PROPOSED POOLHOUSE & RESTORATION OF BUILDINGS 5 & 8

WHITEHOUSE FARM, LAND WAY, ME3 7JH

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2026

ON ARCHITECTURE

Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8, Whitehouse Farm: Design & Access Statement

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by On Architecture on behalf of Mr P. Giles.

Project Title	Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8
Site Address	Whitehouse Farm, Land Way, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7JH
Client Details	Mr P. Giles
Document Type	Design & Access Statement
Document Number	24.051-ONA-XX-XX-RP-A-0002
Suitability	S0

Revision	Date	Note	Prepared	Checked
DRAFT	23/05/2025	Draft issue for comment	IA	LH
01	05/02/2026	Issue for planning	BB	-

This document has been designed to be printed double sided at A3 (landscape).

ON ARCHITECTURE

Logan House,
St Andrews Close,
Canterbury,
CT1 2RP

T:01227 634 334
E:info@onarchitecture.co.uk
W:onarchitecture.co.uk

First issue published by On Architecture Ltd, May 2025.

© 2025 On Architecture Ltd (unless otherwise stated within this document)

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval systems, or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of On Architecture Ltd.

Please note:
Unless otherwise stated all drawings, maps, images and diagrams contained within this document are not to scale.

CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION

On Architecture 5
Introduction 6

02 ASSESSMENT

Site location 8
Photographs of the Site 9
Contextual Study 10

03 EVALUATION

Opportunities and Constraints 12
History of Whitehouse Farm 13
The National Design Guide 14

04 DESIGN

Barn Conversion 16
Pool House & Link 17
Design strategy 18
Layout Plan 19
Elevations & Materials 20
Computer Generated Image 21

05 CONCLUSION

Conclusion 23

01

Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

Introduction

ON ARCHITECTURE

On Architecture are a multi-award winning design practice with extensive experience in architecture, planning and property specialised across Kent and the Southeast. We operate from a studio located in Canterbury and work on projects across the UK: which include retail, commercial, residential, hospitality, education and listed buildings, ranging in scale from bespoke to masterplanning.

From the outset, the Practice has established a reputation for exemplary design and consistently high standards of service.

On Architecture understands the commercial realities that come with projects and our aim as Architects is to work within the project specific parameters and to maximise value through high quality and innovative design solutions for both the client and end user.

Through a rigorous undertaking of background and contextual analysis of proposal sites, we are able to deliver high quality developments which maximise the unique opportunities afforded by our strong contextual understanding and engagement. In each case, we strive to create bold, well designed proposals which generate a strong sense of ownership, while respecting context, character, and wherever possible, enhancing the surrounding area.

We understand what it takes to create vibrant new communities, successful new developments and high quality, sympathetic additions to sensitive places. The importance of maintaining a high standard in design, layout, services and natural amenities remains at the core of our design ethos and philosophy.

Examples of relevant work, including work on listed buildings [On Architecture]

INTRODUCTION

On Architecture has been appointed by Mr. P. Giles to consider the potential for redevelopment of Buildings no.5 & 8, part of Whitehouse Farm located in Higham, Rochester .

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared for the proposed development at Whitehouse Farm, situated on Land Way, Higham, Rochester, ME3 7JH. The historically significant and visually appealing rural location of the site offers an opportunity for thoughtful and sensitive development. This document outlines the design principles and concepts that have informed the proposal, ensuring that it respects the character and setting of the existing landscape while meeting modern standards for functionality, accessibility, and sustainability.

Building 5, formerly utilised as a threshing barn, is proposed to be restored and transformed into an ancillary facility. Building 8 is proposed to be rebuilt following demolition. The proposal aims to re-purpose the existing structure in a way that it preserves its historical integrity while introducing modern amenities that would enhance its functionality.

This document includes studies of the surrounding area, the site and the proposed development. The purpose of this document is to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and local environment, whilst demonstrating the commitment of the applicant and designers to achieving good design and meeting the requirements of planning policy, legislation and good practice guidance.

