

Applicant: Mr & Mrs J White

Agent: Mr Gareth Edwards
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited

Land West Of Prospect House Farm, Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire

Erect 2 x dwellings with garages and formation of a new access involving demolition of existing buildings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations contrary to Officer recommendation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no dwellings and detached double garage.
- 1.2. The proposal is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, and it is therefore not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development. Whilst there is an extant Class Q approval on-site for the conversion of a building into 2no. dwellings, the significant increase in site area proposed by this application is considered to render the fallback position irrelevant. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
- 1.3. Subsequently, the development of the site would also result in an adverse landscape character impact through the erection of relatively large dwellings in terms of scale and massing in a rural location that currently benefits from largely uninterrupted views. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in this regard.
- 1.4. The site is located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The proposals fails both the Sequential and Exception Test as it is not demonstrated that the development could be accommodated elsewhere, nor that there are wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm arising from the flood risk associated with the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.
- 1.5. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, having regard to Local and National Planning Policy, and is accordingly recommended for refusal on this basis.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located on Land West of Prospect House Farm, Whittlesey Road in March.

- 2.2. The site is located in a rural location approximately 1km from Turves and comprises three buildings that are of agricultural vernacular. There is a residential dwelling immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, with the next residential property located approximately 200m south of the application site.
- 2.3. The site is located within Flood Zone 3 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal seeks the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings on site and the erection of 2no. dwellings that are two-storey, 4-bed in nature.
- 3.2. The proposed palette of materials comprises timber cladding and slate roof tiles. The proposed dwellings measure 13.4m in width, 11.6m in depth, 5m in height to the eaves and 7.6m in height to the ridge.
- 3.3. Each dwelling would also benefit from a detached double garage with matching materials that measures 7.2m in width, 7.85m in depth, 2.4m in height to the eaves and 5.3m in height to the ridge.
- 3.4. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| F/YR16/0902/PNC04 | Change of use from agricultural building to 2-storey, 5-bed dwelling | Prior Approval Granted 17.02.17 |
| F/YR22/0712/PNC04 | Change of use from agricultural building to 2 x dwellings | Prior Approval Refused 08.08.22 |
| F/YR23/0567/PNC04 | Change of use from agricultural building to 2 x dwellings | Prior Approval Refused 24.08.23 |
| F/YR24/0414/PNC04 | Change of use from agricultural buildings to 2 x dwellings | Prior Approval Granted 18.09.24 |

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1. March Town Council – 03.12.25

Recommendation; Approval

5.2. Environment Agency – 21.11.25

No objection

5.3. Environmental Health – 24.11.25

No objection subject to condition securing Contaminated Land mitigation

5.4. FDC Ecology – 26.11.25

I have no overall objections to the proposals on Ecology grounds. I would accept that the development could achieve the required biodiversity net gain on-site by the

provision of the new garden spaces on land which is currently rather species-poor agricultural land.

The buildings to be demolished have been shown to be used occasionally by Barn Owls and Kestrels as day-perches, although there were no signs of nesting. I would advise that prior to any demolitions commencing the buildings should be re-inspected for any signs of nesting. If birds are found to be nesting in the buildings, no works should commence until any young birds have fledged. All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Barn Owls are further protected from disturbance by the same legislation.

5.5. Natural England – 03.12.25

No objection

5.6. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – 12.12.25

No objection subject to conditions securing suitable construction of access points

5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 10 letters of support were received from residents of Turves, Whittlesey and March. Five of the letters received provided no detailed reasons for support, with the remaining letters raising the following points:

| Supporting Comments | Officer Response |
|--|---|
| Opportunities for families to move to area | See 'Principle of development' section of report |
| Development will enhance village | See 'Character and appearance' section of report |
| Converting barns into dwellings | Proposal is for demolition of buildings, not conversion of building |
| Makes efficient use of previously developed land | See 'Principle of development' section of report |

6 STATUTORY DUTY

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

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

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

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

National Design Guide 2021

Context
Identity
Built Form
Movement
Nature
Uses
Homes and Buildings

Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
LP4 – Housing
LP5 – Meeting Housing Need
LP9 – March
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
LP18 – The Historic Environment
LP19 – The Natural Environment

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall Development
H3 – Local Housing Need

Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Fallback Position**
- **Character and appearance**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Parking Provision and Highway Safety**
- **Biodiversity Impact**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1. There was a previous Class Q Prior Approval granted under reference number F/YR24/0414/PNC04 for the conversion of the easternmost agricultural building on site to be converted into 2no. residential dwellings.
- 9.2. There have also been several earlier Prior Approvals for the same building, with applications in 2016 (Approved), 2022 (Refused) and 2023 (Refused).

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. The application site is located in proximity to the settlement of Turves, which is identified as a 'Small Village' in Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). Such settlements are capable of supporting a small amount of development, although this will generally be restricted to residential infilling or small business opportunities.
- 10.2. However, the location of the application is considered to fall outside of the built form of Turves by approximately 360m with no pedestrian access to the limited facilities of that settlement. The site therefore has limited access to services and facilities and would rely entirely on the private motor vehicle. The Market Towns of March and Whittlesey would be likely to provide the majority of service provision to the proposed dwellings, both of which are located approximately 6km from the site.
- 10.3. On this basis, the site is considered to fall within an 'Elsewhere' location, where development is restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of local, rural enterprise.
- 10.4. The proposal is for the erection of 2no. dwellings, with no evidence submitted to demonstrate that it is required for the effective operation of a rural enterprise. As such, the principle of the development conflicts with Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.
- 10.5. It is not considered that the proposal would benefit from the exception for isolated homes in the countryside as set out in Paragraph 84(c) of the NPPF (2024) as this requires the re-use of redundant or disused buildings and would enhance its immediate setting. It is acknowledged that the site in its current condition is not of any particular aesthetic merit. However, it is not considered that the aesthetic improvement on the site would be dependent on the proposed development, nor any suburbanising that would likely have a far greater impact on the landscape character of the area. As such, it is not considered that the exception afforded by the NPPF would apply in this instance.
- 10.6. It is acknowledged that there is a general emphasis throughout the NPPF on the re-use of previously developed land. However, the NPPF must be read as a whole in assessing development proposals. In this instance, it is not considered that the presumption in favour of the re-use of previously developed land would, in itself, be sufficient to override the need for development to be sustainable, nor would it override considerations of environmental harm, sustainability, or the impact on the character of the area. In any event, the glossary of the NPPF advises land occupied by agricultural buildings is exempt from the definition of previously developed land and, as such, such emphasis would not apply to this development proposal.
- 10.7. As previously noted, the site is located approximately 360m from the built form of the settlement of Turves, which in itself has limited service provision, and 6km to

the service provision found in Whittlesey and March, and does not benefit from any pedestrian access links such as footways etc. As such, the development would be entirely reliant on the private motor vehicle to access services and facilities. It is also noted that the historic use of the site for agricultural purposes would generally be more suited to a rural location.

10.8. As such, it is not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development, and the re-use of previously developed land would not outweigh the harm previously identified. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

Fallback Position

10.9. It is noted that there is an extant Class Q Prior Approval for the conversion of one of the agricultural buildings into 2no. residential properties, and it is on this basis that the applicant asserts the principle of development is established and acceptable.

10.10. The relevant legal principles in assessing a fallback position is set out in the case of *R v Secretary of State for the Environment and Havering BC (1998)*. In this case, the judge set out three elements to the fallback test:

“First whether there is a fallback use, that is to say whether there is a lawful ability to undertake such a use; secondly, whether there is a likelihood or real prospect of such occurring. Thirdly if the answer to the second question is “yes” a comparison must be made between the proposed development and the fallback use.”

10.11. Consideration of the fallback position offered by Class Q Prior Approvals was given under Court of Appeal decision Mansell vs Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council [2017], which allowed consent for the demolition of a barn and bungalow and erection of 4no. detached dwellings in their place.

10.12. Turning back to the three tests of a fallback position mentioned previously, it is established that residential development could take place on site by virtue of the approved Class Q approval on site. The first element is therefore considered to be passed.

10.13. In terms of the second element, the submission of this current application demonstrates a desire of the applicant to maximise the value of the site and therefore demonstrates that there would be a likelihood or real prospect of the fallback occurring. The second element is therefore considered to be passed. It should be noted, however, that no justification has been provided as to why the conversion of the building approved under the Prior Approval is no longer being pursued. The commentary on this point in the submitted Design and Access Statement is limited to the author’s considered “betterment to the local area”.

10.14. In respect of the third, and perhaps most crucial element, a comparison must be made between the fallback use and currently proposed development.

10.15. In this regard, the Class Q approval for the conversion of one of the buildings on site on a far smaller site area (260m²) compared to the site area of this application (5561m²). Whilst it is noted that the red line on the Class Q is restricted by the regulations, the site area for this current application represents approximately a 2140% increase in area subject to development, with the increased site area

resulting in an additional sprawl of development measuring 90m in this rural countryside location.

10.16. Furthermore, the dwellings proposed as part of this application are far larger in size and scale than those approved in the Class Q scheme and would therefore also result in a significant increase in landscape character impact, conflicting with the aims of the Local Plan and principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.17. Consequently, it is not considered that the Class Q Prior Approval represents a fallback position that would justify the approval of this scheme contrary to the aims and principles of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

10.18. The principle of development is therefore considered to be unacceptable in this instance.

Character and Appearance

10.19. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, sets out a number of criterions in which proposals are required to meet, to ensure that high quality environments are provided and protected. Most relevant to the proposal are:

(d) makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhances its local setting, responds to and improves the character of the local built environment, provides resilience to climate change, reinforces local identity and does not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape character of the surrounding area.

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

10.21. The dwellings proposed are two-storey, 4-bed in nature and are proposed to be constructed with timber cladding and slate roof tiles. It is considered that these details are acceptable in principle and that suitable details could be secured via a suitably worded condition.

10.22. As mentioned in the 'Principle of Development' section of this report, the site is located in a rural, countryside location with largely uninterrupted views from the surrounding area.

10.23. Whilst the proposal would result in the removal of some disused buildings on site that would provide improvement to the landscape character of the area, these buildings to be removed are modest in size and scale, and as such have a limited visibility and subsequent landscape impact.

10.24. The proposed dwellings are significantly larger in both size and scale, due to their two-storey nature, and will therefore be highly visible on the landscape, resulting in an erosion and incongruous intrusion on the largely open and undeveloped landscape. Furthermore, the proposed dwellings cover a far larger area than the existing buildings to be removed, and the domestication of the site with any residential would result in further erosion of the landscape character of the area.

10.25. It is therefore not considered that the benefit arising from the removal of disused buildings currently on site would outweigh this harm that has been identified.

10.26. It should be noted that the proposed designs of the dwellings, as shown on the submitted floor and elevation plans, is not objected to.

10.27. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would result in actual harm to the landscape character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and is therefore considered to be unacceptable in this regard.

Impact on Amenities

10.28. Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan seeks to promote high levels of residential amenity. Similarly, Policy LP16 seeks to ensure development proposals result in high quality environments.

10.29. There is limited development in the surrounding area, with a single dwelling immediately adjacent to the site the only development within circa 230m of the site.

10.30. The existing dwelling to the east of the site is separated by a number of well-established trees that provide screening from the proposed units. Further, there is a separation distance of approximately 30m to the proposed dwellings. It is considered that this distance is sufficient to avoid any detrimental impacts on the amenities of the existing dwelling.

