DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 21st JULY 2025

Case No: 24/01498/LBC

Proposal: Change of use and partial demolition of former Public

House to nine residential units

Location: 7-9 Market Square, St Neots

Applicant: Bewick Homes Ltd

Grid Ref: 518158 260259

Date of Registration: 19.08.2025

Parish: St Neots

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) as the case officer's recommendation is contrary to that by St Neots Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

1.1 The site is located within the town centre of St Neots on the northern side of the Market Square, directly opposite the Market Place. The Market Square frontage is bordered on either side by commercial premises with the Nationwide Building Society and a rear car cark to its west and an Estate Agents to its east. The property backs onto the residential development and commercial properties known as Priory Court on Priory Lane which has flats located on the first and second floors. The eastern boundary of the site is shared with the Cross Key Mews.

Proposal

1.2 This application seeks approval for the change of use of Nos. 7 and 9 Market Square, St Neots from a public house (formerly the Brook and Bartender) to 9 residential units. The proposal also involves the partial demolition of the existing building and the provision of a commercial (Class E) unit retained at ground floor level, fronting Market Square.

- 1.3 The proposal includes a total of 5No. studios, 1No. 1-bed flat and 3No. 2-bed flats ranging in size from 38sqm to 84sqm. Seven of the proposed units would be arranged around a newly formed rear courtyard accessed from both Market Square and Priory Lane with the conversion of the first and second floors of Nos 7 to 9 Market Square forming a further two units.
- 1.4 The property comprises two separate Listed Buildings (Nos. 7 and 9 Market Square) which are Grade II Listed along with their extensions to the rear. The adjacent properties No's 3 to 15 (odd) form a group and are also Listed. The buildings were first listed in 1971 (List Entry Nos: 1129890 and 1129891) and are located within the St Neots Conservation Area. A small part of the rear of the site along the western boundary lies within the Scheduled Monument of St Neots Priory.
- 1.5 The Local Planning Authority is also determining a full planning application for the same development (Reference: 24/10497/FUL).
- 1.6 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 2024) sets out the three objectives economic, social and environmental of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 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 2024 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 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 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)
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings
- 3.2 St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 adopted February 2016
 - Policy A3: Design
 - Policy SS2: Utilising Historic Buildings
- 3.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
 - St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment (October 2006)
 - The National Design Guide (2021)

For full details visit the government website Local policies

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Given the heritage and use of the property there is a wide planning history associated with it. The history from November 1974 onwards is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. The most recent, relevant history is detailed below:
- 4.2 24/01497/FUL Change of use and partial demolition of former Public House to 9 residential units Pending consideration and also reported to this Committee.
- 4.3 0200674FUL Change of use from A1/A3 to A3 (restaurant/pub) with staff accommodation. Erection of new shopfronts Approved
- 4.4 0200675LBC Erection of new shopfronts and alterations to form pub/restaurant Approved.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 St Neots Town Council – Object to the proposed development due to the loss of retail space, lack of off-street car parking and the overdevelopment of the site potentially leading to substandard living conditions and a negative impact on the listed building and conservation area. The Council are concerned about the impact of creating flats in the front historic 18th and 19th Century core of the listed buildings.

Officer Note - It should be noted that in terms of the Listed Building Consent application the LPA is only permitted to consider matters relating to the impact on heritage assets.

5.2 Historic England – Has concerns about the application on heritage grounds due to the lack of supporting information and assessment currently provided.

Officer Note – Additional supporting information including Archaeological evaluation and mitigation has now been provided in line with these concerns and Historic England have been reconsulted, but at the time of writing this report no further comments have been received.

- 5.3 Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer Does not support these proposals unless there is sufficient public benefit. Identified a less than substantial level of harm to arise from the proposal and should the LPA consider there to be adequate public benefits as a result of the proposal to make acceptable, conditions should be imposed on any planning permission granted. Further comments are included below.
- 5.4 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Following the receipt of amended and additional information, no objections, subject to the imposition of conditions on any planning permission granted. Welcome the approach to preserve the archaeology in situ beneath the current building. Archaeological evaluation demonstrated good survival of the priory floor, wall footings and deposits particularly towards the rear of the current building. Recommend the depth of the buffer over the known archaeology is mitigated through the use of 2 conditions. The first to secure the Archaeological Management Plan for the preserved deposits. The second to secure the archaeological monitoring of the foundation works and recording of any further archaeology encountered.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6. No third-party representations were received during the course of the application.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
 - Impact on Heritage Assets

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 7.2 No's 7-9 Market Square are Grade II Listed Buildings located within the St Neots Conservation Area. The properties are also in close proximity to a number of other Grade II Listed Buildings and are adjacent to the Scheduled Monument of St Neots Priory.
- 7.3 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.4 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 7.5 Para 212 of the NPPF sets out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.' Para 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification...' The NPPF goes on to state that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.
- 7.6 Local Plan Policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.
- 7.7 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and matters relating to the external works to the building are considered under the associated FUL application. HDC's Conservation Team have also been consulted
- 7.8 This application seeks approval for the change of use of the existing public house to nine residential units along with a commercial (Use Class E) space at 7-9 Market Square, St Neots. The proposal also involves the part demolition of the existing building to the rear and various internal and external alterations.
- 7.9 The proposal property contains the historic three storey buildings to the front, the modern two storey rear extension and the single

storey roofed-over ground floor between them, which also includes the ground floors of all the buildings. The application proposes the retention and restoration of the listed buildings and the retention and conversion of the majority of the brick-built extensions to the rear to form a number of separate dwellings. The flat roof extension to the rear is proposed to be removed together with a small part of the eastern rear building that currently contains the toilets for the public house. A new courtyard will be created providing access and amenity space to seven of the new residential units.

