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**F/YR22/0973/FDC**

**Applicant: Fenland District Council**

**Agent : Miss Meghna Deora  
Pick Everard**

**Wisbech Park, Lynn Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire**

**Erect a single-storey community hub, which includes a multi-purpose hall, cafe and toilets**

**Officer recommendation: Approve**

**Reason for Committee: Fenland District Council application.**

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## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This application seeks full planning approval to erect a single storey community hub building, including a multi-purpose hall, café and toilets within Wisbech Park.
- 1.2. The proposal is acceptable in respect of the principle of development and aligns with the aims of the Fenland Local Plan and Chapter 8 of the NPPF, which seeks to promote healthy, safe and inclusive communities.
- 1.3. There are no issues to reconcile with regard to visual impact and character, heritage, flood risk, highway safety, residential amenity or any other material considerations that would justify refusal of the scheme. Thus the scheme is therefore recommended for approval.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site is an area of land located within Wisbech Park, which is within Bowthorpe Conservation Area. The site is currently an almost triangular shaped area of open grassland, positioned to the west side of the park, adjacent to the existing 'A-mazing' Apple Orchard immediately to the east and North Cambridgeshire Hospital further west. Existing footpaths within and across the park run to the north, west and south.

## **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1. This application seeks full planning approval to erect a single storey community hub building at the site, comprising a multi-purpose hall, café and toilets. Hard landscaping is proposed to the north and east sides to provide circulation to the access points and toilets linked to an existing pathway to the northwest. A gated bin store area is proposed along the existing access path further northwest.
- 3.2. The hub will have a footprint of approximately 20.3m wide by 8.9m deep, with a mono-pitch sedum room with overhang to provide shelter and shading to the north, east and south sides. The roof will reach a maximum height of approximately 5.8m to the north (front) side, sloping down to approximately 3.6m to the south (rear) side.

- 3.3. The hub will be constructed of Cambridgeshire Buff brickwork, with dark grey fascia, timber soffits, and dark grey joinery. Aluminium signage is proposed to the north, east and west elevations. The sedum roof will also include PV panels. Dark grey metal shutters are proposed to the openings on the north, east and south elevations, with accessible toilets to the west elevation.
- 3.4. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

#### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Pertinent planning history included (some history omitted for brevity):

F/YR19/0141/FDL	Erection of a single-storey plant room to existing building North Cambridgeshire Hospital, St Augustines Road, Wisbech	Granted 10.04.2019
F/YR15/0712/LB	Refurbishment of existing bandstand involving replacement roof The Bandstand, Wisbech Park	Granted 01.10.2015
F/YR15/0711/FDC	Refurbishment of existing bandstand involving replacement roof The Bandstand, Wisbech Park	Granted 01.10.2015
F/YR08/0665/FDC	Display of advertisement flag on 6.0m high pole	Granted 02.09.2008
F/YR07/1273/CA	Demolition of former bowls pavilion Pavilion, Wisbech Park	Granted 31.03.2008
F/YR04/0158/F	Erection of a 3-storey building for use as a primary care building including G P surgery, retail pharmacy, complementary health suite, community health clinic, car parking and ancillary B1 (office) use North Cambridgeshire Hospital, St Augustines Road, Wisbech	Granted 13.04.2004
F/YR02/0964/F	Formation of new access to park from Whitby Street and alterations to pathway from Whitby Street to Tavistock Road to form cycle and pedestrian route	Granted 13.11.2002

#### 5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1. **Historic England** – *Thank you for your letter of 23 August 2022 regarding the above application for planning permission for the erection of a single-storey community hub, which includes a multi-purpose hall, cafe and toilets.*

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

*We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.*

- 5.2. **Environment Agency** – *The above planning application falls within our Flood Risk Standing Advice. It is considered that there are no other Agency related issues in respect of this application and therefore, in line with current government guidance, your council will be required to respond on behalf of the Agency in respect of flood risk related issues.*

- 5.3. **Environment & Health Services (FDC)** – *The Environmental Health Team have 'No Objections' to the proposed scheme as it is unlikely to affect or be affected by the existing noise or air climate. Contamination is also unlikely to be an issue at this site given the lack of any previous development.*
- 5.4. **Environmental Services (FDC)** – *Bin provision for the bin store area appears sufficient with all waste streams covered. The location of the bin store is suitable from a collection point of view. From the design the store does not appear to have a roof which I would suggest making more secure given the location.*
- 5.5. **Wisbech Town Council** – *That the application be supported.*
- 5.6. **Local Residents/Interested Parties** – One letter of objection received to the scheme in respect of the proposed design. Whilst acknowledging the laudable nature of the proposal concerns were raised that the overall design was 'blocky' and lacking imagination and that the large windows will cause issues with energy use and temperature control.

A further representation was received, and whilst no objection was stated, there were concerns raised in respect of the likely times the hub would be in use, issues with access and parking and potential antisocial behaviour concerns regarding litter, noise and other matters such as the availability of toilet facilities.

## **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).
- 6.2. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

## **7 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **7.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021**

Para 2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Para 11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Para 47. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Para 92. Planning policies and decision should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which (a) promote social interaction; (b) are safe and accessible.

Para 93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should (a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; (b) support the

delivery of local strategies to improve... social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

Para 130. Achieving well-designed places.

