

AGENDA

PLANNING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2026

1.00 PM

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

Committee Officer: Jo Goodrum
Tel: 01354 622424 (committee only)
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

1 To receive apologies for absence.

2 Previous Minutes (Pages 5 - 36)

To confirm and sign the minutes from the previous meetings of 19 November 2025 and 10 December 2025.

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/YR25/0586/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 (Pages 37 - 68)

To determine the application.

6 F/YR25/0750/F

Bromsgrove House , Honesome 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 (Pages 69 - 86)

To determine the application.

7 F/YR25/0814/PIP
Land North Of 10 Askham Row Accessed From, Hospital Road, Doddington
Permission in principle for 4 x dwellings (Pages 87 - 102)
To determine the application.

8 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 (Pages 103 - 126)
To determine the application.

9 F/YR25/0807/PIP
Land South Of 6, Bridge Lane, Wimblington
Permission in principle to erect up to 7 x dwellings (Pages 127 - 136)
To determine the application.

10 F/YR25/0863/PIP
Land North East Of 134 London Road, Chatteris
Permission in principle for up to 4 x dwellings (Pages 137 - 146)
To determine the application.

11 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) (Pages 147 - 160)
To determine the application.

12 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) (Pages 161 - 176)
To determine the application.

13 F/YR25/0806/PIP
Land South Of Lavender Mill Close, Fallow Corner Drove, Manea
Permission in Principle for up to 9 x dwellings (Pages 177 - 200)
To determine the application.

14 F/YR25/0802/PIP
Land North West Of 176 High Road Accessed From, Hassock Hill Drove, Gorefield
Permission in principle for 9 x dwellings (Pages 201 - 222)

To determine the application.

15 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

Wednesday, 24 December 2025

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, 19 NOVEMBER 2025 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor S Imafidon and Councillor N Meekins, Councillor M Purser (Substitute)

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor I Benney,

Officers in attendance: Matthew Leigh (Head of Planning), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer), Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer) and Gavin Taylor (Principal Development Officer)

P72/25

F/YR24/0903/0

LAND ADJACENT NEW SAXON WORKS, PETERBOROUGH ROAD, WHITTLESEY
ERECT UP TO 65,000 SQ M FLOOR SPACE CONSISTING OF E (B)(D)(F) (AMENITY BUILDINGS) AND E (G)(I)(II)(III) (OFFICE, LABORATORY AND MANUFACTURING) INCLUDING RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, PARKING, COUNTRY PARK AND OTHER ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

Gavin Taylor presented the report and drew members attention to the update report which had been circulated.

Gavin Taylor advised members that he was in receipt of a letter which was received earlier that day from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which in exercise of their powers under Article 31 of the Town and County Planning Development Management Procedure Order, has directed that the Council is not to grant permission on this application without specific authorisation. He added that the direction is issued to enable MHCLG to consider whether they should direct under Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act, that the application should be referred to them for determination, however, this direction does not prevent the Council from considering the application or from forming a view to the merits or if so minded to refuse the planning permission.

Gavin Taylor made the point that the direction from MHCLG should not influence the decision making of the Council and should the Council resolve to grant permission, the Secretary of State requires time to consider whether to call the application in for their own consideration before the Council issues any planning permission. He explained that further information has also been received from the Ecological Officer with regards to comments received from the Saxon Gate Residents Group in particular with regard to their concerns over the habitats regulation assessment that is undertaken and the Ecologist has confirmed the recommendations of the habitats regulation assessment which sets out the requirements for review the assessment following the receipt of the reserved matters application including the water resources strategy which is also required under one of the proposed conditions.

Gavin Taylor explained that further comments have been received from the Council's Environmental Health Team who have considered the additional comments submitted by the Saxon Gate Residents Group which covers a number of matters such as pollution control,

exposure to pollution, ongoing Saxon Pit investigations, monitoring enforcement concerns and all comments have been reviewed along with the circulated committee update and the proposed conditions set out in the officer report and have advised that they are satisfied that the necessary controls are secured and raise no objection. He explained that he has also received an update from the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) earlier today and further to their previous consultation on 24 November 2024, they have noted the proposal to discharge surface water via the adjacent Saxon Pits discharge into the Kings Dyke and the Environment Agency is considering a foul effluent discharge permit application for this particular outfall and, therefore, it should not be assumed that MLC would grant consent to discharge surface water via this outfall.

Gavin Taylor explained that MLC have also stated that an alternative discharge directly from the site may be required and any surface water discharge will require the prior consent of MLC under their byelaws as well as an agreement and approval of final planning decisions. He added that there are a number of conditions securing the water supply strategy, foul and surface water drainage strategies and these conditions will be consulted with via the Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency, Anglian Water and MLC when such conditions come to be discharged or when a reserved matters application is submitted which is the standard approach.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Chris Boden, who addressed the committee in his position as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor. Councillor Boden stated that he is addressing the committee as the County Councillor for the application site, and he explained that he fully endorses the officer's report and the recommendation of approval. He added that he recognises that it is an outline application which is important to note because there are some matters of detail which do need to be addressed but that can be achieved under the reserved matters stage of the application.

Councillor Boden explained that the application has been subject to a successful pre-application submission and has the approval of Whittlesey Town Council. He expressed the view that the proposal brings huge positive economic effects with it and not merely for Whittlesey but for Fenland as a whole.

Councillor Boden made the point that the location of the proposal is very important as there are no material effects on residential amenity which sets it aside from any other economic growth area that there is a potential for in Whittlesey. He expressed the view that all planning applications involve the requirement of taking a balanced view of the pros and the cons and, in his opinion, officers have reached the correct recommendation and most of the objections raised have been with regards to the issue of transport issues.

Councillor Boden explained that he has been in contact with the Highways Team at Cambridgeshire County Council with regards to the application, adding that he has frustrations with regards to their approach, which he does not feel has been the correct one. He made the point that there was a fundamental change to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024 with regards to transport planning and the change meant that the modelling changed from a predict and provide model to a vision and validate model, with, in his view, the County Council appear to still be using the predict and provide model and are not utilising the current NPPF for transport planning.

Councillor Boden stated that it is the cumulative impact that is important when considering the traffic situation not with this application but when considering every planning application within Fenland. He added that he wished to emphasize the comments made by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council which mirror the point he has been making for some considerable time concerning the fact that the current transport network within and outside of Whittlesey cannot cope with significant major additional development.

Councillor Boden expressed the view that the advantages of the scheme outweigh the disbenefits

that there are, with there having been a significant number of new applications which have come through in the last few years for additional housing all of which add to the negative effects of transport in the area. He explained that there is a further planning application which will be brought forward within the next few months which will be coming through on the site adjacent to Saxon Pit which lends itself to a significant increase in heavy good vehicles coming into Whittlesey and the cumulative effects cannot continue to be added on top of each other.

Councillor Boden expressed the opinion that the limit is yet to be reached but the limit is not too far away, and this does need to be taken into context as additional employment is required within the Whittlesey and Fenland area. He added that this sort of employment is also required and this sort of economic development is exactly the sort of thing which is needed and he does not want to see all of the advanced engineering and research roles being located in the Peterborough area, leaving Fenland with nothing so far as economic development is concerned.

Councillor Boden expressed the view that Fenland needs this sort of development, and it is inherently good and he explained that he has reviewed the points made by Peterborough City Council Highways and, in his opinion, most of it appears to resonate with peak hour access to the site than there reasonably will be. He added that when in operation it is likely that it will be a 24-hour operation as well a large amount of remote working due to the nature of the employment roles and, therefore, he does have doubts with regards to the calculations of the Peterborough City Council Highways team.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Boden whether he has made any progress with his discussions concerning a potential bypass as the A605 is nearing capacity? Councillor Boden explained that Fenland District Council received a report earlier this year with regards to the potential of the A605 Relief Road and he hopes to bring a further report to the next meeting of Cabinet and Full Council to progress the matter. He added that the likelihood is that the road maybe implemented in the next decade and explained that the biggest and most immediate problems will actually be in Whittlesey Town Centre itself at the two roundabouts, the Kelly Vision Roundabout and the Cemetery Road roundabout, as that is where the most significant impact is and that will also be least impacted by the proposed development.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that the A605 is surcharged and the Kelly Vision roundabout is already suffering from very heavy traffic congestion, with Whittlesey suffering from considerable HGV traffic and the condition of the A605 being very poor. He expressed the view that there are severe limitations with regards to what can be done on the A605 which will also mean there can be no widening achieved and by implementing an additional 1300 – 1600 jobs at the Science Park in the future then there will be a cumulative effect on the A605. Councillor Boden stated that he agrees with the points made by Councillor Gerstner as there are times when the A605 suffers from very heavy traffic which is only going to get worse as there has been further residential development which has already been approved but is yet to be built out and both roundabouts will suffer further from an increase in traffic. He stated that the objections concerning the transport side which are being highlighted with the application have nothing to do with the Kelly Vision roundabout or the Cemetery Road roundabout as they are primarily to do with the Kings Dyke Bridge and with junctions within the Peterborough City Council area. Councillor Boden expressed the view that it is a very important distinction to make and added that if there must be an increase in traffic then it should be against the flow of peak hour traffic which currently exists. He stated that this is what the proposed application will cause, and it will obviously increase the amount of traffic and the greatest increase in traffic will be against the current peak hour flow and minimizes the effect that it would have. Councillor Boden added that if it were in addition to the current direction of peak hour flows in both directions during the morning and evening then it would be a different matter. He referred to the state of the A605 and added that he wholeheartedly agrees that the condition of the road is unacceptable.

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is horrified at the state of the A605 and added that the Highway Authority at the County Council need to take appropriate action as the state of the A605 is disgraceful. Councillor Boden agreed.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Mrs Dee Laws, who addressed the committee in her position as a Whittlesey Town Councillor. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she completely endorses the officer's report, and she fully supports the application. She expressed the view that the Planning Officer should be applauded for his detailed and comprehensive report which demonstrates the amount of work involved with the statutory consultees to bring the application forward for a decision to be made.

Councillor Mrs Laws stated that the proposal in front of the committee is forecast to deliver 1660 full time equivalent jobs equating to £59 million per annum additional wages and £126 million per annum gross value-added uplift for the UK economy. She added that the proposal also brings with it significant economic benefits not only to the economy of Fenland but also the regional and UK economy, with it also fitting with the Council's economic growth objectives contained within its Economic Refresh Strategy 2025 to 2028 and the shared ambition from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2050 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Growth Plan.

Councillor Mrs Laws added that it also fits with the Council's political strategy occupying a broad location for growth in Whittlesey which is identified for employment use, making the point that the application achieves net gains in biodiversity, and will provide public accessibility and open space through a country park. She stated that was a facility which was lost some years ago with the failure of the Sainsbury's out of town store, with an attached retail park and adjacent public country park.

Councillor Mrs Laws added that it is the west to east main gateway into the town of Whittlesey and there are opportunities for a high-level design and a visual enhancement to the area. She explained that the agent and applicant provided a presentation to the members of Whittlesey Town Council, and the members were supportive and welcomed the application, with their also being a public consultation and as a result a lot of positive comments and support were received.

Councillor Mrs Laws explained that the proposal means a lot to Whittlesey Town Council and as Councillor Mrs French has referred to the southern relief road, the proposal is the type of opportunity that will open the gateway for transport and will improve the road network. She expressed the view that Fenland is an aging and maturing population, and the proposal will encourage younger people to come back and settle in Fenland and as a result it would mean that the houses would be developed which are needed for families, with the proposal delivering so much for the town and enhancing the future with the improvement to the age group coming through.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that Councillor Mrs Laws has referred to people coming to Whittlesey to live and he asked whether she would agree that Whittlesey has almost reached capacity in land terms to build out any further major developments in Whittlesey as it stands at the present time? Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she does not disagree with that fact, and she expressed the view that Whittlesey has taken a hit for the Fenland area with regards to the amount of development which has taken place. She added that there are larger applications coming forward for both March and Wisbech and she stated that in the Local Plan there is a figure but that is not a ceiling figure. Councillor Mrs Laws added that there are several applications in the pipeline which are yet to be built out, and she explained that she undertook a survey a few months ago which resulted in her consulting with the local estate agents in the area, with the concerning thing being that people are trying to buy retirement bungalows more than family houses at the present time, but it is her understanding that in the community now residents are looking to give their children their

houses and then they move into a retirement bungalow themselves. Councillor Mrs Laws added that there appears to be an element of concern and there needs to be a more levelling off the age group in the area.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that the proposed 1660 jobs which may or may not come forward for local people in the Science and Technology park will require pretty high levels of education and qualifications. He added that in Whittlesey there is an element of the area being constrained on future land to build on which he is concerned about, with there being no large open spaces anymore to build thousands of houses. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she understands the point being made by Councillor Gerstner and there is still land available and there are still several applications which are to be brought forward which are in Whittlesey and border Whittlesey. She made the point that the employment within the Science and Technology Park would offer a variety of different job types and will not only include degree operating technicians as there will be positions available for landscape gardeners and posts available to maintain other aspects of the buildings. Councillor Mrs Laws added there will be the requirement for staff to operate the café and restaurant too and, therefore, there will not be the requirement just for the focus to be on high academic level posts and there will be opportunities for a wide range of diverse skills.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that having read the officer's report, the biggest concern is Anglian Water and Middle Level Commissioners, and she asked Councillor Mrs Laws for her views. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she has many views on that point, but the application is only at outline stage and further details will come forward as the application progresses, with it appearing suddenly that the Middle Level Commissioners are taking an interest which is not something that they have done previously. She made the point that she welcomes the fact that they are showing an interest but that could be that they have more staff support to be able to do that and whilst she appreciates that they have concerns, Anglian Water have issues with regards to the right to connect and whilst there is an awareness of this, it is not going to change and whatever utilities are on the site, Anglian Water will have the right to connect into. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that from a Middle Level perspective, in her view, it will come down to the next stage of the application process.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Sarah Hann, Ross Percy-Jones and Robyn Green from Peterborough City Council Highways Team. Sarah Hann explained that she is the Principal Engineer within the Highway Development Control Team at Peterborough City Council (PCC) and they were consulted on the application as a neighbouring authority. She explained that the application has been reviewed to assess the impact of the proposed development on the Peterborough City Council highway network and due to the lack of information provided as part of the application, as well as their understanding of the existing highway network within Peterborough, they have had to recommend that the application be refused because it has not been demonstrated that it would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway within Peterborough.

Sarah Hann made the point that she is aware of several roads and junctions and roads in the vicinity of the site which are already near to, at or over capacity during network peak hours, which are on main routes anticipated to be used to access the development which include the A605, Whittlesey Road, Toll Road and A605 Stanground bypass as well as the bypass junction with Fletton Parkway. She made the point that the trip rates used within the transport assessment rely on there being a modal share of 50% or 60% of car driver trips and the census data from 2011 shows that for existing employment sites in this area, 88% of people who travel from the Peterborough area travel by car and 74% of the total trips made as a car driver.

Sarah Hann made the point that whilst the data is now 13 years old, it is the most recent census data available which is not affected by the impacts of Covid and public transport, walking and cycling links to the location have not significantly changed in the intervening period and she still considers the data to be representative. She added that the Department of Transport connectivity

tool also demonstrates that the location is poorly located by bus and active travel modes.

Sarah Hann explained that no assessment of the impact of the development for the 88% existing mode share on the Peterborough network has been carried out and little information has been provided by the applicant to indicate how it is intending to improve accessibility of the site from Peterborough by non-car modes to achieve a vision of a reduction from 88% to 50% or 60% car trips. She stated that it has been acknowledged that a shuttle bus is to be provided from Peterborough Station to the site but this is unlikely to be widely used as the majority of people travelling from the Peterborough area would then have to travel by bus to then have to travel out of town again and for most people it would be quicker and more easier to just drive.

Sarah Hann added that the 63% of the trips generated are expected to travel to, from or through the Peterborough area and she explained that even at a 50% mode share it would see an increase of 180 trips in the peak morning travel period and 160 trips through the evening peak travel period. She added that by using the trip data from the traffic assessment and the current modal share of 88% car trips for the application site, there would be an increase in 317 trips in the morning peak travel time and 281 trips in the evening peak travel time because of the development.

Sarah Hann stated that the transport consultants have indicated that as the development does not exceed an 8% increase in vehicle trips through Peterborough junctions, the impact of the development is not significant, however, the trigger for junction capacity assessments is any junction which receives thirty or more additional two-way trips in a single network peak hour because of the proposal and this trigger applies across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough transport assessment guidelines. She made the point that the application does not fully consider the impact of the proposed development of the Peterborough highway network and there has been no junction capacity modelling for many of the affected junctions.

Sarah Hann acknowledged that Cambridgeshire Highways have recommended refusal of the application but have also provided a condition restricting trips from the site to the 50% mode share but if the 50% threshold was applied and restricted by a condition it would still have that significant increase in trips through the Peterborough network and as the impact of this on all of the affected junctions has not been fully modelled it has not been possible for her team to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the impact within the area or what the appropriate level of contribution associated with such a trip cap for the area would be. She asked the committee to consider refusing the application due to the severe residual cumulative impact on highway safety and capacity within Peterborough or defer the decision to allow the appropriate assessment of the impacts of the development on Peterborough's network to be carried out, and any mitigation or trip cap contributions to be determined.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Meekins asked for clarification with regards to the point made concerning the fact that the data held is 15 years old. Sarah Hann explained that the most recent census data that is not affected by the Covid pandemic is 13 years old, which is what would be used to assess the modal share across trips to and from a development.
- Councillor Meekins stated that there appears to be an assumption that all those persons who are going to be employed at the Science Park will be travelling from Peterborough and apart from Whittlesey there are three other market towns and there is a great deal of unemployment in Wisbech and the Science Park could offer employment for some of those looking for work. Sarah Hann explained that the transport assessment submitted by the applicant indicates that 63% of the trips to and from the site will come from the Peterborough direction and the remaining trips will come to and from the Whittlesey direction.
- Councillor Gerstner questioned whether at the time when the Cardea roundabout was built and the junction for the Milk and Water Road was improved was there not any transport assessments undertaken including statistical information gathered? Ross Percy-Jones,

Principal Transport Planner, explained that there have been a number of planning applications over the last 5 to 10 years where the junctions have been looked at and subsequently had improvements made to them, specifically the Milk and Water junction. He stated that those developments have each assessed their own impacts and there has been significant changes around different development growth assumptions over time meaning it is difficult to draw a like for like comparison between the applications and their assessments. Ross Percy-Jones added that each one of the applications have been able to justify any impacts in relation to those junctions and when considering the current proposal, there is a neighbouring application site which has carried out the assessment on Peterborough's network and has taken into consideration the current proposal which demonstrates that cumulatively when you add in all of the growth sites together it is when you see the impact at the junctions. He made the point that it is acknowledged that the A605 is currently capacity constrained but not to the extent which is being demonstrated under the assessments.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there has been a number of planning applications for the Saxon works for an operator bringing in IBA and that is heavy goods traffic. He added that he is surprised that PCC have not raised this as an issue as most of the traffic is coming from the Peterborough direction and leaves in the Peterborough direction. Councillor Gerstner added that there is an impending planning application going through the County Council to double the amount of material that the applicant is going to deal with and he has concerns with regards to the cumulative impact this application will also have. He asked for clarification as to the type of modelling used if there is a reliance on statistical information which is 13 years old. Ross Percy-Jones explained that the modelling that has been undertaken by the applicant and the transport consultant have used up to date survey data following a traffic survey exercise undertaken in 2023 using traffic flows and the census data which was referred to, to give an indication of the percentage of car driver trips. He added that he agrees it is indicative and it does not give a complete view of what happens now but it is the closest that is available and does appear to be a national issue that most authorities have to grapple with in terms of the age of the available data. Ross Percy-Jones explained that the junction modelling that has been undertaken is based on current data and added that with regards to the Saxon brick work site, PCC has provided a response on that application and he has requested the same type of assessments and the applicant for that proposal has carried out those assessments and has taken into consideration the effect of the current application. He added that the Saxon brick work application has demonstrated that by 2030 without their proposed development, with the doubling of HGV traffic, there was an indication that the Milk and Water Drove junction on the A605 and the immediate roundabout junctions to the west would operate at capacity. Ross Percy-Jones expressed the opinion that when you start to see at capacity conditions on the network, then any further increases in traffic delay starts to have a material impact on highway safety, with there being a great deal of academic research which demonstrates that there will be an increase in accidents on the network as congestion increases.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that the border between PCC and Fenland is located near the Horsey Way turning and there have been some good road improvements undertaken by PCC including improvements near Cardea and the Milk and Water junction, however, the report states that the capacity is not sustainable and he asked for further clarity with regards to what is considered to be sustainable. Ross Percy-Jones stated that regarding sustainable network operations if the traffic volumes exceed 85% of the available capacity on the network then that is what would be at capacity conditions. He added that a vision validated approach needs to be followed with applications and there is the need to work with applicants to identify a preferred vision to see whether that is something that can be achieved and delivered. Ross Percy-Jones stated that from a PCC perspective when considering the application, it has not been possible to determine whether that vision can be sustainably delivered and it needs to be demonstrated whether there is going to be an impact on the highway network and if there is a realistic chance that enough active travel provision or increases in bus services is going to come forward which would help to offset

the number of cars on the network, with to date it has not been demonstrated that there are going to be sufficient proposals in place to achieve those aspects. He explained that as well as the junction modelling which is looked at the modelling within the transport assessment is also considered and if it is not demonstrated that the application site could be reasonably accommodated with a vision that aligns with local and national policy then that is when he would put forward a refusal recommendation.

- Councillor Gerstner referred to the condition of the A605 and its severe limitations in engineering terms of what could and could not be achieved and he asked whether from a PCC perspective there are any suggestions as to what works could be taken to help the situation. Sarah Hann stated that she agrees it is a very constrained network in terms of the physical space to allow improvements of any type and the Stanground bypass is currently being looked at as one of the current phases is only a single carriageway and it is likely that when considering all of the proposed developments in the locality it is likely that this section of the bypass will need dualling and an entire additional carriageway will be needed. She added that, with regards to the existing junctions, by dualling the bypass it would have a knock-on impact on those junctions which would then need to be looked at as well.
- Councillor Purser referred to the A605 which suffers from heavy traffic, and he made the point that if people use buses and cycles surely that will alleviate some of the problems faced by the A605 and its heavy usage by HGV and cars. Sarah Hann stated that car trips take less space on the road network as opposed to lorries and there is always a congestion benefit by moving lorry trips from the highway. She explained that the information submitted as part of the application does not have any comparison of the trips and as a result it is not clear whether the proposed development would result in a reduction in trips and, therefore, be a benefit because the comparison has not been undertaken.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Stephen Rice, the agent and James McPherson, Transport Consultant. Mr Rice outlined what a Science Park is, explaining that it is a type of business park with a specific focus on research, development and innovation. He added that the buildings on it are usually specifically designed and purpose built with bespoke facilities for laboratories, workrooms, offices, meeting areas and high-grade manufacturing as well as recreational facilities such as gyms and cafes.

Mr Rice explained that there is normally a link to a university or an educational body and the main aim is to facilitate growth for business, entrepreneurs, start ups and collaborative communities. He expressed the opinion that they all deliver heightened levels of prosperity for the businesses on them and in turn this prosperity and wealth get distributed throughout the region in which it is located.

Mr Rice explained why he is proposing a Science Park on a former brickwork, adding that in 2021 he was tasked with designing a scheme for the regeneration of the brickworks and when this commenced it had only been announced that construction was starting on the new University in Peterborough and this was a key factor in his initial evaluation process. He made the point that he used to work for a company who managed all the science parks in Cambridge and Oxford, and he is of the view that a Science Park can offer far more than a standard Business Park.

Mr Rice stated that he formed a team of consultants and the first company he employed specialises in advising Science Parks who were recommended by the UK Science Park Association, with them evaluating the site and concluding that it had excellent prospects. He explained that it has always been the vision to design a development which was genuinely Net Zero and this required an input from energy specialists and Vital Energy who are the onboard development partner have designed an energy infrastructure which will mean that the development will be self-sufficient in heat and power whilst also being able to export heat and in particular generated from the on site ground and water source heat pumps.

Mr Rice explained that the energy and innovation centre on site could also be used to redistribute

waste heat from McCains to Whittlesey through a local heat network which would potentially be funded by national Government. He made the point that from an early stage in the process he engaged with educational bodies including the new ARU, Peterborough College and Cranfield University with ongoing discussions taking place, with Cranfield University being particularly keen to commence research projects on water neutrality and circularity as well as energy infrastructure focussing on heat networks and distribution, which is very much in line with Government policy for which there is significant grant funding available and Cranfield are very keen to apply for grant funding if outline permission is granted and he added that he is keen to involve the ARU with the projects.

Mr Rice stated that Councillor Mrs Laws has outlined some of the benefits that the Science Park will provide but it will also provide two hectares of public park immediately next to Whittlesey, an onsite gym and café open to the public and a shuttle bus, with the shuttle bus key to the Science park as it could run from the site to Peterborough Station and possibly Whittlesey Station. He added that the proposal will include circular cycle footpaths which will run around the site as well as a new pedestrian and cycle path from the site to Snoots Road, Whittlesey and explained that there will also be new control crossings on the A605 for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr Rice made the point that he is very conscious that despite extensive discussions and the provision of evidence-based modelling which demonstrates how the development can deliver the sustainable transport modes which are confirmed in the transport assessment, the information has not been able to satisfy the Highway Team at the County Council and acknowledges the fact that there is further work to do and he has confidence that the transport plan will work. He stated that he has agreed to the principle of a Section 106 legal agreement that requires the delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure, off site parking control and substantial financial payments to the Council if the sustainable transport targets are not met.

Mr Rice expressed the opinion that he feels that the town of Whittlesey and the region deserve a development like this, he has heard views expressed that the proposal will not provide jobs for Whittlesey or Fenland and he made the point that he does not agree with that view. He added that of the predicted 1650 new jobs, about 30% are likely to be for high qualified scientists and the rest will be for support staff across a whole range of disciplines including administration, media, property, grounds maintenance and hospitality.

Mr Rice stated it is an aspirational project which would not only offer employment opportunities for existing Fenland residents, but he is looking towards the future for the next generation who can aspire to work in science and technology, attend university and build a successful prosperous future for themselves and their families and region.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that it is important to clarify that contrary to the point made by some Whittlesey Town Councillors that there was no public consultation, he can confirm that there has been a consultation exercise undertaken not only with the public but also with the Town Council. He added that the public consultation took place in December 2023 and the Town Council following that.
- Councillor Gerstner expressed the view that the proposal is a wonderful opportunity to change Whittlesey and the surrounding area for generations to come.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that should the committee be minded to granting outline planning permission would Mr Rice be prepared to confirm that the thirty-seven proposed draft planning conditions in the officer's report can? Mr Rice stated that he has reviewed all the conditions with the Planning Officer and he is happy to agree to them all.
- Councillor Gerstner stated whether there is any plan in place should the Ralph Butcher Causeway be restricted in traffic flow as has been the case for the last 12 months. Mr Rice stated that it is a phased development which is not all going to happen overnight and if built out as envisaged it would be the third largest science park in the UK. He added that

everyone appears to be assessing what the transport issue is likely to be and by the time it is fully built out it may be 15 years, with in 15 years' time sustainable transport modes are going to be far more prevalent and the use of the car will not be as prevalent as it is in the current day. Mr Rice expressed the view that it cannot be contemplated that the issue with the causeway will not be solved as they would have to consider reopening the railway crossing again and consideration may be given to opening the southern relief road to take some of the freight off the causeway or considering a weight limit on the causeway.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that Mr Rice had referred to a proposed bus service running from site to Peterborough and in his presentation, he alluded to the possibility of the bus servicing Whittlesey, and he asked for further clarity on that statement. Mr Rice explained that at the current time the focus is on Peterborough as it is going to be more difficult to persuade people to get off a train in Peterborough and use a bicycle to get to the site and he sees that as a challenge. He explained that he has used a model of a very successful Science Park in Didcot in Oxfordshire and that site operates an amazing sustainable transport network including the use of the first autonomous buses in the UK. Mr Rice explained that he is far keener to decipher on how to get people from Whittlesey Train Station to the site using walking and cycling as a mode and he prefers to spend money working out how a cycle route could be implemented rather than spending money on a shuttle bus service but he has costed proposals for the bus service and that has been provided to the County Council who have advised that it does look to be realistic in terms of the costings. He stated that the parking on the site will be subject to a nominal parking charge to dissuade people from using a car and the shuttle bus to Whittlesey has been discussed and it could be factored in, but the preference would be to improve the sustainable transport routes in the first instance.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that the application is in outline only but questioned whether Mr Rice has any idea of who the end users may be? Mr Rice explained that he has worked with Richard Collins from EIBC who are specialists in Science Parks and he has worked with him for three years since the infancy of the application process, with Mr Collins compiling a list of companies both from a local and slightly wider area from the district and it has been surprising how many high-tech businesses already exist in the region and all of them are potential targets but realistically the businesses that have been spoken to will not engage fully until a planning permission is secured. He added that he has already spoken to a number of regional politicians along with the CPCA, ARU and Cranfield and the only way a site such as this is going to be successful is if all the interested parties have a vested interest in seeing something like this work and come together. Mr Rice explained that when the genetics of a science park are considered along with how they evolve it requires a commitment from everybody, including politicians, regional leaders to attract businesses and the search for employees which is a very important factor. He added that it needs to be demonstrated to businesses that want to come here that there are employees and certain services and facilities in place to attract international companies, with them also having engaged with the CPCA from the outset as they would be one of the outside bodies that consider the database of possible businesses.
- Councillor Mrs French asked for an explanation with regards to what a mobility hub is as it is mentioned in the application. James McPherson stated that a mobility hub is a focal point where the shuttle bus operates from as well as a place for parking and hiring bicycles and a hub where the café could be. He explained that it is a centralised hub which looks to primarily have opportunities for sustainable travel but will be a standalone building which has other uses as well. Mr Rice added that there will also be a cycle shop, cycle repair stations and showers which are all included to encourage people to use a bike rather than a car.
- Councillor Connor stated that it has been mentioned that the CPCA and Cranfield have been contacted and have shown an interest, however, should there be a problem and businesses do not wish to operate from Whittlesey, how can he be certain that this will come to fruition. He expressed the view that it appears that there is a reliance on others to come forward with joined up thinking and it may not be as easy as that. Mr Rice stated that

it is incredibly difficult to bring a project such as this to reality, with obtaining planning permission just being the start and it has taken four years so far to get to the current stage, and he made the point that this type of development does not happen overnight and if it did then its longevity and successfulness would not be there. He explained that a great deal of work and discussion has taken place over the four-year period and Cranfield University are exceptionally enthusiastic and are looking to submit grant funding packages for research projects based on energy and in particular water. Mr Rice stated that he been receiving advice from Professor Stevenson who has been involved with the application from an energy perspective, and he is of the opinion that the science park should be water based due to the uniqueness of the park and none of the surface water can leave the site until a pump is switched on. He added that this is completely unique and the only way that the water will get into the Kings Dyke will be if a pump is switched on and the water will not go anywhere unless the pump is turned on, with this being the concept of water neutrality where all the on-site surface water comes in and it has been designed with a surface water drainage system, and the water will all be directed back to the lake which has got a freeboard and a vast attenuation capacity. Mr Rice explained that ultimately the site will be treating its own water, circulating and reusing all of its water which its water neutrality before moving to the next stage known as water circularity which means all the water including foul water gets reused and recycled on the site. He added that Cranfield are very keen to commence and obtain Government funding to commence research as the site could become a blueprint for commercial developments in the east.

- Councillor Connor stated that, if the application were approved, when does Mr Rice anticipate that works on the site would commence? Mr Rice stated that a realistic date would be 2027 by the time the reserved matters application is dealt with, and the highways issues are considered. He added that Anglian Water have agreed to supply fresh water to the site and with regards to foul drainage on any site this needs to be dealt with. Mr Rice explained that the first piece of work will be to implement the new access off the roundabout and a Section 278 process will take 18 months to 2 years.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that with regards to land contamination and the current state of the land, there has been historic issues with land contamination, and he questioned whether any survey work has been undertaken on the land? Mr Rice stated that there has been a survey carried out, and it was the first report he commissioned on the site, and a full stage three contamination assessment was undertaken with twenty metre deep bore holes and the survey was clear.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that he presumes that, in consultation with Cambridgeshire Highways, the concerns and issues regarding the A605 and including traffic volumes and the availability of cycle and pedestrian facilities will be properly addressed as in his view the site is not suitable for either walking or cycling from Whittlesey or Peterborough. He asked whether consideration has been given to joining and accessing cycle route 63 which can be reached via Funthams Lane, with the pathway on the northern side of the A605 not being fit for use and is challenging for pedestrians and he questioned whether Mr Rice can make a commitment and agree to look at improving the pathway in order to open up a route to the cycle route 63. Mr Rice explained that he has engaged with McCains very heavily during the application as have his energy consultants with regards to potentially using heat from McCains but unfortunately the strip of land in Funthams Lane which would be required to implement a cycle lane is owned by Forterra and they have totally failed to engage with him. James McPherson stated that with regards to footway improvements the transport planning policy now compels them to be visionary, and it is in the revised NPPF, and from the very outset of the application they have wanted to focus on the movement of people and not cars and if bigger roads are built then ultimately they will be filled with cars and car dominated behaviour. He made the point that he does not want to look at the future demand based on historic traffic trends and with regards to the cycle and pedestrian connections he has considered a route through the site to come out onto the A605 and looked at a toucan controlled crossing to allow people to cross to the northern side of the A605 and to then join those into Crossway Hands which will then go up towards the off

carriageway cycle connection. James McPherson added that with regards to going back into Whittlesey there are constraints with regards to what is achievable in terms of improvements for cyclists, but it has been carried along as far as Snoots Road and that is where the cyclists would rejoin the carriageway. He made the point that it is part of the strategy being looked at and considering how people can be moved by sustainable modes and the mode share target of car drivers at 50% has been included in all the transport work and a lot of work has been undertaken to show how that can be achieved through not only active travel but also to include shared and public transport including the shuttle bus.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there is a cycle route 63 which goes from Stonald Road in Whittlesey and all the way to Peterborough, and he has concerns that the Crossway Hand junction is already suffering from a high level of traffic with limited capacity. He expressed the view that the road is dangerous for cyclists due to the volume of traffic and the fact that it is a single carriageway and with lorries attempting to pass each other, there is no room for cyclists. James McPherson stated that he is not saying that everyone is going to cycle to the site or that nobody will drive to and from the site, however, they are trying to provide an evidence based sustainable strategy by considering various different options on how people can travel to the site, with a lot of that travel is based on public transport including the shuttle bus. He added that with regards to the Crossway Hand junction there have been different options considered with regards to the design and in line with local transport note 120 which looks at cycle infrastructure design and how cyclists can be integrated with vehicles whilst acknowledging the HGV company in the vicinity that a swept path analysis has been undertaken in order to consider the largest vehicle types that would have to access Crossway Hand and to check that all of the different users could be accommodated and that has also been subject to an independent stage one road safety audit as well. Mr Rice explained that the site can be accessed by coming out of Whittlesey at Crossway Hand where you come into the site where there is then a perfectly good cycle way that takes cyclists through the site, through the science park and then back out the other end. He added that if people wanted to cycle from one end of the A605 to the McCain end then that is achievable rather than used the A605. James McPherson added that he is not suggesting that an inordinate amount of people would cycle to the site and whilst they would love to see that happen in the overall mode share he is suggesting just under 10% of the overall employees at the site could potentially have the opportunity to cycle. He made the point that the figure is not a dissimilar level to what is shown in the census data of 2011.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that 10% of 1600 is 160 and he does feel that the figure is being slightly ambitious.
- Councillor Gerstner questioned whether consideration is going to be given to a further public consultation should outline planning permission be approved? He further asked whether consideration is being given to the inclusion of a data centre within the science park? Mr Rice stated that with regards to a further public consultation he would be keen to know what Councillor Gerstner had in mind and if there was a valid reason for it and it would achieve something then he would consider it. He added that with regards to a data centre, the whole concept of the application is to provide employment, and the applicant has already been approached by people who are looking to include many different types of things on the site including a data centre. Mr Rice stated that a data centre would only employ about ten people and that is not something that he wants to see in Whittlesey and, in his view, it would seem a waste of a fantastic site. He explained that there will be data on the site and the vital energy infrastructure which has been designed for the site could be a blueprint as it shares heat and cooling and there is no requirement for air conditioning on the site and all of the computer banks in the site will be cooled from the lake. He added that he is totally against data centres and distribution centres on the site.
- Councillor Meekins stated that Mr Rice has mentioned that he has previous experience with Science Parks, and he explained that he was a partner at Bidwells for 13 years and a fundamental part of the business. He referred to the 1600 jobs going to be located on the Science Park and asked whether the office jobs that were alluded to are 9-5 roles or could they be attributed to flexible working hours? Mr Rice stated that he would describe a

Science Park as one of the most enlightened places that you can get in terms of employment, and they are flexible in terms of working hours. He added that it will be dependent on the type of research that is being undertaken, and some employees will treat it as a 9–5 job whilst others will hybrid work.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there has been a consultation exercise undertaken but one consultee was omitted, and he asked whether that has any bearing on what can and cannot be achieved today given the fact that the consultee have been given further time to respond. Gavin Taylor stated that there was one resident who was missed off of the original consultation and as a result they have been issued with a 21 day consultation letter which is the statutory obligation and that consultation period expires around the 26 November but to date no comments have been received from them. He added that the recommendation is as set out in the report and is to have regard to any material matters that may arise after the determination of the application today, but irrespective on whether the residents' comments on the application, the Council has a legal duty before a planning permission or refusal notice is issued to take into account all material considerations. Gavin Taylor explained that should that resident raise a matter to be considered which has not already been identified in the officer's report then the recommendation would be to discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Planning Committee as to whether the application would need to be brought back before the committee. He added that if there are comments raised which are not materially different to what has been considered in the officer's report then it would permit to proceed on that basis.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that given the objections both within the application from PCC Highways and CCC Highways and considering the point made by Councillor Boden within the presentation that they may be using the wrong model to factor an opinion on the proposal he would like that to be answered. He added that Travel England have stated that the A605 is not conducive to cycling or walking and the condition of the A605 is very poor as well as the adjacent road not being suitable for active travel at 40 mph. Councillor Gerstner made the point that to his knowledge there are five different speed limits along the A605 which alternate between 30 and 40mph along various parts of the road. He stated that given the possibility of wastewater there are several factors to consider, and he asked officers to explain how they have decided the contributing factors to recommend the application for approval. Gavin Taylor stated that, in terms of the process, there is always a planning balance to apply to most applications when making a determination and on this occasion the planning balance is set out in the report. He referred to some of the outstanding matters which include drainage and water supply and stated that the NPPF sets out that where it is considered that the development can be made acceptable in planning terms through conditions or obligations and in this case it is deemed appropriate to apply planning conditions to ensure that there are satisfactory schemes coming forward to support the development and he added that there is no reason why that cannot be secured through a planning condition. Gavin Taylor explained that he has contacted the EA as well as the MLC and asked whether they consider the conditions which have been set out are satisfactory and they have responded positively and with regards to some of the outstanding matters with regards to drainage there are reasonable conditions which can be imposed which are attributed to larger applications asking for site wide strategies. He added that, with regards to the balance of the transport impacts, it is set out in Section 11 of the report, with officers being mindful that the site is constrained and limited in terms of its scope and what can be reasonably and viably achieved through the scheme and whilst ideally there would be a continuous cycle footway connecting Whittlesey to Ramsey to Peterborough to March, unfortunately there is not due to how the settlements have evolved. Gavin Taylor stated that the applicant has chosen to look at what reasonable opportunities can be achieved through sustainable transport modes and active travel modes and a package has been put forward which, in the view of officers, is not going to alleviate the transport impacts and as is set out in the report there are going to be cumulative impacts of transport on the highway, but it

does aim to limit that through its vision. He added that by working through the proposal with the transport team there are obligations going to be sought through the Section 106 system where there will essentially be a financial penalty if the active travel movements and the modal share is not achieved, for the applicant to pay towards highway improvements which may either alleviate some of the transport impacts or improve and encourage non car modes of travel. Gavin Taylor stated that those issues are balanced against the benefits of the scheme which are set out in Section 11 of the report and include economic growth, employment opportunities, bio diversity net gain which is above the statutory 10% requirement as well as the public community areas which can be utilised by everybody and all of those aspects are seen as benefits which outweigh those disbenefits.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that the proposal is a wonderful opportunity for the district and should not be missed, however, he does not feel that enough weight has been given to the A605. He added that PCC have highlighted their constraints and restrictions and their ability to address the A605 and Active Transport England have highlighted that they require a firm commitment around the provision of an enhanced service in the area, making the point that currently the application does not include part of this enhanced transport system. Councillor Gerstner expressed the view that out of 1600 jobs, they are expecting 10% of that number to be cyclists on a road which is not conducive to cyclists or pedestrians. He reiterated that point that Active England are not supporting the proposal in its current form, and he finds the serious cumulative effects of the A605 to be unnerving.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to condition 2 and added that it states that application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of five years and she questioned whether that statement contains an error as the Council will not exist in five years. Gavin Taylor stated that the conditions are in place for members to consider and if they wish to amend any of them then that is within their gift to do so. He added that five years was set as a requirement to deliver the reserved matters stage of the application as it is a long-term project and if after 5 years the reserved matters aspect is not in place then the element of that permission is removed. Matthew Leigh stated that the condition relates to the local planning authority and irrespective of whether it is Fenland or another council, it will still be the local planning authority.
- Councillor Gerstner asked officers from CCC Highways how they came to their decision on the application and why they are not using the latest data and information? Andrew Connolly explained that the modelling that has been assessed by the Highway Authority is the modelling that has been submitted by the applicant and the assumption within that model uses up to date traffic counts using industry standard software to assess the impact, with the model not being out of date and it is very much up to date. He referred to the census data and added that census is undertaken once every ten years and is, therefore, a little bit limited, making the point that it is unfortunate that the last census was in the middle of the Covid pandemic, and nobody uses that data as it does not give an accurate representation, and as a result the 2011 data is used to demonstrate how people travel around in Whittlesey. Jez Tuttle from CCC Highways stated that he has heard it mentioned during the committee that the Highway Authority at CCC do not use the vision and validate model but that is not the case and that modelling system is used and especially where networks are constrained. He made the point that the challenge that the highways authority faces is that someone has a vision, but consideration must be given as to whether the challenge is reasonable and he is aware that people who live in Peterborough will walk and cycle but as soon as you get out of the parkway system then that is less likely to be the case. Jez Tuttle stated that in terms of the vision the Highway Authority are not convinced that they will see a lot of walking and cycling because of the A605 and even the path alongside the river is not of a good condition during the winter months especially when it is dark. He made the point that when considering passenger transport, at the current time, there is only one bus which is being proposed to run from the train station in Peterborough and whilst it may pick up some passengers from the station who have travelled from Huntingdon, in his view, the proposed bus will not help those people who are travelling from the March direction and there is a larger suite of measures that is required to accompany

the application, and he does not believe that the work has been undertaken to ascertain what those additional measures might be. Jez Tuttle explained that because of the issue, the Highway Authority have requested a trip cap as they are convinced that the mode share will go down to 50% as that lends itself more to Cambridge where there are park and ride facilities and cycle ways. He expressed the view that passenger transport is the way forward, one bus operating from the station in his opinion is not sufficient and there maybe other opportunities to look at works buses from other areas and he explained that the Highway Authority are not against the vision and validate, but in their opinion and with the information that they have seen to date, it is not achievable at this point in time.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that in the presentation it was stated that the current proposals for the Crossway Hand junction remains unacceptable and the revised design incorporates several positive amendments to partially address the concerns. He added that it also states that the variation in design could be deliverable but would likely resolve its principal concerns and on balance the Highway Authority feel that it is now in a position where it can seek a planning condition to secure delivery of appropriate and cycle mitigations at the Crossway Hand junction. Councillor Gerstner asked whether a desktop modelling exercise has been undertaken for the junction and whether an officer has been to site to see it first hand to ascertain what can and cannot be achieved at the junction? James Stringer from the Highway Authority stated that with regards to that junction he agrees that it is quite constrained and there are HGV movements related to the business located nearby. He explained that the design which has been undertaken by the applicant has been through a road safety independent audit to assess whether the junction would flag up any safety issues which would need to be resolved and as a result the design has been amended. James Stringer explained that the current status is that the design is not perfect and the application is at outline stage but there is a design in place which could be delivered that would be satisfactory to the Highway Authority after going through the 278 process to refine the design in order to assist HGV traffic from getting through the junction whilst also providing something that is safe and attractive for non-motorised users which he agrees is a challenge.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that there does not appear to be any recent data, making the point that he fails to understand why when dealing with a road layout where there is one road in and one road out, where there is no other alternative and traffic survey has not been undertaken. Jez Tuttle explained that the traffic survey data is up to date or as up to date as it can be given the time scale between the submission of the application and now and the traffic conditions in terms of vehicles are up to date and the key thing is the vision validate process requires consideration as to how the amount of car trips can be reduced. He added that the base data for the mode share is quite old which causes an issue as when trying to undertake a vision and validate analysis on data which is old and officers do know the number of cars and an assumption can be made with regards to the number of cars that would go to the site given the trip rates which are standardised. Jez Tuttle explained that the figure which is not known is how many people that could refrain from using their cars and because the data for the existing amount of people such as the mode share is old and it is very difficult to undertake a vision and validate assessment with data which is quite old. He added that it is very difficult for Highways Officers as they used to rely quite significantly on Government census data and as the last census data was 2021 this does lead to questions with regards as to whether the data is still valid. Jez Tuttle explained that one of the PCC Highways Officers had made the point that the status quo has not altered that much when considering the corridor which is being looked at and there have not been any large-scale bus, walking or cycle interventions and when considering peoples travel habits there is not a lot which is going to change. He explained that the train services have not particularly increased and as there have not been any significant changes since 2011, it is going to be broadly the same in terms of the mode, with it going to be predominantly car modes with very few cyclists as well as people using the bus and potentially train users. Jez Tuttle stated that the opinion of Highways is that the data is old but given the fact that there will not be much which will change things, in their view, the data set for the route is going to be

about right.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that modelling alludes to the fact that there are going to be queues on the roundabout and Highways have predicated that the queue could be up to 110 metres, with 2034 still being a considerable number of years away but that could be when the science park comes to fruition. He made the point that the Highway Authority have stated that this is not acceptable and demonstrates that the proposed development will have severe impact on the roundabout and he asked officers to provide an explanation. Andrew Connolly explained that it is the applicants modelling which the Highway Authority have reviewed to determine the impacts and what they are required to assess is the base year which is when the application is submitted, the year when the application is fully built out and then five years following post full build out in order that it can be determined how the network is going to operate in the future. He explained that the information which has been provided by the applicant has been reviewed and the modelling they have used is up to date and is, therefore, acceptable, which demonstrates that the queues in the transport assessment are shown as being 109 metres on the A605 at the roundabout by the Ralph Butcher Causeway. Jez Tuttle added that the queue length is 109 metres which is approximately twenty cars and the delay in journey would equate to 48 seconds per vehicle but that information was on the very minimal mode shares as officers have already stated that they are not entirely convinced by that. He made the point that if the mode share increases significantly to 80%, if there is a junction that reaches capacity it becomes an exponential increase and if the mode shares are not achieved then the delay to each vehicle could then increase to up to 2 minutes which is why the trip cap has been suggested as a secondary intervention if the mode share is not realised.

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

- Councillor Mrs French asked for her thanks to officers to be recorded and added that, having listened to the views of the Highways Officers from both PCC and CCC, she believes that the issues are something which can be overcome in the future. She stated that it is a brownfield site, an outline application and there appears to be very few objections. Councillor Mrs French referred to 5.21 of the officer's report where the Council's Business and Economy Team have stated that there is a shortage of commercial space employment land in the district. She made the point that the agent has undertaken a great deal of work on the proposal, agreeing that the condition of the A605 is appalling and she will support the application.
- Councillor Imafidon stated that Fenland is crying out for something such as a Science Park, and it is an opportunity which should not be missed. He added that he has considered the issues and challenges concerning the A605, however, the road infrastructure across the whole country is struggling but that does not mean that development should not be encouraged. Councillor Imafidon stated that both the officers and agent for the application have carried out very good work and the benefits outweigh the harm in this case, and he will fully support the application.
- Councillor Meekins stated that the application has good points and bad and the issue concerning traffic congestion, in his opinion, is just a way of life. He added that this is a wonderful opportunity with potentially 1600 jobs and Fenland is open for business and the agent has alluded to the fact that whilst there is still uncertainty with regards to businesses coming forward with a proposed 1600 jobs there must be some interest. Councillor Meekins added that if the proposal does not come to Whittlesey then those employment opportunities are going to go elsewhere, and the brownfield site will be left. He made the point that if outline permission is granted then the agent and applicant can move forward and advise interested parties that outline permission has now been granted. Councillor Meekins added that there are a significant number of conditions which have been attributed to the application and, in his view, it should be supported.
- Councillor Connor stated that he will support the application, adding that this type of application does not come forward very often and it is a wonderful opportunity for Fenland to put itself on the map. He added that it is only an outline application which only has access

agreed and a significant amount of detail can come forwards at the next stage of the application should it be approved today.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that he would have preferred to see the application deferred as there are sustainability and mode share concerns as well as cycling and walking infrastructure deficiencies, with there also being bus and public transport uncertainties and a number of technical outstanding issues. He added that there is a great deal of mitigation measures included in the conditions and he does not feel that the application has been rushed because he appreciates that the applicant has put in a great deal of work. Councillor Gerstner stated that the officers have also dealt very well with the application but, in his view, he believes that the application should be deferred in order to give the applicant time to revert back to highways in order to try and find some mitigation that can be engineered. He expressed the view that people do not walk and cycle down that road and there are a number of aspects that can still be rectified including the Crossway Hand junction. Councillor Gerstner stated that it is a fantastic opportunity which he is very supportive of but in its current form he cannot support the application, and he would rather see it deferred.
- Councillor Purser stated that the application is in outline form and he will fully support the proposal.
- Councillor Connor stated that on balance the employment opportunities the proposal will bring with it and the aspirations of Fenland to move forward all outweigh the concerns with the road apart for repairing the A605.

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

(Councillor Connor stated that he had previously attended a presentation given by the agent with officers and members during the infancy of the application but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(All members present declared that they know Councillors Boden and Mrs Laws as they are elected members of the District Council)

(Councillor Mrs French and Imafidon stated that they are members of Cabinet and work closely with both Councillor Boden and Councillor Mrs Laws, but they have not entered into any discussions regarding the application)

(Councillor Gerstner stated that he has met the agent on two previous occasions, but they did not discuss the application and attended the open public meeting concerning the application, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

3.40 pm

Chairman

PLANNING COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2025 - 1.00 PM

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor R Gerstner and Councillor M Purser,

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

P73/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of 12 November 2025 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

P74/25 F/YR25/0726/PIP **LAND SOUTH OF 29 PRIMROSE HILL, DODDINGTON** **PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 2 X DWELLINGS**

The Legal Officer stated that the application is for residential and workplace use and the issue facing the Council is that there is no power which allows it to impose planning conditions or Section 106 obligations on a Planning in Principle (PIP) application. He explained that the advice that he has given the committee is that it would be better for the application to be deferred in order to allow time for discussions to take place with the applicant to consider amending the application to make it more efficient for the application to be approved or refused and then if it were to be approved it would be framed in the correct way so that members could achieve what they want in that event.

Councillor Connor stated that he is sorry that this issue has not been highlighted prior to today's meeting and apologised to the applicant and agent for the issue which has arisen and also to members who have spent time reading the reports and have undertaken site visits.

Councillor Connor asked members whether they were content with the legal advice which had been provided to them and members unanimously agreed that they were.

Councillor Benney stated that it is disappointing that issue this has not been identified prior to today as the application has been in the planning system for a long time. He asked the Head of Planning to confirm whether the application is going to be brought back before the committee for determination? Matthew Leigh explained that as members are aware a new scheme of delegation is being introduced by Central Government and it is not likely to be heard by the House of Lords for at least another two months and he does not see any reason why this application will not be brought back to committee in January.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be DEFERRED.

(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 Imafidon declared that the agent has undertaken work for him 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 had been lobbied on this application)

P75/25

F/YR25/0729/PIP

LAND NORTH OF 10 PRIMROSE HILL, DODDINGTON

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE TO ERECT 4 WORKPLACE DWELLINGS

The Legal Officer stated that he has advised the committee that this application should be deferred due to the fact that the Council cannot currently impose conditions to regulate the development and a deferral will enable discussions to take place with the applicant.

Members confirmed that they agree with the legal advice provided to them.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be DEFERRED.

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

P76/25

F/YR25/0730/PIP

LAND NORTH OF THE QUADRANT, PRIMROSE HILL, DODDINGTON

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 2 X DWELLINGS

The Legal Officer stated that he has advised the committee that this application should be deferred due to the fact that the Council cannot currently impose conditions to regulate the development and a deferral will enable discussions to take place with the applicant.

Members confirmed that they agree with the legal advice provided to them.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be DEFERRED.

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

P77/25

F/YR25/0258/VOC

LAND EAST OF THE ELMS, CHATTERIS

VARIATION OF CONDITION 7 (SOUTHERN ACCESS) AND REMOVAL OF CONDITION 16 (LEAP) OF PLANNING PERMISSION F/YR22/0967/FDL (ERECT UP TO 80 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)) - RE WORDING OF CONDITION.

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Benney, a District Councillor. Councillor Benney stated that the application site used to be in the ward but is now in his adjacent Council ward. He explained that this was a scheme that he looked at when he sat on the Investment Board and came under his portfolio holder responsibilities which is why he is not taking part in the discussion or voting for the item.

Councillor Benney stated he has always supported the application because when he first became a councillor for Birch Ward, he had several residents contact him with regards to a flooding issue in The Elms, explaining that when the Farriers Gate development was built at a higher level the water runs off from that development and into The Elms causing flooding to gardens which are often underwater as well as being halfway up the wheels of parked cars. He stated that at that time he went to see David Rowen, the Development Manager, and asked him what steps could be taken to overcome the drainage issue, and his professional advice was the best thing to resolve the issue will be to build near it and, in his view, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to fix the flooding issues in The Elms.

Councillor Benney added that councillors can be unpopular for approving the granting planning permission amongst other things but fixing a situation so that residents houses do not flood is a vital part of a councillors role, which is why he has always supported this application because when he was the Portfolio Holder, he was involved in meetings with Lovells who are the construction company responsible for the build of the development. He added that during the course of one meeting he asked whether the development would fix the problem in The Elms, and he was advised that it would and he asked for a written guarantee that the proposal would fix the problems for the residents of The Elms, and it was confirmed by the Lovells representative that it would, with the response he was provided being as good as you are ever going to get as a councillor to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Councillor Benney explained that there are two attenuation ponds on the site which are located in order to take the water away from the application site as well as to take the water away that is flooding through from Farriers Gate, which is the only chance which will come forwards to fix the issue and it will be a lost opportunity if it does not go ahead. He explained that at the outline stage of the application it was going to be for 80 houses, however, that has now been reduced to just over 50 dwellings due to the amount of land which is required for the attenuation ponds to drain the water away which is why the variation of condition application is needed due to the costs of undertaking the work, which are prohibitive and could stop the development from going ahead.

Councillor Benney added that he appreciates that there is a loss of social housing from the proposal but there have been several houses approved in West Street and as a councillor there is the requirement to have social housing for local need as opposed to people being sent from outside the area because they need somewhere to live. He made the point that Chatteris is a nice place and he fully supports the application for the social housing that was passed which he appreciates is required but if the reduction in social housing means that the issue in The Elms is resolved then, in his view, it is a sacrifice which is worth it and he asked members to support the proposal.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked Councillor Benney whether he was able to confirm how much social housing has been approved in Chatteris recently? Councillor Benney stated that he does not know a definitive number, but he explained that there is the whole estate located down West Street and the Hallam Land development will include an element of social housing. He added that there needs to be enough social housing in the first place for local need and it should not be the situation where people are just sent to Chatteris because it is cheap to live. Councillor Benney expressed the view that several years ago the Council were moving

people out of London, where the Housing Benefit equated to £1,500 a month and in Chatteris it was £600 per month. He expressed the opinion that he wants to keep Chatteris a nice place to live and the houses should be for local people. Councillor Benney stated that he does fully support the developments which are being undertaken but his focus with the current application is overcoming the drainage issues for the residents of The Elms.

