



WHALEBACK

DESIGN, ACCESS, HERITAGE & PLANNING STATEMENT

Nether Walstead Gates 1 & 3

ADDRESS

Nether Walstead, East Mascalls Lane
Haywards Heath RH16 2QJ

DATE

May 2026

REVISION

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Introduction

This document was originally prepared in support of approved applications DM/25/0007 and DM/25/0008, relating to the replacement of one gateway and the installation of three new gateways and gates along the driveway serving Nether Walstead, The Cottage, Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage.

This application relates to minor differences between the approved and implemented forms of Gateways 1 and 3. The proposals follow pre-application advice (DM/26/0180), which indicated that a retrospective application for these works would be likely to receive support.

To provide clarity and certainty regarding the planning status of the implemented works, the proposals for Gateways 1 and 3 are being brought forward through a standalone planning application at this stage.

Gateway 2, together with other gates where planning issues have been identified, will be addressed separately.

Whaleback Ltd is instructed to prepare a Design, Access, Heritage and Planning Statement for works proposed at Nether Walstead, a Grade II listed building.

The proposals involve the replacement and installation of new gateways and gates along the long driveway. The driveway leads to Nether Walstead and three other separate dwellings: The Cottage, Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage which were historically part of the landholding of Nether Walstead.

The driveway comes off East Mascalls Lane and travels southwards to Nether Walstead. It splits into two approximately 50m north of the house and this secondary arm of the driveway leads to the three other cottages. A public right of way crosses the site approximately a third of the way down the driveway with a gate either side and continues in a south-easterly manner past Nether Walstead but adjacent to the south western boundary of Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage.

The proposal includes the replacement of the existing most northerly gateposts that mark the entrance to all properties and the public right of way and the installation of a gate closer to the house, to the west of the Studio/ Garage.

The design of the gates has been led by an assessment of the historical development and significance of the buildings and the site and its surroundings. This analysis draws upon historical sources from the West Sussex Records Office, the planning history, and direct observation. This informed understanding has been integral to shaping the design approach and its justifications.

This document further articulates the design principles and concepts applied to the gates’ design demonstrating how it respects the property’s special architectural and historical significance, and its broader setting.



Aerial view of Nether Walstead and neighbouring cottages.

Context and site description

The site is a large private dwelling situated at the southern end of a long private drive accessed off East Mascalls Lane. It is situated within the parish of Lindfield and falls under the administration of Mid Sussex District Council.

The surrounding area is rural with dwellings dispersed between large areas of open undeveloped land with large groups of trees interspersed across the area.

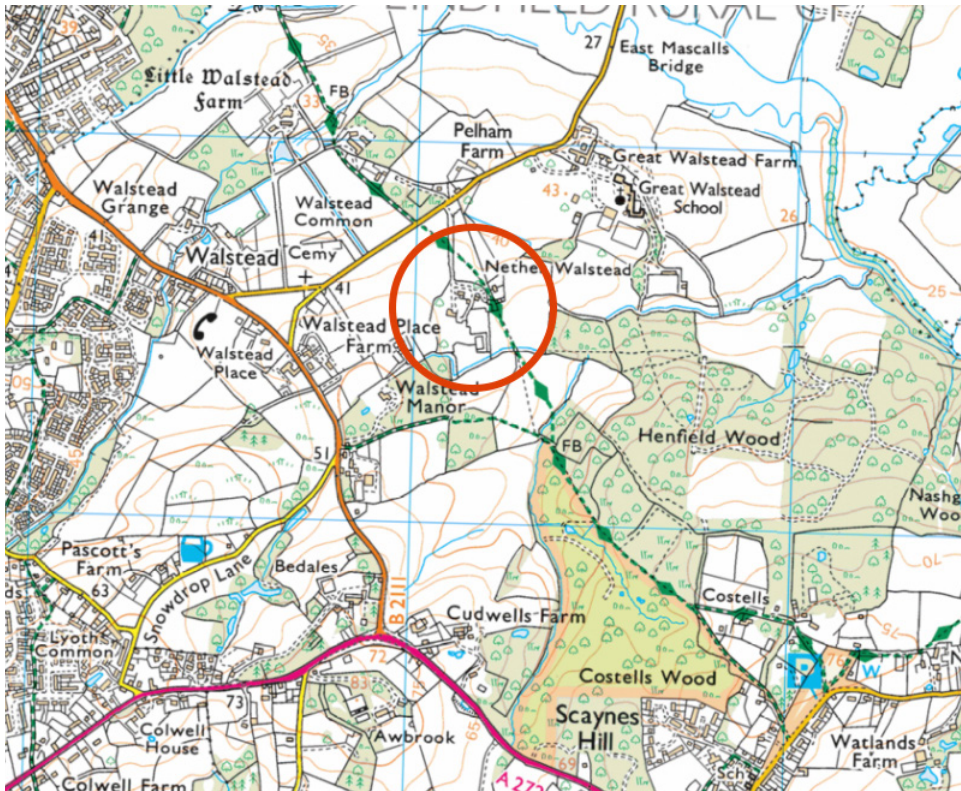
Two timber posts are located at the entrance to the driveway, alongside a 4-bar fixed section of fence over the grass verge. All components are constructed of white-painted timber. There is name board beside the fence posts.

The house is Grade II listed (National Heritage List Number 1180891) and is described as:

The original portion is of two storeys and attic, with two sets of dormers, and is of three bays. It is fronted with weather-boarding and stands on a red brick base. The back elevation is of red brick with a narrow gabled projection of three storeys. The modern additions are to the west and an L-wing to the north. Again these are in weather-boarding on red brick plinths or red brick to the ground floor level. The windows throughout the building are casements.

There is a massive brick chimney breast at the east end, and subsidiary chimneys to the western end of the original portion as well as two additional chimneys in the C19 and C20 sections. All is under a tiled roof

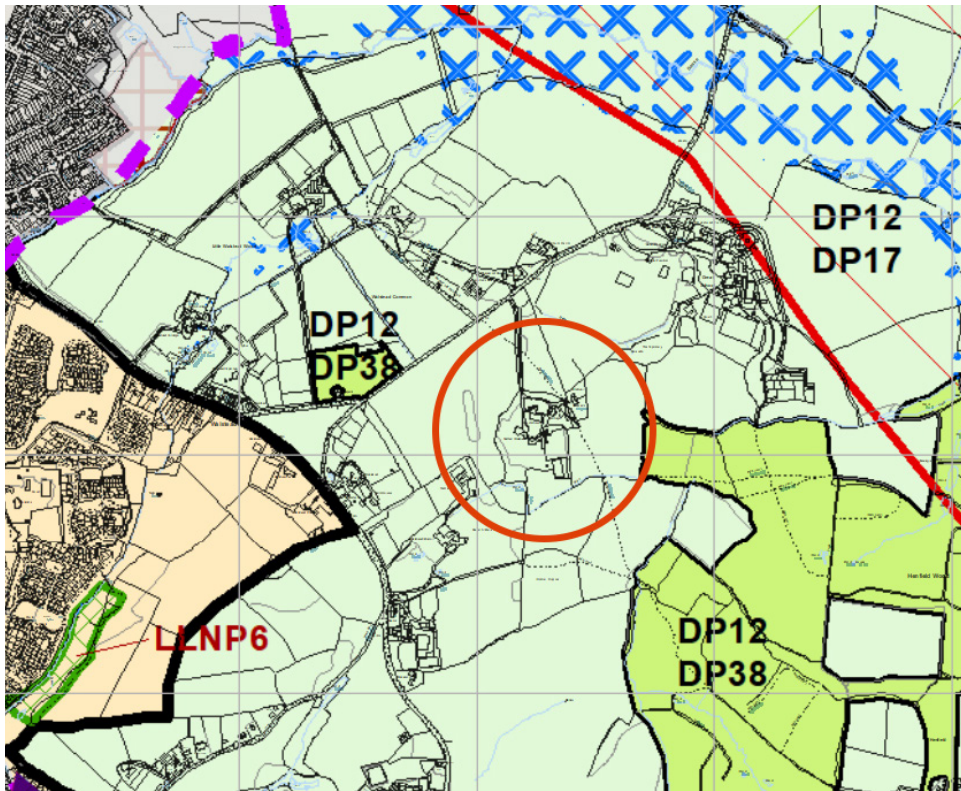
The interior was not inspected.



