

DAVID JENKINS DESIGN

RIBA CHARTERED ARCHITECTS



BIRCHGROVE FARMHOUSE BARNS,
BIRCHGROVE ROAD, HORSTED KEYNES

PROPOSED CONVERSION, EXTENSION & ALTERATION OF
EXISTING BARNS INTO A NEW DWELLING

PLANNING, DESIGN & HERITAGE STATEMENT

JULY 2026
ISSUE 1

INTRODUCTION



- 1 - Stone barn
- 2 - Timber clad playhouse barn
- 3 - Main house
- 4 - Entrance to site
- 5 - Pool
- 6 - Other barns
- 7 - Public footpath
- 8 - Parking

AERIAL IMAGE

Not to scale



LOCATION PLAN

1:1250 @ A3

Site Address - Birchgrove Farm House, Birchgrove Lane, Horsted Keynes, RH17 7BT

Our application proposals and planning statement have been prepared in response to feedback from earlier pre-applications DM/26/0720 (March 2026) & DM/25/2109 (August 2025).

Site Context and Brief

Birchgrove Farmhouse is a detached dwelling with a series of barn outbuildings within its curtilage. The site is within the Birch Grove conservation area and in the High Weald National Landscape.

Access is to be provided via an existing established gated access to the courtyard from the track to the north. A public footpath runs along the northern edge of the site.

Our client has lived at the property for 54 years and would like to continue to do so, but requires an accessible accommodation. The main farmhouse has limitations for adaptation to provide suitable accessible living and sleeping arrangements.

We propose to convert the Stone barn (1) and the timber barn (2) to a new independent dwelling, to meet the brief for suitable accessible living accommodation. The layout would give future flexibility for visiting family members, or a live in carer, to live alongside the applicant whilst maintaining independent living.

