
F/YR18/0780/F

Applicant: Mr D Creese

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

Land West Of 327, Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire

Erection of 1 x single-storey 3-bed with garage and 2 x 2-storey 3-bed dwellings

Reason for Committee: Officer recommendation is contrary to the comments of the Town Council

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal is a full application for the construction of three dwellings on the land.

The site is located within March, on land designated as being at the lowest risk of flooding, and involves the development of a currently empty plot of land.

The proposal is to be accessed from an existing private drive and the intensification of the use of this access is considered to be contrary to planning policy.

The scheme includes the construction of two-storey properties in an area where single-storey development is a key characteristic. The scheme is considered to result in harm to the character of the area contrary to planning policy.

The proposal is recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is currently scrub grassland located to the rear of 325-329 Norwood Road, surrounded on three sides by existing closeboard timber fencing, with an existing store/stable on the fourth side. To the north of the site is a bungalow accessed from Smiths Chase, which faces out over the site from two existing windows (bedroom and living room), located approximately 1.5 metres from the site boundary.
- 2.2 The fence on the southern boundary of the site is supplemented by an evergreen conifer hedge located within the gardens of the adjacent properties, approximately 3m in height.
- 2.3 On the opposite side of Prospect Road to the west are three further bungalows accessed directly from the private road.
- 2.4 The site is located in Flood Zone 1.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is for the construction of three new dwellings on the site, one single-storey and two 2-storey (utilising through-eaves dormers) semi-detached dwellings. All three properties are to be accessed from Prospect Road following revisions to the scheme, with parking provision made on the basis of two spaces per dwelling in line with the required parking standards. All three dwellings would have rear gardens compliant with the one third requirement of policy LP16. The design and access statement submitted alongside the application indicates that brick and interlocking tiles will be the primary materials of construction of the dwellings.

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR05/0680/O	Erection of 5 dwellings involving demolition of existing dwelling	Granted 28/7/05
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5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **March Town Council**

Recommend approval

5.2 **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority**

Original scheme: Geometric access details required for both proposed connections to the public highway network. Request additional details.

Revised scheme: Concern over access point between Prospect Road and Wisbech Road, which is likely to result in obstruction of the free flow of traffic on Wisbech Road and create conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. It may also result in service/delivery vehicles reversing along Prospect Road and out onto Wisbech Road. The applicant should reduce the number of plots served off Prospect Road and provide the details previously requested, or the application should be refused.

5.3 **FDC Environmental Health**

Request unsuspected contamination condition and a construction management plan, otherwise no objections.

5.4 **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

14 separate objections were received in relation to the original proposal from eight separate residences, raising the following concerns in relation to the scheme.

- Impact on privacy (during construction and after occupation)
- Devaluation of adjacent properties
- Increased noise impact in the area
- Possible ecological value of the site (nesting birds, bats, dormice etc)
- Broken domestic appliances have been buried on the land
- Japanese Knotweed is in evidence on the site
- Will not make a significant difference to local housing need
- Concern regarding pedestrian safety in relation to school routes
- Highway safety concerns
- Access alongside 327 will cause amenity issues and hamper access to meter boxes on the adjacent dwelling.
- Prospect Road is unsuitable for the additional traffic.
- Loss of light to adjacent dwellings.

- Could block access to rear parking areas for other dwellings.
- Views from garden will be spoilt.
- Parking provision may not be sufficient for need.
- Services provision, no gas available, is there sufficient foul capacity.
- Prospect Road is private and access across it is not granted. 327 Norwood Road does not have the right to access the land from the west.
- Proposal will result in more flooding in the area.
- Difficult for fire service vehicles to access the site.
- Site is at medium-high risk of surface water flooding.

5.5 Following the revisions to the scheme and the re-consultation, seven further objections from four properties, all of which had responded to the original proposal, were received. The matters identified in the objections are the same as those received in relation to the original proposal, except for the removal of concerns over the Norwood Road access.

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).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para 11: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para 12: Conflict with an up-to-date plan should not usually be granted

Para 127: Well-designed development

Para 130: Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area.

7.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a planning application

7.3 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

7.4 March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall development

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and amenity**
- **Highway safety**
- **Flood risk**

- **Other matters**

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1 The site has been subject to a preliminary enquiry in relation to development of the site for residential purposes. That enquiry provided two options for development, one of which was indicated as having the potential to gain a positive recommendation (proposing two new dwellings both accessed from Prospect Road), whilst the second was indicated as being unlikely to gain support, (also for two dwellings but both accessed between the existing host dwelling and 329 Norwood Road).
- 9.2 The current proposal increases the number of dwellings proposed on the site to three, initially proposing access to two of them along the route indicated at the pre-application stage as not being supported, although the revised drawings amend the point of access of all three properties to Prospect Road.

10 ASSESSMENT

10.1 Principle of Development

- 10.2 The application site is located within the town of March, identified in the Fenland Local Plan (2014) as being one of two primary market towns within the district, and one of the settlements within which the majority of the District's new housing is to be provided.

- 10.3 The site is within flood zone 1 and there are no historic or ecological designations that would indicate a presumption against the principle of residential development here.

10.4 Design and amenity

- 10.5 The dwellings to the south and east along Norwood Road and Wisbech Road are mainly two-storey properties, and represent the historic development along these routes. The more recent infill development to the rear of these roads is almost exclusively single-storey by contrast, including the existing dwellings accessed from Prospect Road and Smiths Chase, which are most closely associated with the application site.
- 10.6 Policy LP16 requires proposals to deliver high quality environments, listing several contributory elements to meeting this requirement, which include (amongst other things) making a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, and not adversely impacting on the amenity of neighbouring users.
- 10.7 Although the proposed two-storey dwellings on the site would be located adjacent to the boundary of other two-storey properties to the south, those dwellings would be located in excess of 20 metres from the site, with the proposed properties more closely associated with the single-storey dwellings opposite instead. In that setting, the two dwellings would appear incongruous and out of place, overwhelming the street scene with a combination of the overall height (5 metres to the eaves and approximately 8.5 metres to the ridge) and the relatively limited space between the dwellings and Prospect Road (approximately 5.5 metres). Whilst this type of relationship may be acceptable in other areas, the lack of two-storey dwellings accessed from Prospect Road and the general low level of the properties that are already in existence leads to plots 2 and 3 having a harmful effect on the character of their immediate

surroundings contrary to policy LP16. Plot 1 is more sensitively designed in this respect, retaining a single-storey height more sympathetic to the dwellings around it however the layout proposed shows the bedrooms for the dwellings located facing onto the road, set back by approximately 2 metres, which would lead to a poor privacy relationship between the dwelling and Prospect Road.

