

WARD: Eastville CONTACT OFFICER: Catherine Tyrer  
SITE ADDRESS: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE

APPLICATION NO: 16/02114/F Full Planning  
EXPIRY DATE: 7 September 2016

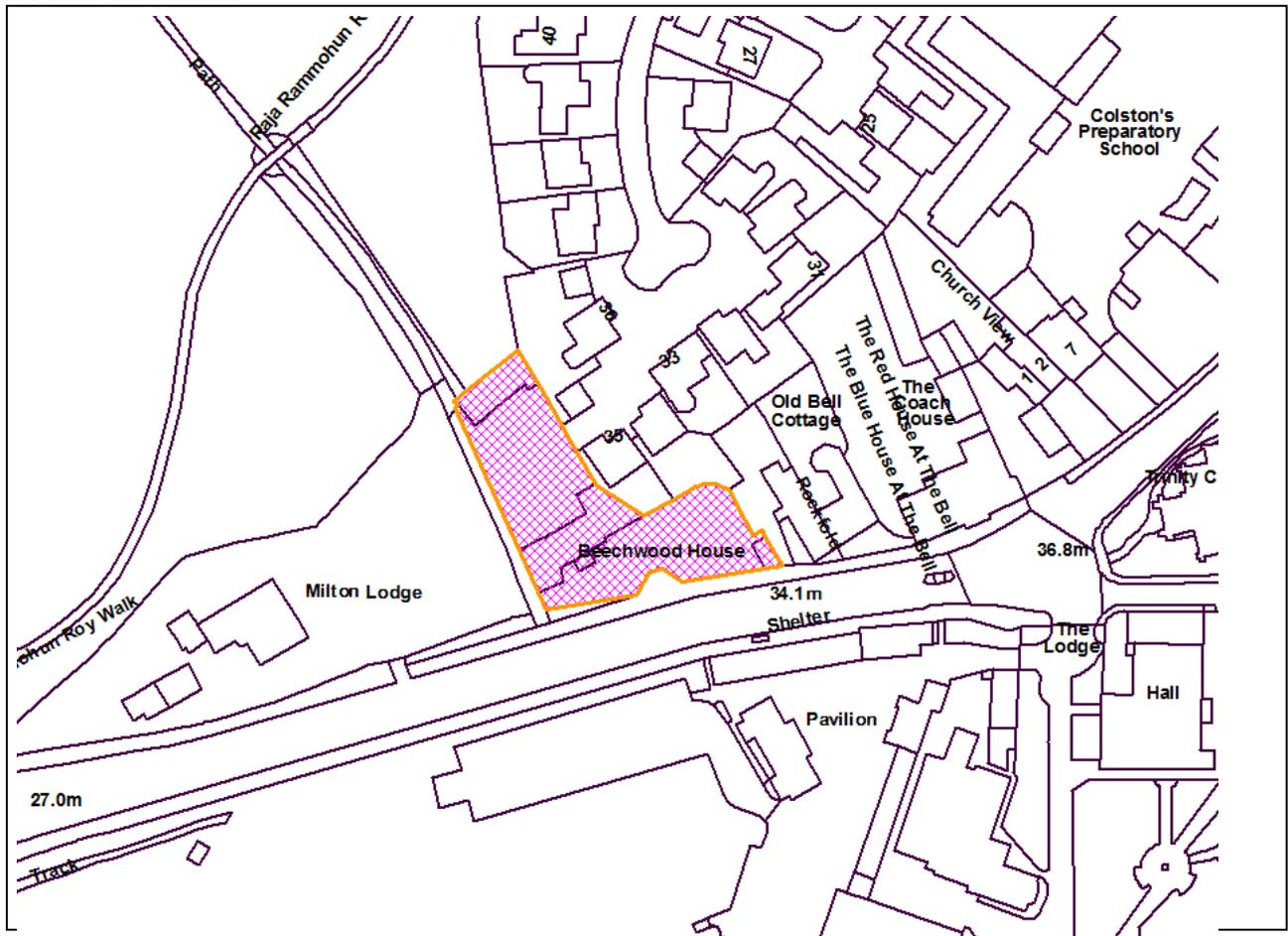
*Change of use of existing doctors surgery and house into 9 self-contained units of private sector emergency accommodation for mothers of young children. Associated car parking and refuse and recycling store. (Major Application)*

RECOMMENDATION: Grant subject to Condition(s)

AGENT: Aspect360 Ltd  
45 Oakfield Road  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2AX  
APPLICANT: Top Drawer Properties  
17 Duckmoor Road  
Bristol  
BS3 2DD

*The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.*

LOCATION PLAN:



**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**  
**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

## SUMMARY

The application is being referred to Committee because there has been a high level of public interest, with 34 objections to the proposed scheme.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located in Eastville ward, with residential properties on three sides, to the north, east and west. To the south of the site, on the opposite side of Bell Hill is Colston's School.

The application site is known as Beechwood House and comprises a two storey, 5 bed detached house located on the northern side of Bell Hill. Part of the ground floor had previously been in use as a Doctor's Surgery (including an office, surgery and associated store rooms). The property has a large curtilage with a spacious drive and parking area that could accommodate up to 7 cars. There is a good sized rear garden to the rear along with a (currently empty) swimming pool housed within a building.

