
F/YR25/0156/F

Applicant: Mr G Sharman

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

Sharman Fabrications, Gaul Farm, Gaul Road, March Cambridgeshire PE15 0YY

Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling and erect 1 x storage shed involving demolition of existing shed and stable (B2)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Deferral from previous Committee meeting

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application was heard at Planning Committee on 28th May 2025 where it was agreed to defer the application to allow for further information to be provided to demonstrate the operating model of the business, including details of expansion and to prove that the business is viable and to substantiate the need for the dwelling on site, including evidence to prove that the employees listed as working there actually do.
- 1.2 The applicant has provided further information in the form of a business plan and confidential financial statement from 2020-2023.
- 1.3 The submitted business plan identifies availability of staff on site and security as reasons for the functional need of the dwelling, however it is not considered that these reasons are sufficient to justify a dwelling on site, particularly considering that the address detailed within the application form is approximately 0.6 miles from the application site, which equates to a 3 minute drive.
- 1.4 The submission largely fails to address the requirements of Policy LP12 – Part D in terms of a functional need for a dwelling on site as it is not considered that the increased security or convenience from the applicant residing adjacent to the site is a material factor sufficient to overcome the policy requirement to direct development away from such sites.
- 1.5 As such, the application is recommended for refusal.

2 UPDATE

- 2.1 This application was presented at Planning Committee on 28th May 2025 where it was agreed to defer the application to allow for further information to be provided to demonstrate the operating model of the business, including details of expansion and to prove that the business is viable and to substantiate the need for the dwelling on site, including evidence to prove that the employees listed as working there actually do.

- 2.2 The submitted business plan provides an overview of the history of the business, noting that the business has been operating on this site since 2004. The business plan indicates that the business has recently expanded and diversified into other areas of work including fencing and gates for schools and homes; supply of beams for house; repair work to lorries and their equipment. Prospective activity detailed within the business plan include being on call to repair lorries and equipment during evenings and weekends, shot blasting and powder coating.
- 2.3 The business plan appears to indicate two reasons for the need for a dwelling on site. The first reason is to allow for availability of an employee to undertake on call lorry repairs on evenings and weekends. The business plan notes that the applicant would be available 24 hours a day to take delivery of equipment and for goods to be collected. The second reason is regarding site security. The business plan states that the business has had items stolen. The plan does note that the materials are left on site in a building which is secure, however the business owners have received phone calls when vehicles are outside of the site so therefore travel to check the site.
- 2.4 The submitted business statement notes that the applicant would be living in the property, with his wife and two children.
- 2.5 Contained within Appendix A is the Officer's original committee report.

3 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

Functional need of the dwelling

- 3.1 The submitted business plan provides an overview of the history of the business and proposed expansions, including looking into expanding the company into shot blasting and powder coating. The business plan notes that the business is open to expansion in work and would take more employees if the work was to increase. The submitted financial statements appear to indicate that the business is relatively low risk.
- 3.2 The submitted business statement identifies that having an employee on site 24 hours of the day would allow for improved availability of staff on site. The business plan states that applicant would be available to be on call and to take delivery/collection of equipment and goods.
- 3.3 The applicant currently lives 0.6 miles from the application site, which is a 3-minute drive. This is not considered an unreasonable journey time to travel to the site to take collection/delivery of goods within the site. In addition to this, it is unlikely that collection and deliveries would be outside of normal, reasonable working hours.
- 3.4 It is also not clear from the submitted information why the applicant living on site would allow for the applicant to be available 24 hours for on call repair works, especially considering the proximity of the applicant's current address to the application site. As a result, it is not considered that the scheme would result in significant sustainability benefits given that the existing distances involved in travelling from their permanent address to the site would be considered reasonable.
- 3.5 The submitted business statement identifies site security as justification for a dwelling on the site. The business statement however does note that the buildings

on site are secure. In addition to this, no crime details or police crime numbers have been provided.

- 3.6 Security is a matter to be considered in relation to the acceptability or otherwise of a planning application, however it would not be uncommon or unreasonable for business premises of this type to operate under a scheme of security cameras and alarms. It should also be noted that the site itself is not unduly remote or isolated given its proximity to the A141 to the east of the application site.
- 3.7 With regards to the issue of safety and security this is not generally held to demonstrate an essential requirement for a dwelling to be required on site given the range of other measures there are to address this such as CCTV, alarms etc. This is borne out by the number of planning appeals around the country which are dismissed in this regard. An on-line search shows of appeals in 2024 and 2025 concerning dwellings submitted in connection with business premises with security cited as justification, that 13 out of 15 were dismissed with the two allowed relating to businesses with animal welfare justification.
- 3.8 Accordingly, the submission largely fails to address the requirements of Policy LP12 – Part D in terms of a functional need for a dwelling on site as it is not considered that the increased security or convenience from the applicant residing adjacent to the site is a material factor sufficient to overcome the policy requirement to direct development away from such sites, especially considering that the applicant is currently situated 0.6 miles away from the site, which is a 3 minute drive.
- 3.9 In addition to the above, Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 3.10 The additional information submitted has failed to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a worker to live permanently on site and thus the application is also considered to be contrary to Paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 **Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1	Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) steer new development to sustainable areas that offer the best access to services and facilities. The exception to this approach is where it can be demonstrated that such development is essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services, or that there is a justifiable reason for locating development in otherwise unsustainable locations. The proposed dwelling would be located in the open countryside and whilst it is asserted that it is essential for business reasons, the justification given does not meet the requirements of LP12(D) in terms of evidencing a clear functional need or that no other suitable accommodation is available. Whilst the NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy this does not override the need to ensure that development is located in the most accessible and sustainable locations. The proposed development is located outside any settlement limits and the justification given is not sufficient to warrant the
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	development being considered as an exception. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014).
2	Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and paragraphs 155-165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, set out the approach to developing land in relation to flood risk, with both documents seeking to steer new development in the first instance towards available 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 higher flood risk areas if it can be demonstrated that there are no reasonably available sites at a lower risk of flooding. Fenland District Council's adopted approach to sequential testing is that where a site is located in the countryside, the area of search for application of the sequential test is the whole District. The Sequential Test accompanying the application (contained within the submitted Flood Risk Assessment) does not consider sites across the whole of the District and therefore the Sequential Test is lacking proper application and is accordingly failed. As a result, the proposal would fail to accord with the provisions of the NPPF, Policy H2(c) of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017, Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016.
3	Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to deliver and protect high quality environments throughout the district. Proposals are required to demonstrate that they make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhancing their local setting and both responding to and improving the character of the local built environment whilst not adversely impacting on the street scene, settlement pattern or landscape character of the surrounding area. The proposal is for the construction of a new dwelling within an area characterised by sporadic development with a close relationship to the wider open countryside. The development would result in the consolidation of existing sporadic built form and an urbanisation of the area, detracting from the open and sporadic character of this rural location. The result would be a development that results in harm to the existing distinctiveness and open character of the area which would be contrary to policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

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Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling and erect 1 x storage shed involving demolition of existing shed and stable (B2)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation

Government Planning Guarantee

Statutory Target Date For Determination: 23 April 2025

EOT in Place: Yes

EOT Expiry: 4 June 2025

Application Fee: £2312

Risk Statement:

This application must be determined by 4th June 2025 otherwise it will be out of time and therefore negatively affect the performance figures.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks to erect a self-build/custom build dwelling and a storage shed, involving the demolition of an existing shed and stable.
- 1.2 The application states that the dwelling is to be in association with the existing fabrication business on site, however limited justification has been provided as to the functional need for the dwelling on site. In addition to this, the existing business use on site does not fall within the development criteria listed under Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.
- 1.3 Accordingly, the submission largely fails to address the requirements of Policy LP12 – Part D in terms of a functional need for a dwelling on site as it is not considered that the increased security from the applicant residing adjacent to the site is a material factor sufficient to overcome the policy requirement to direct development away from such sites.
- 1.4 A further permanent dwelling in this predominantly rural location is considered unjustified in this case and would significantly detract from, and undermine, the rural character of this part of the district.
- 1.5 The application is not accompanied by a sequential test exploring the availability of alternative sites in location of lower flood risk.

1.6 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is situated to the southwest of the junction of the A141 Isle of Ely Way and Gaul Road, to the west of March.
- 2.2 The site features a corrugated metal workshop building, stables, paddock land and a gravelled parking/turning area. There is an existing gated access off Gaul Road leading to the parking/turning area.
- 2.3 The application site is situated within Flood Zone 3 (high risk).

