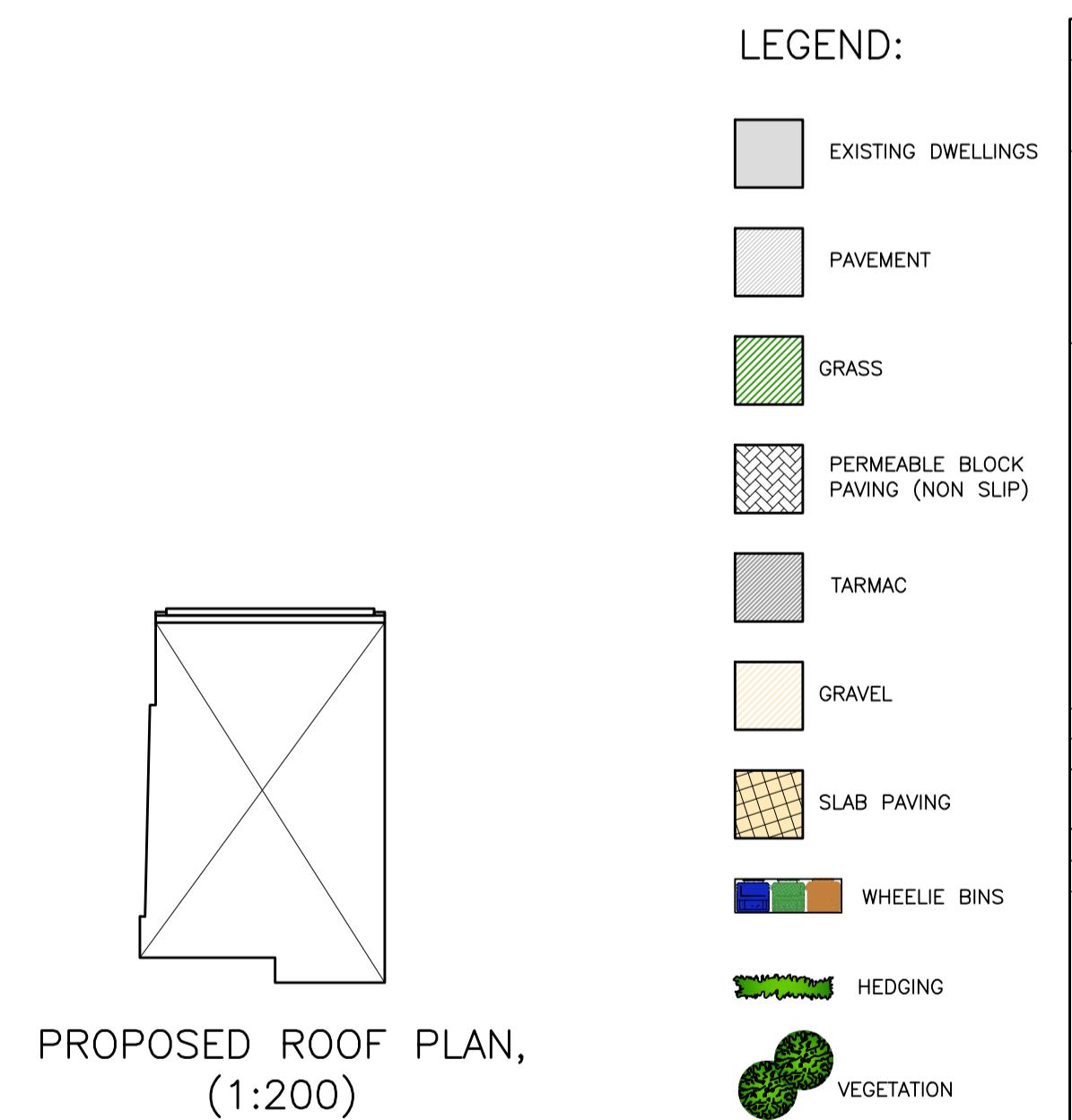
EXISTING ROOF PLAN,  
(1:200)



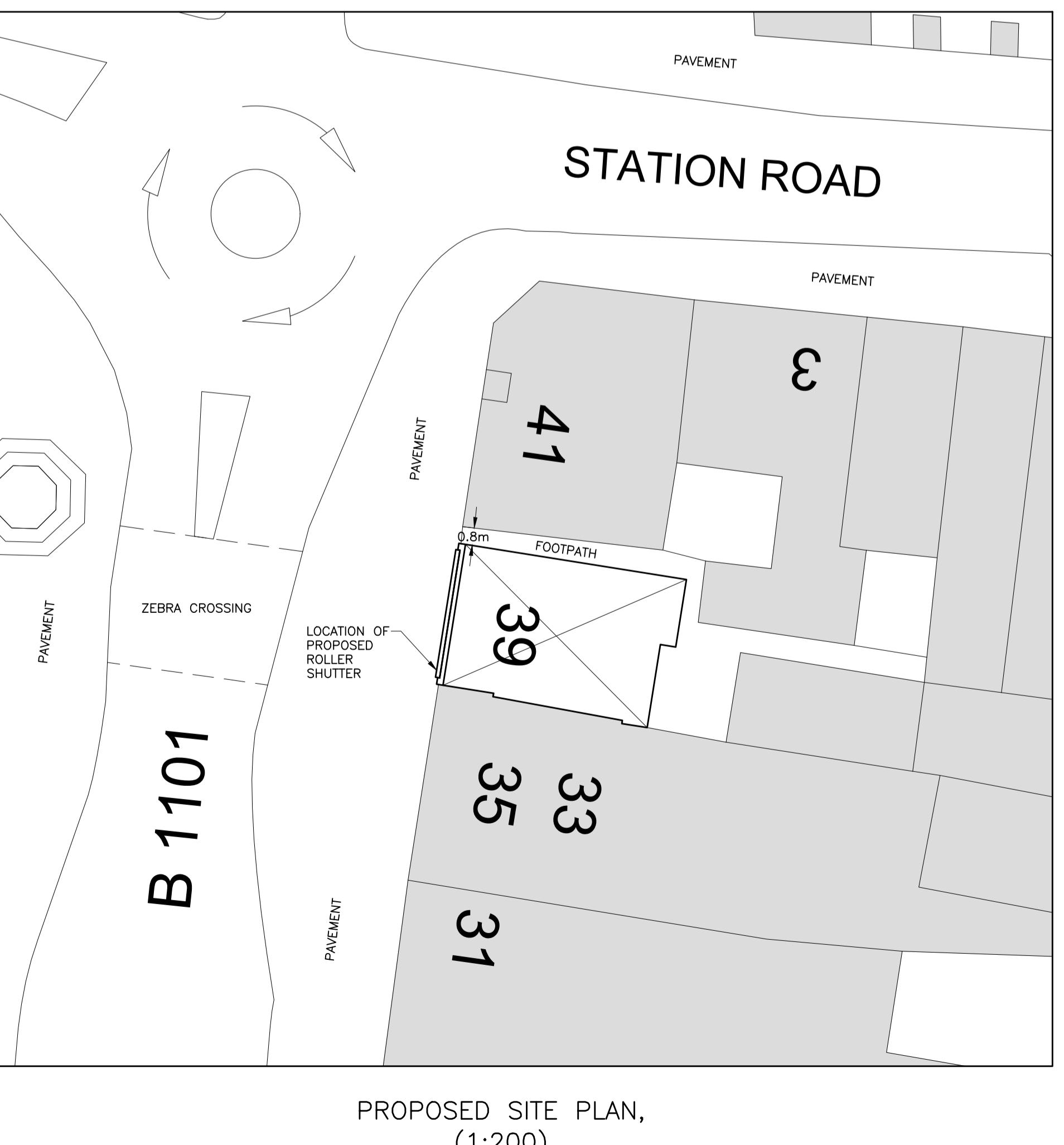
EXISTING ROOF PLAN,  
(1:200)



EXISTING SITE PLAN,  
(1:200)

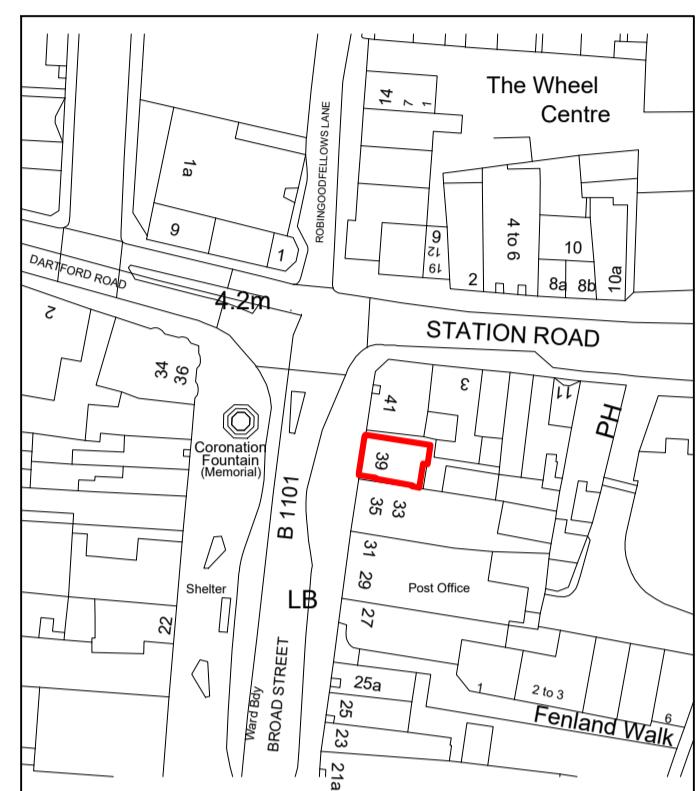


PROPOSED ROOF PLAN,  
(1:200)



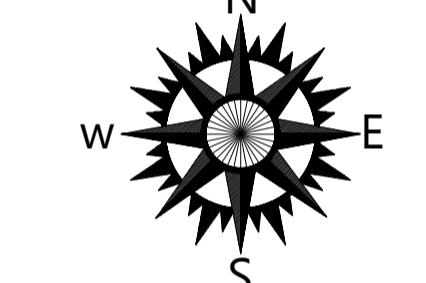
PROPOSED SITE PLAN,  
(1:200)

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All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.  
The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the LABC (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.  
All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details



LOCATION PLAN  
(1:1250)

1:1250 METERS  
0 10 20 30 40 50



REVISIONS DATE

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LABC Building Excellence Awards Winner Fenland District Council Building Design Awards Winner

CLIENT Mark Page

PROJECT 39 Broad Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 8TP

TITLE Existing & Proposed Plans

DRAINED G.Boreham DATE OF ISSUE  
CHECKED  
DATE Oct 2025 DRAWING NUMBER  
SCALE As Shown H10814/01



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION / STREET SCENE,  
(1:100)



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION / STREET SCENE,  
ROLLER SHUTTER UP  
(1:100)



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION / STREET SCENE,  
ROLLER SHUTTER DOWN  
(1:100)

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REVISIONS DATE

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**LABC**  
LABC BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Winner

**Fenland District Council**  
Building Design Awards  
Building Excellence in Fenland

CLIENT

Mark Page

PROJECT  
39 Broad Street  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 8TP

TITLE  
Existing & Proposed  
Elevations / Street Scenes

DRAWN	G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10814/02

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All dimensions are in mm unless stated otherwise.

Materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they are to be of the standard appropriate to the works and suitable for the purpose stated in or reasonably to be inferred from the drawings and specification. All work to be in accordance with building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that the recommendations define the quality of the finished work. Materials products and workmanship to comply with all relevant Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, BS or EC marks.

