
F/YR21/1165/F

**Applicant: Ms Libby Eastley
Places For Living Plus**

**Agent: George Thorpe
Swann Edwards Architecture Limited**

Land East Of 24-26, Mill Close, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

Erect 6no dwellings (1-bed, single-storey)

Officer recommendation: Grant

Reason for Committee: Public interest as Fenland District Council involved in facilitating housing project

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The proposal is for the provision of 6 dwelling units within the town of Wisbech. The units would provide sheltered housing accommodation managed by the applicant to accommodate previously homeless persons.
- 1.2. The application site is currently disused land between existing residential flats and a commercial factory premises in the centre of the town.
- 1.3. The proposed units are pre-fabricated dwellings and would be brought into the site and could be removed at a later date if required without impacting on the site itself.
- 1.4. The development is screened and located in such a way that it does not result in significant harm to the street scene.
- 1.5. The units can be constructed in such a way as to provide mitigation against noise and odour impacts from the adjacent factory, and can be adequately controlled to ensure appropriate levels of residential amenity to both their occupants and neighbours.
- 1.6. The scheme accords with the relevant planning policies and there are no other material considerations that indicate that the proposal would not be acceptable.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is empty land at present adjacent to existing residential flats located on Mill Close, Wisbech. It was originally intended as additional parking provision for the residential development but is not utilised as such. The land is enclosed by those existing blocks of flats and a closeboard fence on two sides, with brick walls on the remaining two sides. To the east of the site is the Princes commercial premises with further residential dwellings to the north. Those residential dwellings have first floor windows that overlook the site.

- 2.2. The application site is currently tarmac surfaced with no apparent areas of drainage for surface water, although the tarmac surface itself has degraded to a substantial degree, with large cracks and missing patches.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal is for the siting of six pre-constructed dwelling units on the land, along with ancillary work including bin collection area, bike store, picnic tables and integrated planting units to each of the dwellings. The units are intended to provide managed accommodation for previously homeless persons.
- 3.2. Each of the units is of a monopitch design, and timber clad with the direction of cladding varying based on the elevation (horizontal cladding to the sides, vertical cladding to the end elevations) with two blocks of three to be constructed on the site. The southern block would be built with flush frontages while the northern block is proposed to be in a staggered arrangement following the angled northern boundary.
- 3.3. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QZXLEBHE0D800>

4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| F/YR12/0498/F | Installation of 6 free standing air source heat pumps to serve existing flats | GRANT | 23.08.2012 |
| F/YR10/0701/F | Change of use of ground floor hostel to 1 x 2-bed flat (24 Mill Close) and office (26 Mill Close) part retrospective | GRANT | 09.11.2010 |
| F/YR08/0981/F | Siting of temporary modular building for welfare and educational requirements in connection with existing site | REFUSE | 23.12.2008 |
| F/YR02/0658/F | Change of use of two ground-floor flats into a hostel for a maximum of 8 persons | GRANT | 29.01.2003 |

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. Wisbech Town Council

Support

5.2. Environment & Health Services (FDC)

The Environmental Health Team note and accept the submitted information. The application includes a noise impact assessment report and an odour impact assessment report provided by Aval Consulting Group Limited, reference 91601. Both the noise and odour impact assessments reports have been undertaken in accordance with the relevant technical guidance and standards. Therefore, I would recommend a condition ensuring that noise mitigation measures are implemented as per section 6 of the noise impact assessment report provided. I would also recommend a condition ensuring odour mitigation measures are implemented as per section 5 of the odour impact assessment report to ensure there is no adverse impact on the proposed new sensitive receptors.

Due to the proposed development site known to be previously used for car parking, I would also recommend the 'UNSUSPECTED CONTAMINATED LAND' condition be imposed to any planning consent granted.

Consequently, as long as the development is undertaken in strict accordance with the recommendations of the noise and odour impact assessment reports submitted within the application and the above condition is included, then this service has 'No Objections' to the proposal in the event that planning consent is granted.

Updated response following additional information

I have reviewed the documents and I am satisfied that the information provided meets the recommendations in the odour and noise impact reports submitted. I have informed Nick, so as long as he can concur that there is sufficient protection in place to ensure that the development will be constructed in accordance with the information provided, then we will not need to recommend specific noise or odour conditions for the development.