- 7.10 The listing descriptions of both 7 and 9 Market Square refer to the frontages of both Buildings and contain no information in respect of the internal features or the rear elevations and extensions. Also noted is the fact that they form part of a group of buildings with Numbers 3 to 15. The significance of both buildings therefore lies in the contribution they make to the historic and architectural value of St Neots Market Square. Both buildings have been extensively extended and remodelled both internally and to the rear over the years. The listing records that both properties have modern ground floor shopfronts and entrances.
- 7.11 The proposal involves the removal of fixtures and fittings, internal partitions and plant equipment internally across all three floors and specific details have been provided during the course of the application following a number of concerns raised by the Council's Conservation Officer. The submitted Wall Investigations shows the internal walls to be demolished are modern additions to the historic building and therefore no objections are raised in relation to their removal.
- 7.12 The proposed new internal ground floor wall between No 7 and 9 is now aligned with the upper floors and the apparent historic ground floor alignment of the two buildings. The existing staircase between the first and second floors, as well as the existing staircase from ground floor to first floor are both to be retained following the receipt of amended plans and no works are proposed to the balustrade. Furthermore, the existing ground floor pillars would also be retained.
- 7.13 The proposed reduction in floor level is described and identified in the amended drawings/documents. The proposal removes a limited length of concrete which currently forms a curve, described as 750mm in height, within what appears to be the former ground floor of No. 9 and reinstates the ground floor to one level. The amended drawings show that the location of the proposed area of higher floor removal is not within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument.

- 7.14 The Council's Conservation Officer notes that the change of use of most of the property to residential is not considered to be harmful to the significance of the Listed Buildings as they retain the likely historic domestic use of the historic upper floors as well as maintaining the domestic use of the upper floors of the modern rear extensions.
- 7.15 However, the proposal would see the loss of the existing commercial use to the front of No. 9 and its change to an entranceway and the Conservation Officer does not consider this to retain the significance or character of the building as a historic three storey commercial building on a historic market square. In addition, the removal of the commercial use of the ground floor of the buildings to the rear of Numbers 7,9 and 11 changes the contribution of the buildings around Market Square. The buildings which form the Market Square, as well as its backlands, record the importance of St Neots as a trading and commercial centre from the 17th Century onwards as well as the heart of the medieval core. While it is recognised that the historic rear buildings themselves have been replaced by late 20th century rear extensions, the proposed change of use removes the remaining historic contribution of these buildings to the Market Square. For these reasons the Conservation Officer considers that the proposed change of use of the ground floor would be harmful to the significance and character of the Listed Building and to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.16 The proposal would include the demolition of the existing roofedover single-storey element at the rear of the site and one of the rear extensions. The elements proposed to be demolished are not considered to contribute to the historic or evidential values which form the significance of the Listed Buildings as they are modern additions to the site and by extension do not positively contribute to the St Neots Conservation Area.
- 7.17 During the course of the application, additional information, amended plans and a structural Engineers Report have been submitted in an attempt to overcome the Conservation Officers concerns.
- 7.18 The concerns expressed by the Conservation Officer about the potential harm of the proposal to the significance of the Listed buildings because of the condition of the buildings and their structural support has now been addressed by the submitted structural Engineers report and is considered acceptable.
- 7.19 Amended plans have also been received to retain the existing doorway on the principal elevation of No 9 and include a new window type feature that aligns with the windows of the upper floors removing the previously proposed metal gates. The

amended plans also remove the original proposal to replace the existing windows on the front elevation of Nos. 7 and 9 and instead retain and repair them. Conditions would be imposed on any consent granted requiring the submission of detailed scaled drawings and methodology of proposed works and repairs including full details of the proposed works to the frontage, windows, materials, methods and finishes.

- 7.20 The proposed finishing materials include the use of uPVC doors, concrete roof tiles, uPVC rainwater goods and double-glazed windows, which are not generally acceptable for use on a Listed Building. The property is partly historic and partly modern and therefore details of all proposed materials and features are needed to fully assess the potential impact on the listed building. As such, a condition would be imposed on any consent granted to secure specific details and samples of finishing materials. Furthermore, a separate condition would be imposed requiring the submission of detailed scale elevation and section drawings of all proposed windows and doors, including glazing bars, sills and lintels and reveals and full details of materials and finishes.
- 7.21 The proposal includes a 'parge' coat to be applied to the interior of the walls of the historic buildings of Nos. 7 and 9. However, the walls of the building are of traditional construction and breathable materials so the addition of any sealant to the walls would prevent their breathability and is likely to lead to damp and condensation problems within the wall and building and to its deterioration. As such, a condition would be imposed on any listed building consent granted to ensure the use of breathable materials on the interior and/or exterior walls of the historic buildings.
- 7.22 The submitted elevation and section drawings include details of the proposed installation of ground floor walls into the existing rear buildings. The drawing also confirms that the rear buildings adjoining the historic buildings are to be retained with ground floor walls retained. The slight alteration of the roofline of the west elevation reduces the height of the end section of the roof and the impact on the adjacent Listed Building (No. 3 Market Square).
- 7.23 Notwithstanding the submission of additional information and amended plans to improve the front elevation of No. 9, the Council's Conservation Officer has still concluded that the proposal would result in a less than substantial degree of harm to the significance and character of the Listed Buildings of Nos. 7 and 9 Market Square, St Neots due to the loss of a commercial use and change of appearance to the ground floor of No. 9 (including its use as an entranceway) as well as the loss of the historical use of the rear extensions at Nos. 7 and 9. However, it is acknowledged that in principle a change of use of part of the proposal property may be supportable and there may be public