- Councillor Marks asked Councillor Benney whether he can recall when the last episode of flooding occurred? Councillor Benney stated that he did not know as he is no longer the ward councillor where the site is located but does recall an instance where he was called to a meeting in a resident's home and the gardens were all under water and their cars had water above tyre level with the road at the bottom of The Elms being flooded. He made the point that this is a one-time opportunity to fix the problem and he would rather be unpopular for building something that people do not want than be unpopular for having a house that has 2ft of water running through it as it is a situation that people should not find themselves in.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that it is disappointing that there is a loss of affordable housing, but she does understand why. She asked Councillor Benney whether he is aware if the Lead Local Flood Authority has been consulted on the proposal? Councillor Benney stated that he did not know as he is no longer the Portfolio Holder he is no longer involved in briefings.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from John Mason, the agent. Mr Mason stated that the application seeks to amend several key aspects of an outline planning permission granted by the Council in September 2024. He added that the outline application for land east of The Elms, approved the principle of up to 80 dwellings on the site and the principle of access from The Elms and all other matters were reserved.

Mr Mason stated that the site has been purchased by Fenland Future Limited (FFL) for delivery and he explained that FFL is the wholly owned subsidiary of the Council and the purpose of FFL is to deliver much needed housing and to provide a financial return to the Council which can be used to support Council services and local projects. He made the point that the site in Chatteris provides FFL with the opportunity to build a range of homes for local people and to provide a revenue stream for the Council, with the FFL employing highly experienced construction company Lovell Partnerships (LP) to design and deliver a housing scheme which provides much needed local housing and additional revenue back to the Council and maximising the financial return from the site.

Mr Mason explained that following the outline approval FFL and LP have been working with the architects and engineers to fully understand the constraints of the site and this has led to three key changes being proposed which require an amendment to the outline application. He made the point that the site is at risk of surface water flooding and the outline application including limited detail on how surface water could be safely managed without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Mr Mason added that updates to the Environment Agency's flood map to account for climate change now suggest that the site is more at risk than previously thought and that as a result a cut and fill exercise will be proposed in order to raise some parts of the site and lower others to ensure that the new homes are protected from flooding and any flood waters can be directed out of the site to the east. He stated that as a result this has reduced the developable area and increased the engineering costs meaning that only 54 homes can now be delivered instead of 80 and there cannot be any affordable housing included.

Mr Mason explained that this change has been subject to robust scrutiny with officers and third-party consultants, and he added that whilst there has been some disagreement concerning the exact construction costs, all parties agree that the scheme will not be viable if it provides affordable housing and consequently would not be able to proceed. He added that the second key change is with regards to the vehicular link to the south, however, the outline application only proposed a link

from The Elms, which was on the basis of highways modelling done at the time and this is what was shown on the approved outline plans.

Mr Mason explained that a pedestrian and cycle link to the south will have several advantages and, in his opinion, it will promote walking and cycling through the developments to the east of Chatteris and will link the public footpaths to the town centre and out to the countryside. He added that it will also limit the traffic going through The Elms which will now only have a vehicular link to the homes on the application site rather than a vehicular link to homes across the entire eastern allocation.

Mr Mason made the point that the change has been reviewed with the Highways Authority and Planning Officers who have confirmed that by removing the link it will comply with both the allocation and the outline application. He explained that he is also proposing to remove the public play area from the site and make a commuted sum payment of £67,000 to replace and improve existing play equipment nearby.

Mr Mason stated that the proposed homes are already within walking distance of several play areas and officers agree that it will be better for the local community if the existing play areas are upgraded, making the point that a play area on the application site would duplicate existing provision and would also be located in areas at risk of flooding which may limit its usability. He stated that if the application is approved then FFL will move forward with the reserved matters submission for 54 dwellings which will set out the precise layout and designs of the homes and open space.

Mr Mason made the point that FFL in partnership with Lovells are confident that the scheme is deliverable and they will be able to get on site in good time to ensure that the new homes can be delivered. He added that it is regrettable that the site cannot deliver affordable homes and the site will continue to play an important part in delivering housing, open space and pedestrian and cycle connections for the district whilst fulfilling the aims of the allocation.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French asked whether the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been contacted with regards to the existing flood issues which are being experienced? Mr Mason explained that he has already submitted the reserved matters application which contains a detailed surface water drainage scheme and his engineer has been engaging with the LLFA on a pre application basis to agree the plans and the reserved matters application has also been subject to consultation as well from the LLFA and Anglian Water. He explained that their written responses already appears online which approves the drainage strategy and officers will be making their assessment of that shortly. Mr Mason added that it is his understanding that with regards to the surface water flooding issues is that the water comes into the site from a variety of directions and the cut and fill exercise will create contour lines which will channel the water out of the site and out to the countryside to the east taking flood water from the surrounding areas and direct the water in a controlled manner.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to the public open space and the proposed financial contribution that has been stated, and she expressed the opinion that as the Portfolio Holder for Parks and Open Spaces it is far preferable to have better quality play areas as opposed to too many smaller ones.
- Councillor Marks stated that he understands that the £67,000 will be for the park provision, however, he asked for clarification as to what the actual original figure was for the initial proposed park? Mr Mason stated that in the original viability review there was a figure for public open space and it is his understanding that the £67,000 figure was provided by the Public Open Spaces Team.
- Councillor Marks stated that there is going to be a loss of social housing which he is concerned about and he added that there is a very large attenuation pond proposed on site

which will affect land use and he questioned whether that is one of the reasons why there is a loss of social housing. Mr Mason explained that it formed part of the flood engineering works that are creating the areas of raised and lowered land, they can only raise enough land to lower the equivalent amount of land which means that you are not going to flood back into The Elms and as a result it means that there is a tightly defined developable area. He explained that by increasing the developable area to include a play area would mean that there would be the requirement to deepen those channels for surface water which was reaching the point where it would not work anymore. Mr Mason stated that the balance has been struck where the land will be raised and that can only fit 54 homes plus the engineering works means it is no longer viable to provide the 20% affordable homes.

- Councillor Connor stated that whilst he was initially disappointed with regards to the loss of social housing, he is now content that the works being undertaken will alleviate the flooding from the nearby properties which is a very positive step.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked what the initial figure was which was submitted for the play area? Matthew Leigh explained that officers do not have the information submitted by the applicant in their original assessment for what they were looking to spend. He added that the figure officers have, which has been negotiated in the Section 106 contributions, relates to what the Parks and Open Spaces Team were looking for in 2021 in relation to improvements and enhancements to the existing play facilities and officers have index linked it up to the figure as stated within the officer's report.
- Councillor Marks requested clarity that it was considered in 2021? Matthew Leigh confirmed that the figure has been index linked and is now, therefore, higher as originally the figure was £60,000.
- Councillor Connor expressed the view that £67,000 does not provide much play area equipment and is very frugal amount. Matthew Leigh explained that the issue of the application is viability and the reason that the request for this amount of money is still valid is to make the scheme acceptable because of the shortfall on site.
- Councillor Murphy stated that the land needs to be built on and was earmarked for housing 30 years ago.

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

- Councillor Mrs French stated that the figure of £67,000 is irrelevant because by the time the reserved matters is submitted and works starts it is likely to be another four or five years. She stated that the Council are working on Inspire and Place and Pride projects and as a result of funding from Central Government, every play area across the district is being assessed and reviewed, which could mean that the play areas in Chatteris will be enhanced. Councillor Mrs French expressed the opinion that she is delighted that the flooding issue has been considered by the agent and applicants as it has been a known problem for some time. She stated that she will support the application and referred to the fact that Chatteris Town Council are of the opinion that the application should have been determined by another authority but made the point that the Planning Committee members are very experienced, and she does not agree with the comments that they have made which she finds to be offensive.
- Councillor Connor stated that he agrees with Councillor Mrs French adding that members of the committee are experienced and he was also the Chairman of the County Council's Planning Committee.
- Councillor Marks stated that £67,000 is only a small amount and he is concerned with regards to the loss of the social housing, but there is community benefit by dealing with the drainage further along the road, making the point that the land was earmarked for housing 30 years ago when the bypass was built. He stated that if there was just social housing on the site then it would be unaffordable anyway, meaning the land would never be built on and the flooding issue would still exist and, in his view, this is the best way forward for the land and for the surrounding community and he will support the application.

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

(Councillor Benney declared that as he was a previous member of Cabinet and sat on the Investment Board who are involved with Fenland Future Limited, he would take no part in the discussion and voting thereon, and following his presentation to the committee he left the meeting for the duration of the item)

(Councillor Imafidon declared that as he is a member of Fenland Future Limited, he would not take any part in the item and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

(Councillor Murphy registered, 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)

P78/25 F/YR25/0347/F
20 NENE PARADE, MARCH, PE15 8TD
ERECT 2X SELF-BUILD/CUSTOM BUILD DWELLINGS INVOLVING DEMOLITION
OF EXISTING DWELLING AND GARAGE WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA

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 the application was deferred by the committee in June, with the committee agreeing to demolish the existing 1970's bungalow which is heavily damaged with subsidence and replacing it with two dwellings being acceptable. He explained that he has worked with officers to bring forward a recommendation of approval for 2 three bedoomed chalet bungalows in the middle of March, and he added that the applicant is happy to sign the self-build declaration and pay the fee.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French thanked Mr Hall for taking into consideration the views of the Planning Committee and for working proactively with officers.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that if the application is approved, she would like to see a very strong condition added that during demolition and rebuild there is to be no parking allowed on Nene Parade. Hayleigh Parker-Haines stated that a condition for a construction management plan can be included to secure those details.

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

- Councillor Mrs French stated that the application was heavily debated in June and the agent, applicant and officers have worked successfully together.
- Councillor Benney stated that he welcomes the fact that the agent has worked with officers on the application and the application should now be approved.

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

(Councillor Marks assumed the position of Chairman due to Councillor Connor's declaration and being unable to Chair the item)

(Councillor Mrs French registered, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that she is a member of March Town Council, but takes no part in planning)

(Councillors Connor and Imafidon declared that as they were not present when the item was debated previously, they would not take part in the item for its entirety)

(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 registered, 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 added that he also knows the agent but has had no business dealings with him)

P79/25

F/YR25/0776/PIP

LAND NORTH OF 386 WISBECH ROAD, WESTRY

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR UP TO 9 X DWELLINGS

Tom Donnelly presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Mrs Simmons, an objector to the proposal. Mrs Simmons stated that the A141 is a major road which is very busy and Westry is an elsewhere location. She made the point that the report makes reference to the site being in Flood Zone 1 but according to the Government's flood maps it does state that the area is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Mrs Simmons explained that there has been planning permission granted at The Paddocks and also across the road but the flood zone appears to be closer than a Flood Zone 1 and it also states that it is very close to Flood Zone 2 and she has severe concerns that her property will be flooded as a result. She explained that her property has suffered from frequent power cuts, along with total loss of water and in some instances very low water pressure, with the infrastructure and pressure on the utilities being unreliable at times and Westry is an isolated area with no nearby shops or facilities and poor public transport links with a very infrequent bus service.

Mrs Simmons added that the properties located across the road took over six months to rent out and, in her opinion, the proposed properties will also find it difficult to attract new residents and occupants will also find it difficult to cross the busy A141. She expressed the view that the surface water run off to existing properties needs to be considered as local residents are very concerned if the flooding situation worsens.

Mrs Simmons explained that the road suffers from severe congestion which causes hazards for emergency vehicles when they are trying to navigate the heavy traffic and, in her opinion, any additional development is only going to add to the existing chaos. She expressed the view that the proposal conflicts with LP3 of the Local Plan and is located in an isolated and unsustainable area, with the flood risk having been misinterpreted, the highway safety is of a concern as the application is on a major road and the demand for housing in Westry is low and the site is agricultural.

Mrs Simmons added that she has lived in other parts of March and moved to Westry in 2011 for a quieter environment and, in her view, the land should be left as agricultural as it has been up to October 2025 and there should be no development on that land when there are other suitable places to develop. She added that the objections which were submitted for the development at 433 Wisbech Road are also relevant to this application due to its proximity to the current application site.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she also lives in Westry and has not experienced any loss of power or water. Mrs Simmons stated that throughout the year she experiences low water pressure, no water and issues with power cuts including twice in the last two weeks, with

the additional dwellings only going to add to the existing problems. She added that she also has concerns with regards to the increase in vehicles which may accompany the new dwellings. Mrs Simmons expressed the view that as the properties will be using cess pits the new residents will not be familiar with how cess pit systems operate and this could also add to environmental issues.

- Councillor Marks asked for clarity that the land was in agricultural use up until October and has the land just now been left as fallow or have they drilled it and left the site? Mrs Simmons explained that until October it was being farmed and there were bales of hay on the site and then following that the land was blocked off and the land was only being farmed at the other end. She stated that neighbouring properties have also noticed that the land has ceased agricultural use in that particular section from October of this year.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that the application is for linear development set between residential properties which, in his opinion, follows the form and character of the area even though at the back there are barn conversions. He stated that on the latest Environment Agency maps the application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and whilst he agrees that the land at the back is in Flood Zones 2 and 3 the application site is in Flood Zone 1.

Mr Hall explained that to the south of the site there are two barn conversions that were approved in Flood Zone 3 and they are single storey and referred to the presentation screen and pointed out the application site which, in his opinion, is infill development, making the point that when you review officers' reports for developments in Westry further to the south it does state that they consider that this part of Westry as part of March. He referred to the officer's presentation and stated that the officer pointed out that an appeal was submitted previously for a site 50 metres to the north of the application site and was refused planning permission and the appeal was dismissed about 7 years ago and that site that was dismissed is located between a large construction company and a large farming business.

Mr Hall explained that the current application site is set between residential properties and it faces all residential properties to the east and the north and a continuous built-up form to the south, with the site to the north being included in the emerging Local Plan and whilst it holds limited weight, in his view, somebody must have held the view that the site would be suitable for development even though it is located further north. He made the point that March Town Council support the application and none of the consultees have objected to a small-scale development for infill development for individual dwellings.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that in front of the proposed development there is a riparian dyke and whilst she appreciates that the application is only for planning in principle, it does need to be taken into serious consideration as does the inclusion of cess pits as there are no main sewers in Westry.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that if she wants to turn right out of her property she must turn left and use the roundabout to turn around. She added that she must rely on the traffic lights at Goosetree for her to turn and she asked Mr Hall to take that all those points into consideration.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she does not feel that there is enough information from any of the authorities especially highways. Matthew Leigh explained that when dealing with planning in principle applications there is no ability to really make any consideration outside the principle.
- Councillor Murphy stated that in the officer's presentation they referred to the site being in an elsewhere location but, in his opinion, it should be classed as an infill application. Tom

Donnelly explained that this is something that was considered for the appeal site on the opposite side of the road and at the time the Council in their refusal did contend that this was an elsewhere location. He explained that the appellant suggested that it did form part of the built-up form of March and that that due to the distance from services, facilities and lack of public transport links, the Inspector concluded that this part of Westry would be classed as an elsewhere location.

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

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has lived in Westry for 41 years and over the years she has seen it grow, with there being one footpath which is not particularly good and that is located on the opposite side of the road. She expressed the view that she has concerns with regards to the dyke and cess pits and she explained that the contractor has been chosen for the traffic lights which are going to be installed at the Hobbs Lot junction with work commencing in the new year. Councillor Mrs French expressed the opinion that Westry cannot take anymore development and if the proposal was for 1 or 2 dwellings then it could be acceptable but in her view 9 is too many. She added that the issue at Lime Tree Close has been ongoing for 5 years and there is still no resolution and ,in her opinion, this application is going to be a nightmare waiting to happen and she cannot support it.
- Councillor Marks stated he has listened to the views of Councillor Mrs French who is the Ward Councillor and knows the area very well, with planning being about land use and the objector to the proposal highlighted her concerns with regards to the additional vehicles and he also has concerns with regard to the highways and the entry and exit from the site. He added that traffic can tail back for some distance which could include lorries turning into the factory if it reopens and, in his opinion, his major concern is regarding the highway, and he also feels that there is not enough detail which has been provided. Councillor Marks stated that he recognises the comments concerning problems with cess pits and low water pressure, but he believes that the proposal is for too many houses on too small a plot with too many vehicle movements and he cannot support it.
- Councillor Connor expressed the view that nine houses are far too many and he cannot support the application.

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

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

**P80/25 TPO042025
TAVISTOCK ROAD, WISBECH**

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

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

- Councillor Benney stated that it does not impede any works which need to be undertaken by having a Tree Preservation Order applied and if works needs to be undertaken to it which deem it to be unsafe then that can be done. He added that it does look to be a nice mature tree, and he feels that the order should be granted.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she concurs with view of Councillor Benney.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the Tree Preservation Order in respect of 1 x Sycamore tree be CONFIRMED.

David Grant presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Lee Bevens, the agent. Mr Bevens stated that his clients moved into their property in December 1995 and have never suffered from any type of flooding episode or been waterlogged with surface water, with the only occasion where they have had an excess of water was outside their driveway on the road which was as a result of the road drain being blocked. He explained that on investigation the land distributor was blocked solid with mud and dirt which was cleared by highways and there have been no further occurrences.

Mr Bevens explained that report of the annual overflow of sewage detailed in some of the letters of objection has not happened at the address but is a recurring problem at Poppyfields where there is an ongoing issue that Councillor Marks is involved with. He stated that with regards to land drainage, the applicant has been paying drainage rates to Welney Internal Drainage Board on a yearly basis since 1995, and they also pay a farmer to clear the ditches twice a year around their land to cut and to dredge the ditches as and when required, with the applicant being aware that other landowners do not make payments and do not even pay for the pumps.

Mr Bevens added that the applicants' stables, barns, tack room, shed, poly tunnel and paddocks have also been in place for 29 to 30 years and 52 Station Road which is located north of their field also has brick buildings and stables located on the east side of the property which all protrude into the area of the countryside and go beyond the linear frontage of Station Road. He referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the recent planning applications which have been submitted along Station Road, and he pointed out the site to the north at 76 Station Road, which, whilst it had pig sheds located on the site, it still proposed the back land development.

Mr Bevens explained that the Planning Officer has stated that the application does not respect the rural character or linear settlement pattern of Station Road, making the point that the site to the north is also located in Flood Zone 3 and had to raise floor levels of the proposed dwellings. He explained that the next slide demonstrates that it is a triangular shaped area of land where the development is proposed and it is a self-contained parcel of land which is bound by Station Road and existing ditches to the north, south and east, with there being numerous outbuildings established behind the linear frontage of Station Road which were shown on the slide by red squares.

Mr Bevens referred to the presentation screen and explained that the slide shows the site layout that formed the permission in principle for the rear of 76 Station Road and highlights the fact that there is a precedent already for back land development along Station Road. He added that whilst the proposed development is behind the frontage of Station Road it is following an example already established by the development already in place and also follows a general concept of development in Manea that has been behind the linear frontage.

Mr Bevens made reference to the developments in Westfield Road in Manea which also has a strong linear frontage and in recent years there have been numerous approved applications including 24 dwellings at Smart Close, 3 approved dwellings approved at land north of 100 Westfield Road, 9 self-build dwellings at 36 Westfield Road, 7 dwellings northwest of 34 Westfield Road and 8 dwellings at 18 Westfield Road, which are all behind a linear frontage. He expressed the view that at some point a scheme sets a precedent for back land development which can be

demonstrated along Westfield Road.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that the site has had the precedent set by the development to the north and is in a more sustainable location being within 10 minutes' walk of the village centre including the school and a 10-minute walk to the station and development is needed to support the station. He added that the applicant wishes to develop the site for a retirement property for themselves and a dwelling for their daughter, with the additional dwellings together with their current property paying for the dwellings to be built as well as supporting the required infrastructure.

Mr Bevens explained that further specific details on drainage, flooding and highways works would be submitted in a future technical details consent and he is confident that all those matters could be addressed without causing flooding to neighbouring properties ensuring highways safety and he asked the committee to look at the benefits of the scheme and support the application.

Members asked Mr Bevens the following questions:

- Councillor Marks referred to the comment made by Mr Bevens in which he was referred to, and explained that Poppyfields is a development which is located by Wisbech Road. He explained that he has been involved with flooding throughout the whole village and he organised a meeting with Anglian Water which Councillor Mrs French also attended to raise the various flooding issues that Manea suffers from.
- Councillor Imafidon asked whether there has been any consultation undertaken with the local Internal Drainage Boards? Mr Bevens stated that he has not consulted with them but there have been comments between the Drainage Board and the Lead Local Flood Authority with regards to the sequential test and it is his understanding that they were satisfied with regards to what has been undertaken and they are looking for further information which would come in as a result of the technical details consent.
- Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that the number of proposed dwellings is too many for such a small area, with Mr Bevens explaining that two of the dwellings will be for the applicant and the applicant's daughter which is only two dwellings out of a possible seven plus the existing house which is there. He added that the other major concern that he has is the actual entrance and exit on Station Road as the existing property stands forward and he has concerns with regards to the visibility as there are vehicles driving more than 40mph along that road and there is also a pavement used by children going to school. Councillor Marks asked whether the proposed properties are going to be joined to the main sewer network or will be using cess pits? Mr Bevens expressed the view with regards to the layout he does not feel that it is a dense layout at all, and the paddock will be retained opposite and the site could take a lot higher density. He stated that the highways have been considered and it is likely that the road would not be offered for adoption and it will be a private road and the visibility splays can all be achieved as that has been reviewed almost as if it was an outline application just committing the access due to the fact that access is the key driver when considering this type of scheme. Mr Bevens made the point that he does not believe that there is an issue with highway safety and visibility at that point even though there are cars which park along that section of road but that cannot be controlled as it is a public highway. He explained that with regards to the drainage for the individual properties that would be committed in the technical details consent and advice would be sought from a drainage expert as to what would be the best solution, but it would not be onto the main system.
- Councillor Connor stated that he has concerns with regards to the site being in the catchment of Manea Town Lots Water Recycling Centre which currently lacks capacity to accommodate any additional flows generated by the proposed development. He added that it is included in Anglian Water's Business Plan and a planned growth scheme investment between 2025 and 2030 but there is no certainty whether this will be undertaken in that time. Councillor Connor made the point that it does state that Anglian Water would object to any connection into the foul network from the proposed development due to the capacity

constraints and the pollution risk. Mr Bevens stated that if the application were to be approved, the technical details consent would be worked out with a drainage consultant to ensure the best solution is achieved and then further discussions would take place with the drainage boards and Anglian Water. He explained that there is an attenuation pond on the planning in principle scheme and with regards to controlling the flow, the flow would be controlled and would go into the ditches. Mr Bevens added that it would form part of the technical details consent and it cannot be committed to in a planning in principle application, but he is aware of the foul water issues and that would be addressed.

- Councillor Connor stated that he does have significant concerns with regards to the foul water.

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

- Councillor Marks stated that he is a member of Manea Parish Council and was not present when this was debated, however, he has read their comments which he agrees with and are all poignant. He expressed the view that it is back land development and whilst the application where the pig sheds used to be located is now taking place, he recalls that it was a requirement to remove pig farms out of villages which was why that was passed. Councillor Marks stated that the application site goes further back compared to the piece of land where the pig farm used to be and the biggest concern he has is still flooding. He stated that across the road from the application site there was an episode of flooding which took place in December 2024 and there was an Anglian Water pump located in the vicinity which then failed and it was discovered that it had backed up all the way from Wisbech Road which is a quarter of a mile away near Poppyfields and the blockage also continued towards Pump Corner. Councillor Marks added that the whole line is struggling to keep up with foul water and whilst the application site could have cess pits installed it is his understanding that the drain at the top of the site is a private drain that must feed in at least a third of a mile into a main drain. He added that the properties will need to be raised to come out of Flood Zone 3 and he made the point that he cannot support the application it is over intensification for the application site and is far too much for the village of Manea.
- Councillor Connor expressed the view that he is not content with the application, and he added that Anglian Water are up to the limit with the flows and, in his opinion, the access is poor and it is back land development, and he cannot support the application in its current state.
- Councillor Marks stated that the agent had referred to Westfield Road regarding various development located there and he added that the committee recently refused an application and the Planning Inspector found against that but there was not a cost implication. He added that the Inspector's report stated that an application further down the road for four bungalows with almost exactly the same entrance of the property being located close to the road was refused by the Inspector and he agreed with the Council. Councillor Marks made the point that he sees this as a very similar application as it is back land with the access and the vision issues.

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

(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Manea Parish Council but was not present when this item was discussed. He further declared that he is a member of the Manea and Welney Internal Drainage Board)

P82/25

F/YR25/0796/PIP

LAND NORTH OF 120 LONDON ROAD, CHATTERIS

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE TO ERECT UP TO 1 X DWELLING

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 stated that the application is for an infill plot for a single dwelling to match in with a continuous linear development along London Road and the dwellings along that part of London Road are all individually designed dwellings which have been there for several years. He referred to the officer's report with regards to the bowling green which was a private bowling green and its use ceased in 2014 when the owner passed away, with it never being a public facility and was only for the owner's private use and was never a commercial bowling green as Chatteris already has one located in Wood Street.

Mr Hall explained that in the officer's report it refers to various refusals and appeals on the site in 2006 and 2008 which he agrees with and added that they were considered under a different Local Plan. He stated that all along the front of the site on the opposite side of the road there is a footpath which stretches for almost the whole length of London Road and the site is in Flood Zone 1.

Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the red star which indicates the application site, and he explained that to the northeast of the site the construction for Hallam Land has commenced and to the south of the application site down London Road and Stocking Drove there have been various planning permissions given since 2019 and some of those are built out, and some are partway through construction. He expressed the opinion that the committee have already accepted that this area is part of the built-up form of Chatteris under LP3 of the Local Plan and there are no objections to the application from any consultee or members of the public and Chatteris Town Council support the application.

Mr Hall expressed the view that it is an ideal site for an individual dwelling to match in with the adjacent development in Flood Zone 1 and it has not been used for agricultural land for at least 20 to 30 years. He added that it has a footpath link and matches in with the adjacent built-up form of linear development.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Imafidon stated that he has noted that the bowling green is not a public asset and was last used in 2014 but as it appears to be well maintained he would like to know what it has been used for since that time? Mr Hall explained that it is his understanding that the family just maintain the site as a green piece of land as the family still reside there.

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

- Councillor Murphy stated that, within the presentation, officers have stated that the site floods, but he has lived in Chatteris for 80 years and he has never known the site to flood. He added that the application is for the family and the land is a private piece of land and he added that officers are of the opinion that the site cannot be built on adjacent to the bungalow which the family already own. Councillor Murphy stated that further down the road, there are more properties being built and they are located much further outside of the area and should never have been allowed to be built there. He added that the application is for one dwelling located next to another bungalow which will allow a family to live near each other and, in his view, it should be approved.
- Councillor Benney stated that he agrees with the points made by Councillor Murphy and added that the bungalow which is already there is a replacement bungalow as the previous property on the site suffered from subsidence and had to be demolished and rebuilt. He added that it was a private bowling green and the proposed dwelling will be for a family member to be able to reside next door to their mother which he applauds. Councillor Benney stated that the officer report states that the site is located outside of Chatteris and he disagrees with that as, in his opinion, there is at least a mile in distance from the bottom of Ferry Hill where the sign says Chatteris as you come from Somersham. He explained that this has been very well debated by the committee and there must be at least 10 further

houses which are built further along going out towards the road sign which have already approved. Councillor Benney expressed the view that the principle of development has already been well established in the area and he is confident that the bungalow will be built to a high standard and he will support the application.

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

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal of planning permission as they feel that the proposal is located inside the Chatteris area, and they feel that the precedent of development has already been set and members need to be consistent

(Councillor Benney declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is 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 Imafidon declared that the agent has undertaken work for him personally, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

(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 added that he also knows Matthew Hall but has no business dealings with him)

3.19 pm

Chairman

F/YR25/0586/F

Applicant: Fink Developments

Agent : Mr R Swann
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited

Phase B Land East Of, Berryfield, March, Cambridgeshire

Erect 15 x dwellings with associated infrastructure and the formation of 1 x balancing pond and public open space

Officer recommendation: Grant

Reason for Committee: Town Council recommendation contrary to Officer Recommendation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the development of 15 dwellings, associated access, garages, public open space and a detention basin on land east of the emerging Berryfields development, March. The site measures approximately 2.39ha, with the developable area focused to the west on land within Flood Zone 1, while the eastern portion, within Flood Zones 2 and 3 remains undeveloped as public open space.
- 1.2 The revised scheme follows the refusal of an earlier proposal for 18 dwellings. Key amendments include a reduced quantum of development, reorientation of dwellings, repositioning of the internal road, and relocating all built form into Flood Zone 1. These changes address previous concerns relating to flood risk layout and biodiversity net gain.
- 1.3 The proposal comprises a mix of three- and four-bedroom homes across four house types. Although the scheme does not fully reflect the District's identified need for smaller homes, this was not a previous reason for refusal and is not considered to warrant objection. All dwellings meet private amenity space standards, the design approach aligns with the neighbouring Berryfields development, and no significant harm is anticipated to residential amenity or the wider landscape. Parking provision meets adopted standards, and the highway authority raises no objections following amendments to access arrangements.
- 1.4 A viability assessment, independently reviewed by the Council, concludes that the development cannot viably support either affordable housing or S106 contributions. Even before policy requirements are applied, the scheme produces a negative residual land value. The omission of contributions is therefore accepted.
- 1.5 The scheme achieves a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, with enhancements concentrated within the extensive eastern greenspace. Ecological impacts can be adequately mitigated and managed through conditions. Archaeological investigation will be required due to known heritage assets in the vicinity.

1.6 Overall, the proposal would deliver modest economic benefits, meaningful environmental enhancements, and social benefits through additional housing in a sustainable Market Town location. The design quality, amenity provision, and access arrangements are acceptable, and previous reasons for refusal have been addressed.

1.7 On balance, and when assessed against the NPPF and the Fenland Local Plan, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development. The benefits are considered to outweigh the identified harm, and the application is recommended as acceptable, subject to conditions.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site sits to the east of the relatively new built developments under the terms of F/YR14/1020/O and F/YR18/0984/RM and subsequent application F/YR23/0792/F known as 'Berryfields'. The site extends approximately 2.395 hectares and is currently undeveloped land laid to grass

2.2 Access is be provided from the recently approved developments to the west. With the exception of the adjoining construction site the boundaries are currently open, but with ditches on the eastern and southern sides. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning however the north eastern corner sits within flood zone 3 and the central section is within Flood zone 2.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of 15 dwellings together with associated public open space and a detention basin. The proposed access road would extend eastwards from the existing turning head of the adjacent development currently under construction, with eight dwellings positioned along this east–west section (five to the south and three to the north). The road would turn northwards, running parallel to the existing and emerging dwellings to the west, with the remaining seven dwellings fronting the road and turning head at the northern end, broadly reflecting the established layout pattern. The majority of the proposed dwellings would be situated within Flood Zone 1, while the eastern portion of the site, which lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, would be retained as public open space.

3.2 The proposed development comprises 15 two storey dwellings arranged across the site, providing a mix of three- and four-bedroom houses. The dwellings range in size from approximately 113m² to 161m² and are designed with varied ridge and eaves heights, with a maximum ridge height of approximately 8.4m and eaves heights generally between 4.8m and 4.9m.

3.3 All dwellings provide family accommodation arranged over two floors, typically comprising open plan kitchen dining areas, separate living spaces, utility rooms where applicable and bathrooms at first floor level, with some units including ensuite facilities.

- 3.4 External materials are consistent across the development to ensure a cohesive appearance and comprise predominantly facing brick with areas of render to selected elevations and features. Roofs are finished in either terracotta or slate grey tiles, reflecting the variation in house types while maintaining a unified character across the site.
- 3.5 Most plots are served by a single garage, except for Plots 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12 (B2 and B3 house types). The garages have a ridge height of 5.27m, eaves of 2.45m, and measure approximately 4m in width and 7.64m in depth, finished in facing brick.
- 3.6 A substantial proportion of the land to the east, delineated within the site red line boundary, is set aside as public open space and accommodates the proposed detention basin. Pedestrian and cyclist access to this area is provided between plots 8 and 9.

Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

The recent, relevant planning history for the site is provided below, this does not include the planning history for part of application site forming access to the public highway through adjacent development to the west:

Reference	Proposal	Decision
F/YR23/0550/F	18 Dwellings with associated infrastructure and the formation of 2 x balancing ponds and public open space	Refused – 10.01.2025

5 CONSULTATIONS

Several amended plans and additional information/clarification has been provided throughout the determination of the application. The consultation responses below incorporate each round of consultation:

5.1 March Town Council

Object due to concerns regarding flooding and drainage at this site as well as the developer's unwillingness to provide affordable housing or make s106 contributions.

Internal Consultees

5.2 FDC Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer

No objection and provided background on affordable housing and requirements of 3 affordable rented homes and 1 shared ownership based on 25% AH requirements.

5.3 FDC Ecologist

No objection. Recommends a condition securing a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan statutory BNG, no site clearance and protection of watercourses conditions be included should the application be approved.

5.4 FDC Arboricultural Consultant

Originally raised concerns due to insufficient information having been provided in terms of the protection and retention of the trees along the boundary of the site. Following receipt of an arboricultural impact assessment the original comments have been addressed with no objections or further comments raised.

5.5 FDC Environmental Services – Refuse

No objection however additional plans in terms of swept path analysis are required as currently the ones submitted are insufficient. A number of recommendations are also made.

External Consultees

5.6 CCC - Archaeology

No objection subject to the inclusion of a condition securing a programme for investigation and recording given the archaeological potential of the site, should the application be approved

5.7 CCC – Highways

No objection, subject to the inclusion of conditions should the application be approved.

The highway authority initially raised objections to the location and orientation of the pedestrian and cycle access to the public open space between Plots 8 and 9 due to safety and visibility concerns and also sought clarification on the proposed farm access at the north of the site. These issues were considered essential to resolve prior to determination due to potential safety and adoption implications. Following the submission of amended plans, the access arrangement has been revised in line with current highway guidance and the farm access has been removed, thereby addressing the previous concerns.

5.8 Environment Agency

No objection but note that the main source of flood risk is associated with watercourses under jurisdiction of the IDB.

5.9 NHS – Premises and Estates

No objection but note three nearby GP practices Riverside Practice, Cornerstone Practice and Mercheford House Surgery have no capacity to accommodate additional patients. The proposed development is expected to generate approximately 36 new residents, resulting in additional demand for primary care services. A financial contribution of £12,895.82 is therefore sought to mitigate the impact of the development, based on the additional floorspace required and NHS cost benchmarks.

5.10 Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority

Originally objected to the application due to concerns regarding the attenuation basin, shared attenuation tank, discharge rate discrepancies and hydraulic calculations and watercourse maintenance buffers. Additional details were received with a subsequent consultation with the LLFA being undertaken whereby the objection was upheld on grounds of FEH rainfall calculation concerns, Drainage plan queries and watercourse maintenance. Following the receipt of: Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy, MTC, Ref: 2104, Rev: C, Dated: May 2025 and the Applicants Response to LLFA, MTC, Ref: MJB/2104, Dated: 6th October 2025 the LLFA removed the objection in principle as the documentation provided demonstrates surface water can be managed accordingly.

5.11 Middle Level Commissioners

The Board initially raised significant concerns regarding the positioning of the detention basin and balancing pond over an existing pipeline believed to drain a spring serving the wider Elm Road area. At that stage, the IDB considered there to be insufficient information regarding the pipeline's ownership, condition, levels and maintenance responsibilities, and expressed concern that the arrangement could compromise future access and integrity of the pipeline, thereby increasing flood risk. The IDB advised that the balancing pond should be relocated to allow appropriate access and long term maintenance and also highlighted opportunities to deliver enhanced multifunctional flood storage and blue green infrastructure, alongside the need for a site-specific SuDS and watercourse maintenance strategy.

Following the submission of revised plans and further information, the IDB confirmed that responsibility for the on-site watercourse rests with the management company and that maintenance should be undertaken in accordance with the existing Watercourse Management Plan. While a 6 metre maintenance access width continues to be recommended, this is advisory rather than a fixed requirement. The IDB also confirmed that, aside from the unresolved vesting of the downstream watercourse, the Watercourse Management Plan remains relevant and provides an appropriate framework for ongoing maintenance.

Further clarification has been provided by the Applicant, however at the time of writing this report no further comments have been received from the Board.

5.12 Cambridgeshire County Council – Planning and Sustainable Growth

No objection but advised that the proposed development of 15 dwellings is estimated to generate 37.5 residents including 4.5 early years children, 5.5 primary pupils and 3.75 secondary pupils. On this basis S106 contributions are sought towards early years provision, secondary education, SEND education and libraries. The contributions total £193,521.50, comprising £52,776 for early years, £114,000 for secondary education, £23,341 for SEND and £3,412.50 for libraries, together with a £1,200 monitoring fee. Primary education and strategic waste contributions are not required.

5.13 Anglian Water

No objection

5.14 Cambridgeshire Police (Designing Out Crime)

No objection and commends the scheme in terms of layout but makes a number of recommendations in terms of fencing, lighting, doors and windows, cycle storage, EV charging, footpaths/open space and LEAP, SuDS/Attenuation ponds and construction phase security. Namely that these should follow secured by design principles given the siting within a medium risk to crime area.

5.15 Cambridgeshire Fire

No objection subject to the inclusion of a conditions securing a water scheme for the provision of fire hydrants.

5.16 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Four letters of objection have been received from residents on Berryfields and Burnet Gardens, these comments are summarised below:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Congestion	Comments noted and discussed in the below report.
Flooding	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Loss of arable land	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Developers disrespectful and don't pay necessary contributions	Comments noted.
Incorrect land shown as common land	Comments are noted. However, none of the submitted application plans identify any land as common land. The red-line boundary accurately reflects that used in previous applications on the site, and there is no evidence within the submission that any common land has been included.
The information contained within the Viability Review is deemed to be misleading and incorrect namely in terms of referencing a number of properties which were part of the original site.	Comments noted however, regard in assessing the likely sold prices of the potential dwellings is to be had to the sale prices of properties within the vicinity. Whilst these are not all new builds it is not considered that this in isolation prejudices the information. Furthermore, the viability assessment carried out by the applicant has been independently reviewed.

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 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
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
LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail
LP9 – March
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
LP17 – Community Safety
LP19 – The Natural Environment

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall Development

H3 – Local Housing Need

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

Policy 5 - Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Policy 10 - Waste Management Areas (WMAs)

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

Policy 16: -Consultation Areas (CAS)

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

Developer Contributions SPD 2015

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Character and Appearance**
- **Residential and Neighbouring Amenity**
- **Access, Parking and Highway Safety**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1. As mentioned above, planning application F/YR23/0550/F was made on the site for 18 dwellings, which was refused in January 2025 for the following reasons:

Part of the development, including the internal access road for 10 of the dwellings, is within Flood Zone 2. Despite the submission of a Sequential Test Statement on behalf of the applicant, it is concluded that a Sequential Test for the proposals has not been adequately undertaken in line with the approved guidance provided in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD. Accordingly, the application is contrary to Chapter 14 of the NPPF, Part B of Fenland Local Plan Policy LP14 and Policy H2(c) of the March Neighbourhood Plan.

The application as submitted has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in a net loss in biodiversity value, which conflicts with Fenland Local Plan policy LP16(b) and LP19.

9.2. Under the current application, amendments have been made to address the above reasons for refusal. The number of dwellings has been reduced from 18 to 15, allowing the majority of the built form, private curtilages, and the internal access road to be repositioned within Flood Zone 1. The siting and orientation of the proposed dwellings have also been amended to facilitate the above: unlike the

previous submission, where the access road ran through the centre of the site with dwellings backing onto existing properties to the west, the layout now results in the dwellings principle elevation facing these neighbouring properties. While the number of four-bedroom dwellings remains unchanged (12), the overall density has been reduced, and the materials palette remains consistent with the earlier scheme. The lower density has enabled a greater area to be dedicated to biodiversity enhancement. These matters will be assessed below.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy.
- 10.2 The application site is located adjacent to the built form of the settlement of March which is identified within the Settlement Hierarchy as a 'Primary Market Town'. Market Towns are identified within Policy LP3 as the focus for housing growth, accordingly there may be a presumption in favour of housing within this location given that a development of this scale is well below the definition of 'Large scale housing' proposals of 250 dwellings or more. However, this is subject to compliance with other relevant policies within the Local Plan, in particular Policy LP16 (Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District).
- 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 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 Taking into account the above, it is considered that the principle of providing residential accommodation, in isolation, is acceptable, subject to other material considerations, as discussed below.

Housing Mix

- 10.5 Policy LP5, when read alongside the 2021 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), identifies a clear imbalance in the District's housing. The policy encourages a greater provision of smaller, affordable units to meet identified local needs, while also recognising demand for three-bedroom homes in the market sector.
- 10.6 The HNA (2021) shows that in order to meet the identified needs of the District, market dwellings are expected to deliver a balanced range of unit sizes, with a particular emphasis on family housing. Specifically, 3-bedroom homes should comprise the largest share of the market provision while 1-bedroom units are to remain limited (0–10%). The proposal will provide ten larger units and just five three beds and therefore, does not wholly meet the identified needs of the District or support a balanced and inclusive community. Both local policy and paragraph

63 of the NPPF stress the need to offer a range of housing types and sizes to meet different needs.

Affordable Housing, Community Infrastructure and Viability Matters

10.7 Policy LP16 and paragraph 8 of the NPPF require new development to contribute positively to local communities, including through affordable housing provision and the delivery or funding of supporting infrastructure. For a scheme of this scale, Local Plan policy would ordinarily expect 20% on-site affordable housing alongside appropriate S106 contributions.

10.8 However, the applicant has submitted a viability assessment asserting that the scheme is unable to support any affordable housing or financial contributions. This position mirrors conclusions reached for the previous application on the site.

10.9 The submitted assessment has been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council. The review confirms the following key findings:

- An initial appraisal applying full policy requirements (20% on-site affordable housing plus £30,000 S106 contributions) produced a residual land value significantly below the benchmark land value, rendering the scheme unviable.
- Subsequent “trial and error” testing showed that even with zero affordable housing and zero S106 contributions, the scheme still generated a negative residual land value of approximately –£108,700, far below the benchmark land value of £481,000.
- On this basis, the scheme is demonstrated to be unviable even before planning policy requirements are applied. The independent assessor concludes that the only scenario under which the scheme could come forward would be if a developer accepted a profit level materially below normal market expectations.
- Sensitivity testing confirms that reasonable market fluctuations would not materially alter this conclusion.

10.10 Taking into account the above, it is considered that the scheme cannot viably support any affordable housing provision or S106 contributions. Whilst this outcome is regrettable, particularly given the District-wide need for affordable housing of smaller units, the independent review confirms that the development generates a residual land value significantly below the benchmark land value, even before policy requirements are applied, and that adding any affordable units or financial obligations would further undermine viability. In light of this, the omission of affordable housing and S106 contributions is accepted as justified in order to give the scheme the best prospect of being delivered, should the application be approved. Furthermore, the previously refused scheme under application F/YR23/0550/F for 18 dwellings was also found to be unviable, and this did not form part of the reason for refusal of that application.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of Surrounding area

10.11 Policy 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. 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.

- 10.12. Further guidance is provided within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Developments SPD.
- 10.13. The application site occupies land at the edge of the settlement, and the development would extend built form eastwards into what is currently open countryside. However, the revised layout demonstrates that only the western portion of the site is developable due to flood risk constraints. The eastern area, lying within higher flood risk zones, remains as public open space and incorporates attenuation features. This approach softens the transition between the built edge of March and the adjoining countryside, mitigating landscape impact to a reasonable degree.
- 10.14. The dwellings under construction immediately to the west comprise a mix of two- and three-storey properties. The units proposed under this application are two-storey in height and of a scale and form broadly reflective of the existing and emerging character. Four house types are proposed across the 15 dwellings, utilising a materials palette consistent with the earlier scheme, predominantly red brick, with elements of render for visual interest, and roofs in either slate grey or terracotta tiles.
- 10.15. Under the previous application, no design-based objections were raised. The current proposal retains the same architectural approach, with amendments focused primarily on reducing the quantum of development, adjusting the orientation of dwellings, and repositioning the access road so that all built form now sits within Flood Zone 1. These changes have not materially altered the overall design character of the scheme or its associated impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 10.16. It is pertinent to note that due to the relationship between certain dwellings and the adjacent open space opportunities for natural surveillance appear limited and parts of the layout feel less well connected. Policies LP16 and LP17 and paragraphs 130 and 135 of the NPPF emphasise the importance of well-integrated, attractive and accessible environments. However, given the site's significant constraints in terms of flood risk, as discussed further below, it is not considered these matters, in isolation result in sufficient harm to warrant the refusal of the application. This will be discussed further in the planning balance section of the below report.
- 10.17. Taking account of the unchanged design quality, the revised layout, and the absence of design objections to the previous scheme, the proposal is considered to broadly accord with the aims of Policy LP16.

Quantum

- 10.18. The developable area of the site measures approximately 1.56 hectares and lies within the built-up area of March, where national and local policy, including Policy LP3, promotes the efficient use of land in sustainable locations. Recent development in March typically achieves densities of around 30–35 dwellings per hectare, a position supported by the Fenland District Council Monitoring Report (2022–2023), which identifies a district-wide average of 32.3 dph. This indicates

that this site could reasonably accommodate 35–50 dwellings while remaining consistent with local character.

10.19. Under the current proposal, the site would deliver 15 dwellings, which equates to a density of approximately 9.6 dph across the developable area. Although this is lower than typical densities in March, it is noted that only 1.56 hectares of the overall 2.39-hectare site is developable. A previous scheme for 18 dwellings did not attract objection or refusal on density grounds. Given that the reduced quantum primarily arises from the need to confine development to Flood Zone 1 and provide larger dwellings, it would be unreasonable to object to the proposal on density or inefficient land use grounds.

Amenity

10.20. 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.

10.21. The proposed development adjoins existing dwellings and those currently under construction to the west. The closest relationships occur at Plots 1 and 14, which sit approximately 5 metres and 2.5 metres respectively from neighbouring built form. Both plots are positioned adjacent to the side elevations of the neighbouring properties. Plot 14 incorporates no primary habitable room windows facing towards the neighbouring dwelling, and is therefore not considered to give rise to overlooking. At Plot 1, the neighbouring property contains a first-floor side window; however, this window serves a bathroom and would be obscure-glazed, and any views would be limited to the front garden of the adjacent proposed dwelling. Taking these factors into account, together with the orientation and separation distances, it is not considered that the development would result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impacts for neighbouring occupiers.

10.22. The remaining plots benefit from more generous spatial relationships, with separation distances exceeding 25 metres from the rear elevations of the existing/proposed dwellings to the west, and approximately 10 metres from their rear curtilages. This degree of separation is sufficient to ensure that the development would not result in harmful impacts to residential amenity in respect of privacy, outlook, or overshadowing.

10.23. It is important to note that the proposed access road serving the new dwellings would run parallel to the rear amenity spaces of the dwellings currently under construction to the west. While this may lead to some increase in noise and vehicle emissions, the distance between the rear elevations and the road, combined with the modest number of dwellings along this section (seven), limits the potential impact. The layout is consistent with typical residential estate development and is not considered to give rise to unacceptable adverse effects on the occupiers of the adjacent properties

10.24. In terms of the amenity of future occupiers, the layout demonstrates that sufficient distances are maintained between the proposed dwellings to avoid harmful overlooking, overshadowing, or mutual loss of privacy. The orientation of the units has been arranged to ensure that primary habitable room windows do not directly face one another at close quarters, and that each plot benefits from an

appropriate level of natural light and outlook. The scheme is considered to afford an acceptable standard of residential amenity for future occupants in accordance with Policies LP2 and LP16.

10.25. Policy LP16 also seeks to ensure development proposals result in high quality environments 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

10.26. In terms of private amenity provision, all proposed dwellings are served by rear gardens that meet the Council's guideline of providing at least one-third of the plot as usable amenity space, as demonstrated on the Proposed Site Plan. The smallest gardens, at Plots 9 and 15, equate to approximately 33% of their respective plot areas. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with Policy LP16(h)

Landscaping

10.27. Policy LP16 requires all development to contribute to high-quality environments. In relation to landscaping, criteria (c) and (d) require proposals to retain and incorporate natural and historic features of the site, such as trees and hedgerows, in order to preserve landscape character and the settlement pattern of the surrounding area.

10.28. The application is not supported by a comprehensive landscaping scheme, and although the Design and Access Statement alludes to opportunities for enhanced planting and includes minor indicative features on the site plan, this level of detail is insufficient to demonstrate full compliance with Policy LP16(c) and (d). Notwithstanding this deficiency, it is recognised that appropriate landscaping can reasonably be secured through the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition requiring the submission and approval of a detailed soft and hard landscaping scheme prior to commencement.

10.29. Taking this approach, it is considered that effective boundary treatments, planting, and the retention and integration of key natural features can be achieved, thereby enabling the development to contribute positively to the site's character and its wider setting.

10.30. Subject to this condition, the proposal is considered capable of meeting the requirements of Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in respect of landscaping and delivering a high-quality environment.

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

10.31. 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.

Access and Highway Safety

10.32. A transport statement undertaken by MTC Engineering dated May 2025 (ref: 2104 – Phase B – HS Rev A – May 2025) has been submitted in support of this application. This demonstrates that the level of traffic associated with the proposed 15 dwellings will be modest, generating approximately 9 two-way movements during peak hours. When considered cumulatively with the previously consented development to the west, the combined traffic generation remains significantly below the threshold at which strategic network impacts might be expected. On this basis, and having regard to national guidance, the proposal is not anticipated to give rise to capacity issues on the surrounding road network.

10.33. The proposed access arrangement, achieved through the extension of Berryfields, provides appropriate carriageway widths, shared-surface elements and continued footway provision. Vehicle tracking confirms that large vehicles, including refuse vehicles, will be able to manoeuvre safely within the site. The extension of pedestrian footways into the development will ensure connectivity with nearby services, facilities, schools, bus stops and March railway station, enabling realistic opportunities for sustainable travel.

10.34. A Construction Traffic Management Plan can be secured by condition to ensure that construction-phase impacts are appropriately controlled.

10.35. The highway authority initially raised objections to the location and orientation of the pedestrian and cycle access to the public open space between Plots 8 and 9 due to safety and visibility concerns and also sought clarification on the proposed farm access at the north of the site. These issues were considered essential to resolve prior to determination due to potential safety and adoption implications. Following the submission of amended plans, the access arrangement has been revised in line with current highway guidance and the farm access has been removed, thereby addressing the previous concerns.

10.36. Taking all of the above into account, the development is not considered to result in any unacceptable impacts upon highway safety, nor does it give rise to a severe residual cumulative impact on the local highway network. The proposal therefore complies with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan and paragraph 117 of the NPPF.

Parking

10.37. Appendix A sets out that parking provision for two vehicles is required for properties providing up to three bedrooms, properties with four+ bedrooms are required to provide three spaces.

10.38. Plots 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15 are four-bedroom units and each benefit from a single garage together with two additional on-plot spaces. The garages measure approximately 4.05 m by 7.64 m externally, exceeding the minimum internal standard of 7 m by 3 m, and therefore constitute a compliant parking space. The remaining plots comprise three-bedroom dwellings, each of which are served by two dedicated parking spaces. As such, the development as a whole achieves the required level of parking provision in accordance with the adopted standards.

Flood Risk and Drainage

10.39. 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.

10.40. The Flood Risk Assessment submitted in support of the application (MTC Engineering, May 2025, Ref: 2104 – FRA & DS – Phase B – Rev C) concludes that because all proposed dwellings and the access road are positioned within Flood Zone 1, the Sequential Test is not engaged. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states that the Sequential Test should be used in areas at risk from any form of flooding, except where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development, including access or escape routes, land raising, or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located in an area at risk of flooding now or in the future. Whilst it is noted that the public open space falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3, this is not defined as a vulnerable use within Annex 3 of the PPG and therefore, the revised layout is considered to have sufficiently addressed the previous reason for refusal in terms of the sequential test and flood risk.

Drainage

10.41. The Lead Local Flood Authority following the receipt of amended plans, relocating the attenuation basin, shared attenuation tank, and additional information regarding discharge rate discrepancies and hydraulic calculations and watercourse maintenance buffers have raised no objections to the proposal.

10.42. The IDB's most recent response confirmed that the section of watercourse within the site is the responsibility of the management company and should be maintained in accordance with the Watercourse Management Plan (WMP). The WMP provides guidance on channel maintenance and recommends a minimum 6 metre maintenance access width, though this is not a strict requirement. A downstream section of watercourse was intended to be vested as a Board's District Drain but was not due to the landowner's refusal. Aside from this vesting issue, the WMP remains relevant and continues to guide maintenance requirements.

10.43. The comments received from the IDB in relation to the application are noted. The points raised are largely informative and do not constitute an objection to the proposed development. In response to the IDB's observations, the applicant has confirmed that the watercourse in question is a small drain of approximately 1 metre depth which does not require heavy machinery for maintenance, and therefore the recommended 6 metre access width is not necessary. Responsibility for maintenance will remain with the site owner/management company in line with the existing Watercourse Maintenance Plan, which will be incorporated into the wider site drainage maintenance plan, which could be secured by condition. The proposed development layout is consistent with the adjacent consented scheme (F/YR25/0442/NONMAT) and does not give rise to any maintenance or access issues. Overall, the IDB's comments are acknowledged, and no drainage or watercourse issues arise that would prevent the development from proceeding.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

10.44. Policy LP19 requires development proposals to conserve, enhance, and promote the biodiversity and geological interest of the natural environment across Fenland.

10.45. Furthermore, 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.

10.46. A preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted alongside this application, alongside a BNG report and metric. This concludes that most designated sites and protected species would experience neutral impacts from the development, though some unmitigated effects could occur to habitats, nesting birds and foraging wildlife. These impacts can be fully addressed through the proposed habitat creation and long-term management within the eastern greenspace, as detailed in the BNG assessment.

10.47. The application site comprises predominantly modified grassland, with areas of recent disturbance and boundary ditches. The ecological assessment identifies that the site holds limited ecological value, with only low to negligible potential to support specially protected species. During the site visit (August 2025), active construction works were observed immediately adjacent to, and partly encroaching into, the application site, further reducing its current ecological sensitivity.

10.48. The development is subject to the statutory requirement to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The applicant has submitted pre- and post-development metric calculations demonstrating that the scheme can deliver in excess of a 10% net gain on site through the creation and enhancement of grassland, ponds, trees and shrub planting. These outcomes are considered acceptable.

10.49. Given the significance of the proposed on-site ecological enhancements, long-term management and monitoring over a minimum 30-year period will be essential. This should be secured through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), either by planning condition or via a S106 obligation, with the latter offering greater certainty in securing future monitoring fees.

10.50. Notwithstanding the information submitted at this stage, any permission granted will be subject to the statutory BNG condition requiring the submission and approval of a final Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement.

10.51. The Council's Ecologist has not objected to the proposal, it is therefore considered the proposal has overcome the second reason for refusal of the previous scheme, subject to securing appropriate details via condition as discussed above, should the application be approved.

Other Matters

Archaeology

10.52. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. Policy LP18 (a – c) requires development proposals to assess the significance of the heritage asset to determine its archaeological interest, assess the impact of the works upon the asset and provide a justification for the works.

10.53. The site has high archaeological potential, forming part of a known crop marked settlement dating from the prehistoric to Roman period, located beside the Fen Causeway Roman road. Previous investigations at nearby Berryfields revealed an extensive settlement (c. 8ha) with subdivided enclosures, trackways, burials, roadside stockades, and activity spanning from the Bronze Age through the late Iron Age to Roman periods. Further excavation to the west confirmed continuation of these enclosures and trackways into adjacent land. Cropmark evidence and nearby findings indicate that similar archaeological features are likely to extend into the current development area. As a result, further archaeological investigation and recording are required to determine the survival, extent, and condition of remains and to inform any necessary mitigation during development.

Loss of Agricultural land

10.54. The Local Plan and the NPPF both seek to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, and this is a matter raised in representations received to the application. Given the scale of the site it is not considered that the loss of the site would be objectionable in this context.

Refuse Collection

10.55. It is noted that the Council's refuse team have requested swept path analysis throughout the site to demonstrate that adequate access is provided for refuse vehicles. Currently swept path information has been submitted at the two turning heads, and this has been assessed as acceptable. It is considered that this matter can be addressed by the imposition of an appropriately worded condition, should the application be approved.

