



Design & Access Statement

Proposed Replacement Annex

Wellhouse Farm, Wellhouse Lane, Burgess Hill, RH15 0BN

Prepared for Mr and Mrs Carne
January 2026 · Rev -



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1.0 Submission Documents

The following drawings and documents are offered in support of the submission:

Documents	Rev	
Design & Access Statement	Rev	Dwell Architecture & Design Ltd

Drawings	Revision	Title
1404 GA 01	r1	Plans as existing
1401 GA 02		Elevations as existing
1404 GA 20	r3	Plans as proposed
1404 GA 21	r2	Elevations as proposed
1404 GA 22	r3	Site Plan as Proposed
1404 GA 23	r1	Sections as Proposed
1404 SI 04	r2	Block and Location Site Plan

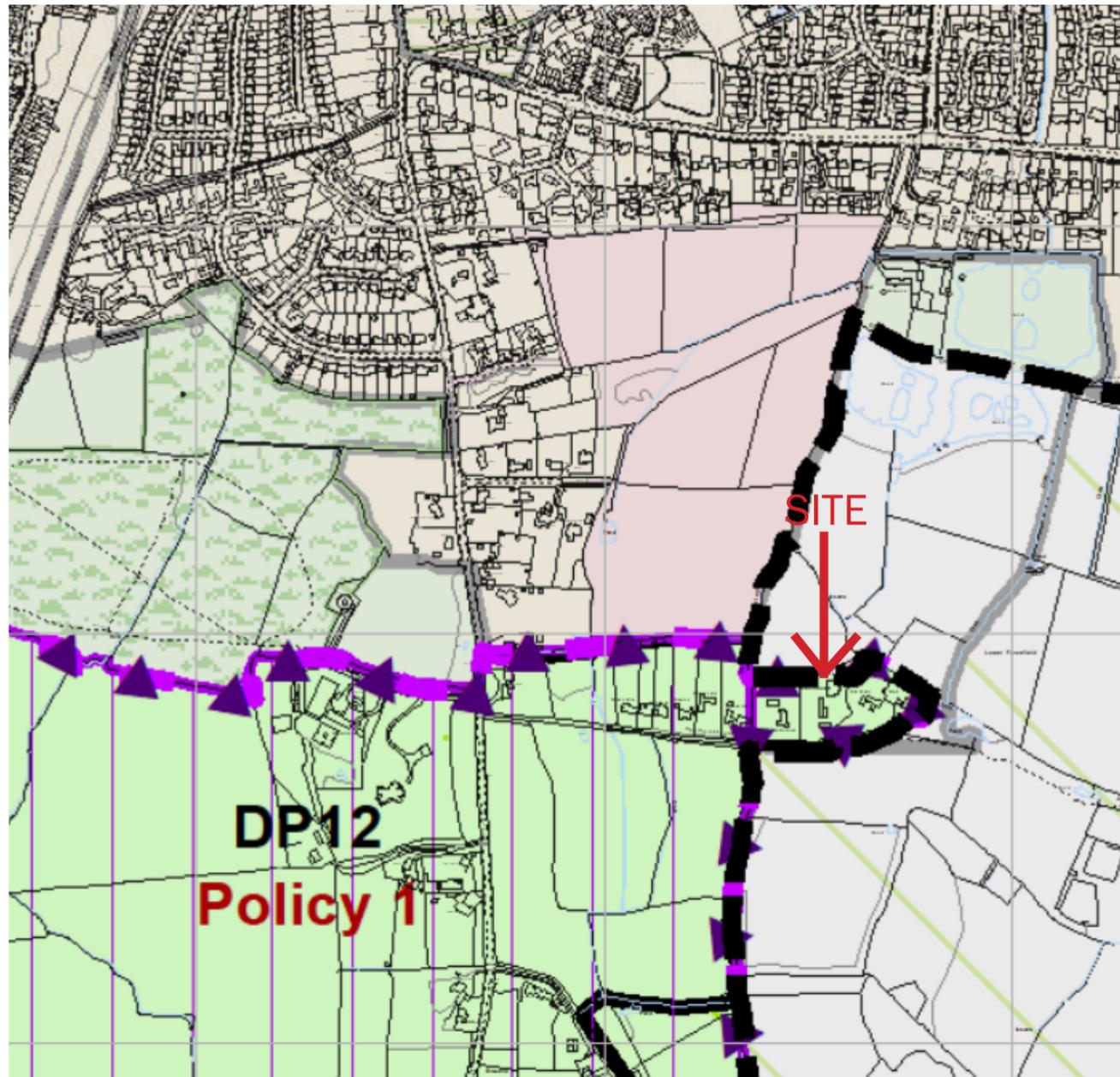


Fig 1: Extract from Mid Sussex Local Plan Map 12: Hassocks

2.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement, is submitted in support of a Householder application for the proposed replacement of an existing annex at Wellhouse Farm, Wellhouse Lane, Burgess Hill, RH15 0BN.

The purpose of this document is to introduce the site and its context, outline the design development process, and demonstrate how the proposal responds to local and national planning policy. It assesses the scheme against the relevant planning considerations and provides justification for the proposed development.

The application seeks to replace the existing ancillary accommodation, as the current annex is no longer fit for purpose. The proposed replacement has been carefully designed to respond to the character and context of the site, reducing its visual impact and integrating in a sensitive, vernacular manner. Dwell has undertaken its standard rigorous design development process, resulting in a considered proposal that is both sensitive to its setting and functional for the needs of the occupants.

Terms of Reference

This application follows the previously refused application (Ref: DM/25/1960), which proposed an extension and porch, as well as the subsequent Pre-Application (Ref: DM/25/2651). The Pre-Application discussed 2 proposals, both of which will be discussed in section 6 of this document.

The use of the proposed development remains unchanged: the annex will remain incidental to the enjoyment of Wellhouse Farm. As noted in the delegated report for DM/25/1960, the proposed use was not considered to be in conflict with Policy DP15. This revised submission specifically addresses the other policy matters raised in the previous decision notice.

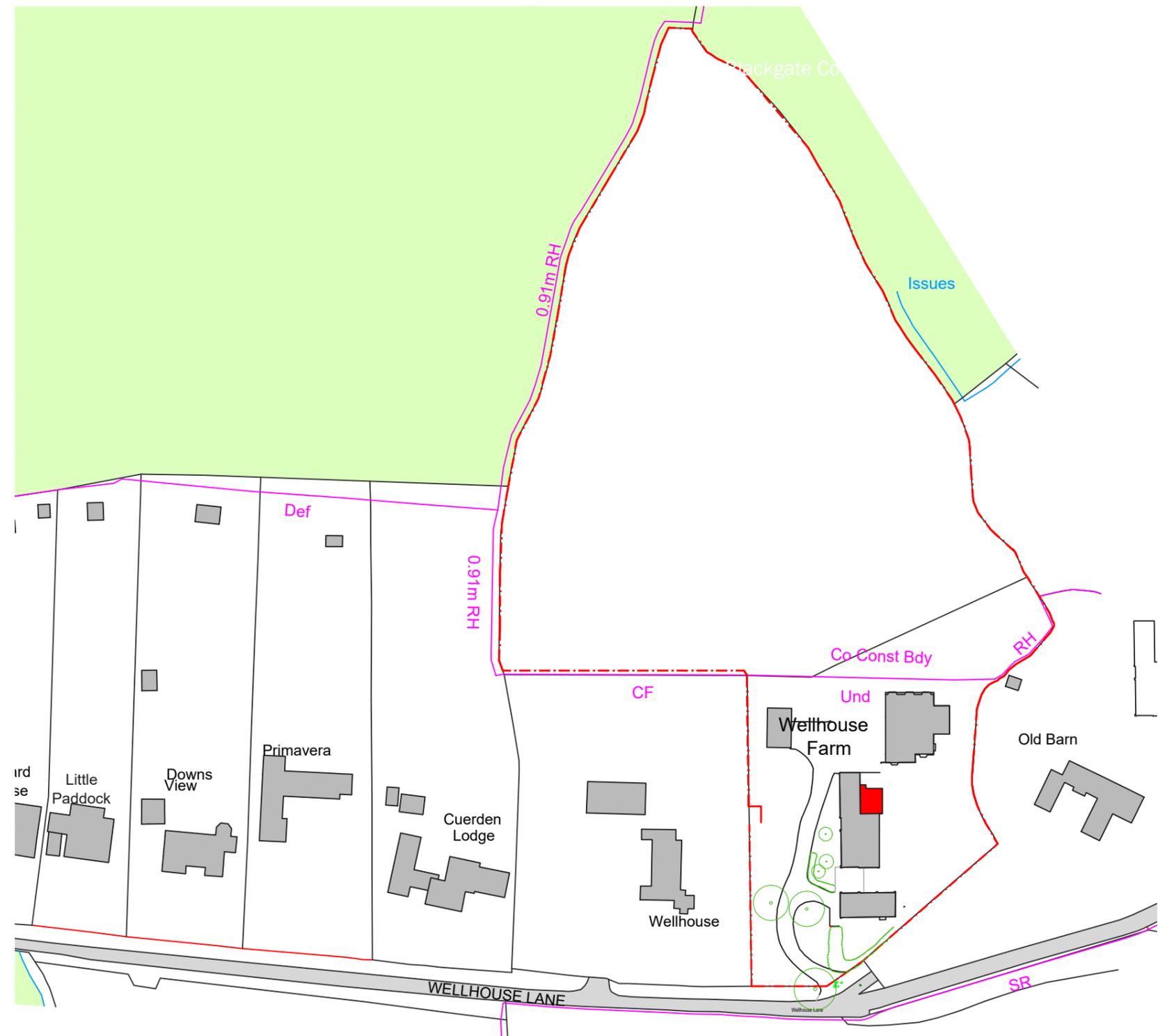


3.0 Location, Site and Context

Wellhouse Farm is located on the rural outskirts of Burgess Hill, within the administrative boundary of Hassocks Parish. The property sits to the north of the privately-maintained Wellhouse Lane, which is accessed from Ockley Lane.