HERITAGE

EXISTING BUILDING - EXTERNAL



1. View of Stone barn from courtyard



2. View of Timber clad barn from courtyard



3. View of barns from the pool



4. View from public footpath



5. View from public footpath



6. View of stone barn

HERITAGE

EXISTING BUILDING - INTERNAL



1. Internal view of timber barn



2. Roof structure to timber barn



3. Stone barn structure to ground floor



4. Stone barn roof structure



5. Stone barn roof structure



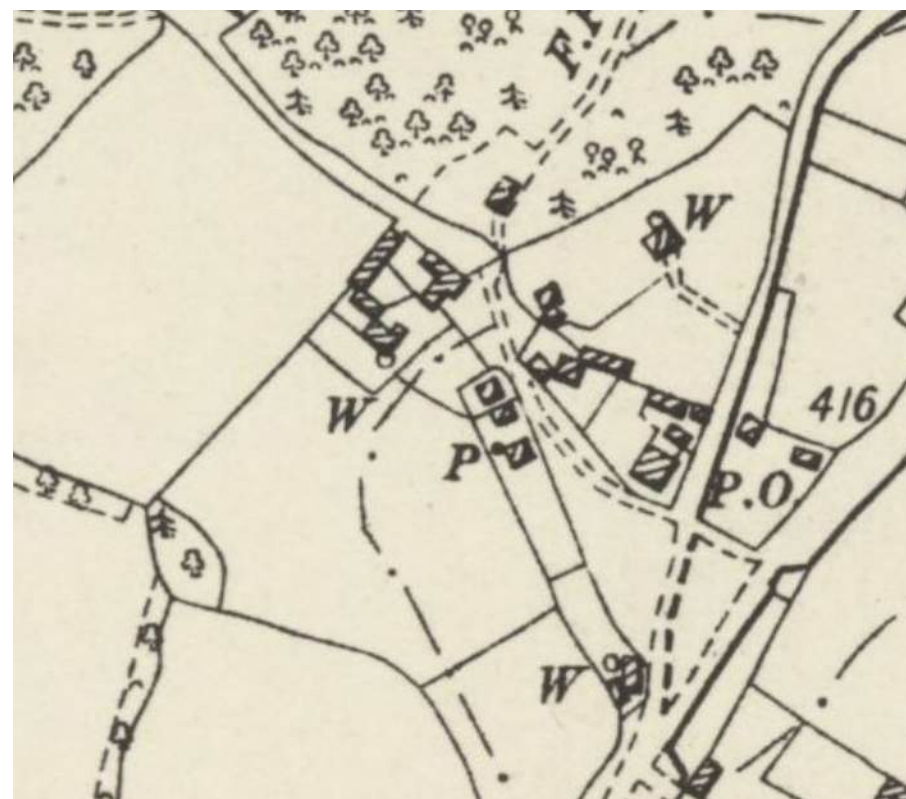
6. Stone barn wall build-up

HERITAGE

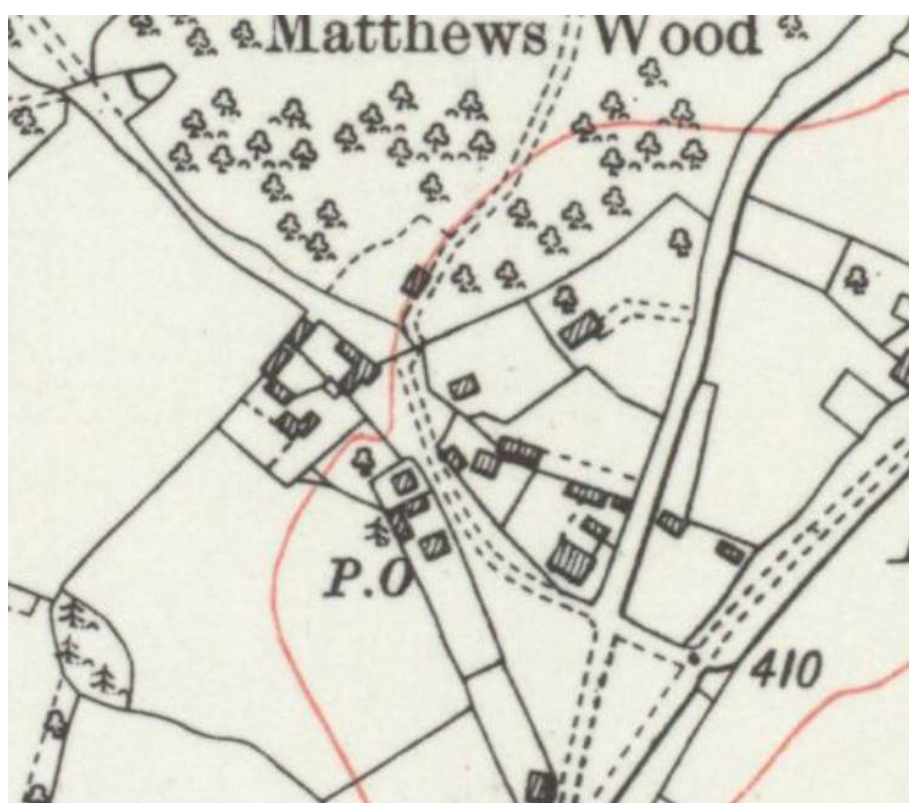
EXISTING BUILDING



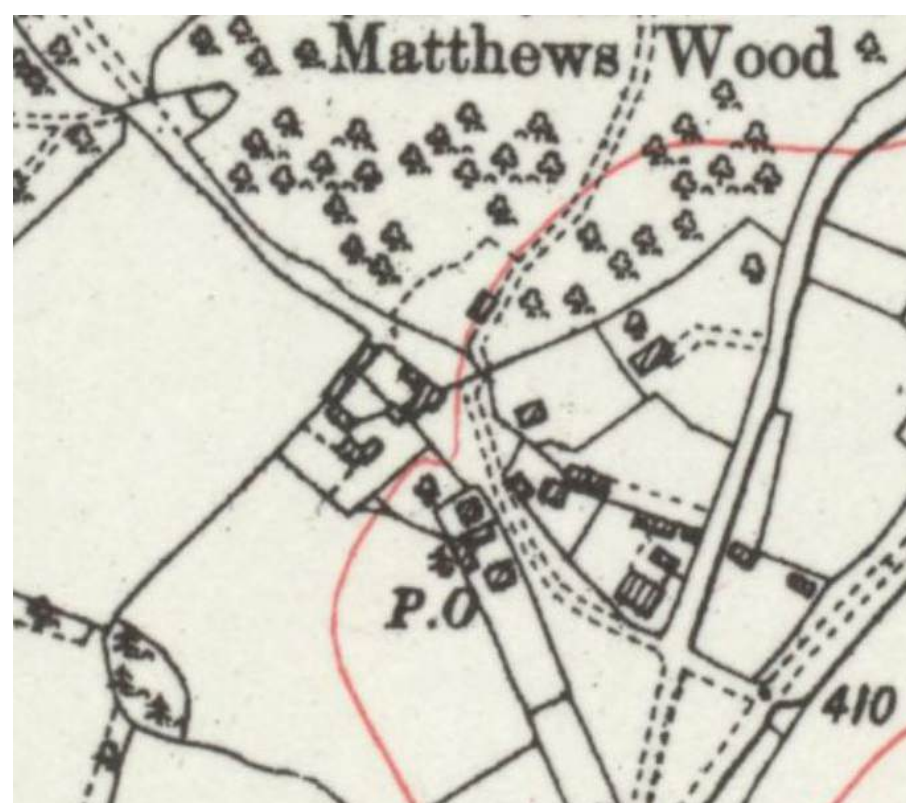
1. 1879



2. 1899



3. 1931



4. 1938

The stone barn is believed to have been built in 1853. Historic mapping shows evidence of the building footprints of the barns dating back to at least c.1879.

Birch Grove Conservation Area

Birch Grove was designated a Conservation Area in 1990, the boundary of which is defined on the Proposals Map. The focal point of Birch Grove is a small triangular green, around which the majority of the buildings are clustered, away from the highway; the absence of through traffic results in a peaceful and attractive environment.

Birchgrove Farmhouse is situated on the NW edge of the conservation area boundary.

Existing Barn Outbuildings

I was noted during pre-application that the conservation officer considers the farmhouse and the courtyard of historic farm buildings as being of historical and architectural interest in the local context, and regards them as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs), which also make a strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Birchgrove Conservation Area.

Planning History (Main House)

2006 under 06/01402/FUL: permission was granted to add a new entrance porch to the front elevation.

1992 under HK/035/92: permission was granted to implement ground and first floor alterations.

1986 under HK/031/86: permission was granted to implement a single storey extension and internal alterations at ground level.

1981 under HK/043/81: permission was granted to implement ground floor bay windows on the main house.

1978 under HK/006/78: permission was granted to build a conservatory on the main house.

Our proposals have been prepared with consideration of relevant planning policies outlined below. A key policy is outlined below to support our new dwellings within the countryside by conversion of a rural outbuilding.

DP-15 Re-use of Rural Outbuildings

We understand that there is policy support for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use in the countryside (DP15) - where it is not a recently constructed agricultural building which has not been or has been little used for its original purpose and, the re-use would secure the future of a heritage asset.

The barns have a history and contribute positively to the setting, but are in relatively poor condition and currently underutilised. A positive decision would allow for investment in the building and a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Adopted District Plan - relevant policies

- DP4 Housing
- DP6 Settlement hierarchy
- DP12 Protection and enhancement of the countryside
- DP15 New Homes in the Countryside
- DP16 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP21 Transport
- DP26 Character and design
- DP27 Dwelling Space Standards
- DP34 Listed Buildings and other Heritage Assets
- DP35 Conservation Areas
- DP38 Biodiversity
- DP39 Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41 Flood risk and drainage

