

---

**F/YR25/0149/FDC**

**Applicant: Mr Mark Greenwood  
Fenland District Council**

**Agent: Mrs Fiona Bage  
ELG Planning**

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

**Demolition of existing building and erect a max 2.4m fence in a conservation area**

**Officer recommendation: Refuse**

**Reason for Committee: Fenland District Council are the applicants**

---

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission and relevant demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, to demolish the existing former Barclays Bank building and erect 2.4m high fencing surrounding the site following demolition.
- 1.2 The building has been purchased by Fenland District Council with the express intention of demolition and Government funding has been secured for this under the Future High Street Fund. The funding arrangements that have led to this approach are not considered material to the assessment of the application, having regard to the Local Planning Authority's legal duties.
- 1.3 It is acknowledged that there is an opportunity for redevelopment of this site to make a positive contribution to the heritage assets and the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole, hence the demolition of the building could be accepted if it is demonstrated that its replacement would provide a high quality development, with an active ground floor use, which enhances its local setting and the historic and local built environment and would provide a public benefit which would outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the loss of the existing building.
- 1.4 However, in this case there is no proposal for redevelopment of the site, the application merely seeks permission to demolish the existing building and erect a 2.4m high fence around it; there are no proposals for remediation of the site or a meanwhile use, which may mitigate impact of the loss of the existing structure. The building is not considered such an eyesore as to warrant its demolition without any safeguards in place as to its future development.
- 1.5 There is no evidence of a marketing exercise to otherwise demonstrate re-use is unviable or unattractive to other potential commercial enterprises. There is no evidence as to why it is necessary to demolish the building prior to a scheme for its redevelopment having been secured, and without a proposed scheme and/or evidence of the viability of such a scheme, no evidence that the demolition of the building would result in the site being viable in future.
- 1.6 Therefore, there is a distinct risk that the site would remain vacant with fencing to

secure it indefinitely, which would be more harmful to the character of the area than current appearance and condition of the site. This would result in unjustified harm to the historic environment, the character and visual amenity of the area and the vitality and viability of the town centre, which has recently been subject to substantial regeneration, involving the introduction of large extents of public realm, immediately in front of the application site and along Broad Street, enhancing the setting and appreciation of the War Memorial and Conservation Area as a whole and which would be detracted from should this development be approved. As such, there are not considered to be any public benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the identified harm.

- 1.7 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF 2024 states that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. However, these can only be used in certain circumstances as set out in Paragraph 57 and 58 of the NPPF 2024 and Regulation 122 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). It could not be considered reasonable to prevent the demolition of the building until such time as a redevelopment proposal came forward, or secure redevelopment of the site, as such, there is no planning mechanism to secure the future of the site should this application be approved.
- 1.8 As set out above, it is considered that there are no benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the harm identified, and there is no planning mechanism to secure the future of the site should this application be approved, as such, the application is recommended for refusal.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site consists of the former Barclays Bank, a 'Brutalist' style building part 2-storey, part single-storey, located on a prominent corner plot between Broad Street and Grays Lane, immediately abutting the recently regenerated public realm on Broad Street. To the rear of the building is a former car park, partially surrounded by a brick wall where the temporary public toilets have been sited. The site is located within March Conservation Area and situated between the Grade II listed buildings of the War Memorial on Broad Street and the Old Bank House on West End, there are also a number of non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity. It is within the Town Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area and constitutes Primary Shopping Frontage. The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of surface water flooding.

## **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission and relevant demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, to demolish the existing building and erect 2.4m high solid timber fencing surrounding the site following demolition, the finish of which is to be agreed.
- 3.2 The building has been purchased by Fenland District Council with the express intention of demolition and Government funding has been secured for this under the Future High Street Fund, however there are currently no proposals for future redevelopment of the site.
- 3.3 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:

#### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

There have been numerous applications on this site, predominately for advertisements, and the most recent application is detailed below:

F/YR21/0753/F	Removal of signage and ATM from existing building	Granted 27/8/21
---------------	---	--------------------

#### 5 CONSULTATIONS

##### 5.1 Town Council

*Recommendation: Approval*

##### 5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology

*We have reviewed the documents and have no comments or recommendations based on the archaeological implications or the demolition of the existing building. We would however welcome reconsultation with regards to any future development plans.*

##### 5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways

Initial comments were received on 17/3/25 which queried whether the existing access would be retained, following clarification the following comments were received on 11/7/25:

###### *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*

*Following clarification from the applicant that the existing access will remain required, the previously requested condition is no longer necessary. Instead, please append the following condition:*

*No demolition (including any temporary or enabling works, for example ground works and vegetation clearance) shall commence on site until a Demolition Traffic Management Plan (DTMP) has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority. The Local Highway Authority requests that the DTMP be a standalone document separate from any Environment Construction Management Plan or the like, as the risks and hazards associated with construction traffic using the public highway are quite different from those associated with the internal site arrangements. The principal areas of concern that should be addressed are:*

- 1. Movements, control, and timings of muck away lorries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted public highway).*
- 2. Contractor parking, during the demolition phase shall be within the curtilage of the site and not on the street. If the site has limited potential to provide on-site car parking the applicant must provide details of how any off-site parking will be controlled, e.g., a managed list of contractor/employee vehicles parking on-street and their drivers telephone contact details.*
- 3. Movements, control, and timings of all deliveries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted public highway).*

*4. Control of dust, mud, and debris in relationship to the functioning of the adopted public highway, including repairs to highway damage caused by site vehicles. Please include wording that the adopted public highway within the vicinity of the site will also be swept within an agreed time frame as and when reasonably requested by any officer of the Local Highway Authority and that any highway damage (including verges) will be repaired in a timely manner at no expense to the Local Highway Authority.*

*The DTMP must relate solely to how the operation of the site will affect the adopted public highway, other information for example noise levels, is not a highway matter and should not be included within the plan. The approved DTMP shall be adhered to throughout any demolition and construction periods for the proposed development.*

*Reason: in the interests of highway safety.*

#### **5.4 Designing Out Crime Team**

*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 the immediate location and March East / West Ward for the last 2 years. I would consider the proposed location to be an area of medium risk to the vulnerability to crime.*

*It is important that security and crime prevention are considered and discussed at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the security of buildings, homes, amenity space and the environment provide a safe place for people living, 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 can advise that having considered the proposal; I have no objections but have the following recommendations during the demolition / construction phase.*

*Construction Phase Security (Advisory Note) – There are many crimes which occur during the construction phase of a development; the most significant include theft of plant equipment, materials, tools, and diesel fuel. Secured by Design recommend that security should be in place prior and during the construction phase. This should include robust perimeter fencing of the site and a monitored alarm system (by a company or individual who provide a response) for site cabins and those structures facilitating the storage of materials and fuel.*

*The developer is advised that the name of the contractor and signage with an emergency contact telephone number should be displayed at several places on the perimeter fencing. This allows the public to report suspicious circumstances. Mobile or part time CCTV systems can be used as an effective aid to the security of a site and can act as a deterrent to criminal activity. This office will always provide specific advice regarding site security if required. Security lighting will CCTV systems, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the surveillance footage, especially during nighttime hours.*

## **5.5 Historic England**

*Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application.*

*We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/>*

## **5.6 Ecology Officer (FDC)**

Initial comments were received on 7/3/25 which set out the requirement for further bat surveys, upon receipt of this the following comments were provided:

- I would accept the results of the bat emergence survey that the building to be demolished does not support a bat roost. No further level of survey is required prior to deciding the application.*
- The application is exempt from the requirement to provide a net gain in biodiversity because the proposals will not affect any substantive areas of semi-natural habitat.*

## **5.7 Arboricultural Officer (FDC)**

*I have no objection.*

## **5.8 Environmental Health (FDC)**

*Thank you for the opportunity to view the attached documents and comment on this application. Environmental Health raise no objection to this application. We would like to raise the following observations.*

*In note the age of the building and therefore recommend that prior to demolition the operator undertakes an asbestos survey of the property. Should materials containing asbestos be found, then a risk assessment for safe removal of these materials and disposal should be undertaken.*

*Due to the proximity of this property and residents, businesses and pedestrians, the site should operate effective dust and noise management practices. During demolition should there be any visible emissions of dust leaving the boundary of the demolition site, mitigation measures should be implemented.*

*Please find the following informatives for your consideration.*

### **A.1. Asbestos**

*The existing structure, which is formed of asbestos containing materials, should be removed by a licensed asbestos removal contractor. However, if the amount of asbestos is such that a licensed waste removal facility is prepared to receive a minimal amount of such material without the need for a contractor to remove it, then this requirement can be waived.*

*If a Licensed Asbestos Removal Contractor is required to be engaged, then an Asbestos Removal Work Plan should be submitted to and approved by Fenland District Council before any work on the removal of the structure commences. The applicant is to advise Fenland District Council which course of action is to be taken in either event and must ensure that they notify Fenland District Council's environmental health team on completion of works.*

## *A.2. Demolition*

*No demolition work should take place outside the hours of 08:00 hours and 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 08:00 hours to 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. There should be adequate protection for nearby residents from dust created in the demolition phases of the development and adequate and effective means of suppression of dust must be provided.*

*Prior to the demolition phase commencing, at least 7 days advanced notice is given to the occupiers of the immediate neighbouring properties.*

*Reason: To protect the amenity of the adjoining properties*

## **5.9 Conservation Officer (FDC)**

*The site is host to the former Barclays Bank premises in Broad Street, March. The site is prominent both within the streetscene and within the setting of a host of designated and non-designated heritage assets.*

*The building is highlighted within the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a negative frontage that has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene and March Conservation Area.*

*Despite the above and the public's mixed views on such architectural style. Brutalist architecture, as this building presents itself as an example of, is increasingly becoming rare and many good examples nationally have been lost to redevelopment. Despite the often stark contrast between brutalist style buildings and historic buildings of more traditional form in towns and cities, these buildings represent the varied urban grain that makes up the character of our streets and are examples of an important architectural movement at a particular point in time. Such buildings with comparatively simple form and materials often present themselves as 'ugly' owing to weathering and lack of maintenance. Clean and simple lines don't look well when they are unmaintained and cluttered, for which these buildings are often burdened.*

*Despite mixed opinions, it would be difficult to defend the loss of a building that is identified in the CAAMP as a negative feature. The concern here principally lies with prominent demolition within a conservation area being approved without a forward plan for future development on the site.*

*Justifications have been put forward in the form of a viability report, as well as information surrounding the former bank vault that is said to be difficult to remove without affecting the structure of the building. However, this does not overcome the principal concern of the risk associated with demolition with no forward proposals, thus rendering the site vacant.*

*Although a vacant building does nothing for the vitality and character of a streetscene, a long-term 'missing tooth' in terms of a vacant site has the potential for much greater impact. This is evidenced by the harm caused by a number of long-term vacant sites in both March and Wisbech.*

*Although there is a clear wish from the applicants that the demolition is simply a building block to getting the site sold and redeveloped, there are indeed no guarantees.*

*Permission to demolish without a future plan, essentially renders the site vacant, with risks to the character and appearance of the conservation area for an unknown period of time.*

*It is considered that the decision makers need to be fully aware of this potential for long-term harm, which would ultimately be contrary to national and local planning policy and guidance in relation to heritage assets.*

*The proposed plan shows a tall hoarding fence to be installed around the perimeter of the site to screen the development. If the council decides to approve this application, conditions should be applied to ensure that details of colour can be agreed. An appropriate hoarding colour would likely reduce the negative impact to some degree in the short term.*

*On the basis of the unknowns highlighted above, there are concerns with approving demolition with no forward plan, which would be contrary to national and local planning policy. It is not clear from the submission documents where the public benefit lies and how this outweighs the identified harm of a vacant site with no forward plan.*

*As such, the proposal is not considered to be in accordance with LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan, Section 16 of the NPPF and S72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*

**RECCOMENDATION:** *Objection*

## **5.10 Local Residents/Interested Parties**

One objection has been received, from New Road, Chatteris regarding the following:

<b>Objecting Comments</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
The application should be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for determination as the applicant is Fenland District Council and concerns that Fenland District Council will be dealing with it's own application to develop the site.	This application does not relate to a County matter so cannot be determined by Cambridgeshire County Council.
The building should be made available for rental publicly for a period of time, not automatically demolished	The material considerations in relation to the loss of the building will be assessed in the sections below.

## **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)

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**

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

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

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 – C1, C2

Identity - I1, I2

Nature – N3

Public Spaces -P1, P2, P3

### **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

LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail

LP9 – March

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

### **March Neighbourhood Plan 2017**

TC1 – Primary Shopping Frontages

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021**

Policy 14 - Waste management needs arising from residential and commercial Development

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

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

DM6 – Mitigating Against Harmful Effects

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



## **March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2008**

### **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  
LP5: Health and Wellbeing  
LP7: Design  
LP11: Community Safety  
LP15: Employment  
LP16: Town Centres  
LP20: Accessibility and Transport  
LP21: Public Rights of Way  
LP23: Historic Environment  
LP24: Natural Environment  
LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain  
LP27: Trees and Planting  
LP32: Flood and Water Management

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Town Centre and Economic Growth**
- **Heritage**
- **Amenity and Health and Wellbeing**
- **Highways**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Ecology and Trees**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

## **9 ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 9.1 Policy LP1 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 is a high level, overarching policy supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development; planning applications that accord with the policies within the Local Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 9.2 There are no specific policies in relation to demolition, however the proposal relates to a building formerly used as a bank, which is in a prominent location within the Town Centre boundary, Primary Shopping Area and constitutes Primary Shopping Frontage. It is located within March Conservation Area and within the setting of Listed Buildings, hence the following policies are the primary points of consideration:
- 9.3 Policy LP6 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to support development where it would strengthen the role of Market Towns, enabling these to adapt and provide a wide range of facilities in a high-quality environment. Town Centre uses will be supported within the Primary Shopping Frontage providing there is no impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole and community facilities and

commercial uses at ground floor level within the Town Centre boundary should be retained unless evidence indicates why the use can no longer be justified.

- 9.4 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect and deliver high quality environments, ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, improves the character of the local built environment and avoids adverse impacts.
- 9.5 Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment. All development proposals that would affect any designated or undesignated heritage asset are required to describe and assess the significance of the asset and/or its setting, identify the impact of the proposed works on the special character of the asset and provide a clear justification for the works, especially if this would harm asset or setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.
- 9.6 Hence, the principle of demolition may be accepted subject to compliance with all relevant policies and material considerations.