- benefit from the proposed change of most of the property to residential use.
- 7.24 The primary significance of these Listed Building appears to lie in their external appearance and the group value contribution they make to the historic and architectural value of St Neots Market Square.
- 7.25 Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 7.26 The proposal is currently vacant, the pub/restaurant having closed in 2021. The proposal change of use would secure a long-term viable use for the two Grade II Listed Buildings and this is considered a benefit of the scheme. The Local Planning Authority are therefore satisfied that the public benefits of the proposed development would outweigh the harm identified by the Council's Conservation Officer in this instance. Furthermore, it is recognised that amended plans were received during the course of the application to seek to address concerns raised by the Council's Conservation Officer and reduce the level of harm.
- 7.27 Overall, following the receipt of amended and additional information (including the Structural Engineer's Report), the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not result in any physical harm to the historic parts of the Listed Buildings of No's. 7-9, St Neots. As such, the proposal is therefore deemed to be in accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP2, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies A3, SS1 and SS2 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

Conclusion

- 7.28 The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is:
 - * Would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area;
 - * Would not have a harmful impact upon the designated heritage assets.
- 7.29 Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to conditions to include the following

- Time limit
- Approved plans
- Materials to be agreed
- Works to No. 9 frontage
- Window repairs details
- New windows and doors details
- Breathable materials on walls of the historic buildings.

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CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to Christina Riley, Development Management Team Leader, South Team – email christina.riley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



I	No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
- 1	140.	INCICI CITCO	Development	SITT C DCCISION	140103

The following application/s are for listed building consent								
S1	24/01497/FUL	Twigden	OBJECT	The Council has reviewed the				
AND THE	24/01498/LBC	7 - 9 Market Square, St Neots		planning proposal documents,				
	The state of the s	Change of Use, and partial		including consultee comments				
		demolition of former Public House		submitted by Historic Buildings &				
		to 9 residential units		Places (HB&P), and shares their				
		The Cultification of the Artist Advisors (Artist Artist Ar		concerns. In particular, the Council				
				are concerned about the impact of				
				creating flats in the front historic				
				18th and 19th-century core of the				
				listed buildings. Reference is made				
				to Chapter 16 of the National				
				Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)				
				(2024), which emphasises the				
				importance of preserving heritage				
				assets.				
				Policy Considerations				
				Huntingdonshire District Council				
				Local Plan				
				The proposal does not align with				
				the Huntingdonshire District				
				Council Local Plan, in particular:				
				8.39: The purpose of this				
				policy is to ensure that				
				development proposals				
				protect and conserve the				
				district's heritage assets				
				and where possible				
				enhance them and their				
				settings.				
				Policy LP 34: Heritage				
				Assets and their Settings;				
				Conversion, Alteration, or				
				Other Works to a Heritage				
				Asset; Conservation Areas				
				and Archaeology. St Neots Neighbourhood Plan				
				The proposal is inconsistent with				
				the following policies:				
				Policy SS1: Proposals				
				involving alterations to				
				listed buildings or those				
				contributing to the				
				conservation area's				
				character should retain				
				existing facades where				
				appropriate. Residential				
				use above ground floor				
				level is acceptable only if it				
				does not result in the loss				
				of an existing town centre				
		· ·		or an emoting term centre				



No. R	eference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
			JATE DECISION	Policy SS2: The re-use of historic buildings within the Town Centre for town centre uses is supported. Any alterations must be sympathetic to the building's historic and architectural significance. Policy PT2: Development proposals, including residential conversions, must provide adequate parking to meet the need of residents and visitors. Key Concerns 1. Loss of Retail Space: The proposed change of use from retail to residential a prime retail location on Market Square is concerning. This shift will contribute to the erosion of retail units in the Town Centre, negatively impacting its vitality. 2. Lack of Parking: The development does not provide sufficient parking which may lead to increased pressure on existing parking facilities. 3. Overdevelopment: The proposed nine dwellings constitute an overdevelopment of the site, potentially leading to substandard living conditions and a negative impact on the listed building and conservation area. Whilst the Council is not opposed to residential development on the site it believes the development of the site it believes the development of the site it believes the development of the site and the impact of the loss of retail space, which is in a prime location, will have a negative impact on the Town Centre and on listed building and conservation area.



Schedule of Planning Applications –25th March 2025

lo.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
			1	The Council would prefer to see a
				revised proposal to better align
				with local and national planning
				policies, ensuring a balanced
				approach that safeguards the
				town's heritage while supporting
				sustainable development. This
				would include a reduction in the
				number of dwellings to provide
				better quality and size of
				accommodation along with the
				retention of retail units on the
				ground floor.
ne f	ollowing application,	s are in a conservation area		92



Schedule of Planning Applications –25th March 2025

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
			VO.	