Wellhouse Farm is located outside the defined built-up area boundary and within open countryside. The landscape character in this area is defined by its rural qualities, including open agricultural land, scattered dwellings, historic farmsteads, and by its proximity to the South Downs National Park. The site also sits adjacent to the Mid Sussex District administrative boundary and falls within the area covered by the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal has been carefully designed to respond sensitively to this rural context, respecting the character, setting, and scale of the surrounding landscape while enhancing the functionality and longevity of the existing property.



Location site plan



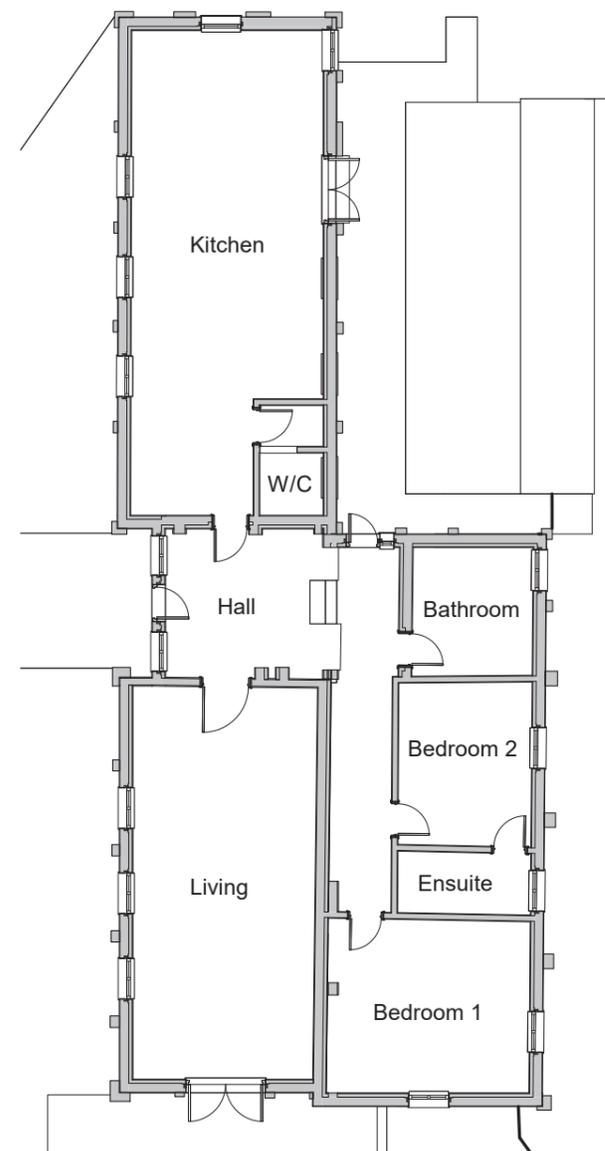
4.0 Existing Use

4.1 Existing Building

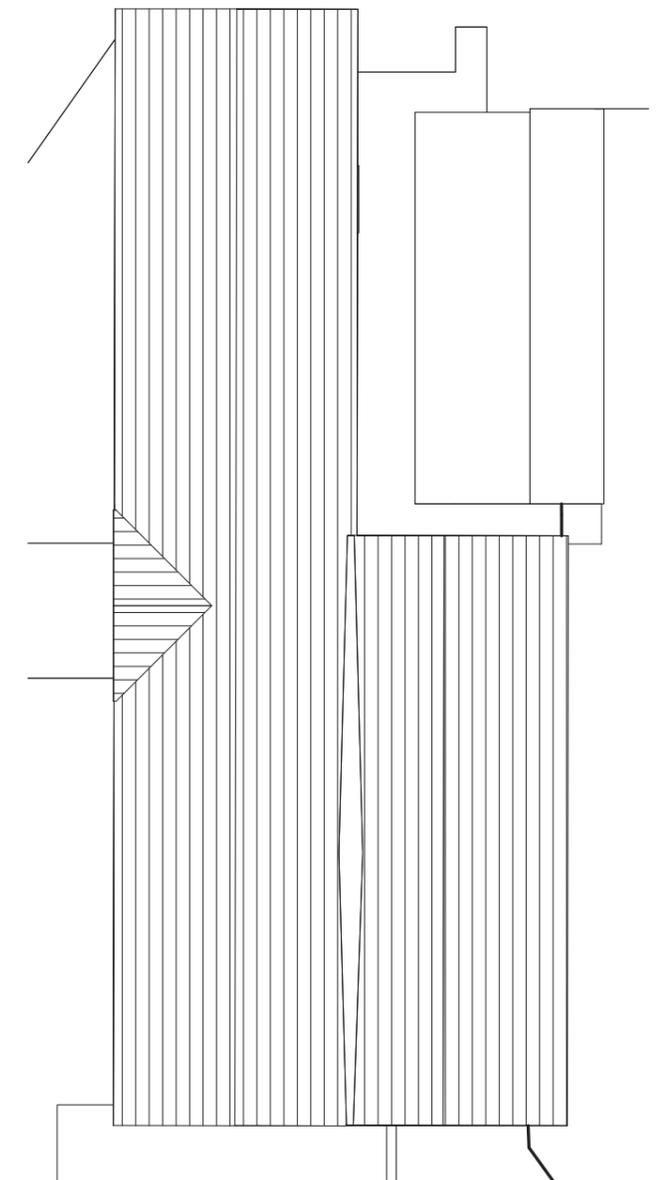
The existing annex provides ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. The building, formerly a dairy barn, was converted in 2013 into a two-bedroom annex. The accommodation currently comprises:

- Entrance hall
- Living room
- Two bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Ensuite
- Kitchen
- Cloakroom
- Hallway

The annex is single-storey and arranged over a split-level floor plan, reflecting the historic floor level changes between the original barn structure maintained during conversion.



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Existing First Floor Plan



4.2 Building Issues

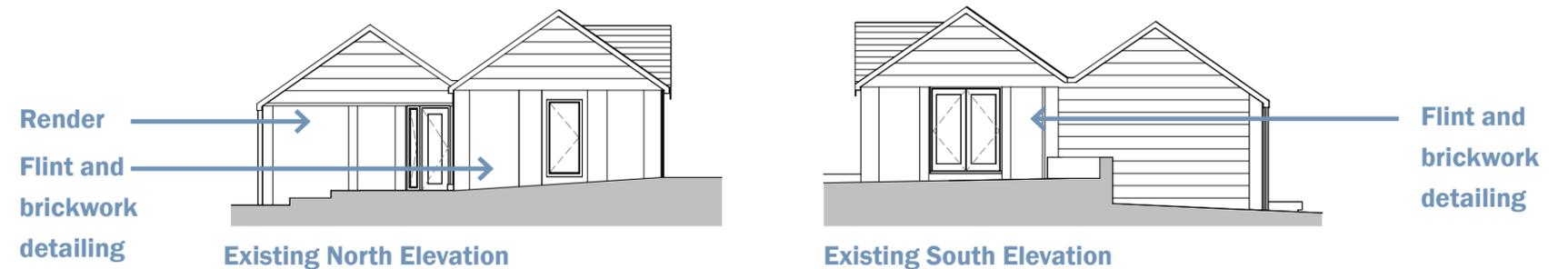
Although the annex was converted in 2013, the standard of construction and detailing has not proven durable over time. As a result, the building now requires extensive remedial works in order to bring it to a condition that is fit for purpose.

The original building form and concrete construction have resulted in ongoing issues relating to damp and ventilation. The roof design incorporates a central valley which has become a persistent point of failure, leading to water ingress and the deterioration of structural roof members and internal finishes.

The external cladding is at the end of its service life and has failed in places permitting water penetration, a condition that has been exacerbated by the apparent absence of an effective damp-proof course. Internal damp-proofing measures appear inconsistent, which, if left unaddressed, could result in an unhealthy internal environment. In addition, the building lacks sufficient background ventilation, further compounding these internal environmental issues.

In addition, the existing annex performs poorly in terms of energy efficiency. The applicants are keen to improve the environmental performance of the accommodation by reducing energy demand for heating and lowering overall CO2 emissions; however, the limitations of the existing structure significantly restrict the extent to which these improvements can be achieved.

Taken together with the split levels complicating access around the building for elderly occupants, these factors demonstrate that the existing annex is no longer suitable for retention and efforts are required to deliver a more robust, sustainable, and long-term solution.





