



Design & Access Statement

**Land Rear of No.34 Pilgrims Way East,
Offord, Sevenoaks, TN14 5QW**

October 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1, This Design & Access Statement has been compiled to support the application on the land to the rear of Chalkhill, No.34 Pilgrims Way East, TN14 5QW. In this instance it is proposed to demolish a large number of existing structures and subdivide the site to allow for the construction of a new detached residential dwelling.

1.2 The scheme proposed looks to sensitively construct a new family home that represents no more of an impact on the Green Belt than the existing outbuildings. Indeed, there will be a significant reduction in overall built form Volume, Gross External Area and Footprint in comparison to the existing buildings on site. There will also be a notable reduction in on site hardstanding, which again has a material benefit to the openness of the site.

1.3, This document should be read in conjunction with the topographical survey and relevant planning drawings, as well as the supporting Ecology, Archaeological and Highways Reports and Planning Statement.

1.4, This statement analyses the characteristics of the surrounding area and identifies key design that have been considered in preparing the scheme. It then concludes with an executive summary of the proposed development.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND ASSESSMENT

2.1, The site is located within the Metropolitan Greenbelt, it is however not within a Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nor is the existing building listed. The site also does not have any Tree Protection Orders.

2.2, The land is situated in an area with archaeological potential with the western portion of the site also sitting within the extents of a Scheduled Monument (Otford Roman Villa). A number of the buildings to be removed are also located within this area. The extents of this is shown in Fig.1.0, Site Analysis Plan.

2.3, The application site is situated to the rear of No.34 Pilgrims Way East which is located approximately 46m to the north. The site is therefore well screened from the main public highway by existing built form. Within close proximity there are other examples of back land redevelopment set to the rear of existing residential properties, so the development of this land would not be out of context.

2.4, The land is currently accessed via a shared access road that connects onto Pilgrims Way East and serves No.34 as well as the application site.

2.5, Formerly the land and buildings were used as part of the Chalkhill agricultural smallholding. The existing buildings are clearly no longer used for this historical purpose. They are however quite extensive and occupy a large footprint within the site with this sense of scale exacerbated by a large amount of hardstanding. Whilst predominantly single storey in nature, albeit some are quite tall and on a sloping terrain, they do represent an extensive amount of built form in the Green Belt.

2.6, The structures on site are of no architectural value and because of their original use, are typically agricultural in nature with simple corrugated roofs and timber or corrugated cladding to the walls.

2.7, Any new dwelling on this land would be largely hidden from wider views and therefore it would not form part of a defined street scene. The buildings to the north, including No.34 are however typically residential in nature being clad with brick or mock Tudor cladding and clay roof tiles. As confirmed above the land is not within a Conservation Area, or AONB.

2.8, In terms of terrain there is a notable change in levels for approximately 10m from the front of the site, adjacent to Pilgrims Way East and the application site itself. The land then continues to fall away to the south with it becoming open land largely clear of built form. Existing mature planting around the boundary of the site and within the curtilage, screens the land from wider views.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND ASSESSMENT



Access is off Pilgrims Way East

Sub-station located to rear of garage block

Location of the Otford Roman Villa scheduled monument which overlaps the proposed site

Footpath located to rear boundary with access through to Otford Station and village amenities

AONB to north of Pilgrims Way East and whole of area situated within the Greenbelt

Single access drive to both no. 34 and the redundant commercial site behind

Mature landscaping and good screening, separation distances and levels to adjacent properties

Location of redundant piggery buildings to be demolished, retained or refurbished for proposed redevelopment

Open grassland to rear of site that slopes away to rear boundary with whole site having a southerly aspect

Fig.1.0 – Site Analysis Plan

3.0 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig.1.0 – Photograph looking towards existing building 3. As a result of the sites historical use, there is a large amount of paraphernalia littered throughout that give it a messy appearance.



Fig.2.0 – Photograph showing existing building 4. Note the hardstanding to the front.



Fig.3.0 – Photograph showing existing building 4. Note the hardstanding to the front.



