

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15th DECEMBER 2025

Case No: 25/01238/FUL

Proposal: Erection of 2no. dwellings and associated works.

Location: 2 Queens Court, Eaton Socon, St Neots

Applicant: Mr Buchanan

Grid Ref: E 516816 N 259445

Date of Registration: 21.07.2025

Parish: St Neots

RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE

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

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application site is on the northern side of Queens Court, a primarily residential area in Eaton Socon, St. Neots. The area generally comprises of two storey dwellings of similar age, style and materials. A row of shops is located to the southwest. Queens Court is a cul-de-sac and Queens Gardens provides a route through the estate and serves the nearby shopping parade. The site is therefore prominently located visible within the street scene of both Queens Court and Queens Gardens.
- 1.2 The application relates to the side garden of No.2, Queens Court, an end-of-terrace dwelling sited at the junction where Queens Court meets Queens Gardens. The host dwelling is typical of the area, constructed in red brick with a tiled roof and its ridgeline parallel to Queens Court. A separate single storey garage and shed is sited to the eastern side, beyond which lies an open strip of grassed land currently used partially as a drive with an access from Queens Gardens.
- 1.3 This application seeks permission to demolish the existing separate single storey garage and shed to the east of the dwelling and erect two, two-bedroom homes. These dwellings would be built upon the existing strip of open land to the east. Parking to Plot 1 would be provided on two separate accesses from Queens

Gardens, while Plot 2 would have two vehicle spaces provided immediately within the front garden from Queens Court.

- 1.4 The dwellings would create a continuation of the existing terrace of properties with pitched roofs, and a centrally located chimney. The application states that the materials used would be appropriate to the host dwelling and surrounding area, although no specific details regarding materials have been submitted as part of the application.
- 1.5 The application proposes to utilise the garden immediately to the front of No.2 as parking for the existing dwelling and the existing vehicular access from Queens Gardens for one of the new dwellings as well as a new vehicular access further to the north for the second proposed dwelling.
- 1.6 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency Maps for Flooding and on the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment maps and there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity.
- 1.7 It is acknowledged that the proposal follows planning refusal reference 23/00774/FUL and 22/01309/FUL for the Erection of two x two-bedroom homes and associated works, one of which was a delegated refusal and subsequently dismissed at appeal and the earlier application refused by Development Management Committee in November 2022. The most recent reasons for refusal are provided below:
 1. The scale, shape, massing and siting of the proposed development is considered to fail to assimilate with the general form and layout of its surroundings and does not contribute positively to the area's character. The proposal has not been guided by the established building line or boundary treatments and causes an unacceptable degree of prominence. The proposed private amenity areas do not reflect the scale and proportion of gardens in the locality. The proposal omits design features (canopies and bay windows) which are common in the immediate street scene and therefore conflicts with the prevailing appearance of the public realm. The proposal would also introduce a car-dominated frontage on Queens Court which reduces the pleasant open aspect of this part of the street. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies LP 7, LP 11 and LP 12 (parts a, b, c, l and m of the Local Plan, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, paragraphs 130 a - d, and 131 of the NPPF and the place making principles set out in Chapter 3 of the HDC Design Guide SPD 2017.
 2. The application has failed to incorporate adequate provision for refuse (wheeled bins) by virtue of the omission of a completed unilateral undertaking contrary to the requirements of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

2011, and Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted May 2019).

- 1.8 It is noted that this current scheme does offer a different proposal to that refused in 2023 and dismissed at appeal in 2024. The agent has made some design reference in the new scheme to the existing terraces fenestration and siting of doorways, as well as the inclusion of a ground floor bay window.
- 1.9 The end gable, the principle elevation for Plot 1, has been given a more active frontage to make it more appealing to the wider street scene in line with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (SPD) 2017. The front door is located on this elevation along with a small first floor bathroom window. The siting, footprint and scale of the dwellings remains similar to that proposed under the earlier refused applications. The garden sizes and access points also remain the same as those previously submitted.
- 1.10 There are several recent planning applications for this site, the most recent being the appeal decision under reference APP/H0250/W/243338224 following the refusal of 23/00774/FUL.
- 1.11 This application has been accompanied by:
- A Planning, Design and Access Statement;
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Report;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
 - A Unilateral Undertaking to make provisions for bins
- 1.12 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

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 Areas
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

3.2 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 (2024)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)

3.3 St Neots Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy A3 (Design)
- Policy PT1 (Sustainable Travel)
- Policy PT2 Vehicle Parking Standards for Residential Development

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. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 23/0077/FUL – Erection of 2 x 2-bedroom homes and associated works REFUSED dated 18.08.2023
- 4.2 22/01309/FUL - Erection of 2 x 2-bedroom homes and associated works REFUSED dated 25.11.2022

Appeals History

- 4.3 24/00019/REFUSL - Erection of 2 x 2-bedroom homes and associated works – Dismissed 08.07.2024

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Parish Council – support the proposal and advise the proposal is in keeping with locality and improves the property.
- 5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority – No objections to the proposal in principle. The Highway Authority notes this proposal will utilise existing highways accesses. The 4 parking areas will be permeable block paving. Based on the information submitted, from the perspective of the Local Highway Authority the proposed development is acceptable subject to conditions requiring lay out of the accesses prior to occupation and adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run off into the adjacent public highway.
- 5.3 Huntingdonshire District Council Arboricultural Officer – The proposal is not located in a Conservation Area and there are no TPO's at the address. There appears to be no trees of significance on the site that would require consideration in the planning process.

Recommendation: No objections to the application.

- 5.4 No comments have been received from the Councils Ecology or Landscape officers.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 During the course of the application, three letters of representation were received by neighbouring residential properties. All three were in objection to the proposal. The concerns raised have been summarised below:

- parking provision not adequate
- busy cul-de-sac
- accessibility problems for emergency vehicles
- overdevelopment of the plot
- overlooking potential
- construction noise
- children's safety (near to school)
- work already being carried out on site
- inaccurate representation of the site within the application documents.

