

F/YR25/0852/F

Applicant: Mr Mark Page
Chloes

Agent : Mr G Boreham
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

39 Broad Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8TP

Installation of external shutters to existing shop front (retrospective)

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application is for the installation of external shutters to an existing shop front. The proposal is retrospective.
- 1.2 Shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.
- 1.3 Whilst there are some isolated examples of shutters in close proximity to the site, it is important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the Shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.
- 1.4 The proposed external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policy LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.
- 1.5 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is situated on the eastern side of Broad Street, within the market town of March. The site is also situated within March Conservation Area and is within the vicinity of numerous Grade II Listed Buildings. The site is also situated within the Primary Shopping Frontage of March town centre.
- 2.2 The building on site is currently occupied on the ground floor by 'Chloe's Jewellery', which is a double fronted shop unit with a central entrance door. The shop sits within a row of other units with a mixture of retail uses.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 Planning permission is applied for the installation of solid external shutters to the existing shop front. The roller shutters would be black and would cover the windows and entrance door, the whole of the shop frontage. The shutter box would project from the shopfront.

3.2 The proposal is retrospective.

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
F/YR07/0222/F 07/00031/REF	Change of use from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services)	REFUSE APPEAL ALLOWED	19.04.2007 21.09.2007
F/YR04/3105/F	Erection of part single/part 2-storey rear extension to existing shop	GRANT	05.05.2004

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Parish/Town Council:** Supporting.
Recommendation; Approval

5.2 **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority:** No Objections.

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

I note the proposal is for the installation of security shutter for a jewellery shop.

5.3 **Designing Out Crime Officers:** No Objections.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application. I have viewed the documents in relation to crime, disorder, and the fear of crime. I have searched the Constabulary crime and incident systems covering location and ward for the last 2 years and have provided an updated crime analysis of the ward. I would consider the proposed location to be an area of medium to high risk to the vulnerability to crime based on the figures below.

Wards	March East Ward = 1076	Broad Street = 87
Criminal Damage	113	5
Robbery	9	1
Theft from person	2	0
Bicycle Theft	18	1
Theft from a vehicle	20	0
Theft of a vehicle	27	0
Vehicle Interference	8	0
Public Order	62	10

<i>Burglary Business</i>	14	6
<i>Burglary Dwelling</i>	19	0
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	16	1
<i>Theft other</i>	68	0
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	12	0
<i>Possession of weapons</i>	26	0
<i>Violence (including Stalking/Harassment)</i>	508	17
Incidents	2293	84
<i>Rowdy Nuisance / Malicious Nuisance</i>	121	24
<i>Vehicle Nuisance / Stolen Vehicle / Theft other</i>	126	0
<i>Suspicious Circumstances</i>	391	4
<i>Crime Other</i>	18	1
<i>Drugs</i>	22	1

There doesn't appear to be any crime prevention or a security section within the Design and Access Statement, however, it is evident that both have been considered. It is important that these are considered and discussed at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the security of buildings, amenity space and the environment provide a safe place for people working in and visiting this location.

NPPF Para 135(f) states - Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments - create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

I have no objection to the use of a roller shutter at the above-mentioned premise. Please also consider external LED dusk to dawn lighting and CCTV.

5.4 Senior Archaeologist (CCC): No Comments.

5.5 Conservation Officer (FDC): Objection.

The proposal seeks retrospective consent for roller shutters and associated projecting shutter housing to a building within the March Conservation Area.

Shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.

Fenland DC's Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements Supplementary Planning and Design Guidance states:

Security shutters that cover an entire shopfront or glazed area present a visually unattractive barrier outside shopping hours and can give a street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. Retractable mesh or metal grilles behind the glazed area may be acceptable in shops displaying goods such as jewellery or electronic equipment.

There are indeed limited examples of shutters to Mallets (Broad Street) and the pawnbrokers (High Street), however it is very important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.

I would suggest the applicant seek to install internal shutters on the basis that these do not require consent and are substantially less detracting to the conservation area than external shutters.

The retrospective proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm (medium of the spectrum) and Local Authorities are bound by the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990) and the provisions of the NPPF which considers that any impact on heritage assets (in this case the March Conservation Area) should be met with a strong presumption for refusal unless strong justifications outweigh the harm. In this instance, internal shutters are considered to be appropriate in securing this shopfront.

Consistency is key in any planning decision and especially so in conservation areas. In following such planning and heritage legislation and provisions, this application should be refused. It is considered that allowing such would set a precedent for shutters in the conservation areas within the Fenland District Authority Area.

RECCOMENDATION: Refuse.

5.6 Councillor S Count: Objection.

Please note my objection to this application. I am against the further allowance of external shutters in our Town centre location. At night time this ends up ghettoising Town centres, making them appear as no-go-zones prone to graffiti. We are a quiet market town not an inner urban area. Internal grid shutters perform the same role for security purposes but look much better at night time. This is in a Conservation area which adds further cause for objection.

I therefore support rejection of this application, but would support the internal mesh type shutters, if submitted.