Planning Balance

10.56. 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)

10.57. This stance is supported by Local Plan Policy LP1. In respect of the economic objective, it is acknowledged that most residential development typically generates some economic benefit, particularly through the creation of jobs during the construction phase. In this case, the proposal would generate temporary employment in the construction phase and contribute to the local economy through increased footfall for local businesses, shops, and services once occupied. While these benefits are modest in scale, they nonetheless represent a positive contribution to the economic role of sustainable development.

10.58. In respect of the social objective, the proposal would add to the District's housing supply and delivers a mix of three- and four-bedroom dwellings. Although the proportion of larger units does not wholly align with the 2021 Housing Needs Assessment, the previous application on the site did not attract any policy-based objections relating to housing mix, and the overall mix has not materially changed. Given the reduced site capacity arising from flood-risk constraints, this weighs proportionately in favour of the scheme.

10.59. With respect to affordable housing, independent viability review confirms that the development cannot viably support affordable housing or S106 contributions. While regrettable, the evidence is robust and aligns with the conclusions reached under the previous application. On this basis, the absence of affordable housing is accepted and does not weigh significantly against the social benefits of delivering market housing in a sustainable location.

10.60. With regard to the environmental objective, the development is broadly consistent with the adjacent schemes currently under construction to the west. While the revised layout creates limited opportunities for natural surveillance between certain dwellings and the adjacent open space, it represents an improved arrangement in terms of flood risk mitigation. As no design objections were raised to the previous application and the architectural approach remains largely unchanged, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of design and character, subject to conditions.

10.61. Although the scheme represents a lower density than typically achieved in March, this reflects the flood-risk constraints which limit the developable area. The earlier 18-unit proposal attracted no concerns or refusal reasons relating to density or the efficient use of land; in the interests of decision-making consistency, it would be unreasonable to conclude that density now weighs significantly against the proposal. Any negative weight in this regard is therefore limited.

10.62. The site has a low ecological baseline, and the development offers meaningful enhancements, with the ability to deliver in excess of a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain secured through a long-term management plan. This represents a clear environmental benefit.

10.63. In flood-risk terms, all dwellings and the access road are located wholly within Flood Zone 1 and are not at significant risk of flooding. No specific floor-level or resilience measures are required, and surface-water drainage can be secured by condition. While part of the wider red-line boundary includes Flood Zones 2 and 3, and the application does not satisfy the sequential test. Given the improved arrangement and the absence of any realistic flood risk to the built form, residual Sequential Test concerns carry only limited weight in the planning balance.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 When assessed against the three objectives of sustainable development, the proposal delivers modest economic benefits, clear environmental enhancements, and meaningful social benefits through the delivery of additional housing in a sustainable Market Town location. While the housing mix and density are not fully aligned with policy aspirations, these matters were not previously identified as

reasons for refusal, and the updated scheme performs no worse, than the earlier proposal.

11.2 The flood-risk position has improved significantly compared with the previous application, with all development now located within Flood Zone 1. Taking into account the previous decision, the consistency of approach required by national guidance, and the ability to secure drainage and biodiversity matters by condition, the residual concerns regarding the Sequential Test do not outweigh the overall benefits of the scheme.

11.3 On balance, the proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development when assessed against the NPPF and the Fenland Local Plan and is therefore acceptable.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Grant; subject to the following conditions:

1	<p>The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years 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>No development, including preparatory works, shall commence until details of measures indicating how additional surface water run-off from the site will be avoided during the construction works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant may be required to provide collection, balancing and/or settlement systems for these flows. The approved measures and systems shall be brought into operation before any works to create buildings or hard surfaces commence.</p> <p>Reason To ensure surface water is managed appropriately during the construction phase of the development, so as not to increase the flood risk to adjacent land/properties or occupied properties within the development itself; recognising that initial works to prepare the site could bring about unacceptable impacts, in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP14.</p>
3	<p>No demolition/development shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has implemented a programme of archaeological work, commencing with the evaluation of the application area, that has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than under the provisions of the agreed WSI, which shall include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">the statement of significance and research objectives;The programme and methodology of investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;The timetable for the field investigation as part of the development programme;The programme and timetable for the analysis, publication & dissemination,

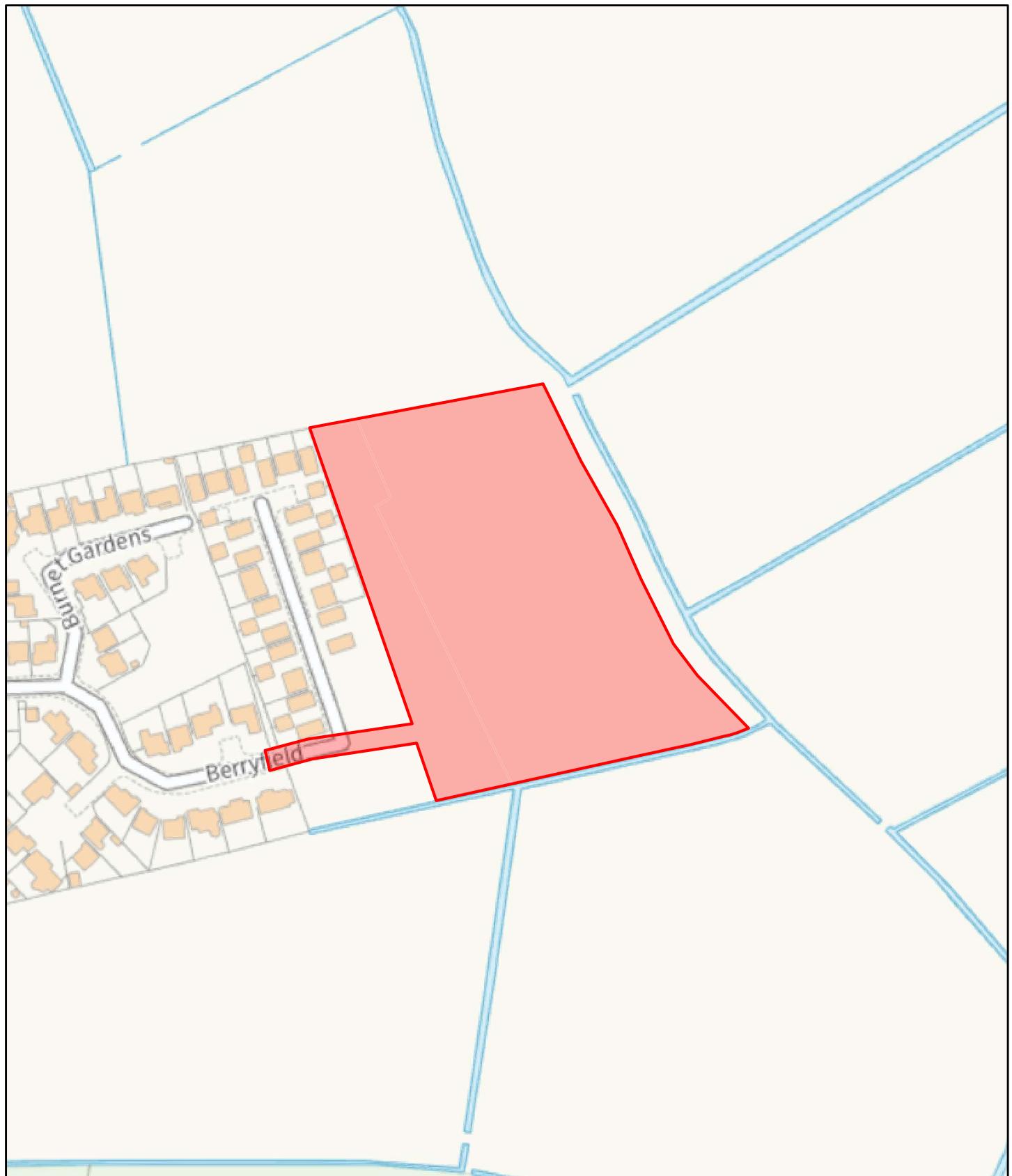
	<p>and deposition of resulting material and digital archives.</p> <p>Reason: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any demolitions or groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely preservation and/or investigation, recording, reporting, archiving and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan Policy LP18.</p>
4	<p>No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors o Loading and unloading of plant and materials o Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development o The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate o Wheel washing facilities o Any approved Arboricultural Method Statement o Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction o A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works <p>Reason: In order to ensure that the construction takes place in a suitable manner and to ensure that amenities of existing residents are protected as far as reasonable, in accordance with LP2 and LP16 of the Local Plan.</p>
5	<p>Notwithstanding the details submitted as part of this application, prior to the commencement of development, a swept path analysis demonstrating that a standard refuse collection vehicle can access, manoeuvre within, and exit the site safely shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the approved access and manoeuvring arrangements shall be retained thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that refuse vehicles can safely access and manoeuvre within the site, in the interests of highway safety and proper waste management, in accordance with Policy LP2 and LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan.</p>
6	<p>No works related to the alteration of ground levels at the site and no works above ground level shall occur until details of existing ground levels and proposed finished ground levels, and their relationship to the adjoining land, and floor levels have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: In order to ensure that amenities of residents are protected as far as reasonable, in accordance with LP2 and LP16 of the Local Plan.</p>
7	<p>Full details of the provision and subsequent retention of both hard and soft landscape works on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by</p>

	<p>the local planning authority prior to any works occurring above ground level at the application site. These details shall include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Details of proposed schedules of species of trees and shrubs to be planted, planting layouts with stock sizes and planting numbers/densities. 2) Details of the planting scheme implementation programme, including ground protection and preparation, weed clearance, stock sizes, seeding rates, planting methods, mulching, plant protection, staking and/or other support. 3) Details of the aftercare and maintenance programme. <p>The soft landscape works shall be carried out as approved within the first available planting season (October to March inclusive) following the occupation of any part of the development hereby approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.</p> <p>If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree or plant, or any tree or plant planted in its replacement, is removed, uprooted, destroyed, dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted in the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.</p> <p>Hard landscape works</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Details of paved surfacing, with materials finishing and edgings 5) Details of street furniture, with designs materials and dimensions <p>The hard landscape works shall be carried out as approved prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby approved and retained and maintained as such thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and that it contributes to the visual character and amenity of the area and to protect the character of the site in accordance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
8	<p>No laying of services, creation of hard surfaces or erection of a building shall commence until a detailed design of the surface water drainage of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Those elements of the surface water drainage system not adopted by a statutory undertaker shall thereafter be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.</p> <p>The scheme shall be based upon the principles within the agreed Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy, MTC, Ref: 2104, Rev: C, Dated: May 2025 and shall also include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Full calculations detailing the existing surface water runoff rates for the QBAR, 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) (1 in 30) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) storm events; b) Full results of the proposed drainage system modelling in the above-referenced storm events (as well as 1% AEP plus climate change), inclusive of all collection, conveyance, storage, flow control and disposal elements and including an allowance for urban creep, together with an assessment of system performance; c) Detailed drawings of the entire proposed surface water drainage system,

	<p>attenuation and flow control measures, including levels, gradients, dimensions and pipe reference numbers, designed to accord with the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual (or any equivalent guidance that may supersede or replace it);</p> <p>d) Full detail on SuDS proposals (including location, type, size, depths, side slopes and cross sections);</p> <p>e) Details of overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants;</p> <p>f) Demonstration that the surface water drainage of the site is in accordance with DEFRA non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;</p> <p>g) Full details of the maintenance/adoption of the surface water drainage system;</p> <p>h) Permissions to connect to a receiving watercourse or sewer;</p> <p>i) Measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface water</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained and to ensure that there is no increased flood risk on or off site resulting from the proposed development and to ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage can be incorporated into the development, noting that initial preparatory and/or construction works may compromise the ability to mitigate harmful impacts, in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP14.</p>
9	<p>Notwithstanding Condition 8, prior to the commencement of development, a Watercourse and Drainage Maintenance Plan for the site, incorporating the existing Watercourse Management Plan (WMP), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>The plan shall include details of:</p> <p>The ownership and responsibilities for maintenance of all watercourses and drainage features within the site, including the small drain running through the development</p> <p>The maintenance regime, frequency, and methods to be used to ensure the continued effective operation of the watercourses and drainage systems.</p> <p>Access arrangements for maintenance, including any necessary clearance widths.</p> <p>Procedures for updating and reviewing the plan over the lifetime of the development.</p> <p>The development shall be carried out and subsequently maintained in accordance with the approved plan for the lifetime of the development.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained and to ensure that there is no increased flood risk on or off site resulting from the proposed development in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP14.</p>
10	<p>Prior to works above ground level, a scheme and timetable for the provision of fire hydrants shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and provision of the fire hydrants shall be made in accordance with</p>

	<p>the scheme and timetable.</p> <p>Reason - To ensure a satisfactory form of development.</p>
11	<p>Prior to works above ground level, a scheme for the provision, laying out, equipping, management and long term maintenance of the public open space within the site, including all pedestrian and cycle routes and links, as shown on the site plan provided, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:</p> <p>The location, extent and phasing of delivery of all areas of public open space and pedestrian and cycle routes.</p> <p>Details of surfacing, landscaping, boundary treatments and any associated furniture or lighting.</p> <p>Arrangements for public access and connectivity to the wider pedestrian and cycle network.</p> <p>Details of the body responsible for management and maintenance and the funding mechanisms to secure its long term upkeep.</p> <p>The approved scheme shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the timely delivery, accessibility and long term management of public open space and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, in the interests of visual amenity, residential amenity, health and wellbeing and sustainable modes of travel, in accordance with Local Plan Policies LP2, LP15 and LP16.</p>
12	<p>Prior to their use in the development hereby approved, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: In order to ensure that suitable materials are used on the development as there are insufficient details within the submitted planning application, in accordance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.</p>
13	<p>Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling the road(s), footway(s) and cycleway(s) required to access that dwelling shall be constructed to at least binder course surfacing level from the dwelling to the adjoining adopted highway.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that each dwelling is appropriately served by highway infrastructure in the interests of highway safety and sustainability in accordance with policies LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, 2014.</p>
14	<p>Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved a refuse collection strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved refuse collection strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details in full and thereafter be retained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing.</p>

	<p>Reason: The application contains insufficient information to ensure that adequate facilities are provided for refuse and recycling storage and collection, in compliance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.</p>
15	<p>The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the terms and specifications contained within the Ecology Report dated May 2025 carried out by Wild Frontier Ecology which are attached to and form part of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure compliance with Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act with respect to nesting birds and to protect features of nature conservation importance in accordance with Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p>
16	<p>The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the terms and specifications contained within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment undertaken by Oakfield Arboricultural Services ref: OAS 25-393-AR01 dated September 2025 which are attached to and form part of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the trees on site are adequately protected, to safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).</p>
17	<p>The walls/fences as shown on the approved plan number SE-2304 - PP1001 Rev D shall be constructed prior to the first occupation of the dwelling to which it relates and shall be retained as such thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the boundary treatment shown is in place, in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP16.</p>
18	<p>Prior to the occupation of the first dwelling hereby approved, full details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed streets 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 accordance with policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).</p>
19	<p>No dwelling hereby approved shall be occupied until the parking spaces serving that specific dwelling have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The parking spaces provided shall thereafter be retained for that purpose in perpetuity.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure adequate space for parking off the highway is provided in the interest of highway safety, in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Development Plan</p>
20	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents</p>



8/11/2025, 11:10:08 AM

1:2,500
0 115 230 460 ft
0 35 70 140 m

 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council

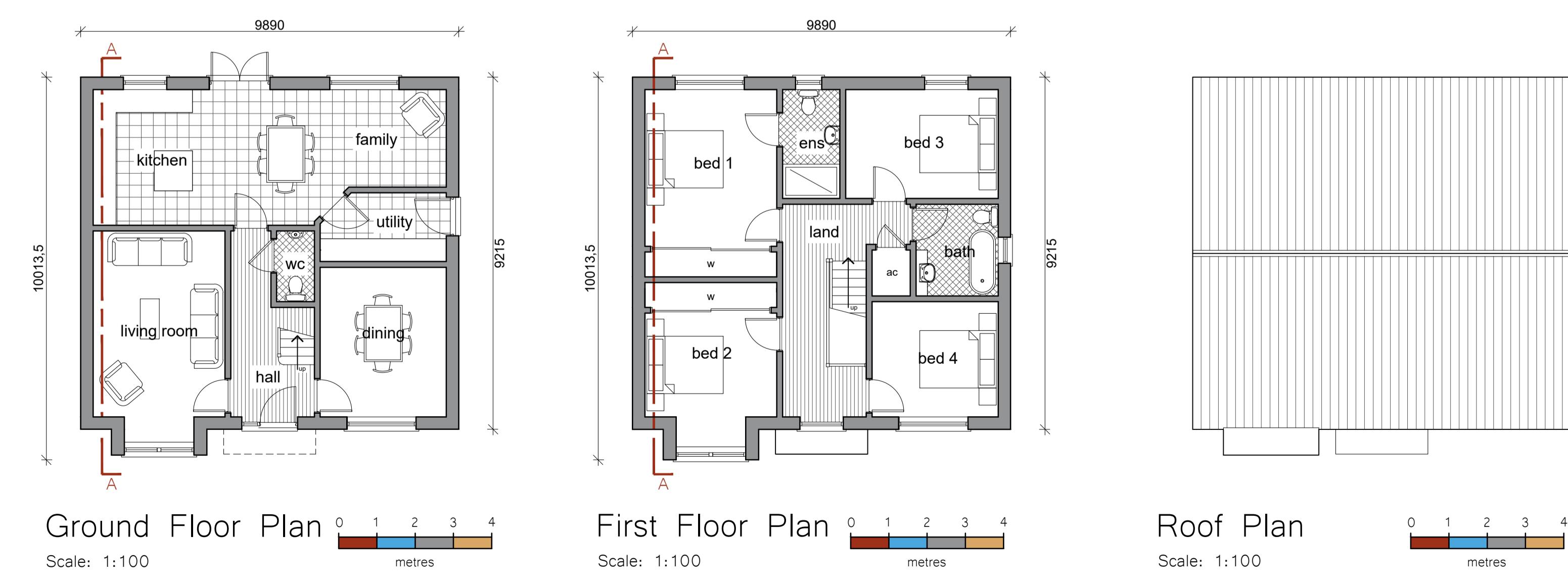
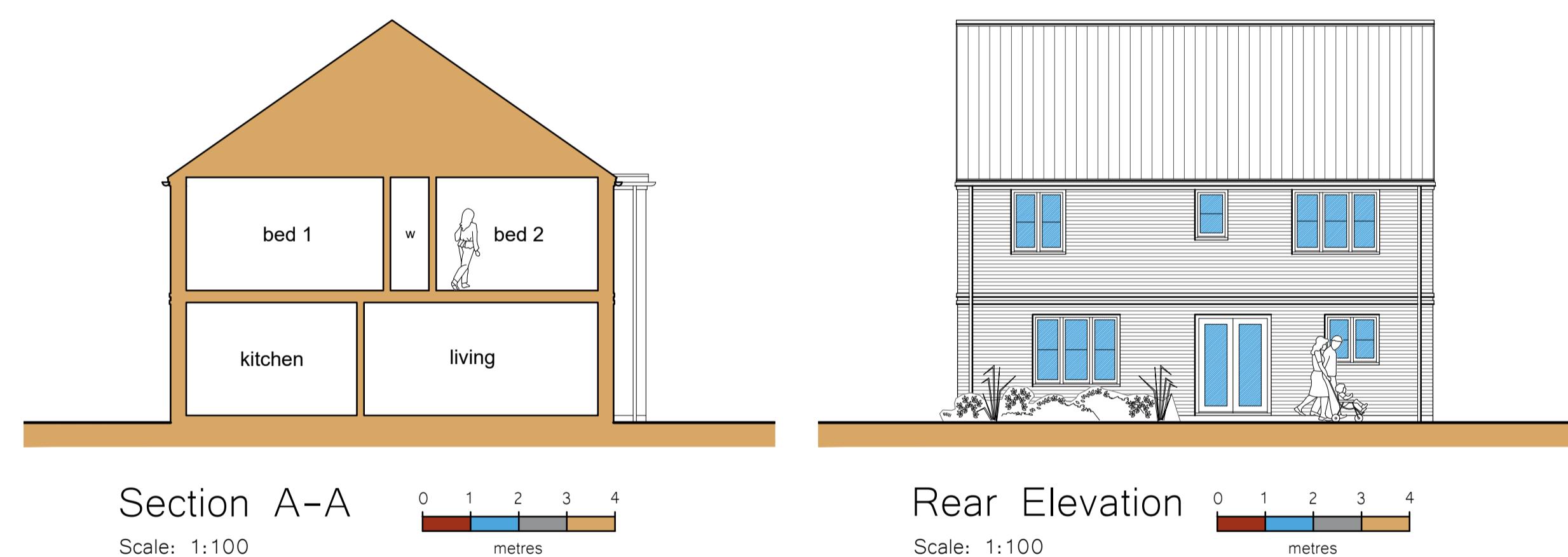
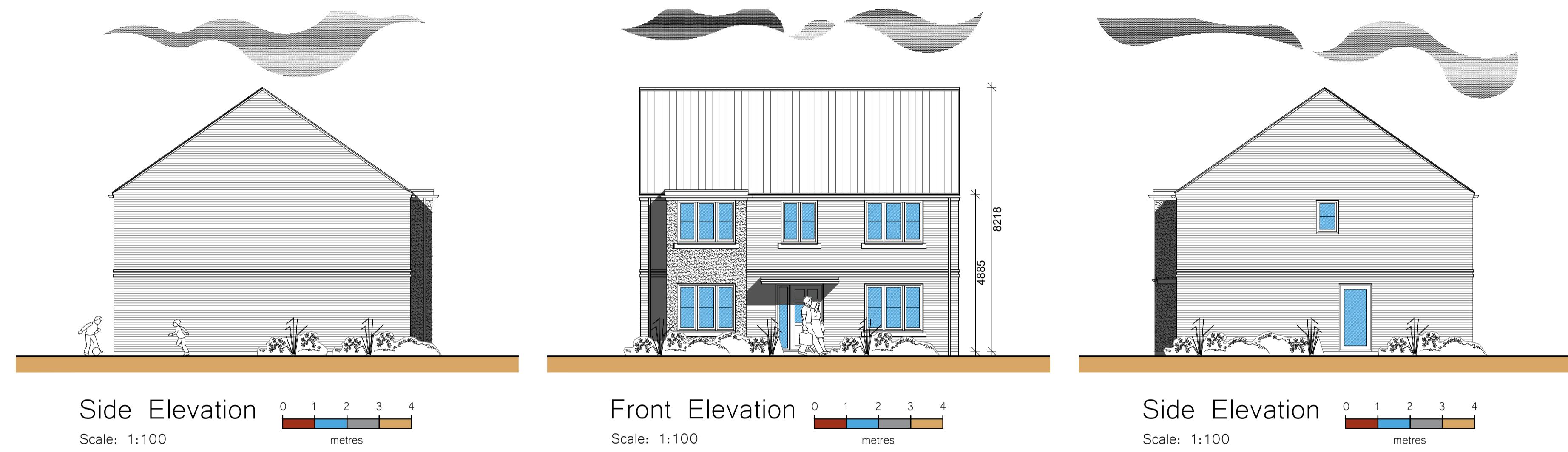
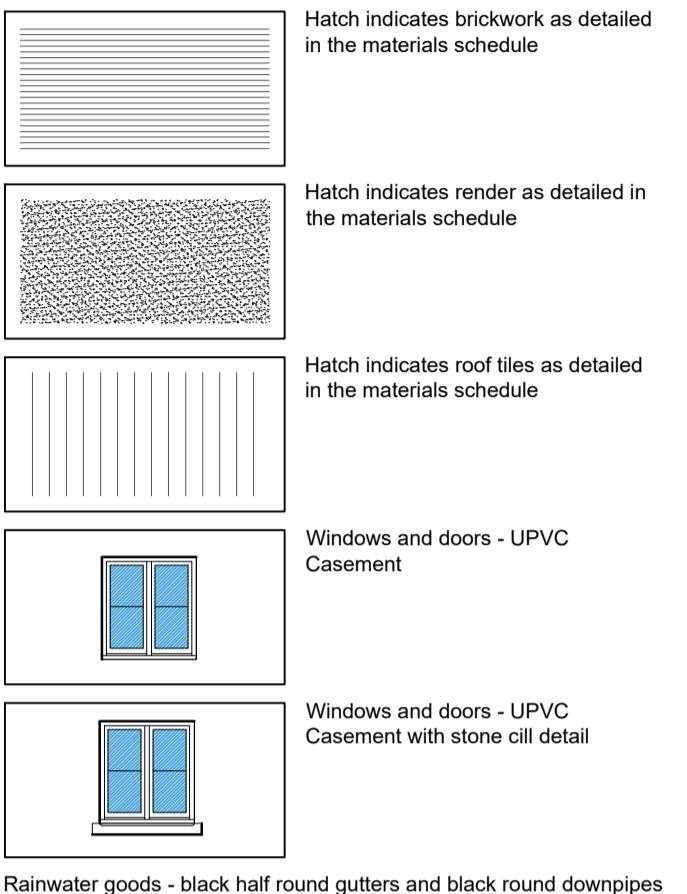
Plot Schedule				
Plot	Unit Ref	Bedrooms	Floor Area	Notes
Plot 1	House Type B1	4 Bed	161.0m ²	with garage
Plot 2	House Type B1	4 Bed	161.0m ²	with garage
Plot 3	House Type B4	4 Bed	150.2m ²	with garage
Plot 4	House Type B2H	3 Bed	119.0m ²	
Plot 5	House Type B2	3 Bed	119.0m ²	
Plot 6	House Type B2H	3 Bed	119.0m ²	
Plot 7	House Type B1	4 Bed	161.0m ²	with garage
Plot 8	House Type B4	4 Bed	150.2m ²	with garage
Plot 9	House Type B1	4 Bed	161.0m ²	with garage
Plot 10	House Type B4	4 Bed	150.2m ²	with garage
Plot 11	House Type B3	3 Bed	113.2m ²	
Plot 12	House Type B3	3 Bed	113.2m ²	
Plot 13	House Type B4H	4 Bed	150.2m ²	with garage
Plot 14	House Type B1	4 Bed	161.0m ²	with garage
Plot 15	House Type B4H	4 Bed	150.2m ²	with garage

Schedule of Materials			
Plot	Bricks	Render	Roof Tiles
Plot 1	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 2	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 3	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 4	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 5	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 6	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 7	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 8	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 9	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 10	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 11	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 12	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Slate Gray
Plot 13	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 14	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta
Plot 15	Ibstock Windsor - Red	Off White	Russell Galloway - Terracotta



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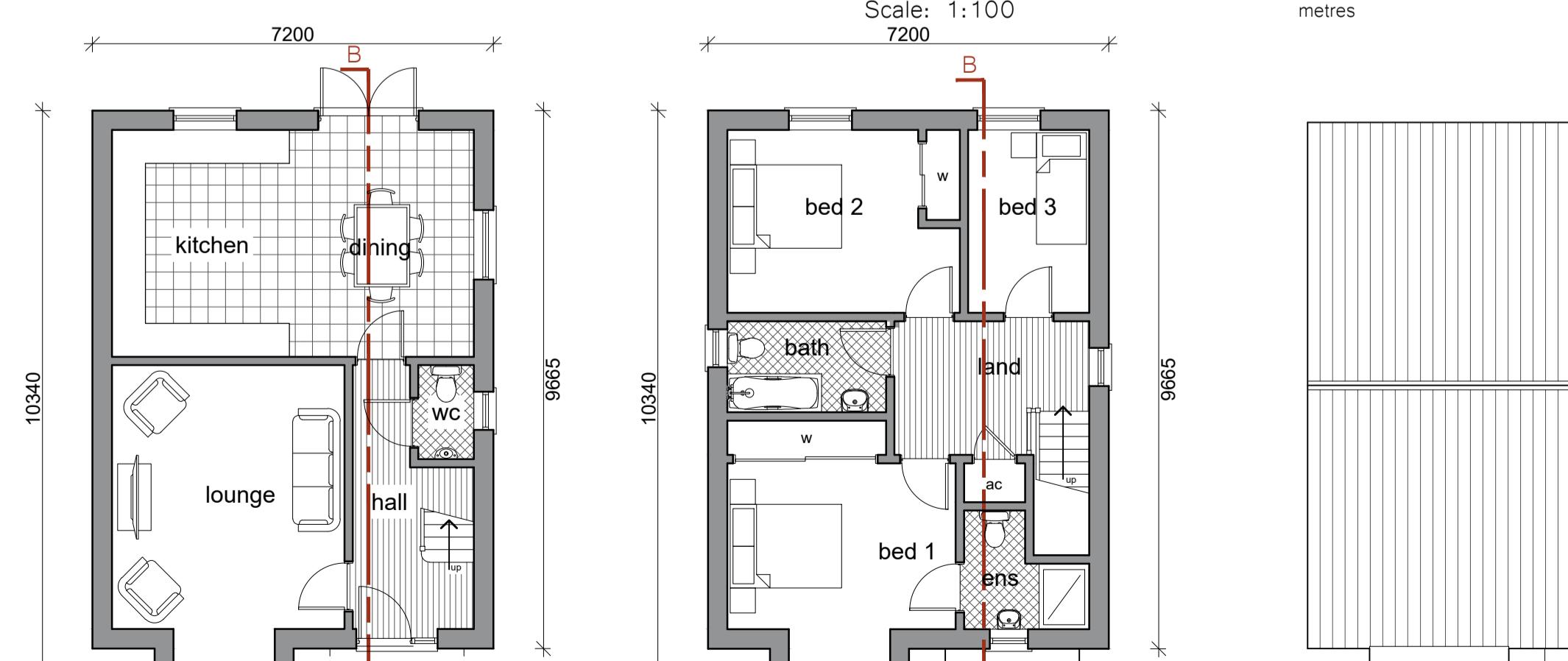
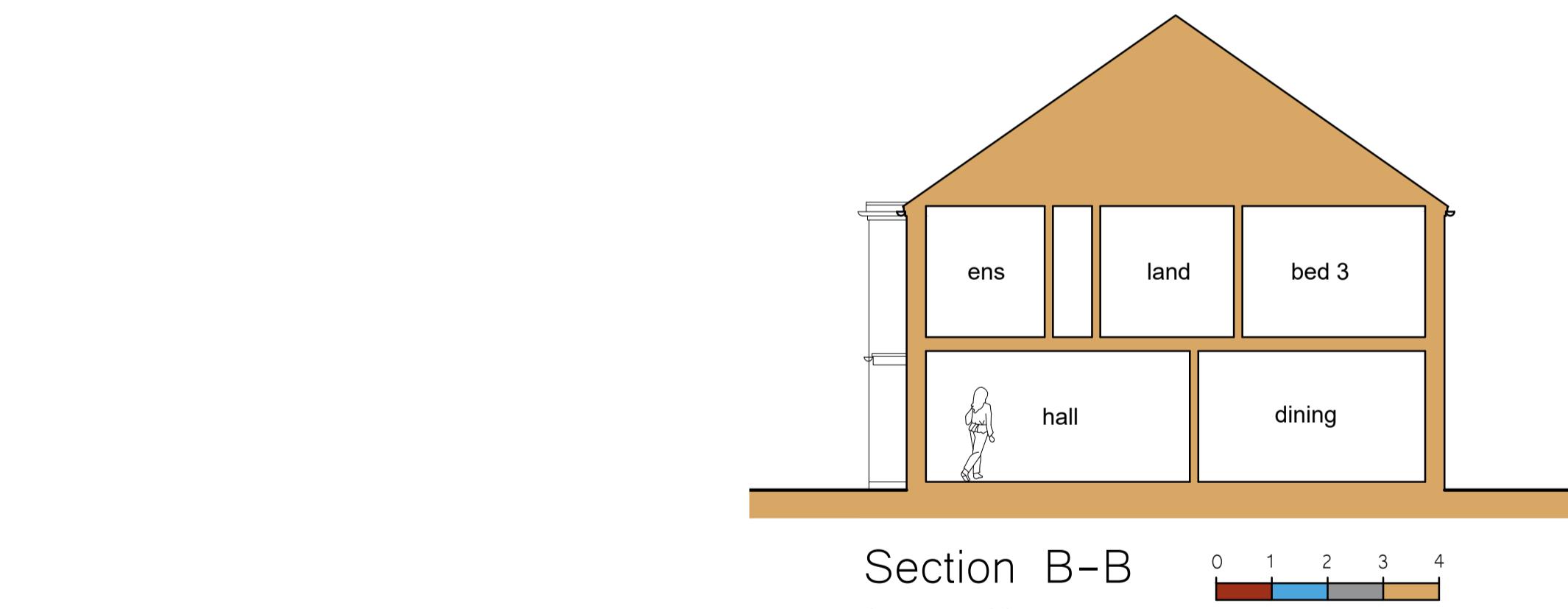
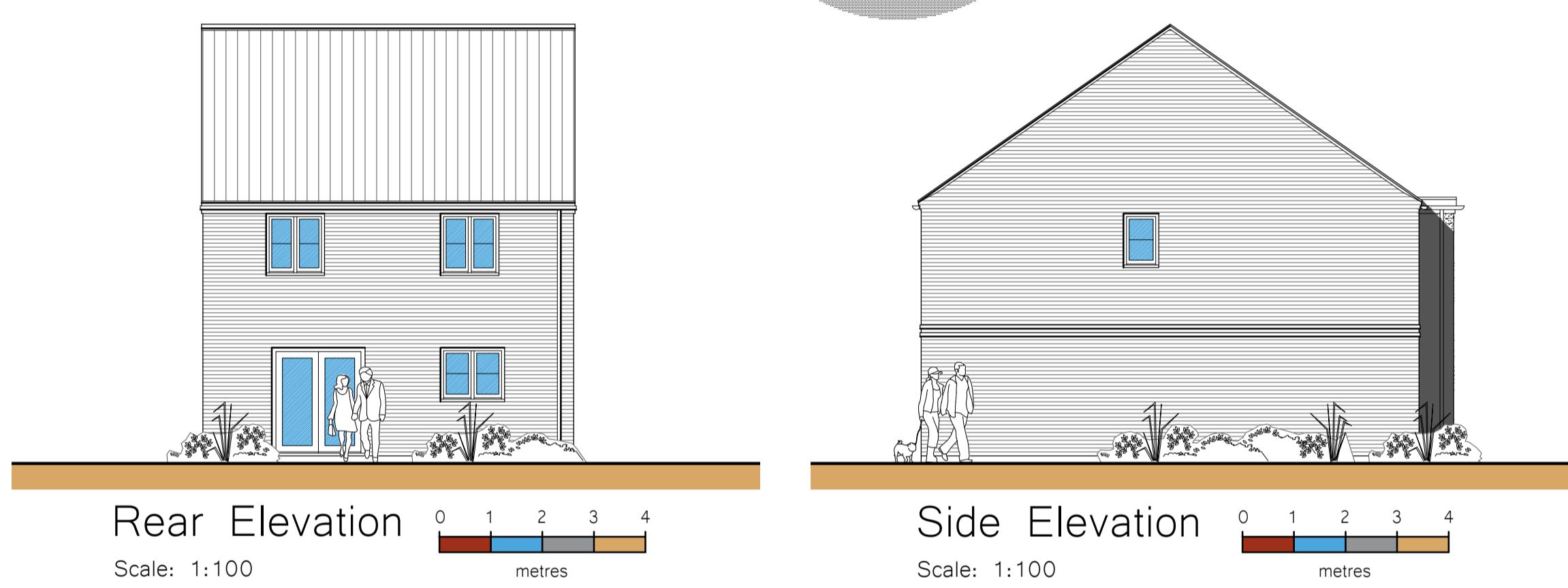
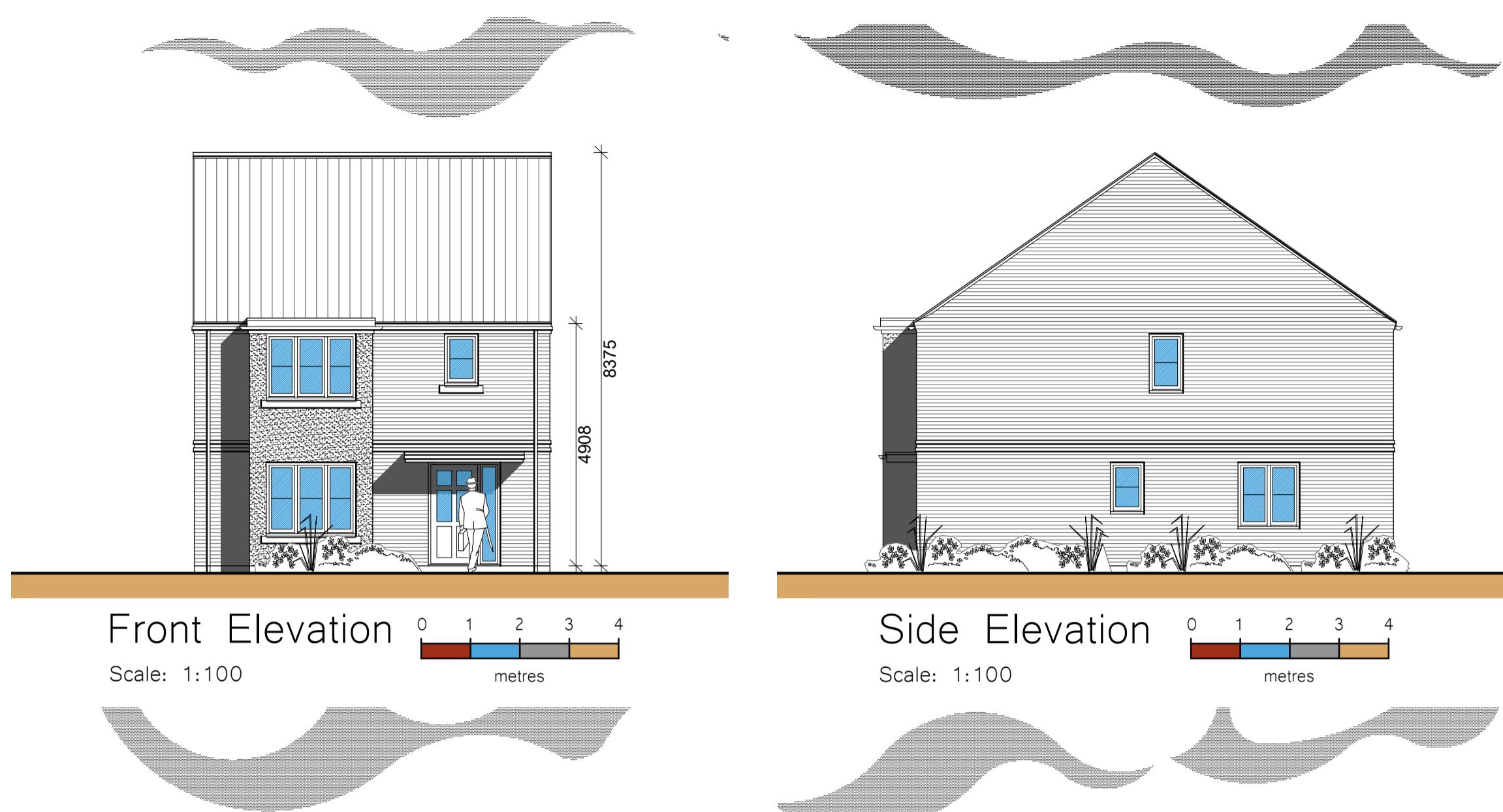
MATERIALS KEY



PLANNING

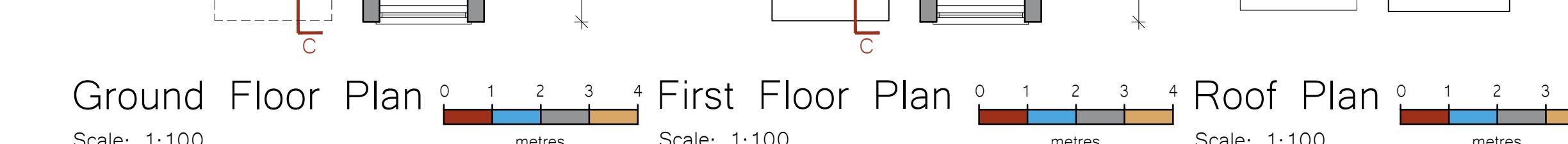
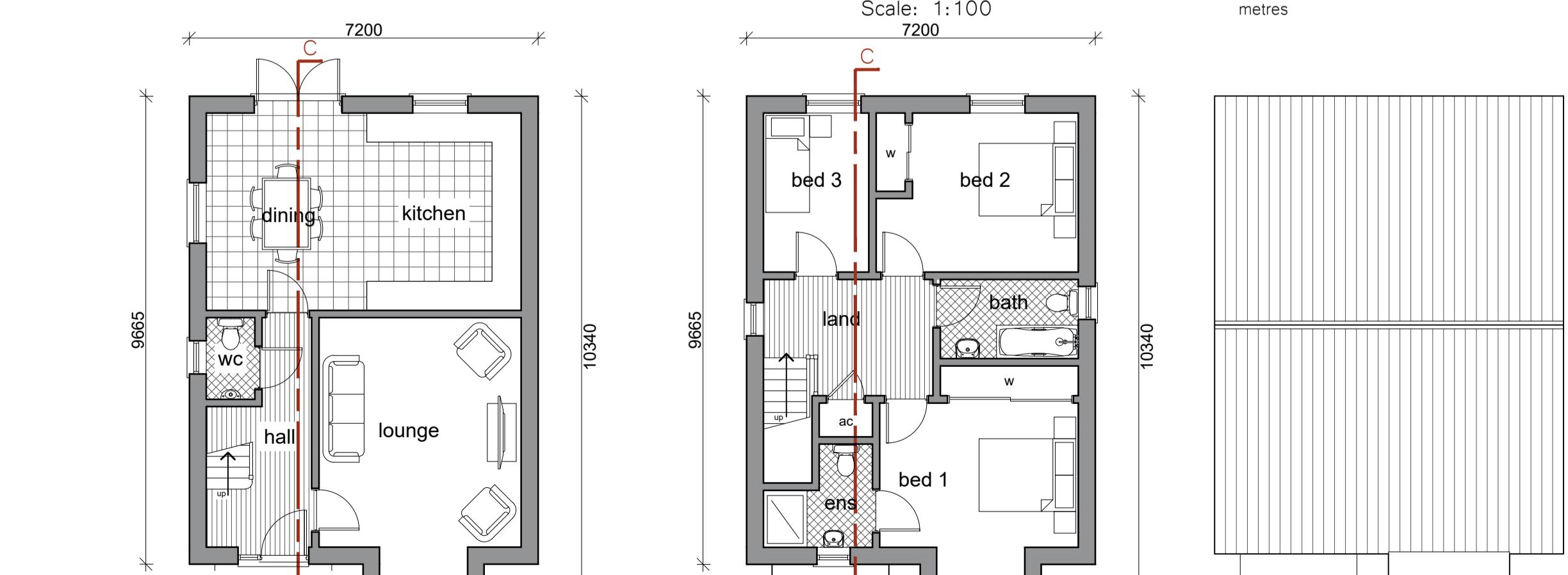
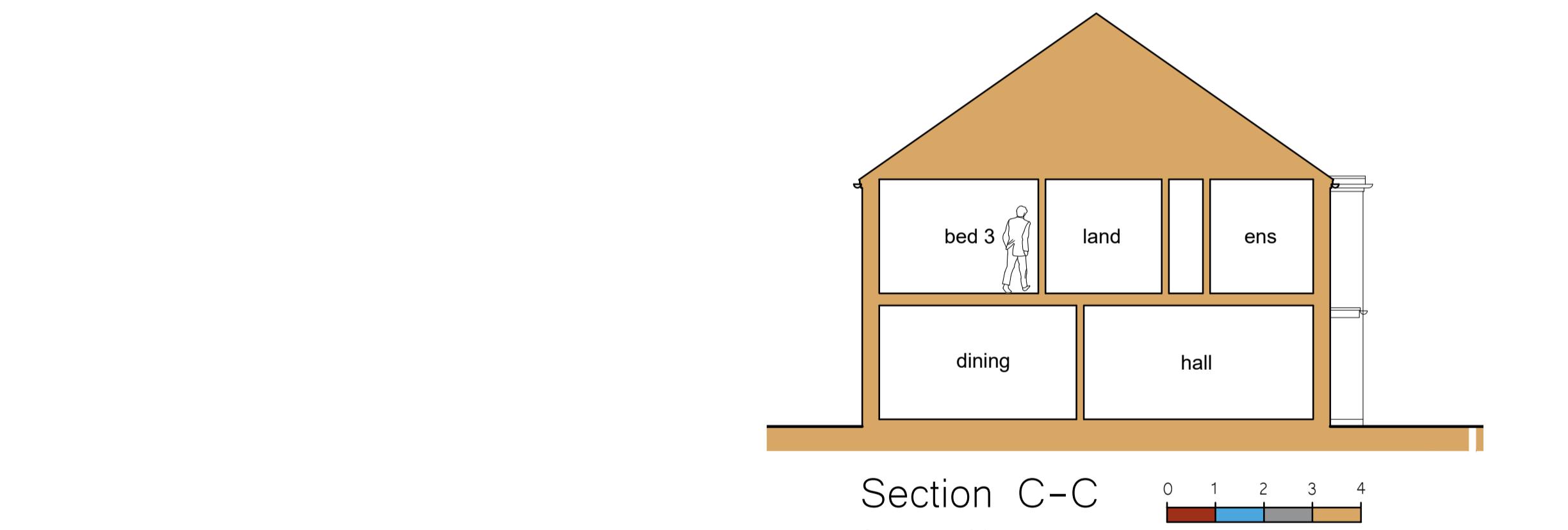
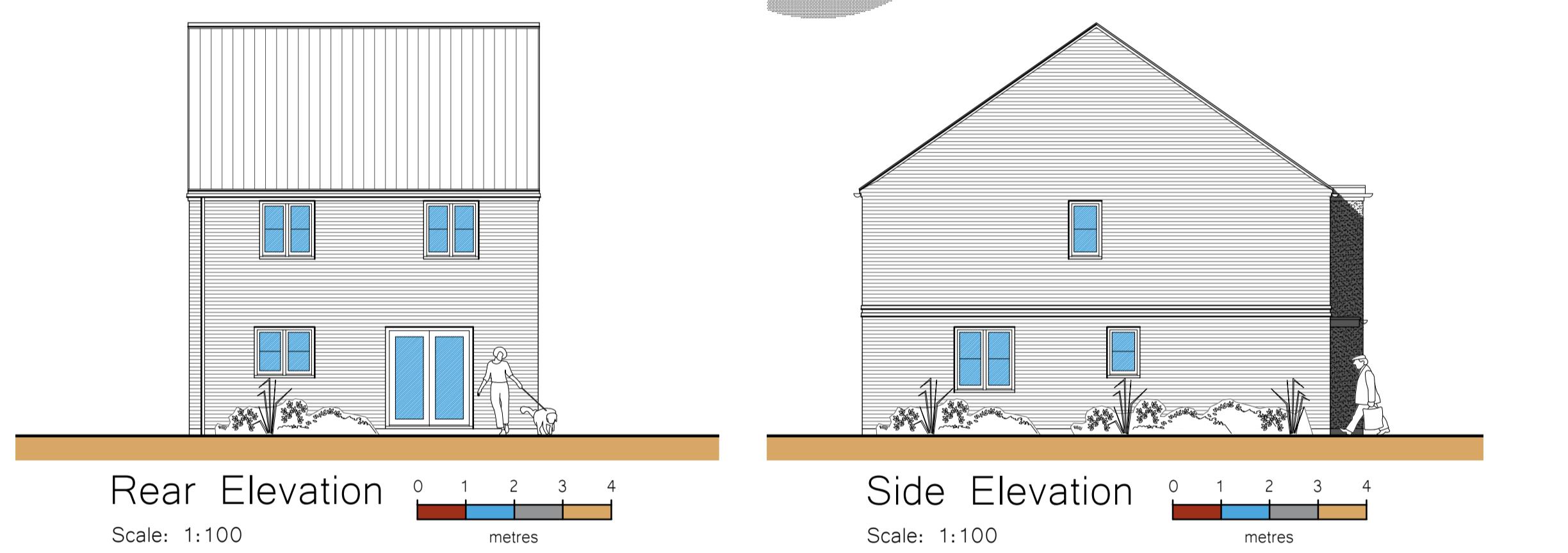
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Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn, Fen Road,
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t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

Proposed Residential Development Land East of Berryfield March, Cambs for: Fink Developments	Job Title Date Scale Various Sheet Size A1
Drawing Title Drawing No. SE-2304	Date April 2025
Planning Drawing House Type B1	Scale Various Sheet Size A1
Dwg No. PP1100	Job No. RS
Drawn by RS	Revision B



House Type B2H

House Type B2H



House Type B2H

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MATERIALS KEY

	Hatch indicates brickwork as detailed in the materials schedule
	Hatch indicates render as detailed in the materials schedule
	Hatch indicates roof tiles as detailed in the materials schedule
	Windows and doors - UPVC Casement
	Windows and doors - UPVC Casement with stone cill detail
	Rainwater goods - black half round gutters and black round downpipes

PLANNING

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Job Title
Proposed Residential Development
Land East of Berryfield
March, Cambs
for: Fink Developments