Chairperson

Development Management Committee Application Ref: 24/01498/LBC

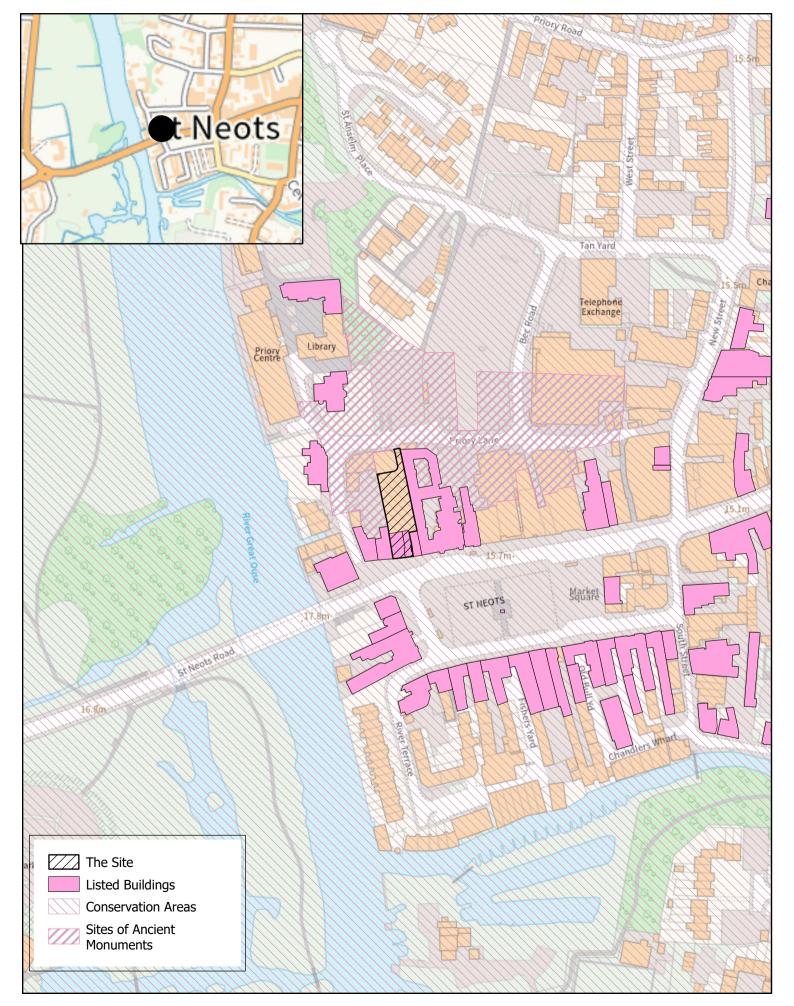


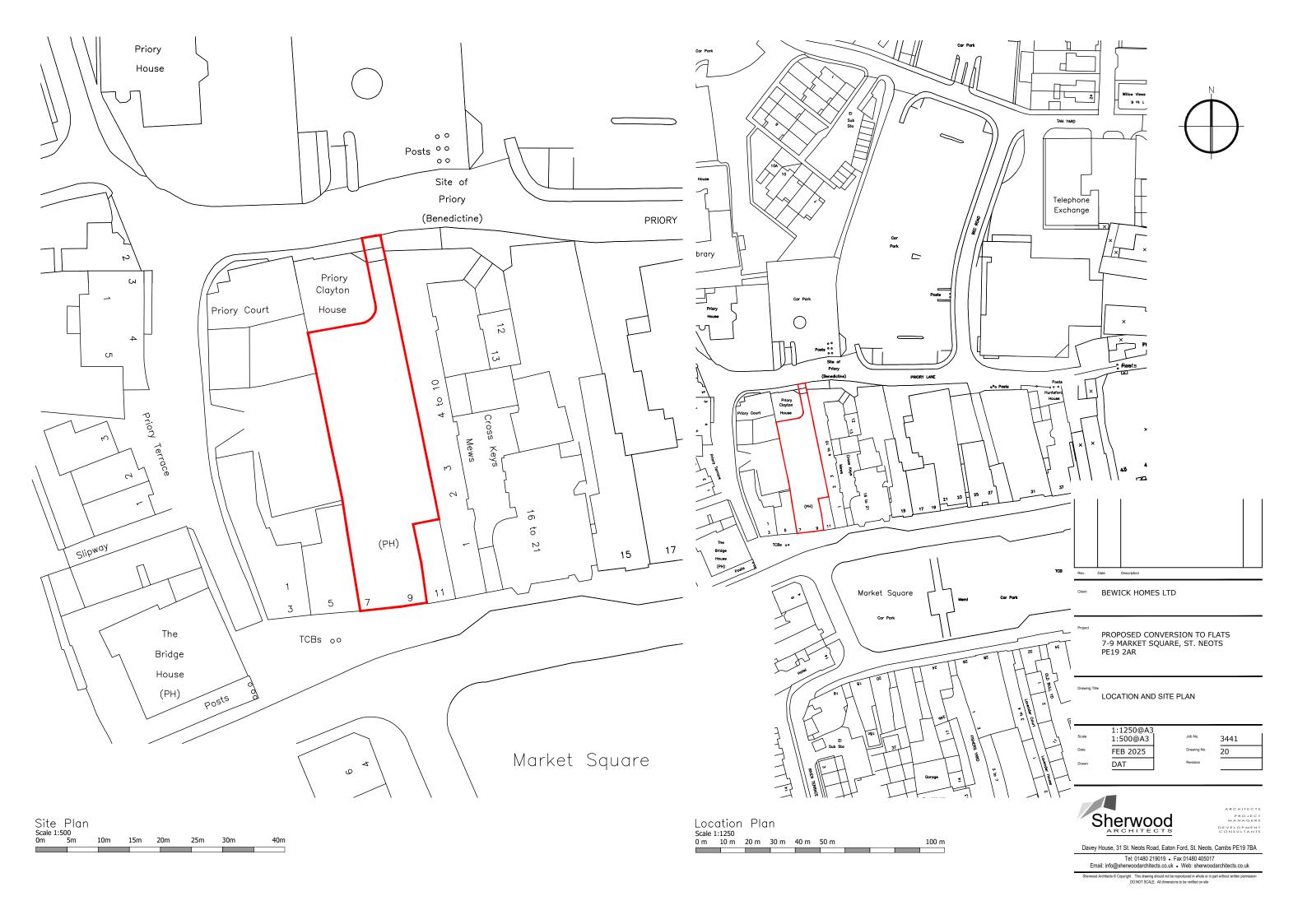
