



Planning Committee
29th April 2025

Application No	:	24/01546/FUL Full Application
Location	:	Unit 2 & Unit 3 37 Beehive Lane Great Baddow Chelmsford CM2 9TQ
Proposal	:	Change of Use of Units 2 and 3 from office space to a place of worship, religious instruction, education and training (F1) and meeting place for the use of the local community (F2).
Applicant	:	Chelmsford Hindu Society
Agent	:	Ms Sarah Threlfall
Date Valid	:	18th November 2024

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The application is for the change of use of units 2 and 3 at 37 Beehive Lane, from office to place of worship (use class F1), community services and religious instruction classes (use class F2).
- 1.2. The principle of change of use is acceptable. There are no external changes to the units as part of the application. The development would provide a community facility and is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.
- 1.3. In accordance with the Council's Constitution paragraph 3.4.7.21(e), the application is presented to the Planning Committee for a decision as the applicant is Chelmsford Hindu Society, whose chairperson is a City Councillor, and an adverse representation or comment has been received.

2. Description of site

- 2.1. The application site is a roughly L shaped parcel of land situated on the eastern side of Beehive Lane and consists of four commercial units. Units numbered 2 and 3 are the subject of this application. Units numbered 1 and 4 are also located on the site but do not form part of the proposal. Records show Unit 1 (as annotated on proposed block plan no. TM/1028/01 Rev C) use is retail/shop and Unit 4 (as annotated on same proposed block plan) use is a storage facility.
- 2.2. Currently the site has six parking spaces, although three of the spaces are not practical due to difficult manoeuvring, and they serve all four of the units on the site. The access to the site is relatively narrow, measuring 2.3m in width.
- 2.3. The site is located within an existing Employment Area and is within Chelmsford Urban Area, for policy purposes.

3. Details of the proposal

- 3.1. The application is for a change of use of Units 2 and 3 from office space to a place of worship, religious instruction, education and training (use class F1) and meeting place for the use of the local community (use class F2). The proposed uses are not separated or designated internally so essentially the proposal is for a mix of the two uses.
- 3.2. As there are no specific times/days for worship, the use would take place at various times throughout the day, seven days a week. The supporting information includes information about festivals that occur throughout the year. The proposal includes a travel plan which details off-site parking availability during those specific Hindu Festivals (located at the Church of the Latter-day Saints, along Baddow Road).

4. Other relevant applications

02/01662/FUL – Extension to commercial premises. - Approved

21/01050/FUL – Construction of outbuilding for purposes of a storage facility. - Approved

5. Summary of consultations

- Public Health & Protection Services – Request suitable hours of use condition

- Great Baddow Parish Council – Request conditions
- Economic Development & Implementation – No comments
- Essex County Council Highways – No objection, subject to conditions
- Local residents – 6 responses received

5.1. The local residents responses consist of:

Commenting: 1
Objecting: 3
Supporting: 2

5.2. The objections received that are of a material consideration to the application are summarised as follows:

- Concerns over parking and highway safety
- Concerns over noise and disturbance

5.3. A wider summary of the representations can be found in Appendix 2.

6. Planning considerations

Main Issues

Impact on existing Employment Area

- 6.1. The site is located within an Employment Area, protected by Policy DM4 of the Local Plan, which resists the loss of Class B uses or other 'sui generis' uses of a similar employment nature. Within the Employment Areas, as shown on the Policies Map, the Council will seek to provide and retain Class B uses or other 'sui generis' uses of a similar employment nature unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect for the site to be used for these purposes.
- 6.2. The existing use falls within Use Class B and is therefore afforded protection under Policy DM4. Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment or change of use for non-Class B uses where:
- i. the use does not fall within Class A Use Classes unless it is of limited small-scale and ancillary; and
 - ii. the use provides employment at the application site; and
 - iii. the use will not adversely impact upon the operation and function of the Employment Area or Rural Employment Area.
- 6.3. In response to these criteria of Policy DM4:
- i. The uses proposed are Class F1 and F2 and so does not fall within Class A. This criteria is satisfied.
 - ii. The use would provide employment for two to four people on the site, consisting of a building manager, an administrator, a daily cleaner and a full-time priest. This criteria is satisfied.
 - iii. The proposal would result in the loss of a B class use within an Employment Area. However, further information was submitted during the lifetime of the application to demonstrate that there is not a shortage of available office space within the locality. In addition, the appeal of

this site for potential occupiers for Class B uses is limited by various factors, such as the access being narrow for larger vehicles; the relatively limited floorspace; and the limited parking available. A supplementary statement was submitted stating the numbers of available office floorspace units being marketed currently in the locality and why the application site is not the most suitable space for Class B uses. Following consideration of these matters, the use will not adversely impact upon the operation and function of the Employment Area.

