
F/YR26/0123/F

Applicant: Mr L Granger

**Agent : Swann Edwards
Architecture Limited**

Willow View, The Chase, March, Cambridgeshire

Erect 1 x self-build/custom build dwelling involving the demolition of existing dwelling

Officer recommendation: Refuse

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

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The principle of a replacement dwelling in this location is acceptable. However, the proposed dwelling is excessive in scale, width and footprint relative to the plot, resulting in a cramped and roof-dominant form of development that appears incongruous within the street scene and fails to respond to the character of The Chase.
- 1.2 In addition, the siting of the dwelling close to the southern boundary, combined with its scale and massing, would result in an overbearing impact and loss of light to the occupiers of Bramble Cottage. Furthermore, in the absence of an appropriate legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure the self-build nature of the scheme.
- 1.3 Whilst there are no objections in relation to highways, flood risk or ecology, the proposal is recommended for refusal due to its harmful impact on the character of the area and neighbouring amenity and is therefore contrary to local plan policies LP2 and LP16 alongside the guidance contained within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments SPD

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of The Chase within the built-up area of March. The site is currently occupied by a single storey detached dwelling with associated detached outbuildings and is in a state of disrepair. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a replacement single storey three bedroom dwelling with an integral garage. The proposed dwelling would take on an L-shaped form, with a maximum height of approximately 6.5 metres, a maximum depth of 15.51 metres to the southern end and an overall width of 26.6 metres.
- 3.2 The accommodation would comprise an open-plan lounge, dining and kitchen

area, two ground floor bedrooms including one with an en suite, a bathroom, plant room, shower room and garage. A further bedroom with en suite would be located within the roofspace.

- 3.3 The development would utilise the existing vehicular access from The Chase, with the introduction of a new driveway, swimming pool and areas of soft landscaping to the front of the dwelling.

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

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

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

| Reference | Description | Decision |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| F/YR15/0184/F | Erection of a single-storey extension to side of existing dwelling involving the demolition of existing garage, side lean-to extension and chimneys | Granted |

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 March Town Council

Approval, noting “this development is welcomed”.

Internal Consultees

5.2 FDC Environmental Health

No objection, subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan, in the interests of protecting the amenity of nearby residents during demolition and construction phases. It is considered, should the application be approved, this condition would be reasonable and necessary.

5.3 Local Residents/Interested Parties

Three letters of objection have been received from residents on Bullfinch Way, The Chase and Gaul Road, March and these are summarised below:

| Objecting Comments | Officer Response |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Impact on condition of surfacing of The Chase and pedestrian users | Comments noted and discussed below |
| Out of keeping | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| Elaborate scale for a conventional 3 bedroom property | Comments noted. |
| Overbearing nature on neighbouring properties to the south | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| Loss of light to neighbouring properties to the south | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| The site is sufficiently large for the design to be adjusted, moving the dwelling to the north and into a more | Comments noted. However, the application is required to be assessed against the plans submitted. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| central position. | |
| Street lighting will be adjacent to the main bedroom window | Comments noted. |
| Overlooking properties to the south. | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| Surface water flooding concerns, exacerbating current issues for neighbouring properties to the South which flood in heavy rainfall. | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| Concerns regarding the scale. | Comments noted and discussed below. |
| Two thirds of the upper floorspace is unutilised and therefore, the scale of the building could be significantly reduced. | Comments noted and discussed below. |

Eleven letters of support have been received from residents on Knights End Road, Cedar Close, Wisbech Road, The Chase, Clydesdale Close, Elm Road, Coronation Close, Millfield Close, Westwood Avenue, Brewin Avenue and St Peters Crescent, March. It should be noted that one comment received from Ravenhill Drive was registered as supporting comments but are more general comments so have been discounted in this section and are provided in the table following the below. Supporting comments are summarised below:

| Supporting Comments | Officer Response |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Will improve the appearance of existing property and land | Comments noted and discussed below |
| Asset and beneficial to the area | Comments noted and discussed below |
| Appropriate in scale and design | Comments noted and discussed below |
| No impact on neighbouring properties, traffic or parking. | Comments noted and discussed below |
| Appropriate for its location | Comments noted and discussed below |

Three letters from residents on Ravenhill Drive and The Chase March have been received and are summarised below:

| Comments | Officer Response |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Given the lengthy size, should external lights be installed these should not shine into neighbouring gardens/properties. | Comments noted, should the application be approved, a condition could be included to secure any details of future external lighting. |
| Obscure glazing to the ensuite window to prevent overlooking. | Comments noted and discussed below |
| The Chase should be widened to 4.5 metres as required under the allowed appeal for application F/YR21/0819/FDL | Comments noted. However, this is not the appropriate arena to secure these and should be dealt with appropriately through Enforcement. |
| The dwelling is proposed extremely close to neighbouring properties – could it not be moved. | Comments noted however, the LPA are required to assess the proposal as submitted. |
| Limited information about the swimming pool assume there will be no structures above or around it | Comments noted. Based on the plans provided there are to be no structures around to support this aspect of the |

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 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

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

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Nature

Public Spaces

Uses

Homes and Buildings

Resources

Lifespan

Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

LP4 – Housing

LP5 – Meeting Housing Need

LP9 – March

LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District

LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

LP17 – Community Safety

LP19 – The Natural Environment

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014

DM2 – Natural Features and Landscaping Schemes

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

DM4 – Waste and Recycling Facilities

DM6 – Mitigating Against Harmful Effects

Developer Contributions SPD 2015

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Design, Appearance and Impact on Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area**
- **Impact on Neighbouring Amenity**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1 It is acknowledged that the site has been vacant for a prolonged period and that its current condition has been the subject of engagement with relevant Council services. Whilst this context is noted the condition of the site in itself is not a material consideration that would outweigh the need to assess the proposal against the relevant planning policies.

10 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1 Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) identifies March as a Primary Market Town where the majority of new development, including housing, should be directed.
- 10.2 The site lies within the built-up area in a sustainable location and the proposal relates to the replacement of an existing residential unit. As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant planning policies and material considerations.

Design, Scale and Appearance

- 10.3 Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan requires development to contribute positively to the character of the area and to respond appropriately to its context in terms of design and scale.
- 10.4 The site is situated within a predominantly residential area characterised by a varied mix of dwelling types, plot sizes and architectural styles. Properties along The Chase are generally single storey detached dwellings, while surrounding streets such as Ravenhill Drive and Gaul Road display a mix of semi-detached, detached and terraced properties.
- 10.5 The proposed dwelling reflects the prevailing single storey form found along The Chase and incorporates design features such as gables that are consistent with neighbouring properties. The inclusion of a large glazed element on the front elevation introduces a more contemporary aspect, which provides some visual

interest.

- 10.6 However, the proposal would result in a substantial increase in built form across the site, particularly along the frontage. Although the removal of an existing outbuilding, which currently fronts the road and appears to be in a state of disrepair, would improve the immediate appearance of the site, this benefit is limited.
- 10.7 The footprint of the proposed dwelling, when considered against its plot width, appears excessive and results in a development that would read as cramped within the site. The steep roof pitch, combined with limited use of the roofspace, contributes to a roof-dominant form that lacks sufficient articulation.
- 10.8 The site is currently in a poor and unkempt condition, and the principle of a replacement dwelling has the potential to improve its appearance. However, this does not justify the acceptance of a scheme that would result in harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. Given the generous size of the plot, it is considered that a more sympathetic and appropriately scaled form of development could be achieved which would positively contribute to the street scene.
- 10.9 Taken together, the scale, massing and proportions of the dwelling would appear incongruous within the street scene and would not respond positively to the established pattern of development. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policy LP16.