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

Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

Determining a planning application

## 7.3. **National Design Guide 2021**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Public Spaces

Uses

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

LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail

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 across the District

LP17 – Community Safety

LP18 – The Historic Environment

## 7.5. **Emerging Local Plan**

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation on 25th August 2022, the first stage of the statutory process leading towards the adoption of the Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 48 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

LP4 – Securing Fenlands Future

LP5 – Health and Wellbeing

LP7 – Design

LP8 – Amenity Provision

LP10 – Shop Frontages, Security Shutters and Canopies

LP11 – Community Safety

LP17 – Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities

LP20 – Accessibility and Transport

LP23 – Historic Environment

LP32 – Flood and Water Management

## 7.6. **Cambridgeshire Flood And Water SPD**

## 8 **KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Community facilities**

- **Heritage and visual impact**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Flood risk**
- **Other matters**

## **9 BACKGROUND**

- 9.1. This proposal has been informed through pre-application discussions with the Council's Planning and Conservation Teams.

## **10 ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 10.1. Wisbech, as a designated Market Town, is the main focus of sustainable growth within the Fenland District. Policy LP2 identifies that development proposals should contribute to creating healthy, safe and equitable living environments and provide good access to health, leisure and recreation facilities whilst ensuring that adverse impacts are avoided, and residential amenity is not compromised.
- 10.2. Matters of visual and residential amenity are further considered under Policy LP16 with Policy LP18 seeking to safeguard existing heritage features. Highway safety (Policy LP15) and flood risk (Policy LP14) must also be considered.
- 10.3. The principle of development of a new community hub in Wisbech Park is therefore acceptable subject to the consideration of the necessary planning policies in respect of the scheme.

### **Community facilities**

- 10.4. The delivery of a new community facility within Wisbech Park will enhance the social and community capital within the town, thereby aligning with the aims of Policy LP2 and the wider aims of Chapter 8 of the NPPF, which seeks to promote healthy, safe and inclusive communities.

### **Heritage and visual impact**

- 10.5. The proposed community hub will be positioned within Wisbech Park, alongside existing facilities. The hub will be in prominent view when approached on foot via existing pedestrian walkways within the park. In addition, wider views of the proposed hub building will be visible when travelling south on Park Avenue, from the neighbouring North Cambridgeshire Hospital car park to the west, and across the park when looking north from Park Road to the south of the site.
- 10.6. The proposed hub building has been designed with materials to reflect adjacent development within the park. Views from the south will include the sedum roof element, which from wider vistas will appear as a natural element in the park landscape. The building will be of a height and scale that will not be detrimentally prominent within the landscape.
- 10.7. Whilst the proposed building will be notable, it will not result in detrimental incongruousness in the wider urban or parkland landscapes. Owing to its positioning within the park, it will also have negligible impact on the Bowthorpe Conservation Area, positioned away from the listed buildings along Lynn Road.
- 10.8. The proposed shutters, whilst not of an open grille design, have been designed to be integrated within the relevant openings and will not protrude externally. The use of shutters and the need for vandal-resistant design is considered acceptable in the context of protecting a community asset from vandalism within a public

park. It is considered that these elements will cause negligible impact on the conservation area in terms of their visual impact, whilst deterring anti-social behaviour, in accordance with Policy LP17.

- 10.9. Given the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regard to design, character, heritage and visual impact and accords with Policy LP16 and LP18.

#### **Residential amenity**

- 10.10. The proposed hub building is located away from residential properties, including those on Park Avenue approximately 120m to the northwest, Verdun Close approximately 110m to the east and Park Road approximately 135m to the south. As such, there will be no impacts in respect of overlooking or overshadowing to reconcile as a result of the scheme.
- 10.11. Concerns were raised from a local resident in respect to the hours of operation for the proposed hub. The submitted design and access statement (Paragraph 1.4) states that the likely opening hours will be 9am to 6pm. The statement does not indicate the likely days of the week of operation however. Notwithstanding, owing to the location of the hub building and the likely activities that are to be undertaken within the space, these hours of operation seem appropriate to limit any unacceptable impacts to residential amenity by way of noise or light pollution. The environmental health team raised no objection to the scheme, with no comments in respect of issues surrounding residential amenity impacts.
- 10.12. Therefore, given the above, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of Policies LP2 and LP16 with regard to the impact on residential amenity.

#### **Flood risk**

- 10.13. The site is located partly in Flood Zones 1 & 2. According to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document, the proposed community hub building is classed as 'assembly and leisure' which is classified as a 'Less Vulnerable' development type. Development classed as Less Vulnerable can be considered compatible with Flood Zone 2 in certain circumstances.
- 10.14. Issues of surface water disposal will be dealt with under Building Control regulations.
- 10.15. Given that the proposed community hub building is not for residential use, and the building will not likely be in use during potential flood events, and it will not likely increase the impact of flooding elsewhere, it is considered that despite the potential flood risk at the site, the proposal complies with the guidelines within the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD and may be considered acceptable in this instance.

#### **Other matters**

- 10.16. There are no proposed vehicular accesses or parking proposed in respect to the scheme. Given the scheme is to be located within an existing public park, there is likely to be a comparable trip generation and parking requirement to the existing situation. As such there are no issues to reconcile in respect of Policy LP15.
- 10.17. Consultations with FDC's Environmental Services team resulted in no objection to the proposed bin store as it was suitably positioned for collections and offered appropriate levels of storage given the nature of the development proposed. It

was commented, however, that it may be preferable to provide a bin store area with a roof, which may be preferable in respect of security; although the lack of a fully enclosed bin store with a roof would not justify refusal of the scheme.