#### **Town Centre and Economic Growth**

- 9.7 Policy LP6 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to support development where it would strengthen the role of Market Towns, enabling these to adapt and provide a wide range of facilities in a high-quality environment. Town Centre uses will be supported within the Primary Shopping Frontage providing there is no impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. Community facilities and commercial uses at ground floor level within the Town Centre boundary should be retained unless evidence indicates why the use can no longer be justified.
- 9.8 Policy TC1 of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 relates predominantly to the retention of retail in the Primary Shopping Frontages, however the justification for this policy sets out that it seeks to ensure the future viability of the town centre, recognising the importance of providing local residents with shops and associated facilities as an important contribution towards sustainable development objectives.
- 9.9 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF 2024 seeks to support the role that town centres play at the heart of their communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption and promote their long-term vitality and viability. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF 2024 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 9.10 The building subject of this application is a former bank (Use Class E) which is understood to have closed in 2021, and the site is within the Town Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area and constitutes Primary Shopping Frontage.
- 9.11 Whilst the former use of the building would be considered a community facility, the introduction of the wider ranging Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) in 2020, and the fact that there are no conditions restricting the use of the building, means the building has the option of being utilised by a variety of commercial uses without the need for planning permission and as such its use as a community facility could not be retained.
- 9.12 The building has been purchased by Fenland District Council with the express intention of demolition and Government funding has been secured for this under the Future High Street Fund, however there are currently no proposals for future

redevelopment of the site, hence the scheme would result in the loss of a building which could be reused for a town centre use without a replacement being secured. The funding arrangements that have led to this approach are not considered material to the assessment of the application, having regard to the Local Planning Authority's legal duties.

- 9.13 Policy LP6 seeks to retain commercial uses at ground floor level unless evidence indicates why this can no longer be justified. The application is accompanied by a viability assessment in respect of the retention and conversion of the existing building as a wholly commercial premises, and alternatively with use of the first floor as residential, and this concludes that retention and conversion is unviable in either case. The supporting documentation raises a number of constraints to conversion, including the vault which would require removal, the presence of asbestos and the upgrades required in order to meet current Building Regulations standards. It is acknowledged that redevelopment of the site has potential for significant improvement, in terms of the usability of the building, potential housing provision and in respect of the quality of the environment and character of the area.
- 9.14 However, the building is not considered such an eyesore to warrant its demolition without any safeguards, or indeed any proposals, in place as to its future redevelopment. There is no evidence of a marketing exercise to otherwise demonstrate re-use is unviable or unattractive to other potential commercial enterprises. There is no evidence as to why it is necessary to demolish the building prior to a scheme for its redevelopment having been secured, and without a proposed scheme and/or evidence of the viability of such a scheme, no evidence that the demolition of the building would result in the site being viable in future.
- 9.15 Therefore, there is a distinct risk that the site would remain vacant with fencing to secure it indefinitely, which would be more harmful to the character of the area than the current appearance and condition of the site. This would result in unjustified harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre, which has recently been subject to substantial regeneration, involving the introduction of large extents of public realm, immediately in front of the application site and along Broad Street. As such, the development is considered contrary to the aforementioned policies.

#### **Heritage and Character of the area**

- 9.16 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal duty to have special regard to preserving a listed building or its setting when considering whether to grant planning permission which affects a listed building or its setting; and in deciding whether to grant planning permission for development in a conservation area, the Council has a legal duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 9.17 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect and deliver high quality environments, ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, improves the character of the local built environment and avoids adverse impacts.
- 9.18 Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment. All development proposals that would affect any designated or undesignated heritage asset are required to describe and assess the significance of the asset and/or its setting, identify the impact of the proposed works on the special character of the asset and provide a

clear justification for the works, especially if this would harm asset or setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.

- 9.19 DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014 seeks to ensure that as a minimum, development provides high quality and attractive public places, which should aim to improve and reinforce positive features of local identity.
- 9.20 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF 2024 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 9.21 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 seeks to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 9.22 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF 2024 states that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 9.23 Paragraph 210 of the NPPF 2024 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 9.24 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF 2024 states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 9.25 Paragraph 213 of the NPPF 2024 states that any harm to, or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 9.26 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF 2024 states 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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 9.27 Paragraph 217 of the NPPF 2024 states that local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
- 9.28 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF 2024 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.
- 9.29 The application site consists of the former Barclays Bank, a 'Brutalist' style building located on a prominent corner plot at the terminus of the continuous built form on the western side of Broad Street, and immediately abutting the recently regenerated public realm, which has opened up this area and results in this site appearing even more prominent in the street scene. The site is located within March Conservation Area and situated between the Grade II listed buildings of the War Memorial, now within the public realm on Broad Street in front of the site, and the Old Bank House on West End, there are also a number of non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity.
- 9.30 The March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2008 (CAAMS) identifies the application site as an enhancement opportunity which is currently a negative frontage that has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and March Conservation Area. Notwithstanding this a vacant site could not be considered an enhancement and would fail to meet the objectives of the CAAMS, furthermore, Brutalist architecture is becoming increasingly rare and these buildings represent the varied urban grain that makes up the character of our streets and are examples of an important architectural movement at a particular point in time.
- 9.31 It is acknowledged that there is an opportunity for redevelopment of this site to make a positive contribution to the heritage assets and the town centre as a whole, hence the demolition of the building could be accepted if it is demonstrated that its replacement would provide a high quality development, which enhances its local setting and the historic and local built environment and would provide a public benefit which would outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the loss of the existing building.
- 9.32 However, in this case there is no proposal for redevelopment of the site, the application merely seeks permission to demolish the existing building and erect a 2.4m high fence around it; there are no proposals for remediation of the site or a meanwhile use which may mitigate impact of the loss of the existing structure. The building is not considered such an eyesore to warrant its demolition without any safeguards, or indeed any proposals, in place as to its future development. There is no evidence of a marketing exercise to otherwise demonstrate re-use is unviable or unattractive to other potential commercial enterprises. There is no evidence as to why it is necessary to demolish the building prior to a scheme for its redevelopment having been secured, and without a proposed scheme and/or evidence of the viability of such a scheme, no evidence that the demolition of the building would result in the site being viable in future.
- 9.33 Therefore, there is a distinct risk that the site would remain vacant with fencing to secure it indefinitely, which would be more harmful to the character of the area than current appearance and condition of the site. This would result in unjustified harm to the historic environment and the character and visual amenity of the area, which has recently been subject to substantial regeneration, involving the introduction of large extents of public realm, immediately in front of the application

site and along Broad Street, enhancing the setting and appreciation of the War Memorial and Conservation Area as a whole and which would be detracted from should this development be approved. As such, there are not considered to be any public benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the identified harm and the development is considered contrary to the aforementioned policies.

- 9.34 Notwithstanding this, it is noted that the building appears physically attached to 8 Broad Street to the north and limited information has been provided regarding the proposed fencing, hence should the application be approved it would be necessary to impose conditions in this regard to secure further details of how it is proposed to demolish/make good No.8 and the appearance, management and maintenance of the proposed fencing.

