
F/YR20/0440/F

Applicant: Mr J Allen

Agent : Anglia Building Consultants

22 Colvile Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

Conversion of dwelling to 2 x 2-storey 3-bed dwellings

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

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The application is for the subdivision of an existing, substantial dwelling in an established residential area within Wisbech, into two separate dwellings. The principle of this broadly accords with Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan.**
- 1.2. The proposal involves minimal physical changes to the external appearance of the building, and would have no unacceptable amenity impacts on neighbouring or future occupiers of the development.**
- 1.3. Additional car parking is proposed to meet the requirements of Appendix A of the Fenland Local Plan, and while this will result in more vehicles accessing the site it will also improve the current visibility for the parking area at the property, and no objections have been received from the Highway Authority.**
- 1.4. Objections have been received from the Town Council and several nearby residents and landowners, however the impacts of the proposal are considered limited, and will not result in a significant detrimental impact on the area.**
- 1.5. The development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and it is recommended to grant planning permission.**

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is an existing detached two-storey dwelling located in a typical 19th or early 20th Century residential area on the eastern side of Wisbech. It is a traditionally styled property, with a central access door, ground floor bay windows and a symmetrical arrangement of windows at the first floor on the front elevation.**
- 2.2. The dwelling has historically been extended to the rear with a two-storey addition, constructed in a style to match the main building. The previous**

landscaped front and rear gardens have been removed, with the front garden having been replaced with a gravel finish to either side of a tiled entrance path to the property. The rear garden has been subdivided with a timber fence to form a car parking area and a small amenity area immediately adjacent to the house.

- 2.3. The dwelling is located on the corner of Colville Road and Trafford Road, fronting the former. A contemporary period dwelling neighbours the site on Colville Road to the east, while to the north of the site on Trafford Road are a pair of more recently constructed semi-detached dwellings which sit side on to the site.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal is for the sub-division of the existing dwelling, creating two separate three-bedroom units which would both run front to back. This is to be achieved through the relocation of the main entrance door further back into the property to form a lobby, off which both units will take access. Further internal works will facilitate the sub-division, including creating a second staircase.
- 3.2. There will be some minor external works to the rear and side elevations with existing openings being bricked up and a new opening created. An existing small lean to rear extension will also be removed as part of the proposal.
- 3.3. The rear garden area is to be subdivided by the erection of a 1.8m timber fence to create separate amenity areas for each property, with access from the rear of the units to this. Two car parking spaces are proposed to serve each unit, accessing from Trafford Road, with Unit 1 having parallel spaces and Unit 2 having tandem spaces.
- 3.4. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QAZYTBHE01U00>

4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR20/0190/F	Conversion of dwelling to 4 x 1-bed flats and 1 x 2-storey 1-bed dwelling	Refuse 9/4/20
F/YR19/1044/F	Change of use of existing dwelling (C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) for up to 14 persons	Withdrawn 10/1/20
F/YR16/0757/F	Erection of a 3-storey, 2-bed dwelling with integral car port	Refused 4/10/16

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1. **Wisbech Town Council:**
Objection on the basis that the proposal constitutes overdevelopment of the site.
- 5.2. **FDC Environmental Health:**
No objections
- 5.3. **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority:**
No Highway objections, conditions requested to secure parking and visibility splay provision.

5.4. **Local Residents/Interested Parties:**

14 letters of objection from residents of the locality have been received in relation to the proposal, identifying the following matters in respect of the scheme.

- Will result in 6 bedrooms and therefore an HMO in a different guise
- Impact on parking provision – access proposed reduces parking availability on Trafford Road
- Impact on privacy within the adjacent garden
- Work has already commenced
- The property used to be a family house
- Impact on pedestrians, particularly at school pick-up and drop off
- Anti-social behaviour
- Over-development of the site
- Devaluation of property
- Additional waste
- May set a precedent

The applicants have provided a response to the comments received in relation to the letters of objection stating the following:

- They intend to live in one of the properties and rent/sell the other, not turn them into HMOs
- Both proposed properties have 2 off-road parking spaces so there should be no on-road parking as a result of the proposal
- The property has had a driveway crossing the path for the last 10 years with no issues, and all the other properties along Trafford Road with driveways also cross the pavement for access
- Most of the hazards on Trafford Road are caused by irresponsible parking during school drop off and pick up. The road is quiet at other times
- Recent works at the property have been refurbishments, including replacing skirting boards, carpets, re-plastering and decorating works
- Selling the property as a 6-bedroom house would be difficult due to its location

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).

7. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para 2: NPPF is a material consideration

Para 8: 3 strands of sustainability

Para 11: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para 117: Promote effective use of land

Para 118: Opportunities and benefits of the reuse of land

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a planning application

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

LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District

8. KEY ISSUES

- **Principle of Development**
- **Visual Impact & Character**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Highway Safety**
- **Other Matters**

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. There have been three applications on the site in recent history. The first of these was made in 2016 and was for the erection of a detached dwelling in the garden of the property, accessed from Trafford Road. This was refused for being out of character with the area, adverse amenity impacts and a lack of car parking.
- 9.2. A further application was received in 2019 to change the use of the property to a House in Multiple Occupation for up to 14 persons, however this application was withdrawn shortly after it was submitted.
- 9.3. Permission was then sought in early 2020 for the conversion of the dwelling to four single-bedroom flats and a single bedroom 2-storey dwelling, which was refused on the grounds of its impact on the character of the area due to intensification of use and parking provisions, inadequate visibility in relation to the parking area, and failing to provide sufficiently high levels of residential amenity.
- 9.4. Pre-application advice was subsequently sought from the Local Planning Authority in relation to the current scheme following that refusal, along the lines of the application now submitted. The Local Planning Authority indicated in response to that application that the proposal had the potential to be acceptable in planning terms.

10. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. Wisbech is classified as a Primary Market Town under Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) where the majority of the development within the District is expected to take place over the plan period. The principle of residential development within an existing residential area of the town is therefore broadly acceptable.

Visual Impact & Character

- 10.2. Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to deliver and protect high quality environments throughout the District. Proposals must demonstrate they make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhancing their local setting and both

responding to and improving the character of the local built environment whilst not adversely impacting on the street scene, settlement pattern or landscape character of the surrounding area.

- 10.3. The application proposes limited alterations to the exterior fabric of the existing building, mainly in the form of minor alterations to existing doors and fenestration to the side and rear. It is not considered that these will have any significant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 10.4. The front entrance door to the dwelling, will be moved further back into the property to allow the necessary access arrangements to be provided. While this is considered to be an attractive feature of the property at present, this could be removed/repositioned now without any kind of planning control as a householder alteration.
- 10.5. In addition to these alterations to the building fabric, the garden area of the property is to be subdivided and altered to provide space for an additional two parking spaces. In practical terms, this would result in the removal of a section of 1.8m close boarded fence along the Trafford Road frontage of the site that will then become an additional 2 parking spaces. This is considered to have a minimal impact on the street scene.
- 10.6. Overall it is considered that the proposal will have a neutral impact on the local distinctiveness and character of the area, and is therefore there is no justification for the refusal of the scheme on this basis.

Residential Amenity

- 10.7. Policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development proposals to promote high levels of residential amenity, and policy LP16 requires development proposals to demonstrate that they do not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring users whilst providing sufficient amenity space for the proposal, with the guideline for non-flat development being one third of the plot area.
- 10.8. The existing property is a residential dwelling and the proposed work would see the dwelling split into two separate units. Residential amenity considerations include both the impact of the proposed use on adjacent properties, as well as the provision of residential amenity to the residents of the proposed dwellings. It is not considered that the creation of a second dwelling would in itself, intensify the use of the site sufficiently to harm amenity.
- 10.9. With regard to the impacts on the adjacent properties, the main impact results from the proposed new first floor window in the rear elevation of the existing extension to the building. This window would be approximately 11 metres from the shared boundary with the dwelling to the rear, and could therefore result in increased overlooking to the rear garden of this property. However, a distance of 11m from a first floor window to a rear boundary is considered to be a reasonable, and fairly normal, distance which should result in a degree of overlooking which would not be so detrimental to residential amenity to justify a refusal.
- 10.10. This window would also afford views over part of the neighbouring garden to the property on Colville Road. However this is considered to be a typical amenity relationship present with many dwellings in traditional street layouts such as this, and again would not result in a significant impact on amenity.

10.11. With regard to the amenities of the occupiers of the proposed dwellings, the conversion has been designed to avoid any unacceptable relationships between windows that could otherwise cause privacy impacts, and both units have been provided with modest but sufficient private amenity space for their occupants to satisfy the requirements of planning policy in that regard.

Highway Safety

10.12. Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) requires development to provide a well-designed, safe and convenient access for all, while Appendix A of the Local Plan sets out the parking standards associated with development proposals, noting that for properties of up to three bedrooms, two parking spaces are required, and for properties of four bedrooms or more, provision of three spaces is required.

10.13. The application proposes an expansion of the existing parking arrangements serving the property, and would necessitate the extension of the dropped kerb along Trafford Road to allow for more vehicles to park off-road. These works would, however, also allow for greater pedestrian visibility and consequently, on-balance, it is considered that, notwithstanding the objections received from local residents, the development would not adversely impact on road safety. This is a view echoed by the Highway Authority.

10.14. Other comments received in respect of the highways impacts of the scheme relate to on-street car parking. The application proposes two spaces for each dwelling, which is in line with the standards set out in the Local Plan. Any cars which currently park on Trafford Road, and will be displaced as a result of the widening of the access will be relatively limited in number and unlikely to significantly impact on wider highway safety.

Other Matters

10.15. Several other matters have been raised in relation to the application from members of the public and these will be addressed below.

10.16. The first of these that the proposal will result in a “House in Multiple Occupation under a different guise”. The proposal is for the creation of two distinct dwellings and the applicant has affirmed that this is their intention. The application can only be considered on the basis of what has been applied for. Planning legislation is such, however, that up to six people can ordinarily occupy a dwelling without the need for planning permission.

10.17. Second, that work has already commenced within the property. There is no restriction preventing the applicant undertaking internal works prior to obtaining planning permission, or indeed undertaking works to their property.

10.18. Other issues that the property used to be a family dwelling, anti-social behaviour and waste issues will arise from the proposal and devaluation of property are either unsubstantiated or not material planning issues. Particularly in terms of waste the plans indicate suitable bin storage areas.