10.31. The proposed dwellings are separated by a paddock area that offers a separation distance of 25m between the plots. This separation distance and fenestration arrangement is such that no adverse amenity impacts will occur as a result of the development.

10.32. Both dwellings benefit from rear private amenity spaces measuring 23m and 26m in depth respectively, therefore providing ample space for future occupants of the dwellings.

10.33. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of amenity impact.

Flood Risk and Drainage

10.34. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024) set out the policy approach towards development in areas of flood risk. Both of these policies seek to encourage development first within areas of lower flood risk, before considering development in areas at higher risk of flooding. They also seek to ensure developments remain safe from all sources of flooding.

10.35. The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3. The site is, however, at very low risk of surface water flooding.

Policy Considerations

10.36. Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out the policy approach towards development in areas of flood risk. Policy LP14 states that all development proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk from all forms of flooding and development in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding will only be permitted following:

A) The successful completion of a sequential test, having regard to actual and residual flood risks

- B) An exception test (if necessary)
- C) The suitable demonstration of a meeting an identified need, and
- D) Through the submission of a site-specific flood risk assessment, demonstrating appropriate flood risk management and safety measures and a positive approach to reducing flood risk overall, and without reliance on emergency services.

10.37. The National Planning Policy Framework includes an over-arching principle that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding. As such, a sequential, risk-based approach is to be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from flooding. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms that this means avoiding, where possible, development in current and future medium and high flood risk areas. The PPG confirms that the underlying purpose includes placing the least reliance on measures like flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience features. Therefore, even where a flood risk assessment shows the development can be made safe throughout its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere, the Sequential Test still needs to be satisfied.

Sequential Test

10.38. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment by Ellingham Consulting concludes that the Class Q Prior Approval on site establishes the principle of residential development on site and therefore negates the need for the Sequential Test to be passed. These conclusions are echoed in the Design and Access Statement by Swann Edwards.

10.39. Notwithstanding these conclusions, in assessing a planning appeal under reference number APP/D2510/W/24/3343480 (Mablethorpe Road, Theddlethorpe) for a proposal to erect 2no. detached dwellings on a site that benefitted from Class Q Approval, the Planning Inspector concluded as follows:

“The appeal site is within Flood Zone 3 and the proposed residential use falls within the ‘More Vulnerable’ flood risk classification. The form of development proposed is not of a type that is exempt from the Sequential Test as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance for the Framework.

The Flood Risk Assessment submitted by the appellant suggests that the Sequential Test is not applicable in this instance as the approved Class Q conversion provides for 2 dwellings on the site, and the appeal proposal is in effect seeking permission for 2 replacement dwellings. However, the appeal proposal cannot be considered to be for replacement dwellings as the Class Q permitted dwellings have not been created, even if that was a justification for not applying the Sequential Test.

Although the Class Q permission establishes the principle of 2 dwellings on the site, this was for a change of use rather than new-build development. The Framework sets out that application for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the Sequential Test. Whilst that may apply to the Class Q conversion, it does not apply to the appeal proposal.

It is therefore clear that the appeal proposal should be subject to the Sequential Test in respect of flood risk.”

10.40. The proposals and circumstances considered in the aforementioned planning appeal and current proposals are identical in nature, with no material considerations to suggest that a departure from the approach of the Planning Inspector would be appropriate. Therefore, it is concluded that this application would also be required to satisfy the Sequential and Exception Test.

10.41. It is for the decision-maker to consider whether the Sequential Test is passed, with reference to information held on land availability and an appropriate area of search. The latter should be determined by the Local Planning Authority. Accordingly, clarification on the LPA's expected area of search for a Sequential Test is now provided on the Council's website, which states:

"Applicants must define and justify an appropriate area of search when preparing the Sequential Test. The extent of this area will depend on the location and roles of the settlement, as well as the type and scale of development proposed:

- For developments within or adjacent to Market Towns and Growth Villages, the area of search will normally be limited to land within or adjacent to the settlement in which the development is proposed.*
- For all other locations – including Limited Growth, Small and Other Villages, or Elsewhere Locations – the area of search will normally be expected to be district-wide.*

To pass the Sequential Test, applicants must demonstrate that there are no reasonable available sites, within the defined search area, with a lower probability of flooding that could accommodate the proposed development. A poorly defined or unjustified area of search may result in the Sequential Test being considered invalid.

10.42. The above is clear that the area of search applied to a Sequential Test will normally be based on a district wide search area, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a particular need for the development in that location.

10.43. As the site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, the search area should be district wide. The PPG makes it clear that 'reasonably available' sites are not limited to single plots. This may include part of a larger site if it is capable of accommodating the proposed development, as well as smaller sites that, individually or collectively, could meet the development requirement. Sites do not need to be in the ownership of the applicant to be considered 'reasonably available'.

10.44. As set out above, the application is not supported by a detailed interrogation of any sites to determine whether these may or may not be available and capable of accommodating the proposed development. Further, the assertions of the applicant that the re-development of this site provides sufficient justification that the development cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

10.45. On this basis, it cannot be considered that the Sequential Test is passed in this instance.

Exception Test

10.46. Notwithstanding the failure of the Sequential Test, had this been passed it would then be necessary for the application of the Exception Test, which comprises demonstration of the following:

- a) The development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and
- b) The development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

10.47. In respect of a); the most recent Fenland District Council Five Year Housing Land Supply (June 2025) demonstrates a 6.6-year supply of housing land over the five-year period within the district. As such, the Council has a sufficient supply of housing delivery land and is meeting its requirements as demonstrated through recent housing delivery test results. The submitted FRA provides no commentary as to how the proposal satisfies the Exception Test, save for commenting that mitigation measures can be incorporated to ensure the safety of the development and to avoid the increase of flood risk elsewhere. Notwithstanding this, the SPD explicitly states that "*the general provision of housing itself would not normally be considered as a wider sustainability benefit*". Therefore, it is considered that the aforementioned benefits would carry very limited weight in this context.

10.48. In addition, the "tilted balance" as set out in the footnote to paragraph 11 of the NPPF (where Councils are unable to demonstrate a sufficient supply of housing) specifically excludes development in high flood risk areas from any presumption in favour of development. This clearly indicates the government's objective of avoiding development in areas of flood risk, unless demonstrably necessary, even when a Council is unable to deliver the housing its residents need.

10.49. In respect of the latter (b); the inclusion of flood mitigation measures, such as setting the finished floor level of the dwelling 0.4m above surrounding ground level and a further 0.3m of flood resilient construction above finished floor level, are considered to be sufficient to ensure that the development would be safe for its lifetime, with the Environment Agency raising no objections in this regard.

10.50. Notwithstanding this, the proposal fails part a) of the exception test as per the above assessment.

Drainage

Surface Water

10.51. The submitted application form states that surface water will be discharged via soakaways. The site is located in an area of low surface water flood risk and it is therefore considered that this is an acceptable means of surface water drainage.

Foul Water

10.52. The submitted application form states that Foul Water will be discharged via a package treatment plant. It is considered that this is an acceptable means of discharging foul water.

Flood Risk and Drainage Conclusion

10.53. To reiterate, Policy LP14, supported by the NPPF and NPPG, states that development proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk from all forms of flooding, and development in areas known to be at risk of any form of flooding will only be permitted following the successful completion of the Sequential Test and Exception Test.

10.54. The above assessment concludes that the development fails the sequential test by virtue of a failure to provide a detailed assessment of any alternative sites. It is therefore not possible to positively determine that there are no reasonable alternative sites at lower flood risk that could accommodate the development. As such, the schedule fails the sequential test.

10.55. The proposal also fails the Exception Test on the basis that there are no wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm caused by the location of the site in an area of flood risk.

10.56. In summary, the site lies in an area at risk of flooding, and the application fails the sequential test and is unable to demonstrate that development of this site is necessary, nor provide sufficient justification that the benefits accrued would outweigh the flood risk. Development of the site would therefore place people and property in an unwarranted risk of flooding for which there is a strong presumption against, both through policies of the development plan and national planning policy. The proposal is therefore in direct conflict with local policy LP14 and the NPPF and should therefore be refused.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

10.57. The Highway Authority have considered the proposals and have raised no objection to the scheme in terms of highway safety impact, subject to conditions securing the suitable construction of the proposed access points to ensure highway safety.

10.58. The site currently has a lawful use for agricultural purposes, a use that would likely generate a number of traffic movements for much larger vehicles and the private car, although no specific details of these are provided. It is, however, considered likely that the traffic generations would be comparable with that generated by 2no. residential dwellings.

10.59. It is therefore considered that safe access can be provided to and from the site, having regard to the visibility splays that could be achieved.

10.60. The proposal includes the provision of a detached double garage for each dwelling, with further space available for parking in front of the dwellings. It is considered that the level of parking provided is far in excess of that which would be required in the parking standards set out in the Fenland Local Plan.

10.61. The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of parking provision and highway safety.

Biodiversity Impact

10.62. The application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Appraisal by Glaven Ecology that concludes that there will be no adverse impacts on protected sites or species arising from the development that could not be mitigated through precautionary construction methods or subsequent enhancement measures.

10.63. The report has been considered by the Council Ecologist, with no objections forthcoming. However, it has been recommended that the buildings are re-inspected for any signs of nesting prior to demolition works taking place, with no further works to be undertaken until young birds have fledged if evidence of nesting birds is found.

10.64. It is therefore considered that the proposal has appropriate regard to Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) in respect of its biodiversity impacts, subject to a suitably worded condition requiring mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated in the development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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

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

11 CONCLUSIONS

12.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no dwellings and detached double garage.

12.2. The site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location, and it is therefore not considered that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development. Whilst there is an extant Class Q approval on-site for the conversion of a building into 2no. dwellings, the significant increase in site area proposed by this application is considered to render the fallback position irrelevant. The principle of development is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan, and the aims and objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

12.3. Subsequently, the development of the site would also result in an adverse landscape character impact through the erection of relatively large dwellings in terms of scale and massing in a rural location that currently benefits from largely uninterrupted views. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan in this regard.

12.4. The site is located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at the highest risk of flooding. The proposals fails both the Sequential and Exception Test as it is not demonstrated that the development could be accommodated elsewhere, nor that there are wider sustainability benefits that would outweigh the harm arising from the flood risk associated with the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan, and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

12.5. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, having regard to Local and National Planning Policy, and is accordingly recommended for refusal on this basis.