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks to erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling and erect 1 x storage shed involving the demolition of the existing shed and stable. The proposed dwelling would be a detached 2-storey, 4-bed dwelling, with attached single-storey garage. The dwelling would have a greatest depth of 10.8 metres approx and a greatest width of 21.2 metres approx (including the garage). The dwelling would feature dual-pitched roofs with an eaves height of 5.2 metres and a ridge height of 7.9 metres approx. the dwelling would be finished in a buff brick, with red brick plinth and detailing and red roof tiles.
- 3.2 The dwelling would be situated to the north-east of the site, with parking and turning space situated to the front of the dwelling. Private amenity space would be to the side and rear of the dwelling itself.
- 3.3 The proposed storage shed would be situated to behind the existing workshop and would have a floor area of 15 x 10 metres. The storage shed would feature a dual-pitched roof and would have a ridge height of 5.1 metres approx. The storage shed would be finished in a green sheet cladding.
- 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

Reference	Description	Decision
F/YR21/0657/F	Formation of a ménage	Granted 11/08/2021
F/YR06/1289/O	Erection of a workplace home	Refused 22/12/2006
F/YR06/1002/O	Erection of a workplace home	Refused 17/10/2006
F/YR04/3057/F	Change of Use of existing building to workshop for the manufacture of playground equipment	Granted 07/04/2004

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 March Town Council

5.2 FDC Environmental Health

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

Noise

Air pollution

Contaminated land

Artificial light

I conclude that the Environmental Health Team do not object to the principle of this application but would like to raise the following observations.

Noise / Light from the Fabrication business

I note that the residential property is linked to the fabrication business, therefore I would not propose that noise or light will be a matter to consider. However, should the residential property be sold or occupied separately to the business, the business will not be able to operate without exceeding noise levels that will be likely to cause a nuisance to the residential property.

Land affected by contamination

Historic land use likely to results in the potential for contamination to be left in the soils have ben identified. Site photos also identify made ground and deposits of construction and demolition waste. Therefore, I recommend that the standard contaminated land conditions are applied to this application.

No development approved by this permission shall be commenced prior to a contaminated land assessment and associated remedial strategy, being submitted to the LPA and receipt of approval of the document/documents from the LPA. This applies to paragraphs a), b) and c). This is an iterative process and the results of each stage will help decide if the following stage is necessary..

(a) The contaminated land assessment shall include a desk study to be submitted to the LPA for approval. The desk study shall detail the history of the site uses, the proposed site usage, and include a conceptual model. The site investigation strategy will be based on the relevant information discovered by the desk study. The strategy shall be approved by the LPA prior to investigations commencing on site.

(b) The site investigation, including relevant soil, soil gas, surface and groundwater sampling, shall be carried out by a suitable qualified and accredited consultant/contractor in accordance with a quality assured sampling and analysis methodology.

(c) A site investigation report detailing all investigative works and sampling on site, together with the results of the analysis, risk assessment to any receptors and a proposed remediation strategy shall be submitted to the LPA. The LPA shall approve such remedial works as required prior to any remediation commencing on site. The works shall be of such a nature as to render harmless the identified contamination given the proposed end use of the site and surrounding environment including any controlled waters. No development approved by this permission shall be occupied prior to the completion of any remedial works and a validation report/s being submitted to the LPA and receipt of approval of the document/documents from the LPA. This applies to paragraphs d), e) and f).

(d) Approved remediation works shall be carried out in full on site under a quality assurance scheme to demonstrate compliance with the proposed methodology and best practice

(e) If, during the works, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified then the additional contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme agreed with the LPA.

(f) Upon completion of the works, this condition shall not be discharged until a validation/closure report has been submitted to and approved by the LPA. The closure report shall include details of the proposed remediation works and quality assurance certificates to show that the works have been carried out in full in accordance with the approved methodology. Details of any post-remedial sampling and analysis to show the site has reached the required clean-up criteria shall be included in the closure report together with the necessary documentation detailing what waste materials have been removed from site, and what has been brought on to site. Reason: To control pollution of land or water in the interests of the environment and public safety.

5.3 FDC Ecology

I have no objections to the above planning application on Ecology grounds.

The proposed new hedge at the southern boundary of the site represents a suitable biodiversity enhancement for the scheme.

5.4 CCC Highways

Recommendation

On the basis of the information submitted, from the perspective of the Local Highway Authority, I consider the proposed development to be acceptable.

Comments

The existing access is suitable for the proposed development outlined. Therefore, this proposal is acceptable to the Local Highway Authority.

5.5 Environment Agency

We have no objection to the proposed development on flood risk grounds but wish to make the following comments:

We consider that the main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). As such, the IDB should be consulted with regard to flood risk associated with watercourses under their jurisdiction and surface water drainage proposals.

In all circumstances where flood warning and evacuation are significant measures in contributing to managing flood risk, we expect local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions.

NPPF Flood Risk 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 the Local Planning Authority 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.

5.6 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Eight letters of support were received regarding this application from addresses within March (Whittlesey Road x2, Burrowmoor Road x2, Corner Lodge Industrial Estate, Brewin Avenue, Millfield Close and Brewin Avenue), several of these appear to be business addresses. The reasons for support are summarised as follows:

- Allow business to grow
- Economic growth
- Asset to the community
- Security for business
- House would not impact anyone

6 STATUTORY DUTY

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – 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

Uses

Homes and Buildings

7.4 Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

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

7.5 March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall Development

7.6 Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

7.7 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

LP7: Design

LP8: Amenity Provision

LP18: Development in the Countryside

LP20: Accessibility and Transport

LP22: Parking Provision

LP24: Natural Environment

LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Self-build**
- **Character and Appearance**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Access and Parking**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Ecology and Trees**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 9.1 The application site is situated to the southwest of the junction of the A141 Isle of Ely Way and Gaul Road, to the west of the built-up settlement of March. This is an 'elsewhere' location when applying the criteria outlined in Policy LP12; given that it is clearly outside the built-up settlement of March. There is one additional dwelling on this section of Gaul Road, and therefore whilst the site is not necessarily 'physically' isolated, the lack of nearby services and facilities would render the location 'functionally' isolated.
- 9.2 As identified under Policy LP3, development in such areas 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 current use of the site is a B2 use for the manufacturing of playground equipment and therefore clearly does not accord with these prescribed uses. In addition to compliance with Policy LP3, Policy LP12 Part D requires the application to demonstrate the following:

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

Justification of need

- 9.3 The justification provided for the functional need for the dwelling is limited. The submitted design & access statement highlights that the business use has been on site for an excess of twenty years with two full time workers on site, noting that this may expand. The statement also notes that there is no alternative accommodation within the area as the site is already established for the business. An economy statement has also been submitted with the application which contradicts the design and access statement, as this clearly sets out there no additional jobs would be created as part of this proposal. This statement also highlights that the proposal would not have a distinct community benefit and that the dwelling on site would safeguard the existing business.
- 9.4 No business plan has been submitted as part of the application and thus no detail has been provided to satisfy parts (d), or (f) of the Policy. It is therefore unclear why the applicant considers it is essential for a full-time worker to occupy the dwelling. Nor has any business case been provided to be able to confirm that the business is viable to support this.
- 9.5 The application has failed to justify why an additional dwelling would be required to support the business needs. Accordingly, the submission largely fails to address the requirements of Policy LP12 – Part D in terms of a functional need for a dwelling on site as it is not considered that an additional dwelling would be necessary and it is not considered that convenience from the applicant residing adjacent to the site is a material factor sufficient to overcome the policy requirement to direct development away from such sites.
- 9.6 In addition to the above, Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 9.7 The application submitted has failed to demonstrate that there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently on site and thus the application is also considered to be contrary to Paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

Self – build

- 9.8 Policy LP5, Part C seeks to provide, in appropriate circumstances, housing solutions that meet market expectations including self build homes, which is supported by para 62 of the NPPF. 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 the Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Weight would therefore be given to this, the amount dependant on identified demand.

- 9.9 The proposal is for self/custom build dwellings, however the Council can currently demonstrate that the number of permissions given for self/custom builds exceeds identified demand. The register currently demonstrates that 3 permissions are required, with 58 permissions granted to date. As such very limited weight can be afforded to this.

