
F/YR19/0840/F

Applicant: Mr K Harpham

Agent : Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd

15 Church Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9PY

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Number of representations received contrary to the officer recommendation.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 2-storey 4-bed dwelling involving the demolition of the existing dwelling. The proposal is effectively a replacement dwelling following a fire in April 2019.
- 1.2 The site is located within the main settlement of March and is within a sustainable location; therefore the principle of a replacement dwelling is considered acceptable.
- 1.3 The proposed scheme, in its current form is considered unacceptable. The proposed replacement dwelling, in appearance, nearly doubles the scale and mass of the original dwelling. Without a single-storey element, its scale and massing will be overbearing, out of keeping with the character and scale of neighbouring properties and visually prominent in views of the grade I Listed Church of St Wedredas. Its scale and design, which is of a large town house, will be in contrast to the small village character and scale of the street. This alteration in character will negatively impact on the setting of the grade II listed building at No.13 Church Street and in particular of the Church (grade I) and will consequently have a harmful impact which is not outweighed by any public benefits.
- 1.4 It is on this basis the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site currently occupies a partially demolished dwelling following a fire in April 2019. The site is almost rectangular in shape and is situated within the historic core of Town End in March along Church Street with the Church of St Wendreda's (Grade I Listed) located less than 50 metres to the north-east with residential properties surrounding the site. Whilst the site is not located within the March Conservation Area, the neighbouring properties of 11 and 13 Church Street to the north are Grade II Listed, as are several grave-markers in the churchyard (to the north-east). The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of an existing 3-bed fire-damaged property and the erection of a 4/5-bed dwelling.

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

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PYP81KHE06P00>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 No planning history since 1974.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **March Town Council:** Recommend approval.

5.2 **Conservation Officer (FDC):** Objects. The original and revised proposals put forward are not considered acceptable. The proposed replacement dwelling, in appearance, nearly doubles the scale and massing of the previous dwelling. Without a single storey element, its huge scale and massing will be overbearing, out of keeping with the character and scale of neighbouring properties and visually prominent in views of the Church. Its scale and design, which is of a large town house, will be in contrast to the small village scale and character of the street. This alteration in character will negatively impact on the setting of No. 13 (grade II) and of the Church (grade I) in particular. This alteration in setting will result in less than substantial harm and there is no perceived public benefit in the increased scale of the proposed dwelling (over and above that which the original dwelling provided) which outweighs this harm.

5.3 **County Historic Environment Team (Archaeology):** No objection, however consider the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a planning condition.

5.4 **Environment & Health Services (FDC):** No objections to the proposed development. It is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or the noise climate. As the proposal involves the demolition of an existing structure, the unsuspected contamination condition should be imposed in the event that planning permission is granted.

5.5 **Middle Level IDB:** No comments received.

5.6 **Local Residents/Interested Parties:** 24 letters/emails have been received confirming their support for the proposed development.

6 STATUTORY DUTY

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

- 6.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting.

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para. 2 - Applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise

Para. 10 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para. 12 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making

Paras. 24-27 Maintaining effective cooperation

Para. 47 – All applications for development shall be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise

Para. 55 – Planning conditions

Para. 91 - Decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

Para. 98 - Decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access

Para. 118(d) promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively

Para. 127(f) - create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promoted health and well-being and a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Paras. 178 - 189 - Ground conditions and pollution

Paras 193 – 199 – Historic Environment -considering potential impacts

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

National Design Guide 2019

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

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

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

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Impact on the setting of nearby Listed Buildings including St Wendreda's Church**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Access and parking**
- **Other considerations**

9 BACKGROUND

- 9.1 A meeting has been held between the applicant, agent and planning and conservation officers to attempt to produce a design which would provide the same amount of dwelling space and achieve the applicant's aims of maximising area for solar energy gains, indeed several suggestions were offered which could achieve this and which was less harmful to the setting of one of the District's most highly graded heritage assets. Unfortunately and regrettably the revised drawings (submitted on the same day as the meeting) have ignored these suggestions and do not address the concerns set out below.