## 11 CONCLUSIONS

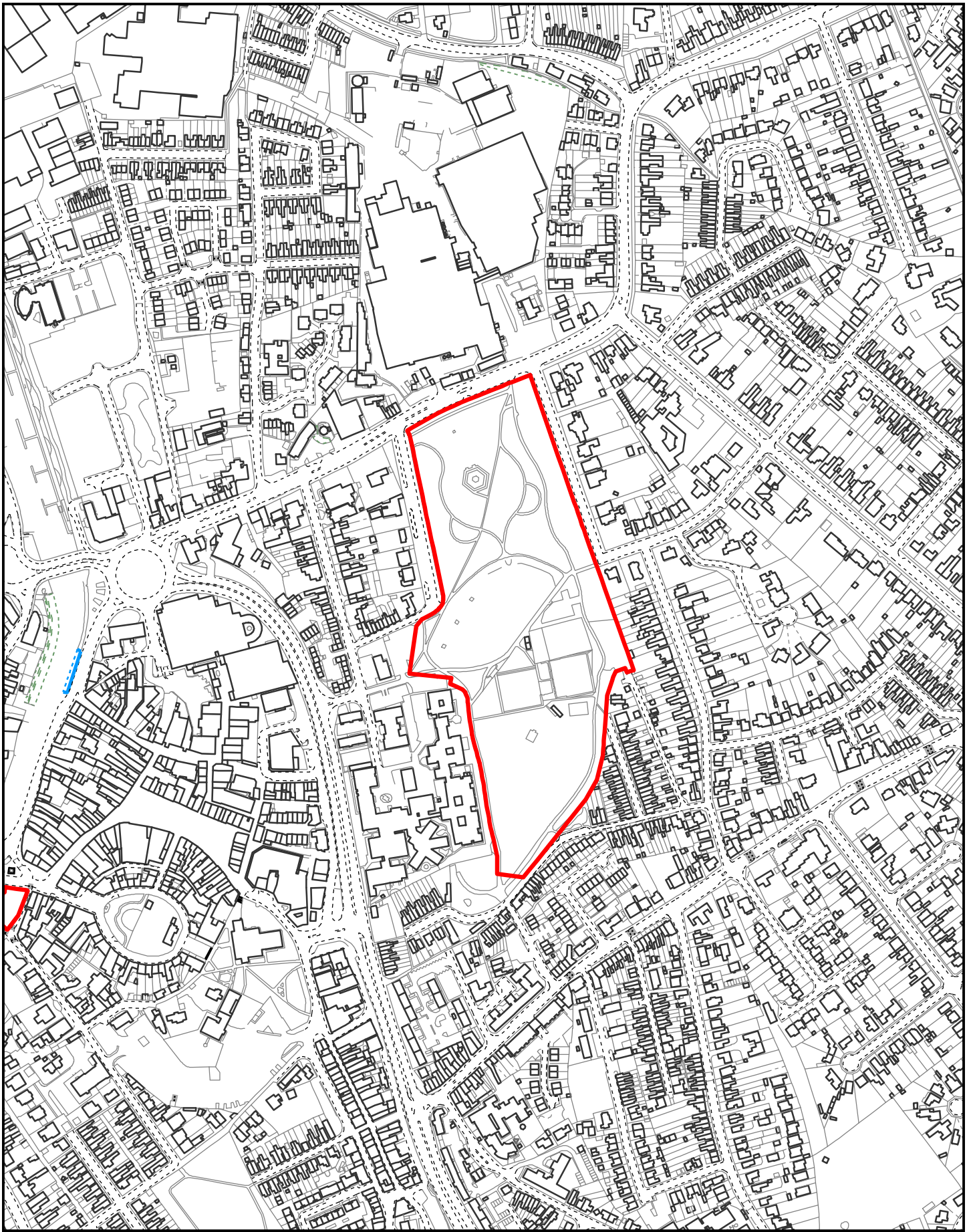
- 11.1. This proposal will deliver a new community building within an existing public park. The proposal is considered acceptable and accords with the relevant policies of the Fenland Local Plan. It represents minimal issues in terms of visual and residential amenity and is acceptable with regard to the above considerations; accordingly, a favourable recommendation is forthcoming.

## 12 RECOMMENDATION

**Grant**, with the following conditions;

### 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>The development hereby approved shall be finished externally in materials as detailed on drawings 9300 P03 and 9310 P02.</p> <p>Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the area and ensure compliance with Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.</p>
3	<p>The community hub building hereby permitted shall only be used between the following hours:</p> <p>0900-1800 Monday - Sunday</p> <p>Reason - In the interests of residential amenity and to ensure compliance with Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).</p>
4	Approved Plans



Created on: 23/08/2022

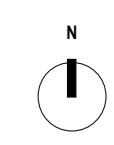
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**F/YR22/0973/FDC**