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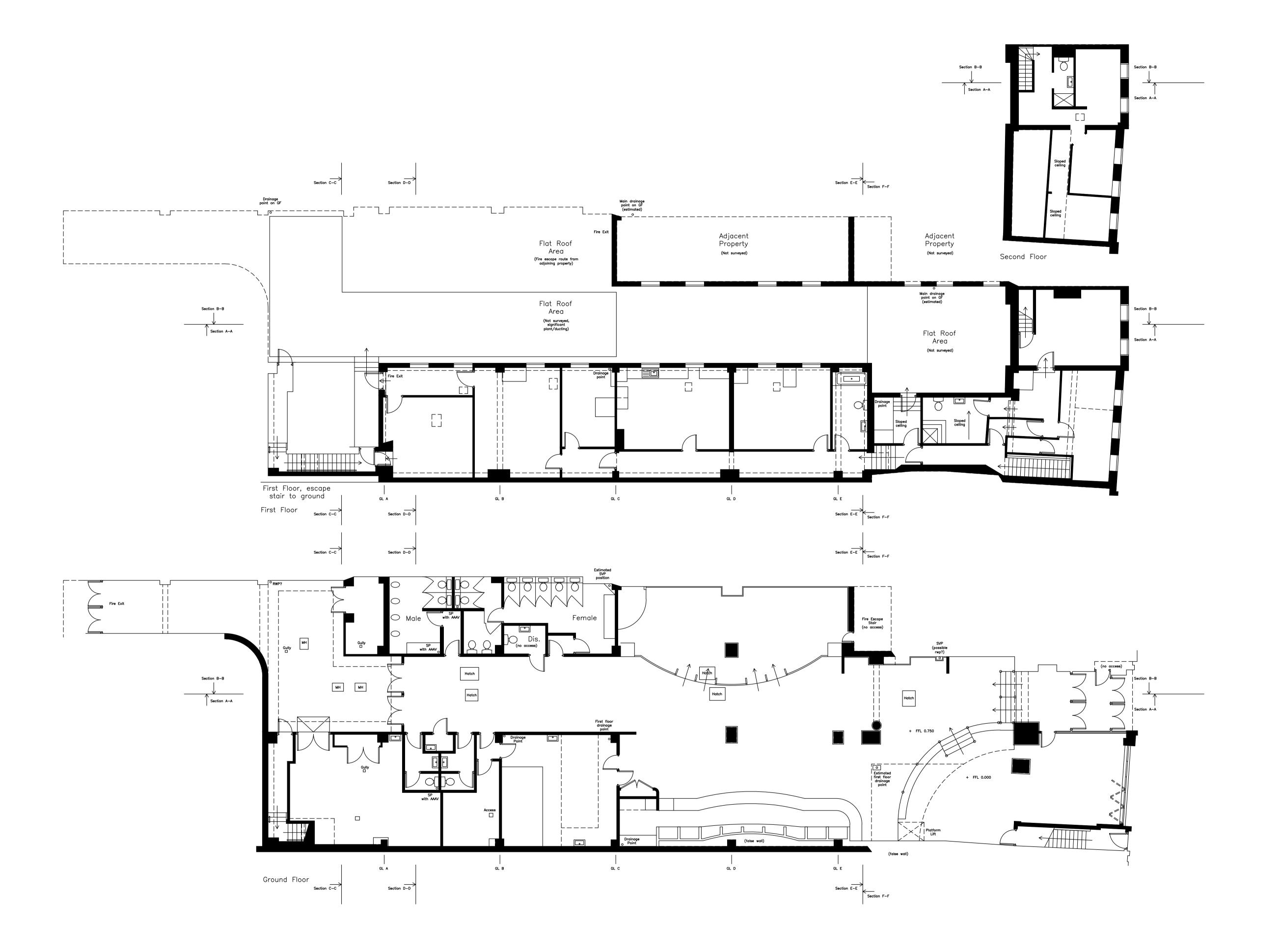
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Client BEWICK HOMES LTD