6.4. The proposal complies with the requirements of Policy DM4.

New Community Facilities

6.5. Policy DM20 relates to developments for new community facilities and contains five criteria which are required to be met. It states:

Planning permission will be granted for new, or extensions to existing, facilities and services which support the local community where:

- i. there is access to adequate public transport, cycling and walking links for the benefit of non-car users; and
- ii. vehicle access and on-site vehicle parking would be provided to an appropriate standard commensurate to the scale of the development; and
- iii. the development would be compatible with its surroundings; and
- iv. there would be no unacceptable impact on the character, appearance or local environment; and
- v. adequate access to and between the facilities and/or services would be provided for people with disabilities commensurate to the scale of the development.

6.6. In respect of these criteria, the following analysis is made.

- i. The site is accessible by public transport, by cycling or by walking.
- ii. The proposed access and parking arrangements are acceptable for the proposed use, following a separate agreement for use of parking close to the site on festival days.
- iii. The proposed use as a place of worship and community use for the Chelmsford Hindu Society is considered acceptable in a mixed area of commercial and residential use.
- iv. The character and appearance of the area would not be adversely impacted due to there being no external works as part of the proposal, in addition to the current mixed use of the area being commercial and residential. The proposed use could result in a level of noise disturbance for residential neighbouring properties, however, a condition restricting hours of use would restrict the noise levels to more sociable hours.
- v. The site has level access. A minibus service would run on festival days for people with disabilities/elderly to transport them from the Church car park to the site.

6.7. The proposal complies with the requirements of Policy DM20.

Neighbour Amenity

6.8. Policy DM29 states that "Planning permission will be granted for development proposals provided the development:

- i. safeguards the living environment of the occupiers of any nearby residential property by ensuring that the development is not overbearing and does not result in unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing. The development shall also not result in excessive noise, activity or vehicle movements; and
 - ii. is compatible with neighbouring or existing uses in the vicinity of the development by ensuring that the development avoids unacceptable levels of polluting emissions by reason of noise, light, smell, fumes, vibrations or other issues, unless appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and permanently maintained.”
- 6.9. The proposed use of Units 2 and 3 would be as a place of worship for Chelmsford Hindu Society and local community use. The application documents indicate that the weekly rituals would attract only a small number of people (approximately 10), and the festivals would attract up to 50 people. There are festival dates throughout the year, and the dates of these have been provided for 2025 but can be subject to some change each calendar year.
- 6.10. In light of the current use of the units as commercial operations, a level of noise during the working day (typically 8am to 5pm) would be expected, and likely experienced dependent on occupiers at any given time. There have been objections received from local residents concerning the level of noise outside of these hours. It would be appropriate for a condition to be imposed restricting the hours of use to ensure neighbour amenity is not adversely impacted.

Access and Parking provision

- 6.11. Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, “development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”
- 6.12. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on the application. They do not raise objection, subject to a number of conditions. A Travel Plan has been submitted that sets out an agreement made with the nearby Church of the Latter-day Saints, in Baddow Road, for use of their car park on festival days. This car park can accommodate 35-40 vehicles.
- 6.13. A planning condition is included that will ensure adherence to the content of the Travel Plan, it outlines that the nearby car park is to be used on the festival days as set out in the ‘Details of Major Events’ document. The conditions recommended by the Highway Authority have been amended to ensure they are appropriate in planning terms.
- 6.14. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Conclusion

- 6.15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised it is concluded that the proposed development is acceptable and delivers a community facility that would benefit the area in accordance with the adopted Local Plan Policies.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.1. There is no change in floorspace as part of this application and therefore the proposal would not be CIL liable.

RECOMMENDATION

The Application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:-

Condition 1

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and conditions listed on this decision notice.

Reason:

In order to achieve satisfactory development of the site

Condition 2

The use hereby permitted shall only take place between the following hours:

08:00 – 22:00 Mondays - Fridays;

09:00 – 22:00 Saturdays; and

10:00 – 18:00 Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The hours of use will extend to:

09:00 – 22:00 on festival days as listed below, whichever day/s they may fall on:

- Diwali
- Durga Puja
- Janmashtami
- Ramnavami
- Maha Shivratri
- Vasant Panchami

Reason:

In the interests of protecting the living environment of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Condition 3

The use hereby approved shall adhere to the content of the submitted Travel Plan 2024-2025 (amended) in order to provide visitor parking at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints car park at 171 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, on the eight festivals listed within that document.