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 48 of the NPPF (2024). 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 application) consists of:

- Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste
- St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029

7.4 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- The Principle of Development
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity

- Highway Safety, Access and parking provision
- Biodiversity
- Accessible and Adaptable Homes
- Water Efficiency
- Developer Contributions

The Principle of Development

Housing Land Supply

- 7.5 NPPF paragraph 78 requires the Council to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against our housing requirement. A substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements was introduced on 12th December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).
- 7.6 As Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old it is necessary to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. NPPF paragraph 78 also requires provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As Huntingdonshire has successfully exceeded the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test, a 5% buffer is required here. The 5-year housing land requirement, including a 5% buffer, is 5,907 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,345 homes, equivalent to 3.68 years' supply.
- 7.7 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications. Where an application is situated within a parish with a made Neighbourhood Plan NPPF paragraph 14 should also be taken into account.

Location and suitability of the site

- 7.8 Policy LP2 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (the Local Plan) sets out the overarching development strategy for Huntingdonshire through the plan period. The main objectives are:
- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities;

- Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities
- Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes
- Support a thriving rural economy;
- Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and
- Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation.

7.9 Policy LP2 directs approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing (together with a limited amount of employment growth) to sites dispersed across the Key Service Centres and Small Settlements in order to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies of the plan, thereby providing further flexibility in the housing supply.

7.10 Policy LP2 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP2 given that it directs development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities which is consistent with the NPPF.

7.11 The site is located within the built-up area of Eaton Socon, which is located within the St Neots Spatial Planning Area as defined by the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. As such, Policy LP7 (Spatial Planning Areas) is considered relevant in this instance. Policy LP7 of the adopted Local Plan states that a proposal for housing development on a site which is additional to those allocated in the Local Plan will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area.

7.12 Given the proposal seeks approval for the erection of two residential dwellings within the built-up area of Eaton Socon, the development is therefore considered to be situated in an appropriate location and acceptable in accordance with LP7 of the Local Plan.

7.13 NPPF Para 84 states: Planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside. NPPF Para 110

states: The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

- 7.14 It is considered that the development would have access to services and facilities within Eaton Socon, and also the means to access larger settlements such as the market town of St Neots through sustainable modes of transport. The development would therefore not result in the development of isolated homes in either the edge of settlement or countryside, nor would the future occupiers have an over-reliance on the private motor vehicle as other options are available in the settlement.
- 7.15 It is determined therefore that the site is considered to be sustainable for the amount of development hereby proposed.

Design, Visual Amenity

- 7.16 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.
- 7.17 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 (DDG) sections 3.3 (Place Making and Hierarchy of Movement) and 3.7 (Building Form) are particularly relevant to the application proposals. Page 65 of the DDG states that 'New buildings should respect the established building line'. Furthermore, page 127 of the DDG (Part 3.7 Building Form) states that 'In principle buildings should respect a common building line determined by the required setback and character for that street or space.'
- 7.18 Additionally, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 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.*

- 7.19 The proposal seeks approval for the erection of two dwellings on land adjacent to 2 Queens Court. There have been several previous applications on this site as outlined in the planning history section of this report. The most recent 24/00019/REFUSL, was an appeal following refusal of 23/00774/FUL, was dismissed as the Inspector concluded that the proposal would appear visually prominent and would erode the open character of the street scene of both Queens Court and Queens Gardens. The siting of the dwellings appearing incongruous with the form and layout of development in the area. As well as providing gardens small and out of keeping with the areas spacious character, and the design failing to respond sensitively to its setting and being unsympathetic to the character of the area.
- 7.20 The proposed development comprises 2 x two storey dwellings attached in a linear form to the existing property No 2 Queens Court. Ridge heights are a maximum of 7.9m, with the two new units sitting marginally higher in ridge and eaves height to No. 2. An underpass separates the existing property (No2) to the adjoining proposed plot 2 at ground floor allowing access to the rear garden of No. 2 Queens Court and Plot 2.
- 7.21 The proposed dwellings have been arranged to form a simple continuation of the building line of Queens Court, creating a terraced effect. This has been amended from an earlier scheme whereby the proposal attempted to 'book end' the building line by introducing gable ends facing north and south. This was not supported and the discussion of design features missing from the proposal has led to that presented as part of this application.
- 7.22 The fenestration has been amended to better reflect the properties in Queens Court. The introduction of a ground floor bay window mirrors that of No 2 Queens Court and the front door for Plot one has been introduced into the west facing elevation, along with a first floor bathroom window to offer a more active frontage to the corner plot. This provides a nod in the right direction design wise however officers still find the west elevation uninspired and bland in appearance.
- 7.23 The overall architectural approach and visual appearance of the proposed dwellings are an improvement on the recently refused/dismissed schemes. However, the proposal still pushes the built form significantly beyond the building line of 15, 17 and 19 Queens Gardens located to the north of the application site. This level of projection has been an ongoing concern historically and one that was also picked up by the Inspector as unacceptable (see paragraphs 6 and 7 of the appeal decision).
- 7.24 Given that the site is located on the junction of Queens Court and Queens Gardens and is readily viewable from the public realm, most notably from the approach from the south, it is considered

the site occupies a prominent position within the Queens Garden and Queens Court street scene. The site is characterised by an open appearance created by the setback arrangement of terrace houses Nos. 4-8 Queens Gardens and this open aspect is also replicated opposite by Nos. 20-22 Queens Gardens to the west which is open in nature. Subsequently it is acknowledged that the proposed development for two dwellings would occupy and therefore result in the loss of the open aspect within the street scene.