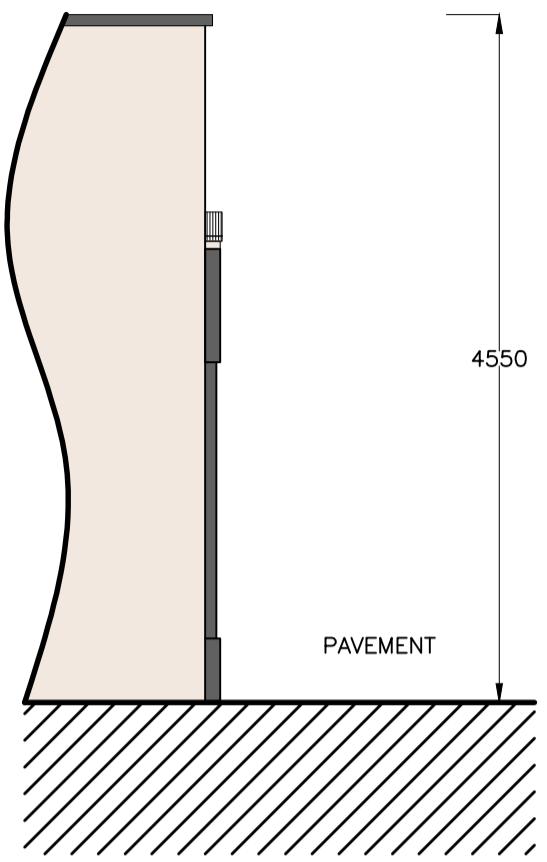
products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared or used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

contractor is to arrange inspections of the works

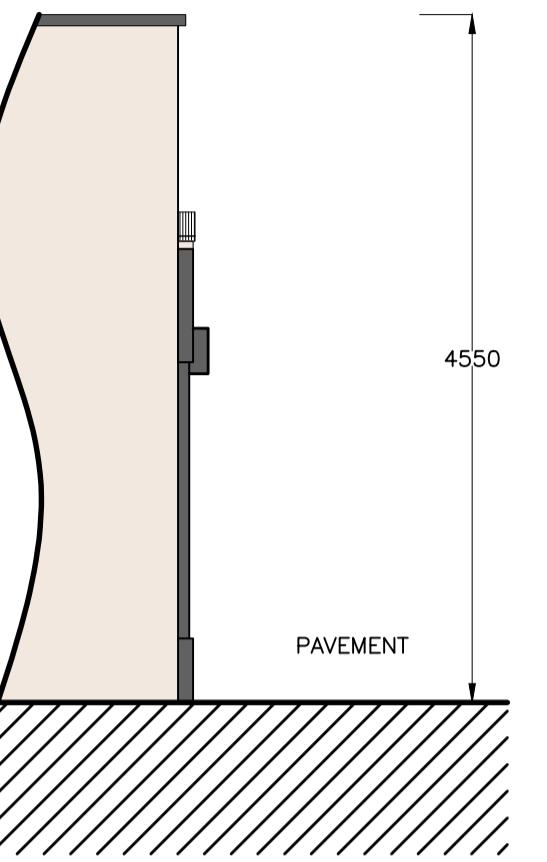
is to arrange inspections of the works in accordance with the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and hand over to the Engineer.

hishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's satisfaction.

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EXISTING PARTIAL LHS ELEVATION,  
(1:50)



PROPOSED PARTIAL LHS ELEVATION,  
(1:50)



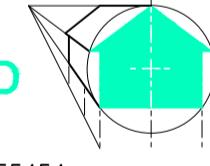
# PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER SHUTTER FITTED



# PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER SHUTTER FITTED



# PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER SHUTTER FITTED

REVISIONS	DATE
<b>MORTON &amp; HALL CONSULTING LIMITED</b> CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS	
London Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire. PE15 8AJ	Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@mortonandhall.co.uk">info@mortonandhall.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk">www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk</a>
	 Building Design Awards Building Excellence in Fenland
Mark Page	
39 Broad Street March Cambridgeshire PE15 8TP	
Existing & Proposed Elevations & Photos	
G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
As Shown	H10814/03

F/YR25/0726/PIP

**Applicant: Savage Developments**

**Agent : Morton & Hall**

**Land South of 29 Primrose Hill, Doddington**

**Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Application Previously Deferred by Committee**

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application was heard at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was deferred to obtain clarity as to whether the applicant wished to proceed with the proposal providing 2 x workplace dwellings.
- 1.2 The application as originally submitted included 'occupational dwellings' within the description on the application form and referenced this in the supporting statement. The application was advertised as purely for residential development and legal advice received indicated that such a detailed matter could not be included within a PIP application as there is no power to secure this via condition. The applicant has subsequently clarified that the application is for two dwellings only with no workplace element forming part of the proposal.
- 1.3 Under Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, the site is considered to be in an 'Elsewhere' location, where new housing is only supported if it is demonstrably essential to a rural-based enterprise. No such justification has been provided. The development would therefore be in direct conflict with the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy of the Local Plan.
- 1.4 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Built development is shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.
- 1.5 Although the density of development proposed is low and could be accommodated physically on the site, this does not overcome the fundamental policy objections regarding location and use. Other technical details, including highway safety, would be addressed at the second stage (Technical Details Consent), though no objections have been raised by the highways authority at this stage.
- 1.6 Therefore, the proposed development fails to comply with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the site's location remains unsuitable for residential development in principle.
- 1.7 Accordingly, this application is recommended for refusal.

## 2 UPDATE

2.1 The application was presented at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was agreed to defer the application to obtain clarity around the issue of the application providing workplace dwellings, as set out in the Executive Summary. This has now been clarified that the application is purely for two dwellings with no workplace element included. Following receipt of this further consultation has been undertaken. Contained within Appendix A is the Officer's original committee report.

### Consultations

2.2 Following a further consultation period consultee response have been received from Archaeology, Environmental Health, and Highways. They have no further additions to their previous responses.

### Public representations

2.3 A further objection has been received from a resident of Doddington Road, Benwick. They have maintained their objection and state that the proposal will be increase traffic, be visually imposing, and lead to the loss of a view and agricultural land.

## 3 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Further to the assessment set out above it is not considered that there are any changed circumstances which would overcome or address the other previously recommended reasons for refusal concerning the elsewhere location, flood risk and lack of a sequential test.

## 4 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1.	The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2	Policy LP14 (Part B) of the Local Plan requires development in Flood Zone 3 to undergo a sequential test to demonstrate that the development cannot be delivered elsewhere in the area at lower risk areas of flooding. Policy LP2 seeks to deliver high quality environments, ensuring that people are not put at identified risks from development thereby avoiding adverse impacts in the interests of health and wellbeing. The site lies within Flood Zone 3 which is a

high risk flood area. The applicant has failed to undertake a substantive and evidenced sequential test and has therefore failed to demonstrate that the development could not be delivered in an area of lower flood risk, thereby failing LP14 (Part B). Consequently, the proposal fails to satisfy policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan as it fails to deliver a high quality environment and unjustifiably puts future occupants at higher risk of flooding.

---

**F/YR25/0726/PIP**

**Applicant: Savage Developments Ltd**      **Agent : Mr R Papworth**  
**Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

**Land South Of 29, Primrose Hill, Doddington, Cambridgeshire**

**Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation.**

---

## **5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of two dwellings on Land South of 29 Primrose Hill, outside the developed footprint of Doddington.
- 1.2 Under Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, the site is considered to be in an 'Elsewhere' location, where new housing is only supported if it is demonstrably essential to a rural-based enterprise. No such justification has been provided. The development would therefore be in direct conflict with the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Built development is shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.
- 1.4 Although the density of development proposed is low and could be accommodated physically on the site, this does not overcome the fundamental policy objections regarding location and use. Other technical details, including highway safety, would be addressed at the second stage (Technical Details Consent), though no objections have been raised by the highways authority at this stage.
- 1.5 Therefore, the proposed development fails to comply with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the site's location remains unsuitable for residential development in principle.
- 1.6 Accordingly, this application is recommended for refusal.

## **6 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is located outside of the settlement footprint of Doddington, to the west side of Primrose Hill and is an agricultural field within an area characterised by its open, agricultural nature with some sporadic development. To the north of the site is 29 Primrose Hill which is a replacement dwelling. On the opposite side of Primrose Hill are a pair of barns which have been converted to residential. The site is bordered by post and rail fencing to the boundary with 29 Primrose Hill and open boundaries to the east, south and west.
- 2.2 The site topography slopes away from the highway with a drain located to the eastern frontage of the site and a separate drain to the southern boundary. The majority of the site is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the north-eastern corner of the site located in Flood Zone 1. None of the site is subject to a low, medium or high annual likelihood of surface water flooding.

## 7 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 A location plan and an indicative site layout (although not a requirement of a PiP application) accompany this submission. The indicative site layout proposes a new 5.5 metre wide shared access road in the north-east corner of the site leading to two dwellings with detached work units. The dwellings shown face onto Primrose Hill with large rear gardens containing a pond and planting around the site boundaries.
- 3.2 The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this 'first stage' establishes whether a site is suitable in principle only, and assesses the 'principle' issues, namely; (1) Location (2) Use, and (3) Amount of development proposed
- 3.3 Should this application be successful the applicant will have to submit a Technical details application covering all the other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle does not constitute the grant of planning permission.
- 3.4 The applicant is only required to submit a completed application form, a plan which identifies the land to which the application relates (drawn to scale and with a north point) and the application fee.
- 3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:  
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

## 8 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 No relevant site history.

## 9 CONSULTATIONS

### 5.1 Doddington Parish Council – 04 November 2025

Object

*Location - This part of Primrose Hill, being a significant distance from the developed boundary of Doddington, is open countryside where any proposed development needs to be fully justified by special circumstances. None have been provided to support these two PIP applications and the applications therefore conflict with FDC's Policy LP3. In addition, there is a conflict with policy LP12 as both developments would have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding countryside.*

*Access - This section of Primrose Hill has a speed limit of 60mph whether traffic has left Doddington travelling towards Chatteris or heading towards Doddington from Chatteris. Any traffic needing access to or from the development under application F/YR25/0726/PIP must join Primrose Hill. Traffic needing access to or from the development under application F/YR25/0730/PIP will initially join Dykemoor Drove, a badly maintained track, before joining Primrose Hill. This area of Primrose Hill has no street lighting or a footpath along the roadway to cater for pedestrians. These dwellings together with their occupational units will create additional traffic movements thereby increasing the risk of accidents on this busy, fast road.*

*Workplace Units - No justification has been given that demonstrates there is a need for workplace units in Doddington. Similar developments to those being suggested have been built in Manea and Chatteris. Over the time since their development a significant number of them have been converted into residential use by the dwelling or are now used as residential annexes for relatives.*

## **5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways – 22 October 2025**

*No objections - The applicant has shown a shared use access at a location with good visibility in either direction which appear to be within the highway extent. I would however note that all and any requirements for this access e.g. visibility splays, widths, material etc... will need to be shown on any future submissions and be to the correct guidance and specifications. As such this non objection by the LHA is just for the principal of the development and not agreement that is accurate at this stage or acceptable to the LHA.*

## **5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council – Archaeology – 13 October 2025**

*Our records indicate that the development lies in an area of archaeological potential, on a spur of higher ground on the southern fen edge of Doddington where the land drops off to the deeper fen to the south. The fen edge was an area commonly settled and exploited during the prehistoric to Roman periods. This has been evidenced in the vicinity of the development area through finds of a Neolithic ground flint axe (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference. 03677) and a late Bronze Age rapier (CHER ref. CB14520). Roman occupation has been recorded at Primrose Hill itself, through pottery and a hearth sealed by peat formed through later marine inundation (CHER ref. 03778). The finds were identified through deep ploughing, with hearth features and pottery being reported.*

*Whilst this site lies in an area of archaeological interest we cannot make specific recommendations without sight of a finalised site layout plan and an understanding of the scale and impacts of the proposed development. We are however content that no works are required prior to determination of an application and consequently we wish to raise no objections for this application to secure Planning In Principle, however we would request to be consulted on any future planning application for development within the redline area indicated, with the expectation*

*that a condition on development, if required, could be secured at Technical Details stage.*

#### **5.4 Fenland District Council – Environmental Health – 10 October 2025**

No objection.

#### **5.5 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Six communications of objection have been received. Five are from addresses in Doddington, namely Primrose Hill x 4 and The Grange . One further objection is from Doddington Road in Benwick.

<b>Objecting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
Highway safety	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Development in an 'Elsewhere' location.	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Flood Risk and Drainage	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Impact on rural character	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Would set a development precedent.	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Commercial units not in an appropriate location.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
No evidence of workplace homes demand in the area.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
Loss of view	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Potential overlooking	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Impact on wildlife	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section
Size of proposed dwellings	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.

Seven communications of support have been received. Three are from Doddington, on Benwick Road, Turf Fen Lane and Askham Row. Two are from Chatteris, on Gull Way and Lode Way. One supporter is from Williams Way in Manea and one from Brewin Avenue in March.