5.7 Councillor P Hicks: Objection.

I feel I must object to the external shutters being proposed for this application in my Ward.

External shutters makes a town look like a no go area and is prone to vandalism. Having talked to other shop keepers who have asked for this type of shutters and been refused, I think it would also set an open door policy for any further similar applications.

5.8 Local Residents/Interested Parties:

Four letters of support received; 3 from March, 1 from Elm, raising the following (summarised):

4x Supporting Comments	Officer Response
Security shutter is the logical option.	A security shutter is not objected to, however, an internal one would provide the security and would be respectful of the Conservation Area.

Other shops and jewellers have shutters close to the site.	See 'Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area' section of this report.
March should be encouraging new businesses.	Opportunity for the applicant to amend the proposal to include an internal shutter rather than an external one had been made, which would have assisted in developing the new business, whilst respecting the Conservation Area.

One representation comment neither supporting or objecting from March, raising the following (summarised):

1x Representation Comment	Officer Response
<p>One comment made neither supporting or objecting:</p> <p>Security measure is required.</p> <p>However, conservation area measures in place to protect appearance.</p> <p>Other shops have external shutters.</p> <p>If permission is granted, a condition should be in place to paint the shutters black.</p>	<p>A security shutter is not objected to, however, an internal one would provide the security and would be respectful of the Conservation Area.</p>

5.9 One petition in support of the proposal has been received (with 19 signatories).

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.

6.2 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

Built Form

Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

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

P18 – The Historic Environment

March Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2017)

There are no specific policies relating to developments such as this, however the visions, aims and objectives of the plan is that the quality of the built and natural environment is improved along with the level of provision and quality of recreational land facilities.

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design Considerations and Visual Amenity of the Conservation Area**
- **Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

9.1 The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the installation of solid external shutters to existing shop front.

9.2 Policy LP17(e) sets out that external roller shutters should be avoided unless the proposal can demonstrate the necessity for them, and then they should be of an open grille design. The application is not accompanied by any supporting information detailing incidents at the premises or in the vicinity which would justify the need for external shutters. The application would in principle therefore be at odds with this policy.

Design Considerations and Visual Amenity of the Conservation Area

9.3 The planning system promotes high quality development through good inclusive design and layout, and the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities. Good design should be indivisible from good planning. Recognised principles of good design should be sought to create a high-quality built environment for all types of development.

9.4 It should be noted that good design is fundamental to high quality new development and its importance is reflected in the NPPF. The basis of policy LP16 of the 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:

9.5 *(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.

9.6 Additionally, Policy LP17 of the Local Plan states that proposals for new shop frontages should avoid the use of external roller shutters, especially those of a solid construction.

9.6 The proposal seeks retrospective consent for roller shutters and associated projecting shutter housing to a building within the March Conservation Area.

9.8 Shutters are generally not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent.

9.9 Fenland DC's Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements Supplementary Planning and Design Guidance additionally states:

Security shutters that cover an entire shopfront or glazed area present a visually unattractive barrier outside shopping hours and can give a street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. Retractable mesh or metal grilles behind the glazed area may be acceptable in shops displaying goods such as jewellery or electronic equipment.

9.10 The Council's Conservation Officer objects to the proposal and has stated that the proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm (medium of the spectrum) and Local Authorities are bound by the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990) and the provisions of the NPPF which considers that any impact on heritage assets (in this case the March Conservation Area) should be met with a strong presumption for refusal.

9.11 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is not considered that any such public benefits exist to justify the harm identified.

9.12 Attempts were made to seek amendments to the proposal to remove the external shutters and replace with internal shutters. However, the agent requested to continue with the external shutter proposal.

9.13 As such, it is considered that the solid external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policy LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

Existing roller shutters within the Conservation Area

9.14 There are indeed examples of shutters in close proximity to the site (Mallets on Broad Street, the pawnbrokers on High Street, Thai Kitchen on Station Road). However, three examples within a wide area clearly illustrate that these are the exception rather than the rule and that the prevailing character of the town centre and conservation area is for shop fronts not to have external shutters.

9.15 It is also important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.

9.16 Consistency is key in any planning decision and especially so in conservation areas. In following such planning and heritage legislation and provisions, it is considered that the proposal warrants a refusal.

Other Matters

9.17 Given the nature of the development there are no implications for wider amenity issues, highway safety, flooding and drainage or archaeology.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

9.18 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.

9.19 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 development is de-minimis for the purposes of BNG.

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 External shutters are not supported in conservation areas owing to the deleterious impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Shutters create a perception of crime, create dead street scenes and set a dangerous precedent, exacerbated where they are of a solid construction.

10.2 Whilst there are examples of shutters in close proximity to the site, it is important to consider that these have been in situ for many years and long prior to the adoption of the March Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the aforementioned shopfront and Advertisement SPD; as such, these should not be considered to be a precedent in this instance.

