

Proposed redevelopment at

Gore Green Farm, Higham, Kent, ME3 7HL



Design & Access Statement

March 2023

Rev B

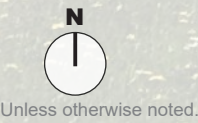
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1.1 Introduction



This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Clague Architects in support of a Section 73 Planning Application and Listed Building Application seeking Minor Material Amendments to the consented and commenced applications ref: 20180380 and 20180381, for;

The redevelopment of the redundant farm site and the clearance of the onsite paraphernalia into a small scale residential development. The site consists of a pair of cottages (formally the farmhouse) a medieval timber frame barn (Grade II listed) and a range of stables.

at

Gore Green Farm, Highham, Kent, ME3 7HL

The purpose of this document is to provide a supporting statement for the application and to explain the background, site analysis and the design process which has led to the current proposals to enable statutory consultees, neighbours and members of the public to easily gain an understanding of what is proposed.

1.2 Applicant & Design Team

The Applicant Bonnex Construction Ltd.

Architects Clague Architects LLP

Clague are a multi-disciplinary practice of architects, urban designers and conservation architects based in Canterbury, London & Harpenden. The practice has extensive experience of dealing with sites involving complex planning issues. Clague have been appointed to prepare the main package of drawings for the agent and applicant.





- Site
- Historic Farmstead with a regular courtyard plan.
 - Farmhouse (now Black Cottages) on the western edge
 - Tithe/threshing barn (Kent Barn) on the southern edge.
 - Stables, on the eastern edge.
 - Cart shed on the northern edge.

Over the past 10 years, the tenant farmer has been unable to maintain the working farm buildings to a standard high enough for use and they have therefore fallen into a state of disrepair.

Buildings

The farmhouse has been split into two cottages and had a number of unsuitable repairs.

The Kent barn has had its roof replaced with asbestos tiles, a number of trees have been allowed to mature against the main frame of the building, the ground level has gradually increased inside the barn over a number of years causing the main sole plate to have contact with the earth resulting in rot in numerous locations.

The stable has been recently converted to a residential dwelling in accordance with Planning Permission (Ref: 20180380) and Listed Building Consent (Ref: 20180381). Structural works to repair the Kent barn commenced in 2020.

Viability

The site has required extensive clearing; the removal of caravans, boats, asbestos tiles and motor cars prior to any proposed building work. The cost of repairs to the main barn and the overall setting of the listed building will be substantial and therefore the scale of the proposals need to financial justify any initial outlay. The scheme is modest in scale and should be met with enthusiasm by the local authority and Kent County Council.



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 4 | 5 |
| 6 | |
- 1 View of site paraphernalia that requires removal
 - 2 Structural defects within rear midstrey of Kent Barn
 - 3 Structural defects within bay 4 of Kent Barn
 - 4 Vegetation growth internally, midstrey
 - 5 Dilapidated stable with missing roof and felt, since renovated
 - 6 Dilapidated Cartshed

2 Site & Context



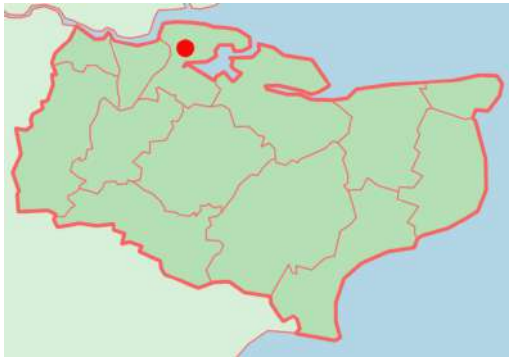
Site Location

The application site is located in Gore Green, Higham. The historic heart of Higham is 2.5 km south of the application site.

In the 1830's a canal was built midway between the application site and Higham. At this mid-point a cutting and tunnel were formed in the landscape.

When the canal eventually closed and was superseded by the railway line, with a new station to the north of the site, further development took place around the new focal point.

The railway station is 950m from the application site. Access to the site is gained from Gore Green Road to the north. The application site is set in a rural environment with close access to bus and train routes.



Approximate Site Location within Kent

2.2 Site Photographs

Due to the difficulty of understanding the topography of the site and closed relationship of the loose courtyard plan, the historic changes in site levels between the courtyard, the internal level of the main Kent barn and the external levels a full topographical survey has been carried out. At the time of the digital survey a number levels could not be fully ascertained due to the extensive vegetation growth.