12 RECOMMENDATION

Refuse: for the following reasons:

1. The application site is located in an 'Elsewhere' location as identified in Policy LP3, where development is restricted to that which is essential for agriculture, or other uses requiring a rural location. The proposal is not for a rural workers dwelling, nor does it involve the conversion and re-use of existing buildings, as required by Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan

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| | (2014) and Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF 2024. The proposal would therefore result in unwarranted development in an unsustainable rural location contrary to the aforementioned policies, with no material planning considerations to suggest otherwise. |
| 2. | Notwithstanding the removal of existing buildings on-site, the proposal, by virtue of the development of a site in a rural location for 2no. two-storey dwellings would be harmful to the character of the open countryside arising from the scale and massing of the dwellings, and the domestic appearance and urbanisation of the rural location, contrary to Policies LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan. |
| 3. | The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 and fails to meet the Sequential or Exception Test. It is considered that the proposal is at an unacceptable risk of flooding without sufficient justification. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), Section 14 of the NPPF (2024), and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2016). |



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0 15 30 55 110 60 m 220 ft

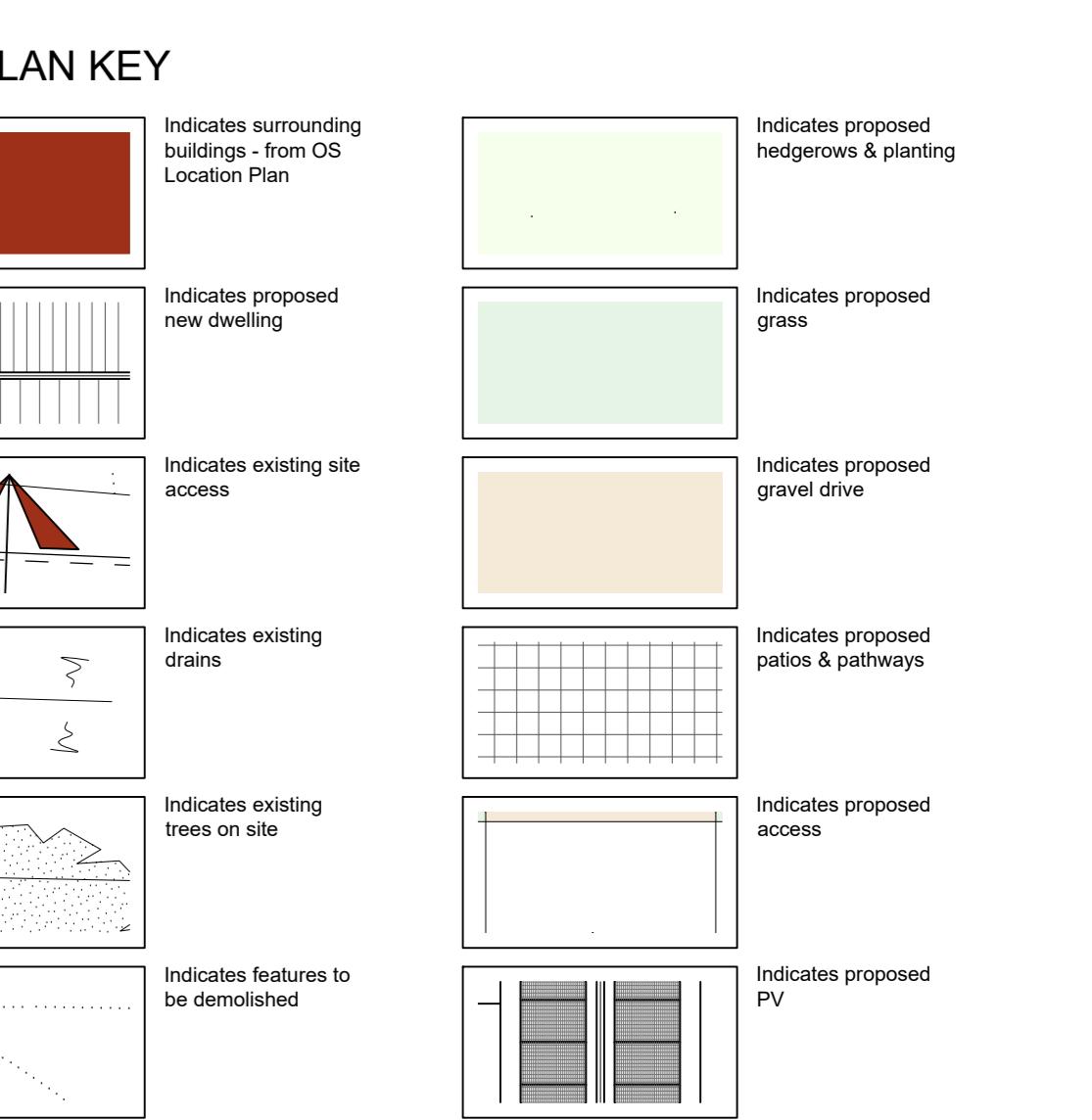
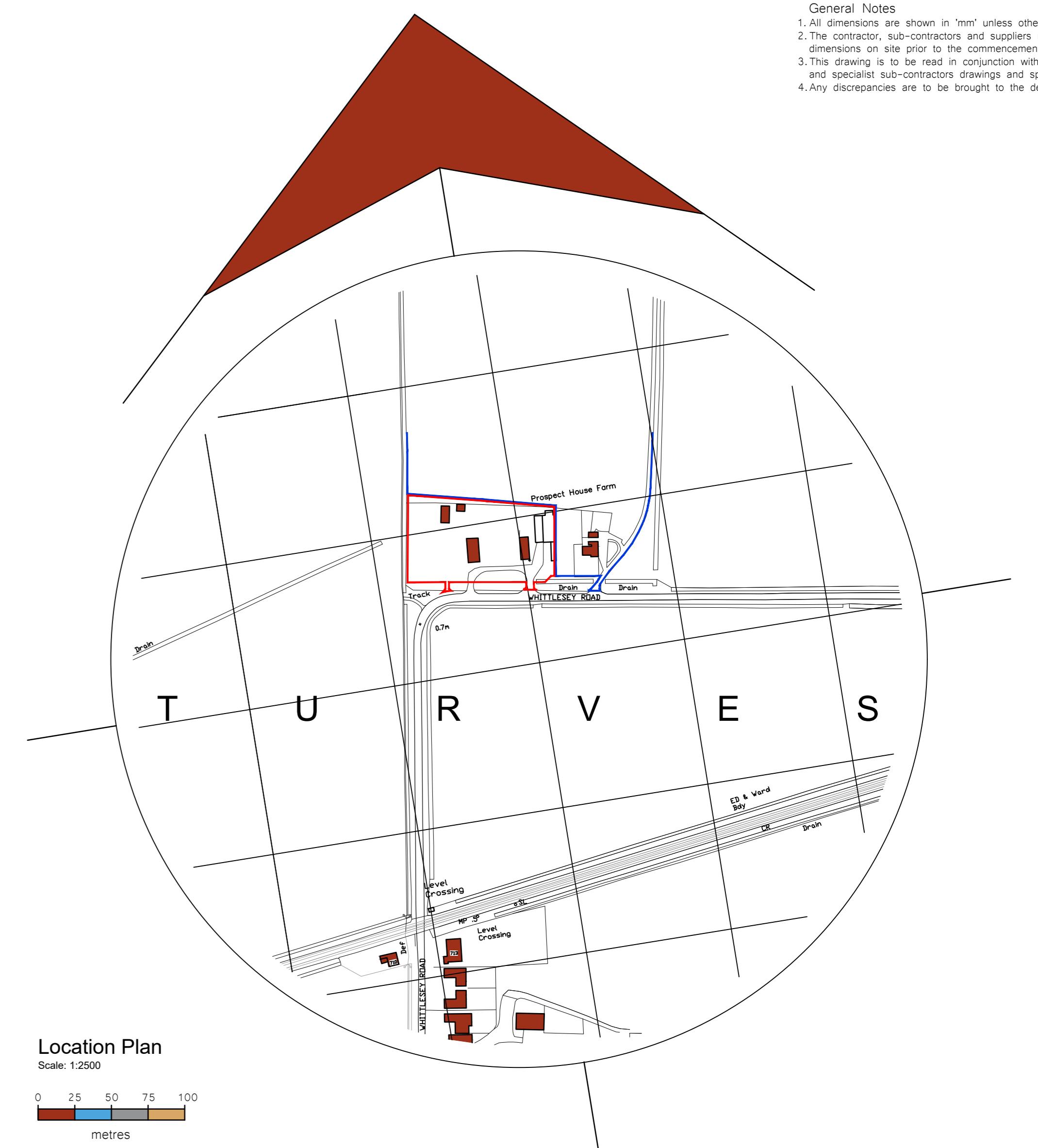
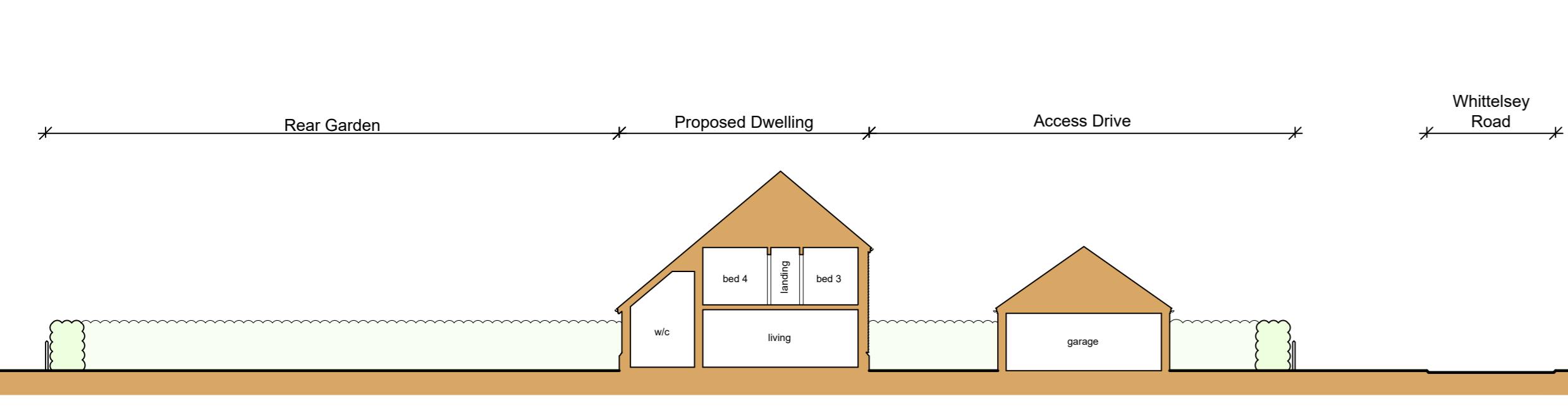
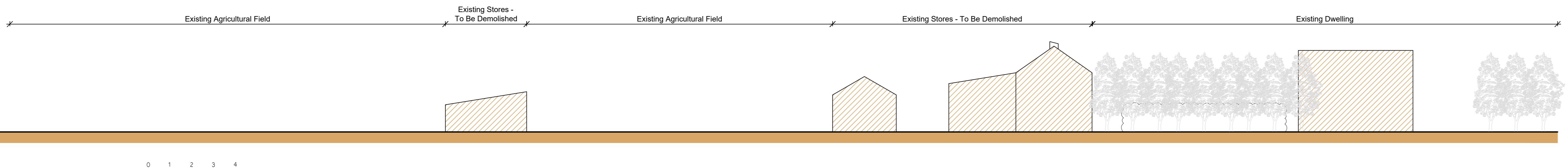
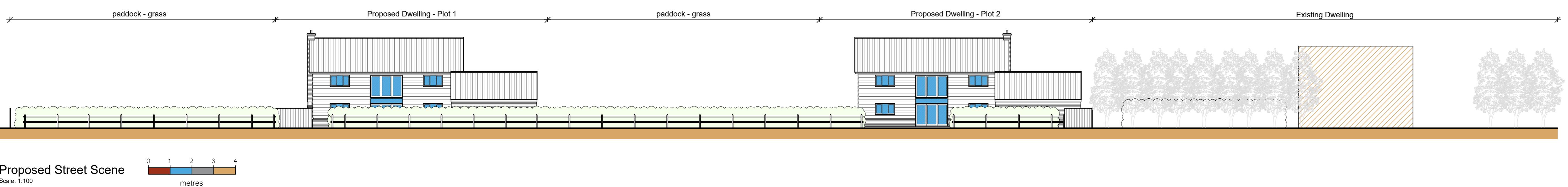
al Notes

Dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.

Contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.

Drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.

Irregularities are to be brought to the designers attention.



Changes following planning comments

OB APPROVAL

SWANN

| | | |
|--|---------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed 2no. Dwellings earns at Prospect House, Whittlesey Road, March, Cambs, PE15 0AP | Date May 2025 | Drawn by CW |
| | | Checked by GE |

Drawing Title
Planning Drawing
Site & Location Plan,
Scenes & Site Section
For: C/O Swann Edwards

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Job No. SE-2209 | Sheet Size A0 |
| Dwg No. PP1000 | Revision B |

Site Plan

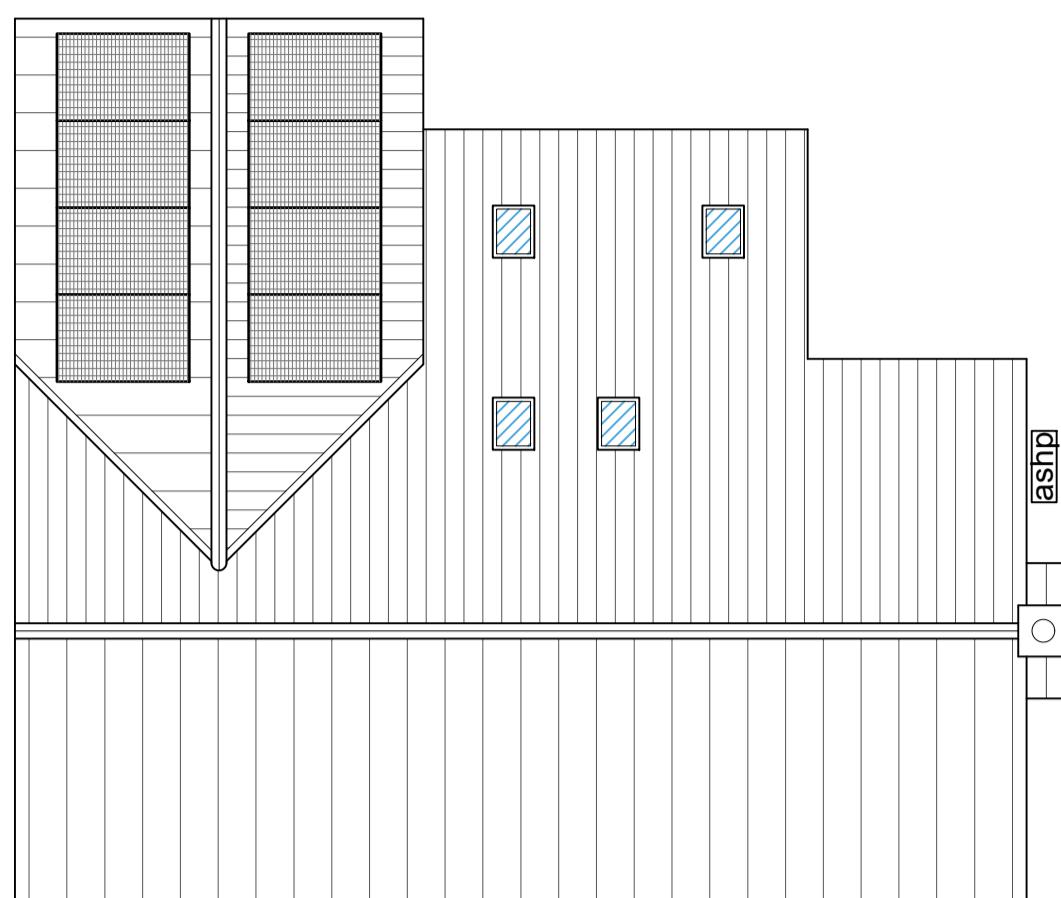
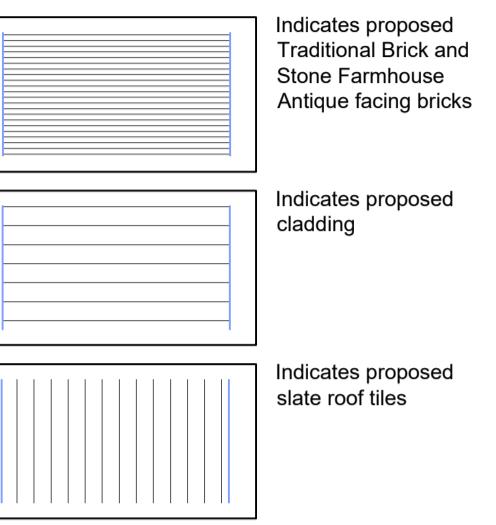
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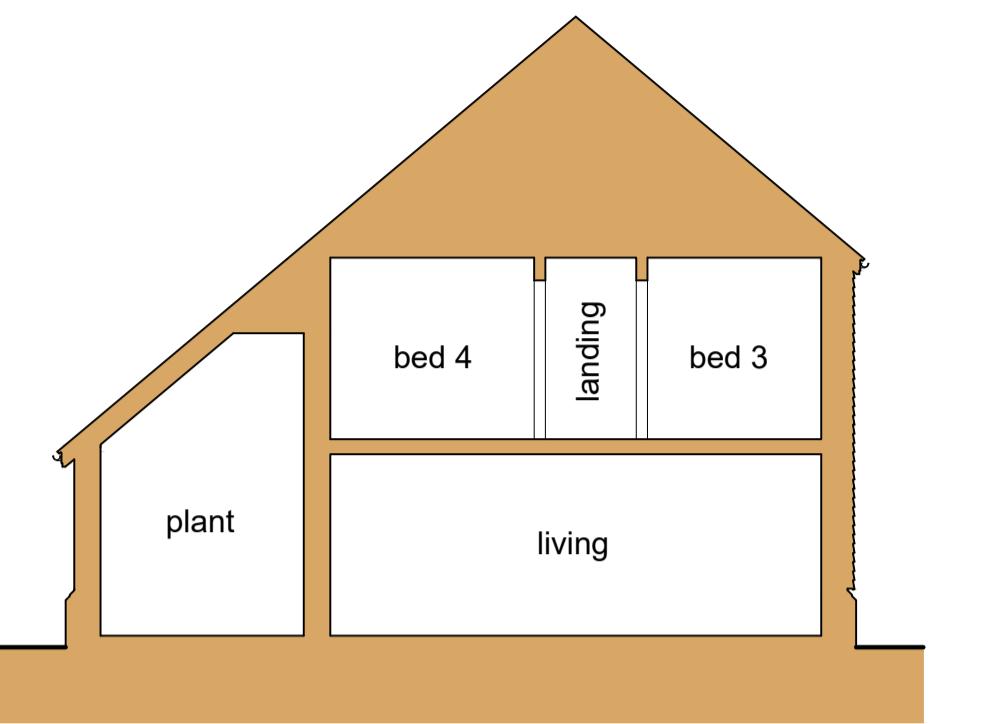
metres

General Notes
 1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
 2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
 3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors drawings and specifications.
 4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