5.3. **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

One letter of objection has been received in relation to the proposal from a resident of Mill Close, stating that the proposal will result in overdevelopment of the site, that access is already limited and that the site is a flood area.

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**

7.1. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Para 2: NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Para 7: Purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

Para 11: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Para 83: Recognise and address specific locational requirements of different sectors.

Para 92: Promote healthy and safe communities through layouts, routes through sites and public spaces etc.

Para 119: Promote effective use of land

Para 120: Opportunities and benefits of the reuse of land

Para 121: Be proactive about bringing forward redevelopment sites

Para 123: Take a positive approach to alternative land uses

Para 124: Making efficient use of land (density - need & character)

Para 130: Well-designed development

7.2. **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Determining a Planning Application

7.3. **National Design Guide 2019**

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Public Spaces

Uses

Homes and Buildings

Resources

Lifespan

7.4. **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

LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail

LP7 – Urban Extensions

LP8 – Wisbech

LP9 – March

LP10 – Chatteris

LP11 – Whittlesey

LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy

LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District

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

LP17 – Community Safety

LP18 – The Historic Environment

LP19 – The Natural Environment

8. **KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Visual Impact**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Other Matters**

9. **BACKGROUND**

- 9.1. The application relates to the provision of managed, sheltered housing accommodation for the homeless. The Council's strategic housing team have been involved in the project in a facilitatory role and informal advice has been given by Planning Officers as part of this, broadly supporting the principle of development.

10. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1. The application site is located within the town of Wisbech, which is identified within the Fenland Local Plan (2014) as one of the Primary Market Towns, where the majority of development is to take place over the plan period.
- 10.2. The development would be located on a piece of land already forming part of a wider residential development and there are no designations on that land that would indicate development should be restricted. On that basis there is no justification for refusal of the proposal on the grounds of matters of principle.

Visual Impact

- 10.3. The development will largely be screened by the existing buildings in the vicinity, and the existing boundary treatment of the site, and as a result would not appear unduly prominent within the street scene being significantly lower than the adjacent buildings. There is a mix of bricks, render and some timber elements in the external finishes of the existing buildings and as a result the scheme, despite being of a pre-fabricated nature, would not appear out of keeping with its surroundings or having any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area.

Residential Amenity

- 10.4. Residential Amenity is considered on the basis of two aspects. First, the residential amenity of the proposed occupiers of the units, and second, the impact of the proposals on the amenity of the neighbouring properties.
- 10.5. With regard to the first of those matters therefore, the proposed units are of modest size, however as noted earlier they are proposed as sheltered housing accommodation for formerly homeless people and therefore the facilities provided are intended to meet the basic needs of residents whilst they are supported to independence and out of homelessness. The units do not comprise long-term accommodation with typical stay envisaged as being between 1-2 years. On that basis, the proposal cannot be evaluated on the same basis as would be expected for an open-market residential dwelling.
- 10.6. Each of the units is provided with a bedroom, ensuite toilet and shower facilities, plus a living area incorporating a kitchenette and dining space. The units also benefit from a verandah to their front elevations serving as an outdoor seating area, to which planters are to be attached to add amenity value to the units.
- 10.7. The units don't benefit from specific defined 'garden' areas, and as such do not meet the guidance contained within policy LP16 with regard to the provision of 1/3 plot area as private outdoor amenity space. The units however are not typical of residential dwellings considered under the terms of this policy, and the policy itself does note that provision of outdoor space must be suitable to the type and amount of development proposed. In this instance therefore, it is considered that the limited space provided is sufficient and appropriate to the development proposed and meets with the requirements of the policy in that regard.
- 10.8. The relationships between the proposed units and neighbouring residential properties must also be considered. Firstly, the bedroom windows of the proposed units, which face the adjacent properties to the north and south where

privacy may be a concern. In this regard however, given the nature of the occupancy of the units it is not considered unacceptable that a lower standard of amenity is accepted from the bedroom windows than would be considered with a conventional dwelling and therefore a condition could be reasonably imposed to require obscure glazing/film to be fitted in those windows to ensure privacy of neighbouring property and the occupants of the units without adversely affecting the amenity of the occupiers.

