

North Hall
Staplefield RH17 6AS



Design Document

18th November 2025 REV 00 STATUS - Planning

FUTURE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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1.0 Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared by Future Planning and Development on behalf of Mr and Mrs Darren and Jackie Stone, in support of a Householder Planning Application for the conversion of a former granary building within the curtilage of North Hall, Mallions Lane, Staplefield, West Sussex (RH17 6AS).

The proposal seeks consent for the conversion of the existing curtilage-listed granary, currently in ancillary use as part of the domestic curtilage of the Grade II listed farmhouse to provide an ancillary gym, office, and games room. The works are designed to secure the building's long term conservation through sensitive adaptation, ensuring continued beneficial use while respecting its historic fabric and setting.

This Statement should be read alongside the accompanying Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment (Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors, September 2025), which provides detailed analysis of the building's historic development, architectural significance, and the effect of the proposed works.

Pre-application advice was sought from Mid Sussex District Council (ref. DM/25/0564). Written feedback was provided by the case officer Hamish Evans and the Council's Conservation Officer, Emily, in June 2025. The current proposals have been refined in direct response to that advice

The proposal is assessed within the context of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031), the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan, and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2024–2029). It has also been guided by the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings, and relevant Historic England guidance.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Explain the design development
- Show that the proposal represents a sympathetic and sustainable reuse of an existing curtilage-listed structure that preserves and enhances the special interest of North Hall and its setting within the High Weald landscape.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scheme submitted at Pre-application Stage

The proposal submitted at the pre-application stage proposed the conversion of the existing granary within the grounds of North Hall to provide an ancillary gym/office/games room. The works are modest in scale and wholly contained within the existing building envelope.

Externally, alterations were limited to the replacement of modern windows with new timber casements of appropriate design, the installation of two conservation rooflights on the south roof slope, a discreet flue, and a replacement stable-style door. A small window is proposed to the east elevation to serve a shower room, positioned to minimise any fabric loss.

Internally, the conversion provides a single open-plan space with a small enclosed shower room, together with reinstatement wall finishes to improve thermal performance and weather proofing. All interventions are reversible, utilise traditional materials, and have been developed to preserve the agricultural character and appearance of the building while securing its long-term, sustainable use.

The converted building remained wholly ancillary to North Hall and will not form a separate unit of accommodation.



Proposals submitted at the Pre-application stage

2.0 Pre-application Advice

2.1 Planning Officer and Conservation Officer

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Mid Sussex District Council in early 2025 for the proposed conversion of the existing outbuilding at North Hall, Mallions Lane, Staplefield to ancillary domestic use. Written advice was received from Hamish Evans (Planning Officer) on 19 June 2025, accompanied by comments from the Council's Conservation Officer, Emily Wade.

Planning Officer's Advice (Summary)

The proposal was described as the conversion of an existing outbuilding to ancillary accommodation associated with the main dwelling.

Assessment would be against the Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP6, DP15, DP16, DP26, DP34 and DP35, the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (AS3), the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, and the NPPF.

The principle of development was considered acceptable provided the building remained ancillary and not capable of independent occupation.

Reference was made to the Conservation Officer's advice, which should be addressed before submission.

The site lies within the High Weald AONB, but the modest scale of works was not expected to harm the landscape.

The proposal was unlikely to affect neighbouring amenity.

An owl and bat survey was required due to the building's age and construction.

Subject to amendments and submission of a heritage impact assessment, permission was likely to be supported.



View of the granary entrance from the south

Conservation Officer's Advice (Summary)

North Hall is a Grade II listed farmhouse with a group of associated outbuildings, including the subject structure, which is curtilage listed.

The outbuilding, probably a former granary or store, is of mixed sandstone and timber-frame construction, partly rebuilt after fire damage.

The principle of conversion was acceptable but several points required clarification or amendment:

A targeted historic building survey and heritage impact assessment should accompany any application.

Rooflights acceptable in principle but preferably on the southern roof slope.

Flue to be located in a less prominent position.

Replacement windows acceptable subject to confirming age and design.

Enlargement of the south-east window contentious as it would remove original fabric.

New north-east window for the shower room should be omitted if possible.

New stable door acceptable subject to detailing.