5.0 DM/25/1960 - Previous Submission

The previous planning application (Ref: DM/25/1960) sought to extend the annex with a porch and a full infill extension to the northeast elevation, providing a shared garden room. The total proposed floor area was approximately 60m² and the design included:

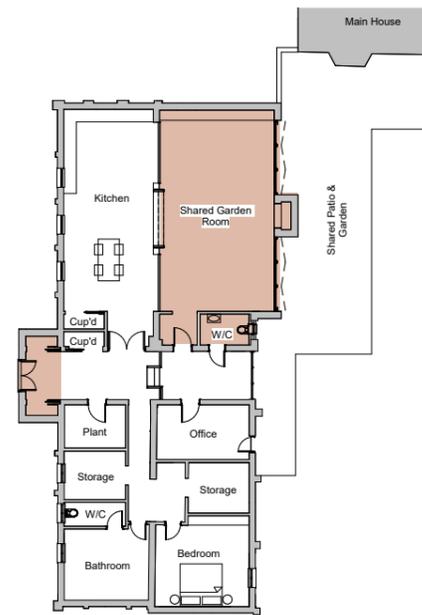
- A flat-roof infill extension
- A gabled dormer roof addition to the east elevation
- A pitched-roof porch to the west elevation
- A concealed flat roof to the valley

The application was refused planning permission, with the key reasons for refusal referencing the following policies:

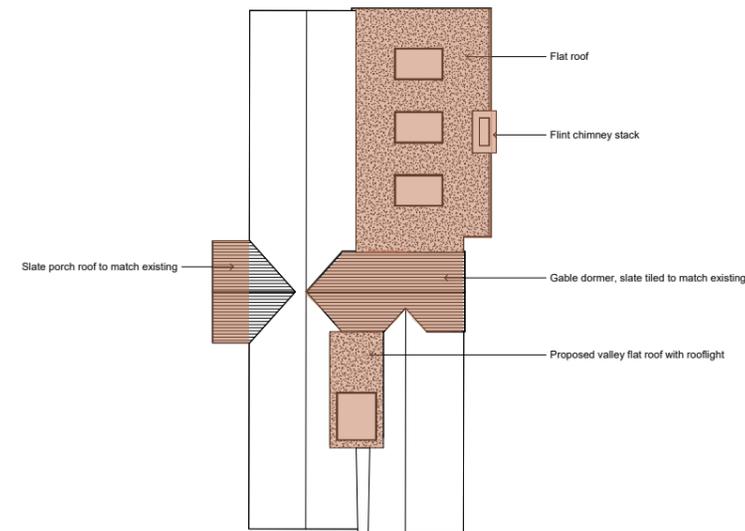
- DP26 – Character and Design (Mid Sussex District Plan)
- Policy 9 – Character and Design (Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan)
- DG49 – Extensions and Alterations (Mid Sussex Design Guide)

It is important to note that no objections were received during the consultation process, and Hassocks Parish Council recommended approval. Furthermore, the officer's delegated report made clear that the overall use of the proposed development was not a matter of concern. It stated that *"the current application proposes accommodation which is to be occupied by the parents of the applicants who reside at Wellhouse Farm. As such, the proposal is not considered to be tantamount to a new dwelling. The red line of the application site is drawn around the entirety of the existing unit for Wellhouse Farm and the garden area is shown to be shared with the main house and the annex. As such, the proposal is not in conflict with DP15."*

This confirms that Policy DP15 (New Homes in the Countryside) was not cited as a reason for refusal, and the use of the proposal was considered acceptable in principle, with no conflict arising in respect of the nature or occupation of the proposed accommodation.

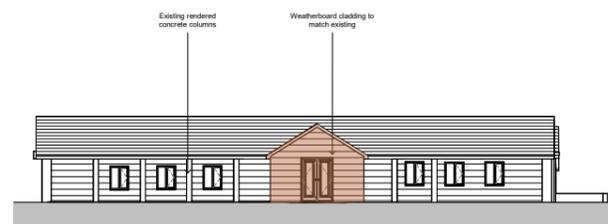


Ground Floor as Proposed
1 : 100

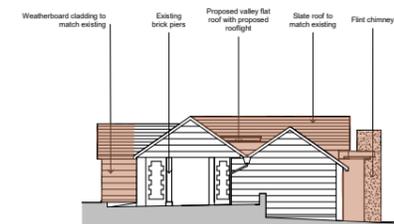


Roof as Proposed
1 : 100

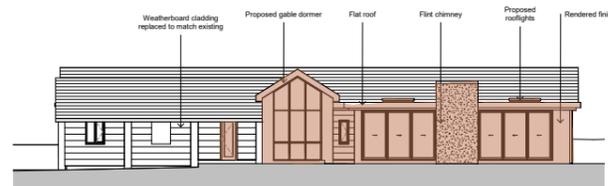
DM/25/1960 Proposed Plans



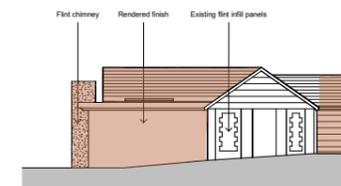
West as Proposed
1 : 100



South as Proposed
1 : 100



East as Proposed
1 : 100



North as Proposed
1 : 100

DM/25/1960 Proposed Elevations

 Additions



6.0 DM/25/2651 - Pre-Application

6.1 Pre-App - Proposed Scheme A (Extension)

The Pre-Application submission initially proposed Scheme A, a reduced extension developed in response to the refusal of application DM/25/1960. While this scheme significantly reduced the footprint of the proposed extension and broadly addressed the policy concerns raised in the earlier refusal, it did not fully resolve the wider site-wide issues or the inherent limitations arising from the existing building and its construction.

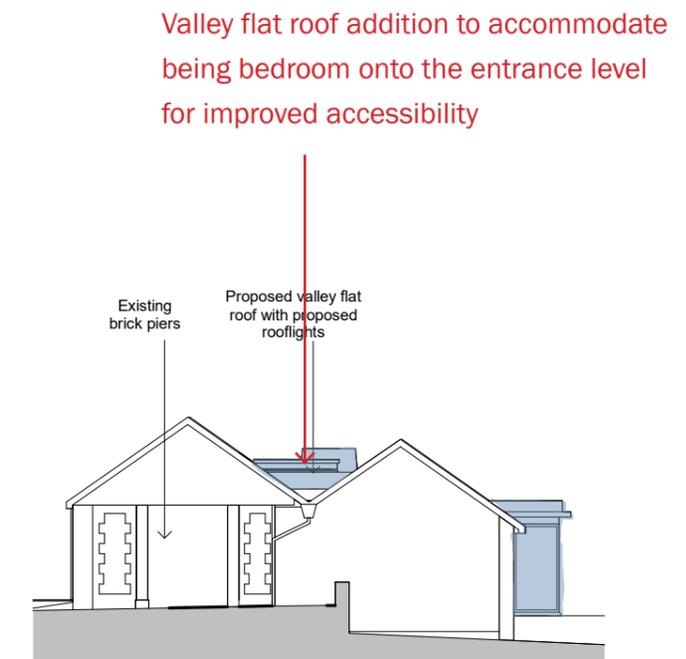
The constraints of the existing structure result in limited internal room depth and compromised functionality. In particular, the split-level arrangement necessitated an increased extension footprint to meet the client's requirements, leading to an inefficient and sub-optimal design outcome.

During discussions at the site visit, it was identified that the length and form of the existing building were not in harmony with the site, with its appearance likened to that of a "static caravan" by the visiting officer. The building was considered to be of limited or no architectural merit, with no clear justification for its retention. Reducing the length of the annex, and reconsidering its overall presence on the site, was therefore identified as a key opportunity for improvement.

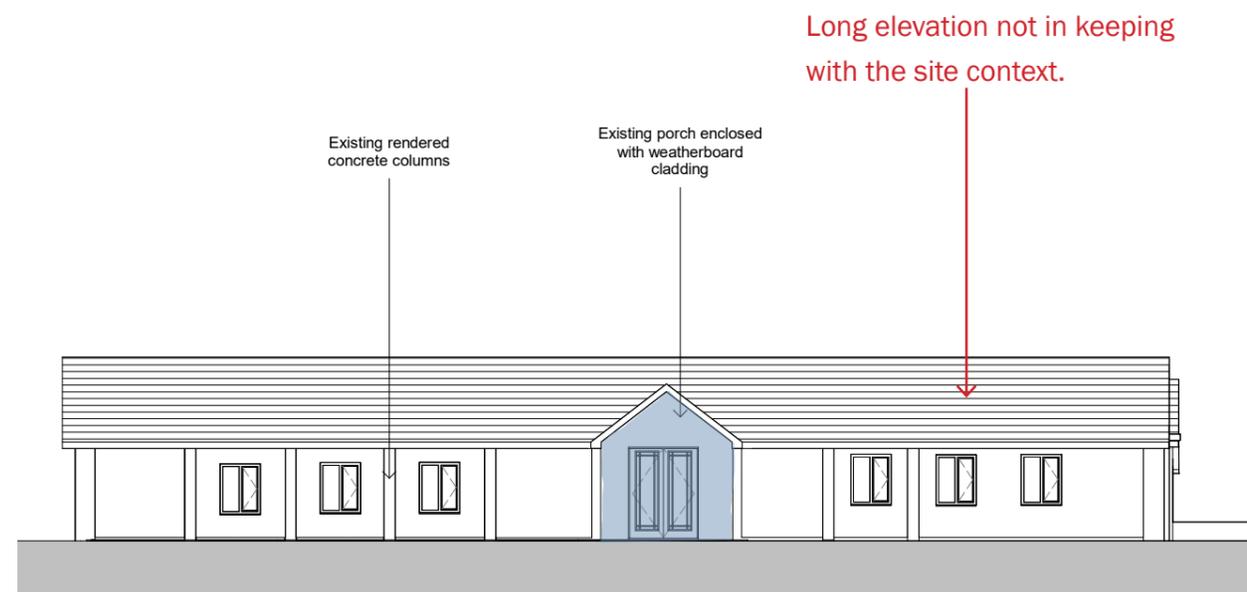
In principle, the Planning Officer was supportive of the changes made in response to the previously refused scheme and did not raise objection to the increased floor area. However, in light of the wider issues discussed, an alternative scheme was developed that replaces the existing annex in its entirety. This approach enables a more coherent response to the site, improved accessibility and internal usability, and a design solution that more effectively addresses the relevant planning considerations and improves the quality and appearance of the site as a whole.