<b>Supporting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
The dwellings are near an existing business	This will be addressed in the Location section.
The dwellings are near a new development	This will be addressed in the Location section.
There is a need for occupational dwellings.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
The housing should be for local residents	This will be addressed in the Use section.
The housing will help retain local entrepreneurs and professionals.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
There is a housing shortage in the country.	This will be addressed in the Use section.

### **10 STATUTORY DUTY**

6.1 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).

### **11 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4 – Decision-making  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land  
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Context Paragraph: 012 (Reference ID: 58-012-20180615). The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission but can advise applicants on the decision notice, where Permission in Principle is granted, what they would expect to see at Technical Details stage.

### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context  
Identity  
Built Form  
Nature  
Uses  
Homes and Buildings

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents  
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside  
LP4 – Housing  
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need  
LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy  
LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District  
LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland  
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland  
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District  
LP19 – The Natural Environment

### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes  
DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

### **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

#### **Emerging Local Plan**

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan.

Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

- LP1: Settlement Hierarchy
- LP2: Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development
- LP4: Securing Fenland's Future
- LP5: Health and Wellbeing
- LP7: Design
- LP8: Amenity Provision
- LP12: Meeting Housing Needs
- LP18: Development in the Countryside
- LP19: Strategic Infrastructure
- LP20: Accessibility and Transport
- LP22: Parking Provision
- LP24: Natural Environment

## 12 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount**

## 13 BACKGROUND

9.1 The proposal is an application for Permission in Principle to develop the site for 2 dwellings. The Permission in Principle route has 2 stages: the first stage (or Permission in Principle Stage) establishes whether the site is suitable in principle and assesses the principle issues namely:

- (1) Location
- (2) Use, and
- (3) Amount of development proposed

And the second (Technical Details Consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are addressed. Technical details consent would need to be applied for should the application be granted.

9.2 Evaluation of a PIP must be restricted to the issues highlighted above; even if technical issues are apparent from the outset these can form no part of the determination of Stage 1 of the process. Accordingly, some matters raised via statutory bodies may not be addressed at this time.

## 14 ASSESSMENT

### Location

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) identifies Doddington as being a 'Growth Village'. For these settlements, development and new service provision either within the existing urban area or as a small village extension will be appropriate albeit of a considerably more limited scale than that appropriate to the Market Towns.

10.2 Policy LP12 identifies that to receive support, the site must be in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village, defined as the continuous built form of the village and excludes individual buildings and groups of dispersed, or intermittent buildings, that are clearly detached from the continuous built-up area of the settlement. The Local Plan does not rely on defined settlement boundaries but rather requires a physical assessment to be made to determine whether or not a site is within a village for the purposes of Policy LP12. This results in a situation where a site could be considered in general terms to be part of the village but not be in the village for the purposes of the spatial strategy. It is considered that the site is visibly separated from the edge of the built-up settlement of Doddington by approximately 1 km when travelled by road.

10.3 It is apparent, that in the case of the application site, it is clearly detached from the remainder of Doddington by agricultural fields and thus outside the continuous built form of the settlement. The majority of the surrounding area is agricultural in use and rural in nature. As such the proposal would constitute development in an 'Elsewhere' location as defined under LP3 which seeks to restrict that to essential rural based development. The proposal is therefore in conflict with Policies LP3 and LP12.

10.4 Policy LP5 sets out the housing targets for the District and the Council has undertaken a full assessment of the Five Year Housing Land Supply in the District and has concluded that the Council is able to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide for more than Five Years' worth of housing against the Council's identified requirements. This is a material consideration and means that any application for new development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

10.5 The site comprises of approximately 0.52ha of Grade 3 Agricultural land as defined by DEFRA (Defra Spatial Data Download) and classified as very good.

10.6 Policy LP12 ((i)) states that development should not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land or if so comprehensive evidence is provided to justify the loss. Para 187 of the NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a) and para 188 (footnote 65) advises that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

10.7 Having regard to the wider DEFRA mapping site, it is acknowledged that a significant majority of the Fenland District falls within the BMV land with only the urban areas of the main Market Towns, the Kings Delph and Morton's Leam areas and the north of March including the prison area falling within the lower grades. As such, it is recognised that there are very few areas of poorer quality agricultural land, and it would not be possible therefore for Fenland to meet its housing demands without developing areas of BMV land.

10.8 This does not however confer that all agricultural land should be developed, especially where it relates more to open countryside than to the settlement and Officers consider that this is the intention of LP12, Part A (c), supported by the preamble at paragraph 4.7.1 of the Fenland Local Plan. An assessment however should be made as to the relationship of the land to the open countryside, in

comparison to the built envelope of the settlement. As stated in the section above, the application site is considered to relate more to the open countryside than the built form, though it is acknowledged that 0.52ha is not significant in the context of BMV land within Fenland.

- 10.9 The site and surrounding area is unlit and is not served by a footpath. However, there is a bus stop located to the frontage of site which can provide a public transport link to good and services in Doddington, Chatteris and beyond.
- 10.10 It is noted that the Agent has advised of other occupational / workplace developments having been approved at Charlemont Drive, Manea, as well as George Way and Albert Way in Chatteris. Each application must be determined on its own merits. Notwithstanding this basic principle, it is considered that the sites are materially different in that these dwellings are considered to be within the established settlement, have lit roads and are served by footpaths. The site the subject of this application is within open countryside, and no justification has been provided as to why workplace dwellings are essential in this unsustainable location. To allow workplace dwellings in this location would set a harmful development precedent that would urbanise an area of open countryside that is over 1 Kilometre by road from the edge of the built up settlement of Doddington.
- 10.11 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Built development is shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.
- 10.12 As per Policy LP3, development not falling into one of the categories set out in the settlement hierarchy will fall into the “elsewhere” category and will be restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services or to minerals and waste development. Whilst the application is for two “occupational dwellings”, the application does not state that these are specifically in relation to any of the industries defined by Policy LP3. Development of this site would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character. If this development was supported it would result in an unacceptable urbanisation to the detriment of the open countryside through the erosion the rural character of the locality. To allow unjustified residential development in this unsustainable location would set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of the area.

### **Use**

- 10.13 The site is situated close to existing development in the open countryside, however as stated above, it will be contrary to Policy LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy and Policy LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District. The introduction of residential workplace units and associated paraphernalia is considered to erode the character and appearance of the open countryside. It is therefore considered that the site is not acceptable to use for new dwellings.
- 10.14 In addition, whilst perhaps being a matter more appropriate for consideration at Technical Consent stage, the location of the site for commercial activity and the

established dwellings does raise potential issues around noise and whether a high quality residential environment would ultimately be created.

10.15 Supporters of the proposal state that there is a need for occupational dwellings, however, no supporting information has been provided to demonstrate this unsustainable location has sufficient demand for workplace homes. Additionally, no existing or proposed businesses have been identified to fill the workplace units. One letter of support states that the housing should be for local residents, however, there is no mechanism to secure this. Supporters also state that the housing will help retain local entrepreneurs and professionals, however, that does not justify development in an unsustainable location in Flood Zone 3.

### **Amount of Development Proposed**

10.16 The application seeks Permission in Principle for two dwellings on a site of 0.52ha which will equate to a density of approximately 4 dwellings per hectare. This is low density and could comfortably be accommodated on-site without being considered an overdevelopment of the site. However, it is difficult to make a direct comparison to other dwellings in the vicinity as they are low in number and do not contain workplace unit buildings. The detailed layout and design will be for consideration at the Technical details stage. In terms of consideration of amount, the proposal is acceptable.

10.17 An objection has been raised as to the size of the proposed dwellings, however, the proposed design is indicative, and therefore no planning weight can be given to these comments at this stage of the planning process.

### **Matters Raised During Consultation**

10.18 It should be noted that a number of supporting letters have commented noting that the provision of two dwellings will not impact on highway safety or increase congestion. These comments are noted, and this does form a material consideration as part of this assessment, but as discussed above there are no concerns, in respect of highway matters to the amount of development proposed.

10.19 It is also noted that the Parish Council have raised concerns in terms of congestion and the associated Highways impact of the proposal, however, Cambridgeshire County Highways have raised no concerns at this stage, with any additional details being secured at the Technical Details stage or subject of a subsequent application. Further given that the proposal relates to two dwellings this quantum of development, is unlikely to result in sufficient harm, to justify the refusal of the application contrary to the Highway Authority's recommendation.

10.20 Comments have been raised about impact on wildlife however, this is a matter which is not attributed material weight at this stage of the application process. Additional public comments raise overlooking concerns, however, this is a matter that could only be determined at the Technical Details stage. Some comments points to the national housing shortage. The only new dwelling approved in the vicinity of the site is for a dwelling of exceptional design under F/YR21/0015/F which accorded with local and national planning policy.

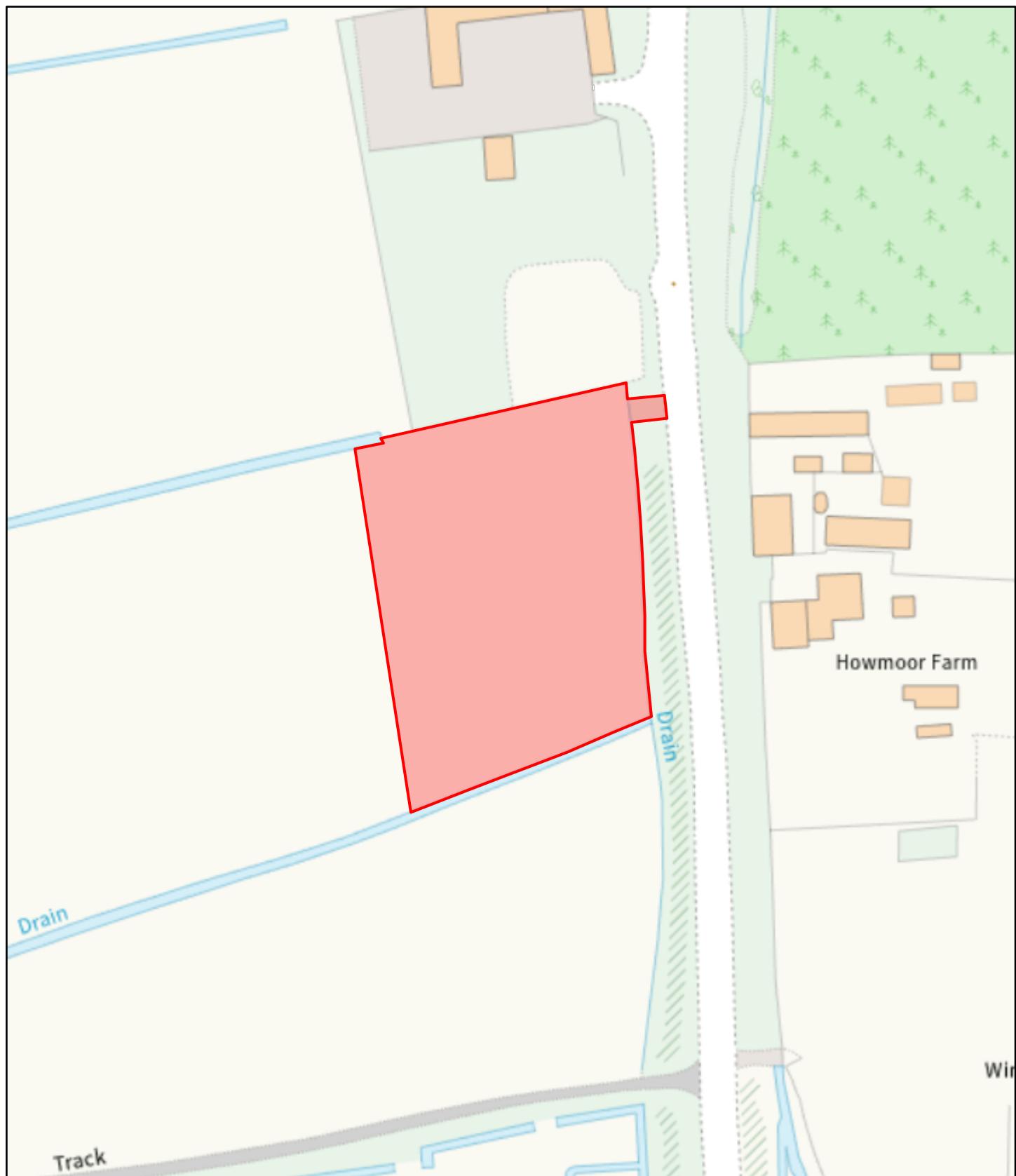
## **15 CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 As indicated above it is only location, use and amount of development that may be considered at the first 'permission in principle stage' and it is considered that the location and use of the site for residential development is unacceptable due to the conflict with the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan.
- 11.2 The principle of development is not supported as the site does not adjoin the built form and whilst the proposal is for workplace dwellings there is no planning justification for such a dwelling in this location.
- 11.3 The site is partially located in Flood Zone 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding.
- 11.4 As such the application is considered to be in conflict with both national and local policy and accordingly the recommendation is one of refusal.