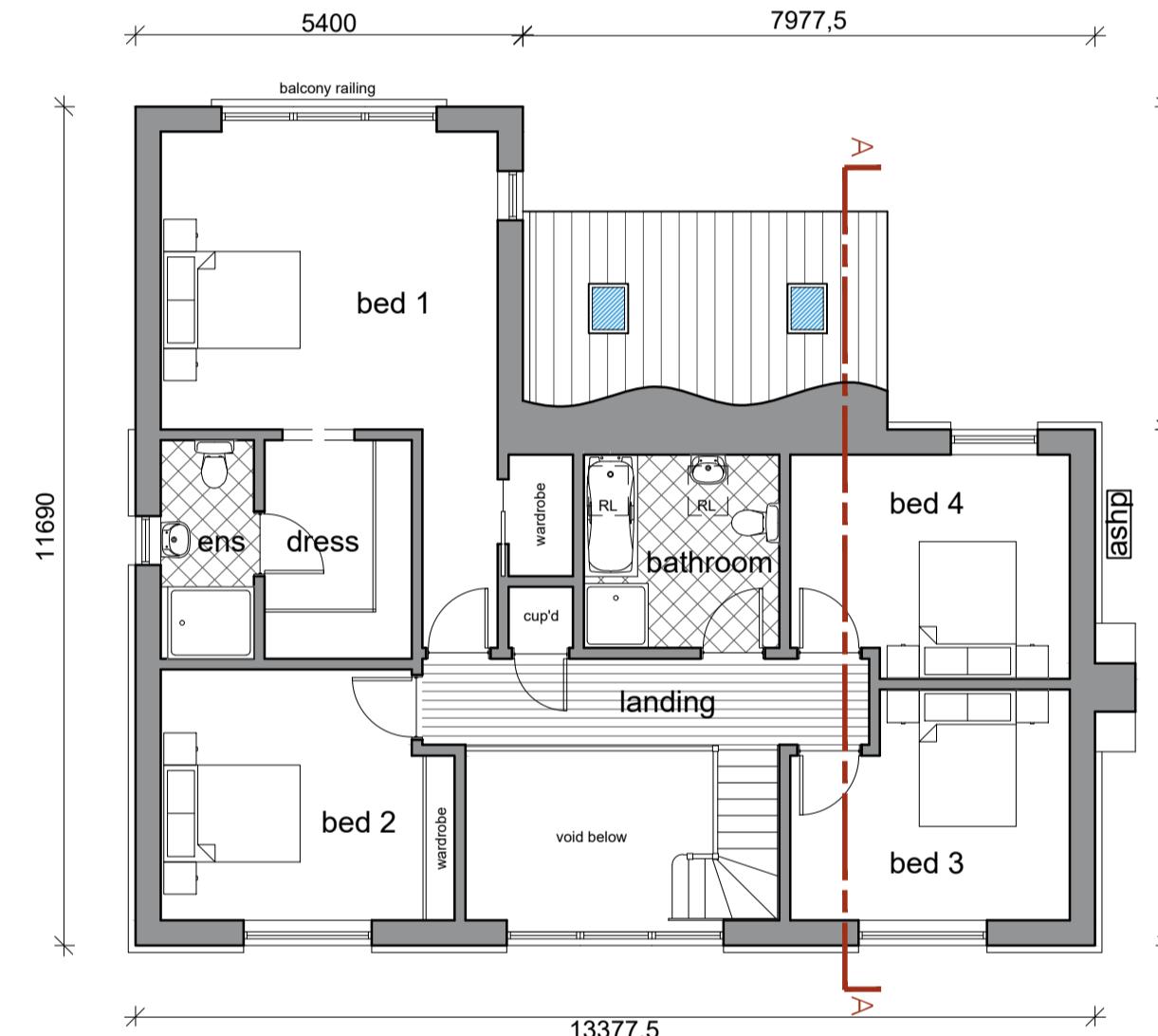
ELEVATION KEY



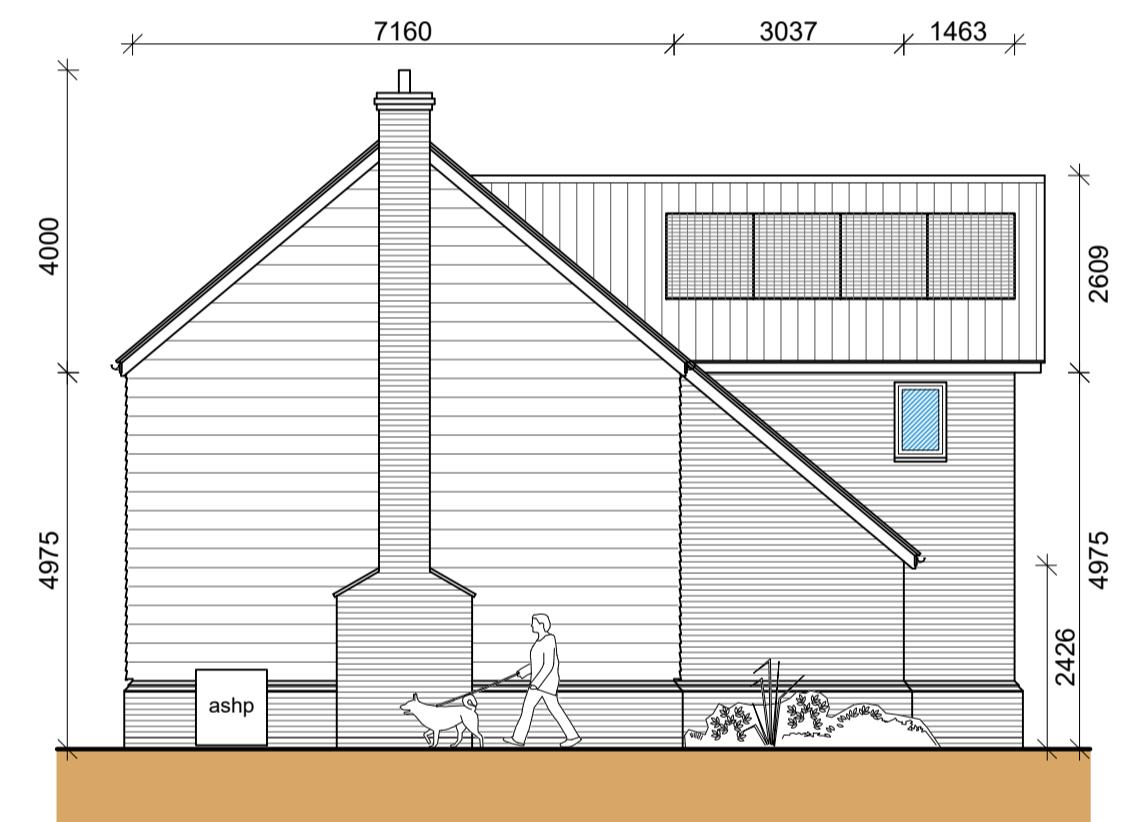
Roof Plan
Scale: 1:100



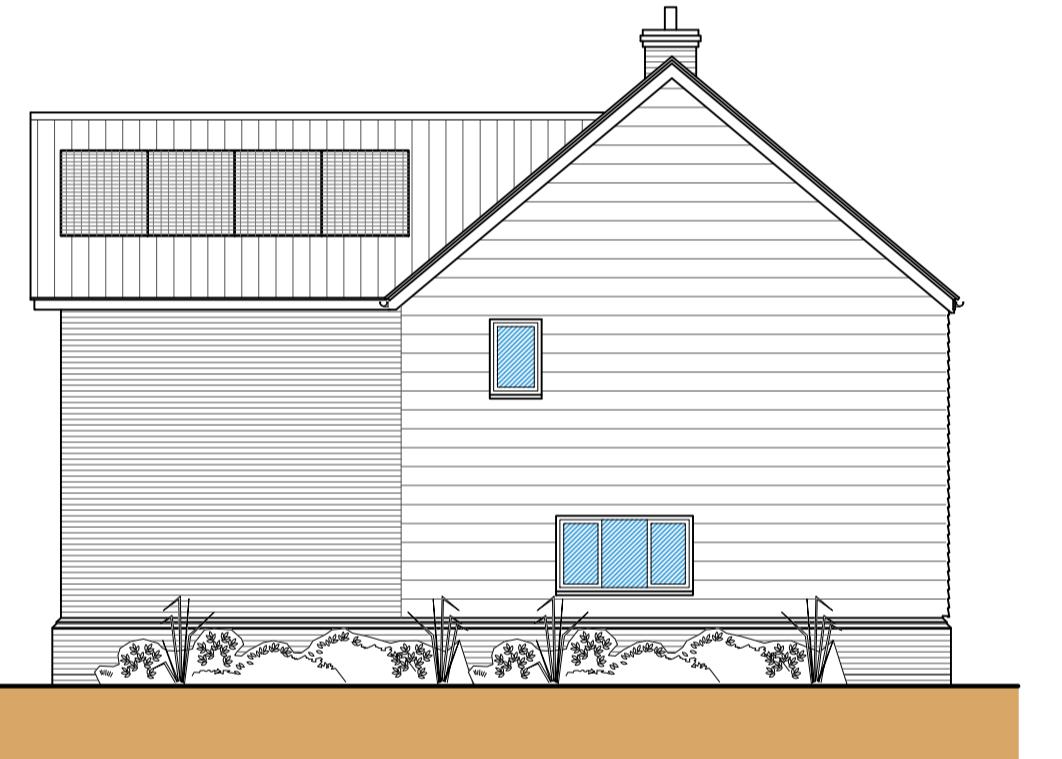
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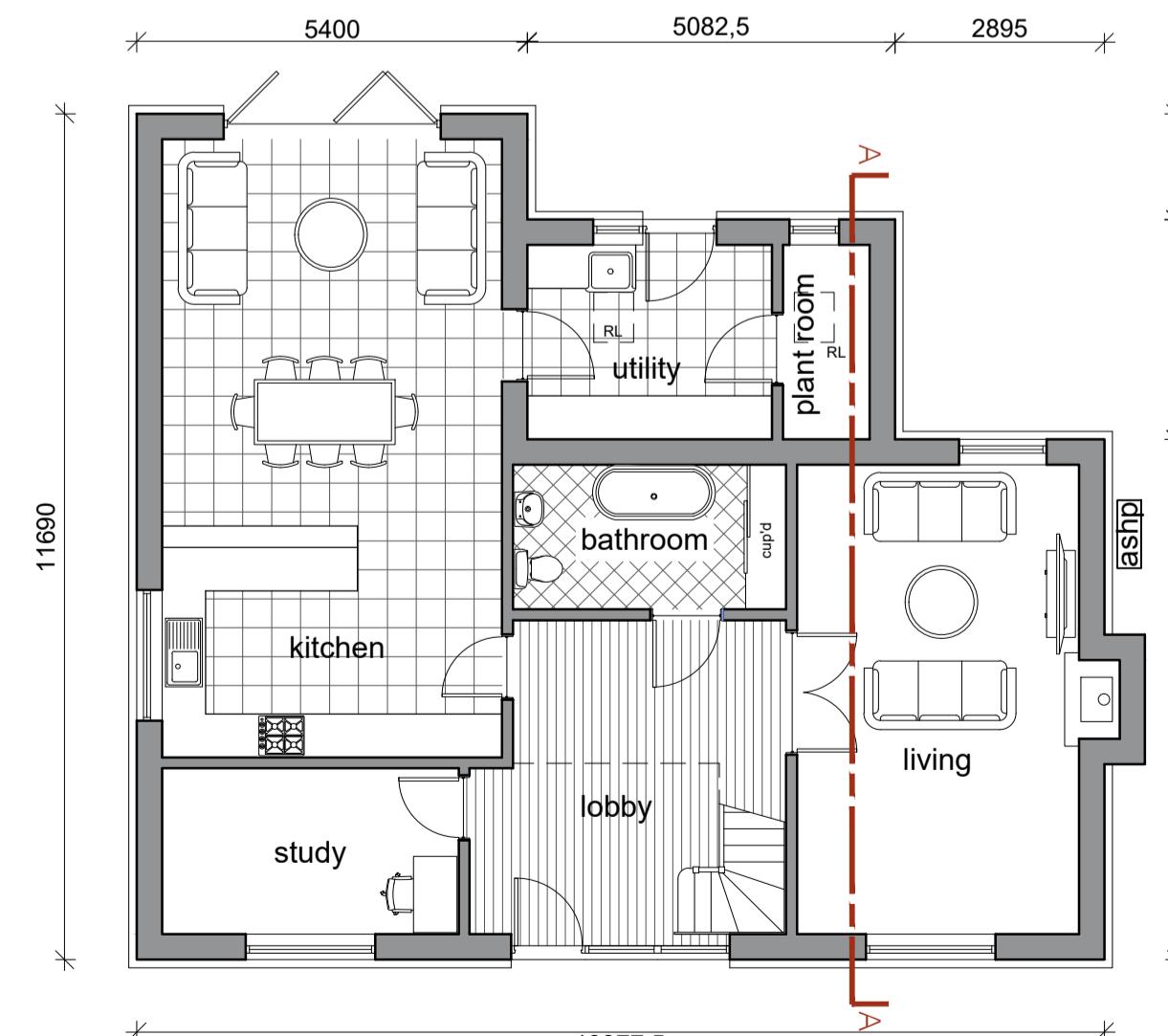
First Floor Plan



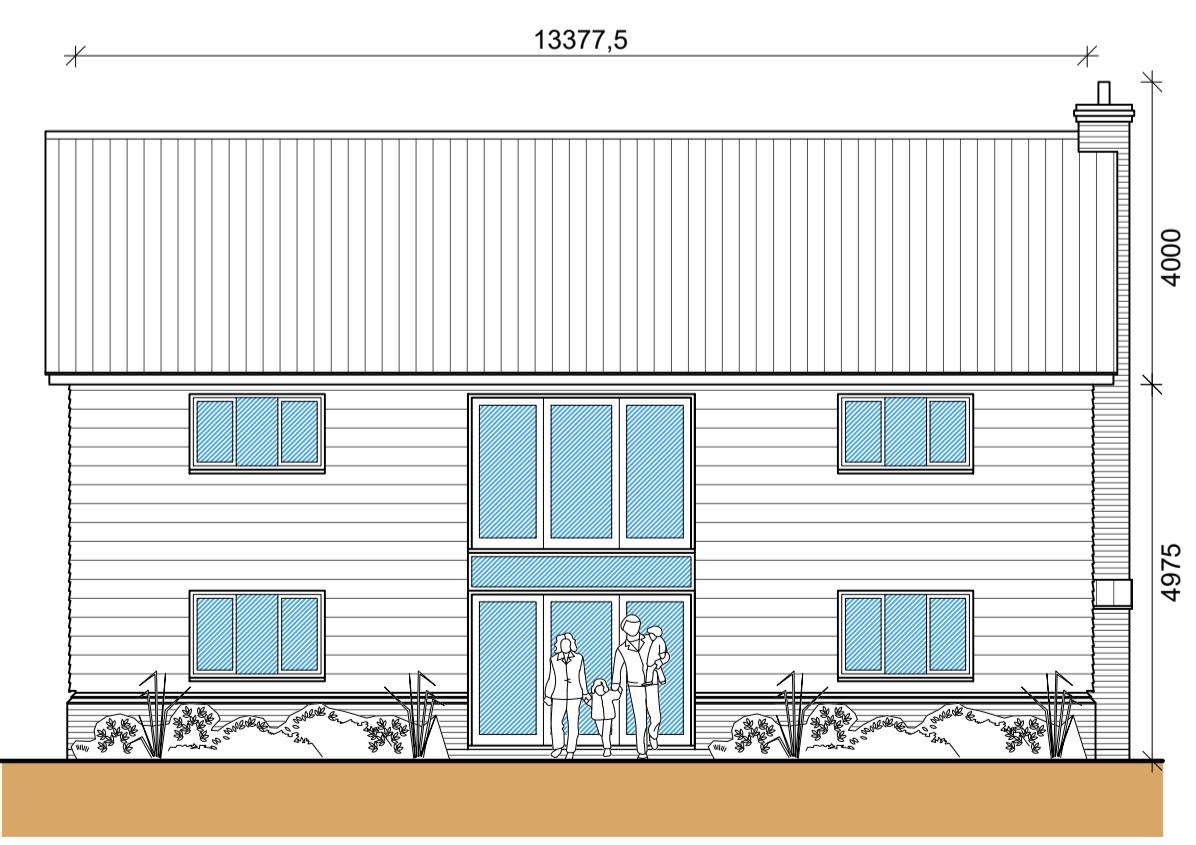
Side Elevation (E)
Scale: 1:100



Side Elevation (W)
Scale: 1:100



Ground Floor Plan



Front Elevation (S)
Scale: 1:100



Rear Elevation (N)
Scale: 1:100

Revisions

| | | |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| A | Nov 2025 | Changes following planning comments |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|

