

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 22nd APRIL 2024

Case No: 21/01977/FUL

Proposal: ERECTION OF 4 TOWN HOUSES (TWO PAIRS OF SEMI- DETACHED DWELLINGS) RE SITING OF VEHICULAR ACCESS

Location: ELM LODGE, POTTON ROAD, EYNESBURY

Applicant: WALSH CONSTRUCTION

Grid Ref: 518774 259040

Date of Registration: 14th SEPTEMBER 2022

Parish: ST NEOTS

RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of refusal is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Potton Road within the built-up area of Eynesbury which forms part of the St Neots Spatial Planning Area. The site comprises a late Victorian two-storey building known as Elm Lodge within a plot of approximately 0.8 hectares which is accessed from Potton Road. The existing hipped roof building is set back on the site and it is understood that it was last used as seven flats (4 bedsits, 2 x 1-bed flats and 1x 2bed flat). There is also a block of five garages at the rear of the site, all enclosed by Heras fencing. The site does not appear to have been in use for a number of years and the dwelling is now boarded up and the site is overgrown.
- 1.2 The site fronts onto a B classified road and is in a predominantly residential area with bungalows and modern two storey dwellings to the north and north-east, commercial buildings to the east adjacent to Elm Cottage at the rear of the site, and two storey dwellings to the south. To the west and south-west is a wider residential area known as Ridgeway.

Proposal

- 1.3 The application is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and garages and the erection of two pairs of semi-detached, one and a half storey dwellings, served by an amended access from Potton Road, located centrally along the plot's frontage. The forwardmost pair of dwellings would be set back in the plot by 9.5m from the southern boundary of the plot. The dwellings would be gable ended, both with a dormer window in the front elevation. The rearmost pair of dwellings would be sited at right angles to the front pair and set behind it at a distance of around 3.8m. The rear dwellings would be sited at right angles to the existing Elm Cottage, around 2m from its rear corner. These dwellings would be gable ended but without any dormer windows.
- 1.4 Parking for the dwellings would be provided in three locations – two spaces to the side of the dwelling on plot 1, two spaces diagonally to the front of the dwelling on plot 2 and four spaces at the rear of the site, in place of the existing garage block. They would be served by a mix of tarmac and paving. A wall would be erected along the site's frontage. The dwellings would each be served by small rear gardens.
- 1.5 In terms of constraints the site is not within a Conservation Area, there are no Listed Buildings in the immediate vicinity and no protected trees. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, which has a low risk of flooding as identified in the Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps.
- 1.6 The application is a re-submission of previous application reference 21/01184/FUL for the erection of 4 single bedroom flats and 3 two-bedroom houses. The application was refused as the proposal was considered to be overdevelopment of the site which would have an adverse impact on the street scene, depart from the characteristics of the area, and would not be adequately functional and accessible in terms of internal floorspace and car parking/manoeuvring in relation to the scale of development proposed. It was also considered that the proposal failed to provide a high standard of amenity for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and would adversely affect the residential amenities of Elm Cottage, No's 125 and 129 Potton Road.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following documents:
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Phase 1 Habitat Map
 - Site photos
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2023 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2023 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP7: Spatial Planning Area
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP14: Amenity
 - LP15: Surface Water
 - LP16: Sustainable Travel
 - LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
 - LP25: Housing Mix
 - LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- 3.2 St Neots Neighbourhood Plan (2014 – 2029)
- A2: Design
 - A3: Design
 - PT1: Sustainable Modes of Transport
 - PT2: Vehicle Parking Standards for Residential Development
 - P4: Sustainable Drainage Systems

3.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.4 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 86/00969/FUL - Alterations to provide 7 flats - Permitted 1986.
- 4.2 0703595DEMDT - Demolition of block of seven flats. Details not required 2007.
- 4.3 0901120OUT - Residential development (8 flats)- The access was for consideration as part of this application and all other matters were reserved - Permitted 04.11.2009. This permission has since expired.
- 4.4 18/01598/OUT - Demolition of existing building and erection of up to 8 flats (residential development) with all matters reserved. Permitted 27.01.2020.

- 4.5 21/01184/FUL - Erection of 4 single bedroom flats and 3 two-bedroom houses. Refused 11.02.2022.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 St Neots Town Council – Recommend approval. Minimum impact on neighbours, satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of site.
- 5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority – The proposed site plan does not provide any details of the access. As it is a shared access, it should be 5m wide for 10m from the highway boundary hard surfaced for 5m from the highway boundary. Also, drainage should be provided to prevent water discharging from the site to the public highway and vice versa.

The applicant will need to detail vehicle to vehicle visibility splays in accordance with the posted speed limit. Visibility splays should be detailed as 2.4m x 43m with no obstruction over 0.6m.

The parking spaces for Plot 1 appear to be less than 2.5m wide and would be difficult to manoeuvre into and out of. This could result in a vehicle being parked in the shared area thus reducing the turning space for the other properties' vehicles.

- 5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology – Prior to determination of the application, it is recommended that the applicant should be required to submit further information. As a minimum this should entail production of a heritage statement and a photographic survey of the property to determine the extent of historic fabric surviving. The survey should include clear images of all external and internal elevations, covering all floors, and should be accompanied by a plan or plans showing the location and direction of images taken (witness diagram). This is required in order for a balanced judgement to be made with regard to surviving historic fabric to be lost, and the scope of any mitigation which may be considered necessary. With respect to the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 194, 195 and 203 apply.

Should the applicant be unable to provide the requested photographic survey for review within the timeframe for determination of this application, or should Huntingdonshire District Council consider that there is not scope to require additional supporting information at this stage, we would consider that on the balance of evidence as currently presented it is unlikely that we would object outright to development from proceeding in this location, but would recommend that the building should be

subject to a programme of formal archaeological investigation in mitigation to its loss. This could be secured through condition.

5.4 HDC Urban Design – Objects to the proposals on the following grounds:

The proposed gardens (particularly for Plot 2) are uncharacteristically small compared to existing adjacent units and in the case of Plot 1 are unlikely to accommodate the functional design requirements of the unit and storage of bins and bikes required by Local Plan Policy LP17.

Whilst the revised scheme reduces overshadowing and overbearing impacts to Elm Cottage, there is concern the proposals could increase perceived overlooking impacts to the rear gardens of Nos. 125 and 129 Potton Road either side. Detailed sections are required to confirm the cill height of windows on the front and rear elevations of Plots 3 and 4. The cill height of the bedroom rooflight on the rear elevation of Plot 2 should also be confirmed given potential overlooking impacts to the rear garden of Plot 3.

