



Youngs Farm

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□ Context

Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of proposals for Youngs Farm, Kentons Lane, Upper Culham, Reading, RG10 8NX. The document describes the existing building, site and local context, followed by the design proposals. This document should be read in conjunction with the existing and proposed drawings and supporting Planning Statement by SmithJenkins, Highways Appraisal by Paul Basham Associates, surveys and assessments from Philips Ecology and Arboricultural Survey by GHA.

The proposals presented in this document seek to secure the long term future of Youngs Farm as a high quality family home and estate, delivered through a carefully considered replacement dwelling and associated ancillary works. The designs have been developed in close reference to relevant planning policy, the site's planning history and the pre-application feedback.

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Youngs Farm lies at the northern end of Kentons Lane in the hamlet of Upper Culham, approximately 2.5 km east of Henley-on-Thames. The site sits within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Open Countryside as defined by Wokingham Borough Council and occupies a prominent, elevated position within the Remenham Arable Chalk Plateau landscape character area. The surrounding area is rural in character with open fields, paddocks, scattered residential development, farmsteads and woodland, and offers long views across the local countryside.

The site benefits from strong screening by mature hedges and trees, and is bounded to the west by open paddocks and parkland views. It lies outside any conservation area but is in the wider setting of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden at Park Place and Temple Combe. The site is also subject to various technical constraints (SSSI impact risk zone, Heathrow aerodrome safeguarding / nuclear consultation zones and bat habitat sensitivity), but lies within Flood Zone 1 and has a very low surface water flood risk.

PROJECT ADDRESS

Youngs Farm, Kentons Lane, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8NX



LOCATION PLAN

KEY:

- Application Boundary
- Ownership Boundary
- Existing



LOCATION PLAN

SCALE: NTS

Site Analysis



Youngs Farm occupies an approximately 11 acre rural site, enclosed by mature boundary planting and characterised by open countryside views. Vehicular access is provided from Kentons Lane via an entrance located south of the existing buildings. It is neighboured by the recently completed Upper Culham House and the dwelling under construction on the opposite side of Kenton's Lane.

The site has evolved incrementally and contains a large detached dwelling near the north-western corner, with vehicular access, driveway and turning area to the east. A group of stable buildings are located to the south, while an ancillary outbuilding lies to the north. Together, these buildings form a dispersed pattern of development across the site, with limited functional or visual cohesion between the main dwelling, the ancillary buildings, the garden and the surrounding landscape.

The existing main dwelling, constructed in the late twentieth century, is a substantial but architecturally undistinguished building. Its external materials comprise brick, flint panels and black-stained weatherboarding but combined, lack coherence and refinement.

The dwelling is positioned and orientated in a way that does not make the best use of the site's natural orientation, setting and long distance views.

The existing arrangement therefore presents an opportunity to rationalise the development pattern, improve the relationship between the buildings and their landscape setting, and create a more coherent and functional site layout.