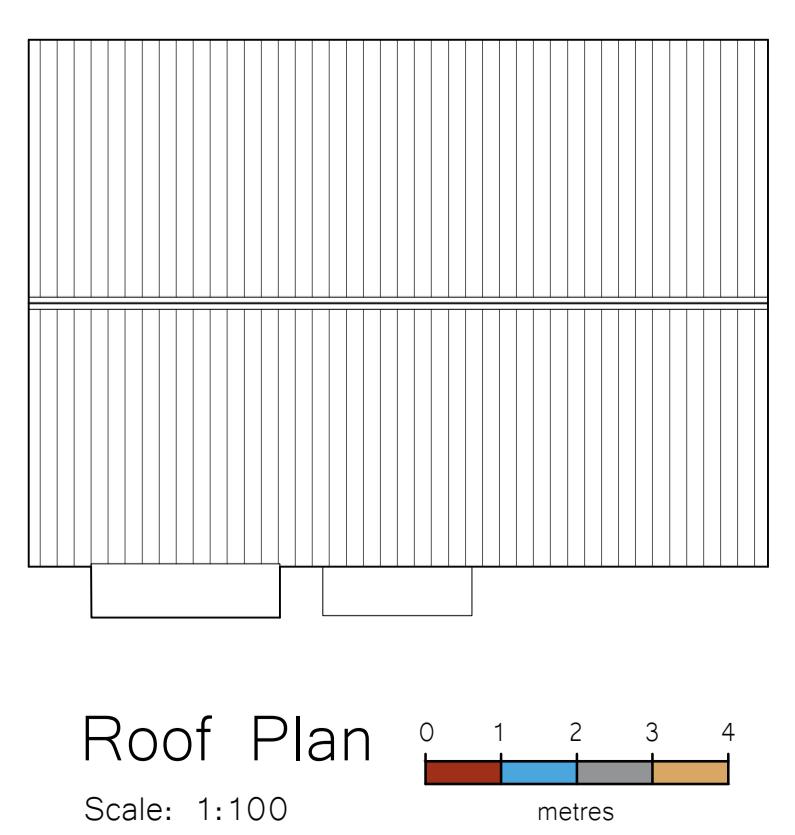
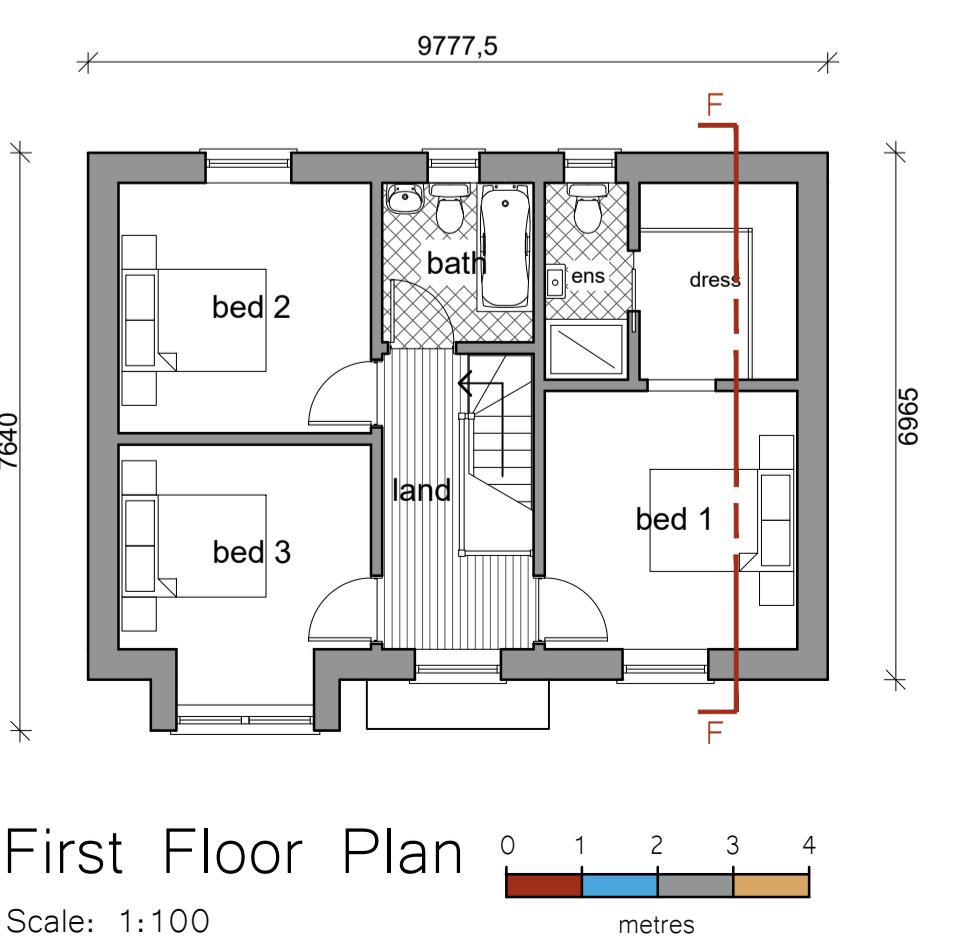
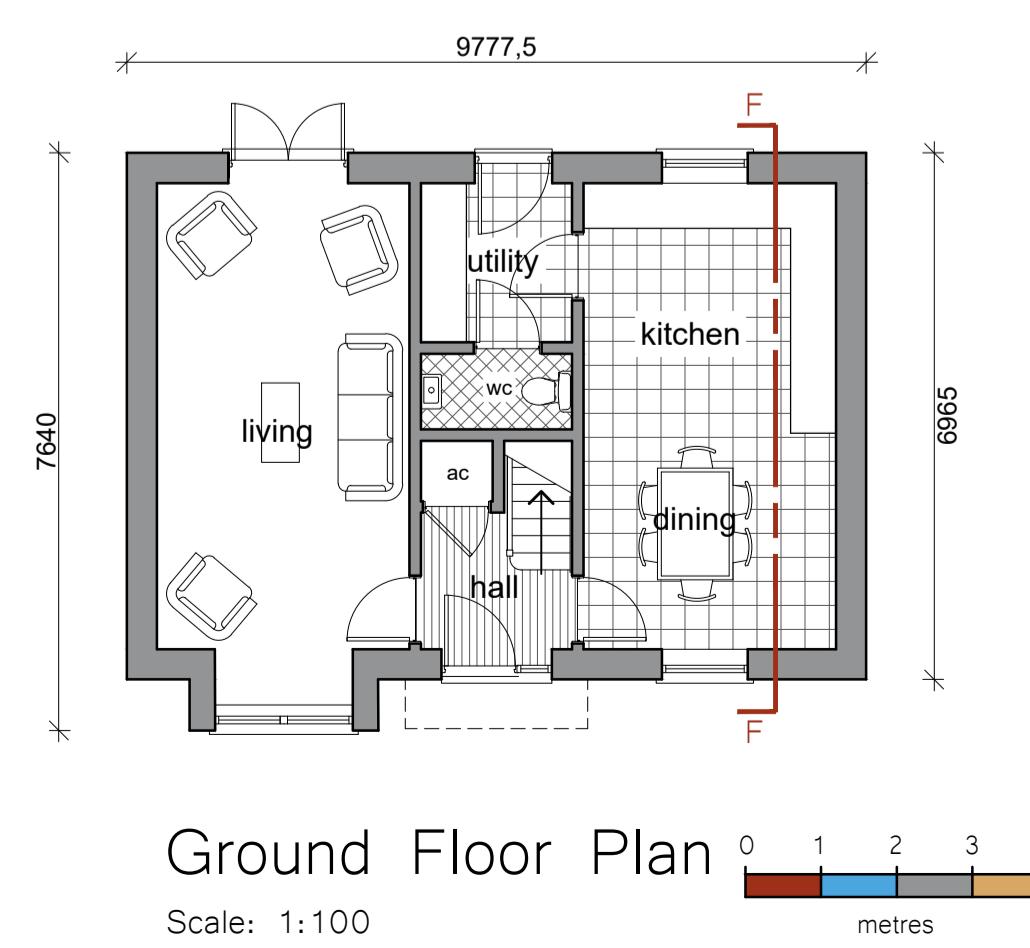
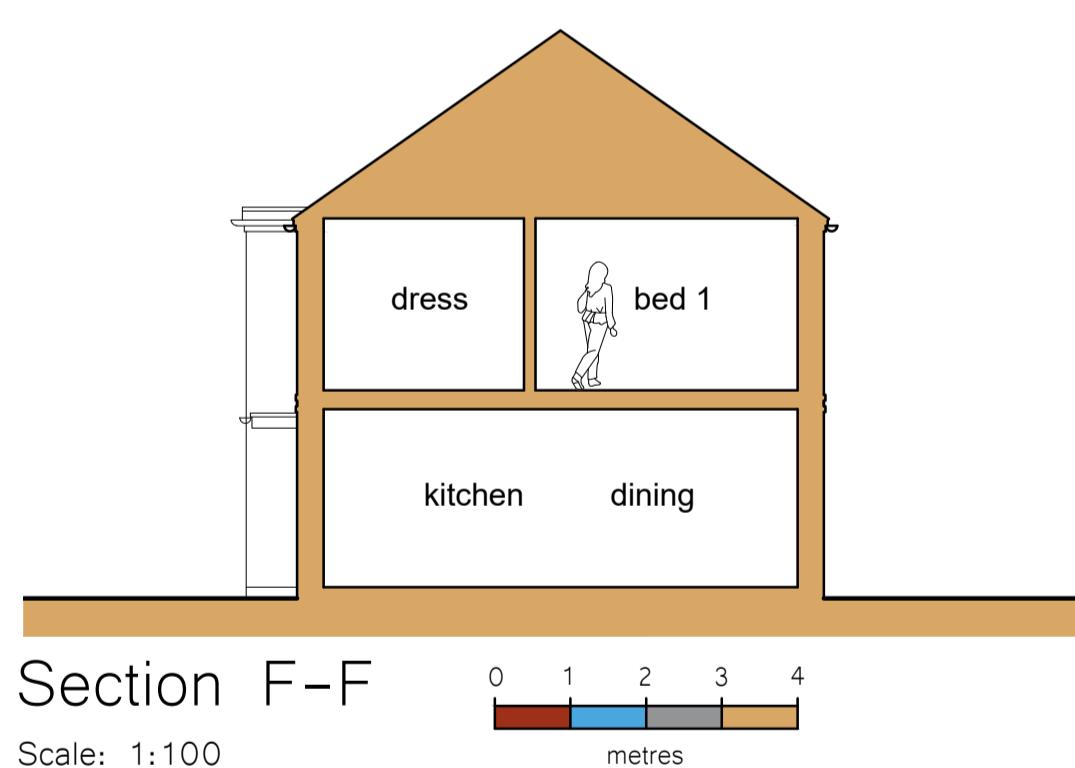
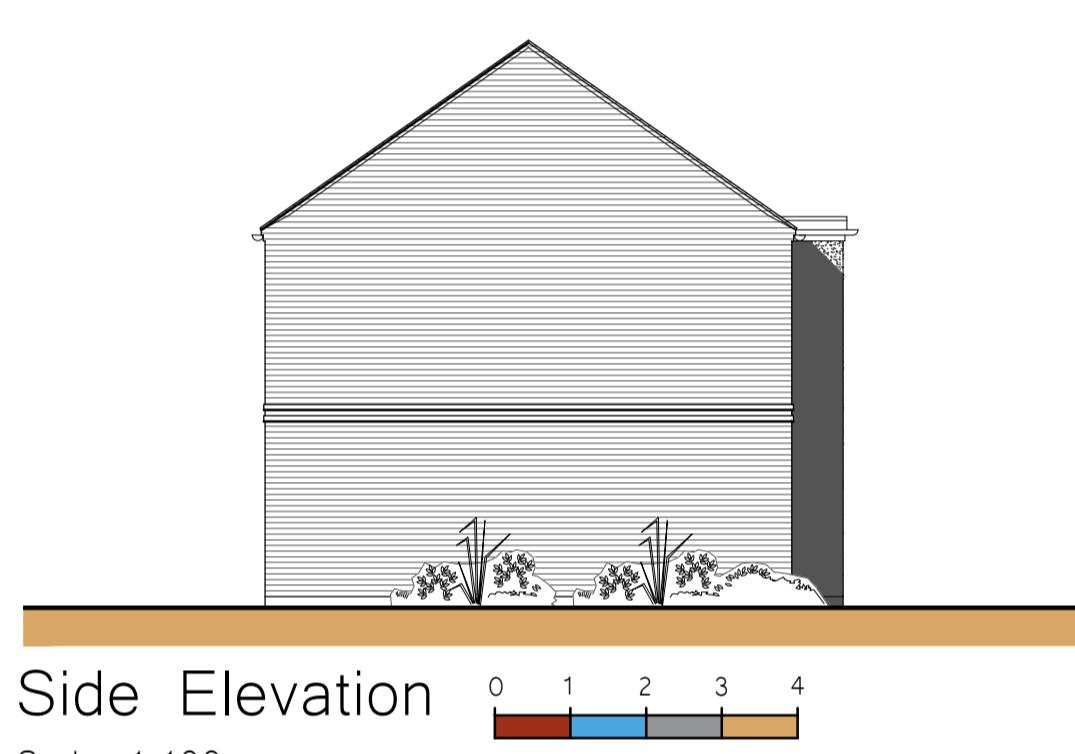
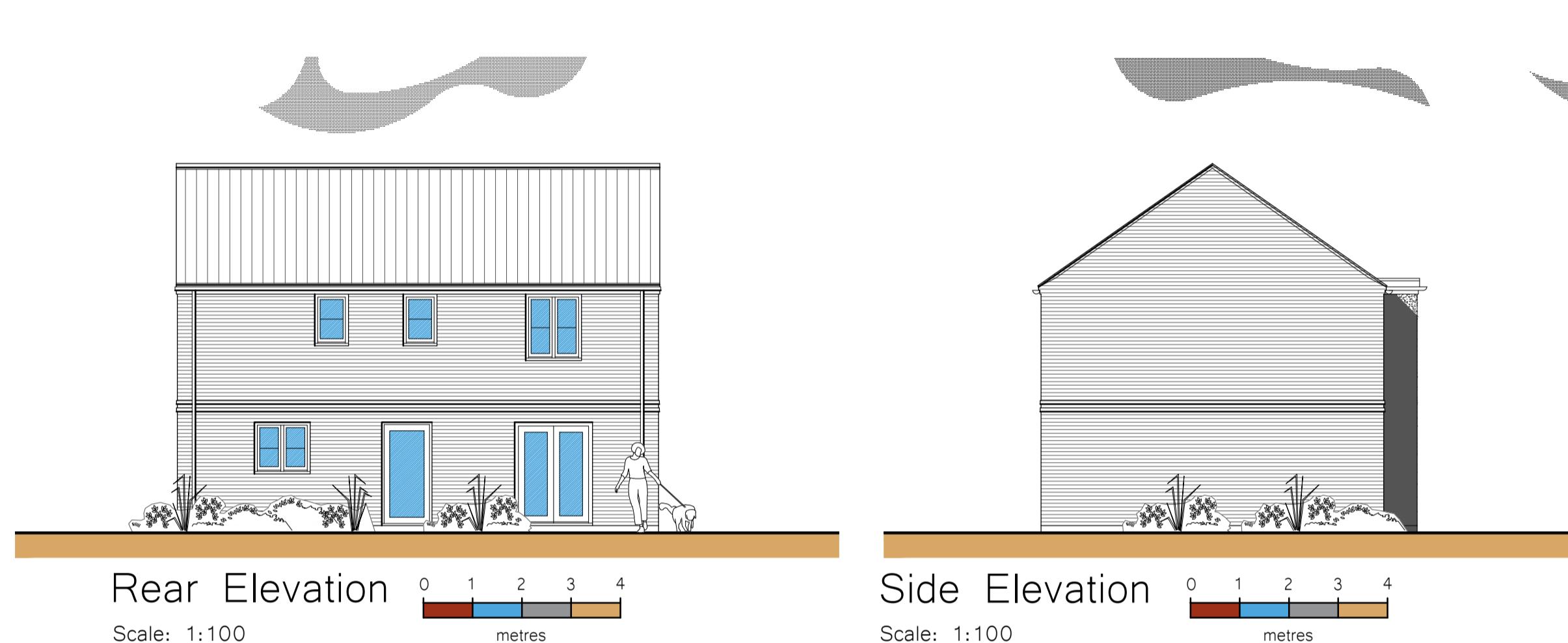
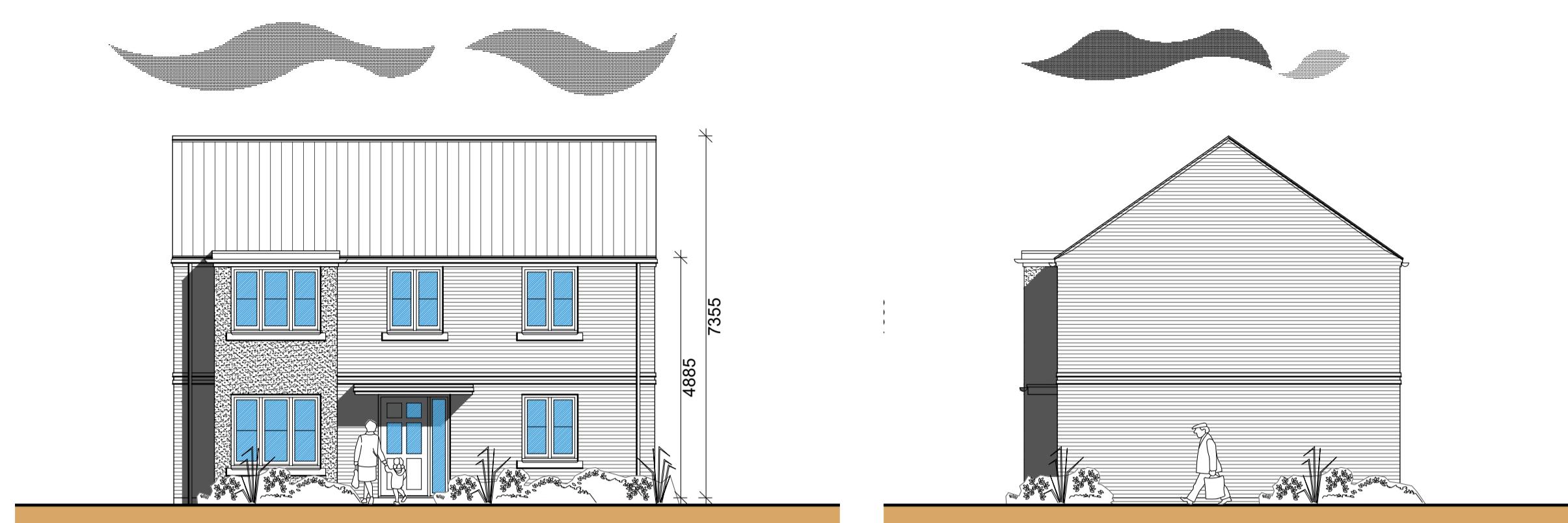
Date
April
Scale
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Sheet Size
A1

Drawing Title
PHASE B
Planning Drawing
House Type B2

Dwg No.
PP1200

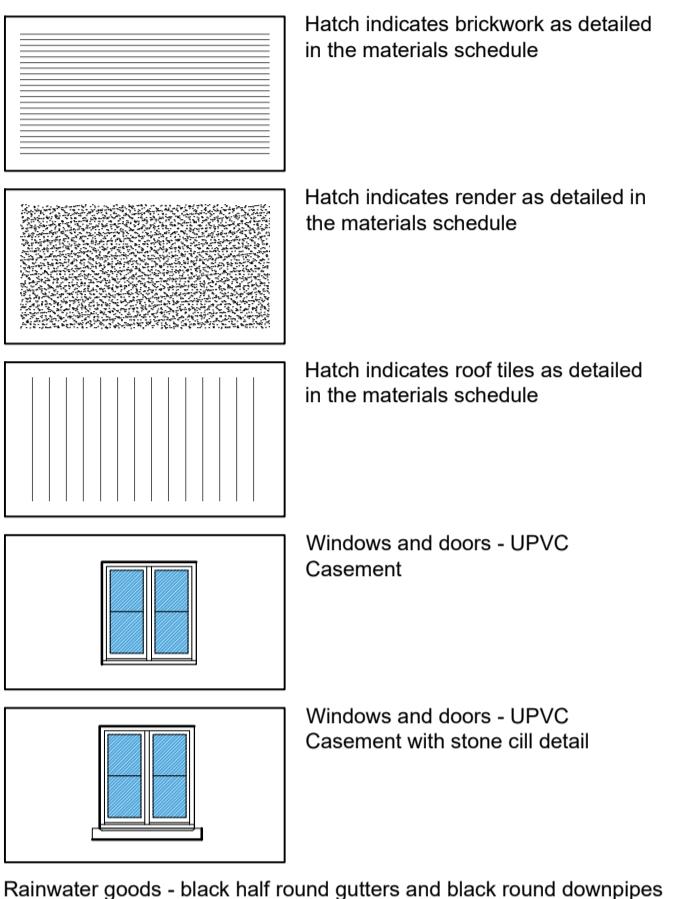
Job No.
SE-2304

Drawn by
RS
Revision
B



General Notes
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MATERIALS KEY

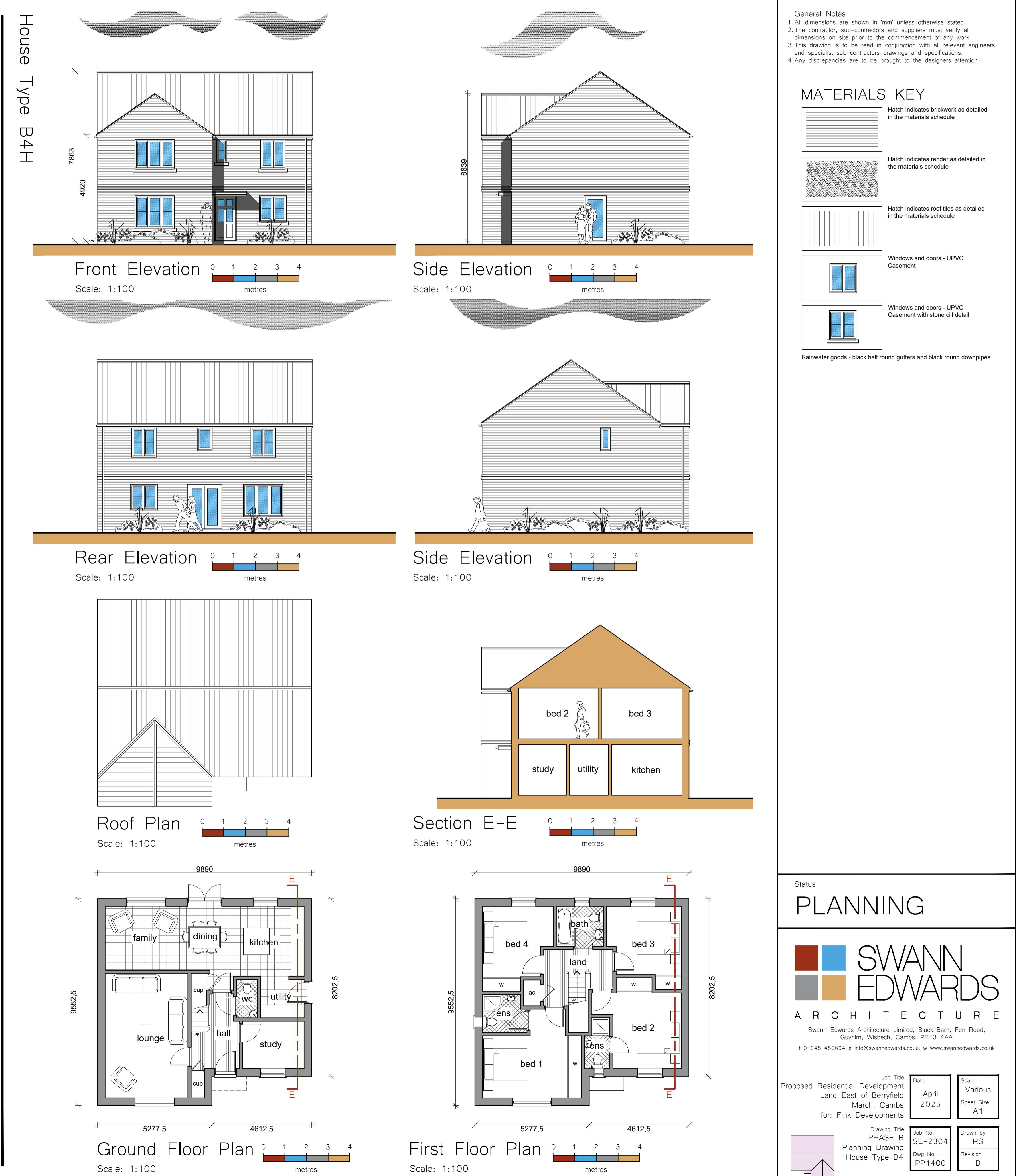
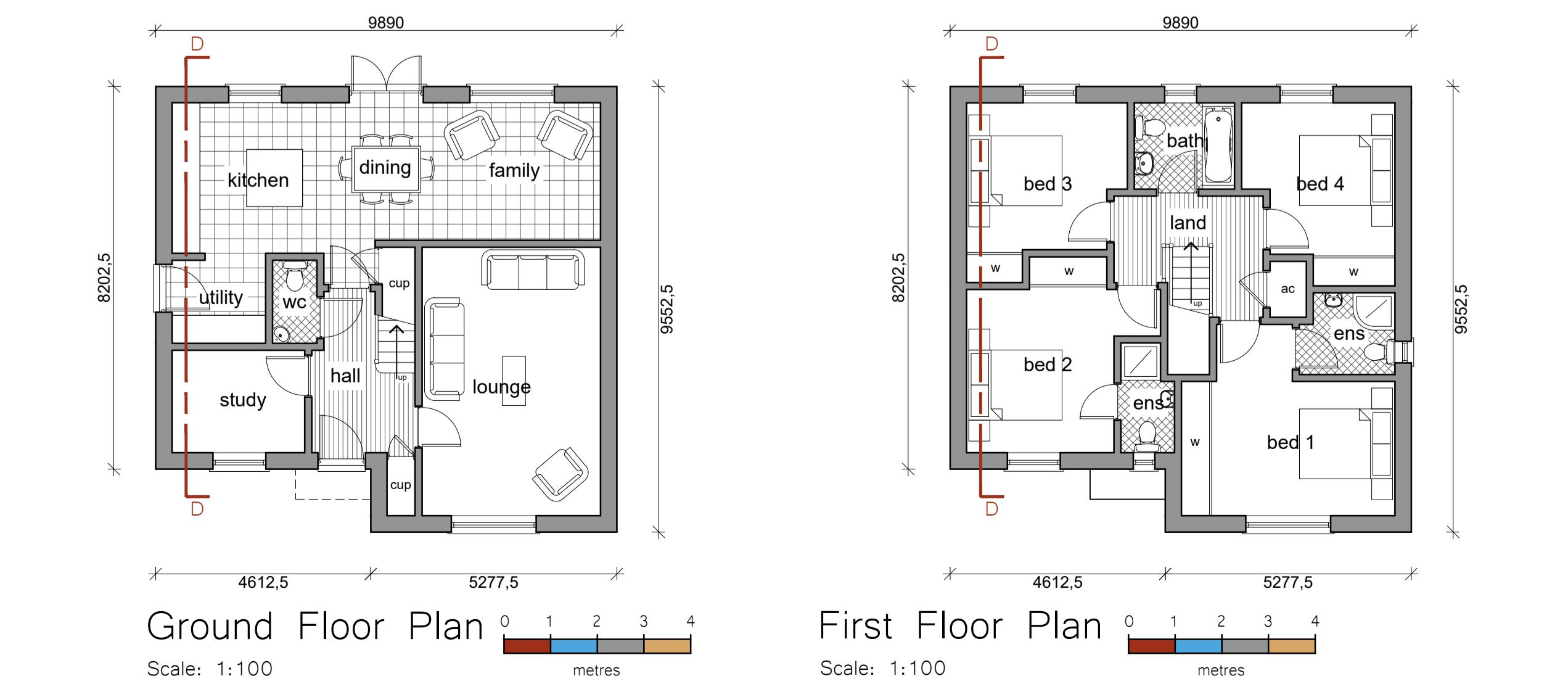
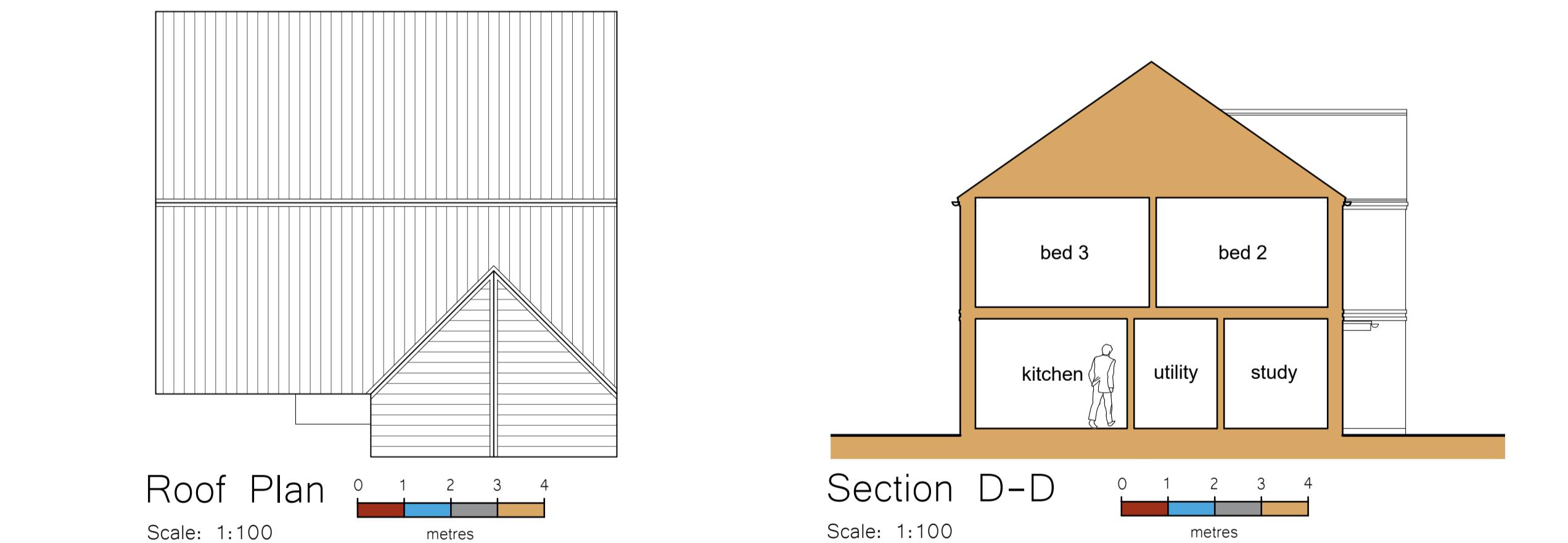
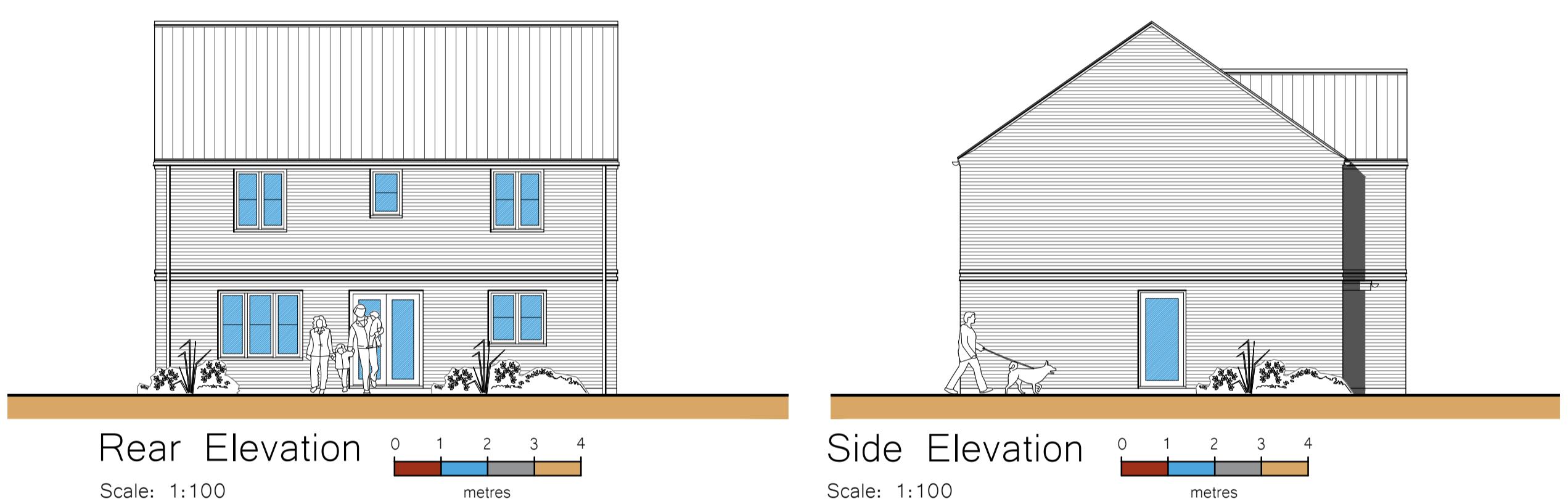
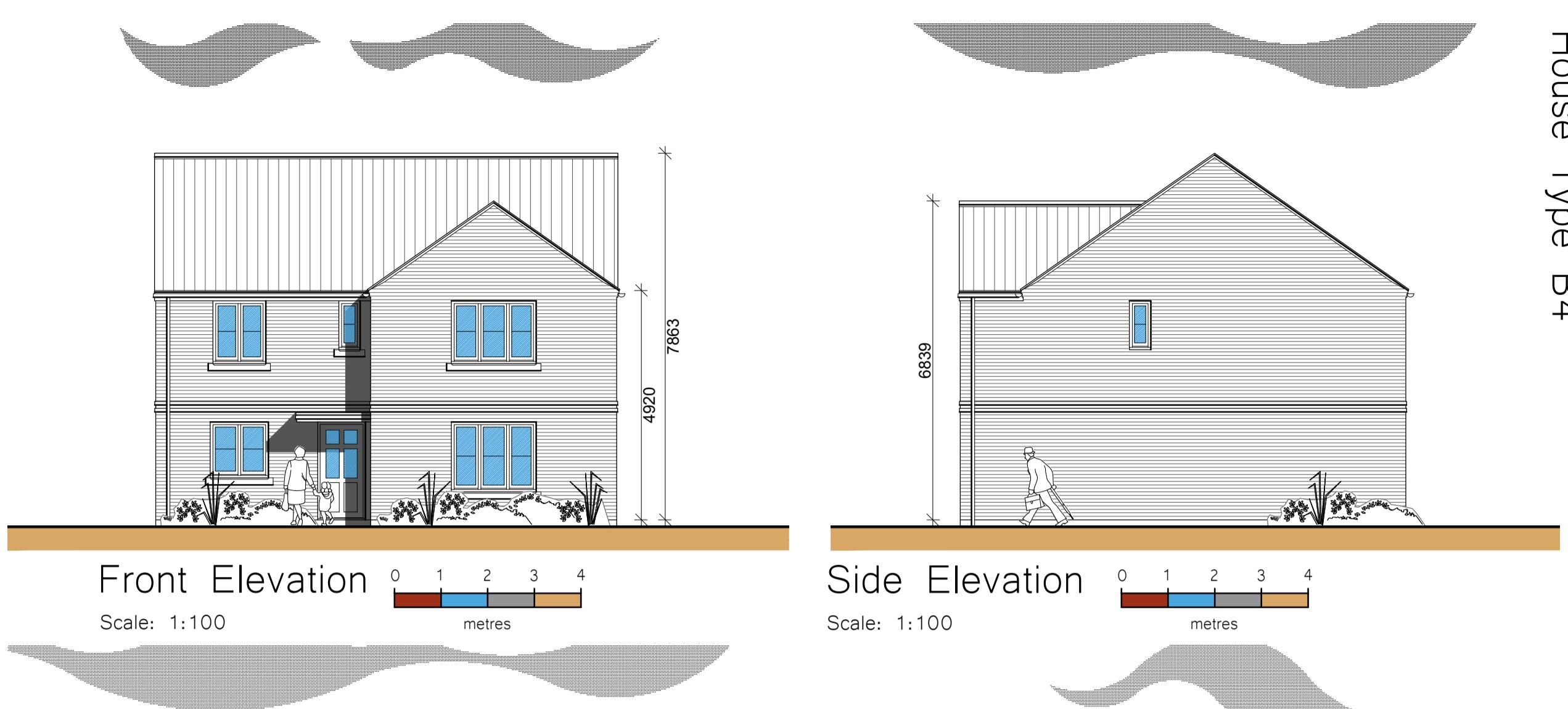


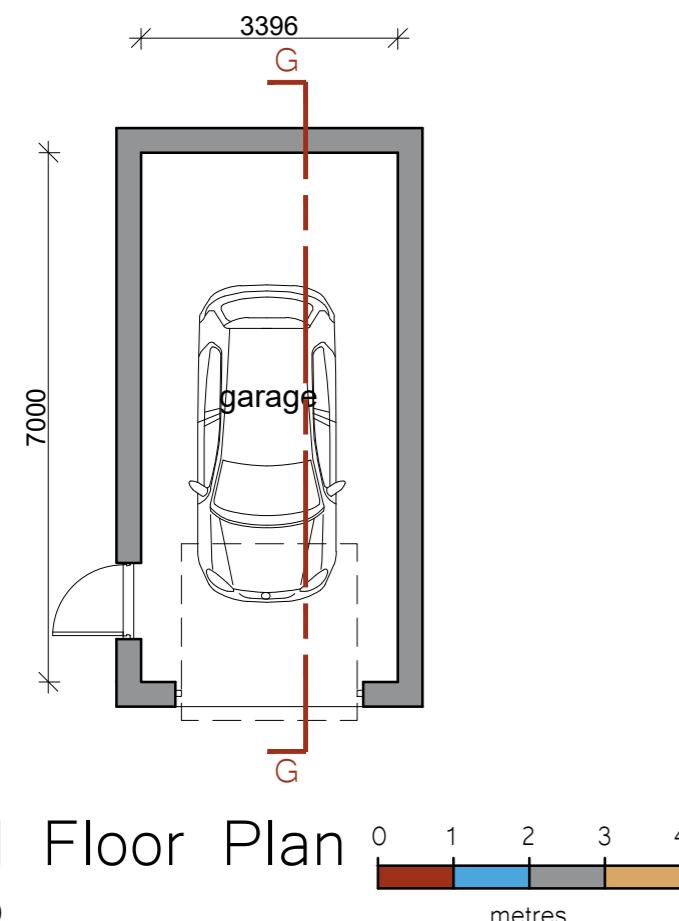
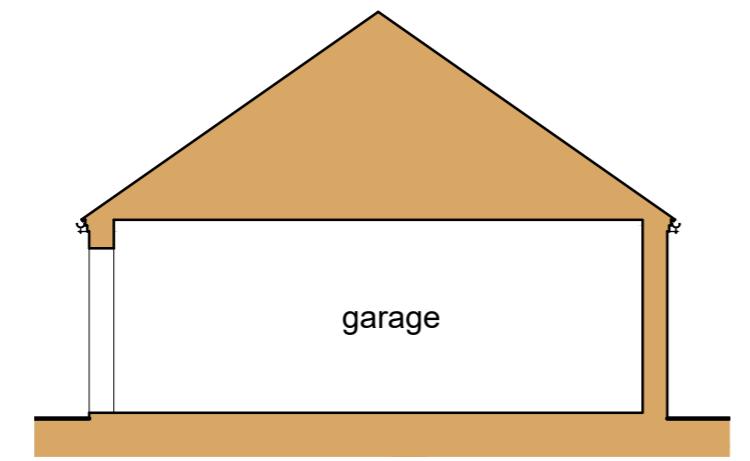
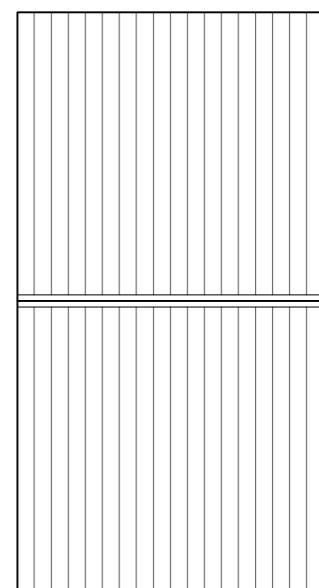
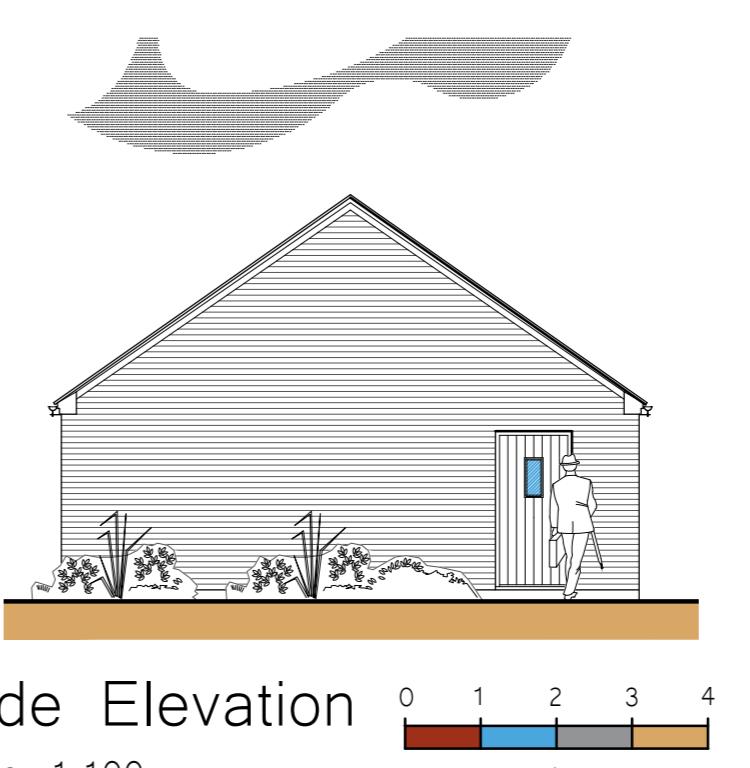
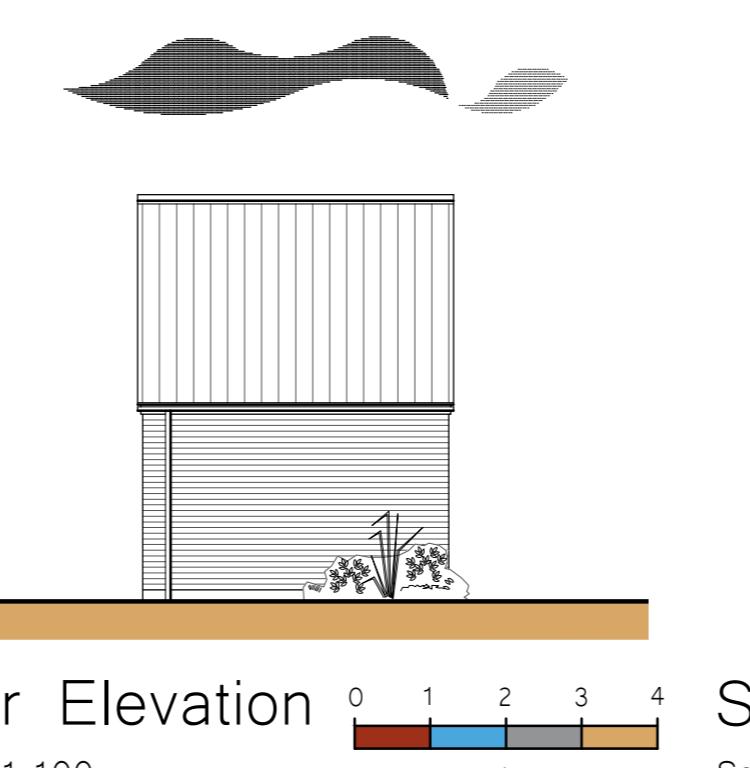
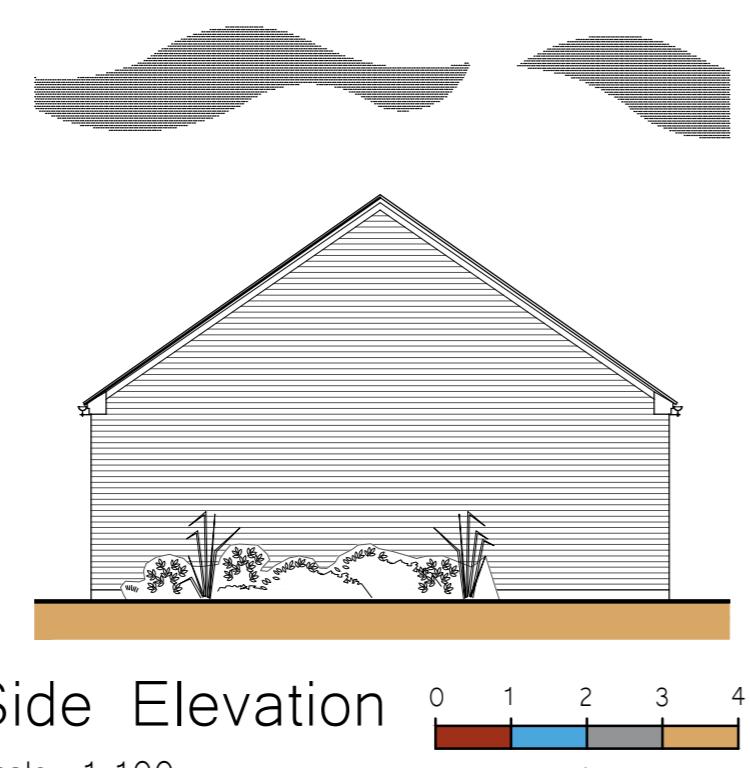
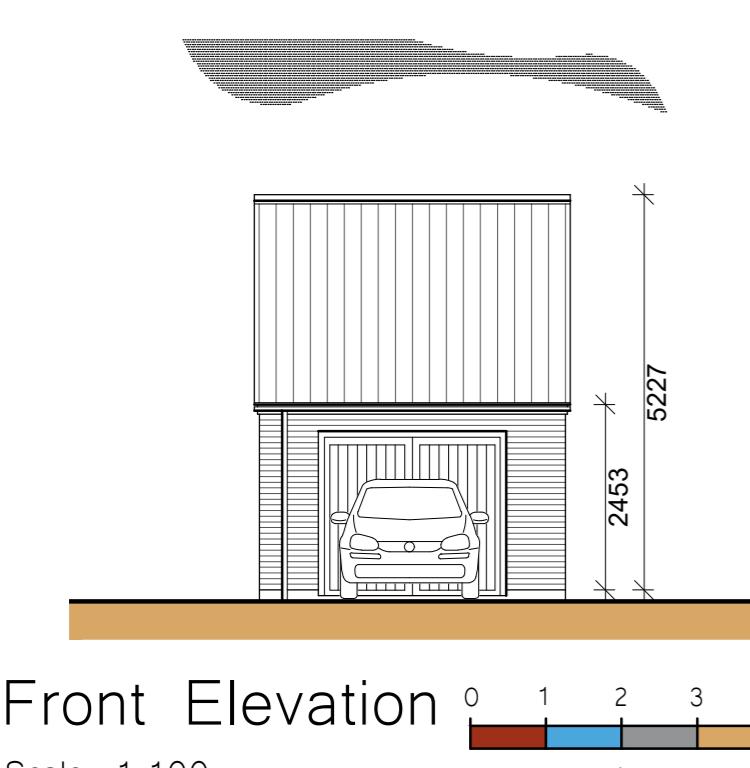
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Proposed Residential Development	Job Title	April	Date	Various
Land East of Berryfield	Planning	Planning	Sheet Size	A1
March, Cambs	Planning	Planning	Sheet Size	A1
for: Fink Developments	Planning	Planning	Sheet Size	A1
	House Type B3	House Type B3	Sheet Size	A1
	Dwg No. PP1300	Dwg No. PP1300	Sheet Size	A1
	RS	RS	Sheet Size	A1
	Revision B	Revision B	Sheet Size	A1

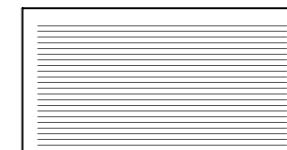




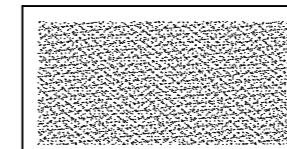
General Notes

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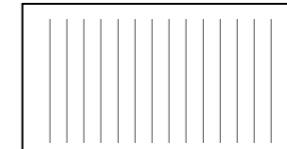
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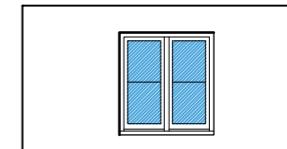
Hatch indicates brickwork as detailed in the materials schedule



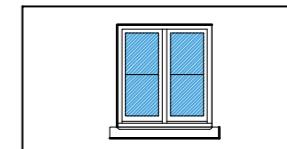
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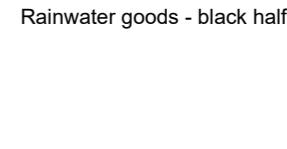
Hatch indicates roof tiles as detailed in the materials schedule



Windows and doors - UPVC Casement



Windows and doors - UPVC Casement with stone cill detail



Rainwater goods - black half round gutters and black round downpipes

Status

PLANNING

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Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA

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Proposed Residential Development	Job Title	Date
Land East of Berryfield		April 2025
March, Cambs		
for: Fink Developments		
	Scale	As Shown
		Sheet Size
		A2
	Drawing Title	
PHASE B		
Planning Drawing		
Garages		
	Job No.	SE-2304
	Dwg No.	PP1500
	Drawn by	RS
	Revision	C

F/YR25/0750/F

Applicant: Mrs Carver

**Agent : Mr G Boreham
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

Bromsgrove House , Honeycombe Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire PE16 6SB

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

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks permission for the siting of a residential caravan and associated curtilage on land serving Bromsgrove House, accessed via Fenton Lode (an unadopted byway north of Honeycombe Road).
- 1.2 The site sits within an isolated cluster comprising two existing dwellings and various agricultural and commercial uses, surrounded predominantly by open countryside and lying outside the established built-up area of Chatteris. Although a past permission for an annexe (F/YR21/1346/F) was granted on personal-need grounds, this consent has lapsed and carries limited weight. More recent proposals for similar development (F/YR25/0352/F) were refused.
- 1.3 The current scheme is materially comparable to the previously refused proposal. The development would introduce a separate residential unit on land beyond the established curtilage, with no functional dependency on the host dwelling.
- 1.4 The siting, scale and domestic curtilage proposed would extend built form into agricultural land, resulting in unwarranted domestication of open countryside, contrary to Policies LP1, LP3 and LP16. No evidence has been provided to justify the need for ancillary accommodation or to demonstrate an essential rural requirement.
- 1.5 The proposal would also result in moderate harm to the rural character and landscape, with the introduction of a domestic caravan, boundary treatments and associated paraphernalia eroding the open setting. While residential amenity and parking arrangements are acceptable, these factors do not outweigh fundamental policy conflicts.
- 1.6 The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 3. No Sequential Test has been undertaken and the development cannot be considered ancillary, meaning the requirement applies in full. Reasonably available sites exist in areas of lower flood risk, and the scheme therefore fails the Sequential Test. Furthermore, the proposal does not demonstrate wider sustainability benefits required to pass Part 1 of the Exception Test, although Part 2 could potentially be satisfied through mitigation. As both

limbs must be met, the Exception Test is not passed.

1.7 Overall, the proposal fails to address the previous reasons for refusal and is considered unsustainable, contrary to key Local Plan policies and national planning guidance.

1.8 Therefore, the application is recommended for Refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is situated to the northern end of Fenton Lode or Twenty Foot Drain, approximately 170m North of the junction with Honeysome Road. The access road to the site incorporates C & G Coaches on its western corner and an electricity substation to its eastern side. The Lode is an unadopted byway serving agricultural buildings and two detached dwellings at its northern end and provides access for maintenance of the adjacent drain.
- 2.2 Between the application site and Fenland Way to the East there is a variety of commercial units on the Honeysome Industrial Estate, including SS Motors' fuel depot, Stainless Metalcraft to the south and a variety of mixed engineering firms and a larger retail outlet to the north.
- 2.3 The two houses along the Lode are in an isolated position away from other new and established housing development situated on the eastern side of Fenland Way, comprising the main built-up area of the town. To the North, West and mainly to the South of the application site there is currently open agricultural land.
- 2.4 It is acknowledged that permission has been granted for a large housing development at Womb Farm, further to the north, and west of Fenland Way. This is the other side of the Twenty Foot Drain and is a comprehensively planned development closely associated with established links into the town itself.
- 2.5 The application site itself comprises a detached bungalow served off the Lode and established rear curtilage and small front garden. There is one un-associated detached frontage dwelling to the immediate south of the site, then an assortment of farm buildings, with the established coach company at the junction with Honeysome Road.
- 2.6 Along the northern side of the red-lined application site there is an older, utilitarian single-skinned brick, former agricultural building. The application site includes this outbuilding, plus agricultural land adjacent to its south, of a slightly larger scale to that of the defined rear garden to the dwelling at Bromsgrove House itself.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land, to extend the residential curtilage of the host dwelling, and the siting of a caravan to be used as an annexe. This would include the removal of the existing mobile home situated to the south of the host dwelling.
- 3.2 The proposed change of use relates to a rectangular parcel of land north of the existing curtilage associated with Bromsgrove.

3.3 The proposed caravan would have a maximum height of 4.11 metres with an eaves height of 2.95 metres, with a depth of 16.16 metres and a width of 4.2 metres. This would be finished with a 0.6 metres brickwork skirt all round, clay stone cladding and dark grey flat roof tile and would feature three gable features to the front elevation. The proposed caravan would provide two bedrooms, a bathroom and open plan living room and kitchen.

3.4 Other associated works include the installation of a 1.2 metre high post and rail fence to the northern, southern and western boundaries, the extension of the existing gravel driveway to the north and west to serve the proposed annexe and an area to the south of the proposed annexe to provide an area for biodiversity enhancements, namely the planting of trees.

3.5 The main amendments as part of this current application are a reduction in the proposed area for the extension of residential curtilage and footprint of proposed accommodation and rather than constructing an annexe, the proposal relates to the siting of a caravan and a reduction in the accommodation provided and is now a two bed. Furthermore, the proposed accommodation has been moved closer to the boundary with the host dwelling.

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

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

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Proposal	Decision
F/YR25/0352/F	Change of use of land for residential use, construction of a single storey building (annexe) and associated development	Refuse
F/YR21/1346/F	Change of use of land to domestic and erect a two-storey self-contained residential annex involving the demolition of existing outbuilding	Approved

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Chatteris Town Council

Recommend Approval

Internal Consultees

5.2 FDC Environmental Health

No objections

External Consultees

5.3 Middle Level Commissioners

No response received at the time of writing this report

5.4 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Eleven letter of support have been received from residents in Sycamore Crescent, Heronshaw, Green Park, Station Street, Barley Close, Fairway, St James Close, Birch Avenue – Chatteris and Watermoor Point in Cirencester.

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Enables family to remain living at the same address – multi generational living and support.	Comments noted and discussed in below report.
Uncertainty around land adjacent future use – this location is more shielded	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Minimal disruption to the surrounding area	Comments noted and discussed in below report.
Applicant valued member of the community	Comments noted.
Superstore proposed to the rear, solar farm to the front, an allotment to the left and housing to the right – how is this unacceptable in rurality	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Site previously received approval for an annexe	Comments noted however as discussed below, the previous permission related to the conversion of an existing building on site and was materially different to that proposed under the current application
Existing caravan removed will improve the area	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Reduction and amendments to scheme result in improvements	Comments noted and discussed in the below report
Cost efficient living	Comments noted
Mobile home is clearly ancillary and it is important this is retained.	Comments noted and discussed below.

One letter of representation from a local resident on Honeysome Road has been received and is summarised below:

Comments	Officer Response
No objection to the principle – concerns regarding the delivery of parts and associated impact on trees	Comments noted. Should the application be approved, this matter could be dealt with via condition.

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 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

Nature

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

LP10 – Chatteris

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

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Visual Amenity/Form**
- **Types of Development**
- **Flood Risk**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1 As denoted above, a recent planning decision for additional claimed annexe accommodation on the site was refused under the terms of application F/YR25/0352/F 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 need for the development as required by Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). 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 inherent domestication of an open 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 fully satisfy 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) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).*

9.2 As discussed in the preceding section of this report, the proposal the subject of the current application remains similar to that of the refused scheme, in that it relates to the change of use of land, the provision of residential accommodation and associated works.

9.3 During the assessment of the previously refused permission F/YR25/0352/F, reference was made to a previous planning permission for the provision of an annexe on the site, under the terms of application F/YR21/1346/F, this was approved at committee of April 2022 for the following reasons:

'The health and wellbeing of the residents will be improved, it will enhance the environment, it is not detrimental to the character of the area and does not have any impact on the neighbours.'

9.4 It is also pertinent to note that the amendment statement accompanying this application states that significant reductions in terms of footprint and extension to residential curtilage have been made, the LPA acknowledges that there has been a reduction to both, however this is not deemed significant but will be discussed further within the relevant sections of the below report.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

10.1 Policy LP1 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. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) 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 to the edge of Chatteris, in what is considered an outlying area to the town. However, broadly it is a location whereby ancillary residential development may be considered acceptable, subject to other material considerations.

10.2 Furthermore, Policy LP16 supports the principle of providing ancillary accommodation on the provision that the proposal does not cause adverse harm to the local character, or to the general environment and is ancillary to the host dwelling.

10.3 It is a conventional expectation that annexe accommodation will be ancillary to the host dwelling and good practice for the accommodation to have a functional link, shared services, amenities and facilities. It is also an expectation for there to be a level of dependence on the occupants of the host dwelling by the occupants of the annexe.

10.4 The annexe must maintain a strong relationship to the host dwelling by relying on the facilities, garden land and driveway of the host dwelling. This is to restrict the opportunity for it to become a separate planning unit over time. From the plans submitted, the proposed annexe would utilise the same access and driveway. However, the annexe proposed falls outside the established residential curtilage of the existing dwelling and proposes the siting of a caravan with its own associated curtilage, rear of and separate to the main dwelling and proposed on what is currently considered to be agricultural land.

10.5 The application is not accompanied by any justification for the proposal or demonstrable need or any functional link with the host dwelling, outside of the proposed accommodation being occupied by family members. The scale and form, location beyond the curtilage and on agricultural land, and lack of dependency is not considered to comprise annexe accommodation but a separate residential unit in its own right.

10.6 It is pertinent to note that whilst it is noted that the site benefitted from an expired planning permission. Given this scheme has not been implemented, this is of limited weight as a fallback position. Notwithstanding the above, the previously approved application is materially different to that the subject of this application, namely that this application relates to the siting of a caravan for residential purposes on land which is currently open and free from built form, whereas the previously approved scheme largely utilised the footprint of an existing outbuilding. Furthermore, the previous decision was based upon demonstrable personal need and improved living conditions for the family members currently residing in the caravan, no evidence has been submitted as part of this application that this is still the case, this alongside the lack of evidence or supporting information, can no longer be a material consideration of this application.

10.7 Furthermore, despite the amendments to the proposal as discussed in section 9 above, these are not considered sufficient to overcome the in-principle concerns raised under the terms of application F/YR25/0352/F. For the purposes of clarity, in respect of planning permission F/YR21/1346/F as discussed above, this is considered to be of limited weight in terms of its fallback position given the material differences between the schemes and that it has expired.

10.8 Taking into account the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal goes beyond providing ancillary accommodation and would be tantamount to a new residential unit. The principle of providing an independent residential unit, in this location is not accepted. The proposal would be contrary to policies LP1, LP3 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Development Plan. Other material considerations are discussed below.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

10.9 Policy LP16 of the Fenland 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:

(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.

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

10.11 The site of the proposed annexe is visible from the west across open agricultural land. From the south, the site is mainly screened by larger industrial units, similarly from the approach to the north and east with the intervening structures on site largely obstruct any views from the west. Significant space is proposed to be used as a separate domestic curtilage, this will be located on undeveloped agricultural land and its domestication will undermine the rural character and appearance of the area. This is exacerbated by the introduction of domestic fencing, planting and ancillary domestic structures and paraphernalia.

10.12 The proposed caravan is also of a design and form which fails to respect the rural characteristics of the locality, incorporating significant domestic scale uPVC fenestration with features and materials discordant with a rural location. Whilst the accommodation type has changed (previously a structure requiring building was proposed now it is the siting of a caravan) its appearance is similar in terms of materials and fenestration.

10.13 It is noted that the proposed change of use, was granted planning permission under application F/YR21/1346/F, as discussed in section 9 of this report, this is afforded limited weight in the assessment of this application, which does not overcome the harm identified above. Similarly, it is noted that the existing caravan is proposed to be removed as part of this application, this is considered to have a neutral impact in terms of design and impact on the character and appearance of the area, namely, that the siting of a caravan on residential land does not require planning permission, so a condition requiring its removal from site would be unreasonable.

10.14 It is therefore considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site, which is currently classed as open countryside, contrary to policy LP16 of the LDP.

Residential Amenity and Private Amenity Space

10.15 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.

- 10.16 The application proposes the creation of a separate area of curtilage for the annexe which would provide an appropriate level of amenity space for future occupiers.
- 10.17 As discussed in paragraphs 10.1 -10.8, the proposal is considered to result in an independent, self-contained residential unit and therefore, the relationship with Bromsgrove House also needs to be considered. Given the single storey nature of the proposal, alongside the degree of separation and established planting (which is proposed to be retained) it is not considered that the development would result in a detrimental impact on the amenity of current or future occupiers of Bromsgrove House or the future occupants of the proposed building. It is therefore, considered the proposal would be in accordance with policy LP2 and LP16 of the LDP.

Parking, Access and Highway Safety

- 10.18 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 cars is required for up to a three bedroom dwelling.
- 10.19 The extended driveway is shown to provide parking provision for three vehicles and would not alter the parking provision currently provided for the host dwelling. It is therefore considered that there would still remain suitable parking provision for at least two vehicular spaces to serve the host dwelling with sufficient manoeuvring space and therefore, there are no objections in this respect.

Flood Risk

- 10.20 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. This stance is supported by the guidance contained within the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016.
- 10.21 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that a Sequential Test is required for planning applications in areas at risk from flooding from any source. In the case of river and sea flooding, this specifically includes land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The fundamental objective of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding (i.e. Flood Zone 1), in line with the risk-based approach advocated by paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).
- 10.22 The application site lies within an area of identified flood risk and, as such, the Sequential Test is engaged. However, no Sequential Test has been submitted in support of the application. It is noted that the proposal seeks permission for

ancillary residential accommodation, and in those instances, a sequential test is not appropriate for any formal submission as the development is limited in where it can be located to still be in conjunction with the dwelling.