Status

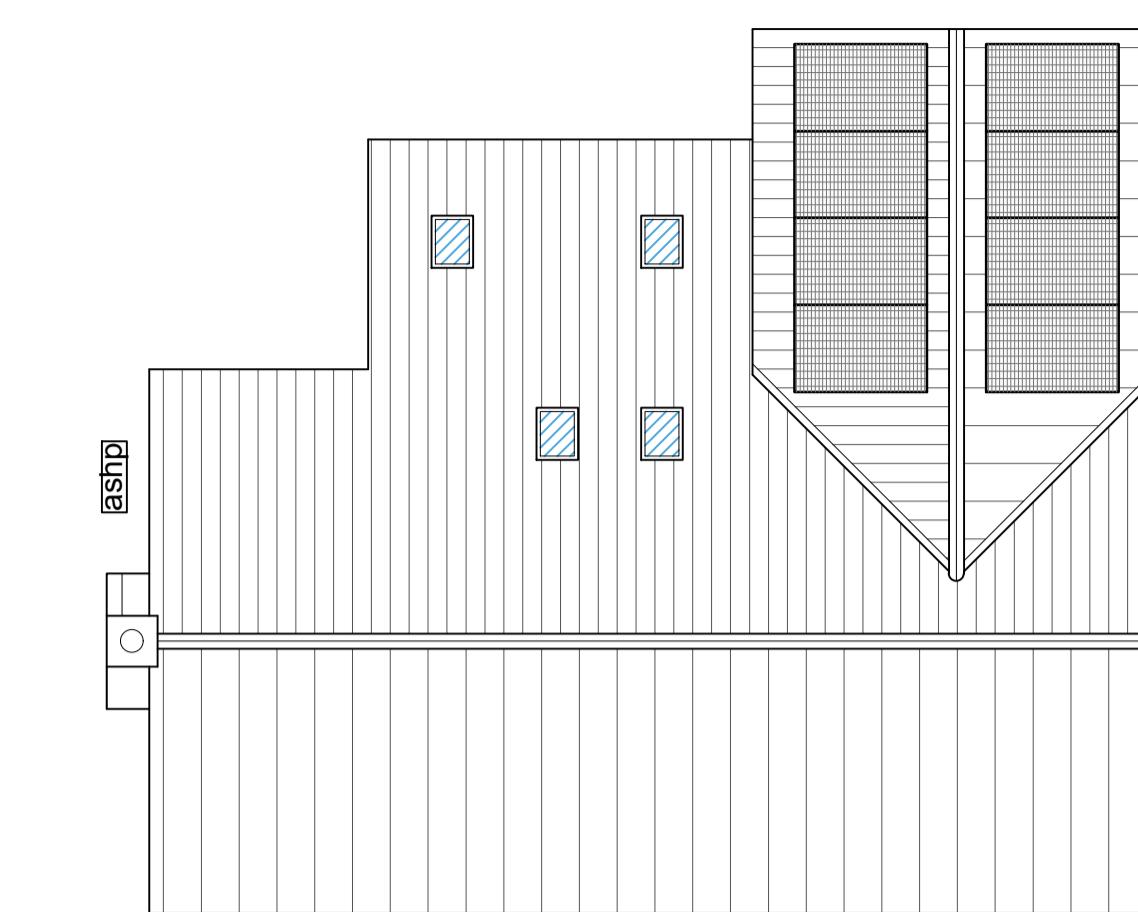
FOR COMMENT

SWANN EDWARDS
A R C H I T E C T U R E

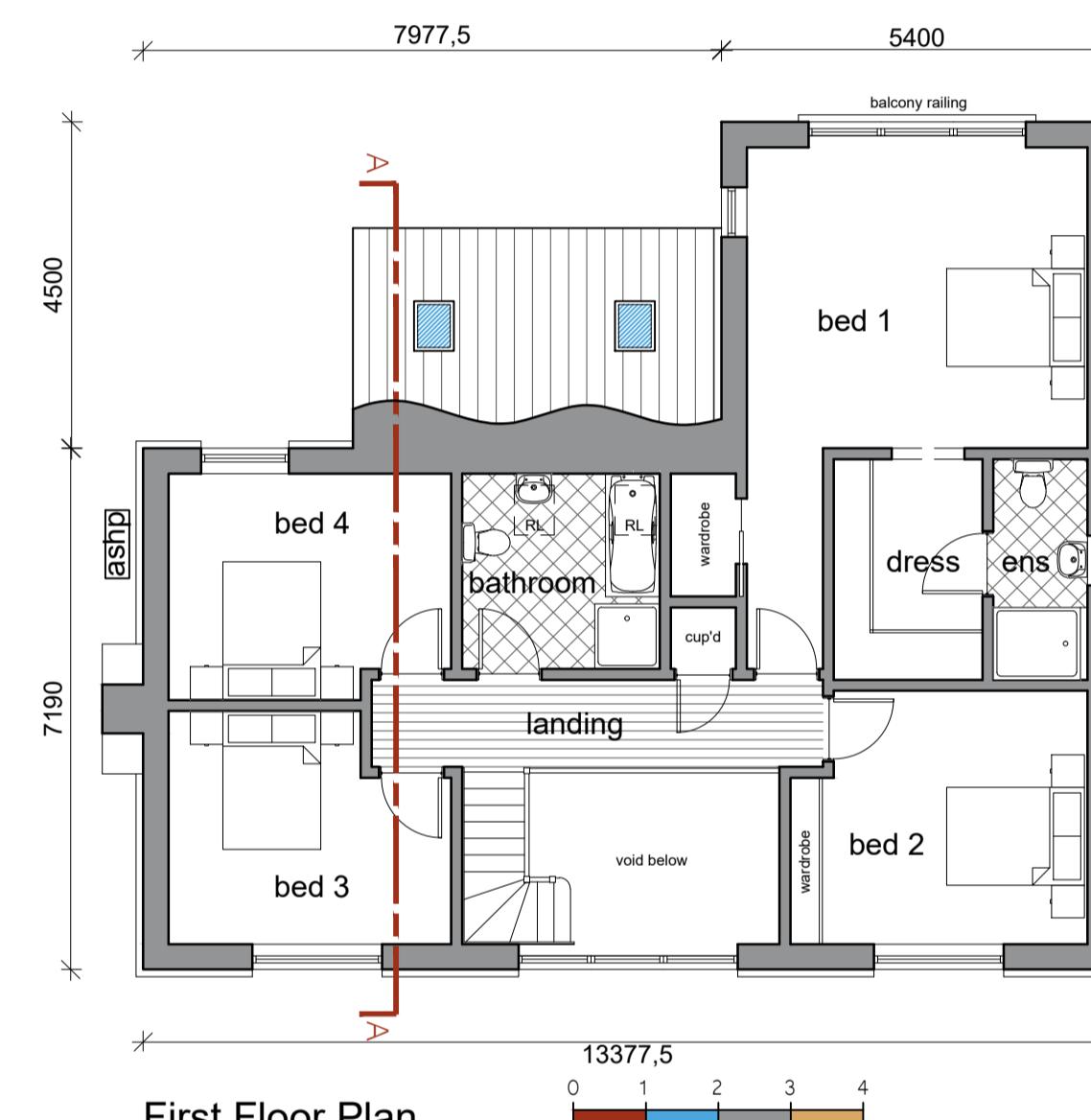
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhine, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Proposed 2no. Dwellings | Job Title | Drawn by |
| Barns at Prospect House | May 2025 | CW |
| WWHittlesey Road, March, | Checked by | GE |
| Cambs, PE15 0AP | Drawing Title | |
| | Planning Drawing | |
| | Plot 2 | |
| | Dwg No. | SE-2209 |
| | Dwg No. | PP1200 |
| | Sheet Size | A1 |
| | Revision | A |