The site is located within the designated Stapleton and Frome Valley Conservation Area. The adjoining house is a Grade II listed building (Rockfold) and the nearby Holy Trinity Church is Grade II\*.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of flooding.

## PROPOSAL

The application proposes the change of use of the existing house and doctor's surgery into nine self-contained units of private sector emergency accommodation for women who are pregnant and/or have young children. A single storey rear extension is also proposed.

The application originally proposed the provision of 11 units, but the application proposal has subsequently been amended to reduce this to 9 self-contained units.

Each unit provides 1 or 2 double beds, kitchen facilities and an ensuite bath/shower room. A Manager's office is proposed on the ground floor and laundry rooms are provided on the ground and first floors.

[NB: By way of clarification, the neighbour notification letters issued to local residents referred to 10 units within the description of development rather than the 11 shown on the floor plans as there was a discrepancy between the submitted plans and application form which was not picked up until a detailed review of the plans had been undertaken. Neighbour notification letters were not reissued as the applicant had confirmed that revised plans would be issued reducing the number of units (as detailed above), which were subsequently received].

Car parking and a refuse and recycling store is also proposed.

In terms of how the proposed use and building will be operated, the applicant has advised as follows:

*"The intention in this case is to provide high quality managed accommodation for pregnant women or mothers who have recently given birth to enable them to have temporary respite whilst they are permanently rehoused. Given the current housing crisis and reduced budgets for local authorities to provide social housing, the use of private rented accommodation is deemed to be preferable to other alternatives such as the use of bed and breakfast accommodation or budget hotels.*

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017****Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

*The accommodation is managed by Top Drawer Properties who operates under licence form Bristol City Council. There is an obligation under Top Drawer Properties to adhere to its contract with Bristol City Council's housing team."*

**PLANNING HISTORY**

The property was in use as a private family dwelling house, with a small doctor's surgery also operating from the premises. There are a number of applications which relate to the residential use of the property (i.e. extensions, swimming pool etc).

A planning application for the change of use of the building to a rehabilitation centre for Emerge Charitable Trust was submitted in December 2015 and subsequently withdrawn (ref: 15/06642/F).

Two separate applications have been submitted for the erection of a two storey dwelling in the curtilage of the property (refs: 15/06641/F and 15/06641/F). Both these applications were refused for reasons relating to submission of insufficient information; and harm to the setting of listed buildings and conservation area).

**RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION**

Notification letters were sent to 147 neighbouring properties. A site notice was displayed and a press notice published in a local newspaper.

34 objections were received. Please note that summaries of responses received are provided within this section, but the full representations received can be viewed on the planning record on the council's website. Issues raised include:

1. Parking/highways: Increased traffic congestions, highway safety concerns, insufficient parking
2. Safeguarding concerns related to occupants and relatives/visitors, particularly in proximity to Colstons School and other young children
3. Description of development not correct (plans show 11 units not 10) and classification of use incorrect (HMO is not C3); conflicting information submitted/received
4. Concerns that accommodation will be used by people with drug/alcohol addictions
5. Noise pollution
6. Poor waste management proposals
7. Units do not meet space standards and would fail to provide a good standard of living accommodation; Cramped living accommodation; concern regarding joint use of property and any additional units on the site – risk of more than 28 people living on the site
8. Over intensification of use – will include women with children, but presumably also other dependants/children.
9. Impact and erosion of residential amenity and character and mix of area; use out of keeping with the area and the conservation area
10. Occupants will attract "high risk" visitors
11. Question whether mothers with young children should be housed together in one property
12. Queries and concern regarding level of on-site management - how will Council's licencing conditions and house rules be enforced; Top Drawer does not have experience of looking after young mothers; 24 hour a day emergency care so presumably some people will be arriving in the middle of the night. Not clear what staff would be on site.
13. Disruption to tenants during construction of extension. Reducing emergency accommodation available and not clear why needed.
14. Pond and swimming pool in rear garden and associated safety concerns.

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**  
**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

Summary of comments received from **Ms Kerry McCarthy MP:**

1. Conscious of need for emergency accommodation
2. Concern about impact on close-knit community of over twenty transient residents
3. Parking and traffic impact needs clarifying
4. Careful consideration required to be given to location of rehabilitation centres
5. If approved, consideration required for its future use to go some way to address anxieties of nearby residents
6. Further clarification required regarding how residents will apply for the emergency accommodation and to ensure such a use would not lead to unacceptable increase in local disturbance and pollution.

Summary of comments received from **Councillor Khan:**

- Local residents have reported use of property by male residents/visitors.
- Property has been grossly mismanaged by Mr Philip's, and has done very little to satisfy us on his promises.
- Would urge committee members to reject this application on the following grounds:
  1. Development will add further to existing problems such as unauthorised persons using the property, alcohols, drugs and extensive amount of litters.
  2. Impact in the conservation Area on the loss of visual amenity.
  3. Together with the application number, 16/02114/F will have huge implication on Highways.
  4. Following the recent history, use of this property as HMO will have adverse impact on children using the local school.