Residential Amenity

- 10.9 Policies LP2 and LP16 seek to ensure that development does not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and that adequate amenity space is provided for future residents.
- 10.10 The relationship with neighbouring properties to the west and north, including Briar House, is considered acceptable given the separation distances and single storey nature of the proposal. The absence of significant openings at high level further reduces the potential for overlooking or loss of privacy. It is noted that the property to the west is two storey with first floor windows which would offer views of the front amenity space afforded to the dwelling and the northern aspect of the rear amenity space, however, this is not considered to result in an unacceptable loss of privacy to future occupants.
- 10.11 To the east, the dwelling would be positioned approximately 5.5 metres from the shared boundary. While a first floor window is proposed within the roofspace, this would serve an ensuite, so could be secured to remain obscure glazed to protect the privacy of neighbouring occupiers to the east. It is noted that the properties to the east are two storey dwellings with first floor windows which would provide some views of the rear amenity space afforded to the proposed dwelling, however, given the acceptable degree of separation it is not considered this would result in a material, unacceptable loss of privacy to the future occupants.
- 10.12 Greater concern arises in relation to the southern boundary with Bramble Cottage, where the proposed dwelling would be located as close as 1.2 metres from the boundary. Although high level windows and rooflights are proposed,

which would limit direct overlooking, the proximity and scale of built form would result in an overbearing impact and a loss of light to the neighbouring property and its amenity space, contrary to the requirements of Local Plan Policy LP16.

- 10.13 In terms of amenity provision for future occupiers, the site would retain sufficient private amenity space in accordance with policy requirements, with at least one third of the plot available for this purpose.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 10.14 Policy LP16 requires development to incorporate appropriate landscaping, while Policy LP19 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- 10.15 While the Design and Access Statement refers to the provision of additional soft landscaping, particularly to the frontage, this is not clearly shown on the submitted plans. Should permission be granted, this could be addressed through a planning condition requiring the submission of a detailed landscaping scheme.
- 10.16 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal concludes that the site has limited ecological value, with negligible potential for protected species including bats and great crested newts. Subject to the implementation of recommended mitigation measures, secured by condition, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to biodiversity.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 10.17 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.
- 10.18 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.

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

- 10.19 Policy LP15 requires development to provide safe and suitable access and appropriate levels of parking.
- 10.20 The proposal would utilise the existing access point onto The Chase. While the revised driveway layout would not allow vehicles to enter and exit the site in forward gear, this reflects the existing arrangement and the proposal would not result in a material intensification of use. As such, it would be unreasonable to raise an objection on highway safety grounds.
- 10.21 Adequate off-street parking would be provided through the proposed garage and driveway, in accordance with adopted standards.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 10.22 Policy LP14 and national guidance seek to steer development towards areas at lowest risk of flooding. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal relates to a replacement dwelling. There are therefore no objections in principle in relation to flood risk.
- 10.23 Limited information has been provided regarding surface water and foul drainage. As the proposal relates to a replacement dwelling, this is something that building regulations would deal with appropriately.

Self-Build and Custom Housing

- 10.24 Policy LP5 of the Local Plan also seeks to ensure that housing solutions are provided which meet market expectations, this included self-build homes. This stance is reflected by Policy H3 of the March Neighbourhood Plan. Under section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under sections 2 and 2A of that Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 10.25 As set out in the Regulations, Part 1 of a register comprises those people and organisations who meet all the eligibility criteria, including the local connection test. Part 2 comprises those people and organisations who meet most, but not necessarily all, the eligibility criteria. The Council has a duty to 'give suitable development permission in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area' (i.e. to meet the demand for the number of applicants on Part 1 of their register) within a 3 year period, post the end of the base period.
- 10.26 The permissions granted demonstrate that the demand for self-build and custom housing (as identified by the register) is comfortably being met in Fenland. Therefore, no weight will be given to the delivery of self/ custom build housing at this time
- 10.27 Furthermore, recent appeal decisions have consistently dismissed proposals where there was no enforceable mechanism in place to ensure that the approved dwelling would be delivered and occupied as a genuine self-build or custom-build project. These decisions reinforce the importance of securing the self-build nature of such developments through a legally binding agreement.
- 10.28 In line with best practice and national policy guidance, it is therefore considered essential that a legal agreement; typically in the form of a Section 106 obligation, is secured to guarantee the delivery of the dwelling as self-build. Without such a mechanism, there is no means by which the Council can ensure the dwelling will meet the requirements of self-build housing as defined by the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended).
- 10.29 In the absence of an appropriate legal agreement, the proposal fails to demonstrate that it would contribute to meeting identified self-build housing need and by association would benefit from the BNG exemption as mentioned above. Accordingly, this constitutes a clear and defensible reason for refusal.

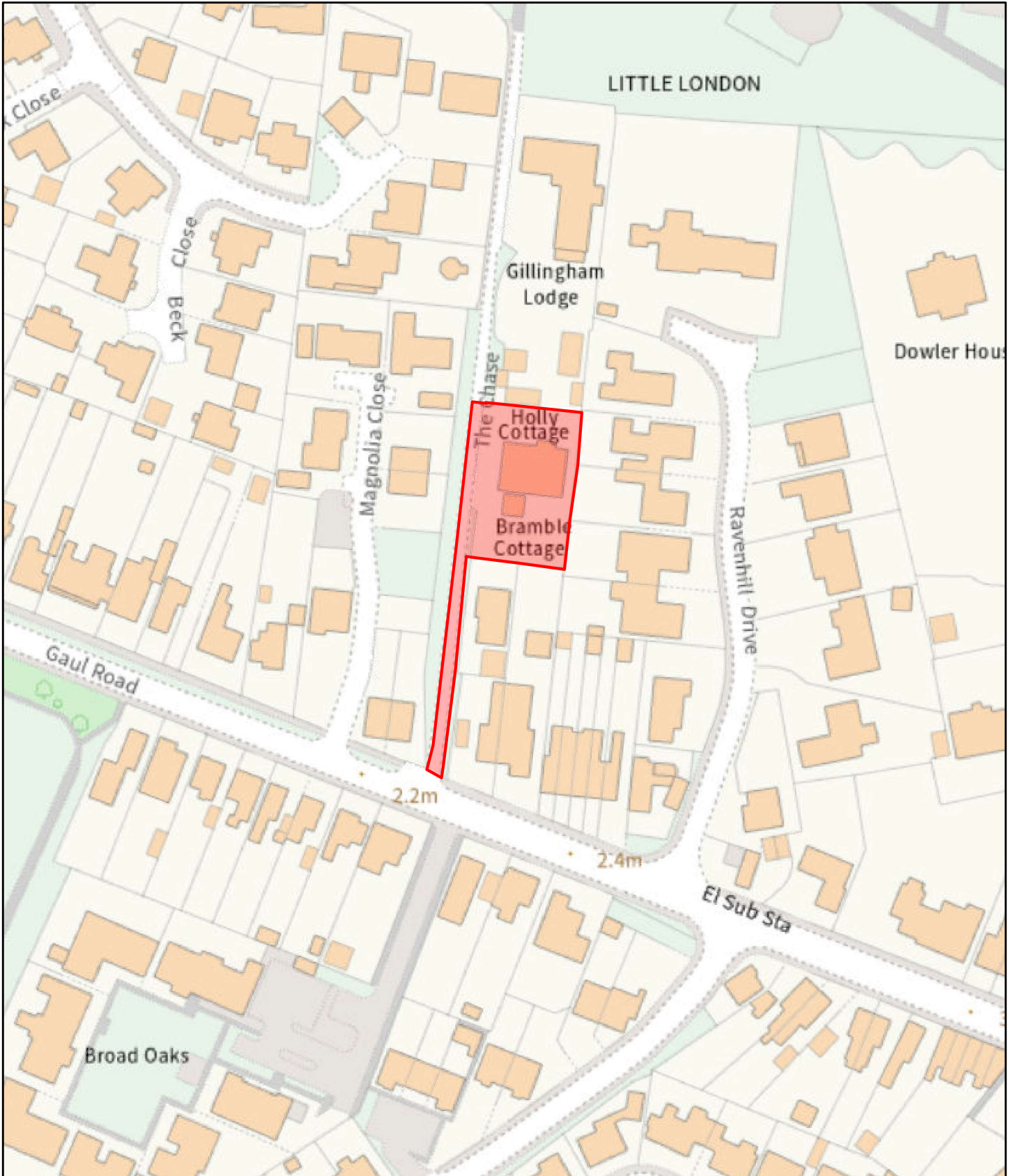
11 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 While the principle of development is acceptable and there are no overriding concerns in relation to highways, ecology or flood risk, the proposal raises significant concerns in respect of its design and impact on neighbouring amenity, particularly to the south.
- 11.2 The scale, massing and proportions of the dwelling would result in a form of development that appears cramped and out of keeping with the character of the area, contrary to Policy LP16. In addition, the relationship with Bramble Cottage would give rise to an overbearing impact and loss of light.
- 11.3 Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to represent a high-quality form of development and is recommended for refusal.

