

Report to Planning applications committee

Item

29 October 2015

Report of Head of planning services

Subject

Application no 15/01382/F - Aldwych House, 57
Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR

Applicant

Aldwych Developments Ltd

Reason

for referral

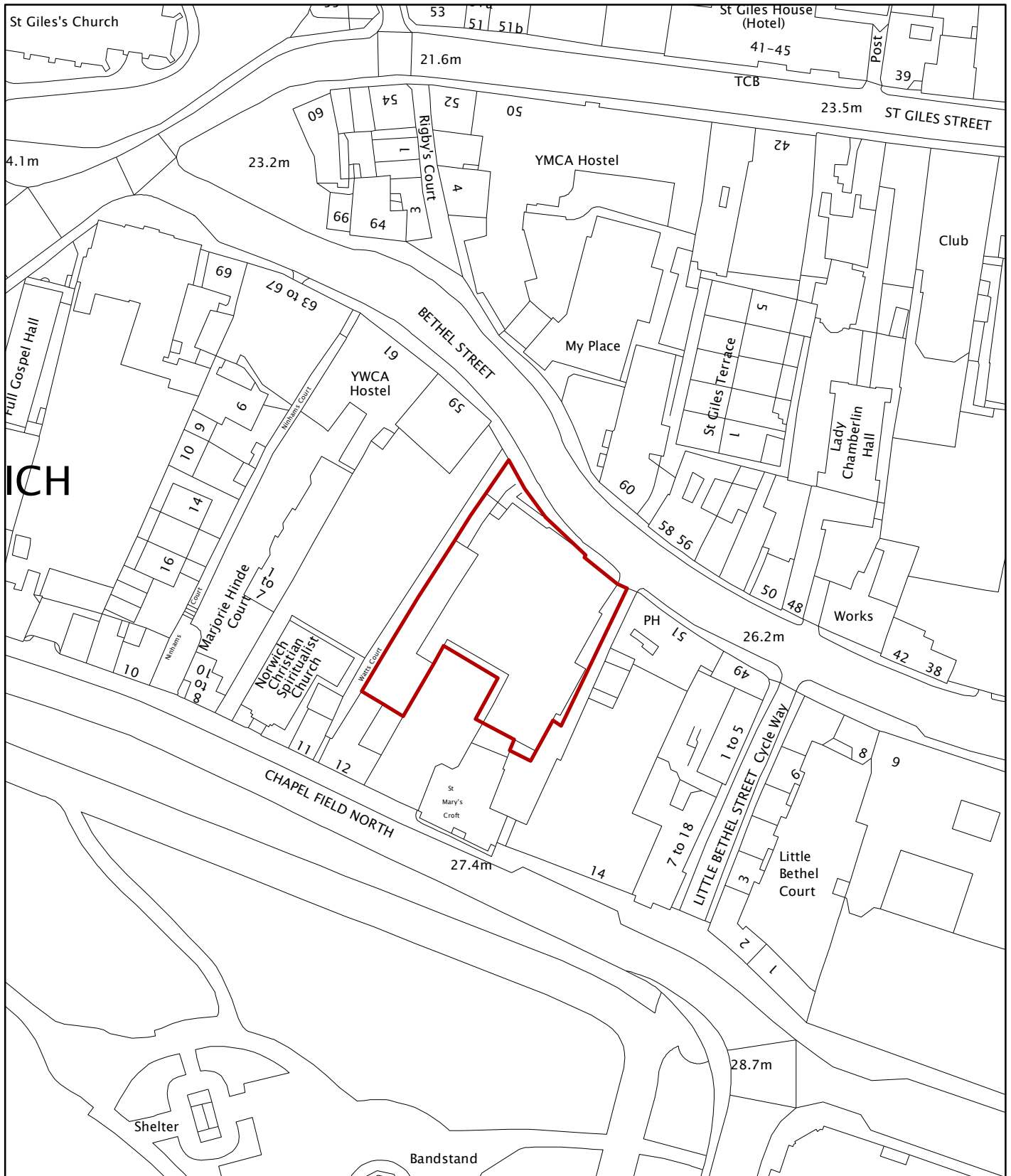
Objection

4(F)

Ward:	Mancroft
Case officer	James Bonner - jamesbonner@norwich.gov.uk

Development proposal		
Inclusion of additional roof lights (retrospective).		
Representations		
Object	Comment	Support
2		

Main issues	Key considerations
1 Design and heritage	Visual impact in views
Expiry date	16 November 2015
Recommendation	Approve



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Planning Application No 15/01382/F