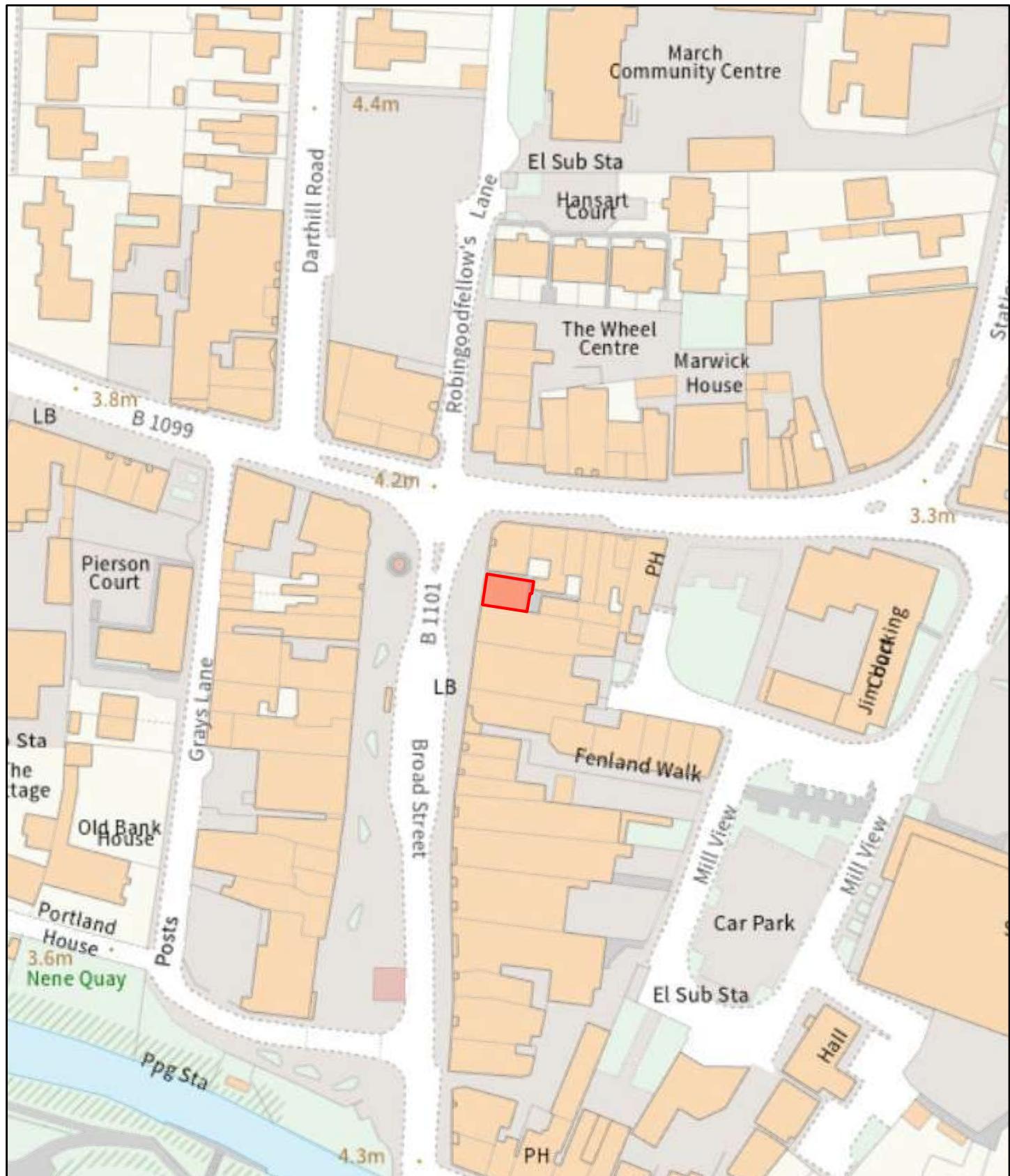
10.3 The proposed external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Policy LP17 of the Fenland Local Plan clearly states that proposals for new shop frontages should avoid the use of solid external roller shutters.

10.4 Therefore, the proposal would be contrary with policies LP16, LP17 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), and the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