Existing Elevations

North & South



Black PPC aluminium dormer windows



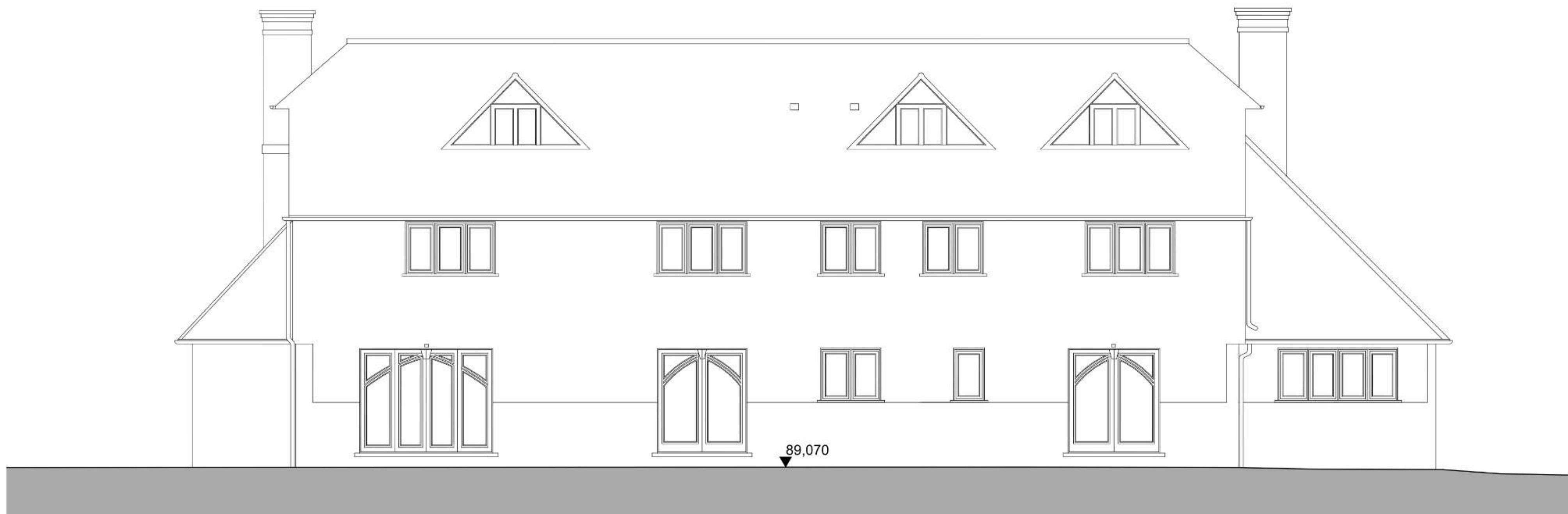
Black timber weatherboarding



Timber windows



Knapped flint panels and red brick



EXISTING NORTH WEST ELEVATION



EXISTING NORTH EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTH WEST ELEVATION