Pre-App Proposal Scheme A - Site plan



Pre-App Proposed Scheme A - South Elevation

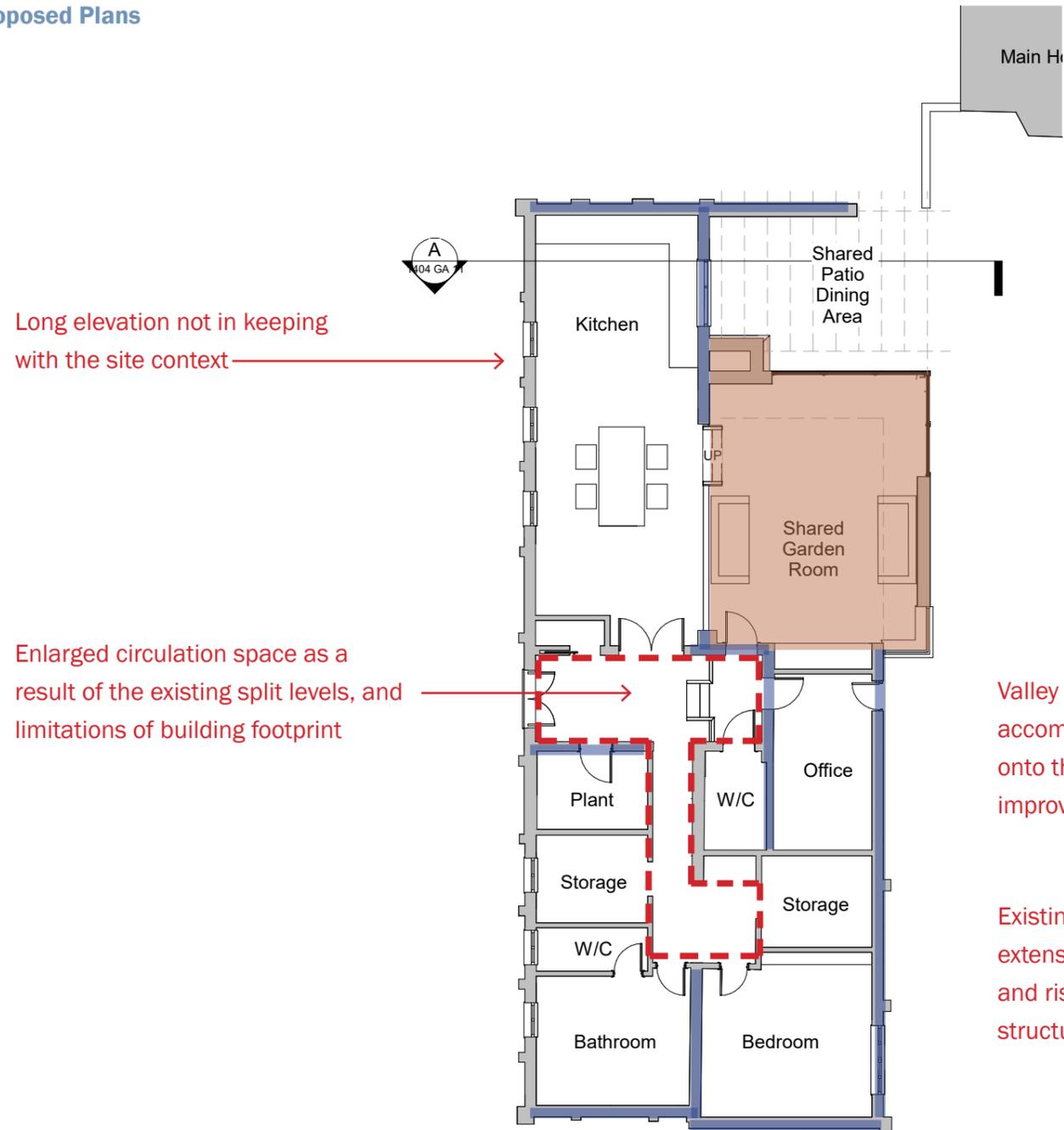


Pre-App Proposed Scheme A - West Elevation

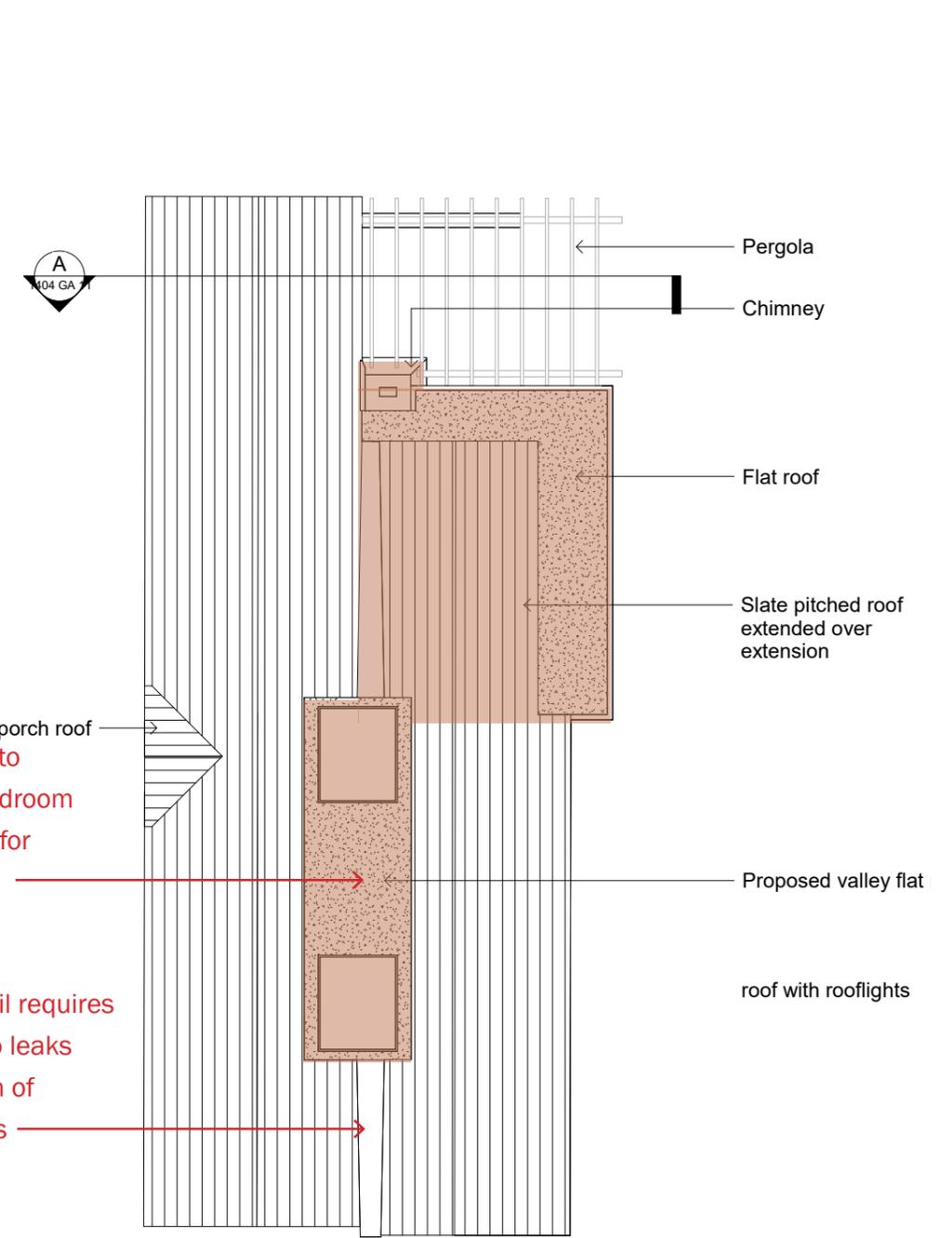


DM/25/2651 - Pre-App - Proposed Scheme A (Extension)

Proposed Plans



**Pre-App Proposed Scheme A
Ground Floor as Proposed**



**Pre-App Proposed Scheme A
Roof Plan as Proposed**

- proposed extension and roof additions
- Original walls retained

Long elevation not in keeping with the site context

Enlarged circulation space as a result of the existing split levels, and limitations of building footprint

Valley flat roof addition to accommodate being bedroom onto the entrance level for improved accessibility

Existing valley roof detail requires extensive repairs due to leaks and risk of deterioration of structural roof members