**OTHER COMMENTS**

A summary of the comments received is set out below. The full consultation responses are available online on the planning register on the Council's website.

**BCC Accommodation Services Manager, Housing Options Service** has commented as follows:

*"Top Drawer Properties (TDP) assured one of my teams that a full planning application had been made in the Autumn/Winter last year and that there were no outstanding issues around building regs., licensing or certifications for gas, electricity and energy performance. Sadly, this proved not to be the case; something we only learnt about after placing small families at Beechwood House as part of statutory homelessness duties."*

He also made a number of comments on the documents submitted, which are summarised as follows:

- Regarding space standards - keen application is given consent, but equally keen that the number of units and the standards they meet is acceptable.
- Household sizes should be clearly referenced i.e. a statement should be included stating "each accommodation unit will accommodate one adult and one child (a child being a baby up to a child aged 10)"
- TDP is contracted by BCC to provide units of emergency accommodation for small families accommodated under s188 or s193 of Part VII, Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). It is not an alternative to private sector emergency accommodation: it is private sector emergency accommodation. The proper emphasis should be that this is good quality, self-contained emergency accommodation (with hopefully on site management) that is a better alternative to budget hotel or shared 'B&B style' accommodation.
- BCC will determine which households are placed at Beechwood House if the application gains consent.
- We are not discharging statutory homelessness duties by using Beechwood House. We are

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017****Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

providing (hopefully) good quality emergency accommodation in the private rented sector (TDP) prior to discharging our duties by using the private rented or social housing sectors.

- What is being offered by TDP is emergency accommodation and not settled private rented accommodation for households BCC owes a duty to. However, it is true that residents (they are not tenants) will be bound by BCC conditions as well as TDP's house rules.
- We have identified that there is an ongoing need for good quality and reasonably priced emergency accommodation and that this should be delivered under contract. We have not however determined that Beechwood House is ideally located. It is in a good location though and does meet our clients' needs.
- I think there is an attempt to gain a degree of leniency based on the temporary nature of this provision versus space standards. Regardless of whether the property represents good quality self-contained units (and whether consent is given for an extension for example), the contract with TDP specifies the West of England Rental standard. If this is not met then contract compliance is challenged.

**Transport Development Management** raised no objection to the proposed use.

**RELEVANT POLICIES****National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012**

National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012

Bristol Local Plan: Comprising Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011), Site Allocation and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014).

In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to all relevant policies of the Bristol Local Plan and relevant guidance.

**KEY ISSUES****(A) IS THE PROPOSED USE ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE IN THIS LOCATION?**

Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need (which includes pregnant women or those with dependent children) as set out under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available. The length of time of stay will depend on the availability of suitable accommodation in the authority's area. Within Bristol there is currently a severe shortage of temporary accommodation.

Local authorities use a variety of accommodation types as temporary housing for homeless Households. These include:

- private sector rented housing;
- social housing on a short-term tenancies;
- hostel/refuge accommodation (sometimes with shared cooking/washing facilities);
- bed and breakfast accommodation; and
- others, such as supported lodgings and mobile homes.

The applicant, Top Drawer Properties (TDP) is contracted by BCC to provide units of emergency accommodation under s188 or s193 of Part VII, Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). It isn't an alternative to private sector emergency accommodation; it is private sector emergency accommodation.

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**  
**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

Policy DM2 refers to “*other forms of shared housing*” and the principles can be applied to the development proposed. It requires that such development will not be permitted where it harms the residential amenity or character of the locality when assessed against a number of criteria, including levels of activity and on-street parking. The policy also requires that development does not contribute to a harmful concentration of such uses within a locality, by exacerbating existing harmful conditions (such as noise/disturbance or parking) or by reducing the choice of homes in the area by changing the housing mix.

Given the size of the property and the nature of the residents, it is not considered that the introduction of 9 units will have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding area associated with levels of activity causing excessive noise or disturbance (and this is addressed in more detail in Key Issue C below).

It is clear that immediately surrounding area predominantly comprises family houses and other uses (including a school). The proposed use will not result in a harmful concentration of similar uses and the provision of the accommodation proposed will not result in a significant change in the housing mix of the area or reduce the choice of homes available. Overall, it is considered that the proposed use complies with policy DM2 and is acceptable in principle. It is also noted that the accommodation will go some way to meet the severe shortage of temporary accommodation within Bristol.

**(B) DOES THE PROPOSAL ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY QUALITY OF DESIGN?**

A single storey rear extension is proposed to the rear of the property. It is not visible from Bell Hill or wider public realm and therefore will not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the street scene, conservation area or setting of nearby listed buildings. The proposed extension complies with the relevant design and heritage policies contained within the Local Plan.

**(C) DOES THE PROPOSAL RAISE ANY RESIDENTIAL AMENITY ISSUES?**

Good design and protection and enhancement of the environment are critical components of central government guidance, as identified in the NPPF. Adopted Bristol Core Strategy Policy BCS18 makes specific reference to residential developments providing sufficient space for everyday activities and space which should be flexible and adaptable. In addition, Policy BCS21 sets out criteria for the assessment of design quality in new development and states that development will be expected to create a high-quality environment for future occupiers.