- 10.8 The proposed designs for plots 2 and 3 also show an internal layout with a landing window in the gable ends of the properties, from which it would be possible to view into the adjacent dwellings, in particular directly down the garden of the dwelling immediately to the south of the site. As a non-habitable room it would be reasonable to require this window to be obscure glazed and non-opening should the scheme be recommended for approval as there would be the potential for unacceptable overlooking of the neighbouring property if that were not the case. Although a similar window exists in the gable of plot 2 facing northwards, the impact of this is less due to the design of plot 1, although some overlooking would still be possible between the dwellings.
- 10.9 The access to plots 2 and 3 originally had the potential for a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity in relation to the scheme, however the revisions have amended this access to address these concerns.
- 10.10 **Highway safety**
- 10.11 The proposed dwellings utilise an existing access into the wider road network, however there are substantial concerns regarding the practicality of that access and its impact on the relationship between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development schemes to provide well-designed, safe and convenient access for all.
- 10.12 The plans originally submitted showed two separate accesses for the properties within the scheme, plots 2 and 3 to be accessed along the side of 327 Norwood Road along its existing private driveway, whilst plot 1 would gain access from Prospect Road. Revisions to the scheme show access to all three properties from Prospect Road, which is an unadopted private drive. Comments submitted alongside the application indicate that the owner of the site does not have permission to access the site from Prospect Road, however this is not a matter that is material to the planning decision reached on the site and is instead a matter for private negotiation between developer and owners.
- 10.13 That being said however, the application indicates access for the additional dwellings along Prospect Road, and the comments of the highways authority indicate that such an access will be required to be 5m in width for the first 10m, however such dimensions are not physically achievable on the site as it is at present. No details have been provided in relation to the dimensions of the proposed access however in light of the wider consideration of the scheme, detailed dimension plans have not been required at this time.
- 10.14 There are currently three dwellings gaining vehicular access from Prospect Road to the west of the site, and therefore an additional three dwellings gaining vehicular access at this point would result in more than five properties being accessed from the private drive, which is normally considered to be the maximum. The additional highways comments received following the revisions to the scheme set out clearly the increased impact as a result of the proposal and make it clear that the scheme does not comply with policy LP15. There is no scope to widen Prospect Road sufficiently within the current land ownership

to provide the width requested by the Highways Authority and therefore it is concluded that the scheme is unacceptable in highways terms.

10.15 Flood risk

10.16 The site is noted as being within Flood Zone 1 and therefore there is no 'in principle' opposition to its development for residential purposes. The Environment Agency website does note however that the site is at a medium to high risk of flooding from surface water; however no surface water drainage strategy accompanies the application. Given the identified risk, it would be appropriate to require such detail should permission be granted.

10.17 Other matters

10.18 Several other matters have been raised for consideration during the course of the application, which are considered as follows:

10.19 Devaluation of surrounding property and the presence of Japanese Knotweed are not material to the planning merits of the proposal, nor are the spoiling of views across the site from other properties, or the right of access along Prospect Road (which could potentially be negotiated in the event of permission being granted).

10.20 Ecological value – there is no evidence to suggest that protected species are present on the site, however should consent be granted then an appropriate survey and mitigation strategy could be required to be undertaken.

10.21 Burial of domestic appliances on the land – as a matter of principle this does not affect the granting of permission, however as per the request of the Environmental Health team during the consultation process, a condition to require an appropriate response should any unsuspected contamination be found on the site would be appropriate if the scheme is granted.

10.22 Services provision – there is no requirement for a property to have a connection to mains gas, and there is no indication that there is insufficient capacity for foul drainage within the public sewer at this location.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The relevant planning policies from the Fenland Local Plan note that the principle of residential development is to be supported in this area, and there are no specific designations on the land that indicate that this approach should be discarded and the site refused as a matter of principle. However, the proposed design of the scheme and its impact on its surroundings are detrimental to the area contrary to the relevant policies of the development plan and there are no material considerations that justify the approval of the scheme contrary to those policies.

12 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 **Refuse** for the following reasons:

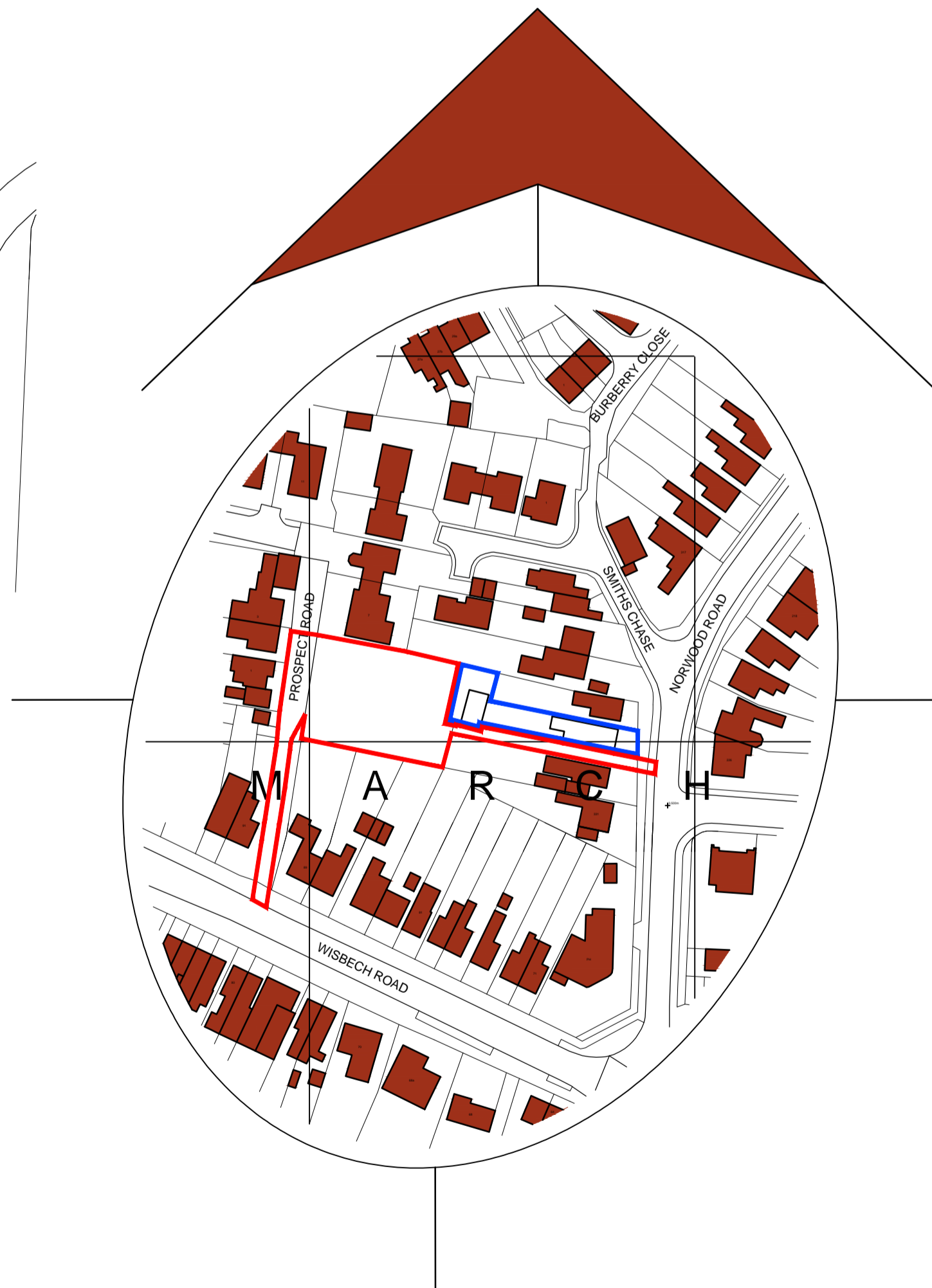
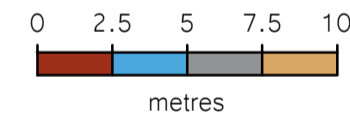
1. Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to deliver high quality environments within the District, including making a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. The proposal is for three dwellings, two of which are two-storey and the third a single-storey, within an area predominantly comprised of

single-storey properties. The two storey element of the development would appear incongruous in this context and therefore not in keeping with its surroundings, to the detriment of the character of the area. On that basis, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan

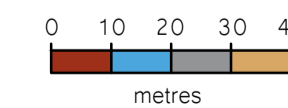
2. Policy LP16 (e) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to deliver high quality environments within the District, not adversely impacting on the amenity of neighbouring users. The scheme would be in close proximity to neighbouring residential properties and the proposed dwellings would impact on the outlook from and light received by windows to habitable rooms in those dwellings. On that basis, the proposal would be contrary to the provisions of policy LP16 (e) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
3. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development to provide well-designed, safe and convenient access for all. The proposal involves the use of a private road to access the proposed dwellings and there is insufficient space to allow the road to be upgraded to allow two-way vehicle flow at its access. The scheme would therefore result in obstruction of traffic flow and conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. On that basis the proposal fails to provide a safe and convenient access for all and has a detrimental impact on highway safety and is therefore contrary to the requirements of policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).



Site Plan
Scale: 1:250

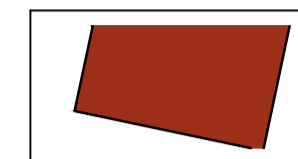
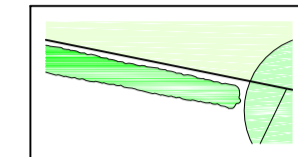
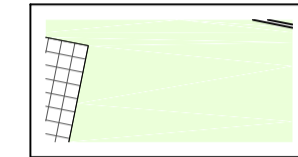
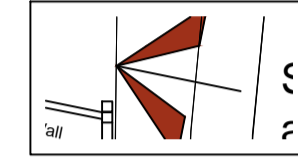
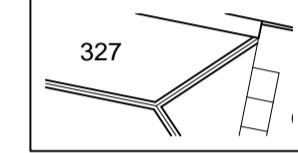


Location Plan
Scale: 1:1250



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SITE PLAN KEY

-  Un-surveyed OS buildings
-  Existing trees and vegetation
-  Proposed grass
-  Site access
-  Existing buildings surveyed