The scheme as submitted is considered contrary to Local Plan Policy LP11, LP12 (parts L, M), LP14, LP17 as well as the placemaking principles set out in Chapter 3 of the HDC Design Guide SPD.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 None Received

7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 47 of the NPPF (2021). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
 - St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029
- 7.4 The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Principle of Development
 - Design and Visual Amenity
 - Residential Amenity
 - Highway Safety and parking provision
 - Flood Risk and Surface Water
 - Biodiversity
 - Archaeology
 - Accessible and Adaptable Homes
 - Water Efficiency
 - Developer Contributions

Principle of Development

- 7.6 The site is located within the St Neots Spatial Planning Area which incorporates the whole parish of St Neots as identified by Policy LP7 of the Local Plan. It is also within the St Neots Neighbourhood Area as delineated in the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.7 Policy LP7 of the Local Plan states "A proposal for development on a site which is additional to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it fulfils the following requirements and is in accordance with other policies: A proposal for housing development (class 'C3') or for a residential institution use (class 'C2') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement."
- 7.8 The site is located within the built-up area of St Neots and the last use of the site and building was residential comprising 7 flats, but it has been unoccupied for a number of years. The site is in an accessible and sustainable location in the built-up area of St.

Neots where residents would have access to wide range of services facilities through sustainable transport modes.

- 7.9 The proposed development residential use, is therefore supported in principle in this location in accordance with St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and Policy LP7 of the Local Plan subject to the assessment against other relevant policies and material planning considerations discussed below.

Design and Visual Amenity

- 7.10 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments;

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 7.11 Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7.12 Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan (2016) states that "All development must be designed to a high quality that reinforces local distinctiveness. Design should be guided by the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials, detailing, roof orientation, relationship to back of pavement, wall to window

ratios, proportion of windows, plan depth, plot width and access, the site and its surroundings including considerations of flood risk management.

- 7.13 Buildings on the fringes of major developments should have variations in height, style and position. They should reflect the town heritage design and characteristics with a variety of traditional and modern building materials. As a matter of good design, defensible space should be provided. Careful consideration should be given to the servicing requirements of buildings to ensure that essential items such as car parking and space for the storage of waste and recycling bins are successfully integrated into the design, including access for service and emergency vehicles."
- 7.14 Section 12 of the NPPF (2023) seeks to achieve well designed places, noting that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 7.15 The National Design Guide 2021 addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics. Paragraph 40 of the National Design Guide states that development should respond positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context, including layout, form and local character.
- 7.16 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 sets out design principles based on recognised best practice and explains key requirements that the Council will take into consideration when assessing planning proposals. The Design Guide promotes locally distinctive design which respects and enhances the character of Huntingdonshire.
- 7.17 The guide notes that with regard to building detailing, the district has various architectural styles and materials which reflects the local vernacular. It is noted that new buildings should be designed in harmony and proportional to each other, complimenting the overall street character of the place. Appropriate spaces between buildings helps to create an interesting streetscape. Detailed guidance is also provided relating to roofs, eaves and ridge lines and chimneys. With regards to materials, these should complement the successful parts of any surrounding developments in order to conserve or enhance the distinctive character of the various parts of the district and to ensure that buildings sit comfortably within the landscape.

- 7.18 The site is located on the eastern side of Potton Road within the built-up area of Eynesbury and comprises a late Victorian building known as Elm Lodge; a two-storey hipped roof detached dwelling that has previously been converted to 7 flats. The existing property fronts Potton Road and is in a predominantly residential area with bungalows and the access road leading to Elm Cottage to the north (No. 129 Potton Road), modern two storey dwellings south (Nos. 123 and 125) and commercial buildings and Elm Cottage to the rear / east of the site. To the west and south-west is a wider residential area known as Ridgeway.
- 7.19 The street scene therefore comprises a variety of single and two storey dwellings (detached and semi-detached), set back in their plots by up to around 12m, though many are a lot closer to their frontages. Some of the dwellings are built to their flank boundaries at ground and first floor levels, though there is a degree of spaciousness to the street scene by virtue of the setback nature of the dwellings. The area is characterised by low boundary walls or open-plan frontages with deep lawns.
- 7.20 The application proposes to demolish Elm Lodge and erect 4 units comprising two pairs of 2-bed semi-detached dwellings. The proposed units are 1.5-storeys in height with some 3.7m eaves and 6.86m ridge heights. Plots 1 and 2 are orientated to front Potton Road, approximately 5.5m forward of the existing Elm Lodge building line but reflect a similar building line and orientation as No. 129 adjacent. Plots 3 and 4 are located to the rear of the site, arranged parallel with the Elm Cottage access that extends along the northern site boundary. Plots 3 and 4 are located approximately 3.9m to the east / rear of Plots 1 and 2.
- 7.21 The application states that the dwellings will be constructed of facing brickwork with interlocking tiles – type and colour to be confirmed. It is considered that details of the proposed materials (facing brick, roof tile) and architectural details (windows – means of opening, colour and reveal depth, the location and colour of meter boxes and flues/extracts) could be conditioned should planning permission be granted.
- 7.22 The previous scheme 21/01184/FUL was refused on the grounds of excessive scale of the rear wing and its poor relationship and unsuccessful integration with the adjacent bungalows to the north, the adverse impact on the street scene, and the impact on the site's frontage to Potton Road, which would be dominated by hardstanding, car parking and a bin store with minimal soft landscaping to complement the generous front gardens and landscaped character of existing dwellings along Potton Road.
- 7.23 Urban Design Officers have considered the application and have commented that the proposed units have a low eaves and ridge height compared to the existing Elm Lodge, however the

approximately 1.3m high gap between the window heads and eaves line creates a large area of blank brickwork that appears disproportionate to the scale of the units. A lower eaves height (and steeper roof pitch) is recommended to improve the proportions of the ground floor level in order to better relate to the adjacent existing bungalows. The side elevations are also entirely blank and side Ground Floor windows (living room or kitchen) are required on Plots 1 (to overlook the parking), Plot 2 (to overlook the access) and Plot 4 (to overlook the parking for Plots 3 and 4) as well as adding interest and breaking up the amount of brickwork. Accordingly the design of the dwellings is not considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and the street scene.

- 7.24 The proposal includes the demolition of the garage block to the rear of the site in order to accommodate two parking spaces each for Plots 3 and 4. Parking for plot 1 is located to the side of the unit and parking for Plot 2 towards the frontage, setback behind soft landscaping. The arrangement of car parking and hardstanding is considered to be acceptable and maintains an area of soft landscaping along the site frontage with Potton Road. This is considered to overcome the concerns raised with the previous scheme (21/01184/FUL).
- 7.25 The proposed boundary treatments including the boundary between the new access and the existing access to Elm Cottage have not been confirmed. A brick wall with piers is proposed along the frontage with Potton Road however, details of the height of this have not been confirmed. Low brick walls with planting are a common feature in the street scene and therefore this would be in keeping with the area, however, it will be necessary to condition hard and soft landscaping details should planning permission be granted.
- 7.26 Whilst Huntingdonshire do not have private amenity space standards, Local Plan Policy LP12 part L requires that development 'ensures that public and private amenity spaces are clearly defined and designed to be inclusive, usable, safe and enjoyable'. The HDC Design Guide SPD Implementation Questions for infill and small groups (page 221) also asks 'has an adequate amount of amenity space been provided for each residential unit and is it of a shape, size and location to allow effective and practical use by residents?'
- 7.27 The National Design Guide (para 129) states 'External spaces are designed to respond to local character, as appropriate solutions will vary by the context, for example whether it is a town centre or suburb'... and para 130 'Well-designed private or shared external spaces are fit for purpose and incorporate planting wherever possible. The appropriate size, shape and position for an external amenity space can be defined by considering:

- o how the associated building sits in the wider context, including access to public and open spaces;
 - o how the amenity space will be used, what for, and by whom;
 - o environmental factors that may affect its usability, such as sunlight and shade, noise or pollution;
 - o wider environmental factors affecting its quality or sustainability, such as a green corridor or drainage'.
- 7.28 The proposed gardens are considered uncharacteristically small compared to the existing adjacent gardens in Potton Road with plot 2 featuring a very small and cramped amenity space measuring just 3m deep x 5.6m wide. As such, the proposal is considered to represent a cramped form of development with limited amenity space for each property that would be uncharacteristic with the established grain of development in the locality.
- 7.29 Overall, by virtue of the cramped form of development with inadequate private amenity spaces for the proposed dwellings, the proposal is considered to be of poor design that would result in detrimental impacts to the character and appearance of the site, the street scene of Potton Road and the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP11, LP12 and LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard and should be refused planning permission in this instance.

