

Report to Planning Committee

27 November 2024

Application reference	DC/24/69314
Application address	Merridale Polishing And Plating Company Limited Unit 2 Friar Street Wednesbury WS10 0RE
Application description	Proposed subdivision of existing industrial unit to create 4 No. industrial units with external alterations.
Application received	22 April 2024
Ward	Friar Park
Contact officer	Alison Bishop Alison_bishop@sandwell.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

That planning permission is granted subject to the approval of Council and the following conditions relating to:

- i) Parking provision provided and retained;
- ii) The units shall only be used for B8 uses (Storage and Distribution) and for no other purposes;
- iii) A Construction Management Plan is provided;
- iv) Details of secure cycle storage; and

v) Details of a waste management plan and refuse storage areas.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The proposal provides opportunities for employment which would contribute towards economic growth in the short term but would not prohibit the site coming forward for housing in the future.

3. How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Thriving Economy in Sandwell	<p>The Sandwell Local Plan serves as the blueprint for future development, guiding housing and employment growth while ensuring new infrastructure investments like transport and schools.</p> <p>Encourage a positive environment where businesses and our community and voluntary organisations are supported to grow; and investment into the borough is maximised, creating job opportunities for local residents.</p>
One Council One Team	<p>Sandwell Council's ethos of 'One Council One Team' reflects a commitment to unity and Collaboration, striving for excellence in serving the community.</p> <p>All of our residents, including our children and young people, are active participants in influencing change – through being listened to, their opinions are heard and valued.</p>

4. Context

4.1 The application is being reported to Planning Committee because it is a departure from the development plan. In addition, one objection has been received.

4.2 To assist members with site context, a link to Google Maps is provided below:

[Friar Street, Wednesbury](#)

5. Key Considerations

5.1 The site is allocated for housing in the development plan.

5.2 Material planning considerations (MPCs) are matters that can and should be taken into account when making planning decisions. By law, planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless MPCs indicate otherwise. This means that if enough MPCs weigh in favour of a development, it should be approved even if it conflicts with a local planning policy.

5.3 The material planning considerations which are relevant to this application are:

- Government policy (NPPF)
- Proposals in the development plan
- Planning history
- Highways considerations - traffic generation, access, highway safety, parking and servicing

6. The Application Site

6.1 The application site is situated at the junction of Friar Street and Crankhall Road and forms part of an existing industrial enclave of buildings. The surrounding area is largely residential with further industrial/commercial units immediately to the south (Brookside Industrial Estate) and east (carpet premises) with the Brunswick Inn to the north and a parade of shops to the northeast. The River Tame is situated further to the east separated by a section of open space.

6.2 Amended plans have been received which address concerns previously raised by highways.

7. Planning History

7.1 The site has an established use for industrial purposes as a polishing and plating company circa 1990s along with other industrial uses and is made up of a group of units to the frontage of Friar Street with a larger industrial unit to the rear where the polishing and plating took place. A small part of the site (unit on first floor) had permission to be used as café/takeaway (DC/01/38292 refers).

7.2 Planning permission was refused in 2021 for division into six units, change of use to retail and single storey office building (DC/21/65624) on the grounds that the development was contrary to the development plan; particularly given the retail proposal being outside a town centre. Other reasons related to poor design and parking.

7.3 There is an established planning consent for a car wash to the side of the premises on the car park area (DC/11/53655).

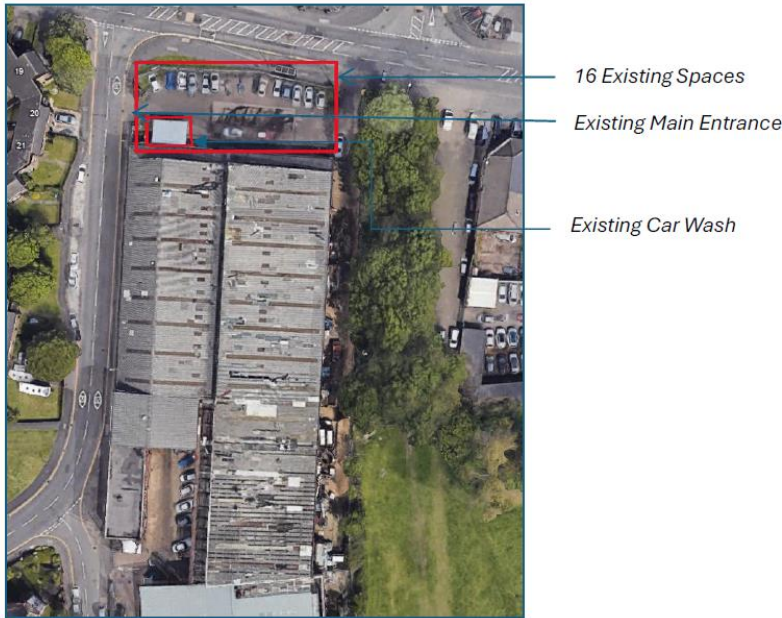
7.2 Relevant planning applications are as follows:

DC/29057	Change of use to include electroplating vat line	Granted 09.03.1993
DC/98/34245	Change of use from Screen printshop to cafeteria/ takeaway	Grant permission with conditions 21.07.1998
DC/10/52402	Change of use of part of the car park for hand car wash (temporary use for 3 years).	Granted retrospective temporary consent for one year. 23.09.2010
DC/01/38292	Renewal of Planning Consent for Change of Use to Cafe and Takeaway.	Grant retrospective consent 18.10.2001

DC/11/53655	Variation of condition 2 attached to planning application DC/10/52402 to allow permanent use as car wash.	Grant retrospective conditional consent 14.09.2011
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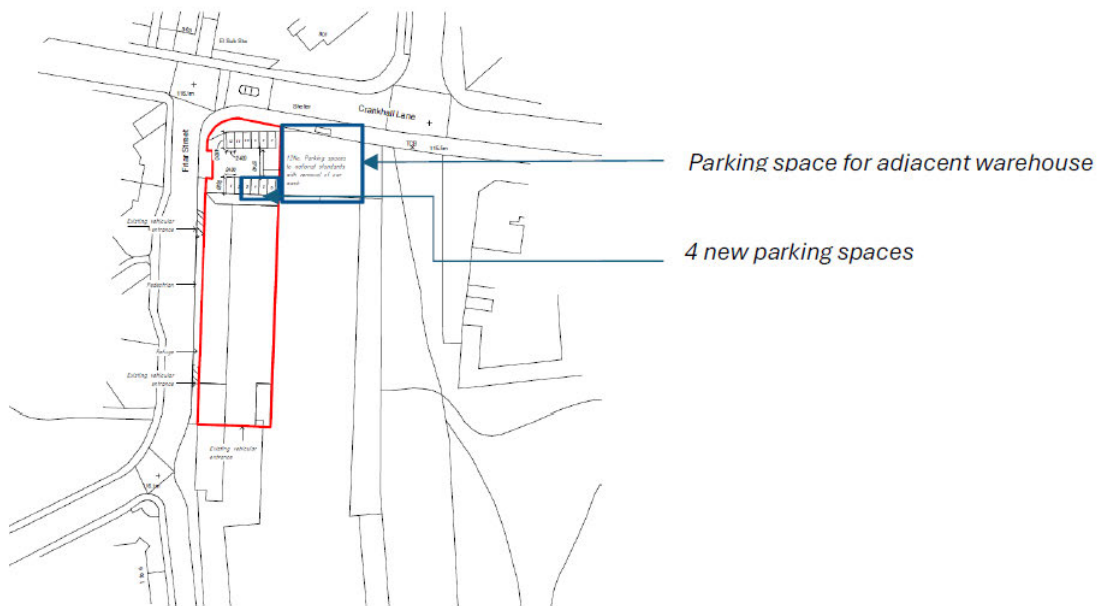
8. Application Details

- 8.1 The applicant proposes to subdivide an existing large warehouse into four smaller units for industrial uses. The floor area of the units would be as follows: -
- i) Unit 1 – 361.9 square metres
 - ii) Unit 2 – 388.1 square metres
 - iii) Unit 3 – 375.2 square metres
 - iv) Unit 4 – 182.1 square metres
- 8.2 The proposal includes some minor external alterations to create two additional pedestrian doorways fronting Friar Street. Internal alterations would include ancillary office, kitchen, toilet facilities to serve each unit.
- 8.3 Two existing vehicle entrances via roller shutter doors would be retained for Units 1 and 3 and parking provision is proposed for 12 vehicles at the junction of Crankhall Lane and Friar Street.
- 8.4 A Transport Statement accompanies the proposal which states that the whole site currently provides 16 parking spaces along with the existing car wash facility. See extract below:



A location plan Google Earth (Image No.1)

8.5 The subdivision of the existing large unit fronting Friar Street into four units would not increase the parking required. The removal of the car wash would provide an additional four parking spaces. See image below:



Proposed Site Plan Cr8 Architecture (Image No.2)

There would also be no changes to the existing servicing arrangements.

9. Publicity

9.1 The application has been publicised by 25 neighbour notification letters and by site and press notice. One objection has been received.

9.2 Objections have been received on the following grounds:

- i) Inadequate parking provision owing to the car park being used as a car wash. This would result in parking on Friar Street which would cause nuisance to residents; and
- ii) Additional vehicle serving to the frontage would cause further roadside blockages and prevent the free flow of traffic.

These objections will be addressed under paragraph 13 (Material considerations).

10. Consultee responses

10.1 Planning Policy

There are no policy objections, despite the site being allocated for housing. It is recognised that the site has been in continued employment use since the adoption of the development plan in 2011 and the proposed application would not be a barrier to the site coming forward for residential use in the future.