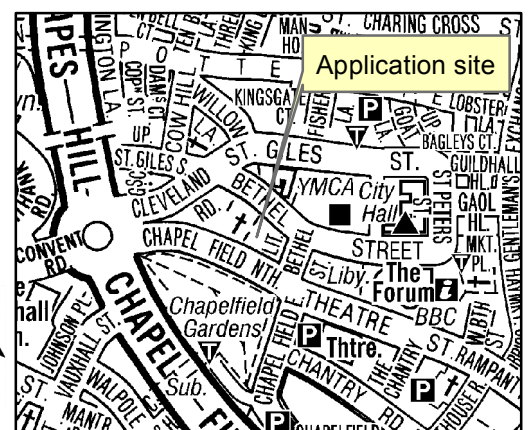
Site Address Aldwych House
57 Bethel Street

Scale 1:1,000



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES



The site and surroundings

1. Aldwych House is located at number 57 on the south side of Bethel Street. It is a C20th building with a distinct 2 storey frontage element identified as having a positive frontage within the conservation area. The rear part of the building has a mansard roof and is two to three storeys in height plus basement area. Pedestrian and limited vehicular access to the site is provided from Bethel Street via an access area adjoining a side alley Watts Court at the west of Aldwych House which links through to Chapelfield North. To the south is Chapelfield Gardens.
2. Prior approval was granted in February 2014 to convert the office space into 18 residential flats (13/02084/PDD). In September 2014 committee approved alterations to the roof and a second floor extension to create an additional 4 flats (14/00630/F). A further prior approval application for 48 flats was approved in November 2014 (14/01472/PDD).
3. Works are well underway on-site and it appears that the latter prior approval and the full permission are the permissions that have been implemented, meaning a total number of 52 dwellings. It has become apparent over the summer that a number of aspects of the conversion and associated construction have been done without the benefit of planning permission. To date this is understood to include:
 - The lowering in height of the western boundary wall (but not the canopy and wall supporting it) [the subject of 15/01381/F];
 - 46No. 'suntubes' on the main flat roof [also within 15/01381/F];
 - 5No. rooflights on the main flat roof [subject of this permission 15/01382/F]
 - Additional window on the second floor on the rear (south) elevation [subject of 15/01380/F]. *NB: since the scaffolding has been taken down it is clear that at least three other windows have been installed that are larger than those approved through 14/00630/F. As the description and proposed plans for 15/01380/F does not make this clear, revised drawings and re-consultation will be required. No decision will be made on this until this new consultation period has happened.*
 - There is a larger square projection on the northern end of the flat roof, which is near the other rooflights but is clearly different in design and is not included on the proposed plans. No mention of this was made until raised by an objector. Given the timing this is not included within any of the current proposals.
 - In addition there are number of pre-commencement conditions which have not been formally discharged [since submitted and pending consideration 15/01384/D].
4. Informal negotiations have been taking place since this was raised by a member of the public which have led to the currently submitted applications. The proposals are understood to be split into three separate applications as a result of the applicants' agent assessment of risk or chance of approval.

Constraints

5. While not listed, the building is within the City Centre conservation area, to which the frontage positively contributes to. There are a number of important buildings nearby including the Coach and Horses to the east and 12 Chapel Field North and St Marys Croft to the south, all grade II listed buildings.

Relevant planning history

6.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
12/01319/U	Change of use of ground floor from offices (Class B1) to storage (Class B8).	Approved	07/09/2012
13/02084/PDD	Change of use from offices (Class B1a) to 18 No. flats (Class C3a).	Prior approval granted	06/02/2014
14/00630/F	Alterations to roof and rear second floor extension to create 4 No. apartments and external alterations to the building including new window openings (Revised plans and description).	Approved	11/09/2014
14/01462/D	Details of conditions 3 a) external facing and roofing materials, 3 b) external decoration to render, joinery and metalwork, 3 c) large scale details of proposed eaves and verges, 3 d) all external joinery, 3 e) proposed roof lights and condition 8 archaeology of planning permission 14/00630/F.	Approved	04/02/2015
14/01472/PDD	Change of use and conversion of offices (Class B1) to provide 48 No. flats (Class C3).	Prior approval granted	26/11/2014
15/01380/F	Inclusion of second floor rear window (retrospective).	Pending consideration	
15/01381/F	Inclusion of sun tubes (retrospective); reduction in height of western boundary (retrospective) wall and redesigned entrance canopy.	Pending consideration	
15/01384/D	Details of Condition 3a: render; Condition 4: cycle storage, bin stores; Condition 5: landscaping and Condition 7: external flues of previous planning permission 14/00630/F.	Pending consideration	

The proposal

7. Retrospective planning permission is sought for five rooflights on the main flat roof of the building. Two are positioned more to its western edge, two on the eastern and one almost centrally between them. They are standard velux-style rooflights within a wedge-shaped box which projects 0.6m from the flat roof, meaning the rooflights themselves are at an angle.
8. One of the rooflights most visible from Bethel Street has been reoriented 180 degrees and lowered slightly to reduce its visibility. This has been carried out.