10.23 However, as discussed above the proposal is not deemed to be ancillary in nature and is therefore considered to relate to the provision of an independent residential unit. As such, the application fails to satisfy the first key test for residential-led development in areas liable to flooding. It is pertinent to note that under the terms of application F/YR25/0352/F, this did form a reason for refusal and therefore, given there has been no change in Agent/Applicant, is something they were aware of. The applicant has not approached the Council to agree reasonable parameters for the Sequential Test area or to discuss what alternative sites may be considered 'reasonably available'. Any such test should be informed by the Council's spatial strategy, local plan policies, and up-to-date evidence of land availability. Decisions on site suitability must be rooted in planning judgment, having regard to the specific nature of the development and the need for flexibility in site comparison.

10.24 Furthermore, it is worth noting that the accompanying flood risk assessment provided dated 13 February 2025 makes a number of minor incorrect claims; namely, references the proposal as a two storey residential annexe, and, in referencing adjacent approvals F/YR19/0670/F is stated as being less than 2 years ago, this was approved on 25.09.2019 and is obviously 6 years old and references application F/YR21/01346/F as will be expiring on 14th April 2025. Based on the above, it does not appear that the supporting FRA has been updated to accurately reflect the proposal the subject of this application.

10.25 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that a Sequential Test is required for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding from any source, including land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The core purpose of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas of lowest risk (Flood Zone 1), consistent with the risk-based approach set out in paragraph 173 and 175 of the NPPF.

10.26 As the site lies within an area of identified flood risk, the Sequential Test is engaged. The fact that flood mitigation measures may be possible does not remove the need for the Sequential Test; such measures fall to be considered under the Exception Test. In the absence of a robust Sequential Test, the proposal fails to meet a fundamental requirement for residential development in high-risk flood areas and is contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, the NPPF, and associated PPG.

10.27 Since the determination of the most recent application, 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.

10.28 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. Notwithstanding this, given that the proposed development is considered to be tantamount to a new dwelling, in an area which has exceeded housing delivery envisaged by the spatial strategy, it remains appropriate for the area of search to be considered on a district-wide basis. This approach reflects both the strength of the district's overall housing supply and the need to maintain a balanced approach to delivering the adopted spatial strategy. The scheme will therefore be assessed on this basis.

10.29 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.

10.30 It should be noted that there are a number of sites within Chatteris (With extant consents and sites readily available within Chatteris 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.

10.31 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.

10.32 The Exception Test comprises two elements, both of which must be satisfied:

- Development to demonstrate that it achieves wider community sustainability benefits having regard to the district's sustainability objectives, and
- That it can be made safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere ('flood risk management')

10.33 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. Whilst it is ordinarily the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate compliance with both elements, the Local Planning Authority must still make its own objective assessment of the evidence and reach a reasoned conclusion on whether both parts of the test are met

- Wider community sustainability benefits

10.34 Given the proposal is to provide one dwelling, in an elsewhere location it is not considered that the proposal achieves a wider community sustainability benefit, as discussed in the previous sections of this report, the proposal would not contribute to the Districts sustainability objectives and therefore, it is not considered the proposal would satisfy this limb of the exceptions test.

b) That it can be made safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere ('flood risk management')

10.35 The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment advises that the following mitigation will be provided:

- The proposed finished floor level of the building will be raised above the existing ground level by 0.6m.
- The main dwelling and annexe owner will be made aware of the Environment Agencies Flood Warning Service, which will notify them of a potential flood risk at the appropriate times

10.36 It is considered that subject to suitably worded conditions, the above would be sufficient to ensure the development would not increase flood risk elsewhere and would therefore, satisfy this limb of the exceptions test.

10.37 Notwithstanding the above, based on the information submitted, insufficient information has been submitted to adequately satisfy the sequential test. Furthermore, the Applicant has failed to demonstrate any further public benefit of the proposal and has not satisfied part 1 of the exceptions test. Whilst the LPA have been proactive and undertaken their own assessment in this respect and found the proposal does satisfy part b, given the lack of information and clarity surrounding the matter, it is not considered that the proposal satisfies both parts of the exceptions test. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy LP14 of the LDP, and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.38 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.

10.39 In this instance, given the above assessment and that the proposal is considered to be tantamount to an independent residential unit, a Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun. The application is accompanied by a BNG Metric and report which concludes that providing the scheme is carried out in accordance with the details and mitigation shown the development would result in a gain of both hedgerow.

10.40 The area proposed for enhancement to secure the gains as mentioned above would fall outside of the current residential curtilage and the land proposed as part of the change of use to serve the dwelling. Therefore, subject to suitably worded conditions, there are no objections in this respect.

Other Matters

10.41 It is noted that representations received refer to other consented or proposed developments in the wider vicinity, raising concerns about future land uses and questioning why the current proposal would be considered unacceptable in a rural context. Comments reference a superstore to the rear, a solar farm to the front, allotments to one side and housing to the other.

10.42 While each planning application must be assessed on its own merits, it is important to clarify the status and relevance of these schemes. The superstore approved under F/YR11/0661/F to the north does not appear to have been implemented and therefore carries limited weight. The solar farm to the west is located over 200 metres from the application site and, in any event, represents a fundamentally different form of development in terms of scale, character and function. Housing within the wider area largely comprises long-established developments dating from the 1990s and does not alter the rural character or Elswhere location as described by policy, of the application site.

10.43 As outlined within the design and character section of this report, the current proposal would introduce an inappropriate form of residential development that would domesticate open countryside and conflict with the established settlement pattern. Consequently, the cited neighbouring developments do not justify or mitigate the identified harm arising from this scheme.

10.44 It is also noted that representations raise concerns regarding potential damage to the mature trees along the access road arising from the movement of larger vehicles. These trees make a valuable contribution to the amenity and character of the area. However, should the application be approved, appropriate measures to safeguard these trees during delivery and construction activities could be secured through a suitably worded planning condition.

Planning Balance

10.45 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)

10.46 This stance is supported by Local Plan Policy LP1. In respect of the first of these, the current proposal would provide negligible economic benefits, for example support for existing and future businesses, services, and facilities by introducing additional residents that would make use of them and provide future spend in the local economy. However, given the proposal would relate to one unit, and would facilitate family members who already utilise these services and facilities, it is considered this would be negligible.

10.47 In respect of the social strand, it is noted that the proposal would enable the family to live in close proximity to one another, however, this is considered to be negligible and outweighed by other factors such as being located within Flood Zone 3 putting future residents at risk and is not located within close proximity to

services and therefore, does not support the current and future needs of the wider community.

10.48 Lastly, in respect of the environmental objective; the proposal would result in the inherent domestication of the site, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the surrounding area, this is considered to result in moderate harm. This harm is further exacerbated by the location of the development, outside the built-up area of Chatteris, whereby occupants would be reliant on private vehicle to access many of the day-to-day facilities and services.

10.49 Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that the proposal includes in excess of 10% BNG uplift, however, this is considered to be of a minor benefit that does not outweigh the harm identified above.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Taking into account the above assessment, the proposed development does not overcome the previous reasons for refusal and therefore is not considered to represent sustainable development and can therefore not be supported in principle. Furthermore, the proposal, is considered to result in the inherent domestication, of what in policy terms, is open countryside, resulting in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

11.2 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3 and fails to meet the sequential test by virtue of alternative sites being available elsewhere in the district to accommodate the development that are at lower risk of flooding. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

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 need for the development as required by Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). 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 inherent domestication of an open 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 fully satisfy 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), the guidance contained within the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016 and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).

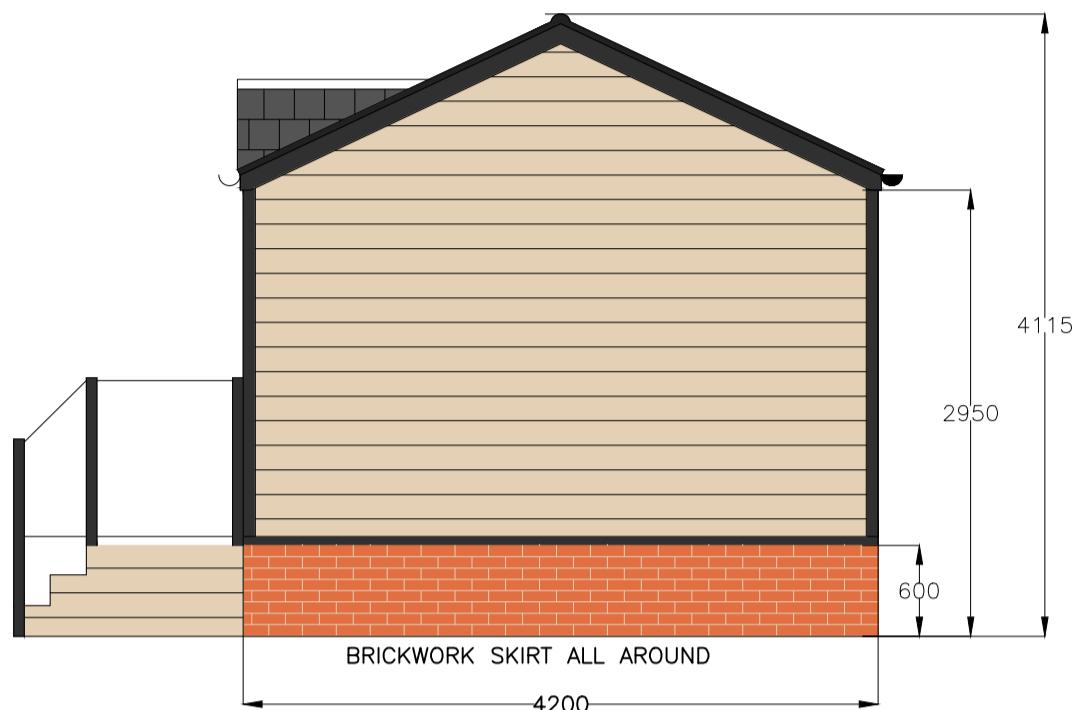


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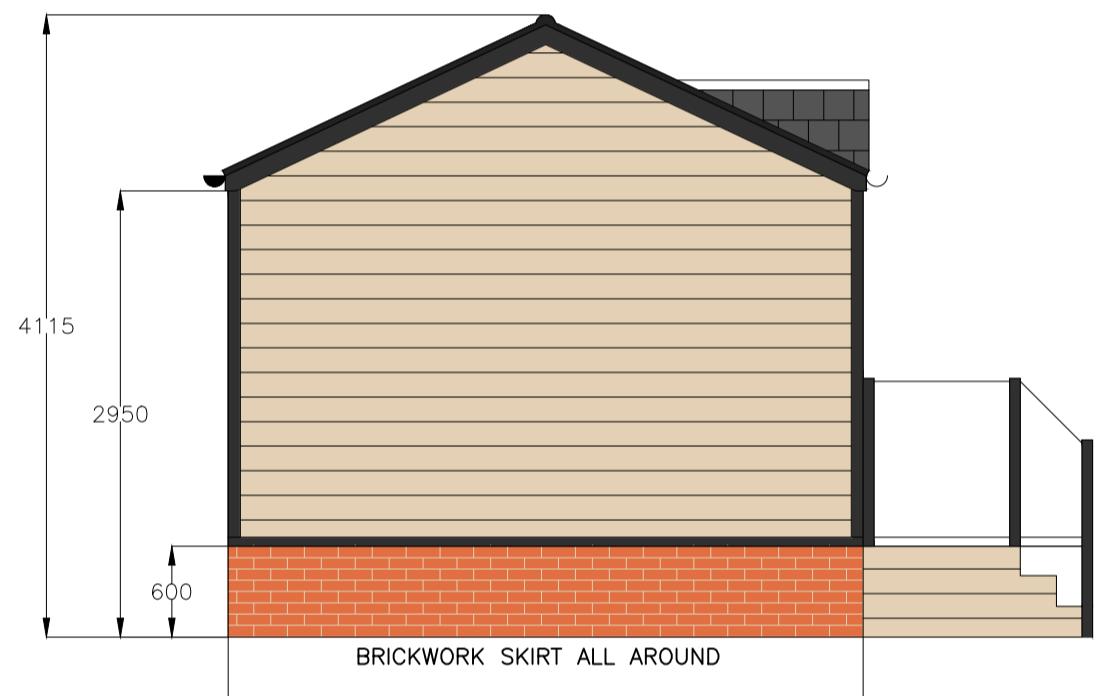
PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION (1:50)
(3)



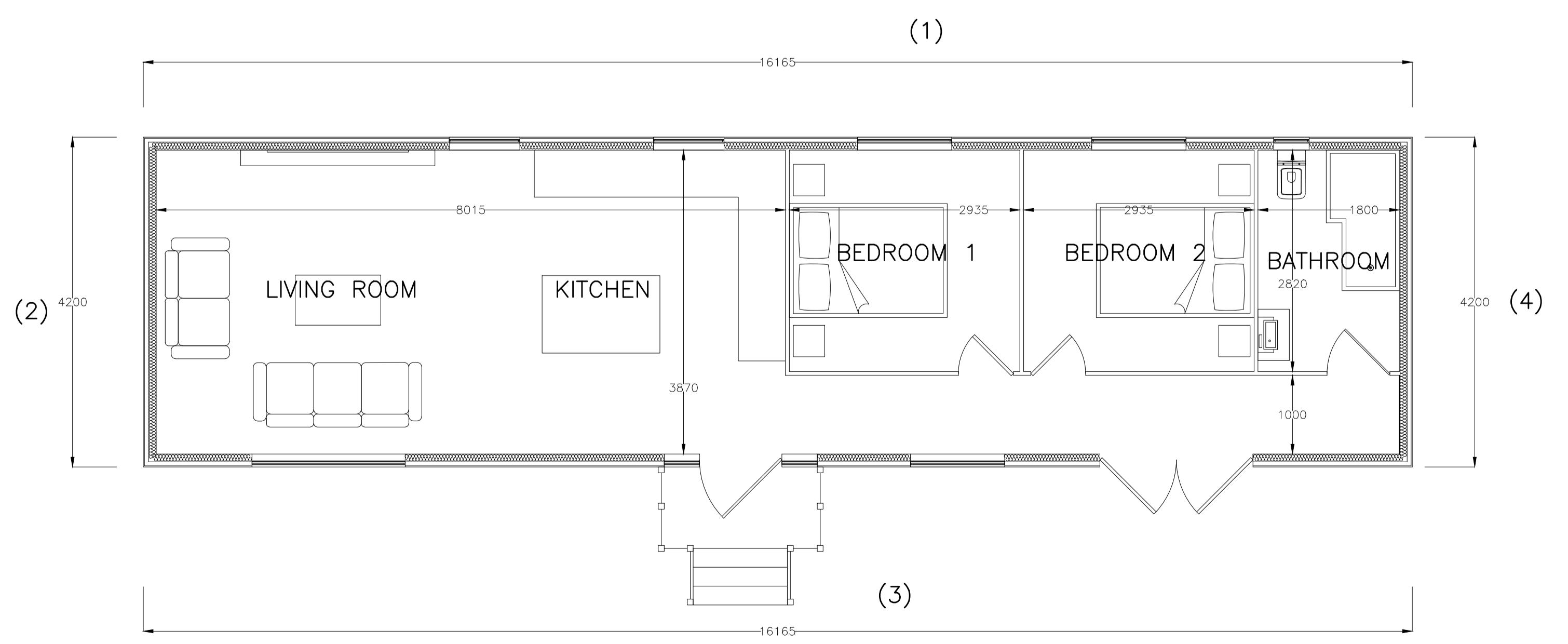
PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION (1:50)
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PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION (1:50)
(1)

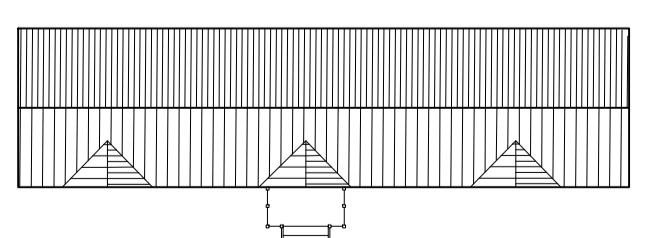


PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION (1:50)
(2)



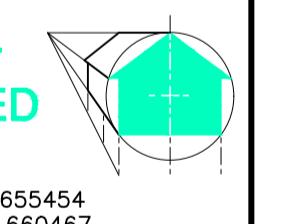
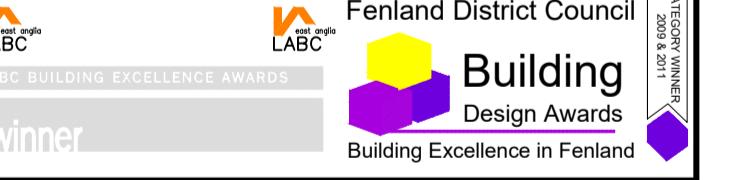
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

MATERIALS:
ROOF: DARK GREY FLAT ROOF TILE
WALLS: CLAY STONE CLADDING
WINDOWS: BLACK AUSTRIAN BAR WINDOWS
SURFACE: BLACK GUTTERS & DOWNPPIPES
WATER



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN (1:200)

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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 EN/BS 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

B	DRAWINGS UPDATED PLANNERS COMMENTS	SEP 2025 MAY 2025
A	REVISIONS	DATE
MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED <small>CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS</small> 		
1. Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ 		
Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk		
Fenland District Council 		
Mrs Carver		
PROJECT Broomsgrove House, Honeyside Road, Chatteris, Cambs PE16 6SB		
TITLE Proposed Building Arrangements		
DRAWN J.Scotcher CHECKED DATE Feb 2025 SCALE As Shown		DATE OF ISSUE
		DRAWING NUMBER H10269/03B

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F/YR25/0814/PIP

Applicant: Mr S Munden

Agent : Mr R Papworth
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land North Of 10 Askham Row Accessed From, Hospital Road, Doddington, Cambridgeshire

Permission in principle for 4 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of up to three dwellings on agricultural land located to the west of Hospital Road, Doddington. The site comprises an undeveloped field outside the continuous built form of the village and forms part of a transitional gap between the built-up area of Doddington and the sporadic, rural pattern of development further north along Hospital Road.
- 1.2 The site was previously refused Permission in Principle for development of up to three dwellings. Since that refusal, outline planning permission has been granted for up to three dwellings on land to the north of the site. The current proposal reduces the red line boundary from the earlier scheme to align more closely with that adjacent approval. However, this change does not alter the site's relationship to the village or its contribution to the rural transition.
- 1.3 The proposal represents encroachment into the open countryside, introducing suburban built form, multiple access points, and the loss of boundary hedgerow, thereby eroding rural character and the edge-of-settlement transition. Although nearby approvals are material considerations, they are regarded as isolated instances of development and not indicative of a change in settlement pattern. The site remains visually prominent from Hospital Road, Benwick Road and nearby public footpaths.
- 1.4 The development fails to comply with Policies LP3, LP12 Part A(a), (c), (d) and (f), and LP16(c), (d) and (f) of the Fenland Local Plan, as well as paragraphs 133 and 187 of the NPPF. The Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and the tilted balance does not apply.
- 1.5 The proposed development would yield a density of approximately 9 dwellings per hectare. Although low density aligns with the rural context, it represents inefficient use of land and conflicts with the environmental and economic objectives of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, and paragraph 130 relating to efficient land use. When combined with policy conflict regarding

location, the proposal does not constitute sustainable development.

1.6 Therefore, the application is recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site lies in the countryside and is a roughly rectangular parcel of land currently in use as an agricultural field. The site has an area of approximately 0.4 hectares. The site is set behind the rear of 8 – 10 Askham Row which is a relatively modern row of detached dwellings fronting Benwick Road. The site can only be accessed via Hospital Road which is a single-track road with no footways running north off Benwick Road.
- 2.2 Benwick Road extends from the High Street/Doddington village centre in a westerly direction. There is development on both sides of Benwick Road up to Hermitage Gardens and beyond this the development becomes more sporadic, especially to the south of Benwick Road at this point and even more so on both sides of Benwick Road as one travels further west. Doddington Hospital and Doddington Court retirement homes and then Askham House, a rehabilitation centre and nursing home are prominent developed sites to the north of Benwick Road.
- 2.3 The character as one travels west is one of sporadic development, mainly fronting the road interspersed with fields and most of the land to the rear of the frontage development comprises open fields. Built development lessens as one travels further along Benwick Road which is typical interface between a village core and the countryside beyond. It is noticeable that this character is being eroded by infill development in a ribbon style which is gradually urbanising this road and Askham Row is an example of this. However, there still remains a general semi-rural/rural feel to the road whereby development is interspersed with open land between development and to the rear.
- 2.4 Hospital Road is currently not much more than a track but it provides an emergency access to the hospital and car park and also the residential development including the dwelling Norbrown to the north of the hospital and to the east of Hospital Road and the four new dwellings that have recently been permitted between Norbrown and the Hospital (see history below), alongside the backland development to the rear of this site. Hospital Road continues for some distance and serves a few sporadic dwellings and farms and also other sporadic business including the Megaplants Garden Centre and, opposite this, a former poultry farm which now seems to be used for storage purposes.
- 2.5 The site subject of this application is flat and devoid of landscape except for a mixed native hedgerow along its eastern boundary where it adjoins Hospital Road. The site lies within flood zone 1 which is the area at lowest risk of flooding.

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. This shows the provision of four dwellings, each with their own individual access points off Hospital Road serving the detached dwellings which face Hospital Road.

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

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

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Proposal	Decision
F/YR22/1243/PIP	Residential development of up to 3 x dwellings (application for Permission in Principle)	Refused

Since the determination of the above application, land to the north of the application site as outlined in red has been granted outline planning permission for the construction of up to three dwellings under the terms of application F/YR23/0993/O.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Doddington Parish Council

Object for the following reasons:

- Site is an important gap and comprises countryside.
- No overriding need for the development given 5YHLS position
- Proposal would require substantial removal of hedgerow and trees
- Impact on Character and Appearance of the area
- Unsafe highway and access conditions
- Impact on biodiversity

Internal Consultees

5.2 FDC Environmental Health

No objection

External Consultees

5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways

It is not anticipated that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the highway at this stage. However, additional details at the Technical Details

stage will be required to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway or highways safety. The LHA go on to set out a number of key considerations and mitigation requirements for the TD stage should the application be approved.

5.4 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Four letters of objection from local residents on Benwick Road, have been received and are summarised below:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Access and Highway implications/safety	Comments noted and discussed below
Loss of Agricultural land	Comments noted and discussed below
Density – Over development	Comments noted and discussed below
Contrary to policy	Comments noted and discussed below
Drainage	Comments noted and discussed below
Environmental concerns	Comments noted and discussed below
Pressure on services	Comments noted and discussed below
Loss of view/outlook	Comments noted and discussed below
Visual impact and out of character	Comments noted and discussed below
Proximity to properties	Comments noted and discussed below
Trees	Comments noted and discussed below
Wildlife concerns	Comments noted and discussed below
Precedent	Comments noted and discussed below
Will potentially require access to land not in Applicants ownership for highway improvements	Comments Noted
Additional housing not required	Comments noted and discussed below.

Nine letters from local residents have been received from residents of Hospital Road, New Street, Ronald's Way, Juniper Close, Sutton Way, The Grange, The Rowans Doddington, and Westbourne Road Chatteris supporting the application, these comments are summarised below:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Appropriate location for development	Comments noted and discussed below
Growth of the community	Comments noted
More family homes needed	Comments noted and discussed below

Proposal constitutes infill	Comments noted and discussed below
Would improve Hospital Road	Comments noted and discussed below
Improvements to Access	Comments noted and discussed below
Effective use of land	Comments noted and discussed 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)

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 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

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

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

DM6 – Mitigating Against Harmful Effects

Developer Contributions SPD 2015

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount of development proposed**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1 There are a number of recent decisions relating to development in the vicinity of the site which Members should be aware of when determining this application.

9.2 Firstly, a total of four detached dwellings adjacent to Norbrown (a pre-existing dwelling) have been approved by Planning Committee, contrary to officer recommendation, further north and to the east of Hospital Road from the site subject of this application (refs F/YR20/0182/O and F/YR21/1522/O). A further five dwellings to the rear of those referenced have also been permitted (ref: F/YR23/0070/O)

9.3 Planning permission has also been granted (ref: F/YR22/0032/F) for café/retail buildings at Megaplants, a garden centre served off Hospital Road with conditions requiring passing bays on Hospital Road.

9.4 Planning application F/YR22/0390/F was refused by Committee (in line with the officer recommendation) for change of use of land to the north of 5 – 7 Askham Row (including erection of chicken run and pond) on 26th August 2022. This site is to the immediate west of the current application site. The application was refused for the following reason;

Policy LP12 Part A (c) and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, DM3 (d) of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014 and Paragraph 130 of the NPPF require that developments do not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the open countryside. The development creates a significantly sized domestic garden which results in an urbanising encroachment into the open countryside to the significant detriment of the character and visual amenity of the area. As such, the development is contrary to the aforementioned policies.

9.5 The application site, as referenced in the Planning History section of this report, was refused Permission in Principle for up to three dwellings. The application was refused for the following reasons:

1. *The site does not lie adjacent to the continuous built form of the settlement of Doddington and is in a countryside location, defined as "elsewhere" in policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.*

The development of this site for up to three dwellings fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the pattern and character of the surrounding natural landscape and built character of the immediate area which his sporadic, interspersed with open land and largely frontage development. It would be inconsistent with the core shape of the village and would appear incongruous both in terms of the landscape character of the area and in terms of visual appearance to adjacent occupiers of land/property and users of the nearby public footpath network. It will inevitably result in the severance of a continuous length of hedgerow to the east boundary of the site with Hospital Road which will result in a further urbanising impact and an adverse impact on the verdant rural character.

As such the proposal is contrary to policies LP3, LP12 A (a), (c), (d) and (f), LP16 (c) and (d) and paragraphs 130 and 174 of the NPPF.

2. *If the principle of residential development on this site were acceptable in terms of location and use of land, development of up to 3 dwellings would not make efficient use of the land and as such would not constitute sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 8 of the NPPF.*

9.6 Since that decision, outline planning permission for up to three dwellings on land immediately to the north was granted at Committee on 11 December 2024 under application reference F/YR23/0993/O.

9.7 The principal change to the current submission, aside from the evolving planning context in the surrounding area, is a reduction in the red line boundary. The revised site area is now smaller than the previously refused scheme.

10 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.
- 10.2 Development not falling into one of the defined village hierarchies 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. Although this site could be viewed as a potential village extension, it must still satisfy the detailed criteria of Policy LP12 alongside LP3.
- 10.3 Policy LP12 Part A supports development where it contributes to the sustainability of the settlement and does not harm the wide-open character of the

countryside. To meet LP12, proposals must satisfy criteria including proximity to the developed footprint, compatibility with village form, avoidance of coalescence or ribbon development, retention of natural features, and safeguarding agricultural land and local character.

10.4 The developed footprint referred to in criteria (a) is further defined in a footnote as “*the continuous built form of the settlement and excludes:*

- (a) *individual buildings and groups of dispersed or intermittent buildings, that are clearly detached from the continuous built-up area of the settlement* (emphasis added).**
- (b) *gardens, paddocks, and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings on the edge of the settlement where the land relates more to the surrounding countryside than to the built-up area of the settlement.* (emphasis added).**
- (c) *agricultural buildings and associated land on the edge of the settlement***
- (d) *outdoor sports and recreation facilities and other formal open spaces on the edge of the settlement”***

10.5 The application site comprises agricultural land and adjoins open fields to the west and north, with large rear gardens of Askham Row to the south. Despite recent outline permission for three dwellings to the north, the site remains detached from the continuous built area and therefore does not meet LP12 Part A(a).

10.6 LP12 Parts A(c) and (d) require development to reflect the prevailing character of its surroundings. Hospital Road marks a transition from the village edge into a rural landscape characterized by sporadic, predominantly frontage development interspersed with open fields. The site forms part of this open rural setting and is read as countryside rather than built-up land.

10.7 Although outline permission to the north has introduced the potential for residential frontage development along the western side of Hospital Road, this is considered to be a relatively modest intervention and is not in such a prominent location on Hospital Road as that of this application. In contrast, and as a result of the proposed development to the north, the application site forms a key transitional gap, maintaining separation between the village and more isolated rural development further north. Its development would encroach into the countryside and erode this transition.

10.8 The development plan remains the starting point in decision-making. As the site fails to satisfy LP12 Part A(a), proposals must rely on other LP12 criteria, yet the scheme is also contrary to LP12 Parts A(c) and (d), meaning the location is not acceptable in policy terms even when recent nearby approvals are considered.

10.9 The site does not reflect the core shape of the settlement and would extend development westward in a manner inconsistent with village form. While the northern approval constitutes a material consideration, it does not alter the rural character of this parcel, which continues to relate more strongly to open farmland. The proposal would therefore remain contrary to LP12 Part A(c) and (d).

10.10 The cumulative impact must also be considered. The approved scheme to the north will already introduce change, but this represents only a minor intrusion. The current proposal, combined with the northern dwellings, could result in up to seven new dwellings and significantly urbanise Hospital Road. The application

site currently provides an important break in built form and contributes visually to the rural transition. Its development would result in a suburban pattern of clustering rather than sporadic edge-of-settlement development.

- 10.11 The site is highly visible from Hospital Road, Benwick Road, rear upper windows of Askham Row, and several public footpaths. These routes currently enjoy open rural views. The proposed development would result in a noticeable shift from agricultural land to built form, harming public perception of the countryside and conflicting with paragraph 187 of the NPPF, which seeks to protect the intrinsic character and natural features of rural areas.
- 10.12 The indicative plans show four new access points off Hospital Road requiring removal of established hedgerow and trees. This further urbanises the lane, diminishes its rural character, and results in biodiversity loss, contrary to LP12 Part A(c) and (f).
- 10.13 As the site does not meet the criteria of LP12 Part A, it falls within the "Elsewhere" category of LP3, where residential development is not supported. The scheme does not relate to a use essential to rural economic function and therefore fails to comply with LP3.
- 10.14 Policy LP16 requires new development to retain natural features, reinforce local identity, and protect settlement pattern and landscape character. The proposal does not respect field boundaries, existing hedgerows, or the established rural pattern and therefore conflicts with LP16 (c), (d), and (f).
- 10.15 The development represents a piecemeal subdivision of agricultural land unrelated to existing settlement form and would further erode the rural identity of this edge-of-settlement location, contrary to LP16.
- 10.16 Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF requires new development to be sympathetic to local character, enhance sense of place, and be visually attractive through high-quality layout and landscaping. The proposal cannot fulfil these aims due to its backland-style, isolated countryside location.
- 10.17 For these reasons, the scheme fails to achieve the placemaking objectives of paragraph 135.
- 10.18 There is no identified housing need that would justify overriding the Development Plan. The Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and policies remain consistent with the NPPF; therefore, the tilted balance does not apply. The proposal is contrary to LP3, LP12(a), (c), (d), (f), LP16(c), (d), and paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF.
- 10.19 Detailed technical matters; such as detailed design, access layout, biodiversity, and archaeology could be addressed at Technical Details stage, but these do not outweigh the fundamental objection to the site's location in principle.

Use

- 10.18 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. This stance was supported at the time of the last application and did not form part of the reason for refusal, given there is no material change in circumstances, it would be unreasonable to come to a different conclusion under this application.

10.19 Considering the land use in relation to surrounding land uses, the use of the land for residential purposes, in principle, would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on surrounding users by reason or noise or disturbance or vice versa. Account has been taken of the motocross site which is situated to the north-west but this is likely of sufficient distance from the site so as not to significantly adversely impact future occupiers.

Amount

10.20 The proposal is for permission in principle for up to three dwellings. The site area is 0.44 hectares approximately. This would equate to an approximate density of 9 dwellings per hectare. This is not efficient use of land. However, policies LP12 (c) and (d) and LP16 (d) requires development respond to the local character as does paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

10.21 Densities vary within the local area from the care home facilities, through to the older established dwellings along Benwick Road to the low density of Askham Row. Taking aside that this location is unacceptable for residential development in principle (as set out above), if this land were to be developed it would not amount to efficient use of land.

10.22 One of the three overarching objectives that the planning system has is achieving sustainable development. Set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF is an environmental objective which includes making efficient use of land. This ties with the economic objective of ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth (it has already been set out in the report above that this is not the right land in the right location and is not needed to support growth). Efficient use of land and proper planning including good layouts ensure that the wider environmental objectives set out in paragraph 130 e.g. improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently (best agricultural land is a natural resource), minimising waste and adapting to climate change are maximised. Piecemeal development, inefficient use of land and developments not in accordance with the adopted development plan are individually and cumulatively counter to these aims. The NPPF defines sustainable development as development that accords with an up-to-date development plan. It follows that development not in accordance with adopted policies is most likely to be unsustainable development and this is considered the case here.

10.23 In this instance, whilst a lower-than-average density would be more in keeping with the countryside setting, a development of up to only 4 houses on a parcel of land of this size resulting in a density of approximately 9 dwellings per hectare is not making efficient use of land and therefore the amount of development proposed is unacceptable and contrary to paragraph 130 of the NPPF. While the application site has decreased in size slightly and the quantum of development has increased by one dwelling, it is not considered that these revisions are sufficient to overcome the previous reason for refusal.

Matters raised during consultation

10.24 It is noted that during the consultation concerns by local residents have been raised regarding drainage, this is matter that could be dealt with at the Technical Details stage should this application be approved.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for residential development on land that lies outside and detached from the continuous built form of Doddington. The site forms an important transitional gap between the built-up extent of the village and the sporadic, rural pattern of development further north along Hospital Road. Its development would result in suburban encroachment into the open countryside, eroding this rural transition and failing to respect the established settlement pattern. The scheme would introduce built form, multiple access points, and loss of hedgerow in a manner that would urbanise the rural lane and diminish the intrinsic character of the countryside.

11.2 The development is therefore not in a location that reflects the core shape or form of the settlement and fails to comply with Policies LP3, LP12 Part A(a), (c), (d) and (f), and LP16(c), (d) and (f), as well as paragraphs 133 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There are no material considerations, including nearby approvals, that outweigh this conflict with the Development Plan. As the Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the tilted balance is not engaged.

11.3 Furthermore, the amount of development proposed is also unacceptable. A scheme of up to three dwellings on a site of approximately 0.44ha represents an inefficient use of land at roughly 9 dwellings per hectare. Although low density may reflect the semi-rural surroundings, inefficient and piecemeal development in a location which is not allocated or required to support growth conflicts with the environmental and economic objectives of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, as well as paragraph 130 which seeks efficient use of land. When combined with its conflict with the Development Plan, the proposal therefore does not represent sustainable development.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

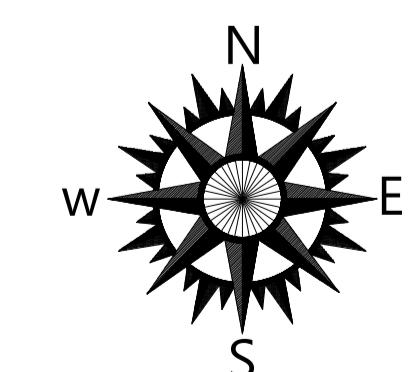
1	<p>The proposal would result in residential development on agricultural land that lies outside and detached from the continuous built form of Doddington. The site forms a transitional gap between the built-up area of the village and sporadic rural development further north along Hospital Road, contributing to the rural setting and character of this edge-of-settlement location. The development would introduce suburban built form, multiple new access points, and the loss of established hedgerow, resulting in an urbanising encroachment into the open countryside that would erode this rural transition and undermine the sporadic pattern of development that characterises the locality.</p> <p>As such, the proposal is not in a location that reflects the core shape or form of the settlement, does not contribute positively to local distinctiveness, and</p>
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	<p>fails to respect natural boundaries or the rural character of the area. The development therefore conflicts with Policies LP3, LP12 Part A(a), (c), (d) and (f), and LP16(c), (d) and (f) of the Fenland Local Plan and paragraphs 133 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
2	<p>If the principle of residential development on this site were acceptable in terms of location and use of land, development of up to 3 dwellings would not make efficient use of the land and as such would not constitute sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 130 of the NPPF.</p>



10/30/2025, 10:31:06 AM

1:2,500
0 115 230 460 ft
0 35 70 140 m



PROPOSED SITE PLAN
(1:200)



REFER TO STAFFORD
INFRASTRUCTURE
ENGINEERING DETAILS
REGARDING HIGHWAY
IMPROVEMENT WORKS
AS APPROVED AS
PART OF APPLICATION
F/YR23/0070/0

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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 reasonable to be inferred from the drawings and specification. All work to be in accordance with good practice and BS 5400 to the extent that the recommendations do not conflict with 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

ESS

C	DRAWING UPDATED	OCT 2025
B	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEP 2025
REVISIONS		
DATE		



Mr & Mrs Munden

PROJECT
Land East of
Askham House
Benwick Road
Doddington

TITLE
Proposed Site Plan
(INDICATIVE LAYOUT)

DRAIN	R.Papworth	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Aug 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H8685/102c



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F/YR25/0594/O

**Applicant: Mr S Ebrahim
Ebrahim Family Trust**

**Agent : Elaine Chiva
Aspect Architectural Design**

Land North Of 450 To 454, March Road, Turves, Cambridgeshire

Erect 3 x dwellings involving the formation of accesses (outline application with all matters reserved)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Deferral from 25th October 2025 Committee

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for the construction of three dwellings on land north of March Road, Turves. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, beyond the established built form of the village, and forms part of open countryside.
- 1.2 An extant permission exists on the adjoining site for three dwellings, which carries weight in establishing the principle of development; however, the impacts of the current proposal must be considered independently.
- 1.3 The site is located in an “Elsewhere” location with very limited access to local services and facilities. Sustainable transport options are poor, which would result in future residents being heavily reliant on travel to nearby villages and towns.
- 1.4 The Sequential Test for flood risk has not been properly undertaken in accordance with the updated guidance (June 2025), and the Exception Test is only partially satisfied. As such, the proposal is contrary to national and local policy on flood risk.
- 1.5 Ecological information submitted is insufficient to determine the likely impacts on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. While a Biodiversity Net Gain condition could secure habitat enhancement, the absence of species-specific survey data prevents a proper assessment of ecological impacts.
- 1.6 The development would extend the built form into open countryside, causing harm to the character and appearance of the area and creating a precedent for unsustainable piecemeal development.
- 1.7 At the committee meeting of 25 October 2025, Members deferred the application for three months to allow submission of the required ecological surveys. As these surveys can only be undertaken between March and October, it has not been possible for the applicant to provide the necessary information within the deferral period. No additional ecological or other supporting information has been submitted.

1.8 Accordingly, the concerns previously identified remain unresolved. The limited benefits associated with providing three dwellings are outweighed by the environmental harm, flood-risk conflict, absence of essential ecological information, and the scheme's conflict with both local and national planning policy. As such, the application is recommended for refusal.

2 Update

- 2.1 At the Committee meeting on 25 October 2025, Members resolved to defer the application for a period of three months to enable the applicant to provide the required species-specific ecological surveys. These surveys were necessary to address identified moderate to high potential for great crested newts, reptiles and badgers, as confirmed within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment.
- 2.2 However, the appropriate survey season for these species falls between March and October, and it has not been possible for the applicant to undertake the required surveys within the deferral period. Consequently, no additional ecological information or survey data has been submitted.
- 2.3 In the continued absence of this essential evidence, the application remains fundamentally unsupported in respect of ecological impacts. It is therefore recommended for refusal for the same reasons set out in the previous committee report, which is appended to this update.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 As no further information or amended documents have been submitted, no additional consultation has been undertaken. The application is therefore assessed on the basis of the material provided at the time of the previous committee report.

4 Assessment

- 4.1 Given that no further ecological, flood risk, design, or supporting information has been provided since the deferral, there are no new material considerations that alter the conclusions of the previous assessment. The concerns regarding flood risk, unsustainable location, landscape impact, and insufficient ecological information therefore remain unresolved.
- 4.2 The earlier assessment is accordingly reaffirmed and should continue to carry full weight.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 No updated or additional information has been provided within the timeframe set by Members to address the outstanding issues relating to ecology. Therefore, the previous conclusions as set out in the earlier committee report remain valid and carry full weight,
- 5.2 While the extant permission on the adjoining site provides some support for the principle of development, this does not outweigh the significant and unresolved harms associated with the current proposal.

5.3 The site lies beyond the built form of Turves and would encroach into open countryside, resulting in harm to rural character and creating a precedent for further unsustainable, piecemeal expansion. The Sequential Test for flood risk has not been robustly undertaken in accordance with updated national guidance (June 2025), and the proposal does not demonstrate the wider sustainability benefits required to satisfy the Exception Test. Furthermore, the continued absence of species-specific ecological surveys means that potential impacts on protected species, particularly great crested newts, reptiles and badgers, cannot be properly assessed.

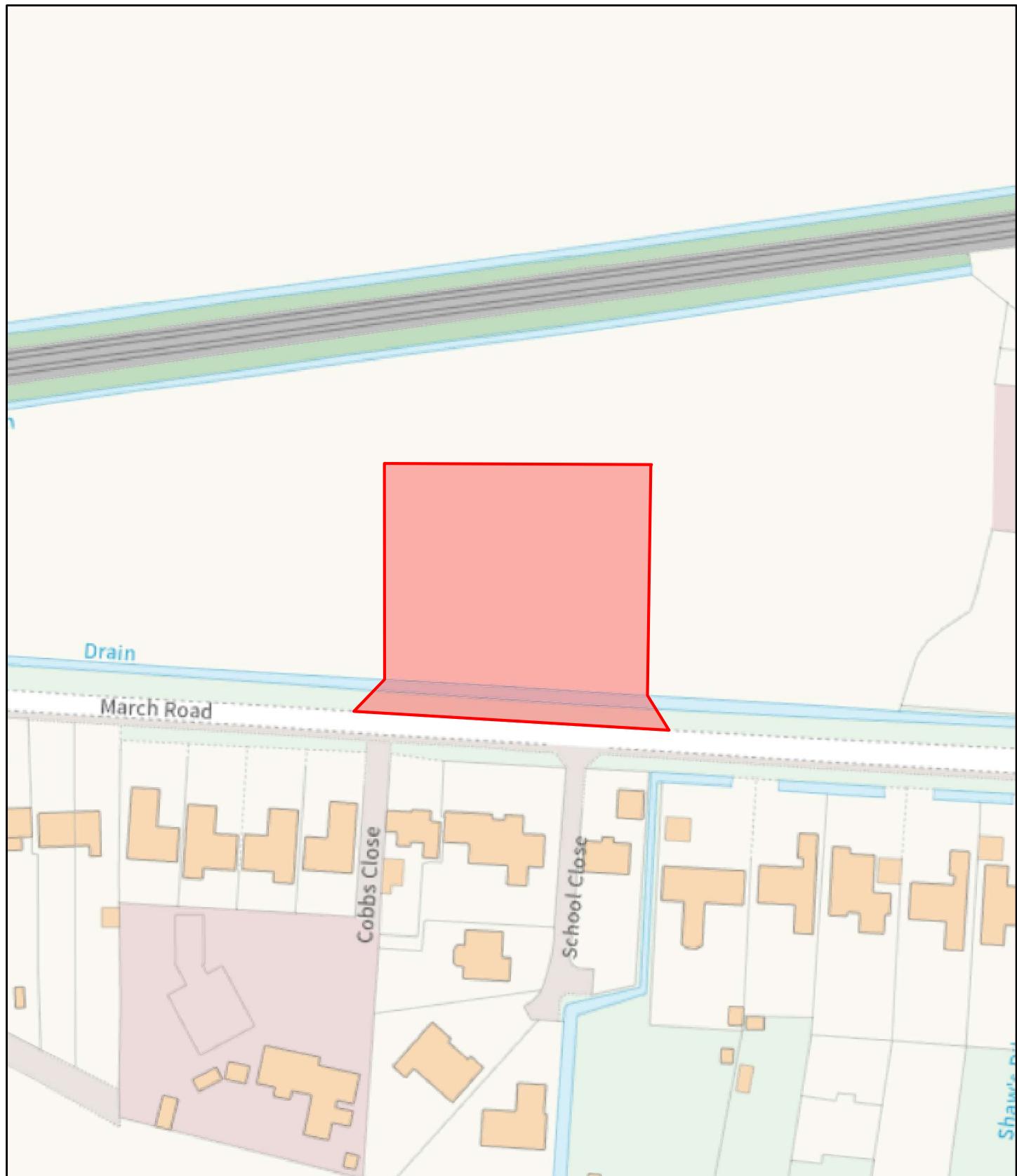
5.4 For these reasons, the environmental and policy conflicts significantly outweigh the limited benefits associated with three new dwellings. The proposal remains contrary to local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for refusal.

6 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse, for the following reasons:

1	The proposed development, by virtue of its siting on the northern side of March Road beyond the established built form of Turves, would result in the unwarranted encroachment of residential development into open countryside. The scheme would fail to respect the core shape and form of the settlement, would erode the openness and rural character of the area, and would create an undesirable precedent for further piecemeal expansion. Whilst the extant permission to the east is acknowledged, the cumulative effect of additional dwellings in this location would intensify the domestication of the landscape to the detriment of its character and appearance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan and Policy 7 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.
2	The application site lies within Flood Zone 3, an area of high probability of flooding. In the absence of a robust Sequential Test, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites at lower risk of flooding within the appropriate area of search, as required by national and local policy. Furthermore, the proposal does not deliver wider community sustainability benefits sufficient to satisfy part (a) of the Exception Test. The development therefore fails to comply with Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), the National Planning Policy Framework, and associated Planning Practice Guidance, which seek to steer new development to areas of lowest flood risk and ensure that where development is necessary in higher-risk areas, the tests of suitability are fully met.
3	Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate the likely impacts of the proposed development on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. The application is not supported by the necessary species-specific surveys to assess the presence, abundance, or potential mitigation requirements for these species. As a result, the Local Planning Authority is unable to determine whether the proposal would comply with its statutory duties or safeguard biodiversity. The development is therefore contrary to Policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as

amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

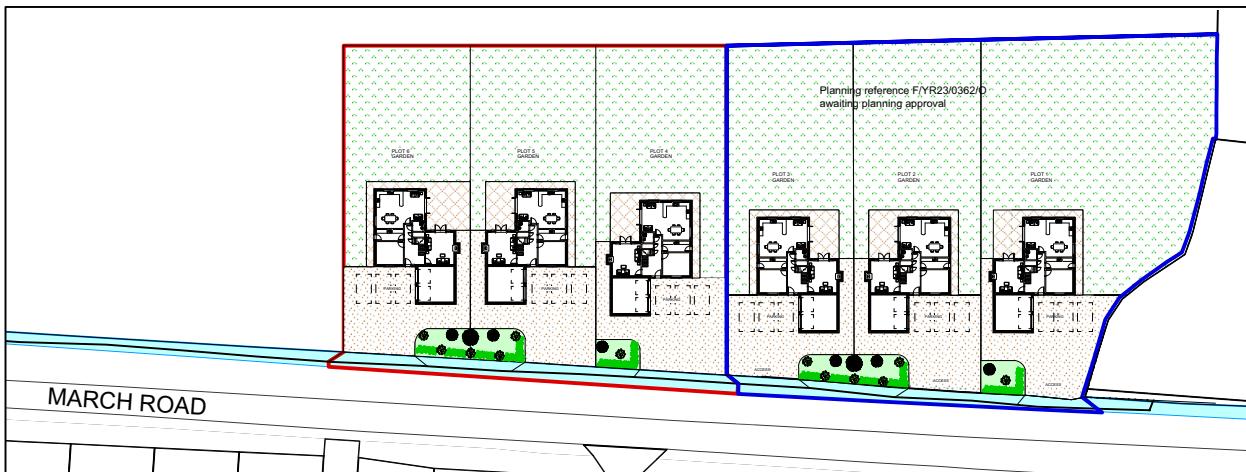


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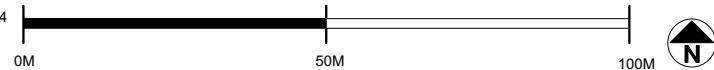
1:1,250
0 15 30 55 110 60 m
220 ft

 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council



Scale Bar - 1:1250 @ A4



Planning reference F/YR23/0362/D
awaiting planning approval

Project	LAND WEST OF 491		Aspect
MARCH ROAD, TURVES		Architectural	Design
Title			
INDICATIVE PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN			
Scale	Date	Job No.	
1:1250	JULY 25	286	
Category	Section Element	Sequential No.	Revision
D	(-)	03	

29A Church Street
Northborough
Leicester LE1 9LN
Telephone 0116303047

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F/YR25/0594/O

**Applicant: Mr S Ebrahim
Ebrahim Family Trust**

**Agent: Elaine Chiva
Aspect Architectural Design**

Land North Of 450 To 454, March Road, Turves, Cambridgeshire

Erect 3 x dwellings involving the formation of accesses (outline application with all matters reserved)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: - Referred by Head of Planning on advice of committee Chairman

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for the construction of three dwellings on land north of March Road, Turves. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, beyond the established built form of the village, and forms part of open countryside.
- 1.2 An extant permission exists on the adjoining site for three dwellings, which carries weight in establishing the principle of development; however, the impacts of the current proposal must be considered independently.
- 1.3 The site is located in an “Elsewhere” location with very limited access to local services and facilities. Sustainable transport options are poor, which would result in future residents being heavily reliant on travel to nearby villages and towns.
- 1.4 The Sequential Test for flood risk has not been properly undertaken in accordance with the updated guidance (June 2025), and the Exception Test is only partially satisfied. As such, the proposal is contrary to national and local policy on flood risk.
- 1.5 Ecological information submitted is insufficient to determine the likely impacts on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. While a Biodiversity Net Gain condition could secure habitat enhancement, the absence of species-specific survey data prevents a proper assessment of ecological impacts.
- 1.6 The development would extend the built form into open countryside, causing harm to the character and appearance of the area and creating a precedent for unsustainable piecemeal development.
- 1.7 On balance, the modest benefits of three dwellings are outweighed by environmental harm, flood risk, insufficient ecological information, and conflict with local and national planning policy. The application is therefore recommended for

refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site extends to approximately 3,870sqm and comprises a parcel of land situated to the north of March Road, close to its junction with Whittlesey Road. Existing residential development lies to the south, fronting March Road, and to the east along Whittlesey Road. To the north and west, the land remains open in character, with the Peterborough–March railway line also located immediately to the north. The entire site lies within Flood Zone 3.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 Outline planning permission is sought, with all matters reserved, for the construction of three dwellings. Indicative plans have been submitted showing access taken from March Road together with an illustrative layout of the site. Whilst the precise details would be addressed at the reserved matters stage, the information provided is considered to give a reasonable indication of how the site could be developed

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 relevant site history pertaining to the site as outlined in red. The below relates to sites within the vicinity:

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR23/0362/O	Erect up to 3 x dwellings with associated accesses and infrastructure (outline application with all matters reserved)	Granted

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Whittlesey Town Council

Object to the proposal and recommend refusal as contrary to LP3, LP12, LP16 (d). Observations as grounds of objection relate to Highways reservations, no comment from the LLFA and loss of natural habitat.

External Consultees

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways

Comment: Safe access is uncertain due to the site's proximity to a sharp bend. The applicant must demonstrate adequate visibility splays and forward visibility in line with the 40mph limit (or adjusted to observed speeds).

5.3 Environment Agency

No objections: The main source of flooding is from watercourses under the IDB's jurisdiction. Under NPPF (para. 162), development should only occur if no suitable lower-risk sites are available; the Local Planning Authority decides if the Sequential Test applies.

5.4 Natural England

No objection.

5.6 The Wildlife Trust

No comments received at the time of writing this report.

Internal Consultees

5.7 FDC Environmental Health

No objection. Recommends inclusion of a condition limiting working hours should the application be approved.

5.8 FDC Ecology

Objects due to insufficient information, as no dedicated surveys have been submitted for great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. These legally protected species are a material consideration in determining the planning application.

5.9 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Seven letters of objection have been received from residents on March Road and School Road, Turves. These are summarised below:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Flood Risk – lack of sequential and exceptions test	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Impact on wildlife	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Impact on open character of the area	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Transport/infrastructure deficiencies	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant sections of the below report.
Ribbon development – undermining established settlement pattern	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Lack of meaningful engagement	Comments noted – from the LPA perspective, the statutory consultations and publication of the application have been undertaken in line with requirements.
Requests a number of conditions imposed if application is approved	Comments noted.
Concerns piecemeal development comes forward to avoid contribution amounts including transport, open space etc...	Comments noted. This could be dealt with should this application be approved and further schemes come forward by the same Applicant. In accordance with Local Plan Policy

	LP13.
Highway Safety	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Contrary to Local Plan Policy LP12 – Turves exceeding threshold in commitments and no clear local community support/engagement	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report
Poor Connectivity	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Cumulative impacts – potential for 12+ dwellings along this stretch – highway impact during construction, character and appearance, amenity	Comments noted. This could be dealt with should this application be approved and further schemes come forward.
Lack of design/layout detail	Comments noted. However, the application is outline in nature with all matters reserved, should the application be approved, this is a matter for consideration under a subsequent reserved matters application.
Sets a precedent.	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Impact on outlook/Loss of View	Comments noted however, loss of a view this is not a material planning consideration in the determination of the application.
Light Pollution	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Property devaluation	Comments noted. However, this is not a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

One letter commenting on the application has been received by a resident of Whittlesey Road, March. These are summarised below:

Comments	Officer Response
Need for supporting infrastructure	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
A number of applications submitted for additional houses show an appetite for the village to grow – it isn't ready	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Several approved homes remain unbuilt	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Strain on local services	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Transport and connectivity	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below report.
Growth not yet sustainable	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant sections of the below report.
Turves lacks amenities and social space to support community growth	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant sections of the below report.
Development should only proceed if supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and community	Comments noted and discussed in the relevant section of the below 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) and Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Resources

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

LP17 – Community Safety

LP19 – The Natural Environment

Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040

Policy 1 –	Spatial Planning
Policy 2 –	Local Housing Need
Policy 7 –	Design Quality

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
- LP5: Health and Wellbeing
- LP6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure
- LP7: Design
- LP8: Amenity Provision
- LP11: Community Safety
- LP12: Meeting Housing Needs
- LP18: Development in the Countryside
- LP20: Accessibility and Transport
- LP22: Parking Provision
- LP24: Natural Environment
- LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain
- LP27: Trees and Planting
- LP28: Landscape
- LP29: Green Infrastructure
- LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Amenity Space**
- **Highways**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Ecology**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain**
- **Planning Balance**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1 The application site lies immediately to the west of the land subject to planning permission F/YR23/0362/O. The determination of that scheme represents a material consideration in the assessment of the current proposal. Application

F/YR23/0362/O was considered by Planning Committee on 20 September 2023 following an officer recommendation of refusal on the grounds that the site was in an “Elsewhere” location, would harm the character and appearance of the area, raised highway safety concerns, and failed to demonstrate compliance with flood risk policy.

- 9.2 Notwithstanding these concerns, members resolved to approve the application against officer recommendation. In reaching this decision, members concluded that the development would not adversely affect local character or appearance and could reasonably be regarded as part of the settlement of Turves. Whilst officers highlighted the lack of infill status and the absence of a sequential test for flood risk, members placed weight on the limited infill opportunities within the village and the identified need for additional development.
- 9.3 Concerns relating to biodiversity were considered capable of being addressed by condition, including the submission of a biodiversity report and enhancement measures. Similarly, highway matters, including visibility splays, were judged to be resolvable through the imposition of appropriate conditions.
- 9.4 Overall, members concluded that the policy conflicts identified were outweighed by local context and site-specific circumstances, and delegated authority was given to officers to issue permission subject to conditions.
- 9.5 Since the determination of application F/YR23/0362/O, local guidance regarding the application of the sequential test and the definition of appropriate search areas has been updated (June 2025). The relevance and impact of this will be addressed later in this report.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy. This policy identifies Turves as a Small Village, where development will be considered on its merits but will normally be of a very limited nature and normally be limited in scale to residential infilling or a small business opportunity. This stance is supported within Policy 1 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan
- 10.2. Policy LP5 sets out the housing targets for the District and the Council has undertaken a full assessment of the Five Year Housing Land Suppl. In June 2025, Fenland District Council published a new Five Year Housing Land Supply report (for the five-year period between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2030) which concludes that the Council can demonstrate a 6.6 years supply of housing land. As the Council can demonstrate a robust supply of housing land which is well in excess of five years supply, substantial weight is given to the Fenland Settlement Hierarchy as specified within the Local Plan.
- 10.3. In terms of Policy LP3, the site cannot reasonably be regarded as infill development. It extends into open, undeveloped land beyond the existing built form of the settlement to the north, and there is no established frontage development on the northern side of March Road that the proposal could be seen to fill. While it is acknowledged that residential units exist at the junction of March Road and Whittlesey Road, along with the extant approval referenced above, the application

site nonetheless represents encroachment into undeveloped land and is therefore considered contrary to the provisions of Local Plan Policy LP3 and the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1.