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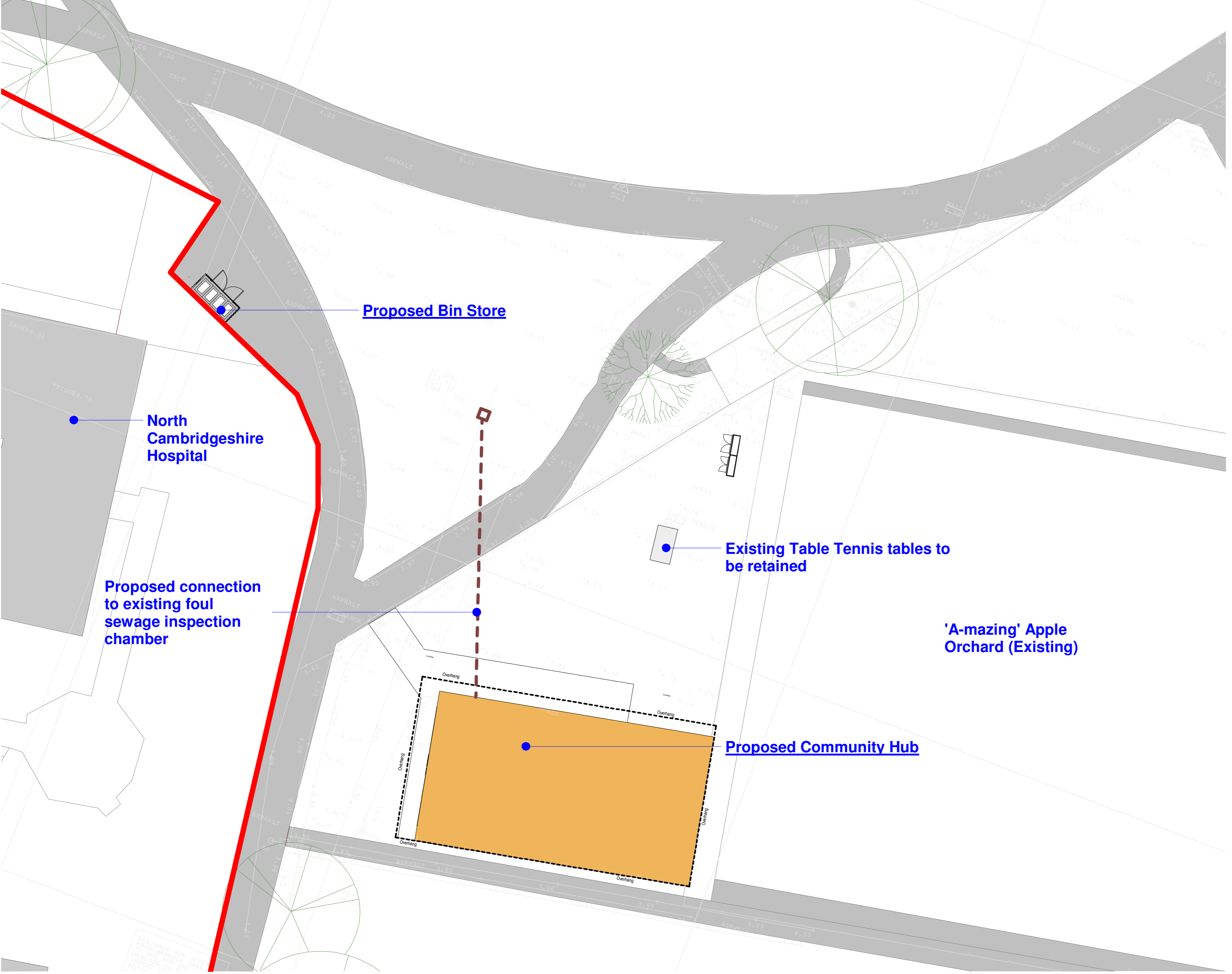






KEY	
	Site Boundary

Total Site Area : 69,334.381 sqm. / 7 hectares



P06	Amendmended to include foul sewer	17.08.2022	MED	JEA
P05	Planning Amendments	15.08.2022	MED	JEA
P04	Issue for Planning	20.07.2022	MED	JEA
P03	Updated to include 3m easement zone to existing AW Foul water sewer	17.05.2022	MED	JEA
P02	Draft Issue	25.04.2022	MED	JEA
P01	Issue for Comments	22.04.2022	MED	JEA
Revision		Date	Drn	Chk

This document references the following files:-

Client  
**Fenland District Council**

Project  
**Wisbech Park Community Hub & Splash Pad Community Hub**

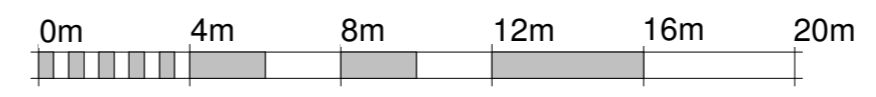
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**Proposed Block Plan**

Suitability Status  
**S4-Suitable for stage approval**

Job No.	Scale	Size	Rev
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Drawing Number  
**FEN002 - PEV - B1 - 00 - DR - A - 9150**

Project Code	Originator	Zone	Level	Type	Role	Number
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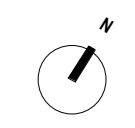