6.2 Pre-App - Proposed Scheme B - Replacement

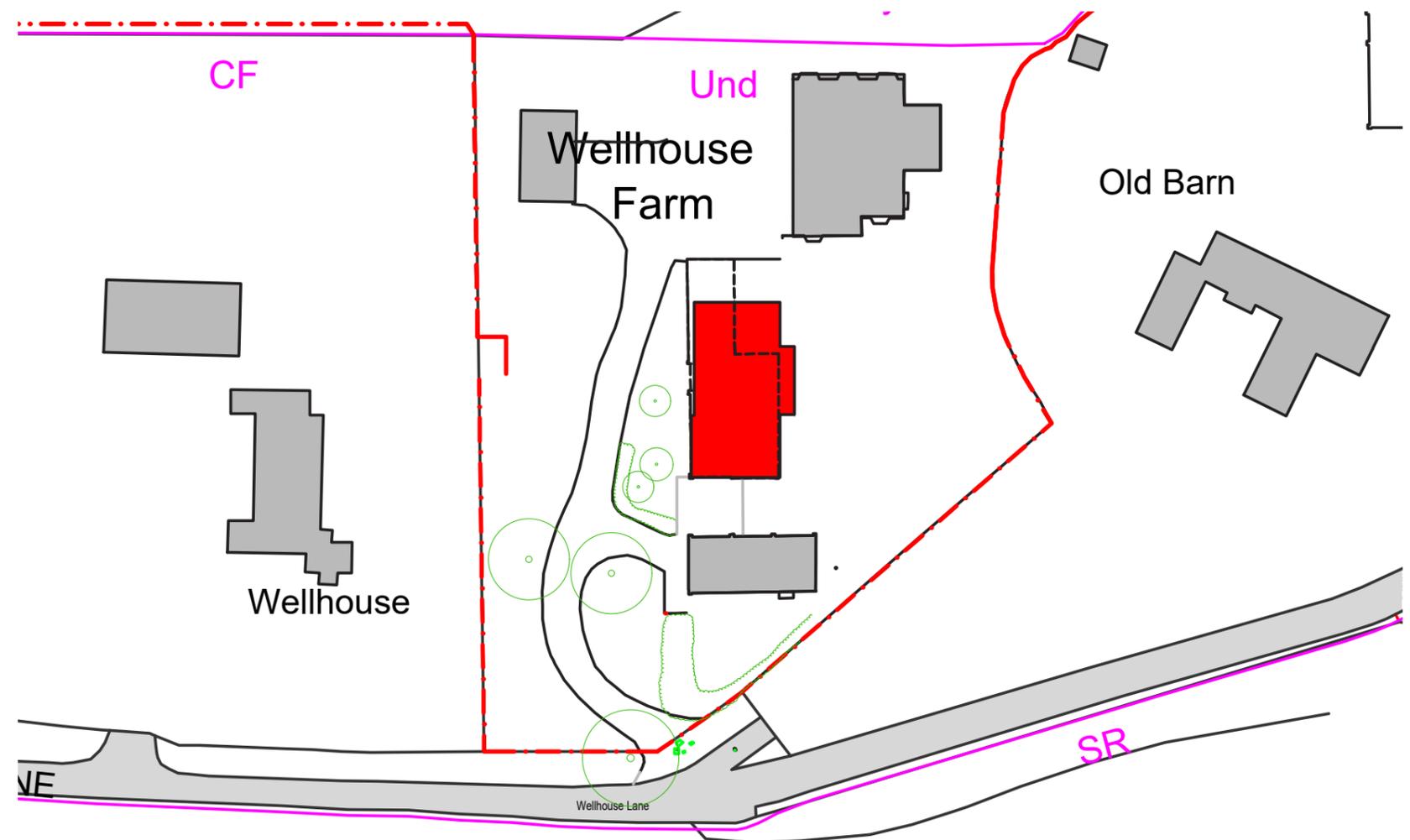
Building on the officer's response to the current building issues and the site context, a proposed annex replacement scheme was developed.

The proposed annexe occupies the same general position as the existing structure; however, rather than referencing the former linear dairy building, the new design is informed by a traditional stable typology. It takes the form of an U-shaped stable block. What would have been a semi-enclosed, east-facing stable yard, has been infilled with a contemporary living space, with the remaining accommodation arranged around the perimeter. The principal entrance is discreetly recessed within the west elevation, avoiding the introduction of a domestic porch and reinforcing the character of a functional farmstead outbuilding.

This approach enables the accommodation to be arranged on a single level, supporting long-term accessibility and multi-generational living. In terms of scale, the proposal has a smaller footprint than the most recent pre-application extension scheme and is significantly reduced compared to the previously refused proposal.

The internal floor level is set broadly in line with the lower level of the existing annex, requiring the building to be partially cut into the lawn between the west elevation and the driveway, which suppresses the ridge and eaves heights and limiting its visual prominence from the driveway and wider site.

The material palette draws from the local Sussex farmyard vernacular while avoiding domestic or gentrified detailing. Flint has been deliberately excluded in response to earlier feedback, with feather-edge timber cladding proposed above a brick plinth and brick piers used to articulate the individual 'stable bays'. Openings on the south and west elevations are limited, and window detailing is intentionally simple.



Pre-App Proposal Scheme B - Site plan



The eastern elevation, which is well screened, allows greater flexibility in fenestration to maximise outlook to views within the site, and ensure sufficient levels of daylight.

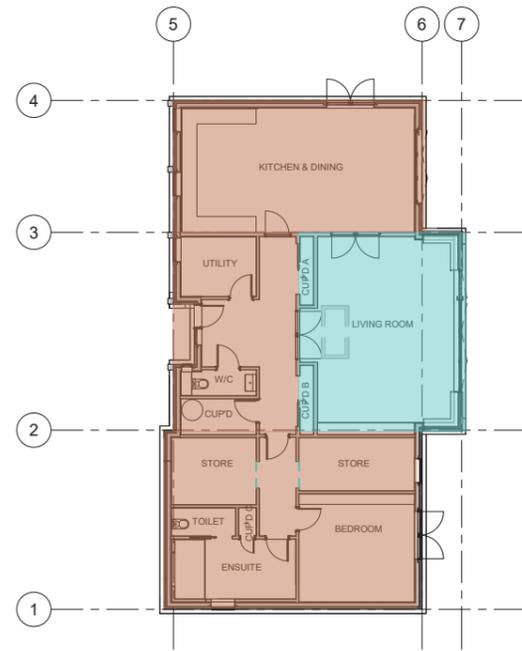
Plain clay tiles are proposed to the roof, reflecting both the main house and local agricultural buildings. Traditional barn detailing of the roofs results in a slightly increased ridge height at the point furthest from the main dwelling to break the overall massing.

The accommodation has been rationalised to reinforce the ancillary nature of the annex, providing a single bedroom with ensuite and dressing areas alongside living, kitchen and utility spaces, all generously-sized to facilitate ambulant disabled and wheelchair accessibility should the need arise. To further suit multi-generational living an accessible dedicated plant room is included to ensure services are readily maintainable, to improve long-term usability.

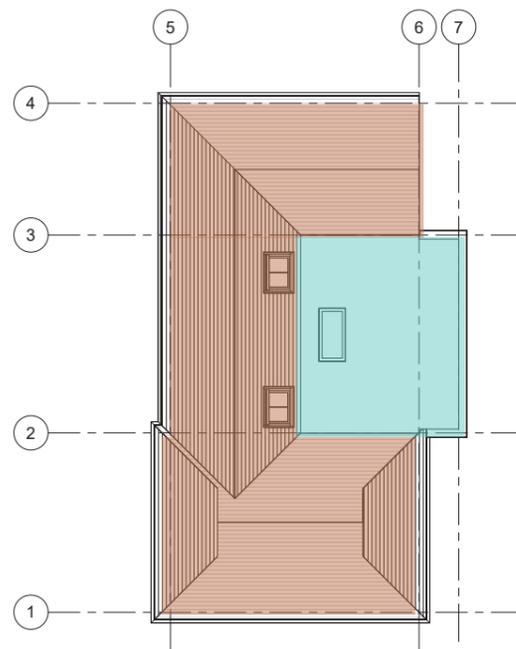
Pre-Application Feedback on Scheme B

In response to this proposal the Planning Officer provided positive feedback, noting that the alternative scheme represents a well-designed response to the issues identified during the pre-application process. It was requested that the submission includes a clear statement setting out how the proposal has evolved and why the existing building is no longer considered fit for purpose. The Officer also requested drawings that clearly show changes in levels and demonstrate how the building is cut into the ground, with the footprint of the existing building shown as a dotted outline on the proposed plans.

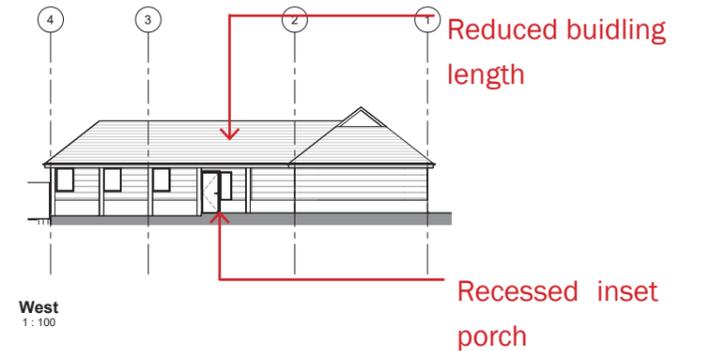
It was confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable as a householder application and that, “with the inclusion of a condition to restrict its use as an annexe for ancillary purposes to the main house, this could be recommended for permission.”