Fig.4.0 – Photograph showing existing building 11. The overall height of this building is further increased by the block retaining wall to the front. This elevation is to the south, which is perhaps the most visible part of the building.



Fig.5.0 – Photograph looking towards building 8. Again the hardstanding to the front can be seen.



Fig.6.0 – Photograph showing building 8 as seen from further to the east. Building 9 is also seen to the left and is also a reasonable sized detached building.

3.0 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig.7.0 – Photo looking back up towards the northern part of the site, as seen from outbuilding 5 to the south.



Fig.8.0 – Photograph showing building 8 with its covered hardstanding storage area.



Fig.9.0 – Photograph showing a large amount of hardstanding, this photo is taken to the west of building 8 and looking up to building 11.



Fig.10.0 – Photograph looking back up the existing access road. This will be shared with no.34 and connects back to Pilgrims Way East.



Fig.11.0 – Photograph showing the new 20mph speed limit along Pilgrims Way East with this photo taken close to the crossover onto site

4.0 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

4.1, An application for Pre-application Advice, Ref: PA/23/00105, was submitted to Sevenoaks District Council, with this seeking feedback on the potential redevelopment of the site. Written feedback was provided in June 2023, following a video meeting between the council, Offset Architects and Robinson Escott Planning.

4.2, As part of this feedback the council confirmed that the scheme did not meet any of the exceptions to new built form in the Green Belt and as such would be inappropriate. Considering this it was confirmed that a case of Very Special Circumstances would need to be put forward. In summary the principal issues were:

- Benefits to the openness of the Green Belt. **Refer to 5.5-5.7, 6.10 & 7.1-7.8 for our design response.**
- Archaeological Impact. Considering the sites location and proximity to a Scheduled Monument Archaeological investigations would be required. **Refer to 6.10-6.11 for our design response along with supporting Archaeological Report.**
- It was recommended that new built form reflects the agricultural nature of the site. Retained outbuildings should keep an agricultural appearance. **Refer to 8.1-8.7 for our design response.**
- Hard and soft landscaping should be considered including permeable materials and post and rail fencing. **Refer to 6.4-6.9 for our design response.**

Please refer to the supporting Planning Statement by Robinson Escott Planning for further details.

4.3, In addition to the pre-app submitted to Sevenoaks District Council, a Highways pre-app was submitted to Kent County Council Highways, Ref: PAP/2022/165, with this seeking feedback of an additional dwelling to the rear. Here it was confirmed that any improvements to the access to improve visibility would be welcomed, but not necessary. It was confirmed that fire and refuse vehicle access would need to be considered. Please refer to the supporting Highways Report for further details.



Fig.11.0 – Sketch Site Layout Plan submitted for Pre-application advice.

