

F/YR12/0356/F

10 May 2012

Applicant : Mr T Smith

Agent : Miss Alexandra Grainger
Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd

Barn South of 2 Newton Hall Barns, Hogens Lane, Newton, Cambridgeshire

Conversion of barn to form a 4-bed dwelling with attached double garage

This application is before the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Humphrey to allow the barn conversion to be considered along with those already completed, to see how it will impact on the area and the development as a whole.

This application is a 'Minor'

Site area: 0.08ha

1. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is located on the western side of Hogens Lane, approximately 100m from High Road. The current use of the barn is as storage for the residential occupiers of the adjoining mobile home. Within the wider area there are two barn conversions; one completed and the other is under construction. The site is bounded by hedging on the eastern boundary and post and rail fencing to the west and south. The vicinity is rural in character.

2. **HISTORY**

F/YR10/0183/F – Conversion of barn to form 5-bd dwelling – Granted 11.05.2010

F/YR06/1336/F – Conversion of barn to form 2 x 3-bed dwellings – Granted 03.01.2007

F/YR05/1001/F – Conversion of barn to form 3-bed dwelling – Granted 26.10.2005

3. **CONSULTATIONS**

Parish/Town Council:

See this as the completion of the site of the Newton Hall barns and are content with the plans.

FDC Conservation:

The barn does not possess any heritage merit, the conversion of this barn would not lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting, nor is it likely to be the starting point for good design.

FDC Scientific Officer:

An unsuspected land contamination condition is required

CCC Highways:

There is no justification for retaining any access to the approved western barn conversion adjacent the existing access to be used in association with this proposal. Requests conditions relating to access construction and position of gates. Request amended plans relating to western access details.

EDF Energy:

Not received at time of report

National Grid:

Not received at time of report

Neighbours:

1 letter of support received, comments regarding;

- the successful conversion of the other barns
- the proposal would 'complete the picture'
- the proposal would encourage more people to the village

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

FDWLP Policy

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|-----|---|
| E8 | - Proposals for new development should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- allow for protection of site features;- have regard to amenities of adjoining properties;- provide adequate access. |
| H3 | - To resist housing development outside DABs. To permit housing development inside DABs provided it does not conflict with other plan policies. |
| H16 | - The conversion of rural buildings to residential use outside DABs will only be permitted where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the building is of architectural or historic merit- the building forms an important feature in the landscape and ought to be retained- the building is constructed of traditional materials and forms part of an existing group of buildings. Where there is residential use, such conversions should respect the size and scale of the original building, require minimal alteration or adaption and not give rise to serious amenity or highway objections. |

Core Strategy (Draft Consultation – July 2011)

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| CS1 | - Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside |
|-----|--|

	CS2	- Growth and Housing
	CS10	- Rural Areas Development Policy The re-use and conversion of rural buildings for residential use which are outside or not adjacent to the developed footprint of a settlement will be supported provided that all of the following are met:
		- the building is of significant architectural or historic merit and intrinsically worthy of retention in its rural setting
		- comprehensive evidence is provided to justify why the building can no longer be used for the purpose that it was originally built or last used, and that there is no demand for use of the building for employment purposes
		- the building is capable of conversion with minimal extension or alteration, including inappropriate new openings and additional features
		- the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without any significant rebuilding as demonstrated in a structural report to accompany any application
	CS14	- Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)		
	Paras 2 and 11	- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
	Para 14	- Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core planning principles	Para 17	- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.
Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	Para 55	- To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Para 109	- The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible.
Conserving and	Paras 128	The significance of non-designated heritage

enhancing the historic to 136 environment

assets should be taken into consideration when determining planning applications.

5. ASSESSMENT

Nature of Application

This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of a barn to form a 4-bed dwelling with attached double garage. The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Principle and policy implications
- Design and layout
- Other matters.

Principle and policy implications

The site is located beyond the established settlement of Newton.

The general thrust of current planning policy is to ensure that development is sustainable and that new housing is located where it can contribute to the vitality of rural settlements. Any departure from this requires special circumstances and, therefore, significant weight should be attached to the policies which set out such circumstances. Whilst a departure could be justified by the conversion of a rural building this would be dependent on whether the development meets with the specific criteria set out in policies of the Development Plan.

Policy H19 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan (Local Plan) states that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will normally only approve the conversion of rural buildings where the development would ensure the retention of a listed building, or a building of architectural interest. The building should be an important feature in the landscape or form part of an existing group of buildings and should be constructed in traditional materials and the conversion should involve minimal alterations or adaption. This policy is supported by CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy where it stipulates that rural building conversions must involve buildings which are intrinsically worthy of retention, provide justification as to why the building can no longer be used for its original purpose, involve buildings which are capable of conversion with minimal extension or alteration and is structurally sound. This document is still emerging and only limited weight can be attached to the policy at this time. However, it is important to note the direction of travel of the emerging Core Strategy and its conformity to the policies of the current Local Plan and the NPPF in terms of the approach to rural housing.

Design and layout

The proposal involves the conversion of a barn for residential use. The details of the proposal raise concern due to the amount of works involved in the conversion and the position of the building in relation to other buildings on the site.

The existing building is a modest sized building measuring 18.5m x 7.8m x 5.2m. The building has little in the way of detailing and is constructed from common brick and an asbestos roof. The only distinctive features within the building are the series of doors on the north elevation which, given their size, amount and regular positioning, are not considered to be of aesthetic merit. It is likely that the barn dates from the early twentieth century which, in view of the historic requirement for farm buildings, is considered to be a relatively modern building.