These photos seek to explain the changes of levels and the difficulties that the project team have experienced when designing a suitable scheme that is within the appropriate size and scale of the existing buildings.



Kent barn - Internal framing



Ponds to north of site



Entrance to farmstead in summer



North east corner of Kent barn in winter



Kent barn south east elevation in winter

2.3 Topography & Landscape

The lowest point of the site is north of the cartshed. This area is proposed to be a new access drive for the black cottages and therefore will be easily drained with the proposed new permeable surface.

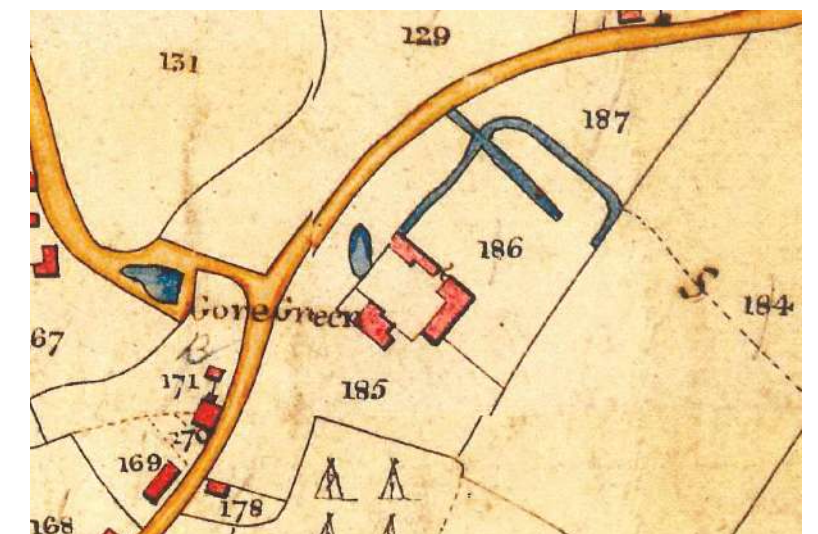
The topography of the site then slopes up gradually from the cartshed to the Kent barn with the highest point of the site to the east where the black cottages are located.

The levels within the barn have gradually increased over the last 400 years, this is not unusual with the activities that once took place. The barns primary purpose was for the sorting, threshing and storing of grain. As a result of mechanisation which developed rapidly in the 1800's and more recently in the last half century, farming practices have greatly changed and with this the size of machinery has increased. Many activities that were once carried out at each farmstead have been centralised on either larger farms or to sites specialising in processing. In recent years these barns have then been used for animal shelters, this has also caused an increase in the floor levels due to straw and muck gradually building up.

To the east of the site is a body of water that has been present in some form for at least 200 years. This is evidenced on the 1830 tithe maps produced by surveyors for the Diocese of Rochester.



Drawing showing existing site plan



1830 Tithe Map

2.4 Site Context & Connectivity

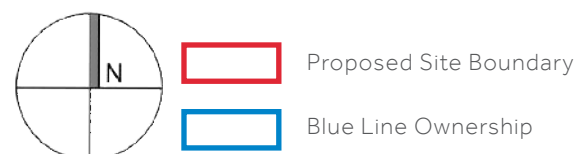
The Application Site extends to approx. 0.8 hectares. It is currently occupied by a tenant farmer and appears to be unattractive agricultural sheds, portacabins, caravans and disused ground.

The site is presently accessed from an existing drive from Gore Green Road to the north. Higham Village is accessible from the site by bike, the centre being 2.5km away and the railway station 950m.