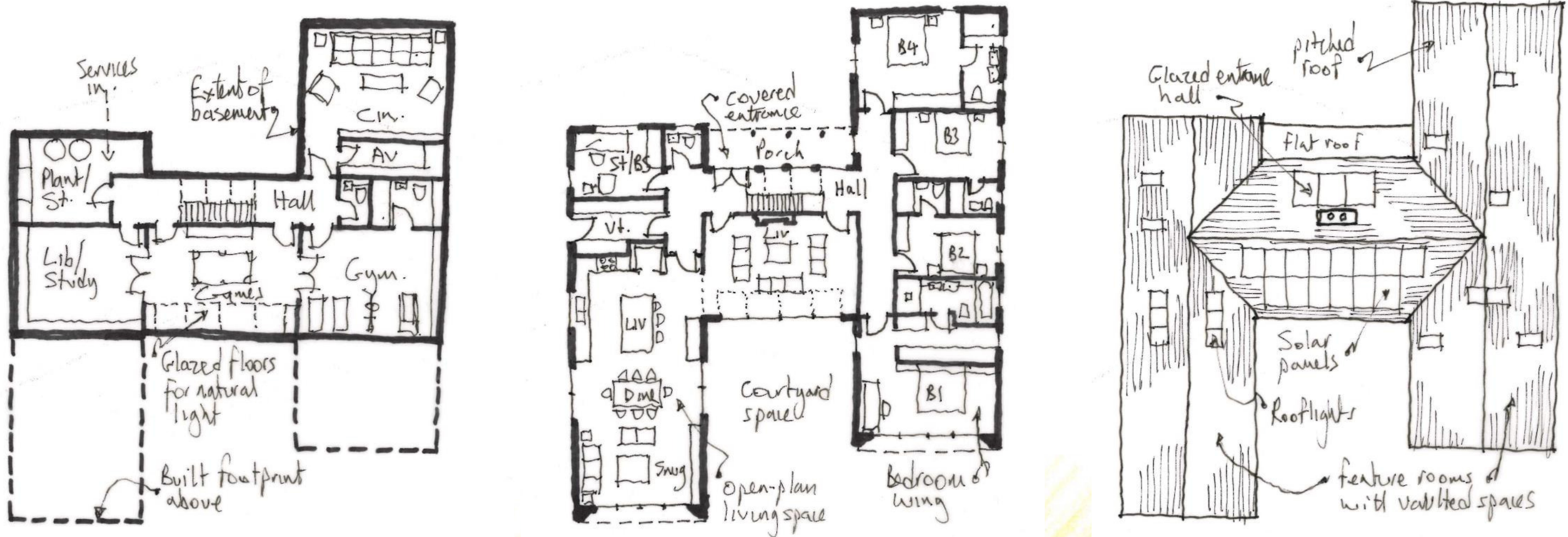


Fig.12.0 – Sketch plans and elevations submitted for Pre-application advice.



5.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

Amount

5.1, Currently the site, which is set to the rear of no. 34 Pilgrims Way East accommodates a number of existing structures that supported the lands previous use as a piggery. Close to the road edge there is a detached structure (outbuilding 2) although due to its proximity to the new dwelling it has been excluded from the massing calculations below and as shown in the appendix. On the main site itself there are a further 9 structures (outbuildings 3-11).

5.2, It is proposed to demolish outbuilding 2 to facilitate an improved entrance crossover/ driveway access. It is also proposed to remove outbuildings 5-11 with buildings 3 and 4 being retained but reduced in size. The two structures that are to be kept will be repaired and reclad to match the new house and will be used for ancillary purposes.

5.3, Currently the land to the rear is covered with hardstanding and existing built form. There are however no allocated parking spaces. The proposed scheme will however provide car parking for 2-3 vehicles, with these being served with electric charging points. Secure cycle parking for at least 5no. cycles is provided within the retained garage, outbuilding 3.

5.4, The new house will accommodate 4/5 bedrooms.

5.5, With reference to the massing study, refer to appendix A, the scale of the existing Outbuildings 3-11 measure:

- Existing Gross External Area : **887.0m²**
- Existing Footprint: **841.5m²**
- Existing Building Volume: **2,760m³**

5.6, In contrast the new dwelling has been designed to represent an improvement to the openness of the greenbelt, by removing some buildings and reducing the existing built form of outbuildings 3 and 4. The proposed built form therefore measures:

- Proposed Gross External Area : **574.7m² (35.2% Reduction)**
- Proposed Footprint: **529.2m² (37.1% Reduction)**
- Proposed Building Volume: **1,964.4m³ (28.8% Reduction)**

Note: as the proposed basement is entirely subterranean and within the footprint of the proposed building it is therefore not included within the area calculations, as per Sevenoaks District Council Green Belt policy. In addition, as stated above outbuildings 1 and 2 are not included in the massing calculations due to their proximity from the new dwelling. Outbuilding 2 is however being removed, which will have some additional benefit to the openness of the site.

5.7, As shown the proposed scheme represents a significant reduction in built form in terms of Footprint, Gross External Area and Built Volume when compared to what is currently on site. This therefore represents an improvement to the openness of the Green Belt.

6.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

LAYOUT / LANDSCAPING

6.1, The site currently accommodates 11 no. existing outbuildings the majority of which (outbuildings 2-11) relate to the lands previous use as a piggery.

6.2, Outbuilding 1 is a detached garage structure and is ancillary to the existing dwelling, no.34 to the north of the site. Both these buildings remain unchanged as part of this application.