Reason:

To ensure there is appropriate parking provision for the use and to safeguard neighbour amenity in accordance with Policies DM27 and DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Condition 4

No amplified speech or music shall be broadcast within open areas of the site.

Reason:

In the interests of protecting the living environment of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Condition 5

Secure and accessible cycle parking for six bicycles shall be provided for the development as shown on the proposed block plan no. TM/1028/01 Rev C within three months of the date of the permission hereby approved.

Reason:

To ensure that sufficient bicycle parking is available to serve the development in accordance with Policy DM27 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Notes to Applicant

1. The Party Wall Act 1996 relates to work on existing walls shared with another property or excavation near another building.

An explanatory booklet is available on the Department for Communities and Local Government website at

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/buildingpolicyandlegislation/currentlegislation/partywallact>

Positive and Proactive Statement

The Local Planning Authority provided advice to the applicant before the application was submitted and also suggested amendments to the proposal during the life of the application. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.

Plans to be listed on any Decision Notice:

Site Location Plan
 TM/1028/01/C
 TM/1028/03/C
 TM/1028/04
 Travel Plan 2024-2025/Amended

Appendix 2 – Consultations

Public Health & Protection Services

Comments
02.12.2024 - Suitable hours of use should be imposed by condition to minimise any noise disturbance from services.

Great Baddow Parish Council

Comments
<p>05.12.2024 - The Parish Council request that the following conditions are applied to this planning application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Hours of use are restricted to 08:00 ' 22:00 daily. 2) Detail and evidence are supplied in relation to the proposed car parking arrangements. 3) A noise level monitor is installed and observed. 4) A more detailed plan regarding the public transport proposal is provided.

Economic Development & Implementation

Comments
25.11.2024 - No further comments in relation to this application.

Comments
<p>19.02.2025 - The applicant has reached agreement with the Church of the Latter Day Saints, located 523 metres walking distance from the proposed development, to use their car parking which can accommodate up to 40no. vehicles.</p> <p>This car park would be used for nine annual major Hindu events (Festival Days), where there would be high attendance.</p> <p>' An updated Travel Plan has been submitted incorporating the use of the parking facility at the Church of the Latter Day Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o On festival days, a mini bus would be used to transport worshippers with reduced mobility to and from the car park in Baddow Road.o There are three zebra crossing along the walking route to The Church of the Latter Day Saints in Baddow Road. Two to the north at the Beehive Lane mini-roundabout, one that across Beehive Lane and one across Baddow Road. There is another crossing at Baddow Road to west adjacent to Spooner Close. <p>This would facilitate two walking routes options using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">' the zebra crossing at the Beehive Lane crossing north over Baddow Road and proceed west.' the zebra crossing at the Beehive Lane mini-round about, to cross west over Beehive Lane then crossing at Baddow Road adjacent to Spooner Close. <p>From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prior to first occupation the parking spaces shown in the Proposed Block Plan, drawing no. TM/1028/01 Revision C shall be retained in this form at all times. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles that are related to the use of the development. <p>Reason: To ensure that on street parking of vehicles in the adjoining streets does not occur in the interests of highway safety and that appropriate parking is provided.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Prior to first occupation the 6no. cycle parking spaces shall be provided as shown in the in Proposed Block Plan, drawing no. TM/1028/01 Revision C in accordance with the Parking Standards. The facility shall be retained at all times. <p>Reason: To ensure appropriate cycle parking is provided in the interest of highway safety and amenity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The submitted Chelmsford Hindu Society Travel plan 2024 -2025 (Amended) shall be implemented. It must include annual update to The Church of the Latter Day Saints car parking agreement for the Overflow Parking Plan, to provide the dates of the nine annual Major Hindu Events, where the use of the Church of the Latter Day Saints car park is required.

Reason: In the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport in accordance with policies DM9 and DM10.

The above conditions are to ensure that the proposal conforms to the relevant policies contained within the County Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance and NPPF 2024.

Date:- 14.01.2025 - Previous comments submitted, now superseded.

Date:- 08.01.2025 – Previous comments submitted, now superseded.