DM27 Layout and Form expects proposals to enable existing and proposed development to achieve appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and daylight; enable the provision of adequate appropriate and usable private or communal amenity space, defensible space, parking and servicing where necessary. DM14 requires developments to deliver a healthy living environment.

The proposed use offers a variety of room sizes, with each unit having an ensuite shower/bathroom, a small kitchenette area (with sink and cooking facilities), a bed and sofa/armchair. There are also communal laundry areas with access to a washing machine. While some of the units are smaller than would be ideal, from the site visit, it was clear that the accommodation was well managed, in a good state of repair and was well furnished. Each unit has access to windows so occupants have access to acceptable levels of daylight and outlook, with a number of units have their own access. It is noted that the accommodation provides a much needed “stop gap” while permanent housing is sought for the families housed in the premises. The application has also been amended during the course of its consideration to reduce the number of units (from 11 to 9), with some units being combined to increase their size and improve the standard of living accommodation/amenity for occupants. Residents and their children also have access to the large garden area to the rear. On balance, given the need for such accommodation and its temporary nature, the overall standard of accommodation is considered to provide an adequate standard of living accommodation. It is also noted that the standard and type of accommodation is superior to alternative provision, such as hostel/B&B.

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**  
**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

There has been a relatively high level of objection to the proposed development, a summary of which is provided above. A number of comments relate to the over intensification of use and associated noise/disturbance concerns. While it is acknowledged that the proposed development does result in an intensification of use, the property is detached and set in sizeable grounds, with the closest neighbouring property being Rockfold and 35 Baileys Mead Road. Both these properties are separated from the main house and are unlikely to be adversely affected by noise associated with day to day activities from inside the house. It is considered that the existing house and its grounds are adequate for the use proposed.

While there will inevitably be some coming and going and activity/noise associated with the use, it is noted that Bell Hill is a relatively busy (B classified road) with a number of bus services and Colston's School opposite, and therefore the immediate vicinity and surrounding area is subject to a certain level of activity and background noise levels. It is also noted that given the nature of the occupants (expectant mothers or mothers with babies/young children) excessive activity/noise/anti-social or evening activity is likely to be limited and unlikely to be significantly greater than that which would be associated with a normal residential use.

A condition is proposed which requires that only women referred by Bristol City Council's Accommodation Services will occupy the premises. Such occupants are bound by the Council's conditions of contract with TDP and any breach could result in the Council rescinding its contract. In addition to this, house rules require, inter alia, that residents do not consume alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises and residents are not permitted visitors (apart from in a professional capacity, e.g. social worker or health visitor). The applicant has advised that any breach of the rules will result in a warning being issued and if a further breach occurs, the tenancy agreement would then be terminated. A condition has been attached which will require the formal submission and approval of this document along with details of how these rules will be managed and enforced.

Overall it is not considered that the proposed use would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents.

**(D) DOES THE PROPOSAL RAISE ANY TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT ISSUES?**

The site is well located in respect of local bus services with bus stops running north (Route 5 and 46 to Yate and Oldbury Court) and south bound (routes 5 and 46 to Broadmead and Bristol Bus Station). Buses run regularly at least every 15 minutes during the busier times of the day.

The applicant has advised that residents of the premises often have very few personal items and the majority of occupants are unlikely to own/have access to a car. Notwithstanding this, a condition is attached requiring the submission and approval of parking details. Likewise, conditions are recommended requiring the submission and approval of details relating to bin/recycling storage and cycle storage.

The proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety and subject to agreement of the details mentioned above (and required through conditions), there is no highway objection to the proposed scheme. The proposed development therefore complies with the requirements of SA&DM policy DM23.

**(E) DOES THE PROPOSAL RAISE ANY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES?**

Energy saving measures are proposed, including the restriction of water usage and the use of energy efficient appliances controls and fittings. According to the sustainability report submitted with the application, photovoltaic (PV) panels are proposed which will achieve a CO2 saving of 22% - a condition is attached requiring the submission and approval of these details. The development therefore complies with Core Strategy policy BCS14.

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**  
**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

(F) IS THE DEVELOPMENT CIL LIABLE?

The CIL liability for this development is £2,385.27

**RECOMMENDED GRANT subject to condition(s)**

**Pre occupation condition(s)**

1. Car/Vehicle Parking

Within two months of the date of this planning permission, details of car/vehicle parking areas/spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such areas shall then be provided on site within 4 months of this planning permission and thereafter, the area shall be kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of vehicles associated with the development

Reason: To ensure that there are adequate parking facilities to serve the development.

2. Cycle Facilities

Within 2 months of this planning permission details for appropriate cycle storage facilities shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Such facilities shall be completed in accordance with the plans as approved within 4 months of this decision notice and thereafter, be kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining premises, protect the general environment, and prevent obstruction to pedestrian movement, and to ensure that there are adequate facilities for the storage and recycling of recoverable materials.

3. Refuse Storage and Recycling Facilities

Within 2 months of this planning permission details for the refuse store, and area/facilities allocated for storing of recyclable materials, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Such facilities shall be completed in accordance with the plans as approved within 4 months of this decision notice. Thereafter, all refuse and recyclable materials associated with the development shall either be stored within this dedicated store/area, as shown on the approved plans, or internally within the building(s) that form part of the application site. No refuse or recycling material shall be stored or placed for collection on the public highway or pavement, except on the day of collection.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining premises, protect the general environment, and prevent obstruction to pedestrian movement, and to ensure that there are adequate facilities for the storage and recycling of recoverable materials.