Representations

9. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Two letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below. All representations are available to view in full at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Issues raised	Response
Rooflights are ugly	Design – see main issue 1.
Main issue with rooflights is the largest square one but now the roof is clearly strewn with shapes, breaking the skyline. Roofscape needs improving.	Design – see main issue 1. It is worth pointing out that the square box-like projection is not one of the five proposed angled rooflights and is not shown on the proposed plans or referred to in the description.

Consultation responses

10. Consultation responses are summarised below the full responses are available to view at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Design and conservation

11. No comments.

Assessment of planning considerations

Relevant development plan policies

12. **Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted March 2011 amendments adopted Jan. 2014 (JCS)**
 - JCS2 Promoting good design
 - JCS11 Norwich city centre

13. Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan adopted Dec. 2014 (DM Plan)

- DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
- DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
- DM3 Delivering high quality design
- DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage

Other material considerations

14. Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF):

- NPPF0 Achieving sustainable development
- NPPF7 Requiring good design
- NPPF12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Case Assessment

15. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant development plan policies are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Framework (NPPF), the Councils standing duties, other policy documents and guidance detailed above and any other matters referred to specifically in the assessment below. The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the main planning issues in this case against relevant policies and material considerations.
16. The principle of the additions to the roof is acceptable, subject to consideration principally on design grounds.

Main issue 1: Design and heritage

17. Design key policies and NPPF paragraphs – JCS2, DM3, NPPF paragraphs 9, 17, 56 and 60-66. Heritage key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM9, NPPF paragraphs 128-141.
18. Views of the rooflights from public positions are very limited. Arguably the only truly visible one from street level is the north east corner. This has been turned 180 degrees and lowered which does reduce its impact but it is still noticeable in views from the east on Bethel Street from around about the old Fire Station as you approach the site. Despite this the finish to the sides of the projecting box ties in with the colour of the tiles on the mansard roof and its visual impact is relatively low. Considering the presence of other items in the city's roofscapes it is certainly not considered to cause adverse harm to the character of the wider conservation, nor does it undermine the significance of any of the numerous heritage assets nearby, including the limited view towards the R.C Cathedral tower.
19. Those views in which some of the other rooflights are visible are largely from elevated positions within other buildings. These are primarily private views and given the additions do not cause significant issues for other issues such as outlook, this is not considered reasonable grounds to refuse the application.
20. Some concern is raised over a larger projection on the northern end of the flat roof, which is near the other rooflights but is clearly different in design. This appears to

be the enclosure for the lift motor which is apparent on satellite images and long-views on Google Street View preceding commencement of the development. It does appear the colour of the cladding on the enclosure has changed but it is not conclusive as to whether it has increased in height. This does not appear on any of the existing or proposed plans, including on this particular application. This matter is subject to separate investigation not for determination in the current application.

Other matters

21. The following matters have been assessed and considered satisfactory and in accordance with relevant development plan policies, subject to appropriate conditions and mitigation:

Amenity – the scale of the proposals are not considered to give rise to any adverse amenity concerns.

Equalities and diversity issues

22. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

Local finance considerations

23. Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant or the Community Infrastructure Levy.
24. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority.
25. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

Conclusion

26. The development is in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.

Recommendation

To approve application no. 15/01382/F - Aldwych House 57 Bethel Street Norwich NR2 1NR and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans.

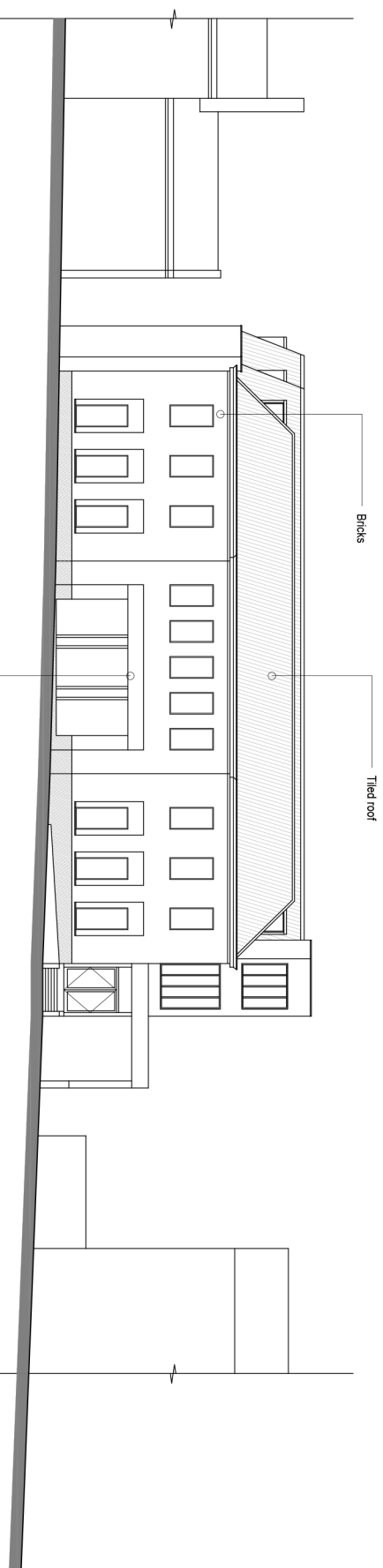
Informative:

The planning permission relates only to the 5No. rooflights as shown on the submitted plans. This permission does not infer approval for those other potentially unauthorised

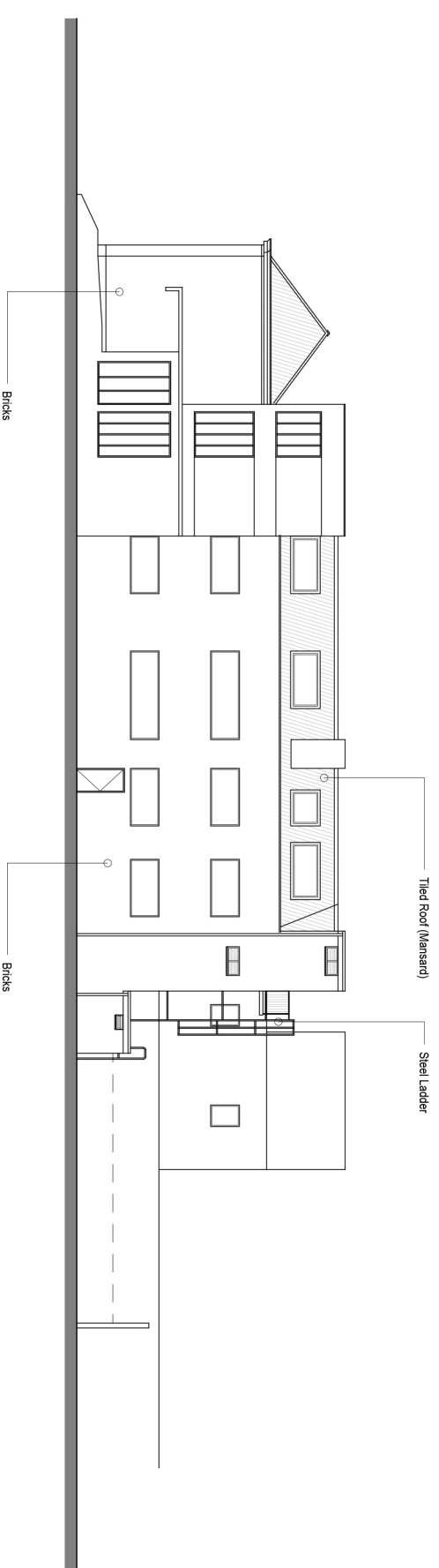
elements, for instance the works to the projection adjacent to the stair tower, assumed to be the lift motor housing. This also applies to the various apparent discrepancies on the plans, including on the front elevation: the two windows in the mansard on the north east corner; the changes to the stair tower, including the different design and position of the windows (as well as those on the adjacent side elevation); and the large distance shown on the section projecting from the east elevation. None of these elements are shown on the plans approved through 14/00630/F and given they are not included in the description of this particular proposal no assessment has been made of their acceptability. For the avoidance of doubt the approved drawings on this decision notice will explicitly delete these elements and focus solely on what has been applied for.

Article 35(2) statement

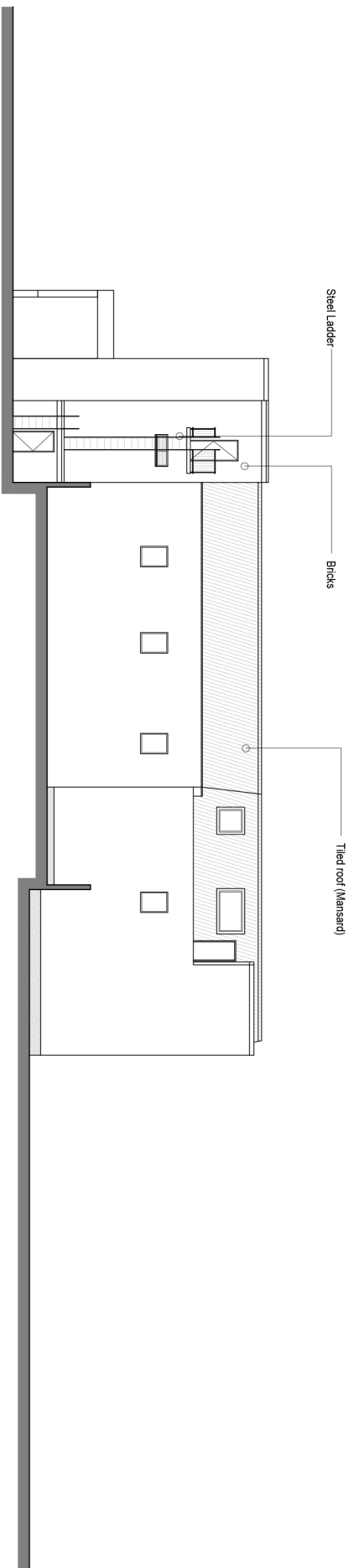
The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments at the pre-application stage the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the officer report.



