

#2421
STONE WOOD

24 01 2025

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



JRD ARCHITECTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Preface
02	Present Arrangement
05	Site Photographs
08	Planning History
09	Design Proposal
10	Materials Palette
11	Proposed Arrangement
13	Area Schedule
13	Site Analysis
16	Ecological Enhancements
22	Design Review

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This document is to be read alongside the supporting documents including existing & proposed drawings as well as any reports. Unless otherwise stated, drawings not to scale.

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PREFACE

DESIGN PROPOSAL TO CONVERT AN EXISTING BARN INTO A DWELLING IN MEOPHAM.

LOCATION

- › Stoney Wood, South Street, Meopham, Kent

OBJECTIVE

- › With the existing barn prone to break-ins, the owner/applicant is seeking permission to convert the existing barn into a single dwelling for their own use allowing them to have a permanent presence on site to deter future vandalism. The site will continue to be used as a paddock with no reduction in the current area of grazing land.

SITE CONSTRAINTS

- › Green Belt.
- › Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area.



PRESENT ARRANGEMENT

SITE CONTEXT

The site is located in-between Meopham Village and Culverstone with shops in either direction, bus stops, and Meopham Train station a short distance away.

The 1.6km section of South Street in-between the two villages features multiple properties of varying plot size and design. In regards to the neighbouring sites, the plot to the North & South are open-fields, to the West is woodland, and to the East is the Baptist Church. The boundaries are lined by wire fencing, scrubland, hedgerows and established trees.

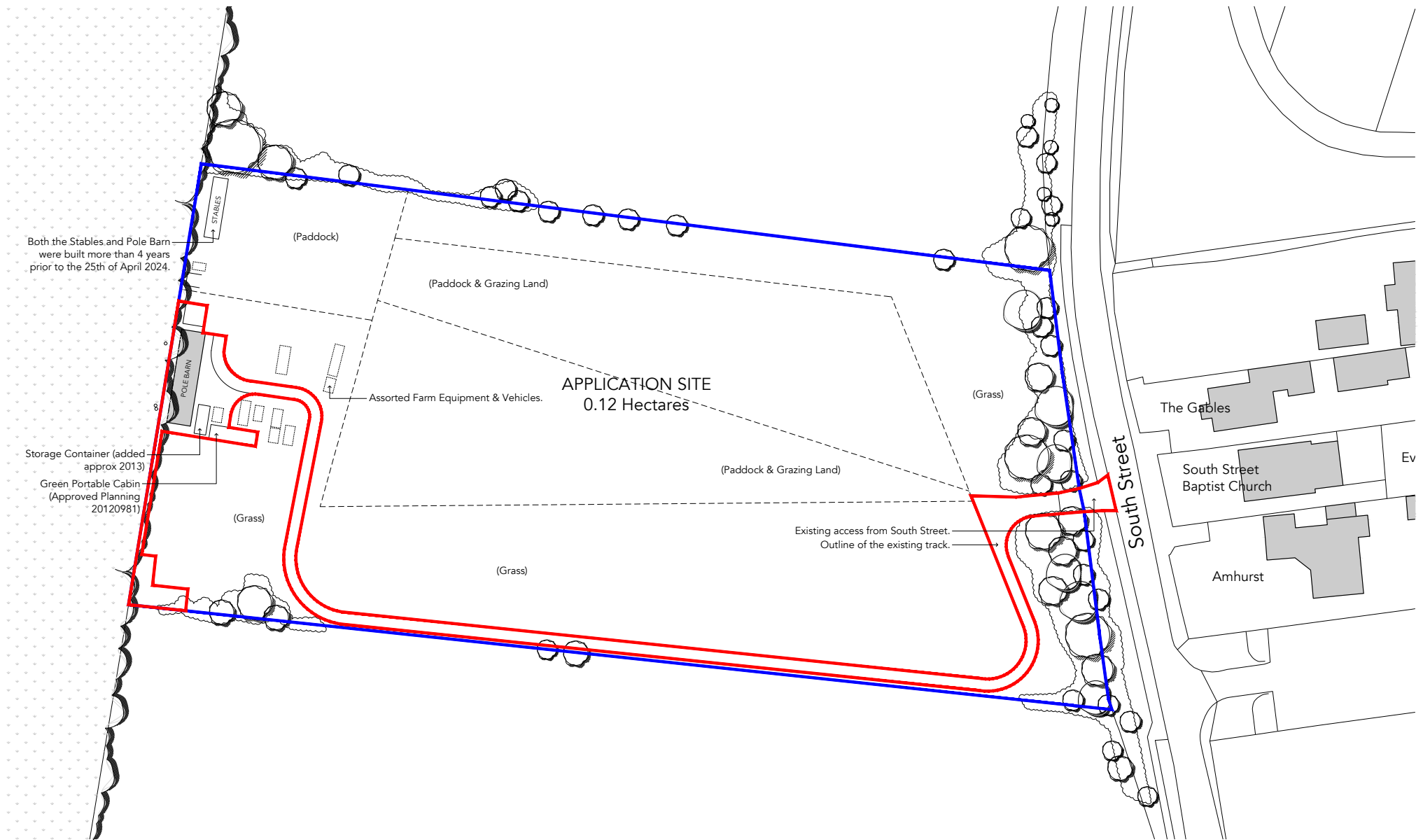
The site is predominantly split into two paddocks with the structures & equipment being consolidated along the Western Boundary furthest away from the A227, and due to the topography of the site, not visible from the road or site access gates.

This includes a barn, stable, Portable Cabin, storage container, various small structures and farm equipment.