PROPOSED CONVERSION TO FLATS 7-9 MARKET SQUARE, ST. NEOTS PE19 2AR

Drawing Title EXISTING FLOOR PLANS

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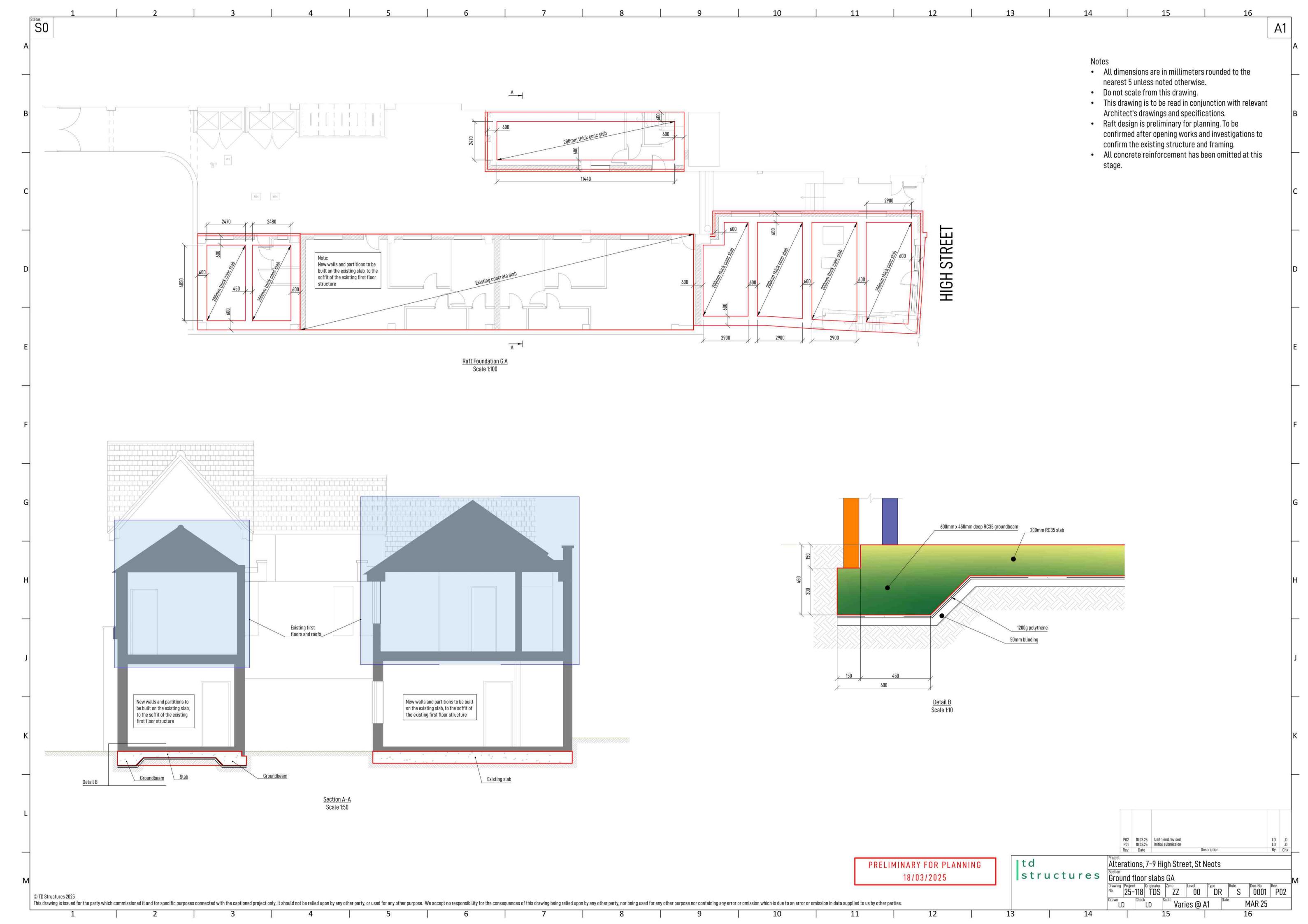
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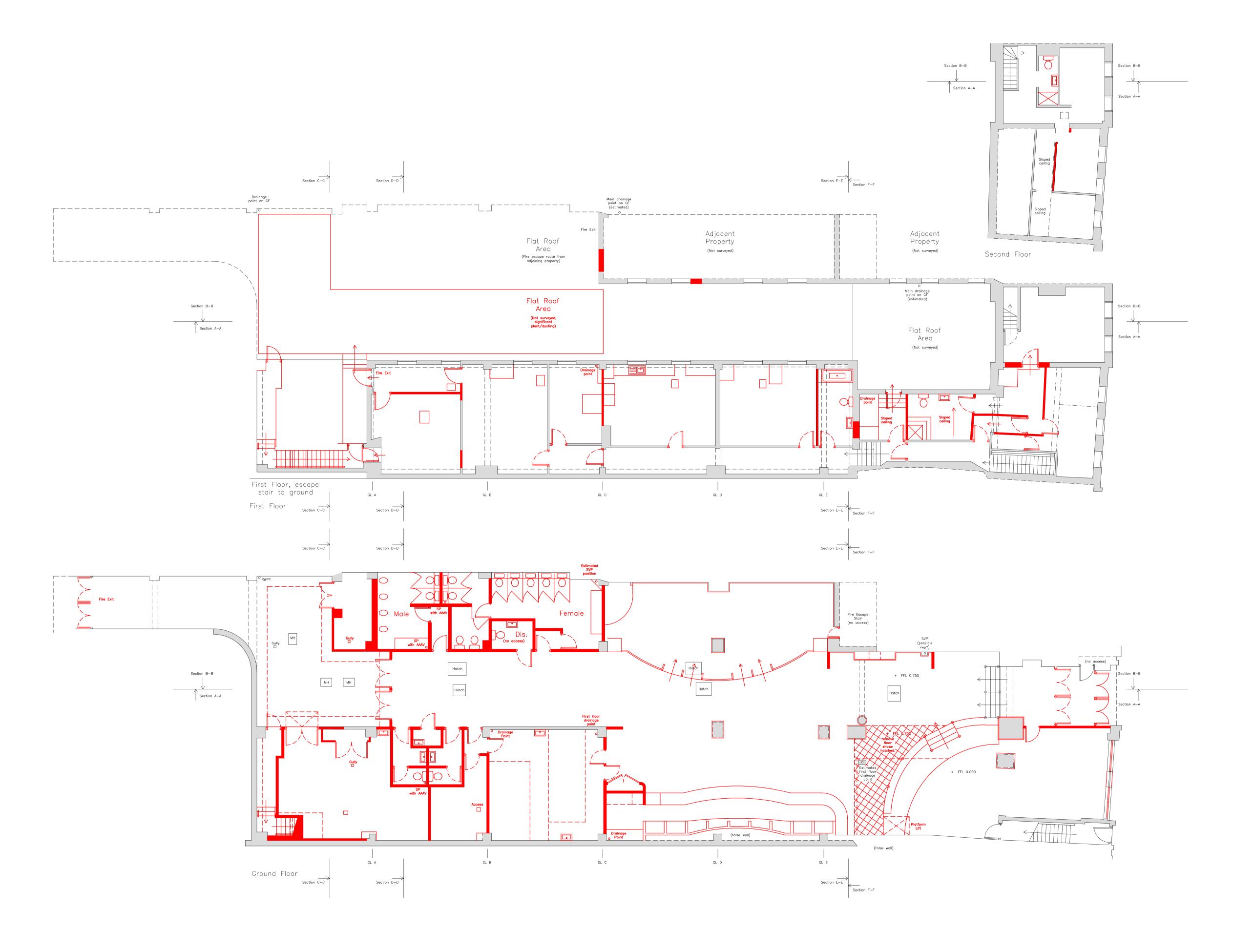
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ARCHITECTS