In view of the above, it is considered that the barn does not satisfy part i) of policy H19 of the Local Plan or B) point 1 of Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy as it is not considered to be of architectural or historic merit.

The works involved in the conversion include raising the roof of the building, to approximately 7m and including an extension to accommodate a garage, lobby and study measuring approximately 12.5m. In addition the previously mentioned openings on the north elevation have been blocked up and replaced with a series of fully glazed doors, however, these have been positioned in such a manner that they do not reflect the siting or arrangement of the original doors. The southern elevation, which was originally blank, has been adorned with a series of patio doors and two other openings. Due to the extent of changes involved in this proposal the building is no longer recognisable as the modest storage unit it once was. As such it is contended that the proposal is tantamount to the creation of a new building and cannot be treated as a conversion. This is contrary to sustainability principles and goes against the spirit of the rural housing policies set out in the Local Plan and the emerging Core Strategy.

The neighbouring building at Newton Hall Barn has recently been placed on the Buildings of Local Interest list. Whilst it is acknowledged that this list has yet to be adopted, it is a good indication of the importance of this historic asset. It is considered that the nature of this development, being unsympathetic to the original building, would detract from setting of Newton Hall Barn to the detriment of this heritage asset. This is contrary to the principles of section 12 of the NPPF.

Whilst it is noted that the Design and Access Statement stipulates that the barn forms part of an existing group of buildings and it is acknowledged that there are other buildings within the vicinity, it is considered that the barn does not contribute to the 'group' of buildings or the setting of the farmstead due to its position in relation to other buildings and its age.

Notwithstanding the building at 2 Newton Hall Barns, to the north of the application site, the existing building is a much later addition to the original farm setting which dates back to the early nineteenth century. The traditional farmstead would have been rectangular in shape and would have created a sense of enclosure. It is important to bear in mind that creating an enclosure is intrinsic to a courtyard development. Given the position and distance of the barn, to the south of the neighbouring buildings, the building does not add to or respect the intrinsic qualities of a traditional farmstead as it does not contribute to an enclosure nor does it front a central core. It is, therefore, considered that the building does not form part of an existing group of buildings where the retention of the building would be preferred to its loss. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to rural building conversion policies.

Policy CS10 of the emerging Core Strategy which can now be afforded weight, albeit limited, and sets out the direction of travel for planning policies within the District stipulates that justification as to why the building can no longer be used for the purpose that it was originally built or last used, and there is no demand for the use of the building for employment purposes, should be submitted in support of such a proposal. Appropriate justification has not been included within the application.

A biodiversity checklist has been submitted as part of the application, however, it demonstrates that no surveys have been carried out on the building. This is of concern as it is widely accepted that farm buildings such as this are often habitats

for protected species. A letter has been submitted from an Ecologist saying that the building was surveyed in 2010, however, it states that a definite statement regarding the potential bat use of the building could not be made. The situation, therefore, cannot be considered as having due regard to biodiversity issues, contrary to section 11 of the NPPF.

The proposal includes sufficient parking and private amenity space, however, CCC Highways have raised concerns regarding the access as it adjoins the access to the north with no reason or justification for doing so. The proximity of the access points could lead to confusion of users of the site and, whilst this is not reason enough for refusal, it further demonstrates that the proposal is unacceptable.

Other matters

The comments received in relation to the proposal 'completing the picture' have been noted and have already been addressed within the body of the report. The comments relating to attracting people to the village have also been noted and whilst it is acknowledged that a new dwelling would attract residents, this should be weighed against the suitability of the site for residential purposes on sustainability grounds. It has already been concluded in this report that the barn is not considered worthy of conversion or retention and, therefore, developing the site for residential purposes would essentially lead to the creation of a new dwelling beyond the village core. This is contrary to sustainability principles and goes against the spirit of the Local Plan, the emerging Core Strategy and the NPPF.

A recent appeal for a barn conversion in Fenland was dismissed due to scale of alterations proposed and the creation of a new dwelling within the open countryside. Given that the Inspector gave weight to the unsuitability of the site for residential purposes due to it being outside the settlement core, the location of the barn conversion site in terms of sustainability is case law. In view of this decision, it is considered that weight can be attached to the location of the application site which is beyond the village foundation and as such the proposal fails on sustainability grounds.

Conclusion

The barn is considered to be of no architectural or historic merit and due to its siting, does not form part of an existing, traditional group of buildings. Due regard has not been had to biodiversity and the extent of the unsympathetic works to the building which would not only fail to respect the character of the original building, they would also detract from the setting of the heritage asset at Newton Hall Barn. It is, therefore, recommended that planning permission is refused.