Residential Amenity

- 7.26 Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Amenity of neighbouring properties

- 7.27 The main matters to consider in terms of residential amenity are the potential overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing impacts to the adjoining residential properties Elm Cottage and Nos. 125 & 129 Potton Road.
- 7.28 The nearest residential property is Elm Cottage, immediately to the rear of the site. Plots 3 and 4 extend further back into the site, approximately 1.6m beyond the rear building line of Elm Lodge. As such the east elevation of Plot 4 would align with the west elevation of Elm Cottage. Previous comments on the refused 21/01184/FUL application raised concerns that the scale and massing of the rear wing could dominate views from the existing

windows on the rear elevation of Elm Cottage and result in a reduction in daylight and sunlight to this unit.

- 7.29 The position of windows on the rear (north) facing elevation of Elm Cottage are not shown on the revised submitted site plan dwg DW4.22, however based on the previous 21/01184/FUL application, these existing windows would already fall within 45 degrees of Elm Lodge and impact the daylight to this unit. It is considered that whilst the proposed Plots 3 and 4 are sited closer to Elm Cottage, compared to Elm Lodge, the lower 1.5 storey height with 3700mm eaves and 6860mm ridge height is likely to have a positive improvement on the daylight and sunlight to Elm Cottage.
- 7.30 With regard to No. 125 Potton Road, Plots 3 and 4 are arranged perpendicular to the side garden boundary with No. 125 Potton Road. These units feature approximately 8.8m deep gardens and are separated from the neighbouring garden by a row of existing trees. Notwithstanding this there is concern that the first floor bedroom rooflights on the rear elevation of Plots 3 and 4 could result in overlooking impacts to the rear garden of No. 129. The cill height of these roof lights has not been confirmed (a section drawing is required through the plot) and therefore it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that the proposals would not result in overlooking and a loss of privacy to No. 125.
- 7.31 With regard to No. 129 Potton Road, Plots 3 and 4 are arranged parallel with the northern site boundary and access track leading to Elm Cottage and are located 12.6m from the southern gable elevation of No. 125 Potton Road. There is concern the first-floor bedroom rooflights in Plot 4 could result in perceived overlooking impacts to the neighbouring rear garden. Again, the cill height of these rooflights has not been confirmed to ensure the proposals would not result in a loss of privacy to No. 129.

Amenity for future occupiers

- 7.32 Policy LP14 states that a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development. A proposal will therefore be required to ensure:
- a. adequate availability of daylight and sunlight for the proposed use, minimising the effects of overshadowing and the need for artificial light;*
- 7.33 Within the site, the dwellings (in particular plot 1) would permit the direct overlooking of the rear gardens of the dwellings on plots 3 and 4 from the Velux windows in its roof. Furthermore, the distance between the rear elevation of the dwelling on plot 2 and the flank elevation of the dwelling on plot 3 would be around 3.9m. At such close proximity and with a gable end, the dwelling on plot

3 would appear overbearing and visually intrusive when viewed from the windows in the rear elevations and the rear gardens of the dwellings on plots 1 and 2. The proposal would therefore have a harmful impact in this regard.

- 7.34 In terms of the internal arrangement of the units, whilst the Council do not have private amenity standards, local and national planning policies require development to have a good standard of amenity. The proposals are considered to fall short of the nationally described space standards on several matters which highlights the cramped nature of the development.
- 7.35 The dwellings would have a gross internal floorspace of around 58 sqm which is below the minimum floorspace requirement for two beds, three-person two storey dwellings (70 sqm), as contained in the Nationally Described Technical Housing Standards document (2015). The ground floor living accommodation would be of a suitable size and would provide for a satisfactory standard of living. However, whilst the larger of the two bedrooms in each of the proposed dwellings would exceed the standard for a double bedroom in the standards document, the smaller of the bedrooms would not.
- 7.36 Failure to achieve the nationally described minimum space standards brings into question whether the proposals would accord with Policy LP25 part F of the Local Plan which states "A proposal that includes housing will be supported which meets the optional Building Regulation accessibility standards (or replacement standards), unless it can be demonstrated that site-specific factors make achieving this impractical or unviable: ensuring 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' (or replacement standards)"
- 7.37 The proposed gardens are also considered uncharacteristically small compared to existing adjacent gardens in Potton Road. The small garden sizes, particularly for Plot 2, are unlikely to provide sufficient space for general every day needs, along with the storage of bins and bikes required by Local Plan Policy LP17. Together with the poor outlook and impact upon amenities, the proposed development would provide for a poor standard of accommodation for the dwellings' future occupiers.
- 7.38 The proposal therefore fails to provide a high standard of amenity for all occupiers of the proposed development and fails to maintain the standard of amenity currently experienced by Nos. 125 & 129 Potton Road. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Highway Safety

- 7.39 Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.
- 7.40 Policy PT2 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan states that "All development proposals which include an element of residential development, including change of use to residential, must provide adequate space for vehicle parking to meet the expected needs of residents and visitors.
- 7.41 A design-led approach should be taken to ensure parking is properly integrated into the layout of the scheme, minimises adverse impacts on surrounding uses, and facilitates traffic flow and accessibility for service and emergency vehicles."
- 7.42 The County Highways Authority upon assessment of the proposal indicated that insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed shared access could be utilised safely. Furthermore, no information has been submitted to demonstrate the method of drainage of the access road to prevent surface water discharging from the site onto the public highway and vice versa and no detail has been submitted to demonstrate that adequate vehicular visibility splays could be provided in accordance with the posted speed limit. The parking spaces for Plot 1 also appears to be of inadequate dimensions and likely to result in a vehicle being parked in the shared area thus reducing the turning space for the other properties' vehicles. The proposed development would therefore impact adversely on the safety of the future users of the development and the safety of the users of the adjoining highway contrary to the objectives of Policy LP17 of the adopted Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.
- 7.43 The Highway authority did request the submission of additional plans and information regarding the access and visibility splays, drainage and the size of the parking spaces. However, given the significant concerns with the proposed development, the additional Highways information was not sought.
- 7.44 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development is considered unacceptable on the grounds of highway safety and as such in conflict with Policy LP17 of the HDC Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2023) in this regard.