10 ASSESSMENT

10.1 Principle of Development

The main policy documents which are relevant to the consideration of this application are Fenland Local Plan (FLP) 2014, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. The weight that should be attributed to these policies and documents are considered below.

- 10.2 In terms of the FLP the principle of a replacement dwelling in this location is supported through Policy LP3. It is however necessary to demonstrate that there would be no harm arising to the visual amenity of the area or residential amenity with regard to Policies LP16 and LP18, as well as safe access to the site (Policy LP15) and that the scheme is acceptable in flood risk (Policy LP14) and that there are no other site constraints, including contamination etc which would render the scheme unacceptable. In addition, it is also necessary to consider heritage impacts as discussed below.

10.3 Impact on the setting of nearby Listed Buildings including the Grade I Listed Church of St Wendreda's

The proposal relates to the demolition of an existing 3-bed fire-damaged dwelling and the erection of a 4/5-bed dwelling. The existing property is unlisted and does not fall within the March Conservation Area.

- 10.4 The neighbouring properties of 11 and 13 Church Street (to the north of the site) are listed at Grade II, as are several grave-markers in the churchyard (to the north-east). The Church of St Wendreda's is listed as Grade I (the highest possible listing) and is located less than 50 metres to the north-east. The site and the section of Church Street is considered to be within the setting of a highly significant heritage asset, therefore this application is considered under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires Local Planning Authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting as well as the relevant policies in the Local Plan and to chapter 16 of the NPPF.

10.5 The NPPF (Chapter 16) paragraph 193 states the more significant the heritage asset the greater the weight should be to its conservation and any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraphs 194 to 196 set out the levels of harm relative to the heritage asset. For example, substantial harm to or loss of a grade I listed building should be wholly exceptional. Given in this case that the setting of the listed building would be affected it is considered that the level of harm is less than substantial. In respect of this paragraph 196 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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

10.6 The location of the site is in the foreground of views from the south porch of the Church and is prominent in views of the Church when approached from the south. The current situation on site is far from ideal, the ruinous state of the site detracts from the setting of the surrounding heritage assets, therefore proposals to sympathetically redevelop it are to be welcomed.

10.7 The proposed replacement dwelling, in appearance, nearly doubles the scale and mass of the original dwelling. Without a single-storey element, its scale and massing will be overbearing, out of keeping with the character and scale of neighbouring properties and visually prominent in views of the listed Church. Its scale and design, which is of a large town house, will be in contrast to the small village scale and character of the street. This alteration in character will negatively impact on the setting of the grade II listed building at No.13 Church Street and in particular of the Church (grade I).

10.8 The street-facing gables are not a feature within this section of Church Street and do not feature on any other property within the immediate area. It is considered that they significantly increase the street-facing scale and massing of the proposed dwelling without contributing to the internal usable space. A design which retained the eaves-level of the original dwelling, with a hipped roof of approximately the same height would be of a more appropriate scale for this setting.

10.9 The original dwelling was double-fronted with bay windows framing the front door and a single-storey building extending to the south. An updated design of similar profile to the original dwelling would be more in keeping with the scale and grain of the neighbouring properties and therefore be more appropriate for the setting of the listed buildings.

10.10 External materials will be important to avoid negatively impacting the view from the Church, due consideration will be required to the choice of bricks and their bond, mortar, roofing materials, style and materials of windows etc, however these details have been agreed with the applicant to be secured through planning conditions.

10.11 Overall it is not considered that the re-designed proposal resolves the original concerns of the Council's Conservation Officer in relation to the increased scale and street-presence of the new dwelling as discussed above. This alteration in setting will result in less than substantial harm. The NPPF (paragraph 196)

requires that the harm to the setting be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal. Whilst there is a public benefit to reinstate a building on the site, the increased scale and massing of the proposal put forward alters the character of the street and thus the setting of the listed Church. Therefore the proposal is not considered to accord with Policy LP16 (a) and LP18 of the Local Plan, nor to the advice in chapter 16 of the NPPF and to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

10.12 **Residential Amenity**

The proposed scheme, given its position and window layout in relation to the surrounding neighbouring dwellings is not considered to have any undue impact in terms of overlooking or overshadowing. Therefore on this basis the scheme accords with Policy LP16 in this regard.