### **Amenity and Health and Wellbeing**

- 9.35 Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to ensure that proposals positively contribute to creating a healthy and safe environment, reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and avoid adverse impacts.
- 9.36 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to protect and deliver high quality environments, ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, improves the character of the local built environment and avoids adverse impacts.
- 9.37 Paragraph 135 f) of the NPPF 2024 seeks to 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.
- 9.38 To the immediate north and attached to the building it is proposed to demolish, is the commercial unit of 8 Broad Street and residential properties of 27 and 29 Grays Lane, and located to the west on the other side of Grays Lane is the residential property of the Old Bank House. The site is located within the town centre, immediately abutting the public realm, as such it is necessary to consider the impact of the proposal on the amenity of residents, workers, businesses and the general public using this area.
- 9.39 No information has been provided regarding how it is proposed to demolish the existing structure, how long this is likely to take, any mitigation measures proposed to prevent adverse impacts or how the subsequent waste will be dealt with. The Environmental Health team have raised concerns regarding dust and noise management, asbestos and hours of demolition.
- 9.40 Should the application be approved, it is acknowledged that there will be some adverse impact and disruption during the course demolition and the removal of materials, however given the scale of the site this is likely to be only for a short time, would therefore not create a significant adverse impact and one that could be adequately mitigated by the imposition of conditions to secure further details in respect of the demolition, dust and noise management and hours of demolition. Environmental Health also recommend imposing a condition regarding asbestos management as this is likely to be present on site, however given that this is covered by separate legislation it is not considered reasonable or necessary to impose.
- 9.41 Given that the site would become vacant following demolition there is potential for this to become targeted by anti-social behaviour, and the Designing Out Crime

Team have also raised concerns regarding potential criminal activity during the demolition phase. As such, should the application be approved it is considered necessary to impose a condition with regards to security measures, including the timeframe for erecting the proposed fencing; any lighting will have to have regard to its impact on ecology given the location of the site close to the river. Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with the aforementioned policies.

### **Highways**

- 9.42 Policy LP15 states that development proposals should demonstrate that they provide well designed, safe and convenient access for all.
- 9.43 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 2024 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 9.44 The application does not seek to alter the existing access, and the proposal will have no impact on the highway network once demolished. The Local Highway Authority have no objections to the proposal, however, should the application be approved it is recommended that a condition is imposed to secure a Demolition Traffic Management Plan (DTMP) to mitigate any potential detrimental impact on the highway network during demolition. Therefore, subject to condition, the proposal is considered to comply with the aforementioned policies.

### **Flood Risk**

- 9.45 Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and Chapter 14 of the NPPF 2024 seek to steer developments to the areas with the least probability of flooding and seek to ensure that development can be made safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere
- 9.46 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; the site is not at risk of surface water flooding. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with the aforementioned policies.

### **Ecology and Trees**

- 9.47 Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 seek to conserve, enhance and promote biodiversity and the natural environment.
- 9.48 The site is close to a number of trees on adjoining land, albeit on the opposite side of Grays Lane, the Council's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted and has no objections or recommendations regarding mitigation, as such, it is considered that the surrounding trees would not be detrimentally affected should the development be approved.
- 9.49 The application is accompanied by a biodiversity checklist for which all answers are no expect for bats and a great crested newts (the site is in a green zone).
- 9.50 Given that there are no natural features on site it is not considered that it could be a potential habitat or dispersal route for great crested newts and as such no further information is considered necessary in this regard.

- 9.51 With regards to bats, the application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment and subsequent Phase 2 Bat Survey, which concluded that no evidence of roosting activity was captured during the nocturnal bat activity survey and therefore there are currently no further constraints with respect to roosting bats. A precautionary approach to works was however recommended, and should the application be approved a condition can be imposed to ensure that the recommendations set out are adhered to. Therefore, subject to condition, the proposal is considered to comply with the aforementioned policies.

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

- 9.52 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.
- 9.53 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 pre-development biodiversity value is too low to require statutory net gain.

## **10 CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 The policies in the NPPF (December 2024) when taken as a whole constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (December 2024) lists the three dimensions to sustainable development; the economic, social and environment objectives, and sets out that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development a proposed development should jointly and simultaneously deliver net gains across each of these key objectives.
- 10.2 To be sustainable, development must strike a satisfactory balance between the applicable economic, social considerations. This stance is supported by Policy LP1 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, which is a high level, overarching policy supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 10.3 It is acknowledged that there is an opportunity for redevelopment of this site to make a positive contribution to the heritage assets and the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole, hence the demolition of the building could be accepted if it is demonstrated that its replacement would provide a high quality development, with an active ground floor use, which enhances its local setting and the historic and local built environment and would provide a public benefit to which would outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the loss of the existing building.
- 10.4 However, in this case there is no proposal for redevelopment of the site, the application merely seeks permission to demolish the existing building and erect a 2.4m high fence around it; there are no proposals for remediation of the site or a meanwhile use which may mitigate impact of the loss of the existing structure. The building is not considered such an eyesore to warrant its demolition without any safeguards in place as to its future development.
- 10.5 There is no evidence of a marketing exercise to otherwise demonstrate re-use is unviable or unattractive to other potential commercial enterprises. There is no



evidence as to why it is necessary to demolish the building prior to a scheme for its redevelopment having been secured, and without a proposed scheme and/or evidence of the viability of such a scheme, no evidence that the demolition of the building would result in the site being viable in future.

- 10.6 Therefore, there is a distinct risk that the site would remain vacant with fencing to secure it indefinitely, which would be more harmful to the character of the area than current appearance and condition of the site. This would result in unjustified harm to the historic environment, the character and visual amenity of the area and the vitality and viability of the town centre, which has recently been subject to substantial regeneration, involving the introduction of large extents of public realm, immediately in front of the application site and along Broad Street, enhancing the setting and appreciation of the War Memorial and Conservation Area as a whole and which would be detracted from should this development be approved. As such, there are not considered to be any public benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the identified harm.
- 10.7 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF 2024 states that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. However, these can only be used in certain circumstances as set out in Paragraph 57 and 58 of the NPPF 2024 and Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). It could not be considered reasonable to prevent the demolition of the building until such time as a redevelopment proposal came forward, or secure redevelopment of the site, as such, there is no planning mechanism to secure the future of the site should this application be approved.
- 10.8 As set out above, it is considered that there are no benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the harm identified, and there is no planning mechanism to secure the future of the site should this application be approved, as such, the application is recommended for refusal.

## 11 RECOMMENDATION

**Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1	<p>Policy LP6 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, Policy TC1 of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and paragraphs 85 and 90 of the NPPF 2024 seek to support development where it would strengthen the role of Market Towns, enabling these to adapt and provide a wide range of facilities in a high-quality environment, ensure the future vitality and viability of the town centres, and recognising the role that town centres play at the heart of their communities as an important contribution towards sustainable development objectives.</p> <p>The application fails to justify the loss of a commercial use on a site within the Town Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area and constituting Primary Shopping Frontage, and there is no proposal for redevelopment of the site, resulting in unjustified harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre. As such, the development is considered contrary to the aforementioned policies.</p>
2	<p>Policy LP16 and Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014 and Paragraphs 131, 135, 208, 210, 212, 213, 215, 217 and 219 of the NPPF 2024 seek to protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment and deliver high quality environments and attractive public places,</p>

<p>ensuring that development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and the character of the area, enhances its local setting, avoids adverse impacts and that any harm to or loss of significance of designated heritage assets should have clear and convincing justification and be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal.</p>
--