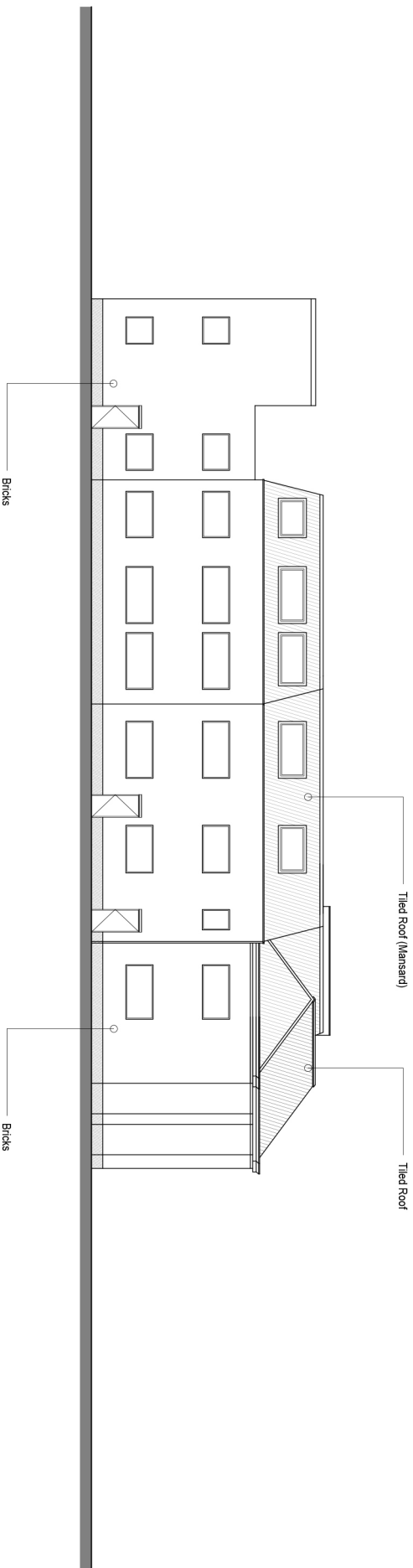
Elevation A_1/200 (A3) (Bethel Street Facade)



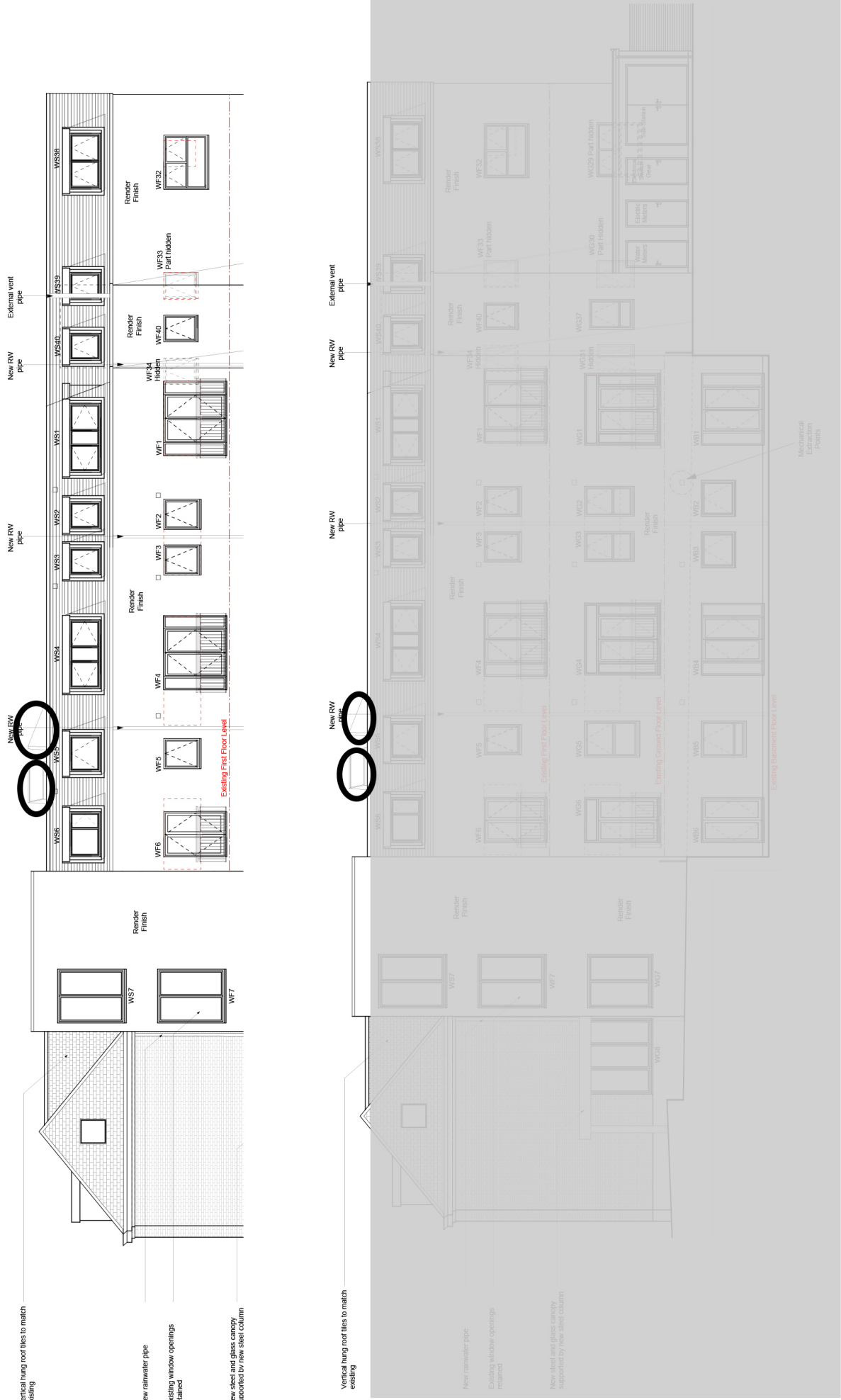
Elevation B_1/200 (A3) (Watts Court Side)