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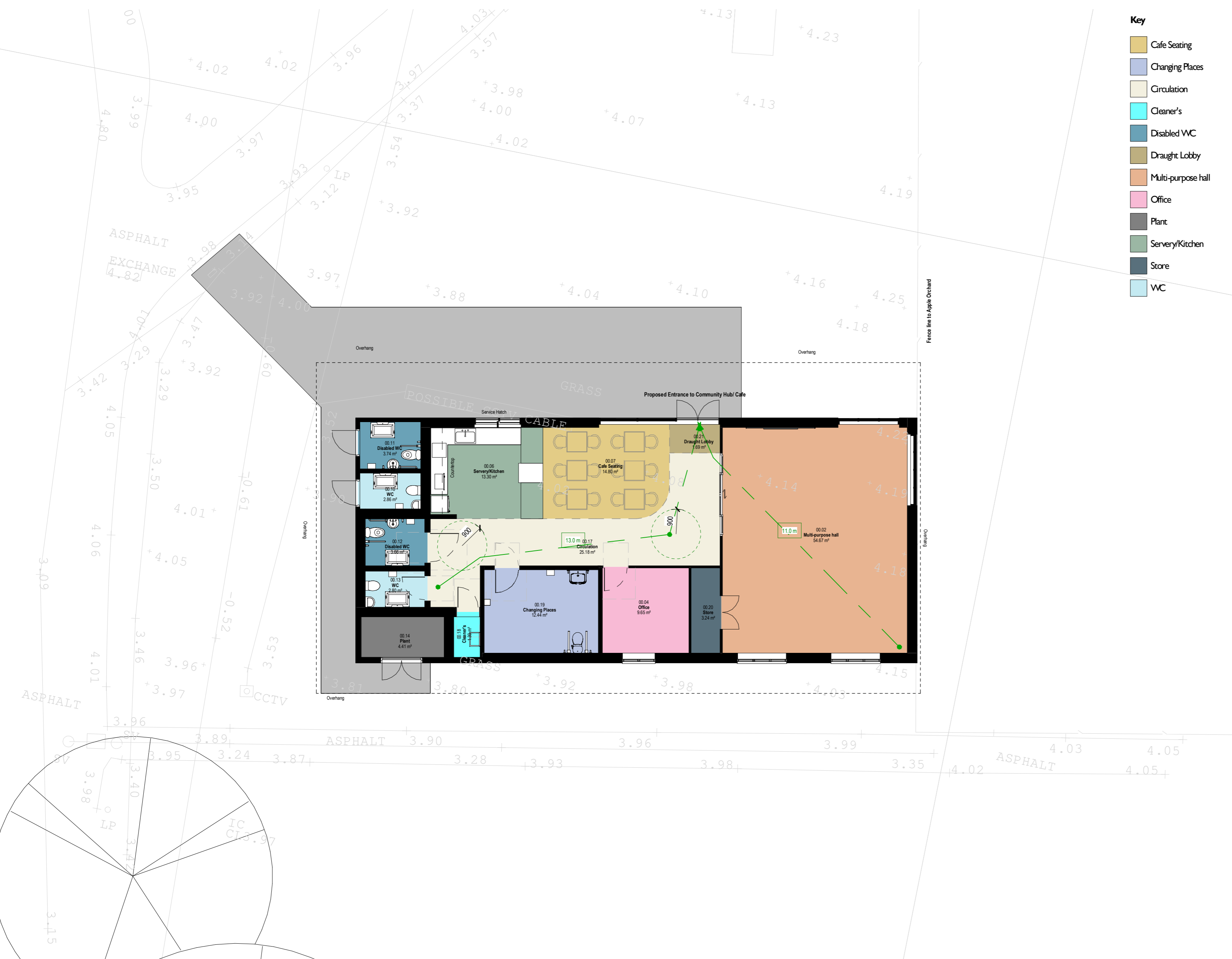
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**Key**

- Cafe Seating
- Changing Places
- Circulation
- Cleaner's
- Disabled WC
- Draught Lobby
- Multi-purpose hall
- Office
- Plant
- Servery/Kitchen
- Store
- WC



P07	Planning Amendments	15.08.2022	MED	JEA
P06	Issue for comments	22.06.2022	MED	JEA
P05	Issue for Planning	20.07.2022	MED	JEA
P04	Updated to include 3m easement zone to existing AW Foul water sewer	17.05.2022	MED	JEA
P03	Updated plans to suit client feedback from 04.05.22	11.05.2022	MED	JEA
P02	Draft Issue	25.04.2022	MED	JEA
P01	Issue for Comments	22.04.2022	MED	JEA
Revision		Date	Drn	Chk

This document references the following files:-

Client  
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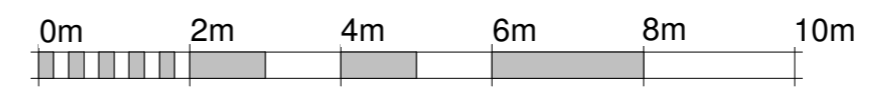
Project  
**Wisbech Park Community Hub & Splash Pad Community Hub**