Existing Plans

Ground & First Floor



Main House

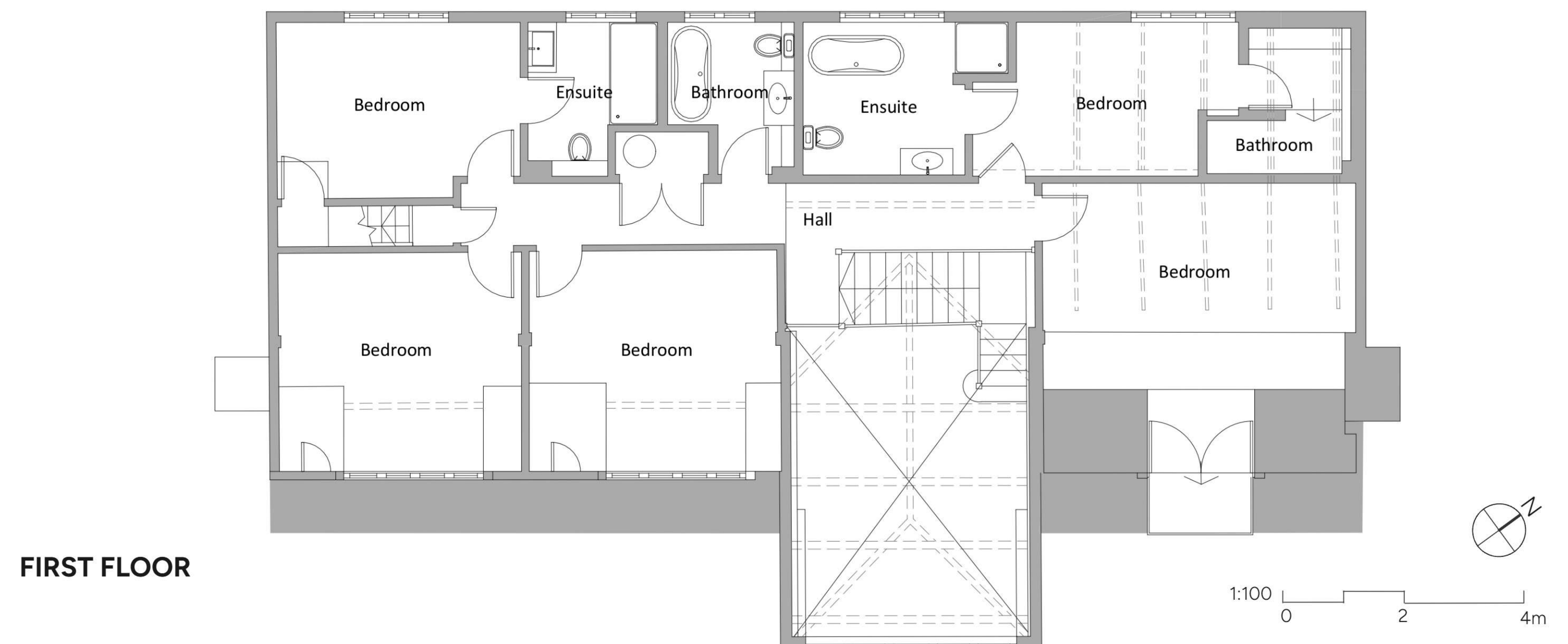
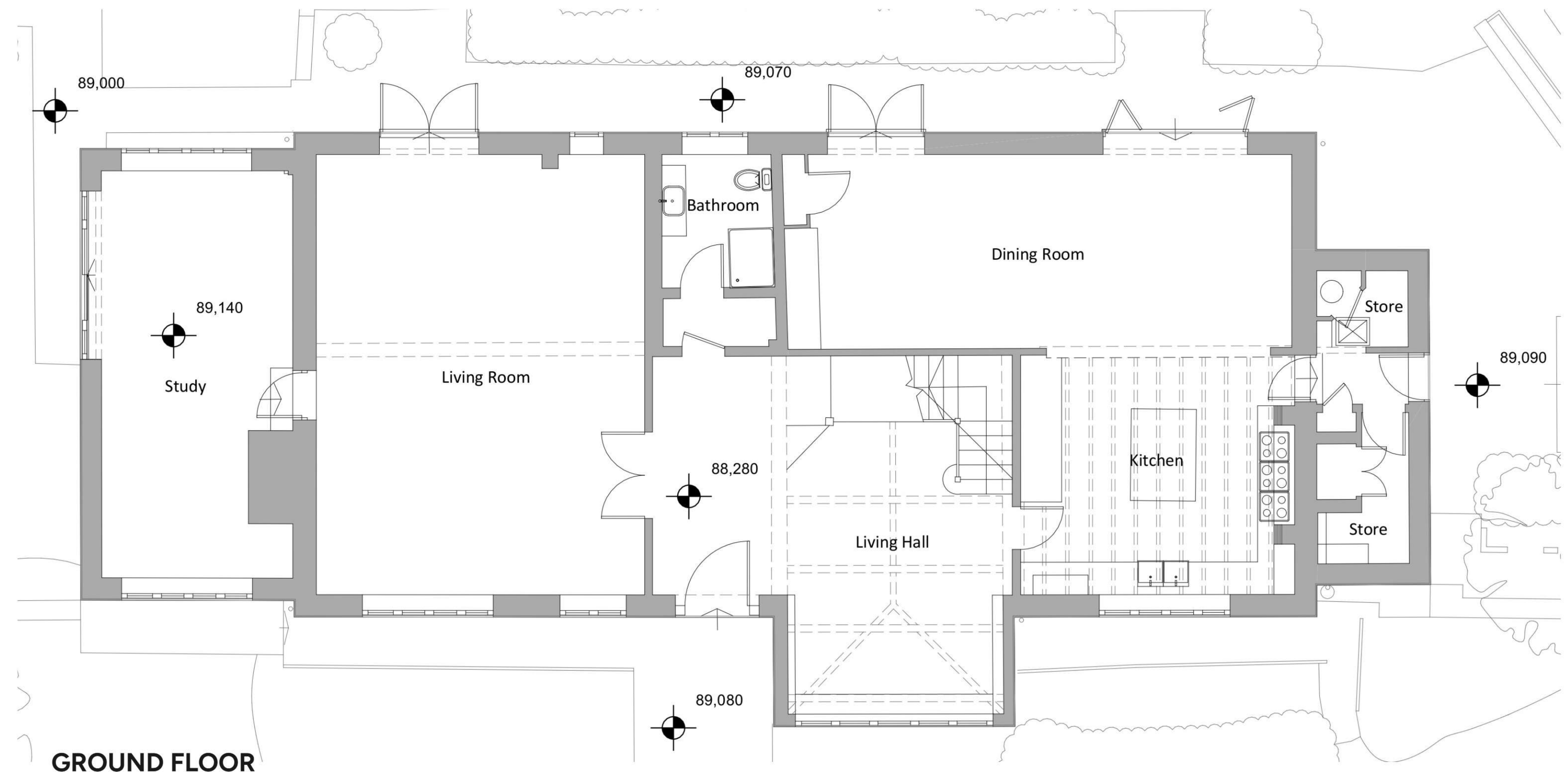
The existing ground floor arrangement has evolved through a series of incremental alterations, resulting in an irregular plan form with limited spatial hierarchy. Circulation routes are indirect and fragmented, reducing legibility and creating inefficient connections between the principal living spaces.