N

Aerial view showing site location

(Image courtesy of Google)

02 Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

Assessment

SITE LOCATION

Whitehouse Farm is situated on Land Way in the village of Higham, Rochester. Higham is a large village in the borough of Gravesham in Kent, characterised by its historic buildings and scenic landscape.

Located in a rural setting, the site benefits from a serene countryside atmosphere while being conveniently accessible from nearby towns and major roadways. The A2 and M2 motorways are within close proximity, providing direct routes to London and the southeast coast. Additionally, Higham is served by a local train station, enhancing connectivity to the broader region.

The site itself is surrounded by agricultural land, contributing to its scenic character and reinforcing its historical significance. The existing hedgerows, woodland and small watercourses around the site enhance the visual setting and support local biodiversity.

Whitehouse Farm's location in a predominantly agricultural area presents an opportunity to integrate the new leisure and entertaining space into the existing infrastructure and landscape thoughtfully. The design and development of the ancillary will be carried out with sensitivity to the surrounding environment, ensuring that it compliments the rural character of the area.

N

Red boundary line indicates application site

(Image courtesy of Google)

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE

Photographs of the application site are set out below:

A

B

C

Image courtesy of Google

D

E

F

CONTEXTUAL STUDY

The area surrounding the site comprises an eclectic mix of buildings, of mixed age, architectural style and scale (see photographs below):

1 Building 12, Whitehouse Farm

2 Building 13, Whitehouse Farm

3 Building 10, Whitehouse Farm

Image courtesy of Google

4 Building 1, Whitehouse Farm

5 Building 15, Whitehouse Farm

6 Building 14, Whitehouse Farm

03

Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

Evaluation

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

N

Key

- 1 Main site entrance
- 2 Courtyard
- 3 Garden
- Existing building to be re-developed
- Dilapidated sheds to be removed
- Primary Roads
- Existing vehicular access retained
- Existing foot way
- Public Right of Way
- Existing trees and hedges
- Agricultural fields
- Focal point
- Single storey buildings
- 2 1/2 storey buildings
- Pond
- Potential pool area
- Landscape buffer
- LB Listed buildings
- Key views

Opportunities and Constraints Diagram

Not to scale

Opportunities

- Repurposing an existing building for resident use aligns with sustainable planning principles, making efficient use of available space
- Incorporating historical elements into the proposed design can create a unique and aesthetically pleasing facility that enhances the site's overall character
- Implementing sustainable principles into the design can minimise the project's environmental footprint and contribute positively to the surrounding ecosystem
- Maximise excellent views over surrounding landscape

Constraints

- Working on a curtilage listed building, meaning strict compliance with local planning regulations and heritage conservation laws is essential
- The proposed facility must aesthetically harmonise with the listed buildings and historical landscape, which may restrict certain modern design elements
- Buildings in poor condition will need to be carefully restored to ensure retention of heritage character

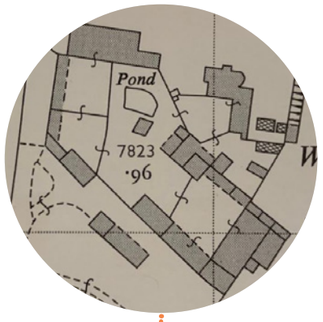
HISTORY OF WHITEHOUSE FARM

Whitehouse Farm was established in the 18th century by local farmers, becoming a central hub for agricultural activities in the region. During that time, the farm was called 'Brick House'.

The map also records the presence of buildings 1,2,11 and 12 along with two further buildings that have since been demolished. It clearly shows the loose courtyard layout.

The OS map from 1897 shows little change to the farmyard layout but includes sufficient detail to show that buildings 12 and 14 were open fronted.

By this time the farm has been re-named The White House.