<p>The application fails to justify the demolition of a building located on a prominent corner plot within March Conservation Area and in the setting of two Grade II listed buildings. There is no proposal for redevelopment of the site, and the resultant vacant and fenced off site would result in unjustified harm to the historic environment and the character and visual amenity of the area. As such, it is considered that there are no public benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the harm identified and the development is therefore considered contrary to the aforementioned policies.</p>
---

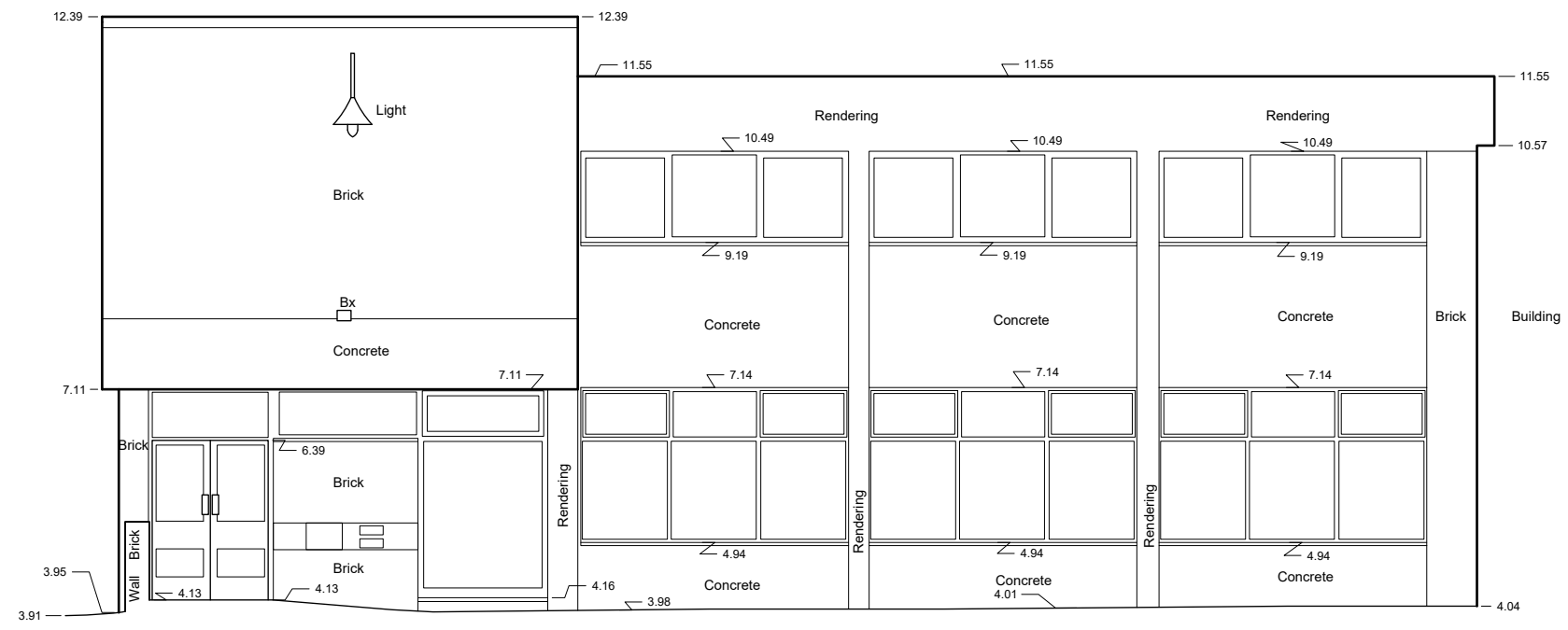




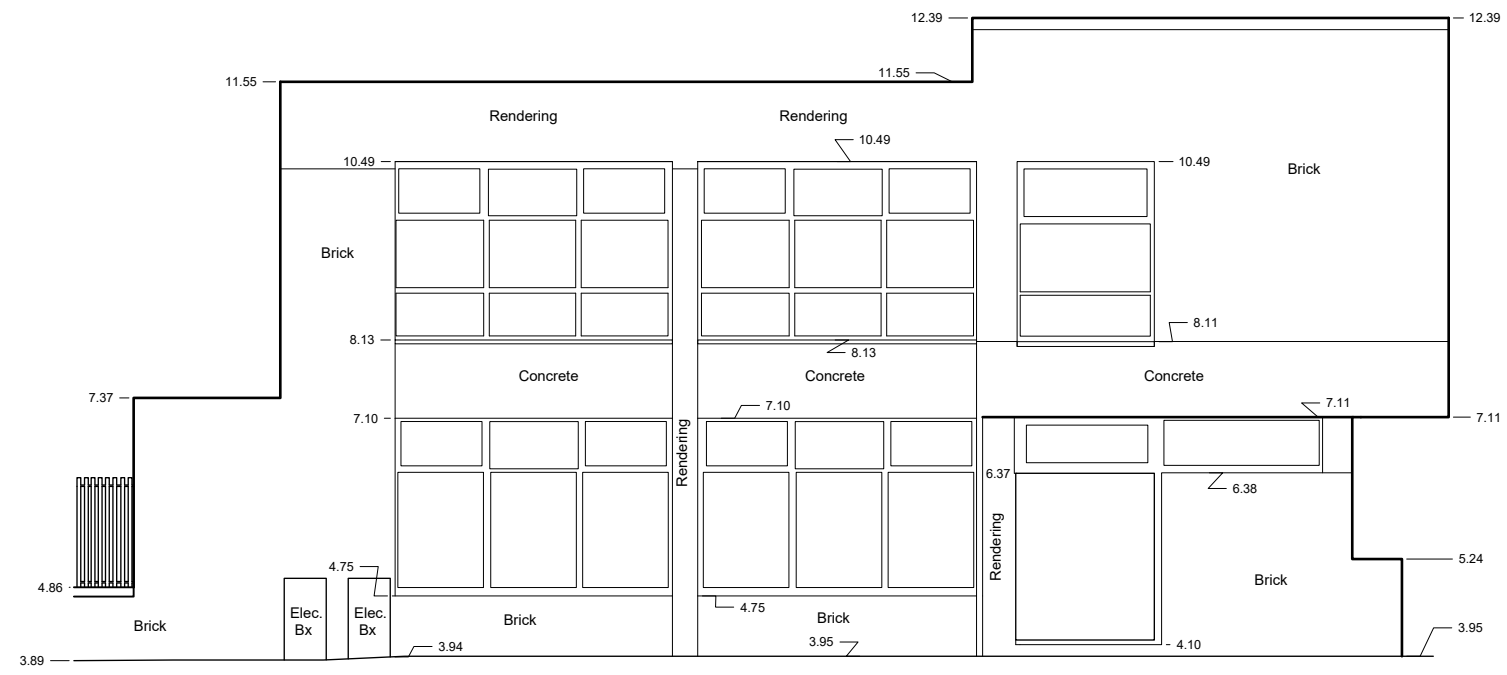




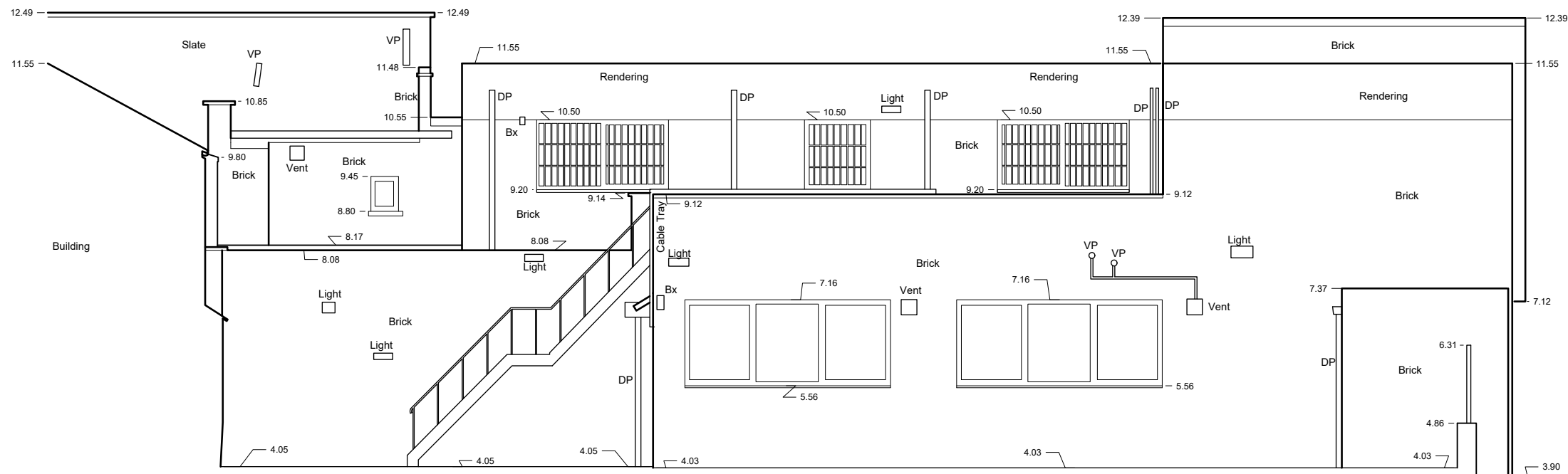




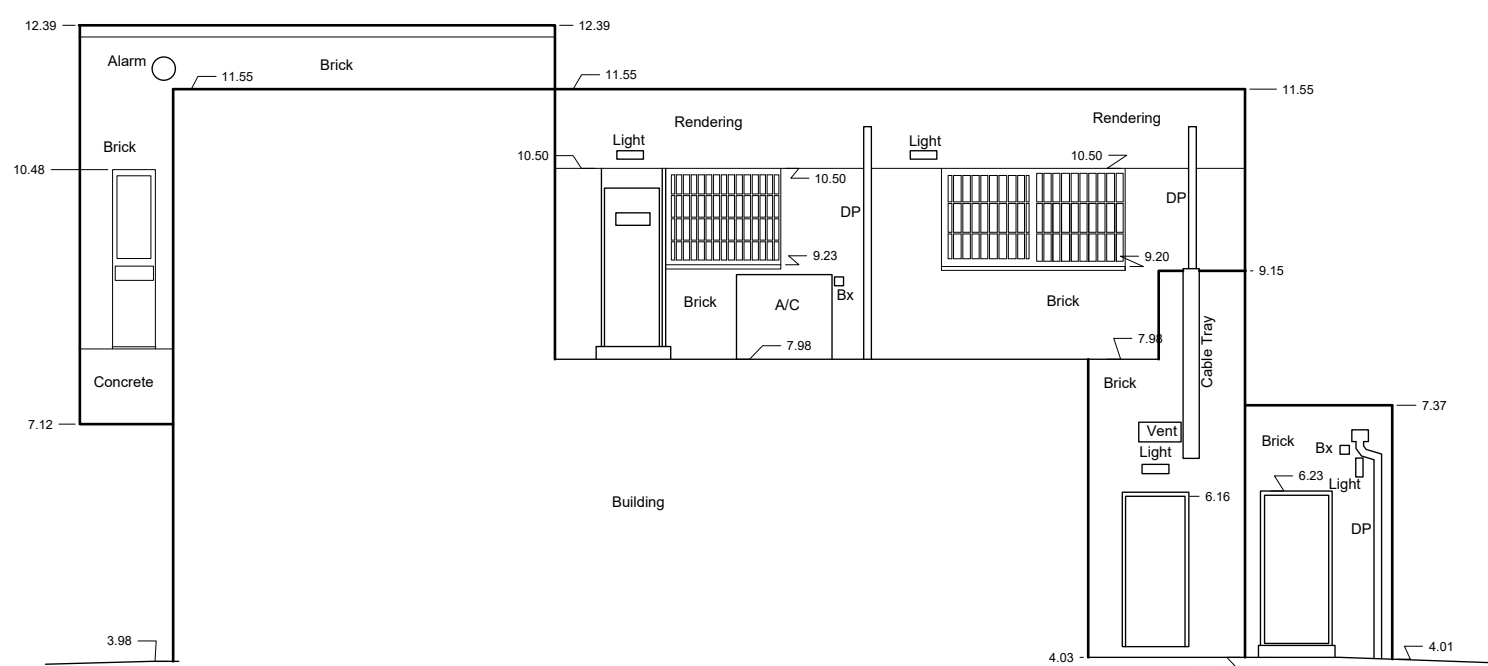
Elevation 1  
Above OS Datum Line 1.00m



Elevation 2  
Above OS Datum Line 1.00m



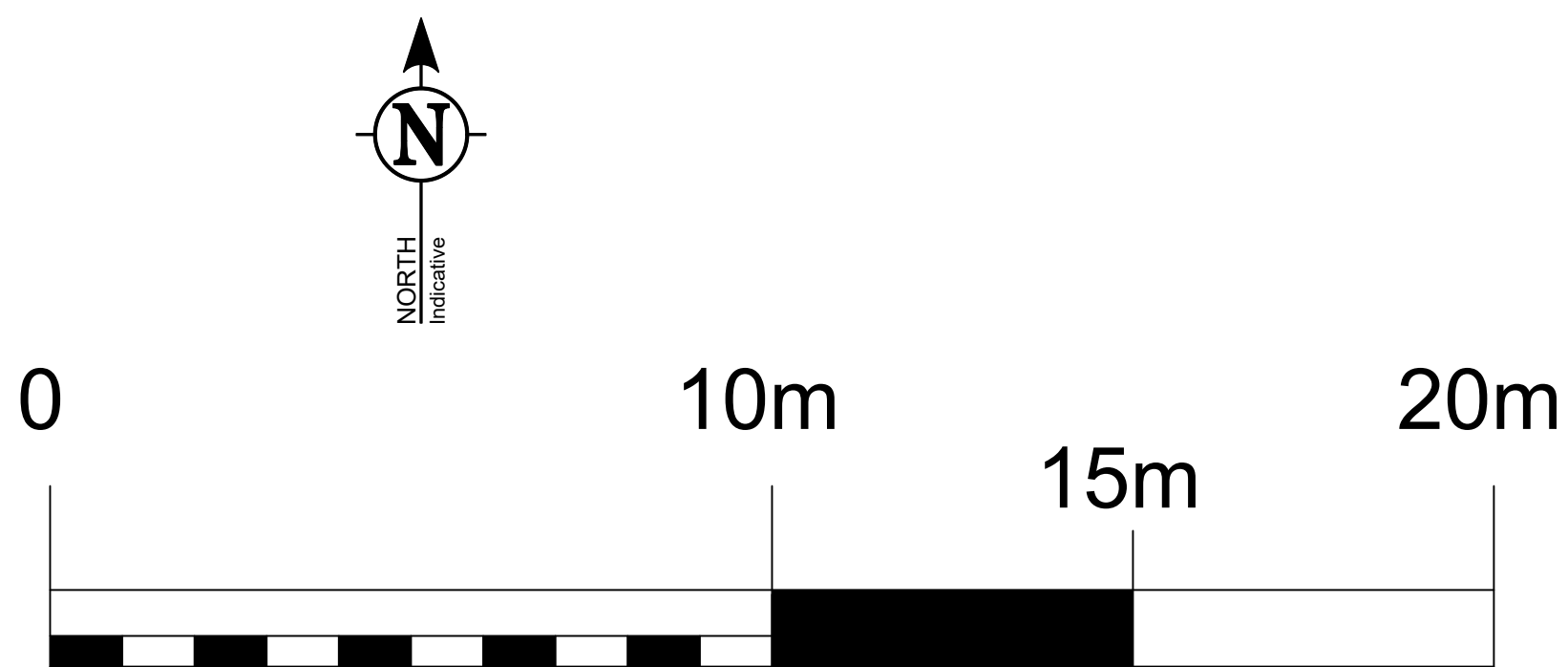
Elevation 3  
Above OS Datum Line 1.00m



Elevation 4  
Above OS Datum Line 1.00m



Elevations Layout



Scale Bar

## TOPOGRAPHICAL & MEASURED BUILDING SURVEYS

### ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS

AH	Arch Head Height	ER	Earth Rod	RSD	Roller Shutter Door
AB	Air Brick	ET	EPA Transformer	RSJ	Roller Steel Joist
AR	Assumed Route	FB	Flower Bed	SI	Sign Post
AV	Air Valve	FBD	Floor Board Direction	SP	Arch Spring Point Height
BB	Beltina Beacon	FH	Fire Hydrant	SV	Stop Valve
BH	Bow Hole	FL	Floor Level	SW	Surface Water
BL	Bed Level	FP	Flag Pole	SY	Cable Stay
BO	Bollard	FW	Foul Water	Tac	Tackle Paving
BP	Brace Post	GG	Gully Grate	TH	Telecom Cover
BS	Bus Stop	GV	Gas Valve	TH	Trail Pit
BU	Bush	HH	Head Height	THL	Threshold Level
BW	Barbed Wire Fence	IC	Inspection Cover	TL	Traffic Light
BX	Box (Utilities)	IL	Invert Level	T/W	Top of Wall
CB	Close Board Fence	IR	Iron Railings	TP	Telegraph Pole
CH	Cill Height	KO	Kern Outlet	TS	Traffic Signal Cover