4. Photovoltaic panels

Within 3 months of the issue of this planning permission, details of the proposed photovoltaic array shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Panels shall be installed within 6 months of the date of this planning permission and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring that the development provides an acceptable CO2 saving from on-site renewable energy.

**Development Control Committee A – 11 January 2017**

**Application No. 16/02114/F: Beechwood House Bell Hill Bristol BS16 1BE**

5. House Rules

Within 2 months of the date of this planning permission, details of the 'house rules' and how these shall be enforced and managed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The premises shall thereafter be occupied in accordance with these approved details.

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of local residents.

**Post occupation management**

6. Restriction on Use

The use hereby permitted shall be used only for the temporary accommodation of pregnant women, or women with young children and referred by Bristol City Council's Accommodation Services. No other residents shall occupy any unit.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

**List of approved plans**

7. List of approved plans and drawings

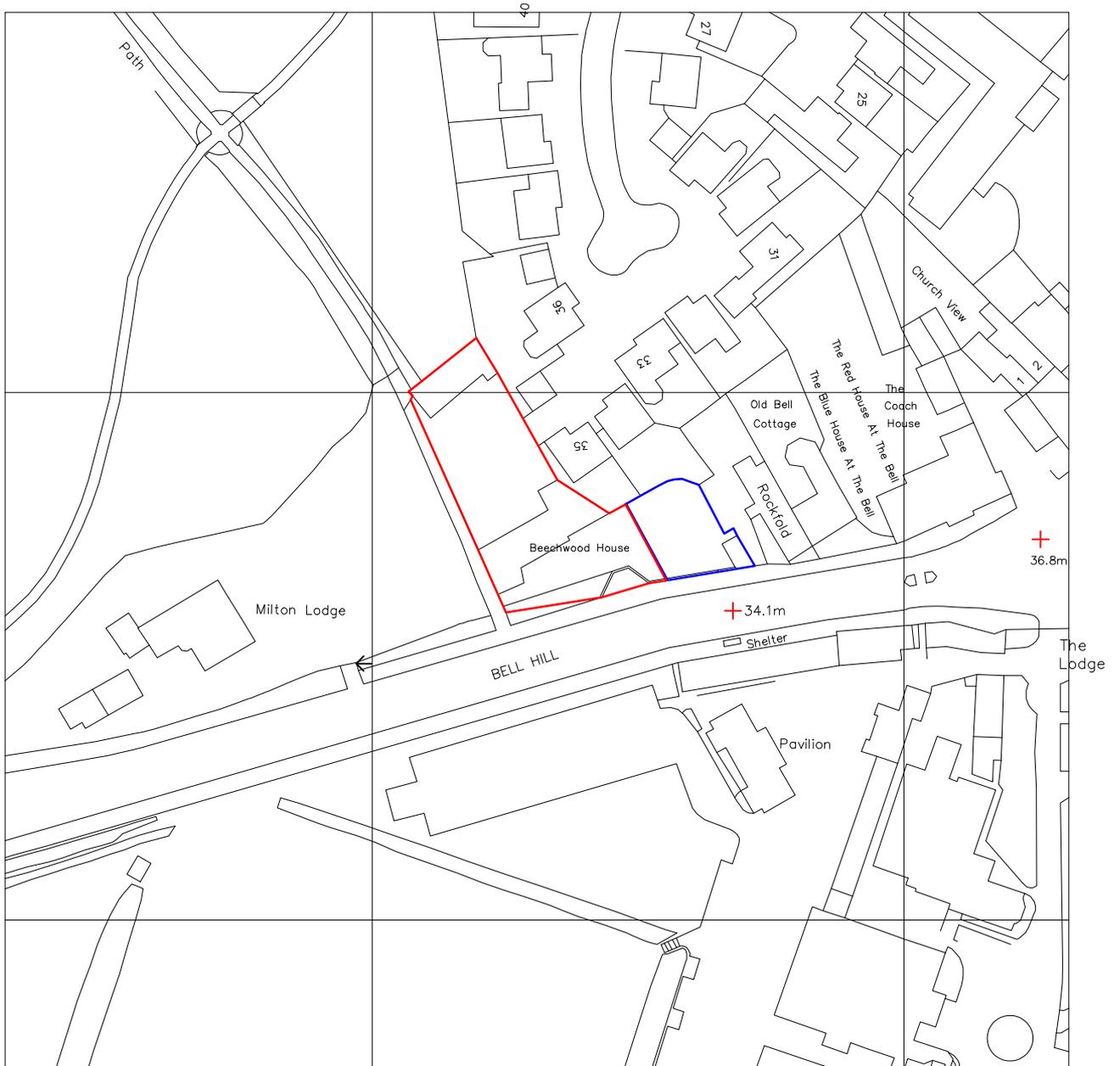
The development shall conform in all aspects with the plans and details shown in the application as listed below, unless variations are agreed by the Local Planning Authority in order to discharge other conditions attached to this decision.