6.3, Currently the site is accessed via an existing entrance crossover onto Pilgrims Way East with this then connecting to an access driveway that leads to the application site to the rear as well as no. 34.

6.4, To the north it is proposed to demolish outbuilding 2, to allow for a widened driveway immediately adjacent to Pilgrims Way East. This allows for vehicles to pass and therefore avoids blocking the main highway, something that would happen with the current driveway arrangement.

6.5, The existing driveway is to then be widened slightly further to the south with this allowing for larger vehicles, including fire engines to access the site to the rear. As shown on the Highways Technical Report by Motion, there is sufficient turning space for such a vehicle within the car parking area immediately adjacent to the new dwelling.

6.6, The new site will be demarcated with the installation of a new timber post and rail fence along the access driveway. This will be softened with a new mixed species hedge that will also add good quality biodiversity into the site. This will require the removal of a number of trees, however these are for the most part small and of a lower arboricultural value.

6.7, To the rear, the existing boundary landscaping will be retained, however again, a number of trees within the centre of the site are to be removed. These are however parasitical trees that have over time grown up between the existing buildings.

6.8, Throughout the site opportunities are being taken to significantly enhance the ecological value of the land through the planting of fruit trees, mixed species hedgerows, areas of wildflower planting and a suds pond to the south. In addition to this the removal of a large amount of existing hardstanding as well as concrete slabs to outbuildings significantly increases the amount of greenery within the site. Not only is this of benefit to the openness of the site, and therefore the wider Green Belt, but it also massively enhances on site biodiversity. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment Report by Native Ecology.

6.9, As required by pre-application feedback the new fences within the site are to be timber post and rail fences, maintaining the open nature of the land.

6.10, Care has been taken with the scheme design to ensure that the new built form sits close to existing demolished outbuildings, thereby ensuring that new structures do not encroach into currently open areas. Indeed, outbuildings at the moment are spread out on site and give it a more developed character. It is proposed to condense the built form into a smaller footprint, that allows for large areas of land to be returned to soft landscaping, which has numerous Green Belt, amenity and biodiversity benefits.

6.11, All new building elements have been considered so that these also fall outside of the Ancient Monument Boundary. Please refer to the supporting Archaeological Report by HCUK for further details.

7.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

SCALE

7.1, To the front of the site no.34 is currently a single storey detached dwelling. It does however benefit from an extant planning consent for a new first floor, Ref: 22/03312/PAH. The neighbouring properties along Pilgrims Way East are also two storey in nature, with houses here being generous in size, but set back from the road.

7.2, The application site itself accommodates a significant number of detached, single storey structures, with these relating to the sites previous planning use.

7.3, These structures which are spread out over a wide area, occupy a large footprint, which is then exacerbated by the amount of hardstanding throughout the site. The spread-out nature of the buildings further builds on this sense of development.

7.4, Whilst being predominantly single storey in scale, a number of the buildings, particularly outbuildings 4, 8 & 9 are quite tall with outbuilding 11 being substantial and set at a higher level.

7.5, As discussed in 5.0, Amount, it is shown that the proposed scheme will result in a significant reduction in Gross External Area, Footprint and Building Volume when compared to what is currently on site. This therefore represents an improvement to the openness of the Green Belt.

7.6, Care has also been given to the design of the new dwelling to ensure that the new built form is set largely on top of the existing building footprint. This ensures that there is no spread of built form into areas that are currently free of development.

7.7, Indeed, as shown on the Proposed Site Plan, Site Sections and Elevations, it is proposed to condense the built form on site into a smaller footprint, which itself is less spread out. This allows for more greenery, which improves the sites setting and biodiversity value, all of which is beneficial to the wider area.

7.8, In addition to the reduction in building footprint on site, the new dwelling has also been designed so that it is no higher than outbuilding 11 to the north. The Proposed Site Sections, on drawing 8158-PD35, also clearly show how the new dwelling does not materially extend beyond the silhouette of the exiting outbuildings to be demolished and how this is then set against the landscaped background which forms a well screened backdrop.

8.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

APPEARANCE

8.1, Considering its former use, the site does have an agricultural character, albeit this is now tired and of no real architectural value.