10.19. It has also been raised that the proposal may set a precedent for similar conversions in the future. Each planning application is judged on its own merits and therefore, it does not automatically follow that any dwelling in the area would also be granted permission for conversion into two separate units.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1. The application is considered to have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area, residential amenity or highway safety and there are no other significant detrimental impacts. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan and there is no justification for refusal of the scheme contrary to those policies.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission, subject to conditions:

1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason

To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved the proposed on-site parking/turning area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans, surfaced in a bound material and drained within the site. The parking/turning area, surfacing and drainage shall thereafter be retained as such in perpetuity (notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part A, Class F of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, or any instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order).

Reason

In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

3. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, the visibility splays shown on the approved plan reference 20-1954-3-C shall be provided on both sides of the new vehicular access and shall be maintained thereafter

Reason

In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

4. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved the 1.8m high timber fence separating the gardens of dwelling 1 and dwelling 2 shall be provided in accordance with the details on the approved plan reference 20-1954-3-C, and the fence shall be retained as such in perpetuity.

Reason

In the interests of the privacy of the occupiers of the dwellings in accordance with policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, (or any Order or Statutory Instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order), planning permission shall be required for the following developments or alterations:

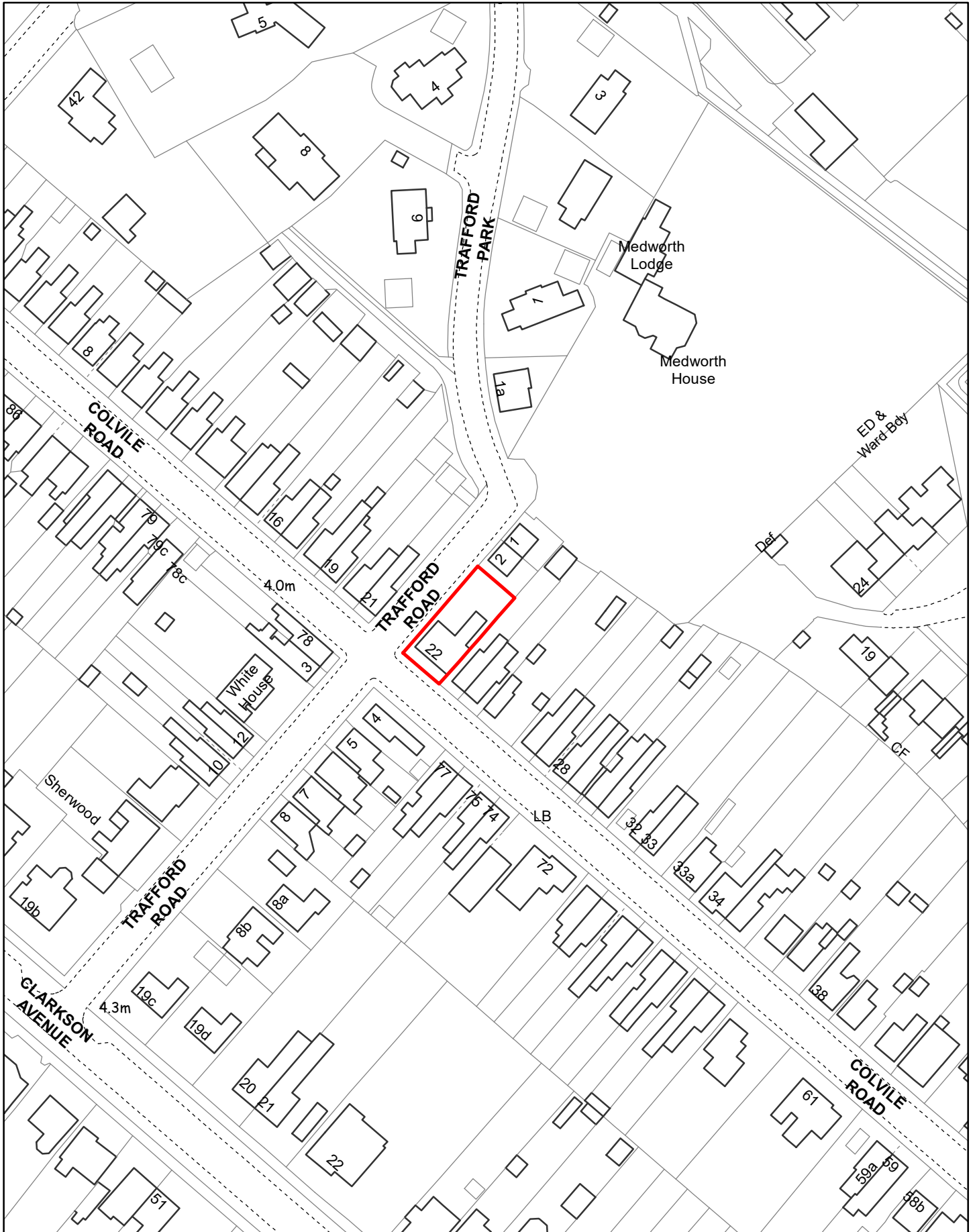
- i) the erection of freestanding curtilage buildings or structures including car ports, garages, sheds, greenhouses, pergolas, or raised decks (as

- ii) detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and E);
the erection of house extensions including conservatories, garages, car ports or porches (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and D);

Reason

To ensure that the Local Planning Authority retains control over the future extension and alteration of the development, in the interests of its architectural and visual integrity and its impact on the residential amenity of the surrounding properties in accordance with the requirements of Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

6. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents



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Scale = 1:1,250



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1m x 1m pedestrian visibility splay.
 Splay to be defined by a boundary feature
 or low level planting.