- 7.25 The proposed pair of semi-detached units would extend development closer westwards to the back edge of pavement along Queens Gardens and would result in development approximately 7.3m forward of the established building line on Queens Gardens, created by the front elevations of Nos. 15 and 17 and the side gables of Nos. 19 and 33 to the north. The siting of Plot 1 would fail to reflect this established building line and would result in exposing the rear elevation and rear garden boundary within the wider street scene. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Huntingdonshire Design Guide in terms of appropriate building setback and by virtue discords with Policy LP12 parts a), b) and c).
- 7.26 The arrangement of parking for Plot 1, located to the rear of this dwelling reduces the depth of the garden to 5.4 metres. This forms an uncharacteristically small and cramped amenity space compared to existing adjacent dwellings on both Queens Court and Queens Gardens. This would be contrary to part l of Policy LP12 of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the single parking space to the side of Plot 1 dominates the frontage of this unit and limits opportunities for threshold planting. This would be contrary to part m of Policy LP12 of the Local Plan.
- 7.27 In regard to Plot 2, the proposed frontage arrangement of parking for Plot 2 and the existing dwelling (No. 2 Queens Court), comprises two car spaces each (4 in total). Whilst this is reflective of the parking arrangements of Nos. 4 and 6 adjacent to the west, the proposal would result in a loss of front garden and vegetation leading to a car dominated street scene with an uninterrupted row of 8 parking spaces. No soft landscaping proposals have been put forward to break up the continuous parking spaces between No. 2 and the proposal, or to soften the appearance of the proposed parking arrangements. Given that the existing dropped kerb on Queens Court serves only the existing drive to No. 2, soft landscaping may not be achievable as it would serve as the access point for parking provision to No.2 Queens Court. It is therefore considered that the frontage of Plot 2 and No.2 Queens court would cumulate in a frontage over dominated by car parking provision, thereby conflicting with parts c and m of Policy LP12 of the Local Plan.

- 7.28 The introduction of a 1.8 metre close boarded fence on the eastern elevation fronting Queens Gardens would also fail to respect the character of the street, given that no other dwelling in the locality features a front boundary at this height, other than hedging. This element of the proposal would also fail to meet the criteria set out in LP12 of the Local Plan.
- 7.29 Although no specific materials are provided within the application, the materials can be conditioned prior to commencement of works on any approval, so as to ensure the building sits harmoniously with surrounding properties.
- 7.30 Overall, the scale and siting of the proposed development is considered to fail to assimilate with the general form and layout of its surroundings and does not contribute positively to the area's character. The proposal has not been guided by the established building line or boundary treatments and causes an unacceptable degree of prominence. The proposed private amenity areas do not reflect the scale and proportion of gardens in the locality. Whilst the current scheme has since included design features (chimneys and bay windows) which are common in the immediate street scene it is not enough to overcome the impact the proposed properties have on the prevailing appearance of the public realm.
- 7.31 Whilst this proposal sees a more cohesive design, it is considered that it still represents a cramped form of development, and the layout will still be dominated by hard surfacing. The proposal would also introduce a car-dominated frontage on Queens Court which reduces the pleasant open aspect of this part of the street. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies LP 7, LP 11 and LP 12 of the Local Plan, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and paragraph 131 of the NPPF.
- 7.32 Overall, it is not considered that the amended scheme has addressed the previous reasons for the refusal and the concerns raised by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to its overall design and impact on the wider street scene.

Residential Amenity

- 7.33 Policy LP14 of the Local Plan 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.
- 7.34 The design, orientation and positioning of the properties are such that the proposed development is not considered to result in a significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties through overbearing impact, loss of privacy or loss of light.

- 7.35 While it is acknowledged that the rear / side first floor window elevation would face north towards No.15 Queens Gardens, these windows would either face onto the side brick wall of No.15 or would provide views of the front garden / drive area which are acceptable.
- 7.36 Similarly, the siting of the proposal would have no significant detriment to the occupiers of the dwelling to the east, No. 2 Queens Court, by virtue of its rear/side eastern wall being at a similar building line to the rear of No.2 with no additional windows directly overlooking this neighbour.
- 7.37 Furthermore, no part of the proposals intersect the 45 degree guidance criteria set out within The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 section 3.7 (Building Form) to cause any significant concerns regarding loss of light, sense of enclosure or loss of privacy.
- 7.38 One of the objections received from neighbouring occupiers refers to overlooking which could create an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity, however whilst close to the neighbouring dwellings, no concerns relating to residential amenity impacts were observed during a site visit.
- 7.39 Given the adjacent context, location, size, and design, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to give rise to any significant amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of daylight, enclosure or other environmental impacts. The proposal is compliant with Local Plan Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Highway Safety and Parking Provision

- 7.40 Policy LP17 of the Local Plan 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.
- 7.41 The application proposes two car spaces to the front of Plot 2 on Queens Court utilising an existing dropped kerb, a car space using an existing access from Queens Gardens and a new access to the north-western area on the site to accommodate one car space with a new access from Queens Gardens.
- 7.42 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan does not have a policy specifically identifying the number of parking spaces that should be provided for new dwellings, and each site is considered separately. It is considered that the provision of four parking spaces for the development is sufficient in this instance. The proposal also ensures ongoing parking provision for No.2. Queens

Court. County Highways have no objection to the proposal in terms of highway safety.

- 7.43 Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) seeks the provision of secure and covered cycle parking on the basis of 1 space per bedroom. No cycle parking provision have been submitted and would be secured by condition if planning permission were to be granted.
- 7.44 Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Biodiversity

- 7.45 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.46 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been submitted and identifies no significant ecological constraints within the site. The report concludes that the proposed development will not impact any protected species. The Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the recommendations set out in the submitted PEA are appropriate and satisfactory and recommend planning conditions securing the recommendations are annexed to any planning permission.
- 7.47 As well as the above (and separate from the requirements of LP30) as of the 2nd April 2024 qualifying new development is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. This means that a 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is required, following the hierarchy of onsite provision; mixture of on-site and off-site provision; and the last resort of statutory biodiversity credits unless it can be demonstrated that the development would be exempt.
- 7.48 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been submitted with the application which demonstrates that the development proposal will result in a 19.34 % net loss in habitat units and a 20.41 % net gain in Hedgerow units. The proposal does not meet the metric trading

rules for equivalent habitat types, as it has insufficient low-distinctiveness habitats, specifically vegetated gardens.