Extract fan on the south-east elevation not contentious.

Internal lining acceptable; evidence of historic lath-and-plaster should be explored.

The officer concluded the proposal was not contentious in principle, provided the above issues were addressed and that the scheme was informed by a detailed heritage statement considering the impact on the listed farmhouse and its setting.

2.0 Pre-application Advice

2.2 Desbruslais Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment (Summary)

Following the pre-application, a Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment was prepared by Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors (September 2025) based on a detailed site inspection and research into the building's history, construction, and development. The report evaluates the significance of the former granary, its historical relationship with North Hall (Grade II listed), and the potential impact of the proposed works.

The assessment confirms that the building is curtilage listed, forming part of the original farmstead group associated with North Hall, and constructed in sandstone, brick, and timber framing. Elements of the upper structure were reconstructed following historic fire damage, while significant areas of 18th–19th century softwood framing survive, including imported Baltic pine timbers bearing visible grading marks.

The Statement records that the building's function as a granary is uncertain, suggesting it was more likely a general-purpose storage or cart building, possibly influenced by regional "bank barn" forms. Despite later alterations, the structure retains evidential, historic, and aesthetic value, and continues to make a positive contribution to the setting of the principal listed farmhouse.

The report concludes that the proposed conversion would result in no significant harm to the significance or setting of the heritage asset. The works are described as modest, reversible, and sympathetic, in accordance with the principles of BS 7913:2013, Historic England guidance, and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Overall, the proposals are considered acceptable from a conservation perspective, subject to appropriate detailing and conditions.



Site map from 1934



Internal photograph showing poorly fitted windows



Internal photograph showing fire damage



Internal photograph highlighting replacement timbers

The Heritage Statement provides a series of clear recommendations and findings, summarised as follows:

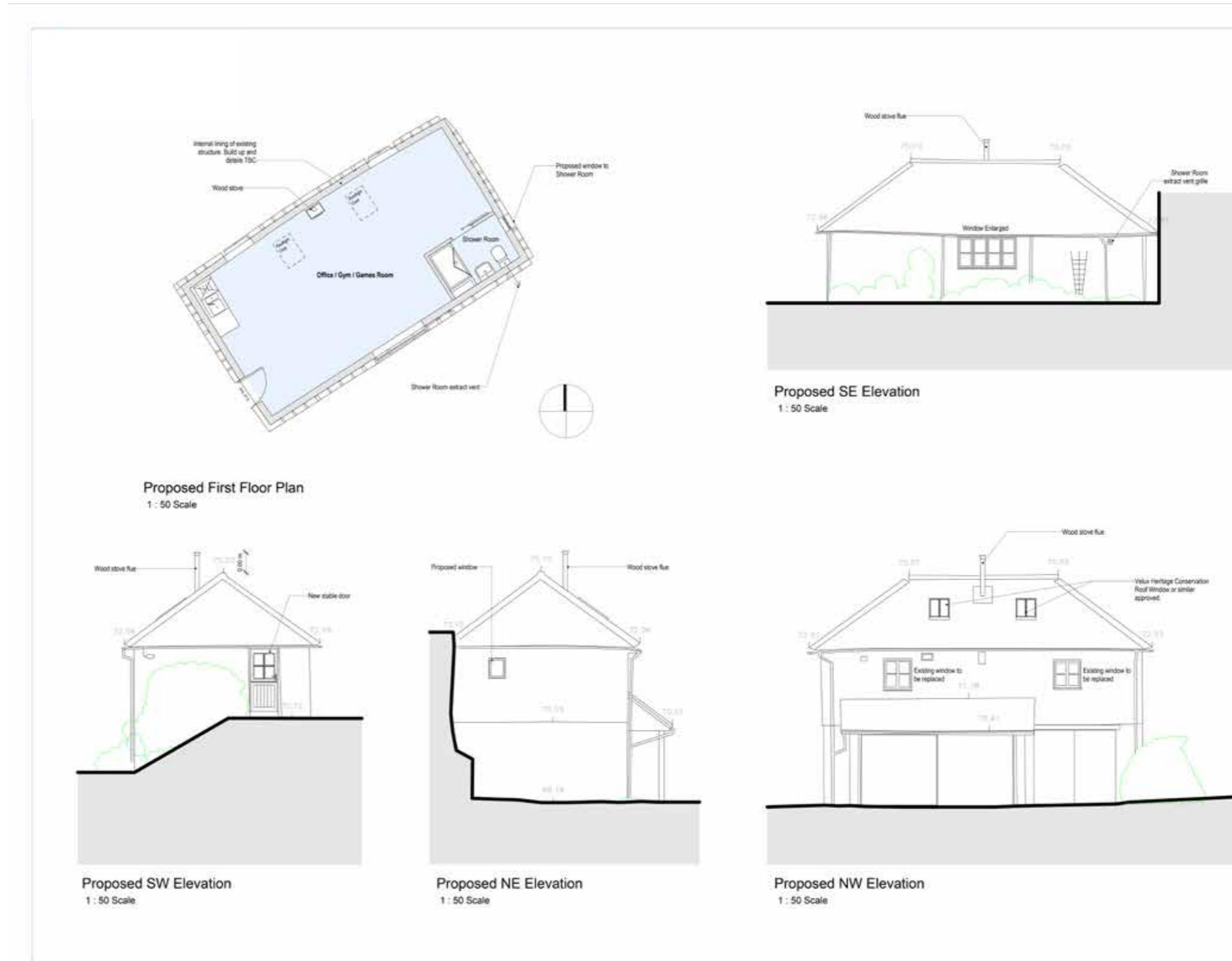
- Creation of Shower Room – Minor internal subdivision; acceptable and reversible.
- Internal Lining – Historically consistent where lath-and-plaster may have existed; acceptable using breathable or removable finishes.
- Rooflights – Two conservation-type rooflights acceptable, preferably on the southern roof slope to reduce visibility.
- Flue – Acceptable in principle; should be discreet and finished in matt black.
- Window Replacements – Replacement of modern softwood casements supported; avoid double glazing for authenticity.
- South-East Window Enlargement – Considered harmful due to loss of original framing; enlargement not supported.
- New East-Facing Window – Minor impact if inserted between studs; acceptable as a small square opening, but should remain limited in size.
- Stable Door Replacement – No objection; acceptable with traditional detailing and retention of existing door for reuse.
- Extractor Fan – Minimal impact; acceptable.
- Setting and External Impact – Overall effect on the listed building's setting is negligible; general views remain unaffected.
- Policy Compliance – The works meet NPPF paras. 200–208 and MSDP Policy DP34, representing less than substantial harm balanced by public benefit.
- Overall Conclusion – The conversion is heritage-led, ensures the building's long-term preservation, and should be supported subject to detailed conditions.

3.0 Design Amendments

3.1 Pre-application Proposal

Following advice from Mid Sussex District Council Officers and the appointed Heritage Consultant, the proposals have been refined to respond to the pre-application feedback and the findings of the Heritage Statement. The revised scheme incorporates the following amendments:

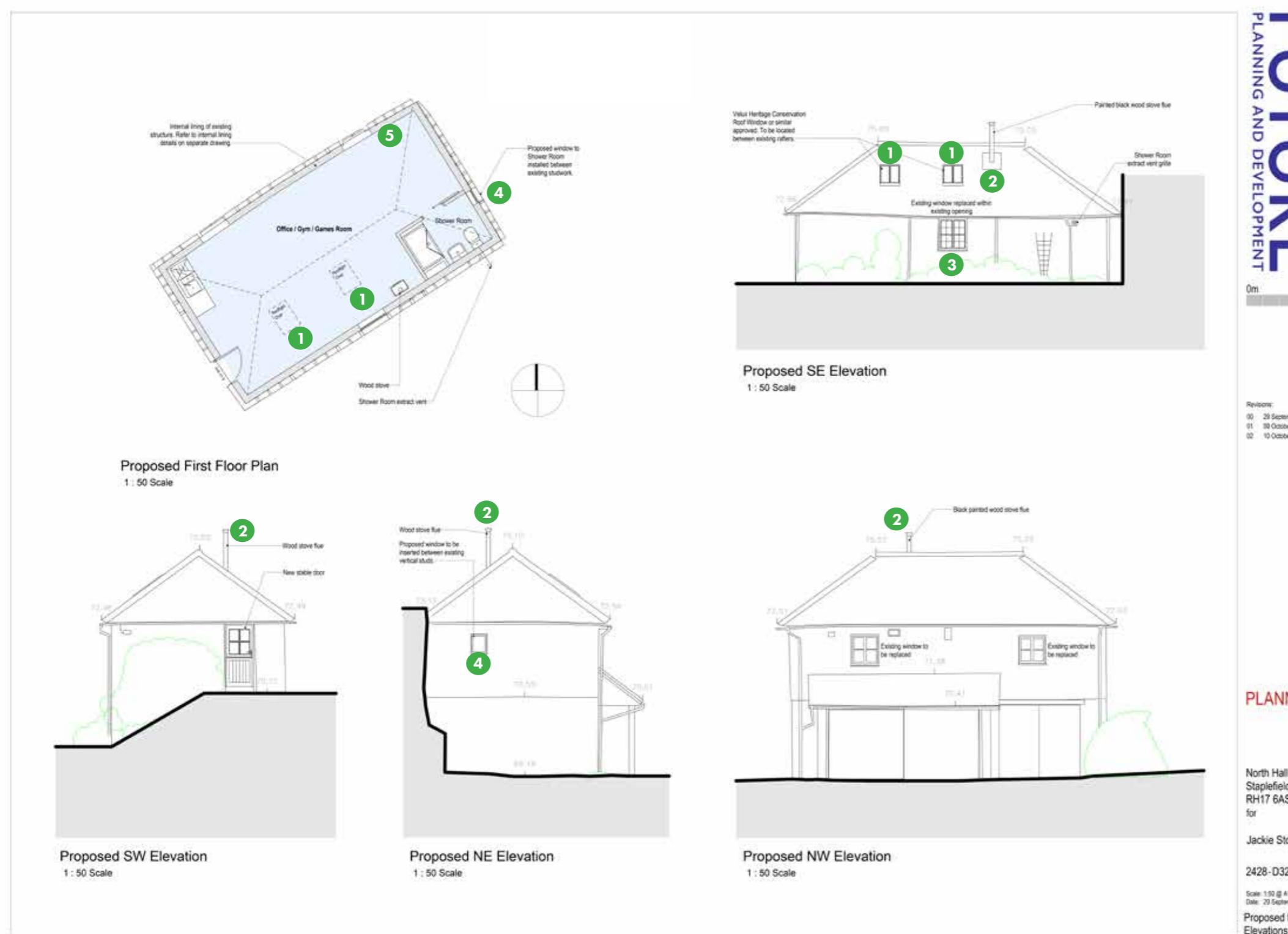
1. Rooflights repositioned to the southern (rear) roof slope, reducing visual impact and avoiding interference with historic roof timbers.
2. Flue relocated to a less prominent position on the south slope and specified as a slim matt-black finish to minimise visibility.
3. South-east window enlargement omitted to prevent the loss of original timber framing and to retain the building's agricultural character.
4. New east-facing window positioned between existing studs to limit any disturbance to historic fabric.
5. Internal wall finishes have been specified in detail. New plasterboard will be fixed to independent stud framing, set a minimum of 50mm clear of the existing walls to preserve the historic fabric. The lining system will be fully removable, ensuring no physical impact on the original structure.



Proposals submitted at the Pre-application stage

3.0 Design Amendments

3.2 Amended Application Proposal



Proposals submitted at the Application stage





4.0 Conclusion

North Hall, Staplefield - Granary

The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing outbuilding within the grounds of North Hall (Grade II) to form ancillary domestic accommodation comprising a gym/office/games room.

The design has been informed by pre-application advice from Mid Sussex District Council and a detailed Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment prepared by Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors (September 2025). The amended scheme reflects that guidance and accords with the principles of conservation, minimal intervention, and reversibility.

The works are modest in scale, contained within the existing envelope, and use traditional materials and detailing appropriate to the building's age and character. They will secure the long-term maintenance and viable use of a historic structure that forms part of the original farmstead group.

No significant harm will arise to the special architectural or historic interest of the building, nor to the setting of North Hall or the wider High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The conversion preserves the building's agricultural character while delivering a sustainable and beneficial use.