CL	Cover Level	LP	Lamp Post	TV	Cable TV Cover
C/L	Chain Link Fence	MH	Manhole	UB	Universal Beam
C/L	Ceiling Level	MP	Marker Post	UC	Unknown Cover
Col	Column	NS	Name Board	UMG	Unmade Ground
C/P	Chestnut Paling Fence	OHL	Overhead Line (approx)	USB	Under Side Beam
CR	Cable Riser	Pan	Panel Fence	UTL	Unable To Lift
CW	Chicken Wire	PS	Post Box	UTS	Unable To Survey
DC	Drainage Channel	PM	Parking Meter	VP	Vent Pipe
DH	Door Head Height	PO	Post	WB	Waste Bin
DI	Disipitated	PR	Post & Rail Fence	WH	Wing Hole
DP	Down Pipe	P/W	Post & Wire Fence	WL	Water Level
DR	Drain	P/W	Partition Wall	WM	Water Meter
EBx	Electric Box	RE	Roofing Eye	WO	Warm Out
EC	Electric Supply Cover	RL	Ridge Level	RP	Reflector Post
EL	Eaves Level	RS	Road Sign	RS	Road Sign
EP	Electric Pole				

### DRAWING NOTES

#### Topographical Surveys

Trees are drawn to scale showing the average canopy spread. Descriptions and heights should be used as a guide only.

All building names, descriptions, number of storeys, construction type including roof line details are indicative only and taken externally from ground level.

All below ground details including drainage, voids and services have been identified from above ground and therefore all details relating to these features including: sizes, depth, description etc will be approximate only. All critical dimensions and connections should be checked and verified prior to starting work.

Detail, services and features may not have been surveyed if obstructed or not reasonably visible at the time of the survey.

Surveyed physical features may not necessarily represent the legal boundary line.

#### Measured Building Surveys

Measurements to internal walls are taken to the wall finishes at approx 1m above the floor level and the wall assumed to be vertical.

Cill heights are measured as floor to the cill and head heights are measured from cill to the top of window.