## 16 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** Permission in Principle for the following reason:

1.	The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2	Policy LP14 (Part B) of the Local Plan requires development in Flood Zone 3 to undergo a sequential test to demonstrate that the development cannot be delivered elsewhere in the area at lower risk areas of flooding. Policy LP2 seeks to deliver high quality environments, ensuring that people are not put at identified risks from development thereby avoiding adverse impacts in the interests of health and wellbeing. The site lies within Flood Zone 3 which is a high risk flood area. The applicant has failed to undertake a substantive and evidenced sequential test and has therefore failed to demonstrate that the development could not be delivered in an area of lower flood risk, thereby failing LP14 (Part B). Consequently, the proposal fails to satisfy policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan as it fails to deliver a high quality environment and unjustifiably puts future occupants at higher risk of flooding.

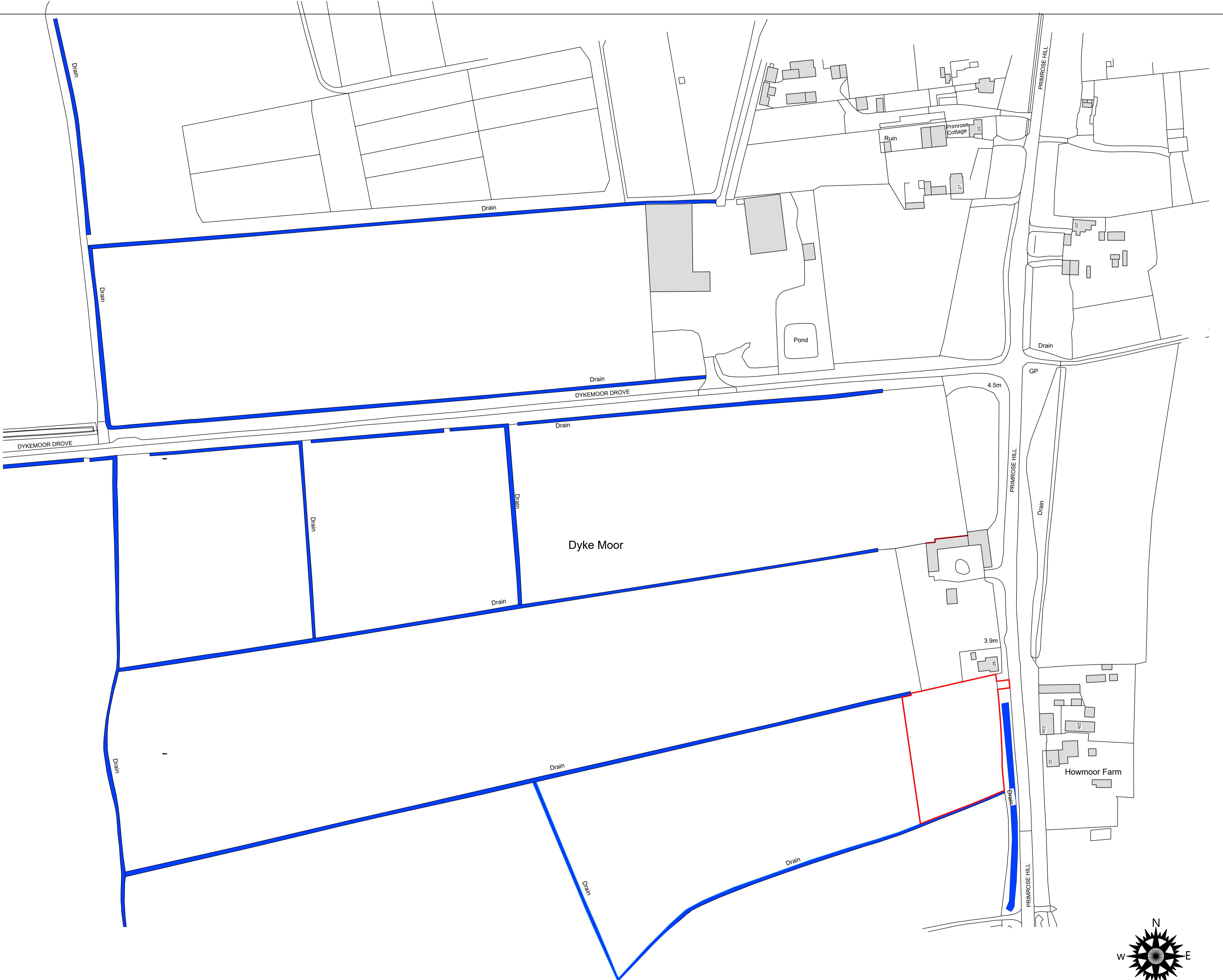


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0 220 ft

Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council



Copyright on all drawings prepared by Morton & Hall Consulting Limited is their property. Drawings and designs may not be reproduced in part or in whole without their written permission.  
Please read, if in doubt ask. Change nothing without consulting the Engineers.

Contractor to check all dimensions on site before work starts or materials are ordered. If in doubt ask. All dimensions are in mm unless stated otherwise.

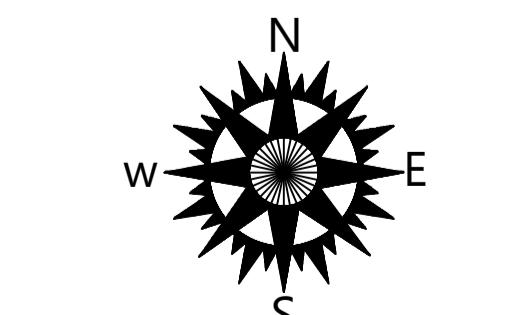
Where materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they shall be of the standard appropriate to the work and suitable for the purpose stated in or reasonably to be inferred from the drawings and specification. All work to be in accordance with good building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that the recommendations define the quality of the finished work. Materials, products and workmanship to comply with all British Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, BS or EC marks.

All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.

The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.

All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details

REVISIONS	DATE
<b>MORTON &amp; HALL CONSULTING LIMITED</b>	
<p>1. Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ</p> <p>Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk</p> <p><b>LABC</b> LABC BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS Winner</p> <p><b>Fenland District Council</b> Building Design Awards Building Excellence in Fenland</p>	
CLIENT	
Savage Developments Ltd	
PROJECT	
Proposed Development South of 29 Primrose Hill Doddington Cambs PE15 0SU	
TITLE	
Location Plan	
DRAWN MH	
DATE OF ISSUE	
CHECKED	
DATE July 2025	
DRAWING NUMBER	
SCALE As Shown	
H10633/03	



LOCATION PLAN (1:1250)

1:250 5 10 15 20 METERS



F/YR25/0729/PIP

**Applicant: Mr W Savage**

**Agent : Morton & Hall**

**Land North of 10 Primrose Hill, Doddington**

**Permission in Principle for 4 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Application Previously Deferred by Committee**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application was heard at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was deferred to obtain clarity as to whether the applicant wished to proceed with the proposal providing 4 x workplace dwellings.
- 1.2 The application as originally submitted included 'occupational dwellings' within the description on the application form and referenced this in the supporting statement and was advertised as such. Legal advice received indicated that such a detailed matter could not be included within a PIP application as there is no power to secure this via condition. The applicant has subsequently provided a revised application description to clarify that the application is for four dwellings only and workplace dwellings do not form part of the proposal.
- 1.3 Under Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, the site is located immediately adjacent to the built-up settlement of Doddington. However, development of this site would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character or sporadic settlement pattern as the village is exited. It would result in unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of this area.
- 1.4 Furthermore, the site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding.
- 1.5 The proposal is for up to 4 dwellings on a site of approximately 0.99 hectares, equating to approximately 4 dwellings per hectare. It could therefore be argued that this development underutilises the land. However, Policies LP12 (c) and (d) and LP16 (d) require developments to respond to the local character in this regard, as does Paragraph 135 of the NPPF; densities in the area do vary and as such this, and the loss of Grade 3 Agricultural land against the context of best and most versatile land within Fenland, are not put forward as further reasons for refusal.
- 1.6 Given the above considerations, this application is recommended for refusal.

## 2 UPDATE

2.1 The application was presented at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was agreed to defer the application to obtain clarity around the issue of the application providing workplace dwellings, as set out in the Executive Summary. This has now been clarified that the application is purely for four dwellings with no workplace element included. Following receipt of this further consultation has been undertaken. Contained within Appendix A is the Officer's original committee report.

### Consultations

2.2 Following a further consultation period consultee response have been received from Archaeology, Environmental Health, Highways and Environmental Services. Archaeology, Environmental Health and Highways have no further additions to their previous responses.

### Public representations

2.3 A further objection has been received from a resident of Turnpike Close, Doddington. They have maintained their objection and state that the proposal is not substantially different to the previous refused applications on this site from 2022 and 2023. The land is outside of the village boundary and would lead to the loss of agricultural land. Additionally, the proposal claims land on the eastern boundary including a drainage ditch which is not in the ownership of the applicant.

## 3 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Further to the assessment set out above it is not considered that there are any changed circumstances which would overcome or address the other previously recommended reasons for refusal concerning the extension beyond the village boundary, flood risk and lack of a sequential test.

## 4 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1.	The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, constituting ribbon development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2.	The site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3; Policy LP12 Part A (j) seeks to ensure that developments would not put people or property in dangers from identified risks, such as flooding. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seek to steer developments to the areas with the least

probability of flooding and development will not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.

The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding and as such the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.

---

**F/YR25/0729/PIP**

**Applicant: Mr W Savage**

**Agent : Mr R Papworth**  
**Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

**Land North Of 10, Primrose Hill, Doddington, Cambridgeshire**

**Permission in Principle to erect 4 workplace dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation.**

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## **5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of four workplace dwellings on Land North of 10 Primrose Hill, outside the developed footprint of Doddington.
- 1.2 Under Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, the site is located immediately adjacent to the built-up settlement of Doddington. However, development of this site would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character or sporadic settlement pattern as the village is exited. It would result in unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of this area.
- 1.3 Furthermore, the site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding.
- 1.4 The proposal is for up to 4 dwellings on a site of approximately 0.99 hectares, equating to approximately 4 dwellings per hectare. It could therefore be argued that this development underutilises the land. However, Policies LP12 (c) and (d) and LP16 (d) require developments to respond to the local character in this regard, as does Paragraph 135 of the NPPF; densities in the area do vary and as such this, and the loss of Grade 3 Agricultural land against the context of best and most versatile land within Fenland, are not put forward as further reasons for refusal.
- 1.5 Given the above considerations, this application is recommended for refusal.

## **6 SITE DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The site is situated immediately to the west of the built form of the settlement of Doddington and is in fallow agricultural use. Adjacent development consists of dwellings at Turnpike Close to the east, and 10 Primrose Hill to the south-west. Arable fields are located to the north, west and south of the site. The site is bordered by frontage trees to the southern boundary, open fields to the west and north, with a 1.8 metre high fence at the eastern boundary.

2.2 The site topography slopes gently away from the highway with a drain located to southern frontage of the site. The site is located in Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3, with two of the four dwellings located in Zones 2 and 3 toward the west of the site. The western half of the site is subject to a low, medium and high annual likelihood of surface water flooding.

## 7 PROPOSAL

3.1 A location plan and an indicative site layout (although not a requirement of a PiP application) accompany this submission. The indicative site layout proposes a new 5.5 metre wide shared access road in the south-west corner of the site leading to four dwellings with detached work units. The dwellings shown face onto Primrose Hill with large rear gardens containing a pond and planting around the site boundaries.

3.2 The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this 'first stage' establishes whether a site is suitable in principle only, and assesses the 'principle' issues, namely; (1) Location (2) Use, and (3) Amount of development proposed

3.3 Should this application be successful the applicant will have to submit a Technical details application covering all the other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle does not constitute the grant of planning permission.