- 7.49 The statutory biodiversity metric demonstrates that the proposed development would result in a shortfall of 0.01 units against the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement. This shortfall is numerically de minimis, and all reasonable opportunities to increase on-site habitat creation and enhancement have been exhausted through the design process. In the event that planning permission were to be granted, this residual shortfall would be addressed in accordance with the biodiversity gain hierarchy, either through the purchase and legal securing of an equivalent (or greater) number of off-site biodiversity units on the biodiversity gain sites register, or as a last resort through statutory biodiversity credits, such that the overall 10% net gain objective would be fully met.
- 7.50 Overall, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied with the findings of the submitted PEA and BNG Assessment and as such the proposal accords with Local Plan Policy LP30 and the NPPF (2024) subject to the imposition of conditions.

Flood Risk

- 7.51 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 159-169 of the NPPF (2024)).
- 7.52 The application site is situated in Flood Zone 1 based on the Environment Agency Floods Maps and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017). This results in a low probability of fluvial flooding and is not subject to the sequential and exception tests as set out within the NPPF. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

- 7.53 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.
- 7.54 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

- 7.55 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. A condition will be attached to any consent to ensure compliance with the above, in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Developer Obligations

Bins

- 7.56 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A Unilateral Undertaking Form in respect of wheeled bins has been received by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the Developers Contributions SPD (2011).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.57 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

- 7.58 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.59 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.60 A revised NPPF was published in December 2024, introducing a substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements. This has resulted in the Council being unable to demonstrate a five year housing land

supply (5YHLS). While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

7.61 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'.

7.62 NPPF para 11 states:

'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.'

For decision-taking this means:

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (7) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

7 Foot note 7 states: The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.'*

7.63 In regard to paragraph 11 (d) part i, it is considered there are no strong reasons for refusal in relation to any habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Green Space, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of

archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75) and areas at risk of flooding. Therefore, the 'tilted balance' is engaged.

- 7.64 A tilted balance approach should be applied in the assessment of the proposed development, and a balancing exercise should be carried out to determine whether the potential any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) part ii.
- 7.65 It should also be noted that paragraph 14 of the NPPF states in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:
- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
 - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.
- 7.66 In this instance, the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan (made on 17 May 2013) is older than 5 years, therefore paragraph 14 is not engaged. However, Policy A3 of the Neighbourhood Plan is still an important material consideration for local character and design, specifically supporting quality design in residential development.

Benefits and Harm

- 7.67 In terms of the social benefits of sustainable development, the proposal would provide two additional dwellings within an established settlement. As the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the contribution of small-scale housing schemes attracts significant weight in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF (2024). The two-bedroom units would also make a modest contribution to local housing mix.
- 7.68 The site benefits from good access to local services and facilities. A lit pedestrian footpath is accessible via Bushmead Road and St Neots Road, and the site is a short walking distance from a bus stop providing frequent services to Ramsey, Huntingdon and St Ives, all of which offer a broad range of facilities. Local amenities including a village hall, primary school, convenience store, public house and fuel garage are all nearby. These local attributes support the NPPF's objective of creating strong, healthy and inclusive communities and are afforded moderate weight.
- 7.69 With regard to the economic benefits, the development would generate temporary construction employment and support local supply chains, with future occupiers contributing to ongoing local expenditure in shops and services. These factors provide moderate positive weight in favour of the scheme.

- 7.70 In terms of the environmental benefits, the scheme would make effective use of land within the existing built-up area and would be capable of incorporating measures to meet optional Building Regulations relating to accessibility and water efficiency. The proposal includes measures to secure Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the biodiversity gain hierarchy. These environmental benefits, while limited in scale, attract limited positive weight.
- 7.71 Balanced against these benefits are the identified harms arising from the siting, layout, scale and detailed design of the development. The proposal would materially erode the open and spacious character of the prominent corner at the junction of Queens Court and Queens Gardens, project significantly forward of the established building line on Queens Gardens, and introduce a cramped pattern of small rear gardens and extensive hard surfacing. The elevated and continuous parking frontage, together with the proposed 1.8m boundary fence, would appear visually intrusive and uncharacteristic, resulting in an overdeveloped and car-dominated appearance that fails to respect or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the surrounding area. This conflicts with the environmental objective of sustainable development and with Section 12 of the NPPF (2024), which requires well-designed, beautiful and locally responsive places.
- 7.72 Having regard to paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF (2024), officers consider that these harms attract substantial weight and significantly and demonstrably outweigh the moderate benefits identified above when the Framework is considered as a whole.
- 7.73 Overall, the proposed development is considered to be of a poor design by virtue of its overdevelopment of the site whereby the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the site. The public benefits of the proposal are not considered to outweigh the identified harm. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to Policies LP7, LP11 and, LP12 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.
- 7.74 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 - REFUSE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:-

The application site occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Queens Court and Queens Gardens within an established residential area characterised by two-storey terraces set behind generally consistent building lines, open front gardens and soft landscaping which together create a pleasant, spacious street scene. By reason of its scale, massing, detailed design and, in particular, its siting substantially forward of the established building line on Queens Gardens, the proposed pair of dwellings would appear as an intrusive and incongruous extension of the existing terrace, eroding the open character of this corner and harming the visual relationship between Queens Court and Queens Gardens. The development would result in unusually small and cramped private garden areas that do not reflect the prevailing pattern, scale and proportion of gardens in the locality and would introduce a 1.8-metre close-boarded fence to Queens Gardens that is out of keeping with the generally open, landscaped front boundaries along the street.

In addition, the layout would create an overly hard-surfaced, car-dominated frontage to Queens Court, with an almost continuous run of parking spaces serving No. 2 Queens Court and the new dwellings, and limited opportunity for meaningful soft landscaping. This would materially diminish the existing pleasant, open aspect of this part of Queens Court and fail to reinforce the local distinctiveness and positive qualities of the area.