Local Residents

Comments

Representations received – 6

Commenting – 1 response– Summarised as follows:

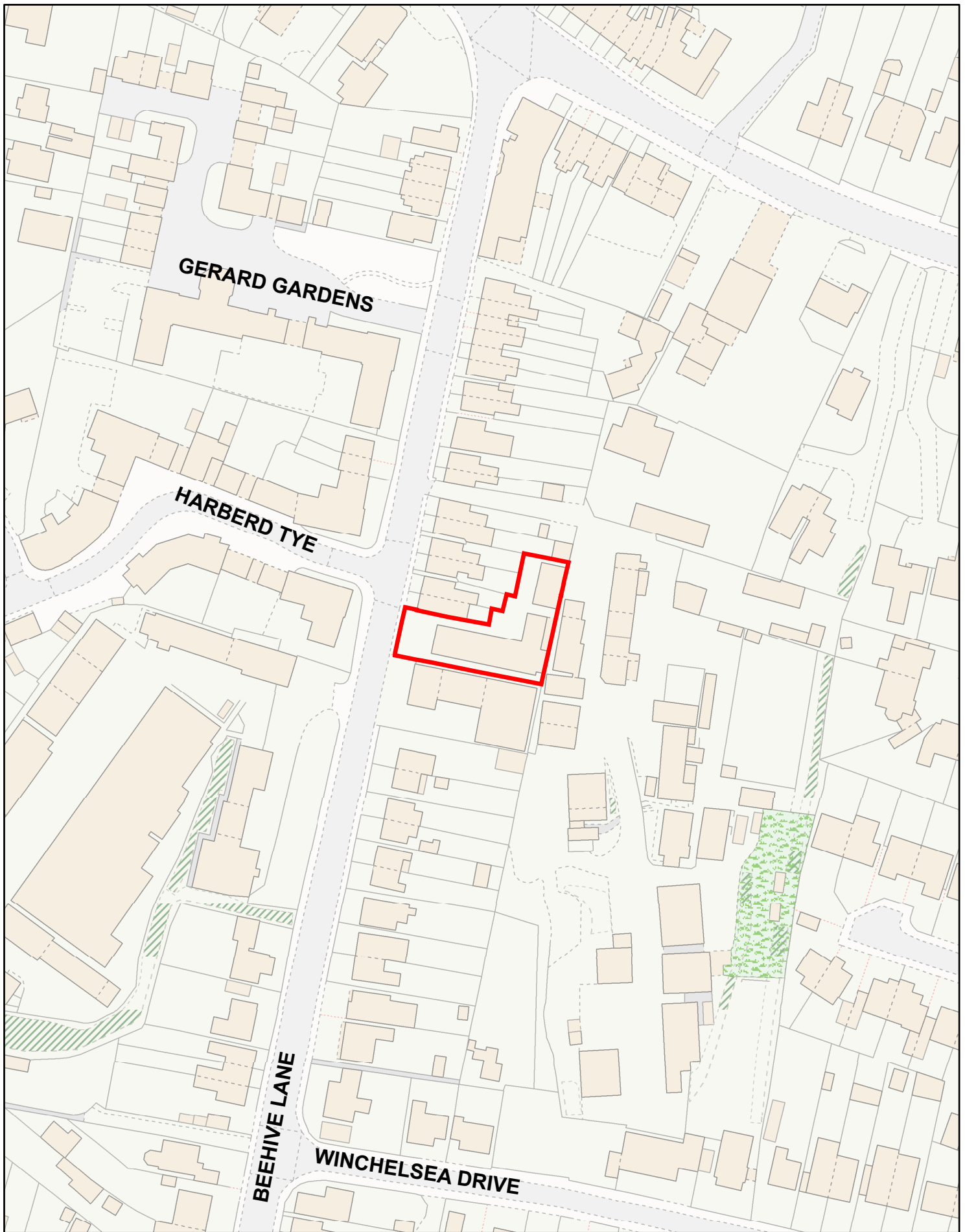
Concerns over noise/disturbance and parking/highway safety, however, no objections if these can be mitigated

Supporting – 2 responses – Summarised as follows:

Proposal addresses a need for a Hindu place of worship and support the proposal.