12 RECOMMENDATION

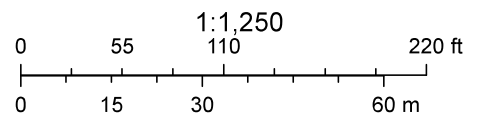
Refuse for the following reasons:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | The proposed replacement dwelling, by virtue of its excessive footprint, width, scale and roof-dominant form, would result in a cramped and visually incongruous form of development that fails to respond positively to the character and grain of development along The Chase. The proposal would appear out of keeping within the street scene and would not make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness. As such, the development is contrary to Policy LP16(d) of the Fenland Local Plan and the guidance contained within the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments SPD. |
| 2 | The proposed dwelling, by reason of its siting in close proximity to the southern boundary, scale and massing, would result in an overbearing form of development and an unacceptable loss of light to the occupiers of Bramble Cottage. This would have a harmful impact on residential amenity, contrary to Policies LP2 and LP16(e) of the Fenland Local Plan, which seek to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. |
| 3 | In the absence of a legal agreement or other enforceable mechanism to secure the delivery and occupation of the proposed dwelling as a self-build unit, the development fails to meet the definition and requirements of self-build housing as set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended). |



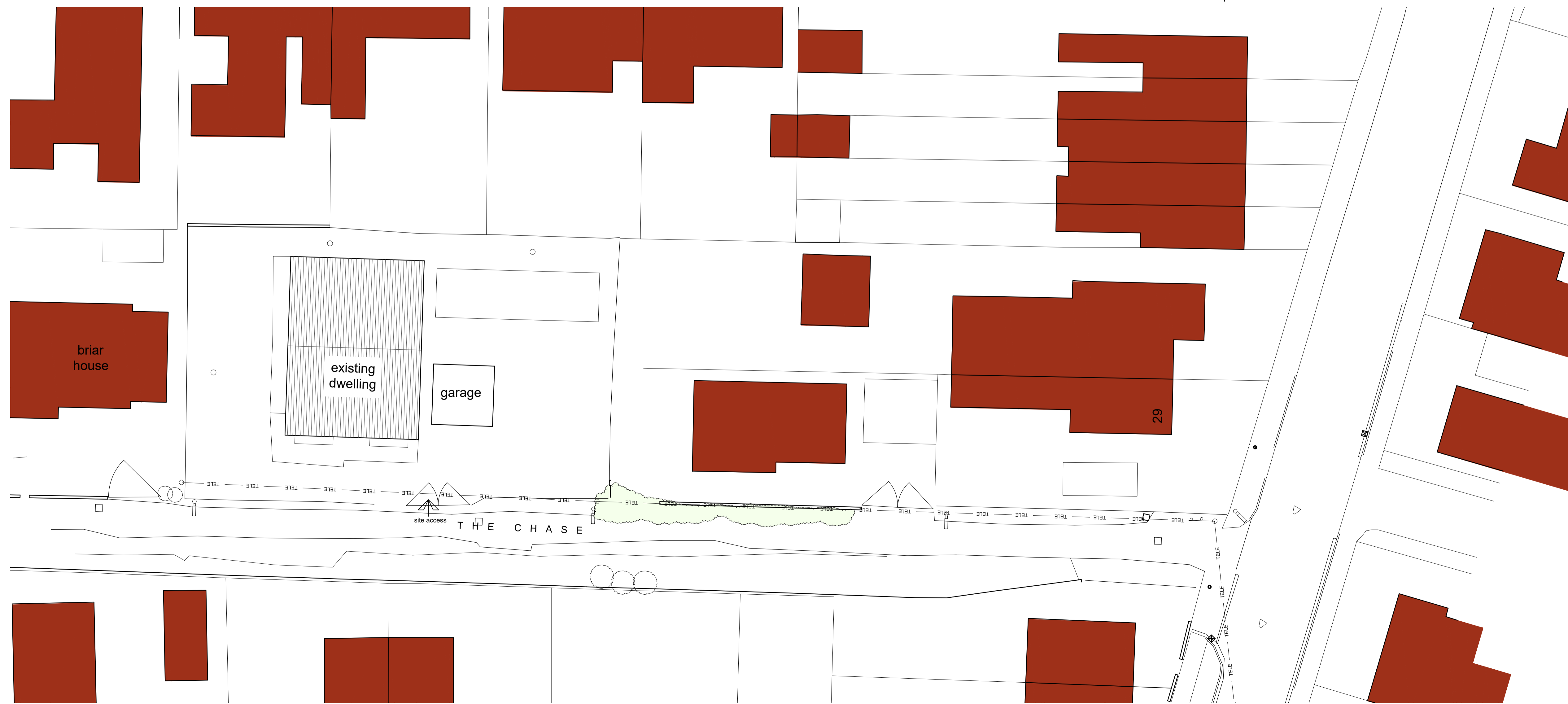
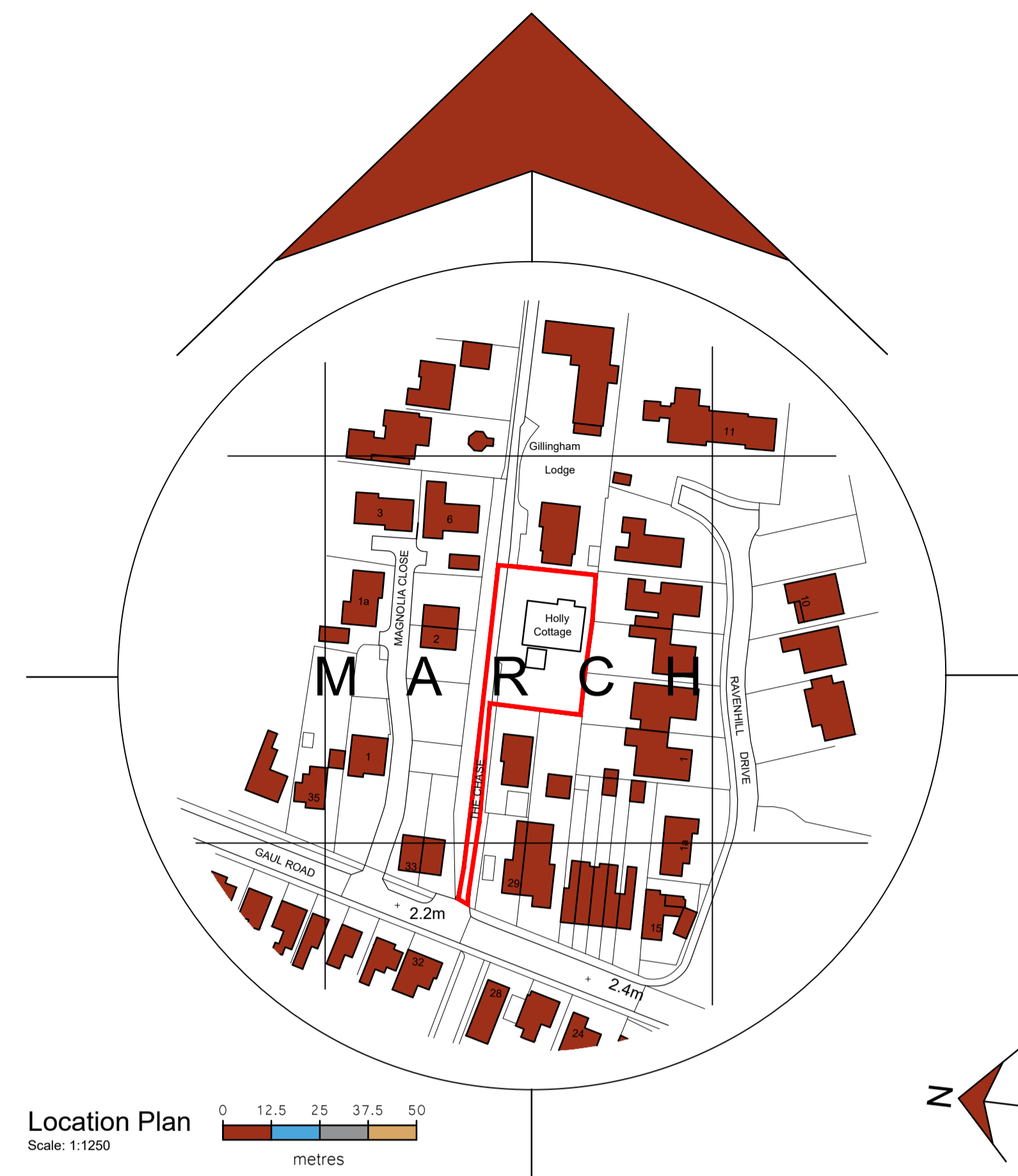
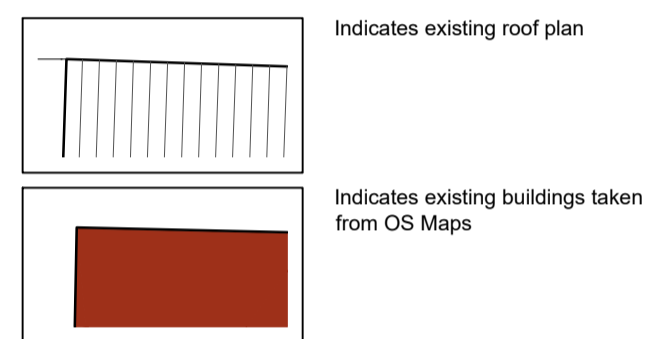
2/23/2026, 11:33:18 AM