Drawing Title  
**Proposed General Arrangement Plan Ground Floor**

Suitability Status  
**S4-Suitable for stage approval**

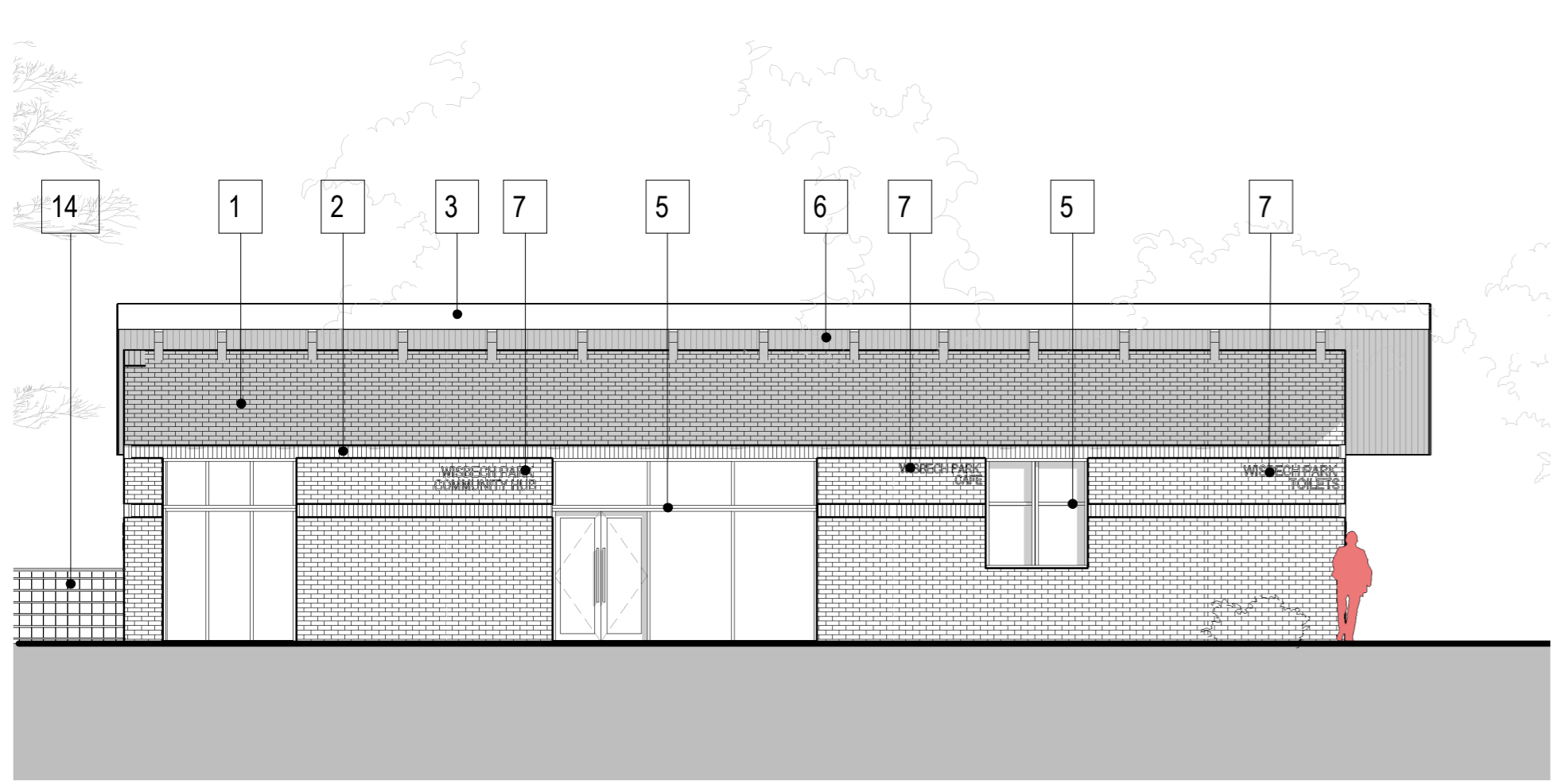
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<b>211328</b>	<b>1 : 100</b>	<b>@ A2</b>	<b>P07</b>

Drawing Number	<b>FEN002 - PEV - B1 - 00 - DR - A - 9200</b>					
Project Code	Originator	Zone	Level	Type	Role	Number