- 10.4. The site lies approximately 500 metres (as the crow flies) from the centre of Turves. It is located around 3km from Coates, a Limited Growth Village, and approximately 5km and 7km respectively from March and Whittlesey, both categorised as Market Towns. Turves itself contains no facilities within its developed envelope, and as such, future occupants would be reliant on travelling to nearby villages and towns to access everyday services.
- 10.5. The nearest railway station is at Whittlesey, which is around a 10-minute drive, a 30-minute cycle, or a two-hour walk from the application site. The station provides services on the Ipswich–Cambridge–Peterborough line, typically operating every two hours until 21:31, and the Cambridge–Ely–Peterborough–Norwich line, which runs every 30 minutes to one hour during peak periods and bi-hourly outside peak hours until 21:31.
- 10.6. With regard to bus services, the nearest stops are located within the Market Towns, requiring a similar journey time as set out above. The village of Coates also benefits from a number of bus stops, served by the No. 33 route operating between Peterborough and March. This service runs every two hours, Monday to Saturday, from approximately 5am until 7pm. Taken together, these transport options mean that the site does not offer sustainable access, particularly in inclement weather. On this basis, the location is regarded as an Elsewhere site, and the proposal is contrary to the above-mentioned policies.
- 10.7. It is noted that Turves has already exceeded its threshold for development. However, an appeal decision received in respect of an application that was refused purely on this basis (F/YR14/0838/O) indicates that the threshold considerations and requirement for community support should not result in an otherwise acceptable scheme being refused and against this backdrop the absence of community support does not render the scheme unacceptable in planning terms.
- 10.8. However, as set out in Section 9 of this report, outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) has recently been granted on the adjoining site to the east for three dwellings. This permission remains extant and is afforded significant weight in establishing the principle of development at this location. Accordingly, and despite the policy concerns outlined above, it is considered that the principle of residential development on the current site is acceptable.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

- 10.9. Policy 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. 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.

10.10. Policy LP12 of the Local Plan supports development that 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. The site must be in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village, it must not result in coalescence with any neighbouring village and must not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland. Similarly, the proposal must be in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement, without resulting in the extension of linear features or create ribbon development, and must retain natural boundaries, respect ecological features, important spaces, etc. Finally, the proposal must be served by sustainable infrastructure and must not put people or property in danger from identified risks.

10.11. The above stance is supported by the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan Policy 7. Further guidance is provided within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Developments SPD.

10.12. The application site comprises vacant land to the north of March Road, surrounded by open land to the north and west. The core shape and form of the settlement is defined by a row of dwellings on the south side of March Road and development on both sides of Whittlesey Road extending northwards from its junction with March Road. At present, there is no built out development on the north side of March Road east of the railway crossing, with the exception of No. 491, located at the junction with Whittlesey Road. That property is visually separated from the remainder of the northern side of March Road by a substantial line of screening vegetation.

10.13. The proposed development would conflict with the established core shape and built form along both March Road and Whittlesey Road. Expansion of the built form along the northern side of March Road would diminish the openness of the area, which is a defining characteristic of the local countryside. Aside from development on Whittlesey Road, there has been no encroachment into open land, and there are no gaps along the northern side of March Road that the proposal could reasonably be said to infill. Allowing development in this location would erode the character and appearance of the area and risk creating a precedent for further piecemeal encroachment into the countryside, in conflict with Policy LP12.

10.14. Given the outline nature of the application, assessment of design is necessarily limited. Consideration is confined to whether the quantum of development is appropriate for the site and whether the site is capable of accommodating such development in an acceptable manner.

10.15. The locality is generally characterised by modest detached dwellings which together form a coherent and consistent streetscape. However, development to the north side of March Road is limited, and introducing dwellings here would domesticate land that currently contributes to the rural setting.

10.16. The proposed scheme would see up to three detached dwellings sited on undeveloped land that currently provides a clear and natural edge to the settlement, marking the transition between the built form of Turves and the open countryside. Long views across the fen landscape are an intrinsic part of the area's character and should be preserved. Although the railway line runs to the

north of the site, it does not provide a strong visual boundary; there are no fences or significant features that would obstruct open views across the agricultural landscape.

- 10.17. The indicative siting of the proposed dwellings aligns with the outline permission granted on the adjacent site to the east. This appears intended to ensure a degree of continuity with that proposal, creating a line of development on the north side of March Road akin to the established pattern on the south side.
- 10.18. Nevertheless, aside from the adjoining approval, there is no other development on the northern side of March Road. Introducing new dwellings here would impose a new and intrusive built form within otherwise open countryside. Whilst the three dwellings permitted to the east may be viewed as a continuation of the built form along Whittlesey Road, they arguably mark a logical end point for development before the landscape transitions into open fenland. Extending development beyond this point would represent an unwarranted encroachment.
- 10.19. It is acknowledged that the extant approval to the east carries significant weight in establishing the principle of development on this side of March Road. However, the impact on character and appearance must be considered independently of principle. Whilst one small-scale scheme may be absorbed without fundamentally altering the settlement's form, the cumulative effect of successive permissions risks eroding the open and rural character of the area. This proposal, when taken together with the adjoining scheme, would extend development further into open countryside and intensify its domestication, thereby compounding the harm to settlement character.
- 10.20. Accordingly, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the rural area by conflicting with the established settlement pattern and by setting a precedent for further expansion into the countryside. This would erode the rural character to the north of March Road and west of Whittlesey Road, contrary to the requirements of Policy LP12 and Policy LP16(d) of the Local Plan and Policy 7 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 10.21. 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.
- 10.22. The application site is bordered by a number of neighbouring properties to the southern side of March Road and by a potential additional neighbouring property to the east under the approved permission F/YR23/0362/O.
- 10.23. As this application is in outline form with all matters reserved, layout details are indicative only and amenity impacts will need to be fully considered at the reserved matters stage. Based on the indicative layout, it is unlikely that a dwelling in this location would give rise to significant harm to neighbouring occupiers by way of overlooking, loss of light, loss of privacy, or overbearing impact. Nevertheless, careful attention will need to be given to window positioning at the detailed design stage to protect the private amenity spaces of both the proposed dwellings and those approved under F/YR23/0362/O.

10.24. The proximity of the site to the existing railway line raises potential issues of noise and vibration. However, it is noted that dwellings have previously been approved closer to the railway (e.g. F/YR18/1133/F), where mitigation measures such as acoustic boundary treatments and sound insulation were secured by condition. As this application is for outline consent only, it is considered that any noise impacts could be appropriately mitigated at the reserved matters stage, if permission were to be granted.

10.25. It is noted that neighbouring representations have raised concerns regarding light pollution and its potential impact on residential amenity. Any issues relating to on-site lighting could be addressed through the use of a planning condition, should the application be approved. With regard to vehicular movements and associated lighting, as the proposal relates to only three dwellings, it is not considered that this would result in a material intensification, beyond that of the existing road between the sites, sufficient to justify refusal of the application.

Amenity Space

10.26. It is pertinent to note that any plans submitted as part of this application are for indicative purposes only and any detailed assessment would take place under the subsequent reserved matters application. However, as previously stated, based on the site constraints these are considered to be reflective of the proposed scale and layout of the site.

10.27. Policy LP16 (h) states that development should provide sufficient private amenity space, suitable for the type and amount of development proposed and for dwellings other than flats, a minimum of a third of the plot curtilage should be set aside as private amenity space.

10.28. On the basis of the indicative layout, it is considered that sufficient private amenity space could be achieved in line with policy requirements. However, in view of the site's proximity to the railway, it will be important that noise mitigation measures are incorporated to ensure this space is of high quality and usable. These matters can be addressed in detail at the reserved matters stage

Highways

10.29. 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 for up to three bedroom properties, parking provision for two vehicles is required.

10.30. The indicative layout demonstrates that sufficient space exists to provide at least three off-street parking spaces per dwelling, which would either meet or exceed the requirements of Policy LP15 depending on the number of bedrooms provided.

10.31. The Local Highway Authority has advised that insufficient information has been submitted, with safe access remaining uncertain due to the site's proximity to a sharp bend. The applicant must demonstrate adequate visibility splays and forward visibility in line with the 40mph limit (or adjusted to observed speeds). These comments are noted; however, as all matters are reserved, it is not considered

reasonable to require this detail at this stage. Furthermore, if the application were not being refused for other reasons, the Agent/Applicant would be given the opportunity to provide the necessary evidence to satisfy this requirement, or adequate suitably worded conditions included to ensure the required visibility splays are achieved. This is a similar stance to that previously taken by the Council, under the determination of the scheme at the adjacent site (F/YR23/0362/O).

Flood Risk

10.32. 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.

10.33. The application site is situated within Flood Zone 3. A Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by Geoff Beel Consultancy dated July 2025 has been provided in support of this application. This document outlines that the sequential and exception test are met as the development is protected against both the 1 in 100 fluvial floods event and also the 1 in 200-year tidal flood event and therefore meets the requirements of the NPPF.

10.34. However, these conclusions are considered fundamentally flawed. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that a Sequential Test is required for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding from any source, including land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The core purpose of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas of lowest risk (Flood Zone 1), consistent with the risk-based approach set out in paragraph 173 and 175 of the NPP.

10.35. As the site lies within an area of identified flood risk, the Sequential Test is engaged. The fact that flood mitigation measures may be possible does not remove the need for the Sequential Test; such measures fall to be considered under the Exception Test. In the absence of a robust Sequential Test, the proposal fails to meet a fundamental requirement for residential development in high-risk flood areas and is contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, the NPPF, and associated PPG.

10.36. 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.

10.37. 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. Notwithstanding this, given that the proposed development is of a scale exceeding that envisaged for the settlement under the adopted hierarchy, it remains appropriate for the area of search to be considered on a district-wide basis. This approach reflects both the strength of the district's overall housing supply and the need to maintain a balanced approach to delivering the adopted spatial strategy. The scheme will therefore be assessed on this basis.

10.38. 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

10.39. It is acknowledged that outline planning permission has previously been granted on the adjoining site for three dwellings, where members gave weight to the fact that the whole of Turves lies within Flood Zone 3 and therefore considered the Sequential Test passed. However, that decision pre-dated the publication of the updated guidance (June 2025), which represents a material consideration of significant weight.

10.40. Under the updated guidance, the appropriate area of search for development in a Small Village is districtwide. As there are clearly other available sites within Fenland at lower risk of flooding, the Sequential Test cannot be considered satisfied. The proposal is therefore contrary to the NPPF, PPG, and Policy LP14.

10.41. 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.

10.42. 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')

10.43. With respect to limb (a), the provision of three market dwellings carries negligible wider sustainability benefit, particularly given the Council can demonstrate a 6.6-year housing land supply. The proposal does not therefore deliver the necessary wider community sustainability benefits, and this element of the Exception Test is not satisfied.

10.44. With respect to limb (b), the FRA proposes finished floor levels 300mm above carriageway level, flood resilience measures up to 0.5m above floor level, and surface water disposal via soakaways. These measures could ensure the

dwellings are safe for their lifetime and would not increase flood risk elsewhere. Accordingly, limb (b) of the Exception Test is considered satisfied.

10.45. Nevertheless, as both elements of the Exception Test must be met, and the Sequential Test has not been passed, the application fails to comply with Policy LP14, the NPPF, and the PPG.

10.46. In conclusion, insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with the Sequential Test, and the proposal fails part (a) of the Exception Test. Whilst the technical flood mitigation measures proposed may be acceptable, the lack of wider sustainability benefits and failure to steer development to areas of lower risk renders the application contrary to local and national flood risk policy.

10.47. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Environment Agency has raised no objection and has confirmed that the site is not at risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources, this does not override the need for a compliant and site-specific flood risk assessment including appropriate sequential test, particularly where a new vulnerable use is being introduced. The LPA must assess the acceptability of the proposal in line with the broader requirements of the NPPF and the Local Plan, beyond EA standing advice alone.

10.48. Based on the information submitted, insufficient information has been submitted to adequately satisfy the sequential test. Furthermore, the Applicant has failed to demonstrate any further public benefit of the proposal and has not satisfied part 1 of the exceptions test. The information submitted in respect of flood risk is not considered fit for purpose. Whilst it is noted that the Lead Local Flood Authority has raised no objection to the proposal, the LPA has a duty to undertake their own assessment in applying the sequential and exception test and it is deemed that the proposed benefits of the scheme do not overcome the identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy LP14 of the Local Plan and the guidance contained within the NPPF

Ecology

10.49. 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.

10.50. A preliminary ecological appraisal undertaken by Archer Ecology dated May 2025 accompanies this application. This report identifies that the following further surveys are required:

- eDNA testing of nearby waterbodies (Pond 1, 2 and Drain 1) - Amphibians (Great Crested Newts):
- Reptile surveys conducted seven times between March and October.
- Badger – pre-word inspection

10.51. Taking into account the above, the site and its immediate surroundings therefore have potential to support great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. All of these species are afforded a high level of legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Their potential presence is therefore a material consideration in the determination of this application.

10.52. While a preliminary assessment has been undertaken, no dedicated species-specific surveys have been provided. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to robustly assess the likely impacts of the development on protected species or to determine whether appropriate mitigation or compensation could be secured. The Council's Ecologist also raised objections to the scheme in this respect. The Agent subsequently sent an email on 5th September 2025 to rebut these comments setting out that the council has already approved adjacent development, and as this is an outline application, further ecological surveys can be secured by condition at reserved matters stage. While the site could theoretically support newts, reptiles, or badgers, no evidence of badger setts was found, and mitigation would be provided if protected species are identified.

10.53. Whilst the above comments are noted and recognised. The applicant's suggestion that ecological surveys can be deferred to reserved matters stage is not acceptable. As set out in paragraphs 10.47 and 10.48, the site and its surroundings have potential to support great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers, all of which are afforded strict legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Their potential presence is therefore a material consideration in determining this application.

10.54. In the absence of species specific reporting and information, the Local Planning Authority cannot robustly assess the impacts of the proposal on protected species or establish whether suitable mitigation or compensation could be secured.

10.55. Accordingly, the LPA cannot lawfully grant planning permission until sufficient ecological information is provided to demonstrate that impacts on protected species can be properly assessed and mitigated.

10.56. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), as well as the above legislation, which collectively require development to safeguard biodiversity and legally protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.57. 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.

10.58. The accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment, contained within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, uses the statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool to estimate the pre-development value of the site. The assessment indicates that the site currently supports 11.33 biodiversity units (11.14 habitat units and 0.19 watercourse units). To achieve the required 10% gain, an additional 1.11 habitat units and 0.02 watercourse units would need to be created. This would result in a post-development value of at least 12.46 biodiversity units (12.25 habitat units and 0.21 watercourse units).

10.59. Limited information has been provided within this outline application regarding how the required 10% uplift would be delivered. However, should planning permission be granted, the standard pre-commencement condition relating to BNG would be imposed to ensure that the required gains are secured prior to the commencement of development. On this basis, no objections are raised in relation to BNG, subject to the imposition and discharge of the necessary condition, should the application be approved.

Planning Balance

10.60. In terms of sustainability the 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. This stance is supported by LP1 of the Fenland Local Development Plan.

10.61. In respect of the economic strand, the proposal seeks to provide three market dwellings. While any residential development generates some limited economic benefits through construction activity and the modest contribution of new households to local expenditure, the scale of the development is very small. Furthermore, given that the Council can demonstrate a robust Five-Year Housing Land Supply of 6.6 years, these limited economic benefits carry very little weight in the overall planning balance. The proposal does not contribute significantly to the delivery of infrastructure or economic growth in the district.

10.62. In terms of the social strand, the development would make a negligible contribution to housing supply, given it pertains to three market dwellings. The site is located in a Small Village with very limited local services and facilities, meaning future occupants would be heavily reliant on travel to nearby villages or Market Towns for everyday needs. Sustainable transport options are limited, and accessibility is constrained, particularly during inclement weather. While technical matters such as parking, amenity, and noise from the nearby railway could be addressed at reserved matters stage, the site's location in an "Elsewhere" area limits the social benefits of the scheme. Consequently, the social benefits are negligible.

10.63. Lastly, in terms of the environmental strand, the proposal has significant environmental constraints. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, and the Sequential Test has not been properly undertaken in accordance with updated June 2025 guidance, with the Exception Test only partially satisfied. As such, the development is contrary to Policy LP14 and national flood risk guidance. The site is also beyond the established built form of Turves, encroaching into open countryside. This would harm the rural character and appearance of the area and set a precedent for further unsustainable piecemeal development, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16(d).

10.64. Furthermore, from an ecological perspective, insufficient species-specific survey information has been submitted to assess potential impacts on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers, contrary to Policies LP16 and LP19 and relevant wildlife legislation. While a Biodiversity Net Gain condition could secure habitat enhancement, the absence of survey data prevents a proper assessment of likely impacts.

10.65. Taking into account the above, the proposal does not achieve the three dimensions of sustainable development. The negligible economic and social benefits of providing three market dwellings are clearly outweighed by the environmental harm, including the failure to meet national flood risk requirements, the encroachment into open countryside, and the lack of ecological information to safeguard protected species. Therefore, the development is not considered sustainable and is recommended for refusal.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Taking into account the above assessment, giving appropriate weight to the Council's previous decision it is considered that the principle of development is accepted. However, the site lies beyond the established built form of Turves and encroaches into open countryside, harming the rural character and creating a precedent for further piecemeal development, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16(d) of the Local Plan and Policy 7 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, the Sequential Test for flood risk has not been properly undertaken, and the proposal does not demonstrate wider sustainability benefits required under the Exception Test, contrary to Policy LP14 and the NPPF. Furthermore, insufficient ecological survey information has been submitted to assess potential impacts on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers, contrary to Policies LP16 and LP19 and relevant wildlife legislation. For these reasons, the application is recommended for refusal.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse, for the following reasons:

1	The proposed development, by virtue of its siting on the northern side of March Road beyond the established built form of Turves, would result in the unwarranted encroachment of residential development into open countryside. The scheme would fail to respect the core shape and form of the settlement, would erode the openness and rural character of the area, and would create an undesirable precedent for further piecemeal expansion. Whilst the extant permission to the east is acknowledged, the cumulative effect of additional dwellings in this location would intensify the domestication of the landscape to the detriment of its character and appearance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan and Policy 7 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.
2	The application site lies within Flood Zone 3, an area of high probability of flooding. In the absence of a robust Sequential Test, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites at lower risk of flooding within the appropriate area of search, as required by national and local policy. Furthermore, the proposal does not deliver wider community sustainability benefits sufficient to satisfy part (a) of the Exception Test. The development therefore fails to comply with Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), the National Planning Policy Framework, and associated Planning Practice Guidance, which seek to steer new development to areas of lowest flood risk and ensure that where development is necessary in higher-risk areas, the tests of suitability are

	fully met.
3	Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate the likely impacts of the proposed development on protected species, including great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. The application is not supported by the necessary species-specific surveys to assess the presence, abundance, or potential mitigation requirements for these species. As a result, the Local Planning Authority is unable to determine whether the proposal would comply with its statutory duties or safeguard biodiversity. The development is therefore contrary to Policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

F/YR25/0807/PIP

Applicant: Mr N Bowers

Agent : Mr Matthew Hall
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land South Of 6, Bridge Lane, Wimblington, Cambridgeshire

Permission in principle to erect up to 7 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The application seeks permission in principle for the erection of up to 7no. dwellings on Land South of 6 Bridge Lane, Wimblington. As the application is only for permission in principle, it is only possible to assess the location, land use and amount of development proposed.
- 1.2. The location of the site is detached from the built form of the settlement of Wimblington and would subsequently result in an erosion of the landscape character of the area, therefore rendering the location of development unacceptable in respect of Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). In this regard, it is considered that the proposal would result in a backland form of development that would run contrary to the settlement pattern in the area, further emphasising that the use of the site for residential purposes is unacceptable.
- 1.3. Further to this, Bridge Lane as a highway is incapable of accommodating further development without the implementation of highway mitigation measures due to the narrowness of the lane and limited opportunities for two-way vehicle movements. As such, it is considered that the location of the site and use for residential is also contrary to Policies LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
- 1.4. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, and it is accordingly recommended that permission in principle is refused in this instance.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located on the southern side of Bridge Lane, Wimblington, and comprises amenity space associated with 6 Bridge Lane, an area of hardstanding and a large shed with more open and undeveloped land to the south of this.
- 2.2. The use of the land, hardstanding and detached outbuilding was permitted under application reference F/YR25/0084/F. The area included within the red line on

25/0084 encompasses the host dwelling, 6 Bridge Lane, and the land immediately south and east of the dwelling. Additional land was included within the blue line that comprised further amenity space land, which forms part of the red line for this Permission in Principle application.

- 2.3. It should also be noted that there was a historic enforcement notice on the site, which was subsequently dismissed at appeal, with the red line for this covering the majority, but not entirety, of the land included within the red line for this application.
- 2.4. The site area measures 0.69 hectares and is set back from the highway, behind a linear pattern of residential development fronting onto Bridge Lane.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The application seeks permission in principle for the erection of up to 7 x dwellings.
- 3.2. The application is supported by an indicative site layout plan, although it should be noted that this is not a requirement of applications for Permission in Principle. This shows a cul-de-sac style development extending south, away from the public highway utilising the existing access to 6B, with this then separated off. The access drive then extends past the side of the dwelling with the dwellings wrapping around the retained rear garden for the existing dwelling.
- 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

ENF/063/22/UW APP/D0515/C/23/3317077	Material change of use of land from agricultural land and domestic garden land to a mixed use of domestic garden land and land used for storage and dismantling of vehicles.	Appeal dismissed & Enforcement notice upheld
F/YR25/0084/F	Change of use of land to domestic land, erection of a shed and formation of hardstanding involving the demolition of existing garage (retrospective)	Granted 04.11.25

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1. Wimblington Parish Council – 12.11.25

Objection on following grounds:

- Other applications in vicinity of Bridge Lane do not set precedent
- Bridge Lane is a narrow highway – other granted applications will impact on safety of highway
- Drainage and flooding concerns
- Detrimental impact on local wildlife

- Site forms part of the countryside environment

5.2. Environmental Health – 30.10.25

No objection

5.3. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology – 13.11.25

No objection. However, subsequent technical details application would be required to secure archaeology mitigation

5.4. Cambridgeshire County Council Minerals and Waste – 19.11.25

The proposed development site is within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel under Policy 5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021). This policy seeks to prevent mineral resources of local and/or national importance being needlessly sterilised. The application documentation does not make any reference to the safeguarded minerals but owing to the limited size of the site and its proximity to existing dwellings the MWPA considers that the prior extraction of the underlying mineral is unlikely to be feasible. If the Local Planning Authority is of the view that there is an overriding need for the development, the MWPA will be content that Policy 5 criterion (l) has been satisfied.

5.5. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – 28.11.25

Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Highway Authority as part of the above planning application the Highway Authority requests that the application be refused in its present format for the following reasons:

- 1. Bridge Lane is considered to be inadequate to serve the development proposed, by reason of its restricted width, lack of passing places and lack of footway provision which would lead to unsafe and unsuitable access for all users, increased risk of vehicle overrun and damage to highway verges, and an unacceptable impact on highway safety, contrary to paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
- 2. Bridge Lane lacks any footway, and further development without such provision would fail to provide safe and convenient pedestrian access. This would result in an unsustainable form of development, contrary to paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

5.6. Anglian Water – 05.12.25

No objection

5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 4no. letters of objection were received on the application from residents of Bridge Lane & Pond Close, Wimblington. The following points were raised:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
Bridge Lane is a single-track road with potholes and no passing places	See 'Location' section of Assessment
Absence of lighting and footpath does not allow safe travel down Bridge Lane	See 'Location' section of Assessment
Harm to landscape character of the area	See 'Location' section of Assessment

A total of 11no. letters of support were received on the application from residents of Gorefield Road, Leverington; Bridge Lane, Wimblington; Elwyn Road, Steeple View, Cavalry Drive, Coldham Bank & Stephenson Close, March; and Hook Road, WImblington. The following points were raised:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Efficient use of unused land	See 'Other Matters' section of Assessment
Already development happening in the area	See 'Location' section of Assessment

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 Wimblington and Stonea Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft October 2024).

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 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 17 – Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

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

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

Wimblington and Stonea Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft October 2024)

Wimblington & Stonea Parish Council has carried out a pre-submission consultation on the draft plan, as required by Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The draft plan has not yet been submitted for examination. Given the very early stage which the draft plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry very limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

Policy RE1 – Rural Character

Policy NE1 – Protecting the Landscape

Policy NE2 – Biodiversity

Policy SD3 – High-quality design

Policy SD5 – Flood Risk

Policy TT1 – Car Parking

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

Policy 5 - Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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

- Location
- Land Use
- Amount
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

9 BACKGROUND

9.1. The proposal is an application for Permission in Principle to develop the site for up to 7no. 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.

10 ASSESSMENT

10.1. Noting the guidance in place regarding Permission in Principle submissions, assessment must be restricted to (a) location, (use) and (c) amount, and these items are considered in turn below.

Location

10.2. Policy LP1 is the overarching policy supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with the policies within the LPD will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy.

10.3. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan identifies Wimblington as a growth village where small village extensions of a limited scale will be appropriate as part of the strategy for sustainable growth. Policy LP3 must be read in conjunction with other policies in the Local Plan which steer development to the most appropriate sites.

10.4. Policy LP12 seeks to protect the sustainability of settlements and the open character of the countryside. To this end, in this instance it requires that:

- a) The site is in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village.
- b) It would not result in coalescence.
- c) It would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland.
- d) It is in keeping with the core shape of the settlement and not harm its character and appearance.

10.5. Policy LP12 sets out that the developed footprint is defined as the continuous built form of the village and excluding groups of dispersed or intermittent buildings that are clearly detached from the continuous built-up area.

10.6. The requirements of Policy LP12 are reinforced by Policy LP16 which stipulates that new development must make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. The northernmost extremity of the application site is set back some 40m from Bridge Lane, behind existing frontage residential development, which in itself is considered divorced from any consolidated built area, and extends southwards to a distance of 140m from the highway. Notwithstanding the developments permitted elsewhere on Bridge Lane to the west of the site under applications F/YR25/0058/O & F/YR20/0234/F, the eastern part of Bridge Lane remains rural in character. Further, the application site does not immediately adjoin the existing built-up form of the settlement, adding to its detachment from the built form of the village and relationship with the open countryside. It is noted that there are established dwellings around the site, but it is not considered these form part of the developed footprint of the settlement.

10.7. Whilst Policy LP3 identifies Wimblington as a growth village, the eastern end of Bridge Lane and the application site are considered physically detached from the village. The proposal would result in the development of a parcel of land that, aside from the domestic development at the northern end of the site, is currently

open and undeveloped. As such, it would erode the space that separates Bridge Lane from the wider settlement. As such, the location of the site would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and local distinctiveness of the area and would be contrary to Policy LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.

- 10.8. A further consideration in this regard is that the development of the site for residential purposes would result in the creation of a form of back land development that would run contrary to the settlement pattern in this location, where residential development is generally characterised by linear, highway fronting development. Again, this would be contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan.
- 10.9. Furthermore, the Highway Authority have objected to the application on the basis that Back Lane is unsuitable to accommodate further development at this time. As such, the location of the site for residential purposes would result in a conflict with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan in this regard.
- 10.10. As such, it is considered that the unacceptability of the site for residential purposes is unacceptable in principle arising from the detrimental impact on highway safety in the location, with the proposal therefore contrary to Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Paragraphs 116 & 117 of the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

Use

- 10.11. As identified in the 'Location' section of this report, there are a number of conflicts with local and national planning policy arising from the location of the site. These issues identified (Highway Impact, Character Impact) would inherently render the use of the site for residential purposes contrary to Local Policy and therefore unacceptable in planning terms.
- 10.12. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and that the site is not acceptable for a residential use.

Amount

- 10.13. The assessment of the site in respect of location and use have identified a number of issues inherent with the development of the site for residential purposes. The principle of development has therefore already been deemed to be unacceptable on this basis. However, it is considered that the overall quantum of development does not add to the unsuitability of the site in this instance.

Other Matters

- 10.14. It is noted that representations have been received on the application objecting to the proposal on flood risk and drainage grounds. Comments have also been received supporting the proposal on the basis that the development would represent an efficient use of land.
- 10.15. In respect of the flood risk and drainage issues, the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding. Therefore, it is not considered to be at risk of flooding. Further to this, a detailed drainage scheme is not a consideration at the PiP stage, although it would be expected that an application for Technical Details Consent would include a drainage scheme to manage surface and foul water.

10.16. In respect of the efficient use of land, whilst the density of development that would occur on the site is considered to be acceptable and efficient, it is not considered that this outweighs the harm identified in the assessment above.

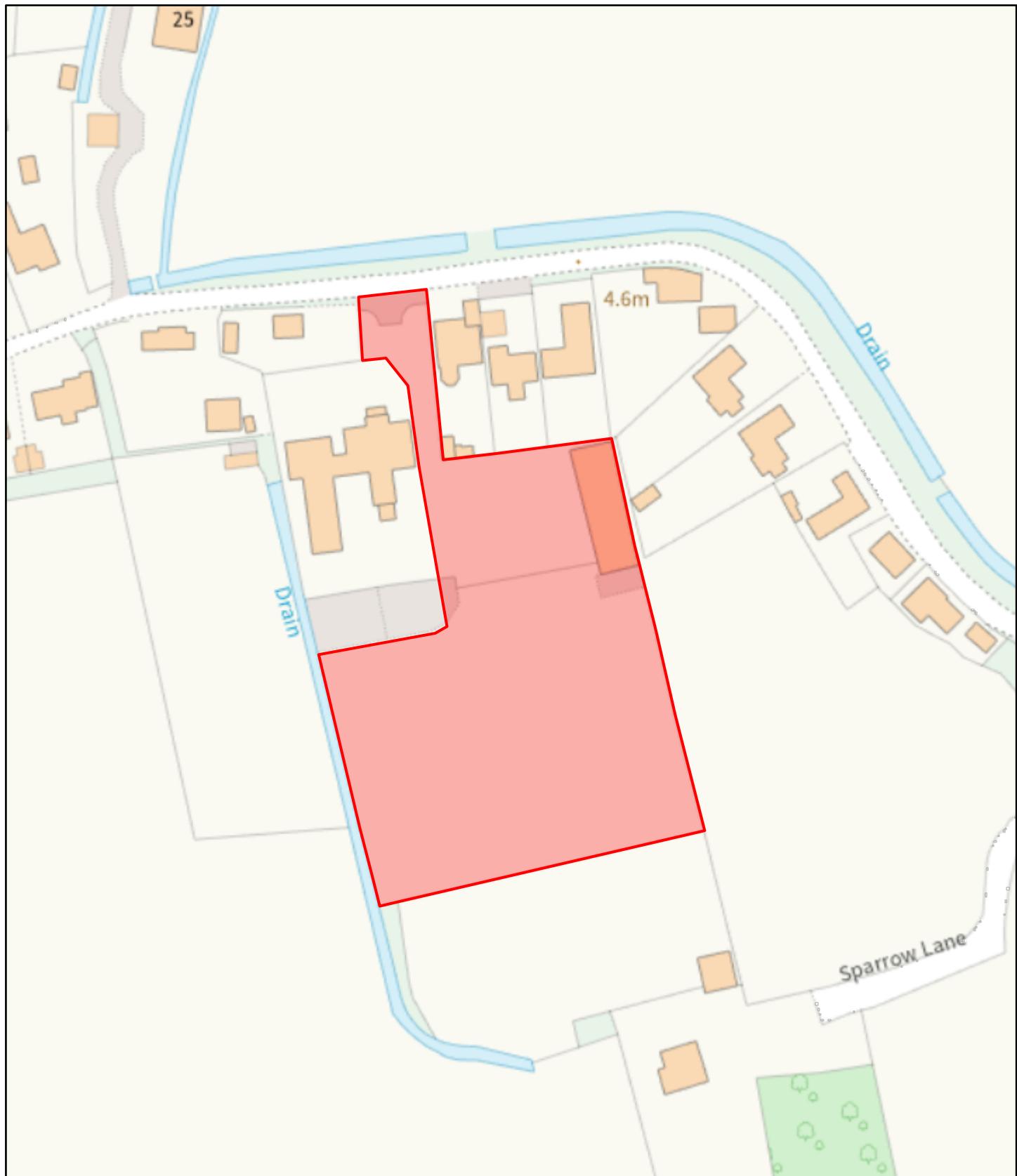
11 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1. The application seeks permission in principle for the erection of up to 7no. dwellings on Land South of 6 Bridge Lane, Wimblington. As the application is only for permission in principle, it is only possible to assess the location, land use and amount of development proposed.
- 11.2. As assessed above, the location of the site is detached from the built form of the settlement of Wimblington and would subsequently result in an erosion of the landscape character of the area, therefore rendering the location of development unacceptable in respect of Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). In this regard, it is considered that the proposal would result in a back land form of development that would run contrary to the settlement pattern in the area, further emphasising that the use of the site for residential purposes is unacceptable, contrary to Policy LP12 & LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
- 11.3. Further to this, Bridge Lane as a highway is incapable of accommodating further development without the implementation of highway mitigation measures due to the narrowness of the lane and limited opportunities for two-way vehicle movements. As such, it is considered that the use of the site for residential purposes and amount of development is also contrary to Policies LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
- 11.4. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, and it is accordingly recommended that permission in principle is refused in this instance.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; for the following reasons:

1.	The proposal would result in large scale in-depth development in an area rural in character and characterised mainly by frontage development and would erode an important visual gap and area of separation between this part of Bridge Lane and the main built form of Wimblington. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP3 and LP12 of the adopted Fenland Local Plan.
2.	The proposed development, by virtue of its location away from the public highway, behind an existing, road-fronting and linear form of development, would result in a back land form of development, contrary to the settlement pattern in the area, that would inherently result in the erosion of the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
3.	Bridge Lane is a narrow highway with limited opportunities for two-way vehicular movements and is incapable of accommodating further development without a detrimental impact on highway safety in this location. Therefore, the location and use of the development proposed is considered unacceptable having regard to Policies LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).



10/29/2025, 12:39:56 PM

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

Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council



F/YR25/0863/PIP

Applicant: Mr P & M Kerridge

Agent : Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land North East Of 134 London Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

Permission in principle for up to 4 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of up to 4 dwellings on Land North East of 134 London Road, outside the developed footprint of Chatteris.
- 1.2 Under Policy LP3 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, as well as resulting in the further urbanisation of the area to the detriment of its character and appearance. This fundamental unsustainability is further highlighted by the lack of pedestrian facilities in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 1.3 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..
- 1.4 Therefore, the proposed development fails to comply with the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the site's location is considered unsuitable for residential development in principle.
- 1.5 Accordingly, this application is recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located outside of the settlement footprint of Chatteris. The site is situated to the north of London Road and form the front part of a grassed field. The frontage boundary of the site is bordered by a 1.4 metre hedge with an open boundary to the east. A low-level hedge is sited to the northern rear boundary, with a 2-metre-high green mesh fence to the western boundary with Seasons garden centre. Arable fields are located to the north of the site and on the opposite side of London Road.

2.2 The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not shown as being subject to an annual likelihood of surface water flooding on the Environment Agency maps.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 A location plan, existing site plan and indicative site layout (although not a requirement of a PiP application) accompany this submission. These indicate the partial removal of the existing boundary treatment on the site and the provision of a line of four dwellings with associated parking and landscaping together with the provision of a new access road connecting to the highway in the south-west corner of the site.
- 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 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

No previous planning history on site.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Chatteris Town Council – 26 November 2025

Support - If approved Town Council requests contribution towards the cost of restoring the footpath along London Road from the Stocking Drove junction to Seasons Garden Centre.

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways – 04 December 2025

No objections at PiP stage - The applicant has undertaken manual vehicular speed counts to calculate an appropriate stopping sight distance for the proposed site access. These inter-vehicle visibility splays are considered acceptable and demonstrate that appropriate visibility can be achieved.

The location of the proposed development raises concerns regarding sustainability and the safety of trip generation by non-car modes. Currently there is no safe means of accessing the site by pedestrians. Given the scale of development, the Local Highway Authority expects that, at the Technical Consent Stage, the applicant will demonstrate how safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, in accordance with paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is likely to require mitigation measures to provide or enhance pedestrian infrastructure connecting the site to the existing footway network at Stocking Drove. In the view of the Local Highway Authority, such mitigation appears entirely feasible and as such, having regard to the location, intended land use, and amount of development proposed, the Local Highway Authority does not anticipate any significant adverse impact to the public highway at this stage.

5.3 Fenland District Council – Environmental Health – 19 November 2025

No objections. Recommends CEMP condition due to scale of development.

5.4 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Six comments of support have been received from properties in Chatteris. The supporters are from Belmont Gardens, Huntingdon Road, Tithe Road, York Road, Burnsfield Estate and New Road.

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
There is other new housing in the area	Addressed in the Location section
This is frontage development	Addressed in the Location section
Meets the definition of appropriate infill	Addressed in the Location section
Accords with Policy LP3	Addressed in the Location section
The site is brownfield	Addressed in the Location section
Access is very good, onto a straight road	Addressed in the Location section
Would improve the streetscene	Addressed in the Use section
Amount of development appropriate for the area	Addressed in the Amount section
The new housing should be executive homes	These comments do not carry material planning weight in a PIP application.
New residents will support local businesses	Addressed in the Conclusion section
Local tradesmen will benefit during the construction period	Addressed in the conclusion 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).

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 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

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

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1 The proposal is an application for Permission in Principle to develop the site for up to 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.

10 ASSESSMENT

Location

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) identifies Chatteris as being an 'Other Market Town'. For these settlements, the majority of the district's new housing, employment growth, retail growth and wider service provision should take place in these settlements.

10.2 The site is considered to be situated within an elsewhere location as it is divorced from the main built form of Chatteris. The Local Plan does not contain settlement boundaries and instead relies upon a case-by-case site specific judgment. Whilst LP12 relates to the development on the edge of villages the criteria within the footnote to this policy are considered to give a helpful indication as to what can or cannot be considered adjacent to the built form of a settlement. This excludes individual buildings and groups of dispersed, or intermittent buildings, that are clearly detached from the continuous built-up area of the settlement. The application site and its surroundings are considered to fall within these exemptions as the site is separated by 750m from the edge of the built-up settlement with significant areas of arable land albeit interspersed with loose knit residential development.

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 There is no footpath on either side of London Road in the vicinity of the site. The nearest footpath is 110 metres away to the front of The Grange on the southern side of London Road to the north of the Stocking Drove junction. Chatteris Town Council has requested the provision of a footpath from the Stocking Road junction to Seasons Garden centre, however there is no provision within a PiP application to secure such infrastructure. The Highways Officer has no objections at the PiP application stage, however they note that there is no safe pedestrian access to the site and expect that *at the Technical Consent Stage, the applicant will demonstrate how safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, in accordance with paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework*. As the serviced and facilities of Chatteris are located over a mile away and with inadequate pedestrian facilities and no certainty that these can be delivered it is considered that this issue further highlights that the proposal site is in an unsuitable and unsustainable location.

10.5 It is noted that the Agent has advised of other residential developments having been approved in the vicinity of the site. Each application must be determined on its own merits. Notwithstanding this basic principle it is also considered that further development should be avoided in this unsustainable location to prevent the further urbanisation of the area.

10.6 Policy LP3 sets out the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy, and approach to elsewhere developments. This is complemented by Policy LP4 which sets out

proposed housing targets for Market Towns and Other Locations. The key driver of these policies is to ensure that new development is directed towards the most sustainable locations whilst recognising that smaller settlements will still need to reflect natural population change and may require additional development of a much smaller scale to reflect these changes. Since the Plan was adopted there have been a number of sites permitted and completed in other locations dramatically exceeding the anticipated provision set out in the adopted Plan with no notable improvements to social, educational and health infrastructure to offset the impacts of development or increase the overall sustainability of these locations. As such the principle of additional residential development within 'Other Locations' should not be automatically accepted.

10.7 The site is considered to be an 'Elsewhere location' as defined by Policy LP3. Development in an elsewhere location 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. The application does not state that it is essential to the operation of the activities set out by Policy LP3. The site currently forms a gap of open countryside, along with the field to the north, which is a characteristic of this part of London Road which gradually transitions from the developed area of Chatteris towards the open countryside. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside.

Use

10.8 The site is situated 725 metres away, at the nearest point, to the edge of the settlement. 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. As set out above the use of the site for residential purposes is contrary to the settlement hierarchy and the introduction of a residential unit 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 for a residential use.

Amount of Development Proposed

10.9 The application seeks Permission in Principle for four dwellings on a site of 0.41ha which will equate to a density of approximately 10 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. Unacceptable impacts have been identified above in term of location and use and it is not considered that any further issues would arise from the proposed quantum of development.

Other Issues

10.10 Supporting comments have been received which state that the site is brownfield in nature. This is not stated within the supporting information provided within the application. A barn now removed is shown on historic aerial photographs, however, this barn is located beyond the northern boundary of the site. The site is considered to be clearly greenfield in its nature and would not fall under the definition of previously developed land in the NPPF.

10.11 The Council's Environmental Health team have commented on the application and raised the need for a condition to control any building process in terms of amenity impacts. The National Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that conditions cannot be applied to a PiP application and this would be a matter to be addressed at a later stage of the process.

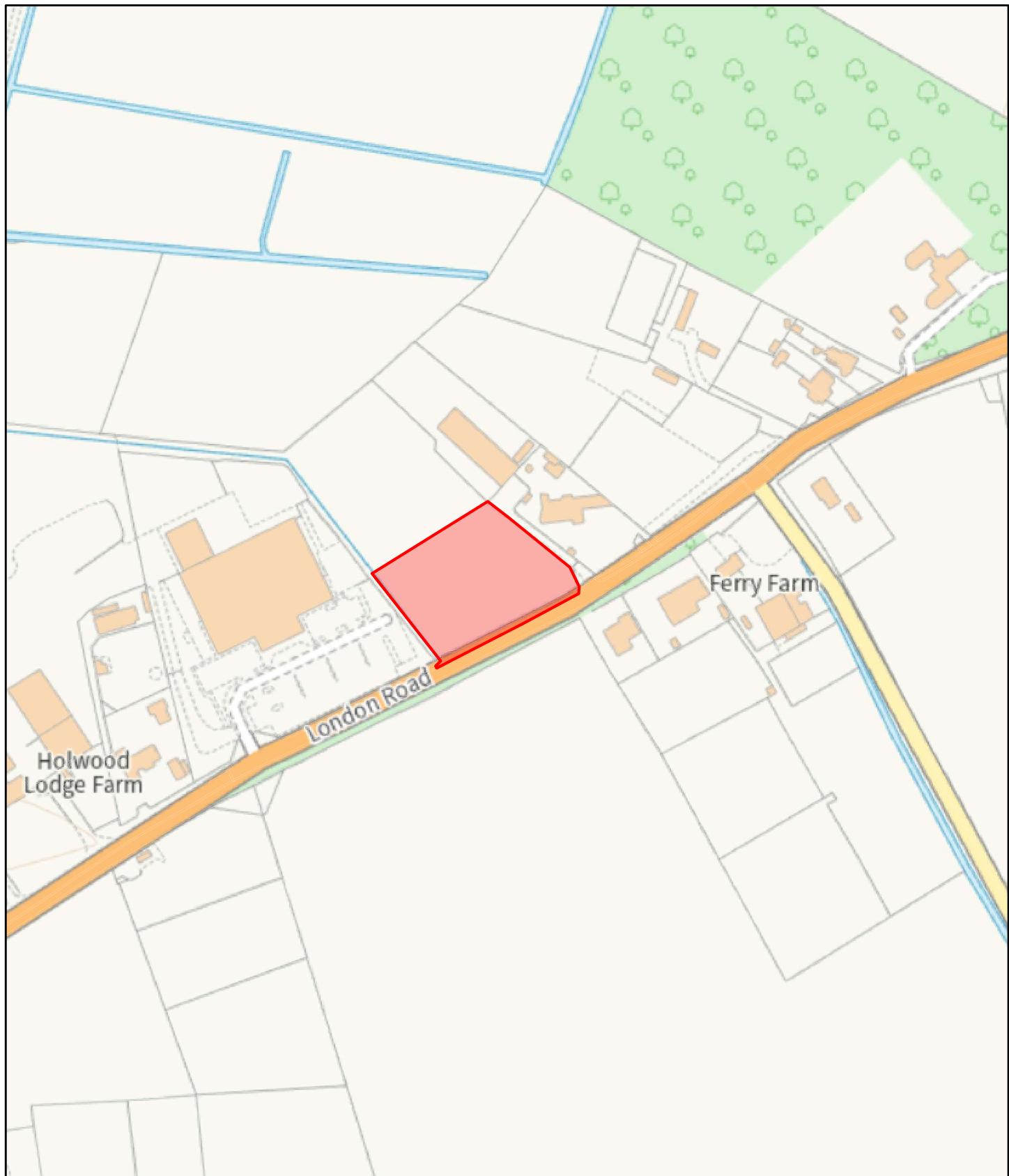
11 CONCLUSIONS

- 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 for residential purposes is not supported as the site does not adjoin the built form of Chatteris and is therefore contrary to both Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan as well as resulting in a further urbanisation of the area to the detriment of its character.
- 11.3 There are no issues to address in relation to flood risk and drainage, and ecology and it is recognised that there could be some limited economic and social benefits through short term construction jobs and additional housing in the district. However, these matters are not considered to outweigh the ultimate unsustainable nature of the location of the site and the consequent policy conflict identified and as such the application is recommended for refusal.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; Permission in Principle for the following reason:

1	The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Chatteris within an unsustainable Elsewhere location as defined in the Local Plan. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable urbanisation, extending development into the countryside, further eroding the character of the area and the open countryside. Additionally, the site and surrounding area is not served by a footpath further highlighting the unsustainable and unsuitable nature of the location for residential development. The development proposal will therefore be contrary, in principle, to Policies LP3, LP15 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).
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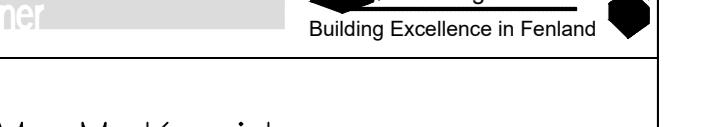
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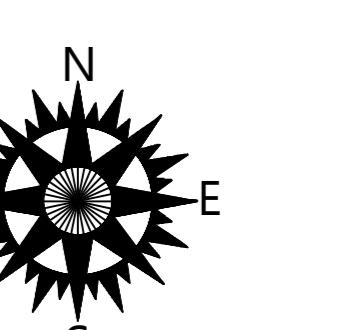
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 Fenland District Boundary



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A. RADIUS RED LINE	NOV 25
REVISIONS	DATE
MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED	
1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AE Tel: 01354 650454, Fax: 01354 650467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk 	
	
	
	
CLIENT Mr M Kerridge Mr P Kerridge	
PROJECT Proposed Development Land South West of 132 London Road Chatteris Cambridgeshire	
DATE Existing Site Plan/ Topographical Survey	
DRAWN MH DATE OF ISSUE DESIGNED REVIEWED APPROVED CHIEF SURVEYOR	
DATE October 2025 DRAWING NUMBER SCALE As Shown At AD REF H10654/03	



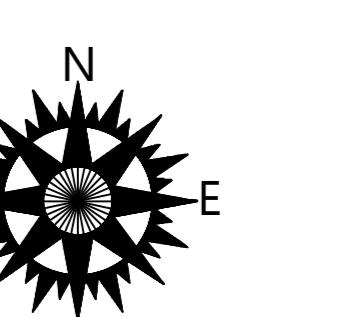
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The contractor is to complete the works in accordance with the Building Regulations (or NHBC if required by the Building Regulations) and is to obtain completion certificate and reward to the Engineer.



A. RADIUS RED LINE	NOV 25
REVISIONS	
MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED	
1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AE	
Tel: 01354 650454, Fax: 01354 650467, E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk, website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk	
Fenland District Council	
Building Design Awards	
Mr M Kerridge Mr P Kerridge	
Proposed Development Land South West of 132 London Road Chatteris Cambridgeshire	
Proposed Indicative Site Plan	
DRAWN MH DATE OF ISSUE	
CHECKED	
DATE October 2025 DRAWING NUMBER	
SIGNED AS Shown AT AD H10654/04	



F/YR25/0834/O

Applicant: Mr Richard Hirson

Agent : Mr James Burrows
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land West Of 78-88, Station Road, Manea, Cambridgeshire

Erect up to 8 x dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 8 x dwellings with matters committed in respect of access. The proposal site is located at the junction of Station and Wimblington Roads in Manea.
- 1.2 The application site is located within Flood Zone 3, an area at the highest risk of flooding but the applicant has not demonstrated conclusively that there are no other reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas at the same or a lower risk of flooding and therefore the development fails the Sequential. There are more than 8 plots within Manea with extant planning permission for a dwelling where construction has not commenced.
- 1.3 Two outline applications for up to 4 dwellings have previously been refused on site. The current applications indicative plans show 8 semi-detached dwellings. The reason for refusal previously given was also sequential test.
- 1.4 The recommendation is therefore for refusal of planning permission.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The proposal site consists of a 0.46ha parcel of land located at the corner of Station and Wimblington Roads in Manea. The site is currently agricultural land but has residential development to the North, East and to the South, with scattered agricultural buildings. The site is generally flat and has no trees. There are surface water drains located around the site.
- 2.2 The site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as defined by the Environment Agency maps.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 The application proposes the erection of up to 8 x dwellings with matters committed in respect of access. A single point of access is applied for towards the northern end of the site which is then shown crossing the ditch around the edge of the site before turning in a north-south direction. The dwellings are indicatively shown to the west of this in four pairs, with tandem parking to the side and rear gardens abutting the western boundary of the site.

3.2 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Application	Description	Decision	Date
F/YR23/0881/O	Erect up to 4no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)	Refused (Planning Committee)	07 Mar 2024
F/YR21/1439/O	Erect up to 4no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)	Refused (Planning committee)	23 Nov 2022

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Manea Parish Council

Object: Inadequate drainage, Flood zone 3

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority

After a review of the submitted information with this Outline Application with all matters reserved, accept access, I have no objection to the principal of the development.

As far as can be determined the proposed location of the access can achieve the correct visibility splays for this speed of road (30mph) within the highway. However, the drawings do not show this detail. It is usually the case that a drawing with the Title "Visibility Splays" show this information so that it can be verified and accepted by the LHA and LPA. On this occasion only I will not need this information as I have consulted our records and there is sufficient width to accommodate these splays within the highway.

There are footways leading to the development site in either direction and as far as can be determined the splays are achievable.

5.3 Environment & Health Services (FDC)

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.

Request – CEMP condition

5.4 Environment Agency 24/11/25

We have reviewed this Flood Risk Assessment and we are now able to remove our objection to this planning application. Please see further information on flood risk below.

Please note our previous comments related to wastewater disposal and water resources from our previous letter remain relevant.

Flood Risk

We have no objection to the proposed development but strongly recommend that the mitigation measures proposed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), referenced ECL0561b and dated July 2025, are adhered to. In particular, the FRA recommends that:

- o Finished floor levels will be set 0.8m above surrounding ground levels.*
- o Flood resilient / resistant measures will be incorporated into the development up to 0.6 m above finished floor levels.*

Sequential Test

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 174, development in flood risk areas should not be permitted if there are reasonably available alternative sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. It is for you to determine whether or not there are other sites available at lower flood risk and whether the sequential test has been passed.

5.5 Head of Environmental Services (15/12/25)

We have 'no objections' as our comments have been addressed

5.6 FDC Ecology

The application site primarily comprises an arable field largely bound by a small section of neutral grassland and tall ruderal herbs. Two ditches occur at site boundaries, immediately to the north-west, east and south-east of the site.

Habitats to be directly lost to the scheme are of limited ecological value, and the site is considered to have only low potential to support any protected or priority species, but the ditches do have local ecological value.

Although the site is within 2.5 km of the Ouse Washes designated nature conservation sites (SAC, SPA and Ramsar), because of the relatively small scale of the planned development, its distance from the designated sites and the separation between the designated sites and the application site, I would not consider that the development will affect the special nature conservation interest of the Ouse Washes. While the application site may occasionally be used by notable bird species associated with the designated sites it has low potential to act as functionally linked land because of its proximity to roads and to other built development.

I would advise that should permission be granted to the application a Construction Environmental Management Plan is required to be prepared. The CEMP should include full details of measures to be taken to avoid disturbance of and pollution of adjacent ditches / watercourses during the course of any development.

Biodiversity Net Gain

I would accept that the development could likely achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% on-site through new landscaping and by the enhancement of existing boundary habitats. The on-site gains could be regarded as significant and therefore they will need to be secured by the preparation and

implementation of a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). The HMMP, together with a more comprehensive Biodiversity Gain Plan, should be required to be provided pre-commencement by means of Condition. The statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition will apply to any permission which may be granted to the scheme.

Other Biodiversity Enhancements

I would support the inclusion of new bird and bat boxes as part of any detailed plans which may be prepared for the scheme.

5.7 Middle Level Commissioners

The application appears to involve development within the Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners 9m 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. These watercourses are protected by Byelaws made in accordance with the Land Drainage Act.

Development within, over, or under a Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners maintained watercourse, or within the Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners maintenance strip, requires the Manea & Welney District Commissioners prior written consent.

It must not be assumed that consent will be given for any development within, over or under these watercourses and/or any associated maintenance access strips or that the issuing of planning permission by your authority means that the relevant works will be consented.

5.8 Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 10no. letters of support were received from The Old Dairy Yards Manea, Cathedral View Manea, Lode Road Manea, Cox Way Manea and High Street March.

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
• Provide much needed housing in sustainable location	• Principle of housing in Manea discussed in assessment section
• In keeping with character of area	• Visual impact discussed in Assessment section
• Link to Fenland Reservoir	• Not a material planning consideration
• Benefits to local business owing to increase in population	• The proposal is for up to 8 dwellings which may have some benefit to local economy

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).

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 10 - Supporting high quality communications

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

Homes and Buildings

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**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Visual Impact**
- **Highway Safety**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Ecology**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 BACKGROUND

9.1 As indicated in the planning history section above 2x outline application for up to 4 dwellings have previously been refused on the site by the Council, with these decisions being taken at the Planning Committee meetings on 06/03/24 and 16/11/22. The reasons for refusal previously given on both applications were with regard to inadequate application of the sequential test. The current application is for 8 dwellings.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan sets out the spatial Strategy for development and the settlement Hierarchy. Policy LP3 defines Manea as a Growth Village where development and new service provision either within the existing urban area or as a small village extension will be appropriate. Policy

LP12 Part A sets out where development may be acceptable in or adjacent to the developed footprint of the settlement as long as it does not adversely impact the character of the countryside and is in keeping with the core shape of the settlement.

- 10.2 The application site forms part of an agricultural field at the entrance to the settlement, bounded to the north by the workplace home development of Charlemont Drive. To the south on the opposite side of Wimblington Road is a group of commercial buildings with further linear residential development to the south. On the opposite side of Station Road is loose knit linear residential development. Consequently, it is considered that while the site forms an attractive entrance to the village it would be difficult to argue that the principle of residential development was unacceptable, given these surroundings.
- 10.3 As such the principle of this development is considered to be supported by Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

Flood Risk

- 10.4 Paragraph 165 of the NPPF (2023) states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. In the same vein, Local Plan Policy LP14 recommends the adoption of sequential approach to flood risk from all forms of flooding and this is reinforced by the Cambridgeshire Flood and water SPD.
- 10.5 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document states that the sequential test was developed to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The SPD states that developers need to identify and list reasonably available sites identifying reasonably available sites as:

“Reasonably available sites will include a site or a combination of sites capable of accommodating the proposed development. These may be larger, similarly sized or a combination of smaller sites that fall within the agreed area of search.”