Revisions

A	Aug 2018	Clients Amendments
B	Oct 2018	Revised for planning

Status
FOR APPROVAL

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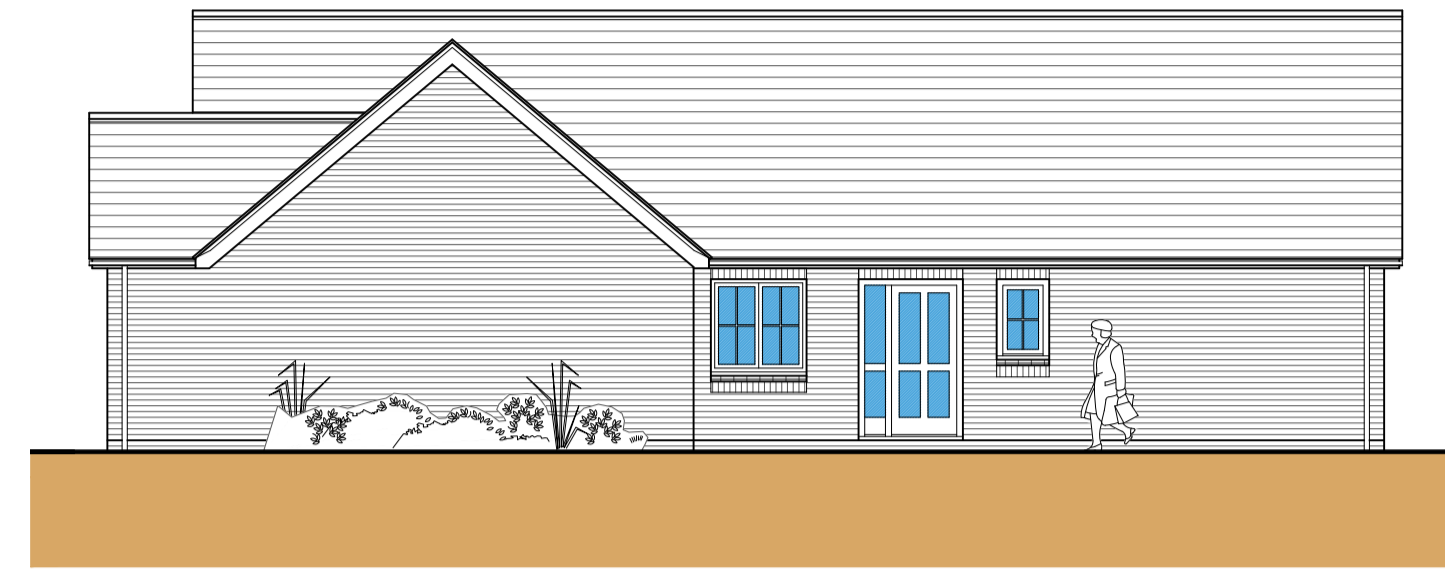
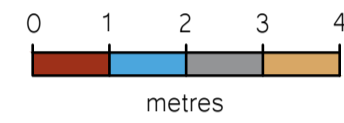
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Drawing Title Site Plan & Location Plan	Job No. SE-864 Dwg No. 20	Drawn by M.N. Revision B