Extend access to Cambridgeshire
 County Council highway requirements
 with the access being sealed and drained
 away from the highway in a bound material

Timber fence to stop 1m
 back from footway to enable
 visibility both ways

Remove section of
 fencing to allow access

1m x 1m pedestrian visibility splay

Existing section of fence
 reduced to 900mm high

Permeable
 block paving
 car parking

21

2

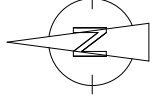
Dwelling 1

Dwelling 2

22

Traford Road

Colville Road



Villeneuve - Basin Road - Outwell
 Norfolk - PE14 8TQ
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 01223 969427
www.angliabuildingconsultants.co.uk
info@angliabuildingconsultants.co.uk

- C 15/6/20 Updated for highways
- B 13/5/20 Proposal changed to two dwellings
- A 30/3/20 Updated for highways

No Date Revision

Issue: For Planning Approval

Site: 22 Colville Road, Wisbech,
 Cambridgeshire, PE13 2ET

Project: Alterations and conversion
 to form two dwellings

Drawing Title: Proposed Site Plan

Client: Mr Allen

Date: April 2020

Scale: 1:200

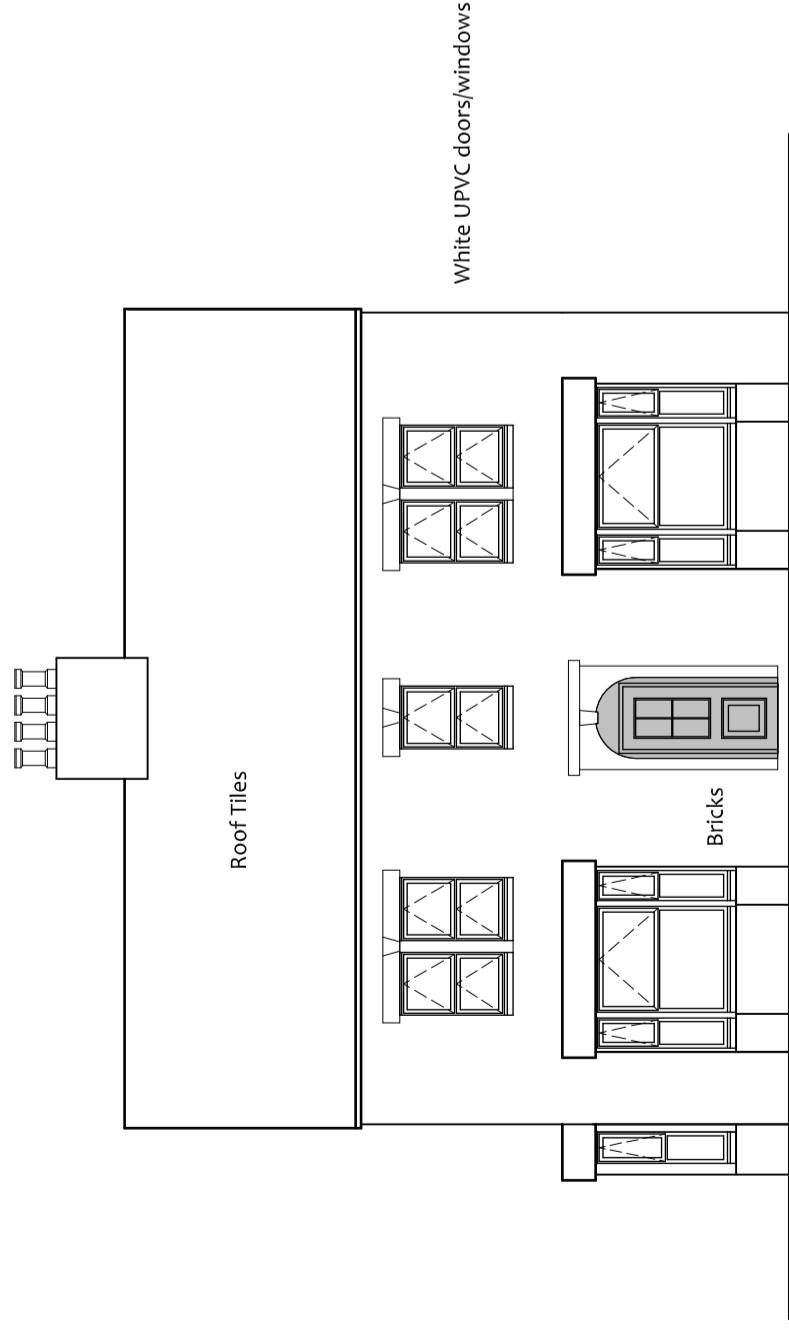
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Drawing Number: 20-1954-3-C