- 10.9. Second, the overlooking of the development from neighbouring properties needs to be addressed. The properties to the north on Opportune Road would have windows approximately 14 metres, minimum, from the rear of the proposed units and it is not considered, that this would result in any unacceptable overlooking. Likewise, the properties to the south on Mill Close would have windows to the immediate rear of the units which would not have any adverse overlooking impacts, given the privacy measures mentioned previously. However, the existing properties to the west would have windows directly overlooking the central area of the site, which residents may be expected to use for amenity purposes. It is accepted that this overlooking may be less than ideal, however given the overall benefit of the accommodation to be provided to the residents it is not considered that such an impact could justify a refusal of planning permission.
- 10.10. The proposal therefore is considered acceptable with regard to both the amenity levels provided to occupants and to the neighbouring residents of the adjacent properties.

Flood Risk

- 10.11. The application site falls within flood zone 2, where development would normally be required to undertake a sequential test to demonstrate that no land in a zone of lower flood risk was available to accommodate the development. Fenland District Council however has adopted guidance with regard to the sequential test, which states that for developments in zones 2 and 3 within the town of Wisbech, if the proposal is for the redevelopment of a site last used for Use Classes A, B, C or D then the council accepts that the sequential test is passed. As the land on which the units are proposed is part of the wider residential development it is considered to therefore pass the sequential test.
- 10.12. The same guidance also indicates that in such cases the first part of the exception test will be considered to be passed as by delivering development of such a site the wider sustainability aims of the council will be being met.
- 10.13. In terms of surface water flooding given the existing site is currently completely covered in an impermeable hard surface the proposal is not considered to pose any additional risk from this perspective.

Environmental

- 10.14. The Environmental Health Team have considered the impact on the development of the adjacent commercial premises, both in terms of the noise generated by the operation of the business, and the odour created.
- 10.15. In both instances, the assessments have provided detailed mitigation required to ensure a satisfactory environment for the proposed occupants, and the Environmental Health team have confirmed that subject to protections ensuring

the identified mitigation is put in place in line with those recommendations then there will be no unacceptable impact on the occupants of the units.

Highways

- 10.16. The proposed development is to be located on land not required for the car parking that formed its original purpose and the proposed nature of the occupancy is not one where resident car ownership is anticipated. The applicant has provided a document indicating the process by which people will be housed in the accommodation provided and the site will be fitted with cycle parking to facilitate sustainable transport methods for the occupants. There is therefore no consideration that is required to be given to the provision of vehicle parking or vehicular access to the site.

Refuse Collection

- 10.17. The application details identify a bin collection point sufficient to serve the development, which is also noted as being shared with the adjoining sheltered housing scheme. Refuse collection is therefore considered to have been adequately addressed.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1. The proposal is for the location of six sheltered housing units on land within an existing residential area. The principle of residential accommodation within Wisbech is supported and encouraged by the Fenland Local Plan, and although the specific appearance of the units is not entirely sympathetic to their surroundings, the limited visual impact resulting from their location is such that the scheme does not justify refusal of permission.
- 11.2. The amenity impacts on both the occupants of the units and the adjacent land can be adequately controlled by planning conditions and therefore there is no justification for refusal of the scheme. Similarly, the occupancy of the site will be on the basis of the methodology outlined by the applicant and therefore a more traditional occupancy condition is not required – instead a condition should be imposed to tie occupancy of the units to that methodology.