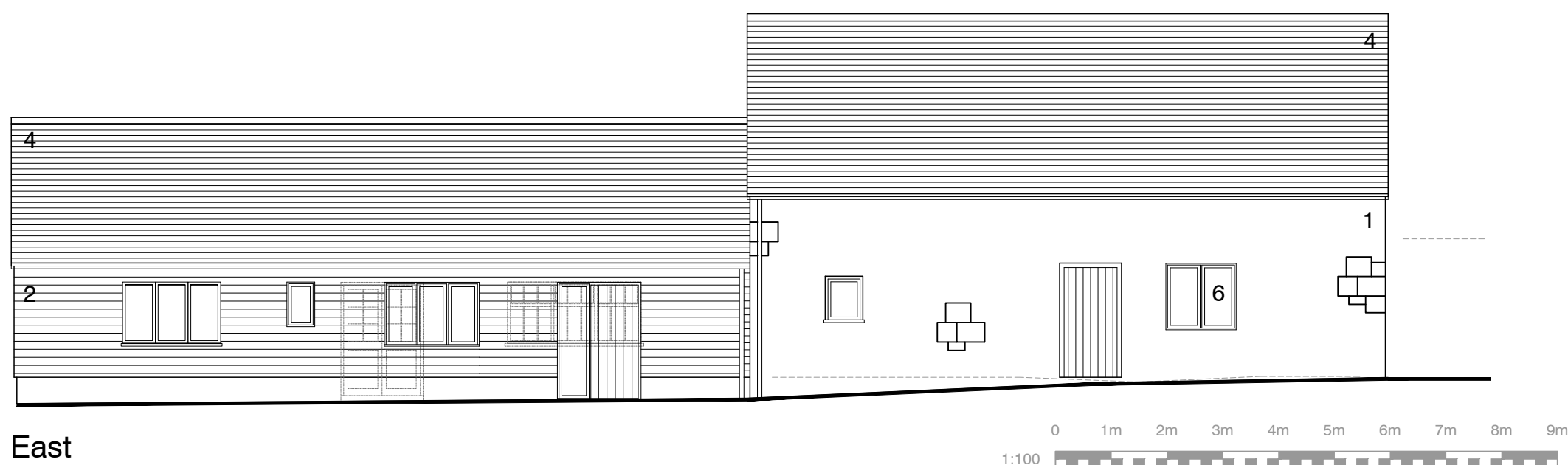
Neighbourhood Plan – adopted 24th May 2023. The following Policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy HK1 Location of New Development
- Policy HK4 Maintaining Local Character and Good Quality Design
- Policy HK5 Infill Development and Domestic Extensions
- Policy HK6 Conserving Local Heritage
- Policy HK9 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy HK10 Protection and Improvement of Natural Habitats
- Policy HK11 Low-carbon design and renewable energy schemes
- Policy HK12 Sustainable Drainage System Design and management
- Policy HK13 Light Pollution

Other relevant Policy documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard – March 2015

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029
High Weald National Landscape – Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies Planning Advice Note – July 2024
The High Weald Housing Design Guide 2020



RESPONSE TO PRE-APPLICATION FEEDBACK

DJD Response to Pre-application 1 Feedback

Planning officer feedback received during our first pre-application (DM/25/2109 submitted in August 2025) confirmed support for the principle of conversion of the barns to a new dwelling subject to some revisions.

In the interim DJD worked with the client to review the proposals seeking to address the planning officer and conservation officer feedback and presented a revised scheme for a second pre-application in May 2026 (DM/26/0720)

Changes summarised below:

- Courtyard included in curtilage of proposed dwelling
- Form, scale and location of proposed extension reduced and relocated
- Reduction in quantity and size of rooflights
- Fenestration to existing barn reconsidered
- Materials to reflect existing buildings (and re-use where practical)

DJD Response to Pre-application 2 Feedback

Our second pre-application proposals largely addressed the initial officer concerns. The form of the proposed extension with projecting gable and new window openings to the existing barn were the remaining issues which we have since re-considered.

A commentary is outlined below in response to specific comments received from planning and conservation officer written pre-app feedback.

Conservation Officer Feedback May 2026

The form of the proposed extensions to the western side of the building has been amended to show an L shaped addition sitting across the two buildings, with a west facing gable. Although the footprint of the addition has been reduced, and the previously proposed flat roof replaced with pitched roofs, I remain concerned that the scale and form of the proposed addition is not sympathetic to the host building. In particular, the west facing projection, which is set at right angles to the host buildings, adds undue bulk and detracts from the existing, characteristic linear nature of the group. The gable also adds to the potential visual prominence of the addition in views from the PROW to the north. I would recommend that this element is removed from any revised scheme, retaining only the reduced range sitting parallel to the existing buildings.

We have reconsidered the scale and form of the extension to the west of the existing barns, replacing the larger proposal with a linear addition which runs parallel as suggested with a simplified form. A traditional pitch is proposed to reduce the scale and visual impact of the extension, and impact on the host buildings appearing as a separate subservient structure. This will be clad in timber, on a stone plinth to not distract from the more prominent stone barn.

I continue to have concerns, however, regarding the northwestern elevation, in particular the new or altered windows to the stone building. I would recommend here that more is done to work with the existing openings, and that in particular the existing window to the top centre of the elevation should be retained in its existing proportions rather than enlarged, and that the proposed additional window adjacent to this should be omitted. This preserves more of the existing fabric and character of the building.

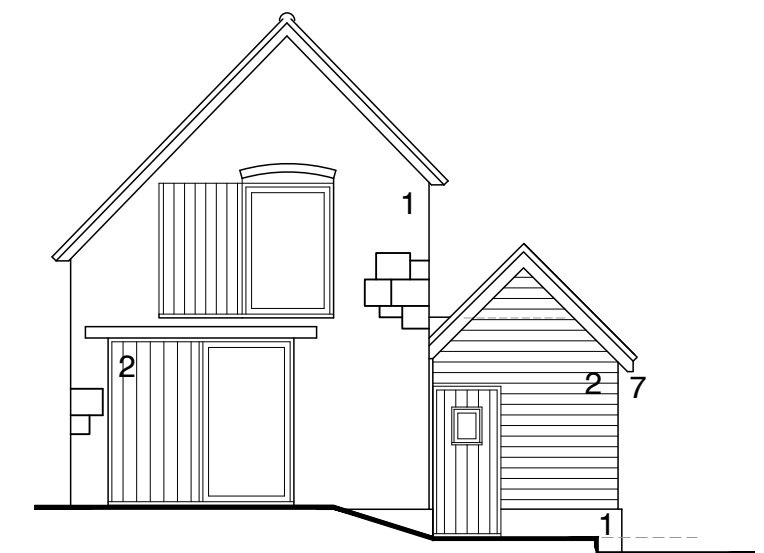
Fenestration on this elevation has been updated in response to your feedback. The central window remains as existing with additional window to the bedroom omitted.

Planning Officer Feedback May 2026

As you can see in the attached response the Council's Conservation Officer does still have concerns regarding some elements of the scheme. However, they are content with the rooflights, northeastern and southeastern fenestrations. The landscaping and amended curtilage are also considered acceptable in principle.

They still have concerns regarding the proposed extensions, the northwestern fenestrations and the PV panels. I would recommend amending the scheme in relation to the proposed extensions and northwestern fenestrations. In relation to the PV panels whilst I appreciate the concerns raised given the public benefits from the introduction of a renewable energy scheme at the it is my informal opinion that the public benefits of the PV panels would outweigh the identified harm.