Ordnance survey map of surrounding area



Map of immediate context



Mid Sussex Policy Map



Magic map of listed buildings and ancient woodlands

Context and site description



The start of the driveway looking north



The driveway looking south towards the house



The driveway crossed by the public footpath



The split in the driveway

Heritage Statement

The house at Nether Walstead is first mentioned in a document dating back to 1631 when it is recorded as belonging to Leonard Brett. The research undertaken by Peter Bushell has charted its various historic owners, coupled with map regression analysis and on site observations it is possible to see how the house evolved from a rustic farmhouse into a country house of some size, reflecting broader changes in architectural taste and social aspiration in the early twentieth century. This transformation is evident not just in the architecture of the house itself but also in the transformation of the agricultural building group into an ancillary service yard.

For much of its history, the house likely served both residential and agricultural purposes. As a farmhouse, it would have evolved primarily in response to practical needs, while some elements may have reflected changing aesthetic tastes. While the house underwent some small changes in the 19th century, the greatest changes took place in the late 19th/early 20th century when the house underwent considerable expansion. These changes coincide with the house evolving to become more of a gentlemen’s country residence. In 1888, Nether Walstead was purchased by Sills Clifford Gibbons, a prosperous dentist from Burgess Hill and the son of a senior clerk in the House of Commons. Following the death of his wife, Clifford Gibbons sold his previous residence, Great Walstead, and purchased Nether Walstead. Although it is not known when Clifford Gibbons sold the house, sales particulars from 1892 describe the property as a “very valuable freehold and sporting estate” to be sold at auction. The estate is described as:

“A commodious and comfortable farmhouse, built of brick and timbered, and roofed with tiles and Sussex stone, containing 2 sitting rooms, kitchen, 2 sculleries, dairy, pantry, and 2 underground cellars, together with 6 bedrooms and 2 attics.”

The farm buildings are noted as compact and situated near the house, including a cart shed, stables, and cattle sheds. There are also two recently built labourers’ cottages, alongside a keeper’s cottage and kennels. Whether the house was actually sold in 1892 is unknown.

It is understood that the house was extensively remodelled and extended in the early twentieth century, prior to 1904. Plans of this work have not been found but the building fabric indicates that this involved the addition of a substantial extension to the house’s west end, the addition of the porch and other works to the pre-existing dwelling. Some small further changes to the house were made in the early part of the 20th century.

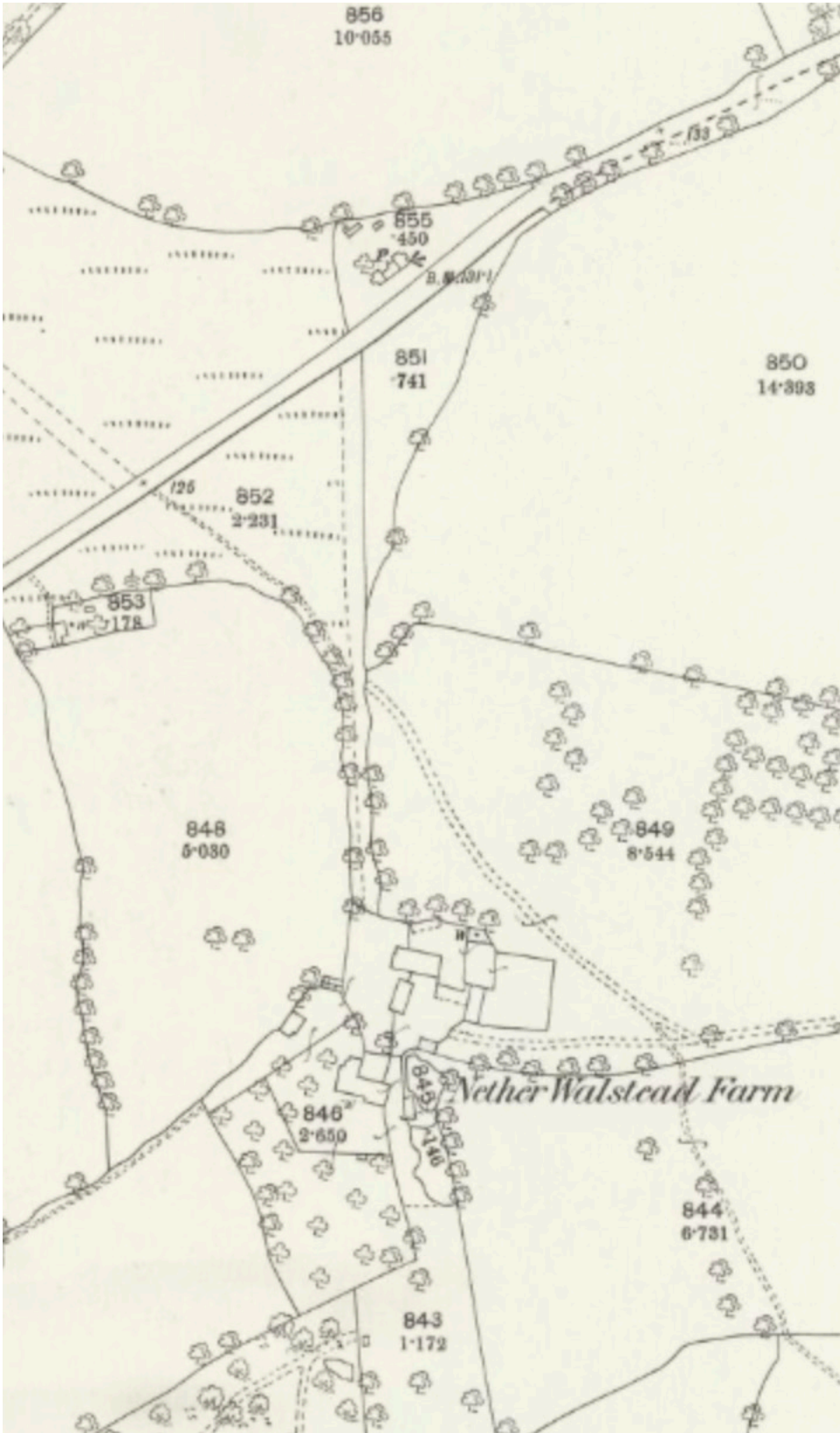
Historic maps show that the approach to the house was from the north off East Mascalls Lane and initially led to the group of agricultural buildings which lie to the north of the house. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875 shows the driveway being straight off East Mascalls Lane. The public right of way is clearly visible on the first edition map. On the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897, the driveway is shown adopting a slightly curved approach. On these earlier maps, the driveway leads exclusively to Nether Walstead and its associated outbuildings as a single group. The first evidence of the driveway splitting appears on the third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1910, showing a branch to the east providing access to the cottages. This occurs at the point where, in earlier maps, the driveway is shown terminating at the Nether Walstead service buildings. A second branch, slightly south of the first fork, leads to the coach house, while the main driveway continues to the principal residence. These branches appear to

respect historic tree locations, carefully integrating with natural features.

The driveway and road arrangement changes slightly further commensurately with the curtilages of the cottages to provide access to them. The current layout identifies the routes and buildings belonging to Nether Walstead and the separate cottages.

