

PROPOSED POOLHOUSE & RESTORATION OF BUILDINGS 5 & 8

WHITEHOUSE FARM, LAND WAY, ME3 7JH

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2026

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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.

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

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

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

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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.



Aerial view showing site location

(Image courtesy of Google)

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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.



 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



1 Building 12, Whitehouse Farm



2 Building 13, Whitehouse Farm



3 Building 10, Whitehouse Farm

CONTEXTUAL STUDY

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



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



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

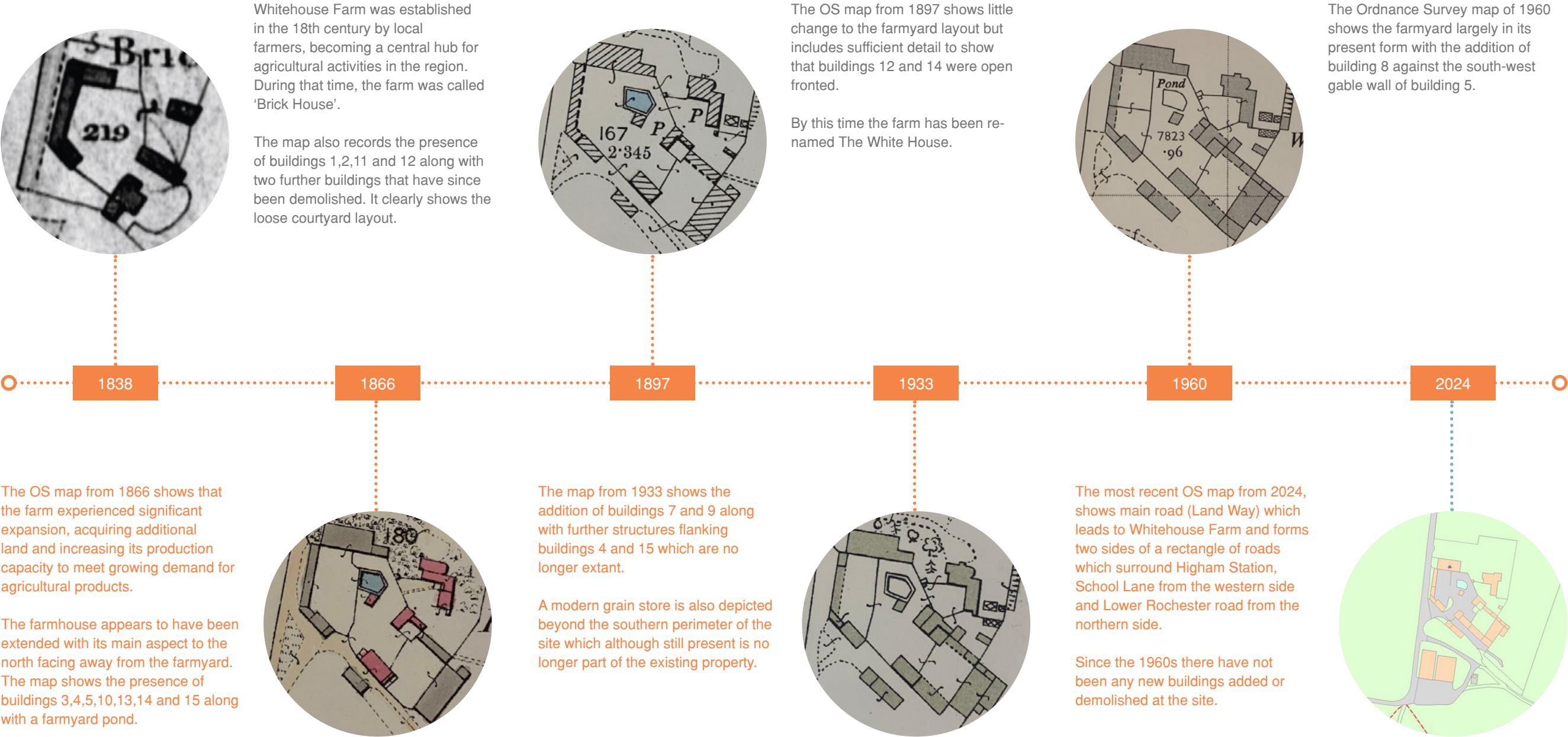


Image courtesy of The National Library & Old Maps

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.