8.2, As shown in 3.0 – Photos, the existing structures are largely clad with corrugated cement boarding, with some finished with metal sheeting or timber cladding. As discussed already, these are all single storey in nature. The developed feel to the site is further exacerbated by the large amount of hardstanding.

8.3, The site is not within the Kent Down AONB, and it is also screened from wider views by existing mature landscaping and its topography. Due to its location, it does not sit within a defined street scene. Care has however been taken to ensure that the new dwelling, whilst having some contemporary details does retain an agricultural character. This is achieved through the building form, detailing and material specification.

8.4, As discussed two structures are to be retained in part with these forming ancillary accommodation to the main dwellinghouse. These are to be reclad/ refurbished and will now be finished with black timber cladding along with a slate/ metal roof. Note the existing structure will be retained and simply repaired if necessary.

8.5, Whilst also keeping the built form subservient the single storey nature of the new dwelling also replicates the lower section profile of the existing structures. Similarly, the black vertical cladding, brick and stone walling and slate roof give the building a considered agricultural appearance that is sympathetic to the site and its context.

8.6, Detailing within the landscaping, including the open post and rail fencing further enhance this character.

8.7, Set to the south of the new dwelling the new pool outbuilding repeats the material specification to the main dwelling, however here a flat roof is proposed with this to have a grass roof. This will help to soften the building into the landscape when viewed from the north, which due to level differences is approximately 3m higher.

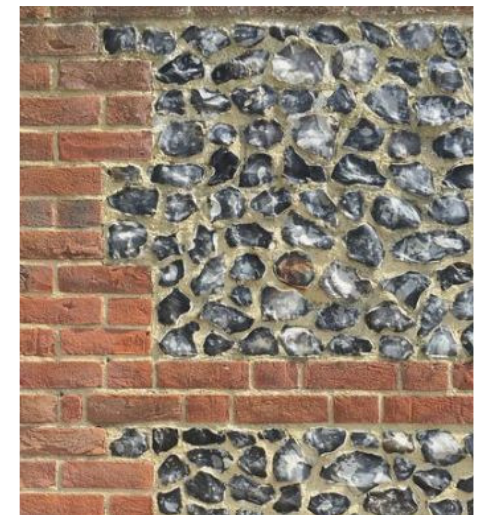
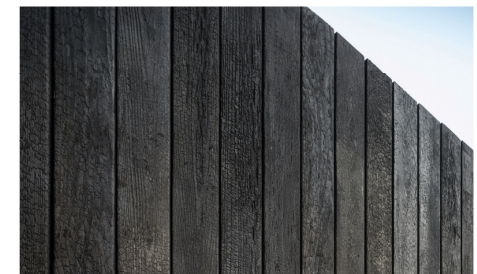


Fig 1, Indicative material specification including a slate roof, brick / stone and black timber cladding to the main dwelling, as well as a wildflower roof to pool building.

9.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

USE / ACCESS

9.1, The site itself is located to the south of no. 34 Pilgrims Way East, which like the surrounding context has a C3 residential dwelling house use class. This property does however not form part of this application.

9.2, The application site itself comprises a number of disused buildings that was formerly used as a smallholding. This planning use has now ceased, as detailed further in the supporting Planning Statement.

9.3, It is now proposed to demolish a number of existing structures to the rear to allow for the subdivision of the plot and the construction of a new detached, C3 residential dwellinghouse. Two existing structures on site will be retained in part, with these becoming ancillary to the new dwellinghouse.

9.4, Currently both no.34 and the application site itself share an existing entrance crossover and access driveway. It is proposed to utilise this existing arrangement.

9.5, It is however proposed to widen the existing driveway with this now being sufficient for a fire engine to access the rear site. Immediately adjacent to the entrance crossover the driveway has been widened further from approximately 3.1m to 4.8m to allow vehicles to pass, therefore preventing any impact on Pilgrims Way East.

