

Archaeological
Building
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**A Heritage Assessment
Rapid Building Appraisal
Broniarth Farm
Guilsfield
Powys**

(NGR SJ 21096 13506)

On Behalf of Dafydd Turner



ABRS Report No 2021-BFGP

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May 2021

ABRS Project No 2021-BFGP

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A Heritage Assessment, Rapid Building Appraisal of Broniarth Farm (Former Farmhouse only), Guilsfield, Powys (NGR SJ 21096 13506).

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Summary

This document is a heritage assessment, rapid building appraisal of Broniarth Farm (Former Farmhouse only), Guilsfield, Powys (NGR SJ 21096 13506), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Dafydd Turner to support a retrospective application for conservation and alterations to the building.

Mae'r ddogfen hon yn yn asesiad treftadaeth cyflym o Ffermdy Broniarth, Cegidfa, Powys (NGR SJ 12336 58194) a gomisiynwyd gan Dafydd Turner oddiwrth Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) cyn cadwraeth ac addasiadau i'r adeilad.

Broniarth Farmhouse is a known historic asset, primarily listed due to it being an unaltered 19th century farmhouse. The proposed works are limited to the 20th century lean to and an outbuilding and will not affect the main house. The principle for the proposed works has been agreed by a previous approved planning application, the currently proposed works will complete this earlier application with some changes.

Mae Ffermdy Broniarth yn ased hanesyddol hysbys, wedi'i restru'n bennaf oherwydd ei fod yn ffermdy heb ei newid o'r 19eg ganrif. Mae'r gwaith arfaethedig yn gyfyngedig i "lean to" yr 20fed ganrif ac hen stabl ac ni fyddant yn effeithio ar y prif dŷ. Mae'r egwyddor ar gyfer y gwaith arfaethedig wedi'i chytuno gan gais cynllunio blaenorol, bydd y gwaith arfaethedig ar hyn o bryd yn cwblhau'r cais cynharach gyda rhai newidiadau.

The proposed development will have no impact upon the significance of the house as a historic asset. There will be limited harm to its setting with the link extension affecting the symmetry of the building as viewed from the surrounding landscape, but its setting will remain largely unaltered. The panoramic windows are clearly modern, but influenced by traditional box framing. The works will have a limited and less than substantial impact upon the overall setting of the building.

Ni fydd y datblygiad yn cael unrhyw effaith ar arwyddocâd y tŷ fel ased hanesyddol. Bydd niwed cyfyngedig i'w osodiad gyda'r estyniad cyswllt yn effeithio ar gymesuredd yr adeilad fel y'i gwelir o'r dirwedd o'i amgylch, ond ni fydd ei leoliad yn cael ei newid i raddau helaeth. Mae'r ffenestri panoramig yn amlwg yn fodern, ond dan dylandwad fframio traddodiadol. Bydd y gwaith yn cael effaith gyfyngedig a llai na sylweddol ar osodiad cyffredinol yr adeilad.

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Planning Policy Wales (PPW), this document is a heritage assessment, rapid building appraisal of Broniarth Farm (Former Farmhouse only), Guilsfield, Powys (NGR SJ 21096 13506).

This assessment has been commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Dafydd Turner to support a retrospective application for conservation of the building, limited internal alterations and conversion of attached outbuildings to residential use. Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent is being sought for the works. The building is currently a domestic residential building.

The building is listed at Grade II (CADW ID 15791) and recorded by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record (HER (PRN 36287)). The proposed development area is not located within a designated Conservation Area.

2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the heritage assessment is to present information on the extent, character, date, integrity and state of preservation of heritage assets present and potentially affected by the proposed development. The assessment will describe the character of the building(s) and their contribution within the wider historic landscape. The assessment will compare the proposals with identified heritage assets and state why these will not be detrimentally affected. For those heritage assets identified as being at risk from the proposed development, a suitable mitigation strategy will be suggested to minimise that risk. The assessment should, once the above information has been gathered, assist in providing an informed planning decision as to whether further stages of work are necessary.

All work follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* adhering to their *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* (TAN (May 2017)). As well as following *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016) in relation to the standing buildings.

All work has been carried out based upon plans supplied by the client or their agent.

The following sources have been consulted to assess previous land use and archaeological potential:

- Archaeological records (Clwyd Powys Historic Environment Record (<https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/index.html>)).
- National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW).
- Previous Ordnance Survey and other maps of the area as held by the Powys Archives (PA).
- Historical background material (ABRS Reference Library and PA).

A site visit was also undertaken in order to assess the current state of the proposed development area and that of the standing buildings and its setting within the wider landscape.