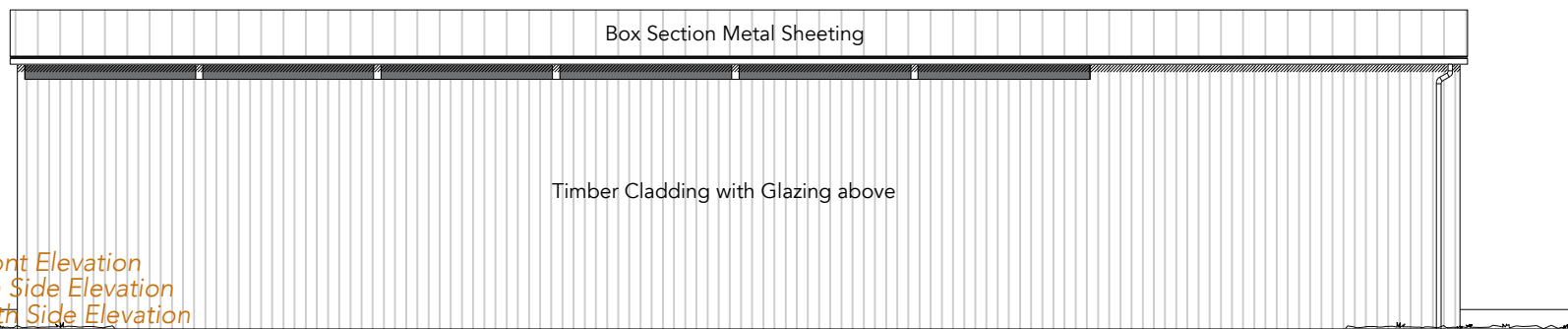
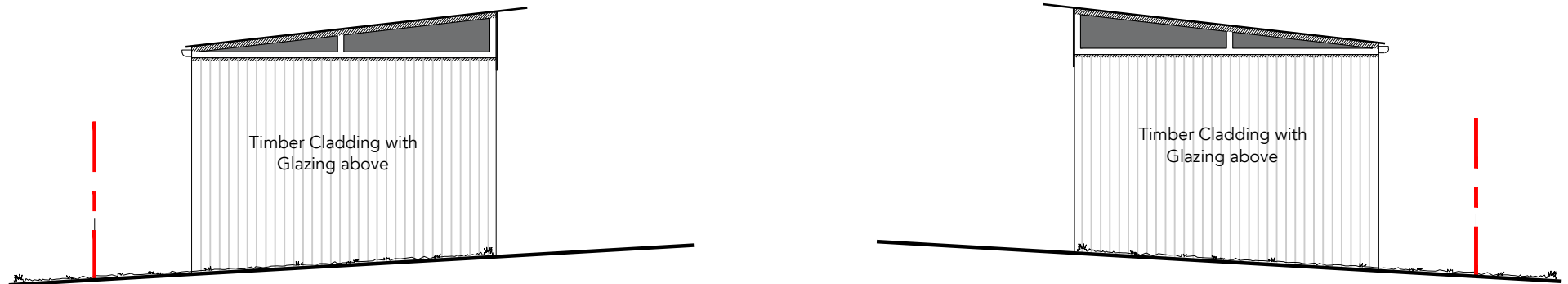
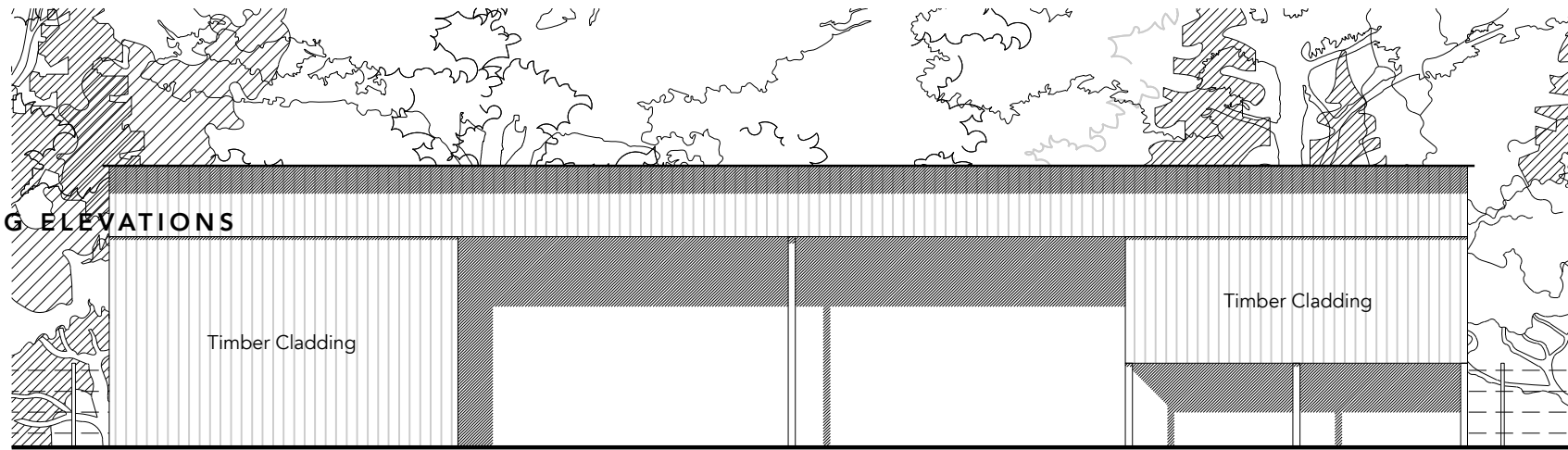
In reviewing the history of the site, the stables were built around 2007, the barn was built around 2011, and the Portable Cabin was approved planning in 2013 where it has remained in its original location.



Site Map sourced from 'Addland' accessed Oct 2024 showing the 'Green Belt' in green and the local villages outside of this area.



EXISTING ELEVATIONS



(Above) Existing Front Elevation
 (Left) Existing South Side Elevation
 (Right) Existing North Side Elevation
 (Below) Existing Rear Elevation

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Existing Site Plan



BARN OUT OF VIEW

01 View from the site entrance towards the barn completely out of view behind the crest of the hill as shown.



02 Entrance to the top paddock.



03 Entrance gates from South Street.



06 Existing Site Plan



01 Entrance to the site from South Street.



02 View South.



03 View North.



04 The existing access road on site.



05 Looking East towards the entrance of the site demonstrating a lack of visibility.



06 Demonstrating that even on the site, the barn is out of view due to the crest of the hill & the level change.



Existing Site Plan



01 Farm equipment, Portable Cabin & barn behind.



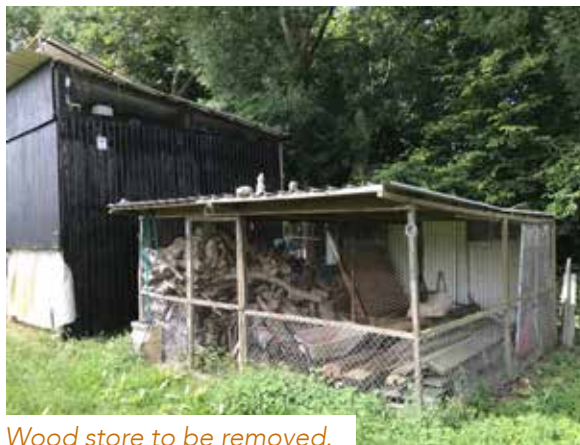
02 Side view of the barn.



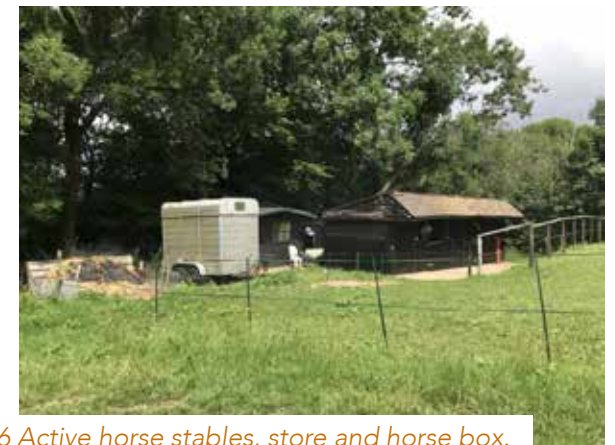
03 View of the barn in question.