2744/103-A Proposed floor plans, received 4 October 2016  
2744/104 Existing and proposed elevations, received 8 June 2016  
2744/100 Existing site survey, received 8 June 2016  
2744/101 Proposed site plan, received 8 June 2016  
2744/102 Existing floor plans, received 8 June 2016

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

## **Supporting Documents**

- 1. Beechwood House, Bell Hill**
  1. Site location plan
  2. Existing & proposed elevations
  3. Proposed layout
  4. Revised floor plans



**Proposed Change of Use**  
 alongside  
**Beechwood House Bell Hill Stapleton Bristol**

**Location Plan**

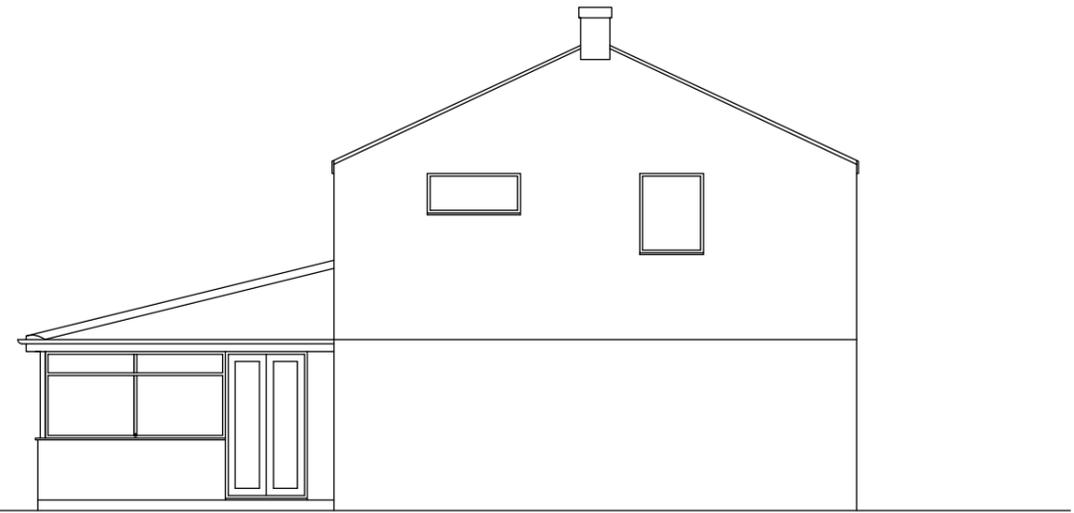
Scale 1: 1250  
 Date : Dec 2015

**Drwg No 2744/105**

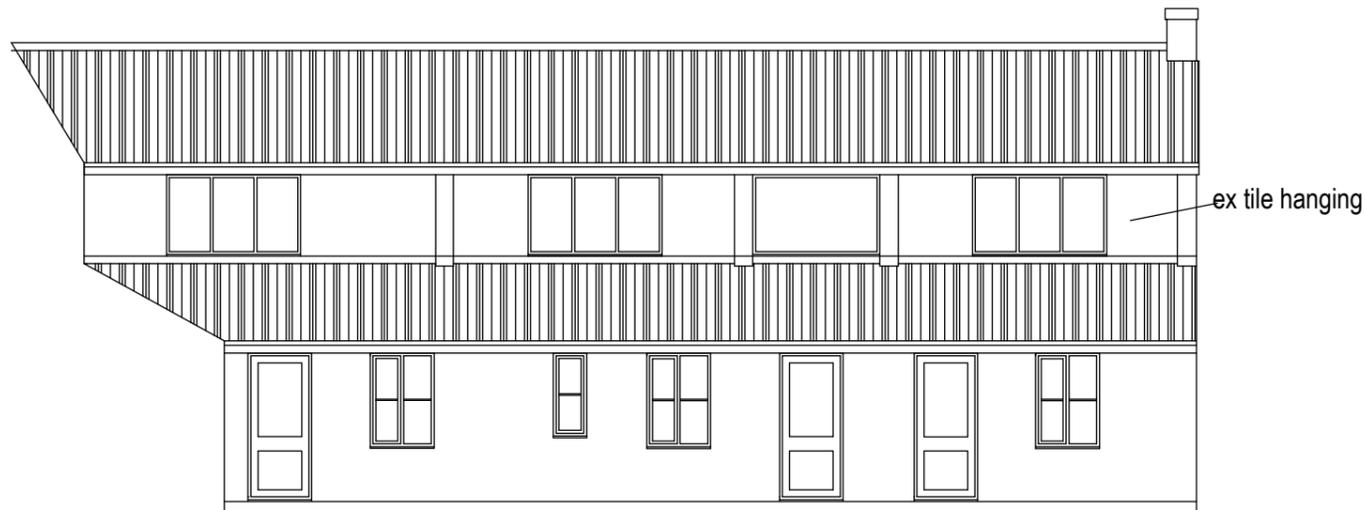
**David Cahill Design Consultant**



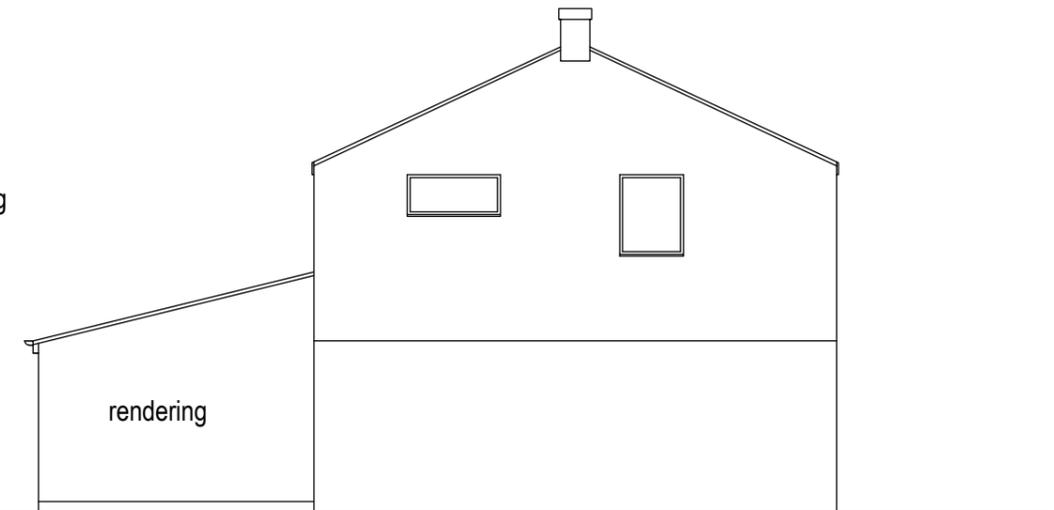
Existing Rear Elevation (north)



Existing Side Elevation (west)



Proposed Rear Elevation (north)



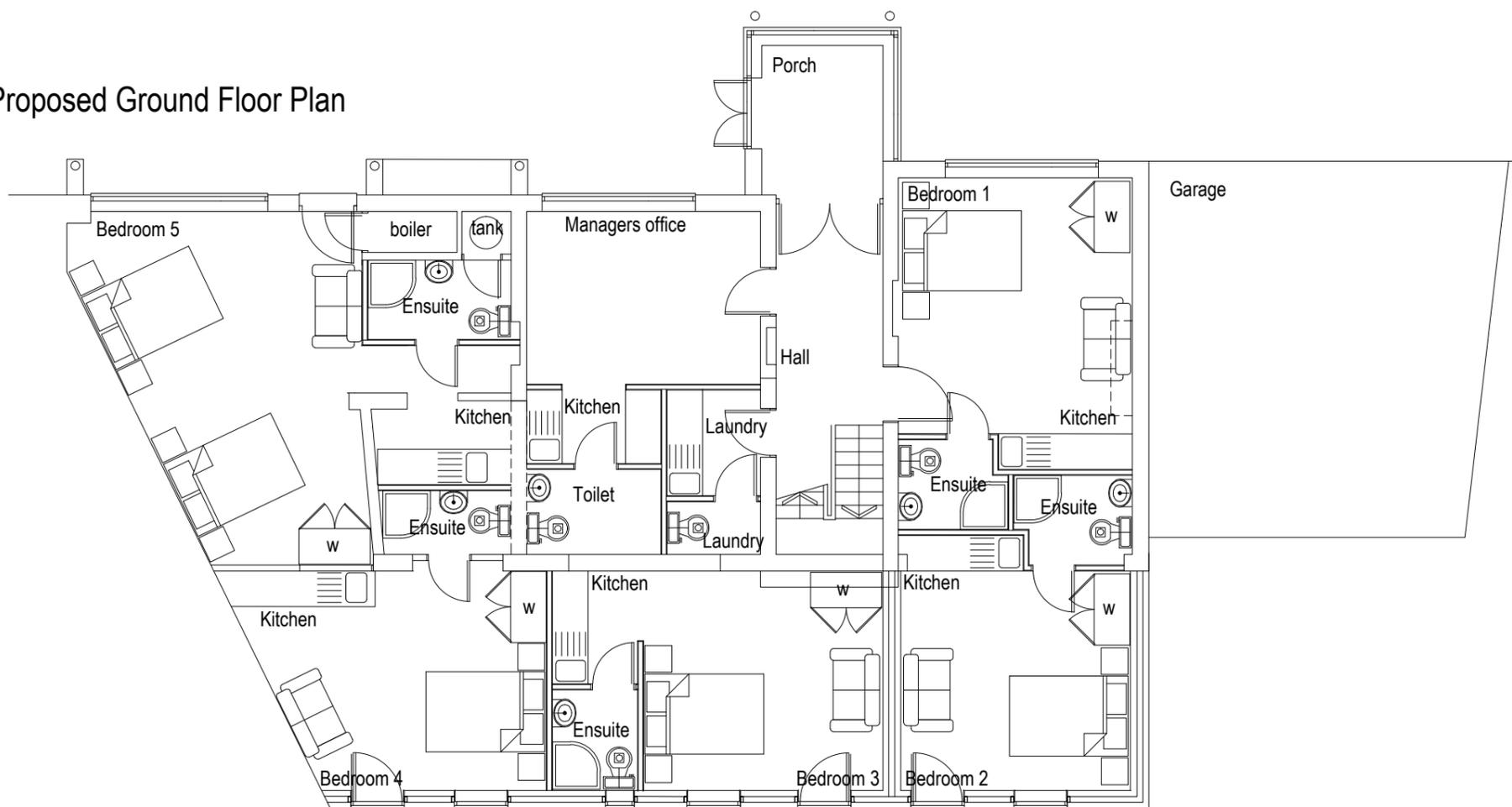
Proposed Side Elevation (west)