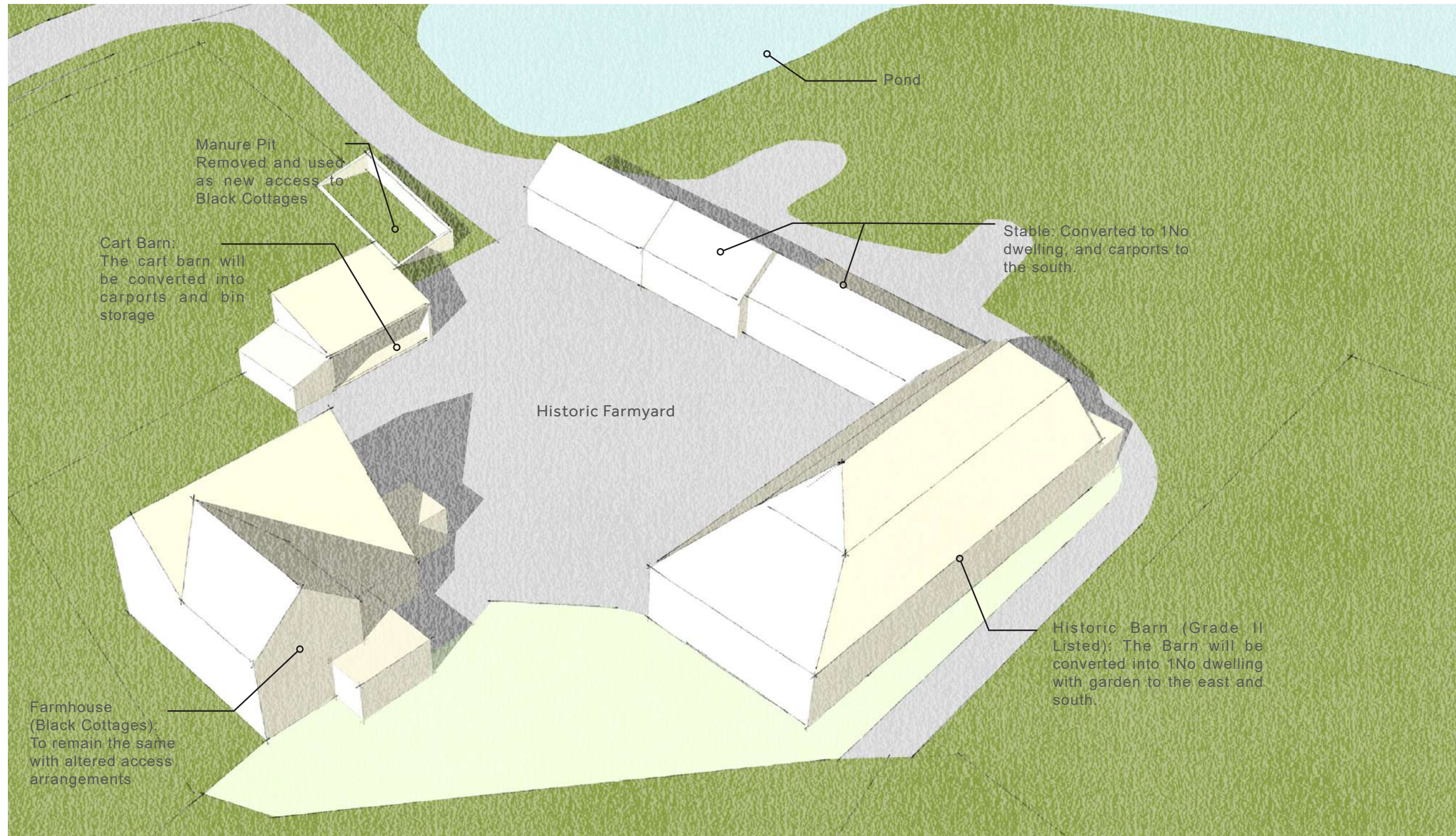
The whole site falls within the Green Belt of Metropolitan London. It is outside of any urban confines and as such is in the open countryside under planning policy.



Gore Green Farm proximity to Higham, Kent.



Site Location



Gore Green Farm Massing Model depicting the relationship and space between buildings

3 The Proposal

3.1 Proposed Layout

The key consideration for the proposed site layout is to retain the historic building pattern, masses and forms. The pre-application sought additional housing, around the courtyard, however the final proposals aim to keep the development to a minimum whilst providing a viable scheme to secure the future of the barn indefinitely. The historic loose courtyard site has been retained and enhanced with parking, bins and bikes housed within carports and enclosed storage areas, reducing the clutter of domesticity.

The chief element of continuity in the proposals is the use of high quality building materials and landscape and boundary treatments. A combination of like for like repairs and suitably chosen new materials for the buildings is proposed. The landscaping proposals will include matching surfaces, post and rail fences and native planted boundaries. A rural character is achieved with this palette avoiding large concrete kerbs or tarmac for example which would damage the character of the historic courtyard setting.