Flood Risk and Surface Water

- 7.45 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 165-175 of the NPPF (2023)).
- 7.46 In this case, the application site is situated in Flood Zone 1 based on the Environment Agency Floods Maps and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) and is not in an area noted as susceptible to ground water flooding (<25%).
- 7.47 Given that the site is in Flood Zone 1 and comprises less than 1 hectare of land, the sequential and exceptions tests for flooding nor the submission of a flood risk assessment are considered necessary in this instance in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.
- 7.48 The application form states that surface water would be disposed via a sustainable drainage system and that the method for foul water drainage would be via mains sewer. Given the low flood risk and minor scale of development, Officers are satisfied that full details of the surface and foul water drainage can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements in this instance.
- 7.49 Therefore, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water and therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Biodiversity

- 7.50 Paragraph 180 of the 2023 NPPF states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that development proposals should demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity have been investigated. Any proposal that is likely to have an impact, directly or indirectly on biodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). LP30 also states that all proposals must also demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible.
- 7.51 The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. It considered that the site has limited ecological potential and that the development would have a low risk of significant impact for such species. The PEA makes a number of ecological mitigation and enhancement recommendations. These are considered acceptable in terms of

enhancing the ecological value of the site. In the event of permission for the proposal being granted, these may be secured by condition.

- 7.52 Overall, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Archaeology

- 7.53 The County Archaeologist recommends that a heritage statement and a photographic survey of the property be undertaken in advance of the grant of permission in order to enable a balanced judgement to be made with regard to surviving historic fabric to be lost, and the scope of any mitigation which may be considered necessary. Given the concerns with the proposed development, such a survey was not sought. However, it is considered that in the event of the proposed development being found acceptable, such a survey may be conditioned.

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

- 7.54 Policy LP25 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 states that proposal for new housing will be supported where they meet the optional Building regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this impractical or unviable.
- 7.55 To ensure that the development can meet these standards a condition would be imposed on any permission that may be granted in this regard in accordance with Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Water Efficiency

- 7.56 Policy LP12 (j) of the Local Plan to 2036 states that new dwellings must comply with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations. Whilst confirmation of compliance from the Applicant/Agent has not been sought given the concerns raised with regards to aspects of the application, a condition could be attached to any approval decision to ensure compliance with the above.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.57 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of wheeled bins has not been submitted as part of the application. On this basis the proposal would not provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would therefore fail to accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.58 The development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

Conclusion

- 7.59 As outlined above, all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.60 This proposal seeks permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and garages and the erection of two pairs of semi-detached one and a half storey dwellings served by an amended access from Potton Road with parking.
- 7.61 Overall, by virtue of the cramped form of development with inadequate private amenity spaces for the proposed dwellings, the proposal is considered to be of poor design that would result in detrimental impacts to the character and appearance of the site, the street scene of Potton Road and the surrounding area. The proposal also fails to provide a high standard of amenity for all occupiers of the proposed development and fails to maintain the standard of amenity currently experienced by Nos. 125 & 129 Potton Road.
- 7.62 Based on the limited information and inadequate access dimensions, the Local Planning Authority are also not able to satisfy themselves that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to highway safety.
- 7.63 It is also worth noting that a Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of wheeled bins has not been provided during the course of the application.

7.64 As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to Policies LP4, LP7, LP11, LP12, LP14 and LP17 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) and Sections 9 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

7.65 Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development is contrary to policy and not acceptable. There are no overriding material considerations that indicate that permission should be granted in this instance. Therefore, it is recommended that the application be refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION - REFUSAL for the following reason:

1. The proposal would result in the introduction of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings whose design would be incongruous with the dominant character and appearance of the street scene. Furthermore, the siting and scale of the proposal would result in a cramped, over-development of the site resulting in inadequate private amenity spaces for the proposed dwellings that would be uncharacteristic of properties in the locality and would result in detrimental impacts on the street scene of Potton Road. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policies LP11, LP12 and LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), the National Design Guide and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).
2. The proposal fails to demonstrate that the dwellings on plots 3 and 4 would not result in the increased overlooking and the perception of being overlooked to the rear gardens of No. 125 and 129 Potton Road. Accordingly, the proposal fails to maintain the standard of amenity currently experienced by users and occupiers of Nos. 125 & 129 Potton Road in conflict with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2023).
3. As a result of the distance between the rear elevation of the dwelling on plot 2 and the flank elevation of the dwelling on plot 3, the dwelling on plot 3 would appear overbearing and visually intrusive when viewed from the windows in the rear elevations and rear gardens of the dwellings on plots 1 and 2. The location of the roof lights in plot 1 could also permit the direct overlooking of the rear gardens of the dwellings on plots 3 and 4. Accordingly by virtue of the design, siting and proximity of the dwellings within the site, the proposed development would have a harmful impact upon the amenities of the future occupiers of the dwellings contrary to Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning

Document (2017) and the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

4. The proposed development by virtue of the sub-standard size of the accommodation in the dwellings and related gardens, would lead to a poor standard of accommodation and amenity for the future occupiers and is unlikely to provide sufficient space to satisfy the needs of a family. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
5. Due to the lack of information regarding visibility splays and adequate access dimensions, the Local Planning Authority are not able to make a comprehensive assessment in regard to the impact of the proposal on highway safety. The parking spaces for Plot 1 also appears to be of inadequate dimensions and is likely to result in a vehicle being parked in the shared area thus reducing the turning space for the other properties' vehicles. The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate that there will be no adverse highway safety impacts and is considered contrary to Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
6. The application is not accompanied by an accurately completed Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins and therefore fails to comply with part H of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) and Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquires about this report to **Adeleh Haghgoo Senior Development Management Officer – adeleh.haghgoo@hungtindonshire.gov.uk**

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – 25 October 2022

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
S1	22/01874/FUL	EE (UK) LTD Mast Above 2 - 6 High Street St Neots Removal of 4.5m trisector antenna flagpole structure (top at 15m) and all ancillary development Installation of 6m trisector antenna flagpole structure (top at 16.4m) and all ancillary development	Approve	Within a sustainable location
S2	22/02070/HHFUL	Mr Simon Fennell 1 Teversham Way Eaton Ford St Neots PE19 7QT Erection of two storey side extension	Approve	Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of its site.
S3	22/01949/TREE	Mrs Jennifer Park 3 Manor House Close Eaton Socon St Neots T1 Sycamore - Crown reduce and shape tree by 2 metres overall and remove any dead wood to keep tree from becoming too large for its location and overhanging property and causing any future property damage.	Approve	Subject to the approval of HDC Tree Officer.
S4	22/01826/FUL	Mr Dakin 35 Drake Road Eaton Socon Erection of a bungalow	Object Cllrs Maslen and Kumar abstained	Overdevelopment of the site. Layout and density of buildings Road Access, with a very narrow road.
S5	22/02040/LBC	Mrs Marg Harris 33 Church Street St Neots PE19 2BU Repair of arched window head to first floor window	Approve	Subject to the approval of HDC conservation officer and the materials used are like for like.
S6	22/02075/FUL	Mr Musharraf Ginai 3 Howard Road Eaton Socon St Neots Insertion within the existing building elevations additional windows and doors	Approve	Minimum impact on neighbours.
S7	22/01836/FUL	Elysium Healthcare Priory Hospital St Neots Howitts Lane Eynesbury Single storey modular units, for storage and staff rest, and fence alterations. (Resubmission 21/01680/FUL)	Approve Cllrs Kumar Laycock, and Slade abstained	Minimum impact on neighbours. Improves the property. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development.