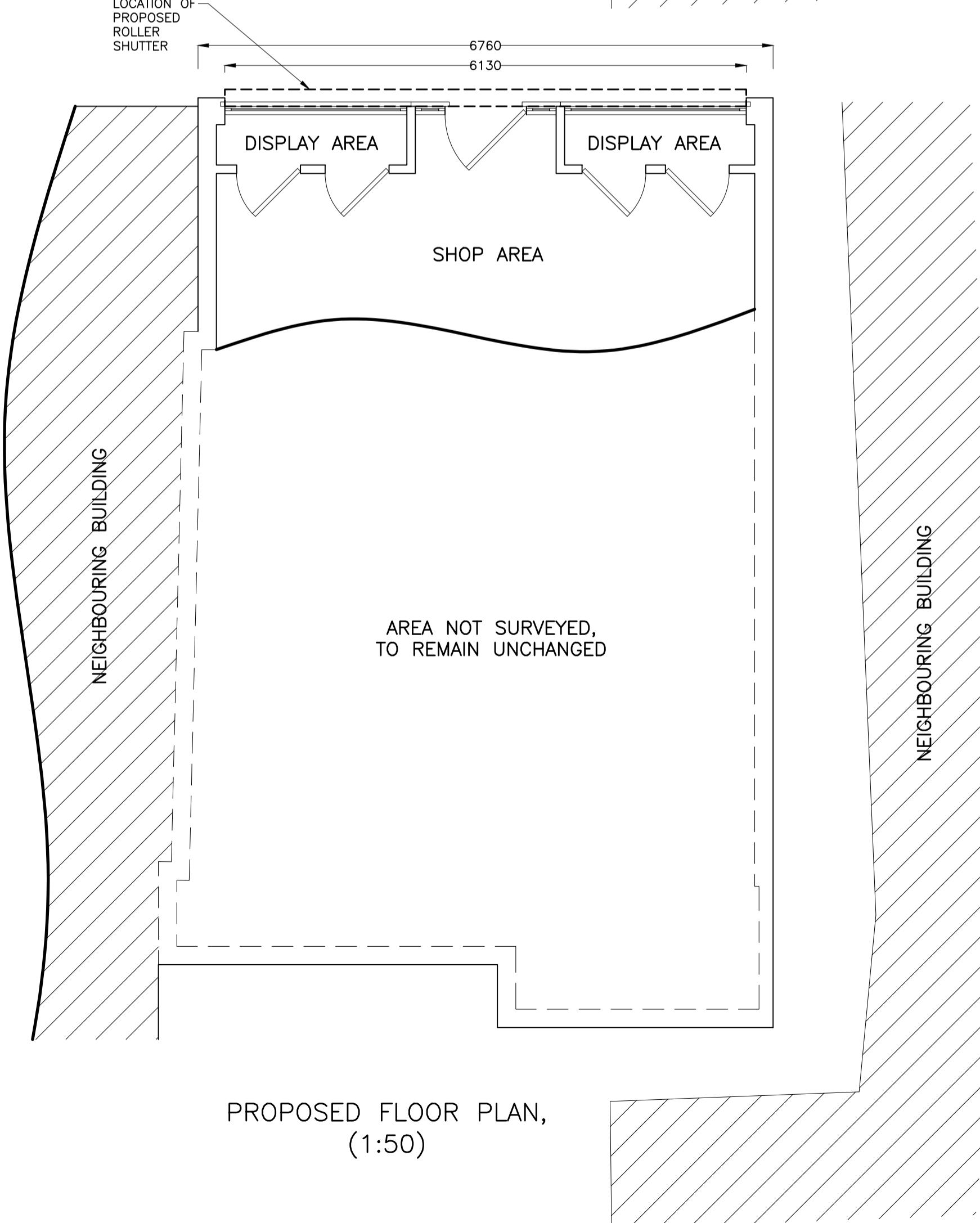
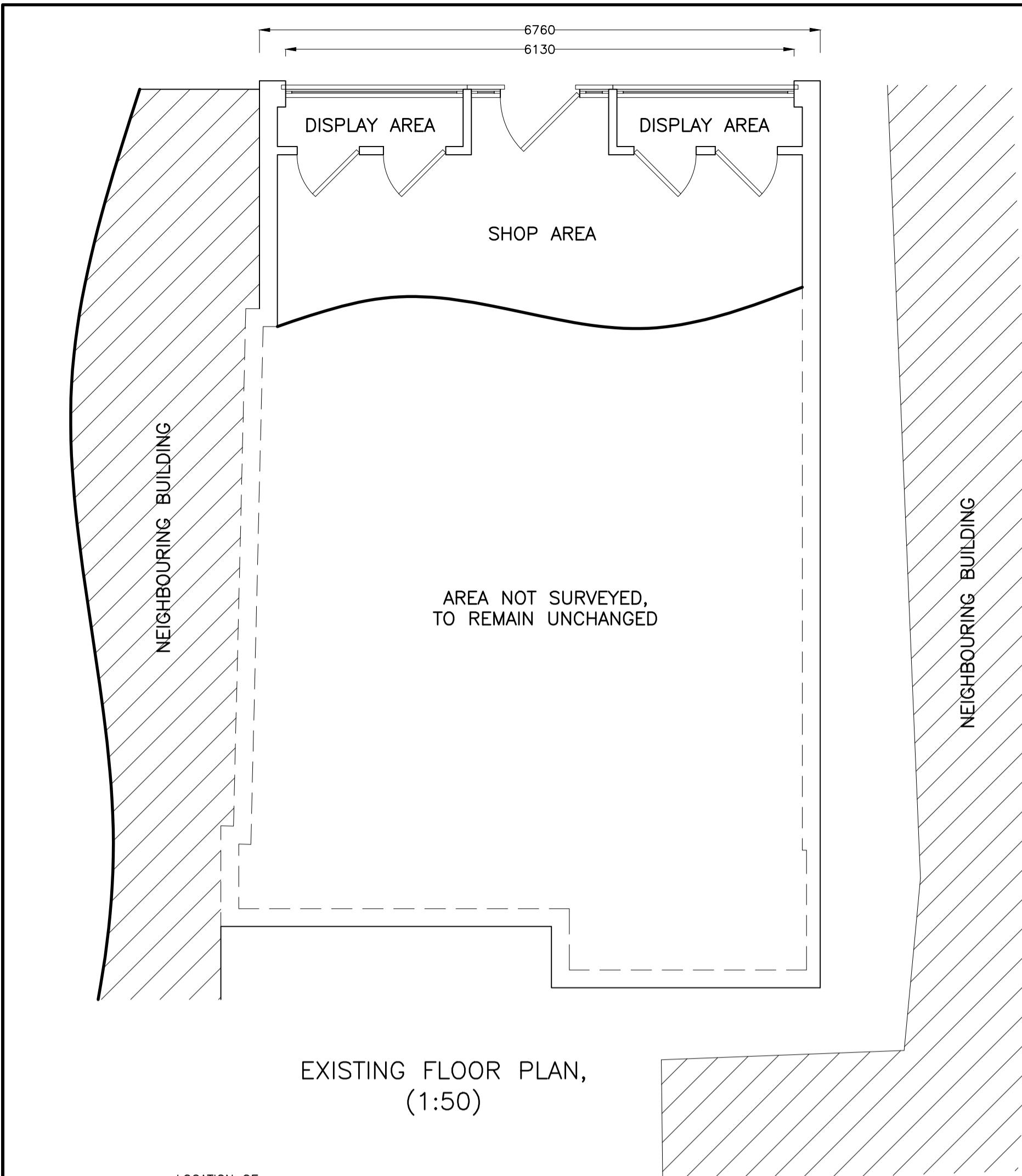
11 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse; for the following reason:

1	The external shutters present a visually unattractive barrier, creating an unwelcoming and fortified appearance to the character of the March Conservation Area and town centre which is not outweighed by any public benefit. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP16, LP17 and LP18 of the Fenland District Council Local Plan (2014), the March Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.
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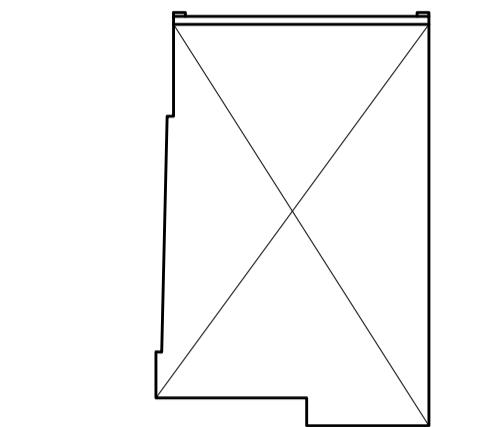
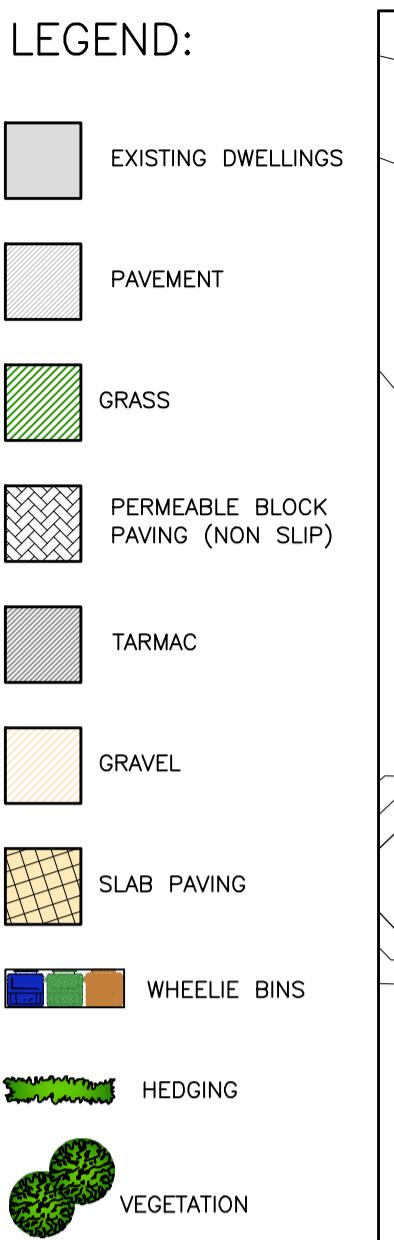


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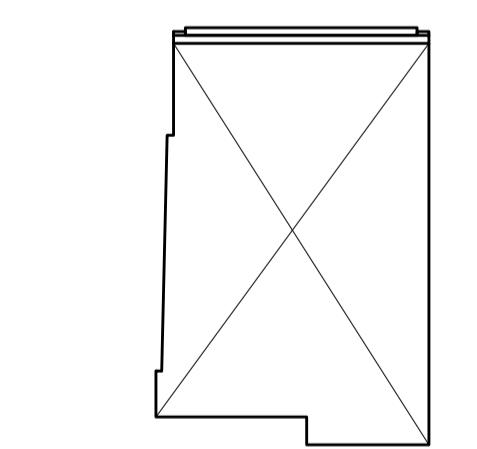


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN,
(1:50)