PROJECT MANAGERS







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PROPOSED CONVERSION TO FLATS 7-9 MARKET SQUARE, ST. NEOTS PE19 2AR

DEMOLITION PLAN



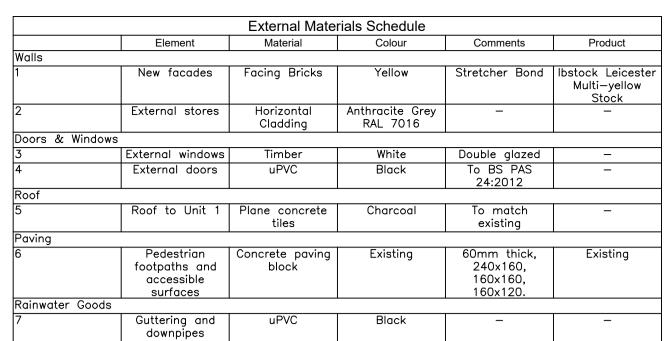
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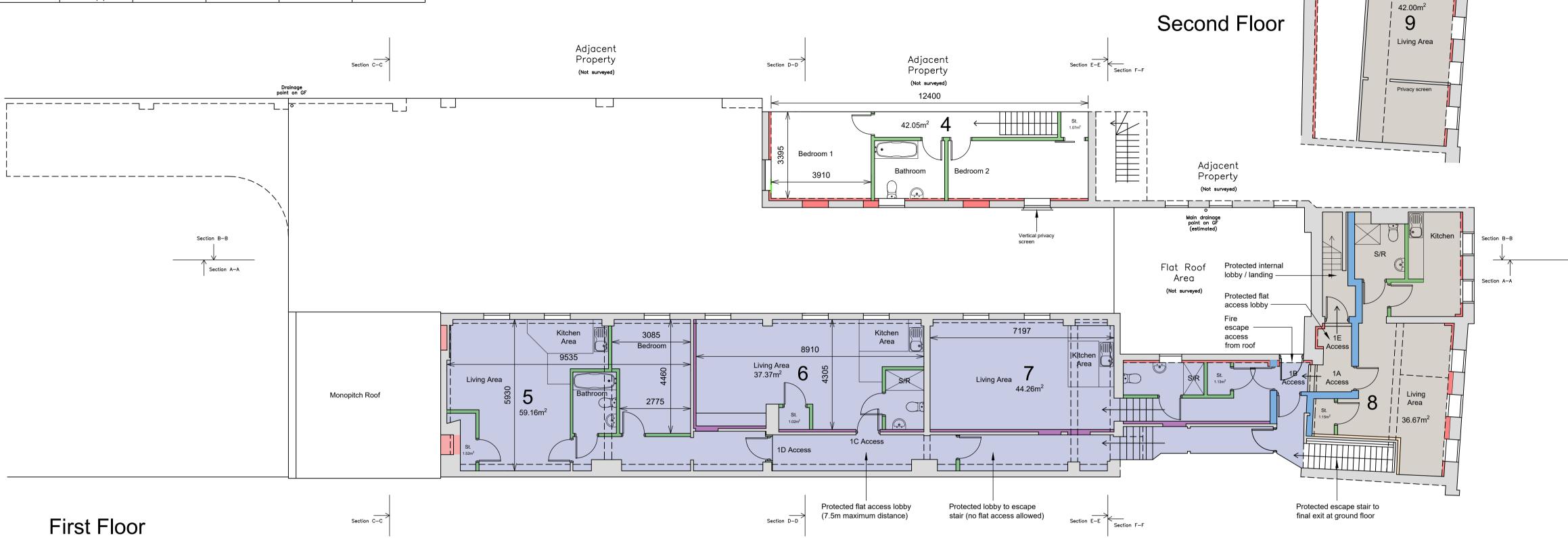
PROJECT MANAGERS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS Davey House, 31 St. Neots Road, Eaton Ford, St. Neots, Cambs PE19 7BA