#### General

The contractor must check and verify all site and building dimensions, levels, utilities and drainage details and connections prior to commencing work. Any errors or discrepancies must be notified to Survey Solutions immediately.

The accuracy of the digital data is the same as the plotting scale implies. All dimensions are in metres unless otherwise stated.

The survey control listed is only to be used for topographical surveys at the stated scale. All control must be checked and verified prior to use.

© Land Survey Solutions Limited holds the copyright to all the information contained within this document and their written consent must be obtained before copying or using the data other than for the purpose it was originally supplied.

**Do not scale from this drawing.**

### SURVEY CONTROL CO-ORDINATES

STATIONS	EASTINGS	NORTHINGS	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
----------	----------	-----------	-------	-------------

#### SURVEY GRID AND LEVEL DATUM

The coordinate system established for this survey is related to Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid at a single point using Smartnet, then orientated to grid north with a scale factor of 1.000.

The level datum established for this survey is related to Ordnance Survey (OS) using GPS Smartnet.

To avoid discrepancies any coordinated data used in conjunction with this survey must be derived directly from this control data.

A	Scale Bar Added	TWL	JIA	27/11/24
REV	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	APPR	DATE



# SURVEY SOLUTIONS

LAND SURVEYING  
BUILDING SURVEYING  
UNDERGROUND SURVEYING  
SITE ENGINEERING  
MONITORING

0845 040 5969  
survey-solutions.co.uk

PWICH BEDFORD COVENTRY GLASGOW LONDON MANCHESTER NORWICH  
NOTTINGHAM YEOVIL

PROJECT TITLE  
2 BROAD STREET, MARCH,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE, PE16 8TO.