9.6, A Pre-application submission, Ref: PAP/2022/165, was made to KCC Highways in March 2023 to ascertain the acceptability of the new access arrangement. This confirmed KCC were satisfied that the proposals would unlikely result in a significant number of additional vehicle trips on the highways network and is therefore acceptable. It should also be noted that the speed limit along Pilgrims Way East has also been reduced to 20mph in recent months, see photo 11, with this improving highways safety along this stretch of road. Please refer to the Highways Technical Note for further details.

9.7, This Pre-application response also confirmed that sufficient electric car charging points and parking spaces should be provided. The proposed layout has been designed accordingly. The supporting Highways Report by Motion, also shows that a fire engine/ refuse vehicle can enter and exit the site in forward gear.

9.8, Level thresholds are to be provided at the main entrances to the property, as required by Part M of the approved documents.

10.0 SUMMARY

10.1, The proposed property will provide a high quality new residential dwelling set within a site that is well screened from wider views.

10.2, The application clearly shows that the scheme will result in a significant reduction in onsite Footprint, Gross External Area and Building Volume, when compared to the existing structures. Not only this, but the built form will be condensed, freeing up more space for soft landscaping with this having the added benefit of reducing the perceived spread of development on site. Being no higher than existing ridge levels the new dwelling will be for the most part within the silhouette of the existing structures to be demolished and set against a well screened backdrop. As such the scheme will have notable benefits to the openness of the Green Belt.

10.3, This reduced built form footprint on site also means that a large amount of additional landscaping can be reintroduced with there being new fruit trees, mixed species native hedgerows, wildflower areas along with a SUDS pond, all of which greatly benefit the biodiversity value of the site.

10.4, No new building work is proposed within the Ancient Monument Boundary, as such the scheme will cause no harm to the archaeological value of the site.

10.5, Due to the proximity from neighbouring dwellings, the new property will have no impact on neighbouring amenity.

10.6, Indeed due to the well set back and screened location of the dwelling, it does not form part of any defined street scene. However, the building has been designed in a manner that replicates the agricultural nature of the site and wider area.

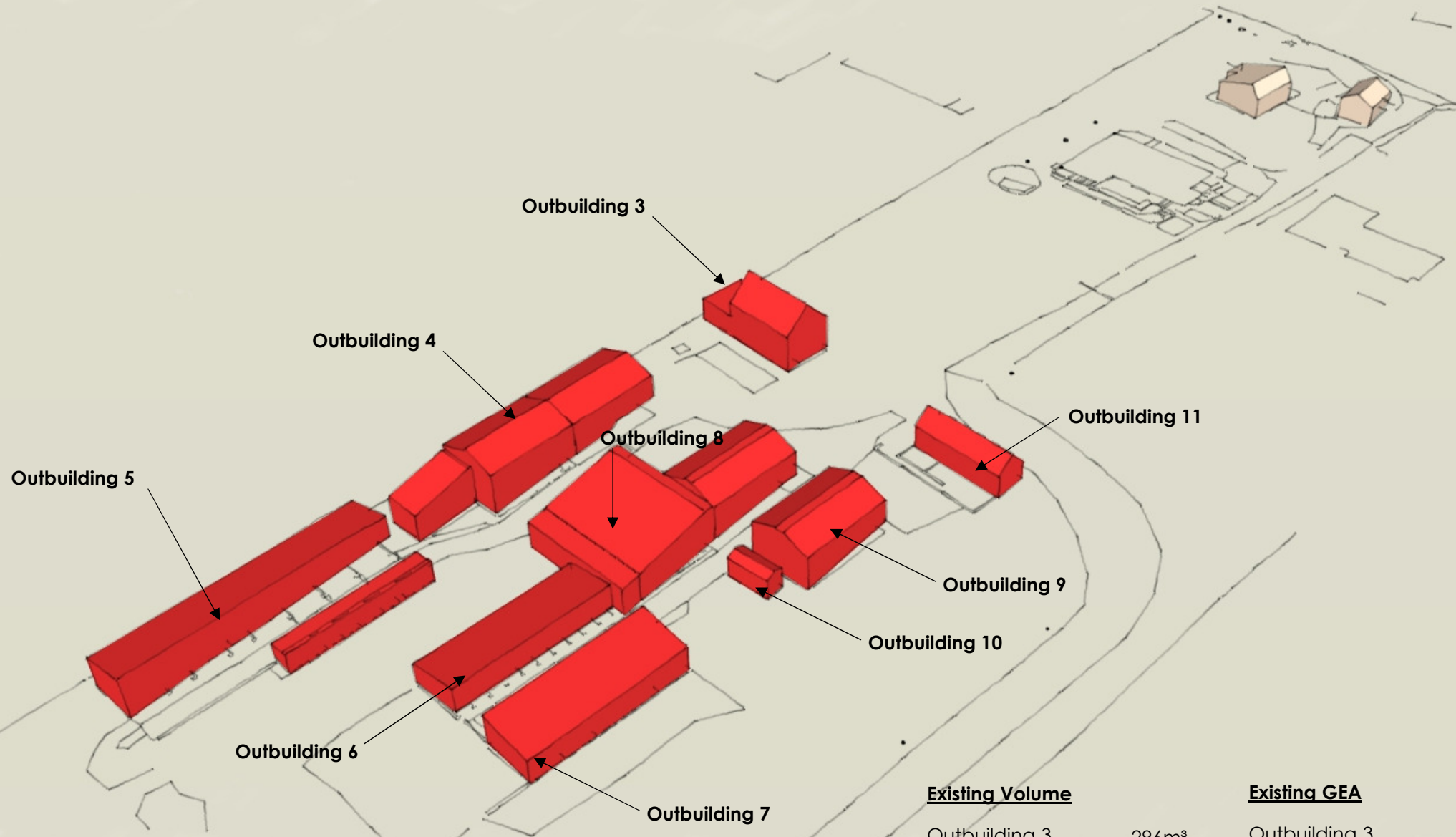
10.7, As confirmed by the supporting ecology reports the scheme will not affect any protected species.

10.8, Overall, it is felt that the proposals provide a well-considered family home that is sensitive to its local context.

APPENDIX A

MASSING STUDY

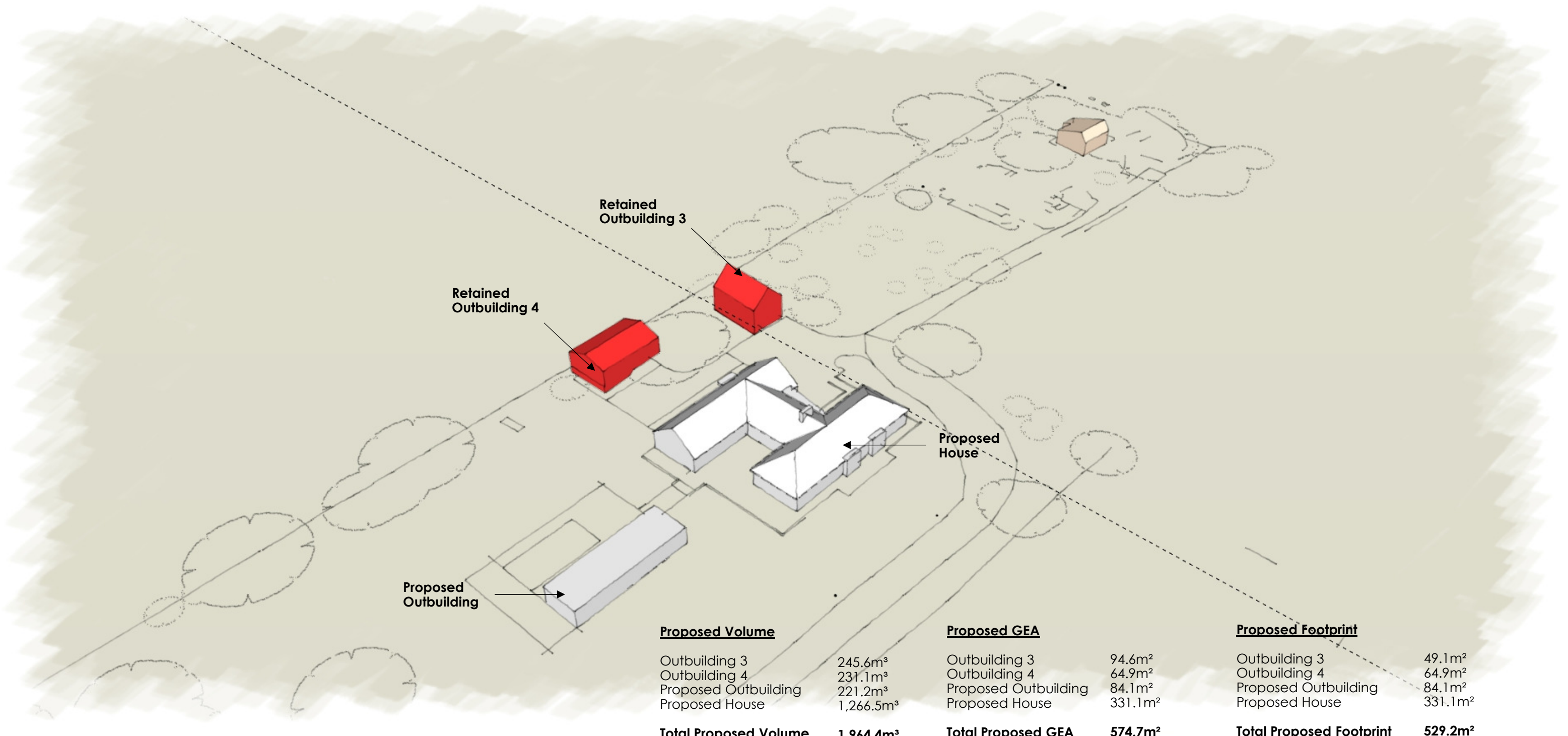
EXISTING MASSING



<u>Existing Volume</u>		<u>Existing GEA</u>		<u>Existing Footprint</u>	
Outbuilding 3	296m ³	Outbuilding 3	115.9m ²	Outbuilding 3	70.4m ²
Outbuilding 4	597m ³	Outbuilding 4	152.5m ²	Outbuilding 4	152.5m ²
Outbuilding 5	394m ³	Outbuilding 5	156.7m ²	Outbuilding 5	156.7m ²
Outbuilding 6	194m ³	Outbuilding 6	82.5m ²	Outbuilding 6	82.5m ²
Outbuilding 7	244m ³	Outbuilding 7	83.5m ²	Outbuilding 7	83.5m ²
Outbuilding 8	666m ³	Outbuilding 8	185.4m ²	Outbuilding 8	185.4m ²
Outbuilding 9	245m ³	Outbuilding 9	66.3m ²	Outbuilding 9	66.3m ²
Outbuilding 10	20m ³	Outbuilding 10	8.8m ²	Outbuilding 10	8.8m ²
Outbuilding 11	104m ³	Outbuilding 11	35.4m ²	Outbuilding 11	35.4m ²
<u>Total Existing Outbuilding Volume</u>	<u>2,760m³</u>	<u>Total Existing GEA</u>	<u>887.0m²</u>	<u>Total Existing Footprint</u>	<u>841.5m²</u>

Note: Outbuildings 1 & 2 are excluded from the massing calculations due to their proximity from the development

PROPOSED MASSING



<u>Proposed Volume</u>		<u>Proposed GEA</u>		<u>Proposed Footprint</u>	
Outbuilding 3	245.6m ³	Outbuilding 3	94.6m ²	Outbuilding 3	49.1m ²
Outbuilding 4	231.1m ³	Outbuilding 4	64.9m ²	Outbuilding 4	64.9m ²
Proposed Outbuilding	221.2m ³	Proposed Outbuilding	84.1m ²	Proposed Outbuilding	84.1m ²
Proposed House	1,266.5m ³	Proposed House	331.1m ²	Proposed House	331.1m ²
Total Proposed Volume	1,964.4m³	Total Proposed GEA	574.7m²	Total Proposed Footprint	529.2m²
	Reduction 28.8%		Reduction 35.2%		Reduction 37.1%

Note: Outbuildings 1 & 2 are excluded from the massing calculations due to their proximity from the development