Plot 1



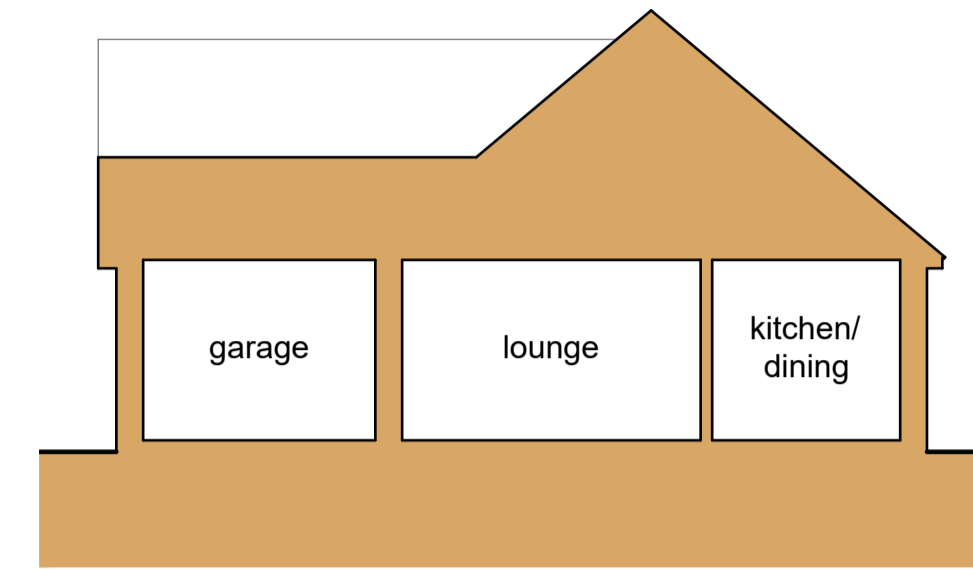
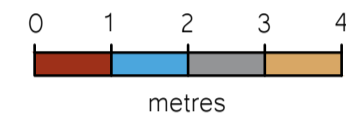
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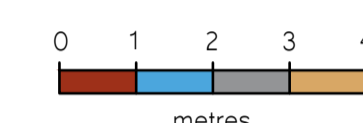
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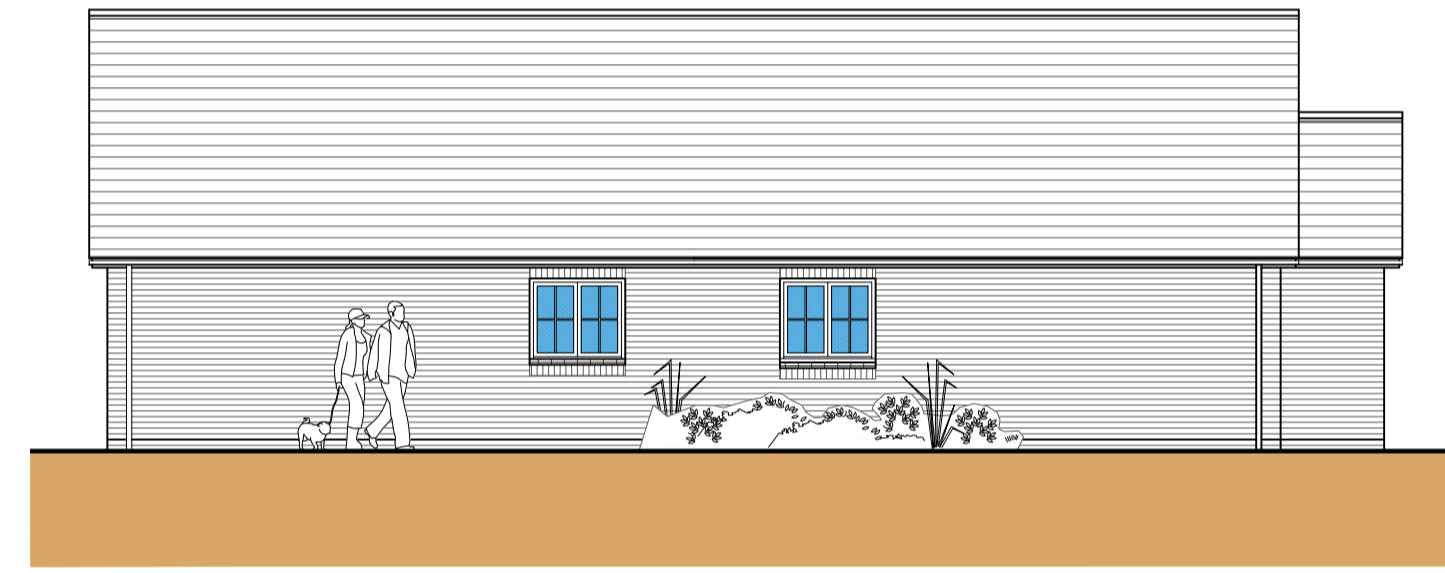
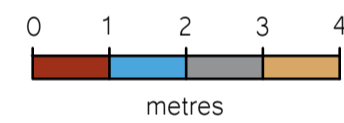
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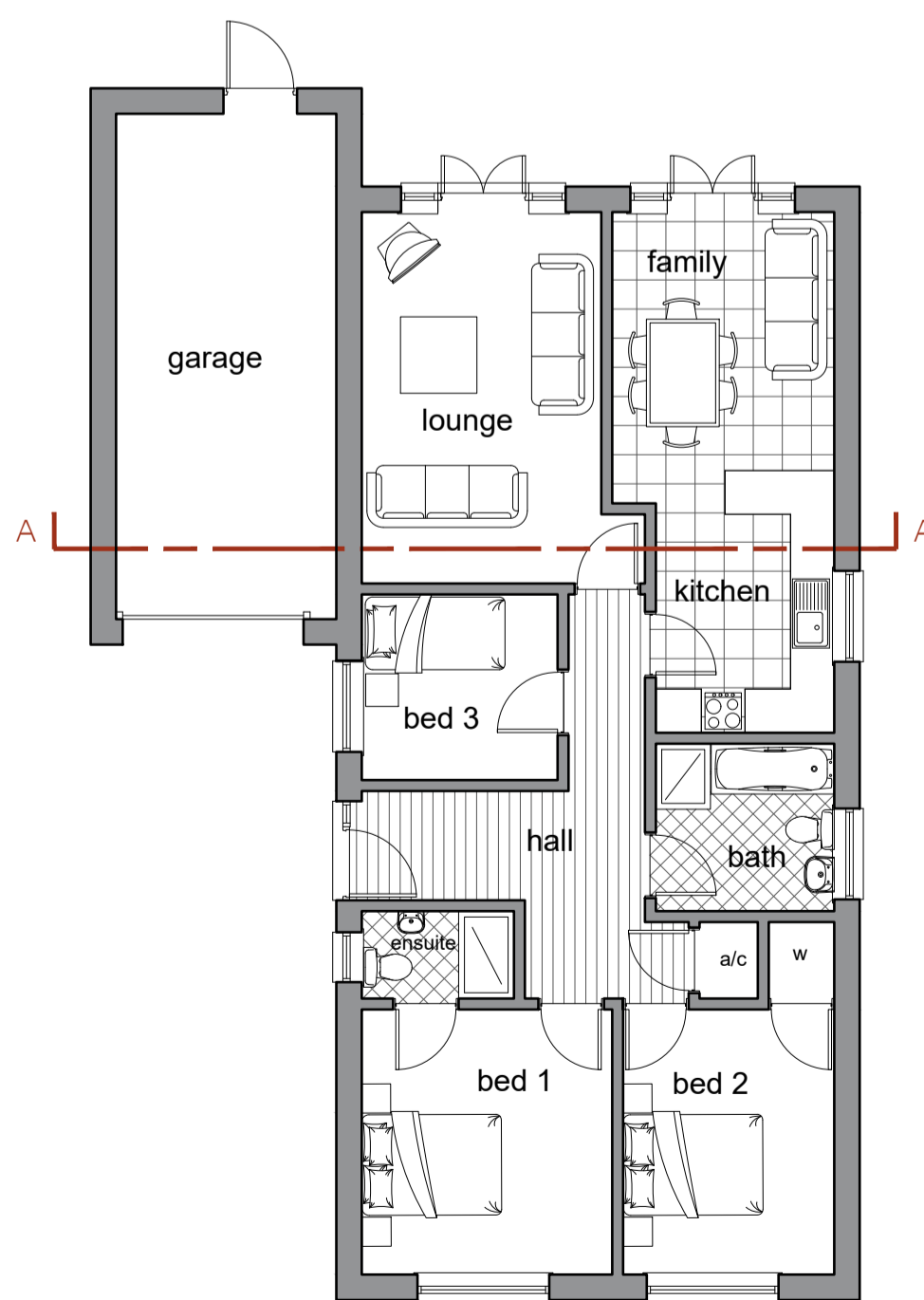
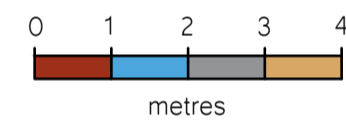
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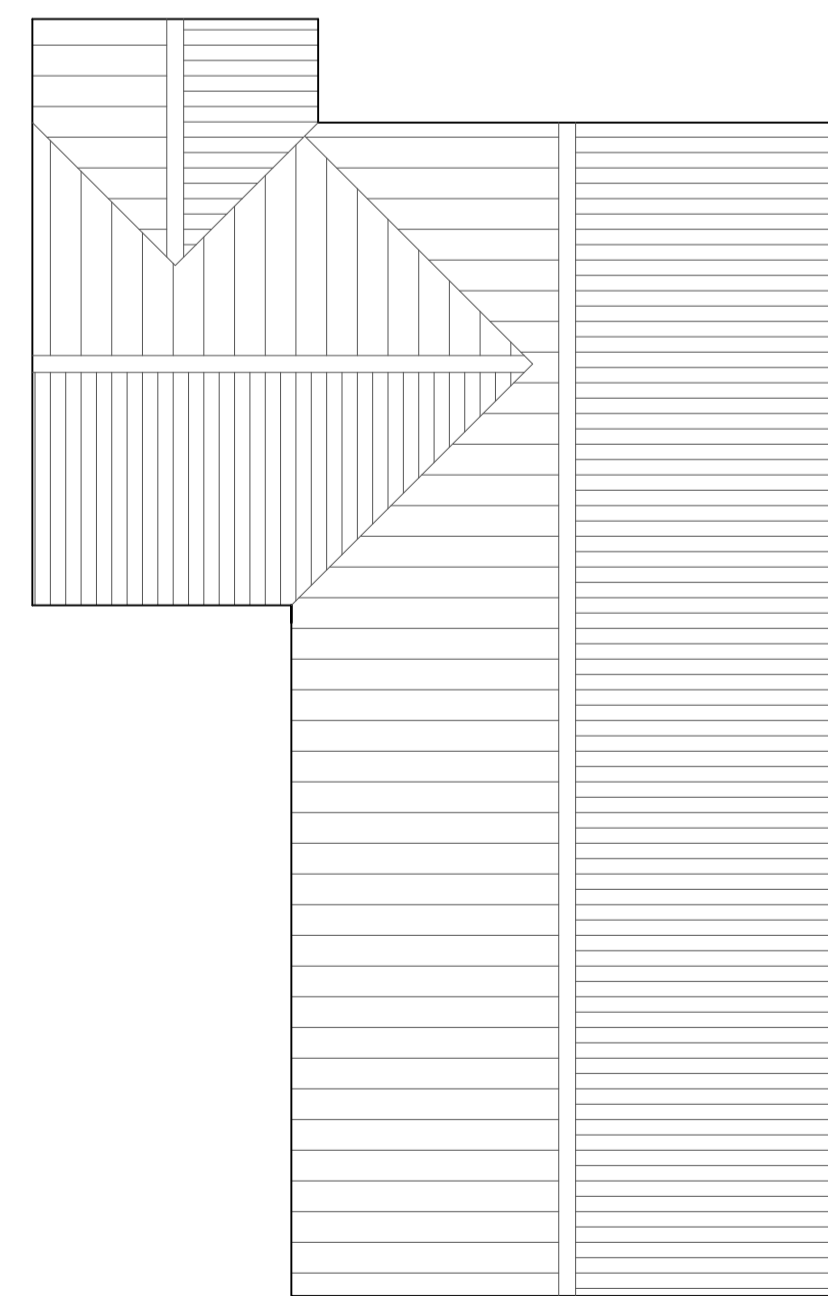
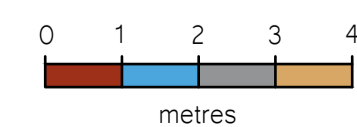
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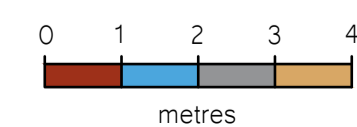
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Roof Plan