Character and Appearance

- 9.10 This application proposes to erect one self-build/custom build dwelling and a storage shed, involving the demolition of an existing shed and stable.
- 9.11 The character of development along this area of Gaul Road is predominantly agricultural, with the presence of one singular dwelling. The character of development could therefore be classed as sporadic and loose knit, due to the large and spacious fields forming gaps between the existing development.
- 9.12 Policy H2 of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 states that development should be of a high standard of design. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan requires development to 'make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhancing its local setting, responding to and improving the character of the local built environment, providing resilience to climate change, reinforcing local identity and not adversely impacting on the street scene, settlement pattern or landscape character of the surrounding area'.
- 9.13 The design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is not considered to be objectionable in its own right, the proposal however by its very nature and location, would detract from the relationship between the site and its rural and undeveloped surroundings. The proposed development would undermine this relationship by the consolidation of existing sporadic and loose-knit built form notable in this area and would therefore be contrary to Policy LP16 of the adopted Fenland Local Plan.
- 9.14 The proposed storage shed would be situated to the rear of the existing workshop and whilst this would be visible from the surrounding public realm (given the open nature of the surrounding area), it is not considered to be out of character in this location.

Residential Amenity

- 9.15 There are no immediate neighbours surrounding the application site and therefore the scheme will not adversely impact upon residential amenity and as such there are no issues to address with regard to Policy H2(a) of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and Policy LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

Access and Parking

- 9.16 The proposed development would utilise the existing access into the site and extending the gravel/hardcore to create a driveway to the proposed dwelling.

Upon consultation with CCC Highways, no objections have been raised to the utilisation of this access to serve the proposed development.

- 9.17 Appendix A of the Fenland Local Plan states that dwellings with four or more bedrooms should provide three onsite parking spaces. One parking space is detailed to the front of the dwelling, and two within the garage. It is therefore considered that sufficient parking space could be achieved on site. As such, there are no issues to address with regard to Policy LP15.

Flood Risk

- 9.18 The application site is located within Flood Zone 3. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan requires new development to be the subject of a sequential test, which aims to direct new development to the areas at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 9.19 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which states '*the proposed dwelling will be tied to the business that is based at the site and therefore can be considered to pass the Sequential Test. Justification for the need for a dwelling is provided within a separate document*'.
- 9.20 The matter of need for the dwelling to be located on site is addressed above. It is concluded that there is no site specific need for the dwelling on site and therefore the sequential test needs to be applied.
- 9.21 It is considered that applying the sequential test across the whole of the District, as is the Council's adopted approach for a site outside the settlement, would result in identifying sites at lower risk, capable of accommodating a single dwelling. Therefore, the proposal is deemed to have failed the sequential test.
- 9.22 On matters of flood risk, therefore, the application site would not accord with the planning requirements at set out under the NPPF, Policy H2(c) of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017, Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016.

Ecology and Trees

- 9.23 The application is accompanied by a tree statement confirming that no trees will be removed on the site. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has also been submitted which confirms that precautionary working methods should be put in place to prevent disturbance to wildlife. Recommended enhancements have also been suggested. The FDC Ecologist has raised no objections to the scheme and therefore there are no issues to address with regards to Policy LP19.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 9.24 The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.
- 9.25 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.

10 CONCLUSIONS

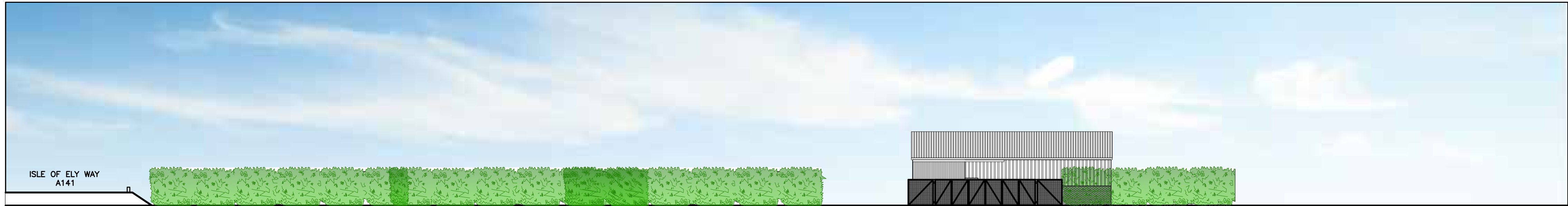
- 10.1 The site lies within an 'elsewhere' location as such, the erection of a dwelling is contrary to the settlement policies outlined in Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. Furthermore, the scheme fails to evidence the 'need' for the property in this location as required by Policy LP12 – Part D and would detrimentally impact on the character of the area. Given that the scheme fails to demonstrate that the development is justified in terms of a functional need and the visual harm that ensues, development plan policies indicate that the application should be refused and there are no material considerations to indicate a departure from the development plan is warranted in this instance.
- 10.2 The Sequential Test accompanying the application does not consider sites across the whole of the District and therefore the Sequential Test is lacking proper application and is accordingly failed. As a result, the proposal would fail to accord with the provisions of the NPPF, Policy H2(c) of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017, Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016.

11 RECOMMENDATION

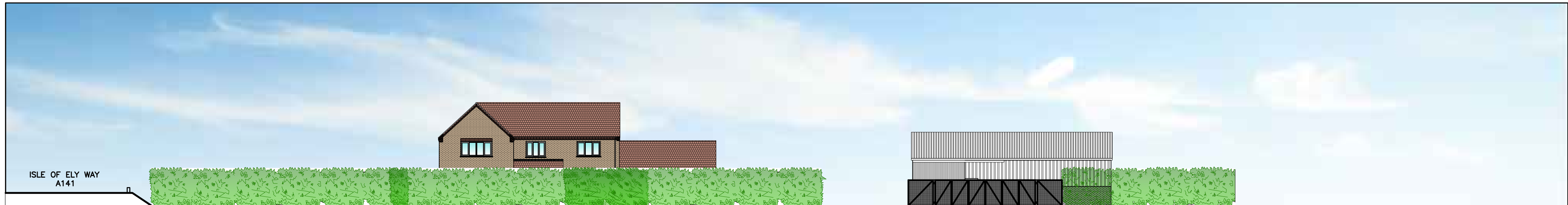
- 11.1 **Refuse;** for the following reasons:

1	Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) steer new development to sustainable areas that offer the best access to services and facilities. The exception to this approach is where it can be demonstrated that such development is essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services, or that there is a justifiable reason for locating development in otherwise unsustainable locations. The proposed dwelling would be located in the open countryside and whilst it is asserted that it is essential for business reasons, the justification given does not meet the requirements of LP12(D) in terms of evidencing a clear functional need or that no other suitable accommodation is available. Whilst the NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy this does not override the need to ensure that development is located in the most accessible and sustainable locations. The proposed development is located outside any settlement limits and the justification given is not sufficient to warrant the development being considered as an exception. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014).
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2	Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and paragraphs 155-165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, set out the approach to developing land in relation to flood risk, with both documents seeking to steer new development in the first instance towards available 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 higher flood risk areas if it can be demonstrated that there are no reasonably available sites at a lower risk of flooding. Fenland District Council's adopted approach to sequential testing is that where a site is located in the countryside, the area of search for application of the sequential test is the whole District. The Sequential Test accompanying the application (contained within the submitted Flood Risk Assessment) does not consider sites across the whole of the District and therefore the Sequential Test is lacking proper application and is accordingly failed. As a result, the proposal would fail to accord with the provisions of the NPPF, Policy H2(c) of the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017, Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016.
3	Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to deliver and protect high quality environments throughout the district. Proposals are required to demonstrate that they make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhancing their local setting and both responding to and improving the character of the local built environment whilst not adversely impacting on the street scene, settlement pattern or landscape character of the surrounding area. The proposal is for the construction of a new dwelling within an area characterised by sporadic development with a close relationship to the wider open countryside. The development would result in the consolidation of existing sporadic built form and an urbanisation of the area, detracting from the open and sporadic character of this rural location. The result would be a development that results in harm to the existing distinctiveness and open character of the area which would be contrary to policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).