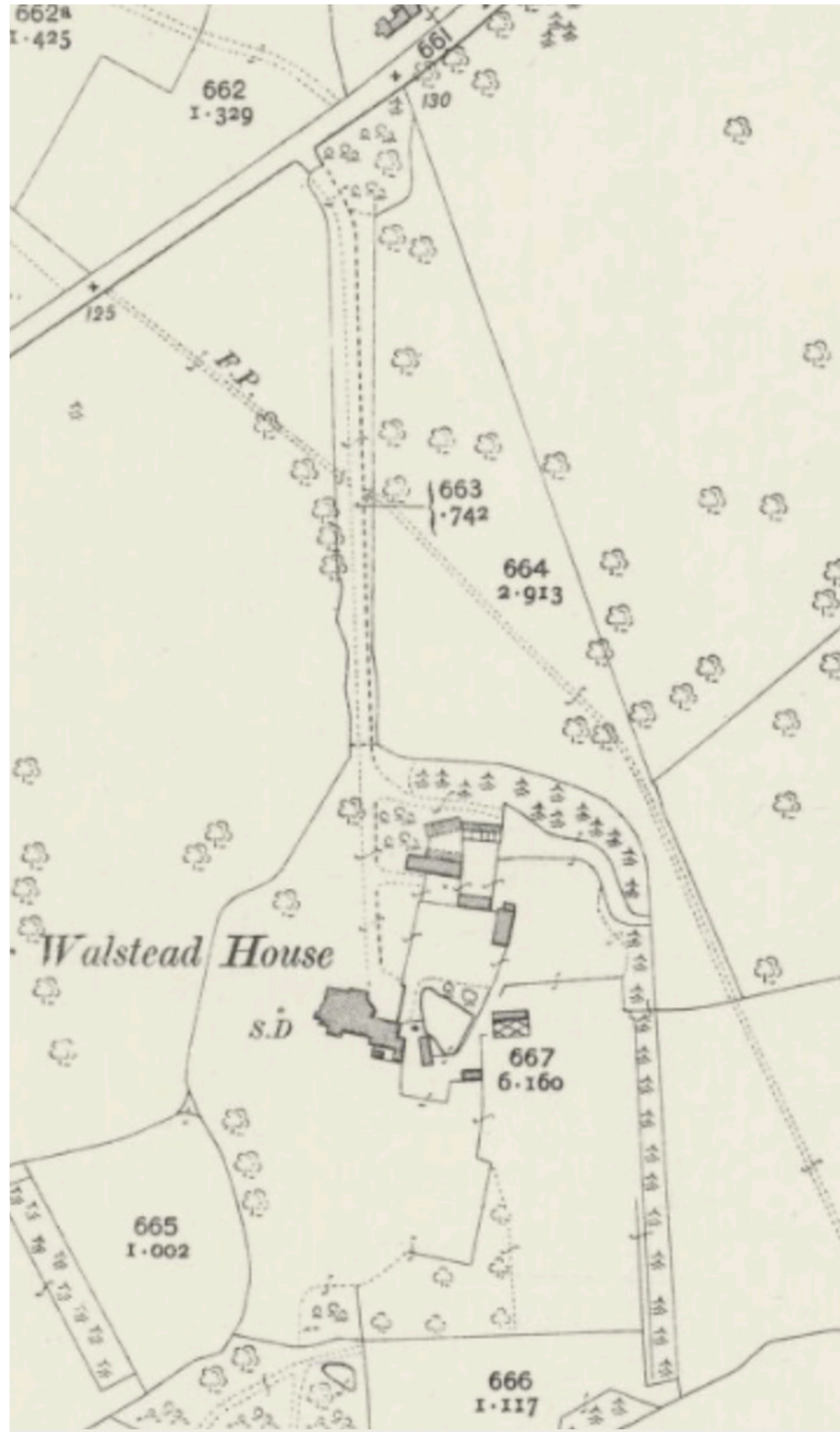
SIGNIFICANCE

As a Grade II listed building, the house is significant. The driveway forms part of the setting of the house and has evolved in line with changes to the house, forms of transport and the ownership of the other buildings. The driveway has retained its primary layout as a tree-lined avenue.