10.13 **Access and Parking**

The existing access is proposed to be maintained and utilised as part of this proposal. The proposal shows an area for three cars to park clear of the highway which would accord with the car parking standards set out in the FLP. There are no concerns in relation to highway safety in respect of the proposal.

10.14 **Other Considerations**

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Historic Environment Team have confirmed that the site lies in an area of strong archaeological potential, situated within the historic core of Town End and less than 50m south-west of the Church. Due to the high archaeological sensitivity of the development area it is considered that, despite the relatively small scale of the development, all groundworks and landscaping for the proposals should be subject to archaeological oversight. Therefore, whilst CCC does not object to development from proceeding in this location they consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured by planning condition. The applicant has been made aware of this requirement and has agreed to the imposition of the condition.

10.15 Whilst the Council's Environmental Health Team does not object to the proposed development however as the proposal involves the demolition of an existing structure, they have recommended a unsuspected contamination condition in the event that planning permission is granted.

10.16 This is a flood zone 1 location and as such it is sequentially preferable in terms of development and represents no issues with regard to Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

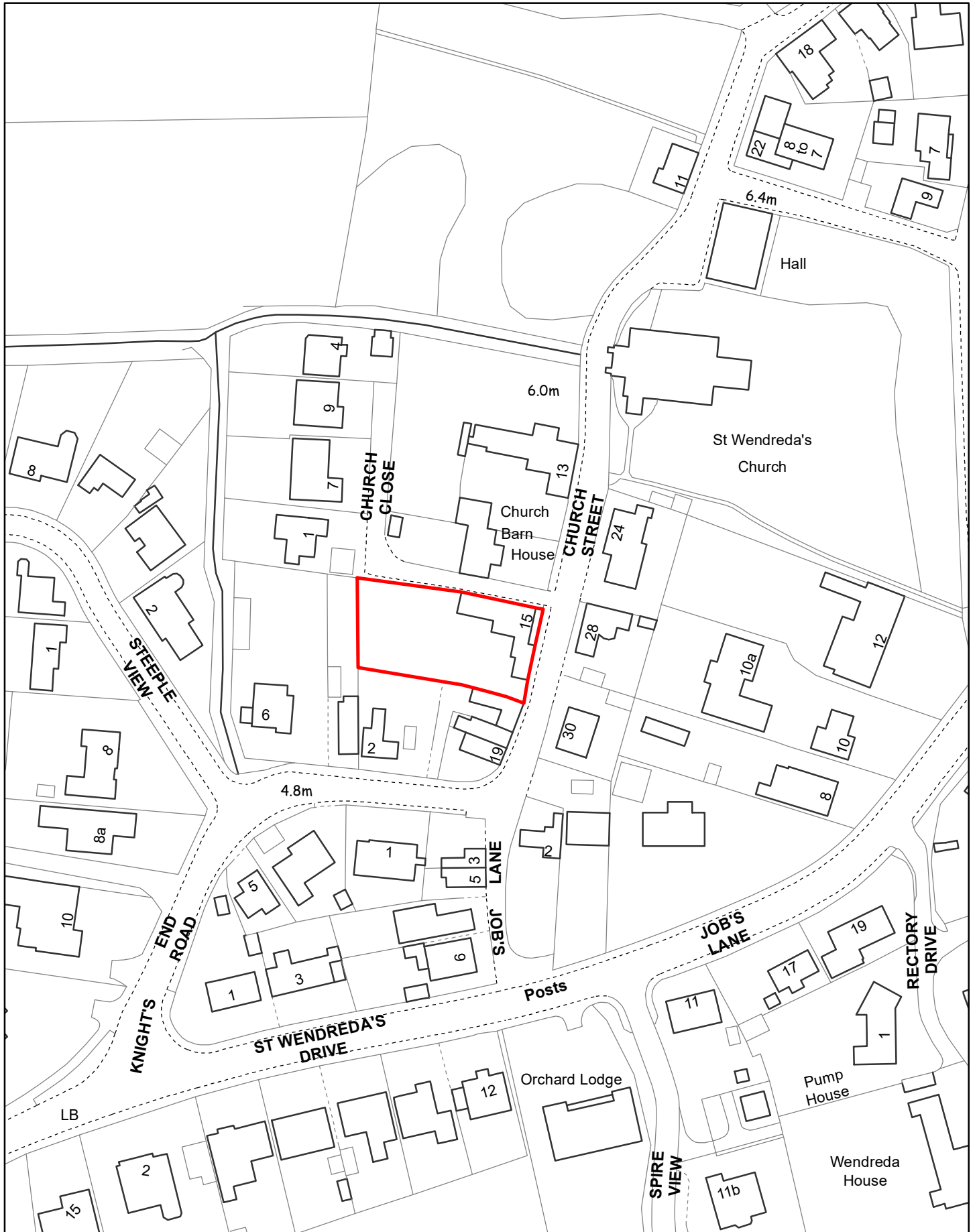
11 **CONCLUSIONS**

11.1 The proposed scheme for the replacement dwelling is considered unacceptable. It is regrettable that the applicant has not sought to work with the Council and adopt some of the recommendations with regard to the Council's legal duties expressed above. These suggestions included retaining a hipped roof to the street elevation whilst adding gables to the rear, extending the dwelling further back into the plot to reduce the dominant street-facing impact, recessing one bay of the façade to mitigate the increased width of the proposal, extending the bay windows to the first floor under hipped projections and/or setting the building further back in the site.

- 11.2 Unfortunately the revised scheme does not resolve the concerns detailed within this report and therefore a recommendation has to be made with regard to the submission as revised. For the reasons given above it is recommended that the proposed development is refused.

12 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1.	The proposed dwelling by reason of its appearance and massing will be overbearing, out of keeping with the character and scale of neighbouring properties and visually prominent in views of the Grade I Listed Church of St Wendreda's. Its scale and design will be in contrast to the small village scale and character of the area and this in turn will negatively impact on the setting of No. 13 Church Street (Grade II) and of the Church (Grade I) in particular. This alteration in setting will result in less than substantial harm and there is no perceived public benefit which outweighs this harm. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to chapter 16 of NPPF (2019) in particular paragraph 196, Policies LP16(a) and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
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LEGEND

