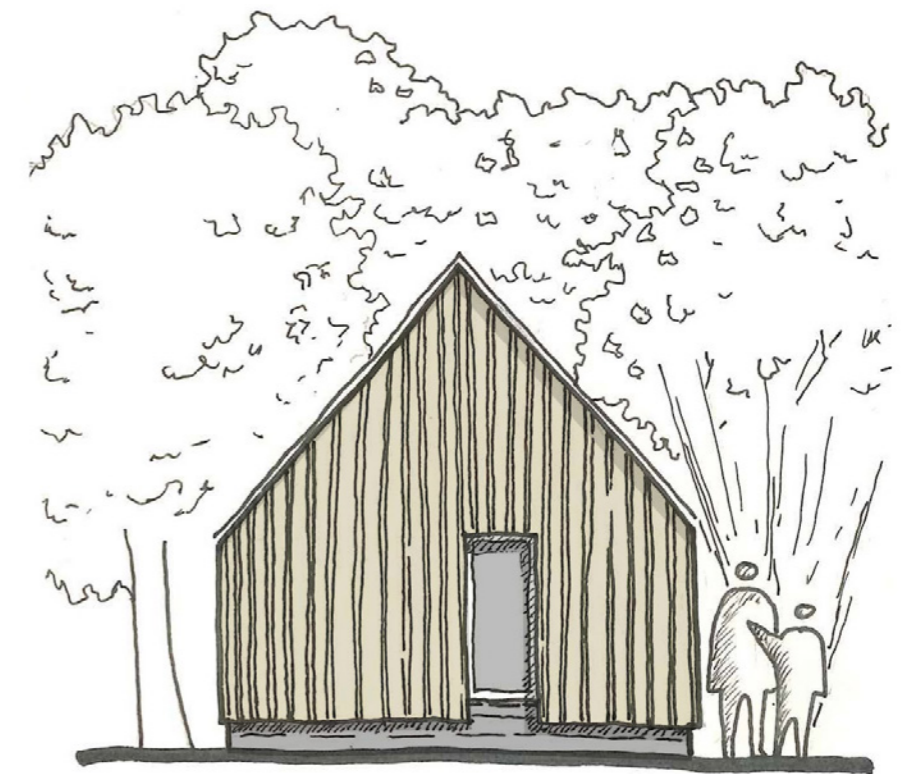




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1.0 _ Introduction

This report has been prepared by Elliott Architects Ltd. on behalf of Brian and Fiona Fidler, owners of Whitewalls, Mohope, Ninebanks.

The report supports the planning application which proposes to rationalise and improve the supporting ancillary outbuildings on the site, and has been prepared following extensive design development and pre application discussions in order to find an appropriate and positive scheme for the site.

The application proposes a number of minor improvements (listed below). These have been sensitively designed and located to complement the existing buildings and wider landscape and would enable a positive, sustainable future for the house and surrounds.

1. Amendments to the access from the public highway (U8038)
2. The removal of curtilage structures
3. The construction of a workshop with solar panels
4. The construction of a garden shed
5. The construction of a greenhouse
6. Relocation of garden wall
7. 2no. Skylights in existing rear kitchen extension.

This document should be read in conjunction with the supporting statement from George F White and all other accompanying drawings and information.

Mr and Mrs Fidler are experienced landscape architects and horticulturists, and are approaching the treatment of the site with a high level of expertise and sensitivity. This dedication to the site has enabled a considered and well justified design which forms the application as outlined here.



2.0 _ The Site

Whitewalls is a detached 2 storey Grade II Listed dwelling, located approximately 4 miles southwest of Allendale Town. It is accessed from the U8038 road via a private drive and small bridge over the Whitewalls Burn.

The site sits low in the valley and the house and site are screened by mature trees. The site is not visible from the A686 (which is approximately 1km west of the site at its closest point), or from Chapel Bank (approx. 0.3km to the east).

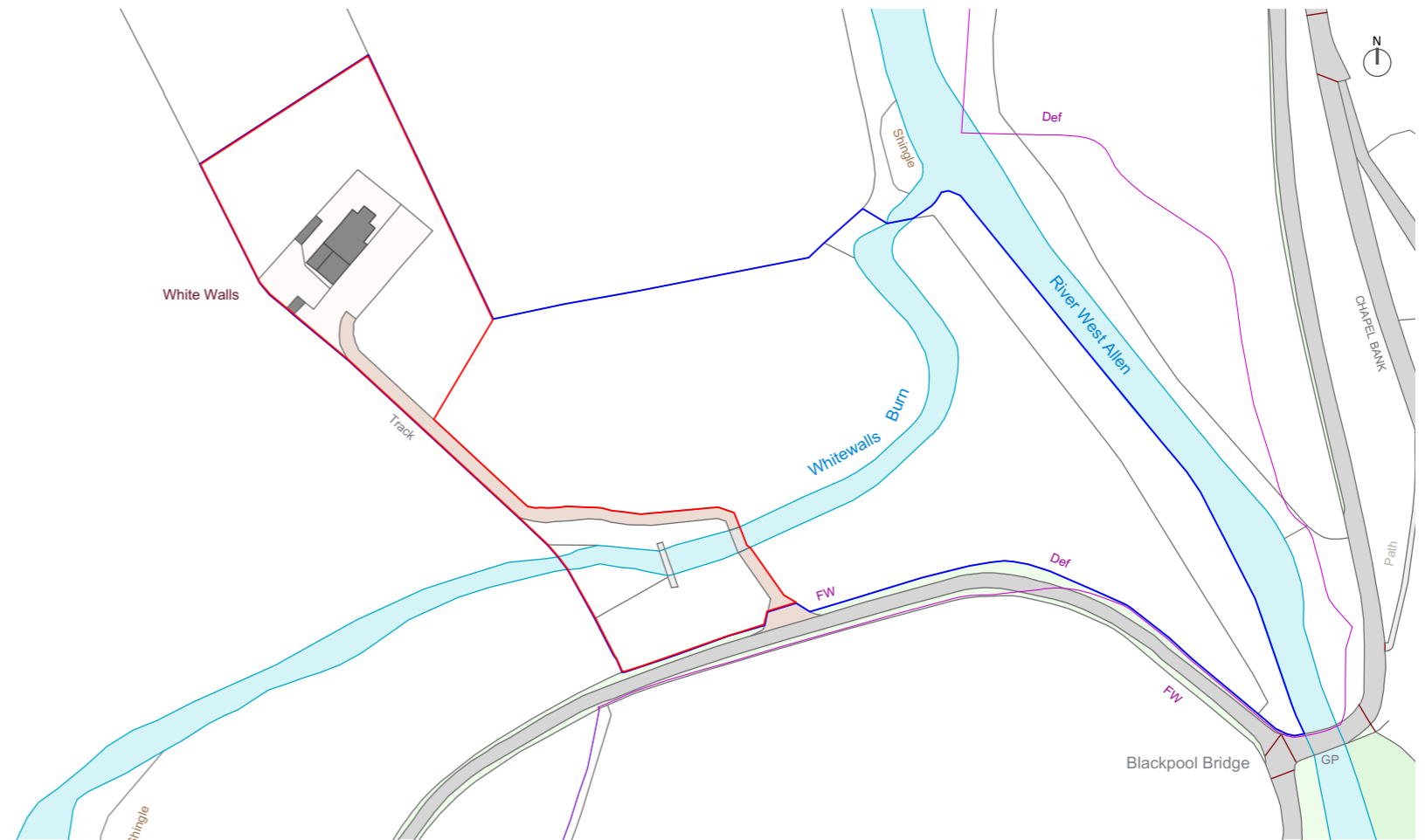


Fig.01 _ Existing Site Location Plan NOT TO SCALE
(Right)



Fig.02 _ Existing Approach towards Whitewalls



Fig.03 _ View from the rear garden



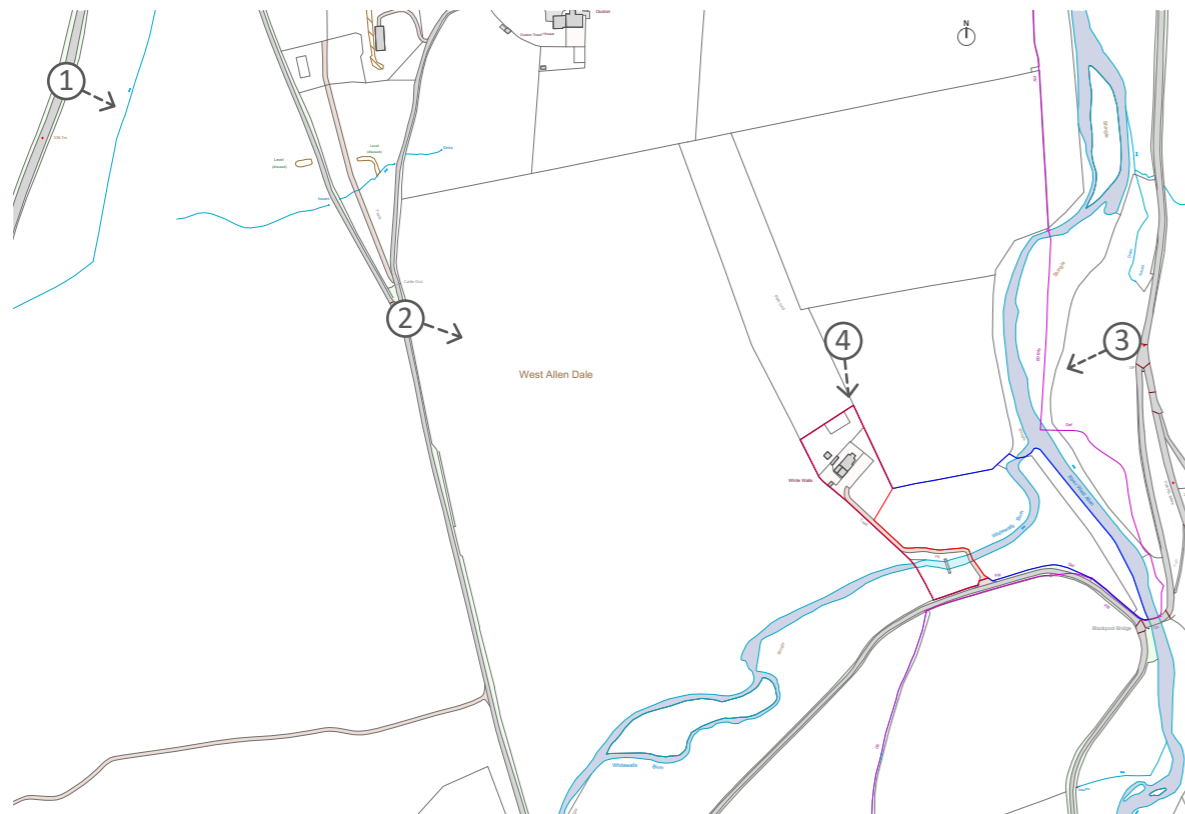
Fig.04 _ View from the side garden

2.1 _ The Site _ Location

The site is relatively flat with a slight slope to the east and south towards the Whitewalls Burn and the West Allen River approximately 150m away. Due to its natural contours, the site enjoys views over the surrounding countryside whilst remaining largely hidden due to the mature trees in the area. The house is south east facing and this aspect allows the site to benefit from direct natural sunlight for much of the day.

The site is physically and visually remote from any other settlements or dwellings and so any development at this location would have minimum visual impact in the wider setting (this is also discussed in more detail later in this document)

Fig.05 _ Existing Area Plan Highlighting Key Views
NOT TO SCALE (Below)



2.2 _ The Site _ Historic Use

The house was originally two farm cottages which were combined to form one dwelling in the late 1970s with some amendments to the south elevation, and was then extended to the north in the 1990s. The Historic England listing states;

House, early C18 probably incorporating earlier fabric. Rubble with cut dressings, slate roof. 2 storeys, 5 bays, slightly irregular. Renewed door slightly left of centre, window immediately to right set in blocking of former door; other windows have all been of 2 lights with deeply-chamfered jambs, the mullions since removed; all now C20 small-paned casements. Left return shows small blocked attic lights and irregularities suggesting the incorporation of older masonry; right return shows one blocked attic light in stone surround. Outhouse to rear probably contemporary, openings mostly altered.

The historic maps also show that a wall was present on site in a very similar position to that proposed in the application, and that there was also a building which sat to the side of the existing house and forward of the south elevation.

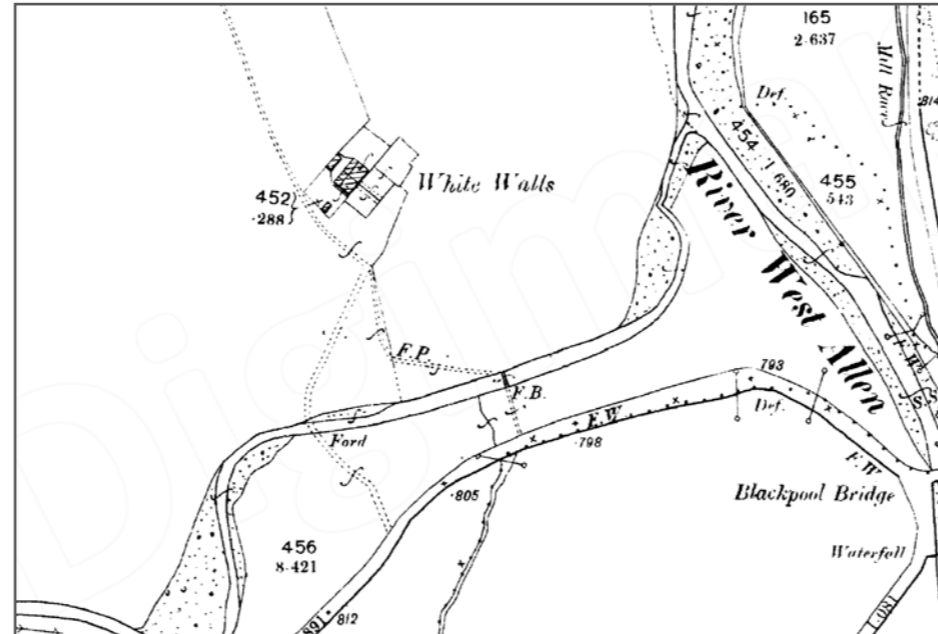


Fig.09 _ 1890s Historical Map NOT TO SCALE

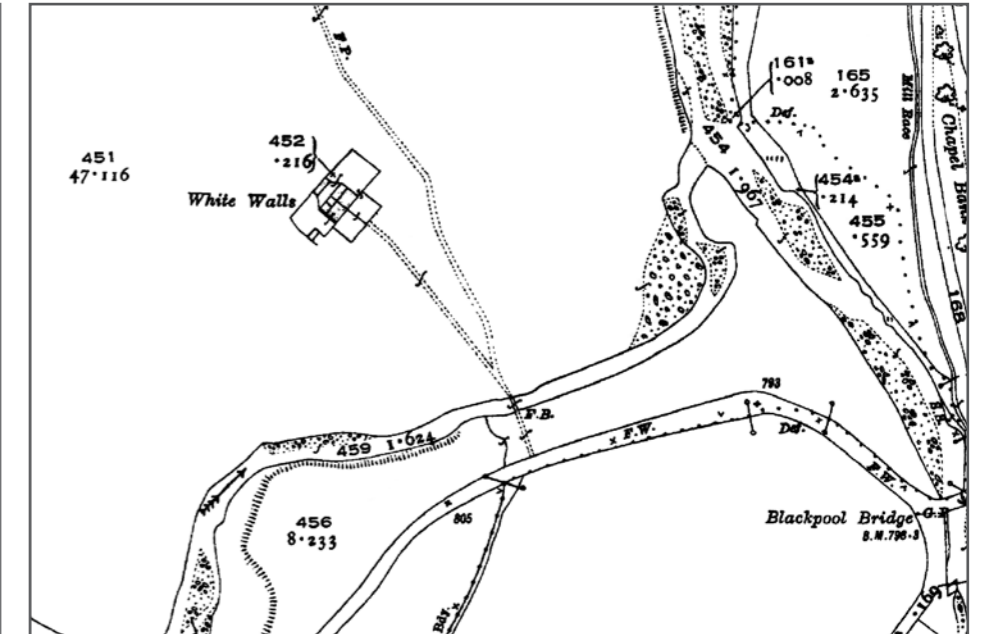


Fig.10 _ 1920s Historical Map NOT TO SCALE

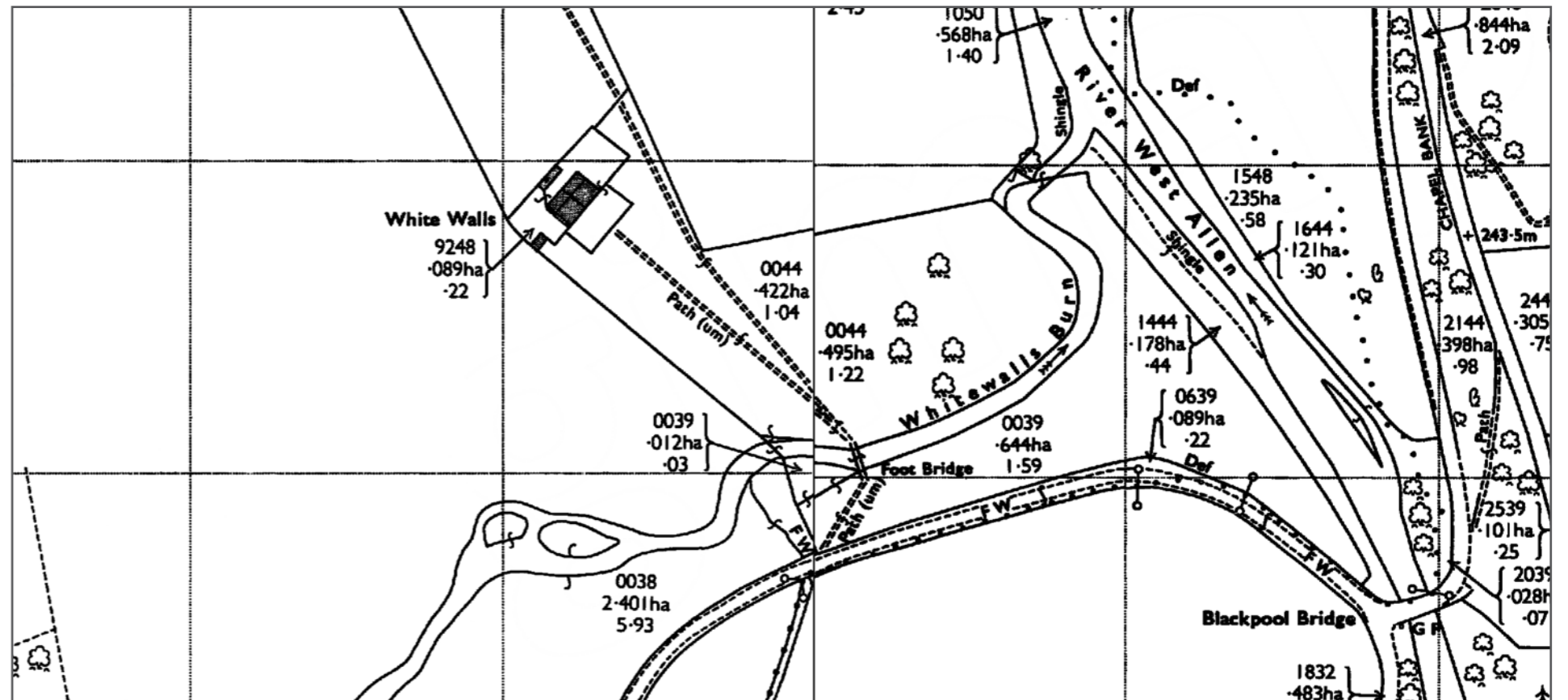


Fig.11 _ 1970s Historical Map NOT TO SCALE (Below)

3.0_Visibility + Sight Lines

The views to the proposed developments from existing roads are minimal. There are no public footpaths or other rights of way on the site or within the surrounding valley.

As mentioned previously, the site and proposed development are not directly visible from either of the closest public highways due to the sloping topography of the site; whilst the proposed greenhouse will be partially visible for the A686, the majority of the proposed development will remain hidden amongst the mature tree cover.

The site is physically and visually remote from any other settlements, dwellings and public rights of way, and so the proposed development would have no adverse visual impact in the wider setting.

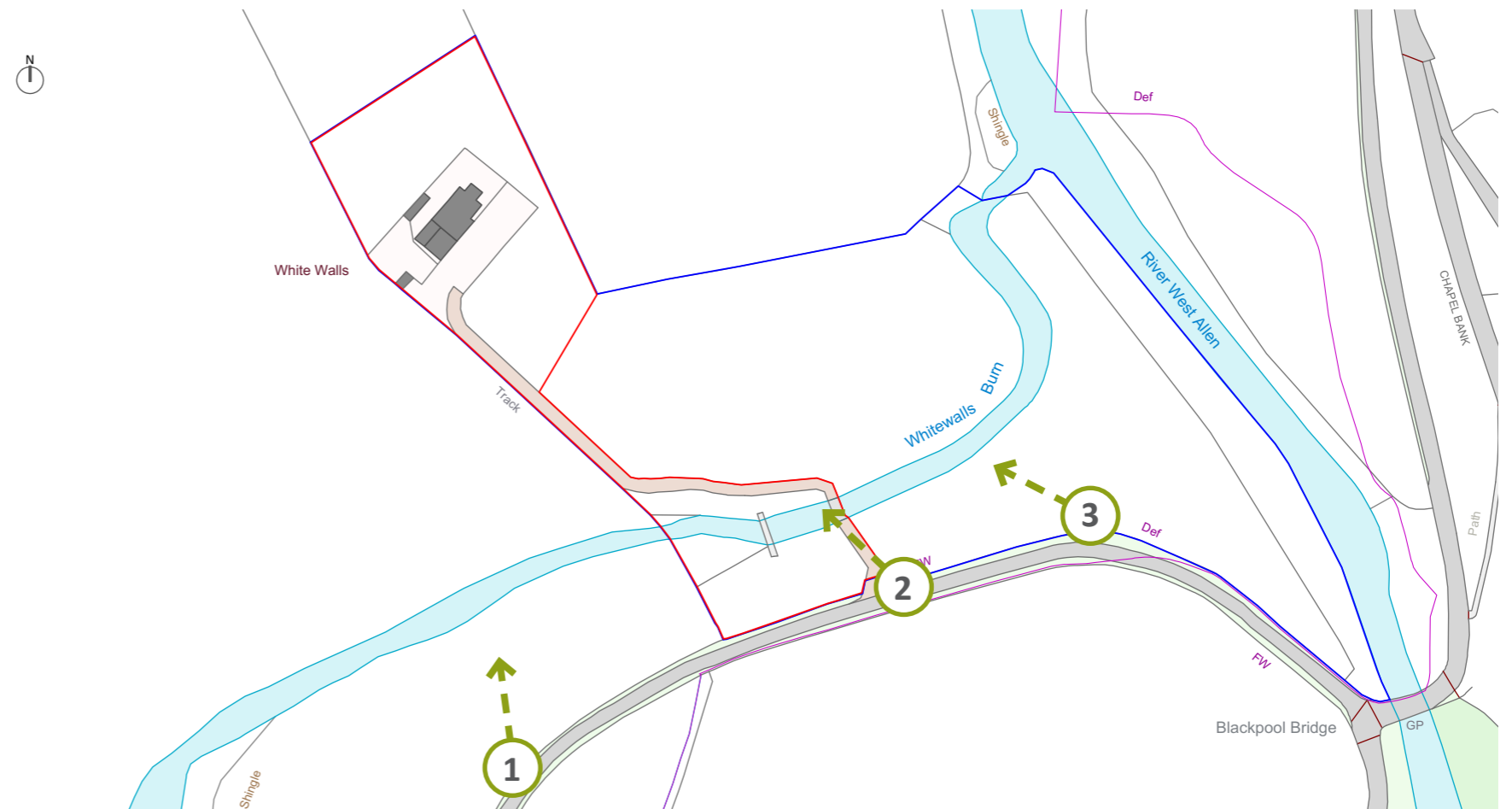


Fig.12 _ Existing Site Plan Highlighting Key Views from Main Access Road
NOT TO SCALE (Right)



3.0_Visibility + Sight Lines

The proposed workshop is set well below the horizon/ skyline on the valley floor, with mature trees as a back-drop, thereby minimising visibility. The workshop has also been sited and designed to minimise the visual impact from the driveway approach to the south east which presents the gable rather than the longer principle elevation.

The proposed workshop is a modest single storey structure which is significantly smaller than the house. Furthermore it is clad in timber which creates a lighter visual feel and will be further softened by additional planting which will screen the building to the south.

The use of timber cladding extends over the proposed window openings; this is a design feature which creates elevations consistent with simple honest ancillary buildings in the rural setting, minimising visual impact whilst providing security / privacy for the internal contents of the workshop.



Fig.16 _ Aerial View Highlighting Key Views along driveway
(Right)



Fig.17 _ View from across Whitewalls Burn



Fig.18 _ View from end of straight portion of drive



Fig.19 _ View from existing gate

4.0 _ Proposed Services + Sustainability

Due to the rural nature of the site the workshop will utilise sustainable resources to maximise the environmental credentials of the building.

Sustainability is inherent within the design of the proposed workshop; the building will be manufactured off site as a timber frame construction; this method has a low embodied energy and creates a low impact on the site. The building will be highly insulated, minimising the required energy inputs and making the building highly sustainable.

The workshop will be clad externally with timber (larch), which will weather over time to a silver grey. This material is often found in supporting rural agricultural buildings and will sit well within the trees as a gentle contrast to the dry stone walling and other stone buildings on the site.

Electricity: New small scale PV panels to the south west pitch of the workshop roof will provide electricity to enhance the sustainable credentials of the development.

Heating: the building is not a habitable space and so only low level heating will be required. The detail of this will be developed further after planning in the technical design stage and will be either via electric panel heaters, or through the use of an air source heat pump. Both of these options would be supplied by the PV panels, and it should be noted that the panels have been located to function efficiently whilst also not being visible from the drive or house due to the listed setting.

Drainage: no foul drainage is proposed for the workshop, greenhouse or storage shed. The workshop has a small footprint and roof/ surface water would be disposed of via soakaways.

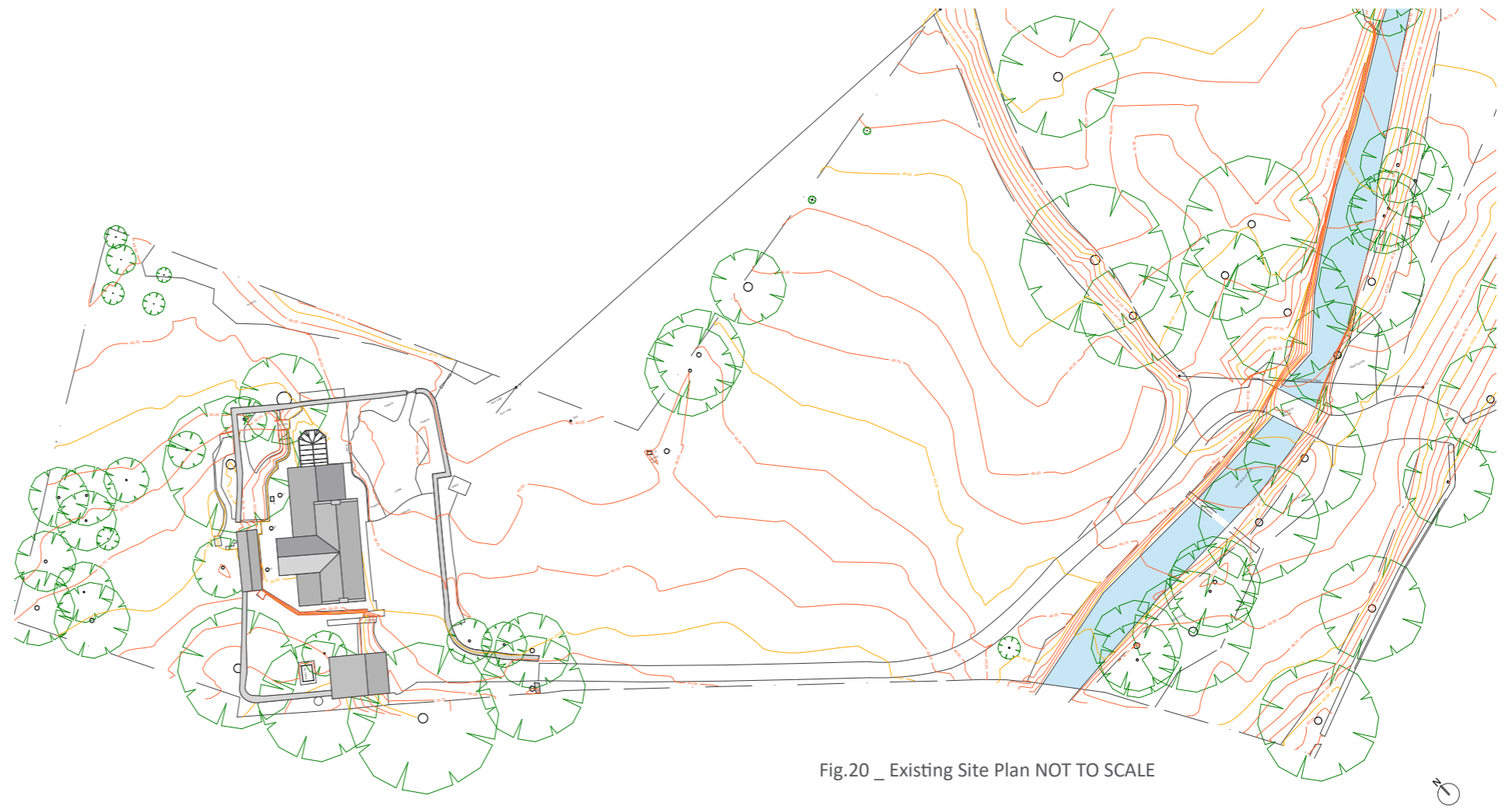


Fig.20 _ Existing Site Plan NOT TO SCALE

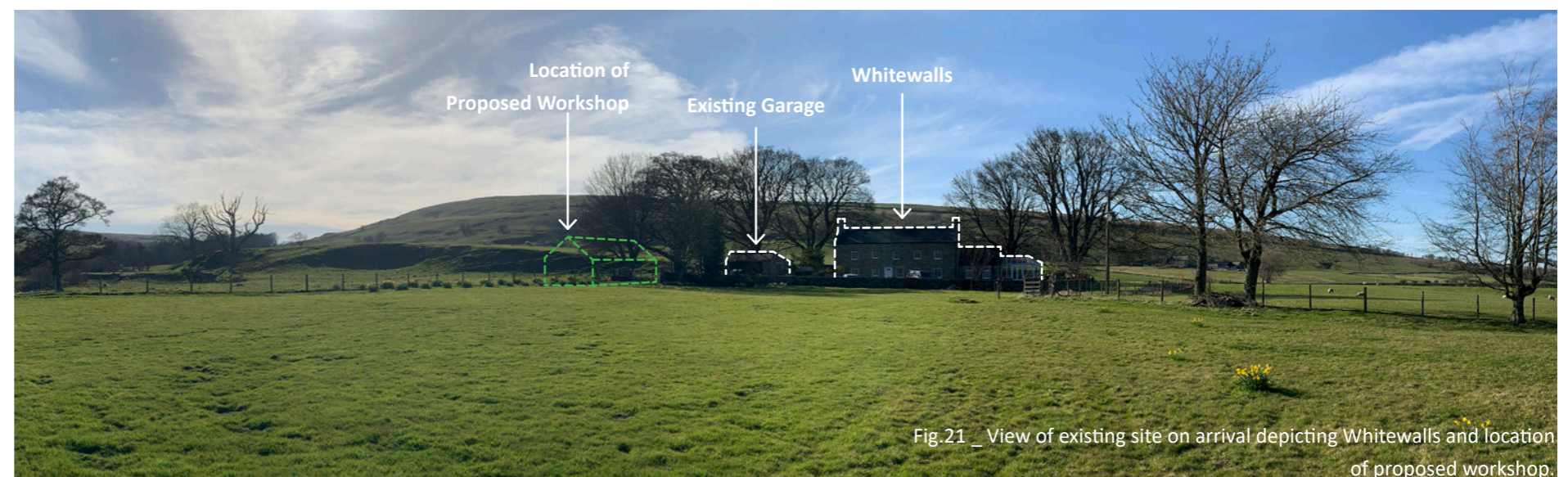


Fig.21 _ View of existing site on arrival depicting Whitewalls and location of proposed workshop.

5.0 _ Design Strategy

5.1 _ Design Strategy_ Proposed Site, Setting + Form

Proposed Development:

The proposed development locations minimise visual and physical impact on the existing landscape. The fundamental aim is to accommodate the required elements whilst remaining sensitive to the surroundings.

The scheme is very low density in proportion to the site, demonstrating a sensitivity to its setting. This fundamental starting point establishes a commitment to quality over quantity and is an appropriate approach for a site of this nature.

Greenhouse + Garden Shed:

The greenhouse is an attractive traditional style timber glasshouse with stone plinth, and by its nature will be transparent and greened. Over time the timber will naturally weather, softening the structure into its surrounding context. It sits close to the north boundary of the property away from the main house and is small in scale; it will therefore sit harmoniously in the setting.

Also to the rear of the main house, there are two old storage sheds which are in a poor state of disrepair. It is proposed that these be removed and replaced with one newer garden shed of a higher quality. This shed will sit close to the western boundary (rather than more centrally in the garden as the current sheds do), again allowing more distance to the house to improve the setting.

The greenhouse and storage shed are small in scale and were considered appropriate as indicated in the pre application enquiry feedback.

The altered wall position and workshop are discussed below to offer further background.

Tractor Shed:

The applicants have looked again at the strategy and are now looking to use the existing garage rather than add an additional tractor shed as indicated in the pre application enquiry. This concession means that the overall additional structures on site are kept to an absolute minimum.

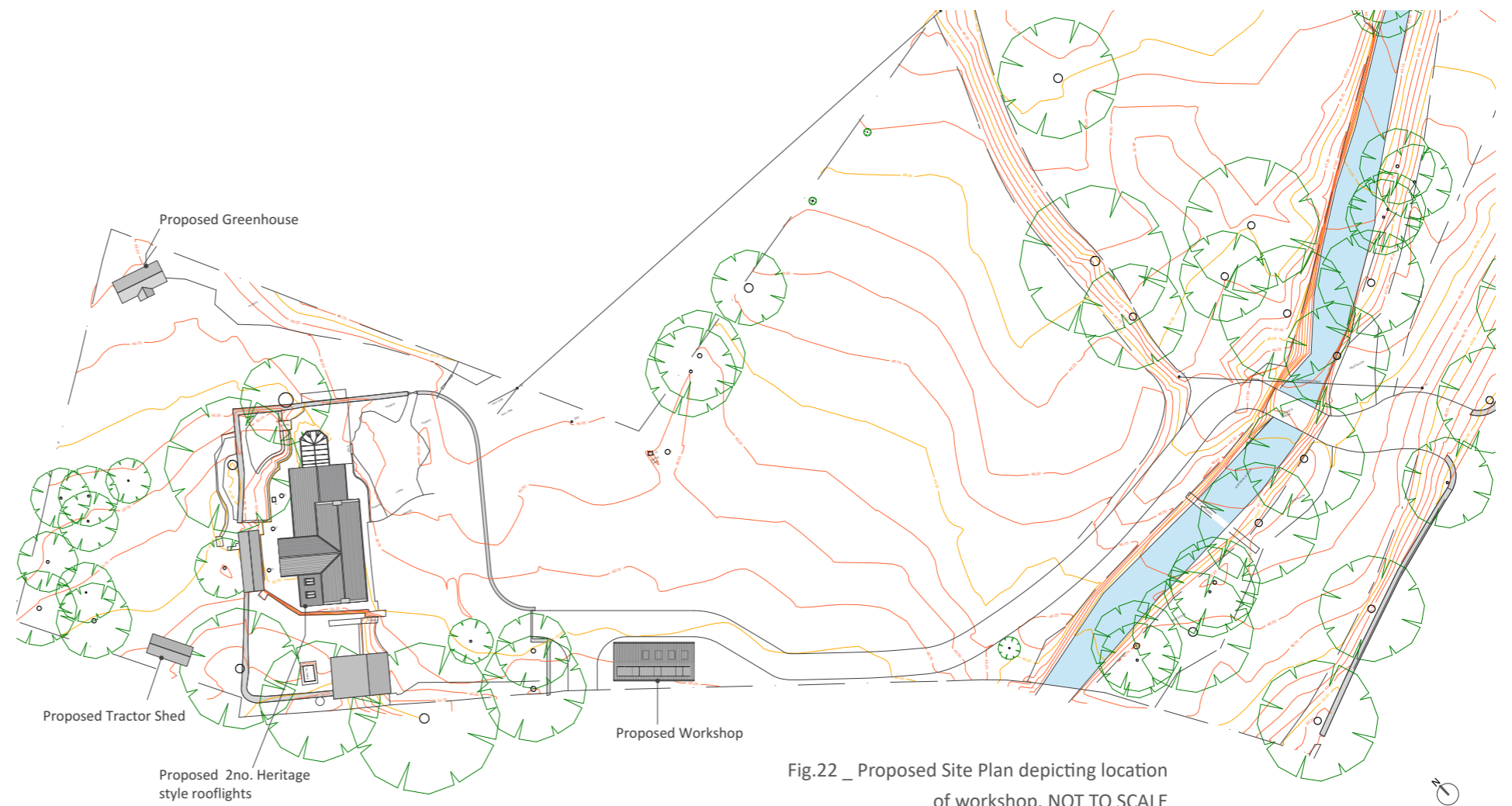


Fig.22 _ Proposed Site Plan depicting location of workshop. NOT TO SCALE

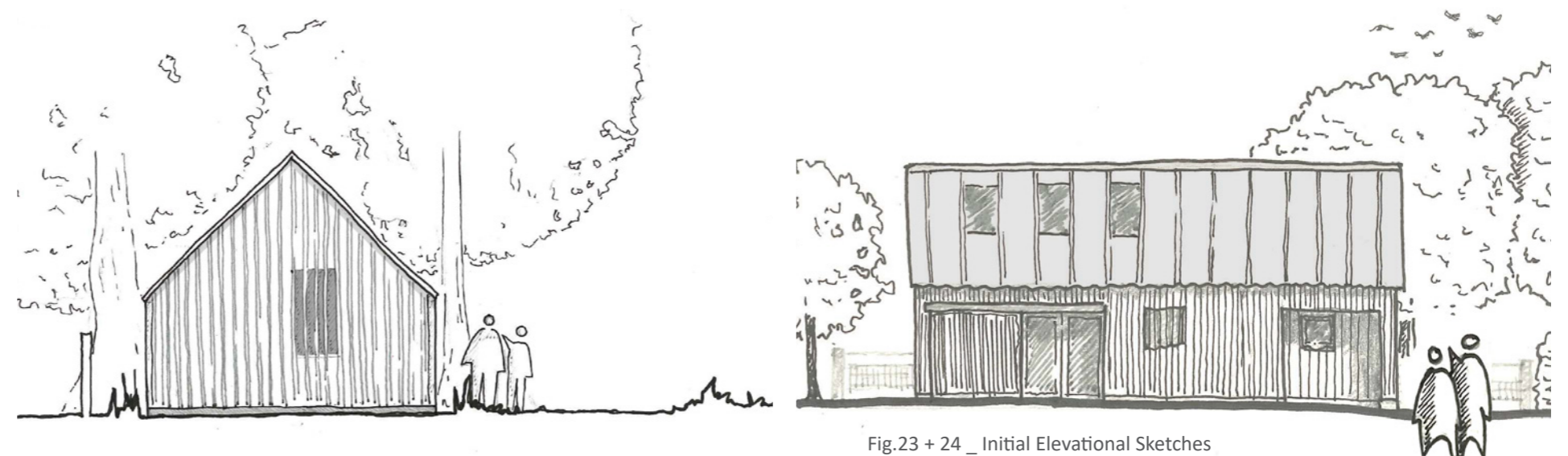


Fig.23 + 24 _ Initial Elevation Sketches

5.1 _ Design Strategy_ Proposed Site, Setting + Form

Access from the Highway:

The proposal includes minor alterations to the boundary wall at the junction with the unclassified highway (U8036). This will improve access for emergency vehicles, visibility and safety (currently the entrance could not accommodate a fire engine but the proposed alterations would correct this). Traditional dry stone walling techniques will be used and the existing stone will be reused. This proposal was deemed acceptable in the pre application feedback.

Private Drive:

The pre application documents considered the alteration of the position of the private drive between the bridge and the house. Having considered the feedback from the planning team, the development now proposes to keep the access drive substantially in its existing position, with only a slight alteration around the new workshop building which realigns the driveway with the existing and proposed new gate positions. The drive will be widened slightly to only 3.6 – 4m and will be finished in gravel to maintain permeability and a natural finish so as to harmonise with the setting.

Dry Stone Wall:

The application proposes to relocate the dry stone wall to the south of the house by realigning it 5.5m to the south east. The wall will reuse the existing stone and would be constructed using traditional heritage techniques to ensure its visual suitability for the site.

Historic maps show different arrangements of walls to the front of the house, and although there is no physical evidence obvious on the site today, the 1856 OS map indicates a wall in this new proposed position. Furthermore, the eastern section of wall was likely added in the late 1990s. It should also be noted that only 18m of this wall predates 1976; this is only around a third of the length of the wall, with two thirds being built in the modern era (the northern end being erected between 1990 and 2005, and the southern end being between 1976 and 1990).

The proposed repositioning of the wall to the historic position would offer a great benefit in terms of screening vehicles, as the current drive enclosure does not allow enough space for the parking and turning, meaning that vehicles are sometimes needed to be parked outside of the wall; the new wall position would prevent this to the benefit of the listed house.

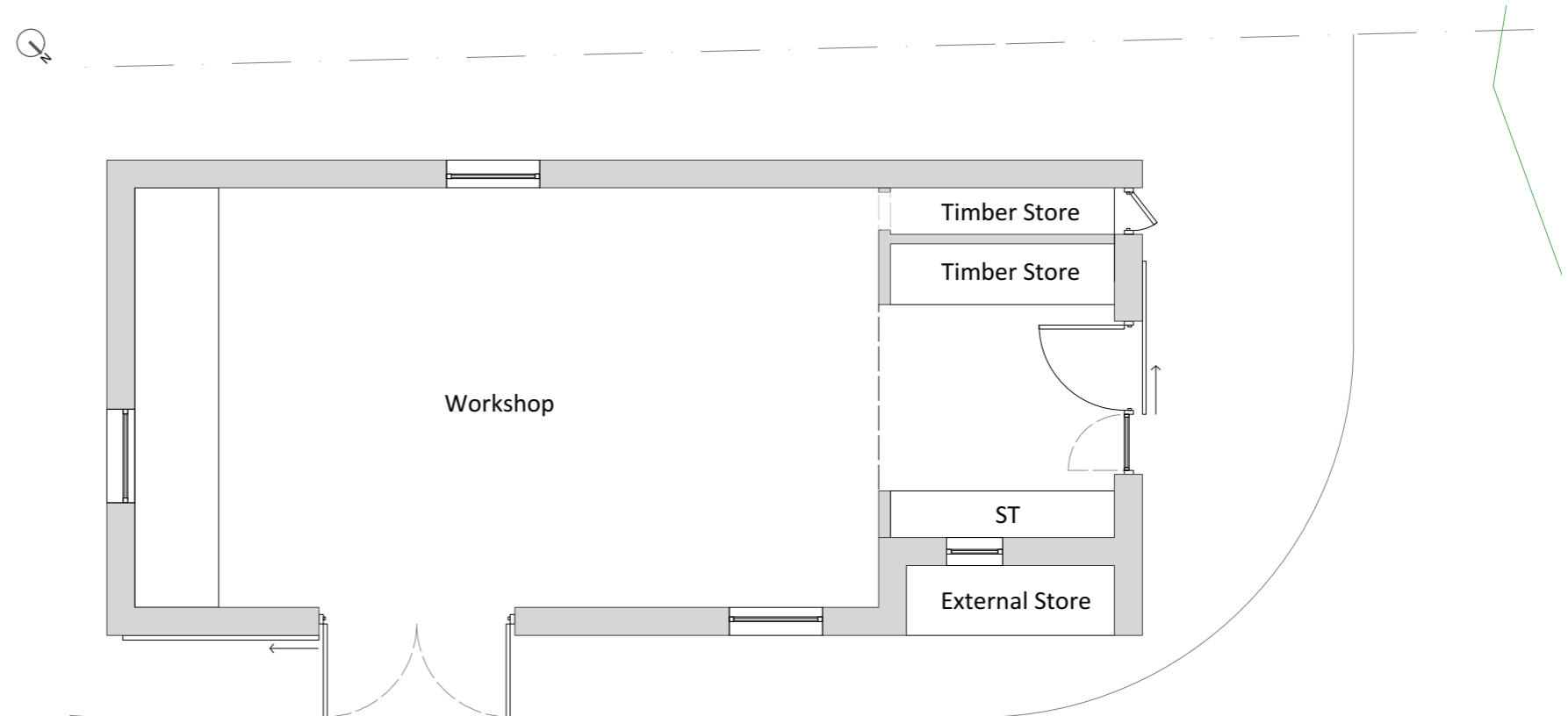


Fig.25_ Proposed Workshop Floor Plan NOT TO SCALE

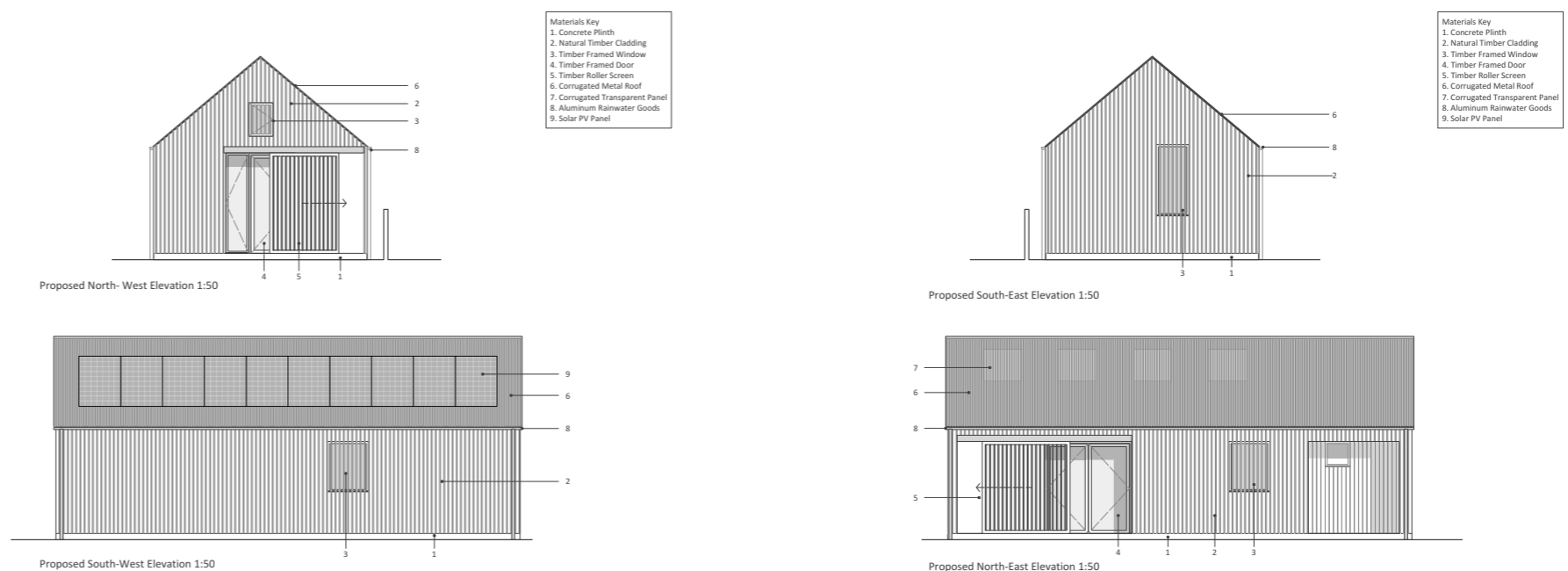


Fig.26+27_ Proposed Workshop Elevations NOT TO SCALE

5.1 _ Design Strategy_ Proposed Site, Setting + Form

It should also be noted that in terms of visibility, when seen from the approach from the south, the new wall position cannot be differentiated from the existing.

Rooflights to kitchen:

The modern extension to the north of the main house has minimal openings and therefore parts of the house are very dark. This application therefore includes two conservation style rooflights to the lower single storey lean to roof to the western side to serve the kitchen area, where more light is required. These rooflights would not be visible at all when seen in conjunction with the historic main southern volume of the house, and thereby have minimal impact on the historic building or setting.

Tractor Shed:

The applicants have looked again at the overall strategy and having considered ways to minimise the amount of development will now use the existing garage for this function; the tractor shed is therefore not part of the application.

Workshop:

- **Position:** The building is positioned to be lower and subservient to the house, and sits close to the boundary to give space for the house to 'breathe'. It is sympathetic to the natural contours of the landscape.
- **Form:** The workshop is a simple form which is reminiscent of field barns and traditional outbuildings of the area and existing buildings on site, being small in scale with a pitched roof.
- **Massing:** The workshop is low lying and linear in order to achieve minimal physical and visual impact on the landscape.



Fig.28_ Proposed Workshop Visual in Context



Fig.29_ North-East Elevation CLOSED



Fig.30_ North-East Elevation OPEN

5.1 _ Design Strategy_ Proposed Site, Setting + Form

- **Materiality:** The proposed material palette draws influence from the existing materiality of the area with the natural timber finish harmonising with the trees and also relating to lightweight agricultural buildings. The roof will be a slate grey profiled metal sheet which will match in colour and tone to the house whilst also referencing simple utilitarian farm buildings. Obviously the existing house is stone and slate, but to replicate this would be inappropriate as it would ‘compete’ visually.

(The AoNB design guide considers profiled metal sheets as proposed here to be appropriate on supporting structures as it ‘adds visual variety within a familiar range of materials’.)

- **Visibility:** The proposed workshop has been carefully orientated to maximise privacy and natural light whilst minimising visual impact by orientating the small gable to the south, thereby presenting a reduced scale when seen from the approach along the driveway.
- **Views into the Site:** The workshop is not visible from the road to the west, and is only visible from small sections of the unclassified road to the south.
- **Close views within the Site:** The building aligns itself with the trees, boundary fence and dry stone walls; through careful orientation and design the workshop minimises its visual impact even at close proximity.
- **Landscaping:** The scheme utilises the natural and existing features of the land. Screening will be provided by the planting of fruit trees around the south of the workshop. No additional fences or ground treatments are proposed outside of the drive and parking area which will both be gravel to maintain permeability and a soft, natural material finish.
- **Access + Circulation:** The proposal utilises the existing drive position for the majority of its length with only minimal alteration around the position of the workshop.



Fig.31_South-West Elevation

Fig.32_North-West Elevation CLOSED



Fig.33_North-West Elevation OPEN



5.2 _ Design Strategy _Aerial Massing Study



Fig.34_Aerial showing connection between Whitewalls + proposed Workshop



Fig.36_Existing Aerial Plan



Fig.35_Aerial showing Tree Screening between Whitewalls + proposed Workshop



Fig.37_Aerial Plan showing proposed Workshop

5.3 _ Design Strategy _ Minimal Visual Impact Study



Fig.38_ Existing View from across Whitewalls Burn



Fig.39_ View from across Whitewalls Burn showing proposed Workshop



Fig.40_ Existing View from driveway



Fig.41_ View from driveway showing proposed Workshop

5.4 _ Design Strategy _ 3D Visualisations



Fig.42 _ View of Whitewalls Entrance Door



Fig.43 _ View from Approach



Fig.44_ Interior view of Workshop I



Fig.45 _ Section through Workshop showing overhead storage area



Fig.46_ Interior view of Workshop II

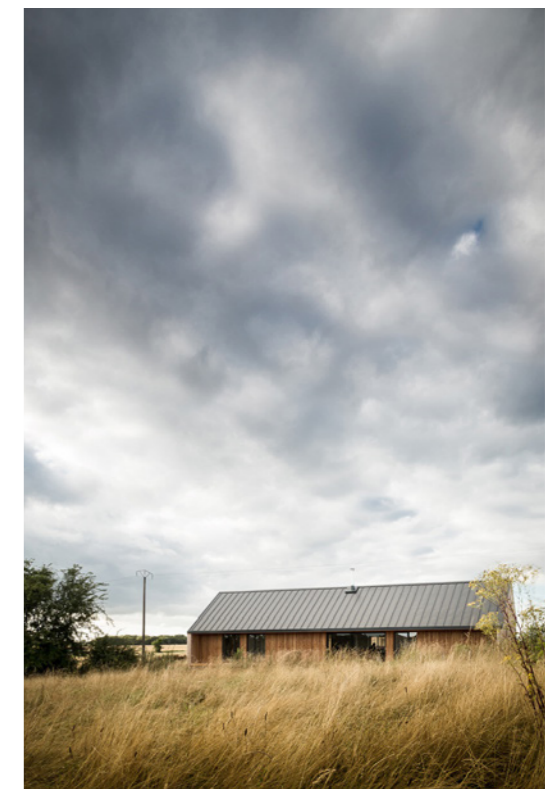
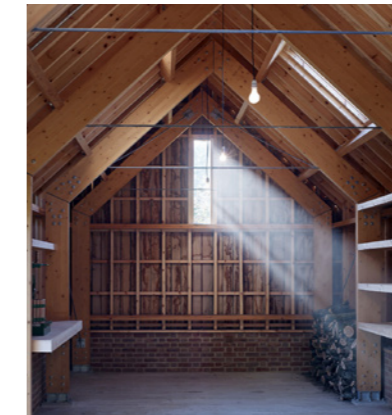
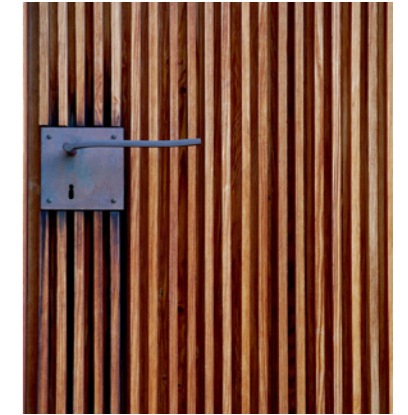
6.0 _ Precedents

This sheet illustrates a range of precedent images which show similar suitable approaches for materials and architectural detailing in the rural setting, and give an idea of the influences to be considered in the design.

The development will use a material palette informed by the local context and rural vernacular buildings of the region, including a simple palette of natural, sustainable materials.

Elliott Architects Ltd. are award winning Architectural Practice who have a proven track record in achieving the highest quality architecture in sensitive contexts. We have won several prestigious awards and have been widely praised for our ability to create architecture which has a lasting and positive impact, socially, historically, environmentally, economically and culturally.

We are respected in design terms and therefore very well placed to deliver architecture which make a positive contribution to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



7.0 _ Conclusion

The design proposes a small number of minor alterations to the existing site and buildings. The proposals have been developed with regard to the feedback received from the planning and conservation teams at Northumberland County Council, and the extent of the design has been reduced (with the omission of the tractor shed further improving the proposals). It should be noted that there were no objections raised by the conservation officer, and the detail in the application should give further comfort regarding the appropriateness of the scheme.

It should be noted that alternative locations for the workshop were considered, but these would result in the requirement for a substantial amount of additional access drive to be built on the site. Due to the levels and existing buildings, a drive would need to be routed in front of and around the house which would clearly have a greater impact than the proposed workshop location as set out in this application.

The scale, position, materiality and form of the development have all been carefully considered to be appropriate within the context, and care has been taken to design the building to minimise the impact on the site physically and visually; with an improved form and materials palette, the buildings draw on influences from the historic context whilst remaining sensitive to it in order to enhance and continue the character of the area.

The scheme has been designed to a high standard by award winning architects with local knowledge and respect for the area, and the commitment and vision of the clients to make a positive contribution to the area is clear, resulting in a great opportunity to create a positive and sustainable future for Whitewalls.