PV panels have been retained on the west elevation, away from the courtyard which is understood to be preferred and supportable due to the benefits of a sustainable energy scheme



North

DESIGN PROPOSALS

Our proposals include conversion of the existing barns, and a modest single storey extension to the west providing a link between the barns retaining some separation of the original structures.

Our proposals have reviewed the scale and form of the extension. The external courtyard to the east is included within the property curtilage in response to earlier feedback.

The original timber frame and roof structure will be largely expressed internally. The layout will be open plan where possible. We have looked to retain original openings as far as practical, with new rooflights to provide natural daylight where appropriate.

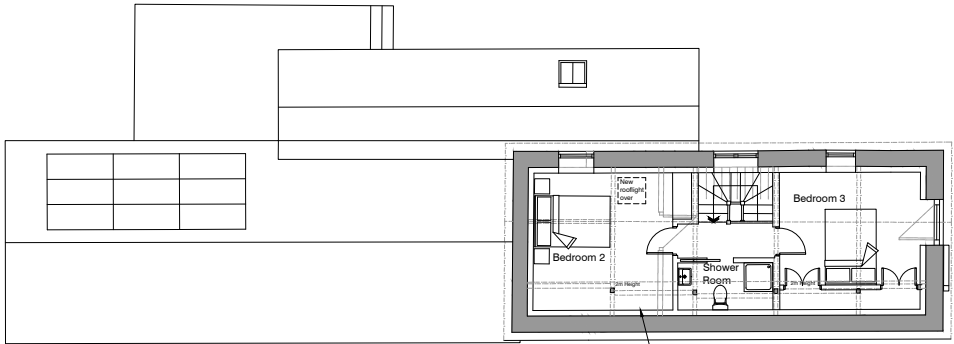
Solar panels are proposed to the south-west facing roof of the timber barn to reduce reliance on mains power. and an air source heat pump will provide underfloor heating to the ground floor as part of our renewables strategy.

Access

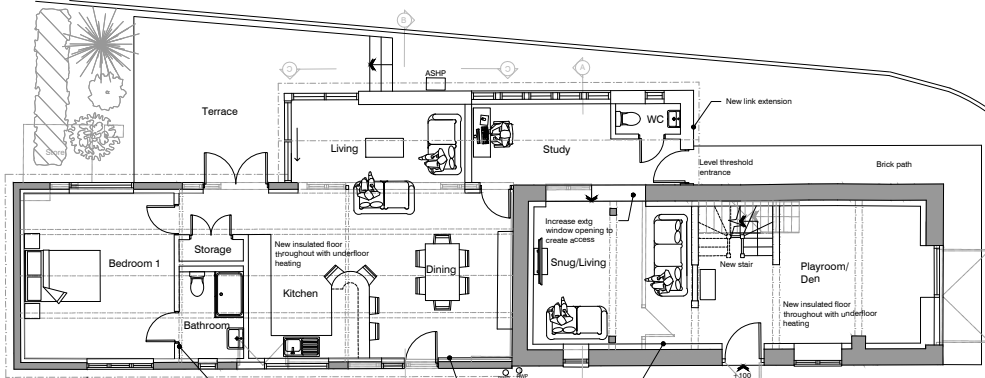
Pedestrian and vehicular access will be from the track to the north where there is an existing established access. A level access entrance is proposed to the west of the stone barn.



Block Plan



First



Ground



MATERIALS



Reused Stone



Timber Weatherboarding

Any new materials used will be carefully sourced to respect the heritage of the existing building.

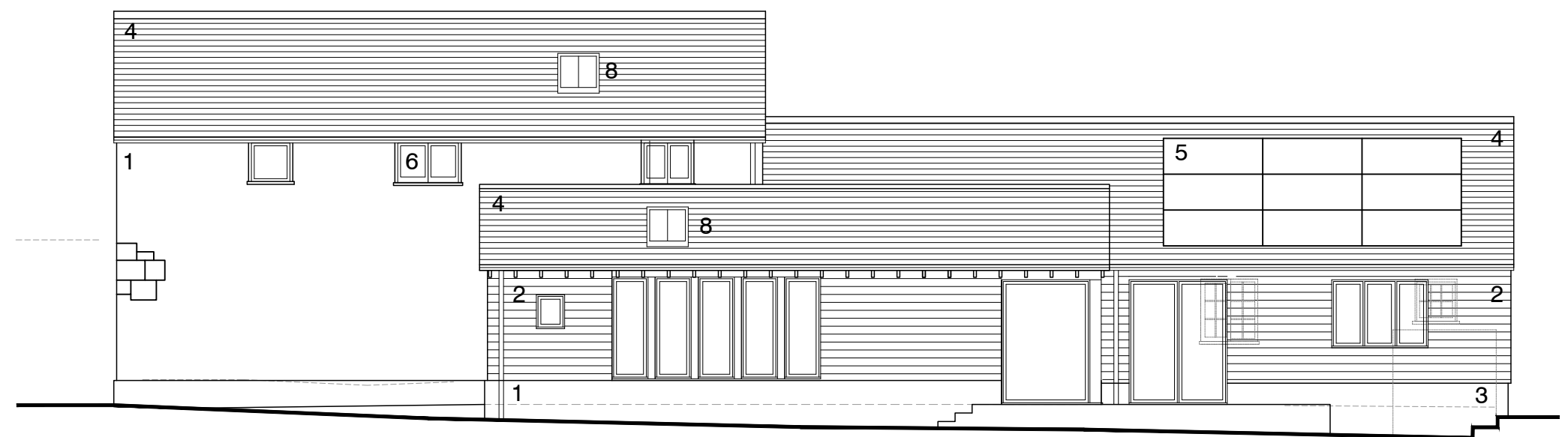
It is proposed that the extension will be constructed with a stone plinth (with stone reclaimed from creation of new opening in the original structure). Timber weatherboarding will replicate the style and finish of the timber barn.

The existing clay roof tiles will be re-used where sound.

New windows and doors will be in timber



Clay Tiles



West

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

Sustainability of the project has been considered from the outset, especially given its rural location.

Re-use of this underutilised building is highly sustainable approach to creating a new dwelling. Existing building fabric will be retained where sound.

The new dwelling will incorporate solar panels and an airsource heat pump with corresponding water tank and control systems and low temperature underfloor heating on the ground floor.

The design makes use of natural light and good window sizes.

The buildings will be insulated internally in line with current building regulations standards are to be incorporated into the building.

Where practical, locally sourced materials with low embodied carbon will be used.

Water use will be managed, with potential to store rainwater using water butts for garden watering.