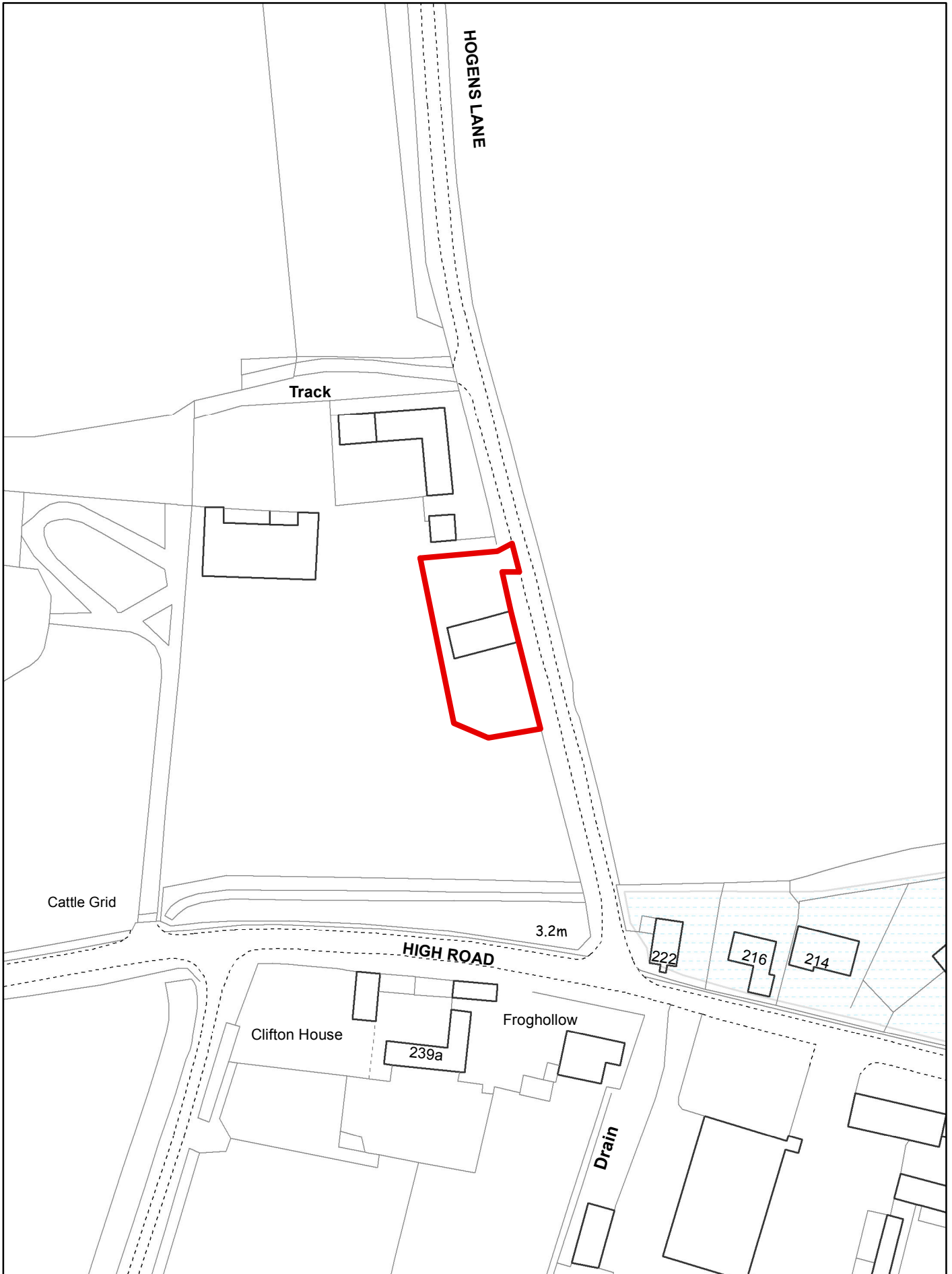
6. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

- 1. By virtue of the lack of architectural or historic merit and the failure to contribute to a traditional group of rural buildings, the barn is not worthy of conversion to residential use, contrary to Policy H19 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, Part B of CS10 of the Fenland Communities Development Plan and Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 2. The proposal does not address the potential for protected species and, therefore, fails to take into consideration biodiversity implications,**

contrary to Part 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3. The extensive scale and amount of works required to convert the barn fail to respect the character of the original building. The unsympathetic result of the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the neighbouring heritage asset at Newton Hall Barn. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policy H19 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, CS10 of the Fenland Communities Development Plan and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 4. The proposal is tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling with no justification and is beyond the village core. The application is, therefore, contrary to Policy H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 5. No evidence has been provided to justify why the building can no longer be used for the purpose that it was originally built or last used, and that there is no demand for the use of the building for employment purposes. The application, therefore, fails to comply with Policy CS10 of the Fenland Communities Development Plan.**