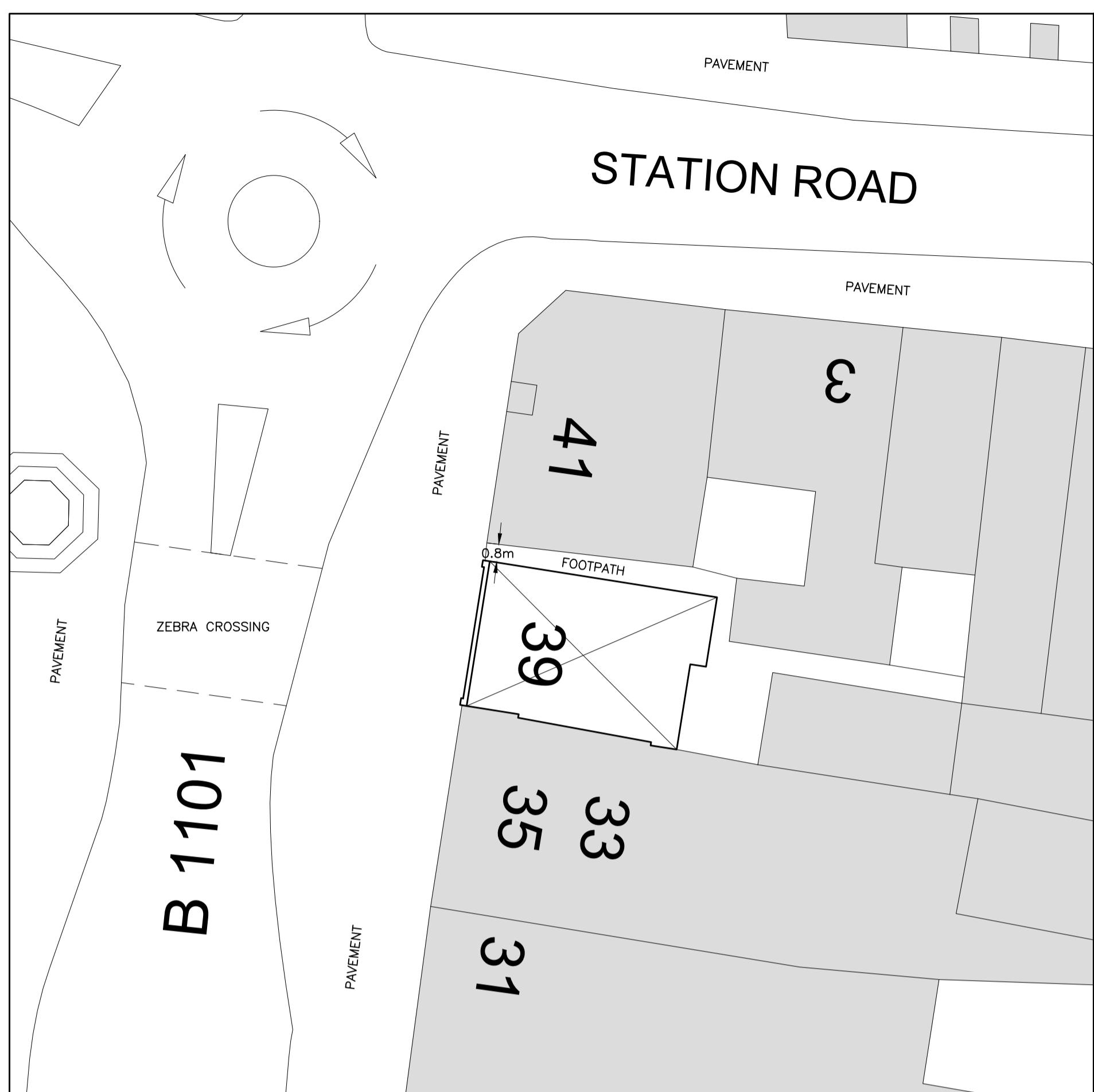
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN,
(1:50)