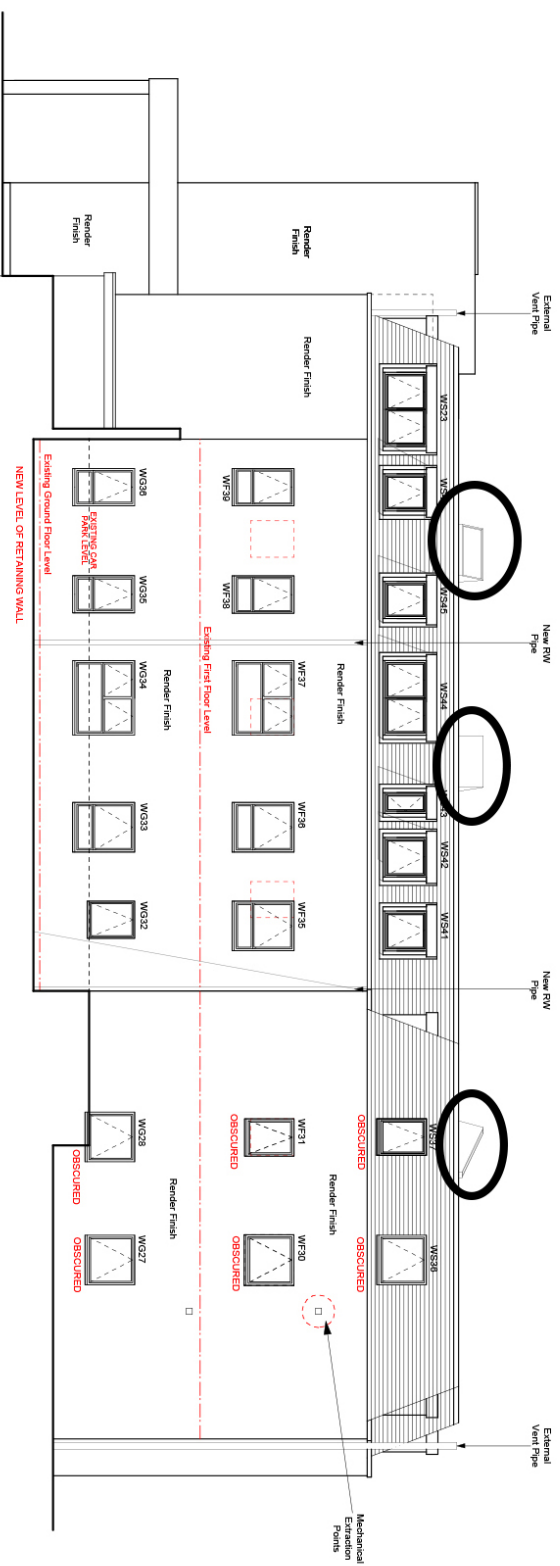
Elevation C_1/200 (A3) (Chapel Field North)