Taken together, these factors amount to an overdevelopment of a constrained corner plot that fails to respond positively to its context, does not integrate successfully with the established form, layout and townscape character of Queens Court and Queens Gardens, and does not achieve a high quality, beautiful or locally distinctive place.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies LP7, LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), in particular sections 3.3 (Place Making and Hierarchy of Movement) and 3.7 (Building Form), and Policy A3 (Design) of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, which together require development to respect local character, established building lines, garden patterns and boundary treatments. The proposal also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), notably Section 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places), including paragraphs 131–135 and 140, which seek development that is sympathetic to local character and history, establishes or maintains a strong sense of place and creates visually attractive and well-designed environments.

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CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquires about this report to **Saffron Loasby, Senior Development management Officer** saffron.loasby@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Schedule of Planning Applications – 12th August 2025

| No. | Reference | Development | SNTC Decision | Notes |
|---|-----------------------|---|----------------|---|
| The following application/s are for listed building consent | | | | |
| S1 | 25/01392/LBC | Pure Gym Ltd 57 High Street, St Neots, PE19 1JG 3x illuminated fascia signs to front, side and rear elevations, vinyl signage to front and side elevations and installation of 5x poster cases to side and rear elevations. | SUPPORT | Members support the application however they concur with the Conservation Officer's concerns relating to the vinyl signage proposal across the entire High Street elevations. Members support the recommendation that this aspect of the proposal should be deleted from the application. |
| The following application/s are in a conservation area | | | | |
| S2 | 25/01190/FUL | St Neots Town Council Steve Van De Kerkhove Community Centre, Cemetery Road, St Neots Installation of 2No. AC units to the roof. | NOTED | As the applicant, the Council makes no formal comment in its role as a statutory consultee. |
| S3 | 25/01343/HHFUL | Mr & Mrs Black Berkley Cottage, 5 Berkley Street Eynesbury Demolition of part of the existing store and WC extension, removal of chimney, erection of new single storey rear extension, and alterations to rear fenestration. | SUPPORT | Makes efficient use of its site. Within a sustainable location. |
| S4 | 25/01383/S73 | Mr Neil McGeoch – Burglas Ltd 25 - 27 Market Square, St Neots PE19 2AR Variation of condition 4 (use) of 24/02021/FUL to allow any use within Use Class E. | SUPPORT | Improves the property. Makes efficient use of its site. |
| S5 | 25/01189/FUL | St Neots Town Council Gatelodge Cemetery Road, St Neots Installation of 3x AC units (air-to-air source heat pumps). | NOTED | As the applicant, the Council makes no formal comment in its role as a statutory consultee. |
| S6 | 25/01350/TREE | Mrs Vanessa Saunders Osier Holt Hardwick Road, Eynesbury Pollarding of 1No. Willow tree (G2) (Land off Coneygeare, Eynesbury, St. Neots) Tree Preservation Order 15/97. | SUPPORT | Subject to approval of HDC Tree Officer. Works to be carried out accordance with best arboricultural practice. |
| S7 | 25/01464/TREE | Ms S Mobbs The White House St Neots Road Eaton Ford T5 Wellingtonia - raise crown to 3.5m and remove broken lodged limb | SUPPORT | Subject to approval of HDC Tree Officer. Works to be carried out accordance with best arboricultural practice. |
| S8 | 25/01321/HHFUL | Miss Caitlin Noonan 97 Great North Road Eaton Socon, St Neots Proposed two storey extension to the side/rear. | SUPPORT | Makes efficient use of the site. Improves the property. |

Schedule of Planning Applications – 12th August 2025

| No. | Reference | Development | SNTC Decision | Notes |
|------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|--|
| S9 | 25/00946/HHFUL | Mr Krzysztof Debowski 134 Duck Lane, St Neots, PE19 2EQ Installation of a dropped kerb | SUPPORT | Members noted the consultee comment from CCC Highways that the highway works proposed will necessitate the completion of a Section 184 Highway Works Agreement between the developer and the LHA prior to commencement. In keeping with locality. Improves the property. |
| S10 | 25/01238/FUL | Mr Buchanan 2 Queens Court, Eaton Socon, St Neots Erection of 2No. Dwellings and associated works. | SUPPORT | In keeping with locality. Improves the property. |
| S11 | 25/01365/HHFUL | Mr Tom Errington 64 Lannesbury Crescent St Neots PE19 6AF Erection of single storey rear extension. | SUPPORT | Improves the property. |
| S12 | 25/01432/HHFUL | Ms Jessie Saywell 81 Hardwick Road Eynesbury Demolition of existing single storey structures. Construction of two and single storey extension and associated works. | SUPPORT | Improves the property. Members consider that the proposal would assimilate itself to the existing part of the town. |