 Fenland District Boundary



- 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.

SITE PLAN KEY



Status

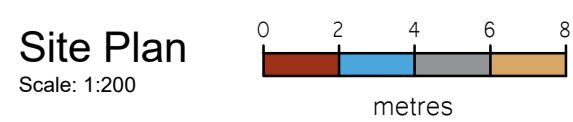
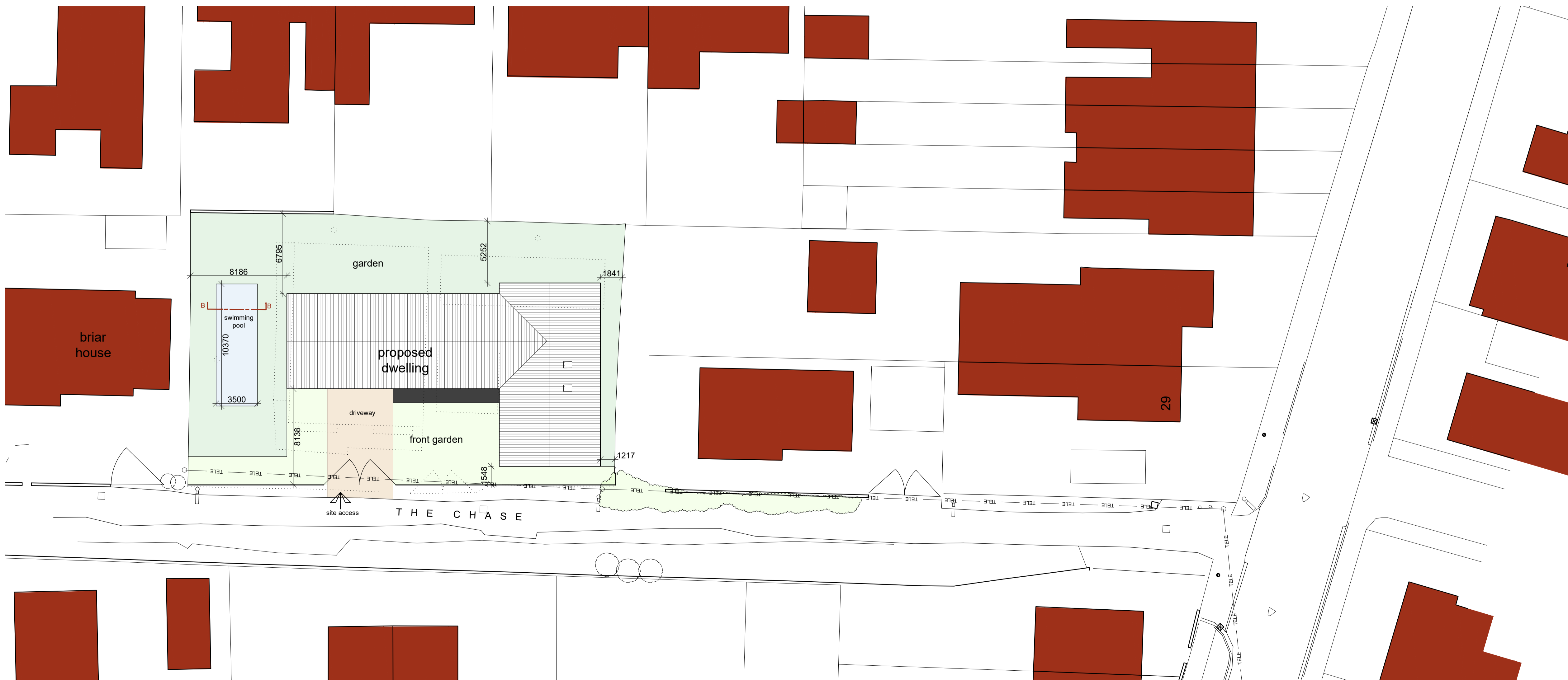
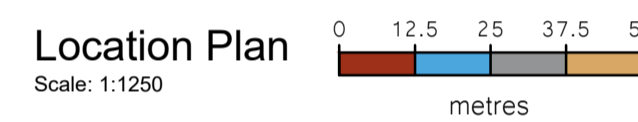