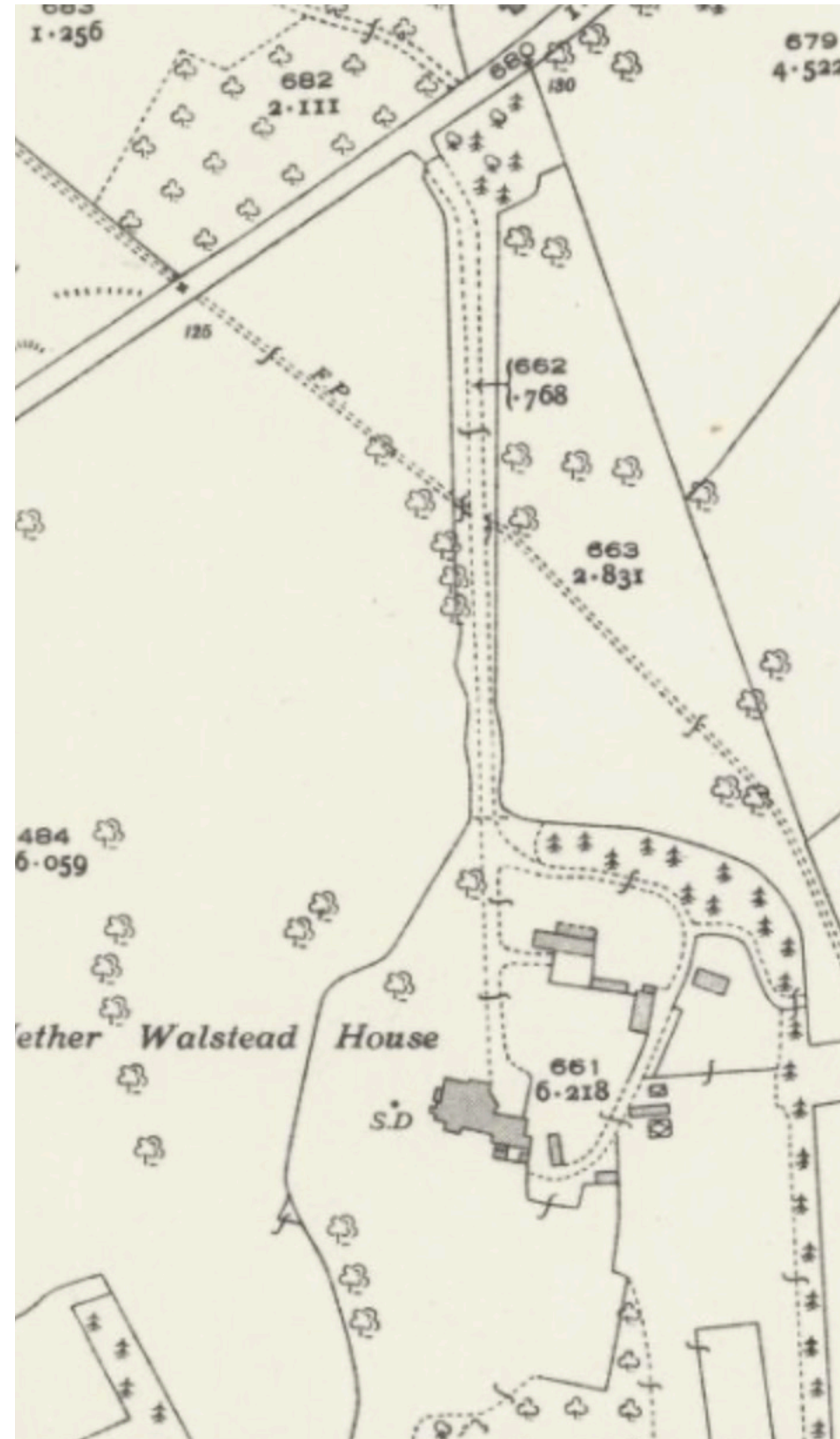


First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875

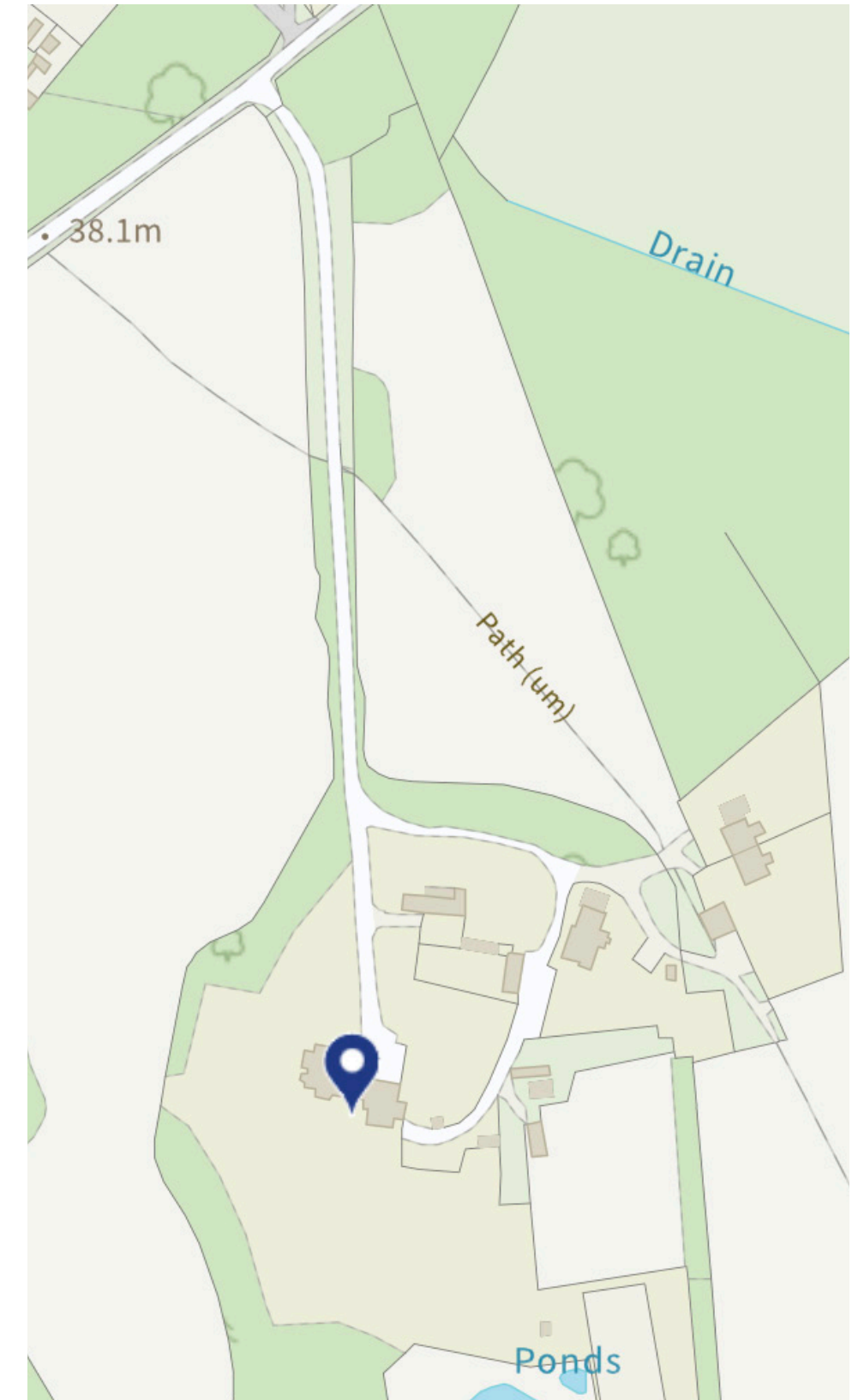
Heritage Statement



Third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1910



Ordnance Survey map of 1946



Existing driveway layout

Proposals

The proposals are for the replacement of the existing gateway at the north end of the driveway, and the installation of a gate closer to the house.

GATEWAY 1

The first gateway replaces the existing fence posts at the entrance to the driveway. Historically there was a five-bar diamond wide gate, but only the posts and fixed section remain. The new gate includes two new painted posts on either side, painted boards on either side, a new name board signalling a private road and the names of the individual properties accessed via the driveway on the left hand side. There are 3 rows of granite setts in the ground. The span of the gate is 5.0m.

GATEWAY 2

This gate does not form part of this application.

GATE 3

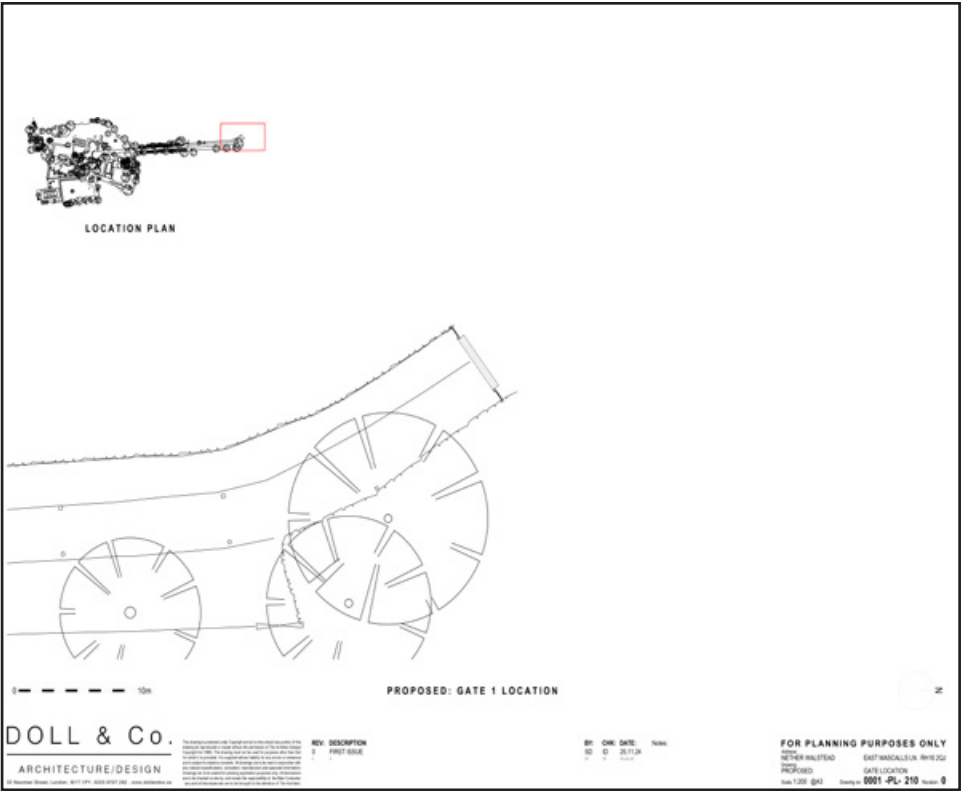
This gate is the main gate to Nether Walstead and as such is more imposing. When closed, the gate emphasises the private nature of the area beyond it but when open suggests an open welcoming threshold.

This gate demarcates the principal entrance to Nether Walstead. It is of simple, elegant design appropriate to both agricultural and country house contexts.

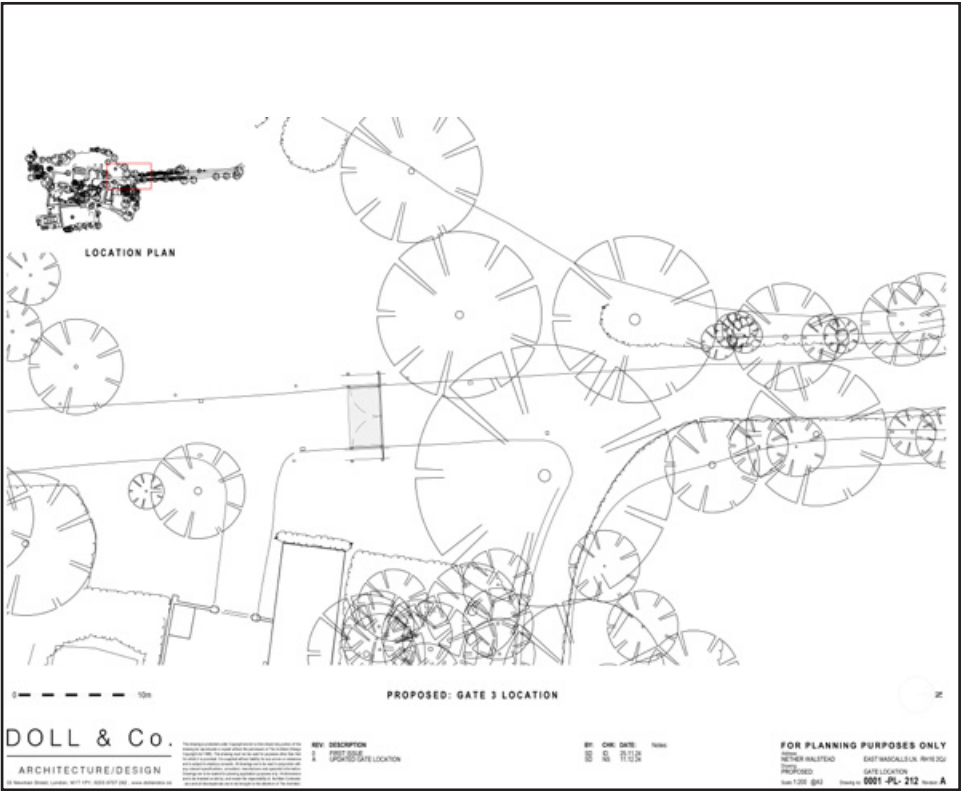
It has two sets of twin posts with painted boards between them, each bearing a masthead LED lamp. Viewed from the north, there is a letter bow mounted within the left panel and a name board to the right. The gates themselves are electrically operated five-bar cross-hatched gates, spanning 5.0m. The swing arc will rest on gate piers on either side and will incorporate a 2.75m area of granite setts. Flanking the gates is gravel areas and dense hedging, reinforcing the boundary of the private area.