04 Side view of the barn and the proposed site.



05 Wood store to be removed.



06 Active horse stables, store and horse box.

PLANNING HISTORY

PAST APPLICATIONS

Year	2013
Reference	20120981
Description	Retention of the storage container for secure storage of agricultural machinery, equipment and hand implements.
Outcome	Permitted

RELEVANT PRE APPLICATIONS

Year	2023
Reference	PRE20230095
Description	Proposal for a bungalow.

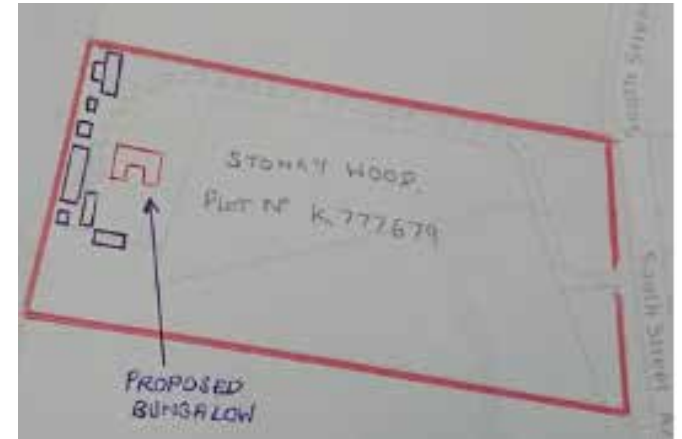
A pre-application was submitted last year for the erection of a new detached bungalow close to the existing barn. The accompanying site plan and elevation give a rough outline of a possible design with the main question being the principal of forming a dwelling on the site.

The reaction was that any development of the Green Belt would be seen as 'harmful', and with the proposal including the erection of a new structure on two levels, it was seen to have a negative impact.

Even though it was recognised that measures could be taken to potentially mitigate the visual impact such as screening, landscaping and excavating land, it would not overcome the impact the new structure would have on the openness of the landscape.

The report does go on to note a number of factors that would demonstrate a sustainable means of development in the Green Belt;

- › 'There is need for a rural worker, including those taking a majority control of a farm business, to live at their place of work in the countryside'
- › 'The development would re-sue a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting'.
- › 'The design would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristic of the local area'.



(Above) Drawings from pre-application PRE20230095 included for context.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Given that the site is located within the Green Belt, special consideration must be given to creating a design that;

- › Avoids the permanent loss of openness to the Green Belt caused by erecting new structures.
- › Demonstrates a sustainable means of building in the Green Belt by reusing existing structures.
- › Build in a style that suits the local landscape and enhances the immediate area.

DESIGN STRATEGY

With the objective to create a dwelling so that the farm owner can have a permanent presence on site to reduce crime whilst avoiding any harm to the openness of the Green Belt, a potential way to achieve this would be to re-use an existing structure such as the barn.

In doing so, there is also the opportunity to address other matters that would improve the immediate setting;

- 01** Protect areas used as a paddock and for grazing.
- 02** Consolidate the area occupied by the Portable Cabin and farm equipment to improve the openness of the Green Belt.
- 03** Keep the residential curtilage to land already occupied by equipment & vehicles.
- 04** Where possible use renewable energy sources and sustainable means of drainage.
- 05** Remove the log store and shed to decrease the volume of built structures on site.



(Above) The barn shown on the right with surrounding structures and equipment to be consolidated.

MATERIALS PALETTE

The proposed materials palette has been chosen to compliment the rural setting, using material commonly found on agricultural sites and known for their hard-wearing properties, whilst also forming a direct link to the existing barn to help reduce the visual impact.

With this, the following materials were chosen for the proposed design;

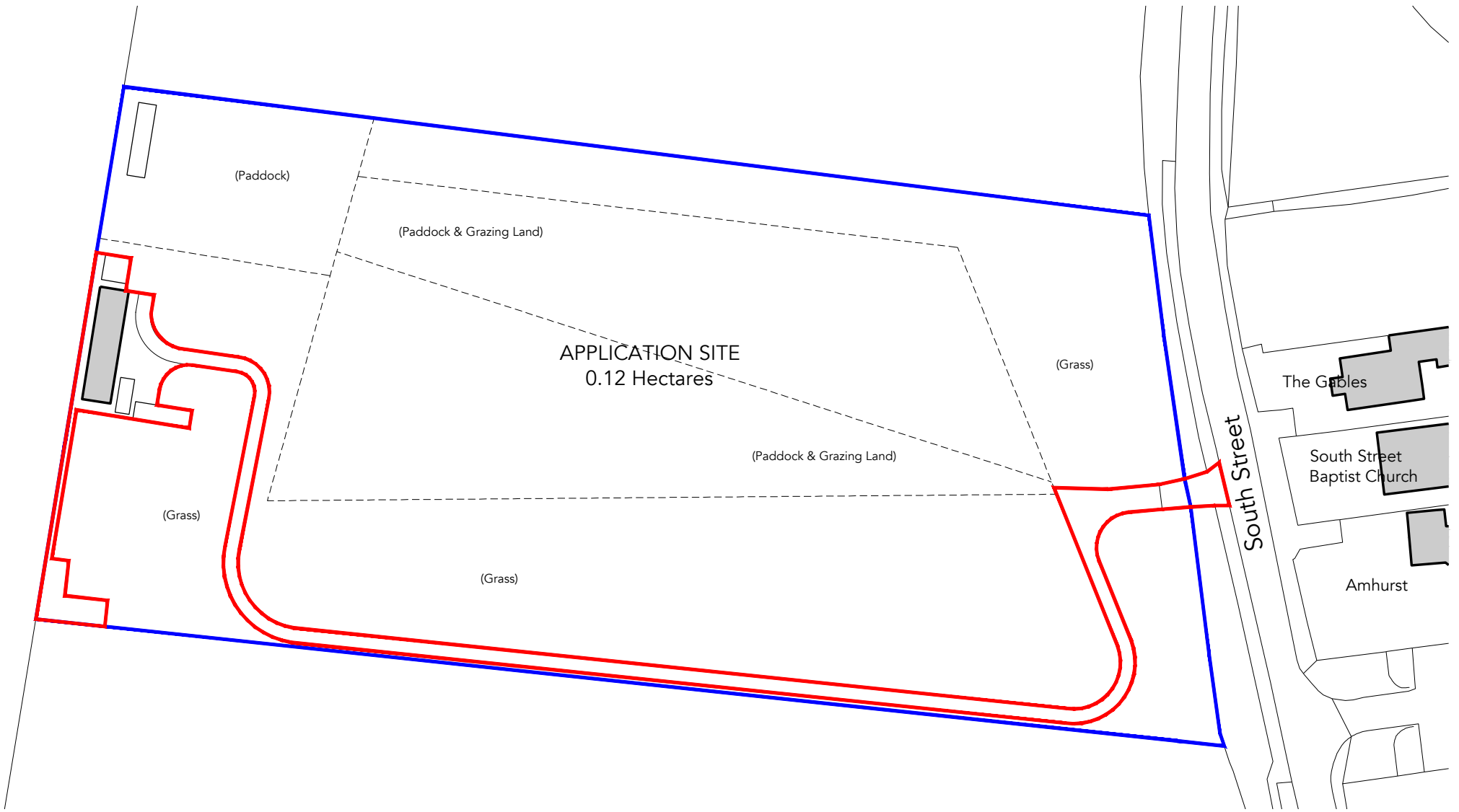
- › External Walls - Brick at low level upto DPC/Finished Floor Level.
- › Cladding - Above this, the majority of the walls will be clad in timber laid vertically and treated black to reference the existing barn, stable and typical agricultural structures across Kent.
- › Roof Covering - Sheets of Metal box section.
- › Fenestration - UPVC double-glazed windows with the frames finished black/dark grey to compliment the cladding.
- › Hard standing - With the existing track being made of compacted hardcore being retained, the extended area serving as a driveway will be made of similar or gravel.