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Design

Proposed Poolhouse & Restoration of Buildings 5 & 8

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

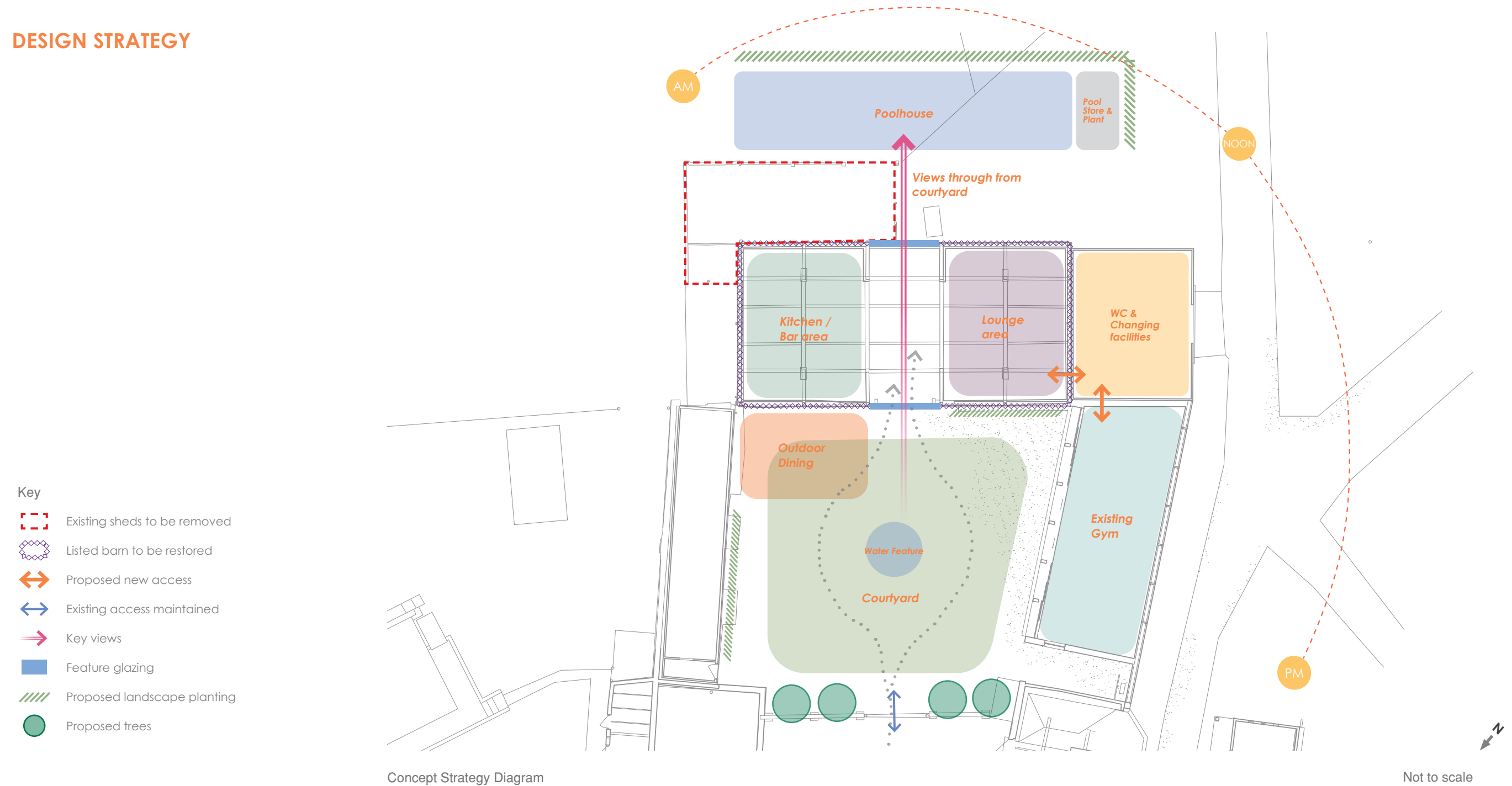


Contemporary extension to historic building



Flat roof form

DESIGN STRATEGY



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.