3.4 The applicant is only required to submit a completed application form, a plan which identifies the land to which the application relates (drawn to scale and with a north point) and the application fee.

3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

## 8 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR22/0812/PIP	Residential development of up to 9 x dwellings involving the formation of 2 x new accesses (application for Permission in Principle)	Withdrawn – 14 July 2022
F/YR23/0113/PIP	Residential development of up to 9 x dwellings (application for Permission in Principle)	Refused – 27 April 2023

## 9 CONSULTATIONS

## **5.1 Doddington Parish Council – 04 November 2025**

*Objection – The Parish Council expresses concerns regarding:*

*Highway Safety  
Ribbon Development  
Biodiversity Impact*

*Contrary to Policy LP3 of the Local Plan*

*A large number of existing workplace homes elsewhere in the district have had the units converted into separate residential use or annexe use.*

## **5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council – Archaeology – 14 November 2025**

*Our records indicate that the development lies in an area of high archaeological potential, to the west of Doddington, near the edge of the existing settlement.*

*Whilst outside the settlement edge location there is the cropmark remains of a network of Medieval ridge and furrow extending around the north of the proposed development (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record ref. 09674). It is located near the edge of the fen island on which the village is situated and this is known as a favoured location for activity in the past particularly in pre drainage times. Just to the west of the proposed development finds of Roman pot confirm activity in the area (CHER 10888, 03778).*

*Whilst this site lies in an area of archaeological interest, we cannot make specific recommendations without further understanding of the scale and impacts of the proposed development. We are however content that no works are required prior to determination of an application and consequently we wish to raise no objections for this application to secure Planning In Principle, however we would request to be consulted on any future planning application for development within the redline area indicated, with the expectation that a condition on development, if required, could be secured at Technical Details stage.*

## **5.3 Fenland District Council – Environmental Services – 24 October 2025**

*Looking at document ‘Indicative Proposed Site Plan’ will the refuse bins be left by the kerbside on collection days ?*

- 1. New residents will require notification of collection and storage details by the developer before moving in and the first collection takes place.*
- 2. Refuse and recycling bins will be required to be provided as an integral part of the development.*

## **5.4 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways – 23 October 2025**

*No objection – After a review of the submitted information and indicative highway boundary extent in the area. I have no objection to the principal of the developments access location or the construction of a footway along the Primrose Hill leading to the village of Doddington. Whilst I have no objections to the principle of the development and its associated infrastructure, to facilitate its construction. This response is not acceptance of the shown layout, location or design from the highway’s authority. IN the later stages of this application or should a separate application be received all and any works within the highway and any access points with it must meet the current highways authorities guidance at that time.*

## **5.5 Fenland District Council – Environmental Health – 15 October 2025**

No objection – *In the event that Permission in Principle (PIP) is granted and a further application for the site is submitted in the future, owing to the scale of the proposed development and close proximity to existing residents, this service requests the submission of a robust Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in line with the template for developers, available on Fenland District Council's website at: Construction Environmental Management Plan: A template for development sites (fenland.gov.uk) The CEMP shall be expected to include working time restrictions to negate the need for a separate condition.*

## 5.6 Environment Agency – 10 October 2025

No objection – Requests IDB are consulted. States development should be assessed against the Flood Risk Sequential Test.

## 5.7 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Comments of objection have been received from a property on Turnpike Close in Doddington, which is beyond the eastern boundary of the site.

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Disturbance from business operations to existing residents.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
Not brownfield land.	This will be addressed in the Use Section.
Wildlife impact.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Foul water drainage provision.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Number of storeys	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Loss of view	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.

Seven comments of supports have been received. Three are from Doddington, on Benwick Road, Turf Fen Lane and Askham Row. Two supporters are from Chatteris, on Gull Way and Lode Way. One supporter is from Brewin Avenue in March, and one is from Williams Way in Manea. The nearest supporter is nearly 800 metres from the proposal site.

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
The dwellings are in close vicinity to the settlement.	This will be addressed in the Location section.
Similar proposals are nearby.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
There is a need for occupational dwellings.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
There is a housing need in the area.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
This will benefit the local economy	This will be addressed in the Use section.
This will retain business owners.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
Building the homes will encourage local businesses to join the community	This will be addressed in the Use section.

## 10 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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).

## 11 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024**

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Context Paragraph: 012 (Reference ID: 58-012-20180615). The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission but can advise applicants on the decision notice, where Permission in Principle is granted, what they would expect to see at Technical Details stage.

### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Nature

Uses

Homes and Buildings

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

LP4 – Housing

LP5 – Meeting Housing Need

LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy

LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District

LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP18 – The Historic Environment

LP19 – The Natural Environment

### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes

## **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

### **Emerging Local Plan**

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

- LP1: Settlement Hierarchy
- LP2: Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development
- LP4: Securing Fenland's Future
- LP5: Health and Wellbeing
- LP7: Design
- LP8: Amenity Provision
- LP12: Meeting Housing Needs
- LP18: Development in the Countryside
- LP19: Strategic Infrastructure
- LP20: Accessibility and Transport
- LP22: Parking Provision
- LP24: Natural Environment

## **12 KEY ISSUES**

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount**

## **13 BACKGROUND**

9.1 The proposal is an application for Permission in Principle to develop the site for 4 dwellings. The Permission in Principle route has 2 stages: the first stage (or Permission in Principle Stage) establishes whether the site is suitable in principle and assesses the principle issues namely:

- (1) Location
- (2) Use, and
- (3) Amount of development proposed

And the second (Technical Details Consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are addressed. Technical details consent would need to be applied for should the application be granted.

9.2 Evaluation of a PIP must be restricted to the issues highlighted above; even if technical issues are apparent from the outset these can form no part of the determination of Stage 1 of the process. Accordingly, some matters raised via statutory bodies may not be addressed at this time.

## 14 ASSESSMENT

### Location

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Local Plan defines Doddington as a growth village. For these settlements, development and new service provision either within the existing urban area or as small village extensions will be appropriate, albeit of a considerably more limited scale than appropriate to market towns. Given the site is adjacent to existing built form, development could therefore be considered as an extension to the village but must also comply with the more detailed policy criteria set out in Policy LP12 as well as Policy LP3.

10.2 The application site adjoins Turnpike Close to the east and as such would be adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village. However, Turnpike Close (along with 8 Primrose Hill on the southern side of the road) is considered to be the edge of the built form, with development further west along Primrose Hill being sporadic frontage development of a rural nature, separated by fields and becoming sparser as the settlement is exited.

10.3 Development of this site would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character or sporadic settlement pattern as the village is exited, it would result in an unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of this area. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy LP12 Part A (c), (d) and (e) which seek to ensure development would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and would not result in linear development. Furthermore, Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan, Policy DM3 of Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD, seek to ensure that developments make a positive contribution and are sympathetic to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, recognise the beauty and character of the countryside and do not adversely impact on the landscape character.

10.4 The site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3; Policy LP12 Part A (j) seeks to ensure that developments would not put people or property in danger from identified risks, such as flooding. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seek to steer developments to the areas with the least probability of flooding and development will not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding and as such the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.

10.5 The site comprises of approximately 0.99ha of Grade 3 Agricultural land as defined by DEFRA (Defra Spatial Data Download) and classified as good to moderate.

10.6 Policy LP12 ((i) states that development should not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land or if so comprehensive evidence is provided to justify the loss. Para 187 of the NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a) and para 188

(footnote 65) advises that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

- 10.7 Having regard to the wider DEFRA mapping site, it is acknowledged that a significant majority of the Fenland District falls within the BMV land with only the urban areas of the main Market Towns, the Kings Delph and Morton's Leam areas and the north of March including the prison area falling within the lower grades. As such, it is recognised that there are very few areas of poorer quality agricultural land, and it would not be possible therefore for Fenland to meet its housing demands without developing areas of BMV land.
- 10.8 This does not however confer that all agricultural land should be developed, especially where it relates more to open countryside than to the settlement and Officers consider that this is the intention of LP12, Part A (c), supported by the preamble at paragraph 4.7.1 of the Fenland Local Plan. An assessment however should be made as to the relationship of the land to the open countryside, in comparison to the built envelope of the settlement. As stated in the section above, the application site is considered to relate more to the open countryside than the built form, though it is acknowledged that 0.99ha is not significant in the context of BMV land within Fenland.
- 10.9 The area in the vicinity of the site is unlit, but is served by a footpath linking to the centre of the village. There is a bus stop located to the frontage of site which can provide a public transport link to good and services in Doddington, Chatteris and beyond. However, it is not considered that these facilities overcome any other harm identified.
- 10.10 It is noted that the Agent has advised of other occupational / workplace developments having been approved at Charlemont Drive, Manea, as well as George Way and Albert Way in Chatteris. Each application must be determined on its own merits. Notwithstanding this basic principle, it is considered that the sites are materially different in that these dwellings are considered to be within the established settlement and have different relationships to the consolidated built form of those settlements. To allow workplace dwellings in this location would set a harmful development precedent that would have an adverse urbanising impact on an area of open countryside that is beyond the edge of the built up settlement of Doddington. Additionally, no justification or evidence of the need for workplace homes has been submitted in respect of this argument,
- 10.11 Development of this site would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character. It would result in an unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of the area, as well as introducing unjustified development into an area of flood risk, which would clearly be contrary to policies LP12, LP14 and LP16 of the Local Plan.
- 10.12 Policy LP5 sets out the housing targets for the District and the Council has undertaken a full assessment of the Five Year Housing Land Supply in the District and has concluded that the Council is able to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide for more than Five Years' worth of housing against the Council's identified requirements. This is a material consideration and means that any application for new development must be determined in

accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Use**

- 10.13 The site is situated close to existing development in the open countryside, however as stated above, it will be contrary to Policy LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy and Policy LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District. The introduction of residential workplace units and associated paraphernalia is considered to erode the character and appearance of the open countryside. It is therefore considered that the site is not acceptable to use for new dwellings.
- 10.14 In addition, whilst perhaps being a matter more appropriate for consideration at Technical Consent stage, the location of the site for commercial activity and the established dwellings does raise potential issues around noise and whether a high quality residential environment would ultimately be created.
- 10.15 Supporters of the proposal state that there is a need for occupational dwellings, however, no supporting information has been provided to demonstrate this unsustainable location has sufficient demand for workplace homes. Additionally, no existing or proposed businesses have been identified to fill the workplace units. Supporters state that the housing will help retain local entrepreneurs and professionals, however, that does not justify development in an unsustainable location in Flood Zone 3.

### **Amount of Development Proposed**

- 10.16 The application seeks Permission in Principle for four dwellings on a site of 0.997 ha which will equate to a density of approximately 4 dwellings per hectare. This is low density and could comfortably be accommodated on-site without being considered an overdevelopment of the site. However, the detailed layout and design will be for consideration at the Technical details stage. In terms of consideration of amount, the proposal is acceptable. When compared to dwellings within the built-up settlement limit the amount of development is considered to be an underutilisation of the site. However, the quantum of development is in keeping with the plot sizes of rural dwellings in an 'Elsewhere' location to the west of the site.
- 10.17 An objection has been raised as to the potential size of the proposed dwellings, however, the proposed design is indicative, and therefore no planning weight can be given to these comments at this stage of the planning process.

### **Matters Raised During Consultation**

- 10.18 It should be noted that a number of supporting letters have commented noting that the provision of four dwellings will not impact on highway safety or increase congestion. These comments are noted, and this does form a material consideration as part of this assessment, but as discussed above there are no concerns, in respect of highway matters to the amount of development proposed.
- 10.19 It is also noted that the Parish Council have raised concerns in terms of congestion and the associated Highways impact of the proposal, however, Cambridgeshire County Highways have raised no concerns at this stage, with

any additional details being secured at the Technical Details stage or subject of a subsequent application. Further given that the proposal relates to four dwellings this quantum of development, is unlikely to result in sufficient harm, to justify the refusal of the application contrary to the Highway Authority's recommendation.