The images shown are for illustration purposes only and may not be an exact representation of the proposal.



PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT





AREA SCHEDULE

CHANGE OF USE

- › 1.07 Hectare - Site Area
- › 0.12 Hectare - Change of Use (with access track)
- › 0.03 Hectare - Change of Use (without track)

EXISTING AREA SCHEDULE:

- › 95sqm Barn Footprint
- › 22sqm Wood Store & Shed
- › 430sqm Area occupied by the Portable Cabin, container & vehicles
- › 547sqm Total area occupied by structures & equipment

PROPOSED AREA SCHEDULE:

- › 95sqm Barn Footprint (staying the same)
- › -22sqm Wood Store & Shed to be removed
- › 250sqm Approximate area occupied by the Portable Cabin, container & vehicles to be consolidated.
- › 323sqm Total area occupied by structures & equipment

SITE ANALYSIS

IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT

Throughout the pre-application report there was an emphasis on the impact & harm that a new structure would have on the openness of the Green Belt.

With this, no new structures are proposed, instead, this application seeks to convert an existing barn whilst removing two structures and consolidating the farm equipment.

In doing so, there would be a reduction of built structures, the area occupied by equipment would be reduced, all the while remaining out of view from the road.

In regards to seeking a sustainable means of development within the Green Belt, there are multiple benefits to this proposal;

- › The occupant of the proposed dwelling would be the owner who has majority control of the farm business.
- › The proposal seeks to re-use an existing structure instead of erecting a new building.
- › The proposal would improve the appearance of the immediate surrounding whilst also being suited to the rural environment.

With this in mind, we believe that the proposal would improve, not harm, the openness of the site and by virtue the Green Belt.

In regards to the area proposed for a change of use and how the presence of a residential unit would impact the openness of the site, this proposal has considered the following;

- › There would be no change or reduction to the area used as a stable, paddock or for grazing.
- › The site would continue to operate as a farm.
- › The existing track from the gates to the barn will be unchanged, therefore there would be no impact.
- › The proposed structure is already present.
- › The proposed dwelling is kept to the area currently occupied by the barn and equipment, so not only would there be very little change to the current arrangement, it would remain entirely out of view from the road.
- › As the barn is a place of work, the site is already accessed and used for parking on a regular basis meaning there would be very little change to how frequently the site is accessed.

TRANSPORT

The site is located less than 1km from two villages, Meopham and Culverstone, with access to bus stops and a train station. The stretch of road between the two villages is home to multiple properties of varying size (many larger than the proposed) indicating that it is not only a suitable place for dwellings but has also been considered appropriate by the Local Authority in the past.

The proposal is for a two-bedroom property, a modest capacity given the size of the plot, which will help limit the number of parked vehicles and 'residential paraphernalia' referenced in the pre-application.

At present, a worker is already required to drive to the site parking near to the barn, therefore the coming & going of a very low volume of vehicles is not new.

SITE ANALYSIS CONTINUED

Access & Highways

01 The access from South Street would remain the same. By virtue of its location, there is already good visibility in both directions which is helped by the depth of the grass verge with any vegetation being set back from the road.