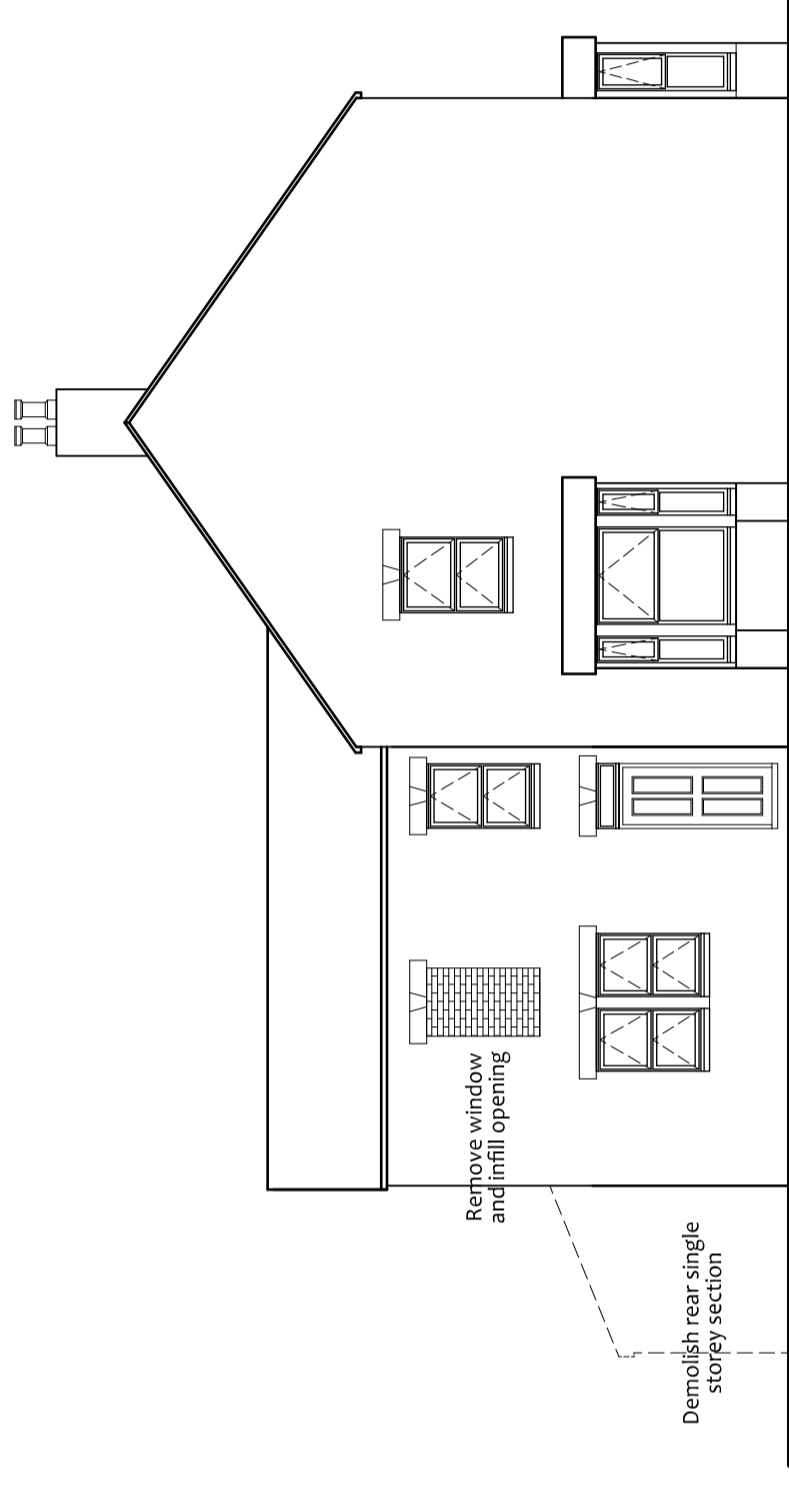


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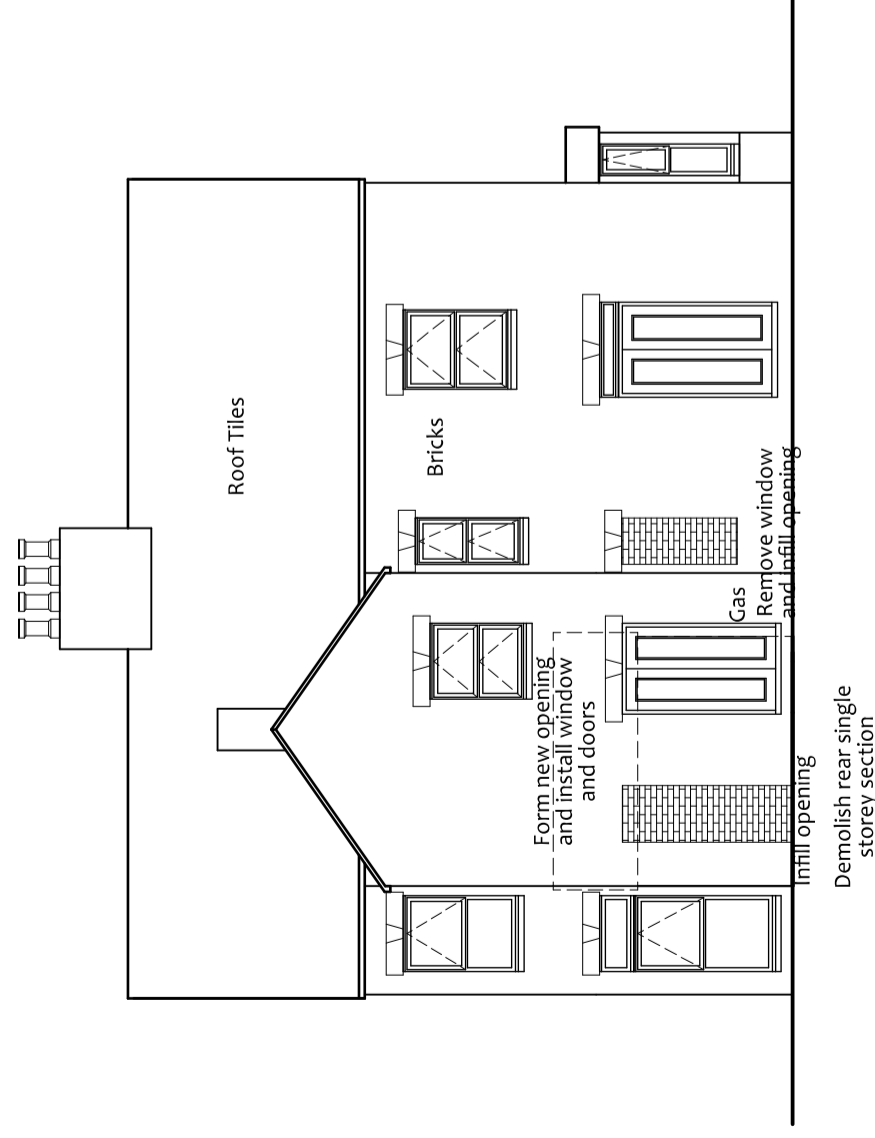