- 10.6 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by Morton & Hall is accompanied by a separate sequential test. This sets out the sites with planning permission within Manea, it states whether the agents consider the sites are reasonably available and whether they are considered to be at a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test incorrectly asserts that sites for 1 dwelling or 7 or more are not comparable to the proposal and are therefore rejected. The sequential test also incorrectly asserts that a site with permission for a bungalow is not comparable to the proposal and is therefore rejected. This is clearly an incorrect approach to take and not consistent with policy and therefore, the sequential test is not considered to be passed.

10.7 Exception Test

Notwithstanding the failure of the sequential test, had this been deemed as passed it would then be necessary for the application to pass the Exception Test, which comprises of demonstration of the following:

- 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').

a) Wider Community Benefits

Section 4.5.8 of the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD sets out the sustainability themes and issues which development could help to address in order to achieve wider benefits, which are:

- Land and water resources;
- Biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- Landscape, townscape and historic environment;
- Climate change mitigation and renewable energy;
- Flood risk and climate change adaptation;
- Pollution;
- Healthy and inclusive and accessible communities
- Economic activity; or
- Transport.

The proposal is for up to 8 dwellings and the submitted Sequential Test and Exception Test Report discusses the Exception test. The Report states that the exception test is passed because:

- *The development would provide wide sustainability benefits to the local village of Manea that would outweigh flood risk.*
- *The site would allow for smaller more affordable 2 bed and 3 bed semi-detached dwellings which there are a lack of smaller two bedroom semi-detached dwellings in Manea.*
- *The development would be safe for its lifetime with regards to vulnerability of the person inhabiting the dwelling and would not increase flood risk elsewhere.*
- *This site does have drainage ditches about the perimeter which are all to be maintained and the Middle Level Commissioners Board Strip is to be left clear.*
- *The site is well drained.*
- *There are no residential dwellings located immediately adjacent the site as the proposal would not increase flood risk on adjacent sites.*
- *The site also has a substantial area left to soft landscaping, which helps with BNG at the site.*
- *The site would be safe from flooding for the lifetime of the development*

It is not considered that these points demonstrate any wider sustainability benefits to the community, albeit there could be scope for a detailed scheme to provide some renewable energy. The Council can currently show a 6.6 years supply of housing land over the five-year period and therefore the provision of 8 dwellings, in flood zone 3, does not weigh in favour when considering the planning balance. The exception test submitted is not considered passed.

b) Flood risk management

The submitted Flood Risk Assessment did recommend the following mitigation measures:

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 0.8 metres above ground level; and
- Flood resistant and resilient construction to height of 0.6 metres above the finished floor level;

The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposal. It is therefore considered that these measures address the need for safety in times of flooding at the site, and as such would satisfy the Exception Test in this regard.

- 10.8 The flood risk assessment undertaken by Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd referenced ECL0561b in support of the development which was considered by the Environment Agency (EA). The EA strongly recommends that the mitigation measures proposed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), referenced ECL0561b and dated July 2025, are adhered to. The EA also set out that it is for the Local Planning Authority to be satisfied by the Sequential and Exception Tests.
- 10.9 There are drainage ditches along the north, south and east of the site. The Drain to the east and part of the south is a Middle Level controlled drain. The indicative drawings show no built form within 9m of the controlled drain, however this would be considered at reserved matters stage. Development requiring consent from the IDB, such as the crossing of the drain, is a separate regime to planning.
- 10.10 Based on the above assessment, the applicant has been unable to show that there are no other reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas at the same or a lower risk of flooding and has not demonstrated any wider community benefits of the development and therefore the development fails the Sequential Test and allowing the development would be contrary to Local Plan Policy LP14, the adopted SPD and paragraphs 159 and 162 of the NPPF(2021).

Visual Impact

- 10.11 Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that 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. This is further reflected in Local Plan Policy LP16 (d) which seeks to deliver and protect a high-quality environment for those living and working within the district.
- 10.12 It is considered that the development of the site would visually read as part of the existing village and not appear incongruous or as an encroachment into the countryside. As described above the site is considered to form an attractive entrance to the village and as such a well-designed scheme incorporating sympathetic landscaping would be required to ensure the quality of this gateway is maintained.
- 10.13 Therefore, subject to appropriate design, layout, and landscaping which would be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage, the visual impact could be acceptable in accordance with Policy LP16 and the NPPF (2021).

Highway Safety

- 10.14 Fenland Local Plan Policy LP15 states that new development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicle access to and from the public highway as well as adequate space for vehicle parking, turning and servicing would be achieved.
- 10.15 The Highway Authority have no objection to the proposed scheme. The Highway Authority have pointed out that no drawing has been submitted showing visibility splays which is usually required. However, on this occasion they are content that

this detail is not needed because the records show that there is sufficient width to accommodate these splays within the highway. The Highway Authority confirm that splays can be achieved on footways leading to the development site in either direction. The site is located a short walk from Manea railway station.

10.16 The indicative plans show that parking on site may be achievable in form of in tandem parking. The Council's Environmental Services team have raised no issues in terms of refuse vehicles being able to service the site.

10.17 The application is an outline application with matters committed in respect to access. The scheme is considered acceptable and complies with Policy LP15 in this regard.

Residential Amenity

10.18 Local Plan Policy LP16 (e) seeks to provide and protect comforts that the general environment provides and to this end ensures that development does not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users owing to noise, light pollution, loss of privacy and loss of light.

10.19 The proposed development is in outline form, with matters only committed in respect of access. From the submitted indicative plan, it would appear that the development which details design and layout, would relate appropriately with the dwellings around it. The scale and external appearance of the scheme is subject to subsequent approval, but it is considered that there is sufficient distance from the neighbouring gardens to be able to accommodate this level of development in this location without compromising residential amenity.

10.20 The proposal indicatively allows for the provision of adequately sized garden areas to serve each dwelling unit in line with policy LP16 (h) together with some communal greenspaces at the front of the development to provide soft landscaping.

10.21 Therefore, subject to appropriate detailed design and layout, the scheme would provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers and protect those enjoyed by existing neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policy LP16.

Ecology

10.22 Policy LP16 (b) requires proposals for new development to protect and enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the proposal site, taking into account locally designated sites and the special protection given to internationally and nationally designated sites in accordance with policy LP19. Criteria (c) requires the retention and incorporation of natural and historic features of the site such as trees, hedgerows, field patterns, drains and water bodies.

10.23 The application site comprises an agricultural field bounded by a hedgerow to the north and ditches to three sides and the access to the development is indicated as being across one of these ditches.

10.24 An ecological survey and if necessary, a species survey, are required to be carried out pre-determination. Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a public sector duty upon local planning authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 193 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications local planning authorities should refuse planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided

(through locating on an alternative site with less impact), adequately mitigated or as a last resort, compensated for. Such consideration requires sufficient ecological investigation to assess if there are any particular protected species present so that they can be taken into account in the consideration of the proposals.

10.25 A Preliminary Ecological Report has been submitted with the application. The surveys were originally undertaken on the 3rd of August 2022, updates were made on the 19th of September 2023 and updates were made on the 5th of June 2025. The report incorrectly shows that 4 large, detached homes are proposed with associated parking and gardens. The report concludes that protected species may be present on site, Licences may need to be obtained and mitigation measures such as what season to conduct works, 5m stand off from the ditch, 9m buffer zone from IDB drain, bat boxes, limited external lighting, species specific planting would need to be implemented. FDC Ecology was consulted on the proposals and have responded with no objection. A Construction Ecological Management Plan would need to be submitted at Reserved Matters stage.

10.26 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Report states any potential harm can be mitigated. Therefore, at Outline stage the detail submitted is considered sufficient to say the proposal is considered acceptable under policy LP16(b) and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 subject to a Construction Ecological Management Plan being submitted at Reserved Matters stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.27 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.

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

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The application seeks Outline planning permission for the erection of up to 8no with matters committed in respect of access.

11.2 The proposed development would be of a scale that is in keeping with the area and, subject to layout, design and finishes, would not detract from the character of the site and the area.

11.3 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3 and fails to meet the sequential test by virtue of alternative sites being available elsewhere in Manea to accommodate the development that are at the same or a lower risk of flooding. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

11.4 The Council can currently show a 6.6 years supply of housing land over the five-year period and therefore the provision of 8 dwellings, in flood zone 3, does not weigh in favour when considering the planning balance. The exception test submitted is not considered passed.

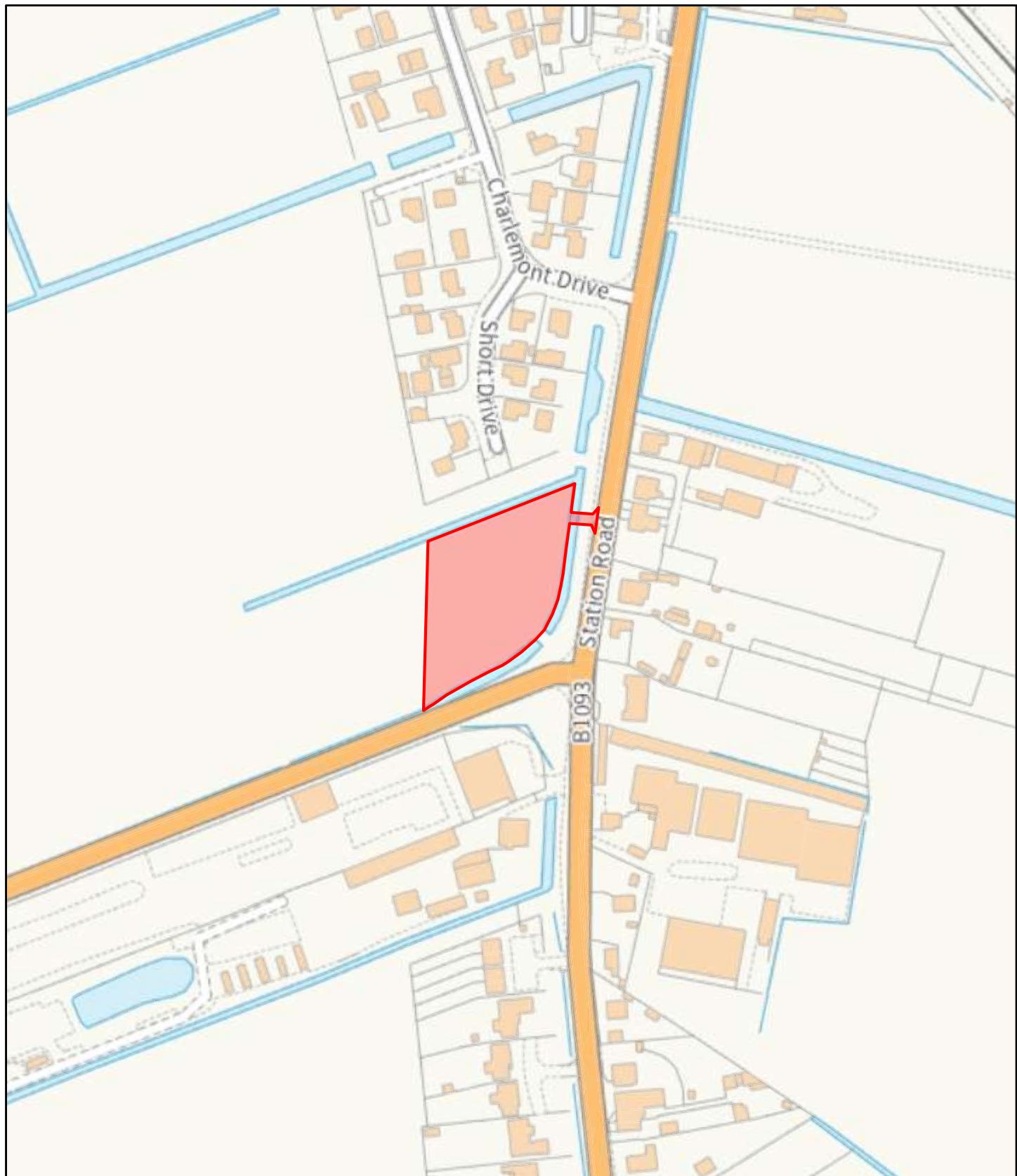
11.5 It is recognised that Manea is an otherwise sustainable location, and it is also recognised that the delivery of eight dwellings would have some limited benefits to the local economy from the provision of jobs during the construction period and in the longer term to businesses in the area as well as some limited social benefits in the delivery of housing. However, these benefits are not considered to outweigh the disbenefits of delivering housing in an area at risk of flooding and the consequent risk to future residents.

11.6 As such the application is considered to conflict with the NPPF, policies of the Local Plan and the Flood and Water SPD.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; for the following reason:

1.	The site is located within Flood Zone 3 where there is a high probability of flooding. The Sequential Test for flood risk has not been adequately applied or met and consequently, the application fails to demonstrate that there are no other reasonably available sites with a lower probability of flooding that could accommodate the development. In addition, the Exception Test has also not been passed. Allowing the proposed development could therefore place people and property at an increased risk, with no justification, of flooding contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), NPPF (2024) and Section 4 of the Cambridgeshire Flood & Water Supplementary Planning Document (2016).
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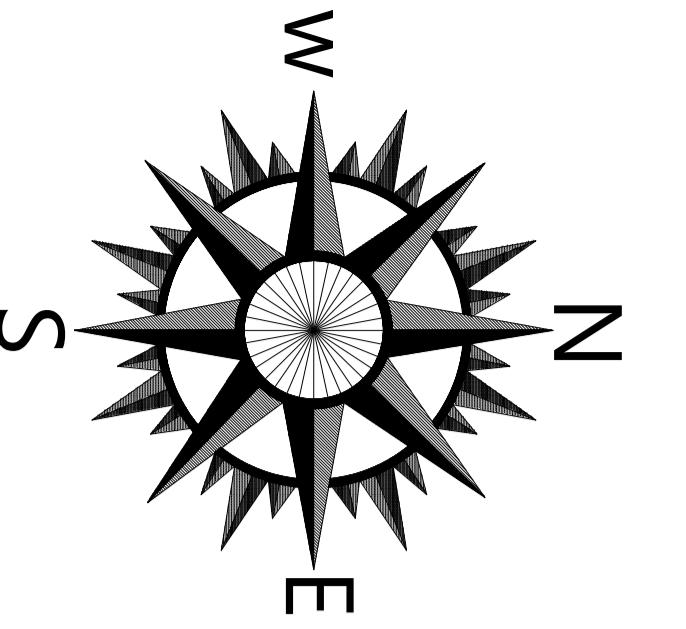
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EXISTING SITE PLAN
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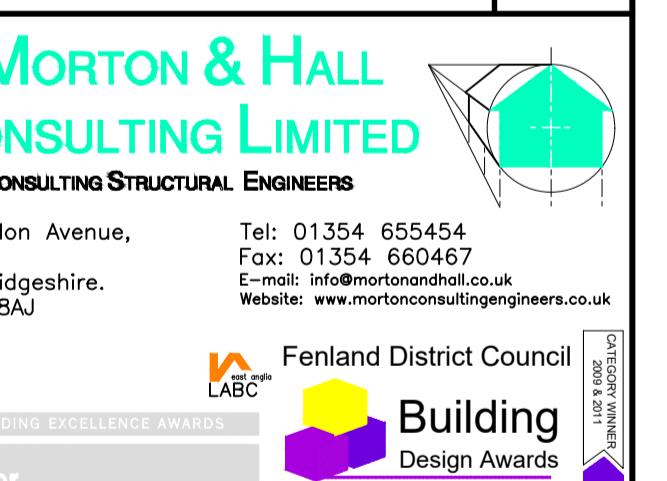


PROPOSED SITE PLAN (INDICATIVE LAYOUT)
(1:500)



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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 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 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

C B A	DRAWING UPDATED PLANNERS COMMENTS UPDATED FOLLOWING INTERNAL COMMENT	DEC 25 OCT 25 AUG 25
	REVISIONS	DATE

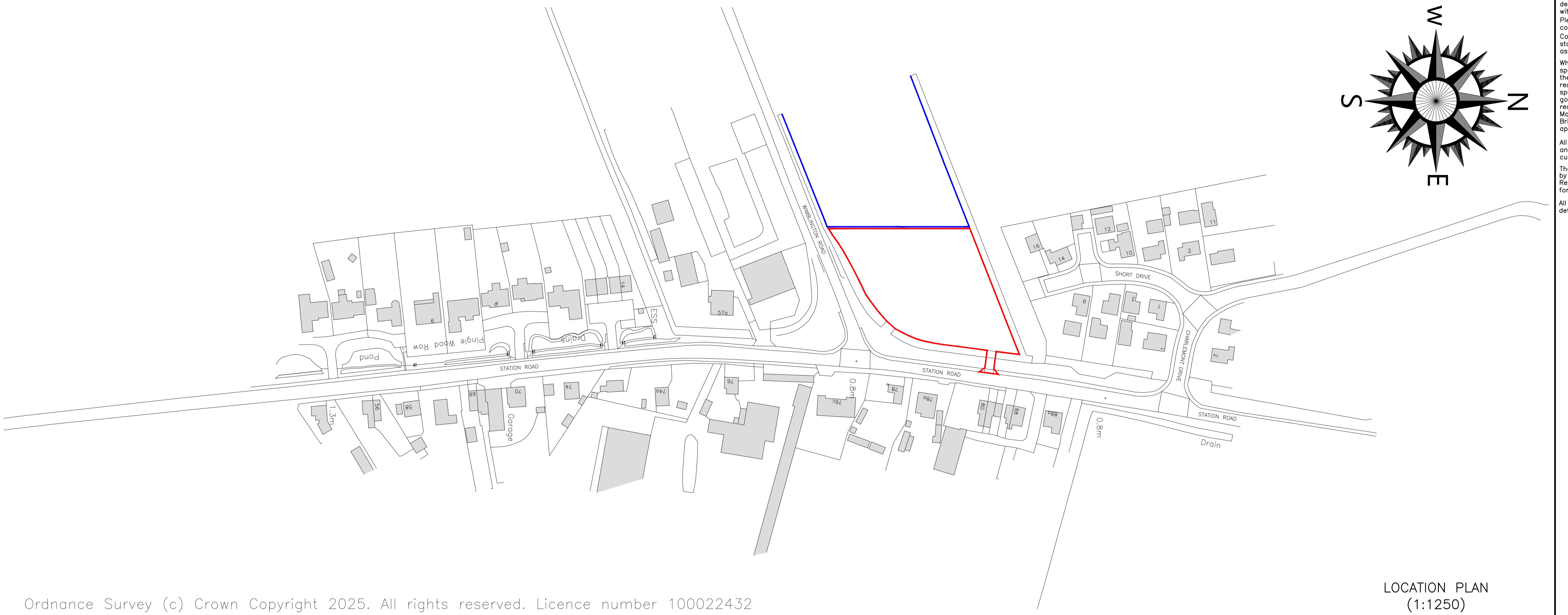


Mr Richard Hirson Jnr &
Mr A Hirson

Land West of 78-88
Station Road
Manea, March
PE15 0HG

Existing Site Plan &
Proposed Site Plan
(INDICATIVE LAYOUT)

DRAIN. J. Burrows	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED	
DATE July 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE As Shown	H10296/02c



LOCATION PLAN
(1:1250)

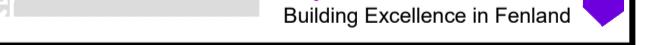


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All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details

A	PLANNERS COMMENTS	OCT 25
	REVISIONS	DATE
MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS 1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk  		
CLIENT Mr Richard Hirson Jnr & Mr A Hirson		
PROJECT Land West of 78-88 Station Road Manea, March PE15 0HG		
TITLE Location Plan & Vision Splays		
DRAIN J. Burrows		DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE July 2025		DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE As Shown		H10296/01A

F/YR25/0739/O

Applicant: Mr and Mrs M Robinson

Agent: Mr Nick Seaton
Anglia Building Consultants

Land South West Of 176, High Road, Gorefield, Cambridgeshire

Erect up to 1 x self-build/custom dwelling, involving the demolition of existing buildings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of one dwelling within the curtilage of No.176 Gorefield Road, in Flood Zone 3. The application commits matters of access only, with all other matters reserved for later approval. The current application is a resubmission of a previous application, F/YR25/0279/O, which was refused under delegated powers on 5th June 2025 owing to the failure of the Sequential Test.
- 1.2. The principle of development is acceptable with respect to the settlement hierarchy Policy LP3; however, the principle will only be fully supported where it meets the necessary criteria of the Local Plan with regard to character and amenity (Policy LP16), and any site constraints such as flood risk (LP14) or highway safety (LP15) that would render the scheme unacceptable.
- 1.3. The application is accompanied by a revised Sequential Test. However, this remains deficient because it does not contain sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites able to accommodate the quantum of development. The proposal is therefore contrary to both Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF as a result, and hence the application is recommended for refusal.
- 1.4. In addition, since the determination of the previous application, appeal decisions have emerged indicating that Self/custom build housing should be secured by means of a legal agreement. No such agreement has been submitted and as such a further reason for refusal is recommended in this regard.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located to the north of Gorefield Road. The site currently comprises part of the front and rear garden spaces within the curtilage of No.176 and includes a detached garage outbuilding associated

with the host dwelling with an existing highways access. The outbuilding presents a frontage appearance of a smaller 'bungalow' type unit with infilled front openings, with additional fenestration and dual garage doors on its eastern flank.

- 2.2. As indicated above to the immediate east of the site is no 176 High Road a detached two-storey dwelling, with the first-floor windows contained within the roof. The dwelling includes a large circular driveway with some parking/turning attributed to part of the application site. To the west is a new dwelling and detached garage, currently under construction, which comprises one of five new plots approved under F/YR23/0548/O.
- 2.3. The site is located in flood zone 3.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of 1 self-build/custom build dwelling, facilitated by the demolition of the existing outbuilding. Matters of access have been committed, with the intention to use the existing westernmost access at the site to serve the new dwelling, with the existing easternmost access retained for use by the host dwelling.
- 3.2. The indicative plans provided suggest a two-storey dwelling adopting a similar set back as the outbuilding at No.176, with a detached single garage set to its northeast.
- 3.3. The indicative street scene submitted with the application indicates a similar scale dwelling to the plot currently under construction to the west.
- 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/YR25/0279/O	Erect 1 x self-build/custom dwelling, involving the demolition of existing buildings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access)	Refused	05.06.2025
F/YR24/0960/RM	Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (Plot 1 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0548/O	Approved	06.06.2025
F/YR24/0312/RM	Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (Plot 5 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0548/O	Approved	20.06.2024
F/YR23/0548/O	Erect up to 5 x dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) and the formation of 5 x accesses	Granted	25.08.2023
F/YR22/0181/O	Erect up to 5no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved)	Refused	04.08.2022

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1. Gorefield Parish Council

The Parish Council does not support this application as it appears to be over development of the site and takes away the amenity space of the host dwelling.

5.2. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority

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 proposed development will utilise the westernmost of the two existing highway accesses, which appears to have restricted visibility to the east.

To improve safety for vehicles exiting the site, the Local Highway Authority recommends either adjusting the approach angle of this access or clearing vegetation within the site to enhance visibility.

Additionally, the access surface is currently unbound and would benefit from reconstruction using a bound material for the first 5 metres from the public highway boundary into the site, to prevent debris from spreading onto the carriageway.

5.3. Environment Agency

Thank you for your consultation dated 15 October 2025. We have reviewed the documents as submitted and we have no objection to this planning application. Please see further information on flood risk and water resources in the relevant sections below.

Flood Risk

We strongly recommend that the development should be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Ref: ECL1480a/ANGLIA BUILDING CONSULTANTS; dated September 2025; submitted by Ellingham Consulting LTD) and the following mitigation measures it details:

- *Finished floor levels should be set 0.3m above existing ground level (0.3mAOD)*
- *Flood Resilient Construction to 0.3m above Finished Floor Levels (0.6mAOD)*

These mitigation measures should be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/ phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above should be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development. This is to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

Sequential Test

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 162), development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites

appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding. It is for you to determine if the sequential test needs to be applied and whether there are other sites available at lower flood risk. Our flood risk standing advice reminds you of this and provides advice on how to apply the test. [...]

5.4. Environment & Health Services (FDC)

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 demolition or 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.

5.5. Local Residents/Interested Parties

The LPA received 15 letters of support for this application from address points including:

- High Road, Gorefield (10no.);
- Decoy Road, Gorefield (2no.);
- Christopher Drive, Leverington (1no.);
- Mill Lane, Wisbech (1no.); and
- Sayers Crescent, Wisbech St Mary (1no.)

Two letters received included no reasons for supporting the scheme; with a further six stating either "no objections/fully in support" but with no specific reasons stated.

Of the stated reasons for support, these are detailed in the below table:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would be an asset, in easy range of village services and facilities.	Matters regarding the principle of development are considered in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would appear appropriate next to other development and improve the streetscene• Will enhance visual appearance and increase natural surveillance• Will not result in overdevelopment	Matters regarding character and appearance are considered in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No highway safety impacts	Matters relating to highway safety are considered in the below assessment.

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) and 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 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

7.2. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- Determining a Planning Application

7.3. National Design Guide 2021

- Context
- Identity
- Built Form
- Movement
- Uses
- Homes and Buildings
- Lifespan

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
- LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding
- LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network
- LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments

7.5. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

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

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

7.8. 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
LP13: Custom and Self Build
LP20: Accessibility and Transport
LP22: Parking Provision
LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain
LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Character and Amenity**
- **Highway Safety**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Self-Build and Custom Build Housing**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1. The current application is a resubmission of a previous application, F/YR25/0279/O, which was refused under delegated powers on 5th June 2025.
- 9.2. The previous application was refused as the Sequential Test within the Flood Risk Assessment accompanying the application did not sufficiently demonstrate that there were no reasonably available alternative sites that may be sequentially preferable to the application site by virtue of either lesser flood risk and/or an extant planning permission able to accommodate the quantum of development proposed, contrary to Policy LP14.
- 9.3. The current application proposes the same development as previously submitted and seeks to address the earlier reason for refusal by way of revised Sequential Test submitted accordingly. This is assessed in more detail below.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. The land is located in the built framework of Gorefield. Policy LP3 classifies Gorefield as a 'Small Village' where development will be considered on its merits but will normally be limited in scale to residential infilling. By virtue of the recently approved plots to the west of the site (F/YR23/0548/O), this application seeks to redevelop an existing outbuilding on a parcel of land between existing properties as an infill plot. Thus, the proposal complies with Policy LP3 with regard to the overall scale of development suitable for Gorefield and therefore does not present a barrier to the granting of outline planning permission in this instance.
- 10.2. Furthermore, the principle of development would only be supported where it meets the necessary criteria of the Local Plan with regard to character and amenity (Policy LP16), and any site constraints such as flood risk (LP14) or highway safety (LP15) that would render the scheme unacceptable.

Character and Amenity

- 10.3. Details of appearance, layout and scale are to be submitted at Reserved Matters stage. The submitted indicative site plan depicts that the plot appears suitably sized to allow for appropriate levels of amenity for future occupants.
- 10.4. The submitted plans offer an indicative street scene, based upon the view from Gorefield Road, which will see a proposed 2-storey dwelling following the stepped building line between the host dwelling to the east and new dwelling to the west. The indicative street scene depicts that the proposed dwelling could be acceptable in terms of design, appearance and scale subject to acceptable submission of the reserved matters.
- 10.5. Notwithstanding the presence of any fenestration proposed to face adjacent dwellings, the proposed dwelling appears adequately separated from these to limit any impacts of overlooking. There may be some impacts of overlooking from the existing adjacent dwellings to the proposed, particularly in the case of the dwelling to the west as this contains fenestration to its eastern flank facing the application site, however this may be mitigated through appropriate design of the intended dwelling and/or boundary treatments at Reserved Matters stage.
- 10.6. Comments from Gorefield Parish Council regarding overdevelopment and impact to the amenity space of the host dwelling are noted. However, the indicative site plans suggest that the proposed dwelling will have both adequate parking/turning space to the front, along with an appropriate quantum of private amenity space which accords with the requirements of Policy LP16 (h), subject to matters of detailed design at Reserved Matters. Furthermore, whilst it is acknowledged that whilst the proposed plot will erode a small area of the southwestern corner of the host dwelling's garden to accommodate its own private amenity space, the remainder of the host dwelling's private amenity space is substantial and as such any limited loss by virtue of the new dwelling will not result any notable detrimental impact to the host dwelling's amenity.

10.7. Accordingly, it is considered that matters of character and residential amenity could be satisfactorily dealt with through the submission of an appropriately designed scheme in any subsequent reserved matters application to ensure compliance with Policies LP2 and LP16.

Highway Safety

10.8. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to ensure safe and convenient access for all within the district.

10.9. The proposal intends to utilise an existing access to serve the site. There are suitable parking/turning areas indicated for the proposed dwelling. There is sufficient turning space shown to allow vehicles to enter and exit in a forward gear, and it is likely that the parking areas will offer sufficient parking in line with the parking provision requirements set out in Appendix A of Policy LP15. Notwithstanding, the exact parking requirement is unknown as matters of Layout and Scale are reserved for later approval.

10.10. It is acknowledged that proposal intends to utilise part of the host dwelling's driveway and demolition of a garage that serves the host dwelling. However, notwithstanding these losses, the host dwelling will retain sufficient parking and turning to ensure safe and convenient access.

10.11. Comments from the Highway Authority raised no concerns regarding highway safety and had no objection to the proposed access arrangements subject to the clearance of existing vegetation to the east to allow for increased visibility and reconstruction of part of the existing access to reduce debris migration. It is understood that the land to the east of the site, which contains the obstructive vegetation is within the ownership of the applicant and as such alterations/vegetation removal can be secured by condition to improve the overall access safety and visibility. Accordingly, it is considered that the scheme complies with Policy LP15, subject to conditions.

Flood Risk

10.12. The site and surrounding area is entirely located in Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 and is therefore considered to be at a high probability of fluvial and/or tidal flooding.

10.13. As stated above, this application is a resubmission of the earlier application F/YR25/0279/O, refused in June 2025 by virtue of an insufficient Sequential Test. In an attempt to address this reason for refusal, the applicant has submitted a revised FRA and Sequential Test in support of the current application.

10.14. 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 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.

10.15. National planning policy includes an over-arching principle in the Framework that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. To that end, 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, as far as possible, development in current and future medium and high flood risk areas. The PPG furthermore 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

10.16. 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 planning authority.

10.17. Since the earlier refused submission on 5th June 2025, on 27th June 2025 the Council formally withdrew its Fenland Flood Risk Sequential Test Methodology and updated clarification on the LPA's expected area of search for a Sequential Test was 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 role 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.* (Emphasis Added)

To pass the Sequential Test, applicants must demonstrate that there are no reasonably 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."

10.18. The current application, which was submitted in October 2025, includes a Sequential and Exception Test report which focuses the area of search on the settlement of Gorefield. However, as discussed above, Gorefield is classified

in Policy LP3 (settlement hierarchy) as a Small village. Accordingly, the above is clear that the area of search for sites within a Small village 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.

10.19. The application is not supported by any evidence to justify the need for development in this location and accordingly does not qualify for any variation to the required area of search.

10.20. The Council is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and there remain sites identified as suitable for development in the Local Plan that do not currently benefit from planning permission. It would, therefore, be reasonable to conclude that on the basis of district wide search, there will be other reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 to accommodate the development. As such, it is considered that the Sequential Test is failed.

10.21. Notwithstanding the above, if, as set out in the above area of search guidance, Gorefield, as a Small Village, was considered the appropriate area of search in this case, the Sequential Test would remain failed. The submitted Sequential Test concludes that there are no reasonably available sites to accommodate the development in an area of lesser flood risk within Gorefield. The Sequential Test considers a number of sites, such as the recently approved F/YR25/0473/O (Land S of 4 – 16 Back Rd, Gorefield - Erect up to 9 x dwellings) discounting this site as reasonably available on the basis of the scale of the proposed development and corresponding construction times. However, matters relating to the quantum of units as this discounted site is immaterial, as the PPG makes clear that 'reasonably available' sites are not limited to single plots, and 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. Furthermore, sites do not need to be in the ownership of the applicant to be considered 'reasonably available'.

10.22. Accordingly, in either case, it is considered that 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 when considering reasonably available sites within the wider district or Gorefield specifically. On this basis, it is 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.

Exception Test

10.23. Notwithstanding the failure of the sequential test, had this been deemed as passed it would then be necessary for the application to pass the Exception Test, which comprises of demonstration of the following:

- 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').

a) *Wider Community Benefits*

10.24. Section 4.5.8 of the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD sets out the sustainability themes and issues which development could help to address in order to achieve wider benefits, which are:

- Land and water resources;
- Biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- Landscape, townscape and historic environment;
- Climate change mitigation and renewable energy;
- Flood risk and climate change adaptation;
- Pollution;
- Healthy and inclusive and accessible communities
- Economic activity; or
- Transport.

10.25. Having regard to the scale and nature of development, it would likely be difficult to achieve wider benefits through much of the list above. However, it is often possible to achieve wider benefits on smaller housing schemes thought the inclusion of climate change mitigation and renewable energy features to a level which exceeds normal Building Regulations requirements. Features such as the installation of photovoltaic panels, air source heat pump, or means to sustain and encourage biodiversity could be utilised to assist in achieving sustainability benefits. These measures could be considered and included at Reserved Matters stage and may result in the satisfactory compliance with the Exception Test in this regard.

b) *Flood risk management*

10.26. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment did recommend the following mitigation measures:

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 0.3 metres above ground level; and
- Flood resistant and resilient construction to height of 0.3 metres above the finished floor level;

which were considered acceptable by the Environment Agency and could be secured by condition. It is therefore considered that these measures address the need for safety in times of flooding at the site, and as such would satisfy the Exception Test in this regard.

Flood Risk – Conclusion

10.27. The evidence submitted has failed to fully demonstrate that there are no sequentially preferable sites that could accommodate the quantum of development proposed under the terms of the current scheme and thus the proposal has failed the Sequential Test. As such, it is considered that the current scheme is not compliant with Policy LP14 and should be refused.

Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

10.28. 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.

10.29. 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.

10.30. The Council can demonstrate that the demand for self-build and custom housing is comfortably being met in Fenland. Therefore, no weight should be given to the delivery of self/ custom build housing at this time.

10.31. Notwithstanding the above, the application is being put forward as a self-/custom build dwelling. Since the determination of the previous application, appeal decisions have emerged indicating that Self/custom build housing should be secured by means of a legal agreement. No such agreement has been submitted and as such a reason for refusal is recommended in this regard.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.32. 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 offsetting. 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.

10.33. 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.

11 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

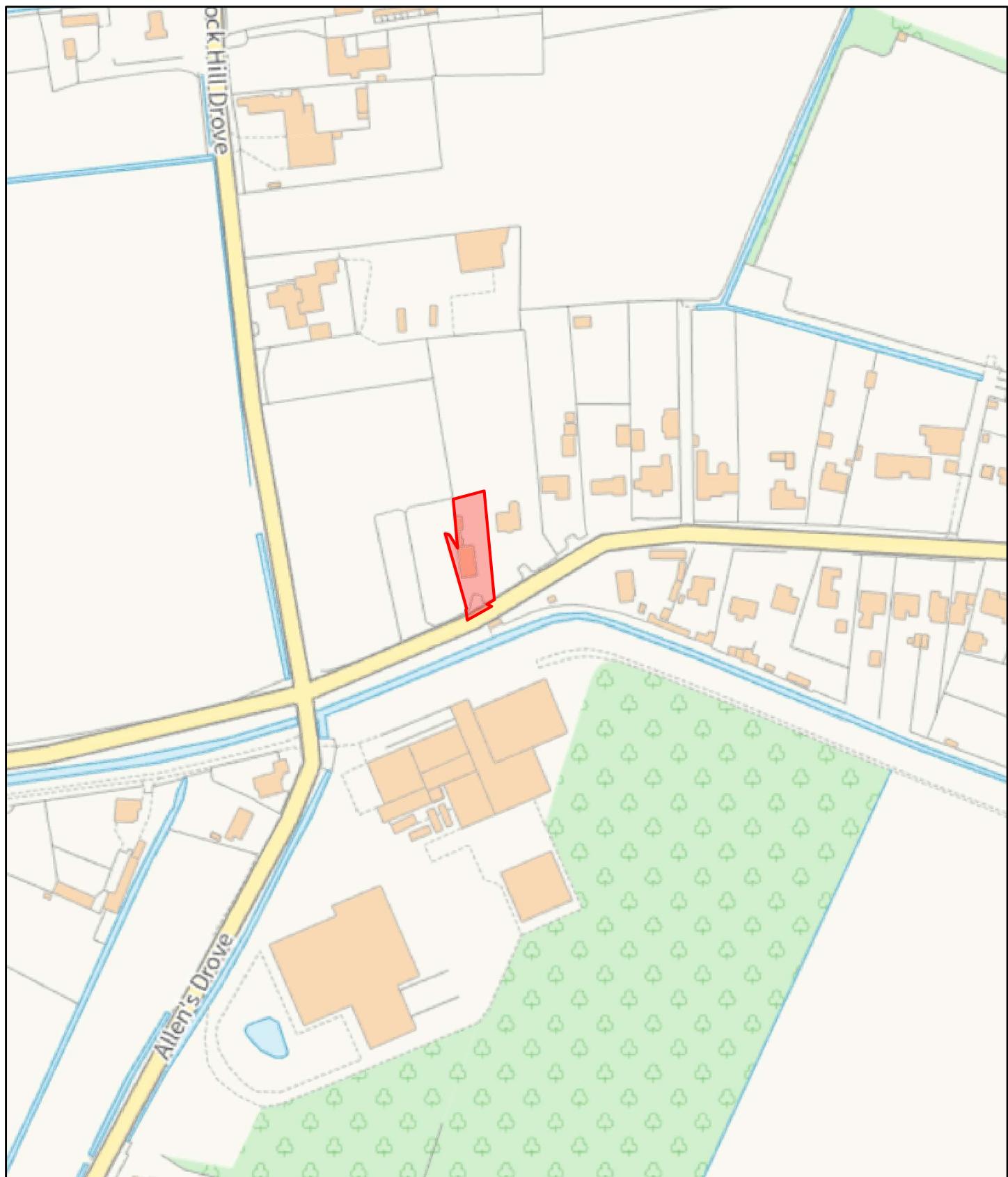
11.1. This application seeks outline approval for the erection of 1 self-build/custom dwelling facilitated by the demolition of an existing outbuilding at 176 High Road, Gorefield.

- 11.2. The proposed development would result in residential infilling within the existing developed footprint of the village. Therefore, the location of the proposed development accords with the spatial strategy which should be offered moderate weight in favour of the scheme.
- 11.3. Matters of access are considered acceptable, subject to conditions to improve overall safety and visibility, accordingly the scheme complies with Policy LP15.
- 11.4. The Council can demonstrate that the demand for self-build and custom housing is comfortably being met in Fenland. Therefore, no significant weight should be given to the delivery of self/custom build housing at this time. Similarly, the Council currently has more than a five-year housing land supply and as such limited weight should also be given to the contribution the development would make to this.
- 11.5. It is also considered that the provision of one dwelling would only make an extremely limited contribution towards economic and social benefits in terms of contribution to the settlement and its services and facilities.
- 11.6. Matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are to be committed at Reserved Matters stage, and as such the indicative details submitted should offer no weight in favour of the scheme.
- 11.7. Conflict arises through the principle of the development of the site with respect to flood risk, rather than as a result of matters that could be addressed at the detailed design stage. Notwithstanding the revised Sequential Test submitted, which focuses the area of search on the settlement of Gorefield, the Council's position is clear that the area of search should 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; such justification has not been advanced in this case and as such the Sequential Test fails, which weighs significantly against the proposal as it is contrary to Policy LP14 and the adopted Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD or Section 14 of the NPPF.
- 11.8. Furthermore, an appropriate legal agreement has not been submitted to secure the development as the intended self/custom build housing, and as such a reason for refusal is included in this regard.
- 11.9. Therefore, these contraventions are considered to outweigh any benefits arising from the scheme. It must be borne in mind that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and there are no material considerations in this case that outweigh the policy contraventions indicated. As such, the application is recommended for refusal.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; for the following reasons:

1	<p>Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires that development proposals within Flood Zone 3 are accompanied by a Sequential Test demonstrating how the development is unable to be accommodated in areas at a lower risk of flooding. This policy is compliant with section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which also requires such a test to be satisfied prior to approving development within Flood Zone 3. The Sequential Test within the Flood Risk Assessment accompanying the application does not sufficiently demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites that may be sequentially preferable to the application site by virtue of either lesser flood risk and/or an extant planning permission able to accommodate the quantum of development proposed. The proposal is therefore contrary to both policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 14 of the NPPF as a result.</p>
2	<p>In the absence of a legal agreement or other enforceable mechanism to secure the delivery and occupation of the proposed dwelling as a self-build unit, the development fails to meet the definition and requirements of self-build housing as set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended).</p>



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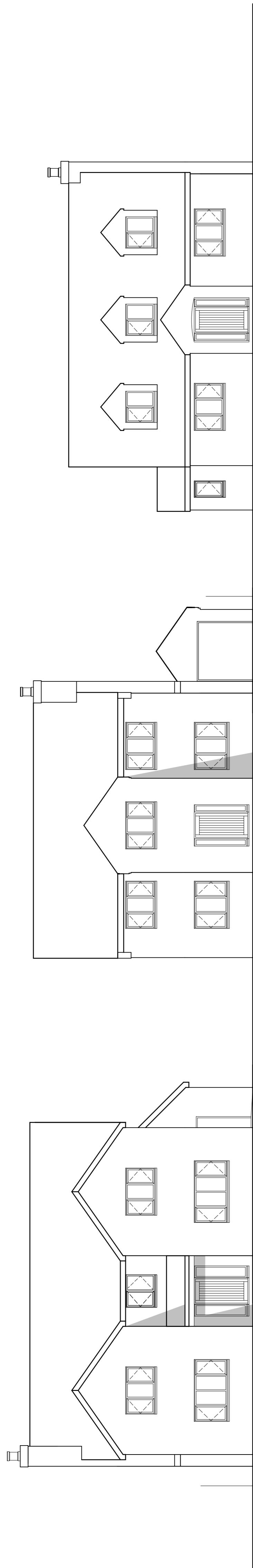
 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council

A vertical scale bar diagram with horizontal tick marks. The labels are 1m, 2m, 3m, 4m, and 5m, positioned to the right of the bar. The bar is divided into five equal segments by these labels, with additional smaller tick marks between them.

Indicative Street Scene

dwelling under construction,
as approved by planning
application F/YR24/0312/RM



176 High Road

An architectural line drawing of a building facade. The facade is a trapezoidal shape. It features four windows: two on the upper trapezoidal section and two on the lower rectangular section. Each window is a four-pane unit with a diamond-shaped center pane. The drawing uses black lines on a white background.

The Plot

A schematic diagram of a beam splitter. It consists of a central vertical line representing the optical axis. A horizontal line extends from the left side of this axis, representing an input beam. From the right side of the axis, two horizontal lines branch out at an angle, representing the two output paths of the beam splitter.



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F/YR25/0806/PIP

Applicant: Westfield Farms Manea
Ltd

Agent: Mr R Papworth
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land South Of Lavender Mill Close, Fallow Corner Drove, Manea,

Permission in Principle for up to 9 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to officer recommendation.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This is an application for Permission in Principle (first stage) for up to nine dwellings on a parcel of agricultural land in the countryside outside of the existing developed footprint of Manea. There are no material considerations which outweigh the determination of this application in accordance with the adopted policies and in line with the NPPF.
- 1.2. Only matters of location, use of land and amount of development can be considered at this stage. All matters of detail would be subject to Technical Details approval if this first stage Permission in Principle were approved.
- 1.3. With regard to location, the proposal fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the pattern and character of the surrounding natural landscape and sporadic built character of the immediate area to the south of Fallow Corner Drove which is largely open agricultural land. It would be inconsistent with the core shape of the village and would appear incongruous both in terms of the landscape character of the area and in terms of visual appearance. It will inevitably result in an unacceptable urbanising impact and an adverse impact on the verdant rural character.
- 1.4. Furthermore, the site lies in an area at high risk of flooding and insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that development of the site is necessary in this instance having regard to national policy which seeks to steer development to the lowest area of flood risk in the first instance. As such, the proposal conflicts with FLP Policy LP14 and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.
- 1.5. The application site is approximately 1.7km from the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site and may provide functional land that is important to the maintenance of populations of Whooper and Bewick's swans and other birds within the designation's assemblage such as Wigeon. The application is not supported by any ecological evidence and as such insufficient information has been submitted to inform the required Habitat

Regulations Assessment.

- 1.6. The application site is indicated as being in an area of potential deep peat, and insufficient information has been submitted to verify the actual soil conditions, as such the application has failed to demonstrate that a development on this site would not impact deep peat with the potential for carbon release.
- 1.7. In addition, if the principle of development in this location were acceptable, the development for up to 9 dwellings does not make efficient use of the land, contrary to the environmental objectives of Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- 1.8. Accordingly, the recommendation is to refuse permission in principle for residential development of this site.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site relates to an undeveloped area of Grade 1 agricultural land, approximately 0.98 hectares in size, situated on the south side of Fallow Corner Drove, Manea. The site, at the time of inspection, appeared to be in current agricultural use, with crops apparent. The site itself is open agricultural land with a drainage channel running along the highway forming its northern boundary and two further drains forming its eastern and western boundaries, the land is open to the south. A small number of mature trees are situated to the northwestern corner, within the highway verge.
- 2.2. Development in the area is predominately concentrated in a linear pattern to the north side of Fallow Corner Drove only. However, a recent approval for 29 dwellings at the former Lavender Mill site (F/YR23/0423/RM), forming an in-depth development, is set behind existing frontage development opposite the site, infilling part of the backland separation between Fallow Corner Drove and Westfield Road to the northwest.
- 2.3. To the south side of Fallow Corner Drove, development is considerably more sporadic. This side is dominated by large expanses of agricultural land with some farm buildings and a very limited number of residential dwellings.
- 2.4. The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. Planning in Principle (PIP) applications are an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing led development and separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail.
- 3.2. As set down in the Town & Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 and Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017, the scope of PIPs (stage 1 of the process) is restricted to consideration of location, development size and land use. All other matters are 'reserved' for consideration by the stage 2 Technical Details application which may be made should PIP be granted.

3.3. The application is supported by limited details, only committing a location plan; No indicative plans detailing how the development could be laid out and appear were provided. A Planning Statement sets out that the development would comprise two-storey dwellings.

3.4. The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this 'first stage' (or Permission in Principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and assesses the 'principle' issues namely:

- Location,
- Use, and
- Amount of development proposed

3.5. Should this application be successful, the applicant would have to submit a Technical Details application (stage 2 of the process) covering all other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle alone does not constitute the grant of planning permission. Technical details consent regarding the proposed properties would need to be applied for should this application be granted.

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

4.1. No available planning history for this site.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1. Manea Parish Council

MPC could not support this application:

- *Insufficient information*
- *Outside the Manea building envelope.*
- *Flood zone 3*
- *Loss of agricultural land*
- *Lack of drainage detail.*

5.2. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority

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

This application seeks to establish the principle of development at this location only. As such, any highways-related requirements cannot be determined at this stage and will be subject to future planning applications and approvals.

Nevertheless, the submitted documentation demonstrates that appropriate inter-vehicle visibility splays can be achieved, and that the proposed vehicular accesses are of a suitable size.

Given the scale of the proposed development, the applicant will need to demonstrate how safe and convenient pedestrian access will be provided at the Technical Details Consent stage. This could be achieved by incorporating a crossing point to the footway on the northern side of Fallow Corner Drove, either via the main site access—where the access would be expected to be designed as a bellmouth junction to accommodate a short section of footway—or through a standalone pedestrian link located along the site frontage.

Furthermore, at the Technical Details Consent stage, the Local Highway Authority will expect the proposed access to be designed to ensure that surface water from the site does not drain onto or across the public highway. Please note that the use of permeable paving alone does not provide the Highway Authority with sufficient assurance that surface water will be adequately managed in the long term. Therefore, physical measures must be incorporated to prevent such runoff.

Additionally, all vehicular accesses should be constructed using a bound material for a minimum of 5 metres from the edge of the public highway into the site. This is to prevent loose material from being carried onto the highway, which could pose a hazard to road users.

5.3. Environment Agency

We have reviewed the documents as submitted and we have no objection to this permission in principle application. The following flood risk issues and mitigation measures should be considered and clarified at the technical details consent stage:

Flood Risk

Our Flood Map for Planning shows the site lies within fluvial Flood Zone 3a, defined by the 'Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change' as having a high probability of flooding. The proposal is for Permission in Principle for up to 9 x dwellings, which is classified as a 'more vulnerable' development, as defined in Annex 3:Flood Vulnerability classification of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Flood Risk Assessment

To assist you in making an informed decision about the flood risk affecting this site, the key points to note from the submitted FRA, referenced 'H10744/MH/mh' and dated 'October 2025', are:

- *Residual breach flood risk depths, velocities, and maximum hazard rating are not specifically addressed, but our fenland hazard mapping indicates flood risk depths of 1-2 m (a more site specific breach depth can be obtained if desired via our products 5-8), and a maximum flood velocity of 0-0.3 m/s, resulting in a maximum hazard rating of danger for most. This risk should be assessed within the FRA.*
- *Proposed finished floor levels are currently 1.8 m above existing ground level.*
- *0.6 m of flood resilient construction has been proposed.*
- *Two storey dwellings are proposed, with no ground floor sleeping.*
- *Safe access/Egress was not assessed.*

Where our Fenland breach mapping shows flood depths up to 2m, we would expect finished floor levels to be set above the highest predicted flood depth. If this is not practicable due to other planning constraints, finished floor levels should be raised as high as possible and flood resistance and/or resilience measures should be incorporated up to the maximum flood depth where appropriate. Please note that flood resistance measures should be incorporated up to a maximum of 0.6m above finished floor levels due to the risk of structural damage if the difference between internal and external flood depths is greater than 0.6m. Where internal flooding is unavoidable, no ground floor sleeping accommodation should be provided. Flood resilience measures and the safe access/egress of the development should also be considered within the FRA.

[...]

Additional comments provided with regard to the sequential test, exception test, flood warning and emergency response, and other flooding sources with advice to the applicant – omitted for brevity.

5.4. **Anglian Water**

ASSETS

Section 1 - Assets Affected

New development must comply with Building Regulations and the Water Industry Act.

Our records show that there are no assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement within the development site boundary or affected by the proposals.

It is highly recommended that the applicant carries out a thorough investigation of the proposed working area to establish whether any unmapped public or private sewers, lateral drains, or other water infrastructure assets are in existence. Due to the private sewer transfer in October 2011, many newly adopted public used water assets and their history are not indicated on our records. Any encroachment zones should be reflected in the site layout. The development site may contain private water mains, drains or other assets not shown on our records. These are private assets and not the responsibility of Anglian Water but that of the landowner.

WASTEWATER SERVICES

Section 2 - Wastewater Treatment

Please be advised that Anglian Water have no foul sewer infrastructure within the vicinity of the proposed development. Consequently it is anticipated that little to no new foul flows will be received by the WRC as a result of this development.

Section 3 - Used Water Network

Please be advised that there are no public foul sewers within the vicinity of the proposed development.

Section 4 - Surface Water Disposal

The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option.

Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer.

Please be advised that there are no public surface water sewers within the vicinity of the proposed development, and therefore Anglian Water will be unable to serve the sites surface water disposal requirements. Alternative methods of surface water disposal will need to be investigated such as infiltration techniques or a discharge to a watercourse in accordance with the surface water management hierarchy as outlined in Building Regulations Part H. The alternative is that a new surface water sewer is constructed which is used to convey your surface water to a watercourse or as part of a SuDS scheme, where appropriate. Subject to the sewer being designed in accordance with the current version of Sewers For Adoption, the sewer can be put forward for adoption by Anglian Water under Section 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991. If the outfall is to a watercourse, the applicant will be required to obtain consent to discharge via the appropriate body. If your site has no means of drainage due to third party land then you may be able to requisition Anglian Water, under Section 98, to provide a connection to the public sewer for domestic drainage purposes. As part of this option, you may wish to enter into a works agreement in accordance with Section 30 of the Anglian Water Authority Act 1977. This will allow you to design and construct the public sewer using Anglian Waters' statutory powers in accordance with Section 159/168 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

5.5. **Natural England**

OBJECTION - SITE UNSUITABLE FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS

Natural England currently objects to this proposal.

As submitted we consider it could:

- *potentially result in the loss or damage of peat soils, against Draft Local Plan Policy LP26*
- *have potential significant effects on the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site*

Further detail is needed to fully assess the environmental impacts of the proposal and the scope for mitigating adverse impacts. Natural England, therefore, advises that any development on this site should be considered via a planning application.

5.6. **Environment & Health Services (FDC)**

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.

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.

5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties

Objectors

The LPA received 31 letters of objection to the scheme, from a number of address points as follows:

- 13 from residents of Fallow Corner Drove, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Westfield Rd, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of School Ln, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Wimblington Rd, Doddington; and
- A number of additional address points, including Bury St Edmunds, Walcott, Lairg, Godmanchester, London, Ely, St Ives, Upper Cambourne, Lower Cambourne, Cambridge, and Waterbeach.

Of the objections received, the following matters were put forward as reasons for objection:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will spoil the traditional village feel • Overdevelopment • Loss of agricultural land • Loss of countryside character • Development would set an undesirable precedent • Development beyond the existing built form • Recent development in the area has mostly been redevelopment of existing sites or agricultural dwellings not new builds on greenfield sites 	Matters of the principle of development, location, use and amount are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure unable to cope • Traffic and highway safety concerns 	Matters relating to highway safety, sustainability and infrastructure are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over surface water flooding – claims to often have standing water on the land • In flood zone 3 • Raising floor levels above flood 	Matters relating to flood risk and drainage are discussed in the below assessment.

level is preposterous	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would endanger local wildlife 	Matters relating to ecology and biodiversity are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential amenity concerns during construction 	Matters relating to residential amenity are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of view for existing residents • Loss of value to nearby properties 	Loss of view and/or property values are not material planning considerations and as such are not discussed in the below assessment.

Supporters

The LPA received 13 letters of support for the scheme. Of these, 2 were noted to be received from address points outside of the Fenland district. The remaining 11 were received from address points as follows:

- 3 from residents of Fallow Corner Drove, Manea;
- 2 from residents of High St, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Station Rd, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Westfield Rd, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Williams Way, Manea (with no reasons for support);
- 1 from a resident of Scholars Cl, Manea;
- 1 from a resident of Wisbech Rd, Manea; and
- 1 from a resident of Straight Rd, Manea.

Of the qualifying letters of support received, the following matters were put forward as reasons to support the scheme:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will improve the overall quality of the road – through additional streetlights, improved drainage, etc. • Will fit into the current development along the Drove • Will balance the road with the development to the north side • Will not impact views or amenity • Will bring new vitality to the locality and help meet housing needs • Will contribute to the local economy 	Matters of the principle of development, location, use and amount are discussed in the below assessment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will aid in reducing congestion in the village centre • Good links to public transport 	Matters relating to highway safety, sustainability and infrastructure are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood mitigation (such as finished floor level raising) can be incorporated 	Matters relating to flood risk and drainage are discussed in the below assessment.

Representations

The LPA received one letter of representation from a resident of Straight Road, Manea (also a supporter). This rebutted to comments made within some published objections regarding claims of standing water, and some claims relating to the developer's motives for submitting the application. It should be noted that these matters, where material to the application, are discussed below.

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) and 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 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
 Homes and Buildings
 Resources
 Lifespan

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
- LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network
- LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments
- LP19 – The Natural Environment

7.5. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

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

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

7.8. 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
- LP22: Parking Provision
- LP23: Historic Environment
- LP24: Natural Environment
- LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain
- LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**

- **Amount of Development Proposed**
- **Additional Matters Raised During Consultation**

9 ASSESSMENT

9.1. Noting the guidance in place regarding Permission in Principle submissions assessment must be restricted to (a) location, (b) use and (c) amount and these items are considered in turn below:

Location

Principle, Form and Character

9.2. Generally, the principle of residential development on this site isn't automatically supported. The land is not allocated for housing in the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014), and the Council can currently demonstrate a healthy housing land supply of 6.6 years. As such, the national "tilted balance" (set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF) doesn't apply in this case. Accordingly, there is no automatic presumption in favour of granting permission. As such, decisions should be based firmly on how well the proposal aligns with local and national planning policies.