Low water usage taps and showers and cisterns will be specified as part of the proposal.

Construction waste will be controlled by a pre-construction waste management plan.

Flood map for planning

Your reference	Location (easting/northing)	Created
Unspecified	539964/130057	21 July 2026 12:10

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

You will need to do a flood risk assessment if your site is **any of the following**:

- bigger than 1 hectare (ha)
- in an area with critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency
- identified as being at increased flood risk in future by the local authority's strategic flood risk assessment
- at risk from other sources of flooding (such as surface water or reservoirs) and its development would increase the vulnerability of its use (such as constructing an office on an undeveloped site or converting a shop to a dwelling)

Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government Licence which sets out the terms and conditions for using government data. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3>

Use of the address and mapping data is subject to Ordnance Survey public viewing terms under Crown copyright and database rights 2026 AC0000807064. <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/os-terms>

Flood Risk Area

Records suggest the site is in Flood Zone 1 - a low flood risk area.

Foul Drainage

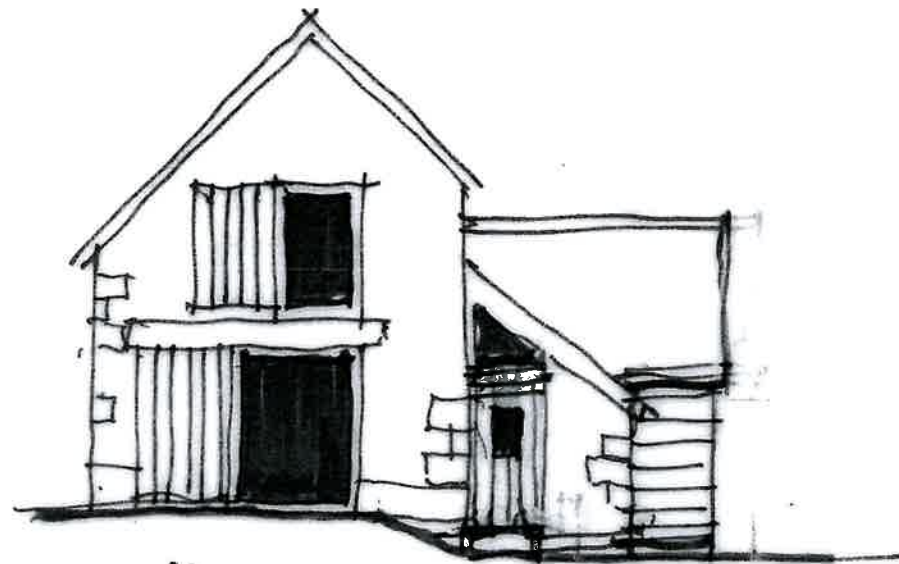
Foul drainage to the existing house is private by sewage treatment plant. It is proposed for the dwelling to be connected to the existing sewage treatment plant situated to the west of the barns.

Surface Water

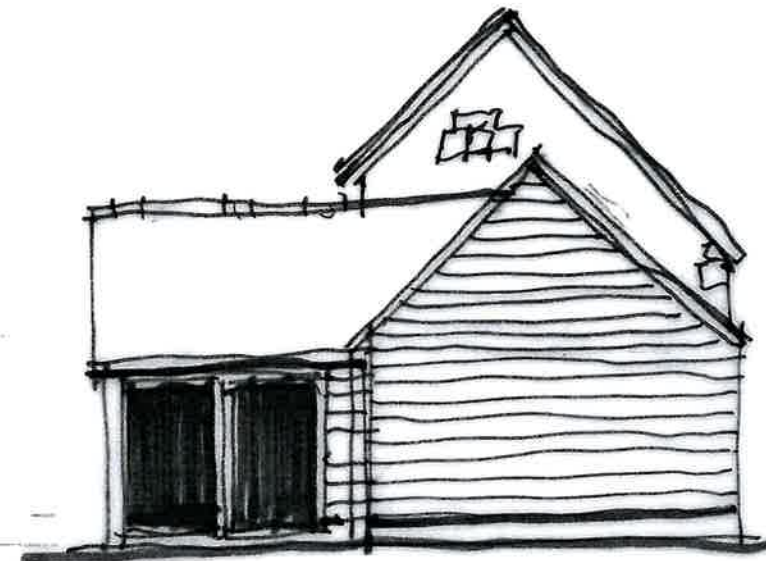
Rainwater disposal will be managed with new soakaways on site to the proposed to the courtyard.

APPENDIX

Appendix includes existing drawings and design proposals from earlier pre-applications DM/25/2109 submitted in August 2025, and DM/26/0720 submitted in May 2026.