Objecting – 3 responses – Summarised as follows:

- Beehive Lane is a very busy road with limited parking
- Up to now noise from site has been 9am to 5pm, use should be restricted to this
- Building not suitable for religious purposes
- Sceptical about attendance figures as there are at least 3000 Hindus living in Chelmsford
- Has been used more than once without permission
- Concerns over capacity of the units
- Noise concerns
- No details of travel arrangements/proposed parking
- No details of days/hours of use
- Concerns over conditions of capacity/hours of use may not be adhered to



0 12.5 25 50 Metres

1:1,250



Planning Committee
24/01546/FUL

Planning & Development Management
Directorate for Sustainable Communities

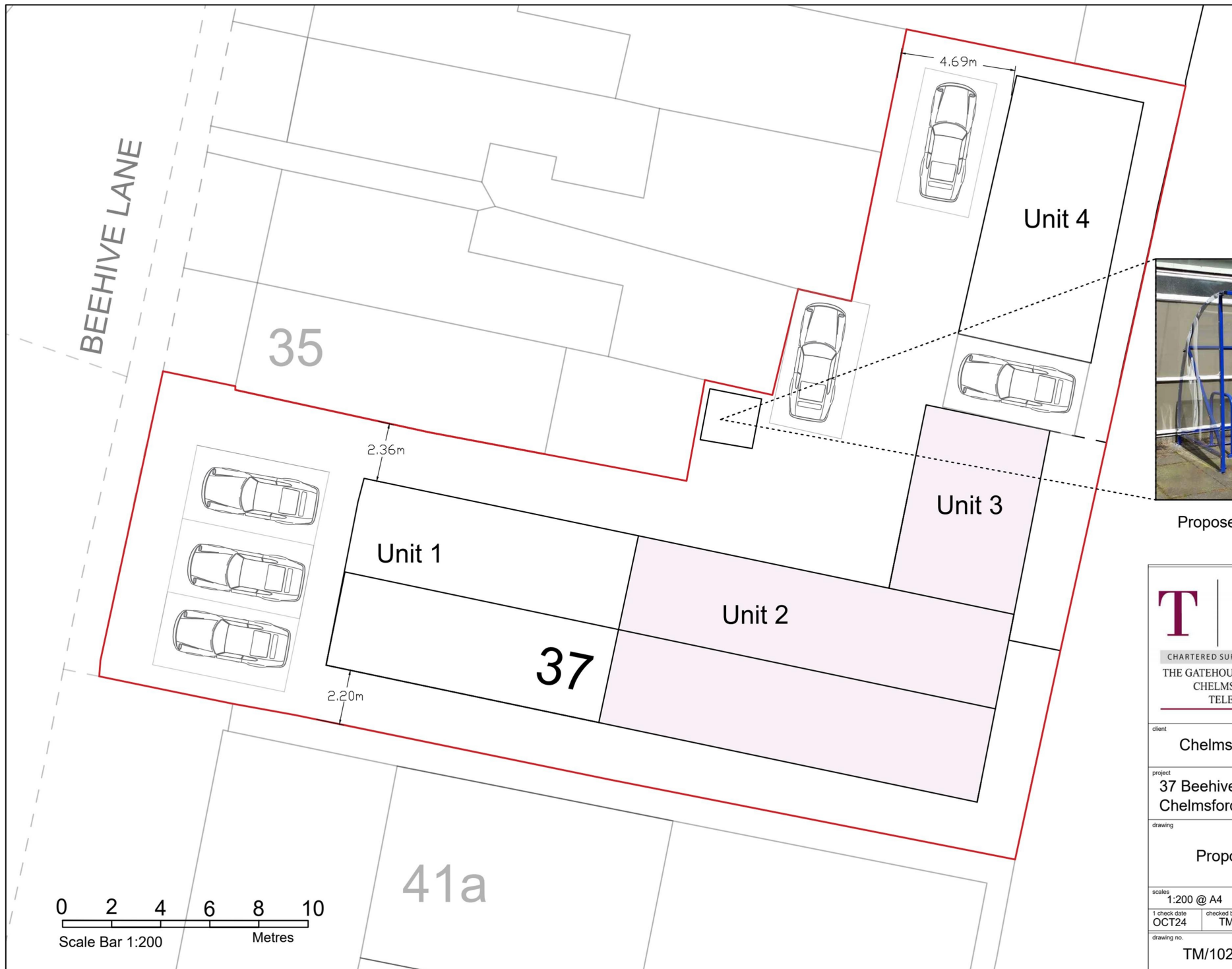
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Proposed bike storage rack