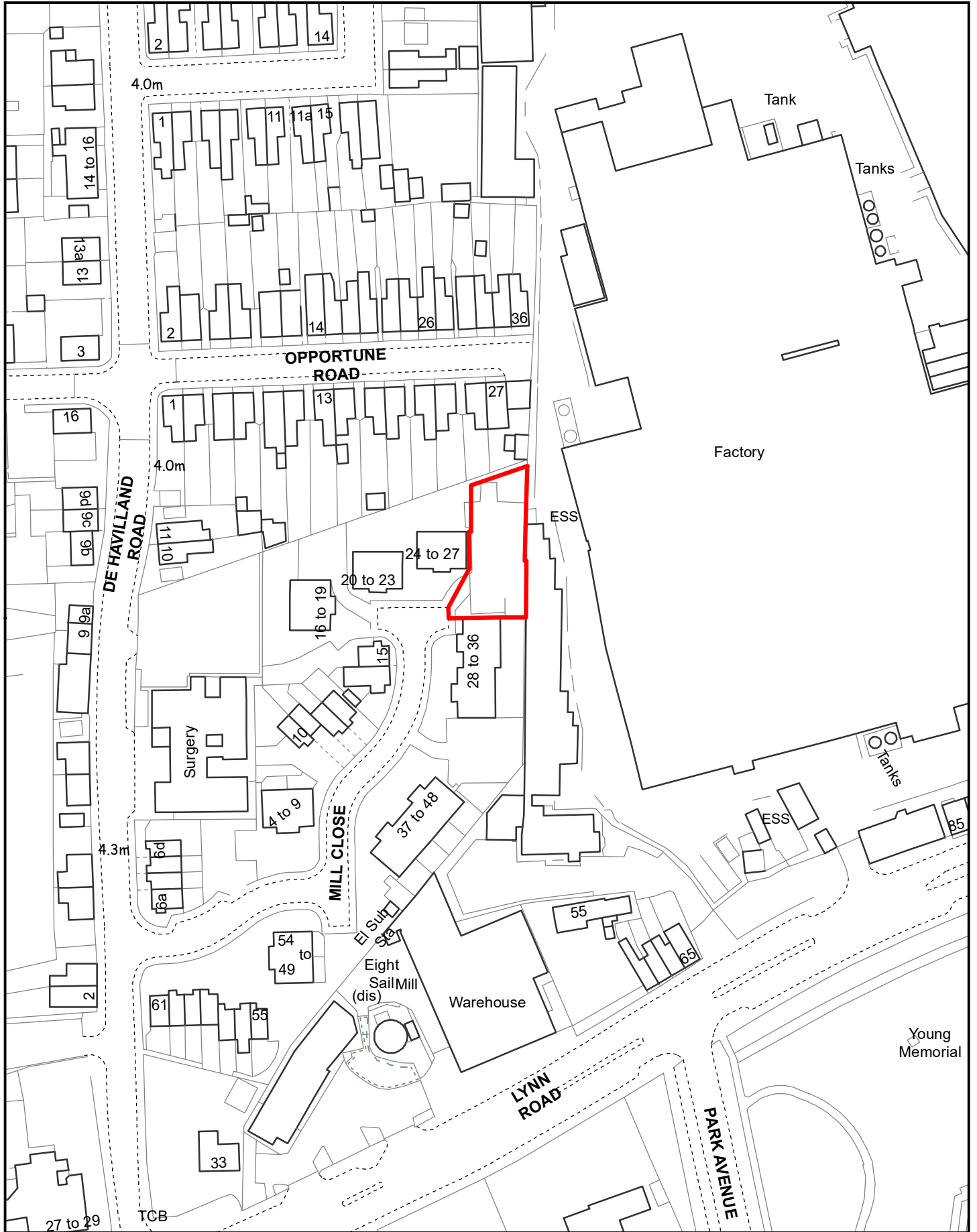
12. RECOMMENDATION

Grant; subject to the following conditions

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| 1 | <p>The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p> |
| 2 | <p>No person shall occupy any of the units hereby permitted unless in accordance with the document titled 'Ferry Project Procedure for Choosing Clients for new development in Mill Close' submitted and approved as part of this planning application.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the modular units hereby approved are only used and occupied in accordance with the purposes identified and considered under the terms of this application and not as permanent residential accommodation of any other description or use.</p> |

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| 3 | <p>Notwithstanding the hereby approved plans, the mitigation measures detailed in the documents titled 'Acoustic Mitigation' and 'Odour Mitigation' shall be incorporated into the design of the units in line with section 5 of the Odour Assessment and section 6 of the Noise Impact Assessment. The physical aspects of those measures shall be retained and maintained in working order for the lifetime of the development.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the location of the development and the proximity of the adjacent commercial premises does not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of the units hereby granted consent.</p> |
| 4 | <p>If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with. The development shall then be carried out in full accordance with the approved remediation strategy.</p> <p>Reason: To control pollution of land and controlled waters in the interests of the environment and public safety in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 183 and 184, and Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Notwithstanding the hereby approved plans, prior to the occupation of any part of the development the proposed bedroom windows in the units shall be glazed with obscure glass or similar permanent obscuring film and fixed shut to a height of no less than 1.7 metres above the floor level of the room within which they are installed and so maintained in perpetuity thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To safeguard the privacy and amenities currently enjoyed by the occupants of adjoining dwellings in accordance with Policies LP2 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, adopted May 2014.</p> |
| 6 | <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the erection of freestanding curtilage buildings or structures including car ports, garages, sheds, greenhouses, pergolas, or raised decks (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and E); ii) the erection of house extensions including conservatories, garages, car ports or porches (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and D); iii) alterations including the installation of additional windows or doors, including dormer windows or roof windows (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and B); iv) alterations to the roof of the dwellinghouse (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1, Class C); v) the installation of satellite dishes (as detailed in Schedule 2, |