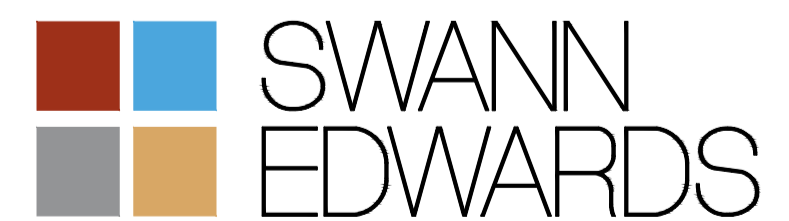
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Job Title Proposed Residential Dwellings Norwood Road, March For Creese Homes Ltd	Date June 2018	Scale As Shown Sheet Size A1
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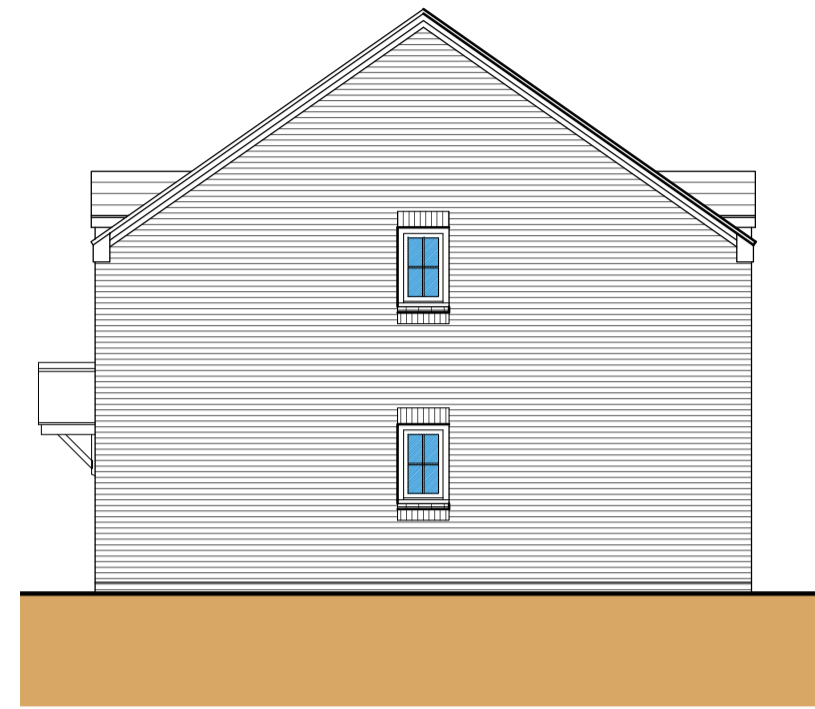
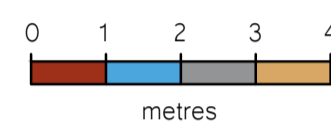
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Dwg No. 21	Revision	