Site Lines

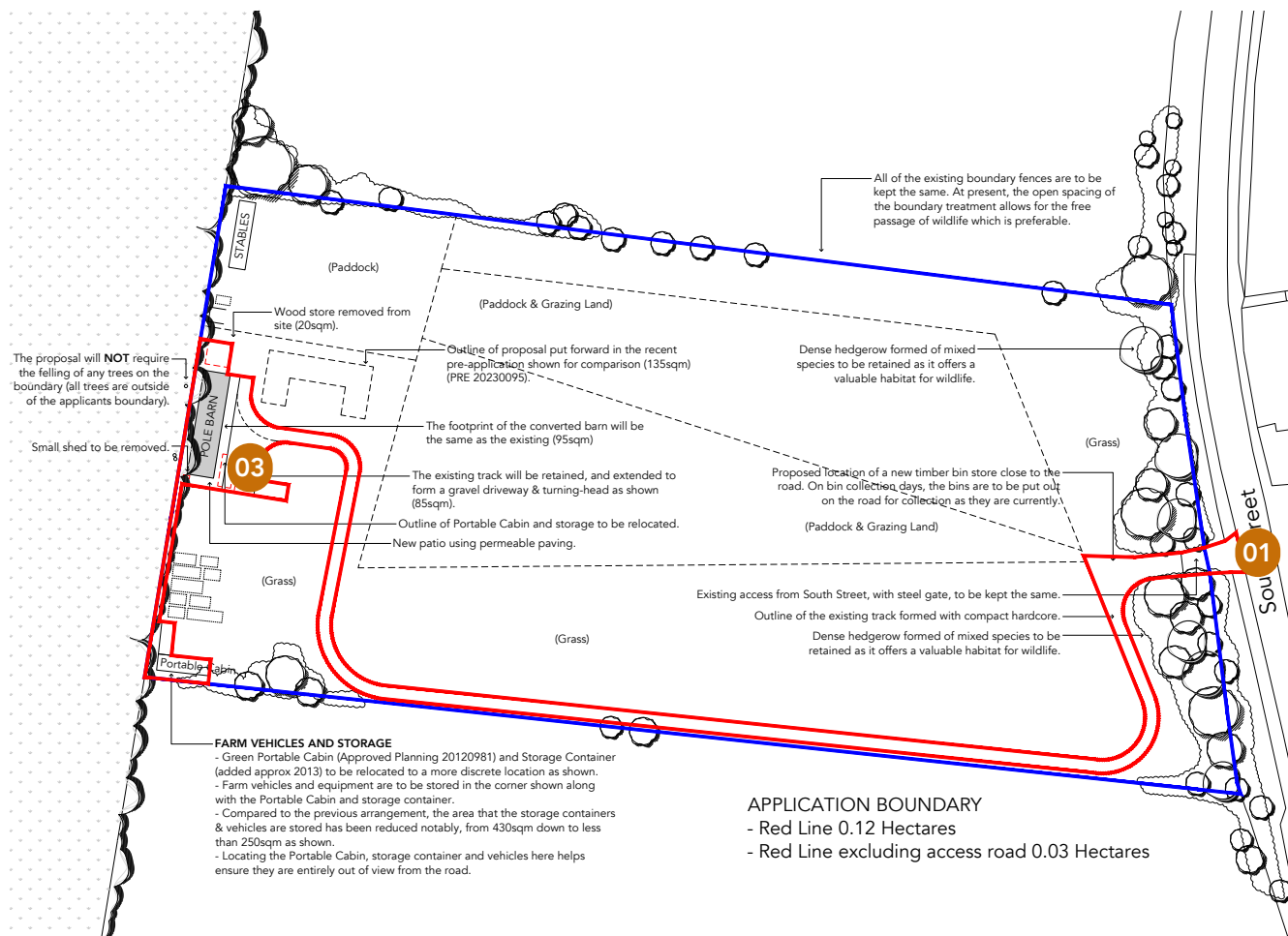
02 As highlighted previously in this document, the barn is more than 100m away from the road and is entirely out of view from South Street. With this in mind, there would be no visual impact on those passing the site or living nearby.

Parking

03 The current arrangement is for vehicles to park at the back of the site furthest away and out of view from the road. This proposal would keep this the same as it is seen to be the most viable, discrete, and secure location (taking into account past break-ins).

Boundary Treatment

04 The existing boundaries, currently formed by wire fencing, scrubland, hedgerows and trees, would remain unchanged as it not only serves as a visual screen but also contributes to the character of the local area.



NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

Overlooking & Overbearing

01 In regards to overbearing, overlooking, or any impact on privacy of the neighbours, the closest dwellings are 160m North and 200m East, therefore there would be no impact on either.

External Lighting

02 Any external lighting must be directed away from the boundaries, and where possible, should be solar powered and downward facing to avoid disrupting local wildlife.

Security

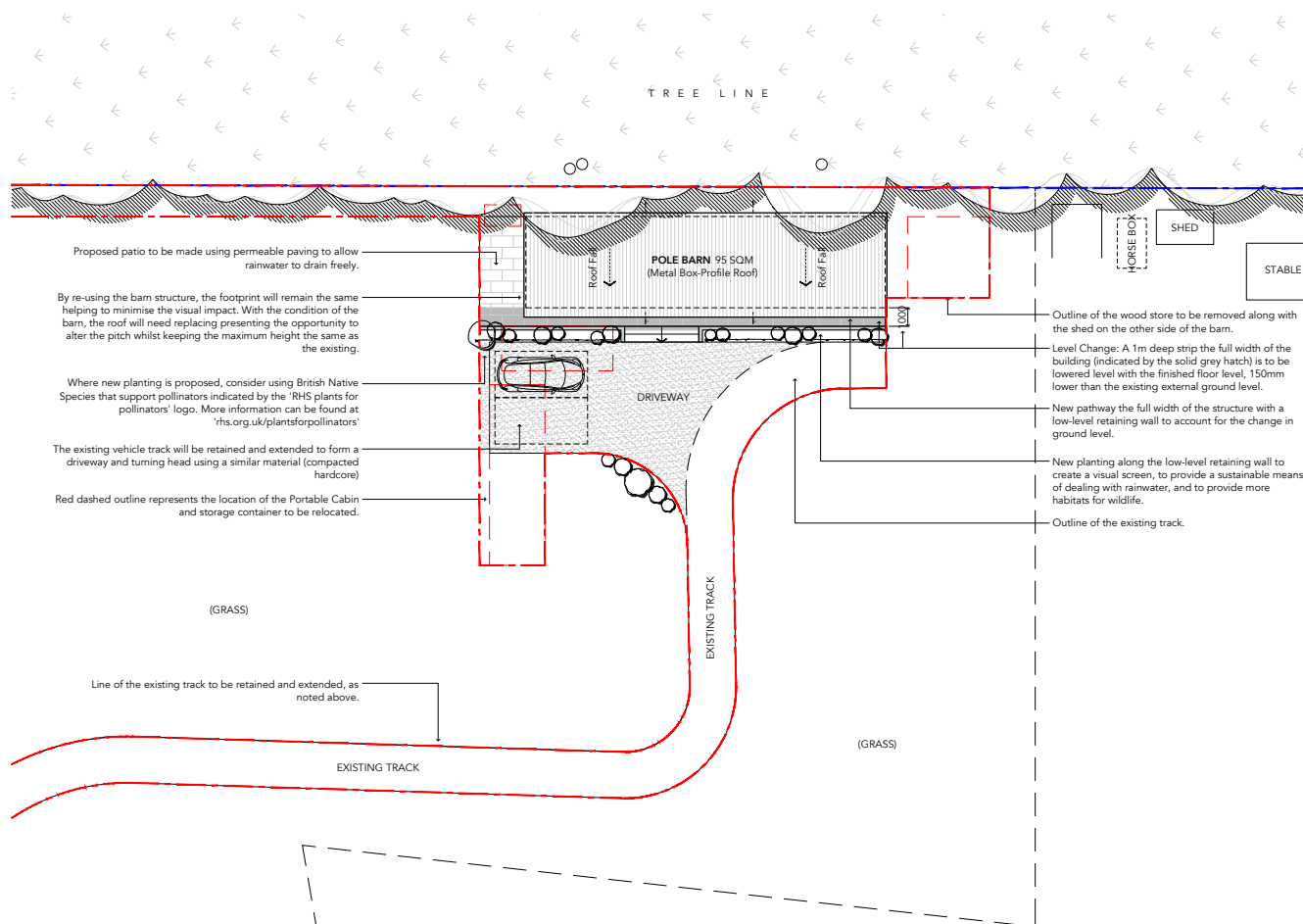
03 The metal gates currently securing the access onto the site would be retained as they are still functional and in good condition.