9.3. Policy LP3 sets out the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy, and approach to elsewhere developments. This is complemented by Policy LP4 which sets out proposed housing targets for Market Towns and Other Locations. The key driver of these policies is to ensure that new development is directed towards the most sustainable locations whilst recognising that smaller settlements will still need to reflect natural population change and may require additional development of a much smaller scale to reflect these changes. Since the Plan was adopted there have been a number of sites permitted and completed in other locations dramatically exceeding the anticipated provision set out in the adopted Plan with no notable improvements to social, educational and health infrastructure to offset the impacts of development or increase the overall sustainability of these locations. As such the principal of additional residential development within 'Other Locations' should not be automatically accepted.

9.4. Manea is classed as a Growth Village, where development and new service provision either within the existing urban area or as small village extensions will be appropriate. However, the application site is located outside of the built form of the settlement of Manea on the southern side of Fallow Corner Drove. The built form of the settlement of Manea extends along the northern side of Fallow Corner Drove, however the south remains largely undeveloped.

9.5. Thus, whilst the site is in close proximity to the settlement of Manea, the site being located in open countryside on the southern side of Fallow Corner Drove is considered an elsewhere location. Policy LP3 and the settlement hierarchy note that an 'Elsewhere' location will be restricted to development that is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services. The application does not include any information to suggest it is related to any of the exceptions outlined by LP3.

- 9.6. The current 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. 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.
- 9.7. Policy LP12 Part A also requires sites to satisfy additional criteria, including: (c) It would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland and (d) is of a scale and in a location that is in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement.
- 9.8. In addition, Policy LP16 (d) refers to development making a positive impact to local distinctiveness and the character of the area and amongst other things should not have an adverse impact on landscape character. It is also a core planning principle in the NPPF that recognises the intrinsic value of the countryside therefore consideration needs to be given to any harm caused.
- 9.9. The application site is located on the southern side of Fallow Corner Drove outside of the built form of the settlement of Manea which extends along the northern side. It is apparent therefore that development of the application site would clearly constitute the extension of the settlement limit onto greenfield land in the open countryside. The majority of the surrounding area on the south side of Fallow Corner Drove is agricultural in use and clearly rural in nature. Accordingly, the proposal would see residential development in currently undeveloped agricultural land, which would result in an unacceptable incursion into the open countryside. It would therefore have a significant detrimental impact on the rural character of the south side of the road. As such, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy LP12 Part A (c). Furthermore, given that the site is divorced from the main built form of Manea that sits to the north side, it is considered that the location of the proposal is not in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement, contrary to Policy LP12 Part A (d).
- 9.10. The application site constitutes an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Manea. Development of this site would not respect the rural character or settlement pattern of the village, 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) and (d) which seek to ensure development would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and respects the core shape of the settlement. Furthermore, the scheme is considered contrary to Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan and Policy DM3 of Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD, by virtue of the unacceptable character impact.

Flood Risk

- 9.11. Another pertinent requirement is to ensure that development is located in areas of lowest flood risk.

9.12. 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 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.

9.13. National planning policy includes an over-arching principle in the Framework that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. To that end, 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, so far as possible, development in current and future medium and high flood risk areas. The PPG furthermore 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

9.14. 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 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 role 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 reasonably 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.”

- 9.15. The application includes a Sequential and Exception Test report (dated 13 October 2025) which focuses the area of search on the settlement of Manea. However, as discussed above, the application site is located outside of the built form of the settlement of Manea on the southern side of Fallow Corner Drove in the open countryside, and thus is considered an elsewhere location. The above is clear that the area of search for sites within elsewhere locations over which a Sequential Test should be applied 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.
- 9.16. The application is not supported by any evidence to justify the need for development in this location and accordingly does not qualify for any variation to the required area of search.
- 9.17. The Council is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and there remain sites identified as suitable for development in the Local Plan that do not currently benefit from planning permission. It would, therefore, be reasonable to conclude that on the basis of district wide search, there will be other reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 to accommodate 9 dwellings. As such, it is considered that the Sequential Test is failed.
- 9.18. Notwithstanding the above, if, as set out in the above area of search guidance, Manea, as a Growth Village, was considered the appropriate area of search in this case, the Sequential Test would remain failed. The submitted Sequential Test concludes that there are no reasonably available sites to accommodate the development in an area of lesser flood risk within Manea. The Sequential Test considers a number of sites, however the reason for discounting some are given as “Small estate style development so not comparable” or “This is a single bungalow not a two-storey house” and therefore relies on the fact that different types/styles of developments on sites with a lower risk of flooding are not comparable. However, it must be considered that this stage 1 Permission in Principle application is merely focused on establishing whether a site is suitable in principle as such details such as whether dwellings are single or two storey or configured in an estate layout are immaterial to this application, as such details are not committed at this stage. Matters relating to the quantum of units as in some discounted sites within the submitted Sequential Test are also immaterial, as the PPG makes clear that ‘reasonably available’ sites are not limited to single plots, and 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. Furthermore, sites do not need to be in the ownership of the applicant to be considered ‘reasonably available’.
- 9.19. Accordingly, in either case, it is considered that 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 when considering reasonably available sites within the wider district

or Manea specifically. On this basis, it is 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.

Exception Test

9.20. Notwithstanding the failure of the sequential test, had this been deemed as passed it would then be necessary for the application to pass the Exception Test, which comprises of 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.

9.21. In respect of (a); In order to pass the Exception Test the proposal must provide wider sustainability benefits i.e., beyond merely the application site, for the community. Examples of benefits beyond the application site may include:

- Visually enhance a site to the benefit of the character of an area;
- Link development to existing services and facilities bringing communities together sustainably;
- Relocate an existing use closer to existing public transport hubs, thus reducing the amount of traffic on the road; or
- Providing community facilities

All these examples would likely provide some benefit to the community beyond the application site.

9.22. To address the exception test, the application includes the following proposals:

- (1) The proposal will incorporate air source heat pumps and solar panels to the roofs which will be ideal as the rear-view properties will be south facing.
- (2) It is expected that the dwellings would be a minimum of B EPC rating.
- (3) The proposals would comply with Building Regulations.
- (4) With this proposal, within the red line the highway verge is shown as the proposal is to widen out the road or provide a layby at this point, which would be for the benefit of users of Fallow Corner Drove.

9.23. The application, as a stage 1 Permission in Principle, does not commit details in respect of (1) – (3) above. However, it is acknowledged that should these elements come forward within the Technical Details stage, these may contribute to renewable energy usage in line with the sustainability objectives of the NPPF. Considering item (4), whilst it is acknowledged that the localised widening of the highway and provision of a layby could be considered a wider public benefit and thus address the exception test, it may be such that the Technical Details proposal would likely result in a requirement to provide localised widening, a layby and/or a suitable footway as part of the development proposals in any case by the Highways Authority, as stated

within their submitted comments in response to this application. Therefore, this provision cannot be considered to address wider public benefit as required by the exception test, as this 'benefit' would be a standard requirement for development of this scale.

9.24. In respect of part (b) of the Exception Test; The inclusion of flood mitigation measures including raised finished floor levels, flood resilient construction measures within the proposal are highlighted within the flood risk assessment technically address the need for safety in times of flooding at the site, and as such would likely satisfy the Exception Test in this regard. However, notwithstanding the Environment Agency's position on this matter, officers retain concern that the implementation of these measures, such as raising FFLS to 1.8m above existing site level may generate material character and amenity concerns which cannot be addressed until the Technical Details Consent stage of the application process.

Drainage

9.25. Foul water capacity and surface water flood risk concerns have been expressed by residents with comments that site is often waterlogged and local infrastructure may not be capable of supporting the development. Manea continues to experience ongoing issues with surface water drainage and sewage system capacity at Manea WRC. However, the application site specifically is predominately within an area of low surface water flooding risk on the Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Risk Maps, and comments from Anglian Water note that there is no foul water infrastructure in the area and that as a result it is anticipated that no new foul flows will be received by Manea WRC as a result of the development. Notwithstanding, matters of surface and foul water disposal will be reserved for consideration within any forthcoming Technical Details application.

Ecological impacts of location

9.26. The application site is approximately 1.7km from the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site. The development triggers Natural England's 'Goose & Swan Functional Land' Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the Ouse Washes due to the potential for surrounding agricultural land to provide important winter roosting and foraging habitat for Ouse Washes qualifying bird species. Suitable arable / grassland habitat, particularly in such close proximity to the internationally designated sites, may provide functional land that is important to the maintenance of populations of Whooper and Bewick's swans and other birds within the designation's assemblage such as Wigeon. The application is not supported by any ecological evidence and as such insufficient information has been submitted to inform the Habitat Regulations Assessment 'likely significant effect' screening and the proposal is considered contrary to Policies LP16 (b) and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024.

9.27. Furthermore, Natural England's high level indicative mapping shows that the application site is located in an area of potential deep peat, and as such they advise that an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey should be undertaken to verify the actual soil conditions and enable consideration of the

sustainable use and management of peat soils, to ensure their protection and minimise production of carbon emissions through their loss and degradation. Natural England's advice is that new development should avoid peat soils to leave this important carbon sink intact and prevent release of CO₂ and/or methane into the atmosphere. Chapter 11 of the NPPF seeks to safeguard land for carbon storage and Chapter 14 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan seek to avoid carbon emissions in order to mitigate against climate change. The application has not been accompanied by an ALC survey and as such has failed to demonstrate that a development on this site would not impact deep peat with the potential for carbon release, contrary to the aforementioned policies.

Location Conclusion

9.28. The above assessment considers the application site for the development of up to 9 dwellings on an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Manea, resulting in unacceptable incursion into the open countryside, harm to the rural character, is positioned in an area of highest flood risk and in an area where Habitat Regulations Assessment 'likely significant effect' screening and Agricultural Land Classification surveys are required. Thus, the location of the scheme is considered contrary to Policies LP3, LP12, LP14, LP16 and LP19 and thus Permission in Principle should be refused on this basis.

Use

9.29. 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.

9.30. Paragraph 174 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. The application site is Grade 1 agricultural land. It should be noted that at the time of site inspection it was clear that this land is in viable agricultural use. No justification was provided in respect of the loss of such land.

9.31. A large proportion of agricultural land in Fenland District is best and most versatile land. There is insufficient information upon which to assess what the loss the land might mean for the district as a whole. However, the Council has rarely refused applications by virtue of the loss of agricultural land, given the quantity of such land within the district. It is therefore considered unreasonable to justify a reason for refusal on this basis.

9.32. Considering the land use in relation to surrounding land uses, the use of the land for residential purposes, in principle, would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on surrounding residents by reason or noise or disturbance or vice versa.

Amount of Development Proposed

9.33. The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 9no dwellings on a site of approximately 0.98ha which would equate to a density of approximately 10 dwellings per hectare, if the full quantum was advanced. Although no site plan has been submitted, it is considered that this is not efficient use of land.

Policies LP12 (c) and (d) and LP16 (d) require development respond to the local character and paragraphs 129 set out the need for development to achieve appropriate densities, with paragraph 130 c) stating local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, considering the policies in the Framework.

- 9.34. Densities vary within the local area from the frontage development of Fallow Corner Drove and Westfield Road, and the in-depth development of the former Lavender Mill site; however, in each of these areas, densities are more akin to those typically found within growth villages such as Manea. Notwithstanding its comparably more rural location than the development to the north and taking aside that this location is unacceptable for residential development in principle (as set out above), if this land were to be developed it would not amount to efficient use of land when compared with adjacent residential development.
- 9.35. One of the three overarching objectives that the planning system has is achieving sustainable development. Set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF is an environmental objective which includes making efficient use of land. This ties with the economic objective of ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth (it has already been set out in the report above that this is not the right land in the right location and is not needed to support growth).
- 9.36. Efficient use of land and proper planning including good layouts ensure that the wider environmental objectives set out in paragraph 8 e.g. improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently (best agricultural land is a natural resource), minimising waste and adapting to climate change are maximised. Piecemeal development, inefficient use of land and developments not in accordance with the adopted development plan are individually and cumulatively counter to these aims. The NPPF defines sustainable development as development that accords with an up-to-date development plan. It follows that development not in accordance with adopted policies is most likely to be unsustainable development and this is considered the case here.
- 9.37. In this instance, whilst a lower-than-average density would be more in keeping with its countryside setting, a development of up to 9 houses on a parcel of land of this size resulting in a density of approximately 10 dwellings per hectare is not making efficient use of land and therefore the amount of development proposed is unacceptable and contrary to paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

Additional Matters Raised During Consultation

- 9.38. **Highway safety** – No objection was raised by the highways authority in respect of the principle of development for residential use. Notwithstanding, details regarding safe and convenient access would need to be fully reconciled at the Technical Details stage to ensure the scheme complies with Policy LP15.

9.39. **Impact on biodiversity/BNG** – The LPA duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended, has been considered and comments received in public consultation and from Natural England are addressed elsewhere.

In relation to more general ecological issues, such information could be submitted at the Technical Details stage (if this first stage were successful) and considered then, consulted upon and the decision, including potential refusal or conditions, should be based upon the findings of said ecological information.

If this stage of Permission in Principle were successful, it would not therefore prevent proper consideration of ecological issues at the next stage and it would not alter duties of landowners/developers to comply with other legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act in the meantime.

The grant of permission in principle is not within the scope of biodiversity net gain (as it is not a grant of planning permission), but the subsequent Technical Details consent (as a grant of planning permission) would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition, unless appropriate exemptions were to apply.

9.40. **Residential Amenity** – Some public comments received raise matters of impacts to residential amenity; however, these are matters that could only be determined at the Technical Details stage. It should also be noted that disturbance during construction, the devaluation of properties and the loss of views are not matters attributed material planning weight.

9.41. **Other matters** – Comments have been received that new housing will create temporary employment and contribute to the local economy. This is not a material planning consideration. 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 Fenland District exceeds its five-year Housing Land Supply with a total of 6.6 years provision.

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1. As indicated above it is only location, use and amount of development that may be considered at the first 'permission in principle stage'.

10.2. The above assessment considers that the location of the site for residential development is unacceptable due to the conflict with the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan and unacceptable incursion of urbanisation into the open countryside, contrary to Policies LP3, LP12, and LP16. In addition, the site lies entirely within in Flood Zone 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.

- 10.3. The application site is approximately 1.7km from the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site and may provide functional land that is important to the maintenance of populations of Whooper and Bewick's swans and other birds within the designation's assemblage such as Wigeon. The application is not supported by any ecological evidence and as such insufficient information has been submitted to inform the required Habitat Regulations Assessment.
- 10.4. The application site is indicated as being in an area of potential deep peat, and insufficient information has been submitted to verify the actual soil conditions, as such the application has failed to demonstrate that a development on this site would not impact deep peat with the potential for carbon release.
- 10.5. Furthermore, it is considered that the amount of development proposed does not constitute an effective use of land and is contrary to paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

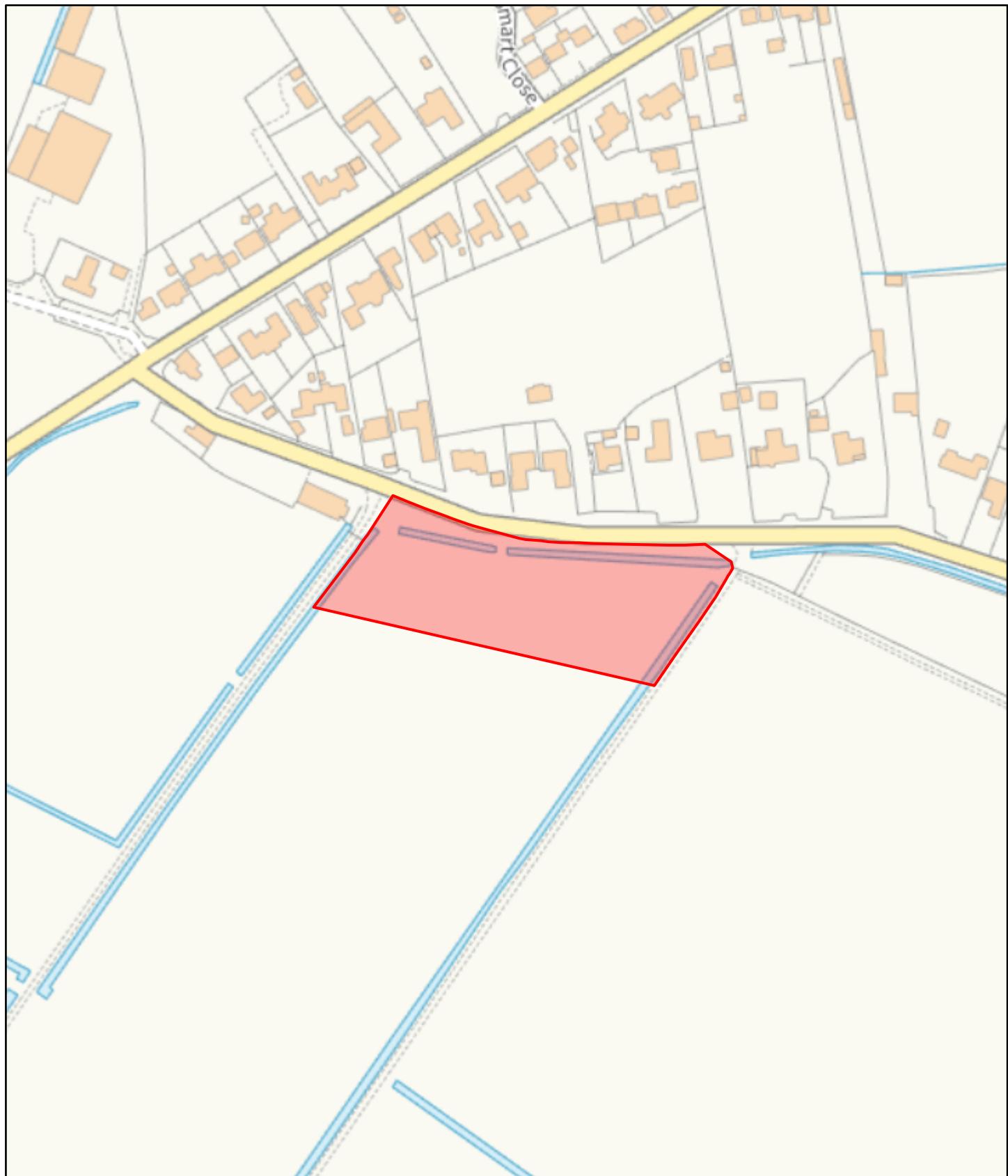
11 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; Permission in Principle for the following reasons:

1	Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the district, and Policy LP12 details a range of criteria against which development within the District will be assessed. The site is considered an 'elsewhere' location where development should be restricted to that which is essential for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services and to minerals or waste development. The proposed development is located in existing agricultural land outside the settlement limits of Manea, where residential development is not normally supported unless justified. The application does not include any evidence to a clear link to rural enterprise and hence does not demonstrate an essential need for development in this location. Thus, the proposal therefore fails to comply with Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2	Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to ensure that development does not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development to deliver and protect high quality environments specifying that development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. The development of this site for up to nine dwellings fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the pattern and character of the surrounding natural landscape and sporadic built character of the immediate area to the south of Fallow Corner Drove which is largely open agricultural land. It would be inconsistent with the core shape of the village and would appear

	<p>incongruous both in terms of the landscape character of the area and in terms of visual appearance. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies LP12 A (c), and (d), LP16 and paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF and in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.</p>
3	<p>The site lies entirely within in Flood Zone 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 substantive 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>
4	<p>The application site is approximately 1.7km from the Ouse Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site. The development triggers Natural England's 'Goose & Swan Functional Land' Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the Ouse Washes due to the potential for surrounding agricultural land to provide important winter roosting and foraging habitat for Ouse Washes qualifying bird species. Suitable arable / grassland habitat, particularly in such close proximity to the internationally designated sites, may provide functional land that is important to the maintenance of populations of Whooper and Bewick's swans and other birds within the designation's assemblage such as Wigeon. The application is not supported by any ecological evidence and as such insufficient information has been submitted to inform the Habitat Regulations Assessment 'likely significant effect' screening and the proposal is considered contrary to Policies LP16 (b) and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024.</p>
5	<p>Natural England's high level indicative mapping shows that the application site is located in an area of potential deep peat, and as such an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey is required to verify the actual soil conditions and enable consideration of the sustainable use and management of peat soils, to ensure their protection and minimise production of carbon emissions through their loss and degradation.</p> <p>Chapter 11 of the NPPF seeks to safeguard land for carbon storage and Chapter 14 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan seek to avoid carbon emissions in order to</p>

	<p>mitigate against climate change. The application has not been accompanied by an ALC survey and as such has failed to demonstrate that a development on this site would not impact deep peat with the potential for carbon release, contrary to the aforementioned policies.</p>
6	<p>If the principle of residential development on this site were acceptable in terms of location and use of land, development of up to 9 dwellings would not make efficient use of the land and as such would not constitute sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 8 of the NPPF, and thus, in terms of amount of development proposed, the Planning in Principle application fails.</p>




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Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council



F/YR25/0802/PIP

Applicant: McDermott Residential Property Limited **Agent:** Mr R Papworth
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

Land North West Of 176 High Road Accessed From, Hassock Hill Drove, Gorefield, Cambridgeshire

Permission in principle for 9 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This is an application for Permission in Principle (first stage) for up to nine dwellings on a parcel of agricultural land in the countryside outside of the existing developed footprint of Gorefield. There are no material considerations which outweigh the determination of this application in accordance with the adopted policies and in line with the NPPF.
- 1.2. Only matters of location, use of land and amount of development can be considered at this stage. All matters of detail would be subject to Technical Details approval if this first stage Permission in Principle were approved.
- 1.3. With regard to location, the proposal fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the pattern and character of the surrounding natural landscape and sporadic built character of the immediate area of Hassock Hill Drove which is largely open agricultural land. It would be inconsistent with the core shape of the village, conflicting with the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan, and would appear incongruous both in terms of the landscape character of the area and in terms of visual appearance. It will inevitably result in an unacceptable urbanising impact and an adverse impact on the verdant rural character.
- 1.4. Furthermore, the site lies in an area at high risk of flooding and insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that development of the site is necessary in this instance having regard to national policy which seeks to steer development to the lowest area of flood risk in the first instance. As such, the proposal conflicts with FLP Policy LP14 and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.
- 1.5. In addition, if the principle of development in this location were acceptable, the development for up to 9 dwellings would result in overdevelopment, contrary to the environmental objectives of Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- 1.6. Accordingly, the recommendation is to refuse permission in principle for residential development of this site.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located to the east side of Hassock Hill Drove, Gorefield approximately 75m from its crossroad junction with High Road, Decoy Road and Allen's Drove and comprises a grassland agricultural field with vegetated boundaries to the north and east. A mix of post and wire fence and vegetation extend along the Hassock Hill Drove frontage. Opposite the site, on the western side of Hassock Hill Drove, is an apple orchard, likely associated with Newling Fruitgrowers, whose commercial premises is located to the south side of High Road.
- 2.2. To the south of the site, fronting High Road, is a development of 5 dwellings, in various stages of construction, approved under F/YR23/0548/O, the northernmost boundary of which backs onto the application site. This development appears to create the boundary of the edge of the main settlement of Gorefield, as defined under LP12, which progresses eastward along High Road into the village centre with development flanking both sides of the road.
- 2.3. Approximately 26m to the north of the site, separated by a line of mature trees and an area of garden land is a dwelling and annexe known as Swan Lodge. Beyond this, development becomes more sporadic with a cluster of four dwellings and a small commercial premises set approximately 130m north the development site on the eastern side of Hassock Hill Drove. On its western side, development is minimal, with large swathes of agricultural land apparent. Similarly to the southwest, residential development becomes more widespread as you progress west along Decoy Road.
- 2.4. The site is entirely within Flood Zone 3, the area of highest risk.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. Planning in Principle (PIP) applications are an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing led development and separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail.
- 3.2. As set down in the Town & Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 and Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017, the scope of PIPs (stage 1 of the process) is restricted to consideration of location, development size and land use. All other matters are 'reserved' for consideration by the stage 2 Technical Details application which may be made should PIP be granted.
- 3.3. Although not a requirement of a PIP application, the application is supported by an indicative site plan and street scenes, showing four dwellings situated in a frontage arrangement on Hassock Hill Drove, with five smaller dwellings set behind. The site plan indicates shared access via a single access from the public highway leading to shared driveways and parking areas for each of the dwellings. Parking and turning is shown to the front of the dwellings with garden space to the rear. The street scene depicts the frontage dwellings as

various sizes, but each with two storeys, some with attached garages and some without.

- 3.4. The current proposal is the first part of the Permission in Principle application; this 'first stage' (or Permission in Principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and assesses the 'principle' issues namely:
 - a) Location,
 - b) Use, and
 - c) Amount of development proposed
- 3.5. Should this application be successful, the applicant would have to submit a Technical Details application (stage 2 of the process) covering all other detailed material planning considerations. The approval of Permission in Principle alone does not constitute the grant of planning permission. Technical details consent regarding the proposed properties would need to be applied for should this application be granted.
- 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

- 4.1. The application site specifically has no pertinent planning history; the below table outlines details of the history of the land to the south.

	Details reserved by Condition 03 (Materials) of planning permission	
F/YR25/3073/COND	F/YR24/0960/RM (Plot 1 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0548/O Land West of 176 High Road, Gorefield	Approved 15.08.2025
F/YR24/0960/RM	Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (Plot 1 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0548/O Land West of 176 High Road, Gorefield	Approved 06.06.2025
F/YR24/0832/RM	Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (Plot 4 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR23/0548/O Land West of 176 High Road, Gorefield	Approved 05.06.2025
F/YR23/0548/O	Erect up to 5 x dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) and the formation of 5 x accesses Land West of 176 High Road, Gorefield	Granted 25.08.2023

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1. **Gorefield Parish Council**

Gorefield Parish Council does not support this application.

It is in Flood Zone 3 and it always lays very wet after rain

The access is onto Hassockhill Drove which is a very narrow country road which also has very poor visibility at the junction with High Road

It is development in the open countryside

It appears to be over development.

Gorefield Parish Council has always been against development in this area but were overruled by the planning committee when the front part of the site was developed.

The applicant has been currying favour of the Parish Councillors to support this application. He has also been contacting local residents who have been complaining about this to the Parish Council.

5.2. **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority**

Recommendation

After a review of the submitted information the highways authority objects to this application and would recommend refusal on the grounds of highways safety.

Comments

The applicant has proposed a new junction on to Hassock Hill Drove. This section of road has a 60mph speed limit and the shown achievable visibility plays to the north at only 2.4m x 79m which is below the required length of 2.4m x 215m. There has been no speed traffic survey information to demonstrate that these can be reduced in line with the DMRB guidance. I would also add that there is no current footway network in the area for the future residences of this site to access any local amenities therefore making this site only safely accessible by vehicles, from the perspective of the local highways authority.

5.3. **Environment Agency**

We have reviewed the documents as submitted and we have no objection to this planning application. Further information on Flood Risk can be found below.

Flood Risk

We highly recommend the development be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (Ref: ECL1646/MORTON & HALL CONSULTING ; dated October 2025; submitted by Ellingham consulting LTD. and the following mitigation measures it details:

- *Finished floor levels shall be set 0.3m above existing ground level*
- *Flood Resilient Construction to 0.3m above Finished Floor Levels*

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/ phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

5.4. **North Level Internal Drainage Board**

Further to your consultation, based on the present indicative information, the Board has no objection in principle to the development of this site.

As part of any future planning application, details (including relevant supporting evidence/designs) will need to be provided about the proposed method and systems to manage surface water run-off arising from the development.

If surface water run-off is to be discharged into a watercourse, an application seeking consent from the Board will be required. If such an application is consented, this may be subject to conditions, including the payment of a development levy.

Furthermore, should the development include the proposed alteration of any watercourse, that would also require prior written consent from the Board.

5.5. **Anglian Water Services Ltd**

ASSETS

Section 1 - Assets Affected

New development must comply with Building Regulations and the Water Industry Act.

Our records show that there are no assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement within the development site boundary or affected by the proposals.

It is highly recommended that the applicant carries out a thorough investigation of the proposed working area to establish whether any unmapped public or private sewers, lateral drains, or other water infrastructure assets are in existence. Due to the private sewer transfer in October 2011, many newly adopted public used water assets and their history are not indicated on our records. Any encroachment zones should be reflected in the site layout.

The development site may contain private water mains, drains or other assets not shown on our records. These are private assets and not the responsibility of Anglian Water but that of the landowner.

WASTEWATER SERVICES

Section 2 - Wastewater Treatment

When assessing the receiving Water Recycling Centre's (WRC) Dry Weather Flow (DWF) headroom we take the latest DWF figures, as verified by the Environment Agency and add sites with planning consent to this. Based on the above assessment West Walton WRC is within the acceptance parameters and can accommodate the flows from the proposed growth. Please be advised that Anglian Water cannot reserve future capacity for sites which lack planning consent. Available capacity in our network can be reduced at any time due to growth, increased demand, regulatory changes, and environmental change.

Section 3 - Used Water Network

If it is the applicant's intention to connect to the Anglian Water public foul network, Anglian Water would object to a connection to our vacuum sewerage system due to the risk of flooding and pollution.

In order to overcome our objection, the applicant would need to consult Anglian Water in the form of a Pre -Development Enquiry tier 1 to undertake an assessment to determine available pots and to ensure there is enough pressure to accommodate the development, without adversely impacting or causing detriment to the existing network. In addition, if there is insufficient capacity downstream of the development, upgrade works may be required to the vacuum network, this will be fully funded by the applicant. Once this has been completed, we require the applicant to submit a copy of the agreed strategy in consultation with Anglian Water to the planning authority. All documents should then be submitted to the local planning authority and form part of the planning application.

If the Local Planning Authority were minded to approve the planning application, despite our objection, we would recommend a condition which prevents commencement until any required upgrades are completed.

Condition: Prior to commencement a scheme for foul drainage works will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority identifying any necessary upgrades. Prior to occupation the identified upgrades must be completed in accordance with the approved scheme. This scheme will identify a sustainable point of connection to the vacuum sewerage system and any necessary upgrades.

Reason: To protect water quality, prevent pollution and flooding and secure sustainable development having regard to paragraphs 7/8 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Vacuum sewerage systems are different to conventional gravity systems in that connections can only be made to a vacuum pot (the chambers on the vacuum system) and not directly to the vacuum pipework. Vacuum pots have limited capacity and are only able to accept connections from 4 properties, either via direct connections to the pot or to a rider sewer (a gravity sewer already connected to a pot). Connections into vacuum pots and rider sewers are only permitted via gravity; pumped connections are not permitted to a vacuum sewerage system. Surface water must not under any circumstances be discharged to a vacuum sewer. Alternative arrangements for surface water disposal would need to be explored.

Anglian Water is committed to supporting sustainable growth and in doing so we must continue to meet the statutory obligations whilst balancing factors such as climate change and environmental protection.

Section 4 - Surface Water Disposal

The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer.

Please be advised that there are no public surface water sewers within the vicinity of the proposed development, and therefore Anglian Water will be

unable to serve the sites surface water disposal requirements. Alternative methods of surface water disposal will need to be investigated such as infiltration techniques or a discharge to a watercourse in accordance with the surface water management hierarchy as outlined in Building Regulations Part H. The alternative is that a new surface water sewer is constructed which is used to convey your surface water to a watercourse or as part of a SuDS scheme, where appropriate. Subject to the sewer being designed in accordance with the current version of Sewers For Adoption, the sewer can be put forward for adoption by Anglian Water under Section 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991. If the outfall is to a watercourse, the applicant will be required to obtain consent to discharge via the appropriate body. If your site has no means of drainage due to third party land then you may be able to requisition Anglian Water, under Section 98, to provide a connection to the public sewer for domestic drainage purposes. As part of this option, you may wish to enter into a works agreement in accordance with Section 30 of the Anglian Water Authority Act 1977. This will allow you to design and construct the public sewer using Anglian Waters' statutory powers in accordance with Section 159/168 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

5.6. Environment & Health Services (FDC)

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.

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.

5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties

Objectors

The LPA received 4 letters of objection to the scheme, all received from address points within High Road, Gorefield. Of the objections received, the following matters were put forward as reasons for objection:

Objecting Comments	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overdevelopment Out of character with the area Gorefield village has met building requirements 	Matters of the principle of development, location, use and amount are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drainage concerns 	Matters relating to flood risk and drainage are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway safety concerns 	Matters relating to highway safety, sustainability and infrastructure are

	discussed in the below assessment.
• Residential amenity concerns	Matters relating to residential amenity are discussed in the below assessment.
• Disruption during construction	Matters of disruption during construction is not a material planning consideration and as such are not discussed in the below assessment.

Supporters

The LPA received 8 letters of support for the scheme, from address points as follows:

- 2 from residents of High Road, Gorefield;
- 1 from a resident Cattle Dyke, Gorefield;
- 1 from a resident at Fendyke Lane, Gorefield;
- 2 from residents of Gote Lane, Gorefield;
- 1 from a resident of Glebe Close, Gorefield; and
- 1 from a resident of Middle Road, Tydd St Giles;

Of the letters of support received, the following matters were put forward as reasons to support the scheme:

Supporting Comments	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would improve streetscene • Infill development 	Matters of the principle of development, location, use and amount are discussed in the below assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will bring vitality to the village and improve viability of local services • Good for local economy 	Matters relating to sustainability and infrastructure are discussed in the below assessment.

One letter received gave no specific reasons, merely stating that they support the scheme. A further letter stated, "*Will not impact me at all so I have no objections at all*".

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) and 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 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
Homes and Buildings
Resources
Lifespan

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
LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network
LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments
LP19 – The Natural Environment

7.5. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2021

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

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

7.8. 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
- LP22: Parking Provision
- LP23: Historic Environment
- LP24: Natural Environment
- LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain
- LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Use**
- **Amount of Development Proposed**
- **Additional Matters Raised During Consultation**

9 ASSESSMENT

9.1. Noting the guidance in place regarding Permission in Principle submissions assessment must be restricted to (a) location, (b) use and (c) amount and these items are considered in turn below:

Location

Principle, Form and Character

9.2. Generally, the principle of residential development on this site isn't automatically supported. The land is not allocated for housing in the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014), and the Council can currently demonstrate a healthy housing land supply of 6.6 years. As such, the national "tilted balance" (set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF) doesn't apply in this case. Accordingly, there is no automatic presumption in favour of granting permission. As such, decisions should be based firmly on how well the proposal aligns with local and national planning policies.

9.3. Policy LP3 sets out the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy, and approach to elsewhere developments. This is complemented by Policy LP4 which sets out proposed housing targets for Market Towns and Other Locations. The key driver of these policies is to ensure that new development is directed towards the most sustainable locations whilst recognising that smaller settlements will still need to reflect natural population change and may require additional development of a much smaller scale to reflect these changes. Since the Plan was adopted there have been a number of sites permitted and completed in other locations dramatically exceeding the anticipated provision set out in the adopted Plan with no notable improvements to social,

educational and health infrastructure to offset the impacts of development or increase the overall sustainability of these locations. As such the principal of additional residential development within 'Other Locations' should not be automatically accepted.

- 9.4. The site is located on the edge of Gorefield which has been identified as a 'small village' within the settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy LP3, where only limited development, normally residential infill or small business opportunities, would be supported. Development must also comply with the more detailed policy criteria set out in Policy LP12 Part A as well as LP3. In recent years the built footprint of the village has sprawled out into the open countryside in a westwardly direction, eroding the gentle transition into the village. In particular, application F/YR23/0548/O has extended the built form of the village up to Hassock Hill Drove. This development of 5 dwellings lies immediately to the south of the application site, which when coupled with the proposed development of up to a further nine dwellings, would be akin to a small village extension of up to 14 dwellings into the open countryside. Accordingly, it is considered that development of this site will further consolidate the built form to an extent that the character of the location is eroded by virtue of this urbanisation.
- 9.5. It is also acknowledged that the village threshold for Gorefield of 33 units has been breached, noting that since April 2011 (as per the Village Thresholds Position Statement 23 Oct 2025) 85 units have either been built/or are committed to be built. Policy LP12 identifies that in such scenarios demonstrable evidence of 'local support' should be presented, in this regard it is noted that the Parish Council and four Gorefield households (from High Road) have raised objection to the scheme with seven Gorefield (six from further afield), and one Tydd St Giles households writing in support. It is accepted that Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 states that the proposal should have demonstrable evidence of clear local community support for the scheme (with such support generated via a thorough and proportionate pre-application community consultation exercise or a Neighbourhood Plan exercise) which has not been undertaken by the applicant. Taking a literal approach to LP12 part A, a lack of support is considered a technical breach of this policy, and this conflict weighs negatively against the scheme. However, this weight is tempered considerably by earlier appeal decisions where a similar breaches were not considered be sufficient to warrant a reason for refusal by the Planning Inspector and when considering the more significant policy conflicts by virtue of the conflict with the settlement hierarchy and the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, that are given significant negative weight.
- 9.6. The current 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. 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 and relate more to the open countryside.

- 9.7. Policy LP12 Part A also requires sites to satisfy additional criteria, including:
(c) It would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland and (d) is of a scale and in a location that is in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement.
- 9.8. In addition, Policy LP16 (d) refers to development making a positive impact to local distinctiveness and the character of the area and amongst other things should not have an adverse impact on landscape character. It is also a core planning principle in the NPPF that recognises the intrinsic value of the countryside therefore consideration needs to be given to any harm caused.
- 9.9. The transition from countryside to village is clearly marked by the current built form that runs along High Road; with sporadic development beyond the site to the north and west and significant areas of open agricultural land, of which the site is part. Development of this site would therefore have a significant detrimental impact on the remaining rural character of Hassock Hill Drove by advancing residential development north and eastwards into open land. As such, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy LP12 Part A (c).
- 9.10. It is considered that the development of this site with 9 dwellings would consolidate the built form to a scale and extent that the character of the area will be unacceptably eroded beyond the core shape of the village along High Road, contrary to Policy LP12 Part A (d) and would have a damaging urbanising impact on the character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan and Policy DM3 of Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD.

Flood Risk

- 9.11. Another pertinent requirement is to ensure that development is located in areas of lowest flood risk.
- 9.12. 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 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.
- 9.13. National planning policy includes an over-arching principle in the Framework that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. To that end, 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, so far as possible, development in current and future medium and high flood risk areas. The PPG furthermore 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

9.14. 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 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 role 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**.* (Emphasis Added)

To pass the Sequential Test, applicants must demonstrate that there are no reasonably 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."

9.15. The application includes a Sequential and Exception Test report (dated 09 October 2025) which focuses the area of search on the settlement of Gorefield. However, the above is clear in that the area of search for sites within Small Villages 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.

9.16. The application is not supported by any evidence to justify the need for development in this location and accordingly does not qualify for any variation to the required area of search.

9.17. The Council is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and there remain sites identified as suitable for development in the Local Plan that do not currently benefit from planning permission. It would, therefore, be reasonable to conclude that on the basis of district wide search, there will be other reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 to accommodate 9 dwellings. As such, it is considered that the Sequential Test is failed.

9.18. Notwithstanding the above, the submitted Sequential Test concludes that there are no reasonably available sites to accommodate the development in an area of lesser flood risk within Gorefield. The Sequential Test considers a number of sites, such as F/YR25/0473/O, which sought outline approval for up to 9 dwellings (the same quantum as the current PIP application). However, this application was discounted by the applicant, stating "*The design drawing is stated within the planning approval and on the design drawing this references single storey dwellings which this application site is for two storey dwellings. This site is therefore not available due to the single storey dwellings stated on the drawing referenced in the outline approval.*"

9.19. Notwithstanding, it must be considered that this stage 1 Permission in Principle application is merely focused on establishing whether a site is suitable in principle as such details such as whether dwellings are single or two storey are immaterial to this application, as such details are not committed at this stage.

9.20. Accordingly, in either case, it is considered that 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 when considering reasonably available sites within the wider district or Gorefield specifically. On this basis, it is 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.

Exception Test

9.21. Notwithstanding the failure of the sequential test, had this been deemed as passed it would then be necessary for the application to pass the Exception Test, which comprises of 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.

9.22. In respect of (a); In order to pass the Exception Test the proposal must provide wider sustainability benefits i.e., beyond merely the application site, for the community. Examples of benefits beyond the application site may include:

- Visually enhance a site to the benefit of the character of an area;
- Link development to existing services and facilities bringing communities together sustainably;
- Relocate an existing use closer to existing public transport hubs, thus reducing the amount of traffic on the road; or
- Providing community facilities

All these examples would likely provide some benefit to the community beyond the application site.

9.23. To address the exception test, the application includes the following proposals:

- (1) The proposal at this site is for air source heat pumps and solar panels to the roof and dwellings that are insulated in accordance with Building Regulations with a further enhancement of triple glazing.
- (2) It is expected that the dwellings would be a minimum of B EPC rating.
- (3) The proposals would comply with Building Regulations.

9.24. The application, as a stage 1 Permission in Principle, does not commit details in respect of (1) – (3) above. However, it is acknowledged that should these elements come forward within the Technical Details stage, these may contribute to renewable energy usage in line with the sustainability objectives of the NPPF.

9.25. In respect of part (b) of the Exception Test; The inclusion of flood mitigation measures including raised finished floor levels and flood resilient construction measures within the proposal are highlighted within the flood risk assessment technically address the need for safety in times of flooding at the site, and as such would likely satisfy the Exception Test in this regard.

Drainage

9.26. Concerns relating to appropriate drainage have been expressed by residents.

9.27. The applicant contests that surface water can likely be managed through soakaways, on the basis of findings following satisfactory percolation tests for the development to the south (F/YR23/0548/O), which may be an acceptable solution.

9.28. It is noted that, in respect of foul water drainage, Anglian Water object to a connection to our vacuum sewerage system due to the risk of flooding and pollution, should it be the applicant's intention to connect to the Anglian Water public foul network. They note that upgrades to this system may be required to ensure foul water from the site can be accommodated appropriately, and as such recommend early engagement with the applicant to discuss their requirements.

9.29. Notwithstanding, matters of surface and foul water disposal will be reserved for consideration within any forthcoming Technical Details application.

Sustainability concerns

9.30. It is noted that an objection was raised by the highways authority in respect of the principle of development for residential use, owing to the unacceptable visibility splays provided and lack of appropriate footway infrastructure, given the quantum of development proposed, that may give rise to issues of highway safety and would conflict with the environmental objective of sustainable development as the intended occupants of the dwellings will be reliant on private modes of transport to access local facilities and services. As such the scheme fails to represent sustainable development in this regard and is contrary to Paragraph 8 of the NPPF and Policy LP1 which sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development in line with the Framework.

This bolsters the view that there will be significant adverse impacts accruing in terms of the scheme's sustainability in locational terms.

Location Conclusion

9.31. The above assessment considers the application site for the development of up to 9 dwellings on an area of land located outside the developed footprint of Gorefield, resulting in unacceptable incursion into the open countryside, harm to the rural character, is positioned in an area of highest flood risk and in an unsustainable location. Thus, the location of the scheme is considered contrary to Policies LP3, LP12, LP14 and LP16 and thus Permission in Principle should be refused on this basis.

Use

9.32. 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 up to 9 new residential dwellings is considered to erode the character and appearance of the rural area. It is therefore considered that the site is not acceptable to use for new dwellings.

9.33. In addition, whilst perhaps being a matter more appropriate for consideration at Technical Consent stage, the use of the land for residential purposes, in principle, would not likely give rise to unacceptable impacts on surrounding residents by reason or noise or disturbance or vice versa.

9.34. Supporters state that the housing will help bring vitality to the village and improve viability of local services, and be good for local economy, however, that does not justify development in an unsustainable location in Flood Zone 3.

Amount of Development Proposed

9.35. The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 9 dwellings on a site of approximately 0.5ha which would equate to a density of approximately 18 dwellings per hectare, if the full quantum was advanced.

9.36. Noting established development locally, along High Road, densities range from approximately 3.2 dwellings per hectare along the northern side, and 8 dwellings per hectare along the southern side. Accordingly, the proposed density of 18 dwellings per hectare is considered to amount to overdevelopment and would result in inappropriate urbanisation of the area, especially when cumulatively viewed alongside the recent development to the south.

Additional Matters Raised During Consultation

9.37. **Highway safety** – Notwithstanding the locational sustainability concerns discussed above, specific details regarding safe and convenient access, such as matters regarding visibility splays, parking, turning and thus highway safety would need to be fully reconciled at the Technical Details stage to ensure the scheme complies with Policy LP15. It is however considered that, noting comments received from the Highways Authority with concerns to highway

safety regarding the deliverability of suitable visibility splays, compliance with Policy LP15 may not be achieved at a more detailed stage.

9.38. **Impact on biodiversity/BNG** – The LPA duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended, has been considered.

In other application types such as outline and full applications, an ecological survey and if necessary further species surveys would be needed up front to accompany the application. This Permission in Principle application, if successful, would not be granting planning permission.

Ecological information should be submitted at the Technical Details stage (if this first stage were successful) and considered then, consulted upon and the decision, including potential refusal or conditions, should be based upon the findings of said ecological information.

If this stage of Permission in Principle were successful, it would not prevent proper consideration of ecological issues at the next stage and it would not alter duties of landowners/developers to comply with other legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act in the meantime.

The grant of permission in principle is not within the scope of biodiversity net gain (as it is not a grant of planning permission), but the subsequent Technical Details consent (as a grant of planning permission) would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition, unless appropriate exemptions were to apply.

9.39. **Residential Amenity** – Some public comments received raise matters of impacts to residential amenity; however, these are matters that could only be determined at the Technical Details stage. It should also be noted that disturbance during construction, the devaluation of properties and the loss of views are not matters attributed material planning weight.

9.40. **Economic benefits** – Comments have been received that new housing will create temporary employment and contribute to the local economy. It is recognised that the construction of the development would provide some employment for the duration of the work contributing to a strong responsive and competitive economy. Whilst it could also be argued that there may be some potential for increased expenditure by occupants when utilising local facilities, the limited facilities on offer are such that this does not render the site location as sustainable. As noted above, there is a direct correlation between the aims of the Fenland Local Plan and the NPPF and a clear planning argument to resist this development as being in an unsustainable location.

9.41. **Contributions** – The applicant provided a confidential preliminary S106 Heads of Terms document to the LPA with proposals to offer community improvements in light the proposed development. The confidential details of this document have not been shared with Members by virtue that there is no legal mechanism within Permission in Principle applications to secure planning obligations, and as such these can be given no weight in decision

making. Should the applicant have sought to provide community improvements, the appropriate mechanism would have been to submit a full planning application to the LPA, whereby the relevant Fenland Local Plan Policies (LP5 and LP13) that seek to secure appropriate infrastructure contributions and/or affordable housing where necessary could be applied in the planning balance.

9.42. **Additional considerations** – No conditions can be attached to a grant of Permission in Principle in accordance with the NPPG advice (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 58-020- 20180615).

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1. As indicated above it is only location, use and amount of development that may be considered at the first 'permission in principle stage'.

10.2. The above assessment considers that the location of the site for residential development is unacceptable due to the conflict with the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan and unacceptable incursion of urbanisation into the open countryside, contrary to Policies LP3, LP12, and LP16. In addition, the site lies entirely within in Flood Zone 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.

10.3. Furthermore, it is considered that the amount of development proposed results in overdevelopment and is contrary to paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

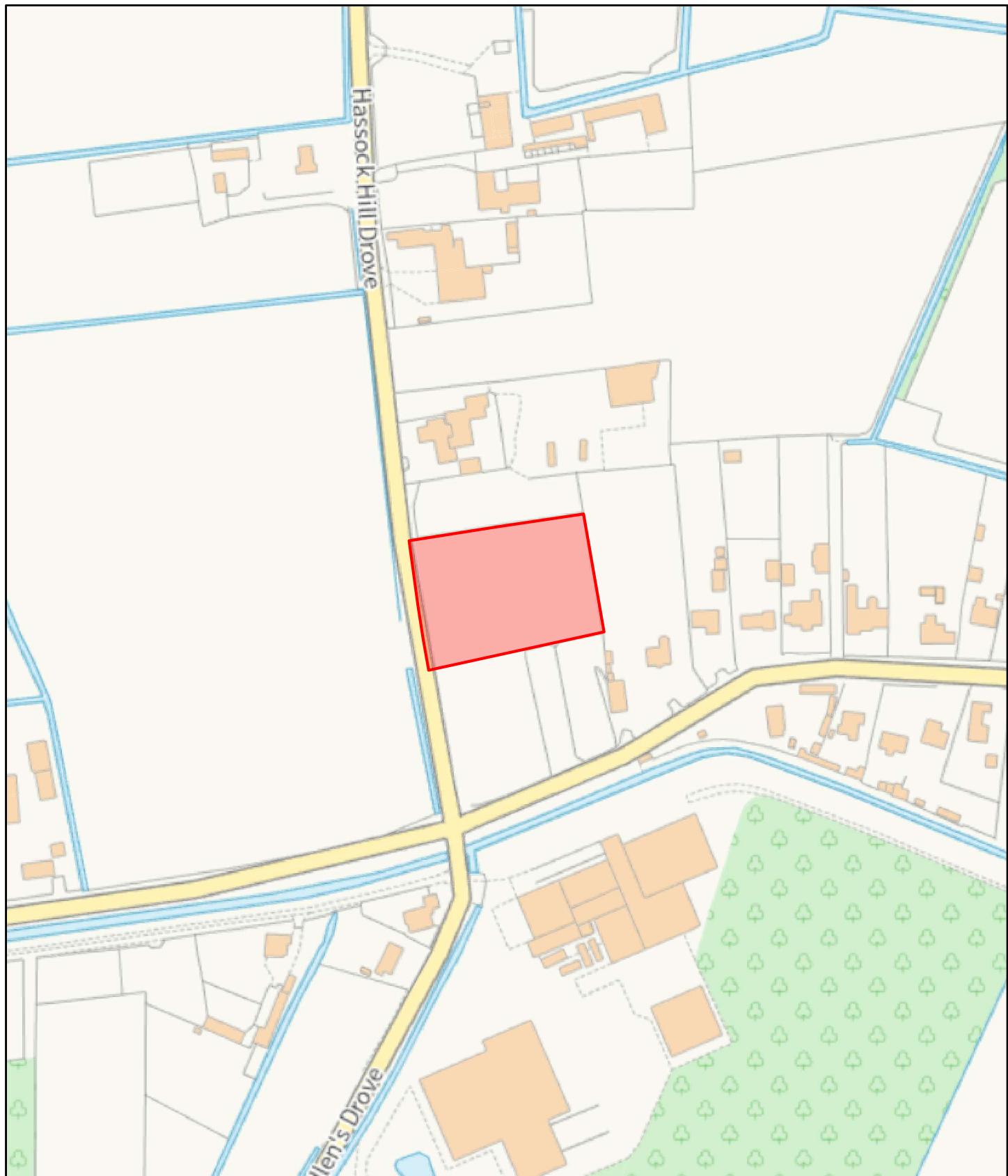
10.4. While it is recognised that the development of the site may deliver some economic and social benefits it is not considered that these would outweigh the overall unsustainable and inappropriate nature of the site or its conflict with the relevant local and national policies.

11 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse: Permission in Principle for the following reasons:

1	Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the district, and Policy LP12 details a range of criteria against which development within the District will be assessed. The site is located on the edge of Gorefield which has been identified as a 'small village' within the settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy LP3, where only limited development, normally residential infill or small business opportunities, would be supported. The proposal will introduce development of up to nine dwellings into an area that currently has a strong relationship with the adjoining countryside and when considered cumulatively with the recent development to the south, would be akin to a small village extension resulting in an unacceptable urbanisation of the rural area. Thus, the proposal
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	therefore fails to comply with Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
2	Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 seeks to ensure that development does not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development to deliver and protect high quality environments specifying that development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. The development proposed would see up to five dwellings and associated infrastructure positioned on undeveloped agricultural land that currently positively contributes to the distinct and natural character beyond the built form of High Road Gorefield. Development on this land would bring a distinctly urbanising effect to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area, directly contradicting the current settlement pattern, contrary to the requirements of Policies LP12 and Policy LP16(d) and paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF, and thus, in terms of location and use, the Planning in Principle application fails.
3	<p>The site lies entirely within in Flood Zone 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 substantive 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>
4	If the principle of residential development on this site were acceptable in terms of location and use of land, development of up to 9 dwellings would result in overdevelopment and as such would not constitute sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 8 of the NPPF, and thus, in terms of amount of development proposed, the Planning in Principle application fails.



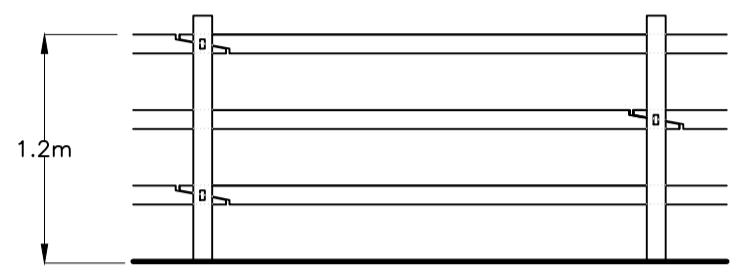
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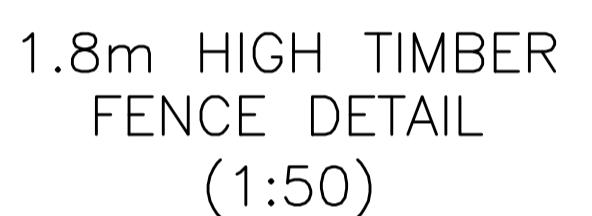
 Fenland District Boundary

Fenland District Council

LEGEND	
PLOT 1	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 2	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 3	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 4	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 5	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 6	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 7	= 4No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 8	= 3No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY
PLOT 9	= 3No BEDROOMS TWO STOREY

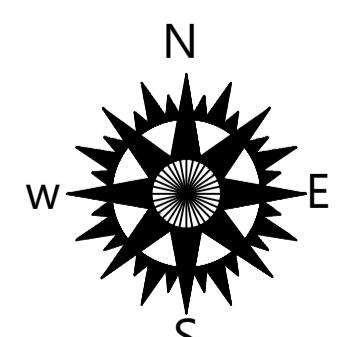


TIMBER POST AND RAIL FENCE DETAIL (1:50)



1.8m HIGH TIMBER FENCE DETAIL (1:50)

NEW ACCESS TO BE 5.5m wide x 10m LONG LAID TO FALL AWAY FROM THE HIGHWAY TO CAMBS COUNTY COUNCIL STANDARDS



PROPOSED SITE PLAN 1:200

0 2.5 5.0 7.5 10.0 12.5 15.0



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All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.

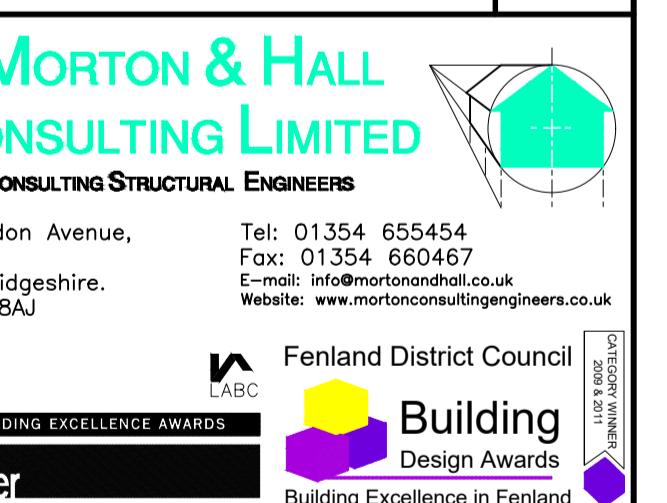
The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO or NHBC as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer.

All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details

LEGEND

	PERMEABLE TARMAC		GRASS
	PERMEABLE BLOCK PAVING		
	PATHS/PATIO AREA		
	GRAVEL (PERMEABLE COVERING)		
	SOLAR PANELS TO ROOF		
	APPLICATION SITE		
	HOUSEHOLDER BIN LOCATIONS		
	3m x 5.5m PARKING SPACE		
	FIRE APPLIANCE		
	BCP = BIN COLLECTION POINT		

A	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 25
	REVISIONS	DATE



McDermott Residential Property Limited

Land South of Swan Lodge Hassock Hill Drove Gorefield, Wisbech PE13 4QF

Proposed Site Plan INDICATIVE LAYOUT

DRAWN MH	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED	
DATE September 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE A1 1:200	H10638/04 A

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