- 10.20 Comments have been raised about impact on wildlife however, this is a matter which is not attributed material weight at this stage of the application process. Additional public comments raise overlooking concerns, however, this is a matter that could only be determined at the Technical Details stage. Some comments points to the national housing shortage, however it is not role of the Local Planning Authority to address under provision elsewhere in the country when we are exceeding our five year housing land supply with a total of 6.6 years provision.
- 10.21 It is important to note that a previous Permission in Principle application for this site under F/YR23/0113/PIP was recommended for refusal and subsequently refused by the Planning Committee of 26 April 2023 on the basis of a harmful incursion into the countryside and flood risk. Aside from the quantum of development there has been no major changes to the proposal, or to local or national planning policy, and this should be a significant material consideration when this application is assessed.

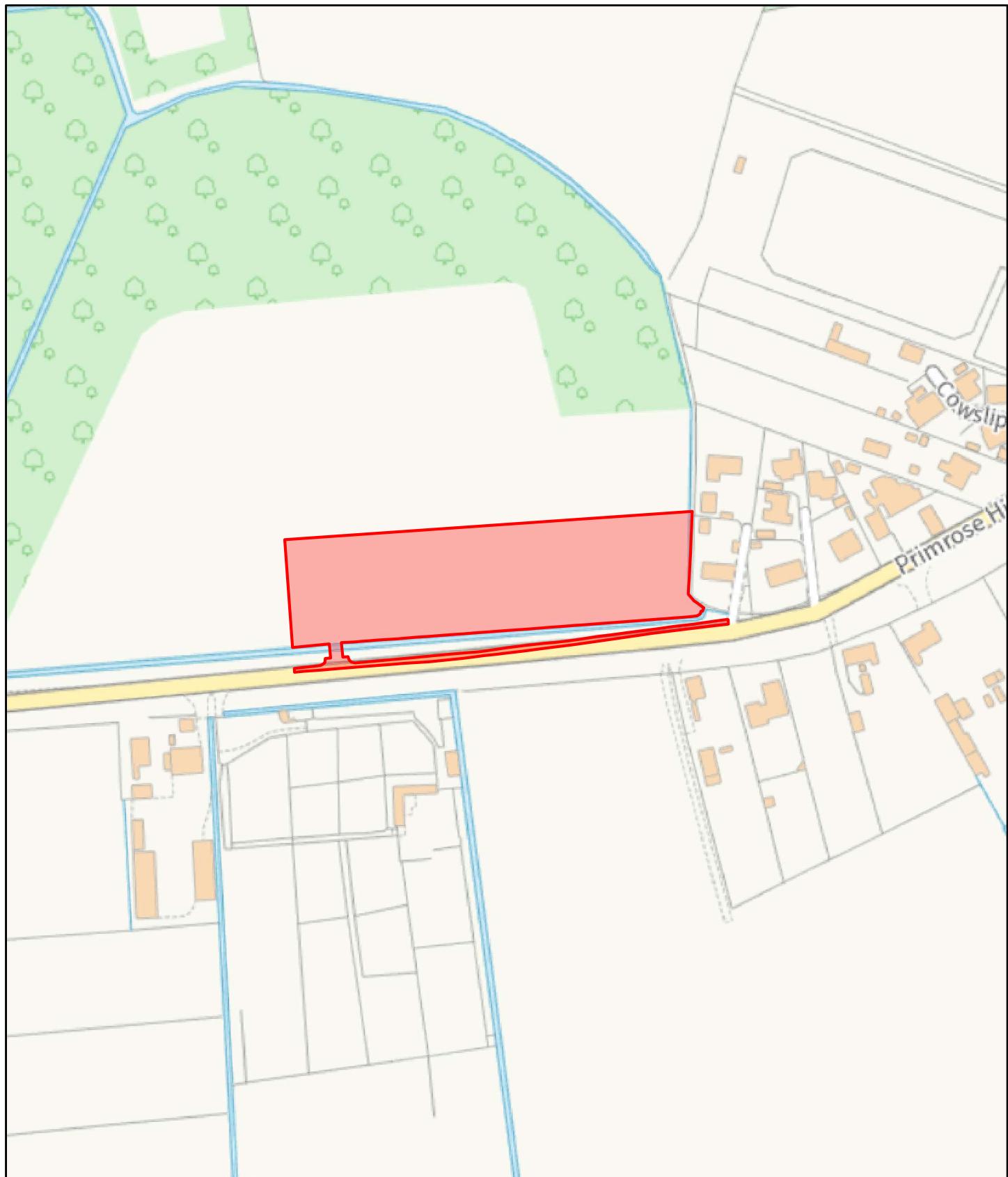
## 15 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 This application seeks 'Planning in Principle' (PiP) for residential development of up to 4 dwellings, where only in principle issues are assessed, namely the location, use and amount of development. All matters of detail would be subject to a Technical Details application should this submission be successful and accordingly, matters raised by consultees may not be addressed at this time.
- 11.2 Development of this site for residential purposes would introduce a formal, linear extension into the open countryside, which does not respect the rural character or sporadic settlement pattern as the village is exited, it would result in an unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of this area.
- 11.3 Furthermore, the site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding.
- 11.4 The proposal is for up to 4 dwellings on a site of approximately 0.99ha, equating to approximately 4 dwellings per hectare, it could therefore be argued that this development does not make an effective use of land. However, policies LP12 (c) and (d) and LP16 (d) require developments to respond to the local character in this regard, as does paragraph 135 of the NPPF; densities in the area do vary and as such this, and the loss of Grade 3 Agricultural land against the context of BMV land within Fenland, are not put forward as further reasons for refusal.

## 16 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** Permission in Principle for the following reasons:

1.	<p>The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, constituting ribbon development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.</p>
2.	<p>The site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3; Policy LP12 Part A (j) seeks to ensure that developments would not put people or property in dangers from identified risks, such as flooding. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seek to steer developments to the areas with the least probability of flooding and development will not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.</p> <p>The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding and as such the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.</p>



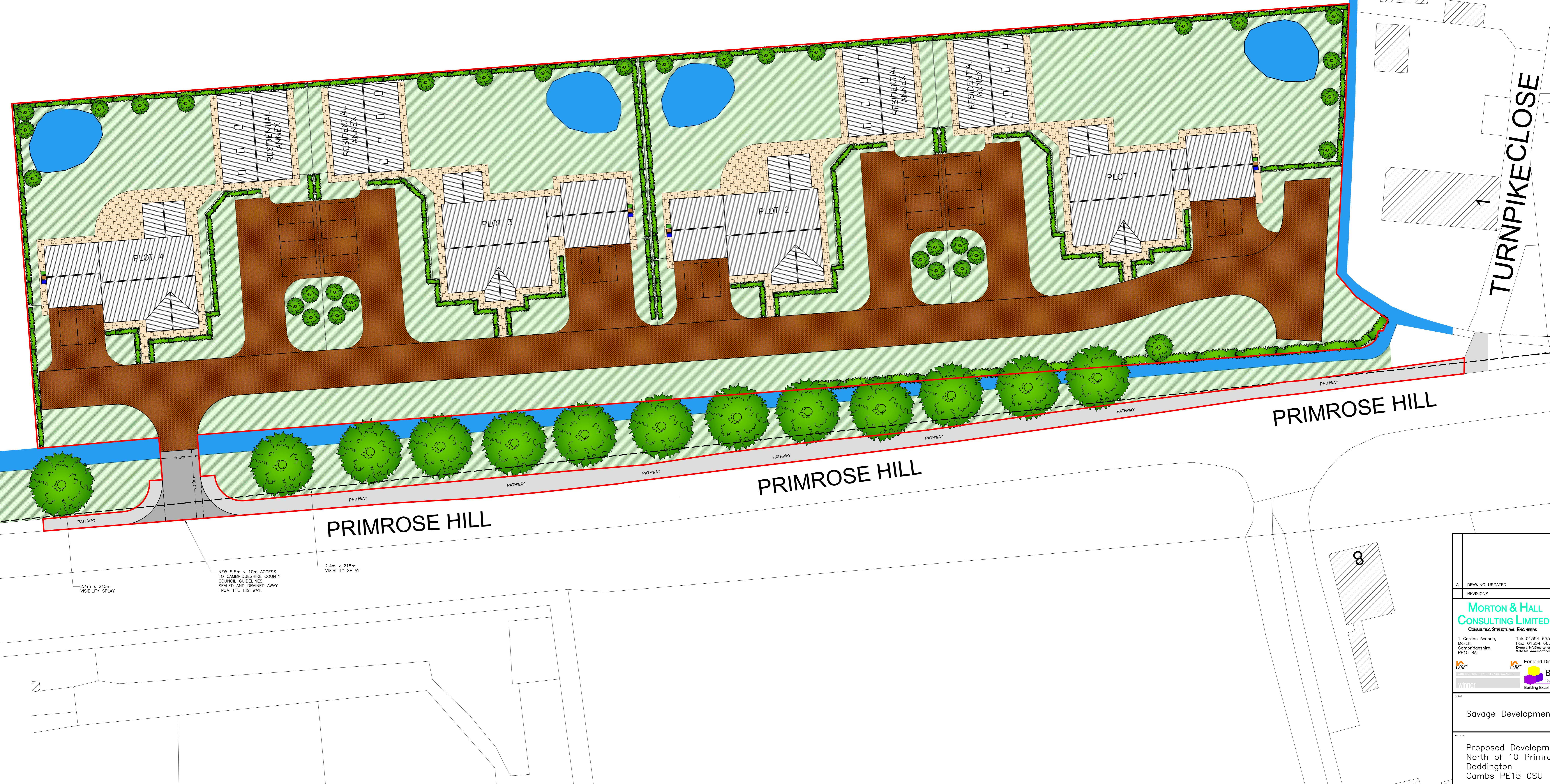
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 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council





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Please read, if in doubt ask. Change nothing without consulting the engineer.  
Contractor to check all dimensions on site before work starts. All dimensions are given in metres. In寸ches and millimetres. All dimensions are in metres unless stated otherwise.  
Where materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they are to be of the standard appropriate to the work. The engineer reserves the right to accept or reject any material or workmanship which is not in accordance with good building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that record drawings define the quality of the finished work. Morton & Hall Consulting Engineers to work in accordance with all British Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, the latest editions.  
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The contractor to commence inspection of the works by the BCC (or NHBC) or as defined by the Building Regulations and to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.

A	DRAWING UPDATED	DEC 25
REVISIONS		DATE
<b>MORTON &amp; HALL CONSULTING LIMITED</b>		
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS		
1 Gordon Avenue, Tel: 01354 655454 March, Cambridgeshire, Fax: 01354 650467 PE15 8AE E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Web: www.mortonandhall.co.uk		
		
Savage Developments Ltd		
Project	Proposed Development North of 10 Primrose Hill Doddington Cambs PE15 0SU	
Site	Proposed Site Plan Indicative Layout	
Drawn	R.Popworth	Date of Issue
checked		
Date	Sept 2025	Drawing Number
Scale	As Shown	H10741/02x

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F/YR25/0730/PIP

**Applicant: Savage Developments Ltd      Agent : Morton & Hall**

**Land North of The Quadrant, Primrose Hill, Doddington**

**Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Application Previously Deferred by Committee**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application was heard at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was deferred to obtain clarity as to whether the applicant wished to proceed with the proposal providing 2 x workplace dwellings.
- 1.2 The application as originally submitted included 'occupational dwellings' within the description on the application form and referenced this in the supporting statement. The application was advertised as purely for residential development and legal advice received indicated that such a detailed matter could not be included within a PIP application as there is no power to secure this via condition. The applicant has subsequently clarified that the application is for two dwellings only with no workplace element forming part of the proposal.
- 1.3 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Indicative built development is partially shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. This proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.4 Although the density of development proposed is low and could be accommodated physically on the site, this does not overcome the fundamental policy objections regarding location and use. Other technical details, including highway safety, would be addressed at the second stage (Technical Details Consent), though no objections have been raised by the highways authority at this stage.
- 1.5 Therefore, the proposed development fails to comply with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the site's location remains unsuitable for residential development in principle.
- 1.6 Accordingly, this application is recommended for refusal.

## 2 UPDATE

2.1 The application was presented at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 where it was agreed to defer the application to obtain clarity around the issue of the application providing workplace dwellings, as set out in the Executive Summary. This has now been clarified that the application is purely for two dwellings with no workplace element included. Following receipt of this further consultation has been undertaken. Contained within Appendix A is the Officer's original committee report.

### Consultations

2.2 Following a further consultation period consultee response have been received from Natural England, Environmental Health, Highways and Environmental Services. Natural England, Environmental Health and Highways have no further additions to their previous responses.