EXISTING STREET SCENE A-A
(1:200)



PROPOSED STREET SCENE A-A
(1:200)



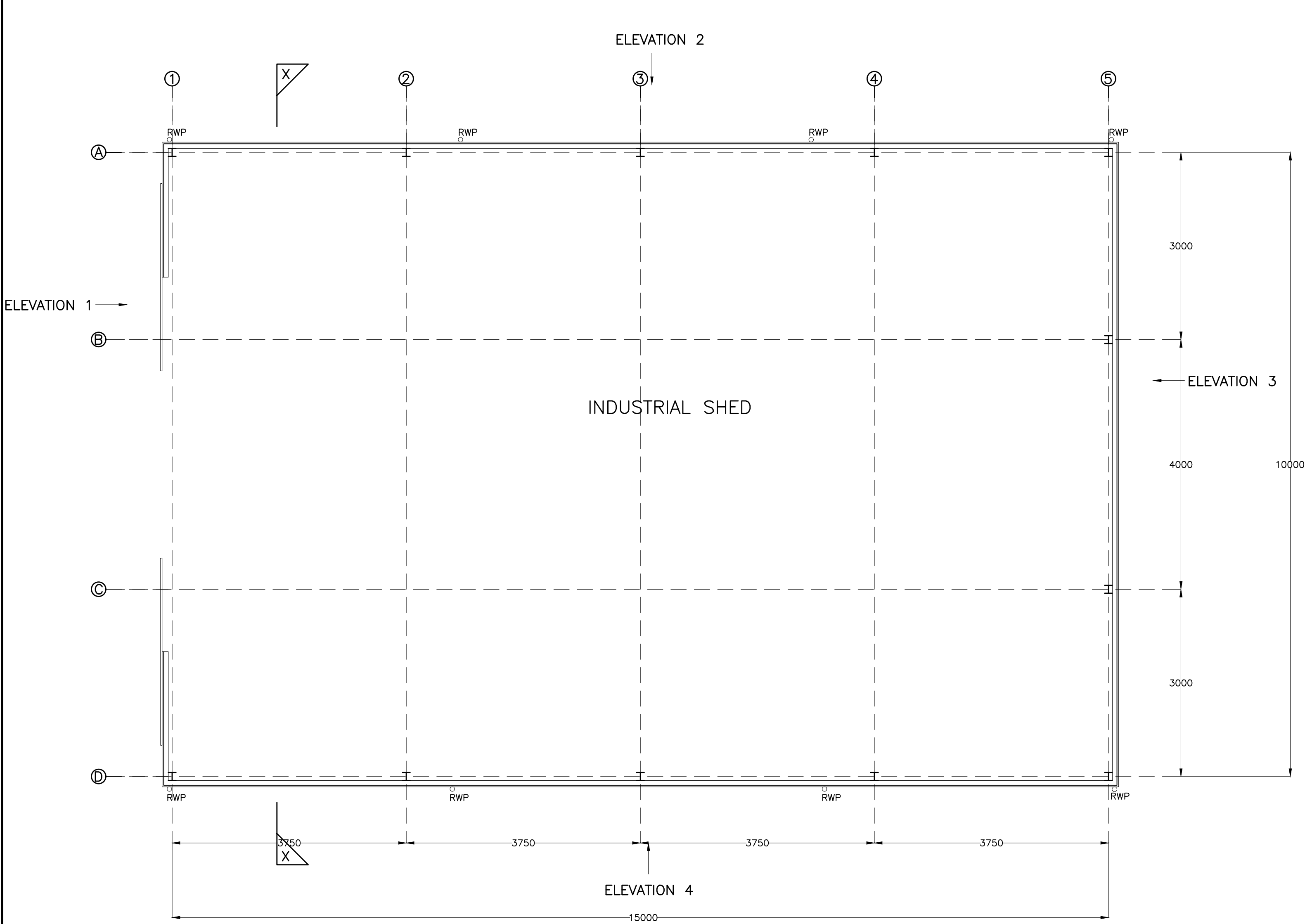
EXISTING STREET SCENE B-B
(1:200)



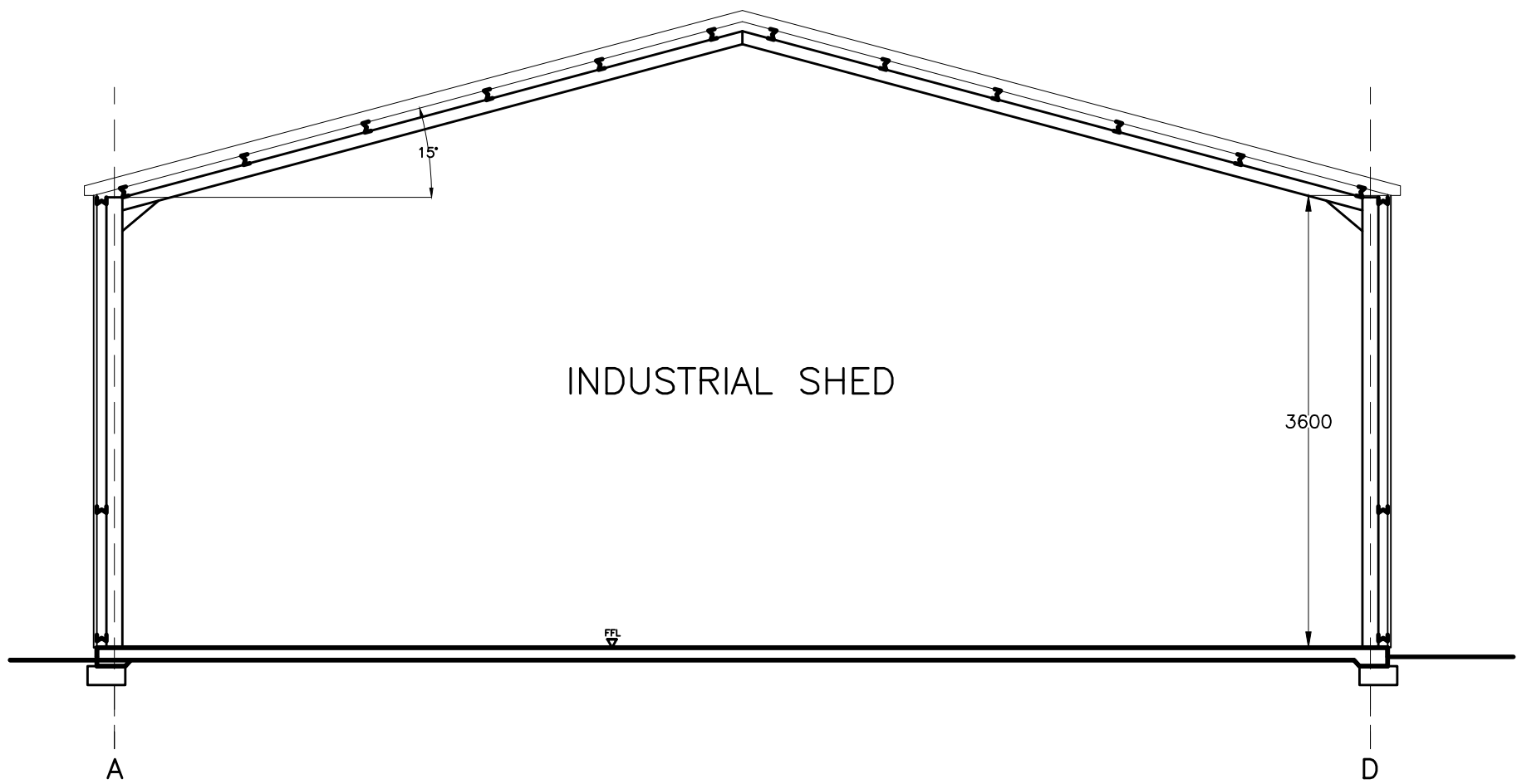
PROPOSED STREET SCENE B-B
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All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details

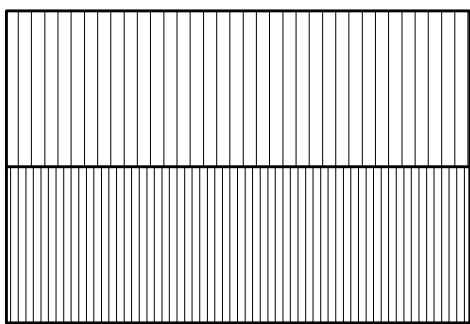
REVISIONS		DATE
 MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS 1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk LABC LABC Fenland District Council Building Design Awards winner Building Excellence in Fenland		
CLIENT		
Mr Sharman		
PROJECT		
Sharman Fabrications Gaul Road, March Cambridgehsire PE15 0YY		
TITLE		
Existing and Proposed Street Scenes		
DRAWN	G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Jan 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10015/06