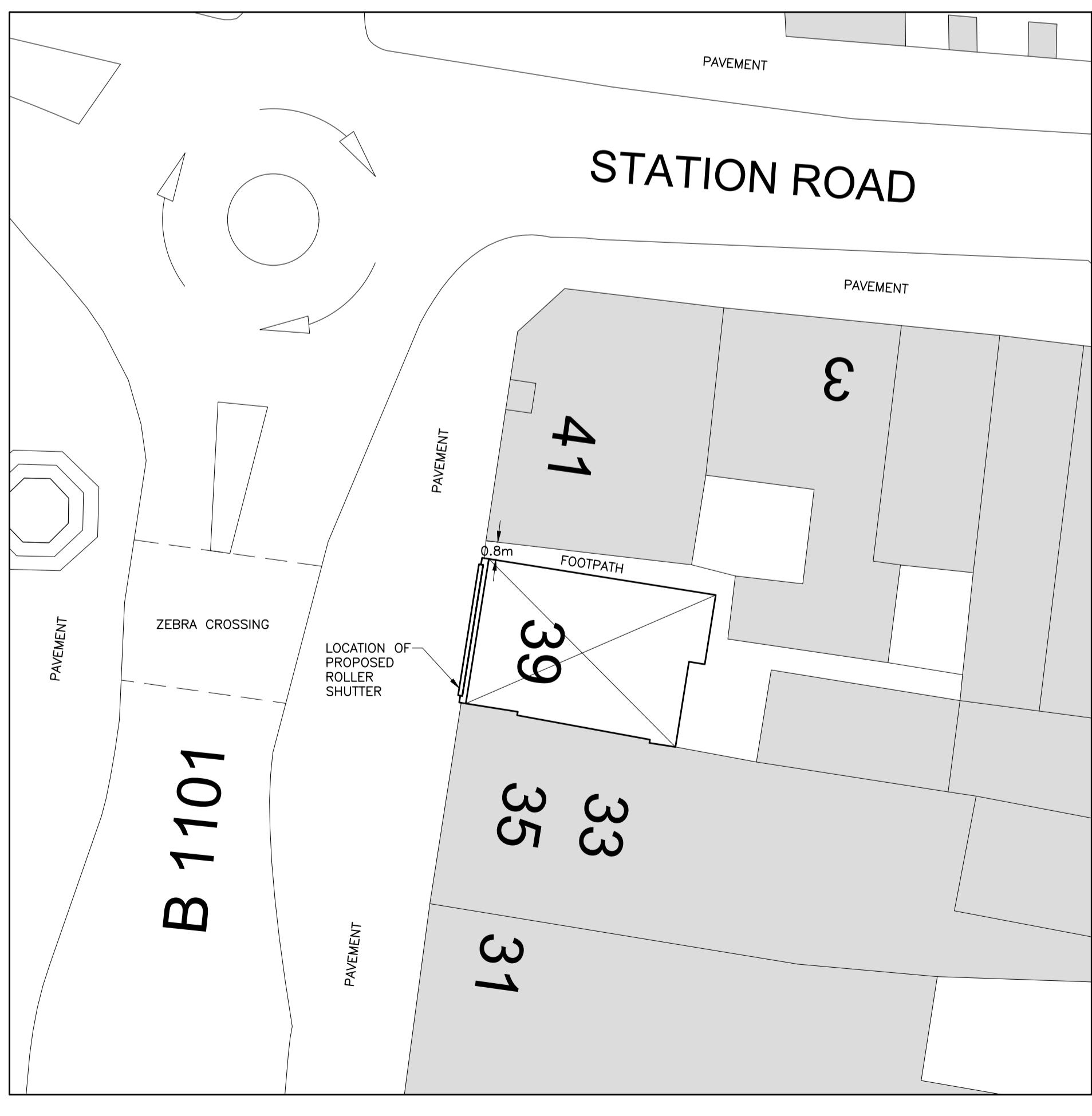
EXISTING ROOF PLAN,
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PROPOSED ROOF PLAN,
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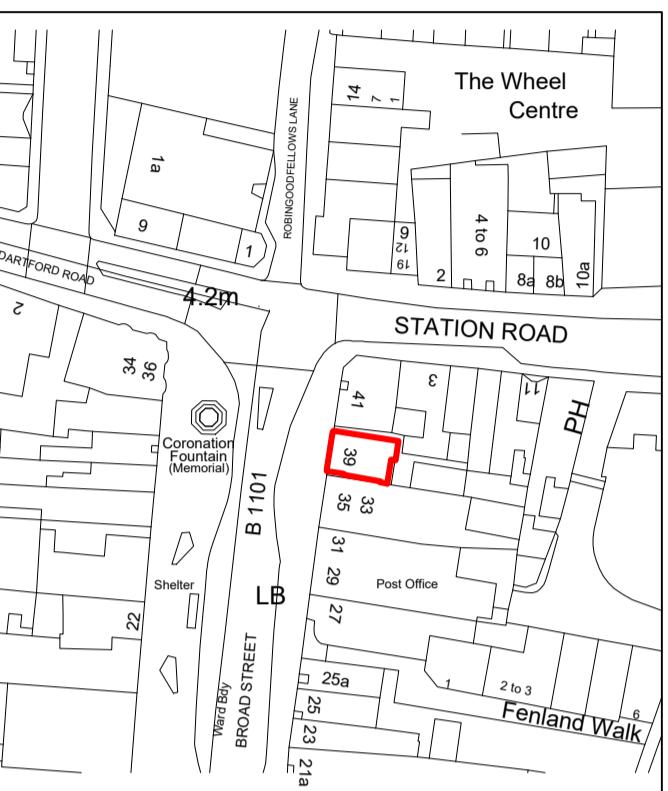