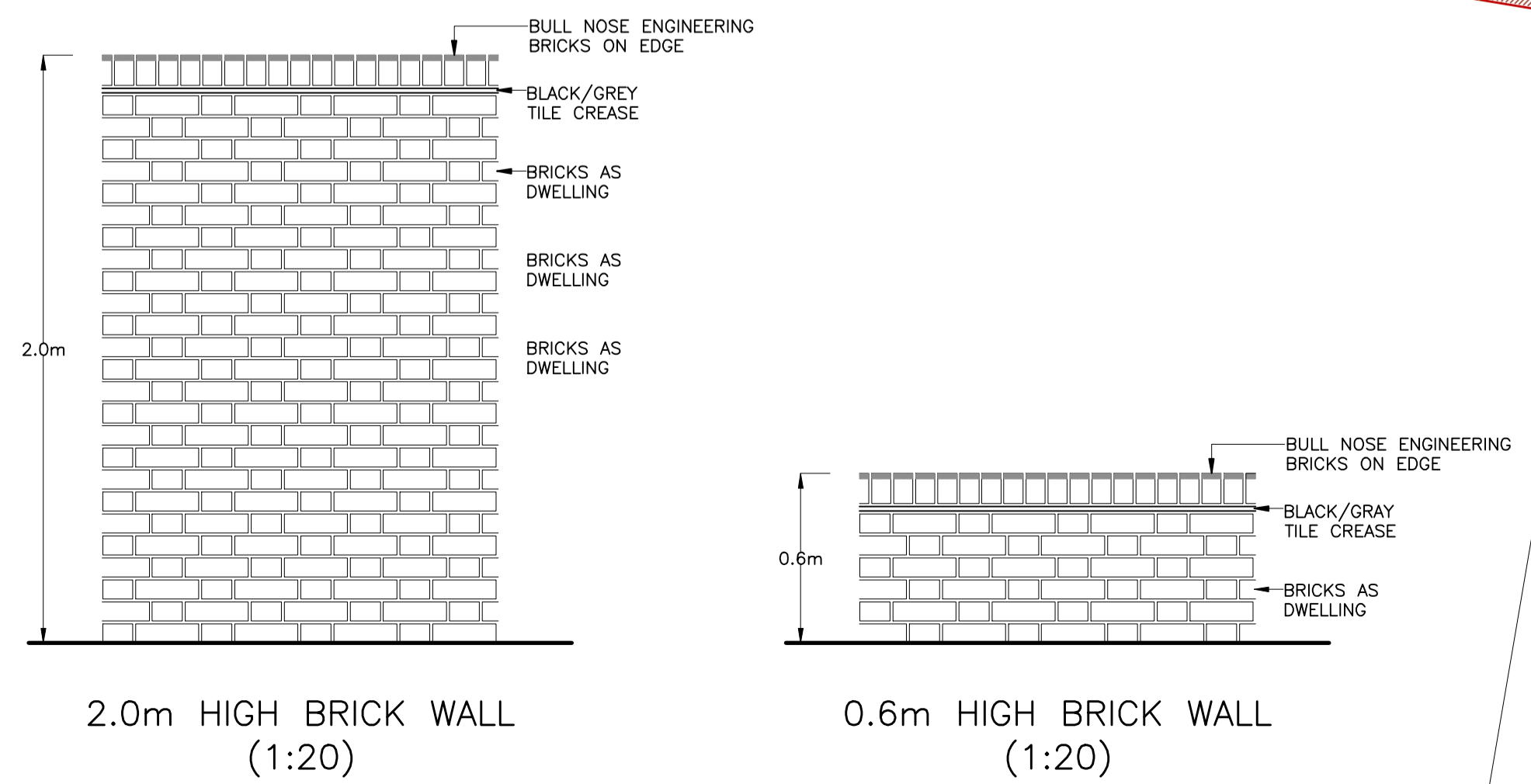
	HOUSEHOLDER BIN LOCATIONS
	GRAVEL (PERMEABLE COVERING)
	TARMAC
	GRASS
	BLOCK PAVING
	PATHS/PATIO AREA
	APPLICATION SITE

REVISIONS	DATE	
H	PLANNERS COMMENTS	DEC 19
G	PLANNERS COMMENTS	NOV 19
F	PLANNERS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
E	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
D	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
C	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
B	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
A	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19