04 The permanent presence of someone on site is considered to be a considerable deterrent to anyone looking to break-in or vandalise property.

SERVICES & POWER

Given the barns location, suitable and sustainable means of getting services in and out of the site have been considered.

- › Foul-Water Drainage - Given the distance the barn is from the road, connecting to the mains drainage would cause notable disruption to the landscape. With this in mind, a cesspit is the preferred means of dealing with foul water which would be emptied and maintained as per the manufacturers specification.
- › Rainwater Drainage - Appropriates sized soakaway.
- › Power - Mains electric (as it is currently) with future plans to add solar panels.



Proposed Site Plan

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

With the proposal re-using an existing building and the driveway in place of the Portable Cabin, as well as plenty of more suited natural habitats on the site, it is not foreseen that the proposal would have a significant impact on local wildlife.

That being said, with the site being within the Green Belt it is important that ecological enhancements are included where possible. This proposal looks only at the area affected by the change of use, leaving the rest of the site natural.

Planting

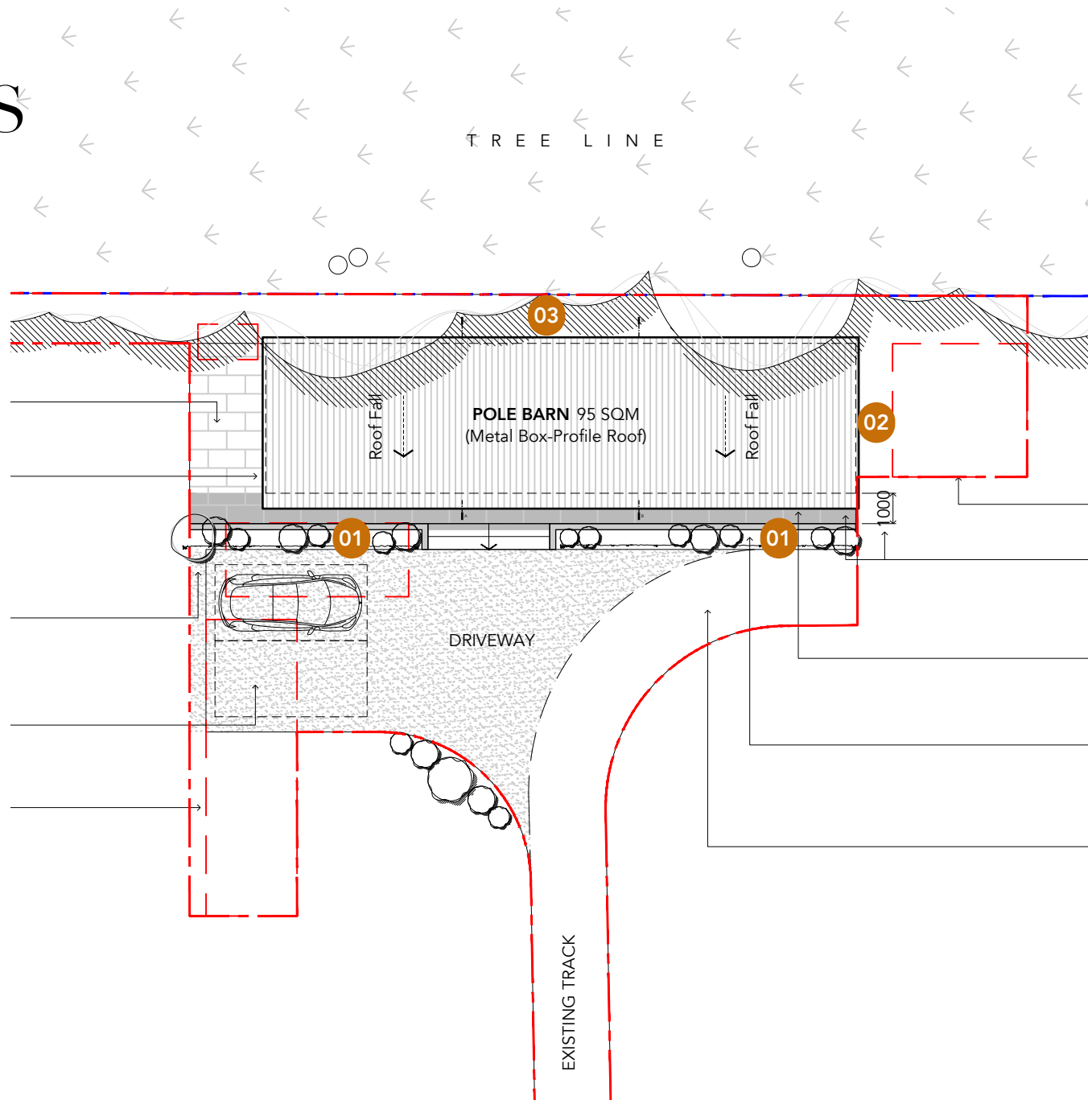
01 New planting along the retaining wall is to use British Native Species that support pollinators indicated by the 'RHS plants for pollinators' logo.

Nesting Boxes

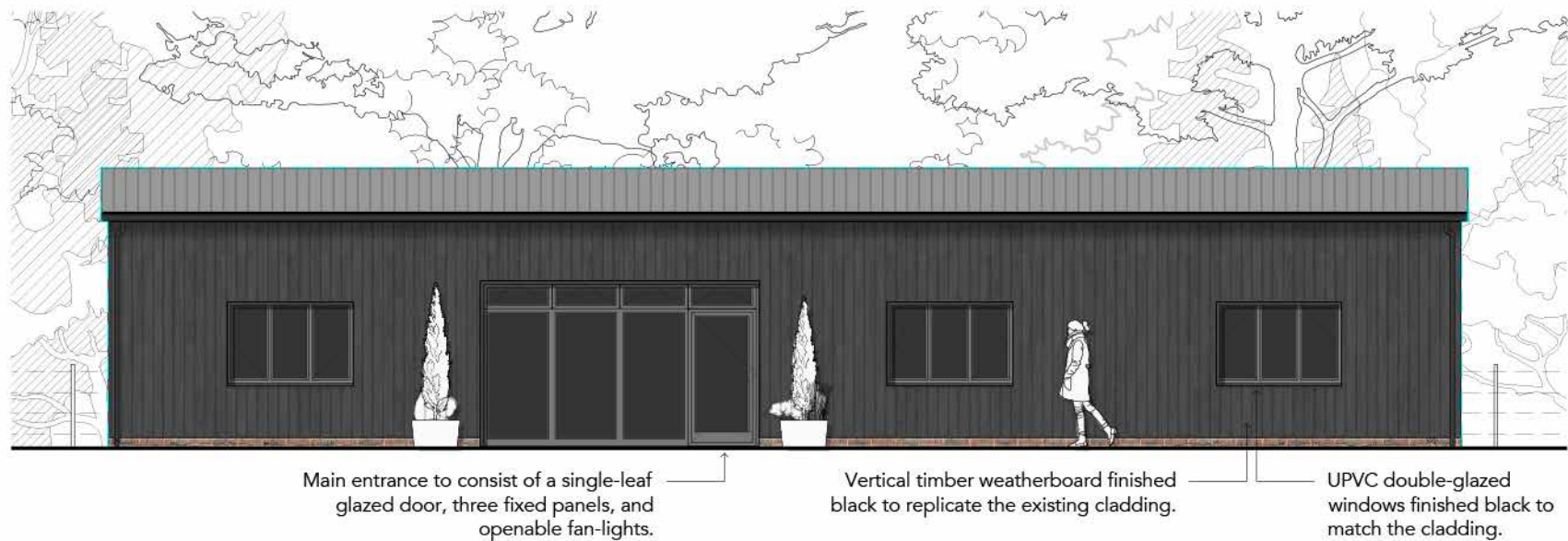
02 Bird boxes & bee houses are to be positioned on the side wall of the building where they are likely to be undisturbed, although with the extensive vegetation around the site, the site provides a variety of natural nesting sites. For guidance on positioning nesting boxes look at resources from the Woodland Trust & the RSPB.