Plot 2 & 3



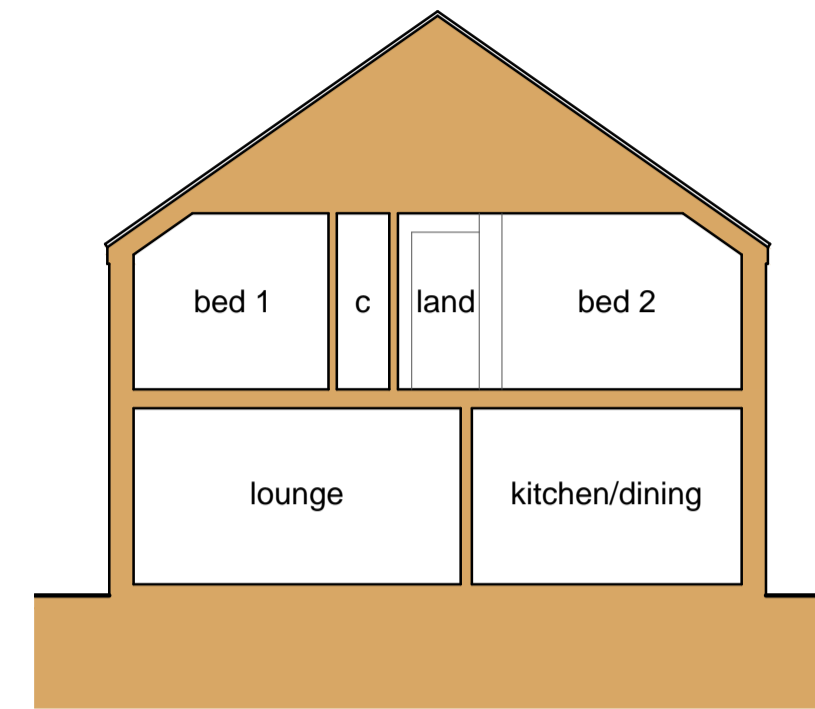
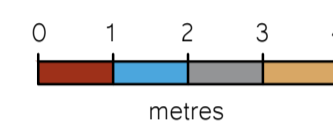
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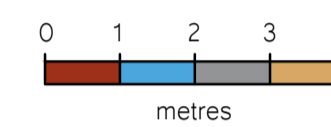
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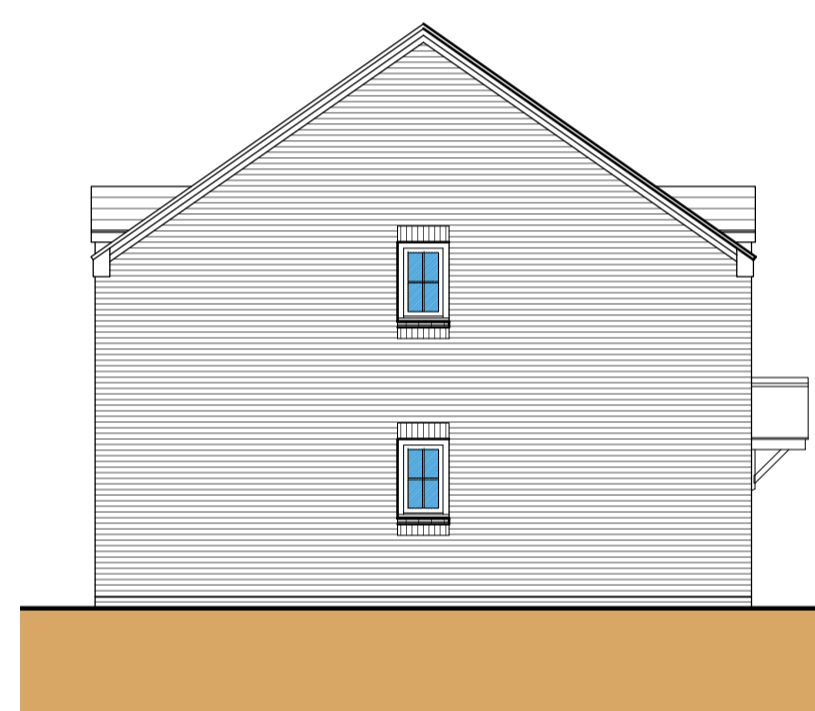
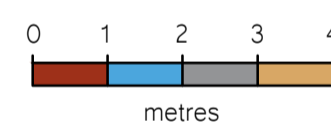
Section A-A