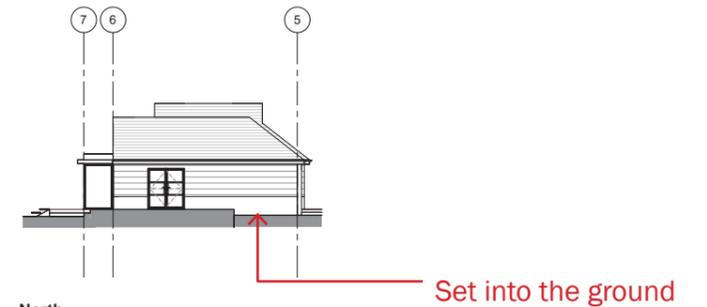
Ground Floor as proposed
1:100



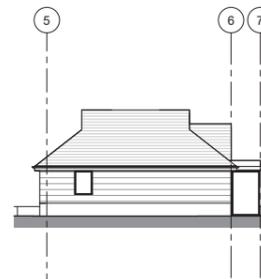
Roof as Proposed
1:100



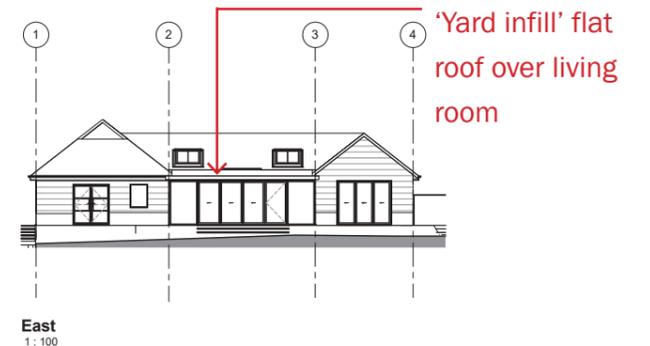
West
1:100



North
1:100



South
1:100



East
1:100

- 'u' shaped stable form
- 'Yard infill'



7.0 Proposed Scheme

The proposed scheme represents a refinement of Scheme B, incorporating a limited number of targeted design adjustments. These include a modest reconfiguration of the internal layout to accommodate a larger plant room, together with further excavation into the ground to lower the internal floor level. This enables the annex floor level to align with the main house patio, improving accessibility and ease of movement between the annex and the dwelling and supporting multi-generational living.

Use

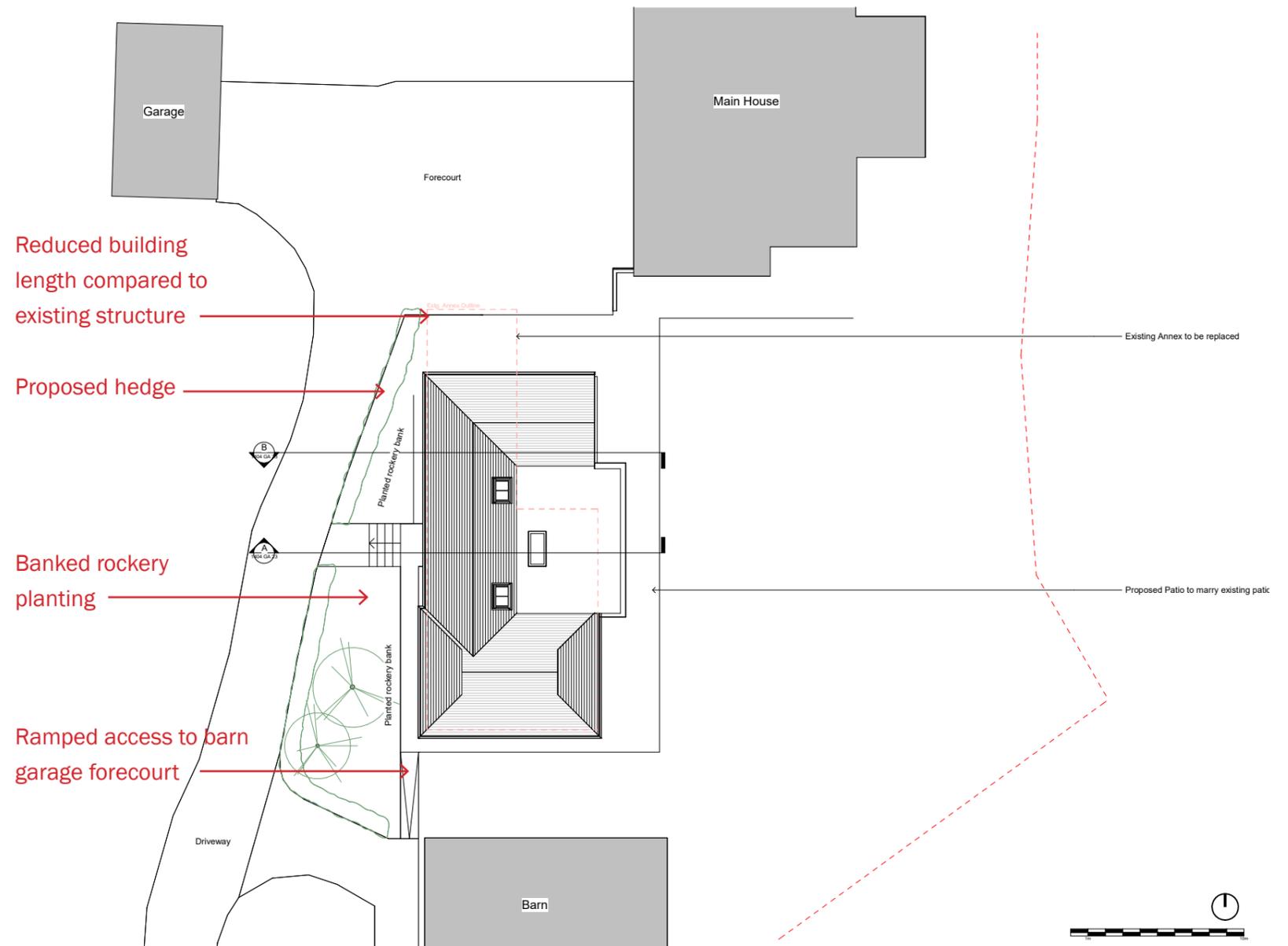
The applicants and their family intend to continue occupying the site as a single, multi-generational household. The annex will remain incidental to the enjoyment of Wellhouse Farm, and the proposal will not result in the creation of a separate planning unit or a material change of use. The proposed replacement building will remain ancillary to the main dwelling. This arrangement supports a multi-generational living model by providing shared use of spaces between the annex and the main house which was accepted in principle by the Local Planning Authority during the previous application.

Appearance

The appearance of the proposed annex is informed by the local Sussex farmyard vernacular and is intentionally non-domestic in character. The design draws from traditional stable block and hay barn forms, expressed through simple massing and restrained detailing that reflect the functional origins of agricultural outbuildings.

The roof pitch now takes its reference from the main house, strengthening the visual relationship between the buildings, while remaining clearly subordinate in scale and form.

Materials have been carefully selected to respond to



Proposed Site Plan



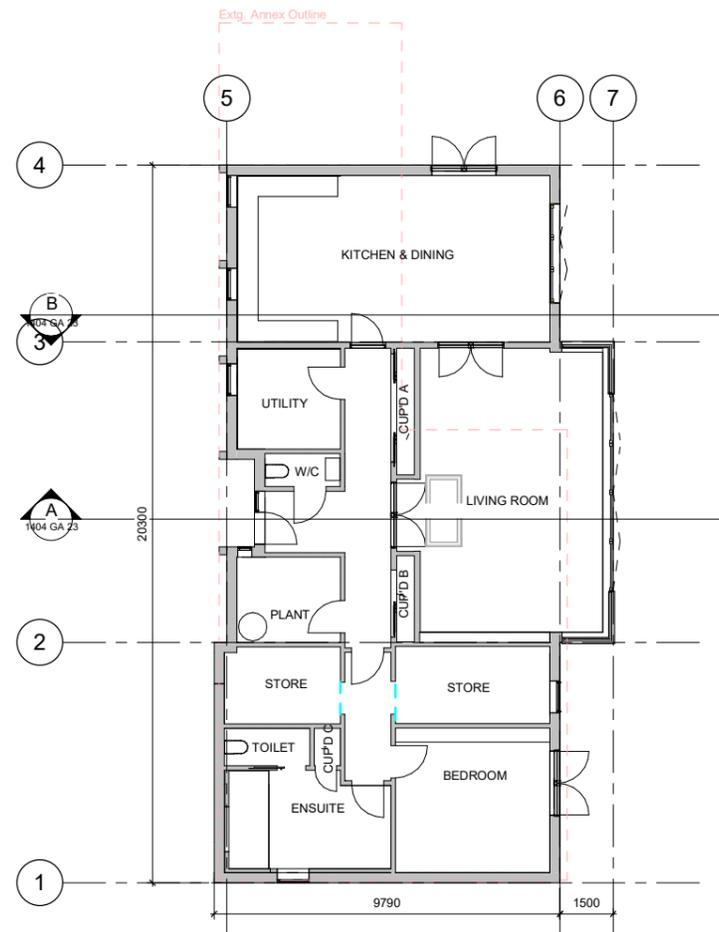
the site context, including feather-edge timber cladding above a brick plinth and plain clay roof tiles, which are characteristic of both the main dwelling and surrounding rural buildings. Openings are limited and simply detailed, particularly on elevations with greater outward visibility, ensuring the annex sits comfortably within its rural setting.

As the building is cut further into the ground, additional landscape measures are proposed to mitigate its visual impact. These include a new hedge along the driveway to provide screening on arrival, and a banked rockery incorporating both ramped and stepped access between the driveway and the barn garage forecourt. These measures help to integrate the annex more effectively into the landscape.