The scheme seeks to introduce a new access to the black cottages. The built form of the historic courtyard is not changing however the proposed access arrangement provides the best possible access to the black cottages and allow it to be legally separated from the rest of the site.

Site plan NTS

3.2 Consented Kent Barn Design

Development works have now commenced to convert the Kent Barn to a 4 bedroom dwelling in accordance with these drawings approved under Planning Permission (Ref: 20180380) and Listed Building Consent (Ref: 20180381).

Accommodation is to be provided on 2 new mezzanine floors either side of the central midstrey. The central midstrey provides a double height entrance space allowing the barns historic structure and height to be enjoyed. The design allows for the new structure to be predominantly separate and non-load bearing on the historic timber frame.

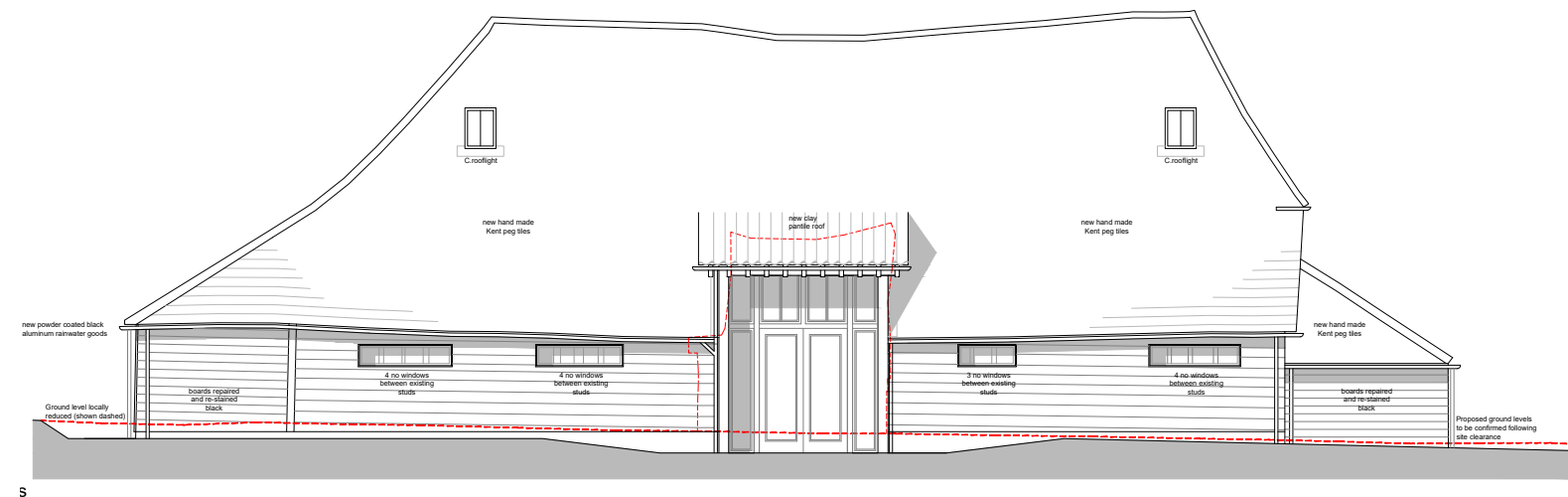
The barn required substantial investment to stop years of decay prior to it being converted. The floor level internally and externally has been reduced so that the repairs to the soleplate of the barn are a sufficient distance from any unwanted moisture.

The main frame required replacement ties, shores and collars. All repairs have been carried out using matching materials and traditional techniques.