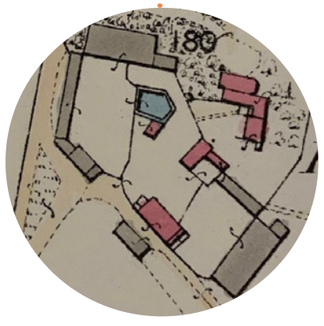


The Ordnance Survey map of 1960 shows the farmyard largely in its present form with the addition of building 8 against the south-west gable wall of building 5.

1838 · 1866 · 1897 · 1933 · 1960 · 2024

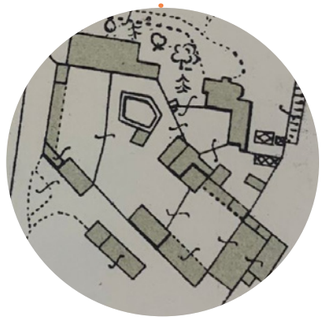
The OS map from 1866 shows that the farm experienced significant expansion, acquiring additional land and increasing its production capacity to meet growing demand for agricultural products.

The farmhouse appears to have been extended with its main aspect to the north facing away from the farmyard. The map shows the presence of buildings 3,4,5,10,13,14 and 15 along with a farmyard pond.



The map from 1933 shows the addition of buildings 7 and 9 along with further structures flanking buildings 4 and 15 which are no longer extant.

A modern grain store is also depicted beyond the southern perimeter of the site which although still present is no longer part of the existing property.



The most recent OS map from 2024, shows main road (Land Way) which leads to Whitehouse Farm and forms two sides of a rectangle of roads which surround Higham Station, School Lane from the western side and Lower Rochester road from the northern side.

Since the 1960s there have not been any new buildings added or demolished at the site.

Image courtesy of The National Library & Old Maps

THE NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

The proposed development aims to display good design and address fully the ten key characteristics set out in the National Design Guide – ensuring a efficient, suitable and sustainable development enhancing the local area.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

The 10 characteristics of a well designed place [National Design Guide]

1. **Context –** The proposed design of the development relates to the existing buildings in the local area and replicates characteristics in materials, detailing and scale. Refer to page 9 of this document for further details.

2. **Identity –** The proposal strives to draw from the identity and character of the surrounding area in order to inform a more sensitive development, incorporating relevant materials and details in order to produce a more attractive and appropriate development.

3. **Built form –** The scale of the development has been considered in detail taking on board the size of local existing buildings as well as aiming to respond to and mitigate impact on buildings in the immediate local vicinity. Refer to page 18 of this document for further details.

4. **Movement –** The proposals will seek to utilise all of the connections and movement opportunities highlighted, including access to the designated roadside pedestrian route to the nearby town centre and amenities. Within the proposal the movement of residents should be considered in the design...

5. **Nature –** The proposal enhances the landscaping of the site by proposing a number of new trees and areas of planting.

6. **Public spaces –** The proposal provides safe, social and inclusive spaces for future residents.

7. **Uses –** The proposal will provide liesure and entertainment spaces, in addition to the main house.

8. **Homes and buildings –** The proposed building aims to provide functional, healthy and sustainable accommodation tailored to the needs of the site.

9. **Resources –** The proposals will comply with all government criteria for a sustainable development across design, materials and in location. A holistic approach is taken towards sustainability, considering not only environmental but also social and economic sustainability. By being efficient and resilient, a truly sustainable development is ensured.

10. **Lifespan –** The proposed development and its facilities will be made to last. The buildings will be easily and well managed and maintained due to a sense of ownership which is created in order to benefit future residents and prolong the life and use of the development. By emphasising this at the design stage, care will be taken to produce a communal and inclusive space which is both aesthetically pleasing and functional, ensuring maintenance and use for many years.

04 Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

Design

BARN CONVERSION

The proposal seeks to restore and convert the agricultural barn into an open plan leisure and entertainment space. Featuring a spacious kitchen and bar with large windows and openings to maximise views over the landscape.

The materials used will match the existing materials found on the site in order to maintain harmony with the surrounding buildings and respect the heritage character of the listed barn. The existing timber structure of the barn is to be retained and restored where applicable, with new black weather boarding to the exterior and new clay tiles to the roof.