The proposal accords with Policy DP26, which requires development to be contextual and site-responsive, and with Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to reinforce local character.

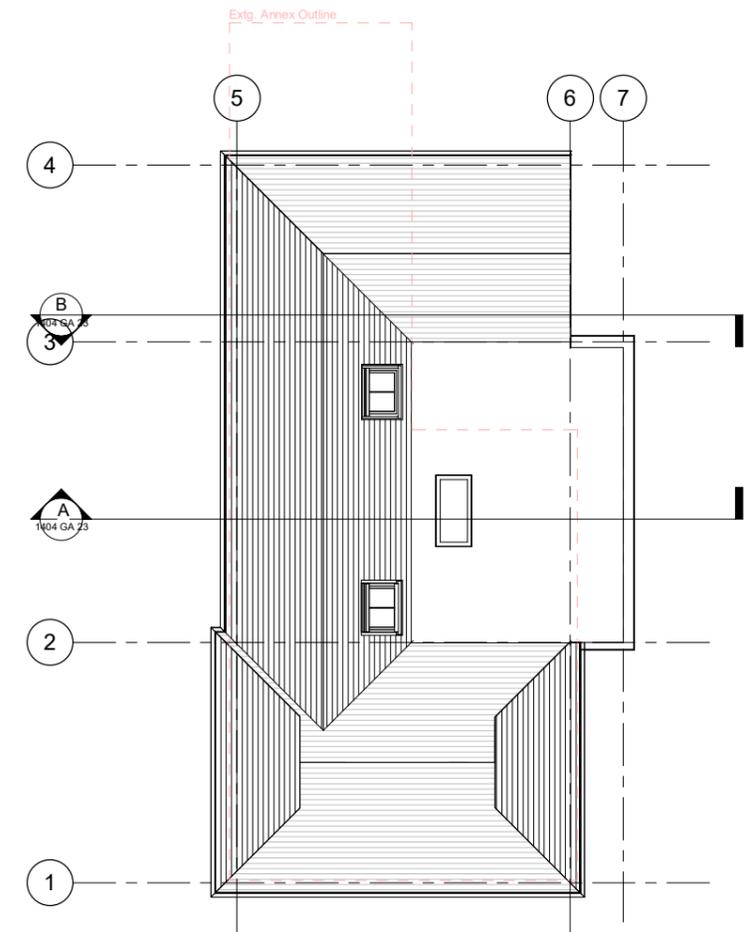


Visualisation of proposed scheme - East facing elevation



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

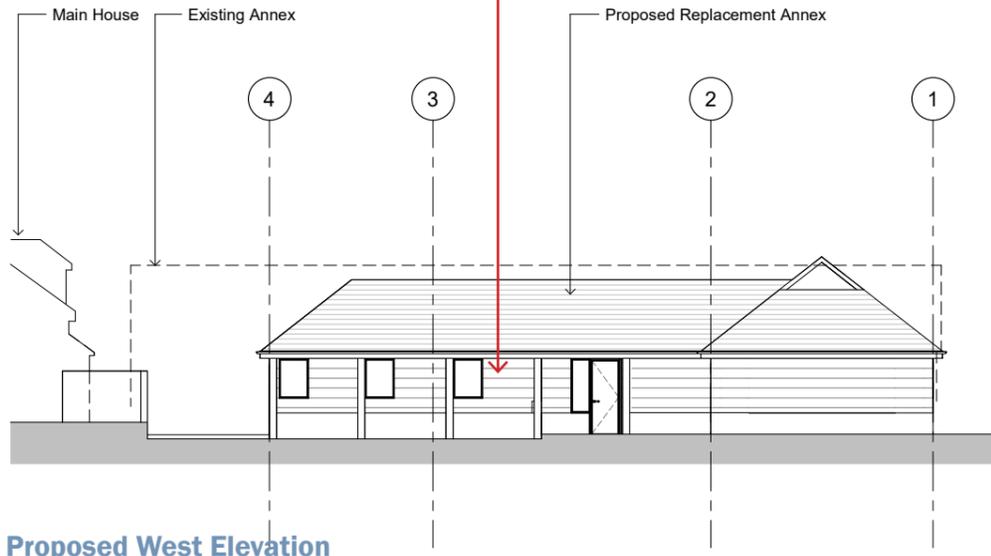
Gross internal floor area as proposed	= 186m ²
Previously refused (DM/25/1960) gross internal floor area	= 225m ²
Gross internal floor area as existing	= 154m ²



Proposed Roof Plan

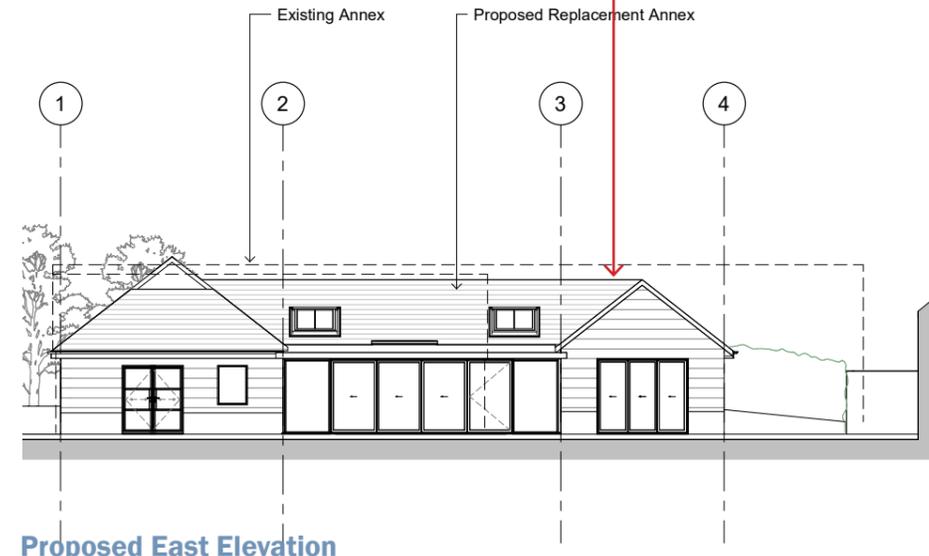


Repeated pattern as noted on existing annex
and in-keeping with stable typology



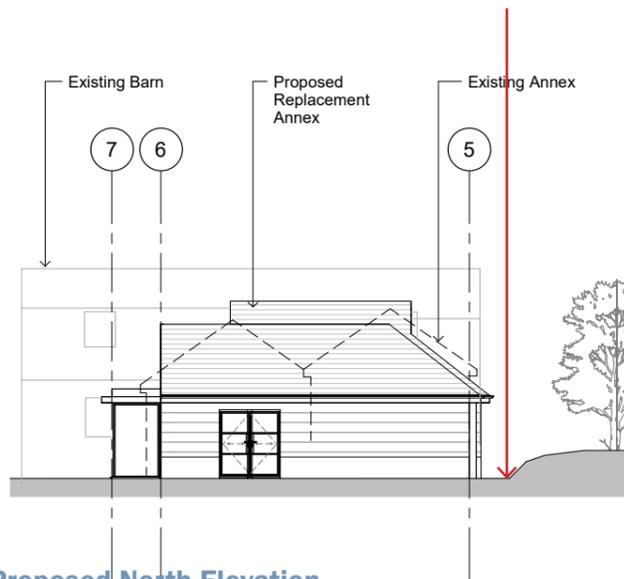
Proposed West Elevation

Main roof lower than
existing annex ridge

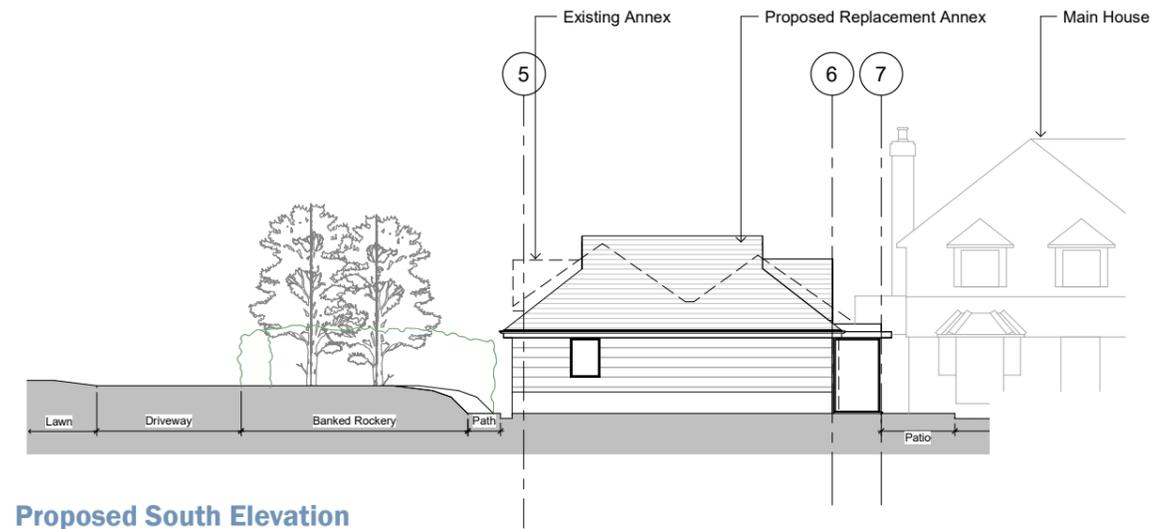


Proposed East Elevation

Cut into existing ground



Proposed North Elevation



Proposed South Elevation



Amount

The scale of the proposed annex has been carefully considered in the context of the site and refined through the evolution of the scheme, in accordance with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031), which requires development to respect the character and scale of its surroundings. The existing annex has a gross internal area (GIA) of approximately 154 m². The previously refused scheme under application DM/25/1960 proposed a substantially increased GIA of 225 m², which was considered unacceptable in terms of scale and impact.