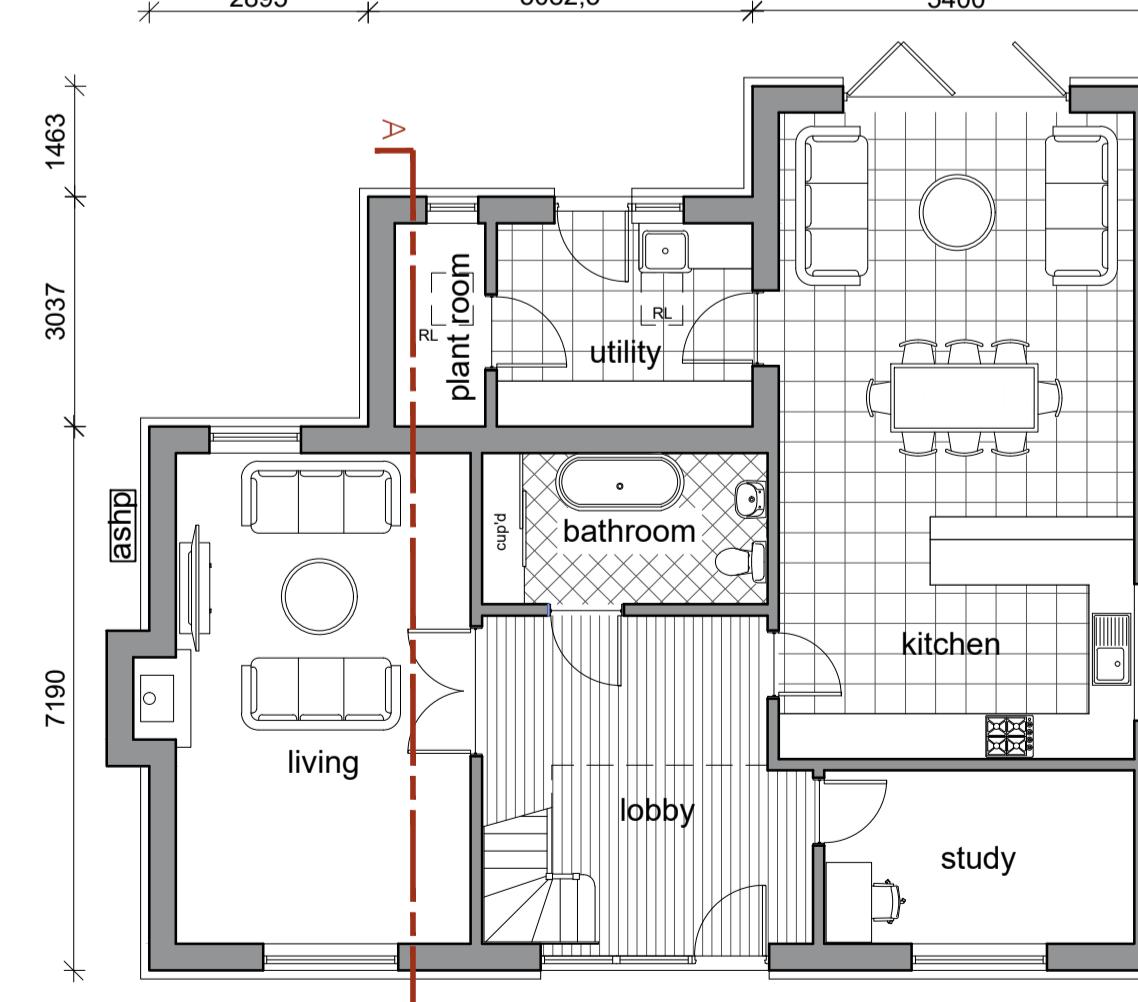
For: C/O Swann Edwards



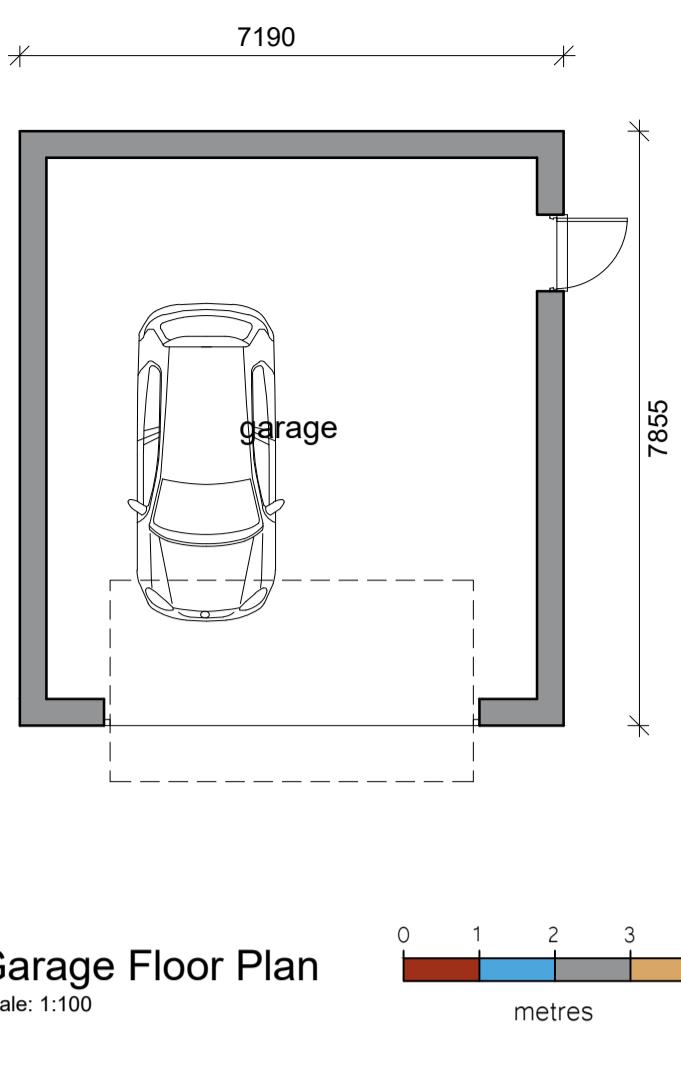
Roof Plan
Scale: 1:100
metres



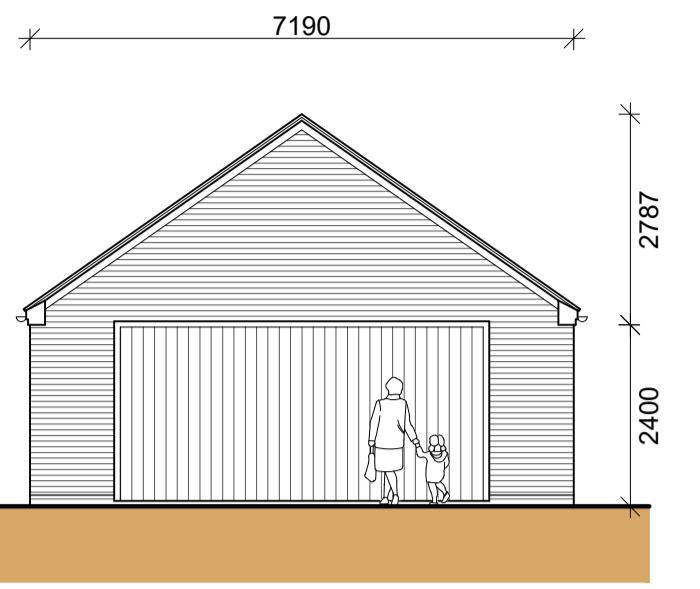
First Floor Plan
Scale: 1:100
metres



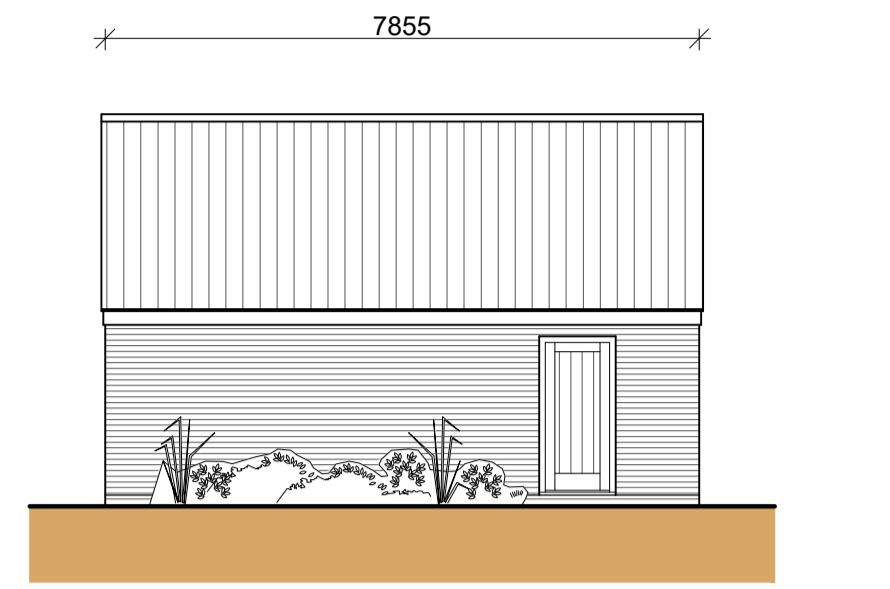
Ground Floor Plan
Scale: 1:100
metres



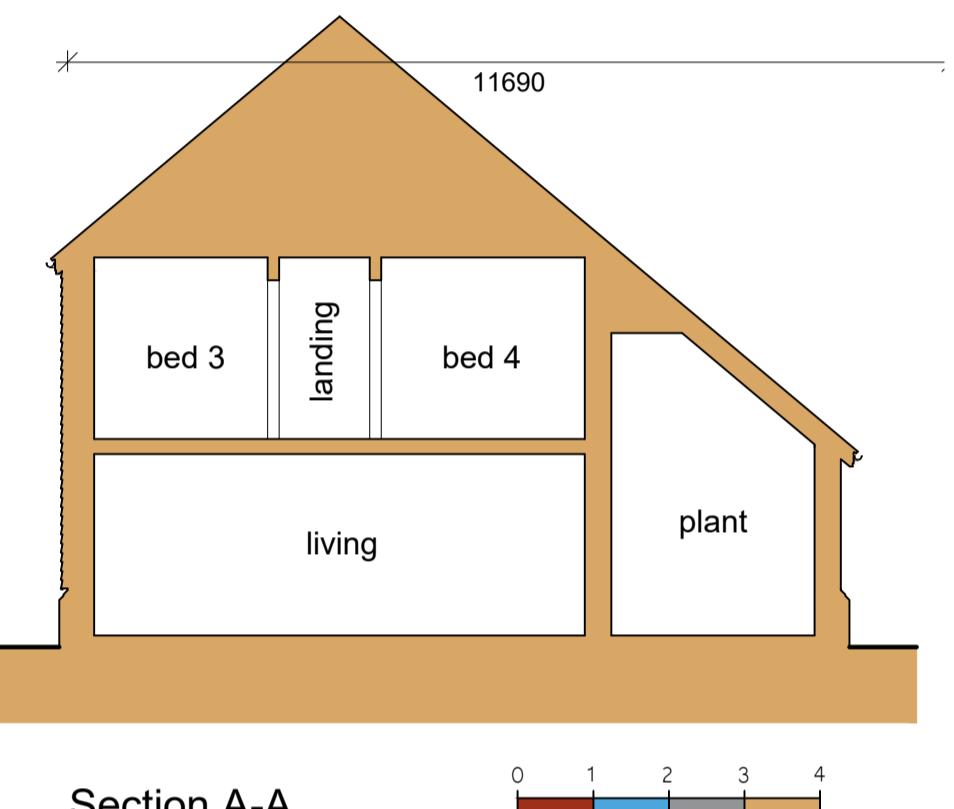
Garage Floor Plan
Scale: 1:100
metres



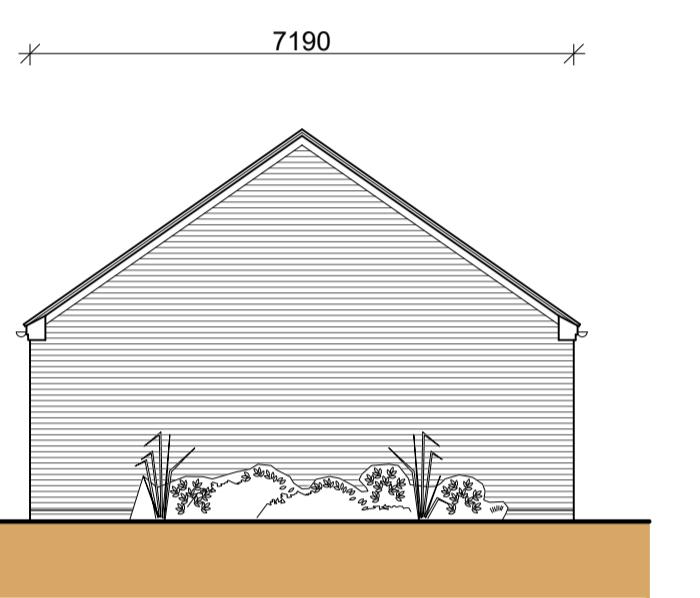
Front Elevation
Scale: 1:100 - Garage
metres