### Public representations

2.3 No further representations.

## 3 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Further to the assessment set out above it is not considered that there are any changed circumstances which would overcome or address the other previously recommended reasons for refusal concerning the extension beyond the village boundary, flood risk and lack of a sequential test.

## 4 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1.	The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2.	The site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3; Policy LP12 Part A (j) seeks to ensure that developments would not put people or property in dangers from identified risks, such as flooding. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seek to steer developments to the areas with the least probability of flooding and development will not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.  The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to

demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding and as such the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.

**Applicant: Savage Developments Ltd**

**Agent : Mr R Papworth**  
**Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

**Land North Of The Quadrant, Primrose Hill, Doddington, Cambridgeshire**

**Permission in Principle for 2 x dwellings**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation.**

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## **5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of two dwellings on Land North of the Quadrant, Primrose Hill outside the developed footprint of Doddington.
- 1.2 Under Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, the site is considered to be in an 'Elsewhere' location, where new housing is only supported if it is demonstrably essential to a rural-based enterprise. No such justification has been provided. The development would therefore be in direct conflict with the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Indicative built development is partially shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. This proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.4 Although the density of development proposed is low and could be accommodated physically on the site, this does not overcome the fundamental policy objections regarding location and use. Other technical details, including highway safety, would be addressed at the second stage (Technical Details Consent), though no objections have been raised by the highways authority at this stage.
- 1.5 Therefore, the proposed development fails to comply with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the site's location remains unsuitable for residential development in principle.
- 1.6 Accordingly, this application is recommended for refusal.

## **6 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is located outside of the settlement footprint of Doddington. The site is situated to the west of Primrose Hill and is in agricultural use. Adjacent development consists of a commercial building to the south, and a dwelling of 'exceptional' design approved under reference F/YR21/0015/F on the opposite side of Primrose Hill. An 'exceptional' design dwelling is an exemption from normal rural residential policy and is supported by Paragraph 84 (previously Paragraph 80) of the NPPF. Arable fields are located to the north and west of the site. The site is bordered by established trees and hedging to the eastern frontage with open boundaries to the east, south and west.
- 2.2 The site topography slopes away from the highway with a drain located to the eastern frontage of the site. The majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 with the rear of the site located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. A eastern frontage drain is subject to a low, medium and high annual likelihood of surface water flooding, however, this drain whilst immediately adjacent to the site frontage is outside of the red line boundary.

## **7 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 A location plan and an indicative site layout (although not a requirement of a PiP application) accompany this submission. The indicative site layout proposes a new 5.5 metre wide shared access road to the north of the site leading to two dwellings with detached work units. The dwellings shown face onto Primrose Hill with large rear gardens containing a pond and planting around the site boundaries.
- 3.2 The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this 'first stage' establishes whether a site is suitable in principle only, and assesses the 'principle' issues, namely; (1) Location (2) Use, and (3) Amount of development proposed
- 3.3 Should this application be successful the applicant will have to submit a Technical details application covering all the other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle does not constitute the grant of planning permission.
- 3.4 The applicant is only required to submit a completed application form, a plan which identifies the land to which the application relates (drawn to scale and with a north point) and the application fee.
- 3.5 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:  
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

## **8 SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 No relevant site history.

## **9 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Doddington Parish Council – 04 November 2025**

*Objection - Location. This part of Primrose Hill, being a significant distance from the developed boundary of Doddington, is open countryside where any proposed development needs to be fully justified by special circumstances. None have been provided to support these two PIP applications and the applications therefore conflict with FDC's Policy LP3. In addition, there is a conflict with policy LP12 as both developments would have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding countryside.*

*Access. This section of Primrose Hill has a speed limit of 60mph whether traffic has left Doddington travelling towards Chatteris or heading towards Doddington from Chatteris. Traffic needing access to or from the development under application F/YR25/0730/PIP will initially join Dykemoor Drove, a badly maintained track, before joining Primrose Hill. This area of Primrose Hill has no street lighting or a footpath along the roadway to cater for pedestrians. These dwellings together with their occupational units will create additional traffic movements thereby increasing the risk of accidents on this busy, fast road.*

*Workplace Units. No justification has been given that demonstrates there is a need for workplace units in Doddington. Similar developments to those being suggested have been built in Manea and Chatteris. Over the time since their development a significant number of them have been converted into residential use by the dwelling or are now used as residential annexes for relatives.*

## **5.2 Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage Board – 30 October 2025**

The application involves development near to the Board's 20m byelaw strip - *During the decision-making process both the applicant and your Council must acknowledge the close proximity of important watercourses and/or associated maintenance access strips to the application site.*

## **5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways Officer – 23 October 2025**

No objection - *The applicant is seeking to construct two new private residential dwellings, accessed off the highway along Dykemoor Drove. In principle I have no objections to the proposal. However, this application only seeks the approval in principle of a development at this location. As such this non objection by the highway authority does not supersede any future comments or requirements made by the highways authority for the permission of a vehicle access from the highway at this location.*

## **5.4 Natural England – 17 October 2025**

No objection.

## **5.5 Environment Agency – 10 October 2025**

No objection – Consult the IDB and assess against the Sequential Test.

## **5.6 Fenland District Council – Environmental Health – 10 October 2025**

No objection.

## **5.7 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Two communications of objection have been received. Both objectors are from Primrose Hill in Doddington.

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
In a countryside location.	This will be addressed in the Location section.
No information to justify loss of agricultural land.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
There is no local or national policy related to workplace homes.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
Other workplace homes in the district have been converted into annexes or single storey dwellings.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
No evidence of demand.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
New dwellings in the area are a replacement dwelling and a dwelling of outstanding design.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
Speed limit is 60mph so not in a built-up settlement.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Poor visibility at proposed access due to frontage trees.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Site is unlit.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.
Site is not served by a footpath.	This will be addressed in the Matters Raised During Consultation section.

Seven communications of support have been received. Three are from Doddington, on Benwick Road, Turf Fen Lane and Askham Row. Two are from Chatteris, on Gull Way and Lode Way. One supporter is from Williams Way in Manea and one from Brewin Avenue in March. The nearest supporter is 700 metres away from the proposal site.

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
The dwellings are near an existing business	This will be addressed in the Location section.
The dwellings are near a new development	This will be addressed in the Location section.
There is a need for occupational dwellings.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
The housing should be for local residents	This will be addressed in the Use section.
The housing will help retain local entrepreneurs and professionals.	This will be addressed in the Use section.
There is a housing shortage in the country.	This will be addressed in the Use section.

## 10 STATUTORY DUTY

6.1 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).

## 11 POLICY FRAMEWORK

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Context Paragraph: 012 (Reference ID: 58-012-20180615). The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission but can advise applicants on the decision notice, where Permission in Principle is granted, what they would expect to see at Technical Details stage.

### **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Nature

Uses

Homes and Buildings

### **Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

LP4 – Housing

LP5 – Meeting Housing Need

LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy

LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District

LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP19 – The Natural Environment

### **Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014**

DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

### **Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016**

#### **Emerging Local Plan**

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

LP1: Settlement Hierarchy

LP2: Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development

- LP4: Securing Fenland's Future
- LP5: Health and Wellbeing
- LP7: Design
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## 12 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount**

## 13 BACKGROUND

9.1 The proposal is an application for Permission in Principle to develop the site for 2 dwellings. The Permission in Principle route has 2 stages: the first stage (or Permission in Principle Stage) establishes whether the site is suitable in principle and assesses the principle issues namely:

- (1) Location
- (2) Use, and
- (3) Amount of development proposed

And the second (Technical Details Consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are addressed. Technical details consent would need to be applied for should the application be granted.

9.2 Evaluation of a PIP must be restricted to the issues highlighted above; even if technical issues are apparent from the outset these can form no part of the determination of Stage 1 of the process. Accordingly, some matters raised via statutory bodies may not be addressed at this time.

## 14 ASSESSMENT

### Location

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) identifies Doddington as being a 'Growth Village'. For these settlements, development and new service provision either within the existing urban area or as a small village extension will be appropriate albeit of a considerably more limited scale than that appropriate to the Market Towns.

10.2 Policy LP12 identifies that to receive support, the site must be in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village, defined as the continuous built form of the village and excludes individual buildings and groups of dispersed, or intermittent buildings, that are clearly detached from the continuous built-up area of the settlement. The Local Plan does not rely on defined settlement boundaries but rather requires a physical assessment to be made to determine whether or not a

site is within a village for the purposes of Policy LP12. This results in a situation where a site could be considered in general terms to be part of the village but not be in the village for the purposes of the spatial strategy. It is considered that the site is visibly separated from the edge of the built-up settlement of Doddington by approximately 1 km when travelled by road.

10.3 Policy LP5 sets out the housing targets for the District and the Council has undertaken a full assessment of the Five Year Housing Land Supply in the District and has concluded that the Council is able to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide for more than Five Years' worth of housing against the Council's identified requirements . This is a material consideration and means that any application for new development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

10.4 It is apparent, that in the case of the application site, it is clearly detached from the remainder of Doddington by agricultural fields and thus outside the continuous built form of the settlement. The majority of the surrounding area is agricultural in use and rural in nature. As such the proposal would constitute development in an 'Elsewhere' location as defined under LP3 which seeks to restrict that to essential rural based development. The proposal is therefore in conflict with Policies LP3 and LP12.

10.5 The site comprises of approximately 0.63ha of Grade 3 Agricultural land as defined by DEFRA (Defra Spatial Data Download) and classified as very good.

10.6 Policy LP12 ((i) states that development should not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land or if so comprehensive evidence is provided to justify the loss. Para 187 of the NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a) and para 188 (footnote 65) advises that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

10.7 Having regard to the wider DEFRA mapping site, it is acknowledged that a significant majority of the Fenland District falls within the BMV land with only the urban areas of the main Market Towns, the Kings Delph and Morton's Leam areas and the north of March including the prison area falling within the lower grades. As such, it is recognised that there are very few areas of poorer quality agricultural land, and it would not be possible therefore for Fenland to meet its housing demands without developing areas of BMV land.

10.8 This does not however confer that all agricultural land should be developed, especially where it relates more to open countryside than to the settlement and Officers consider that this is the intention of LP12, Part A (c), supported by the preamble at paragraph 4.7.1 of the Fenland Local Plan. An assessment however should be made as to the relationship of the land to the open countryside, in comparison to the built envelope of the settlement. As stated in the section above, the application site is considered to relate more to the open countryside than the built form, though it is acknowledged that 0.63ha is not significant in the context of BMV land within Fenland.

10.9 There is a bus stop located 300 metres to the south which can provide a public transport link to good and services in Doddington, Chatteris and beyond. However,

the surrounding area is unlit and is not served by a footpath. As such it is not considered to be reasonably or sustainably linked to Doddington.

10.10 It is noted that the Agent has advised of other occupational / workplace developments having been approved at Charlemont Drive, Manea, as well as George Way and Albert Way in Chatteris. Each application must be determined on its own merits. Notwithstanding this basic principle, it is considered that the sites are materially different in that these dwellings are considered to be within the established settlement. Additionally, no justification has been provided as to why workplace dwellings are essential in this unsustainable location. To allow workplace dwellings in this location would set a harmful development precedent that would urbanise an area of open countryside that is over 1 kilometre by road from the edge of the built up settlement of Doddington.

10.11 The site lies within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Indicative built development is partially shown in flood zones 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding. This proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.12 As per Policy LP3, development not falling into one of the categories set out in the settlement hierarchy will fall into the “elsewhere” category and will be restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services or to minerals and waste development. Whilst the application is for two “occupational dwellings”, the application does not state that these are specifically in relation to any of the activities defined by Policy LP3. Development of this site would introduce residential development into the open countryside, which inherently does not respect the rural character. It would result in an unacceptable urbanisation and set a precedent for future development, further eroding the open character of the area and introducing development into an area at risk of flooding.

### **Use**

10.13 The site is situated close to existing development in the open countryside, however as stated above, it will be contrary to Policy LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy and Policy LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District. The introduction of residential workplace units and associated paraphernalia is considered to erode the character and appearance of the open countryside. It is therefore considered that the site is not acceptable to use for new dwellings.

10.14 In addition, whilst perhaps being a matter more appropriate for consideration at Technical Consent stage, the location of the site for commercial activity and the established dwellings does raise potential issues around noise and whether a high quality residential environment would ultimately be created.