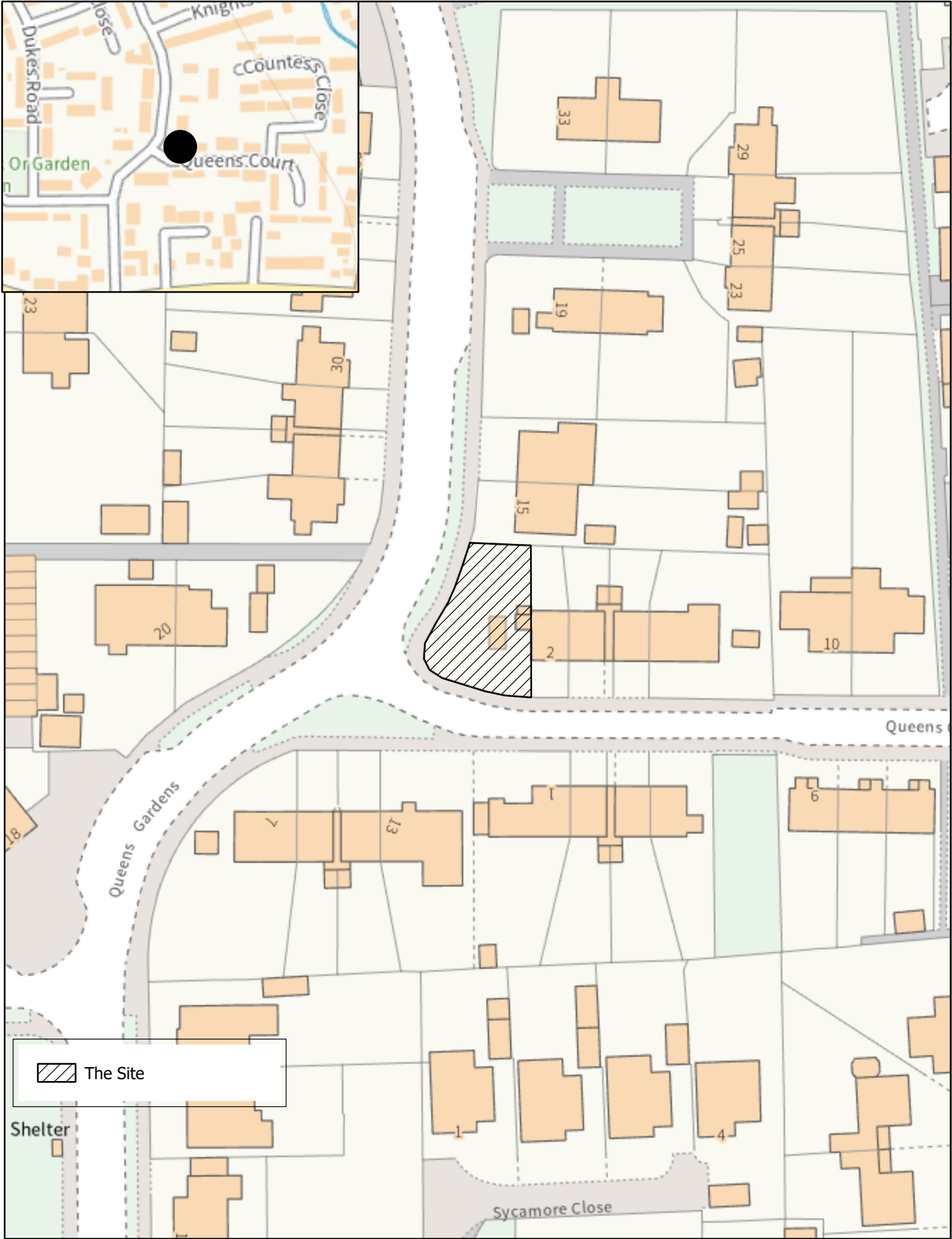
Chairperson

Development Management Committee

Application Ref: 25/01238/FUL



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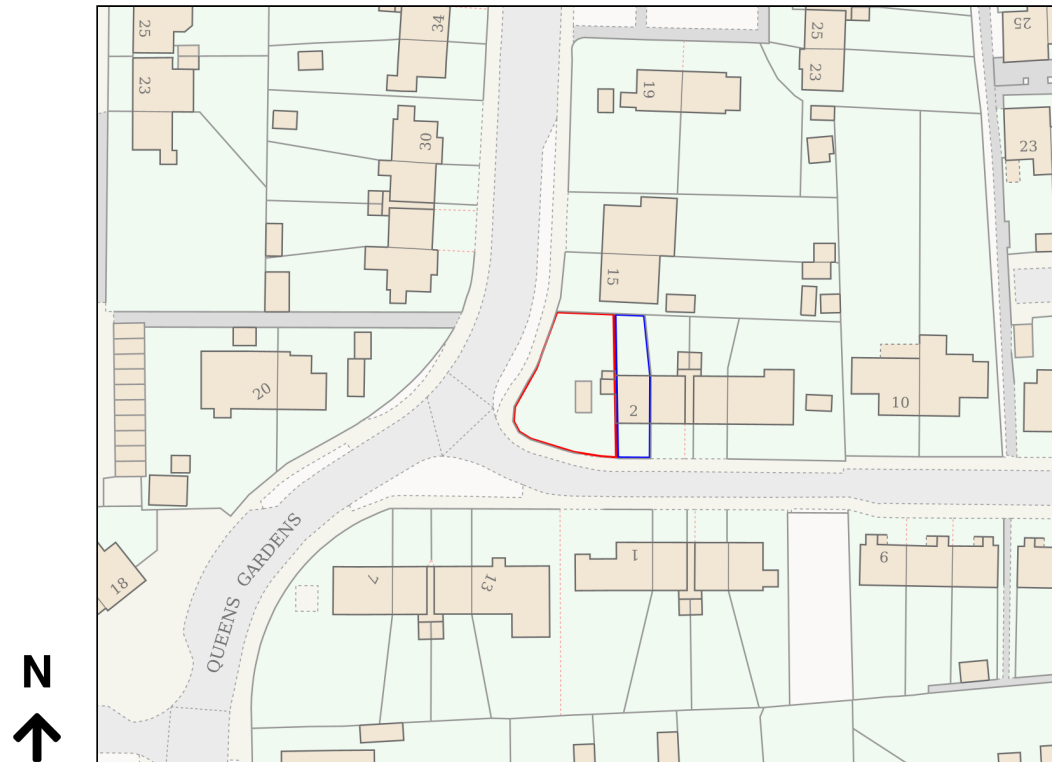