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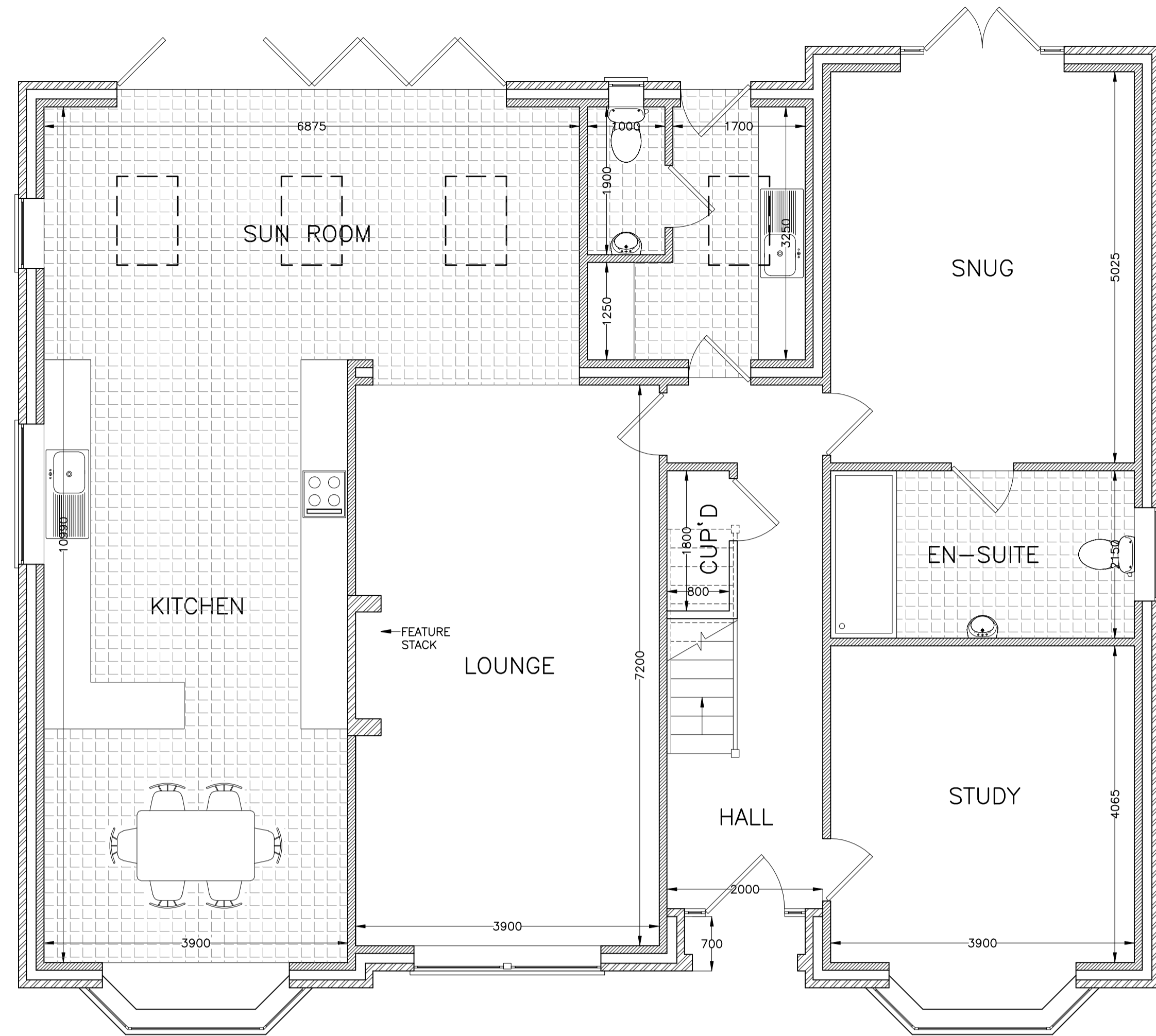
1 Gordon Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AJ
 Tel: 01354 655454
 E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk
 Website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk

Forland District Council
 Building Design Awards
 Building Excellence in Forland



PROPOSED SITE PLAN
 (1:100)

CLIENT	Mr & Mrs Harpham
PROJECT	15 Church Street March Cambs PE15 9PY
TITLE	Proposed Site Plan
DRAWN	M. Halmshaw
CHECKED	
DATE	July 2019
SCALE	1:100
DATE OF ISSUE	
DRAWING NUMBER	H6395/03H



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
(1:50)



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
(1:50)



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
(1:50)



PROPOSED RHS ELEVATION
(1:100)

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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 BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer

MATERIALS

- ROOF : SLATE TILES
- WALLS : BUFF BRICKS
- WINDOWS/DOORS : WHITE UPVC
- GUTTERS/DOWNPipes : BLACK UPVC

J	DRAWING UPDATED	DEC 19
H	PLANNERS COMMENTS	DEC 19
G	PLANNERS COMMENTS	NOV 19
F	PLANNERS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
E	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
D	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
C	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
B	CLIENTS COMMENTS	SEPT 19
A	CLIENTS COMMENTS	AUG 19
REVISIONS		DATE

MORTON & HALL CONSULTING LIMITED
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

1 Gordon Avenue,
March,
Cambridgeshire,
PE15 8AJ

Tel: 01354 655454
E-mail: info@mortonandhall.co.uk
Website: www.mortonandhall.co.uk

LABC
LABC BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS
winner

Fenland District Council
Building Design Awards
winner
Building Excellence in Fenland

CLIENT	Mr & Mrs Harpham	
PROJECT	15 Church Steet March Cambs PE15 9PY	
TITLE	Proposed Ground Floor Plan & Elevations	
DRAWN	R.Papworth	DATE OF ISSUE
CHECKED		
DATE	Aug 2019	DRAWING NUMBER
SCALE	1:50	H6395/02