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| | <p>Part 1, Class H);</p> <p>vi) the erection of any walls, fences or other means of enclosure to all boundaries/the # boundary of the site (as detailed in Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A).</p> <p>Reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 character of this part of the area/conservation area in which it is set in accordance with Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. 2. To prevent overlooking of neighbouring properties, in the interest of the protection of residential amenity in accordance with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. 3. To ensure that the LPA retains control over means of enclosure, in the interests of the appearance of the development and the visual amenity and character of the area/conservation area in which it is set in accordance with Policies LP16 and LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. 4. To ensure the open plan design of the development hereby permitted is maintained, in the interests of the character and appearance of the overall development in accordance with Policies LP14 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. |
| 7 | <p>Before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the cycle parking facilities shown on approved plan reference PP1000 REV A shall have been provided on site and shall be retained thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the occupants of the development have access to cycle parking facilities in accordance with policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).</p> |
| 8 | <p>Before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the refuse collection point shown on approved plan reference PP1000 REV A shall have been provided on site and shall be retained thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the occupants of the development have access to adequate refuse storage in accordance with policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).</p> |
| 9 | Approved Plans |



Created on: 11/10/2021

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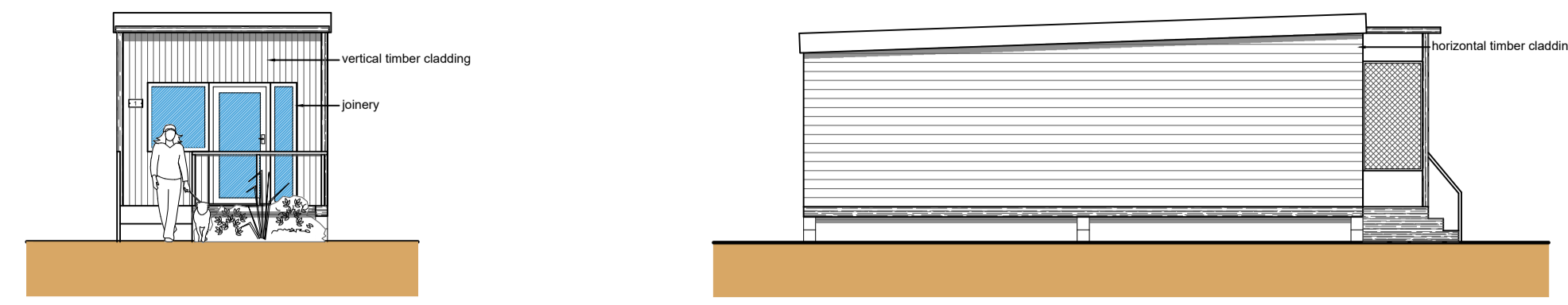
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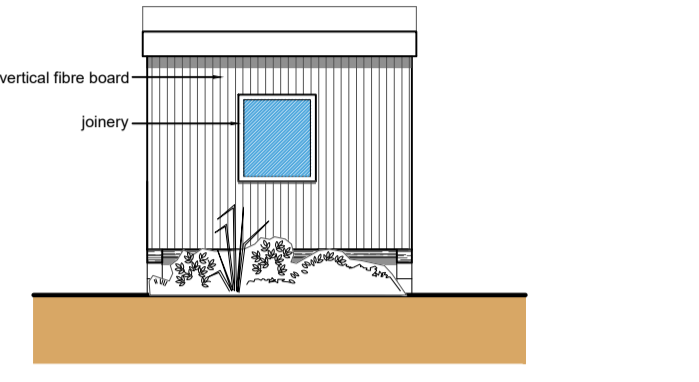