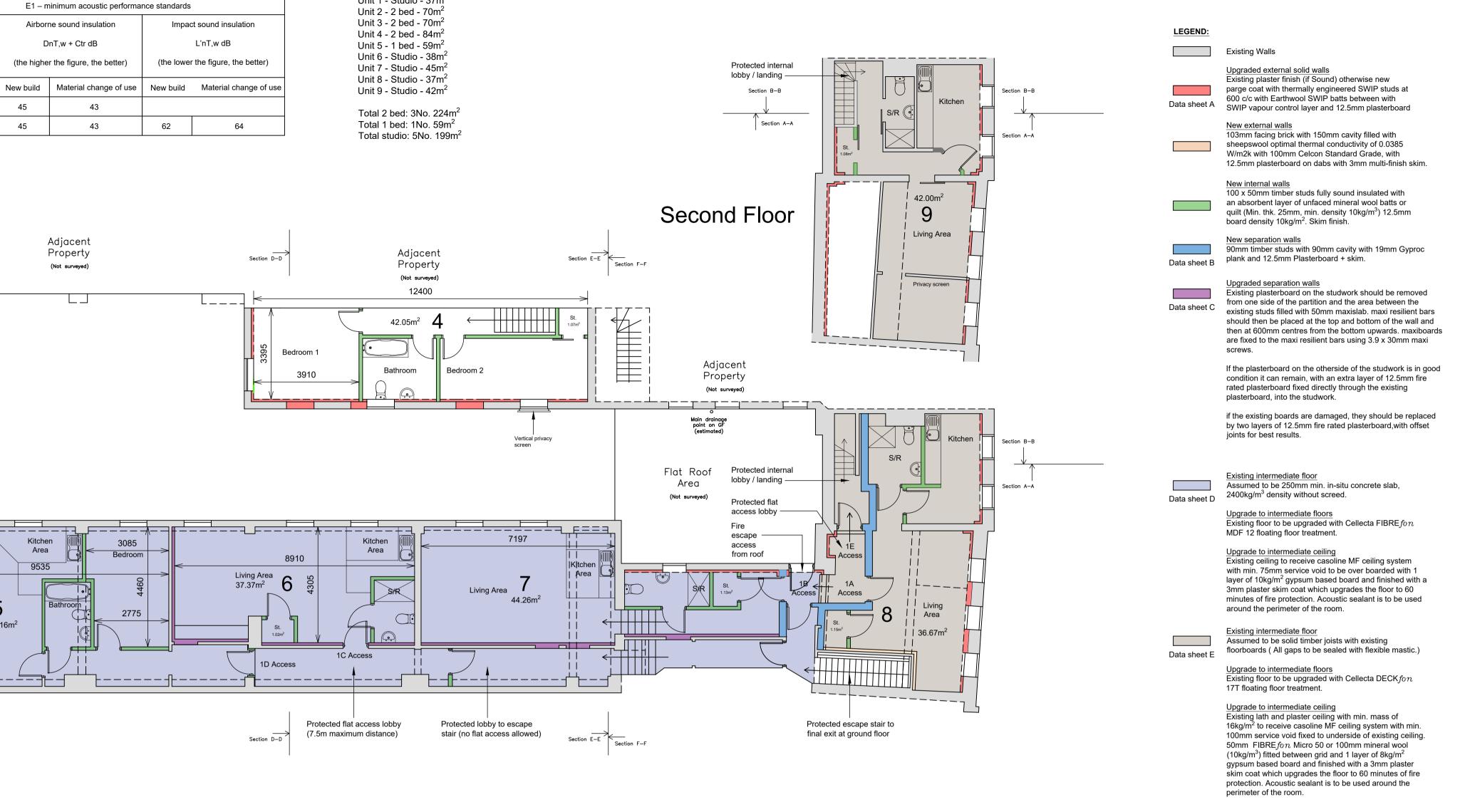
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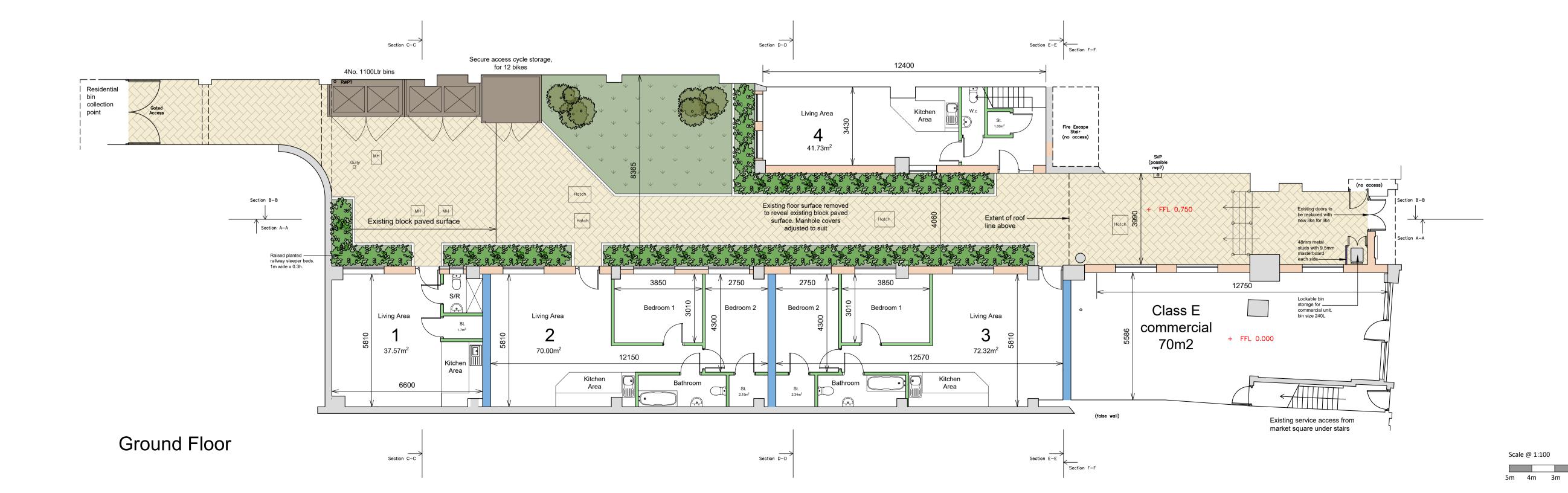
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	E1 – Protection	n against sound from other	Flats Schedule Areas = GIA			
	E1 – m	ninimum acoustic performat	nce standards			Unit 1 - Studio - 37m ² Unit 2 - 2 bed - 70m ²
	D	ne sound insulation nT,w + Ctr dB r the figure, the better)	Impact sound insulation L'nT,w dB (the lower the figure, the better)			Unit 3 - 2 bed - 70m ² Unit 4 - 2 bed - 84m ² Unit 5 - 1 bed - 59m ² Unit 6 - Studio - 38m ² Unit 7 - Studio - 45m ²
	New build Material change of use		New build	Material change of use		Unit 8 - Studio - 37m ² Unit 9 - Studio - 42m ²
Walls	45	43				Total 2 bed: 3No. 224m ²
Floors & Stairs	45	43	62	64		Total 1 bed: 1No. 59m ² Total studio: 5No. 199m ²



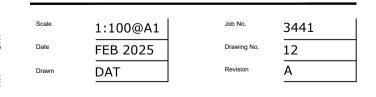






PROPOSED CONVERSION TO FLATS 7-9 MARKET SQUARE, ST. NEOTS PE19 2AR

PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS





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