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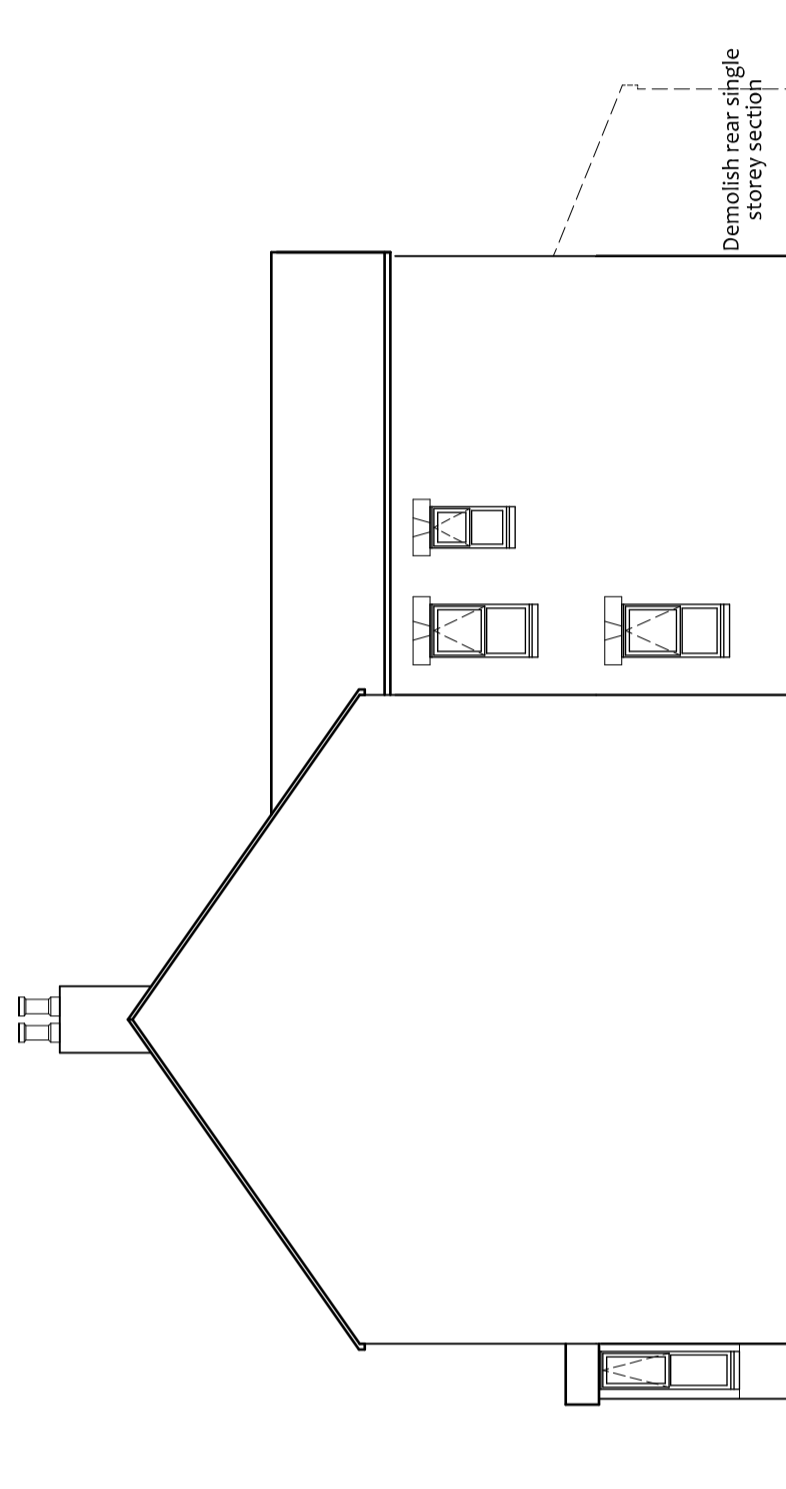
Front Elevation