GATE 4

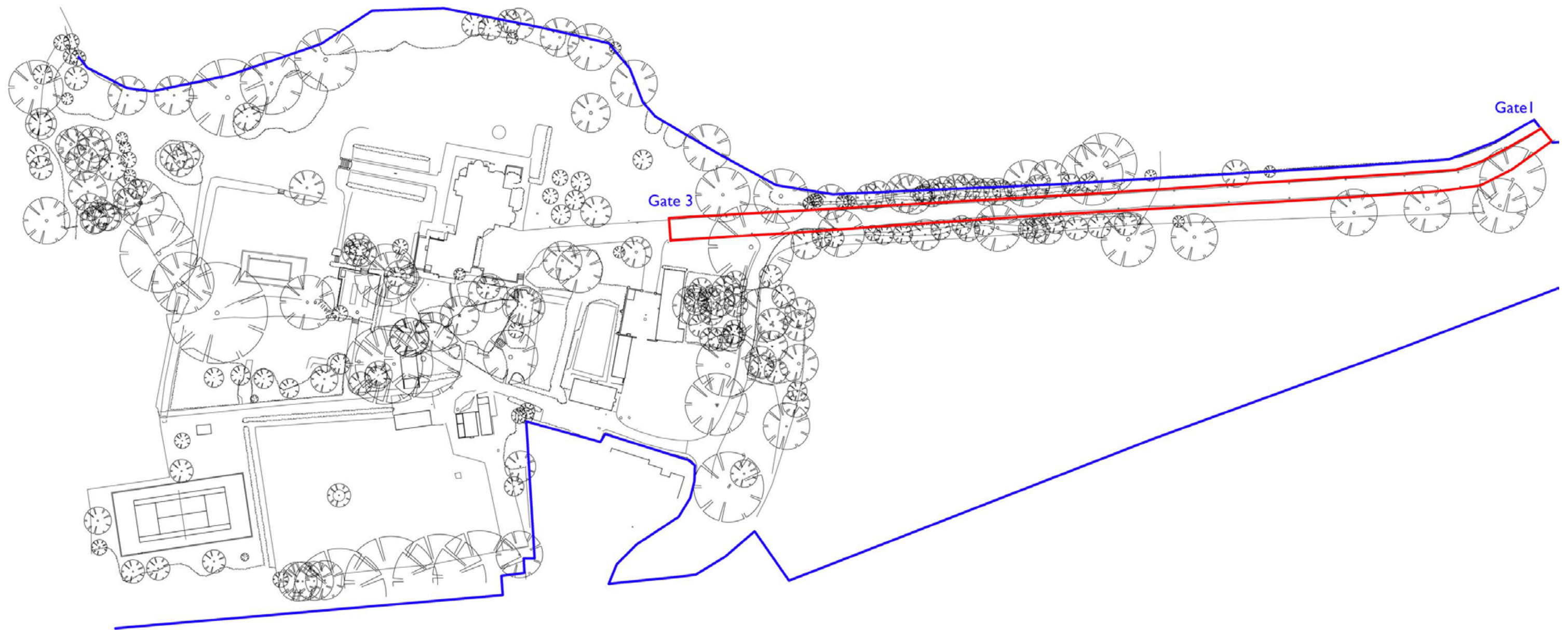
This gate does not form part of this application.



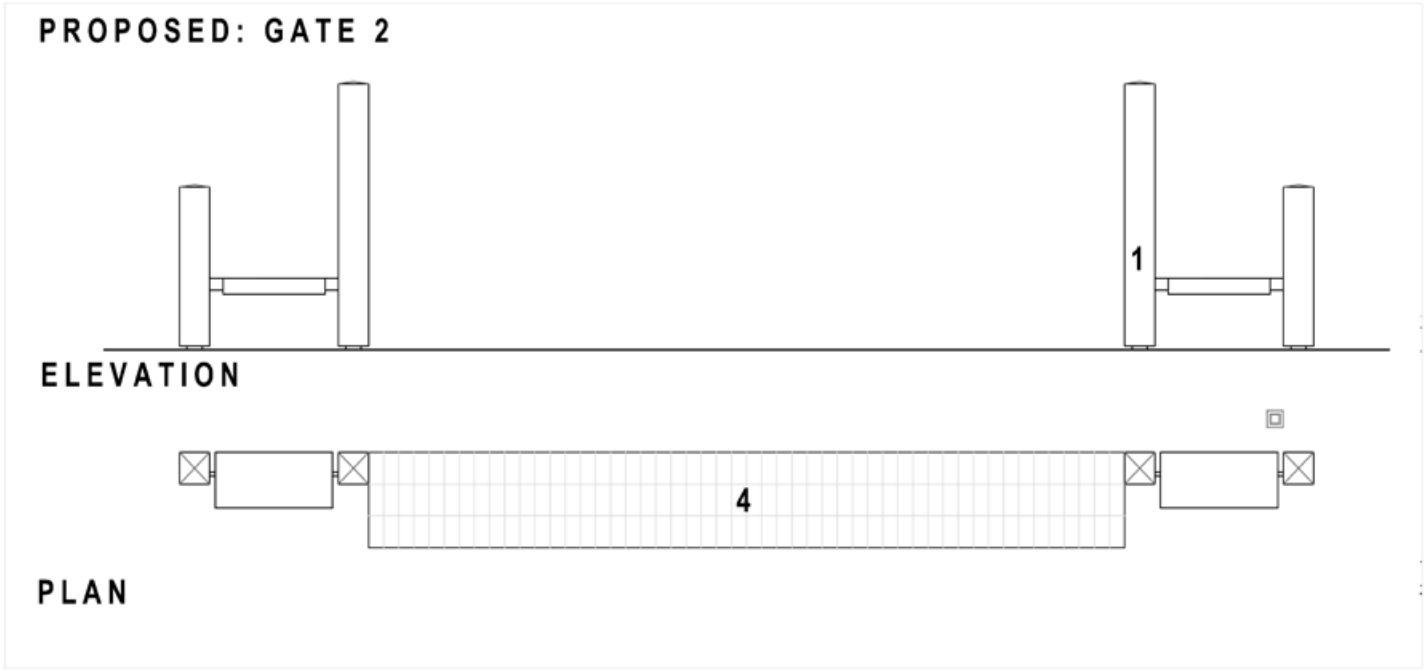
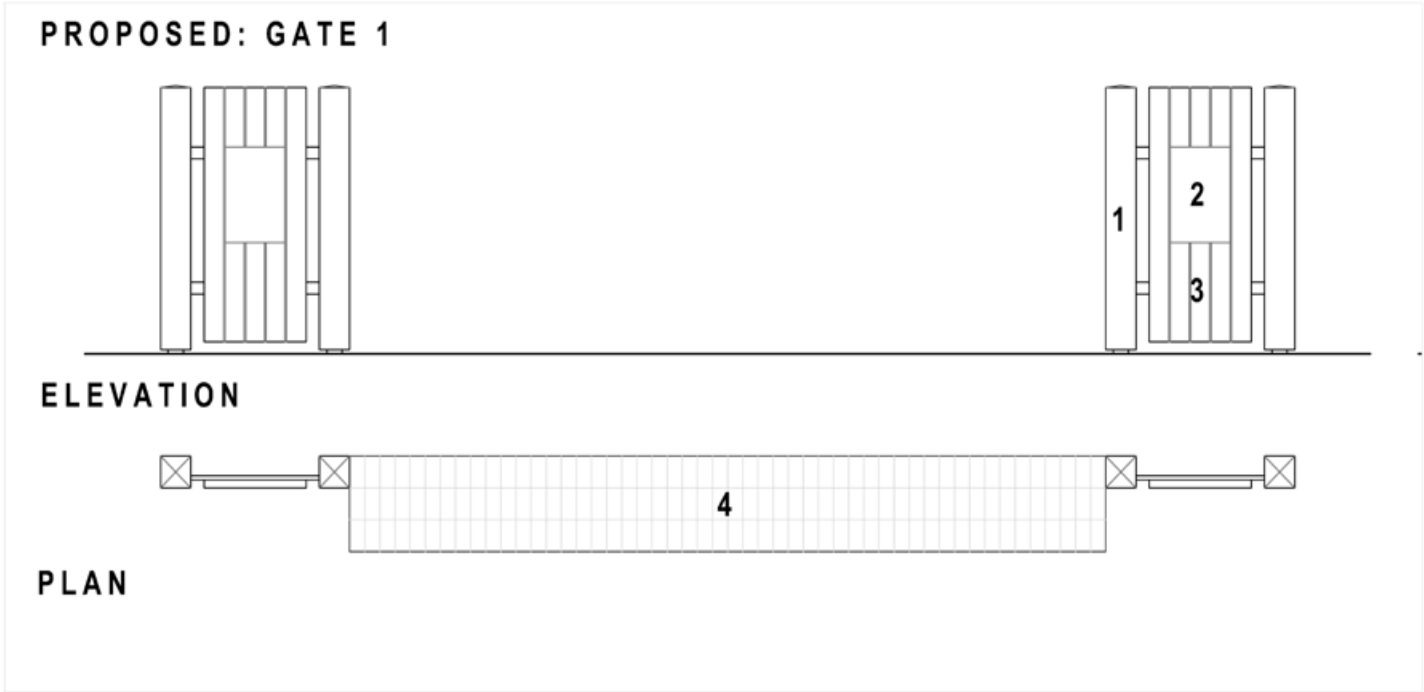
Gateway 1 location