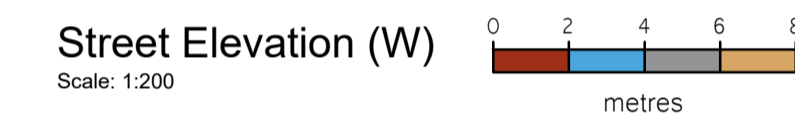
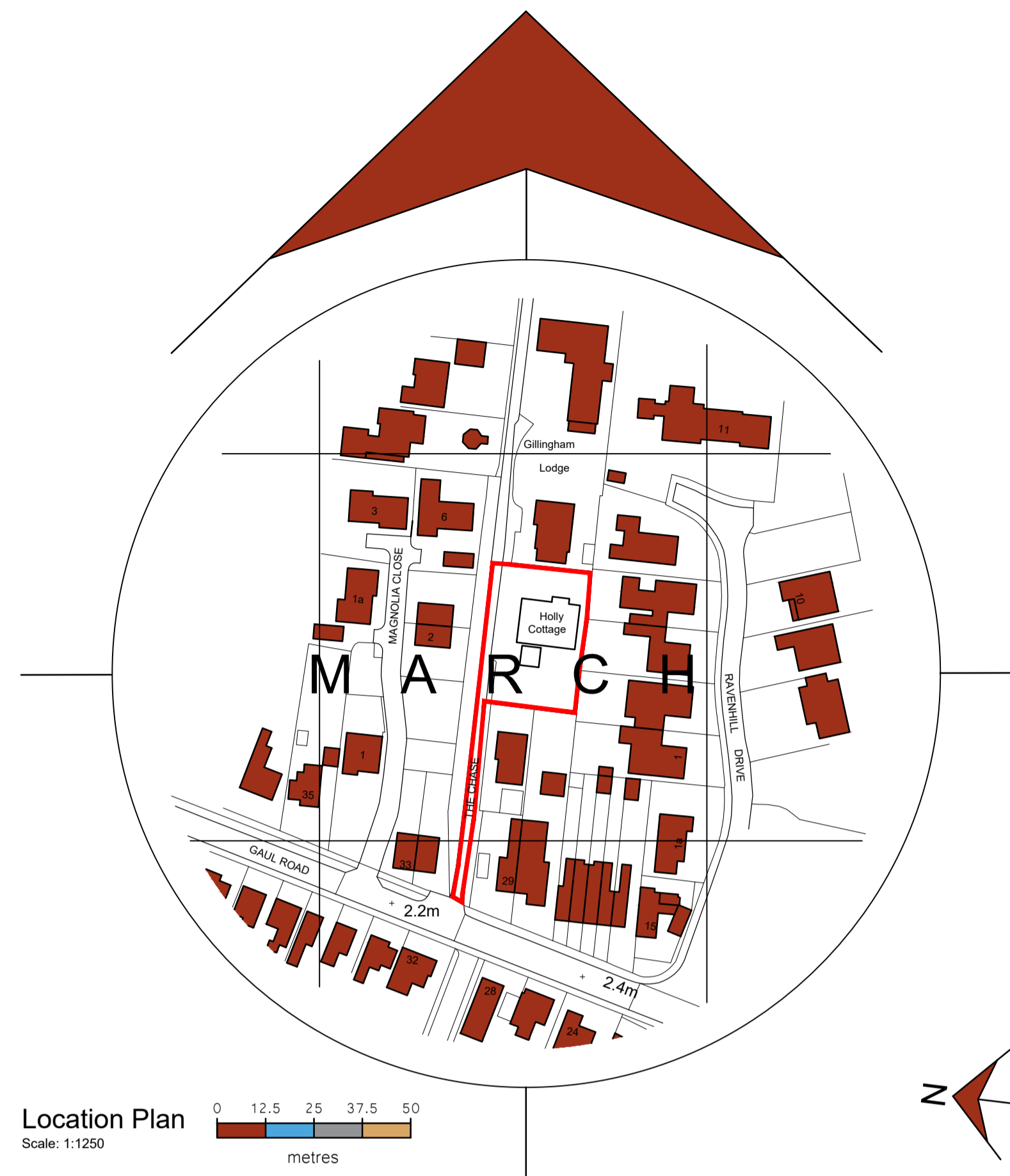
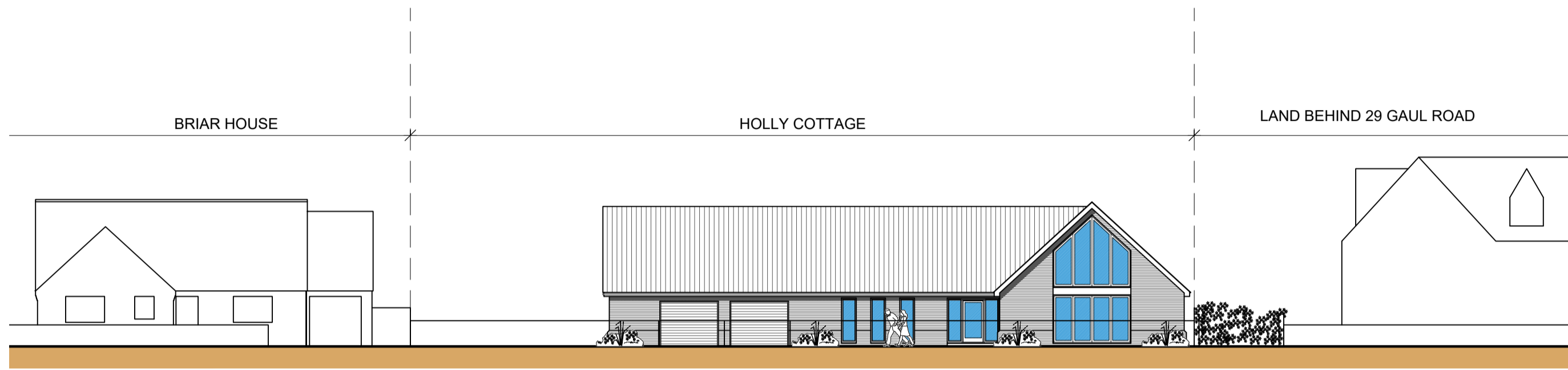
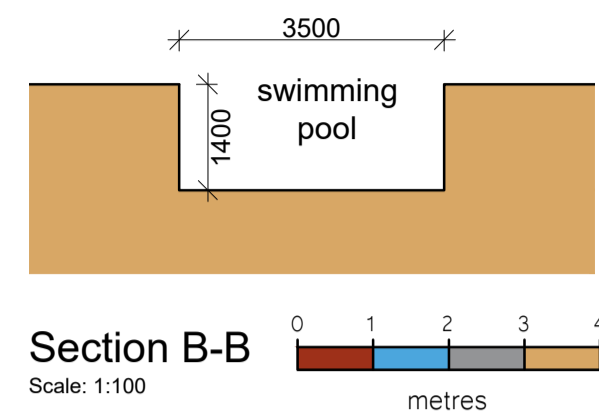
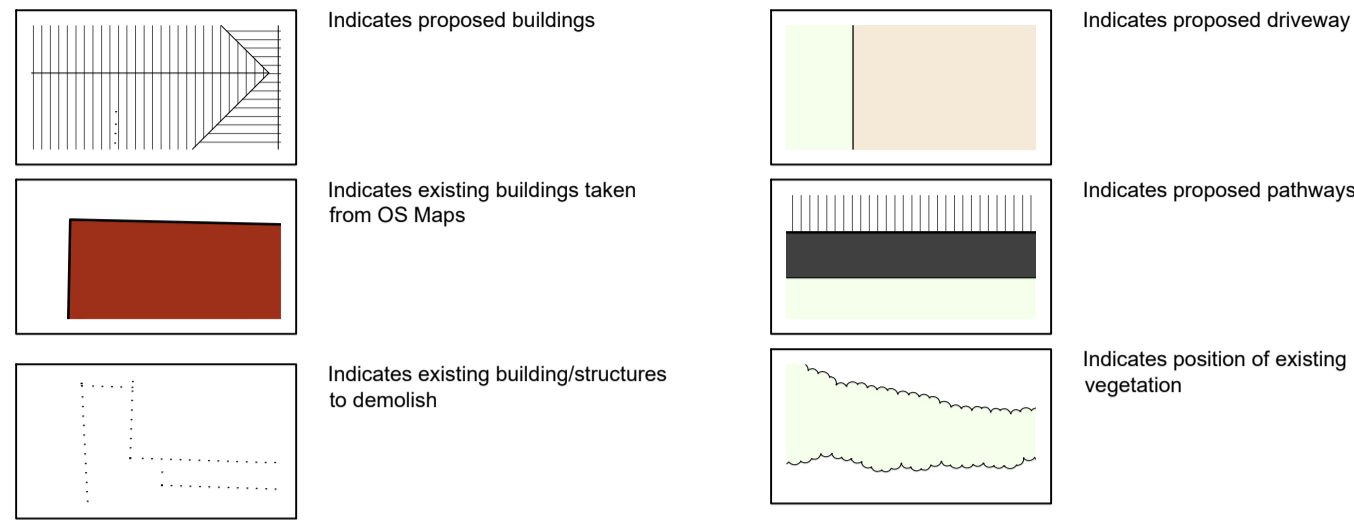
PLANNING