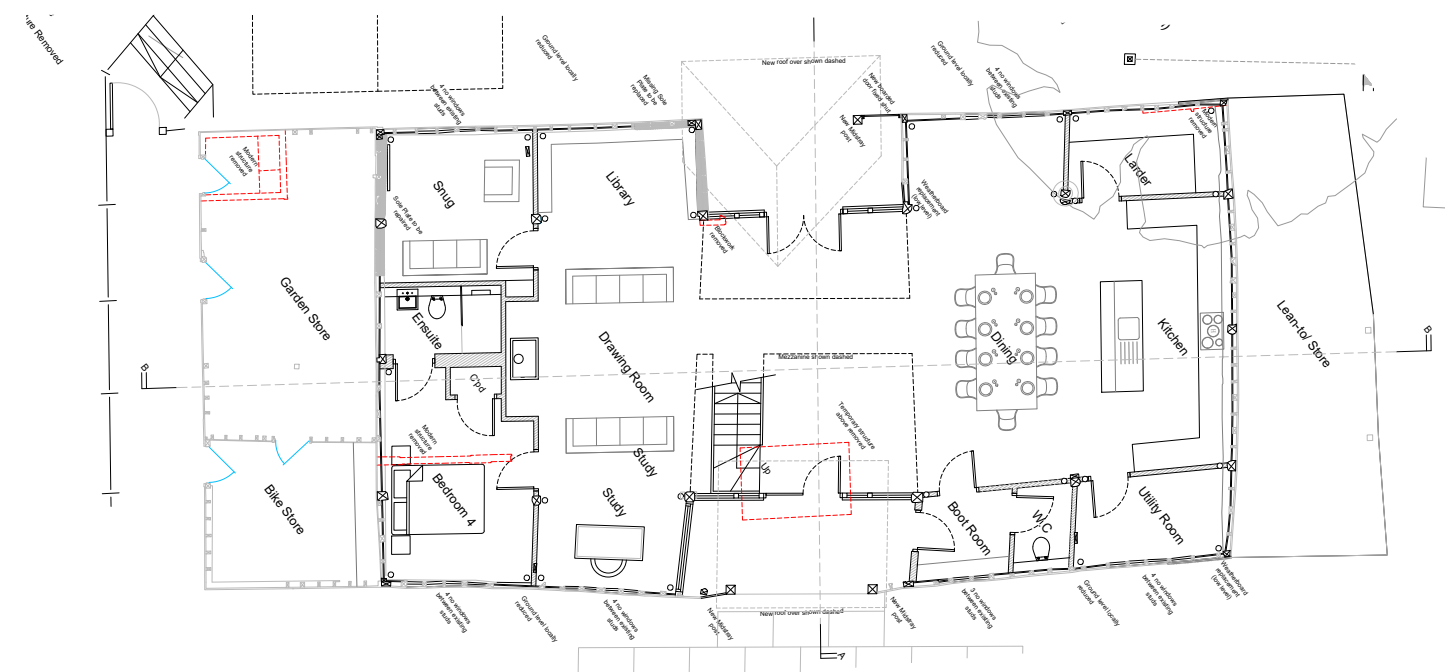
External openings have been kept to a minimum, with all windows at ground floor formed within the existing studs, being tucked high underneath the eaves. The midstrey glazing and doors are set well back within the opening so that the frame is read clearly prior to the eye being drawn to the fenestration. The bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor are lit with discrete conservation roof lights set flush within the tiles.