10.2 Highways

No objections subject to the units remaining as B8 (storage and distribution), parking provision being provided and retained and the new pedestrian doors opening inwards.

10.3 Urban Design

No comments to make given the modest changes to the elevations.

10.4 Pollution Control (Noise)

No objection subject to a condition requiring a construction environmental management plan (CEMP).

10.5 West Midlands Police

No objections.

11. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

11.1 The NPPF sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

11.2 The framework promotes sustainable transport options for development proposals and states that developments should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The development raises no concerns from highways subject to appropriate conditions.

12. Development Plan Policy

12.1 The following policies of the council's development plan are relevant:

Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

DEL1 – Infrastructure Provision

EMP1 – Providing for Economic Growth and Jobs

EMP4 – Maintaining A Supply of Readily Available Employment Land

ENV3 – Design Quality

TRAN4 – Creating Coherent Networks for Cycling and for Walking

Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document – (SADD)

SAD H1 - Housing Allocations

SAD EOS 9 - Urban Design Principles

- 12.2 ENV3 and SAD EOS9 refers to well-designed schemes that provide quality living environments. The changes are modest in this instance.
- 12.3 DEL1 requires development to provide necessary on-site provision to contribute towards sustainable development along with TRAN4 which promotes walking and cycling. Pedestrian access points are provided and a condition to provide secure cycle parking is recommended.
- 12.4 EMP1 and EMP4 seek to secure a sufficient stock of employment land to encourage economic growth. Whilst the site is allocated for housing, the continued use of the site for employment would assist in meeting these aspirations.

13. Material Considerations

- 13.1 National and local planning policy considerations have been referred to above in Sections 11 and 12. With regards to the other material considerations, these are highlighted below:

13.2 Proposals in the development plan and planning history

The site has an establish history of employment use and is currently surrounded by these uses. It is accepted that until the wider site is released for redevelopment the application site could not come forward for new housing and therefore, in the short term, the site can continue to deliver employment to assist with economic growth.

13.3 Highways considerations - traffic generation, access, highway safety, parking, and servicing

The proposal provides additional parking provision due to the removal of the existing car wash and does not increase vehicle accesses. On this basis the development raises no objections from highways.

14. Conclusion and planning balance

14.1 All decisions on planning applications should be based on an objective balancing exercise. This is known as applying the “planning balance”. It is established by law that planning applications should be refused if they conflict with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This essentially means that the positive impacts of a development should be balanced against its negative impacts.

14.2 On balance, despite the application being a departure from the development plan, other material considerations outweigh the allocation and there are no other significant material considerations which warrant refusal that could not be managed by appropriately worded conditions.

15. Alternative Options

15.1 Refusal of the application is an option if there are material planning reasons for doing so. In my opinion the proposal is compliant with relevant policies and there are no material considerations that would justify refusal.

16. Implications

Resources:	When a planning application is refused the applicant has a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, and they can make a claim for costs against the council.
Legal and Governance:	This application is submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Risk:	None.

Equality:	There are no equality issues arising from this proposal and therefore an equality impact assessment has not been carried out.
Health and Wellbeing:	None.
Social Value	None.
Climate Change	Sandwell Council supports the transition to a low carbon future, in a way that takes full account of the need to adapt to and mitigate climate change. Proposals that help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure, will be welcomed.
Corporate Parenting	None.