Log Piles & Homes for Mammals

03 Where vegetation is deeper or there are sheltered spaces, such as the area between the rear of the barn and the boundary, allow for falling leaves to gather and the inclusion of log piles for foraging animals.



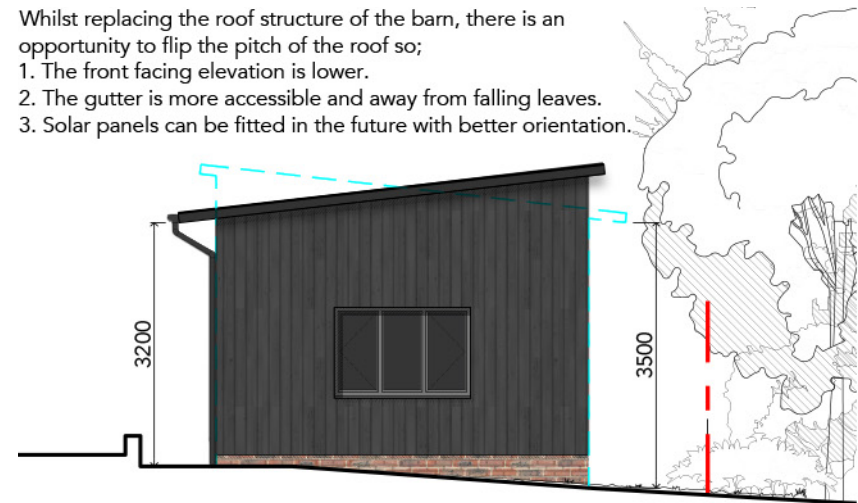
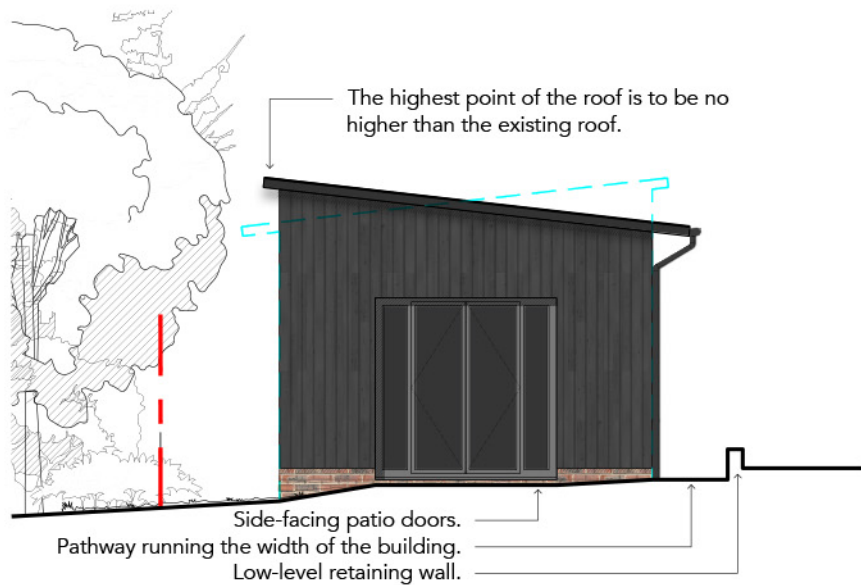
Look out for the
RHS Plants for Pollinators logo.



Proposed Front Elevation

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

The rationale behind the design was to create something that would suit the character of the local landscape, that would reference traditional rural architecture, and that would minimise any visual impact. The footprint and location of the barn will remain the same, however the openings were altered to make the structure suitable for living. Whilst designing the fenestration, special care was given to provide ample light to the internal spaces without disrupting the current arrangement with four distinct bays. By taking this into consideration, we feel that the alterations would make the barn comfortable for habitation whilst still reflecting the geometry of the current barn.



(Left) Proposed South Side Elevation
(Right) Proposed North Side Elevation

With the roof in need of significant repairs to the point where replacing the roof would be not only more economical but more sustainable in the long-term, it presented an opportunity to flip the pitch of the roof whilst ensuring that the maximum height of the roof remained the same.

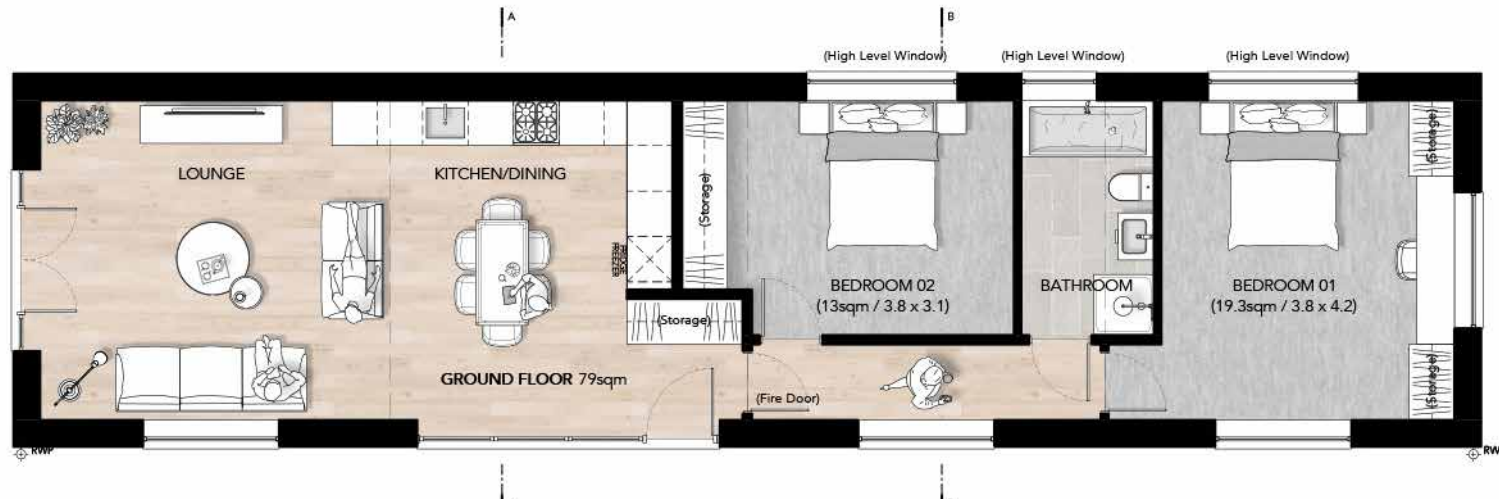
With this, the front elevation will now feature a lower eaves height helping to minimise the visual impact, the rainwater gutter is further from the trees behind helping to prevent them from being blocked with leaves, and the roof is better orientated to maximise solar collection in the event solar panels are fitted in the future.



