

Design & Access Statement

including Heritage and Planning Statements

Car Port, Workshop &
Storage Building
at Boughurst Farm

CPBF_Doc 001



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Executive Summary

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared by RJP Architects in support of a planning application at Boughurst Farm. The proposal comprises the demolition of an existing workshop and store building and its subsequent replacement with a new building for use as a workshop, store and parking; fulfilling both a functional and spatial brief while addressing site-wide parking requirements.

The document sets out and records the site context in section 1, before explaining the design proposals in detail in section 2, which describes how the proposal has acknowledged and responded to the specifics of the site. Heritage and planning matters are thoroughly considered in relation to the proposal and each appraised in the final sections, 3 and 4.

ISSUE

17.04.23 Issued for Planning.

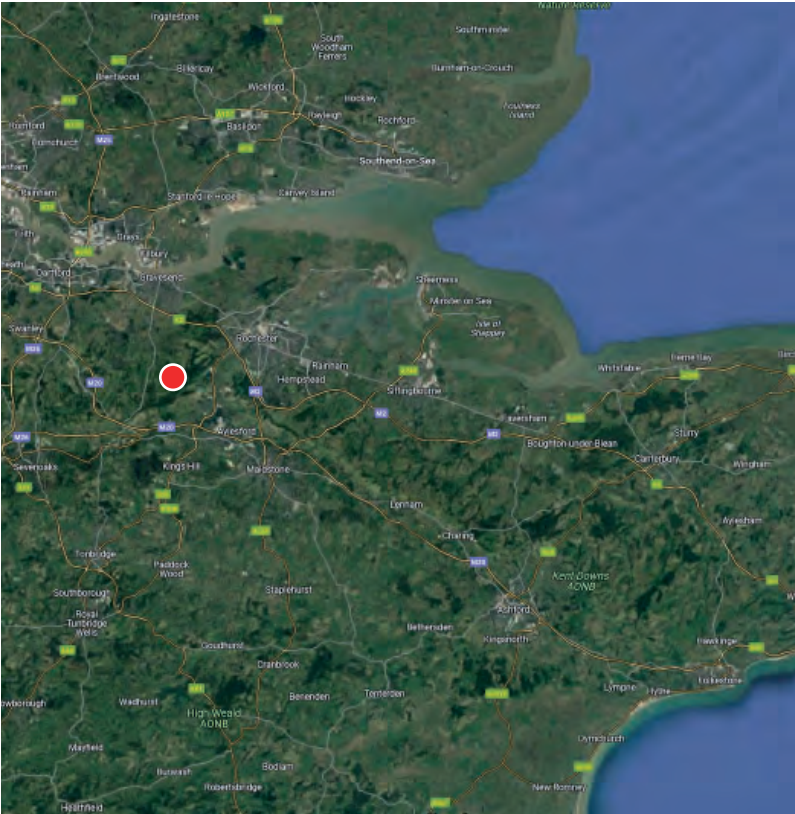
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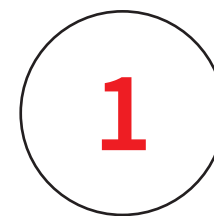
Site

LOCATION MAP



SITE ADDRESS

Boughurst Farm
Leywood Road
Harvel
Meopham
DA13 0UD



Project Context

1.1 The Site

The site is an historic farm property known as 'Boughurst Farm', in the West Kent Downs. It is located in Meopham, falling within the parish of Luddesdown and the jurisdiction of Gravesham Borough Council. The area is predominantly rural, characterised by a rich agricultural patchwork of fields and rolling valleys, with small hamlets and occasional farm settlements.

Albeit no longer operating as a farm itself, Boughurst Farm has substantial grounds, today approximately 4.4 acres, consisting of the main residence 'Boughurst Farm House', and a number of ancillary outbuildings.

There is a level change of approximately 4 metres across the site from west to east, illustrated by the 1 metre contours shown on the plan opposite. Further east of the site the land falls away more dramatically as shown.

The main property is a Wealden Hall House and is Grade II listed, dating from the 15th Century. While it was subject to later alterations and additions, several of its early features remain.

The key buildings are identified opposite and below:

Residence

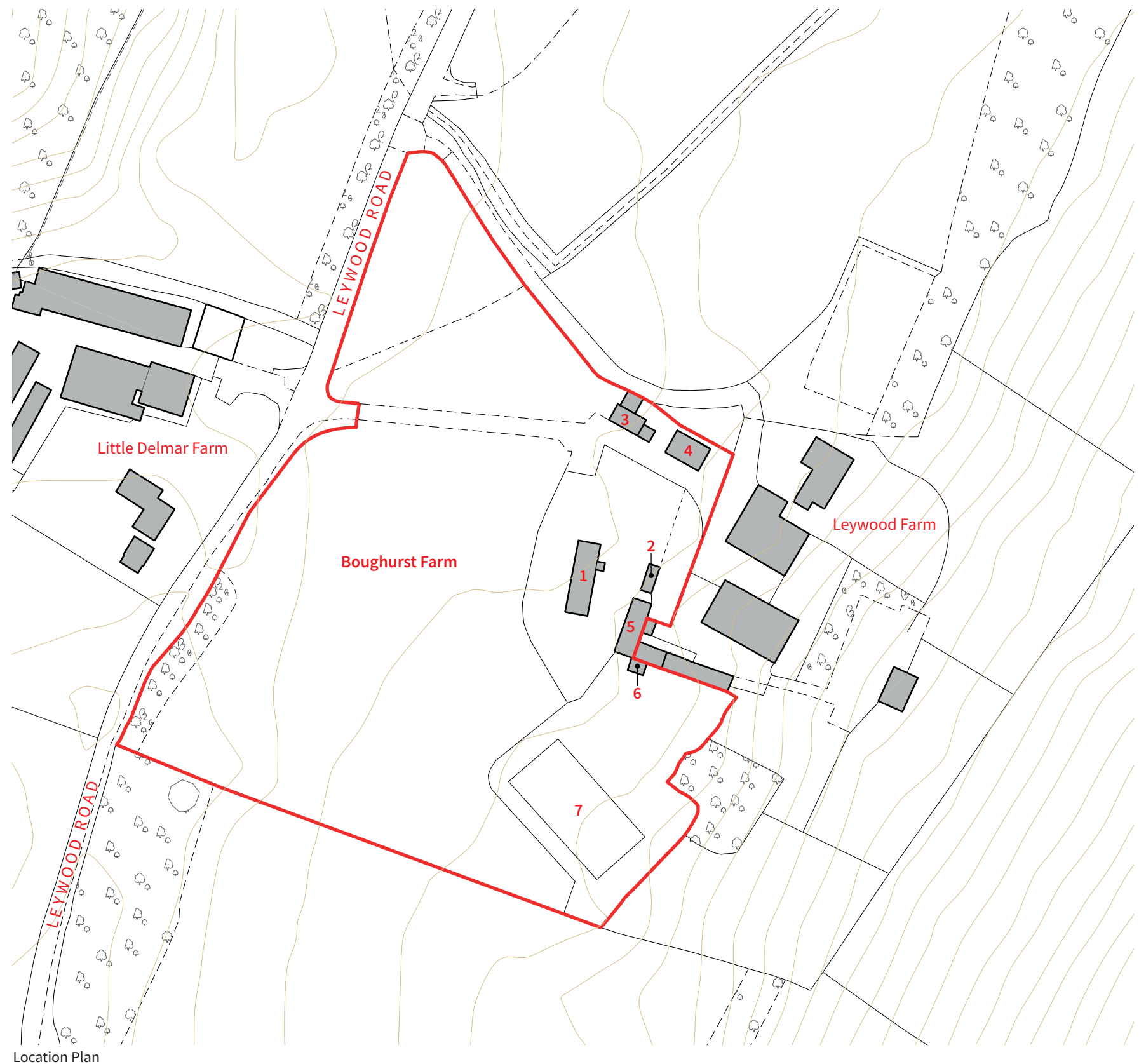
1. Boughurst Farm House

Outbuildings

2. Utility
3. Recreation room / parking below
4. Workshop / garden machinery store
5. Storage
6. Lean to - derelict
7. Tennis Court

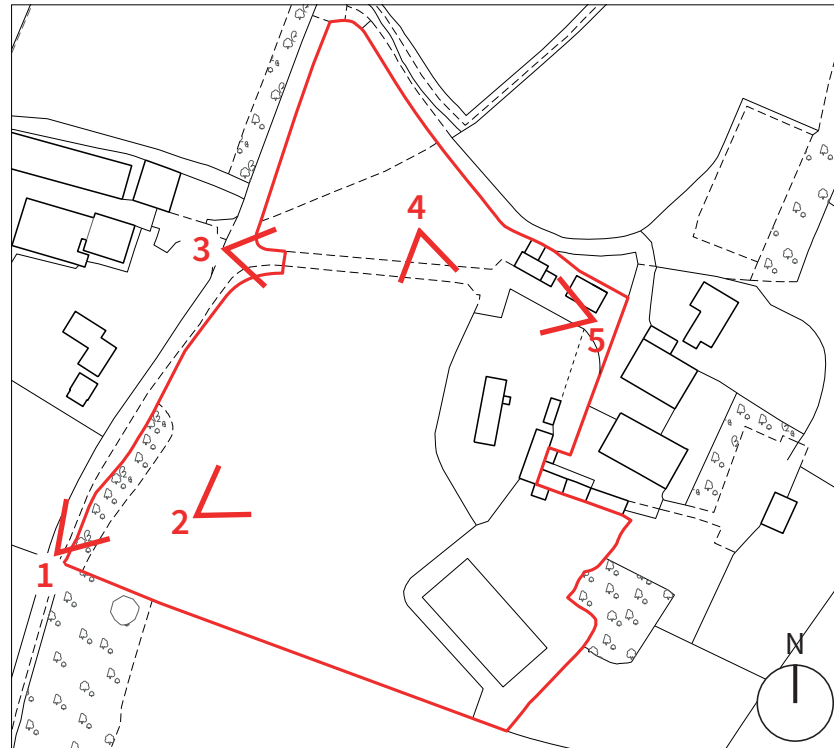
Site Boundary

0 50m



Location Plan

1.2 Site Photographs



Key Plan



1. View along Leywood Road travelling north (site to right).



2. View towards Boughurst Farm across front lawn.



3. View from site entrance accessed via Leywood Road.



4. View from driveway towards Boughurst Farm House.



5. View from end of driveway back towards site entrance.

1.3 Existing Buildings

Boughurst Farm lies between Little Delmar Farm to the west, and Leywood Farm to the east.

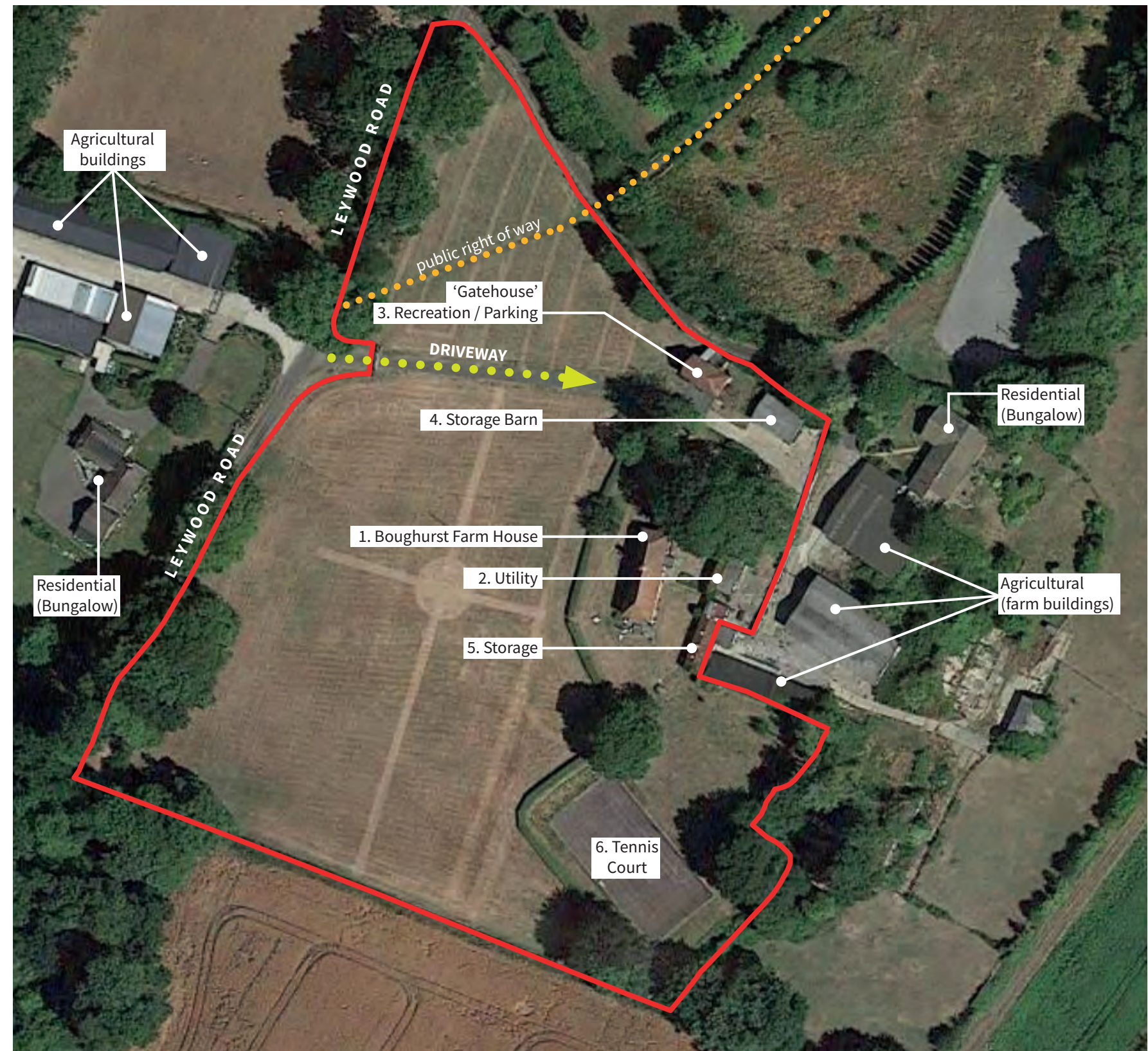
The main property is set far back from the road fronting a large lawn, once a hops field, with uninterrupted views across it. It is constructed on a north - south axis with most rooms benefitting from both morning and afternoon sun. The building is a brick and timber frame structure, with hanging tiles to the upper storey and traditional Kent clay roof tiles.

Numerous outbuildings lie to both the north and east of the house and are generally redundant farm buildings which have been informally repurposed for ancillary uses such as utility and storage spaces.

The northernmost building (3), informally known as 'the Gatehouse', due to its position along the driveway, is formed from a mix of brick, flint and timber weatherboarding to the walls with traditional Kent clay roof tiles.

The outbuildings to the east of the house (2, 5) are clad in timber weather boarding with corrugated metal roofing sheets.

A modern workshop/storage building (4) to the north east provides space for garden vehicles and equipment, necessary for maintaining the grounds. The building is formed from corrugated asbestos wall and roofing sheets.

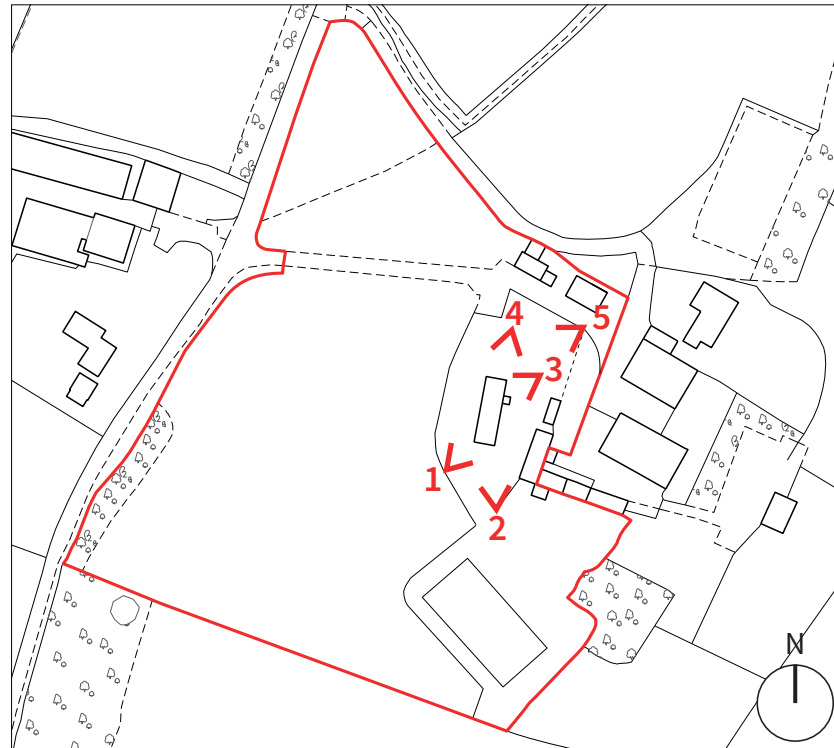


Satellite View

(Source: Google Maps)



1.4 Building Photographs - House



Key Plan



1. View of Boughurst Farm House from the south west.



2. View of Boughurst Farm House from the south.



3. View of Boughurst Farm House from the north east.

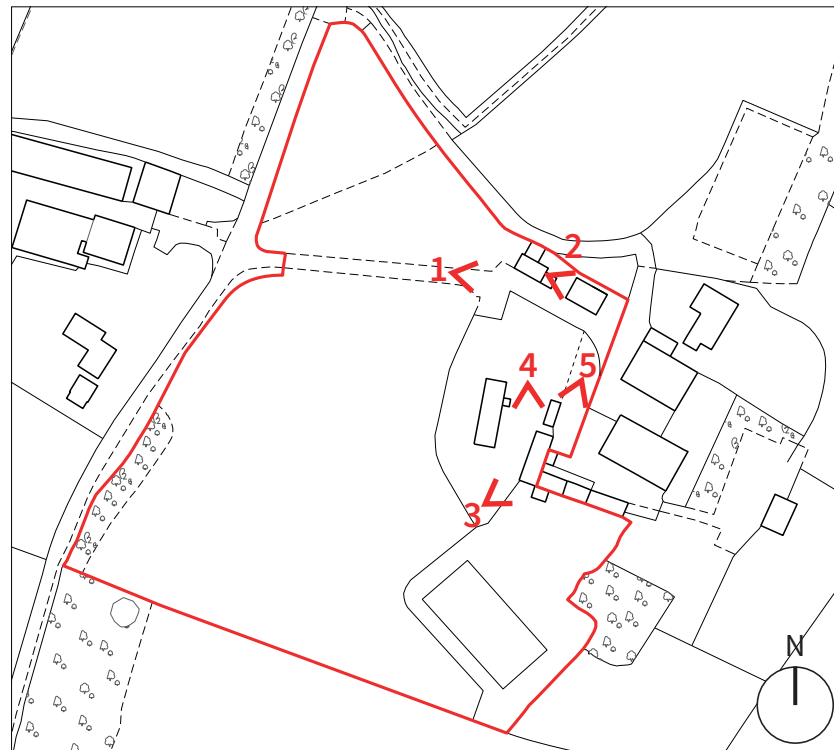


4. View of Boughurst Farm House from the north.



5. View of Boughurst Farm House north east at end of driveway.

1.5 Building Photographs - Outbuildings



Key Plan



1. The 'Gatehouse' with modern workshop/store beyond.



2. Modern workshop/store west elevation.



3. View of outbuildings (partially derelict), south side.



4. View of outbuildings, west side.



5. View of utility building.

1.6 Access & Parking

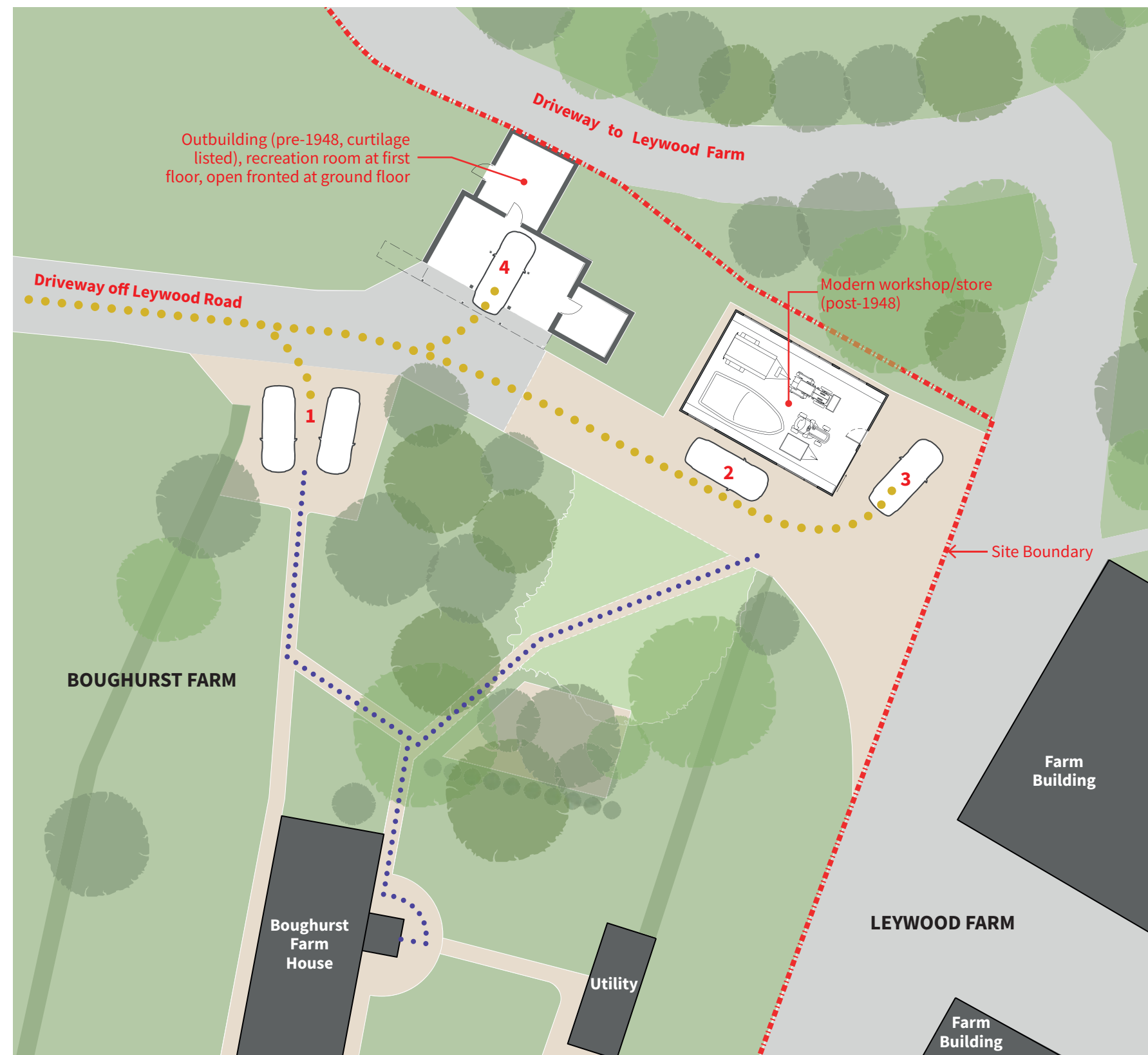
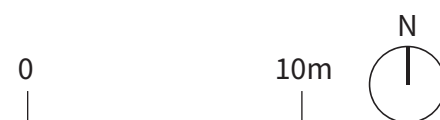
The site is accessed by vehicle from Leywood Road and has its own gated, private driveway. A public right of way crosses the front of the site, as illustrated by the satellite view on page 6 which shows the path across the grass.

Parking arrangements are currently relatively informal with vehicles parking outside, near to the northernmost outbuildings - namely at the hardstanding just above the house (1), or at the end of the driveway adjacent to the storage barn (2) or site boundary fence (3). Covered parking is also possible via the open - fronted ground floor of the recreation building (4).

This particular building is curtilage listed and likely at one time an oast, albeit significantly altered during the 20th century and no longer having the characteristic roundel. It may be that the ground floor of this building was always partially 'open' for housing small farm vehicles such as carts associated with the use of the farm or oast, but it is impossible to be certain of its exact original form. Hinges can be seen on the columns to the modern overhanging roof section at the front, suggesting that at some point relatively recently it had doors, presumably removed to provide under cover parking.

While vehicles continue to be parked here, the building is not particularly well suited to this use as the space between the structural columns is narrow in comparison with modern day vehicle sizes, which it was never intended to accommodate. The current occupants have some concern regarding continued parking here, considering the risks of colliding with the structure and comprising the structural integrity of the building. The project seeks to resolve this, alongside providing dedicated external visitor parking on the site which is more sympathetic to the setting than the existing arrangement.

- Vehicle access for parking
- Access to house on foot from driveway / parking



Partial Site Plan

1.7 Designations

Boughurst Farm dates from the 15th Century. The property was originally a Wealden Hall house and is therefore a building of special interest - it is Grade II listed. As such any other buildings or structure on the site which pre-date July 1948 are classed as curtilage listed (the law states that buildings and other structures that pre-date July 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building).

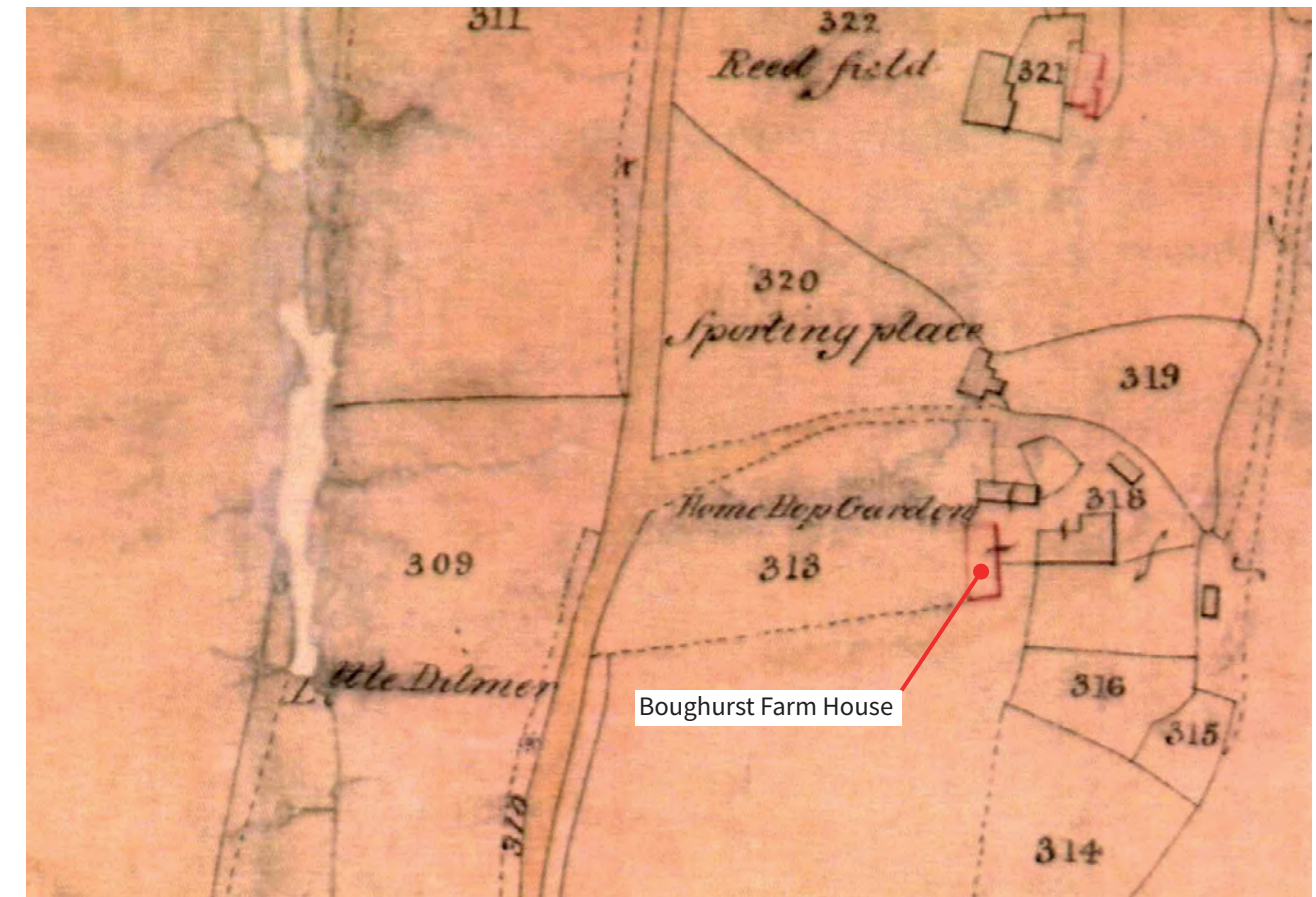
The site lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which stretches from the Surrey border to the cliffs of Dover (2).

In addition the site falls within the Green Belt, the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area (see 4, overleaf), and has also been identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (see 5, overleaf).



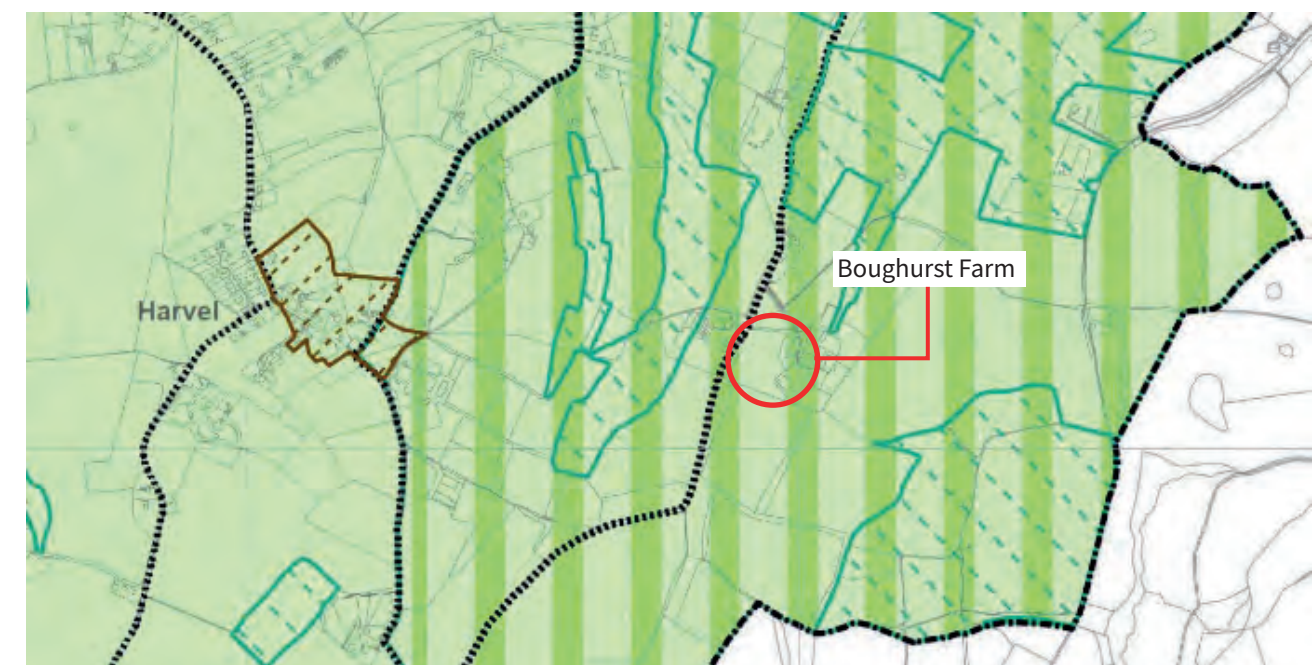
2. Kent Downs AONB Map.

Source: kentdowns.org.uk



1. 1842 Tithe Map.

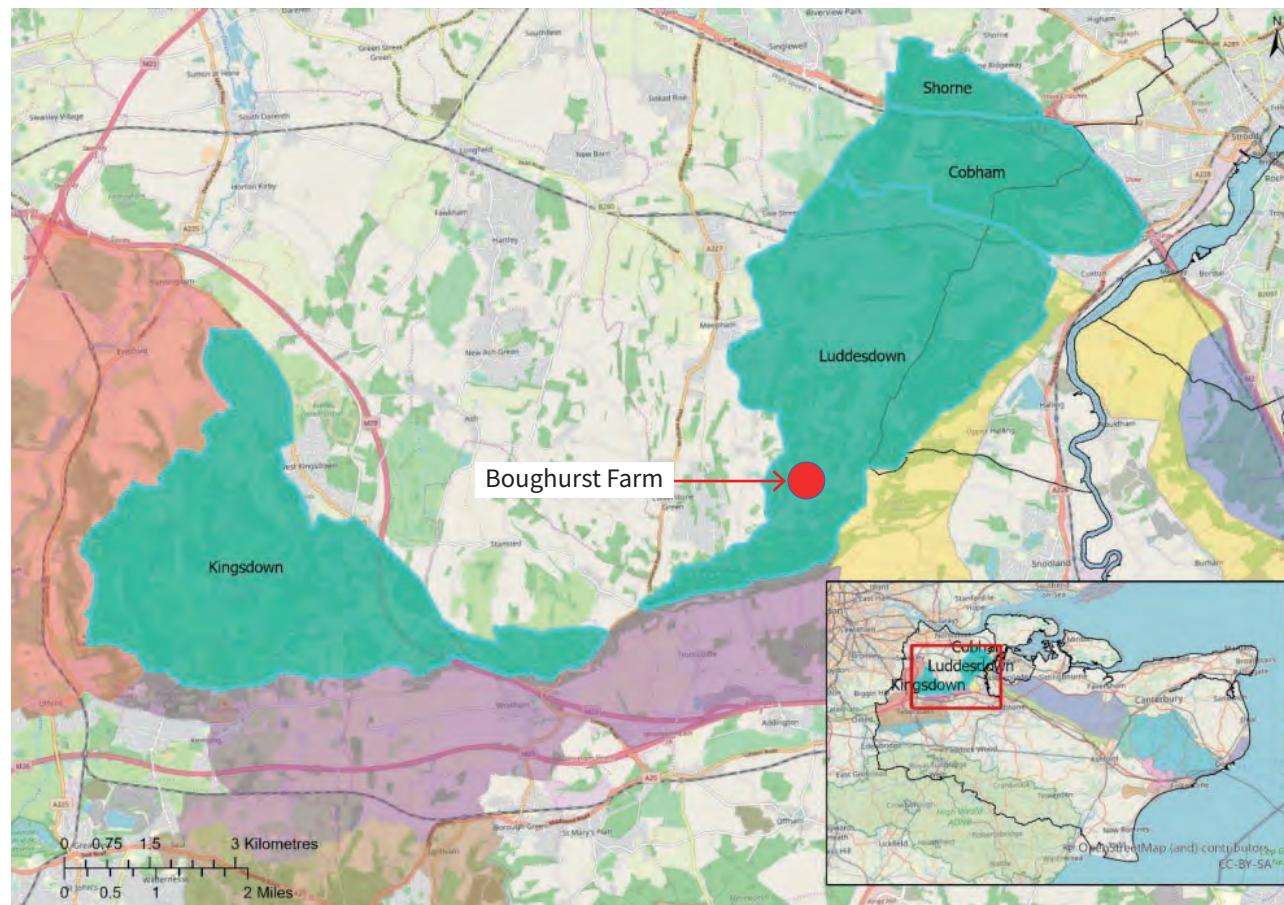
Source: KCC Archives



3. Map identifying site within the Green Belt (and AONB).

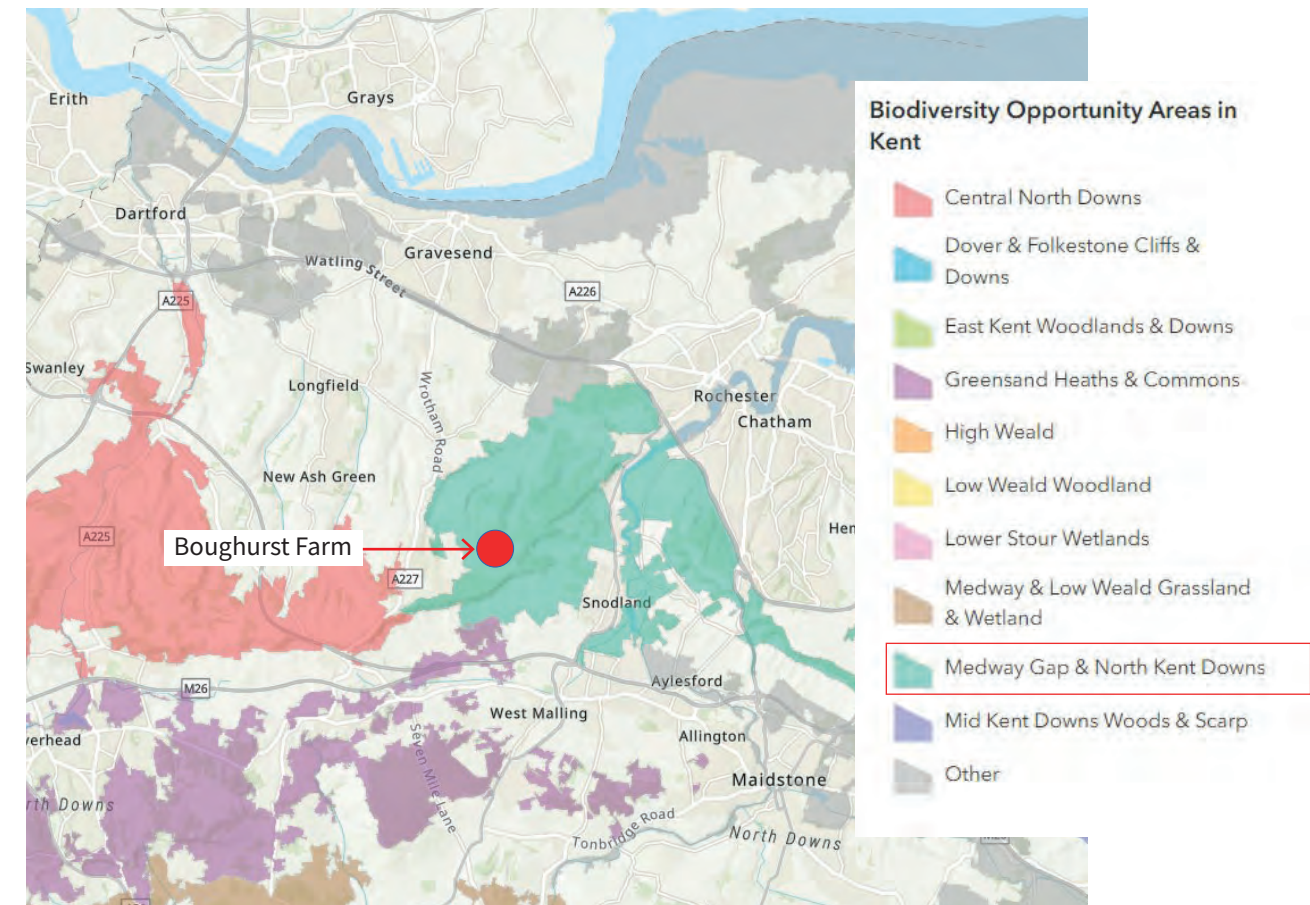
Source: Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map 2014

1.7 Designations (continued)



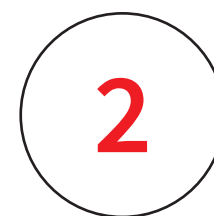
4. Luddesdown Landscape Character Area.

Source: kentdowns.org.uk



5. Medway Gap & North Kent Downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Source: Arcgis.com



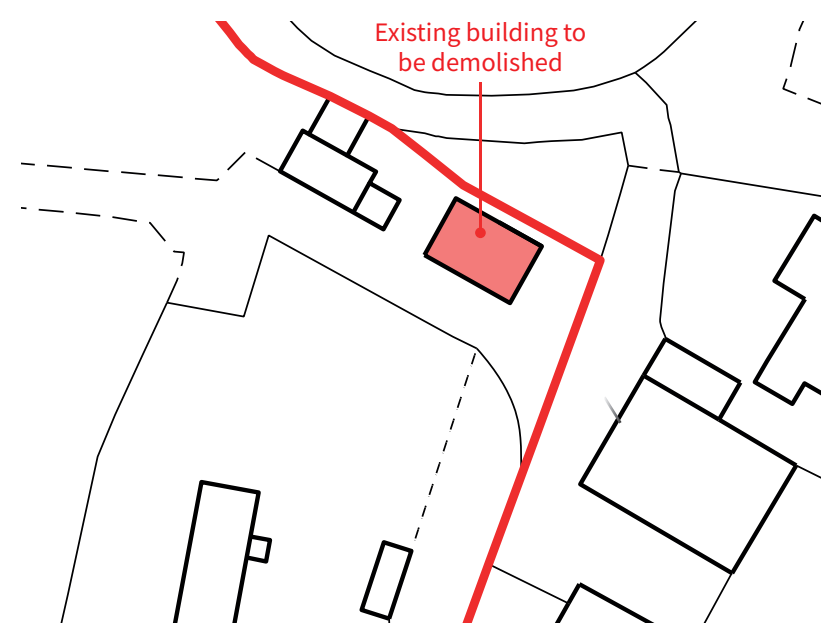
The Project

2.1 Project Proposal

The proposal is to demolish the existing workshop / store and construct a new, higher quality, more appropriate building which provides more space, including parking, in its place (1).

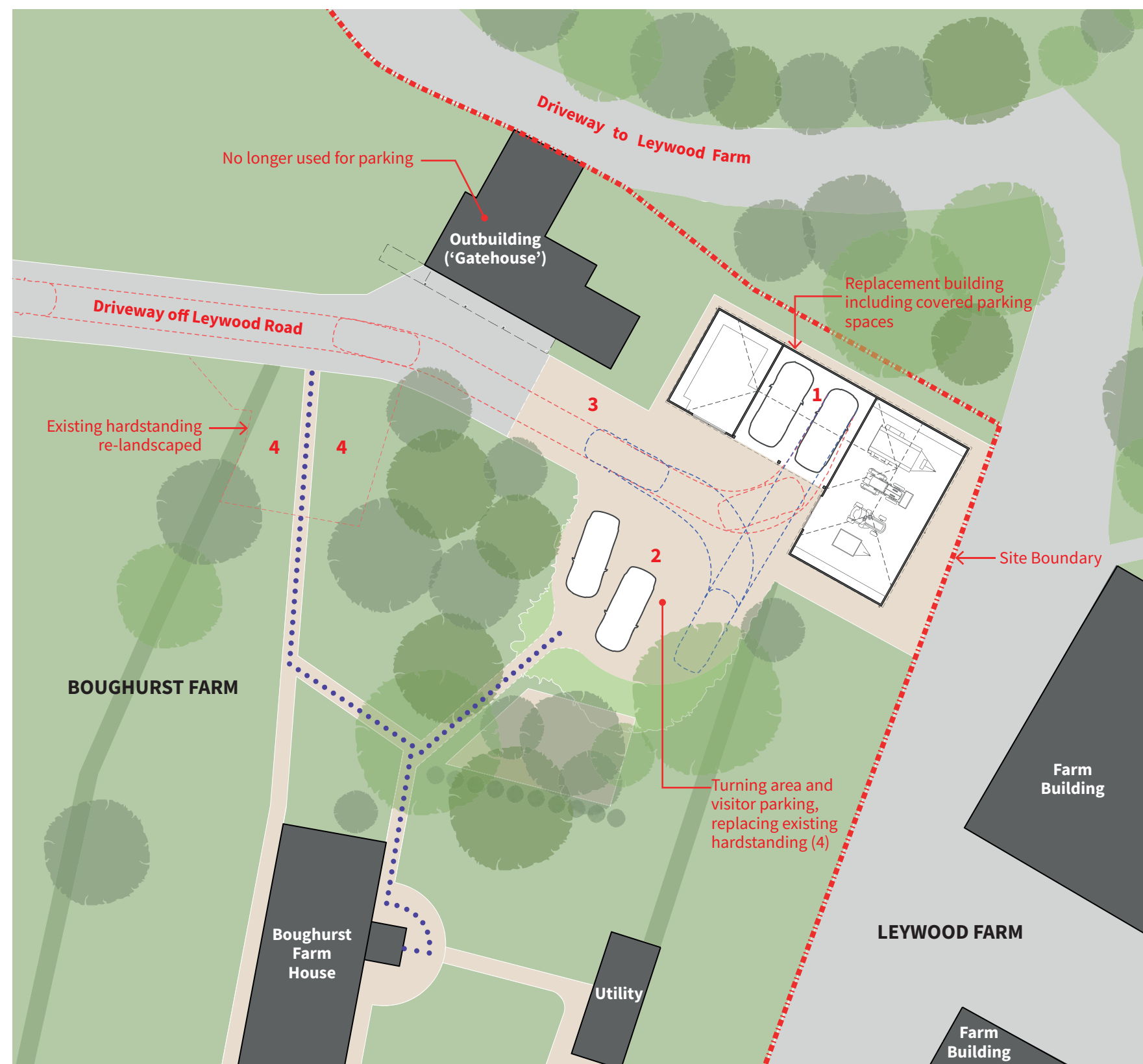
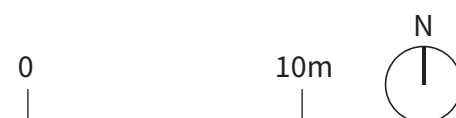
A turning area which can also accommodate visitor parking (2) is formed from the now-grassy yard space opposite (historically a pond). As a result, the 'gatehouse' will no longer be required for vehicle parking.

The existing concreted surface in this area (3) beyond the gatehouse will be replaced with shingle, continuing into the turning area, which will be edged by shrubs and new planting. The existing concrete hardstanding north of the house (4) will be returned to grass, as it was historically (see aerial 1940 aerial photograph, page 27).



Demolition Plan

- Vehicle access for parking
- Access to house on foot from driveway / parking



Partial Site Plan - Proposed

2.2 Building to be demolished

The existing workshop and store is a prefabricated metal framed building clad in asbestos-cement wall and roofing sheets. Late 1900s sales particulars indicate that the barn was built in 1967. This is supported by a 1962 map in which the barn is not yet present (see page 28).

Given it is a post-July 1948 building with no notable features, and is constructed of low quality mass produced materials, it would not be classed as curtilage listed.

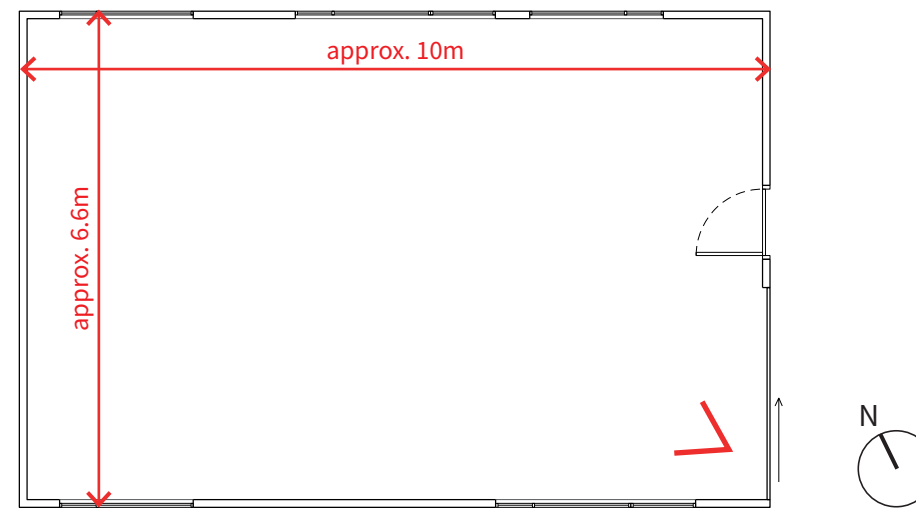
The building will be dismantled by specialists, following the relevant regulations for safe removal and disposal of asbestos-containing materials.

As can be seen in the interior photograph below, the building is at capacity, generally storing essential grounds maintenance equipment and workshop tools.

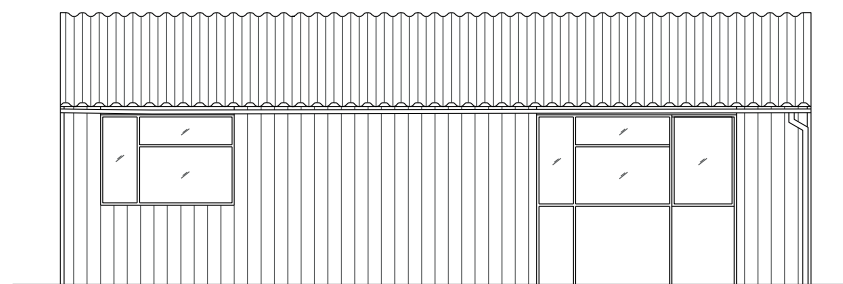
Further photographs of the building exterior and immediately surrounding area can be seen overleaf.



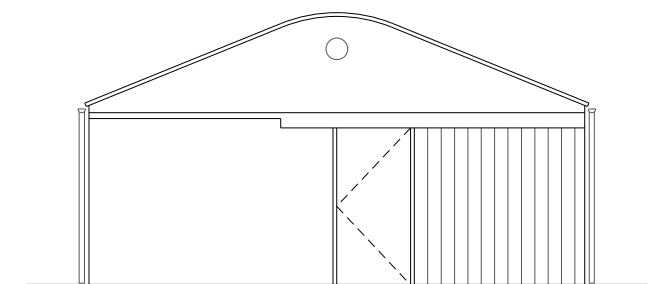
Barn Interior



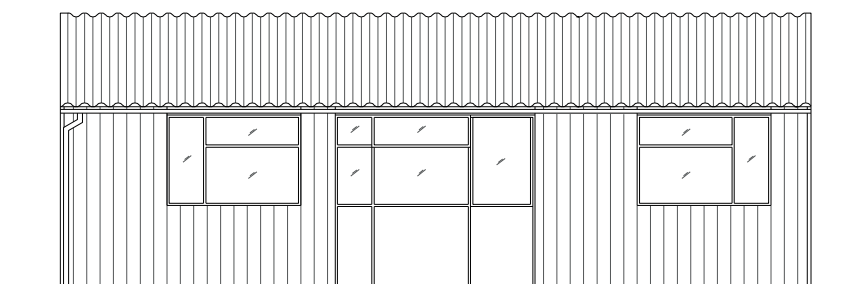
Existing Building Plan



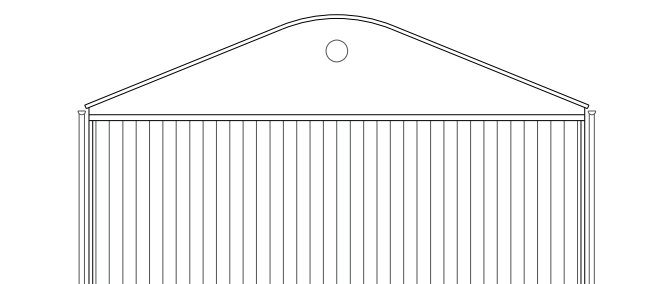
Existing South Elevation



Existing East Elevation



Existing North Elevation



Existing West Elevation

2.3 Photographs - Existing Building & Surroundings



Key Plan



1. Workshop/store entrance to east side.



2. Workshop/store from west, towards the house.



3. Workshop/store distant approach from the south.



4. Grassed yard area opposite store (historically a pond).



5/6. Leywood Farm buildings adjacent, across boundary fence.

2.4 Scale & Massing

The proposed new building lies on the footprint of the existing store and forms an 'L' shaped plan culminating at the end of the driveway. The proposed roof is hipped, referencing both the main listed property Boughurst Farm House, and the curtilage listed gatehouse adjacent. The hips extend to catslides at both ends of the building, lowering the eaves and reducing the massing and overall prominence of the building.

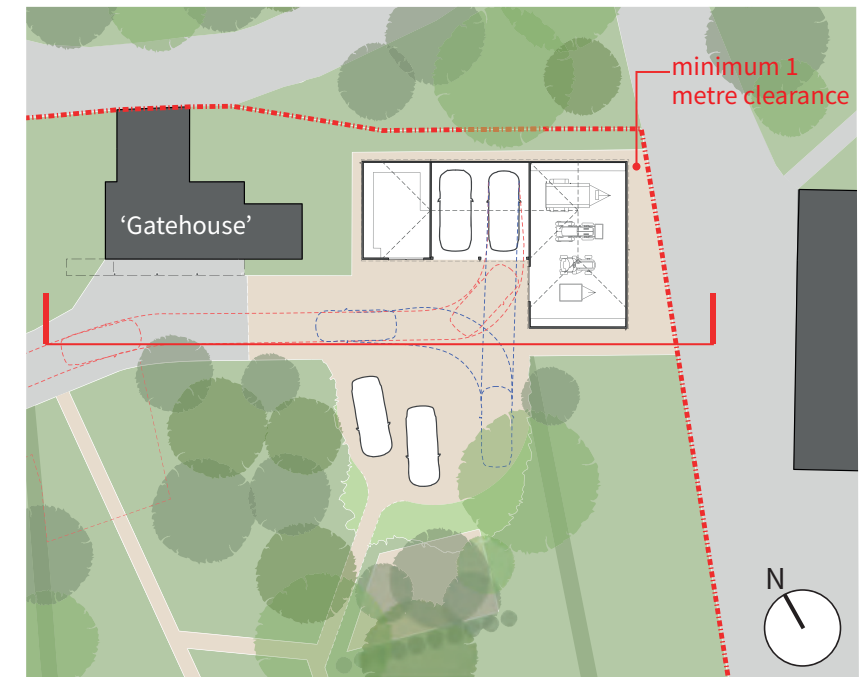
The main front elevation aligns with that of the gatehouse, maintaining the existing building line. It is positioned 1 metre from the site boundary at the closest point to the north east, with the boundary fence tapering away from this point in both directions.

Care has been taken to maintain a ridge height not taller than the single storey element of the adjacent gatehouse, ensuring the new building is subordinate in terms of scale. This is facilitated by the gradual change in ground level, which falls away towards the eastern end of the site resulting in almost 1 metre difference in the floor levels of the buildings.

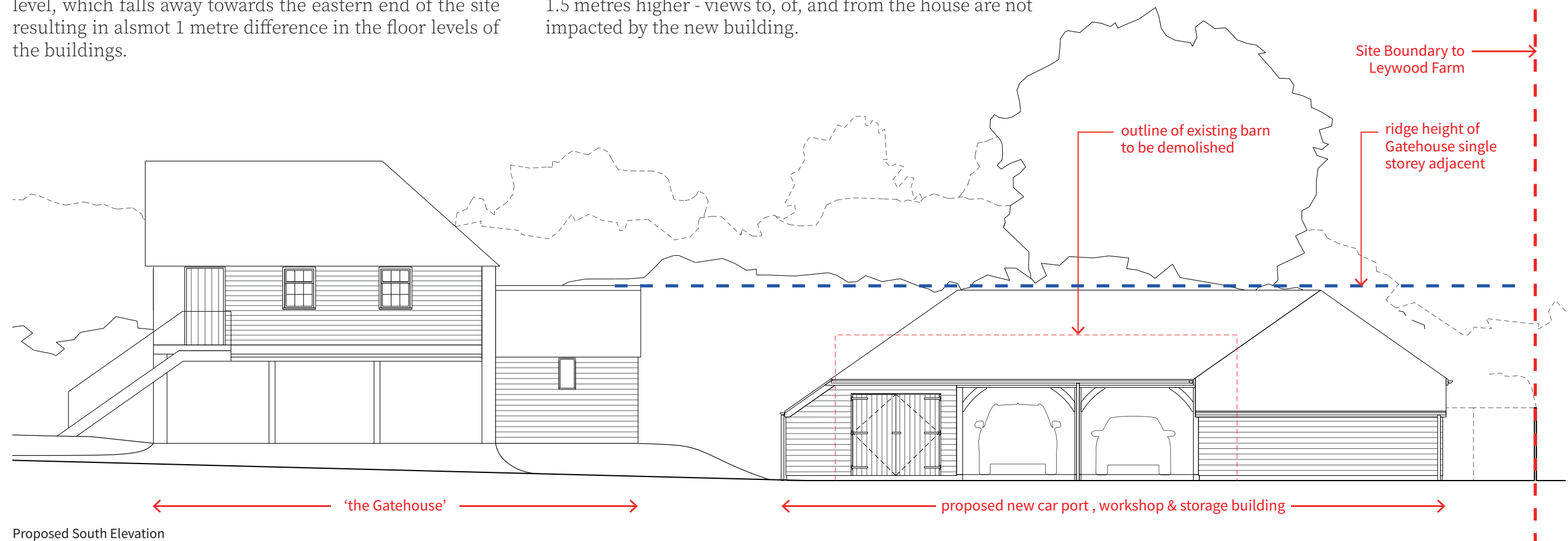
While the footprint extends slightly closer to the gatehouse (1.2m), the hipped, catslide roof minimises the impact of this and creates a more sympathetic relationship between the two buildings than currently exists with gable ended asbestos storage building.

The neighbouring buildings immediately adjacent at Leywood Farm are agricultural and do not have windows or therefore views in this direction. Given the mature vegetation to the west of the Leywood Farm bungalow (which lies to the north east) and it being single storey, the enlarged barn footprint will not result in any harm or material loss of view for the residents of Leywood Farm. It should be noted that the primary views from Leywood Farm are to the east across the wooded valley from the external terrace, and not to the west at Boughurst Farm.

Boughurst Farm House lies south west of the proposal, some 30 metres away and is set on ground approximately 1.5 metres higher - views to, of, and from the house are not impacted by the new building.

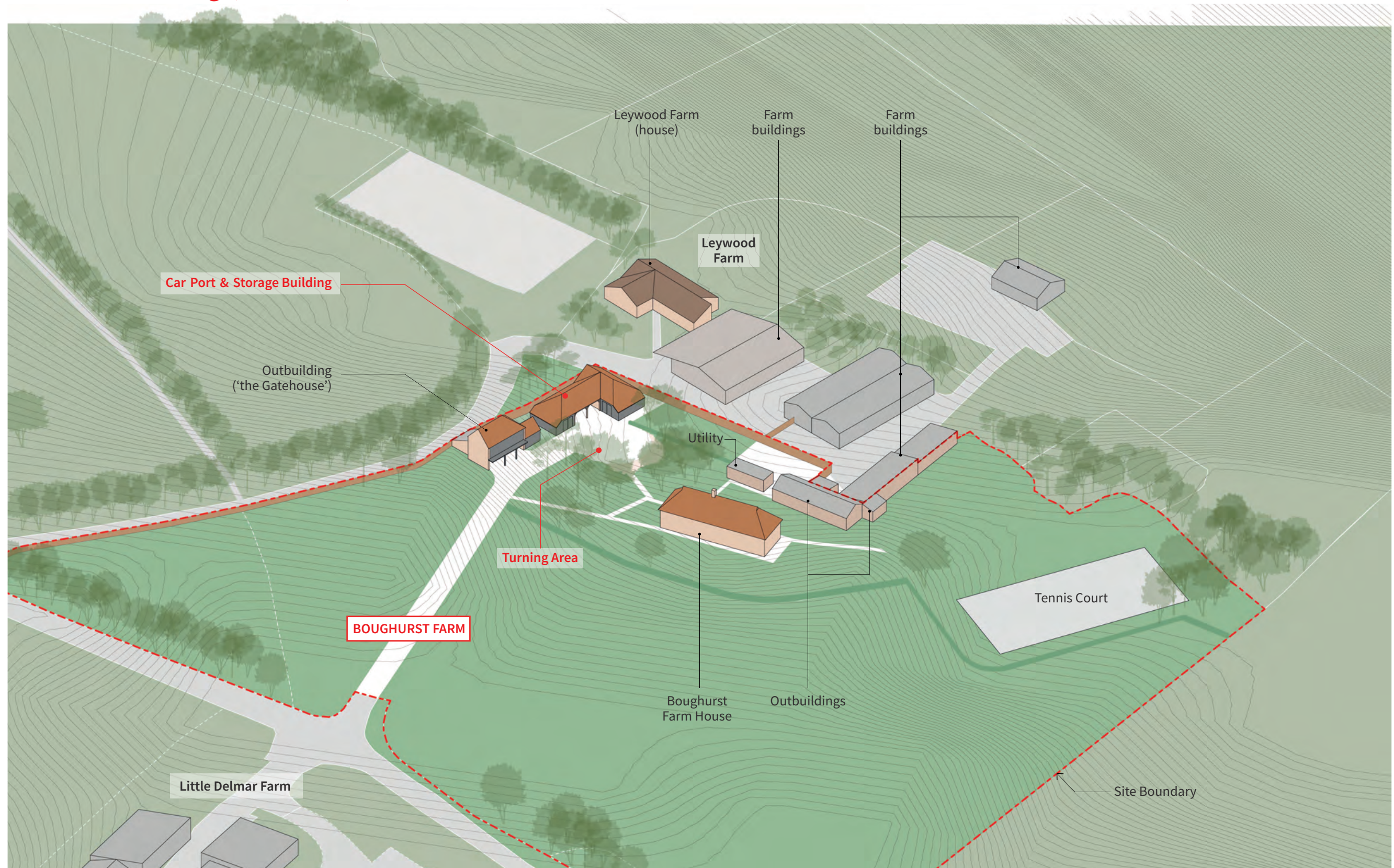


Key Plan



Proposed South Elevation

2.4 Scale & Massing (continued)



Proposed Site Isometric Diagram

2.4 Scale & Massing (continued)



Driveway approach from Leywood Road

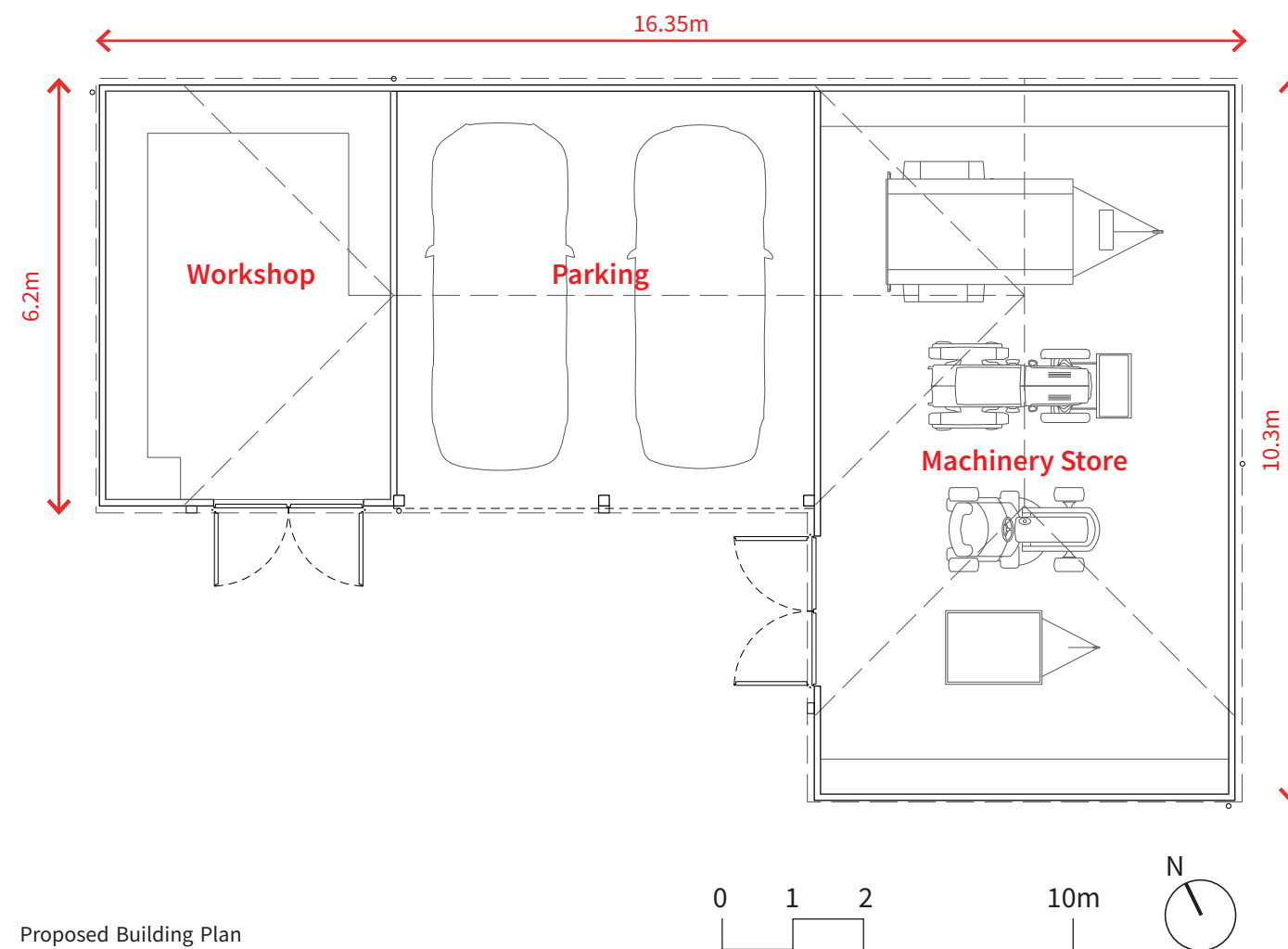
2.5 Layout & Appearance

The proposed building comprises a machinery store of similar dimensions to the existing building, with a separated tools/workshop space, and two covered, open-sided parking bays. As previously noted, visitor parking is accommodated opposite, when required.

The building is constructed and clad in traditional materials - a brick plinth, timber framing, oak, black painted weatherboarding and Kent clay tiles. The materials have been chosen to resonate with the existing ancillary buildings on the site while being subordinate to the main listed farm house.

The materials are considered to be appropriate for a barn-like storage building in this rural, historical farmyard setting, as discussed further in sections 3 and 4 in relation to relevant national and local policy.

The hardstanding area is resurfaced with pea shingle, and has a small inclined ramp up to the car port bays to prevent water ingress into the building.

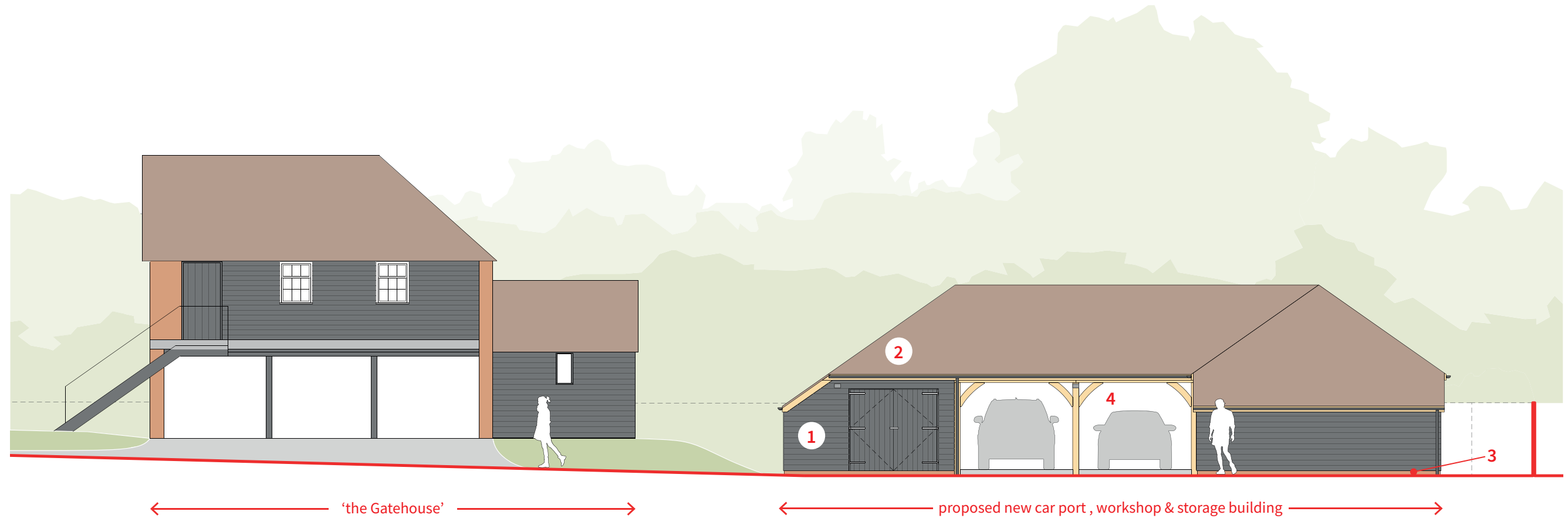


Proposed Building Plan



Precedents of similar form and appearance

2.6 Material Palette



Proposed South Elevation

Feathered timber
weatherboarding
painted blackTraditional clay
roof tilesBrickwork
(to plinth)Oak framing with
traditional details
(to car parking bays)Pea shingle
(hardstanding topping)Diverse planting
(enhanced borders to
turning area)

BUILDING MATERIALS

LANDSCAPING

2.7 Building Services

Lighting

Lighting is kept to a minimum with 3no. external lights and 1no. internal light within the parking area, all activated by PIR movement sensors, in order to keep light pollution to a minimum. In doing so the lights are only on/visible when necessary to assist a vehicle which is turning or parking, and will be switched off otherwise. Downward-only illumination with a warm colour temperature of <3000K reduces upward glare and light disturbance where lux spill could be harmful for any protected species in the area.

Lights to the workshop and machinery store will be switch activated - there is no risk of light disturbance as they are rooms with no glazed openings. All light fittings will be energy efficient LED fittings.

Drainage

Rainwater is collected from the roof and drained to a soakaway. The rainwater goods are a black plastic to sit sympathetically against the black timber cladding. The proposed soakaway location is illustrated on the site plan. Where possible, water butts will be fed from the gutters in order to reuse rainwater collected for garden purposes, with the overflow being directed to the soakaway.

Environmental Performance

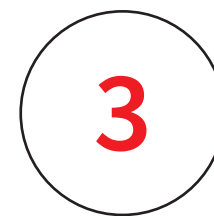
The proposal is not a habitable building and therefore is not heated - in terms of energy usage its consumption is low. Where possible, locally available materials have been chosen and the timber for the structure, cladding and doors will be locally sourced and made.

Waste from the demolition and new construction will be sorted for recycling, safe disposal or reuse where possible (e.g. rubble for below-slab hardcore).

- Soakaway location
- Wall mounted external lighting



Illustrative Partial Site Plan



Heritage Statement

3.1 Description of the Asset

As described and illustrated in section 1, the site, known previously as Boughurst 'Street' Farm, lies within the West Kent Downs.

The farm house at Boughurst Farm is a Grade II listed building, described in the official listing as follows:

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1350233

Date first listed: 21-Nov-1966

List Entry Name: Boughurst Farmhouse

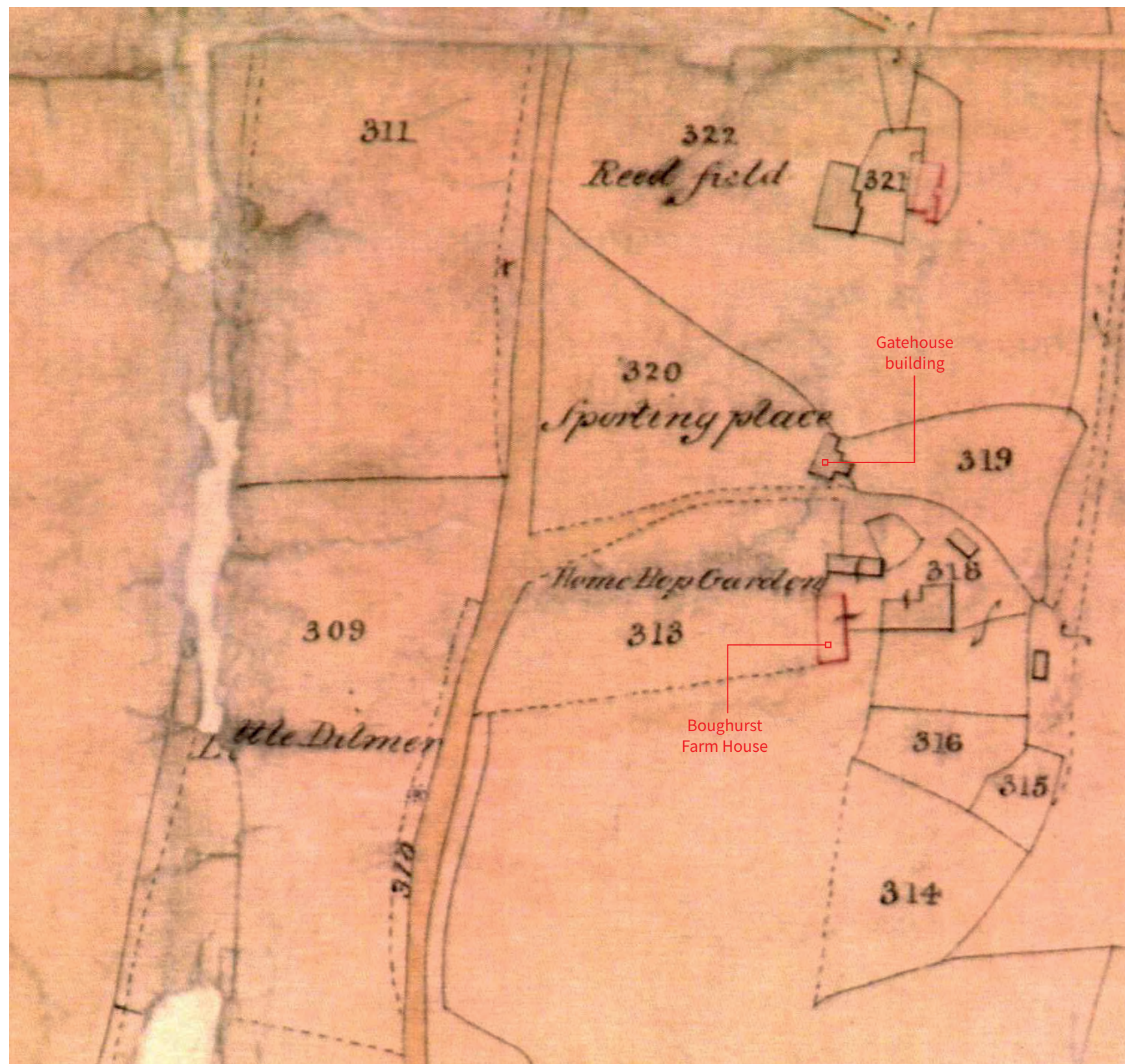
Statutory Address: Boughurst Farmhouse, Leywood Road

Details:

C15 Wealden House. Ground floor brick faced. First floor tile-hung. Northern extension flint faced on ground floor. Hipped tiled roof with crown post. Modern casement windows. Central chimney stack with inglenooks. Massive moulded cross beam internally with carpenter's marks where timbers are framed into it.

The site comprises the farm house, the gatehouse building, the modern store and a number of 1900s farm buildings. As the mapping on pages 25-28 illustrates, the farm house and the gatehouse, while both notably modified, are the only buildings which existing in the mid-1800s to remain. There would appear to be no earlier maps available than the 1842 tithe map opposite. The date of the gatehouse is unknown, and in the absence of earlier maps we do not know how exactly the site arrived at this layout.

Thanks to research published in 'The Meopham Biographies - The Boughurst Family' (Carley, J.) we do know that the name Boughurst Street has been traced as early as the year 1200 with the Boughursts, a family of yeoman farmers, recorded as living in and around the parish of Meopham for some 600 years. The name has been recorded in many variations including Boghurst, Boggas, Boggast, Bogherst, Boggerste, Boggarst and Bowhurst; likely due to changing pronunciations over the centuries.



1842 Tithe Map

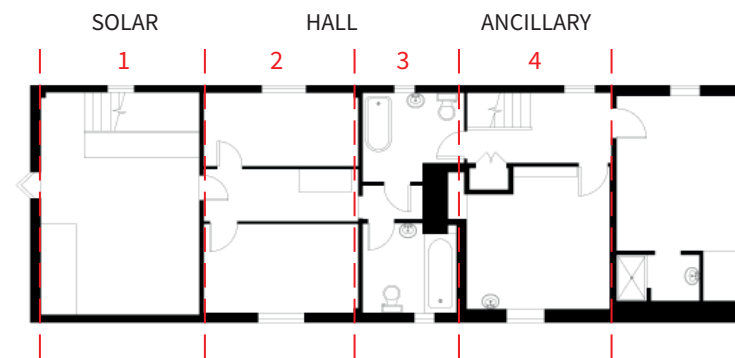
3.2 Boughurst Farm House

The name Boughurst 'Street' Farm indicates that the site was originally a hamlet, albeit now a single property with outbuildings, and the farming elements under separate ownership. The farm house was built as a Wealden Hall house - a particular form of the medieval timber framed 'open hall' building typology, which once dominated in the area of East Sussex and west Kent known as The Weald. Such buildings featured a large hall open to the ceiling with a central hearth and a screened cross passage, with enclosed rooms to each end, often with floors above them accessed by stairs or even ladders.

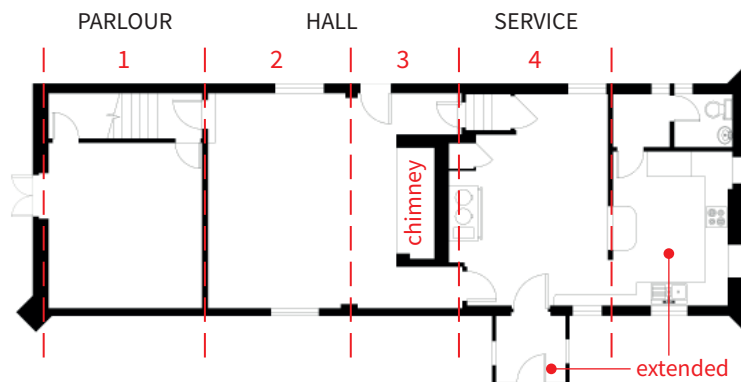
While Boughurst Farm House has been quite significantly modified, likely extended to the north, and certainly extended to the east (rear porch), the typical medieval arrangement including a crown post roof construction can still be traced. Externally at ground floor, the building comprises mostly brickwork walls, with flint to the north end. The first floor is clad in vertically hung clay tiles. The roof is covered in clay tiles, some retaining their timber pegs. The roof to the north of the chimney stack has been rebuilt in its entirety, with no original roof structure remaining. The rest of the building retains much of its original roof structure - the line between the old and new section of roof can be seen clearly in the tiles externally.

The hall now has an infilled first floor as is typical, however the large high level tie beams are still visible, and in the loft there are some surviving crown posts as well the crown beam (numerous modern supports are also evident). Soot blackened timbers remain in the centre, surviving evidence of its time as an open hall house when smoke would rise to the roof depositing soot on the structure.

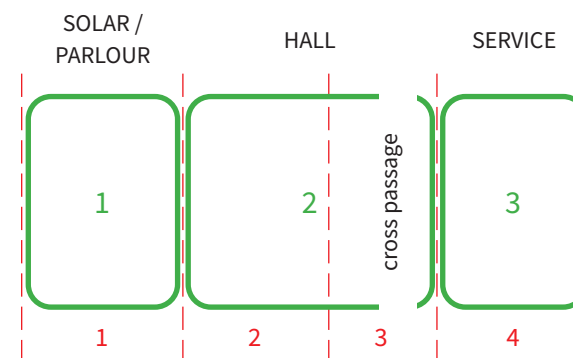
Many hall houses concealed or sometimes replaced their timber frames entirely at ground floor by wrapping or replacing them with brick, and concealing them externally by hanging tiles at first floor - such changes were often carried out in the 18th century as buildings evolved in line with changing technologies and fashions of the time. It is not clear how much perimeter timber frame exists at the ground floor of the house due to the external brickwork and buttresses, and the internal plaster work.



1. First Floor Plan - Boughurst Farm House, possible uses noted.
Characteristic of many hall houses the open hall was eventually infilled at first floor to provide more floor space.



2. Ground Floor Plan - Boughurst Farm House, possible uses noted.
In addition to a first floor, open central hearths were removed in favour of chimney stacks, typically placed within the zone of the cross passage.
Note, the small porch extension to the east side, now used as the main entrance, and the likely extension to the north, now faced in flint on this elevation.



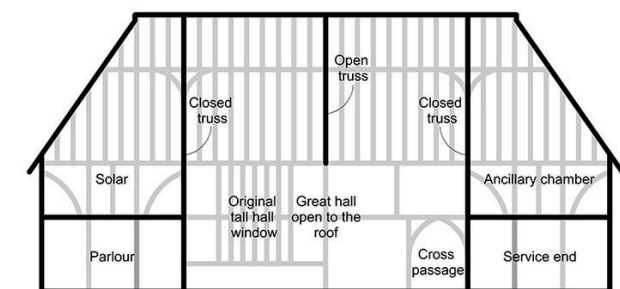
3. Diagrammatic plan of a typical medieval hall house with a 4 bay open hall within the standard tripartite plan layout comprising 3 bays, the middle being the open hall with its central hearth



4. West elevation (front) of house



5. East elevation (back) of house



6. Example section of a typical Wealden Hall House (Source: Early Oak Reproductions)

3.3 The 'Gatehouse' Building

While the primary 'asset' is the farm house, also of note and interest is the curtilage listed gatehouse building, particularly relevant to this proposal given its adjacency to the proposed new building. The original use of the building is not known, but it is assumed it may have been some kind of accommodation or functional farm building, at once time converted into an oast, before being again returned to ancillary uses as it remains today.

The 19th Century was the golden age of the hop industry and so it is not surprising to see large areas of the site noted and illustrated as 'hop gardens' on the 1800s maps (see page 25), and the later addition of what is believed due to its shape to be a round kiln, as seen on the 1895 map (during the hop revolution conversion of existing structures was not uncommon). This theory is supported by an 'oast house' and 'a tiled hop kiln' being described in 1908 and 1918 sales particulars respectively. The omission of the roundel on the building by the mid 1930s map (see page 27) may coincide with the gradual decline of the hop industry during the 1900s - the roundel could be deliberately removed if the farm ceased to cultivate or process hops, or simply lost due to delapidation.

Today the building is of mixed construction, notably brick and flint to the walls and clay tiles and corrugated sheeting to the roofs. It seems likely that the areas in flint are the original material, with more recent repairs in brick. The corrugated asbestos roof sheet is a more recent addition to what is likely an original lean-to section on the north side.

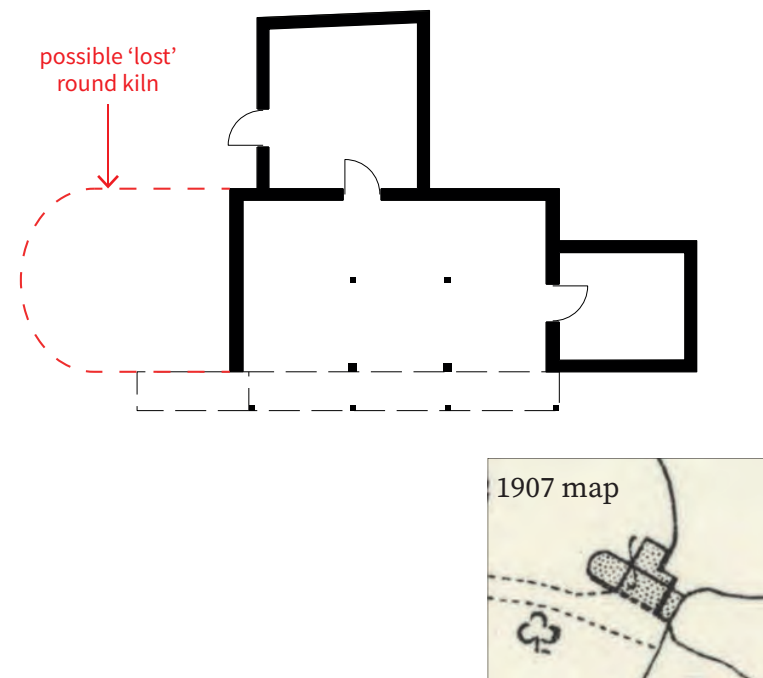
The single storey pitched volume to the east of the building, immediately adjacent to the proposed car port, does not appear to be original judging by the changing form of the building on the mapping on the following pages - this particular section appears to be from the mid 1900s, albeit replacing an earlier footprint lost from this side. Nonetheless, this element is the closest to the proposed building and forms part of the gatehouse's overall massing. In response to this the new proposed building takes its ridge line as a height limit not to be exceeded (as illustrated on page 14).



1. Rear lean-to in flint with modern roofing sheet.
2. Brickwork and flint stitched together.



2. West elevation (front) of the gatehouse.

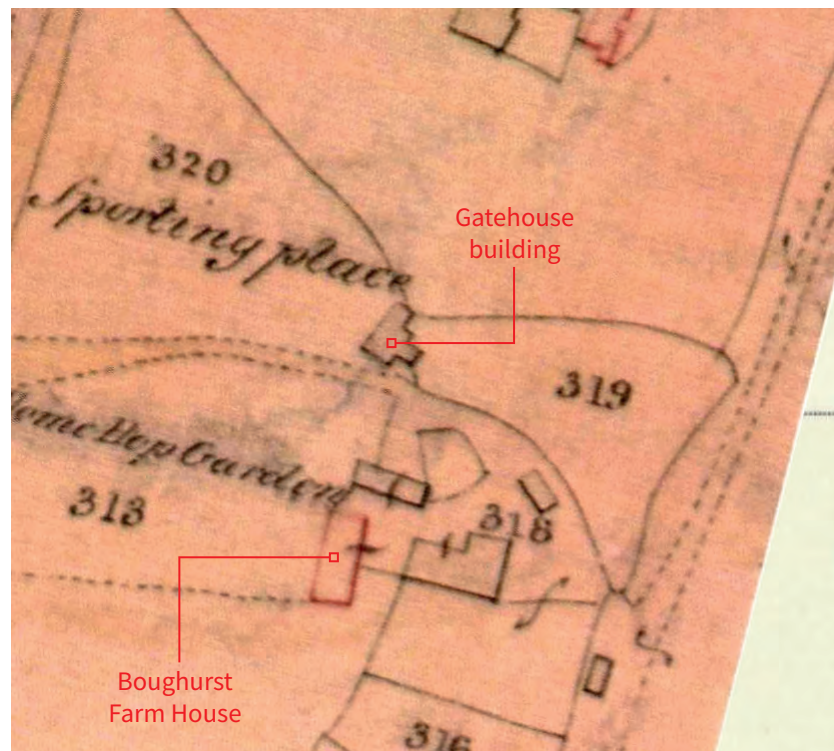
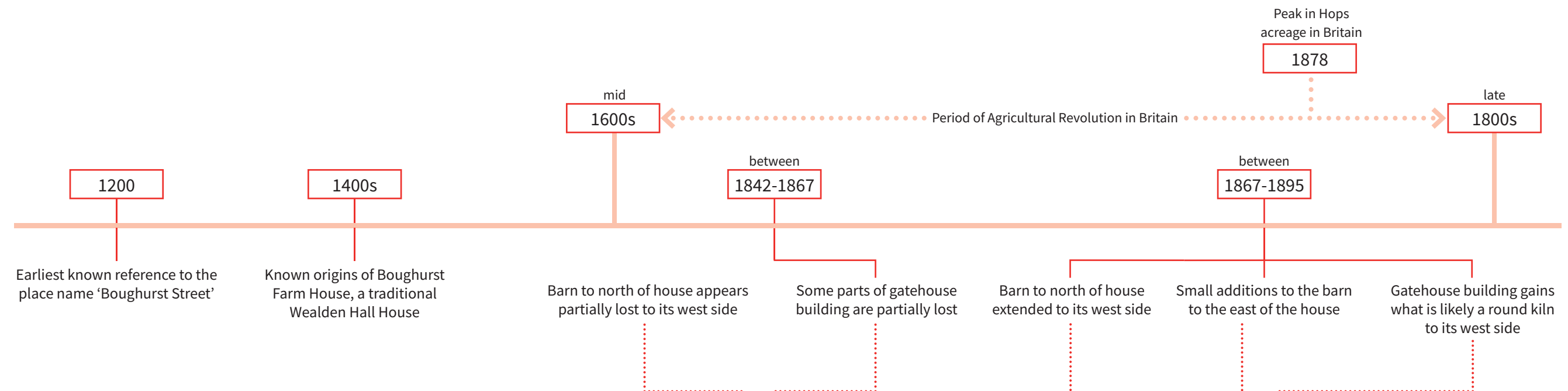


3. Existing Floor Plan - possible round kiln superimposed



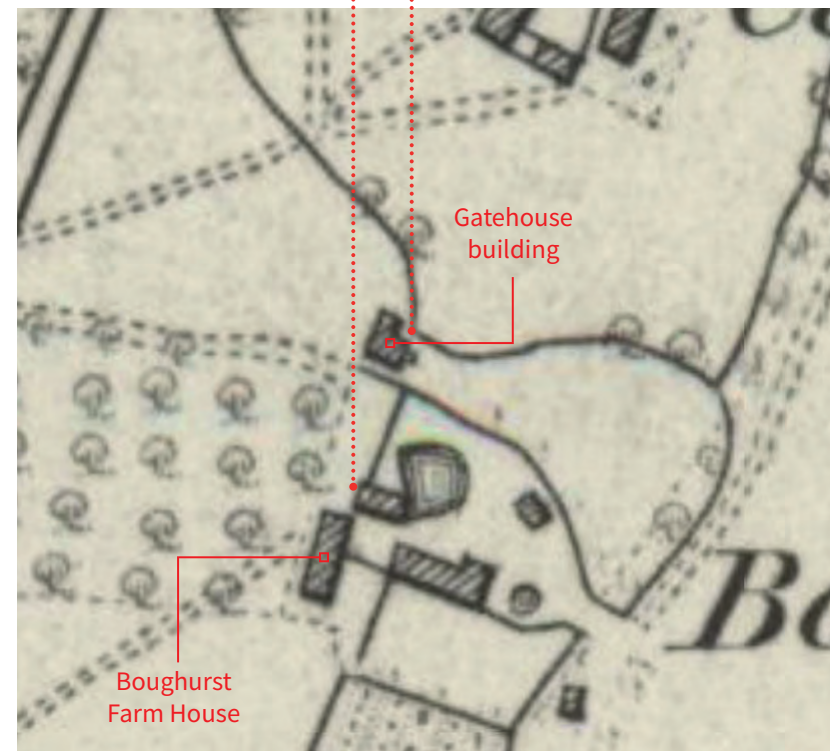
4. Current parking area, mix of flint and brickwork to walls.

3.4 Development of Boughurst Farm



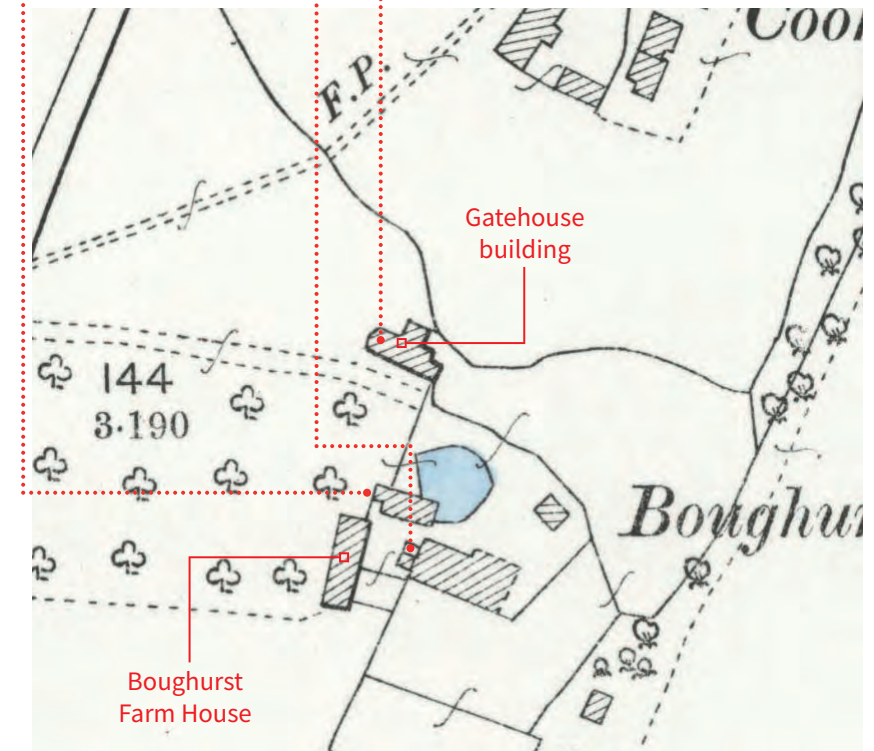
1842 Tithe Map
(Rotated to north)

Source: KCC Archives



1867 Historical Map

Source: NLS Maps

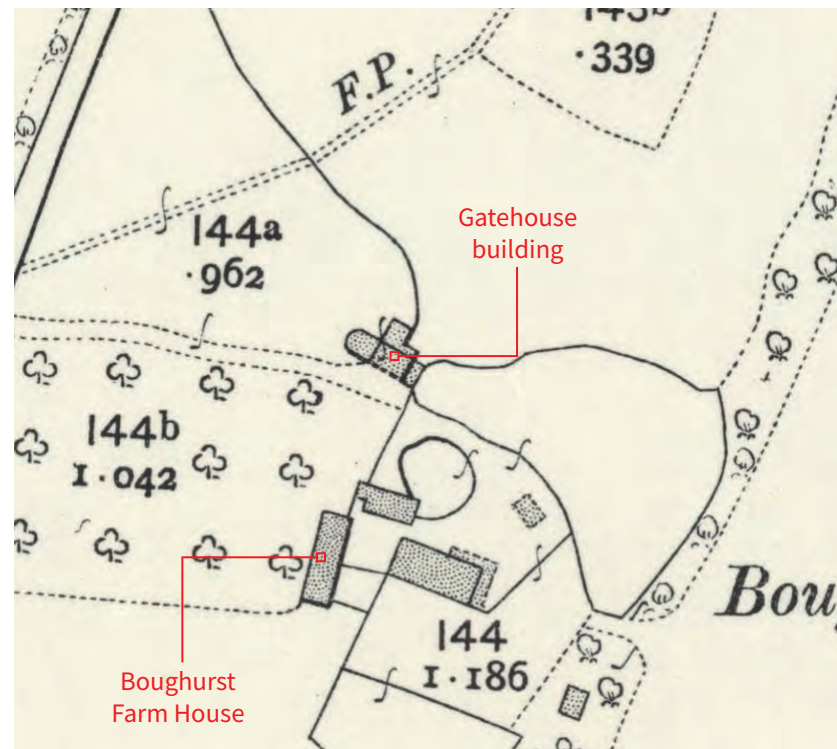
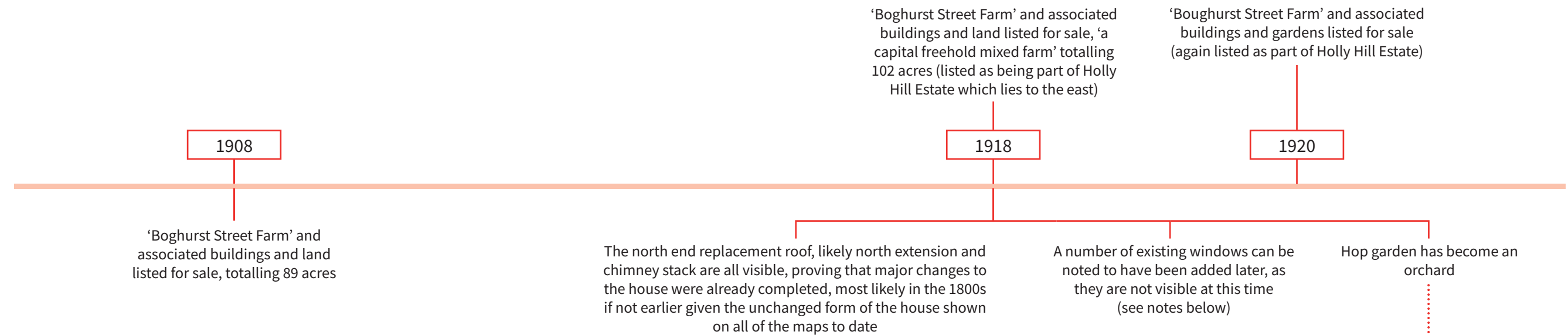


1895 Historical Map

Source: NLS Maps

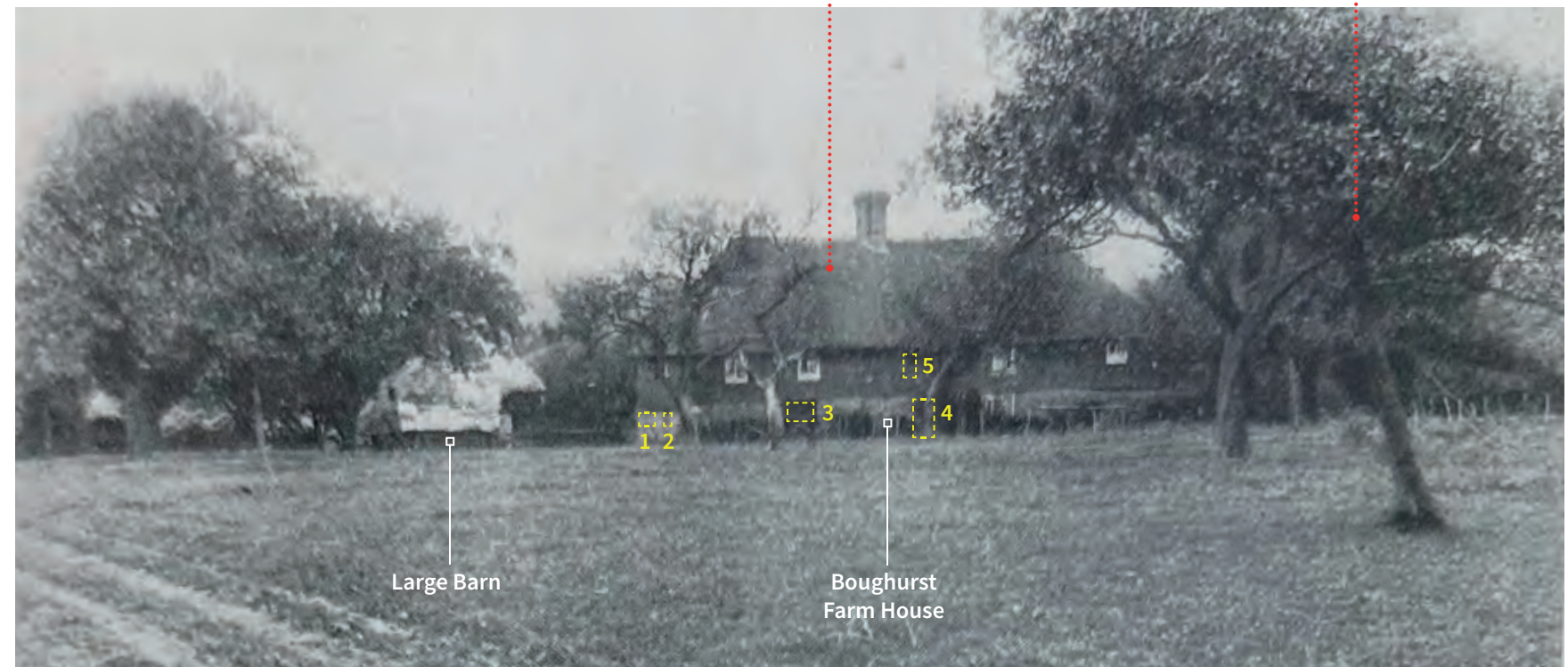


3.4 Development of Boughurst Farm (continued)



1907 Historical Map

Source: NLS Maps



1918 Historic Photograph

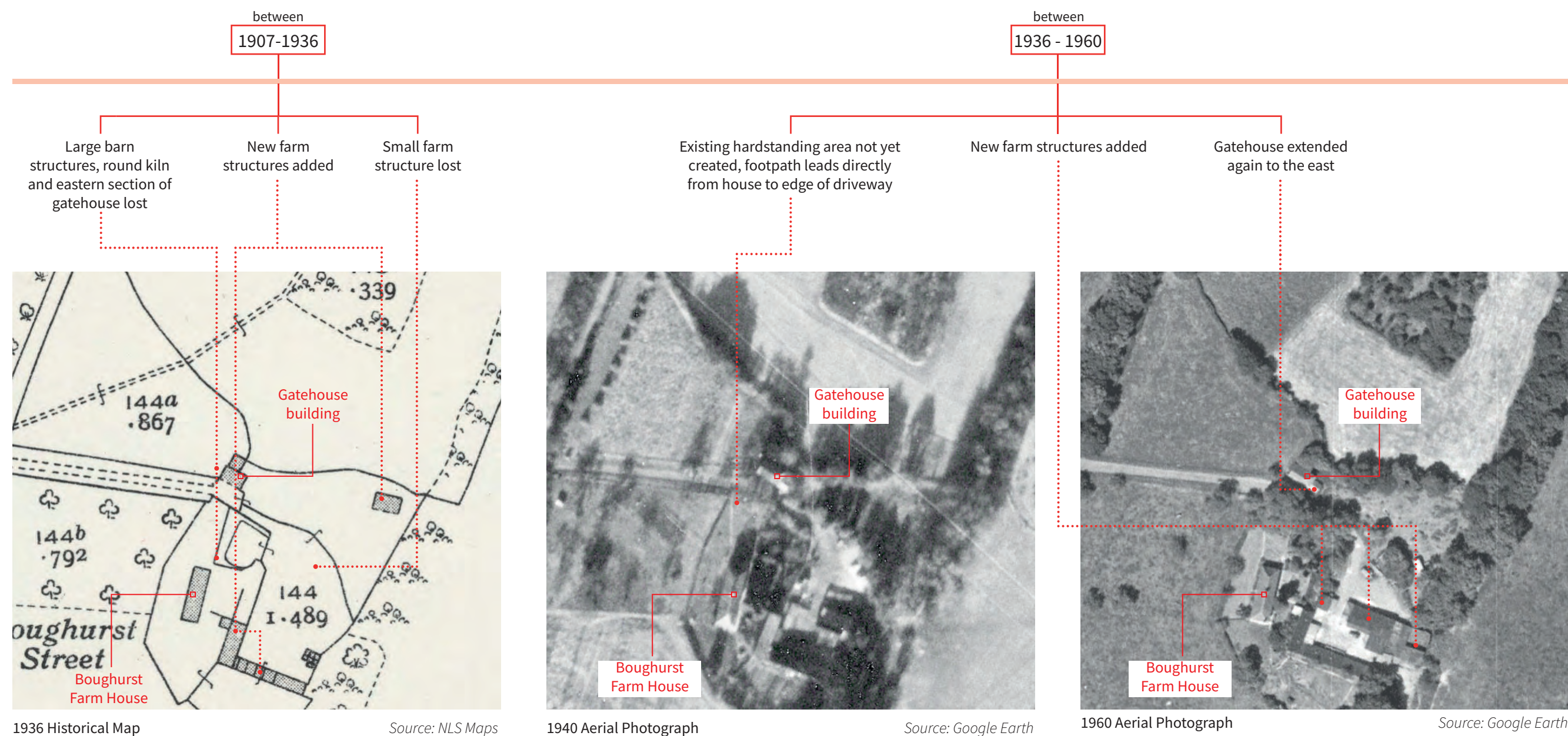
Source: 1918 Sales Particulars, KCC Archives

The photograph has enabled us to identify a number of changes to the west and north of the house since, including:

1. Addition of window.
2. Possible addition of window (unclear).
3. Doorway partially infilled and replaced with window.
4. Possible addition of front door following infill of door at (3)
5. Addition of window.



3.4 Development of Boughurst Farm (continued)



3.4 Development of Boughurst Farm (continued)



3.5 Significance of the Asset

Historic England, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment) define significance in terms of the following ‘interests’:

1. Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

2. Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types.

3. Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.



Boughurst Farm House

(Source: Sales Particulars)

Boughurst Farm House

The significance of the asset, Boughurst Farm House, lies mainly in its age, construction system and its original form as a medieval ‘open hall’ house, constructed in the 1400s. As has come to be expected with buildings of this age and type, it has been altered and extended since its construction, including having the open hall infilled by an upper floor. The external appearance has also been changed, but its origins as a hall house can still be seen, appreciated and admired, particularly internally, but also externally in its form and setting in open landscape it faces onto.

The interests of the house are therefore mainly architectural and to some extent archaeological, due to the survival of original form, structure and some materials, particularly those which evidence its time as an open hall and evolution - namely the structural form, blackened roof timbers and wattle and daub infill panels found in the roof.

The ‘Gatehouse’

The gatehouse building is curtilage listed by virtue of its age and relationship with the farm house, but not itself listed and while interesting, retains much less original fabric than the house. This is a functional building which has likely evolved to meet the requirements of the site occupants at the time, with attempts to repair and retain the building for ancillary uses.

The interest in the gatehouse building is primarily architectural and in trying to ascertain the way in which the building has evolved.

The Setting / Site Layout

The site layout has changed significantly over time, particularly with respect to the location of the farm yard and the outbuildings, all of which pre-1900s (other than the gatehouse) have been lost. The Kent County Council Historic Environment record lists the site as a ‘post-medieval farmstead - a loose courtyard with significant loss of original form (more than 50%).’

The existing driveway appears to match the location of the original track to the farm and is therefore unchanged, albeit now hard-surfaced.

The hop garden which fronted the house, later an orchard and now simply grassed, has continued to remain free of built structures, giving the house a sense of prominence in the landscape.

The historic layout to the east of the farm house whereby large barn structures formed two sides of a small courtyard with the house forming the third, was lost in the early 1900s with the removal of the barns. Following this, the mapping and historic photos suggest that the farm-related buildings and activities were focused further east beyond the house, eventually with the addition of a new house (bungalow) and the farm being separated entirely (now Leywood Farm). There are various modern agricultural buildings on both sites which are of no historical significance.

As a result, the existing placement of the outbuildings other than gatehouse is generally considered to be of little significance, other than helping to tell the story of how the site evolved to arrive at this layout, as neither the historic layout or traditional farm buildings remain. The setting of the farm house looking onto the large open lawns is significant, with built form always resisting use of this space and instead being concentrated to the north and east sides of the house.

3.6 Impact on the Asset

The origins of the house as an open hall house have been summarised on page 23. While the house is of 'special interest', as recognised by its listing, the proposals set out here do not make any alterations to the house itself.

Similarly, the proposals do not make any alterations to the curtilage listed gatehouse building, but do sit adjacent to it, which is why it has been considered in its own right in this document.

The main impact to be assessed therefore, is if the proposal impacts the setting of the heritage asset/s, related views of the asset/s or the way the setting allows the asset/s to be appreciated.



Drone photograph

(Source: Homeowners Survey)

The proposed building is considered to have a **positive** impact on the setting and the assets/s by:

- Replacing an existing, low quality building which does not make a positive contribution to the site in terms of the building materials, form or appearance.
- Utilising the footprint of an existing building as opposed to an additional structure being created elsewhere on the site.
- Being positioned at the low point of the site with the least impact on how the heritage assets are appreciated.
- Removing the need for parking in the gatehouse building and thus risk to its structure, which was not designed to house wider modern vehicles used today.
- Maintaining the major views of the asset/s from the west - from Leywood Road, across the gardens and from the public right of way, which are uninterrupted by the proposal due to the site topography and the proposals form and massing.
- Being designed with hipped, cat slide roofs with low lying eaves, to sit below the adjacent ridge line and reduce the overall massing and bulk of the building.
- Being constructed from sustainable, traditional and familiar materials which are sympathetic to the setting and reference materials found on the existing ancillary buildings on the site.
- Utilising the existing driveway for access and replacing the unattractive, poorly draining concrete sections with a more appropriate, natural pea shingle.
- Offsetting the the extended turning area by re-landscaping the existing parking/turning area, as per the historic layout.
- Removing visual clutter in the form of cars parked around the site by providing discreet, dedicated parking areas for homeowners within the new building, and visitors when required in the extending turning area, which is surrounded by mature vegetation and obscured from view.



Existing driveway photograph with parking 'clutter', detracting from the heritage asset/s

4 Planning Statement

4.1 Planning Context / Policy

This statement sets out the site planning history and the relevant planning policy.

The site description and proposal details have previously been included in the Design and Access chapters (1 and 2) . To avoid duplication this information is only repeated where necessary to address how the proposal takes account of the relevant policies.

Relevant Planning Policy

National

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and puts "the presumption in favour of sustainable development" at the heart of the planning system. The following chapters are relevant to the proposal:

- 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Local

The Development Plan for Gravesham Borough comprises the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014) , which sets out the planning policies that guide development in the borough. The following policies within the Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:

- CS01: Sustainable Development
- CS12: Green Infrastructure
- CS19: Development and Design Principles
- CS20: Heritage and Historic Environment

The following Strategic Objectives within the Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:

- SO8 - Preserve the openness of the Green Belt, maintain its national and local planning purposes and protect it from inappropriate development.
- SO9 - Conserve and enhance the diverse rural landscape including the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting.

- SO13 - Protect and enhance the Borough's heritage assets and historic environment.
- SO14 - Ensure that all new development makes a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the Borough, minimises the risk of crime, responds to climate change and integrates into the existing built, historic and natural environment.
- SO16 - Safeguard and enhance the biodiversity of the Borough.

Site Constraints:

- Luddesdown Downs Local Landscape Character Area
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Rural Boundary
- Archaeological Notification Areas
- Green Belt
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Planning law sets out that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Councils Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Material considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of light or overshadowing
- Parking
- Highway safety
- Traffic
- Noise
- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- Layout and density of building
- Design, appearance and materials
- Government policy
- Disabled persons' access
- Proposals in the Development Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Nature conservation.

4.2 Site Planning History

Most recent applications shown first:

Ref. No: 20210919 | Status: Application Withdrawn

Conversion existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.

Ref. No: 20210920 | Status: Application Withdrawn

Application for Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.

Ref. No: 20120667 | Status: Application Permitted

Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of secondary glazing to all windows at first and second floor levels.

Ref. No: 20170711 | Status: Application Permitted

Application for Listed Building Consent for the retention of the en-suite shower room and cupboard in the fourth bedroom at first floor level.

Ref. No: 20171004 | Status: Approval of details

Application for the approval of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference no. 20170711 relating to details of the extractor fan.

Ref. No: 19980461 | Status: Application Permitted

The installation of a Yorkstar 24 oil fired condensing boiler in lobby leading to ground floor toilet, with a rear exit external flue.

Ref. No: 19860199 | Status: Application Permitted

Use of land as residential garden and erection of 2.75 metre high perimeter fence to tennis court

4.3 Planning Analysis

An assessment of the proposed development is set out against the relevant planning policy noted on page 32. A topic-based approach is taken in respect of the prevailing planning considerations, with due regard to the planning policies at National and Local level.

1. Sustainable Development and The Green Belt

The NPPF defines 5 purposes of Green Belts as follows:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The NPPF goes on to state that “local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land” (Paragraph 141).

New buildings are considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless they meet one of the listed exceptions:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- Limited infilling in villages;
- Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan; and
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development, or
 - Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would reuse previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”

As noted in the Gravesham Local Plan CS01 Sustainable Development, section 4.2.7,

“The National Aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The extent of the Green Belt in Gravesham is defined on the Policies Map. Its local planning purposes are:

- To maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside by minimising the expansion of the Borough’s rural settlements; and
- To assist in concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet.”

Assessment of impact on The Green Belt

The proposal is to replace an existing store for grounds-maintenance tools and equipment. The replacement building will be in the same use, with the addition of covered open-fronted parking spaces.

It is considered that the proposed building would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, either spatially or visually, and would improve the visual amenity. The NPPF planning practice guidance suggests that “assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case.” Albeit separate entities, Boughurst Farm and Leywood Farm are essentially one site, now under different ownerships but historically a single settlement. The site comprises large farm buildings to the east, which while an exception to Green Belt development restrictions due to their agricultural use, are still capable of causing visual and spatial harm given their size and stature. Given the existing collection of buildings, the way in which they sit in the landscape and the relationship/adjacency of the proposed building to these existing structures, the resulting impact on both the immediate and wider site and the openness of the landscape is negligible.

Any suggestions of potential harm are further outweighed by benefits to:

1. The heritage assets by,
 - removing the necessity for parking from the curtilage listed gatehouse building, risking damage to the structure.
2. The landscape, visual amenity and setting of the heritage assets by,
 - Re-landscaping the existing hardstanding,
 - Enhancing the visual appreciation and enjoyment of the assets and the visual amenity as a whole by providing discreet, dedicated parking areas and visually decluttering the site of scattered vehicles.

4.3 Planning Analysis (continued)

2. High Quality Design

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF asserts that “the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”, and that planning policy should ensure that developments:

- “Function well and add to the overall quality of the area.
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Are sympathetic to local character and history.”

The Gravesham Local plan Policy CS19 states that new development will:

- “Be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive.
- Conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards.”

It goes on to describe how this can be achieved through taking account of:

- “The scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.
- The wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.”

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (draft) Management Plan states:

“The choice of design and materials in restoration, new development and landscape management are recognised as critical when seeking to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB. It goes on to add that “New developments will be expected to apply appropriate design guidance and to be complementary to local character in form, siting, scale, contribution to settlement pattern and choice of materials.”

Assessment of the Design

The design proposal is considered in detail in sections 1 and 2. The proposals have been made in response to both planning policy and relevant design guidance.

The proposal first seeks to demolish an existing building of low quality modern construction and limited architectural merit, which does not make a positive contribution to the immediate site, wider area or local character. A high quality replacement building has been designed to provide a machinery store as per the existing use, with a separate tools workshop and parking spaces. An associated turning and visitor parking area opposite reinvigorates the site of a former pond, enhancing the biodiversity with new shrubs and planting.

The building design is well-considered and visually attractive, and in addition to fulfilling the functional and spatial requirements of the design brief, plays a bigger role in enhancing the character and use of the site as a whole.

FORM AND APPEARANCE

The design references the forms of existing buildings on the site while remaining subordinate to them, both in terms of its size and its overall appearance. This is achieved by a limited ridge height, hipped catslide roofs and low lying eaves. The building is positioned to take account of the existing built form both immediately adjacent, and across the boundary in the farmyard. In doing so it successfully integrates into the site without impacting major views in and around the site, or those of the site from a distance.

MATERIALS

The building is set on a low brick plinth and is of timber construction with exposed oak framing with traditional detailing, black painted horizontal featheredged weatherboarding and clay roof tiles. The materials draw inspiration from, and are sympathetic to, the existing buildings on the site and in line with the guidance provided in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, make use of vernacular materials.

ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

The design does not impact the site access arrangements and requires no alterations in terms of highways.

Part of the existing driveway is to be re-landscaped, offsetting the new turning area to be implemented; there is therefore no material increase in the amount of hardstanding on the site generally.

PARKING

The design provides two permanent parking spaces within the new building and can accommodate two parked visitor vehicles and turning space in the proposed hardstanding area opposite. The parking spaces are largely out of sight due to being either in the new building, or surrounded by mature vegetation.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

The site is classed as a ‘very low risk’ area for flooding from both rivers and the sea. The site is also classed as a ‘very low risk’ area for flooding from surface water, which occurs when rainwater cannot drain away through the normal drainage systems. An appropriately sized ground soakaway is proposed to manage rainwater from the proposed building on the site. The location of the soakaway is marked on the proposed site plan.

NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS

Due to the form and position of the building and its lack of window openings, coupled with the existing mature vegetation, the proposal does not result in any issues of overlooking or loss of privacy, or overshadowing or loss of light.

ECOLOGY AND TREES

The existing storage building to be demolished is a post-1960s structure of modern materials, which is considered unlikely to provide opportunity for protected species habitats.

The proposal does not impact any existing trees on the site.

4.3 Planning Analysis (continued)

3. Landscape and Natural Environment

The NPPF Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, states that development within the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty “should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

The Gravesham Local Plan Policy CS12 states that “The overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced. The greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, and the Cluster Studies where relevant.”

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2026 sustainable development principle 9 states:

“New developments will be expected to apply appropriate design guidance and to be complementary to local character in form, siting, scale, contribution to settlement pattern and choice of materials.”

It also states a historic and cultural aim for:

“A landscape in which the principal special characteristics and qualities of the historic character of the Kent Downs landscape, the sites and features, field and settlement patterns... are recognised, valued, conserved and enhanced.”

The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment provides guidelines specific to the Luddesdown Downs area with the aim of protecting and maintaining its character and quality. The relevant guidelines are:

- “Assess development proposals within the area to maintain the character of sparse and distinctive built

development.

- Conserve the isolation and small-scale farmsteads and hamlets.
- Encourage the use of vernacular materials and techniques for buildings and built elements, particularly the use of flint and Kent peg tiles.”

Assessment of impact on the Landscape and Natural Environment

The proposed development has applied appropriate design guidance, as discussed in item 2 ‘High Quality Design’, including that of the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Assessment.

The proposed building is designed, positioned and organised to have a minimal impact on the immediate site and wider setting of the AONB by:

- Using vernacular materials including brick, timber weatherboarding and clay tiles.
- Lying at the low point of Boughurst Farm topographically.
- Remaining within the bounds of the existing cluster of buildings and therefore having a negligible individual impact on the setting.

4. Historic Environment

The NPPF asserts that in determining proposals affecting heritage assets, local authorities should take account of:

- “The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”

The Gravesham Local Plan states that :

“Any proposals for development demonstrate a thorough understanding of the heritage significance of any affected assets, their context and setting.”

It goes on to add:

“Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment...”

Assessment of impact on the Historic Environment

A heritage statement has been included in section 3, and therefore only policy related heritage guidance has been reviewed in this section.

The proposal has been developed following a careful analysis of the heritage assets and the setting, including their evolution and significance, informing a thoughtful design response that enhances the setting. The proposal provides a considered design which respects and references the existing forms, massing, material palette and material colours found within both the site and the locality.

The building proposed for demolition is an ancillary addition to the main farm house, of no architectural quality - it does not hold any heritage value nor does it positively contribute to the character or appearance of the area.

The balance of built form, resulting from the proposal to replace the existing store with a higher quality, more appropriately designed building which also addresses parking issues on the site, supports the enhancement of the architectural interest of the main farm house and the gatehouse, through improving their setting.



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