17. Appendices

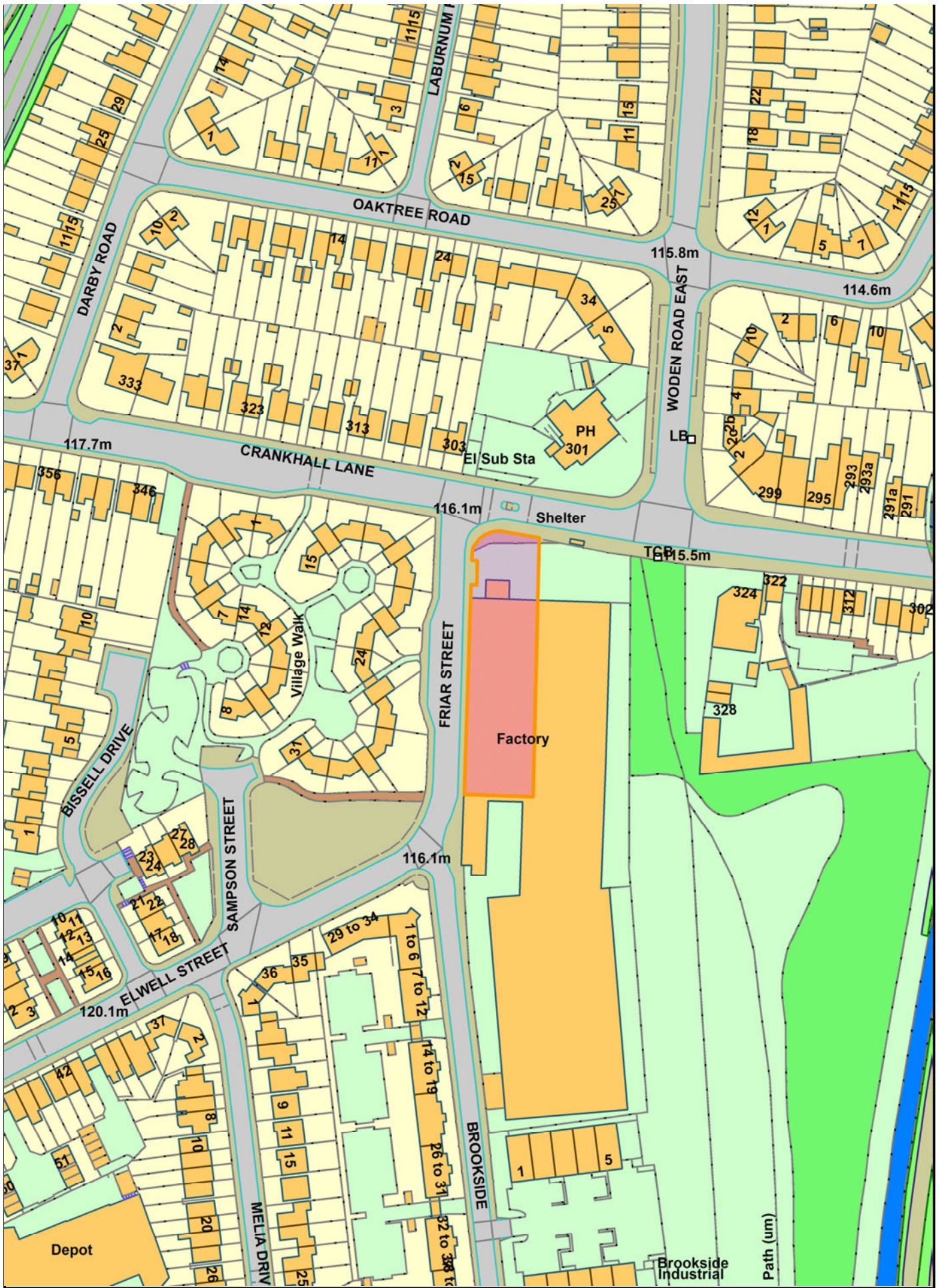
17.1 Plans for consideration

Location Plan

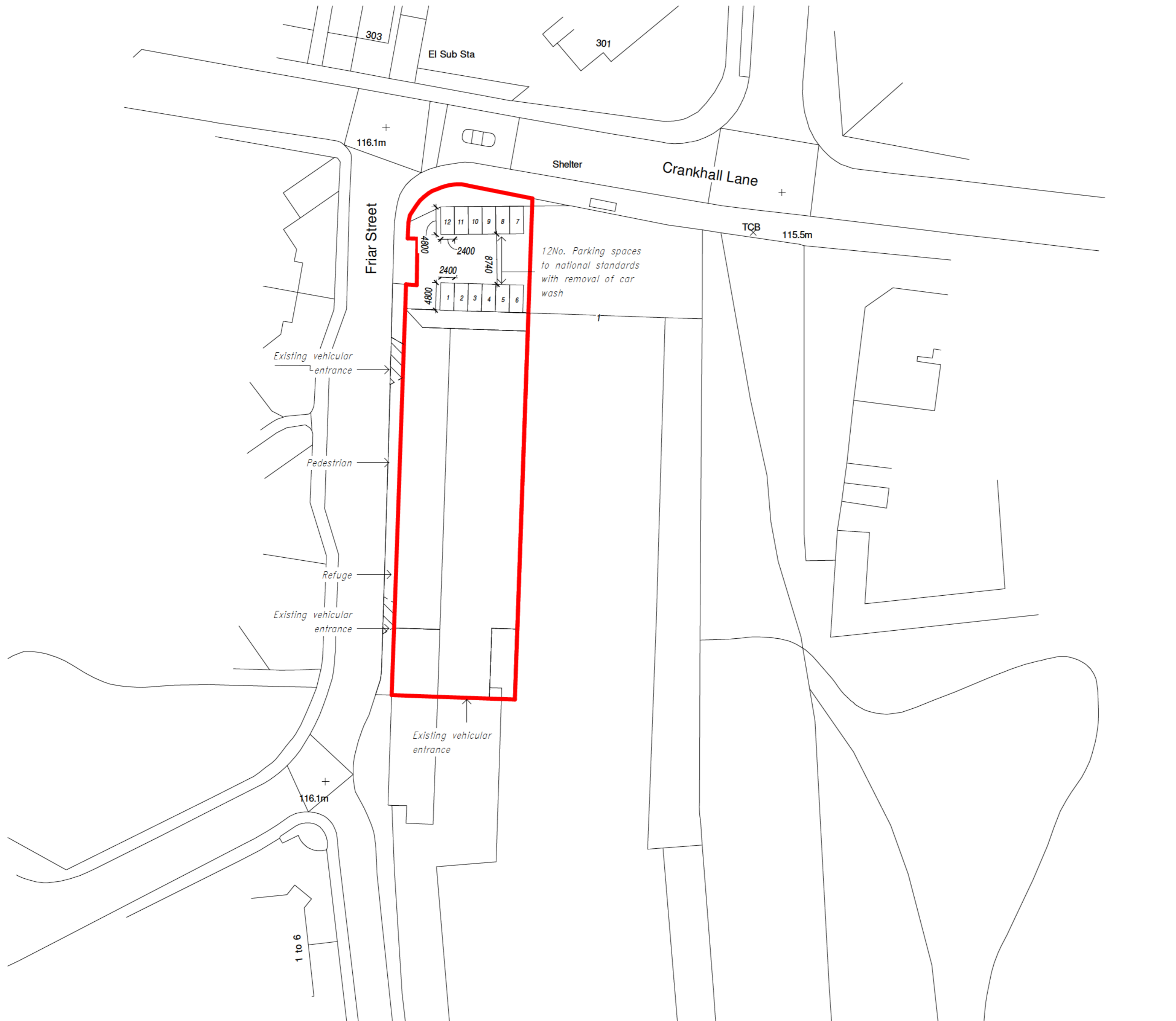
Existing Plan – 001 B

Site Layout Plan – 003 C

Proposed Layout – 002 D

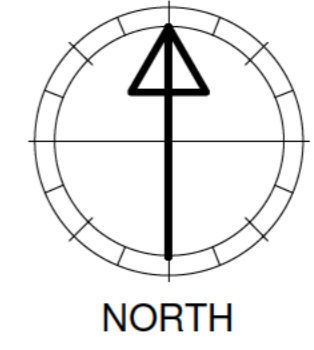
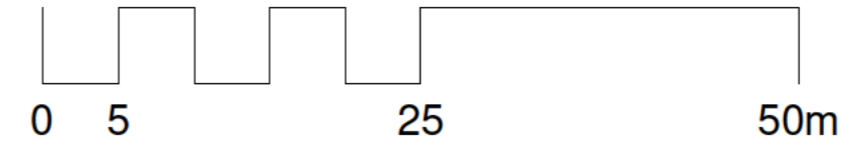


Notes	
No.	Description



12No. Parking spaces to national standards with removal of car wash

Site Layout Plan
1 : 500



Revision	Date	Description
C	02.09.24	Amendments to clients specifications
B	04.06.24	North sign added to plan
A	05.04.24	Clients name amended

CR8
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Client
[Redacted]

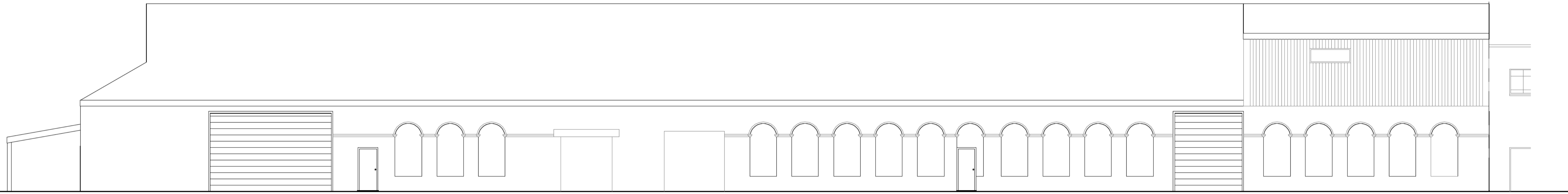
Project
Internal Alterations to Create 5No. New Industrial Units