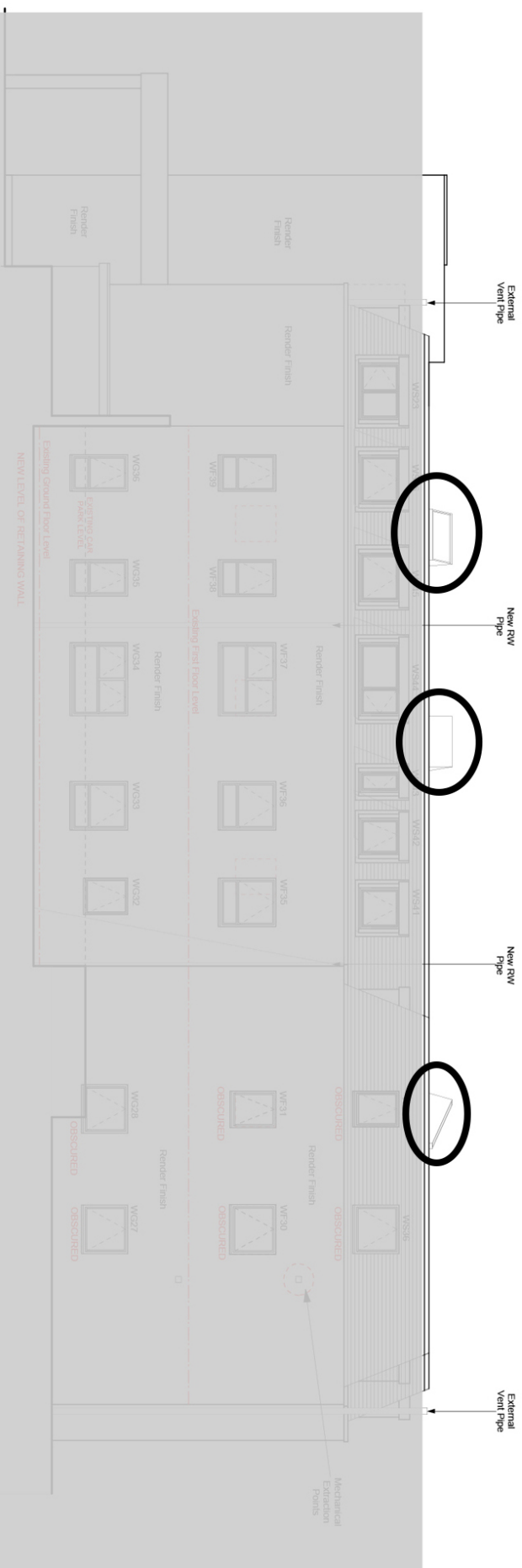
Elevation D_1/200 (A3) (Coach & Horses Pub side)