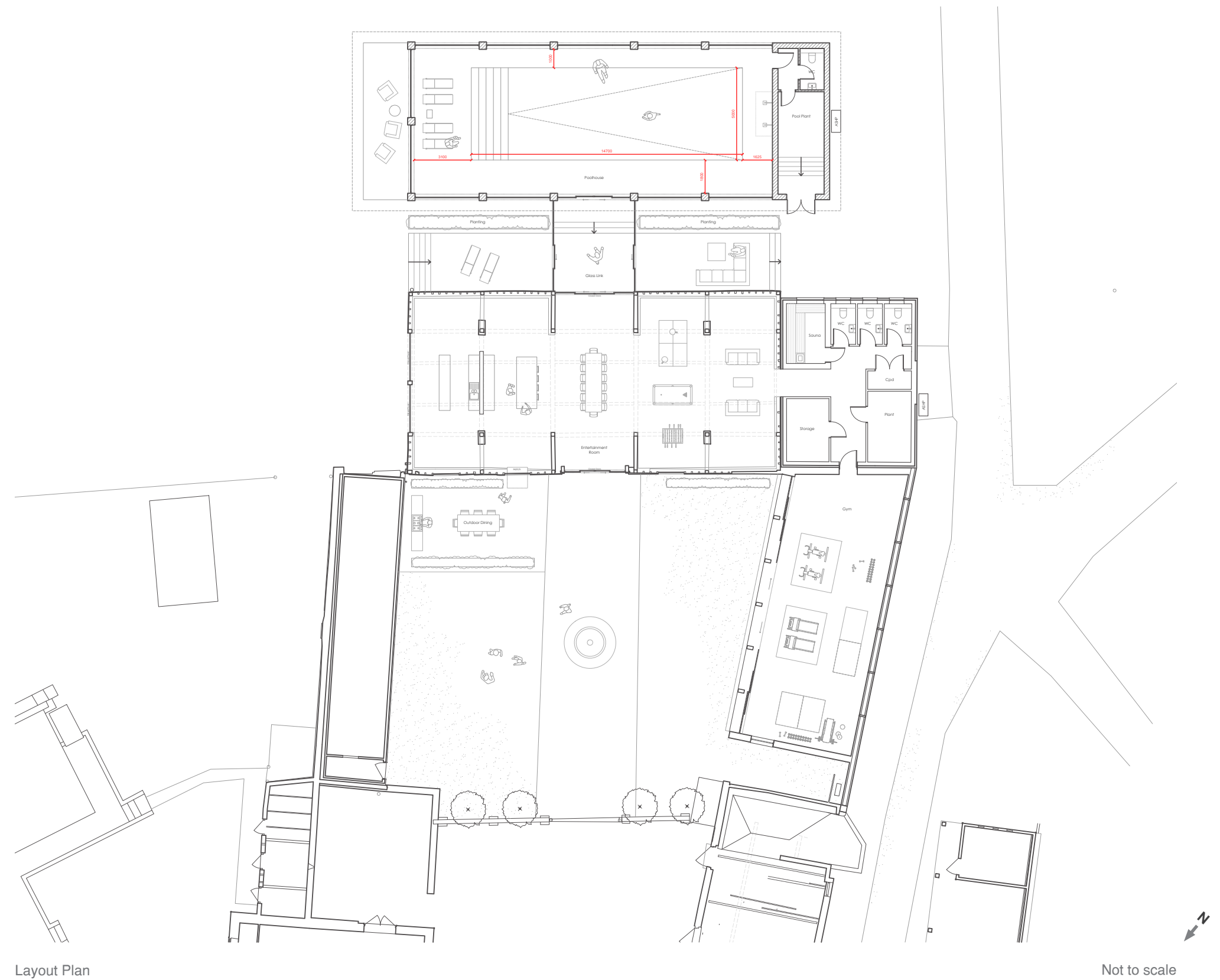
The blockwork building connecting the barn and the gym will provide toilets, shower and changing facilities for the gym as well as storage.

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.



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.



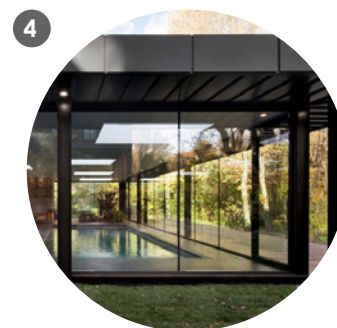
Black Weatherboarding



Clay Tiles



Existing brickwork



Aluminium Windows



Metal Cladding



Proposed Street Scene

Not to scale

COMPUTER GENERATED IMAGE



Indicative View of Proposed Poolhouse

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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 adjoining facilities to the gym.

The detailed scheme has been informed by **pre-application, public consultation**, 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.



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

T:01227 634 334
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W:onarchitecture.co.uk