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

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed Self Build Dwelling Holly Cottage, The Chase March, PE15 9RJ | Date Jan 2026 | Drawn by AL |
| Drawing Title Planning Drawing Existing Site Plan | Job No. SE-2442 | Checked by GE |
| Dwg No. P100 | Sheet Size A1 | Revision |

SITE PLAN KEY



- 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.

PLANNING

SWANN EDWARDS
ARCHITECTURE
PART OF **Collective**
BUILT ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

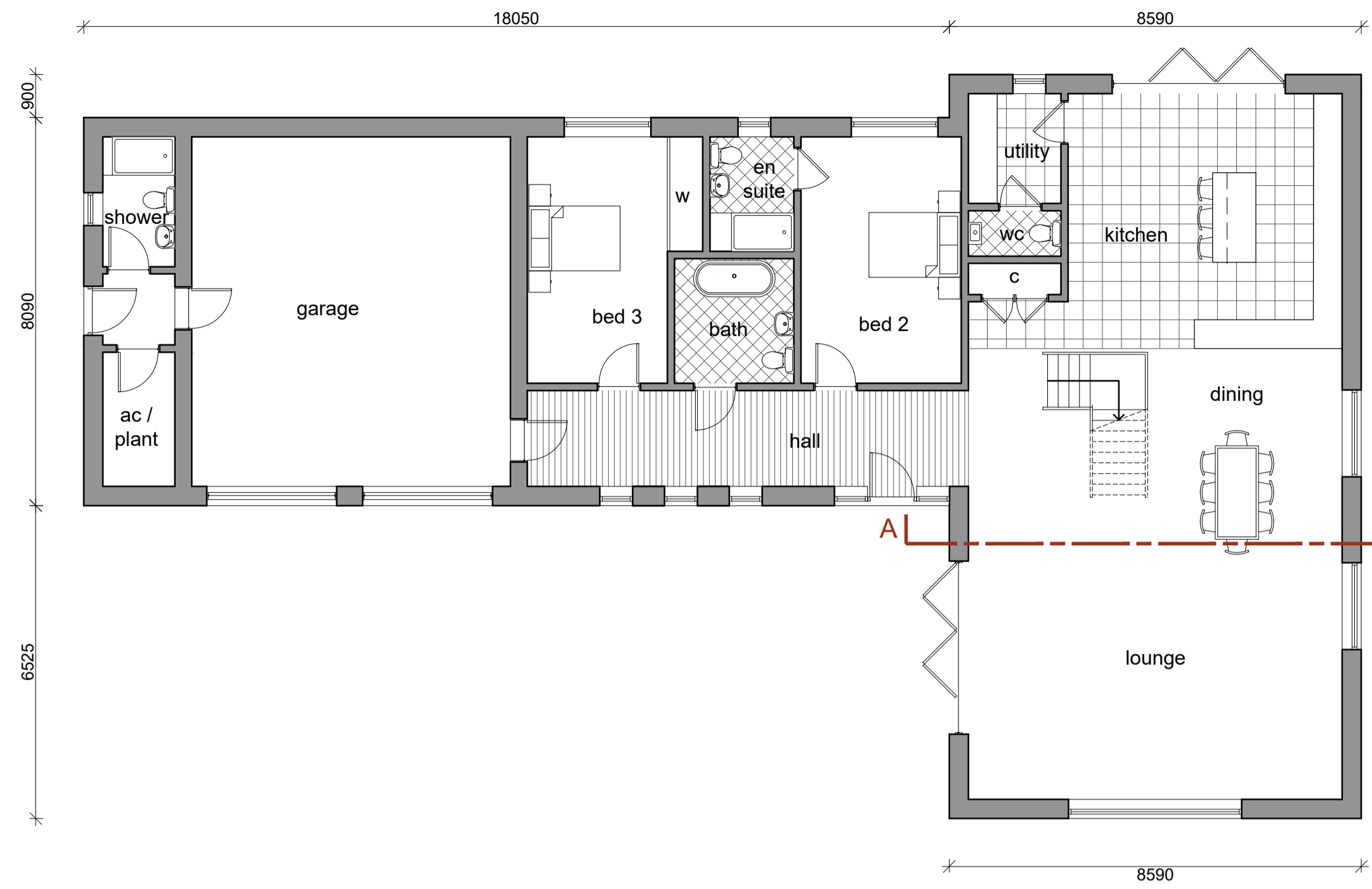
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited, Black Barn,
Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed Self Build Dwelling Holly Cottage, The Chase March, PE15 9RJ | Date Jan 2026 | Drawn by AL |
| | | Checked by GE |
| Drawing Title Planning Drawing Site Plan, Location Plan Garage Floor Plans, Section & Elevations | Job No. SE-2442 | Sheet Size A1 |
| | Dwg No. PP1000 | Revision A |

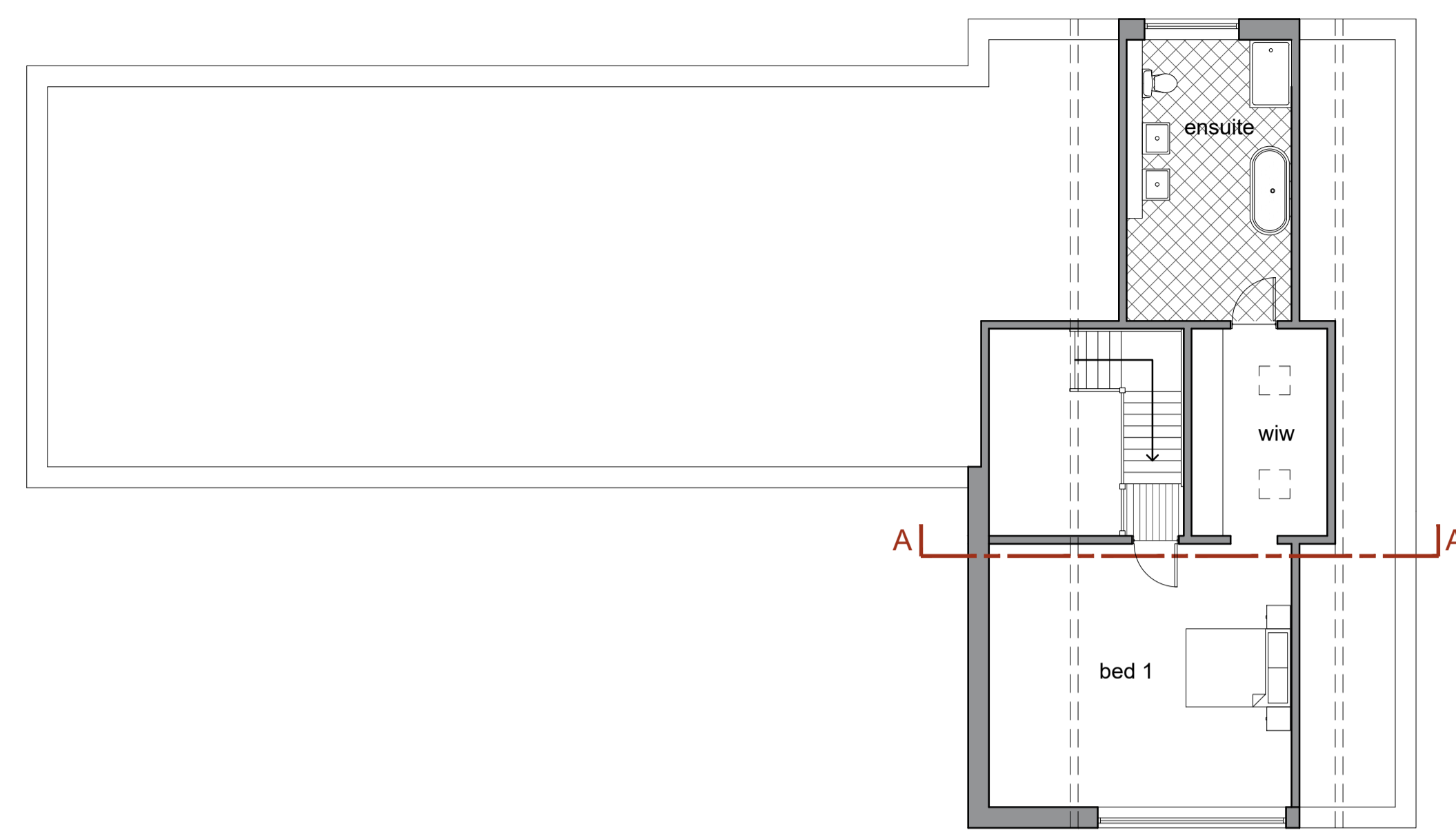
- General Notes
1. All dimensions are shown in 'mm' unless otherwise stated.
 2. The contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site prior to the commencement of any work.
 3. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractors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