Side Elevation



Rear Elevation



Side Elevation



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No Date Revision
 Issue: For Planning Approval

Site: 22 Colville Road, Wisbech,
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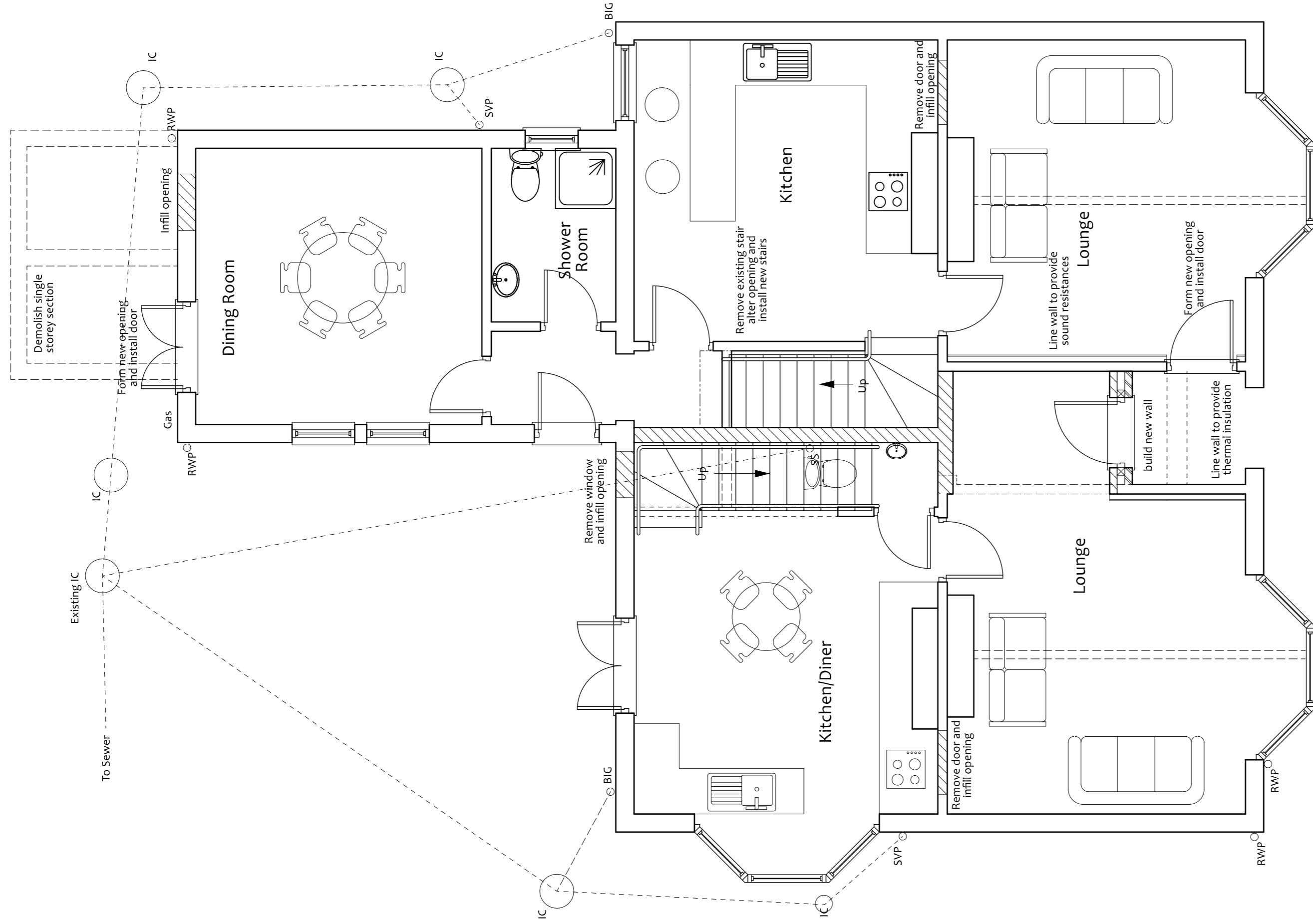
Project: Alterations and conversion of
 dwelling to form two dwellings

Drawing Title: Proposed Elevations

Client: Mr Allen

Date: May 2020
 Scale: 1:100 At: A2
 Drawing Number: 20-1954-5

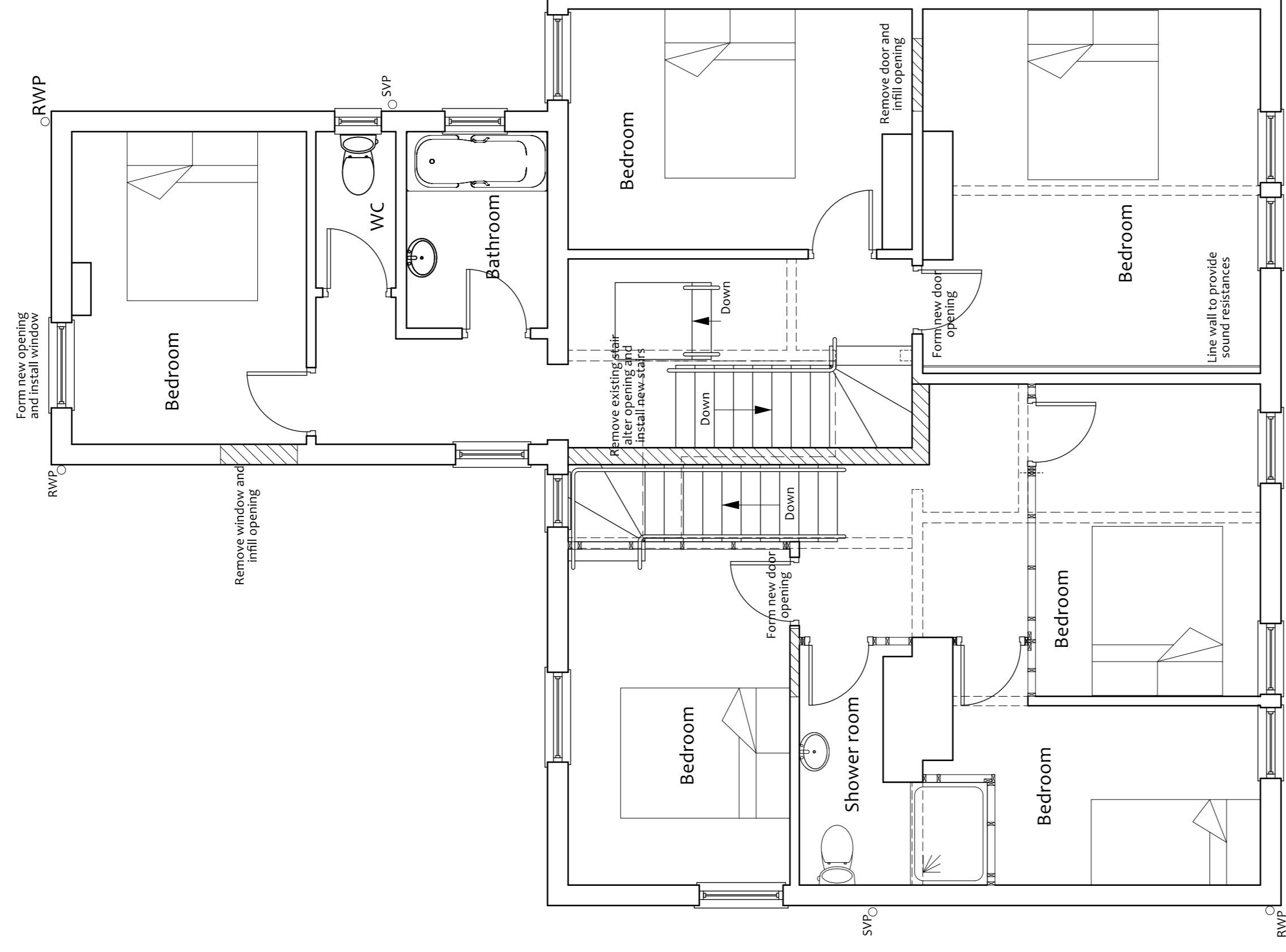
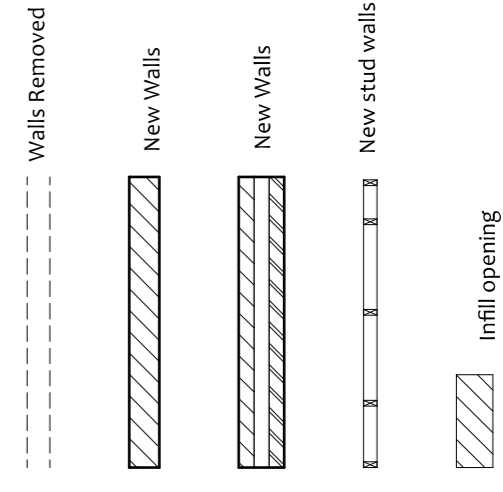
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Dwelling 1

Dwelling 2

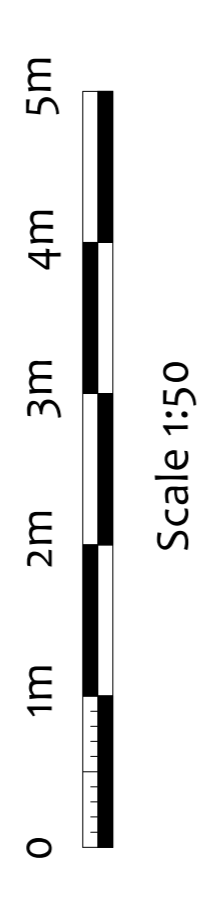
Ground Floor



Dwelling 1

Dwelling 2

First Floor



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A 13/5/20 Proposals altered to 2 dwellings
 No Date Revision
 Issue: For Planning Approval

Site: 22 Colville Road, Wisbech,
 Cambridgeshire, PE13 2ET

Project: Alterations and conversion of
 dwelling to form two dwellings

Drawing Title: Proposed Floor Plans

Client: Mr Allen

Date: February 2020
 Scale: 1:50 At: A1
 Drawing Number: 20-1954-4-A