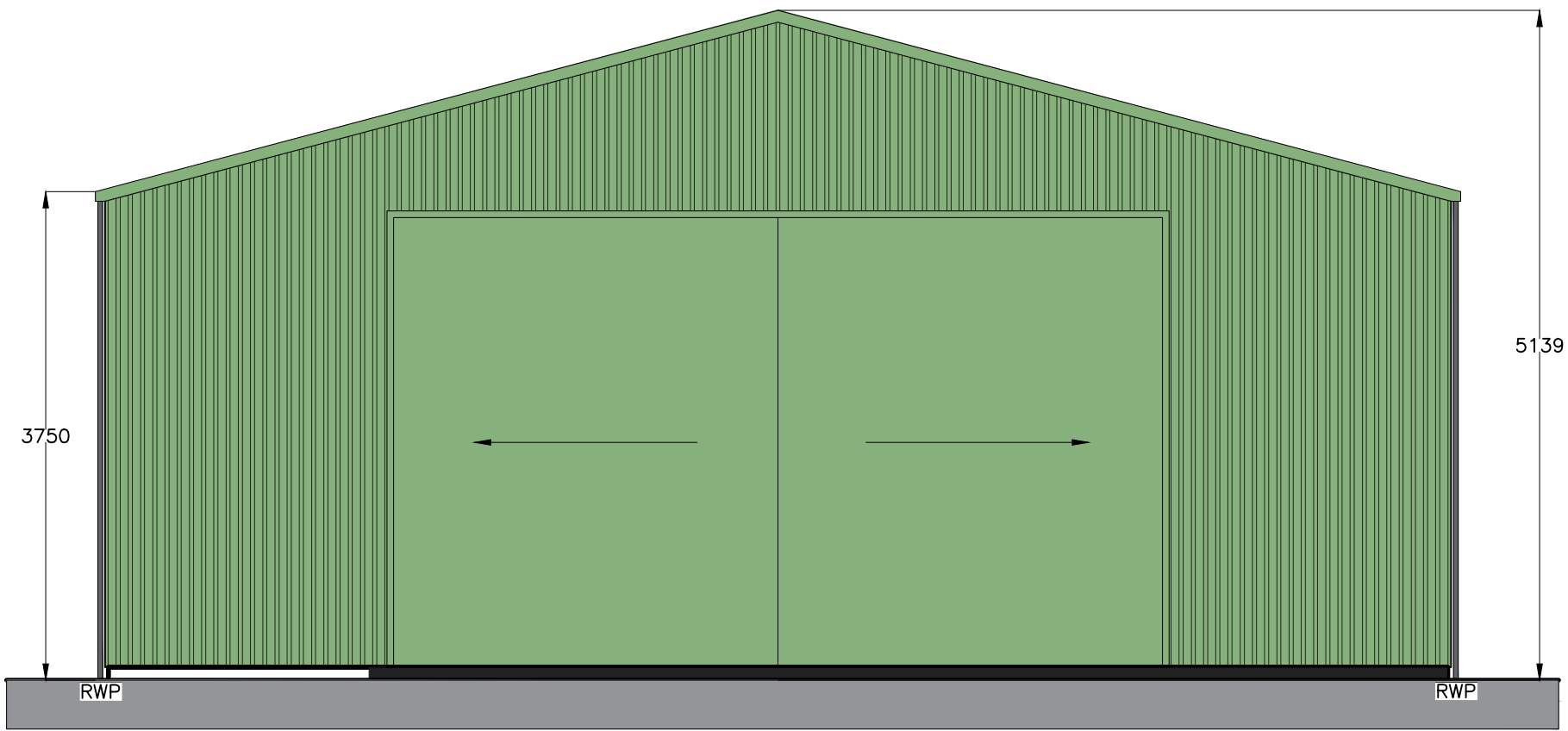
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN (1:50)



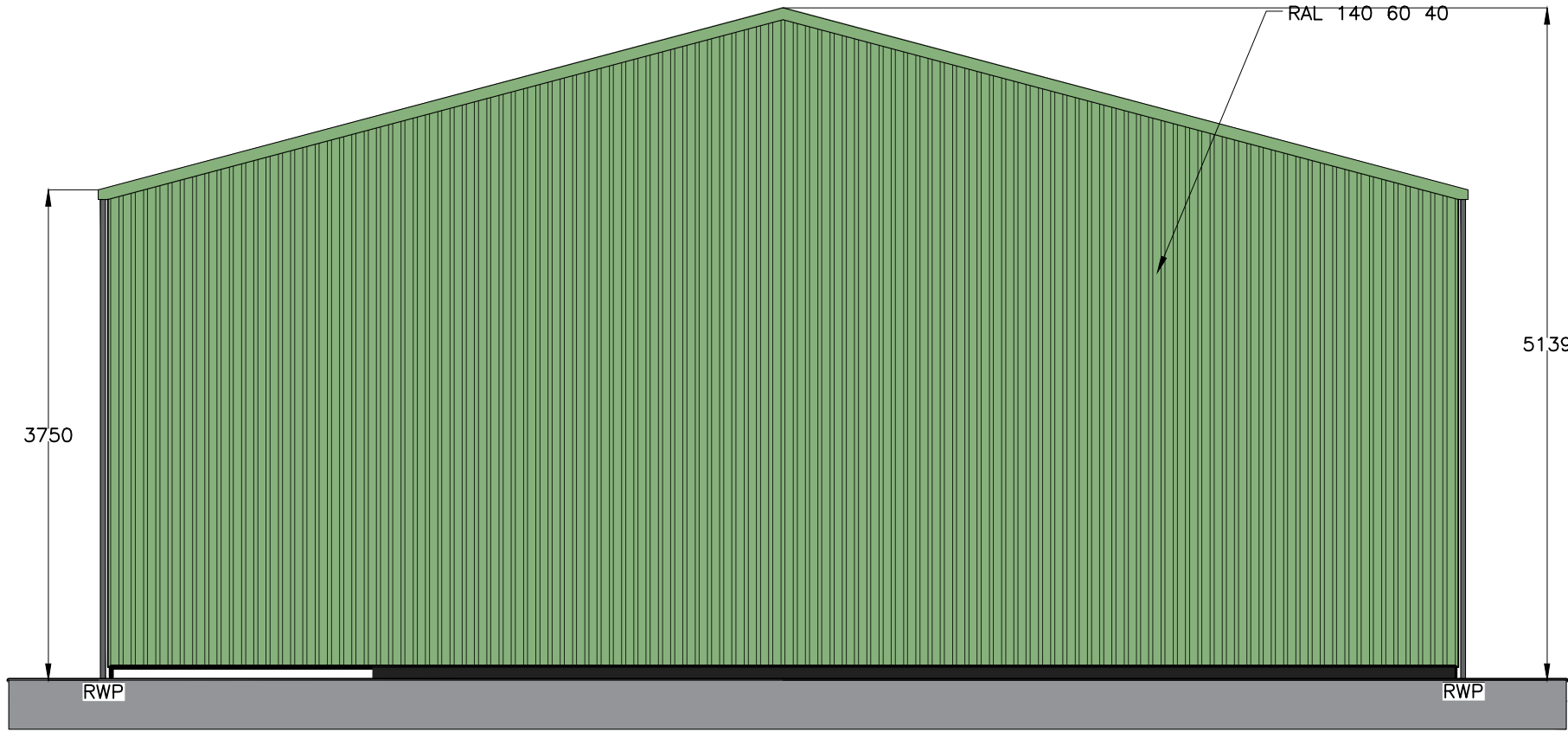
TYPICAL SECTION X-X (1:50)



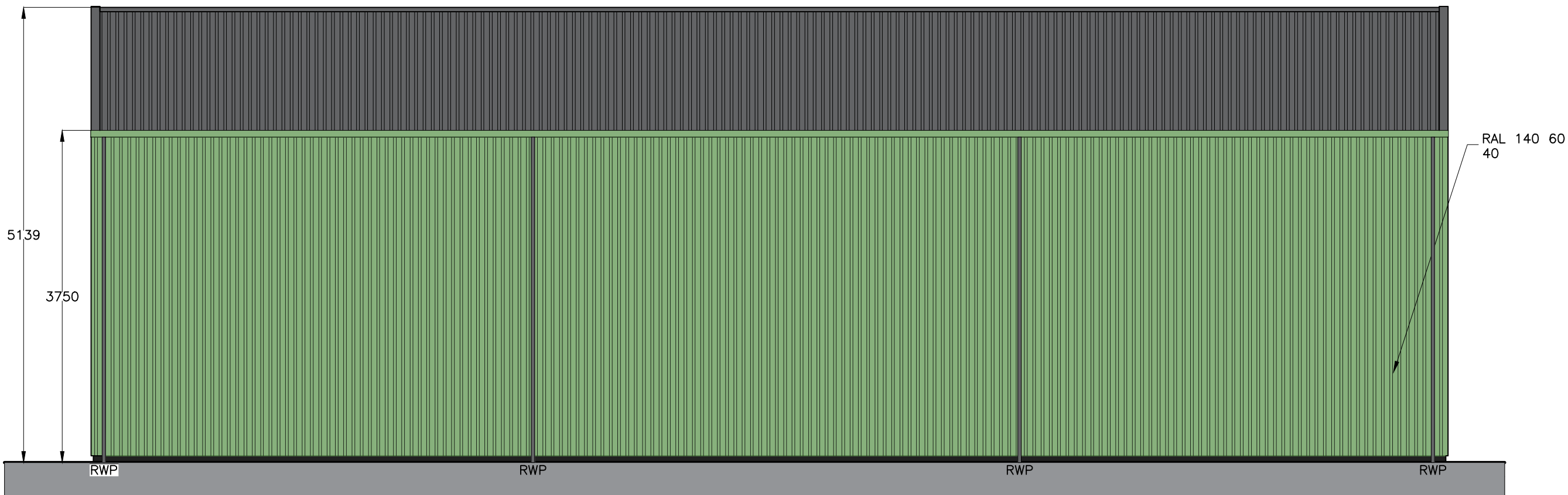
PROPOSED ROOF PLAN (1:250)