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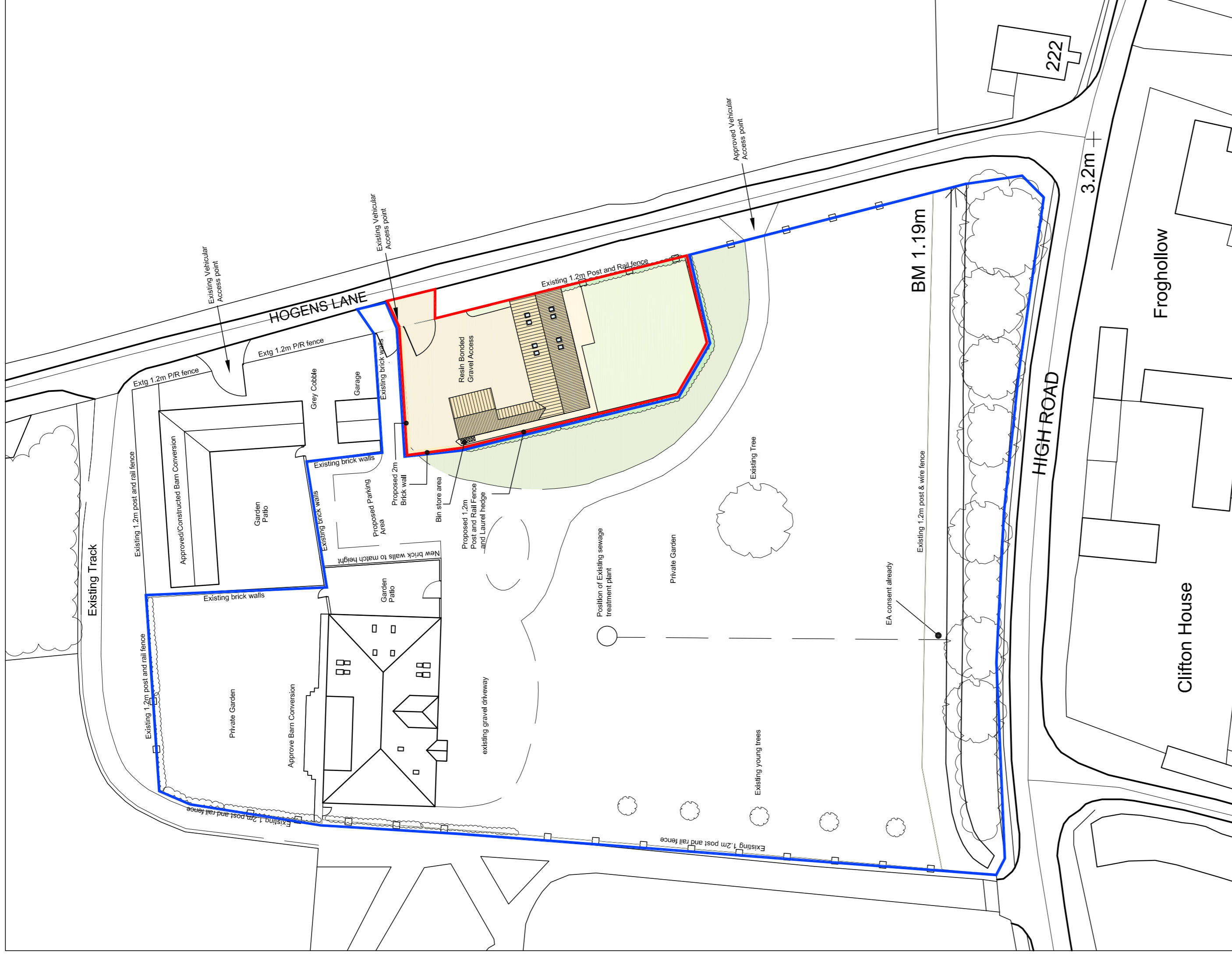
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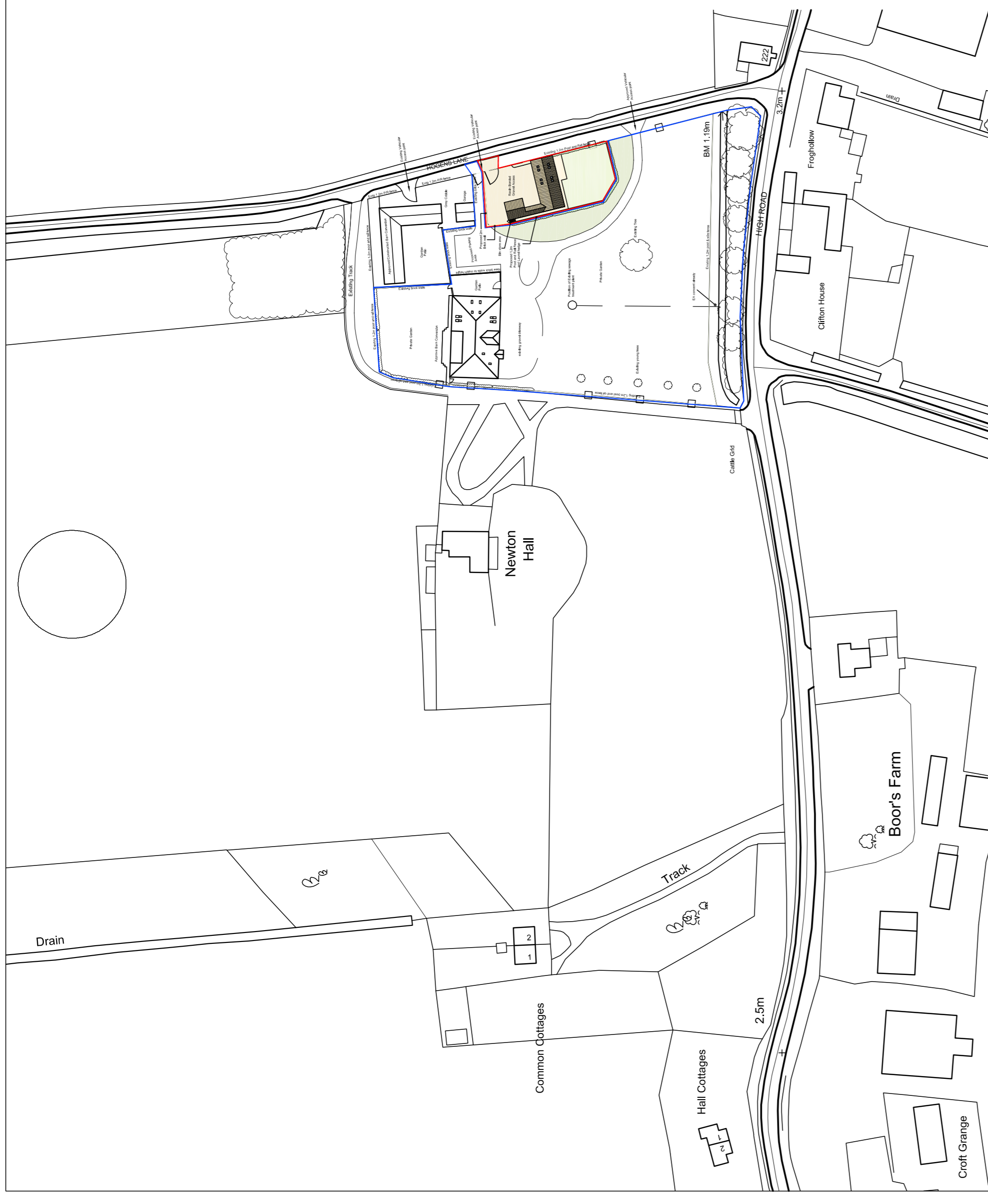
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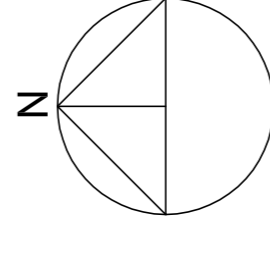
 Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council



Proposed Site Plan 1:500



Proposed Location Plan 1:1250



Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd.
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND BUILDING

PROJECT
PROPOSED BARN CONVERSION
HOGENS LANE
NEWTON

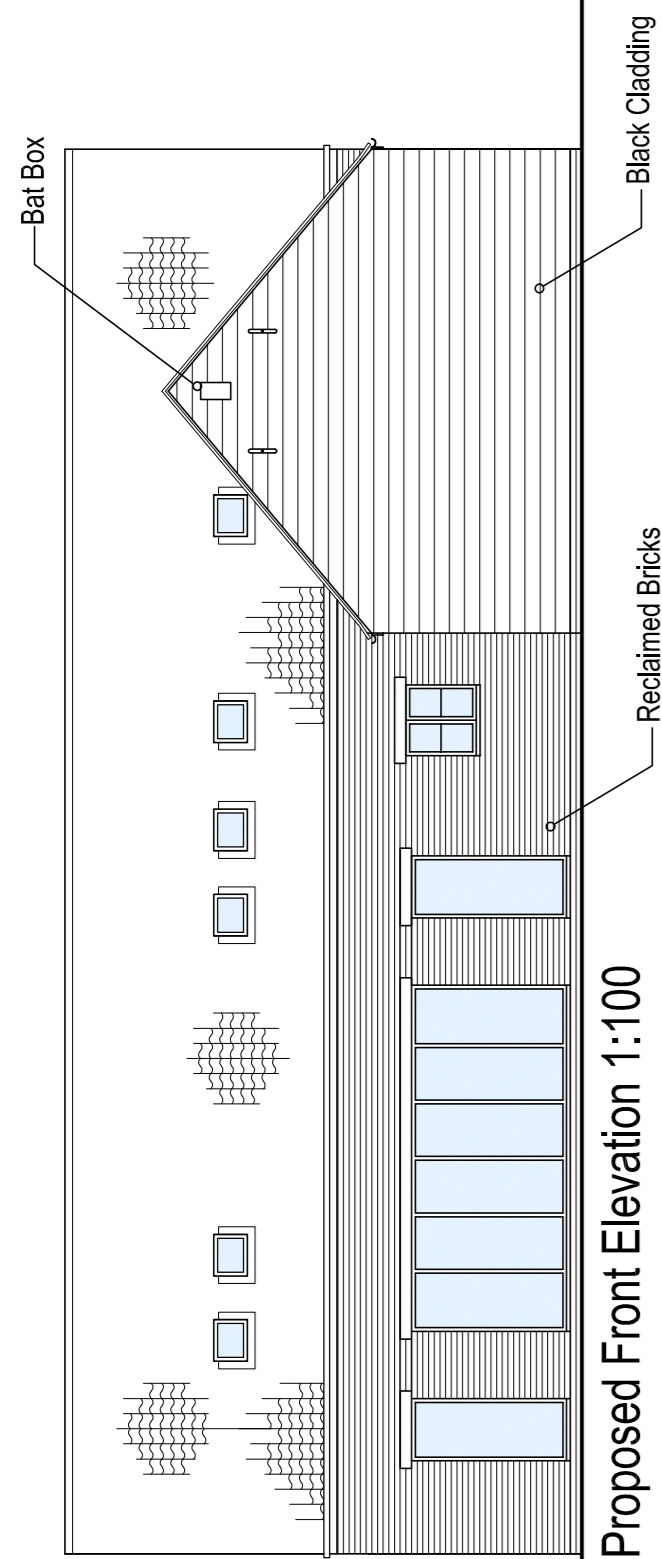
CLIENT

Mr & Mrs. Smith

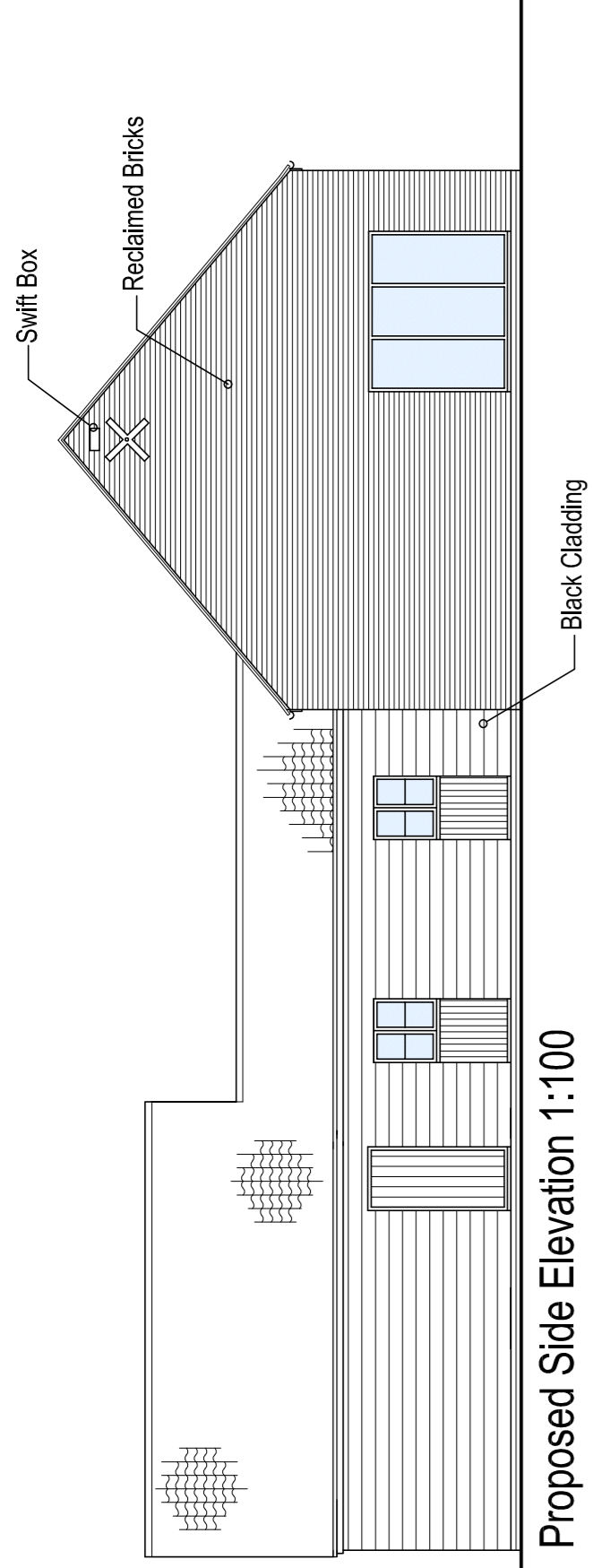
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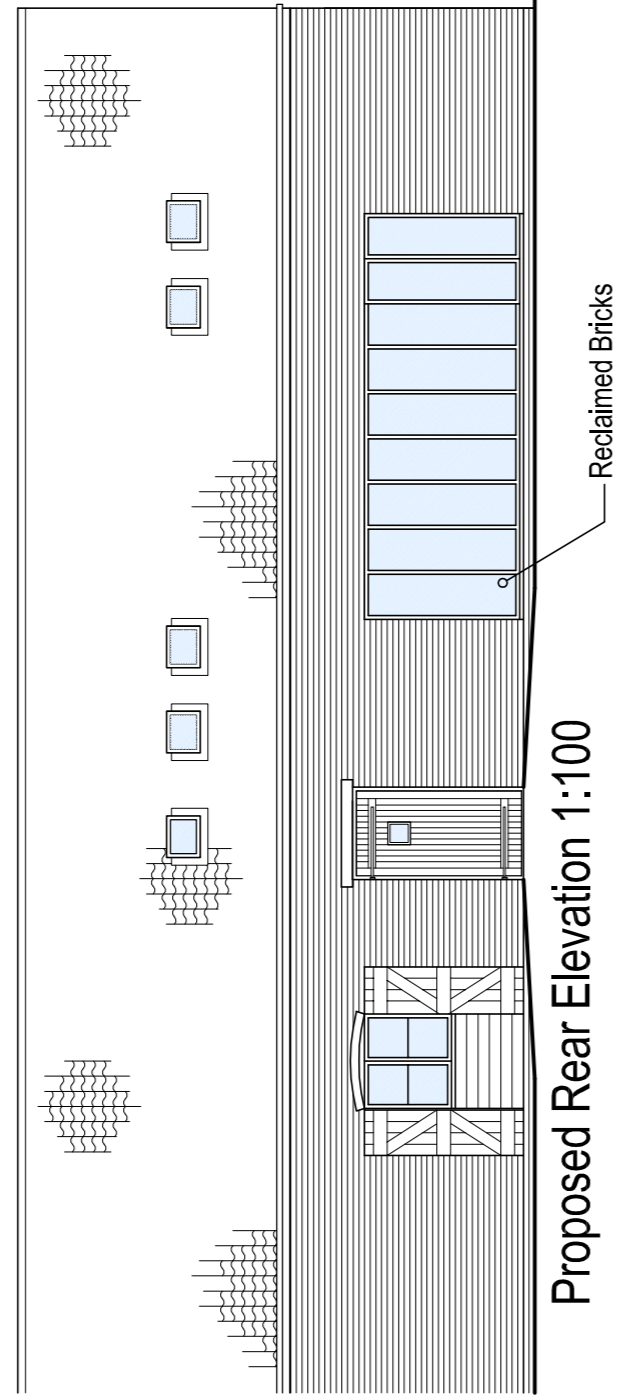




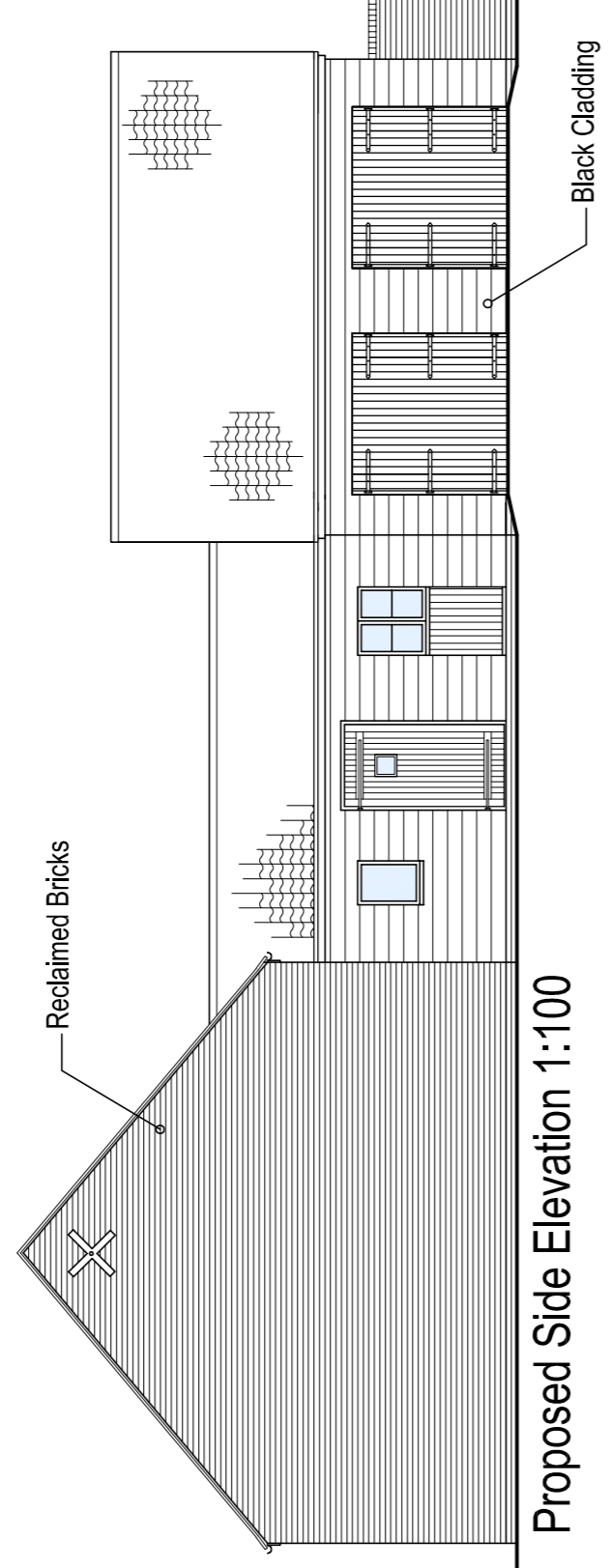
Proposed Front Elevation 1:100



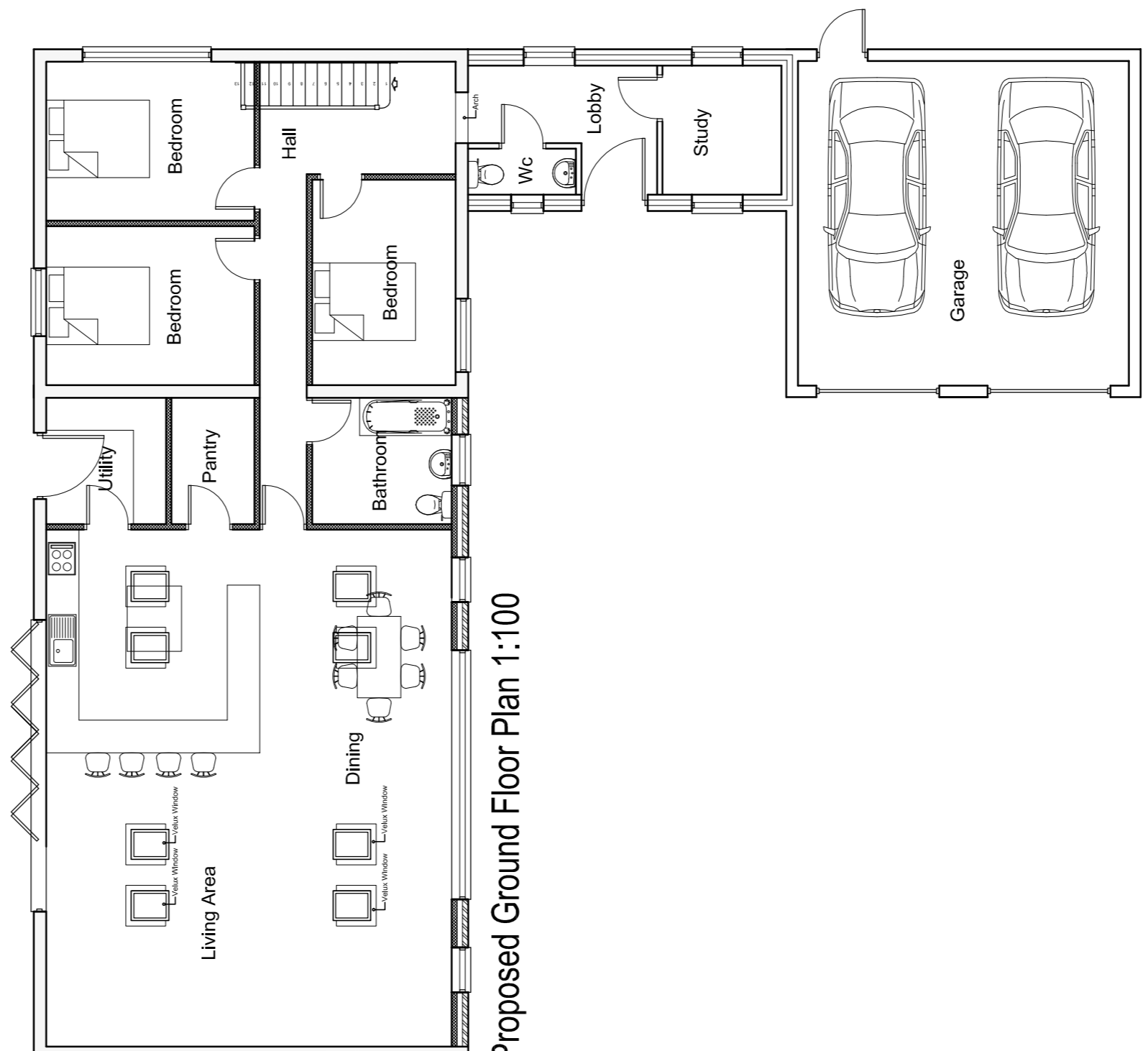
Proposed Side Elevation 1:100



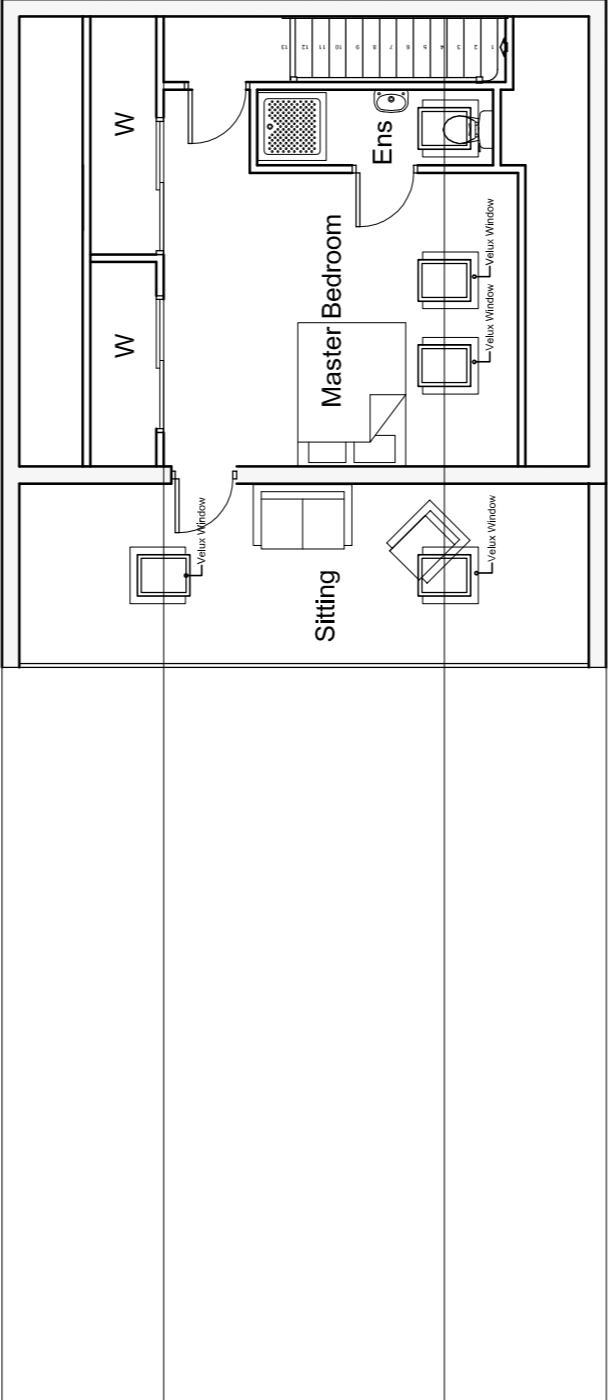
Proposed Rear Elevation 1:100



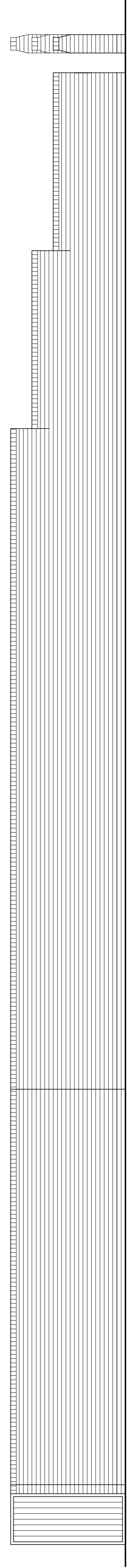
Proposed Side Elevation 1:100



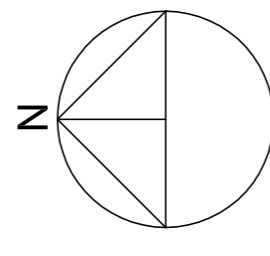
Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1:100



Proposed First Floor Plan 1:50



Proposed 2m Brick Wall 1:50



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PROPOSED BARN CONVERSION
HOGENS LANE
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