Proposed Rear Elevation

With the rear elevation less visible, it presented a more suitable location to have the highest point of the roof, out of view and where it would be less impactful. Although there are no properties to the West, three high-level windows are proposed to provide light without compromising the privacy of the neighbour or occupant.

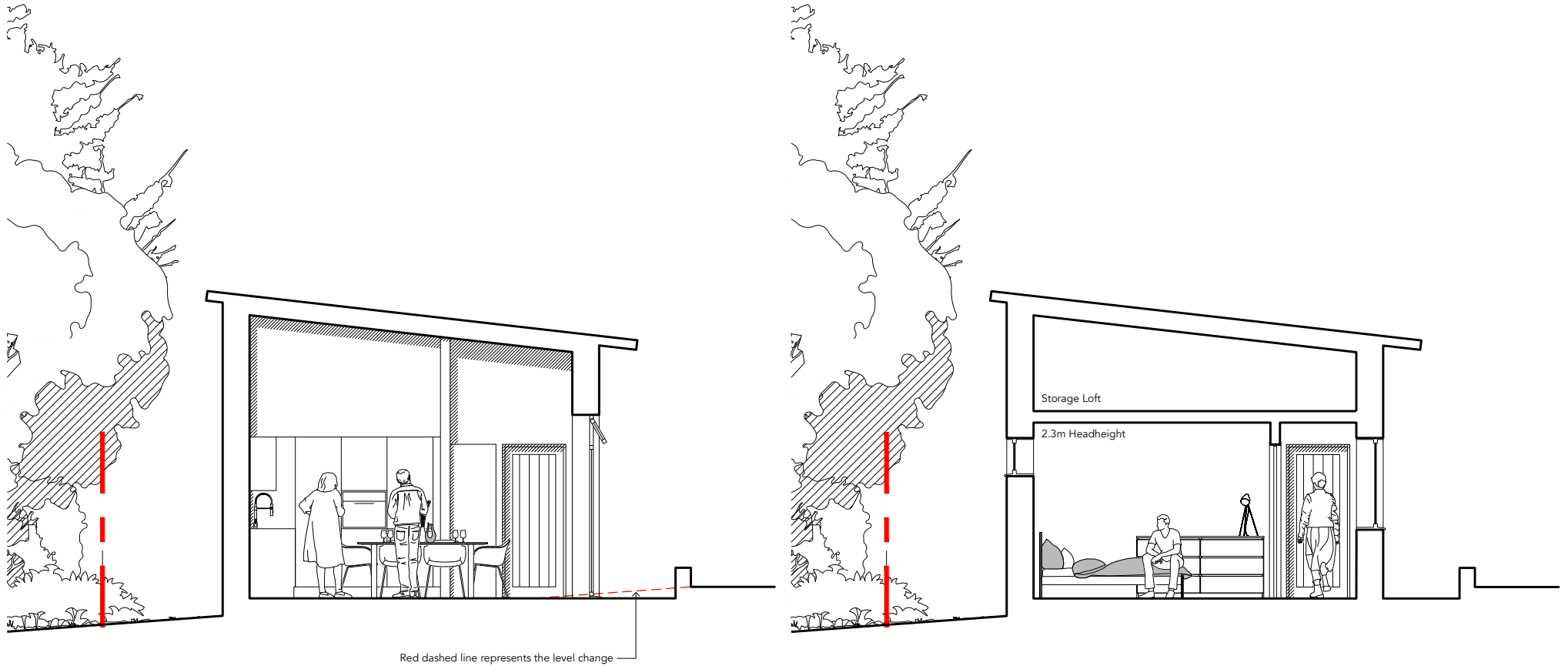
PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

The conversion of the barn into a dwelling is in compliance with the 'Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards' (2015) as well as Gravesham's Local Plan 'Residential Layout Guidelines' (2020).

PROPOSED SECTIONS



(Left) Proposed Section A
(Right) Proposed Section B

DESIGN REVIEW

The proposed planning application seeks to convert an existing barn into a dwelling for the farm owner in order to improve security on site and reduce crime. The site is located within the Green Belt, and thus, special consideration must be given to sustainable development and avoiding harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

There is an emphasis on avoiding the permanent loss of openness to the Green Belt caused by erecting new structures, and ensuring that any alterations to the original building are proportionate. The proposal aims to improve the appearance of the immediate surrounding area while being sensitive to the rural environment.

The impact on the Green Belt is carefully considered in the proposal, with no new structures being proposed. The conversion of the existing barn, along with the removal of two structures from the site, will result in a reduction of built structures and an improvement in the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal aligns with the principle of sustainable development within the Green Belt by re-using existing structures instead of erecting new buildings.

In terms of transport, the site is conveniently located near two villages with shops and transport links. The proposed two-bedroom property is modest in capacity, which will help limit the number of parked vehicles and maintain the rural character of the area. The proposal also takes into account the need for parking on site, as it is already accessed and used for parking on a regular basis.



View of the barn in question.

Access, highways, site lines, parking, and boundary treatment are all considered in the proposal to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding area and neighbouring amenities. Measures for external lighting, security, services, power, foul water drainage, rainwater drainage, and planting are also included to enhance the ecological and visual quality of the site.

Overall, the proposed conversion of the existing barn into a dwelling for the farm owner aligns with the principles of sustainable development in the Green Belt. The design considerations aim to protect the openness of the Green Belt, while improving security on site and enhancing the rural character of the area. The proposal takes into account various factors such as transport links, access, services, and ecological enhancements to create a harmonious living space for the farm owner.



View from the entrance to South Street.