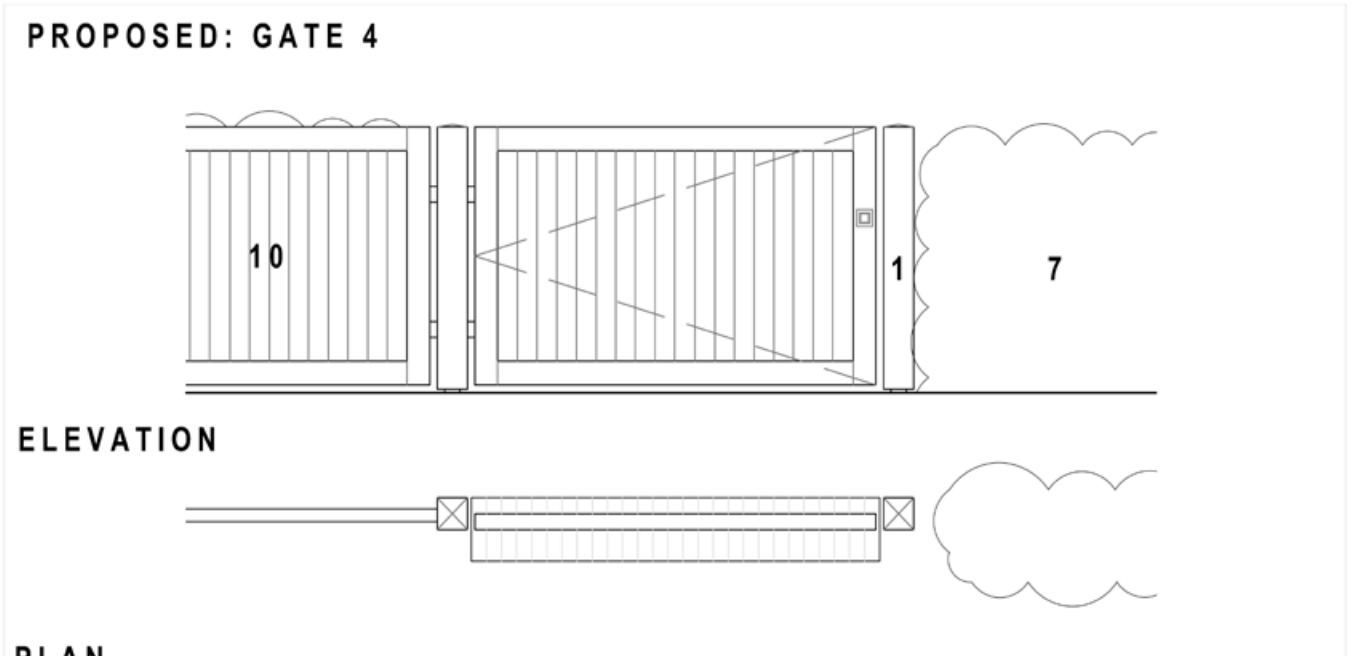
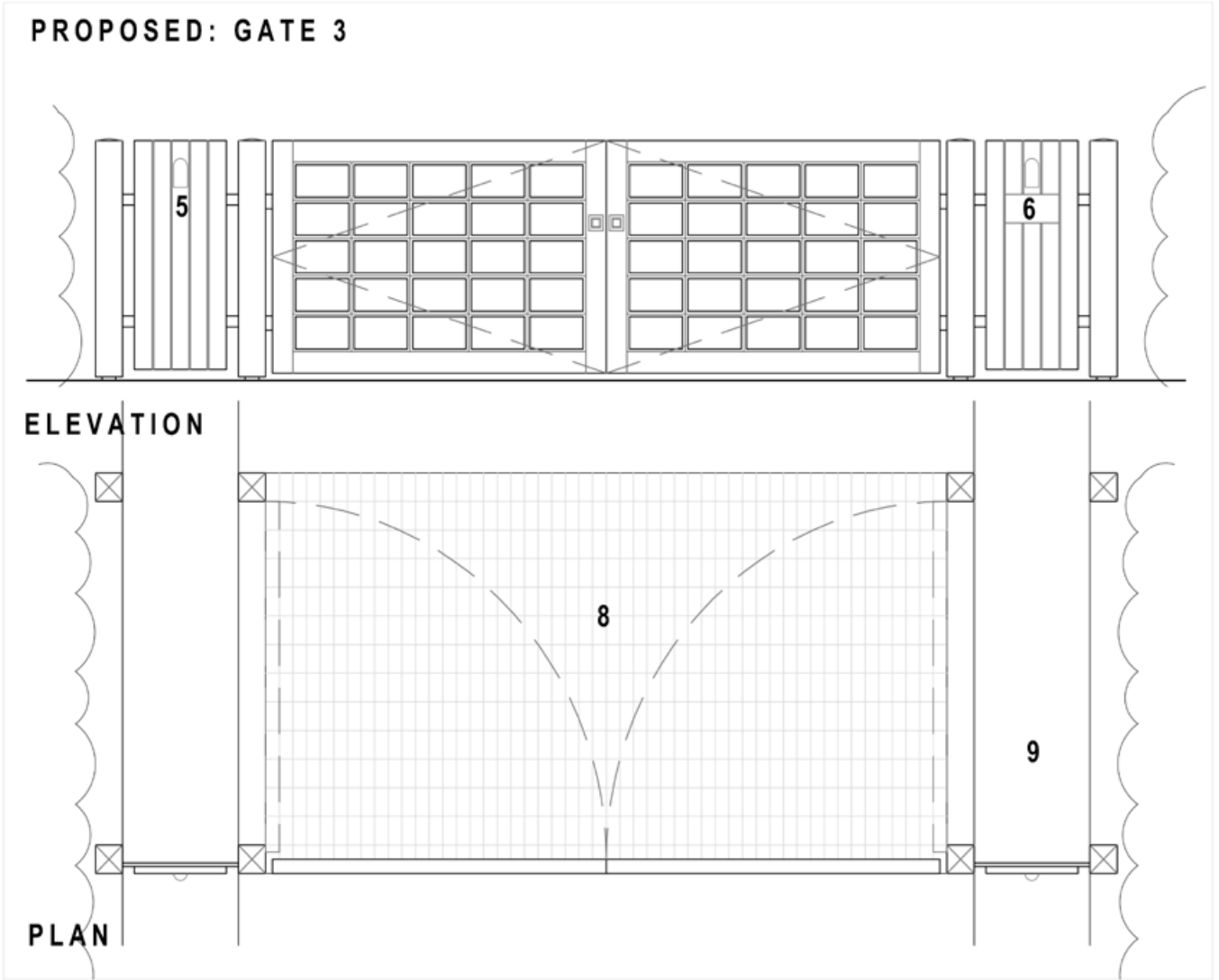
Gate 3 location