In response, Pre-Application Proposed Scheme A (refer to Section 6.1) reduced the GIA to 196 m², a scale that was supported in principle at pre-application stage. The final scheme, which forms the subject of this application, further reduces the GIA to 186 m². This represents a clear and proportionate reduction in built form while delivering improved internal efficiency and functionality. The proposal therefore accords with Policy DG39 of the MSDC Design Guide SPD, which seeks development of an appropriate scale relative to its context.,



Visualisation of proposed scheme - North West corner

Scale

In addition to the reduction in floor area, a number of specific design measures have been implemented to control the perceived scale and bulk of the building. The proposed annex is shorter in overall length than the existing structure, particularly along the west elevation where it is most apparent when approaching the site. Although the plan depth has increased to allow for a more efficient internal arrangement, this has avoided the elongated form that previously contributed to negative visual impact.

The annex is partially cut into the ground, lowering the internal floor level and suppressing ridge and eaves heights. This significantly reduces the apparent mass of the building and ensures it sits more discreetly within the site. Taken together, these measures ensure that the proposal remains visually subordinate to the main dwelling and integrates successfully with the surrounding landscape, positively addressing the sloping nature of the site in accordance with Policy DG41, in addition to Policy DG39 referenced previously.



Visualisation of proposed scheme - East facing elevation

Layout

The internal layout has been deliberately designed to be simple, modest, and functional, reflecting the non-domestic character of the building while remaining respectful of the host dwelling. The arrangement enables a clear and efficient relationship with the main house, particularly in relation to the existing patio and garden.

The internal configuration allows shared spaces to be accessed both from the main house and from the annex, supporting the evolving needs of a multi-generational household. Shared areas, including the, garden room/living room and kitchen all of which are accessed via the shared patio and garden spaces. This approach enhances long-term flexibility and adaptability while minimising physical and visual impact.



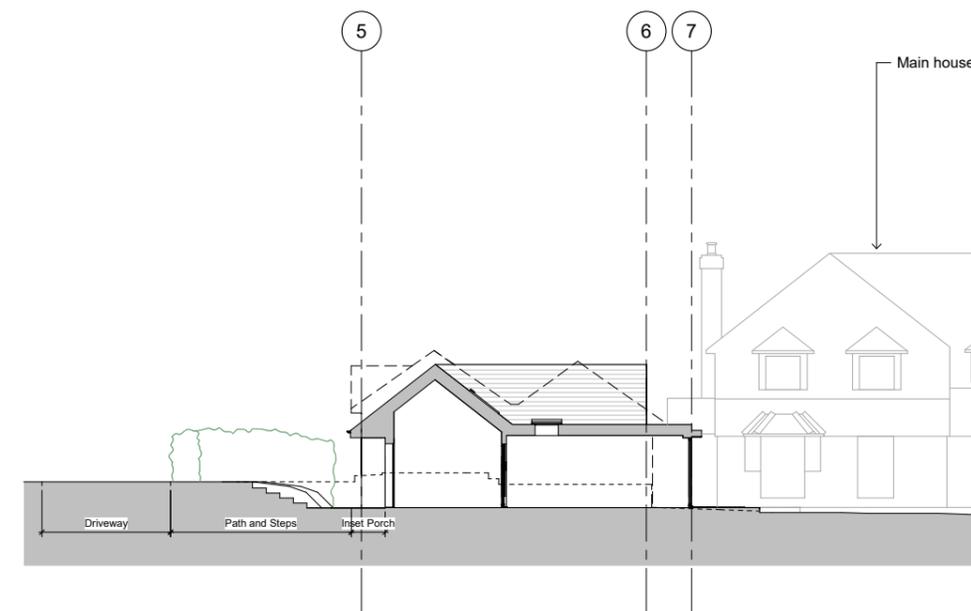
Access

Access to the site remains unchanged, with the proposed annex occupying the same position in plan as the existing annex.

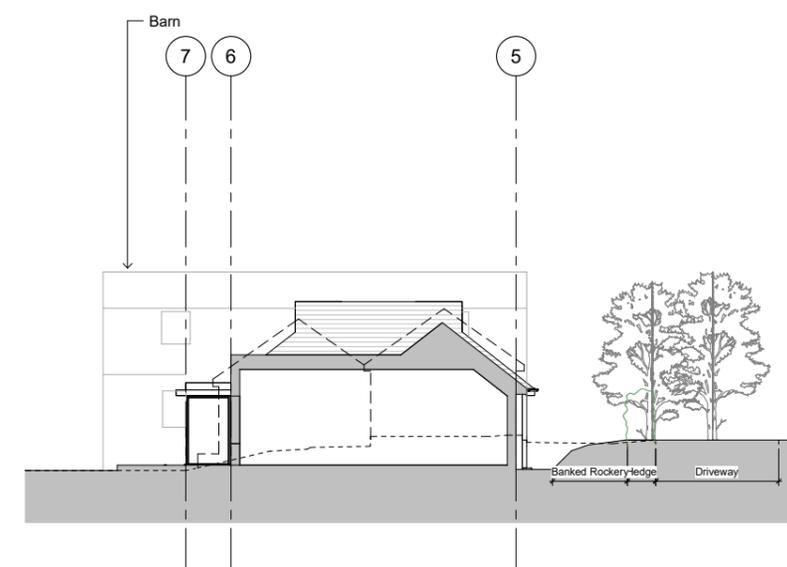
The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to improve accessibility and ease of movement, supporting long-term and multi-generational living in line with the objectives of DG26 (MSDC SPD Design Guide), which promote inclusive and accessible environments while protecting the valued characteristics of the site and its setting.

All accommodation within the annex is arranged on a single level, avoiding internal changes in level and improving usability for occupants of all ages and abilities. The internal floor level aligns with the main house patio and is accessed via a level threshold, enabling step-free movement between the annex and the main dwelling.

External access is further enhanced through the provision of a ramped pathway linking the annex to the existing barn garage level, ensuring inclusive access across the site. Taken together, these measures provide a safe, convenient, and accessible environment.



Section A
1 : 100



Section B
1 : 100



Sustainability

The replacement annex will deliver a substantial improvement in environmental performance compared to the existing structure. The new-build approach enables enhanced thermal performance, improved airtightness, and compliance with modern construction standards, thereby reducing energy demand and associated operational CO2 emissions.

The roof form incorporates south-facing slopes, providing the opportunity for future photovoltaic installation at a later stage if required. In addition, the rationalised internal layout, improved services strategy, and inclusion of a dedicated plant room ensure efficient building operation, ease of maintenance, and long-term adaptability, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient form of development.

Beyond the physical fabric of the building, the functional strategy of the proposal also supports wider sustainability objectives. By enabling multi-generational living on site, the development allows the applicants' parents to vacate their existing dwelling, releasing it back onto the local housing market. This approach helps optimise the use of existing housing stock and makes a modest but meaningful contribution to local housing supply, aligning with Policy DG37 (MSDC SPD Design Guide) and the overarching objectives of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

8.0 Summary

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed replacement annex at Wellhouse Farm represents a considered, proportionate, and policy-compliant response to the site's rural context and to the matters raised in the previous refusal under application DM/25/1960. The proposal replaces an existing annex that is no longer fit for purpose with a well-designed, single-storey building that improves functionality, accessibility, and environmental performance, while reducing overall visual impact.

The design has evolved through a rigorous and iterative process, including pre-application engagement, and is informed by a clear understanding of the site's character and constraints. The final scheme is smaller in gross internal area than both the refused proposal and the pre-application scheme and incorporates specific design measures to reduce perceived scale and bulk. These include shortening the west elevation, cutting the building into the sloping ground, and adopting a more efficient and rationalised internal layout. Collectively, these measures ensure the annex remains visually subordinate to the main dwelling and integrates successfully with the surrounding landscape, in accordance with Policies DP26, DG39, and DG41.

The proposal adopts a restrained, non-domestic architectural language derived from traditional Sussex agricultural buildings, expressed through a simple stable-block form and the use of appropriate vernacular materials. This approach responds positively to the character and appearance of the site and accords with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

In addition, the replacement of the building on its existing footprint, alongside the reduction in bulk and improved relationship to the landscape, ensures compliance with

Policy DP12, which seeks to protect and enhance the countryside and reflect the site's agricultural origins.

Accessibility is central to the design approach. The annex is arranged entirely on a single level, with internal floor levels aligned to the main house patio to provide step-free access between buildings. Enhanced external routes, including ramped access, support inclusive movement across the site, in accordance with Policy DP28 and the objectives of the MSDC Design Guide SPD.

The replacement annex delivers a substantial improvement in sustainability through enhanced thermal performance, improved airtightness, and modern servicing, resulting in reduced energy demand and operational CO2 emissions.

There is no material change in the use of the proposed replacement building, which will remain ancillary to the main dwelling. As discussed in relation to application DM/25/1960, the proposal therefore raises no conflict with Policy DP15.

Overall, the proposal represents a sensitive, sustainable, and carefully considered form of development that directly addresses previous planning concerns and responds to the evolving needs of the occupants. It is therefore respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted.