

**J.A.P.** Architects

# **Design, Access & Heritage Statement**

**Proposed Extensions & Alterations  
at**

**Church Farm (formerly Erratts Farm),  
Cowlinge**

**January 2021**

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## 1.0 Background & Planning History

1.1 Edward and Penny Lewis recently purchased Church Farm with the intention of making the property their long-term family home. J.A.P. Architects were appointed to explore potential for some modifications, including a good quality, singles-storey extension to improve the living accommodation, a new outbuilding and create a more functional, principle access together with a utility room.

1.2 J.A.P. Architects know the property well, having undertaken various works for previous owners (when the property was known as Erratts Farm). Previous (relatively recent) works are set out below, all of which were undertaken in consultation with the local conservation officer, Christine Leveson.

- SE/12/0888/LB  
(i) Replacement partition wall and window at WC and Utility Room (ii) Removal of brick infill and reinstatement of studwork and associated works to internal wall.
- SE/12/1053/LB  
(i) Erection of rear porch canopy (ii) Provision of render to existing leant-o rear extension.
- SE/13/0453/HH  
Alterations to outbuilding to provide accommodation.
- SE/13/0453/HH  
Alterations to ancillary building to provide modernised accommodation including dormer windows to the rear.

In addition, in 2012/13 extensive internal repairs were carried out following significant flood damage caused by a burst pipe while the owners were away. These works included repairs and replacement timbers throughout the existing kitchen, dining and sitting areas.

1.3 Shortly before Church Farm was sold by its previous owners, we prepared a sketch proposal for significant extension and alteration works at the rear of the house. These were consulted on with Christine Leveson and are described below, in Part 4.0. The previous owners were at the point of submitting formal applications when their circumstances changed and the property was sold to Mr and Mrs Lewis.

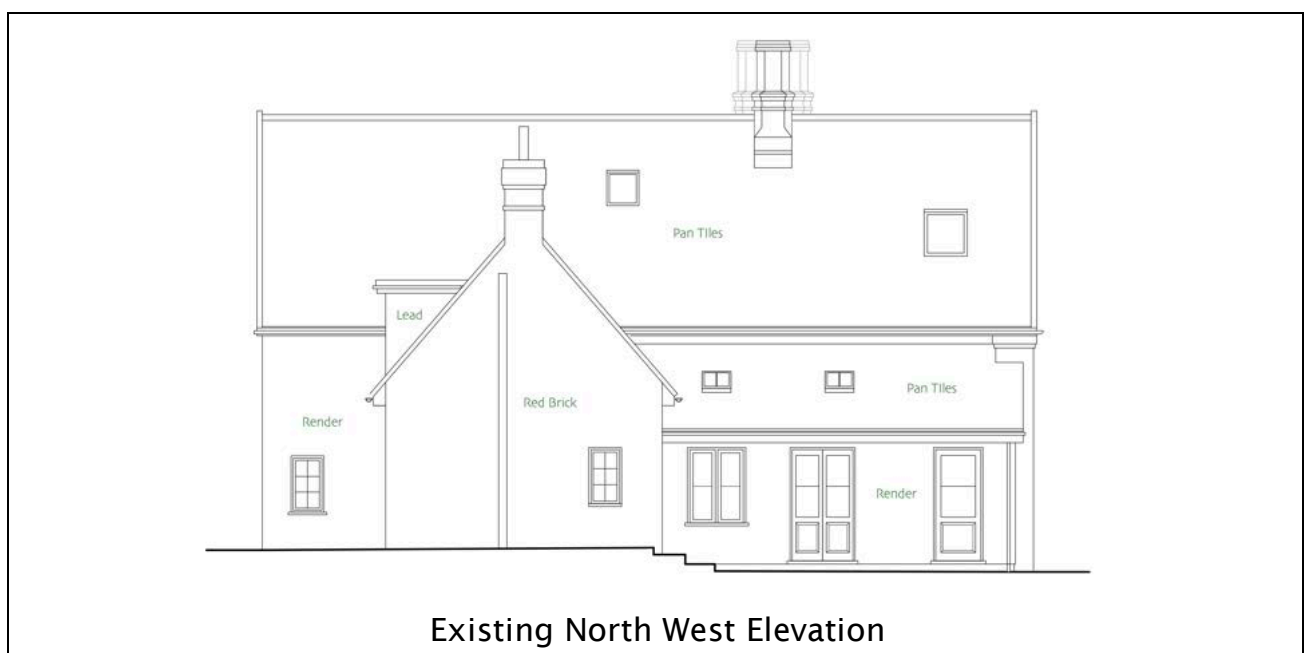
## 2.0 Heritage Part 1

2.1 Church Farm is Grade II listed, list entry:1031691. The official listing names the building is Bridge Farmhouse [subsequently changed to Erratts Farm and then again, more recently, to Church Farm].

2.2 The earliest part of the existing house, has C17 origins, though it has undergone a significant amount of alterations, including opening up works through to later extensions at the rear, a repositioned staircase and sub-division within one of its three bays.



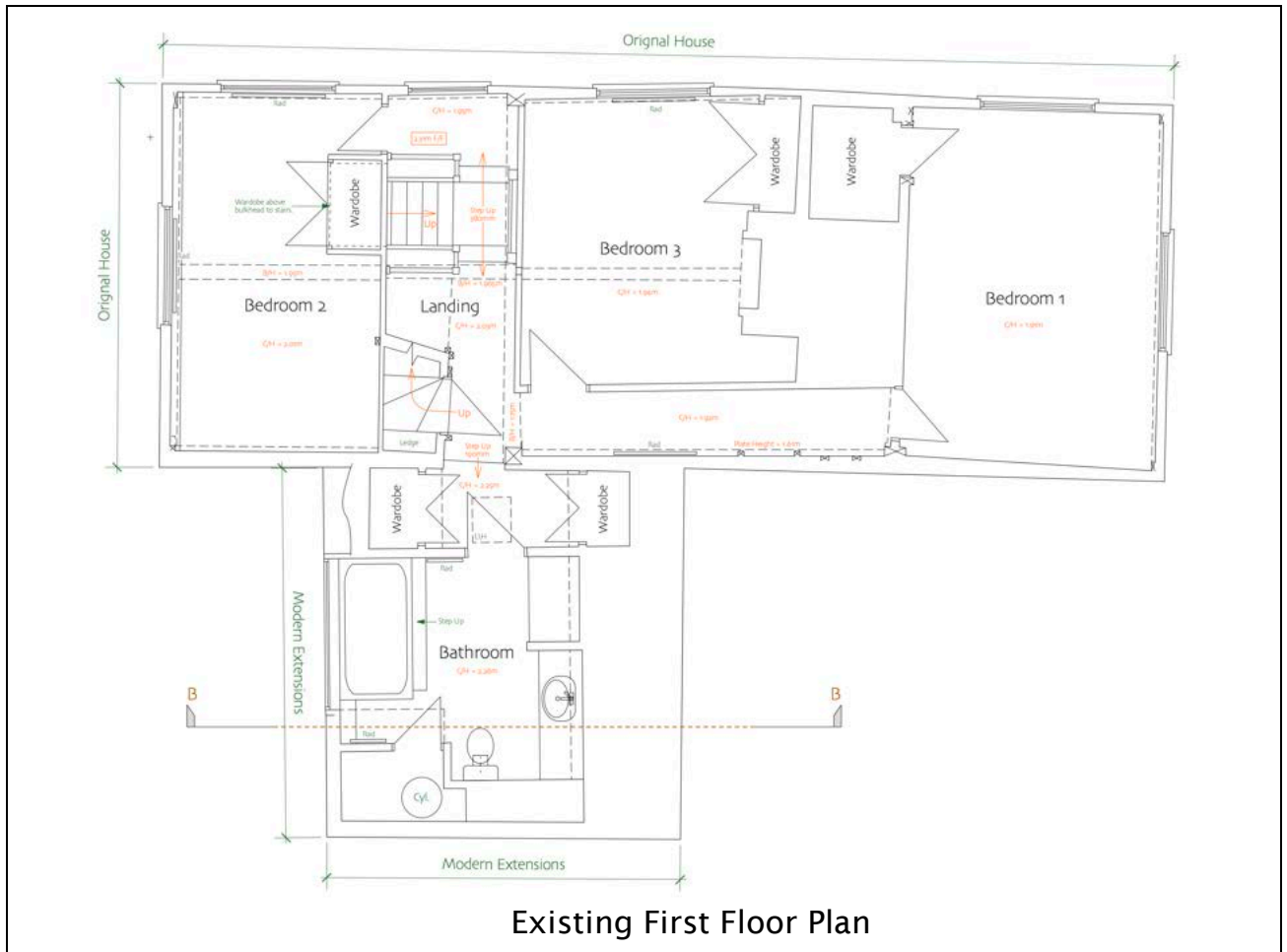
- 2.3 Evidence suggests the original house comprised two bays, with a central front door and chimney stack (see plan below at Part 3 and at drawing 20016-01). A third bay – very slightly narrower than the original house, at its north east end – looks to have been added at a time after the original construction, possibly in the early C18, at which time a new front door was formed.
- 2.4 The principal - most historic - elements of the existing house are plastered and original windows have been replaced with C20 casement windows with multiple glazing bars.
- 2.5 The roof is finished in old, clay pan-tiles, though these are clearly not original and were probably added at the same time as a more modern, two-storey extension was added at the rear.
- 2.6 At the rear are two extensions. One, a two-storey structure with late C19 origins (constructed 9” Flemish bond brickwork) which spans across the join between the principal building and the later third bay. The second is a modern, single-storey lean-to.



2.7 The third bay of the oldest part of the house has been sub-divided to create an entrance hall, a shower room and a utility room (accessed from the later kitchen extension at the rear). The original, principal cross beam remains in this bay, spanning across the top of the modern partitions and forming the alignment of the modern staircase.



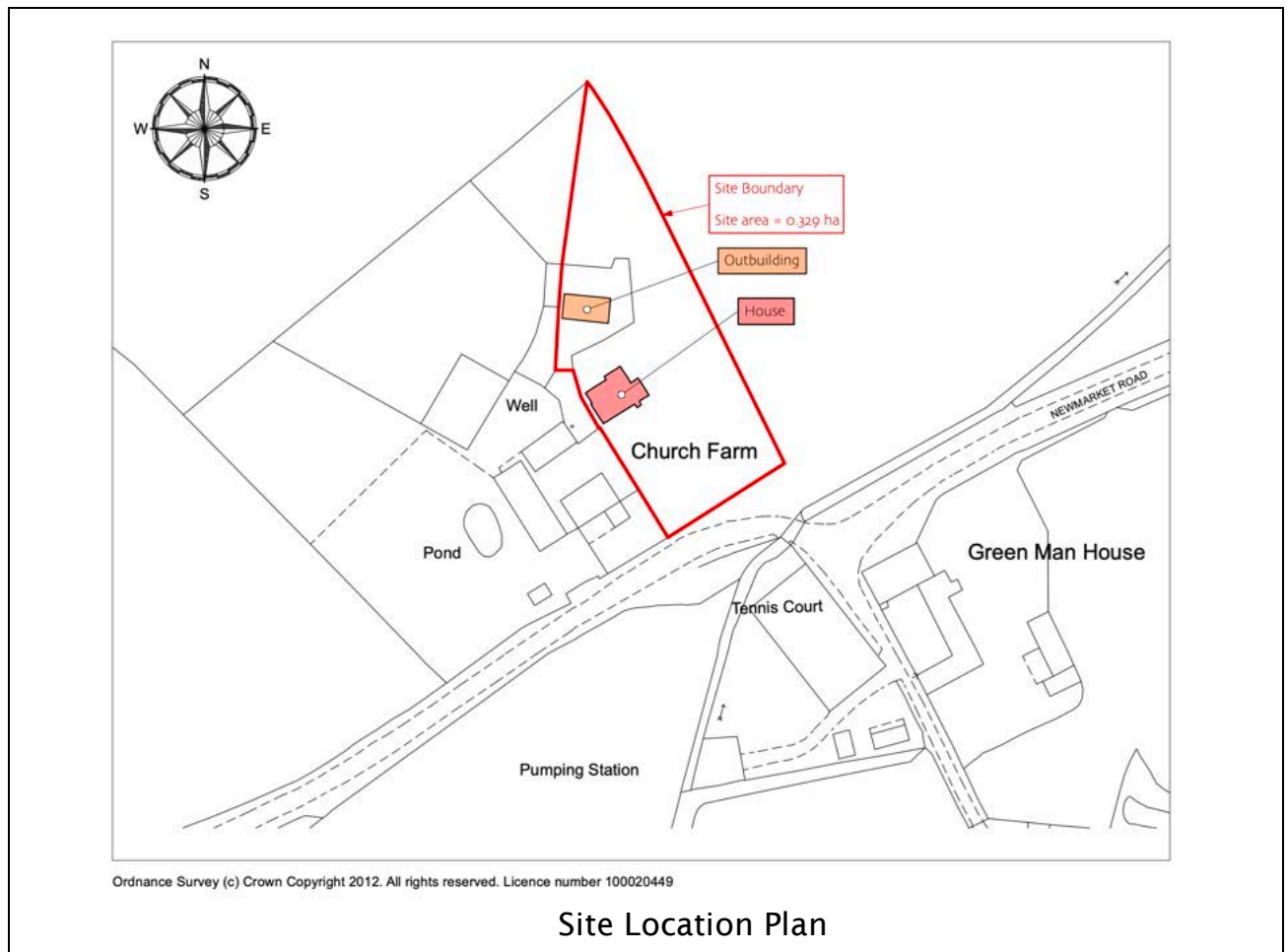
2.8 Evidence exists of extensive dry lining to the external walls of the WC and the utility room. The small window to the WC is modern and replaced an earlier, much larger aperture that would have been positioned in the north east gable, below the large window at first floor. An original door to bedroom 3, adjacent to the south east façade, has been filled in and there is a modern landing configuration giving access to 3 bedrooms. There is a modern aperture leading through to the rear extension. Compared to alterations in this bay, the original two bays are largely untouched, save for an access landing at first floor at the rear of the house.



### 3.0 The Existing Site and Layout

#### The Site

- 3.1 Church Farm is located at Newmarket Road in Cowlinge. Originally a working farm with various barns and outbuildings, Church Farm has for many years functioned as a private dwelling [a large, traditional barn to the east of the main house was converted to a separate dwelling in the 1980's - planning ref:E/811/3323/P].
- 3.2 The existing domestic plot measures approximately 0.33ha. The house is set back from the highway by 50 metres, tightly adjacent to its south west boundary, beyond which is a shared access drive serving Church Farm and the converted barn.



- 3.3 The shared drive creates the unusual situation where it leads to a parking area at the rear of the main house, via a rather tight entrance. This means that the principal entrance to the house is via a 'back door', with the original front door all but redundant.
- 3.4 To the rear of the house is a 1.5 storey annexe outbuilding containing a garden store, a home office and some ancillary accommodation [converted under SE/13/0453/HH]. The access drive runs in front of this building and then around to the rear where there is a large gravelled area for parking.
- 3.5 The front gardens and a large wall screen the property from the road. The garden contains a number of mature trees and there are modest, hardstanding terraces at the front and rear of the house with areas elsewhere laid to lawn.

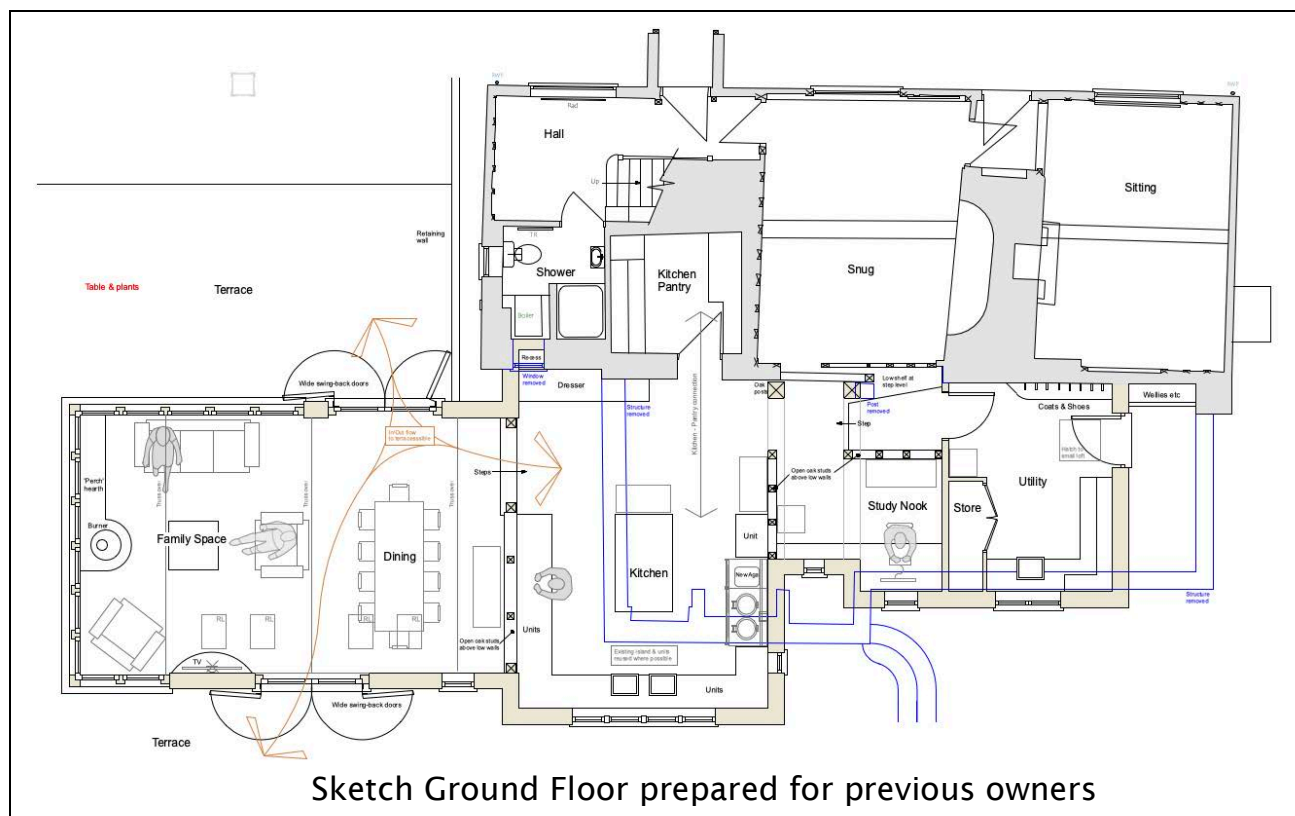
### **The Existing Dwelling**

- 3.6 Detailed survey plans are provided at drawing 20016-02.
- 3.7 As described above, the original house is divided into 3 bays – the original two bays are divided by a large fireplace and chimney stack with sitting areas at ground floor and two bedrooms above. The original staircase would have been located somewhere close to the chimney stack, but this has long since been replaced with a modern stair in the third bay at the north east end of the house.
- 3.8 The original front door, between bays 1 and 2, is no longer used and the later front door, in the third bay, is rarely used as it has no relation to the access drive and parking area.

- 3.9 As described above, the third bay has been sub-divided, creating a WC, a utility room and a front hall (which is really just a passage, accessing the stair and WC).
- 3.10 The more modern structures at the rear comprise a two-storey, solid masonry wing, with a kitchen at ground floor and a large bathroom above and a single-storey lean-to structure. The lean-to covers a dining space opened up to the kitchen and a small 'lobby' with a coats cupboard. This lobby currently functions as the principal, day-to-day entrance.
- 3.11 Part of the roof space has been converted to a small, fourth bedroom and a shower room, both accessed via a winding stair rising from the modern main stair and landing.

#### 4.0 Pre-Application Enquiries

4.1 Prior to Mr and Mrs Lewis purchasing Church Farm, we were asked by the previous owners to prepare proposals for extending the accommodation. [Note: At that time the property was known as Erratts Farm]. Sketch floor plans and elevations were prepared in 2017 and we liaised with the local conservation officer, Christine Leveson.



4.2 The design concept involved fully reworking the accommodation at the rear and replacing the two-storey wing and single-storey lean-to to create a very large open-plan living space, a large utility room, Master Bedroom and a bathroom.

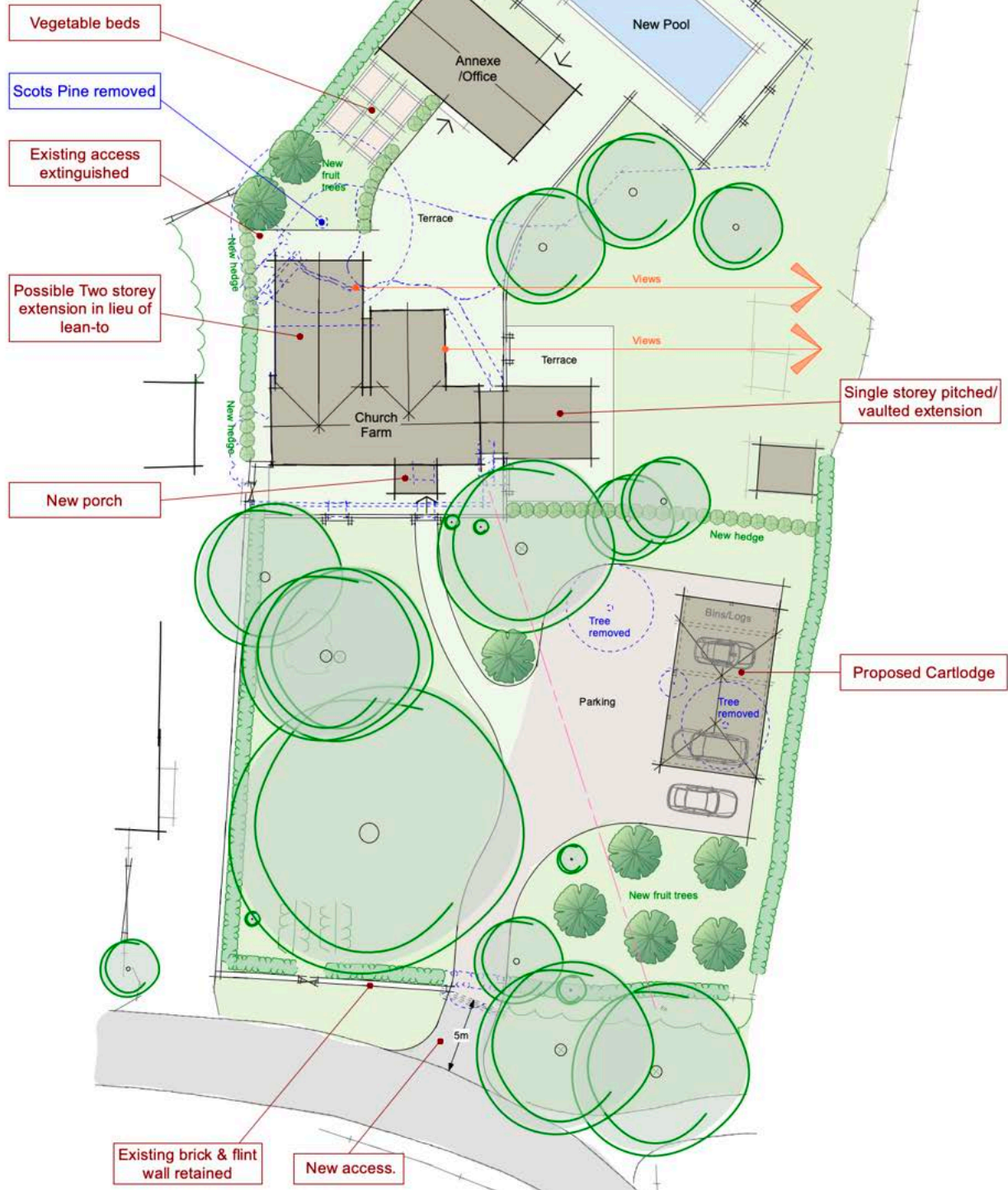
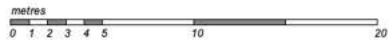


- 4.3 In her emailed response at the time, Christine Leveson stated: *the proposed extensions are as discussed at our site meeting. The replacement rear extensions are subordinate to the original building and maintain a hierarchy of the evolution of the building. The new side extension is also of an appropriate scale and design to work well with the building and create a functional interactive relationship with the surrounding gardens, a feature which the house is currently lacking. Overall, I consider the proposals enhance the property whilst having very little impact on historic fabric.*
- 4.4 With this encouraging response we commenced detailed proposals but the owner's circumstances changed and the property was sold to the current owners (the Applicant), Mr and Mrs Lewis.
- 4.5 Mr and Mrs Lewis asked us to look at some similar proposals (seeking to improve the accommodation) but also to look at the potential for moving the access drive and parking area from the side and rear, to the front. Accordingly, the plan below was sent to Christine Leveson.

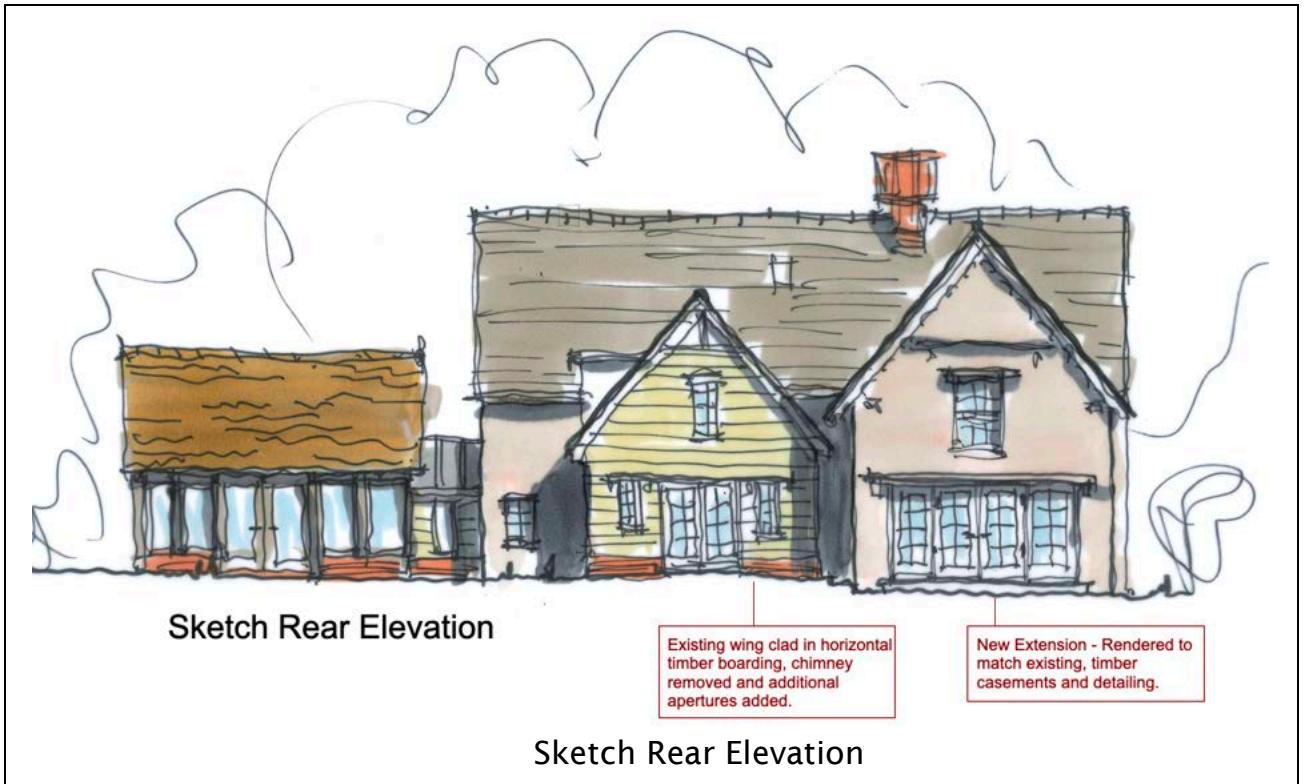
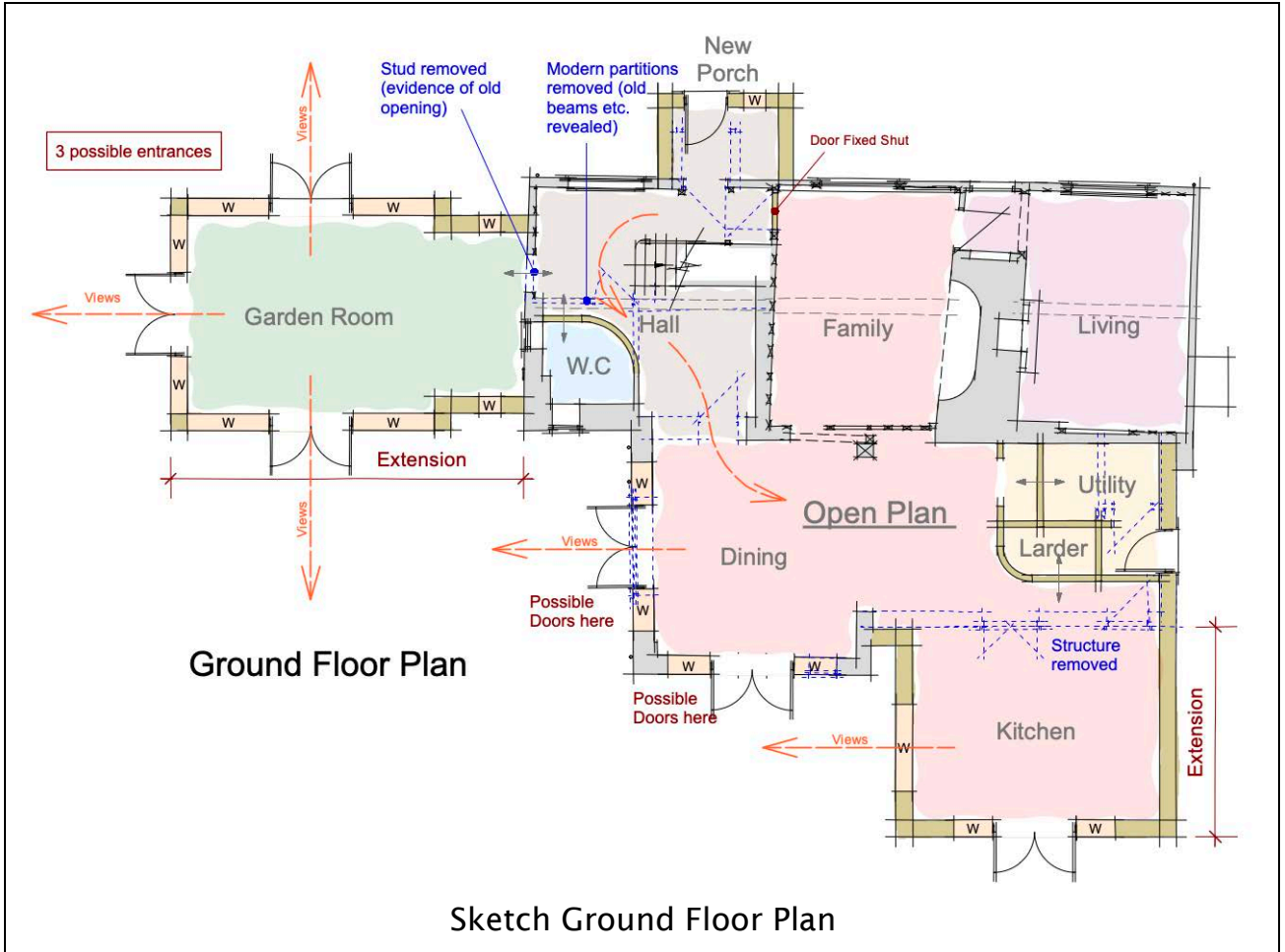


# Schematic Site Plan

Scale 1:250 @ A1



Sketch Site Plan showing new access and drive, new outbuilding and new extensions



In her response of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Christine Leveson addressed each part of the proposal, stating:

**Extensions:** *The previous proposals involved the replacement of the existing modern rear additions with a two-storey, double-pile extension. That extension, although*

*larger than the existing additions, remained clearly subservient to the host building with both elements of it having much lower eaves and ridge heights.*

*The new proposals appear to retain the existing two-storey modern addition and replace the lean-to with another two storey extension. I appreciate this is in the early stages of development, but the ridge height appears to be the same as the main house and the span is wider. It is also longer than the existing rear addition, so would be considerable in scale. This would result in a large and dominant extension which would not appear as subservient to the listed building, nor would it reflect the hierarchy of the evolution of the building. It would also result in a much larger part of the original rear wall and roof slope being covered than the existing arrangement or the previous proposals. Whilst an extension in this location is likely to be achievable, I would advise that it should be considerably reduced from that shown.*

*The side extension appears a little smaller than the previous scheme and is now proposed to link directly to the side elevation of the house. Whilst a modest addition in this location may be acceptable, the impact of creating an access into it needs to be assessed, as this may affect historic fabric in the side elevation.*

**Cartlodge and access:** *I understand the desire to have an independent vehicular access to the property which would, in turn, reinstate the use of the front entrance. The location of the access would also leave the historic wall intact. Usually, outbuildings located to front of listed buildings are discouraged unless it was a historic arrangement, because of the potential impact on the setting of the building. In this instance, however, the layout of the site would appear to preclude the positioning of a cartlodge in a convenient location to the rear of the property which would not affect the setting, including views, in a harmful way. The cartlodge should be subservient to the house so as to minimise its impact on the setting.*

*The driveway should be surfaced in an informal finish, for example, bound gravel. Formal surfacing such as block paving would not be appropriate in this location.*

*I would advise you to also contact Suffolk County Council Highways to discuss the new access as they would be consulted on the formal planning application.*

**Porch:** *assuming the existing porch is of no special interest, its replacement is acceptable in principle, subject to the design and scale of the new porch.*

**Swimming pool:** *this would be located partially behind the exiting outbuilding to the rear of the property. Given the rural location and the potential impact on the setting of the listed building, consideration should be given to reducing the visual impact of the pool and its surroundings, with a softer, more natural/informal approach being preferable. A building might also be needed to house the filtration equipment, unless it can be accommodated in the existing annexe/office building.*

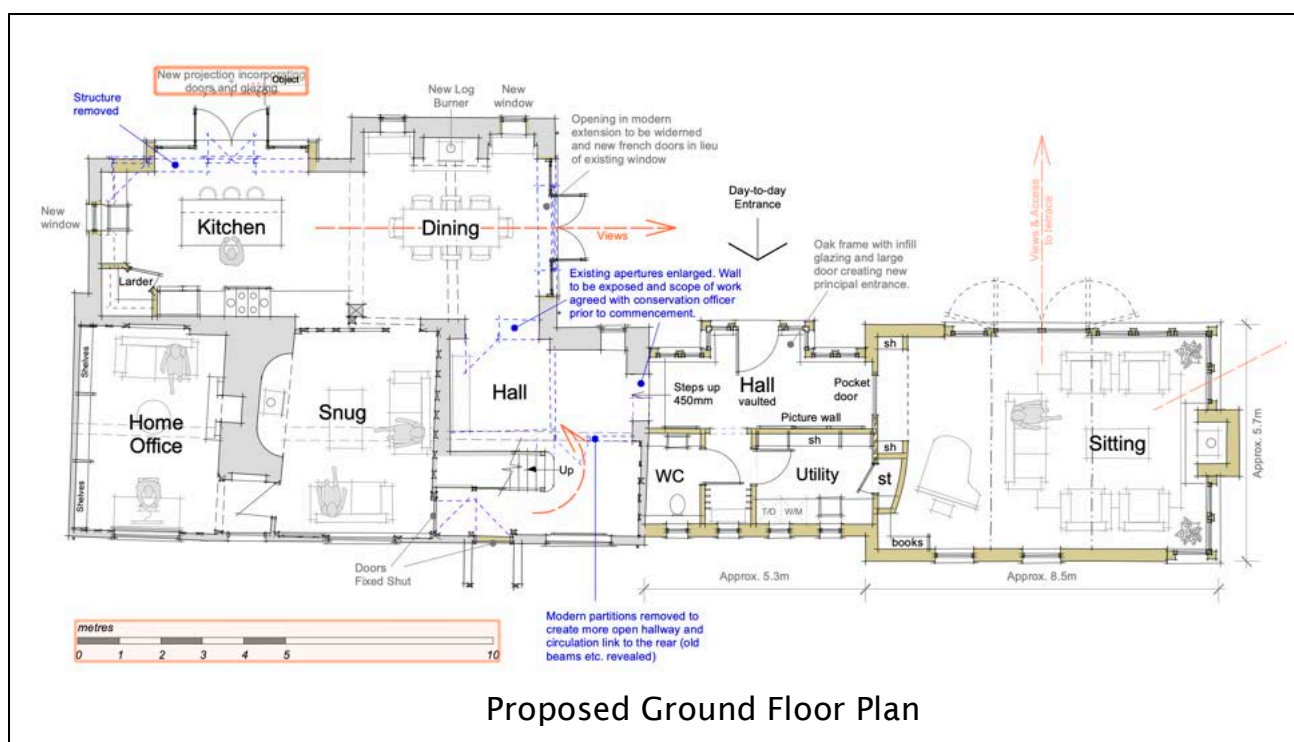
- 4.6 Having consulted with Highways, it became evident that forming a new front access, with sufficient visibility, would be difficult. Also, the conservation officer's comments in respect of the large rear extensions, necessitated a re-think in terms of what additional accommodation might be provided. Accordingly, it was decided to abandon proposals for a new access and to concentrate on improving only the ground floor accommodation, with extensions that would not overtly challenge the existing building in terms of height and scale.

New proposals have been developed in detail for this application and these are set out below.

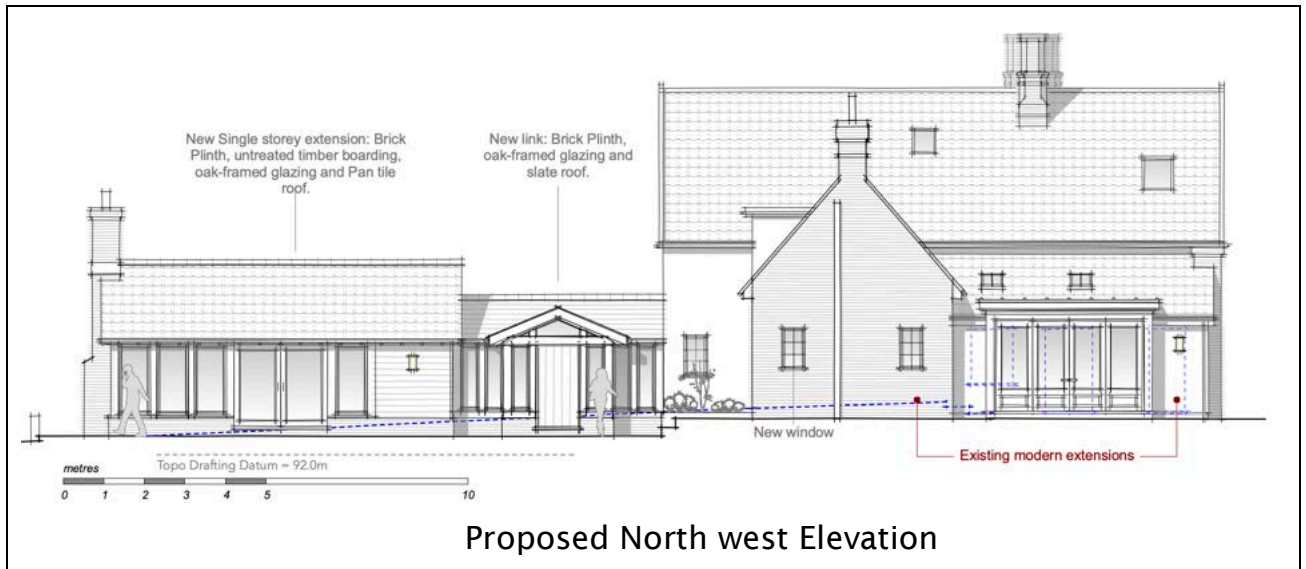
## 5.0 The Proposal

- 5.1 Detailed proposals are provided here at drawings 20016-03, 04, 05, 06, 07 and 08.
- 5.2 The proposal comprises three main elements:
- 1: A reworking of the rear parking courtyard and a new cartlodge outbuilding.
  2. A new, single storey extension and link extension at the north west end of the house.
  3. Alterations to the historic 'third bay' to remove modern partitions and create an opening into the new extensions.
- 5.3 The existing drive is to be retained, leading to the parking area at the rear of the dwelling. Overall, the hardstanding area is to be reduced: a large part of the gravelled area will be taken up and laid to lawn, while the northern edge of the gravelled area will be extended by approximately 3.5m.
- 5.4 A new outbuilding is to be positioned to the rear of the existing annexe/outbuilding. This will be a single-storey, rural-style structure with four covered parking bays. It will be lower than the existing outbuilding with walls finished in untreated timber boarding above a red brick plinth and a roof finished in clay plain tiles.
- 5.5 All modern partitions in the 'third bay' of the existing dwelling are to be removed to open up the space to its original form and expose the original cross beam. The modern stair is to be retained and this space will function as a central hall area with access to the old and new parts of the dwelling.
- 5.6 A small section of modernised wall at the rear of the hall is to be opened up to create a better flow into existing rear extensions, which are to be re-worked internally to create an open plan kitchen/dining area with access to new terrace areas at the north.
- 5.7 The existing French doors at the rear lean-to are to be removed and a new, slightly projecting, aperture is to be formed, with a glazed screen incorporating access doors to/from the repositioned kitchen. A similar screen and doors are to be inserted into the north east wall of the existing two-storey extension, replacing an existing kitchen window. A further small window is to be added to the existing chimney stack to mirror an existing window.
- 5.8 At the north east side of the opened-up hall, an existing (modern) window, which currently serves a WC, is to be removed and the aperture enlarged to create a walk-through opening. Works to this opening and that leading into the kitchen are to include targeted opening up works. It is estimated that, with each opening, a single stud will require removal – accordingly, the final arrangement and width of these openings is to be agreed on site with the conservation officer and in response to relevant planning conditions.
- 5.9 The new gable opening from the hall will lead into a smaller hall space within a small, single-storey 'link' extension. This smaller hall will incorporate the principal entrance to the dwelling – a large, oak door set within a glazed screen outside of which will be a paved area leading to the parking area and driveway.

- 5.10 The new link will also incorporate a WC (replacing the modern WC being removed from the older part of the building), a coats area and a good size utility space (again, moving it from the older part of the house, allowing the third bay to be opened up to a more original form).
- 5.11 The new link will have a shallow pitched roof finished in natural slate, with part of the roof projecting over the front door to emphasise the principal entrance. The north wall comprises a glazed screen with the front door - a visually light structure creating a well-lit access route inside the house with good views to the gardens. The south wall will be finished in horizontal timber boarding above a soft red brick plinth. It will contain small-aperture windows lighting the hall, WC and utility spaces.
- 5.12 Extending further east from the kitchen will be a large, single-storey extension for use as the main sitting room. This 'feature space' will have a vaulted ceiling and highly glazed walls at the north and west sides giving expansive views to the surrounding gardens and countryside beyond. Large, fold-back doors at the north side will give access to a new garden terraces and the eastern gable wall will be emphasised by a large fireplace and chimney stack.



- 5.13 This extension will have a shallow pitched roof finished in clay pan tiles - it will be marginally higher than the link, to create a meaningful hierarchy of built forms (with the original, two-storey dwelling remaining dominant). The walls are to be finished in horizontal timber boarding above a soft red brick plinth and the joinery will be painted softwood, with some glazing panels set into oak framing members as shown below. (Joinery details are provided at drawing 20016-08).



5.14 By creating a new family sitting room, the existing sitting room at the west end of the house (which, by comparison to other spaces is dark and feels cut off from the main living areas) will be re-tasked as a good-size home office.

## 6.0 Access

6.1 Vehicular access into and through the property will remain unchanged, though the parking area is to be rationalised and augmented with the new outbuilding.

6.2 The main pedestrian access to the property is to become more prominent and legible. Located to relate to the opened up hall and new entrance hall, the main entrance will be in a more central position, replacing the small access door and lobby at the south west end of the house.

## 7.0 Heritage Part 2

7.1 Physical changes to the original house have been kept to a minimum and the new, single-storey structure will connect via a low-rise link creating an attractive visual rhythm of flat-fronted pitched roof elements, while retaining the oldest parts of the house as the dominant form.

7.2 The evolution of the dwelling will be clearly discernible and the original third bay will be returned to a single space (save for the retained stair), thereby enhancing the older parts of the dwelling.

7.3 Overall, these proposals will enhance the appearance and functionality of the dwelling, while retaining the essential elements of the building's heritage.

## 8.0 **Summary**

8.1 The proposal will rationalise service areas, such as the utility and WC spaces and will create a large open hallway to become a spacious transition between the old and the new. The new feature living space will reconnect the house interior to the mature gardens and will allow a currently underused space in the old house to become a daily-used home office.

8.2 These proposals have been very carefully considered and are based on a detailed survey of the existing property. We commend this scheme design to the council.

L Frere

For and on behalf of J.A.P Architects