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – 25 October 2022

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
S8	22/01977/FUL	Walsh Construction Elm Lodge Potton Road Eynesbury Erection of 4 town houses (two pairs of semi detached dwellings) Re siting of vehicular access	Approve Cllr Laycock abstained	Minimum impact on neighbours. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of site.
S9	22/01640/HHFUL	Mr Blanchard 7 Saxon Place Eynesbury St Neots Erection of First floor extension, garage conversion and changes to the fenestration	Approve	Minimum impact on neighbours. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of site.
S10	22/01664/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Barnden 33 Springbrook Eynesbury St Neots Proposed annex for ancillary accommodation for an elderly relative.	Approve Cllrs Laycock and Thorpe abstained	Members noted comments submitted by neighbours refer to a line of mature hawthorn trees along the boundary of the proposed development. Members support the application with a condition that the hawthorn trees are protected. In keeping with locality. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of its site.
S11 S12	22/01891/LBC 22/02144/FUL	Cross Keys (St Neots) Limited 16 Cross Keys Mews St Neots PE19 2AR Demolition of single storey rear extension and erection of new single storey rear extension	Approve	Subject to the approval of HDC conservation officer and in consultation with Historic England.
S13	22/01675/FUL	Tesco (Mr Andy Horwood) Regis House 151 Great North Road Eaton Socon Proposal to install New Packaged gas cooler and New External Canopy	Approve	Within a sustainable location.
S14 S15	22/02097/FUL 22/02098/LBC	Mr Alex Sharp 23 High Street St Neots PE19 1BU Residential conversion of the ground and first floors of rear extension, erection of additional storey above the rear extension internal alterations of the first and second floor to form 3 flats	Approve	Minimum impact on neighbours. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development.

Committee Chairperson

Development Management Committee



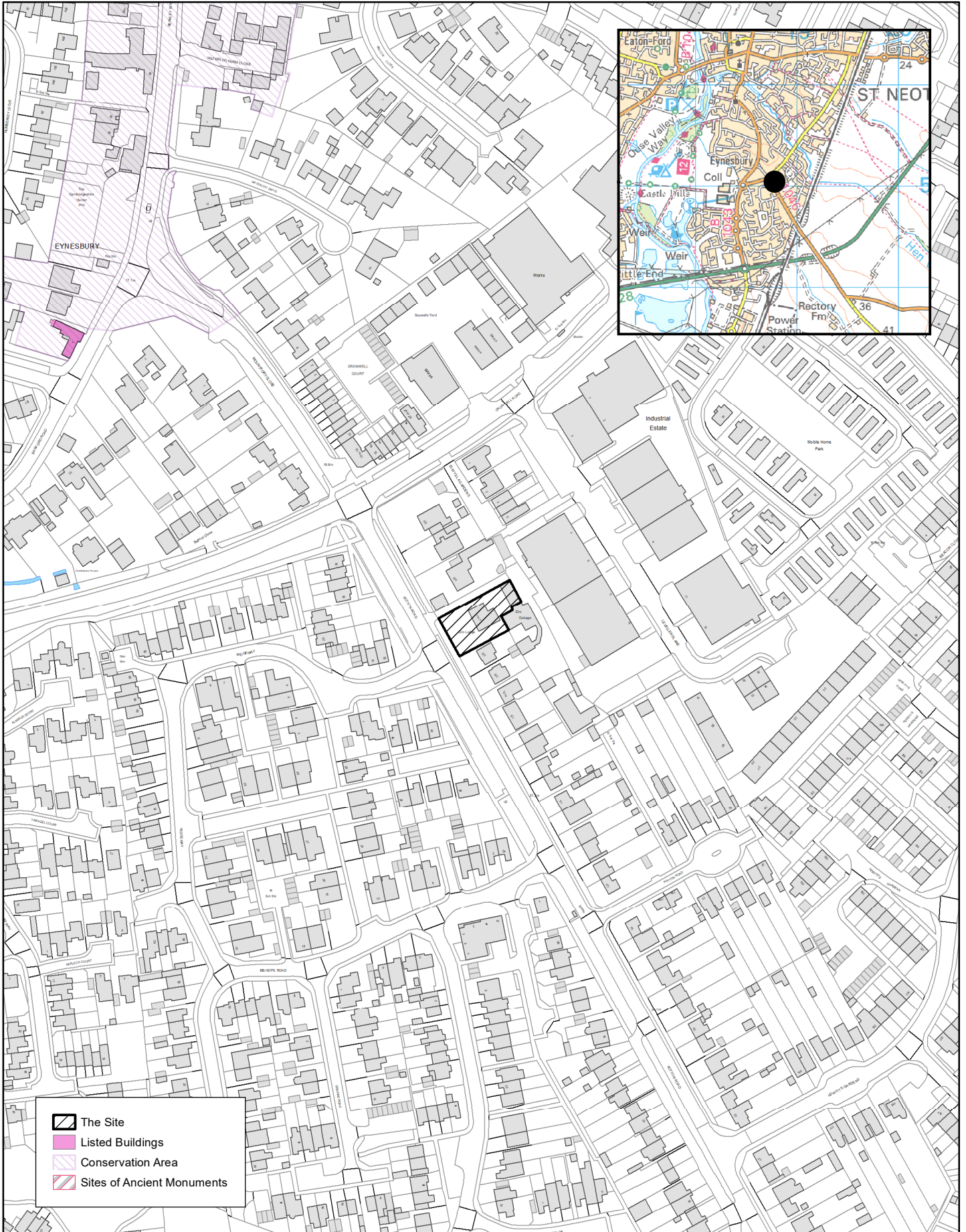
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Application Ref:22/01977/FUL