MATERIAL KEY

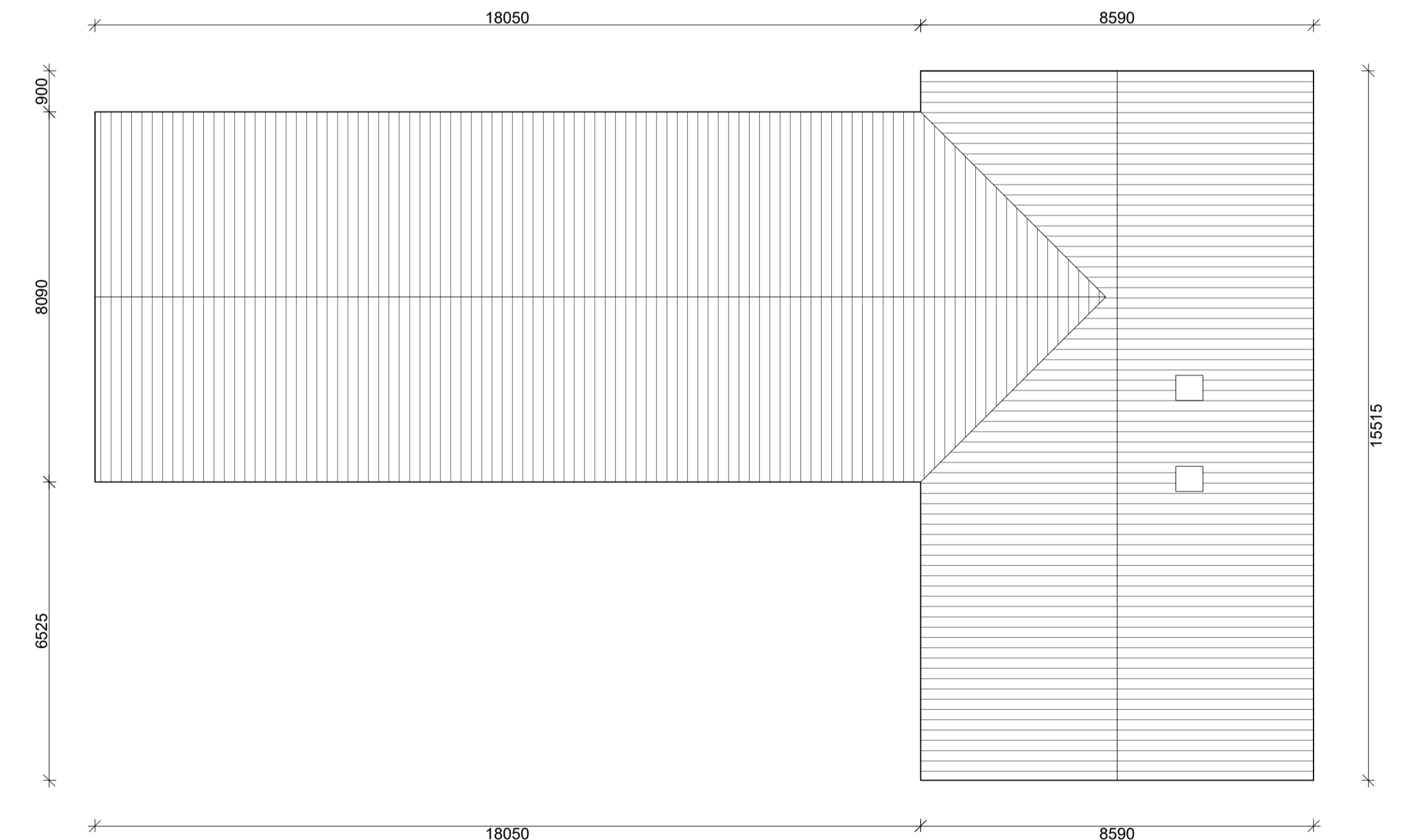
- Indicates proposed slate roofline
- Indicates proposed brickwork TBS 65mm Cuford Mixture
- Indicates proposed anthracite grey uPVC windows & doors
- Indicates proposed anthracite grey fascias & soffits with cast iron half round gutters