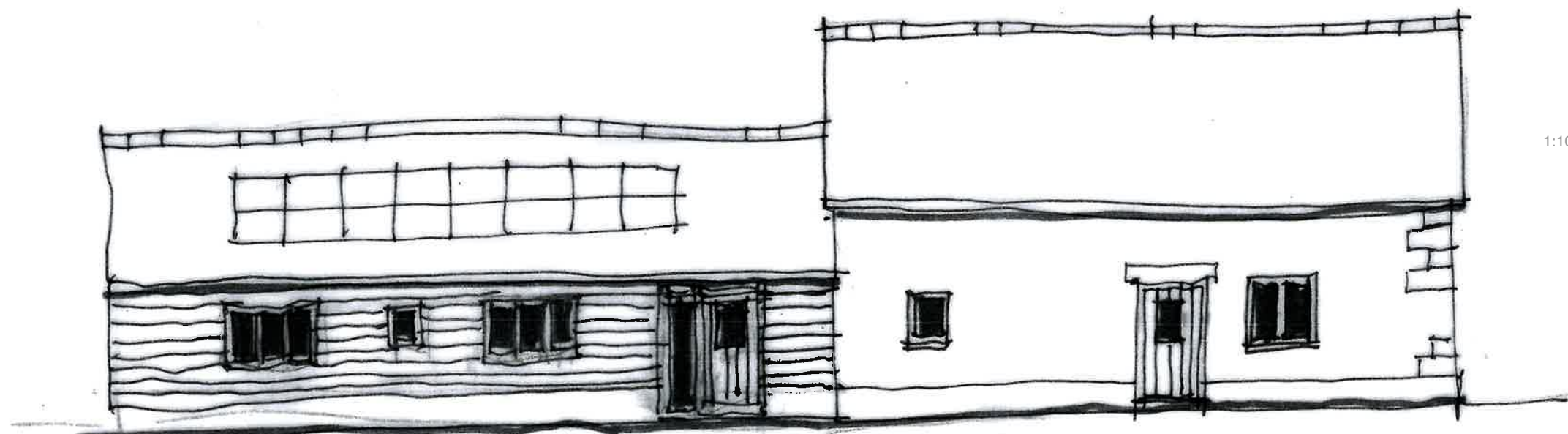
north east



South west



north west



north east

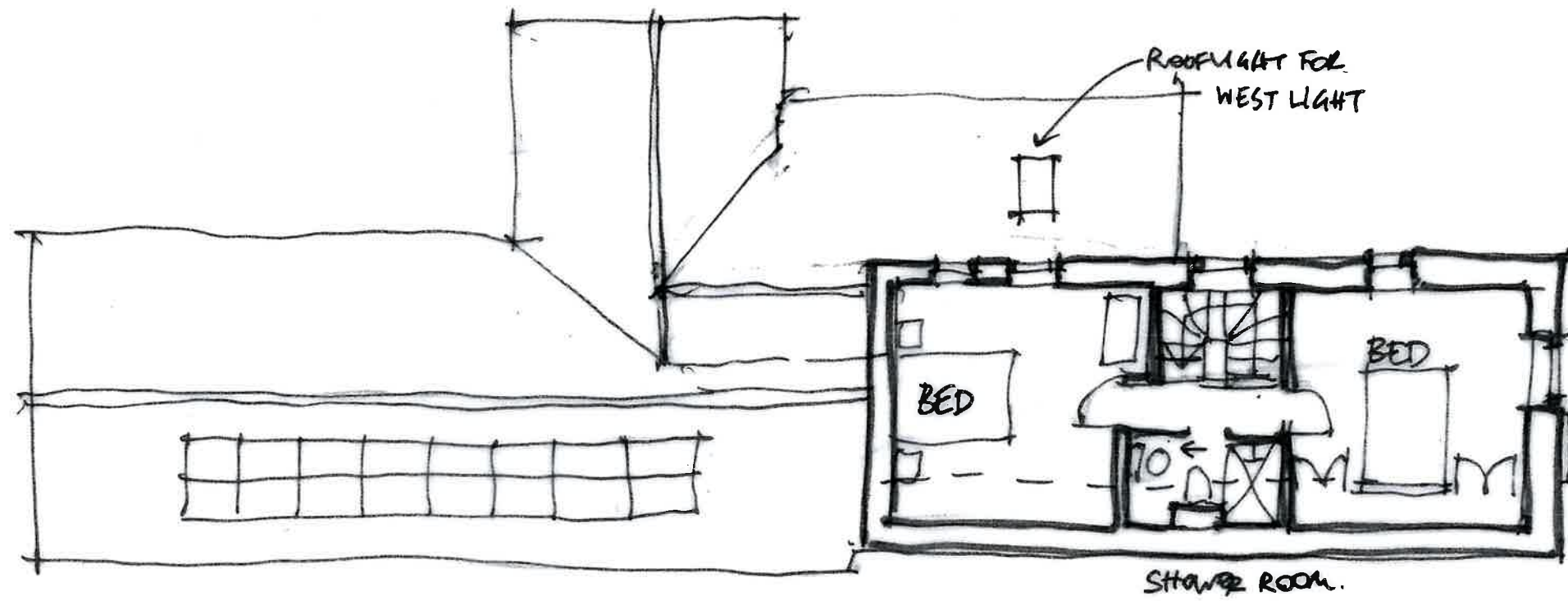


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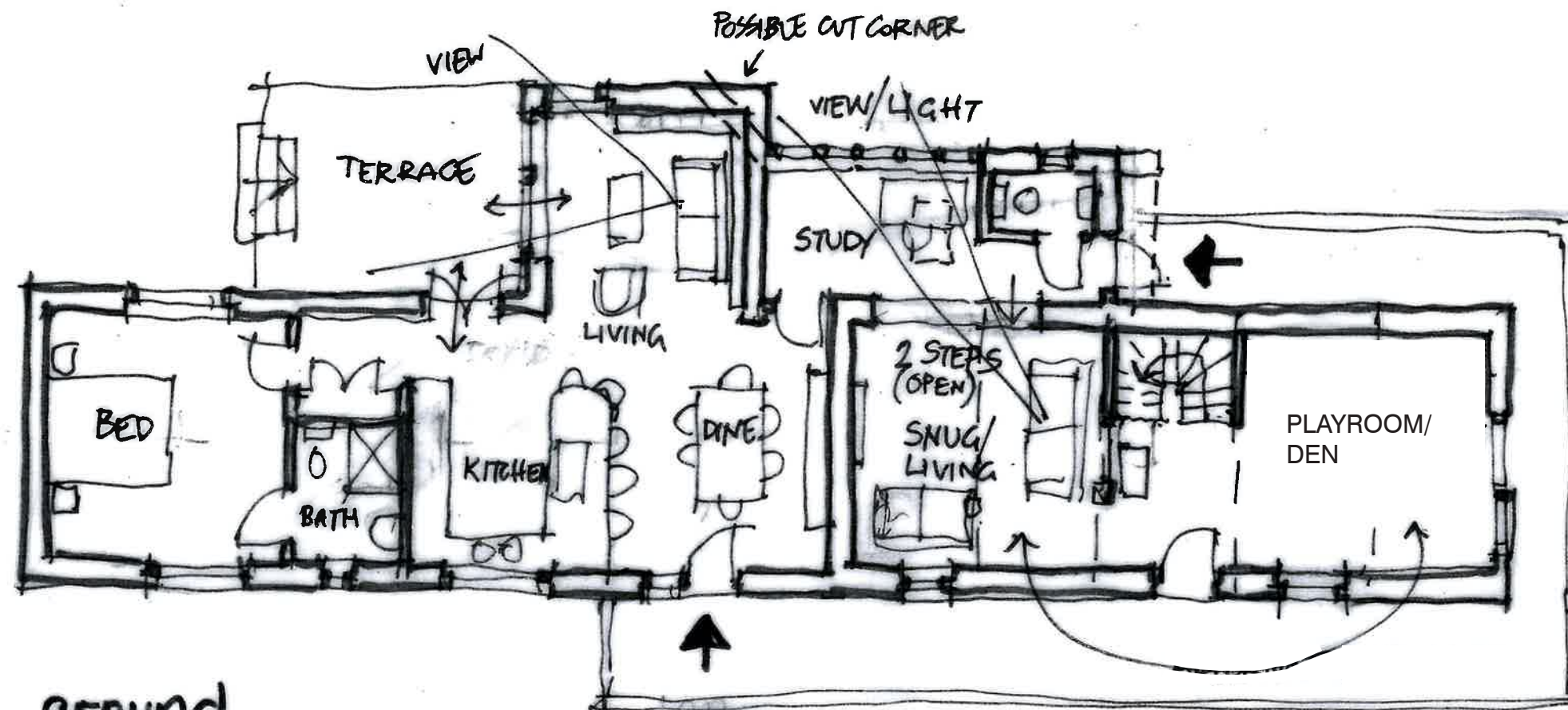
BIRCHGROVE FARMHOUSE