Area tinted grey not part of application



Proposed Rear Elevation 1:100 @ A2



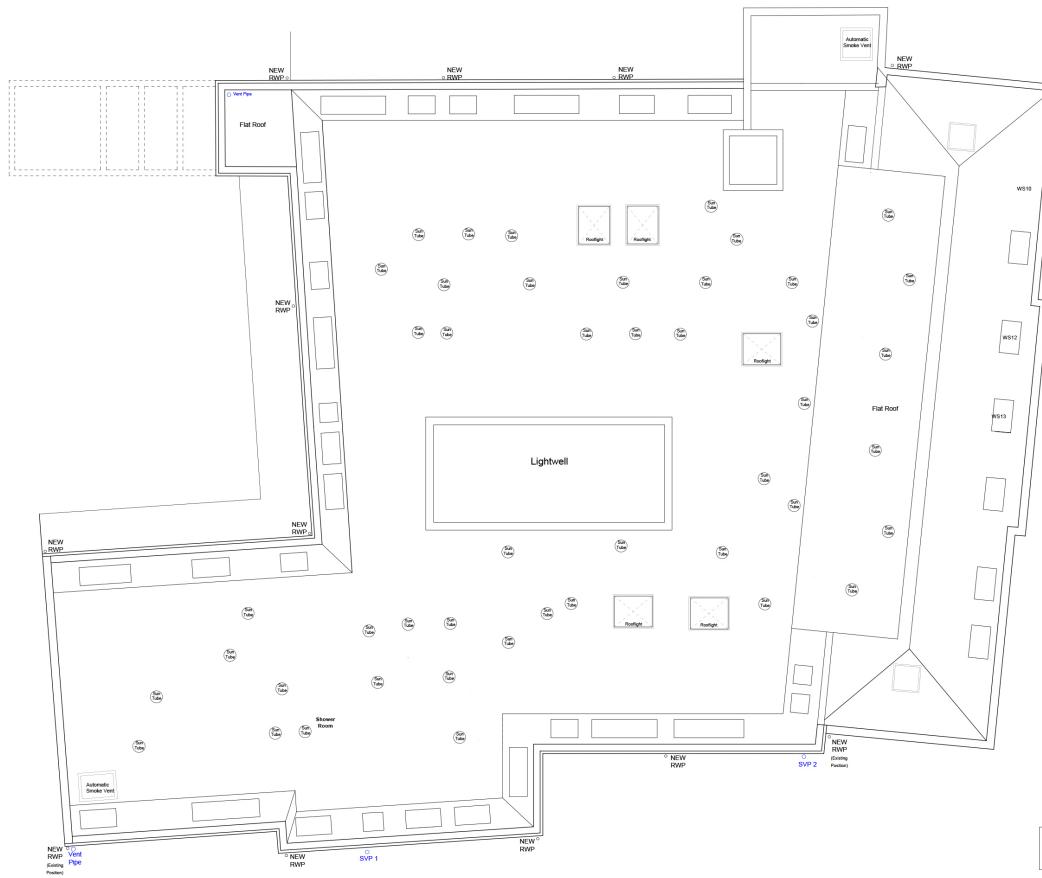
Proposed Rear Elevation 1:100 @ A2

Area tinted grey not part of application

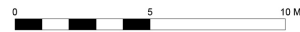
GENERAL NOTES

All dimensions are to be checked on site before commencement of works.
 All sizes and dimensions to any structural elements are indicative only. See structural engineer's drawings for actual sizes/dimensions.
 Sizes of and dimensions to any service elements are indicative only. See service engineer's drawings for actual sizes/dimensions.
 This drawing to be read in conjunction with all relevant Architect's drawings, specifications and other consultants' information.

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING



Proposed Roof Plan 1:100 @ A2

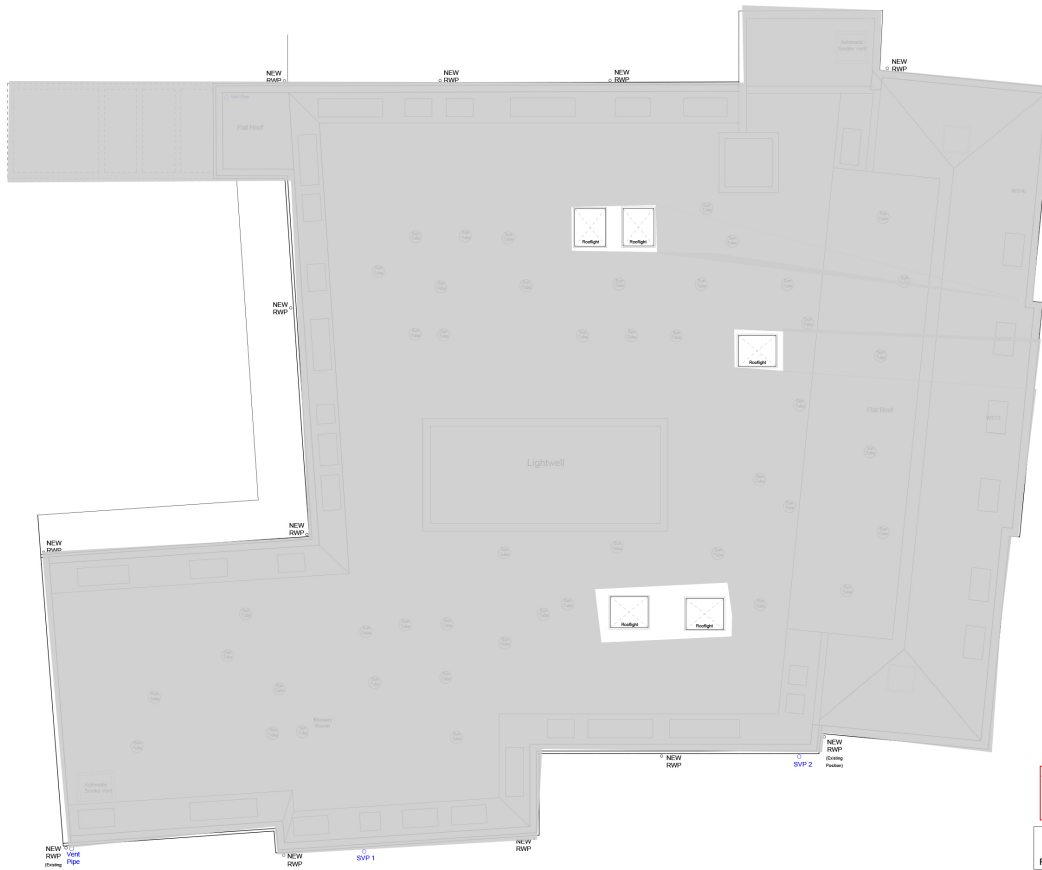


REV:	DATE:	DESCRIPTION:
PROJECT:	Aldwych House, 57 Bethel Street, Norwich NR2 1NR	
CLIENT:	Aldwych Developments Ltd	
DRAWING:	Proposed Roof Plan	
SCALE:	1:100 @A2	DRAWN: RL
DATE:	Jul-15	CAD FILE: 1035-005
STATUS:	Construction	

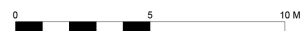
DRAWING NO: 1035-005 REV: *

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Proposed Roof Plan 1:100 @ A2



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DRAWING NO: 1035-005 REV: *

Application only seeking retrospective approval of the 5 x rooflights

Area tinted grey not part of application