Kent Barn - Previous North West Elevation - NTS



Kent Barn- Previous South West Elevation - NTS



Kent Barn- Previous Ground Floor Plan - NTS

3.3 Proposed Kent Barn Design

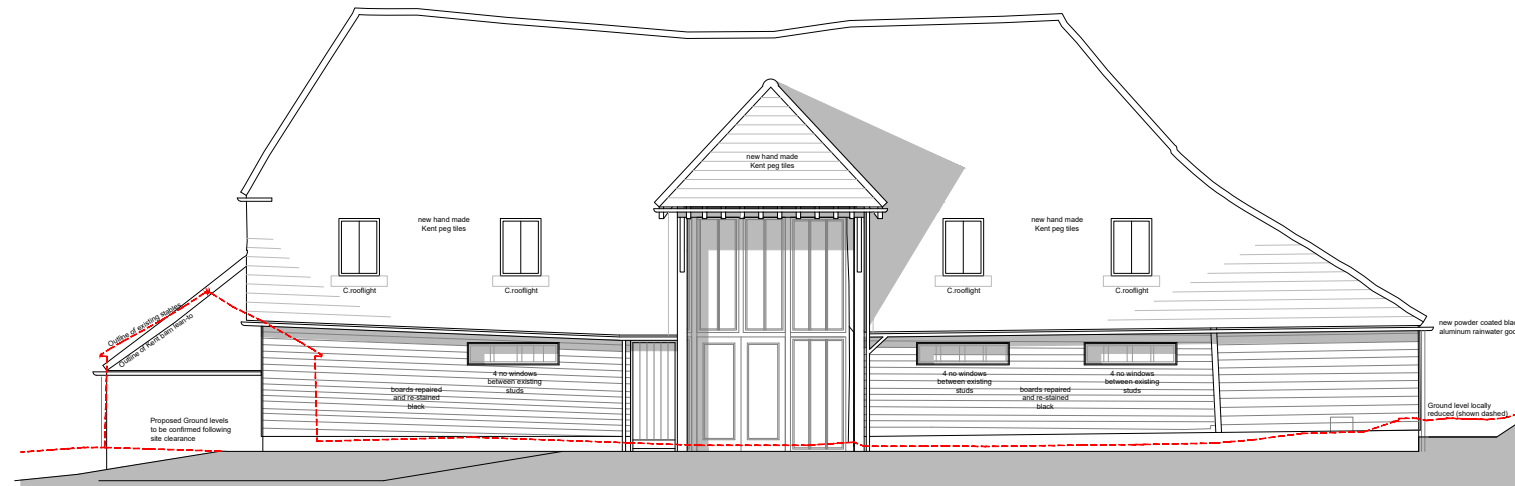
The aim of the new Section 73 and Listed Building Consent applications is to refine the elevations of the Kent Barn and rework the internal floor plan to meet the clients needs.

The positioning of the consented rooflights have been revised, and additional rooflights introduced to provide more natural light and ventilation to the first floor rooms. All rooflights are to be of discrete conservation design set flush within the tiles.

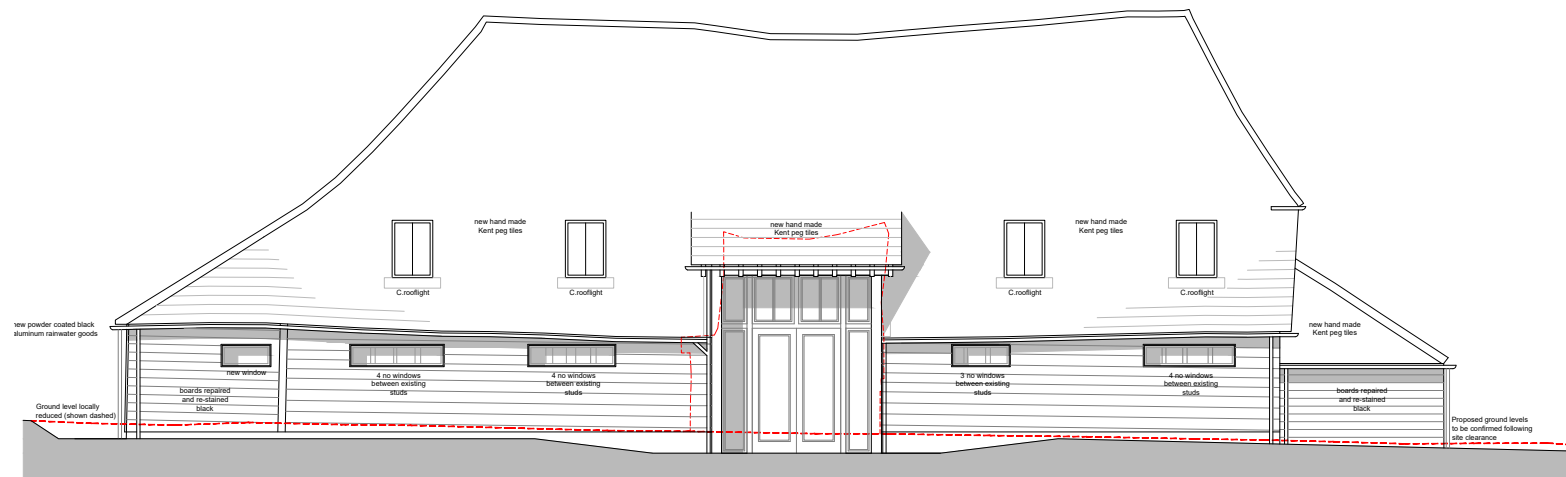
The proposed materials match those previously approved, with the exception of two slight alterations to roof materials. The roof of the rear midstrey (south west elevation) is to be changed from Clay Pantiles to Kent Peg tiles. The roof of the cat-slide roof to the side (south east) elevation are to be changed from Kent Peg tiles to Lead Sheet with Rolls, to improve the visual appearance where there is a change in pitch to the existing roof.