PROPOSED PLANS/ 26/2/26
ELEVATIONS

1:100 @ A3 SK-04



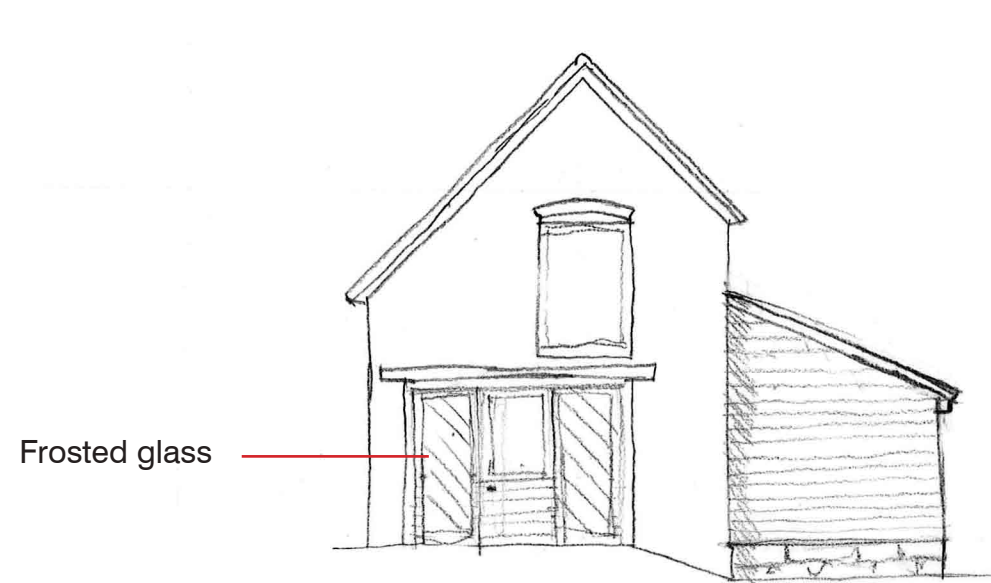
first



ground

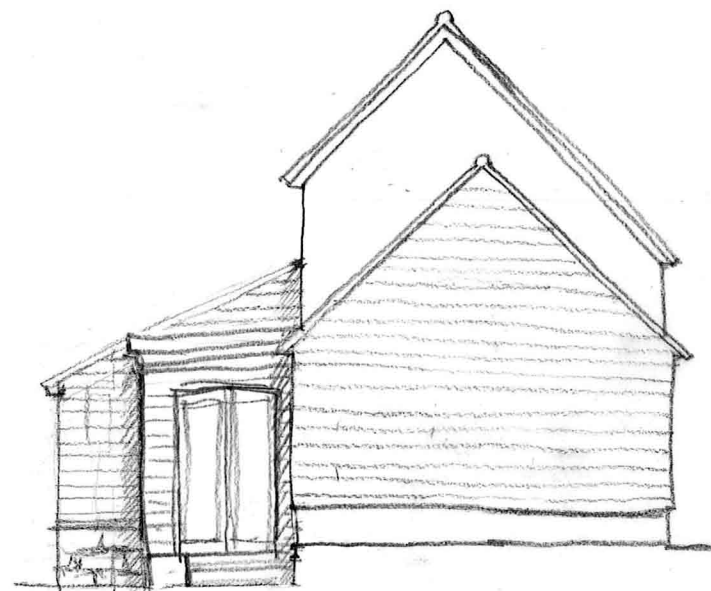


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BIRCH GROVE FARMHOUSE
PROPOSED PLANS 26/2/26
1:100@ A3 SK-03