Location
Unit 2 Friar Street, Wednesbury, WS10 0RE

Drawing Title
Proposed Site Plan

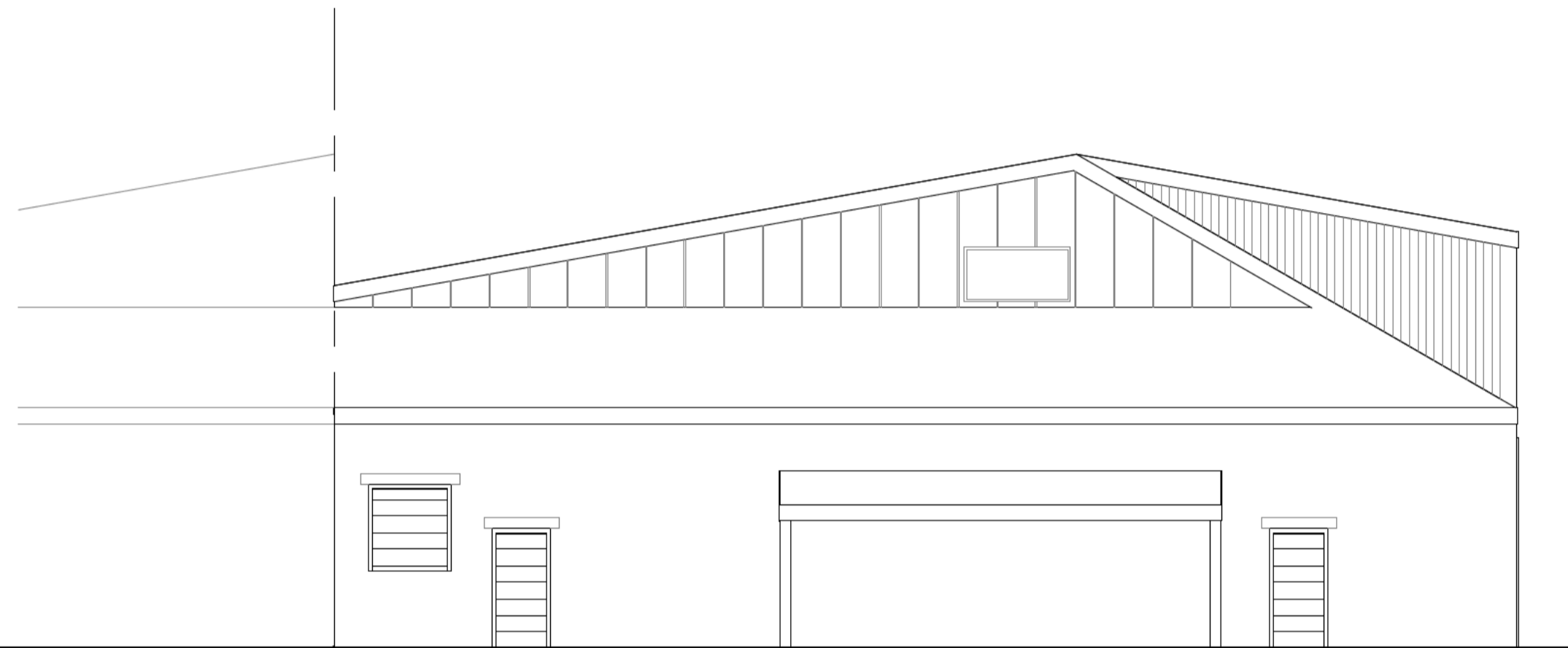
Status PLANNING			
Scale 1 : 500	Date 28.03.24	Drawn SA	Revision C
Job No. 5032	Drawing No. 003	Checked RST	

Notes	
No.	Description



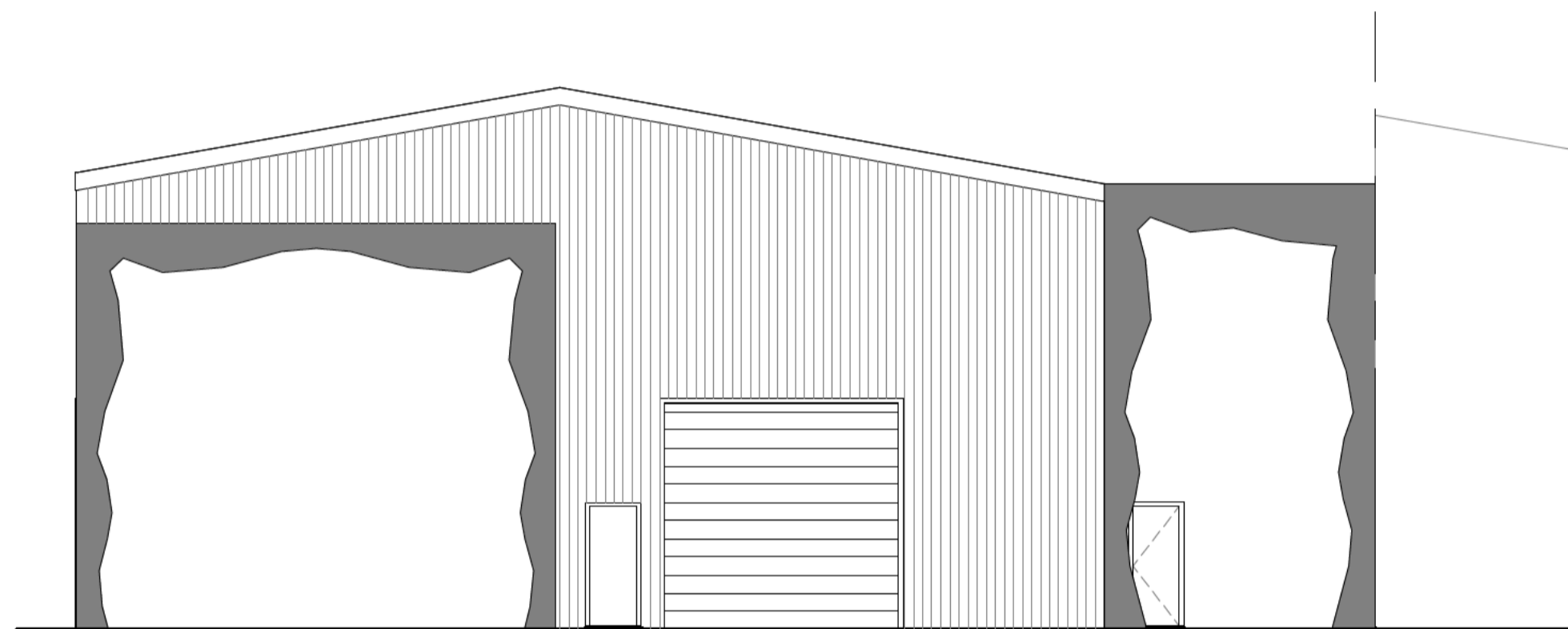
Friar Street Elevation (West)