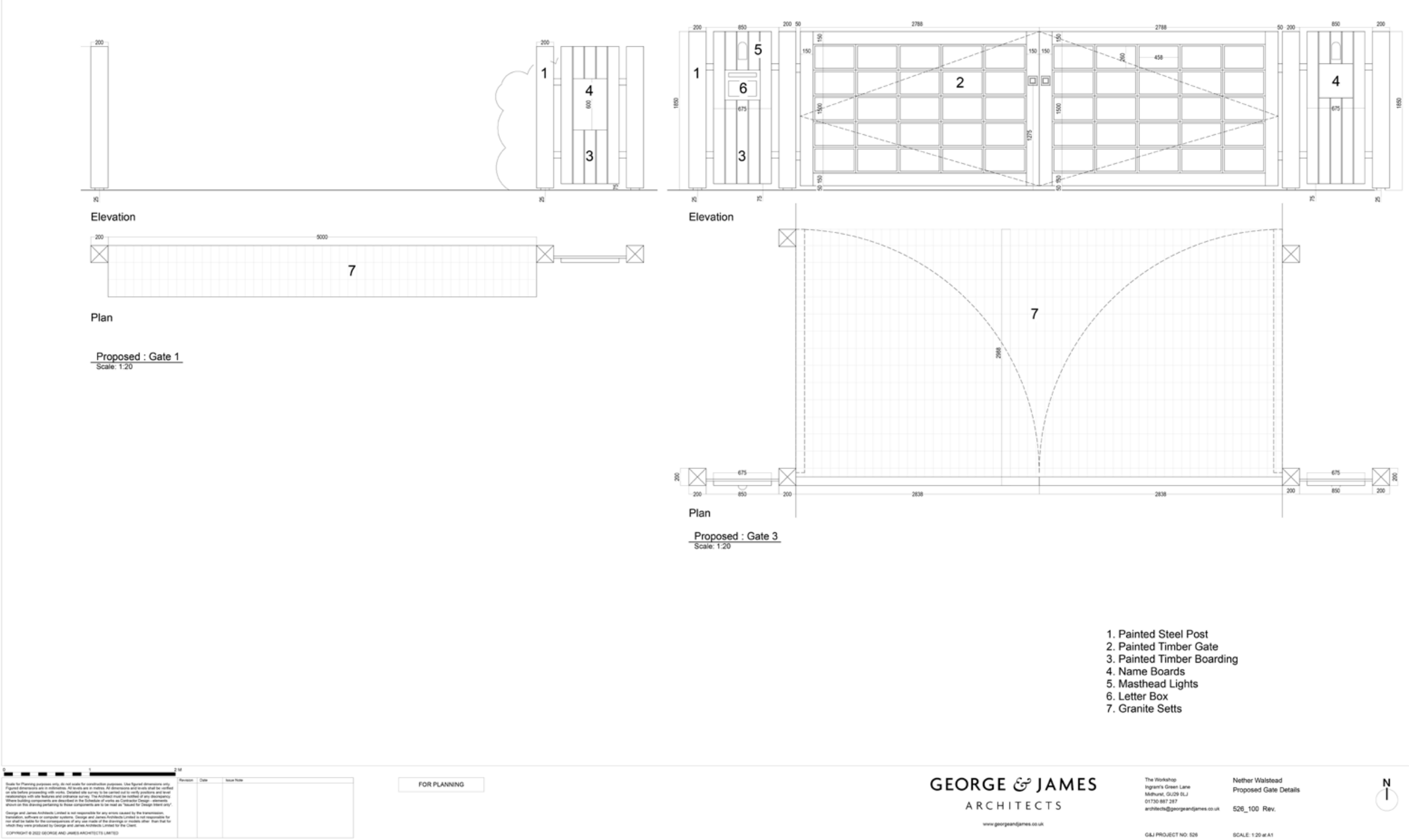
Proposed gate locations



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | 200 x 200 painted post | 10 | Panel fencing with posts |
| 2 | Name board | | |
| 3 | Painted boarding | | |
| 4 | 3 rows of granite setts | | |
| 5 | Masthead LED lamp | | |
| 6 | House name board | | |
| 7 | Hedge | | |
| 8 | 2.75m of granite setts | | |
| 9 | Gravel | | |



Proposed gate and gateway designs (as approved by DM/25/0007 and DM/25/0008)



Impact assessment

ASSESSMENT OF SETTING AND JUSTIFICATION

The proposals do not affect the fabric of Nether Walstead, being limited to the introduction of gateways within the driveway. The assessment of impact is therefore confined to the setting of the listed building and the way in which its significance is experienced in views and movement through the site.

Gateway 1 is located approximately 270m from the principal house and is not prominent in direct views from the building due to intervening distance and boundary vegetation. Gate 3 is about 45m from the house and is also set among trees and boundary vegetation. The works therefore introduce a limited change to the wider setting, experienced principally in the context of approach along the private driveway rather than in association with the principal elevations of the house.

The introduction of gateways reflects an incremental change to the organisation of access within a site that already comprises a principal house and associated residential properties served by a shared driveway. In this context, the gates provide defined points of entry and assist in the legibility of movement and ownership along the drive.

The as-built gates vary from the approved drawings in respect of minor dimensional details and the use of steel posts in place of timber. The differences are limited and, in visual terms, are not readily perceptible due to the consistent painted finish applied to all elements.

The approved documentation did not explicitly define the construction of gateposts beyond reference to timber gates within the application form and supporting statement. The use of steel has arisen from practical considerations including durability, structural performance and the integration of automated access mechanisms. The posts are simple, rectilinear elements which do not introduce additional visual complexity or alter the overall character of the gates.

It is also noted that metal boundary treatments, including estate railings and cast-iron detailing, exist within the wider estate context, providing precedent for the use of metal components within boundary features.

The private driveway serves multiple residential properties, which can lead to ambiguity in relation to access arrangements. The introduction of defined gateways assists in clarifying points of entry and reinforcing the distinction between individual property boundaries.

It is also recognised that boundary treatments in rural residential contexts may perform a secondary passive security function alongside their primary role in defining access and ownership. In this case, the gateways contribute to clearer spatial definition of the respective properties served by the driveway.

The proposals have been assessed in accordance with the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and relevant national and local planning policy. On this basis, the works are considered to result in no material harm to the significance of Nether Walstead, with any effect on setting being limited and localised.



Gate 3 as installed



Gate 3 as installed, viewed from the north



Iron/ steel estate railings and gateposts at Nether Walstead



Iron/ steel estate railings and gateposts at Nether Walstead

Design and Access Statement

This section assesses the proposals against the core components of a Design and Access Statement: use, amount, layout, scale, appearance, and access.

The proposals comprise the replacement of one existing gateway and the installation of new gates along the private driveway serving Nether Walstead and associated properties. The design approach responds to the rural context of the site and the historic character of the wider estate. The proposals are of high quality and are intended to conserve and enhance the long-term appreciation of the site’s historic setting.

USE

The site will continue to function as a principal dwelling with associated residential units served by a shared private driveway. The proposed gates do not alter the established use of the site but assist in managing and defining points of access within the existing residential arrangement.

They also help to clarify the transition between publicly accessible routes (including the public right of way) and privately managed residential areas, reflecting the existing pattern of movement across the site.

AMOUNT

There is no change to the quantum of built development or habitable accommodation. The proposals relate solely to boundary treatments and access infrastructure.

LAYOUT

The siting of the gates follows the established alignment and hierarchy of the existing driveway network, which is shaped by historic land division, the public right of way, and existing mature landscape features.

The principal gateway marks the main entrance to Nether Walstead and is positioned beyond the internal fork serving the associated cottages. This arrangement reflects the historic relationship between the principal house and former ancillary buildings, now in separate residential use but still accessed via the shared route.

Overall, the layout maintains the established pattern of movement and spatial hierarchy across the site and does not alter the fundamental relationships between the former estate components.