The central courtyard is to be made a feature with central water fountain and rich landscaping to enhance the space. Key views over the surrounding landscape are to be maximised within the proposal.

Precedent Images

Courtyard with rich landscaping and outdoor dining area

High ceilings with exposed timber structure

Spacious open plan kitchen for entertaining

Landscape views through from courtyard

Large openings and expanses of glass

Agricultural farmyard enhanced with landscaping

Barn opening onto pool area

Leisure area maximising key views over landscape

POOL HOUSE & LINK

A low-lying flat roofed pool house is proposed to the rear of the barn, with large expanses of glazing and a simple structure to maximise the views over the landscape. The flat roof form ensures the poolhouse is an unimposing addition to the farm and is proposed to be connected to the barn via a lightweight glass link.

Precedent Images

Light of touch structure to maximise views

Contemporary materials and large expanses of glazing

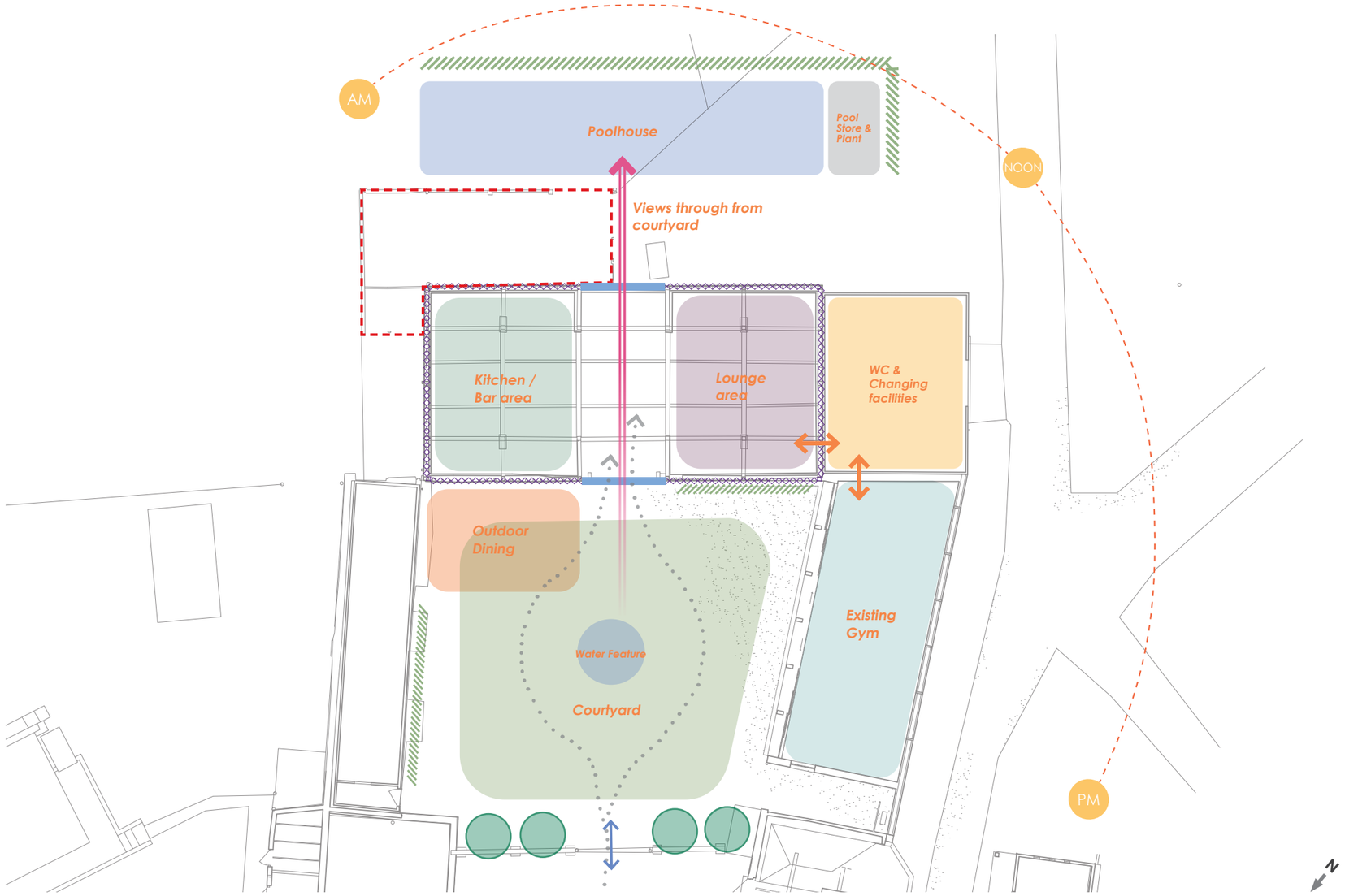
Timber roof structure reflective of the barn interior