Additional windows are sought to the north west and south west elevations, and the existing door opening to the south east elevation is to be replaced with a new fixed window to improve functionality of the interior rooms.

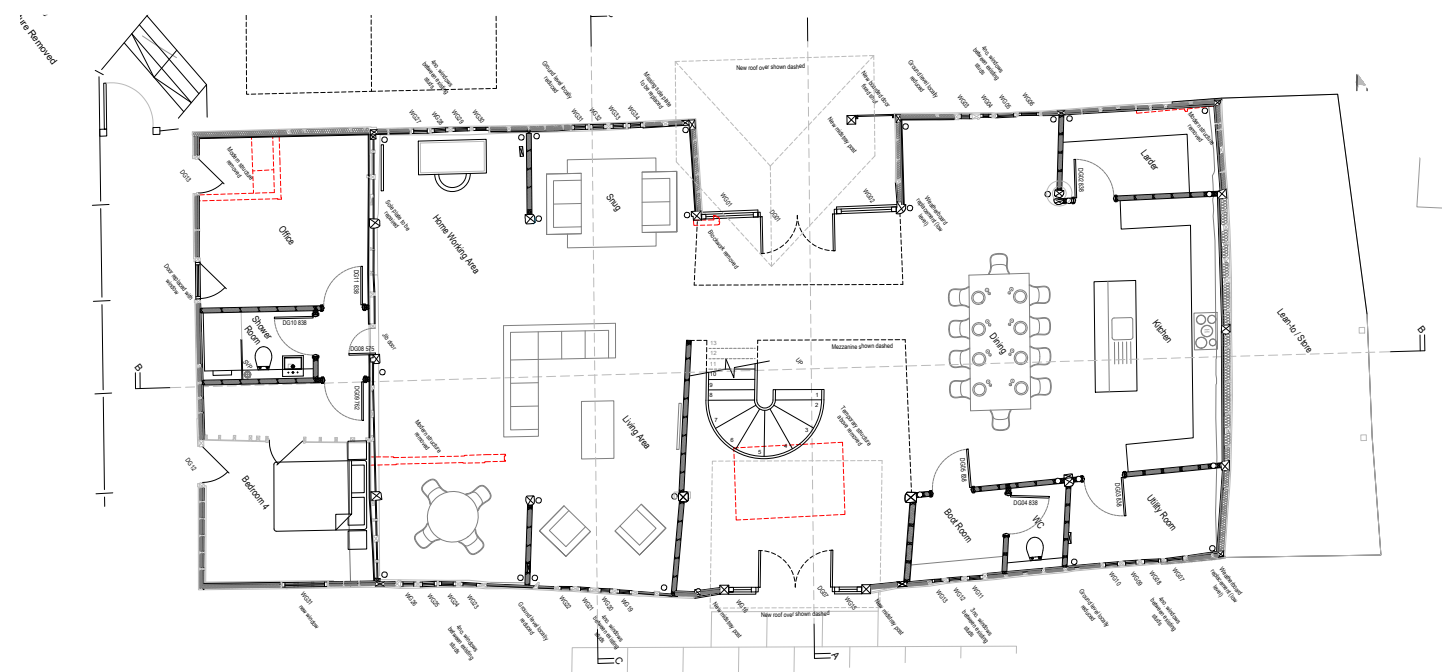
The external doors to the rear midstrey have been repositioned to maximise the internal space available, and the former garden/bike stores are now proposed to be used as internal accommodation forming the home office and fourth bedroom.



Kent Barn - Proposed North West Elevation - NTS



Kent Barn- Proposed South West Elevation - NTS



Kent Barn- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

4

Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion



The proposals offer a great one-off opportunity to preserve the historic loose courtyard farmyard at Gore Green for future generations. The proposals seek the conversion of the existing dilapidated listed grade II Kent barn.

The proposals seek to have minimal impact on the listed building through carefully considered design. Externally the introduction of glazing into the barn has been sensitively positioned, so not to appear over domestic. Internally the design seeks to protect the historic fabric of the barn.

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