DRAWING DETAIL  
MEASURED BUILDING SURVEY (ELEVATIONS)  
Sheet 1 of 1

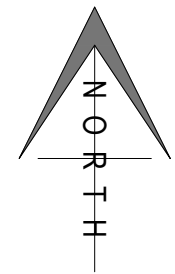
CLIENT FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	SCALE 1:100
SURVEYOR PNC	SURVEY DATE 09/11/2023
CHECKED BY MG	APPROVED BY JIA
DRAWING NUMBER 62191NOLS-03	REVISION A
DWG STATUS FINAL	ISSUE DATE 27/11/2023







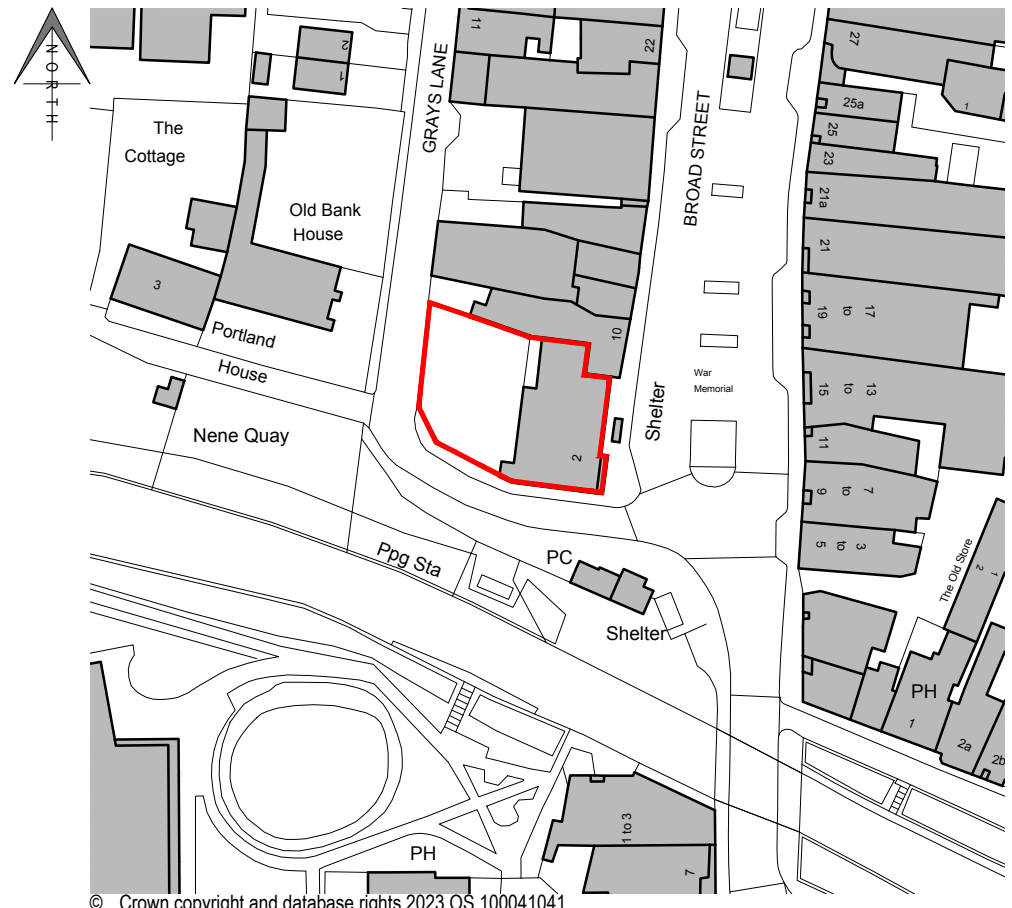
All dimensions to be checked on site and any discrepancies to be reported.  
Units shown are in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.



Site Plan - As Proposed  
0 2 4 6 8 10m  
scale - 1:1200

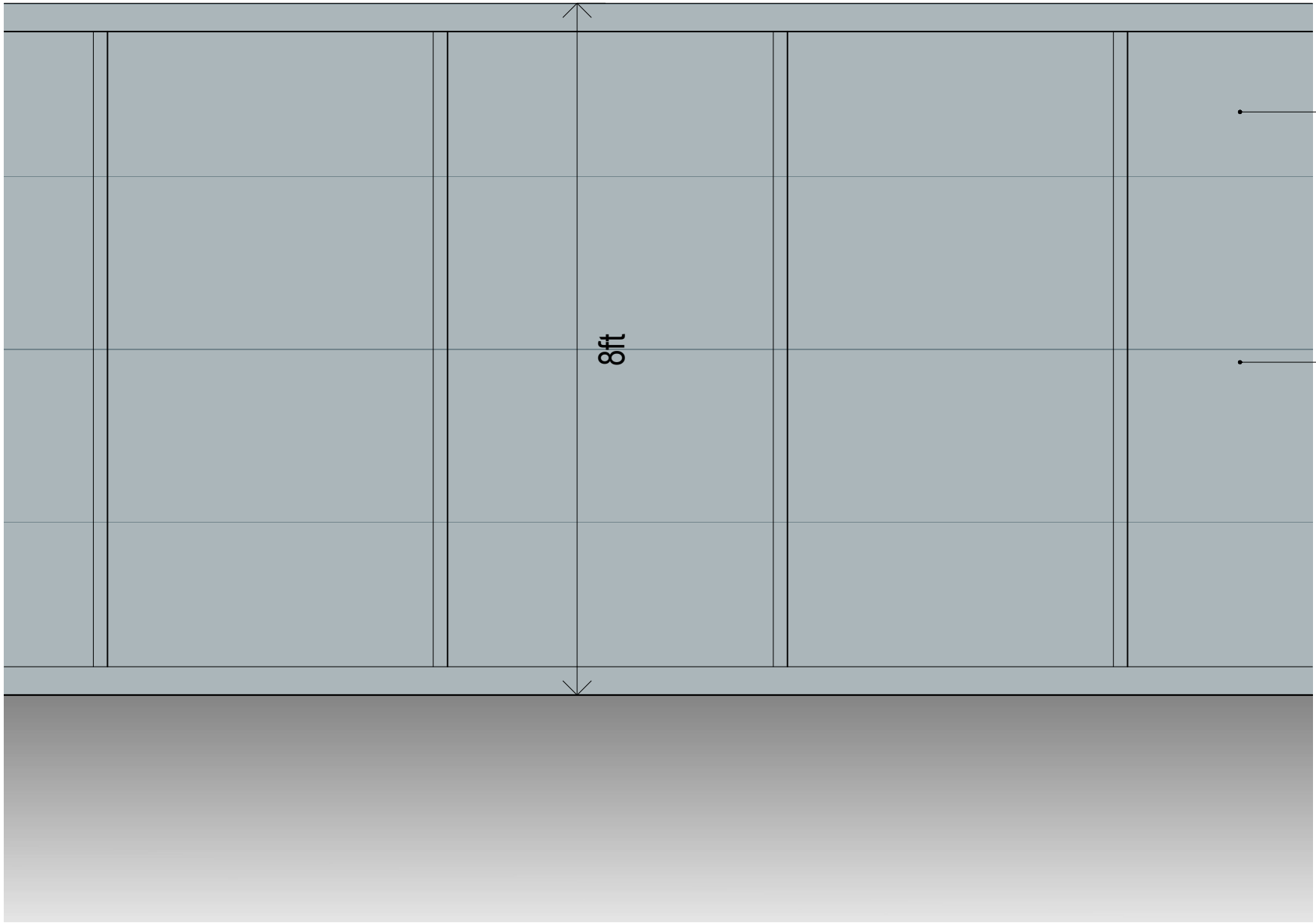
Key

- Existing tree - indicative size and location.
- Fencing - 8ft high painted solid timber fence.



Location Plan

0 10 20 30 40 50 60m  
scale - 1:1250



Fence Elevation - As Proposed

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1m  
scale - 1:20

PROJECT :  
Proposed Mixed-Used Development at 2 Broad Street, March  
for Fenland District Council

DRAWING TITLE :  
PLANNING SUBMISSION  
Post-Demolition Plan

DATE :  
Oct 24

SCALE :  
Var @ A1

SHEET :  
FD-178-P100

REV :  
-