1 : 100



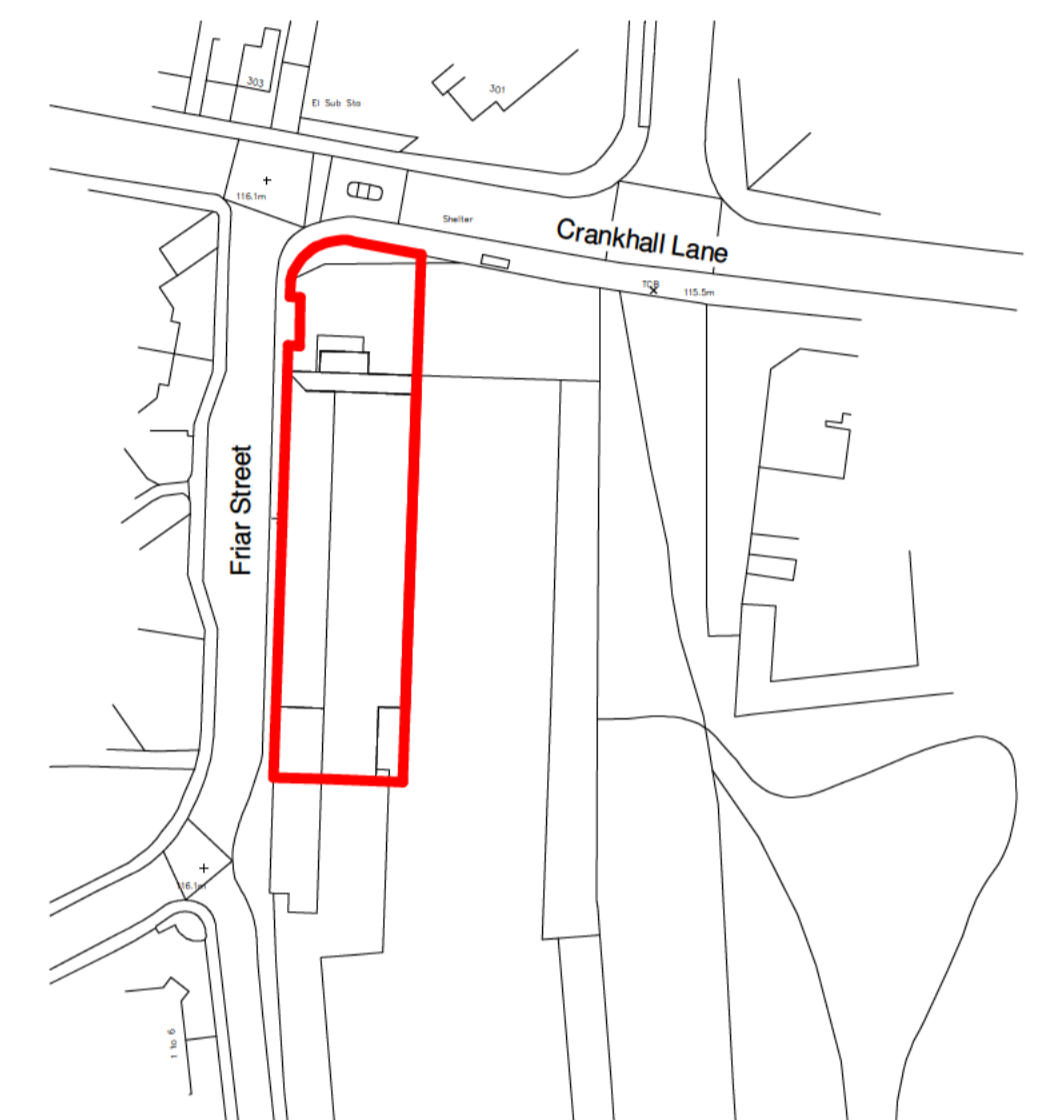
Crankhall Lane Elevation (North)