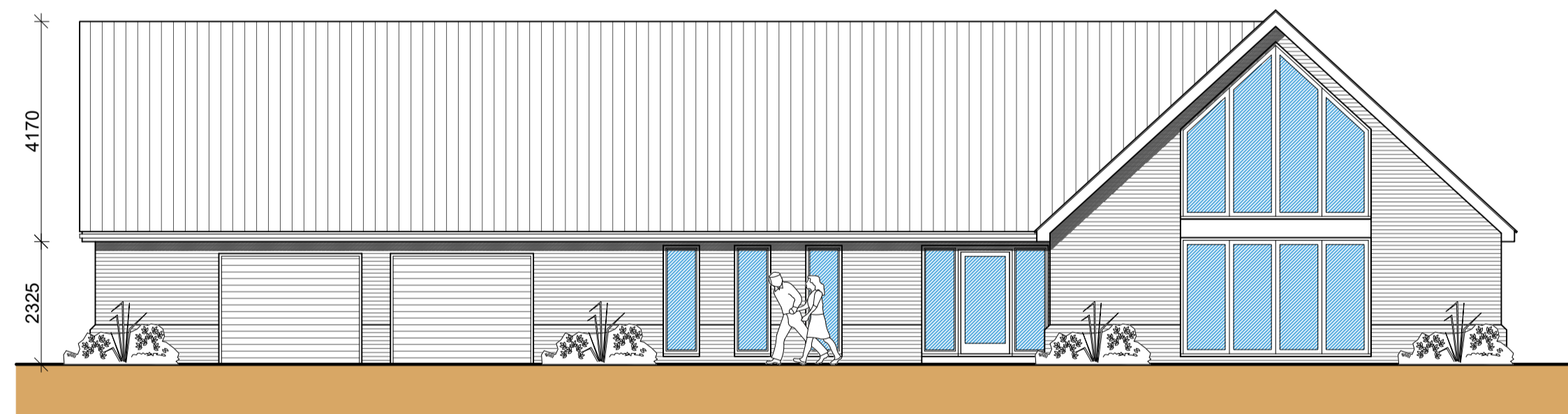
Ground Floor Plan
Scale: 1:100



First Floor Plan
Scale: 1:100



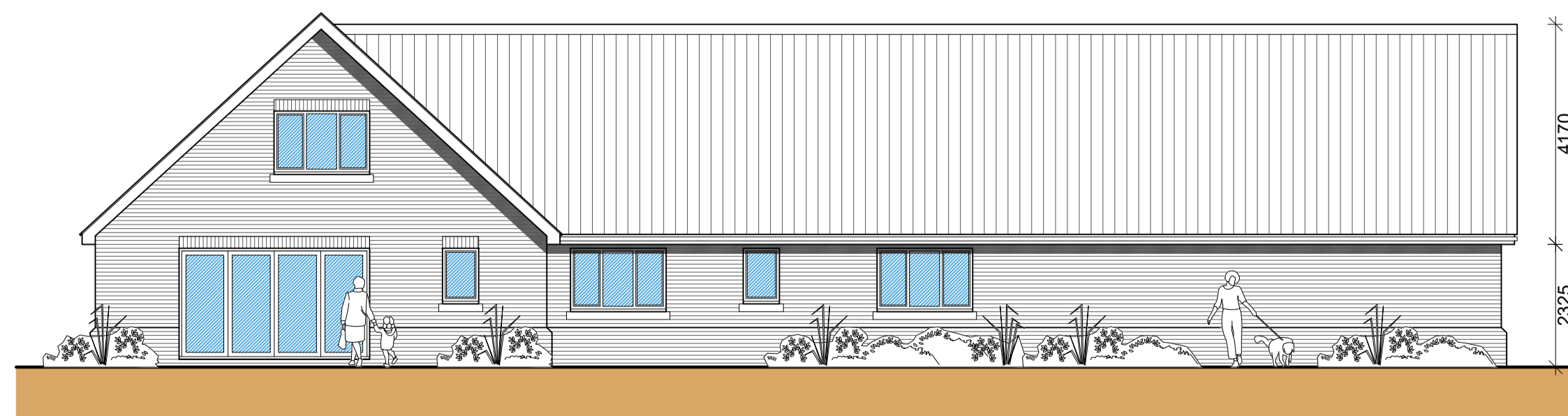
Roof Plan
Scale: 1:100



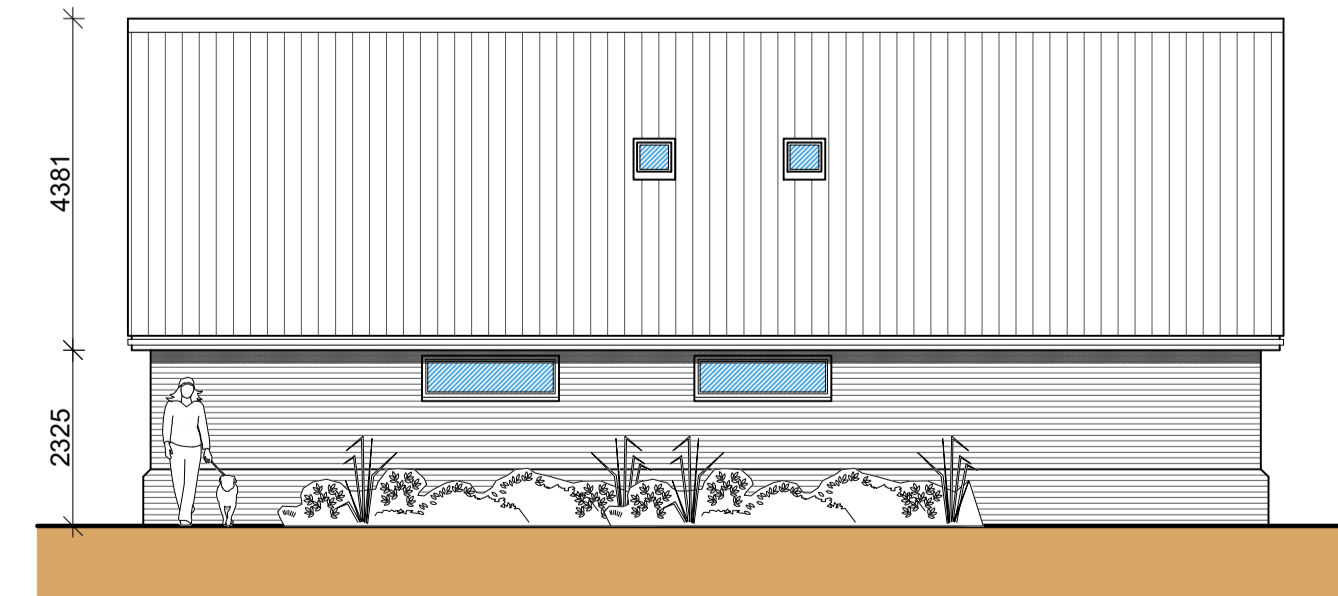
Front Elevation (W)
Scale: 1:100



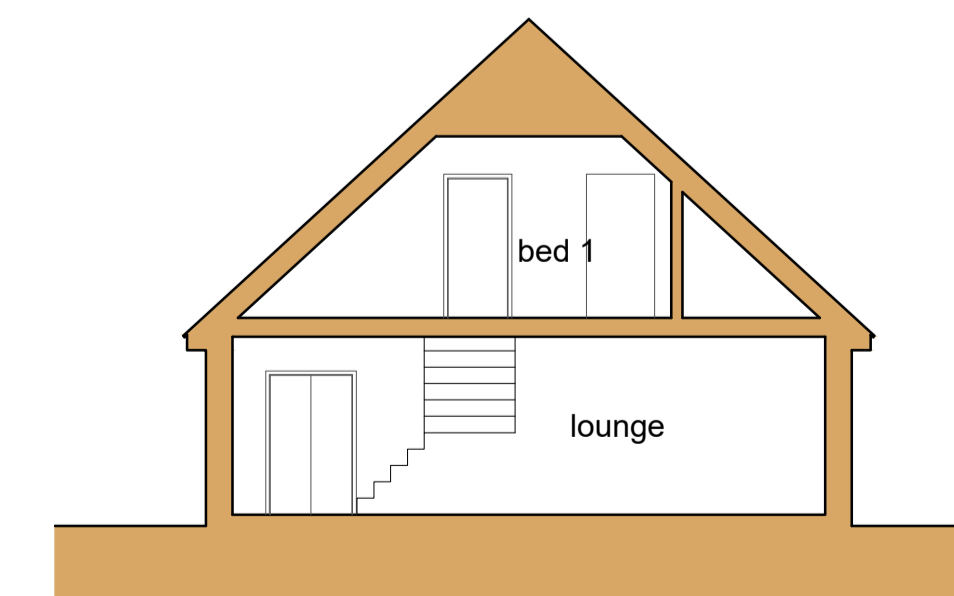
Side Elevation (S)
Scale: 1:100



Rear Elevation (E)
Scale: 1:100



Side Elevation (N)
Scale: 1:100



Section A-A
Scale: 1:100

Status

PLANNING

ARCHITECTURE
PART OF **Collective**
BUILT ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

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

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed Self Build Dwelling Holly Cottage, The Chase March, PE15 9RJ | Date Jan 2026 | Drawn by AL |
| Drawing Title Planning Drawing Floor Plans, Section & Elevations | Job No. SE-2442 | Checked by GE |
| Dwg No. PP1100 | Sheet Size A1 | Revision |