Date Created: 09/04/2024

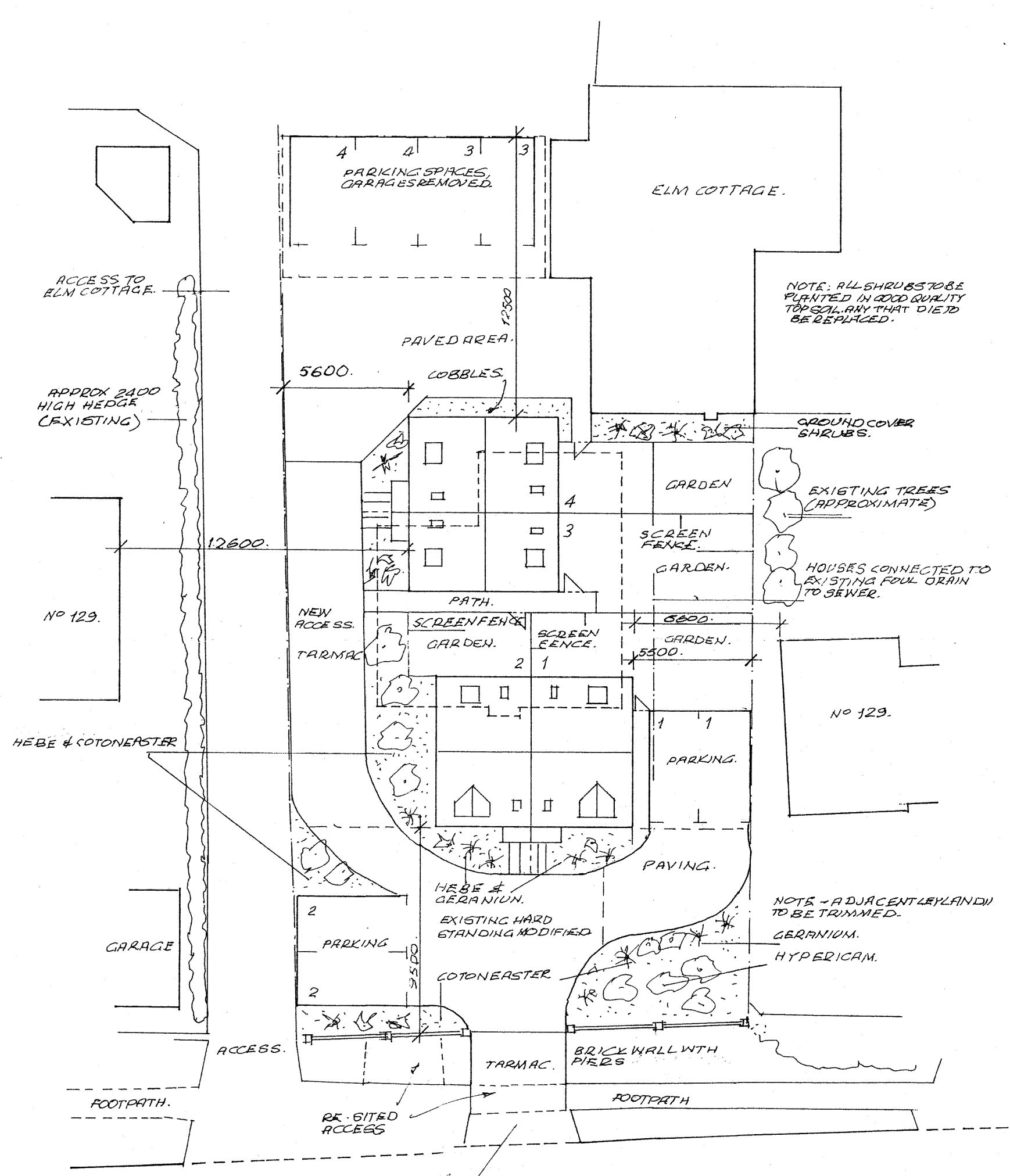
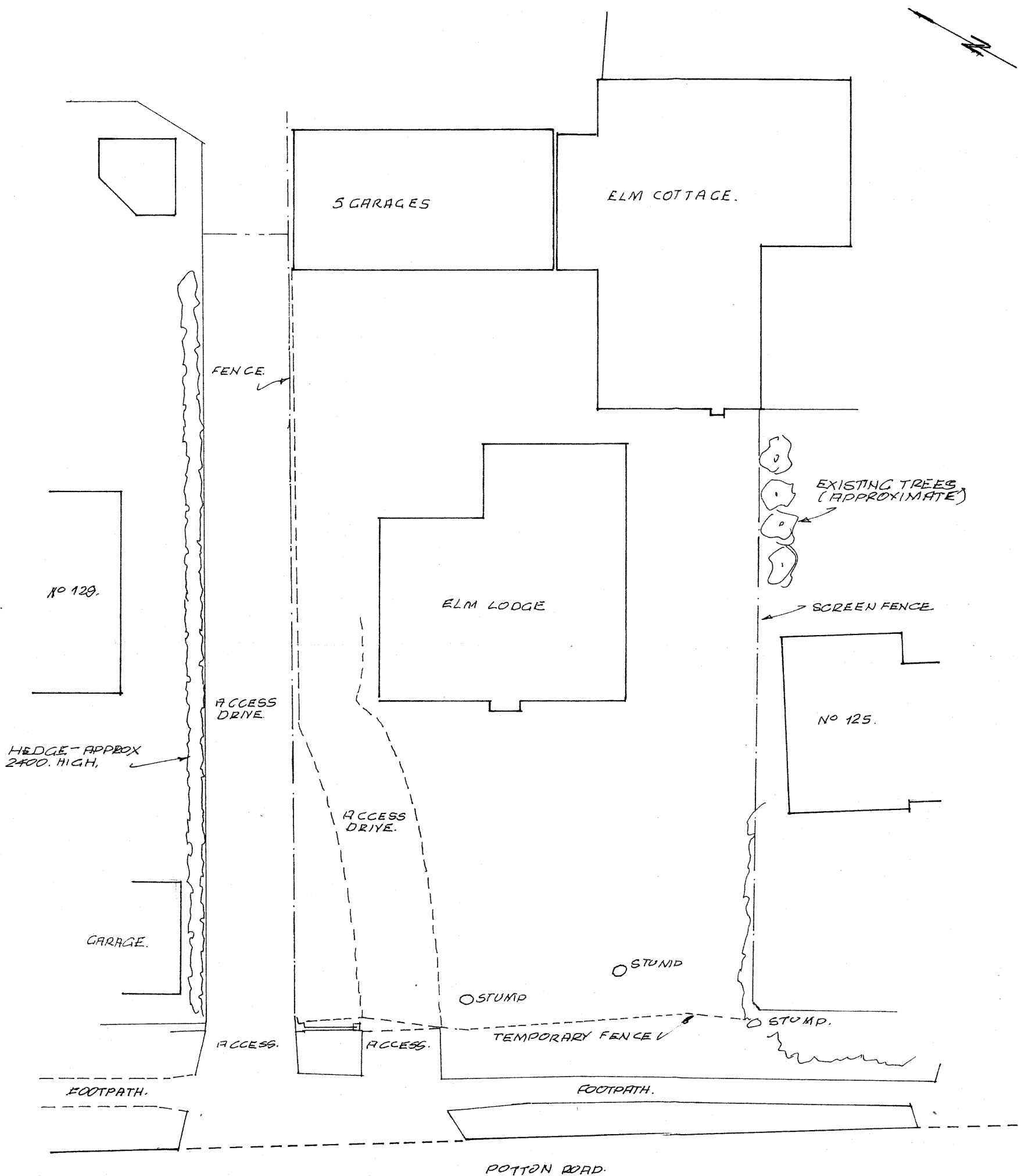
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Ordnance Survey HDC 10002322