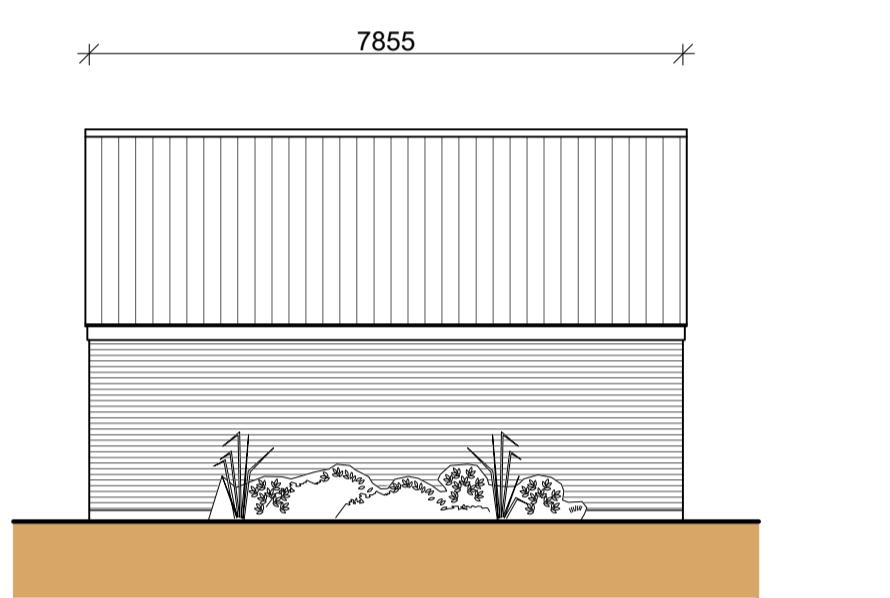
Side Elevation
Scale: 1:100 - Garage
metres



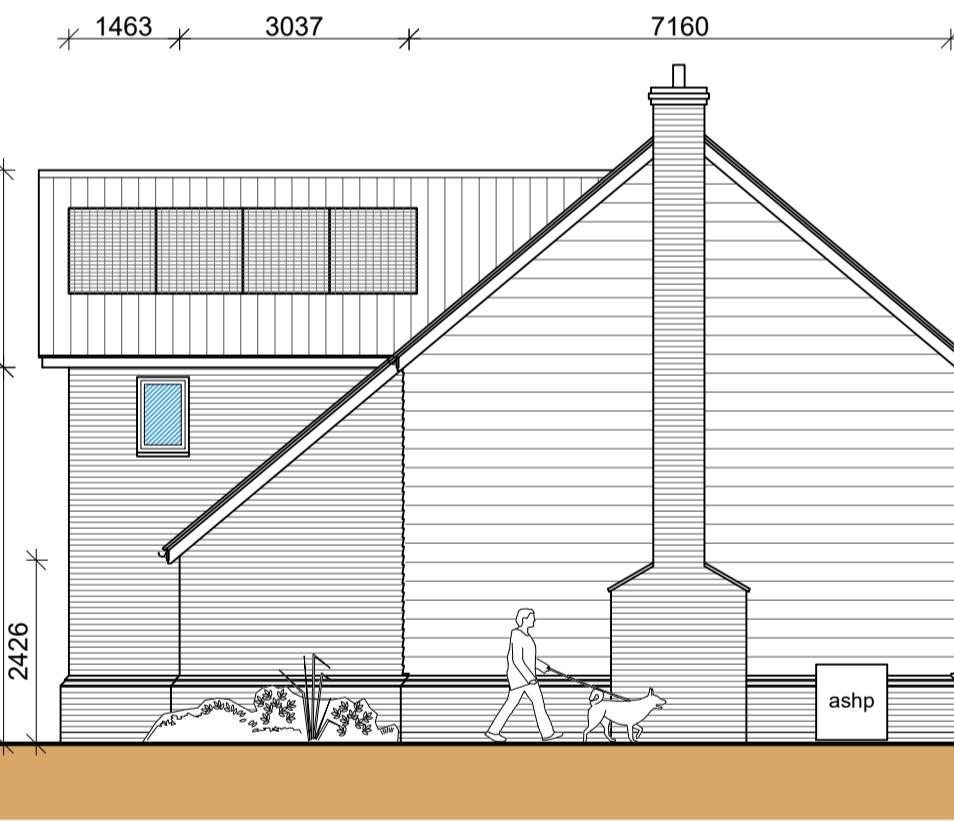
Section A-A
Scale: 1:100
metres



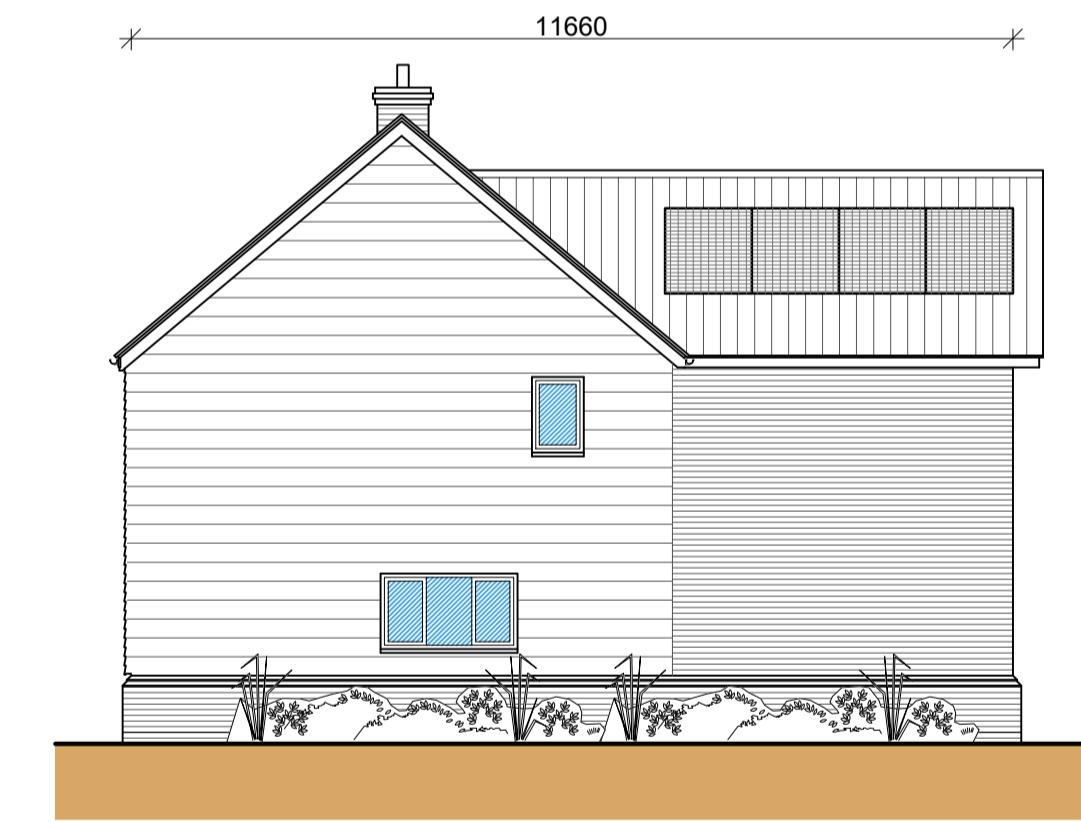
Rear Elevation
Scale: 1:100 - Garage
metres



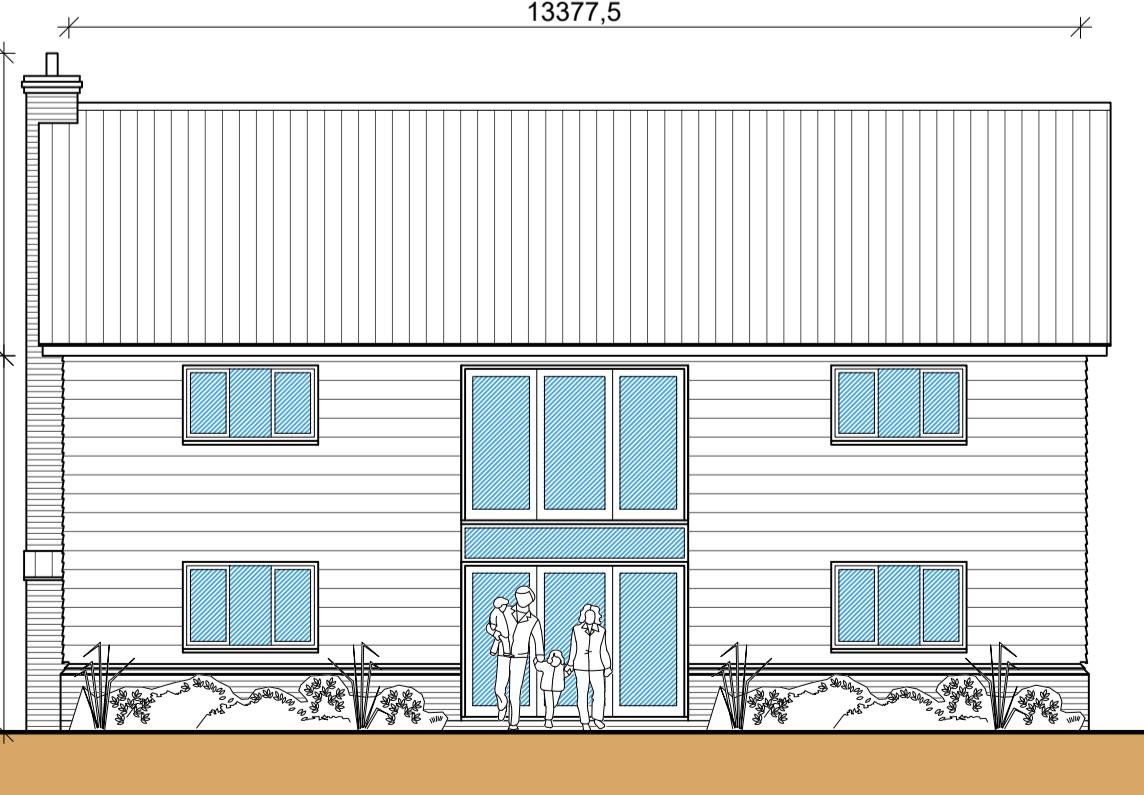
Side Elevation
Scale: 1:100 - Garage
metres



Side Elevation (E)
Scale: 1:100
metres



Side Elevation (W)
Scale: 1:100
metres



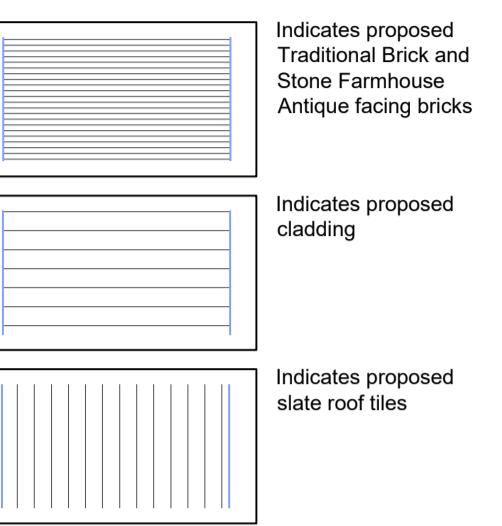
Front Elevation (S)
Scale: 1:100
metres



Rear Elevation (N)
Scale: 1:100
metres

General Notes
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4. Any discrepancies are to be brought to the designers attention.

ELEVATION KEY



Revisions
A Nov 2025
Changes following planning comments

Status

FOR APPROVAL

SWANN EDWARDS
A R C H I T E C T U R E

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Swann Edwards Architecture, Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhine, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA, t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

| | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed 2no. Dwellings Barns at Prospect House, WWHittlesey Road, March, Cambs, PE15 0AP | Drawn by CW | Date May 2025 |
| Checked by GE | | |
| Planning Drawing Plot 1 & Garage | Job No. SE-2209 | Drawn by CW |
| Dwg No. PP1100 | Sheet Size A1 | Checked by GE |
| For: C/O Swann Edwards | Revision A | |