Site Plan
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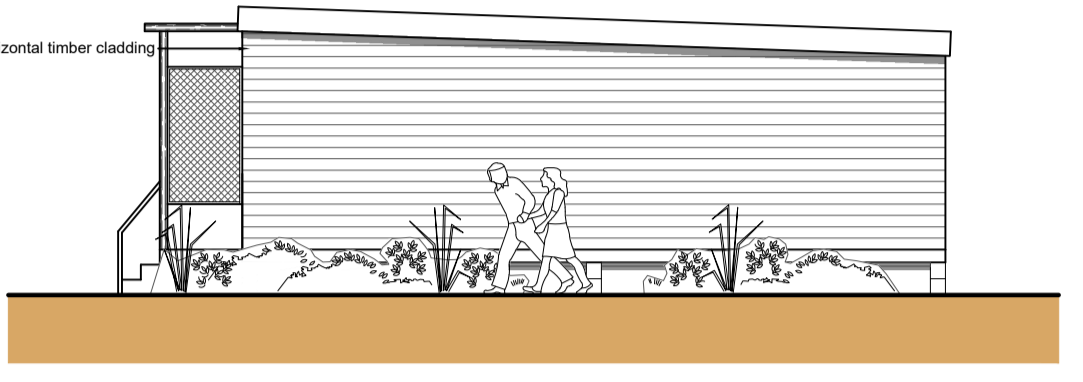