Location Plan

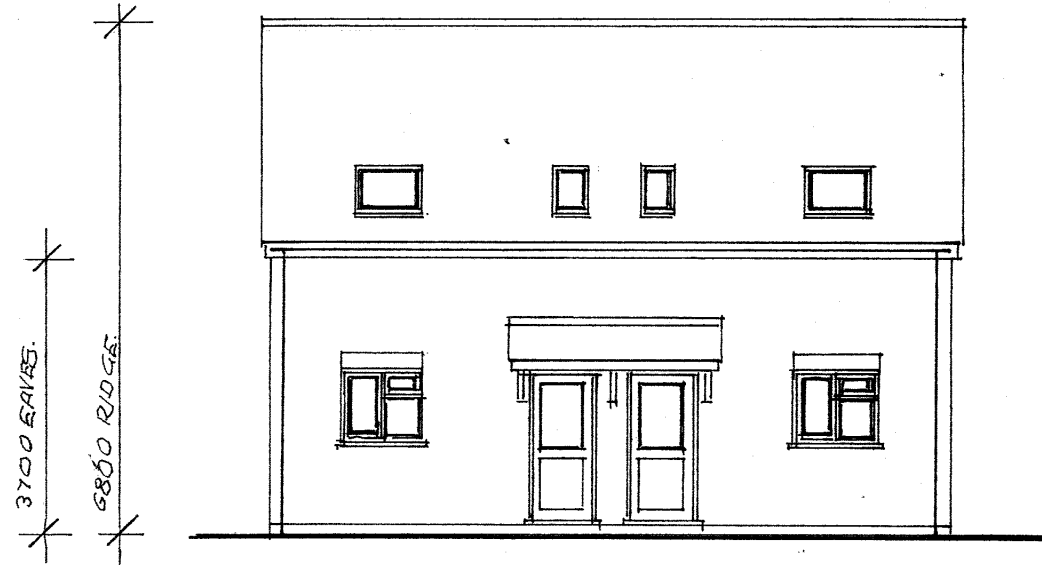




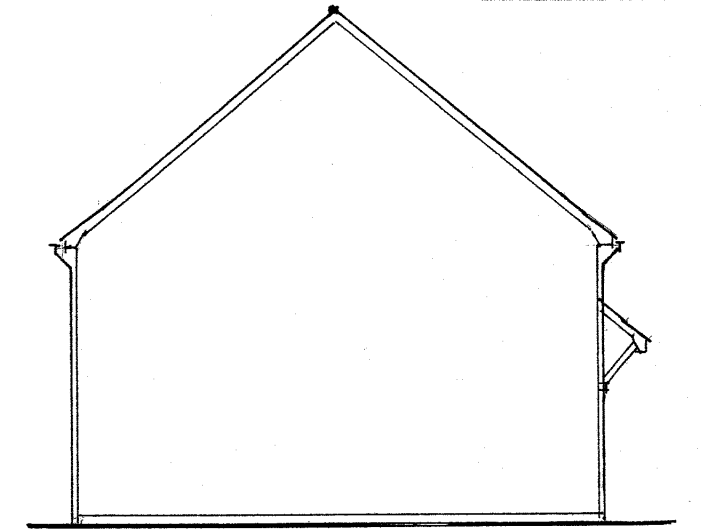
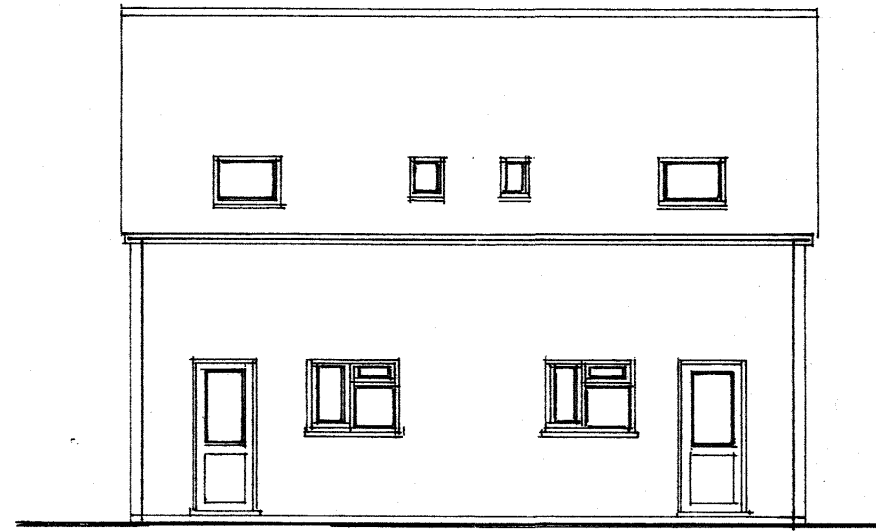
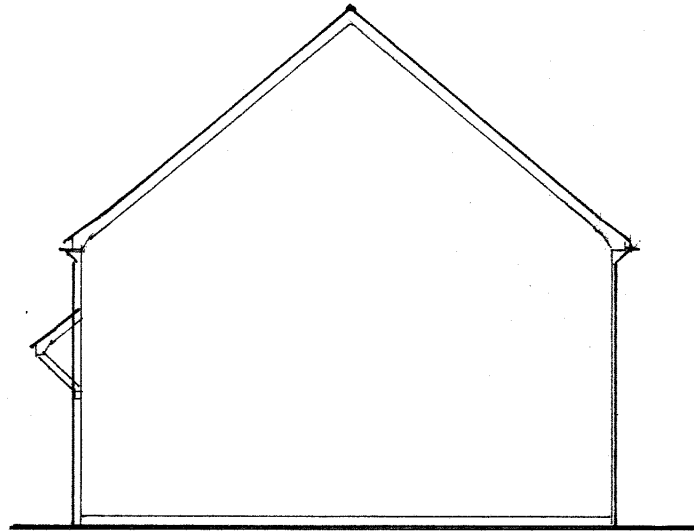
PROPOSED.
 REVISION.
 DISTANCES FROM FRONT & REAR
 BOUNDARIES & ADJACENT DWELLINGS.

REVISED PROPOSALS, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT,
 ELM LODGE, POTTON ROAD, EYNEBURY, CAMBS,
 SITE PLANS,
 SCALE 1:200.