T | M | A

CHARTERED SURVEYORS • PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

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client

Chelmsford Hindu Society

project

37 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow,
Chelmsford, CM2 9TQ

drawing

Proposed Block Plan

scales

1:200 @ A4

date drawn

Oct24

drawn by

AH

1 check date

OCT24

checked by

TM

2 check date

checked by

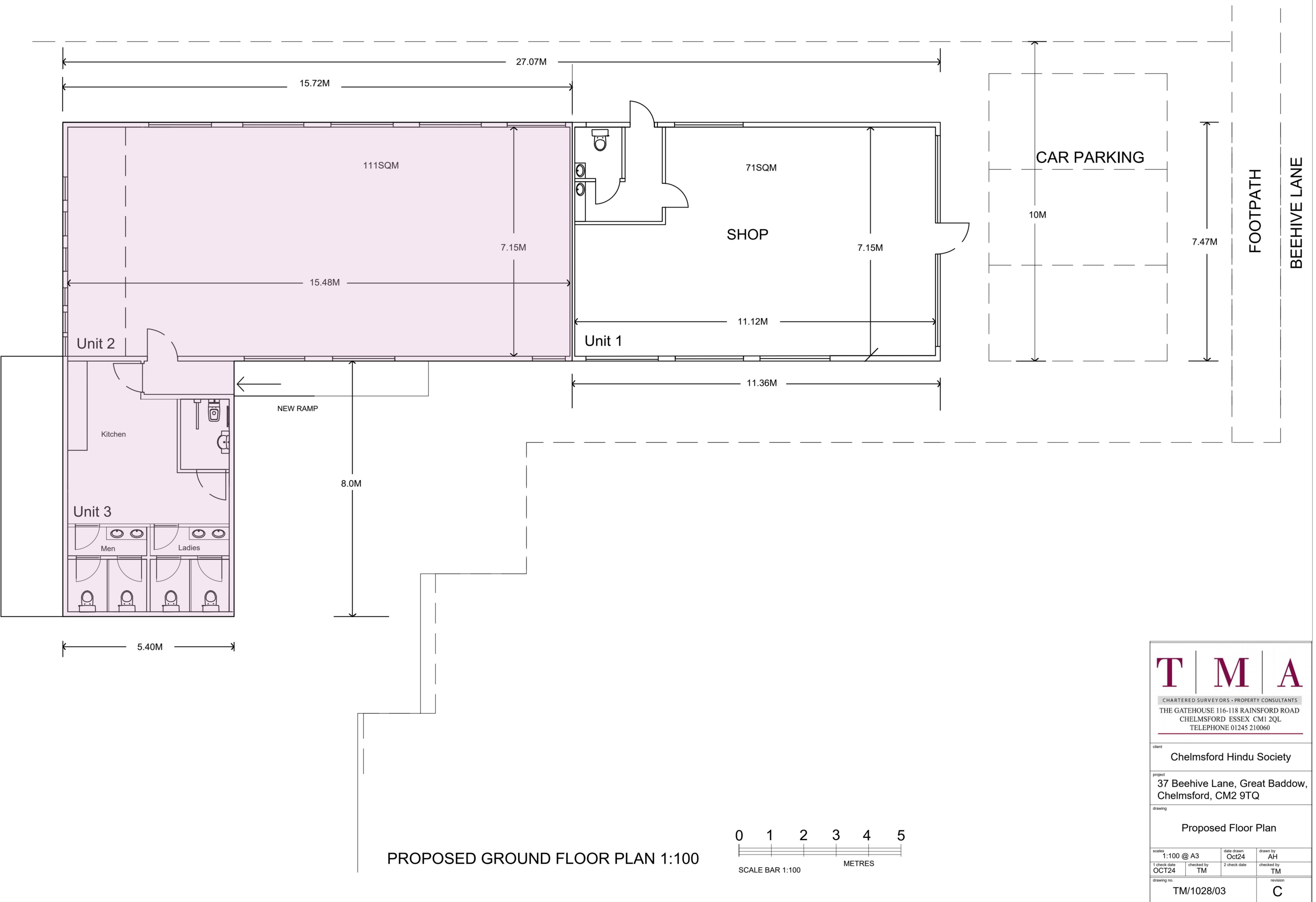
TM

drawing no.

TM/1028/01

revision

C



T | M | A
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client Chelmsford Hindu Society		
project 37 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 9TQ		
drawing Proposed Floor Plan		
scales 1:100 @ A3	date drawn Oct24	drawn by AH
1 check date OCT24	checked by TM	2 check date checked by TM
drawing no. TM/1028/03		revision C