Location Plan

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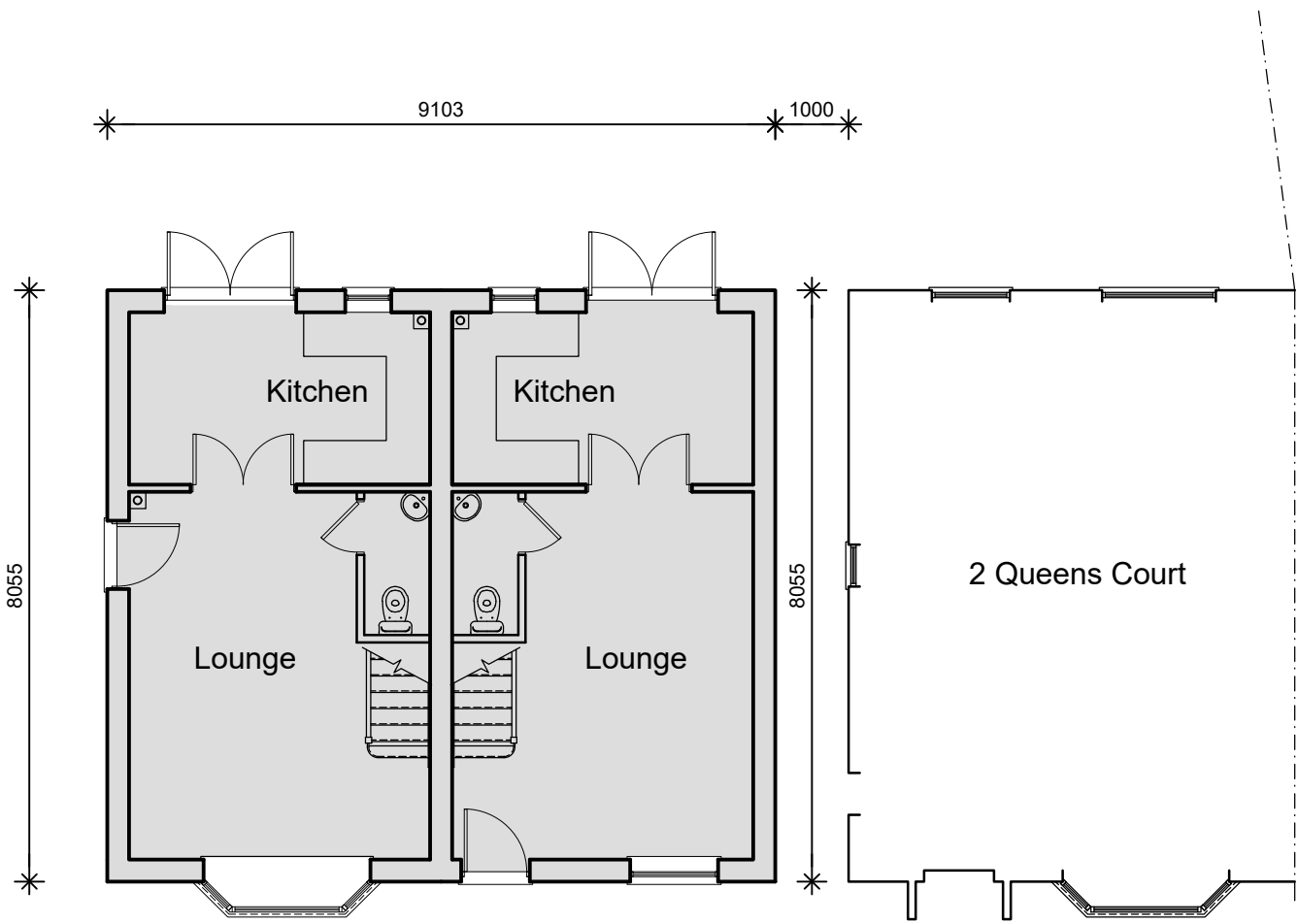
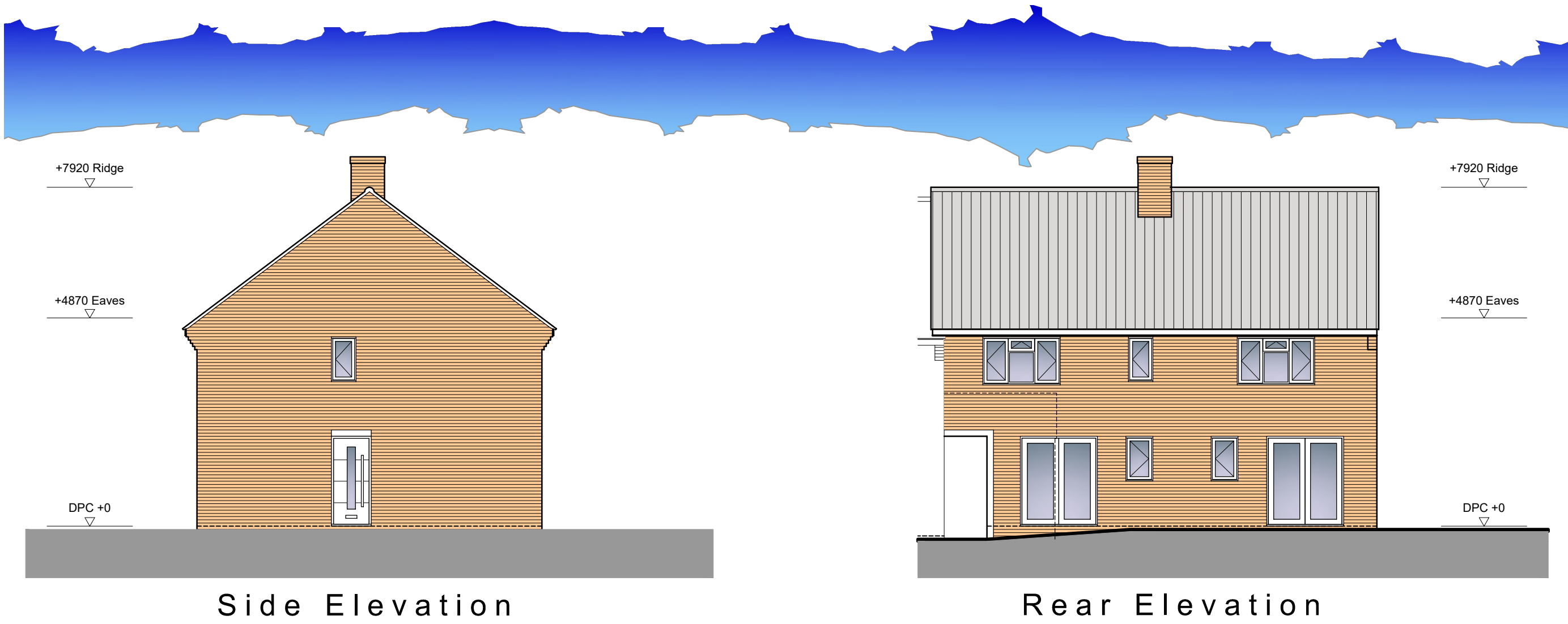
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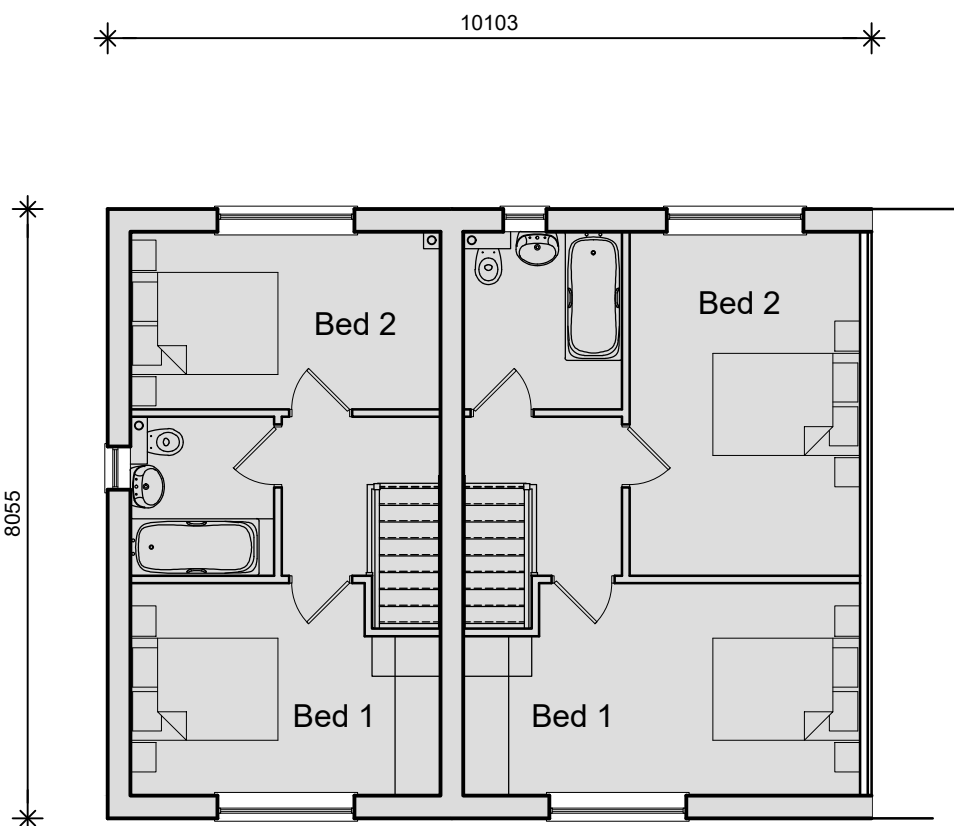