SCALE

The scale of the gates is modest and appropriate to their rural context and the status of Nether Walstead as a former country house. Each gate is proportioned to its specific functional role and location along the driveway, ensuring consistency with the character of the site.

APPEARANCE

The gates are simple in form, reflecting traditional rural gate typologies. They are constructed from painted timber with steel posts introduced for structural performance and durability.

All visible elements are finished in a consistent paint system, resulting in a uniform

appearance with no discernible distinction between timber and steel components. The use of steel posts is not apparent in visual terms and relates solely to structural performance rather than appearance.

Design details, including gate proportions and signage, are intentionally restrained to ensure the gates sit comfortably within their rural setting. The principal entrance includes a name board and limited ancillary features designed to provide wayfinding clarity without visual prominence.

ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to the site and associated properties remain unchanged. The public right of way is unaffected by the proposals.

The introduction of name boards and defined gateways provides clearer interpretation of access arrangements within the shared driveway, assisting visitors and service users in understanding property boundaries and points of entry.

Overall, the proposals retain the existing access structure while improving clarity and legibility within the site.



Design precedent



Design precedent



Design precedent

Planning Statement

PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSE

A pre-application enquiry (DM/26/0180) was submitted in January 2026 in respect of the installation of three gateways (Gateways 1–3) along the private driveway serving Nether Walstead and associated properties. A written response was received in March 2026, following a site visit and consultation with both the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer.

The Conservation Officer raised objections to all three gateways on the basis of their design, perceived materiality and visual impact within the rural setting. Particular concern was expressed regarding the use of metal framing and posts, which were considered to introduce an inappropriate, more contemporary character that was not sympathetic to the vernacular rural context of Nether Walstead and its associated ancillary buildings. The response also identified harm to the setting of the listed building through change to the character of the approach along the driveway, including where this is experienced in proximity to the public footpath. The Conservation Officer concluded that the proposals would result in less than substantial harm (mid-range) to the significance of the designated heritage asset and would be contrary to District Plan Policy DP34, advising that any formal submission should be supported by a clear and robust heritage assessment.

The Planning Officer’s response noted that the installed works did not accord with the approved drawings and supporting documentation under applications DM/25/0007 and DM/25/0008, the Planning Officer indicated that Gateways 1 and 3 were, on balance, capable of support. This view took into account their siting, visibility, and the wider context of the shared driveway serving multiple residential properties. The Planning Officer’s comments therefore distinguish between those elements capable of being considered acceptable and Gate 2, which falls outside this submission.

The pre-application response therefore identified the need for a clear assessment of the material differences between the approved and as-built scheme, and for a proportionate heritage justification addressing setting, design approach and policy compliance. This submission responds directly to that advice in respect of Gateways 1 and 3.

PLANNING AND HERITAGE JUSTIFICATION

The proposals relate solely to boundary treatments and do not affect the fabric of Nether Walstead or any curtilage-listed structures. The assessment of impact is therefore confined to the effect on the setting of the listed building and the manner in which its significance is experienced.

The works have been assessed in accordance with the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, relevant development plan policy including DP34, and national policy within the National Planning Policy Framework relating to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including the balancing exercise for less than substantial harm.

In this context, Gateways 1 and 3 are modest, discrete interventions within a long-established private driveway serving multiple residential properties and intersected by a public right of way. Their scale, siting and consistent painted finish ensure they

read as subordinate elements within the wider landscape and built context of the site.

Relationship to the approved scheme

The approved scheme (DM/25/0007 and DM/25/0008) proposed traditionally crafted timber gates and associated posts. The as-built condition introduces steel posts in place of timber, with all visible elements finished in a consistent painted treatment.

This represents a limited material variation rather than a fundamental design change. In visual terms, the uniform painted finish results in no discernible distinction between timber and steel elements, and the overall design intention of simple, traditionally derived rural gateways remains intact.

The use of steel is driven by practical considerations relating to structural performance, durability and the integration of services associated with automated access control. The posts remain simple, rectilinear elements and do not introduce additional visual complexity or ornamental detail.

Visual and setting effects

Gateway 1 is located approximately 270m from the principal house and there is no intervisibility. It is experienced solely in the context of access to the driveway rather than in association with the dwelling or its immediate curtilage.

Gateway 3 is located approximately 45m from the house, but views are filtered and partially contained by intervening trees and boundary vegetation. It is not prominent in views from the dwelling and is similarly experienced as part of the approach rather than as a feature in its own right.

Both gates are appropriately scaled and read as part of a wider system of access management along the private drive rather than as isolated architectural interventions. The introduction of defined gateways results in a limited change to the experience of movement through the site, but this is considered appropriate to a former rural farmhouse that was later adapted into a country house, and does not adversely impact its relationship with its wider historic landscape.

Heritage balance

Having regard to the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework, any harm arising from the proposals is considered to be, at most, less than substantial and at the lower end of that scale.

This reflects the limited physical intervention, the modest and recessive visual presence of the gates within the wider site, and the largely unchanged experience of the listed building’s setting.

This limited level of harm is balanced against the functional benefits of the proposals, including improved definition of access points within a shared driveway serving multiple dwellings and clearer legibility of boundaries.

It is also noted that metal boundary treatments, including estate railings and gates,

are present within the wider estate context, providing an established precedent for the use of metal components within boundary treatments in this setting.

Functional context

The private driveway serves several residential properties, which can lead to ambiguity for visitors and service users in relation to access arrangements. The introduction of defined gates assists in clarifying points of entry and reinforcing the distinction between private residential boundaries.

It is also recognised that boundary treatments in rural residential contexts can perform a secondary passive security function alongside their primary role in defining access and ownership. In this instance, the gateways contribute to clearer spatial definition of the respective holdings served by the driveway.

Conclusion

The pre-application process identified concerns regarding design and materiality, whilst also indicating that Gateways 1 and 3 were capable of support in principle. The proposals are considered to preserve the significance and setting of Nether Walstead. Any effect on heritage significance is limited and falls at the lower end of less than substantial harm. When weighed against the functional benefits of the scheme, the proposals are considered acceptable in planning and heritage terms.

STATUTORY PROTECTION

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes the statutory duty to give special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest.

Section 66(1) requires that, when determining applications affecting a listed building or its setting, special regard is had to the desirability of preserving that asset and its setting.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) is a material consideration in the determination of this application. Paragraphs 207–214 are of particular relevance.

The NPPF requires that heritage significance is properly understood and that great weight is given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Where less than substantial harm is identified, this must be weighed against public benefits in accordance with paragraph 214.

MID-SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN 2021 - 2039

The proposals are considered against Policies DP26 (Character and Design) and DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets).

Policy DP26 requires development to respect local character and context. The proposals comprise modest boundary treatments within an existing residential

Planning Statement

driveway and are not considered to harm the character or appearance of the area.

Policy DP34 requires development affecting listed buildings and their settings to conserve significance through appropriate siting, scale, form and materials. The proposals do not affect the fabric of Nether Walstead and are considered to preserve its setting, with any impact arising from change to access infrastructure assessed as limited and appropriately controlled.

LINDFIELD & LINDFIELD RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2014-2031

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the rural and historic character of the area and to ensure that development within or near heritage assets is sympathetic in scale, form and materiality. In particular, it seeks to ensure that listed buildings and their settings are conserved and that new development respects established rural character.

The proposals are consistent with these aims in that they are modest in scale, relate solely to existing access arrangements, and do not affect the fabric or core significance of the listed building.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The proposals are considered to accord with the relevant objectives of national and local planning policy. They are confined to boundary treatments and do not involve any works to the fabric of Nether Walstead or any curtilage-listed structures. Existing access arrangements remain unchanged and the function and hierarchy of the site are not altered.

The design approach is simple and rural in character, drawing on traditional gateway forms and employing a limited palette of materials finished in a consistent painted treatment. The gates are modest in scale and read as recessive elements within the wider rural context.

Overall, the proposals preserve the setting of the listed building, with change limited to the introduction of clearly defined access points along an existing private driveway.

Conclusion

The proposals are considered to accord with the statutory requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.

They preserve the significance and setting of Nether Walstead. Any resulting impact is limited and falls at the lower end of less than substantial harm. When balanced against the limited functional benefits associated with access definition and management, the proposals are considered acceptable in planning and heritage terms.

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