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**F/YR20/0417/F**

**Applicant: Mr Colin Hawes**

**Agent : Mr Colin Hawes**

**Storage Buildings and Outbuildings East of 5-6 Norfolk Street, Wisbech**

**Conversion of existing store building to 3 x 1-bed flats including insertion of 5no windows and conversion of part of No.6 to 1 x single-storey flat involving extension and raising of roof height**

**Reason for Committee: Town Council comments contrary to officer recommendation**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The proposal is for the conversion of existing outbuildings to the rear of commercial premises into 4 residential flats.
- 1.2. The property is located in the town centre, within walking distance of services and public transport links.
- 1.3. Objections from the Town Council and the Wisbech Society relate to matters of overdevelopment of the site, lack of off-street parking and impact on the appearance of the building in the Conservation Area.
- 1.4. The town centre location is considered sufficient to mitigate the lack of parking provision, whilst the visual impact of the scheme on the conservation area is minimal. Conditions are considered sufficient to mitigate the impacts of the proposal.
- 1.5. The proposed units are of a modest size with no private outdoor amenity space, however this is common for flats in such locations, and amendments have been made to the scheme to ensure the relationships between the proposed units of accommodation are acceptable.
- 1.6. The recommendation is therefore to grant planning permission for the proposal.

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site is the land to the rear of 5-6 Norfolk Street in Wisbech, and comprises outbuildings and a storage building associated with the commercial premises fronting Norfolk Street.
- 2.2. The arrangement of the existing buildings is such that the site is not visible from Norfolk Street as it is located behind the traditional commercial buildings. From

the east the only visible part of the proposal is a narrow section of the brick storage building with a timber door at the ground floor level.

- 2.3. The courtyard to the rear of Norfolk Street contains three buildings. They are all of brick construction with mono-pitched roof structures, however each of the three buildings has a different depth. As such, they appear as a series of narrowing buildings typical of traditional burgage plots in such areas.

### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal is for the conversion of the buildings to create a total of four new residential units. 3 of these would be created in the easternmost building, whilst the fourth would be created by the conversion and extension of the existing outbuildings at the rear of the Norfolk Street property.
- 3.2. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:

### 4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR15/0487/PNC07	Change of Use of Storage Building to 2 x 2-storey 1-bed dwellings	Refused
F/YR15/0264/F	Conversion of store to form 2 x 2-storey 1-bed dwellings	Withdrawn

### 5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. **Wisbech Town Council**

Objection – overdevelopment of the site and no provision for on-site parking

5.2. **Conservation Officer**

Proposal seeks to utilise a former redundant storage building through clever use of the stairwell within Orange Grove to provide access. Nothing architecturally or historically noteworthy about the brick elevation to the east and no issue with a new brick skin being introduced. Proposals cannot be seen from Norfolk Street. The revisions remove the concerns arising originally from the introduction of a mansard roof to the central conversion.  
Recommend approval.

5.3. **FDC Environmental Health:**

No objection in principle. Detail should be provided demonstrating how suitable noise and ventilation measures can be achieved.

A further response was received following correspondence with the agent stating that they were satisfied with the proposal.

5.4. **Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority:**

No highway objections. FDC will need to consider impact on parking in the area.

5.5. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (Archaeology)**

No likely objection in principle. Request additional information regarding the current and historic functions of the building to account for the decorative treatment of the storage building. A photographic record of the existing condition would be helpful.

## 5.6. **The Wisbech Society**

Objection. Proposal involves masking the existing distinctive brick bands in the building. 3<sup>rd</sup> storey accommodation will result in the loss of the existing steep pitched roof, which should be retained. Visual changes should be kept to a minimum to protect historic features. Don't support the use of uPVC in Conservation Areas. Any extension to the building may require archaeological investigation. Overdevelopment of the site. Replacement of pantiles with slates will change the character of the building.

## 5.7. **Local Residents/Interested Parties:**

One response has been received to the proposal, from the owner of the neighbouring property noting their support for the scheme and citing the following justification.

Will provide needed small unit accommodation. Elevation to Orange Grove will be significantly improved.

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

## 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

Para 121: Take a positive approach to alternative land uses

Para 184: Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Para 189: Applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected.

Para 196: Less than substantial harm should be weighed against public benefits.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

### **National Design Guide 2019**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Uses

## Homes and Buildings

### **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

LP18 – The Historic Environment

## **8. KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Impact on Historic Character/Features**
- **Parking**

## **9. BACKGROUND**

- 9.1. Prior approval was sought under Class P of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 for the conversion of the storage building to the rear of the site into two dwellings in 2015, however the application was refused on the basis that insufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate the building was within a B8 use class and therefore it failed to qualify for the prior approval procedure. A previous full application was withdrawn prior to determination.

## **10. ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 10.1. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy.
- 10.2. Wisbech is a Primary Market Town, one of two such settlements within the highest level of the hierarchy where the majority of the development within the District is expected to take place over the plan period.
- 10.3. The proposal involves the conversion of the existing buildings on the site, including a modest extension to one of those buildings, to provide residential accommodation. This is within the scope of the type of development envisaged within the Primary Market Town level of the settlement hierarchy and therefore the principle of the scheme is considered to be acceptable.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 10.4. 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.

- 10.5. As the proposal is for the development of flats there is no guideline minimum for the amount of amenity space associated with the proposed units. None of the units proposed are indicated as having any private outdoor amenity space. On the basis that the proposal is for the creation of flats, there is no policy presumption in the development plan that the lack of private amenity space should be a reason for refusal of the scheme. The proposed flats in the 3-storey building have no communal space provision, whilst the remaining proposed unit would have a small yard area shared between itself and numbers 5 and 6 Norfolk Street. The Town Centre location of the development mitigates the lack of communal space provision due to the proximity to its facilities and services.
- 10.6. The arrangement of the units has been amended at the request of the Local Planning Authority to remove a fifth flat from the scheme created through the addition of a second floor to the outbuildings. This fifth unit had resulted in a privacy conflict between bedroom windows within the development that has now been resolved by the revised layout.
- 10.7. The floorspace within the proposed flats is limited, however the proposal is for the provision of small flats typical of a Town Centre location.
- 10.8. On that basis, there is considered to be no justification for refusal of the scheme on the grounds of residential amenity, which is proportionate to the type of properties proposed.
- 10.9. The proposed plans do not show specific arrangements for the provision of bins associated with the proposed residential units, however the yard area available at the rear of 6 Norfolk Street and the existing collections arrangements for the Orange Grove flats adjacent to the site, which are also within the applicant's ownership are sufficient to demonstrate that appropriate arrangements can be made, and therefore a condition can be imposed on any permission requiring details to be provided and agreed prior to occupation of the flats.

#### **Impact on Historic Character/Features**

- 10.10. Policy LP18 addresses matters concerning the historic environment within Fenland, noting that development proposals will be required to describe and assess the significance of any heritage asset, identify the impact of proposed works on its character and provide justification for those works, especially if they would harm the setting of the asset.
- 10.11. The application site is located in the Conservation Area, and the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team have identified an unusual decorative pattern within the brickwork at the ground floor level of the eastern elevation of the storage building to be converted. It should be noted that they have not raised an objection to the proposal based on the impact on this wall.
- 10.12. The majority of works proposed to be undertaken in relation to the scheme will not be visible from any point outside the site, with only the proposed alterations to the eastern elevation of the storage building being publicly visible. These alterations consist of the forming of a new brick skin outer wall to allow the existing wall to form the inner skin of a cavity wall. The more modern upper part of this brick wall would then be removed to allow the insertion of a new angled roof to match the appearance of the adjacent building.

- 10.13. The Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the proposal on the basis of its impact on the Conservation Area, and whilst the comments of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team are noted, it is considered that a condition requiring a photographic record to be made of the premises prior to the construction of the new brick skin will adequately mitigate the impact of the scheme.
- 10.14. Overall there is considered to be no harm to the Conservation Area arising from the proposal.

### **Parking**

- 10.15. Appendix A of the Fenland Local Plan sets out the parking standards associated with development proposals, noting that for flats the parking requirement is 1.25 spaces per single-bedroom unit, and 1.5 spaces in other cases.
- 10.16. It also notes however that in some circumstances a reduced or nil parking provision may be appropriate, particularly in circumstances such as sites in the central area of a market town where good public transport links are available.
- 10.17. The proposal makes no provision for on-site parking and there is no scope to accommodate parking on the site. There is on-street parking along Norfolk Street however this is not allocated to the property or the proposed developments and could not therefore be relied on to provide parking for the development. It is however located within the Town Centre Boundary within walking distance of the Horsefair Bus Station and Car Park, and only 1-2 minutes' walk from St Peter's Car Park to the north west.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1. The proposal is for the conversion of existing outbuildings within the site in a town centre location. The scheme will have a limited impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area that will result in no harm, subject to the use of appropriate materials.
- 11.2. There is no parking provision associated with the scheme, however the location of the site in close proximity to the town centre and public transport links means that this is acceptable.
- 11.3. The proposed residential units have limited amenity and are of a limited size, however this is appropriate to the nature of the accommodation they are providing.

## **12. RECOMMENDATION**

Grant planning permission, subject to the following 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.	No development other than groundworks and foundations shall take place until full details of the materials to be used in the development hereby approved for the walls and roof are submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details submitted for approval shall include the name of the manufacturer, the product type, colour and reference number. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.

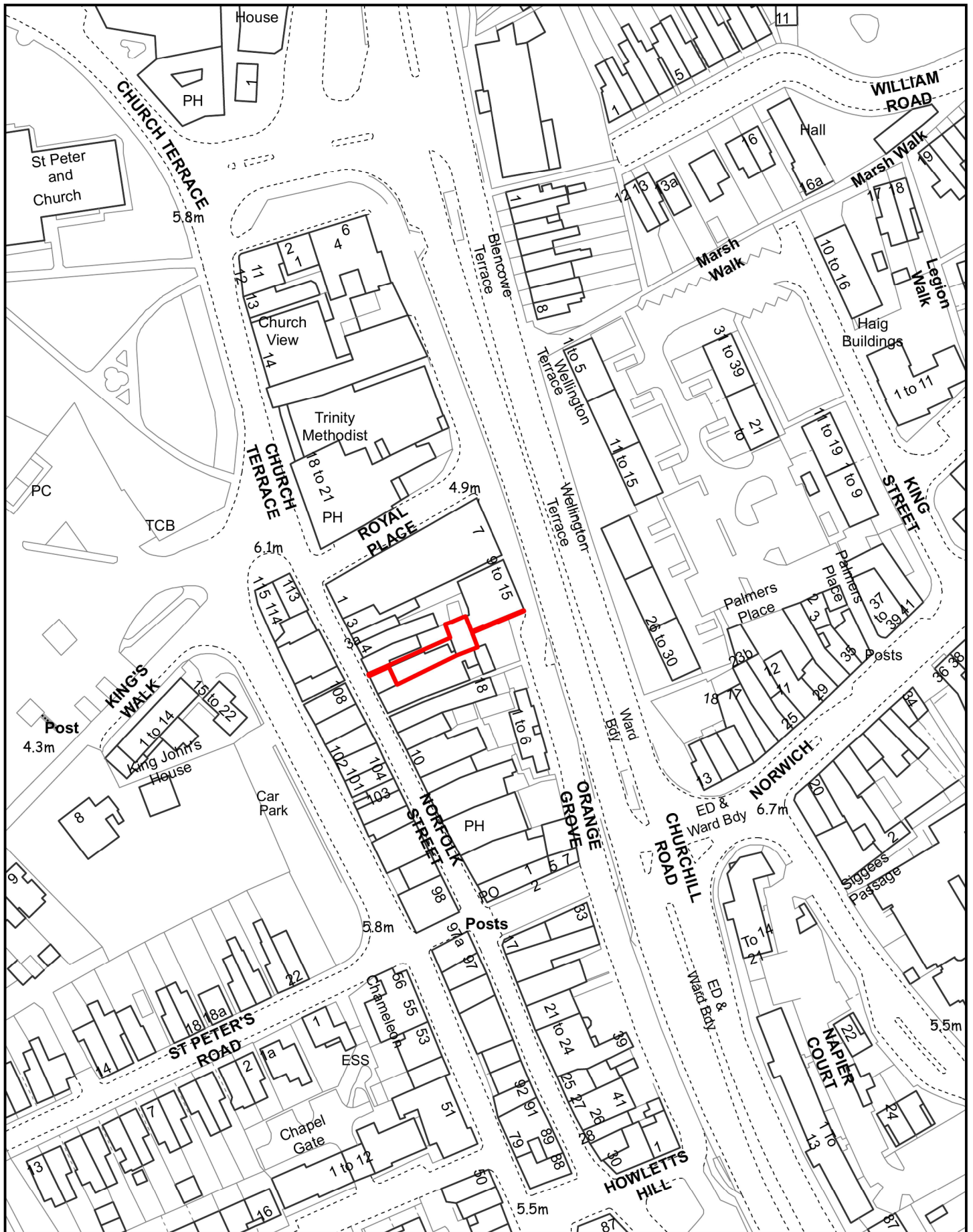
3. No works in connection with the conversion of the storage building to three single-bedroom flats hereby approved shall commence until a photographic survey of the existing building and structures on the application site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. All external and internal elevations of the buildings and structures together with the setting of the buildings and structures shall be photographed. The photographic viewpoints must be clearly annotated on a plan to accompany the survey. The photographs and plan must be in a digital format and must be clearly marked with the planning reference number.

Reason: To ensure that a record of the building is made prior to any works that would obscure historic features in accordance with policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

4. Prior to **the first** occupation of the development hereby approved a refuse collection strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved refuse collection strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details in full and thereafter be retained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of refuse collection and compliance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.

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



Created on: 19/05/2020

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F/YR20/0417/F

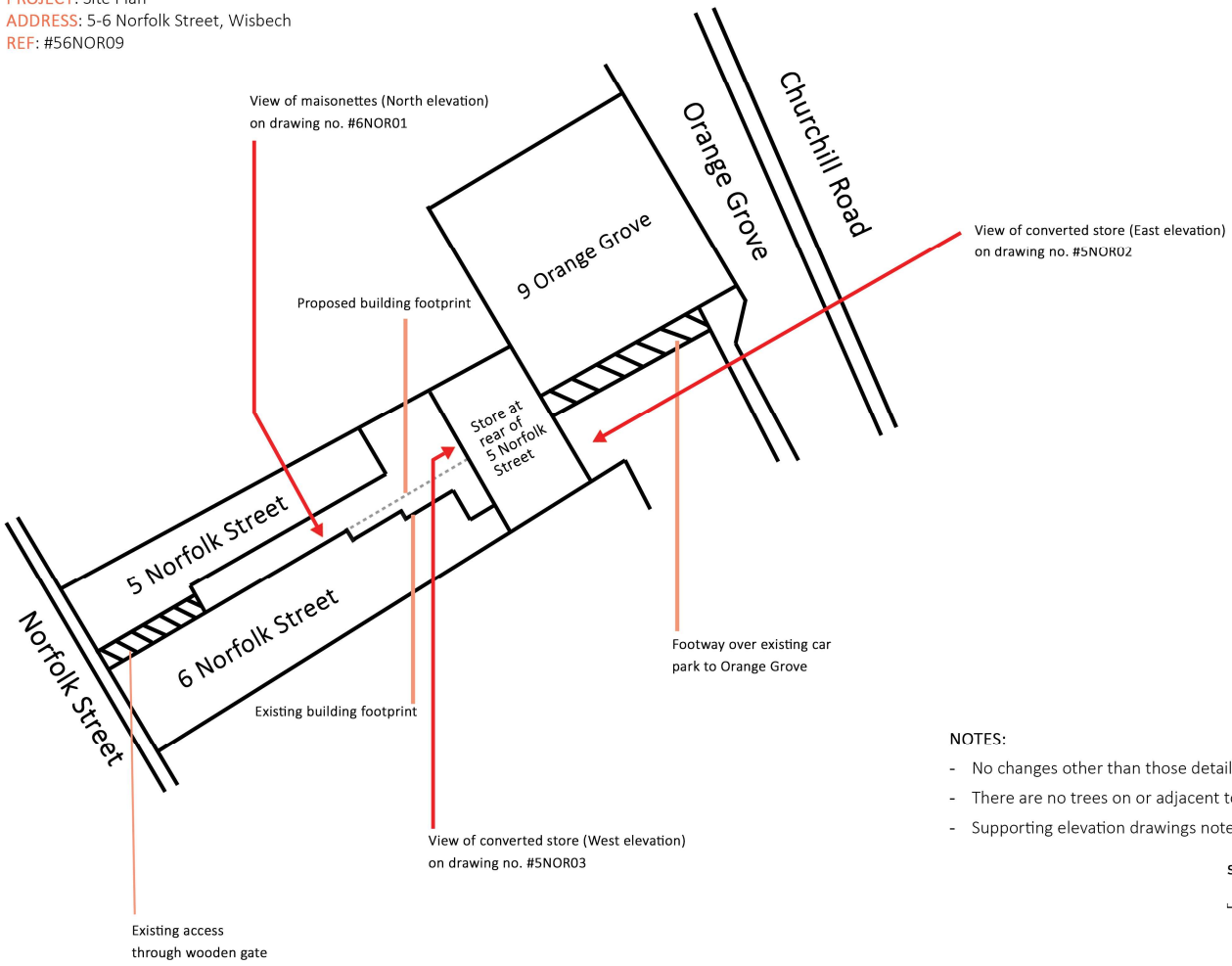
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PROJECT: Site Plan  
ADDRESS: 5-6 Norfolk Street, Wisbech  
REF: #56NOR09

AUTHOR: Colin Hawes  
DATE: 11/05/2020  
DOC SIZE: A3  
VERSION: 4



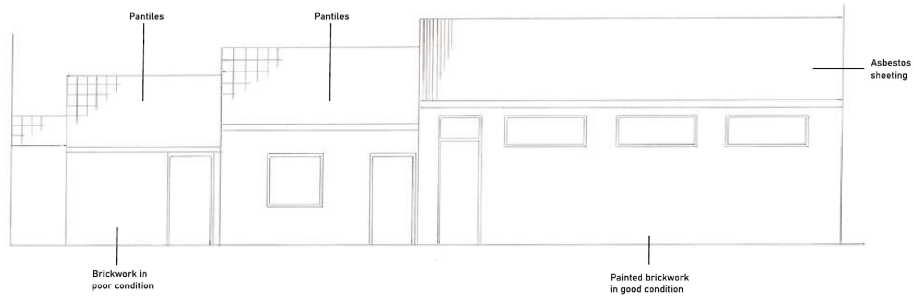
NOTES:

- No changes other than those detailed are proposed
- There are no trees on or adjacent to the site
- Supporting elevation drawings noted with red lines below

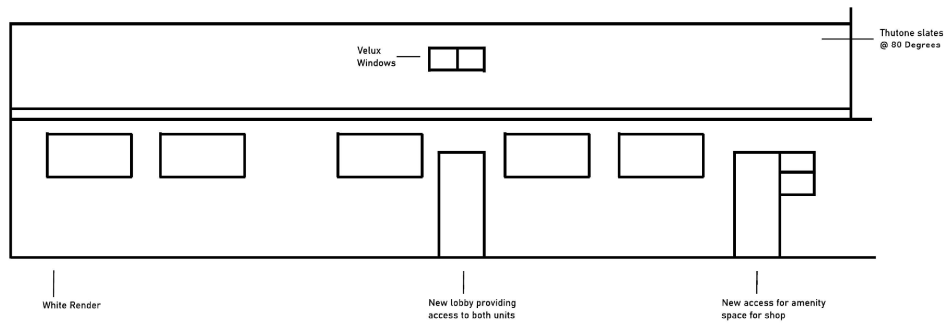
# PROJECT - REAR OF 6 NORFOLK STREET, WISBECH

## North Elevation

### EXISTING



### PROPOSED



#### DETAILS

Colin Hawes | Hempnall House, Lundy Green, NR15 2NU  
T: 01508 499769 | M: 07802 706826

#### PROJECT

REF: #6NOR01 | Version: 4 | Date: 17/07/2020  
Author: CJH | File Size: A4

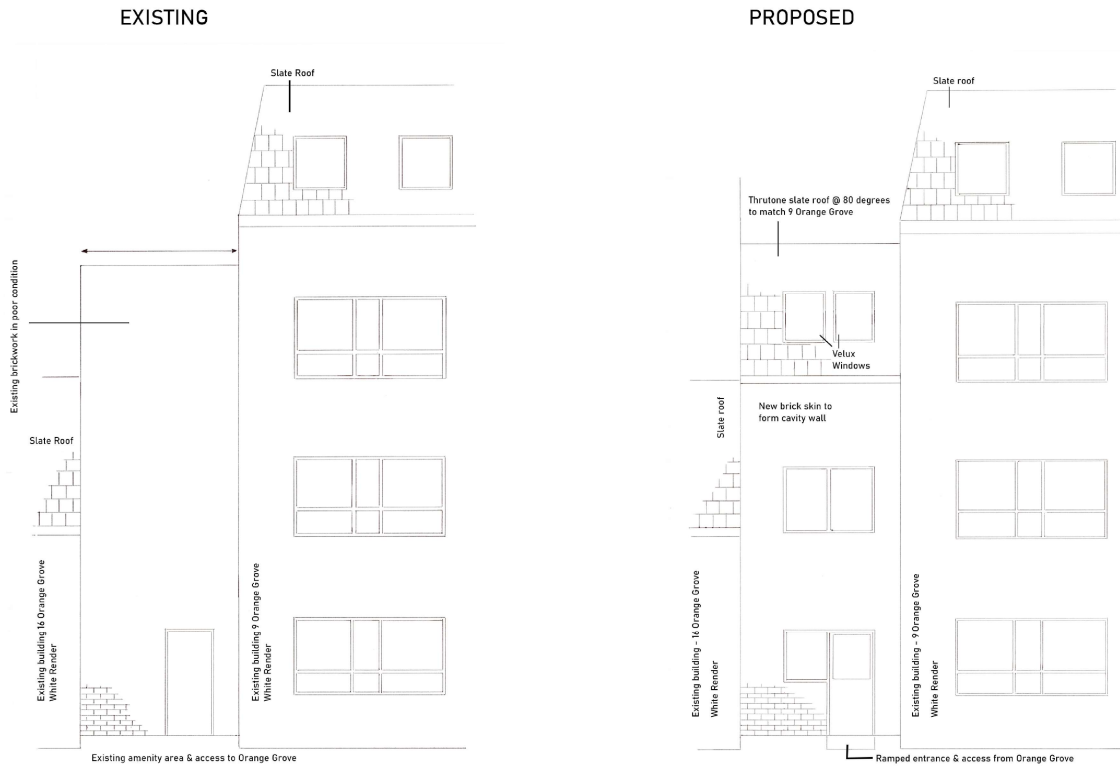
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# PROJECT - REAR OF 5 NORFOLK STREET, WISBECH

## East Elevation



### DETAILS

Colin Hawes | Hempnall House, Lundy Green, NR15 2NU  
T: 01508 499769 | M: 07802 706826

### PROJECT

REF: #5NOR02 | Version: 3 | Date: 04/05/2030  
Author: CJH | File Size: A4

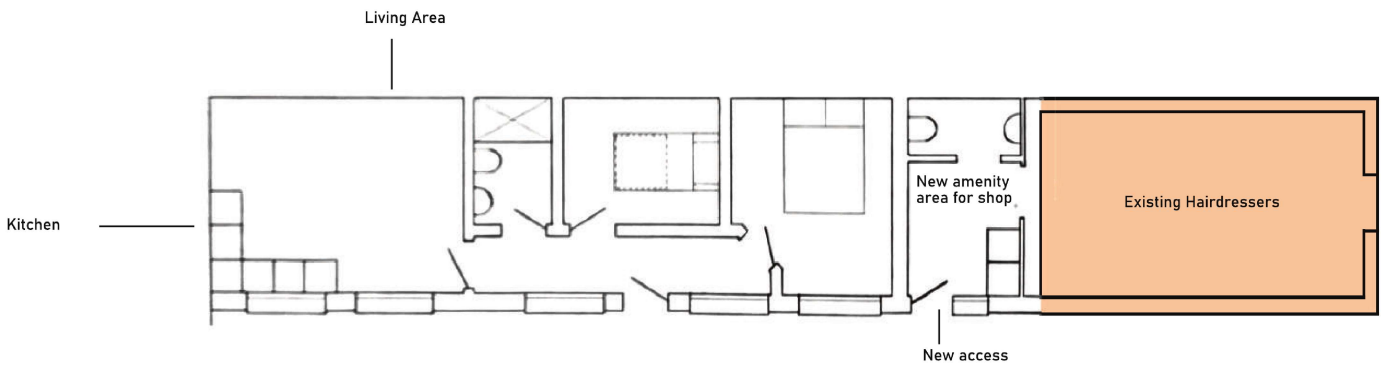
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# PROJECT - REAR OF 6 NORFOLK STREET, WISBECH

## GROUND FLOOR PROPOSED



## EXISTING



### DETAILS

Colin Hawes | Hempnall House, Lundy Green, NR15 2NU  
T: 01508 499769 | M: 07802 706826

### PROJECT

REF: #6NOR06 | Version: 3 | Date: 17/07/2020  
Author: CJH | File Size: A4

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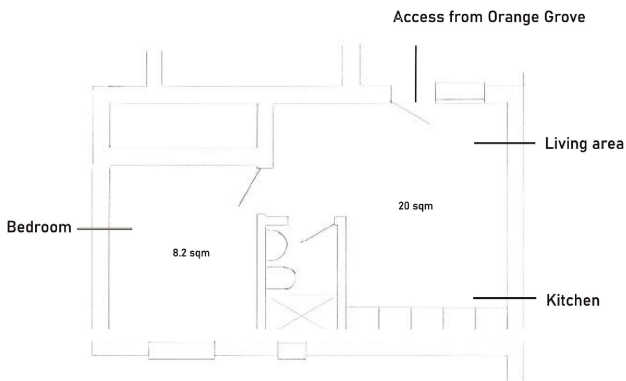
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PROJECT: Proposed Ground, 1st & 2nd Floor Plans  
ADDRESS: Rear of 5 Norfolk Street, Wisbech  
Scale: 1/100  
REF: #5NOR05

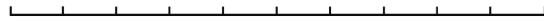
PROPOSED

### GROUND FLOOR

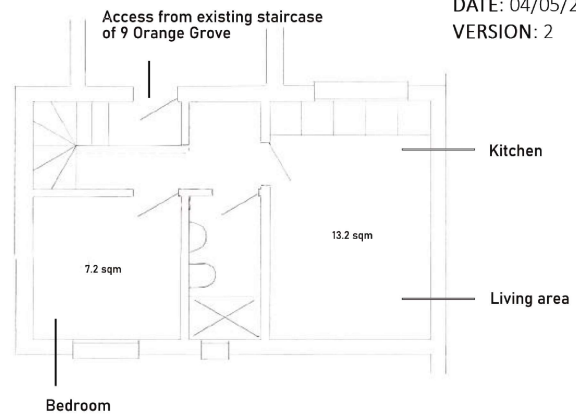


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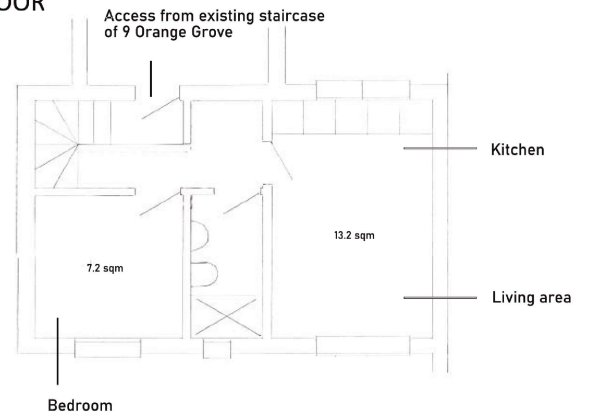


### FIRST FLOOR



AUTHOR: Colin Hawes  
DATE: 04/05/2020  
VERSION: 2

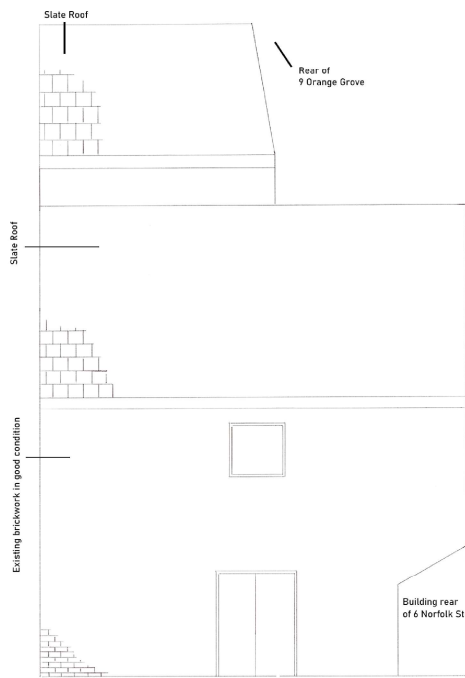
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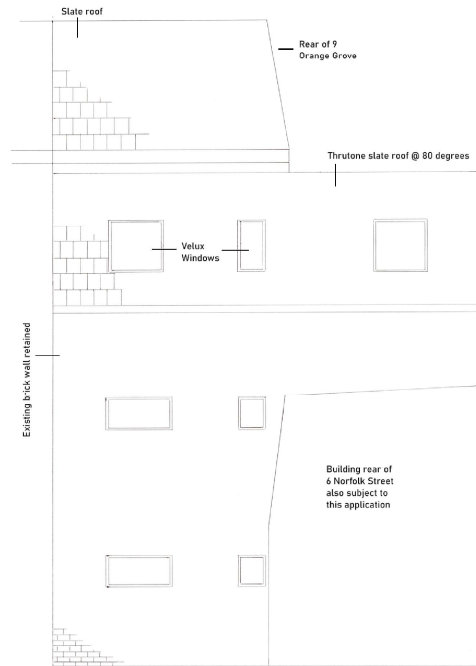
# PROJECT - REAR OF 5 NORFOLK STREET, WISBECH

## West Elevation

EXISTING



PROPOSED



### DETAILS

Colin Hawes | Hempnall House, Lundy Green, NR15 2NU  
T: 01508 499769 | M: 07802 706826

### PROJECT

REF: #5NOR03 | Version: 3 | Date: 04/05/2030  
Author: CJH | File Size: A4

Scale 1:100

10 m