EXISTING SITE PLAN,
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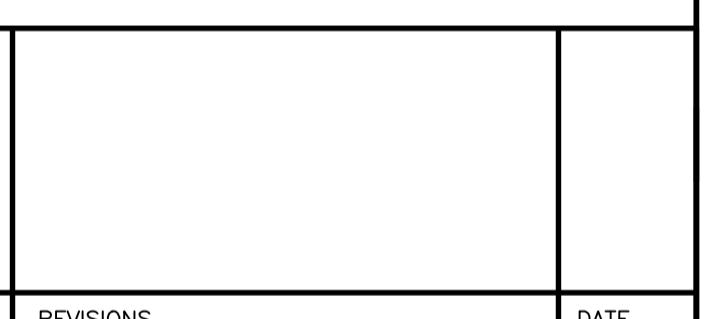
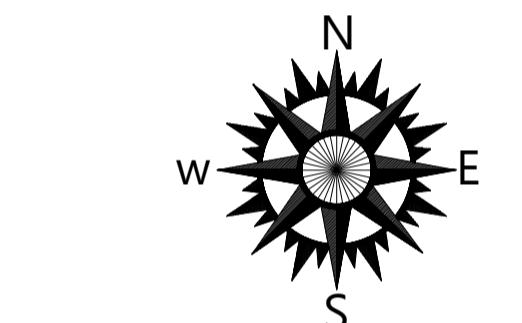
PROPOSED SITE PLAN,
(1:200)

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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 LABC (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



LOCATION PLAN
(1:1250)

1:1250 METERS



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Fenland District Council
Building Design Awards
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CLIENT

Mark Page

PROJECT

39 Broad Street
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8TP

TITLE

Existing & Proposed
Plans

DRAFTER	G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10814/01



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REVISIONS	DATE
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Mark Page

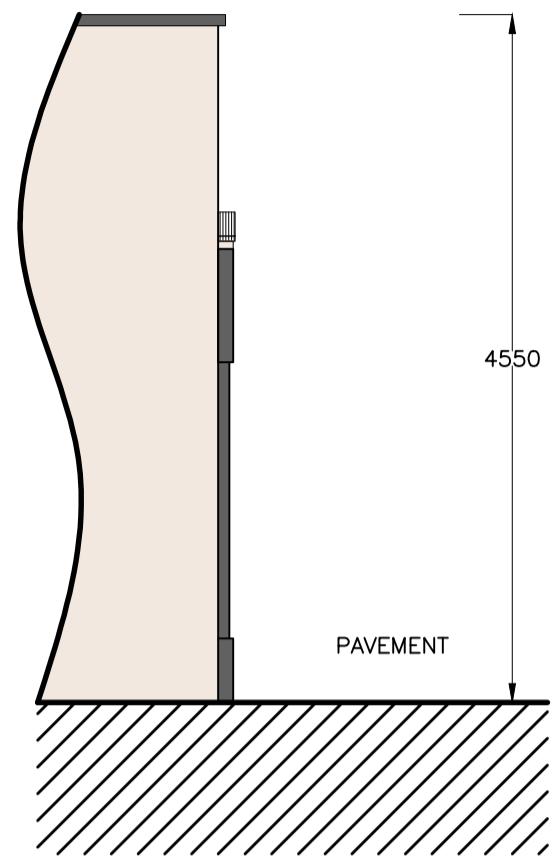
PROJECT

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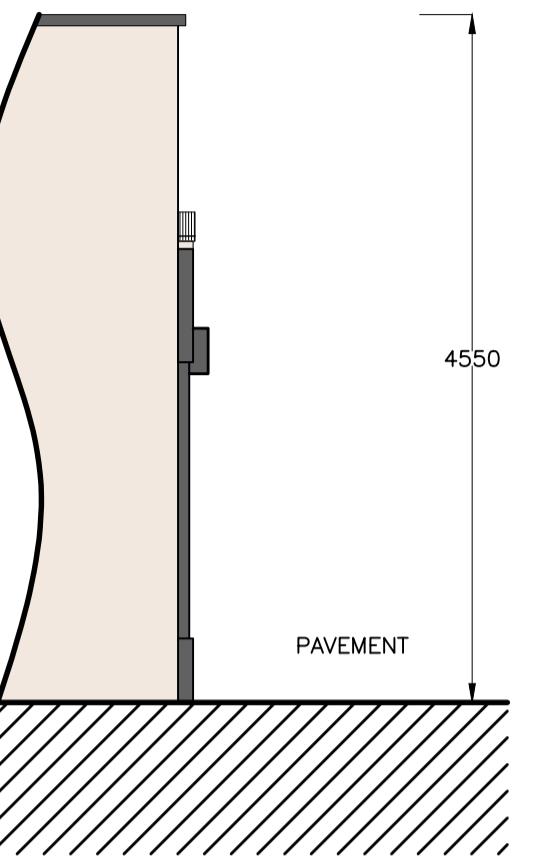
TITLE

Existing & Proposed Elevations / Street Scenes

DRAFTER	G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10814/02



EXISTING PARTIAL LHS ELEVATION,
(1:50)



PROPOSED PARTIAL LHS ELEVATION,
(1:50)



PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER
SHUTTER FITTED



PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER
SHUTTER FITTED



PHOTO OF SHOP FRONT WITH ROLLER
SHUTTER FITTED

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Mark Page

39 Broad Street
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Existing & Proposed
Elevations & Photos

DRAWN	G.Boreham	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Oct 2025	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	As Shown	H10814/03