Front Elevation
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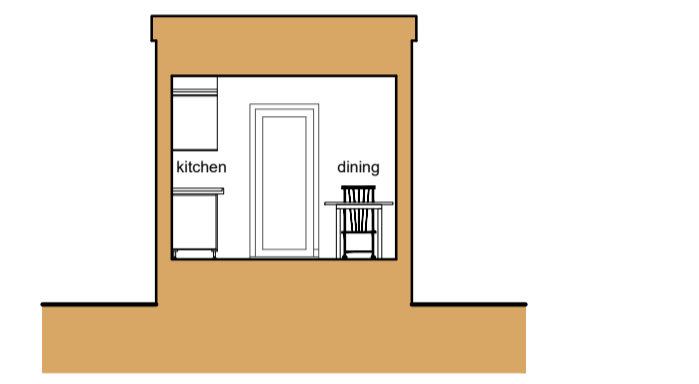
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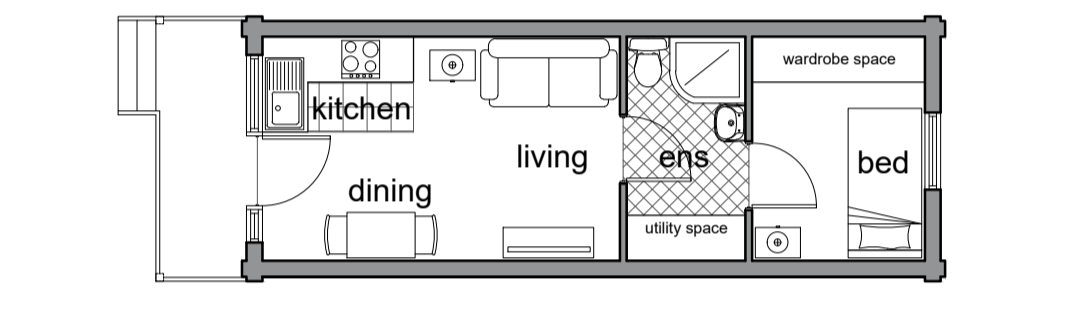
Rear Elevation
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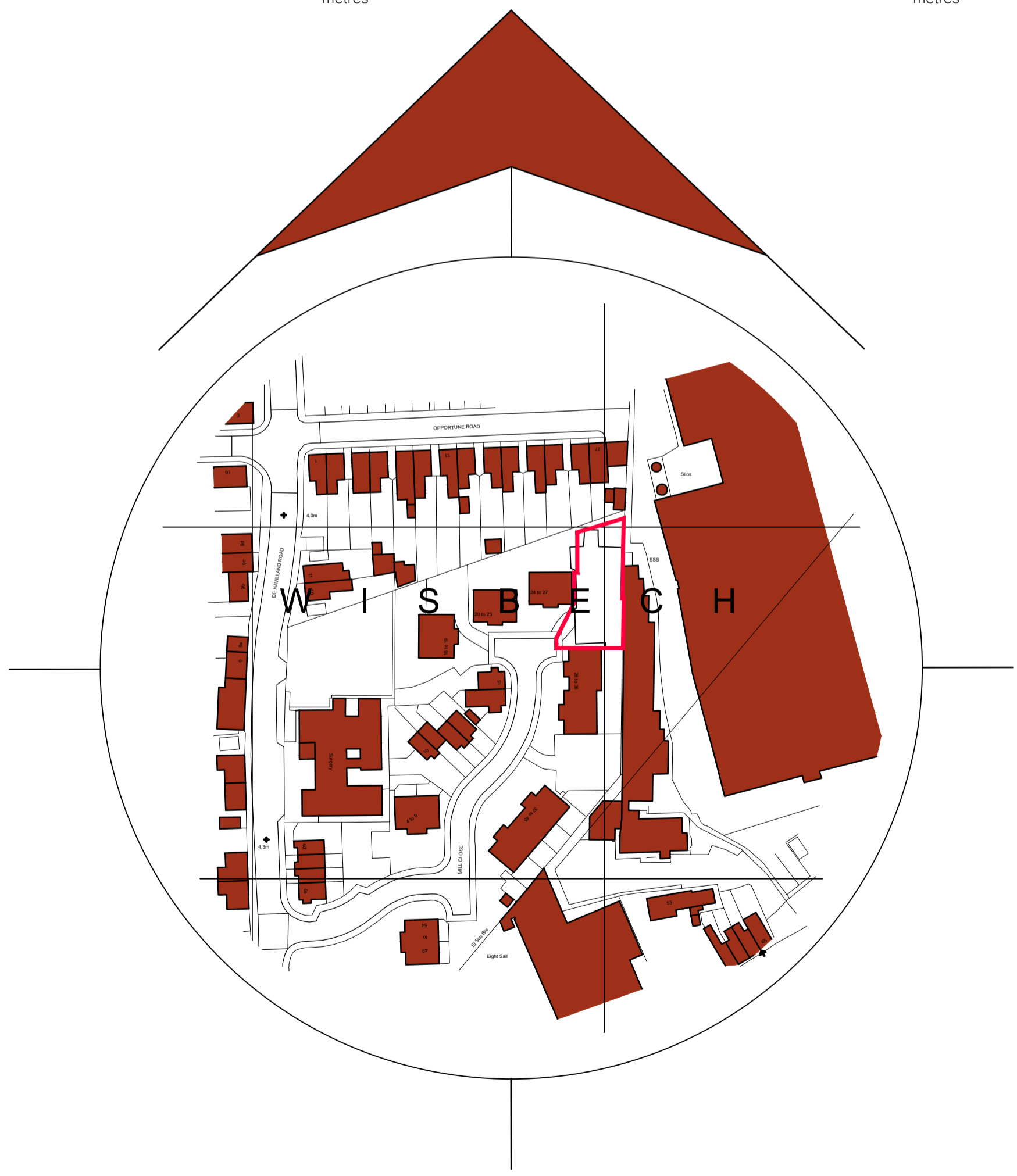
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Section A-A
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Floor Plans
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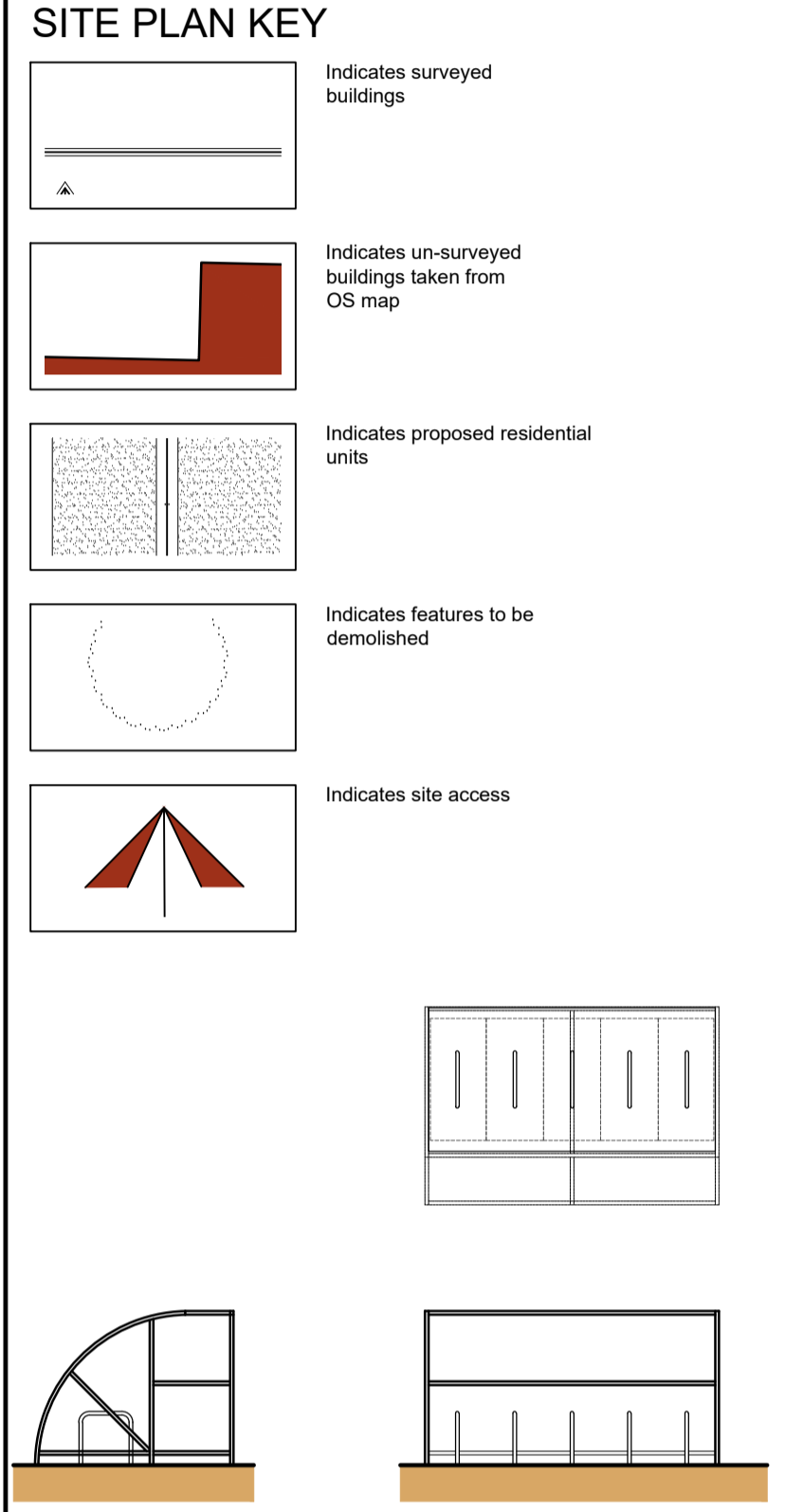
Location Plan
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General Notes

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

CONSTRUCTION DESIGN & MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS 2015

The following information must be read in conjunction with the project Risk register. This drawing highlights significant design related Health & Safety Risks present during Construction phase, and Residual Risks which remain post completion. Other Health & Safety Risks associated with Construction Activities may be present, and must be identified by the Principal Contractor prior to works commencing. Design Risks relating to specialist design items must be identified by the relevant specialist designers/ consultants and issued to the Principal Designer.

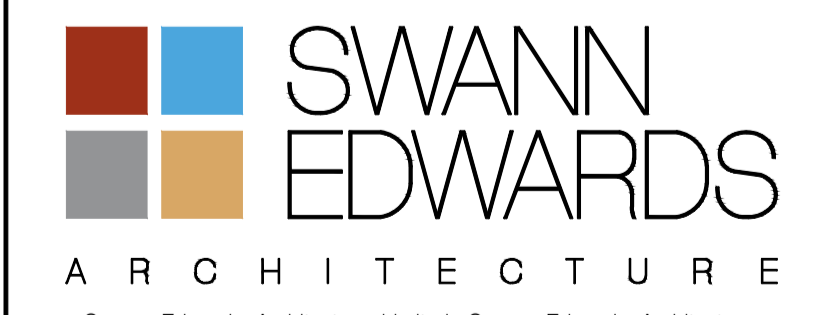


Indicative Bike Store
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Revisions

| | | |
|---|--------|--------------------|
| A | Oct 21 | Planner's Comments |
|---|--------|--------------------|

Status: **FOR APPROVAL**



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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Job Title Proposed 6 No. Modular Units Mill Close, Wisbech, PE13 3BD For: The Ferry Project | Date September 2021 | Drawn by GT | Checked by GE |
| Drawing Title Planning Drawing | Job No. SE-1687 | Sheet Size A1 | Revision |
| | Dwg No. PP1000 | | |