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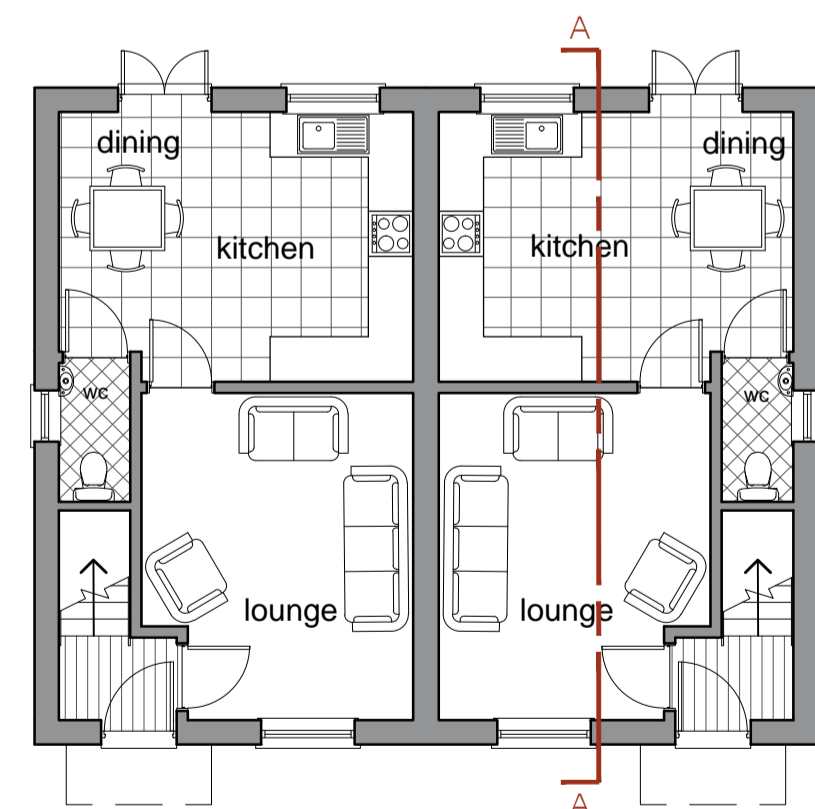
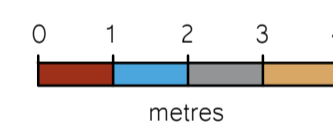
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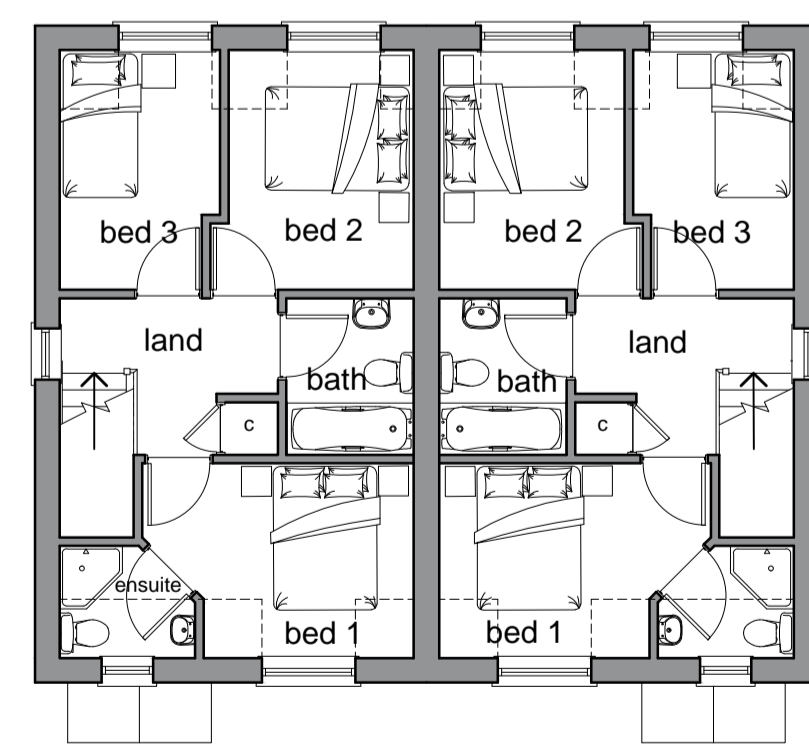
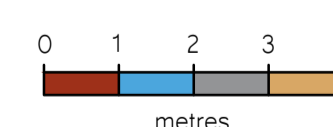
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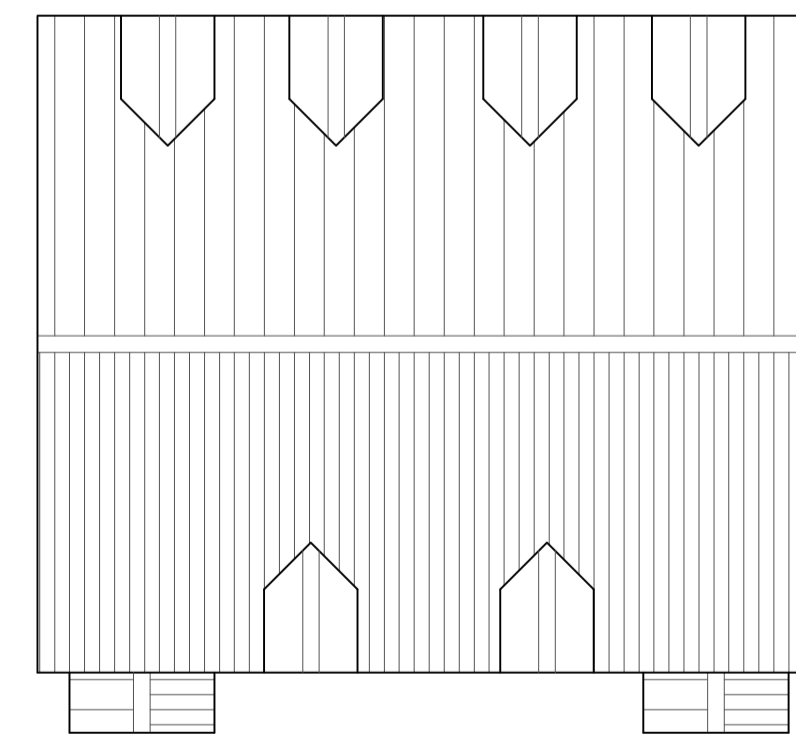
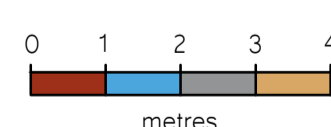
Ground Floor Plan

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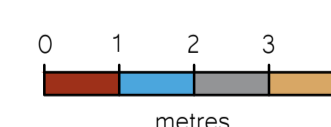
First Floor Plan

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Roof Plan

Scale: 1:100



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Revisions		
A	Oct 2018	Revised for planning

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Drawing Title Planning Drawing Plot 2 & 3 Floor Plans, Elevations & Section	Job No. SE-864 Dwg No. 22	Drawn by M.N. Revision A