Materials  
 Walls : rendering  
 Details : Brick  
 Windows/Doors : white pvc u to match existing  
 Roofs : Redland Breckland Black Grovebury pantiles

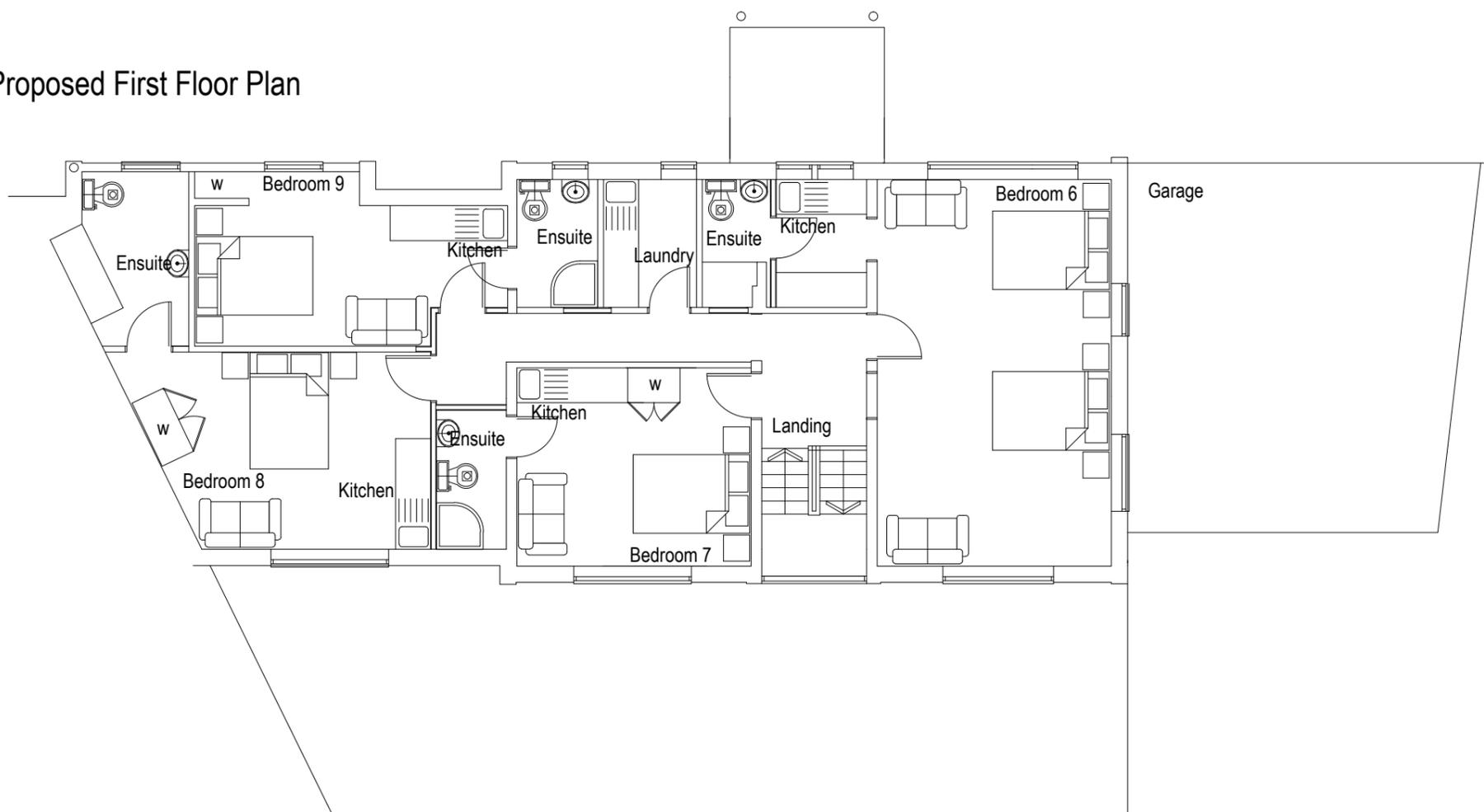
Proposed Change of Use  
 to  
 Beechwood House Bell Hill Stapleton Bristol  
 Existing and Proposed Elevations  
 Scale : 1: 100  
 Date : Feb 2016  
 Drwg No 2744/104  
 David Cahill Design Consultant



### Proposed Ground Floor Plan



### Proposed First Floor Plan



Rev : number of units reduced to nine  
Proposed Change of Use  
to  
Beechwood House Bell Hill Stapleton Bristol  
Proposed Floor Plans  
Scale : 1: 100  
Date : Feb 2016  
Drwg No 2744/103  
David Cahill Design Consultant