Planning Portal Reference: PP-14142425v1

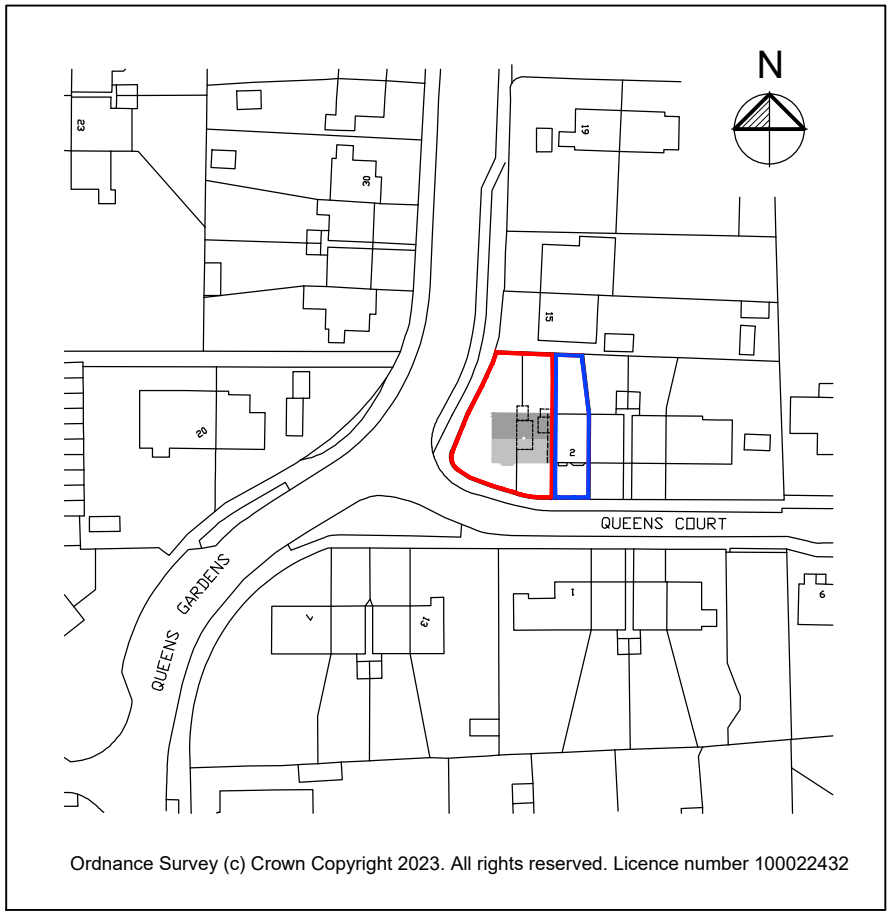




Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Location Plan 1:1250



8 Tennyson Place
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Cambridgeshire
PE19 7LL
Tel / Fax: 01480 218440
Email: john@jlgdesign.co.uk

Project:
Development adjacent to
2 Queens Court, Eaton Socon,
St Neots, Cambs. PE19 8BZ.

Drawing:
Plans and Elevations

Drawn by:
JG

Scale:
1:100;1:200;1:1250

Date:
11.5.25

This drawing should not be scaled other than for planning purposes. All dimensions to be checked on site.

Drawing no:
JLG864/S3/01

Revision