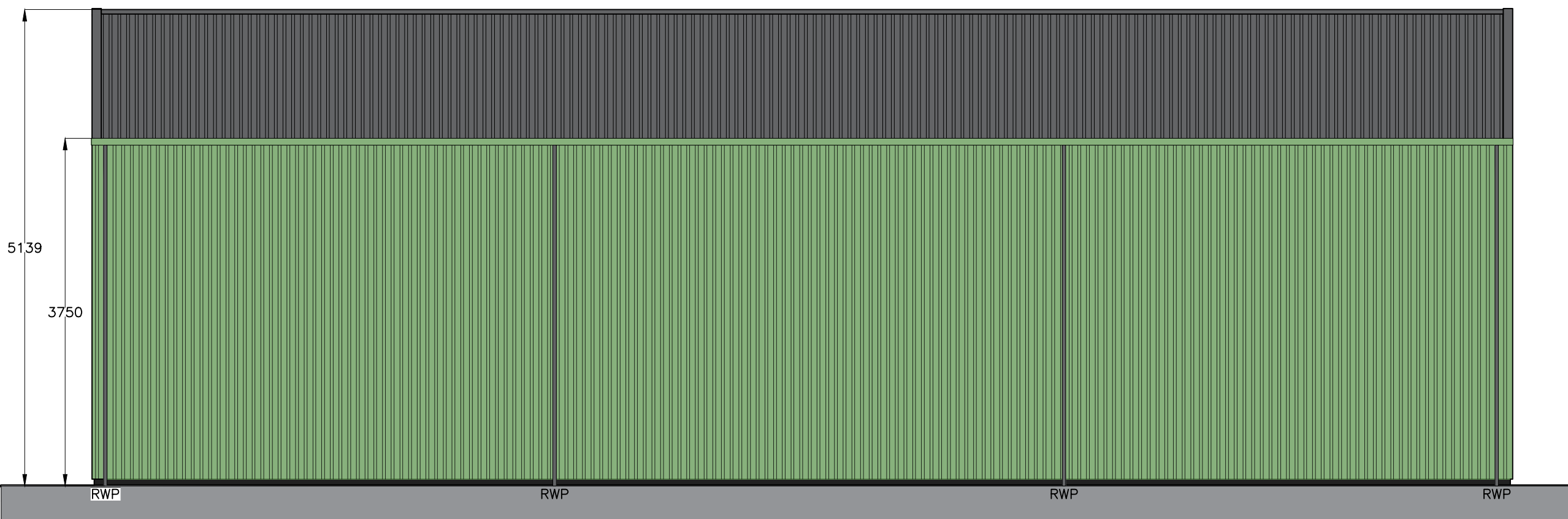
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION 1 (1:50)



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION 3 (1:50)



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION 4 (1:50)



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION 2 (1:50)

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B	UPDATED FOR PLANNING	JAN 2025
A	CLIENT COMMENTS	DEC 2024
REVISIONS		DATE