1 : 100



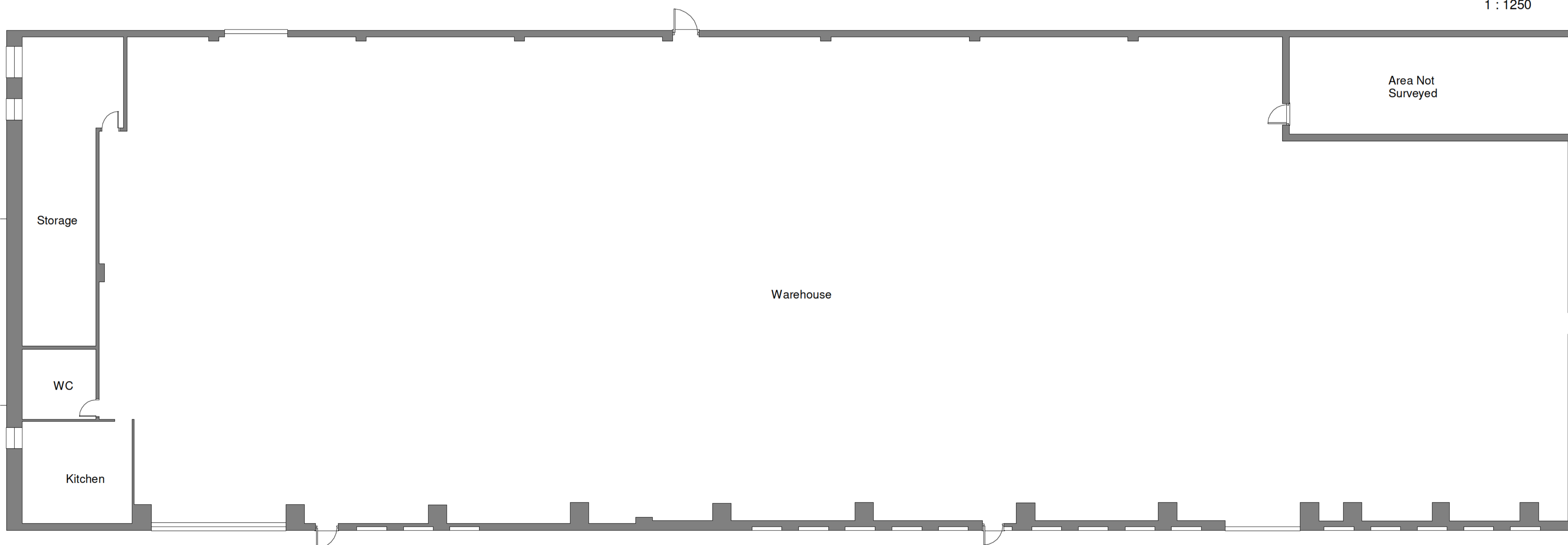
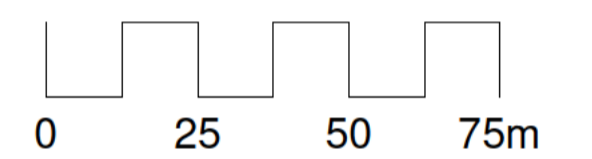
Rear Elevation (South)

1 : 100



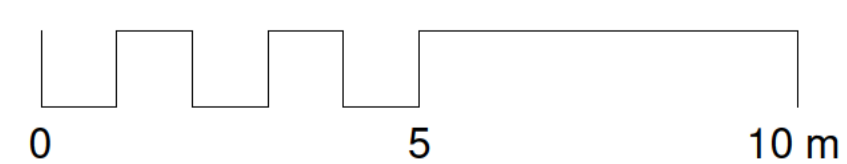
Site Location Plan

1 : 1250



Ground Floor Plan

1 : 100



Revision	Date	Description
B	04.06.24	Elevation names amended for clarity
A	05.04.24	Clients name amended

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Client: [Redacted]

Project: Internal Alterations to Create 5No. New Industrial Units
 Location: Unit 2 Friar Street, Wednesbury, WS10 0RE
 Drawing Title: Existing Plans & Elevations

Scale	Date	Drawn	Revision
As Indicated	28.03.24	SA	B

Job No.	Drawing No.	Checked
5032	001	RST

A1

Notes	
No.	Description

Friar Street Elevation (West)
1 : 100

Crankhall Lane (North)
1 : 100

Rear Elevation (South)
1 : 100

Ground Floor Plan
1 : 100

Revision	Date	Description
D	01.11.24	Door onto highway amended as per LA request 28.10.24
C	02.09.24	Amendments to clients specifications
B	04.06.24	Elevation amended for clarity
A	05.04.24	Clients name amended

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Client: [REDACTED]

Project: Internal Alterations to Create 5No. New Industrial Units
Location: Unit 2 Friar Street, Wednesbury, WS10 0RE
Drawing Title: Proposed Plans & Elevations

Status			
PLANNING			
Scale	Date	Drawn	Revision
1 : 100	28.03.24	SA	D
Job No.	Drawing No.	Checked	
5032	002	RST	