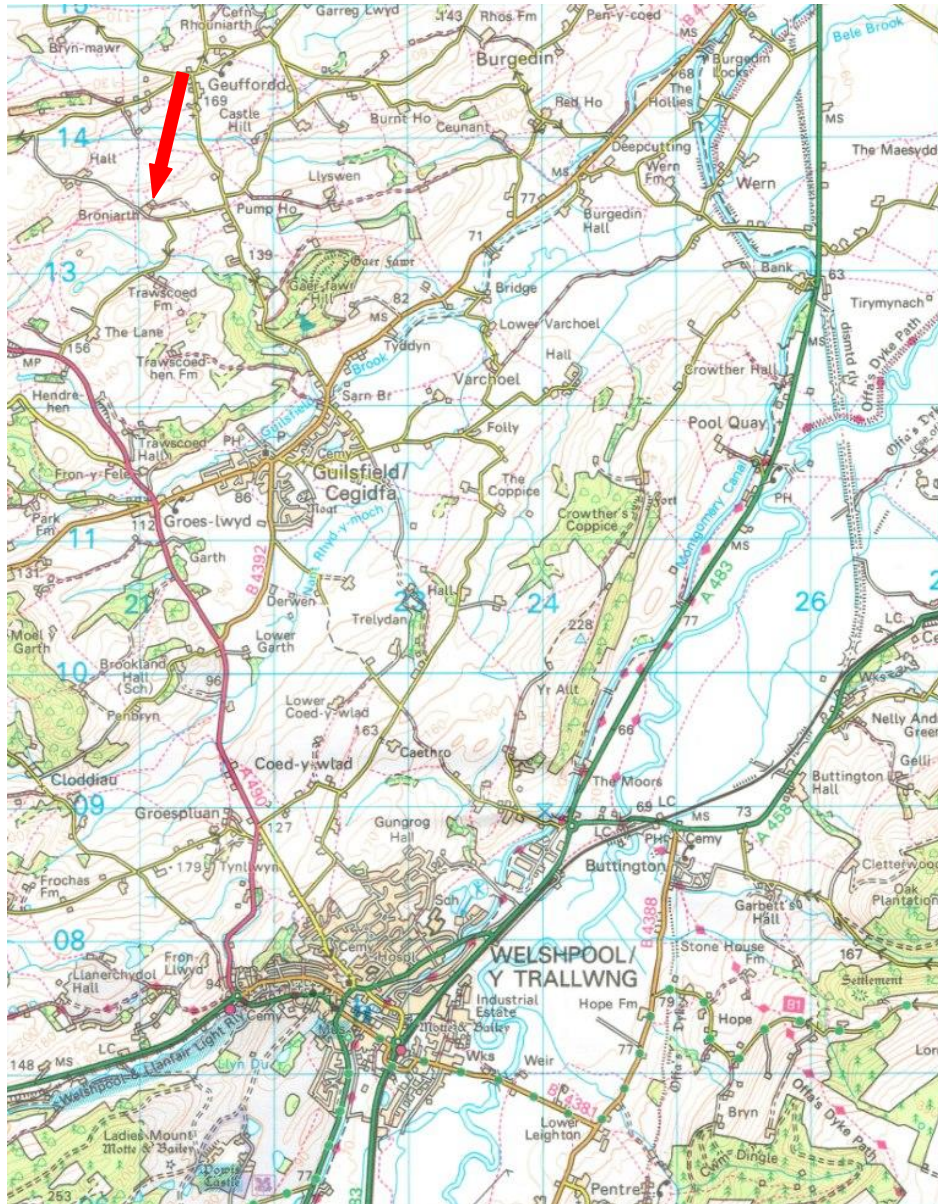


Figure 1
Site Location

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3. Site Location, Geology & Topography

The proposed development area is located approximately 2kms north – north west of the village of Guilsfield (*Figure 1*) and within the historic parish of St Aelhaearn, Powys.

The proposed development area is currently a domestic dwelling, formerly the farmhouse of a working farmstead. The building is located in an elevated position overlooking a wide valley. The building is surrounded by gardens and areas of hard standing; the boundaries are established property boundaries consisting of mixed modern and historic boundary treatments.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Till, overlaying Nantglyn Flags Formation – Mudstone. The proposed development area lies at approximately 160m OD.



Figure 2
Proposed Development Area (in Red), Appraised Building (in Green).
(1:1250 – Supplied By Client)

4. Historical Background

The parish of Guilsfield has an established history dating to the early medieval period, with limited evidence of pre-medieval settlement activity in the vicinity. The parish Church is dedicated to St Aelhaearn, a follower of St Bueno, a Powysian saint with links to the Berriew area which along with the shape of the churchyard suggests an early medieval foundation. The earliest documentary reference to the settlement is the 12th reference to *Kegitua*, the same name is also given in the Norwich Taxation of 1254. The English origins of the placename is thought to originate from *Gylde's* field and first appears as *Guildesfelde* in 1278. By the 19th century Guilsfield is described as an extensive parish with six townships and the chapelry of Llanfechain.

Broniarth Farm is located approximately 2kms north – north west of the village, the *Map of the townships of Upper and Lower Broniarth in the parish of Guildsfield and County of Montgomery* published in 1845 is the earliest available reference to the proposed development area. The map (*Figure 3*) records and identifies the proposed development area

as Broniarth, it consists of a “J”-shaped range of buildings with a smaller building to the south east occupying a similar footprint as the current Broniarth. Interestingly, the accompanying Apportionment lists it as Ty Coch – House, Building, Garden etc occupied by William Rogers and owned by William Ormsby-Gore. It is possible that the farmstead had recently changed its name; Broniarth was once a lordship held by the Princes of Powys.



Figure 3

Map of the townships of Upper and Lower Broniarth in the parish of Guilsfield and County of Montgomery (1845)

William Ormsby-Gore owned the Brogyntyn or Porkington Estate near Oswestry, the tithe suggests that at the time Broniarth was part of that estate. The estate was originally one of the principal seats of the Princes of Powys. By the early 17th century the estate had passed to the Owen Family and upon the death in 1792 of Robert Godolphin Owen the estate passed to his sister Margaret, wife of Owen Ormsby of Willowbrook, whose daughter in 1815 married William Gore of Woodford, Co. Leitrim, MP for North Shropshire (1835-57), the William Ormsby-Gore listed by the Tithe apportionment. Their son, Ralph was created Baron Harlech.

The 1884 Ordnance Survey (XV.SE (*Figure 4*)) records a similar arrangement of buildings as the tithe map, however the building to the south east of the farmyard is much larger and occupying a nearly identical footprint to the present Broniarth Farm. This would appear to suggest that the farmhouse had been rebuilt during the later 19th century, potentially utilising parts of the previous building at the southern end. Slater's *Directory of North & Mid Wales* published in 1895 lists Edward Jones, a farmer of Broniarth, confirming the name.

Broniarth Farmhouse was statutorily listed at Grade II in 1995 (CADW ID 15791). The listed building description describes the building thus:

History

c1850.

Exterior

Farmhouse, c.1850, Flemish bond brickwork on stone foundations, hipped slate roof. Two storeys, double pile plan of 3 bays with central stair hall. Tall central doorcase with 4-panelled door and overlight within an open pedimented timber doorcase. Twelve-paned sash windows in opening with 1 brick segmental heads, 6-pane sashes to first floor, all with stone sills. Brick dentilled eaves. Two stacks on central cross wall. Lean-to at W end of c.1920. Rear elevation has 3-light transomed paned windows with central iron casement.

Interior

Interior has king post roof trusses with angled struts off the haunches. Single tier of purlins.

Reasons for Listing

Included as an unaltered example of a mid C19 farmhouse.



Figure 4
1884 Ordnance Survey.
(Montgomeryshire Sheet XV.SE)

5. Rapid Building Appraisal

The proposed works are limited to the southern gable and adjacent outbuilding, as such this building appraisal will be limited primarily to these areas.

Briefly, Broniarth Farmhouse is a two storey, double pile, brick-built house under a hipped (on all four sides) roof in Welsh slate, believed to date to the mid 19th century; initial cartographic sources appear to support this. The three bay principal elevation (*Figure 5*) houses a tall central doorway with original four panelled door with overlight within an open

pedimented timber doorcase, potentially original six over six sash windows survive on the ground and three over three on the first floor, all finished with segmental brick heads and stone sills. There are brick dentilled eaves on each elevation. The rear elevation (*Figure 6*) has a much more “cottage” appearance with three light casement windows under flat cambered brick arches.

There are two brick stacks on a central cross wall. On the south facing gable is a later lean to extension under a slate roof. The lean to is believed to date to the early 20th century, the straight joint (*Figure 7*) on both elevations confirms the lean to is later. On the main house is a stone-built plinth and a cellar window. The ground floor window is identical to those on the principal elevation. The north facing gable is blank, with the exception of a single ground floor window, it is similar in appearance to those of the rear elevation, but appears to be a later frame.

The outbuilding to the south of the house is again brick-built under a pitched slate roof (*Figure 8*). The three bay building was originally stabling and was until recently in a near derelict condition (D. Turner pers comm). The outbuilding is constructed on a steep south facing slope and the rear (south facing) elevation is partly stone built (*Figure 9*).

The interior of both the lean to and the outbuilding have been recently renovated leaving little of historic or architectural interest. The historic plan-form is still largely discernible (*Figure 15*); the lean to has a substantial fireplace on the west wall, access to the main house is via a narrow door against the fireplace jamb. There is a second opening, originally a window, towards the east on the northern wall and a French window on the western wall, which given the apparent age of the extension may be original.

The outbuilding was in a near derelict condition prior to the recent works, but again the historic plan-form was still discernible. The building consisted of three boxes with doorways on the principal elevation and a larger bay at the eastern end (*Figure 15*). This plan-form, along with the outbuilding’s proximity to the house would suggest the building was stabling, possibly for household horses rather than working horses.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of the conservation of the outbuilding and internal remodelling and a link extension between the outbuilding and the main house (*Figures 17, 18 & 19*). The outbuilding and lean to will be joined with a link extension under a pitched roof which will be hipped at the south east angle. Panoramic windows are to be included in the south east angle of the proposed link, these will be modern in appearance to emphasise this as a modern addition to the building.

The outbuilding will be extended to the south to utilise the slope as basement storage. Architectural details, such as headers, door reveals and sills will be utilitarian in appearance and reflect the agricultural origins of the outbuilding.

7. Justification

This heritage assessment has confirmed that the building is a known historic asset, a Grade II listed building. Broniarth Farmhouse is likely to date to the mid 19th century and was constructed as a farmhouse with outbuildings. Broniarth Farmhouse was listed at Grade II in

1995 for its aesthetic and historic qualities and primarily as an “unaltered example of a mid 19th century farmhouse”. The proposed works will have no impact upon these qualities. Broniarth Farmhouse’s primary significance is it being an unaltered 19th century farmhouse, the proposed works are limited to the 20th century extension and outbuilding, and the main farmhouse will not be impacted by the proposed works.

It is clear that Broniarth Farmhouse was an aspirational house. Its prominent and elevated location meant that the house, potentially replacing an earlier house on a similar footprint, was constructed to be viewed and admired within the landscape. These characteristics form the principle aspects of Broniarth Farmhouse’s current setting as a designated historic asset. The proposed works, internal works; an extension and part conversion of an outbuilding will have no substantial impact upon these characteristics, the house will retain its prominence as viewed from the surrounding landscape.

The construction of the link extension to the south will have an impact upon the historic asset by affecting the symmetry of principal facade. There were, however already buildings to the south and a 20th century lean to extension abutting the southern gable, so this impact cannot be considered as constituting substantial harm to the historic asset. The use of sympathetic materials and a hipped roof following that of the main house and being a common feature of agricultural buildings will further minimise this impact.

Following Technical Advice Note 24 – The Historic Environment (TAN 24), deciding a listed building consent should “*have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest*”. This building appraisal has confirmed that the proposed works will only impact upon the 20th century extension and the curtilage listed outbuilding. The main farmhouse, listed as an unaltered example of a 19th farmhouse will be unaffected by the proposed works.

TAN 24 defines the setting of a historic asset as including “*the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Setting is not itself a historic asset, though land within a setting may contain other historic assets*”. The proposed development is prominently located within the landscape and was likely built and located to be admired within this landscape, it is clear that the principal east facing elevation was the most important, with its neoclassical inspired facade showing grandeur of scale (for the area), symmetry and repetition of windows, it was clearly constructed to be viewed and admired from the east and south east (*Figures 10, 11 & 12*). These characteristics form the principle aspects of Broniarth Farmhouse’s current setting as a designated heritage asset.

The principle of the proposed works have been agreed in previous, approved planning applications (Powys County Council PA Ref. No: M/2007/0320). The current proposals are a variation of these previously approved works and should therefore be supported. The only significant change is the inclusion of the panoramic windows in the south east angle. These windows will result in some harm to the historic asset. The windows are oak framed and located within the proposed extension, the use of simple rectangular panels will emphasise the windows as clearly modern, albeit influenced by the box timber framing tradition seen in the locality and not attempt to emulate the existing 19th century windows, there are a number of examples of glazed box framing in the locality (*Figures 13 & 14*).

The proposed windows, from a distance will blend into the landscape, any attempt to mimic the original painted windows seen on the main house would be highly visible within the landscape and detract from the historic asset and result in substantial harm. An approved, but not built application on an adjacent property (Powys County Council PA Ref. No: M/2004/1150), also curtilage listed included a similar arrangement of windows on the south facing facade. So, again the principle of the inclusion of large windows within a development within the site has been established.

The impact of these windows upon the historic asset will be further diminished through soft landscaping (*Figure 15*) and weathering of modern pointing.

8. Conclusion

This assessment has been carried out following Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: *The Historic Environment* (2017) and followed Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (CIfA) *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*.

The assessment has confirmed that the building is a known and designated historic asset. Following TAN 24 the local planning authority should... "*have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest*". The principle characteristic of the Broniarth Farmhouse is it being an unaltered 19th century farmhouse. The proposed works will only affect the 20th century extension and a curtilage listed outbuilding, the main house itself will be unaffected, thus preserving the building and its features of special architectural and historic interest.

The proposed works will maintain the principle characteristics of the building, there will be some limited harm to its setting with the introduction of the link extension affecting the symmetry of the building as viewed from the surrounding landscape, but its setting will remain largely unaltered. The panoramic windows have been designed to be clearly modern, but influenced by box framing. The proposed works will have a limited and less than substantial impact upon the overall setting of the building.

9. References & Sources

British Listed Buildings website <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

Brunskill, R.W. 2007 *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain And Their Conservation.* Yale.

CIfA. 2017 *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment.*

Historic England. 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice.*

Historic England. 2006 *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice.*

Planning Policy Wales. 2017 *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.*

Planning Policy Wales. 2016 *Chapter 6 The Historic Environment.*

William, E. 1982 *Traditional Farm Buildings in North East Wales.* National Museum of Wales.

10. Colour Plates



Figure 5
Principal Elevation (Looking West – North West).



Figure 6
Rear Elevation (Looking South East).



Figure 7
Straight Joint Between Main House
(Left) and Lean To (Right) on Rear
Elevation (Looking East – South East).



Figure 8
Outbuilding (Looking South West).



Figure 9
Original South Facing Wall of
Outbuilding (Looking North West).



Figure 10
Broniarth Farmhouse, from the South East (Looking North West).



Figure 11
Broniarth Farmhouse, from the East – South East (Looking West - North West).



Figure 12
Broniarth Farmhouse, from the East (Looking West).



Figure 13
Adjacent Curtilage Listed Building with Similar Windows as the Proposed Panoramic Windows.
(Image Supplied By Client)

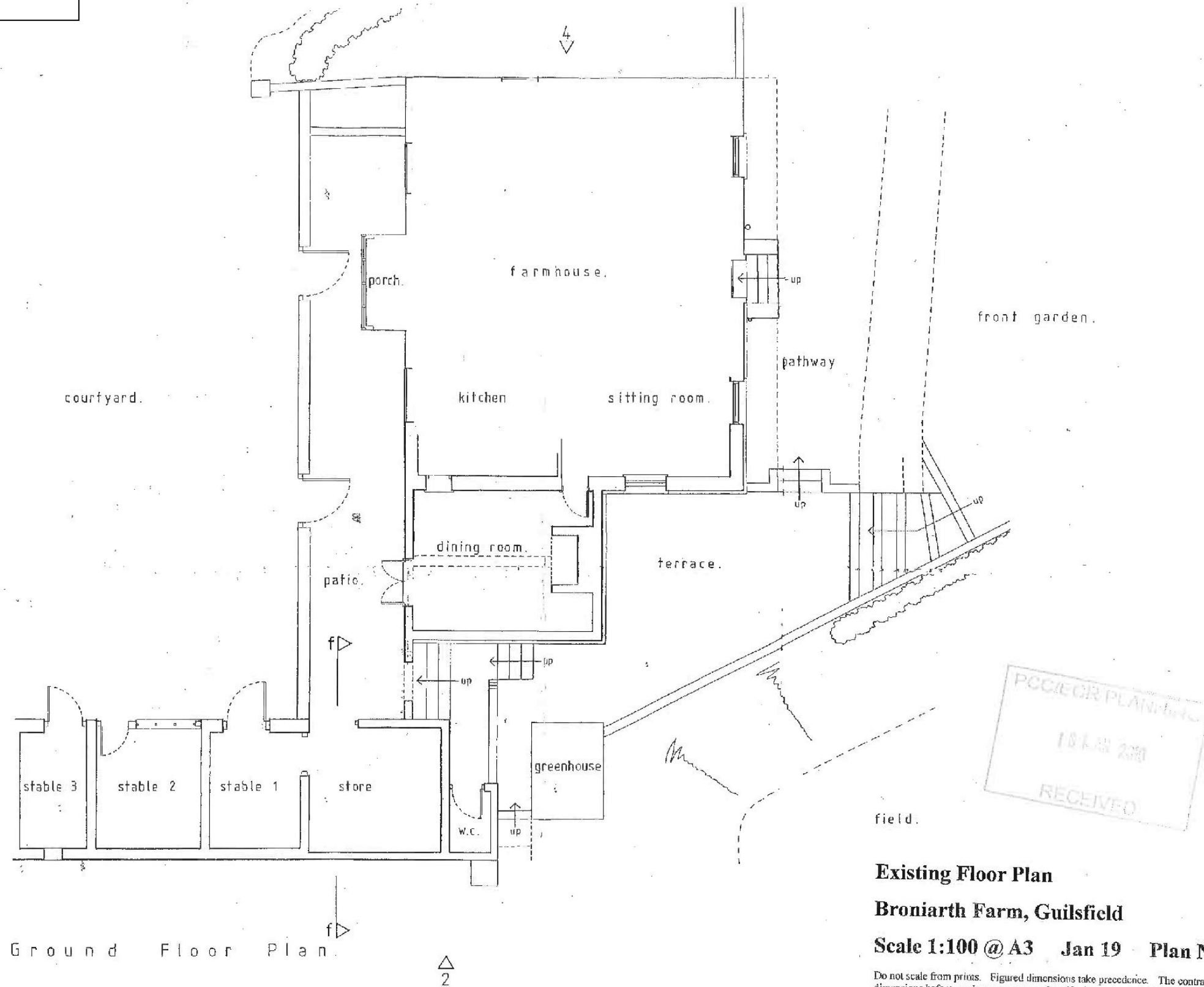


Figure 14
Gaer Fawr Holding, S.E of Broniarth Farmhouse with Similar Windows as the Proposed Panoramic Windows.
(Image Supplied By Client)



Figure 15
Broniarth Farmhouse, from the South East Showing Limited Impact of Proposed Panoramic Windows (Looking North – North West).

Figure 16
Ground Floor Plan – As Existing (Not to Scale).



Existing Floor Plan

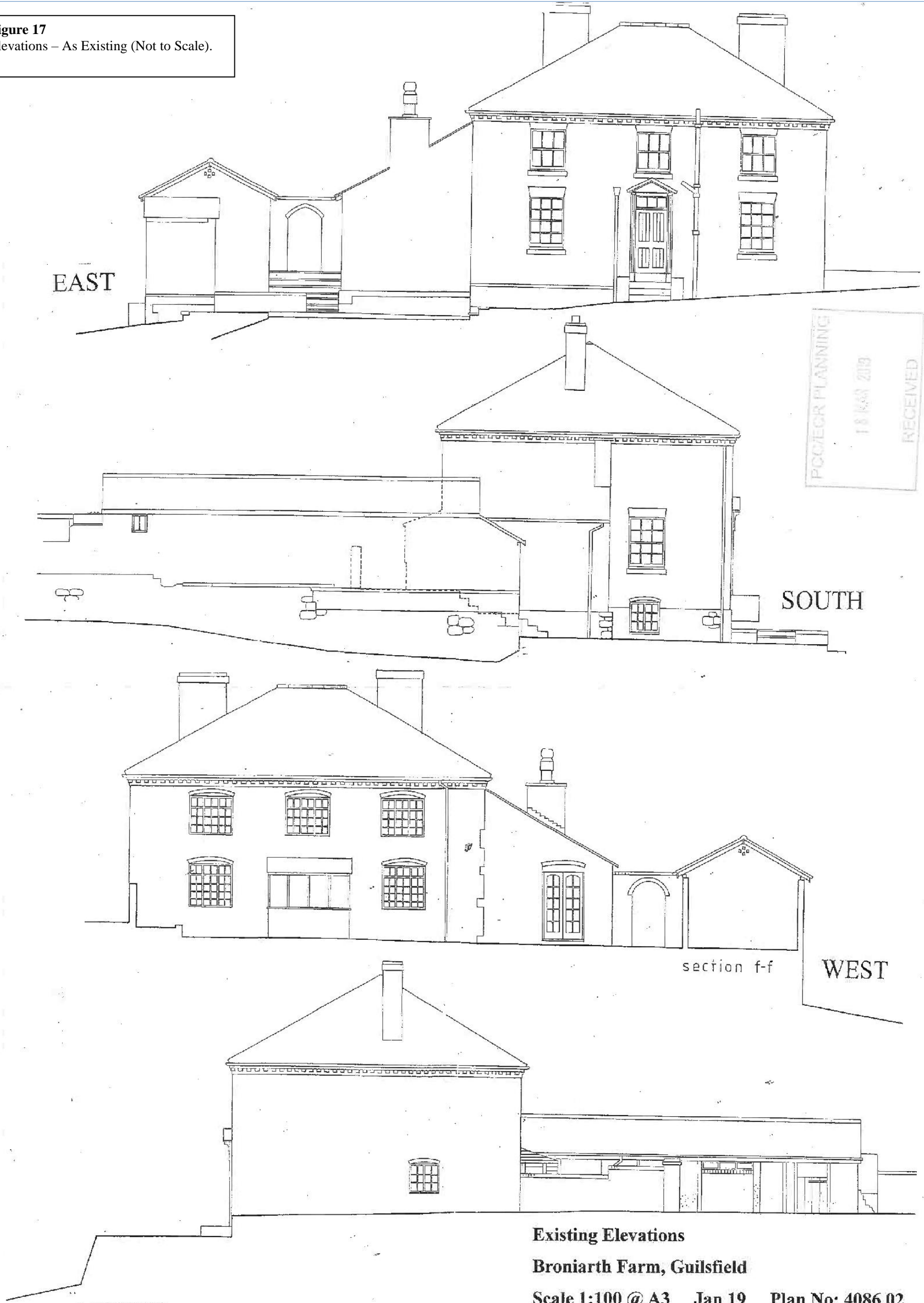
Broniarth Farm, Guilsfield

Scale 1:100 @ A3 Jan 19 Plan No: 4086.01

Do not scale from prints. Figured dimensions take precedence. The contractor is to check all dimensions before work commences and notify the contract administrator of any error or discrepancy. OS Licence No 100006857. * 1 Church Street, Welsphool, Powys SY21 701. * Tel: 01938 554413.

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Figure 17
Elevations – As Existing (Not to Scale).



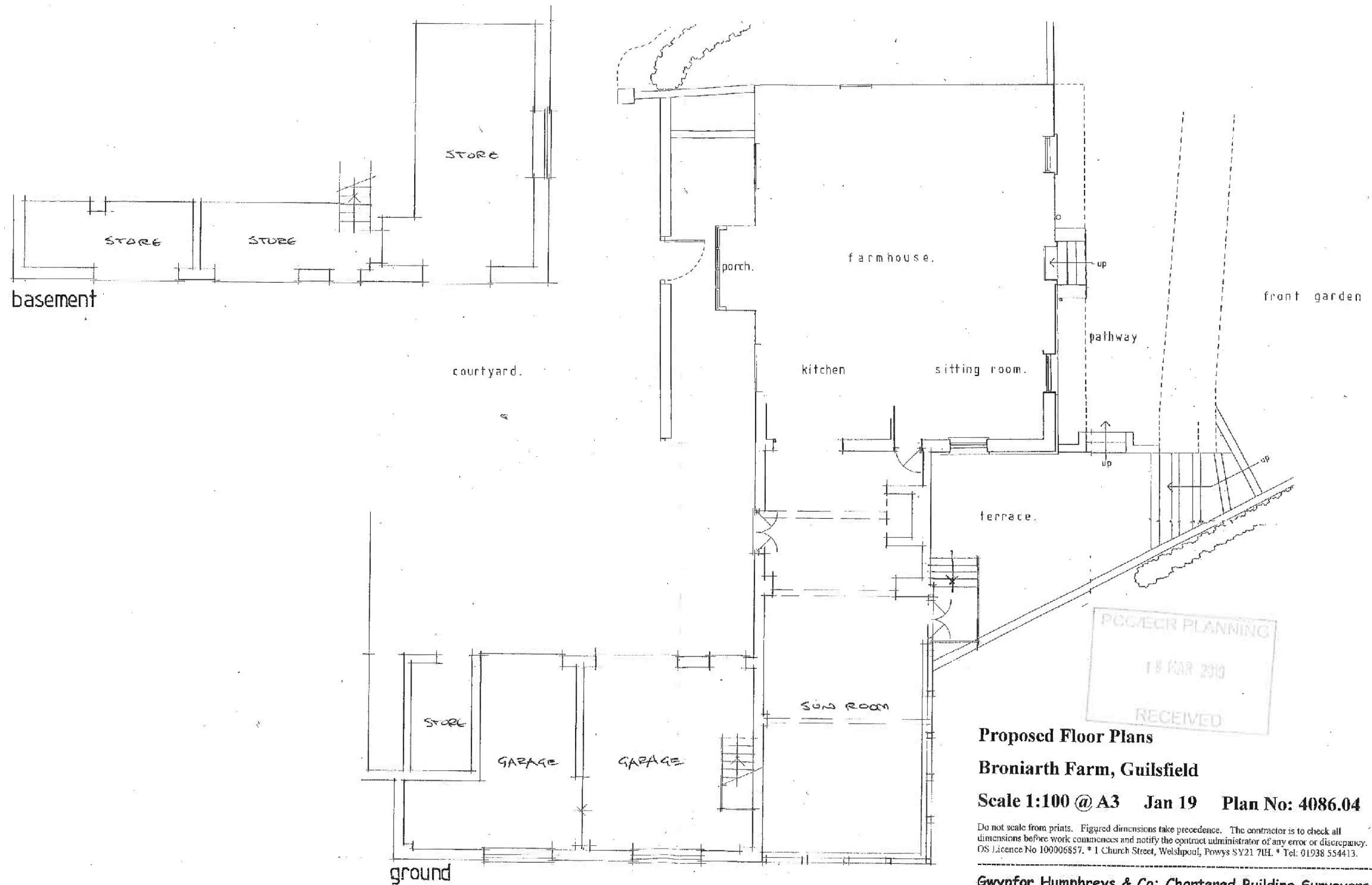
Existing Elevations

Broniarth Farm, Guilsfield

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Figure 18
Ground Floor Plan – As Proposed (As of
May 2021 Not to Scale).



Proposed Floor Plans
Broniarth Farm, Guilsfield
Scale 1:100 @ A3 Jan 19 Plan No: 4086.04

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Figure 19
Elevations – As Proposed (As of May
2021 Not to Scale).



Proposed Elevations

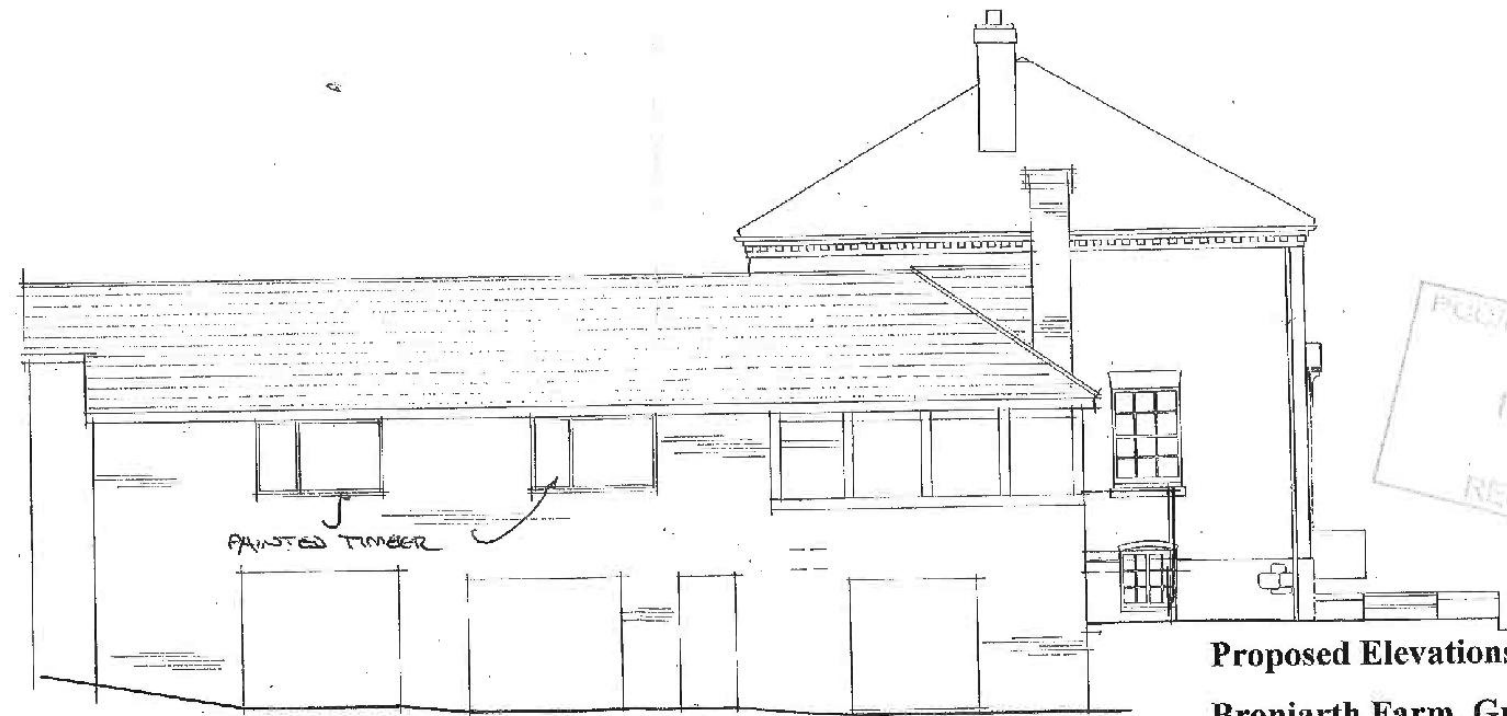
Broniarth Farm, Guilsfield

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Figure 20
Elevations – As Proposed (As of May 2021 Not to Scale).



Proposed Elevations

Broniarth Farm, Guilsfield

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