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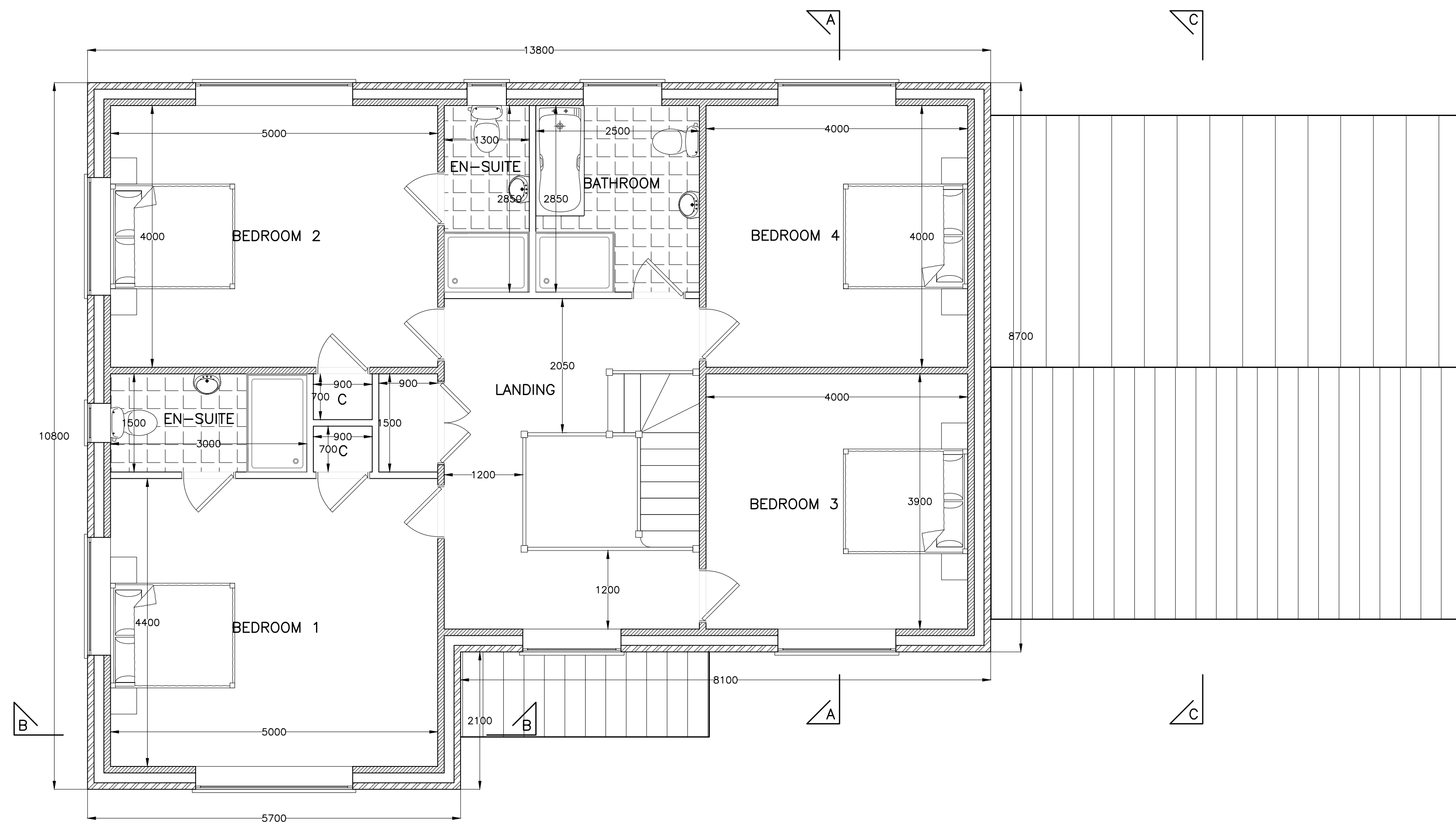
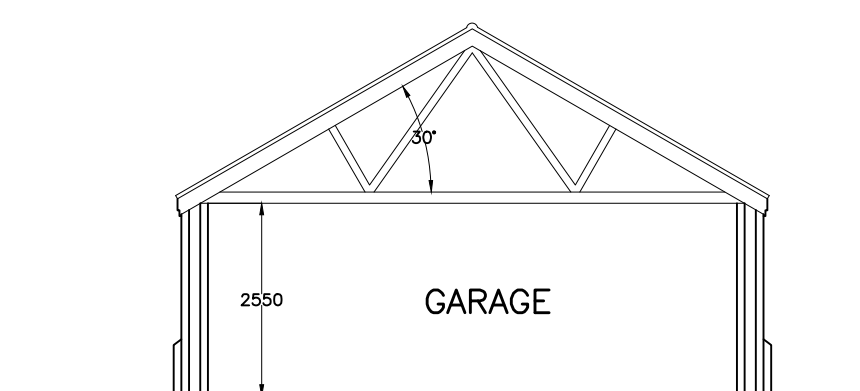
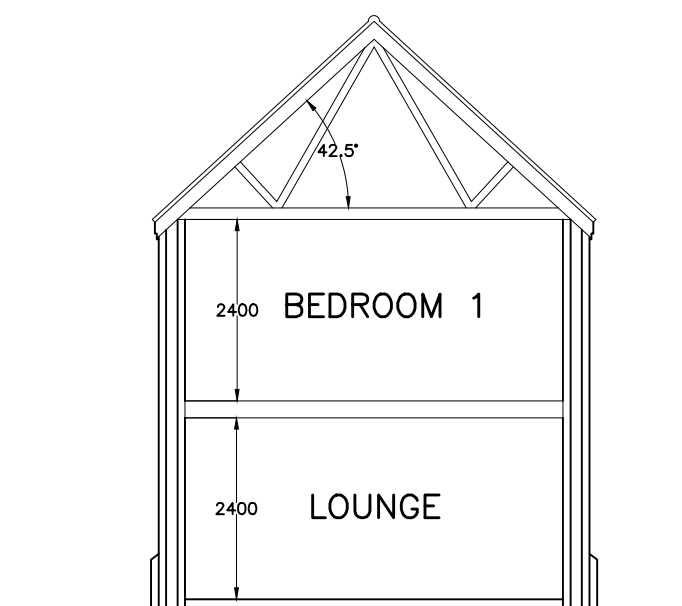
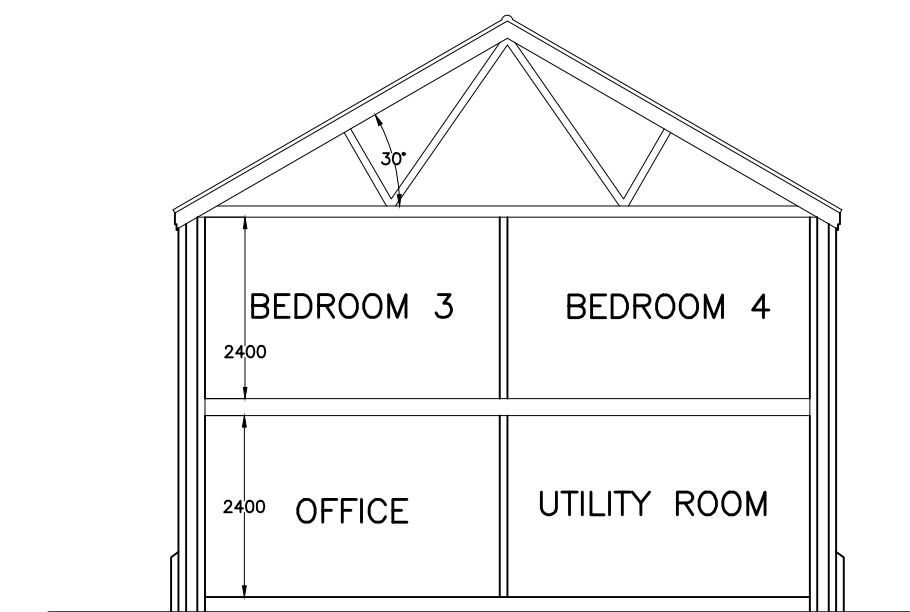
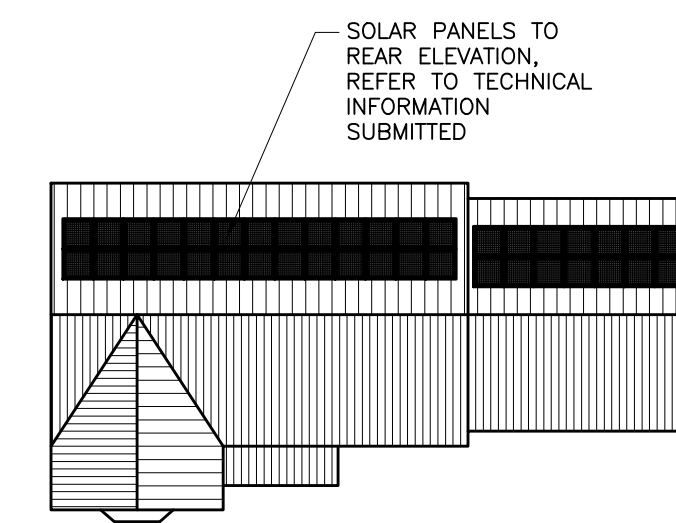
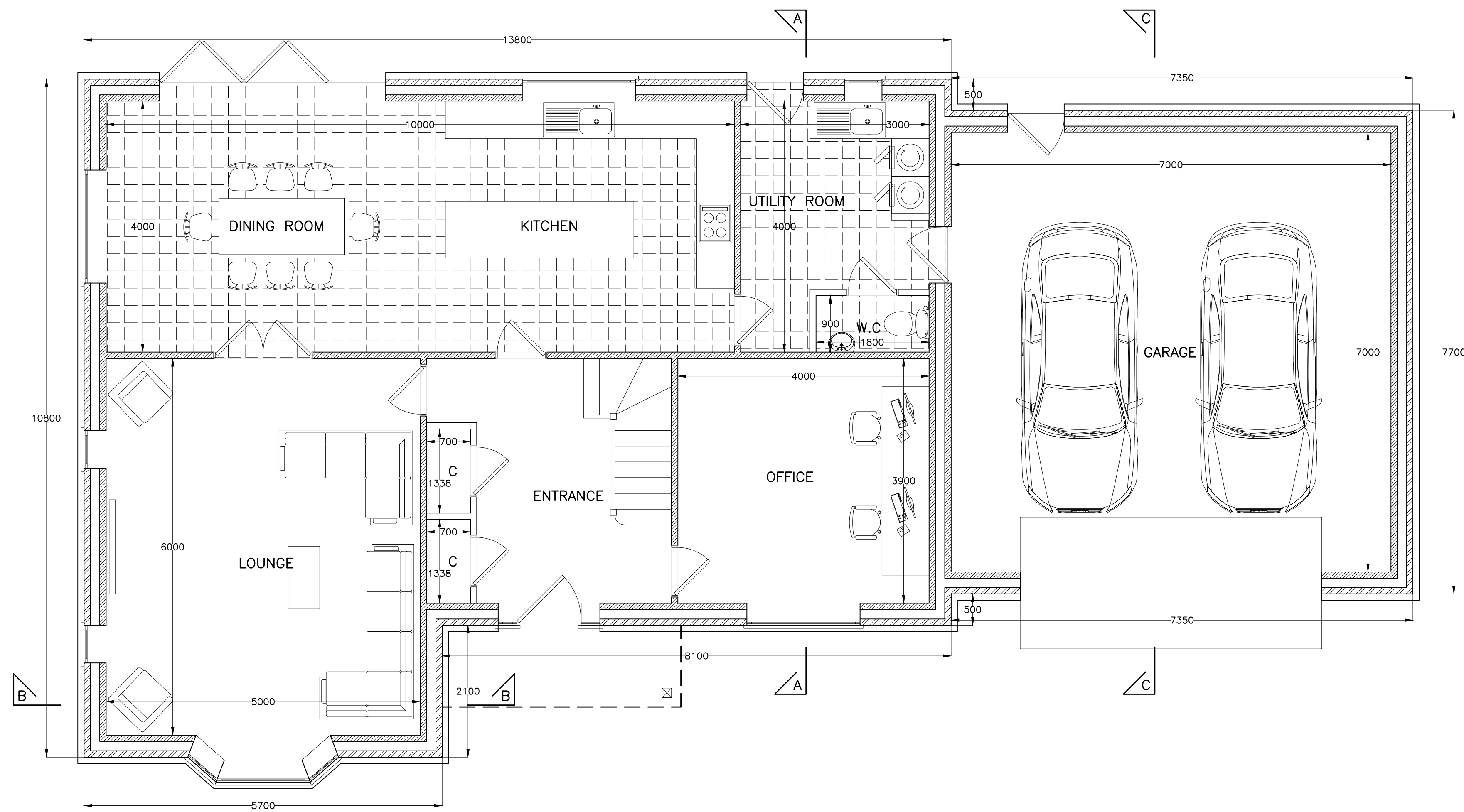
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Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk

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Building Design Awards
Building Excellence in Fenland

CLIENT	
Mr Sharman	
PROJECT	
Sharman Fabrications Gaul Road, March Cambridgeshire PE15 0YY	
TITLE	
Proposed Shed Plans & Elevations	
DRAWN G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED	
DATE Dec 2024	DRAWING NUMBER H10015/04_B
SCALE As Shown	



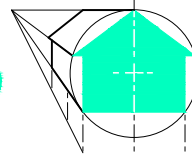
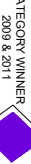
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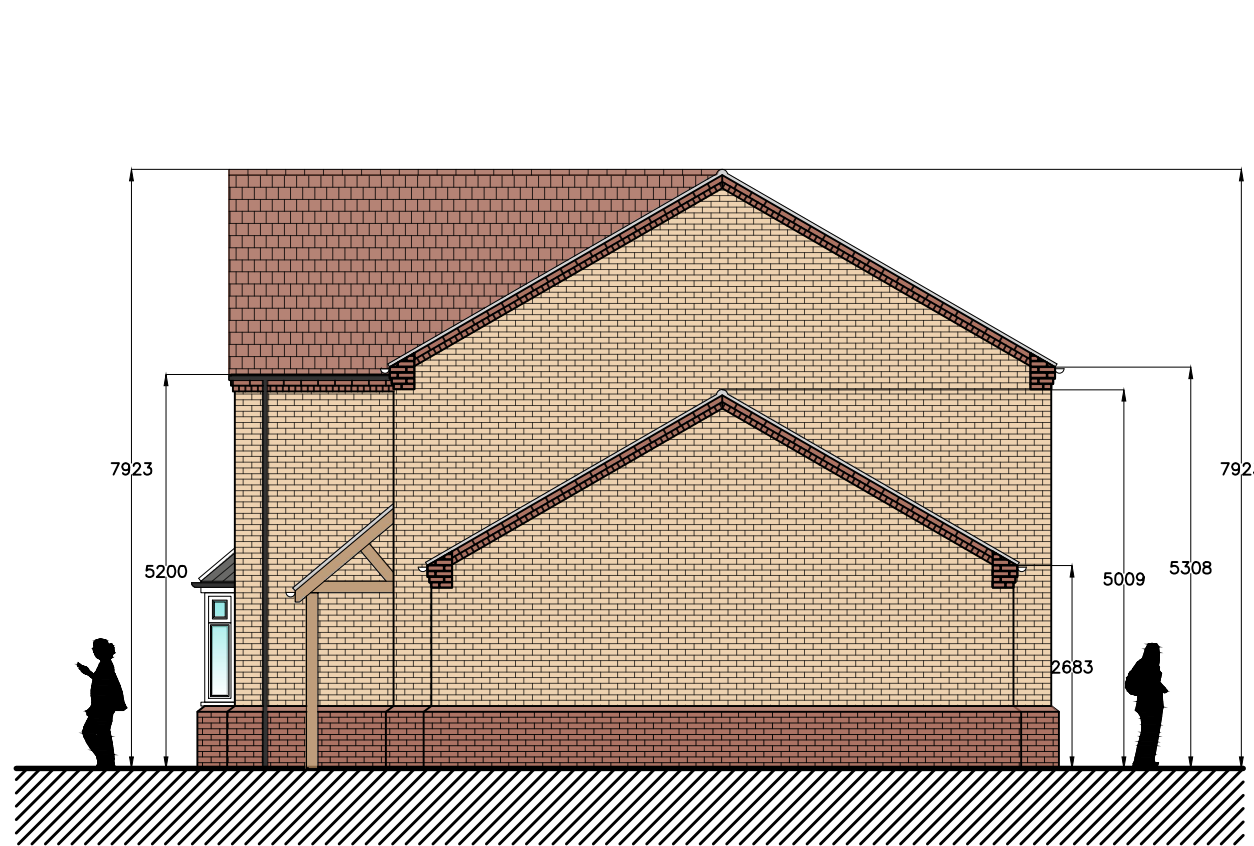
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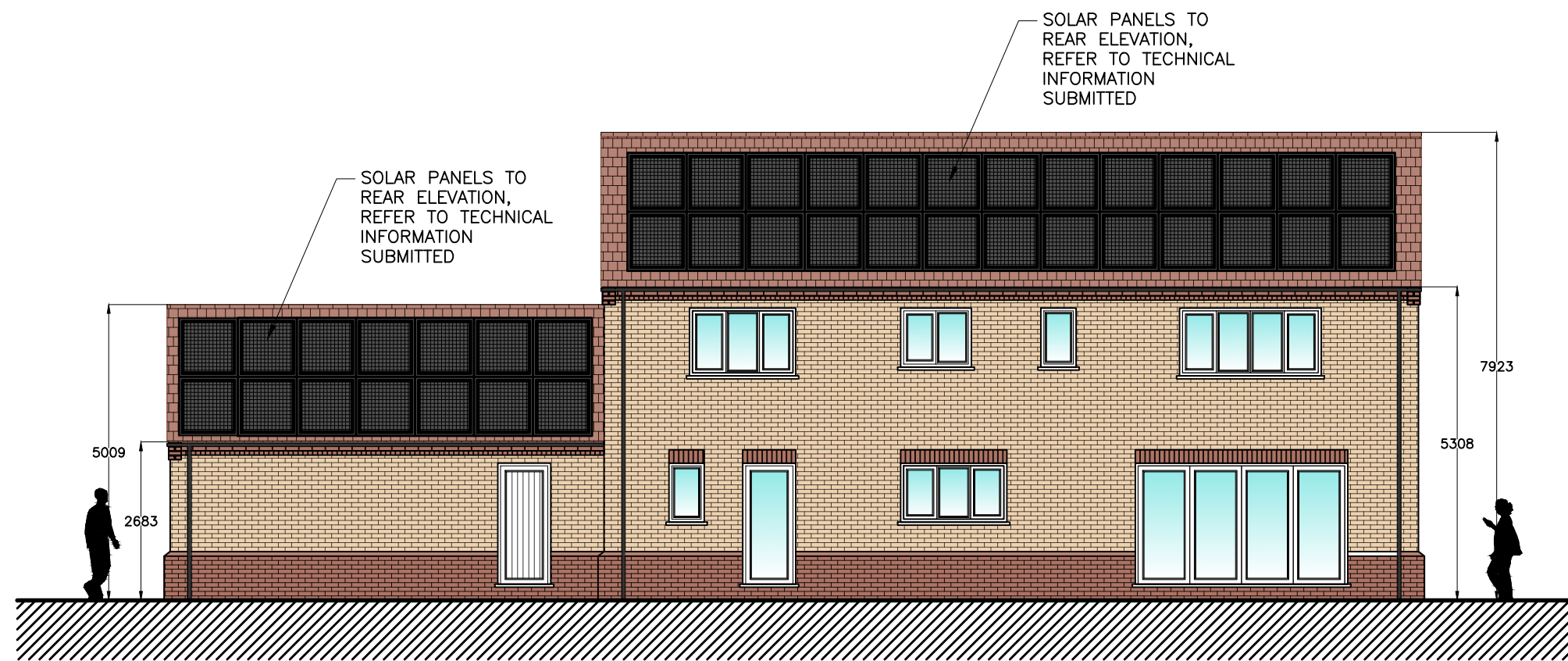
B A	UPDATED FOR PLANNING CLIENT COMMENTS	JAN 2025 DEC 2024
REVISIONS		DATE
  MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS 1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ Tel: 01354 655454 Fax: 01354 660467 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk Website: www.mortonconsultingengineers.co.uk   Fenland District Council  Building Design Awards Building Excellence in Fenland THE BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARD winner		
CLIENT		
Mr Sharman		
PROJECT		
Sharman Fabrications Gaul Road, March Cambridgeshire PE15 0YY		
TITLE		
Proposed Floor Plans & Sections		
DRAWN G.Boresham		DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE Dec 2024	DRAWING NUMBER	
SCALE As Shown	H10015/02 _B	



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
(1:50)



PROPOSED RHS ELEVATION
(1:100)



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
(1:100)



PROPOSED LHS ELEVATION
(1:100)

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CLIENT	Mr Sharman
PROJECT	Sharman Fabrications Gaul Road, March Cambridgehsire PE15 0YY
TITLE	Proposed Elevations
DRAWN	G.Boreham
CHECKED	
DATE	Dec 2024
SCALE	As Shown
DATE OF ISSUE	
DRAWING NUMBER	H10015/03 _B