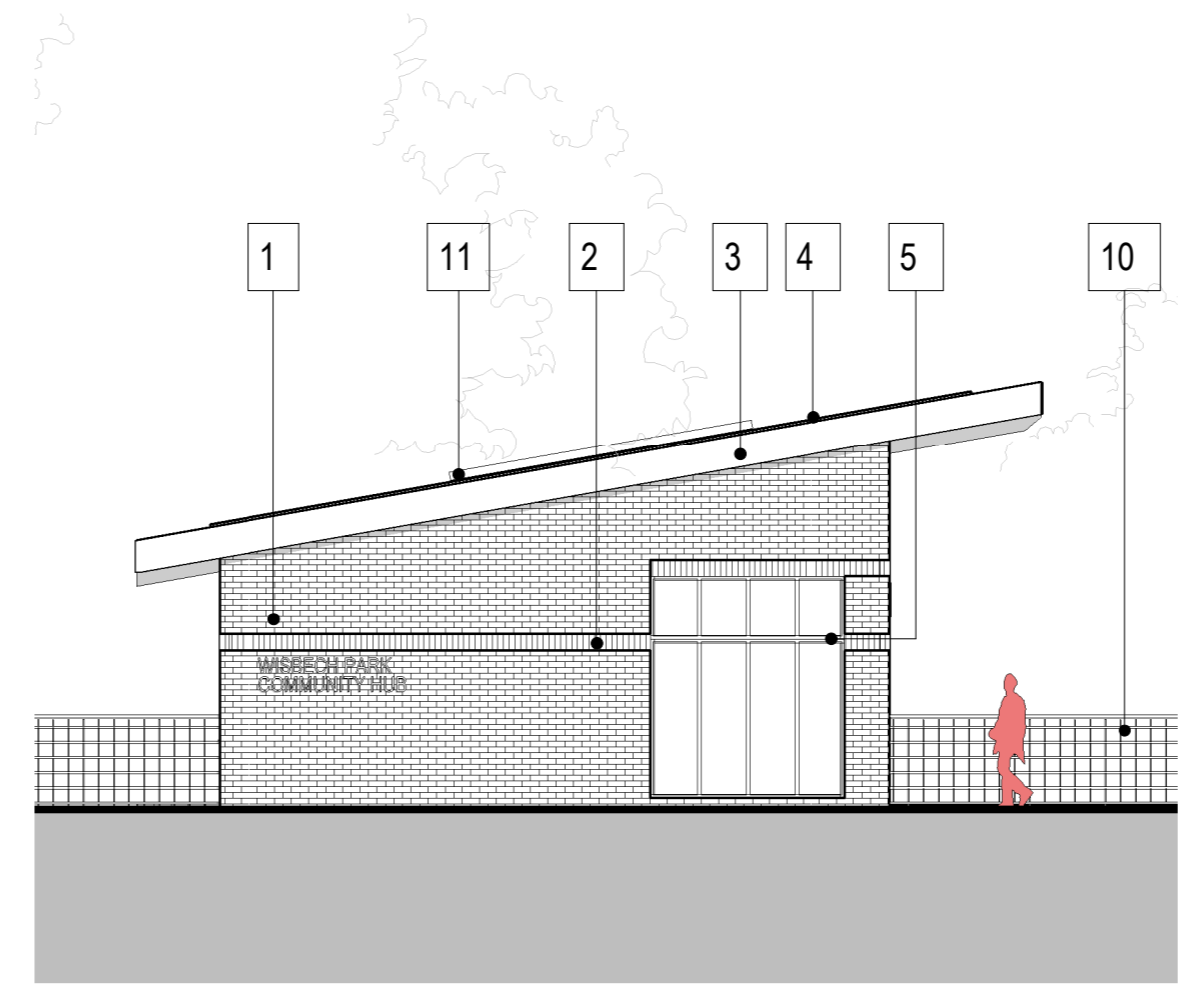
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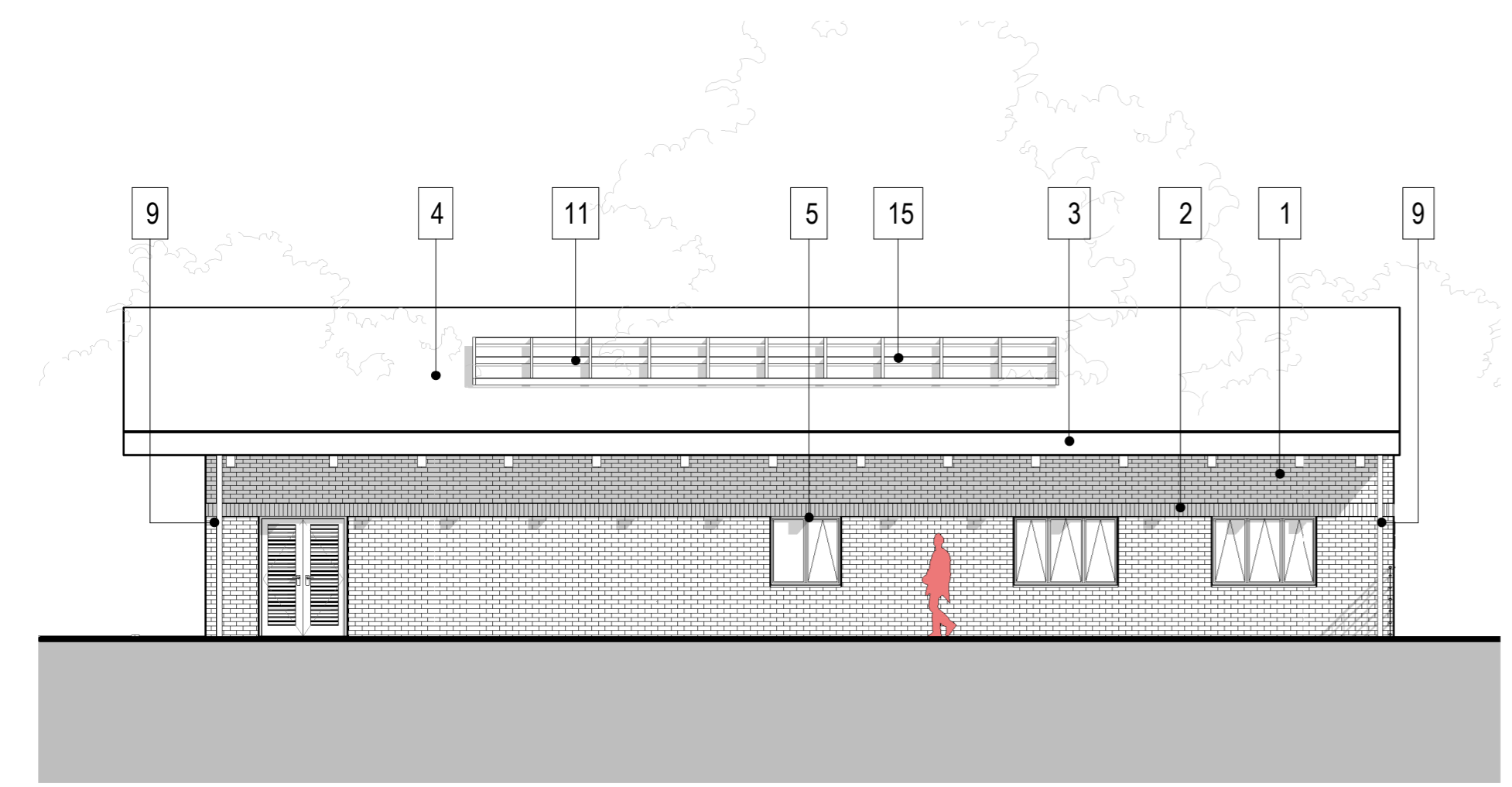
1-North Elevation

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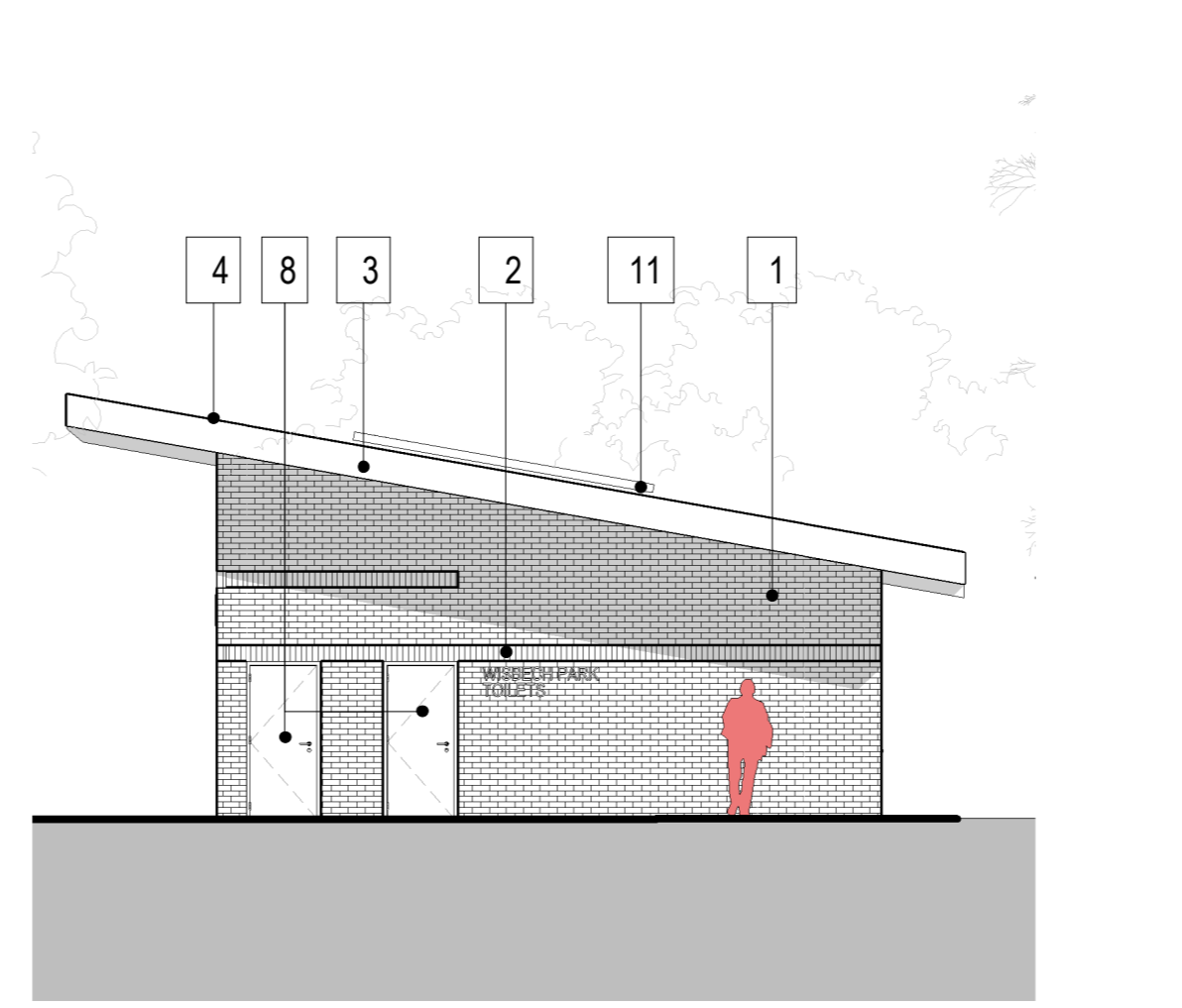
3-East Elevation

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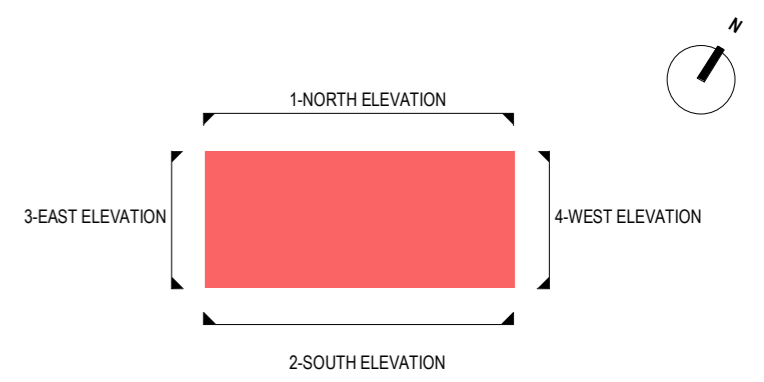
2-South Elevation

1 : 100



4-West Elevation

1 : 100



KEY PLAN

**KEY**

1. Walls  
Material: Cambridgeshire Buff  
Colour: Cambridgeshire Buff
2. Wall Detail  
Material: Soldier course brick  
Colour: Cambridgeshire buff
3. Fascia  
Material: Aluminium  
Colour: Dark Grey
4. Sedum Roof
5. Curtain Wall / Windows  
Material: Aluminium Mullion and Transoms  
Colour: Dark Grey TBC
6. Soffit  
Material: Cedar Timber
7. Signage  
Material: Aluminium  
Colour: Silver/ Dark Grey TBC
8. Doors  
Material: Steel  
Colour: Dark Grey
9. RWP flushed brick reveal
10. Existing apple orchard fence
11. PV Panels

P03 Issue for Planning	20.07.2022	MED	JEA
P02 Revised Elevations	07.06.2022	MED	JEA
P01 Draft Issue	25.04.2022	MED	JEA
<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Drn</b>	<b>Chk</b>

This document references the following files:-

Client  
**Fenland District Council**

Project  
**Wisbech Park Community Hub & Splash Pad Community Hub**

Drawing Title  
**Proposed External Elevations**

Suitability Status  
**S4-Suitable for stage approval**

Job No.	Scale	Size	Rev
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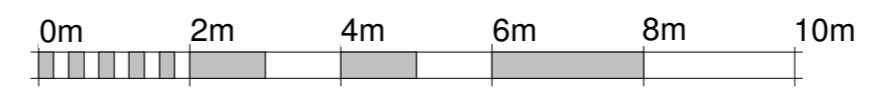
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Project Code	Originator	Zone	Level	Type	Role	Number
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