10.15 Supporters of the proposal state that there is a need for occupational dwellings, however, no supporting information has been provided to demonstrate this unsustainable location has sufficient demand for workplace homes. Additionally, no existing or proposed businesses have been identified to fill the workplace units. One letter of support states that the housing should be for local residents, however, there is no mechanism to secure this. Supporters also state that the

housing will help retain local entrepreneurs and professionals, however, that does not justify development in an unsustainable location in Flood Zone 3.

### **Amount of Development Proposed**

- 10.16 The application seeks Permission in Principle for two dwellings on a site of 0.63ha which will equate to a density of approximately 4 dwellings per hectare. This is low density and could comfortably be accommodated on-site without being considered an overdevelopment of the site. However, it is difficult to make a direct comparison to other dwellings in the vicinity as they are low in number and do not contain workplace unit buildings. The detailed layout and design will be for consideration at the Technical details stage. In terms of consideration of amount, the proposal is acceptable.
- 10.17 An objection has been raised as to the size of the proposed dwellings, however, the proposed design is indicative, and therefore no planning weight can be given to these comments at this stage of the planning process.

### **Matters Raised During Consultation**

- 10.18 It should be noted that a number of supporting letters have commented noting that the provision of two dwellings will not impact on highway safety or increase congestion. Conversely, objector comments have expressed concern with visibility, as well as the condition of Dykemoor Drove. These comments are noted, and this does form a material consideration as part of this assessment, but as discussed above there are no concerns, in respect of highway matters to the amount of development proposed.
- 10.19 It is also noted that the Parish Council have raised concerns in terms of congestion and the associated Highways impact of the proposal, however, Cambridgeshire County Highways have raised no concerns at this stage, with any additional details being secured at the Technical Details stage or subject of a subsequent application. Further given that the proposal relates to two dwellings this quantum of development, is unlikely to result in sufficient harm, to justify the refusal of the application contrary to the Highway Authority's recommendation.
- 10.20 Comments have been raised about impact on wildlife however, this is a matter which is not attributed material weight at this stage of the application process. Additional public comments raise overlooking concerns, however, this is a matter that could only be determined at the Technical Details stage. Some comments points to the national housing shortage, however, this issue would not justify development in an unsustainable location with a risk of flooding.

## **15 CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 As indicated above it is only location, use and amount of development that may be considered at the first 'permission in principle stage' and it is considered that the location and use of the site for residential development is unacceptable due to the conflict with the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan.
- 11.2 The principle of development is not supported as the site does not adjoin the built form and whilst the proposal is for workplace dwellings there is no planning justification for such a dwelling in this location.

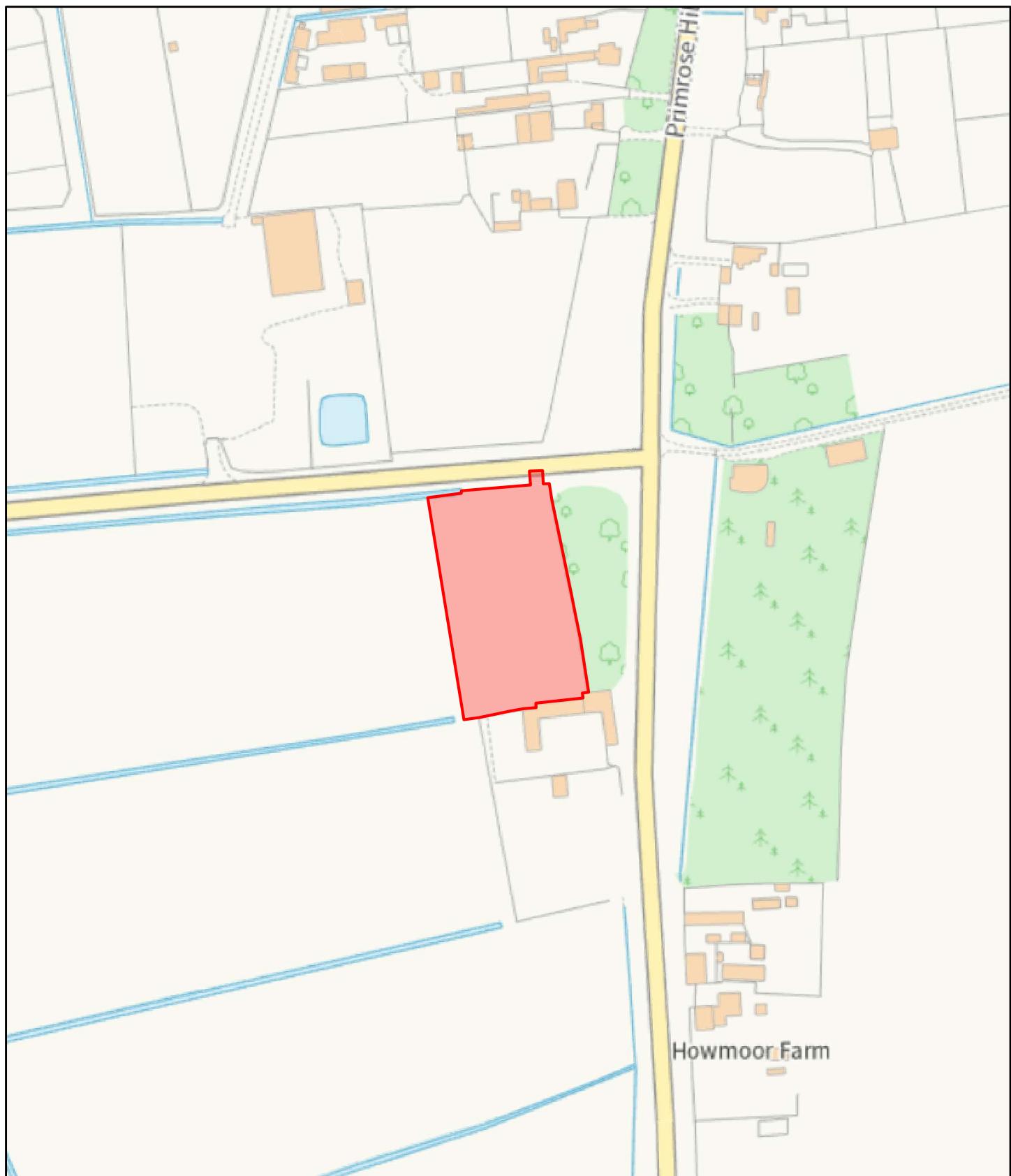
11.3 The site is partially located in Flood Zone 2 and 3. The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding.

11.4 As such the recommendation is one of refusal.

## 16 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** Permission in Principle for the following reasons:

1.	<p>The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Doddington. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside. It would likely set a precedent for future development, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. The development proposal will be in an 'elsewhere' location contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). As such any residential development on this site will be contrary to the above policy considerations and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.</p>
2.	<p>The site lies partially within in Flood Zones 2 and 3; Policy LP12 Part A (j) seeks to ensure that developments would not put people or property in dangers from identified risks, such as flooding. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF seek to steer developments to the areas with the least probability of flooding and development will not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.</p> <p>The application is not accompanied by a sequential test and as such insufficient assessment has been undertaken and inadequate information submitted to demonstrate that it is not possible for the development to be located on a site with a lower risk of flooding and as such the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.</p>

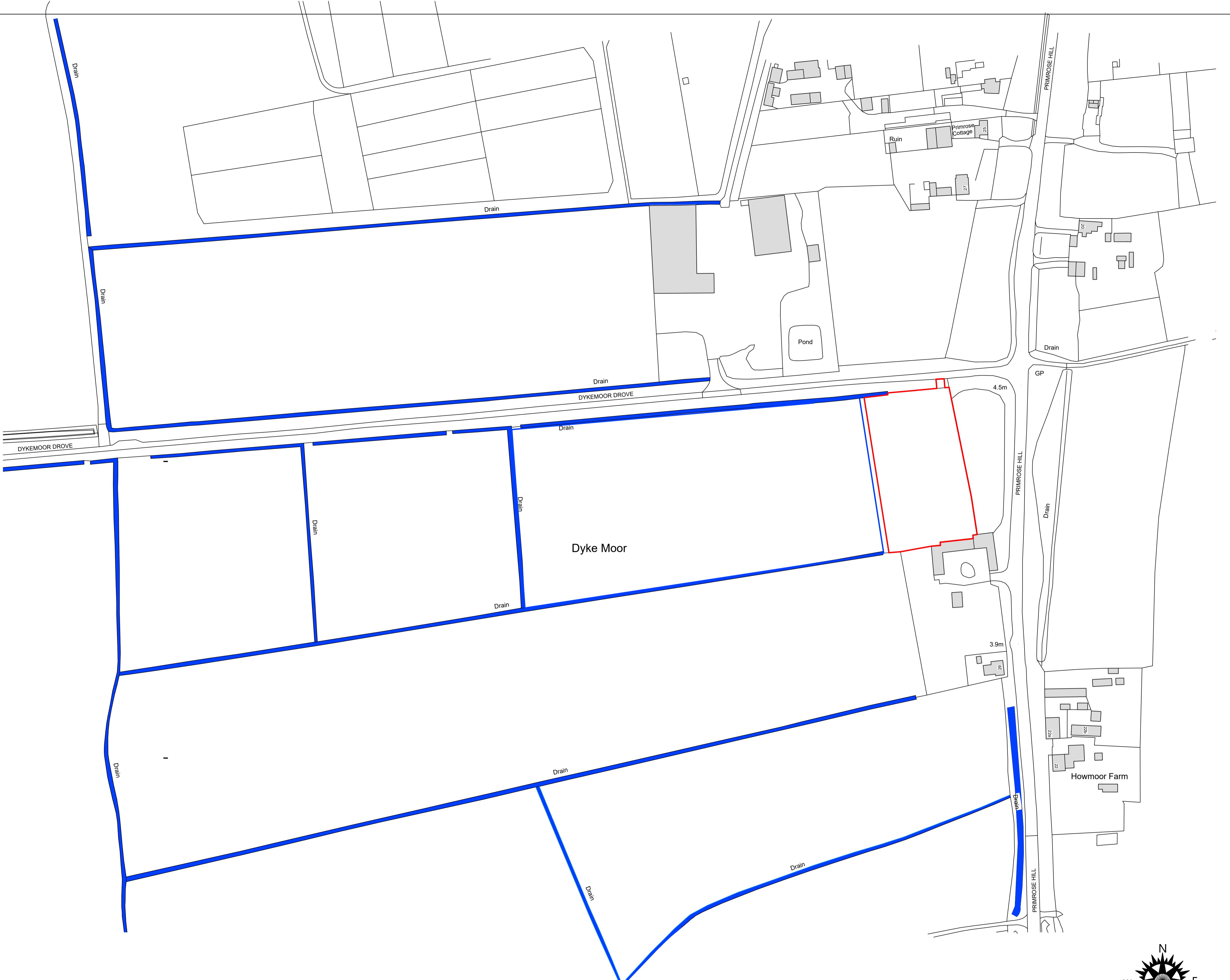


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 Fenland District Boundary

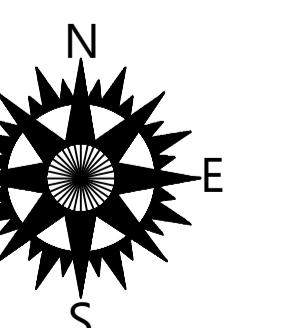
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Fenland District Council



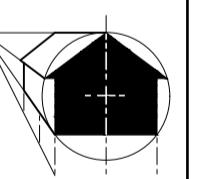
LOCATION PLAN (1:1250)

1:250 METERS



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Please read, if in doubt ask. Change nothing without consulting the Engineers.  
Contractor to check all dimensions on site before work starts or materials are ordered. If in doubt ask. All dimensions are in mm unless stated otherwise.  
Where materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they shall be of the standard appropriate to the work and suitable for the purpose stated in or reasonably to be inferred from the drawings and specification. All work to be in accordance with good building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that the recommendations define the quality of the finished work. Materials, products and workmanship to comply with all British Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, BS or EC marks.  
All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.  
The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.  
All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details

A	CLIENTS COMMENTS	AUG 25
	REVISIONS	DATE

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 TITLE  
 Location Plan

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DATE July 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
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