Glass link from barn to pool house

Contemporary extension to historic building

Flat roof form

DESIGN STRATEGY



Key

- Existing sheds to be removed
- Listed barn to be restored
- Proposed new access
- Existing access maintained
- Key views
- Feature glazing
- Proposed landscape planting
- Proposed trees

Concept Strategy Diagram

Not to scale

The above diagram illustrates the initial design strategy for the site layout including internal layout and connection to outdoor spaces. The listed barn is proposed to be restored where applicable and converted into a large open plan entertainment space, with a bar and lounge area. Feature glazed openings on each side of the barn will allow key views directly from the courtyard through to the pool area and landscape beyond.

The central farmstead courtyard will be maintained as a key feature of the design, serving as the main access route to the barn as well as hosting a sheltered outdoor dining area. The courtyard will be enhanced with a central water feature, proposed trees and planting.

The blockwork building connecting the barn and the gym will provide toilets, shower and changing facilities for the gym as well as storage.

LAYOUT PLAN

The proposal is centred around the main view stretching from the central courtyard through to the landscape beyond. This will be achieved through large glass doors on either side of the barn, which will open onto the courtyard and lead through to the pool house creating a large space for socialising both indoors and outdoors.

The barn features a kitchen, utility room, central dining area as well as living / games area. Facilities such as WC, shower, changing room and sauna are proposed to be connected to the existing gym.

The poolhouse is proposed to the rear of the barn, with a simple structure and large windows - emulating the design of the gym and internal aisled timber structure of the barn. An enclosed glass link creates a sympathetic connection between the historic and contemporary structures. The simple form and materials of the poolhouse and link ensures a harmonious and unimposing addition to the barn.

Layout Plan

Not to scale

ELEVATIONS & MATERIALS

It is proposed to replace the existing weatherboarding and clay tiles on the barn with new materials to match the existing exterior. The poolhouse is proposed to be clad in a contemporary black metal with large aluminium framed windows.

1

Black Weatherboarding

2

Clay Tiles

3

Existing brickwork

4

Aluminium Windows

5

Metal Cladding

Proposed Street Scene

Not to scale

COMPUTER GENERATED IMAGE

Indicative View of Proposed Poolhouse

05 Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a detailed application for the restoration of an agricultural barn and neighbouring blockwork building as well as a proposed poolhouse at Whitehouse Farm, Land Way, Higham, Rochester, ME3 7JH.

The proposal aims to restore and convert the agricultural barn to provide an open plan entertainment space with adjoinging facilities to the gym.

The detailed scheme has been informed by thorough assessment of the existing site context, planning opportunities and constraints and is supported by a series of technical reports.

The principle of good design underpins the proposal, as does the aim to enhance the visual character of the site. Particular care and attention have been given from the outset to the setting of the nearby buildings.

It is therefore concluded that the proposals are fully supported and acceptable in design and access terms.

ON ARCHITECTURE

Logan House,
St Andrews Close,
Canterbury,
CT1 2RP

T:01227 634 334
E:info@onarchitecture.co.uk
W:onarchitecture.co.uk