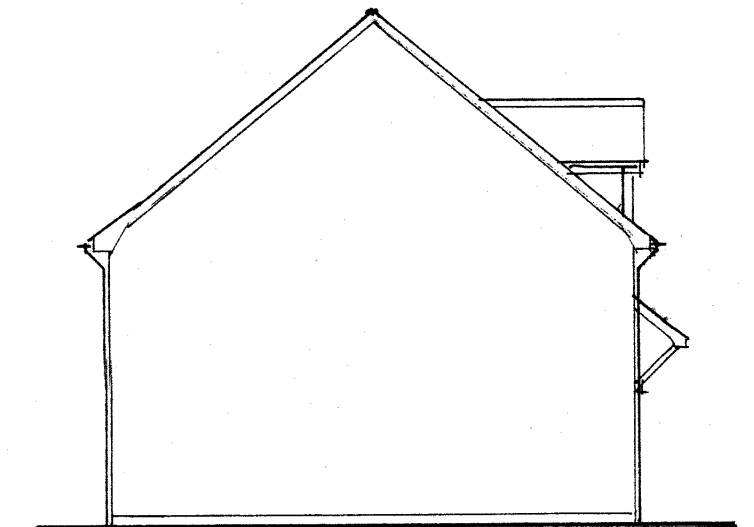
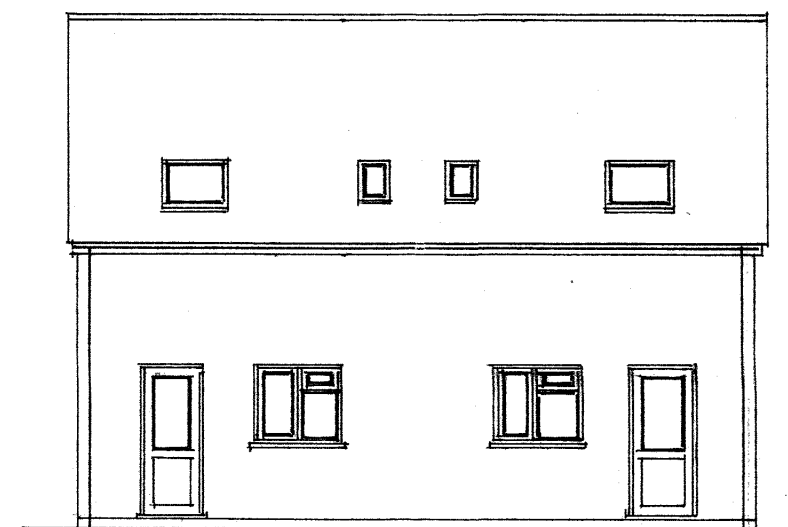
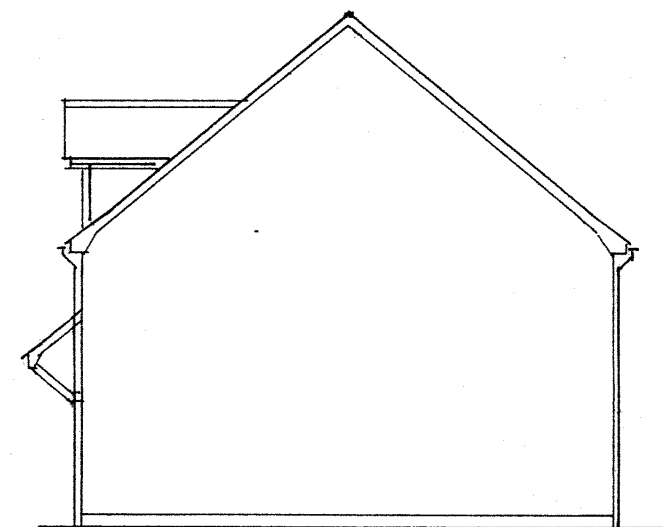
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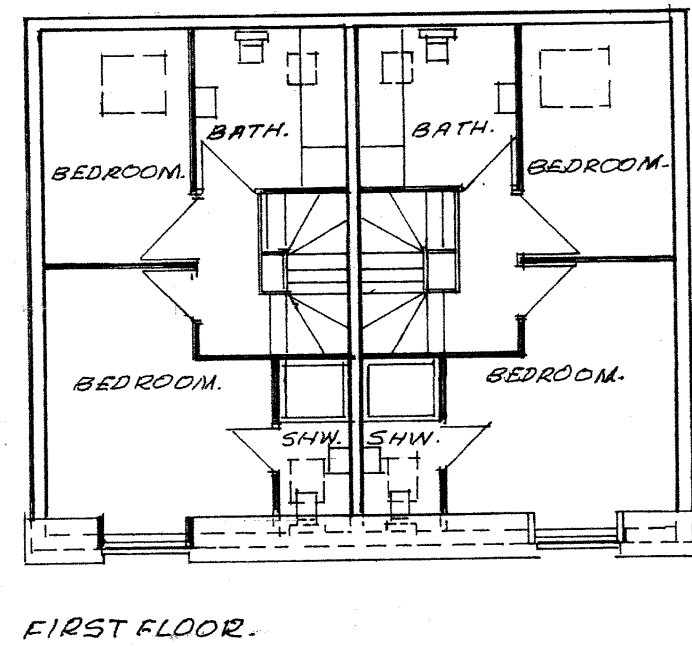
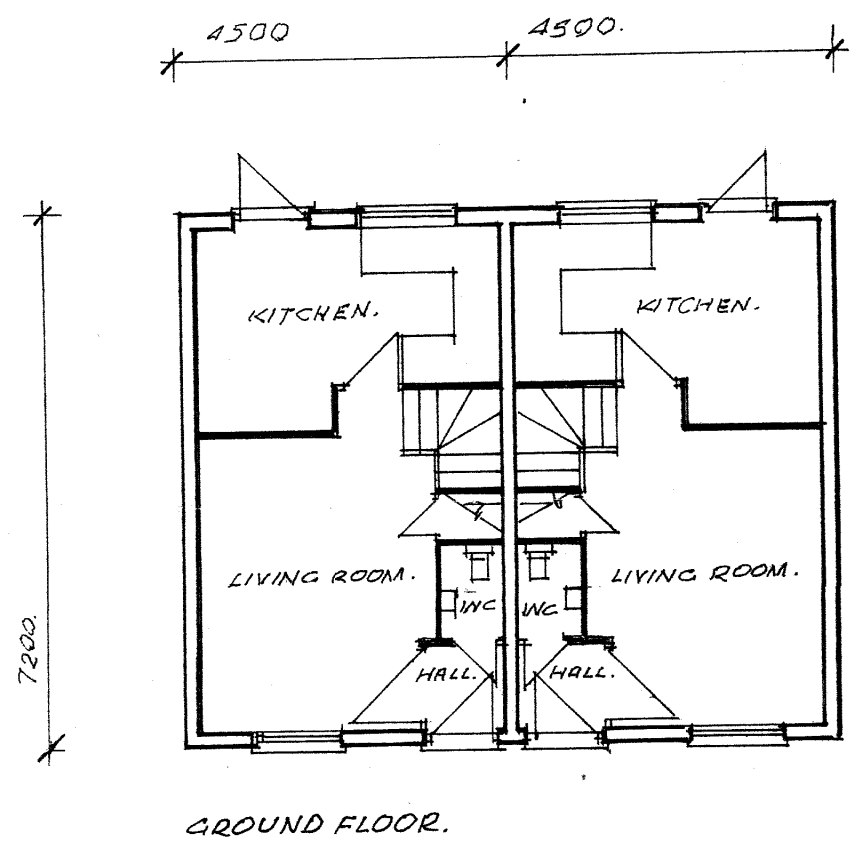
PLOTS 3 & 4.



PLOTS 1 & 2. DIMENSIONS AS PLOTS 3 & 4.



REVISED PROPOSALS, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.
ELM LODGE, POTTON ROAD EYNESBURY, CAMBS.
ELEVATIONS.
SCALE 1:100. DWS. 22.



REVISION.
OVERALL DIMENSIONS ADDED.

REVISED PROPOSALS, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT,
ELM LODGE, POTTON ROAD, EYNESBURY, CAMBS.
FLOOR PLANS
SCALE 1:100. DWG 22.