Frosted glass

North Elevation



South Elevation

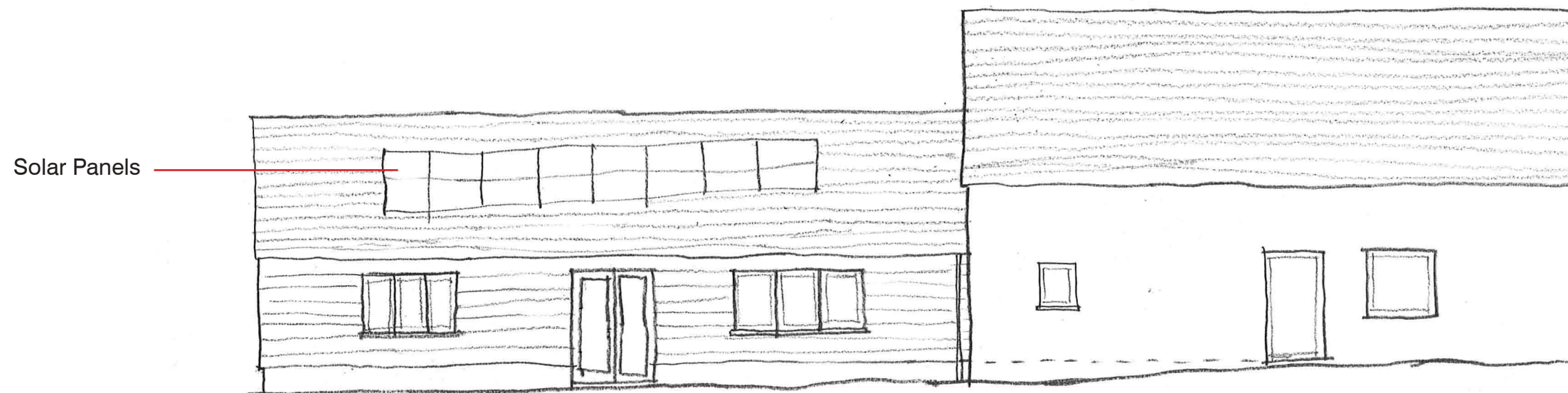


Slate

Oak weatherboard

Stone plinth

West Elevation

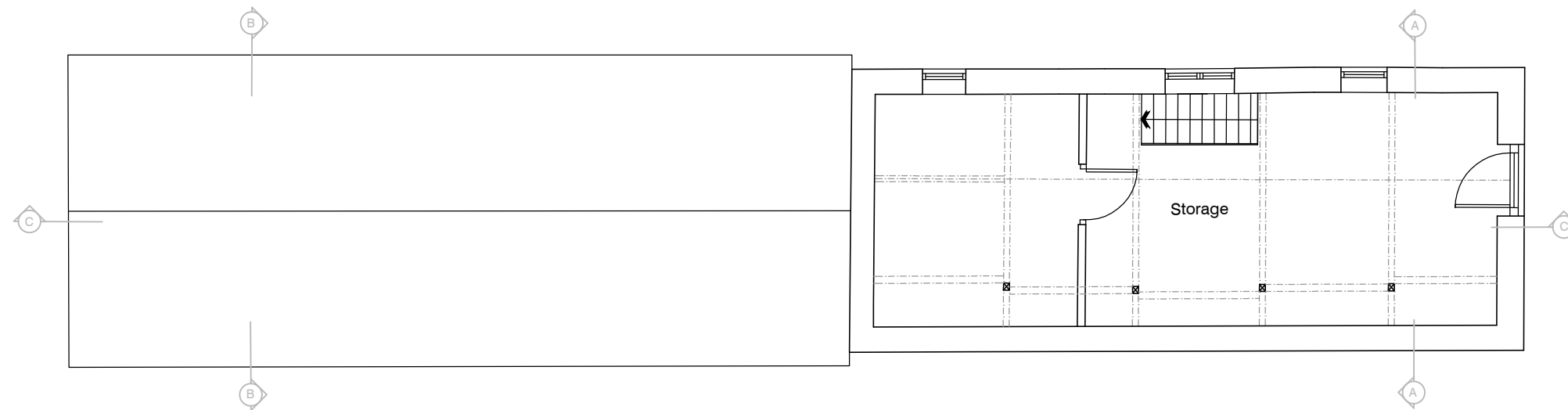


Solar Panels

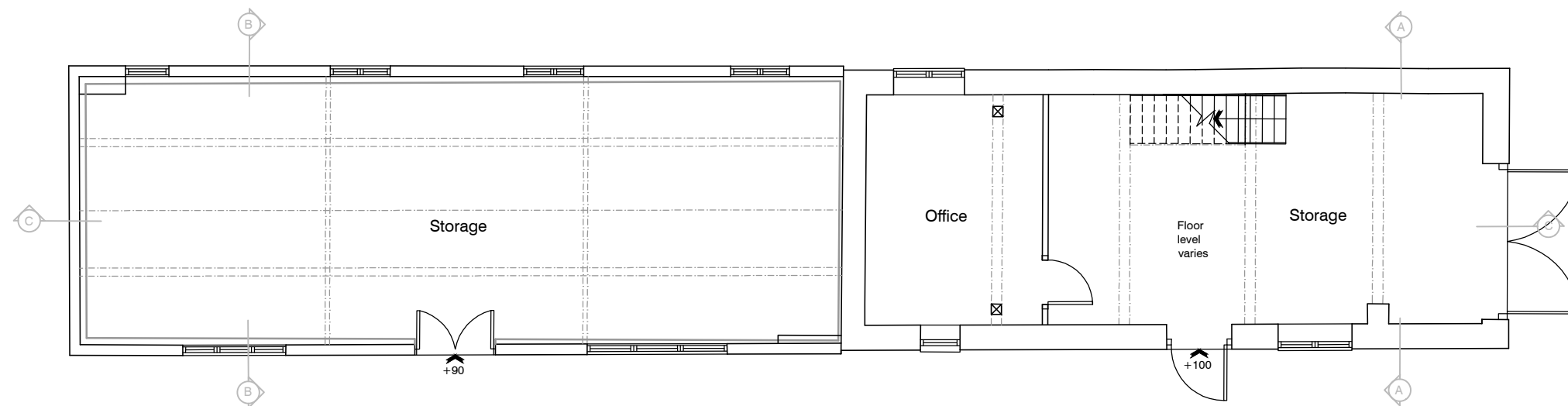
East Elevation

AS EXISTING

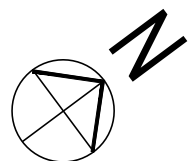
PLANS - BARN



First Floor Plan

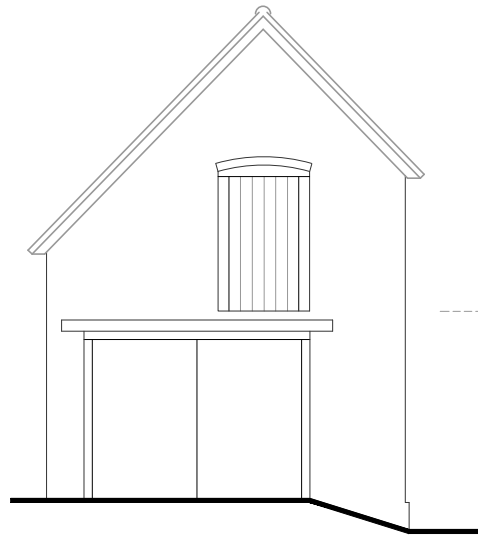


Ground Floor Plan

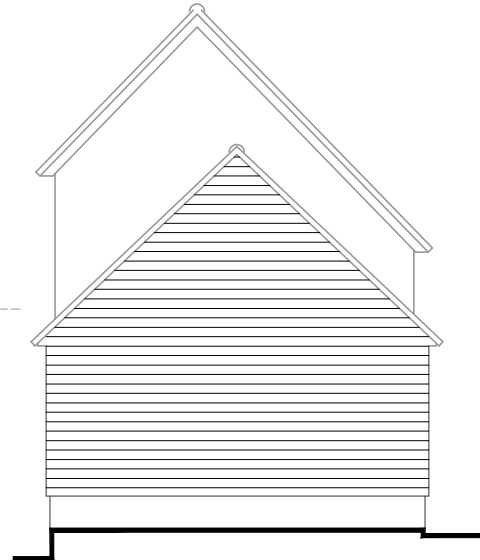


AS EXISTING

ELEVATIONS - BARN



North Elevation



South Elevation



West Elevation



East Elevation



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