Several rooms are restricted by the later additions, making them less flexible and limiting the ability to separate shared living areas from more private spaces.

The extensive countryside views are primarily enjoyed from the hallway, which has a double height space and projecting glazed bay, rather than from the main living areas where they would provide greater benefit.

At first floor level, the bedroom accommodation is similarly affected by the irregular plan geometry. The arrangement does not provide a consistent relationship between bedrooms and bathrooms and results in a lack of functional clarity for family occupation.

Overall, the internal organisation reflects the cumulative evolution of the building rather than a coherent spatial strategy. This limits the ability of the existing structure to accommodate a logical and efficient layout and constrains opportunities to achieve a clear hierarchy of spaces, improved circulation, and better defined private and shared zones.



Existing Plans

Second Floor

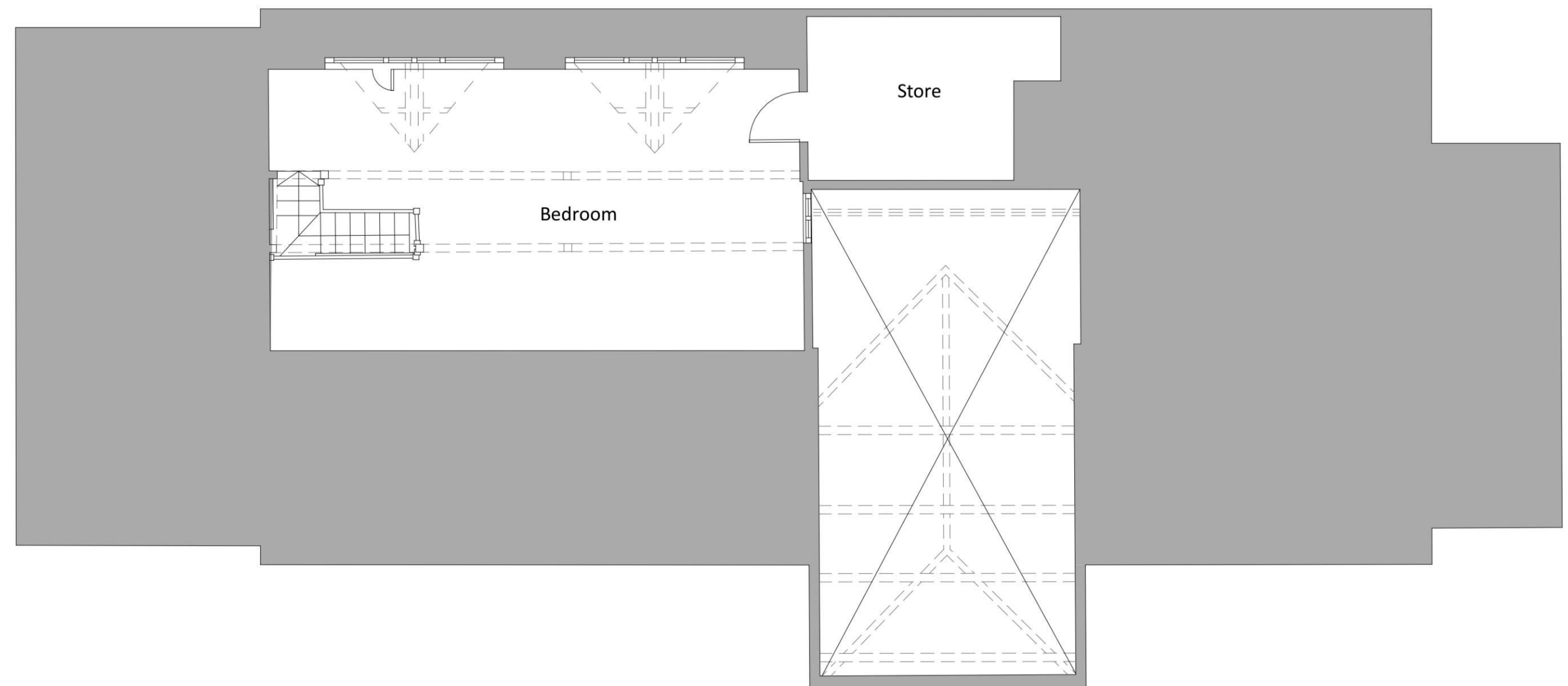


Main House

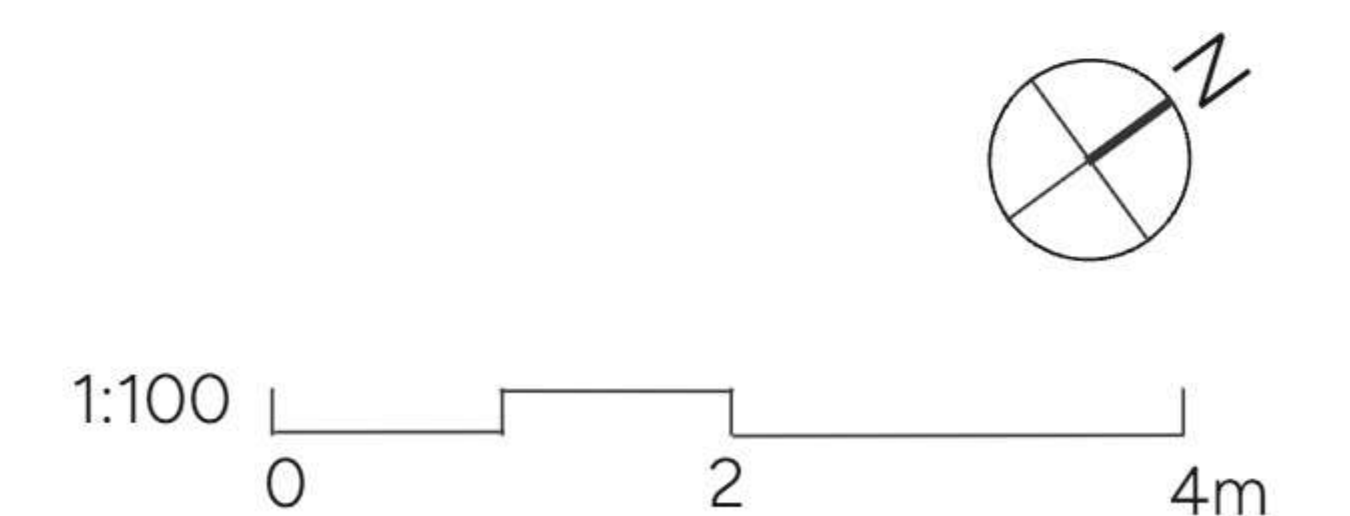
The existing dwelling presents a varied and complex roofscape composed of multiple ridge lines, changes in pitch and a number of projecting elements. This results in a dispersed built form which increases the perceived scale of the building when viewed in the landscape.

The elevations are characterised by a mixture of forms that have developed over time, giving rise to an inconsistent relationship between the principal volumes and subordinate additions.

Several elements project beyond the primary footprint, contributing to a wider spread of built form across the site. This increases the visual presence of the dwelling and extends the developed envelope beyond what would be expected for a single consolidated volume.



SECOND FLOOR



Planning History

PLANNING HISTORY

[152328](#) | Householder application for the proposed extension to existing stables building in curtilage of dwelling. APPROVED

[151989](#) | Proposed erection of a stable block with new access. Demolition of existing stable block following completion. REFUSED

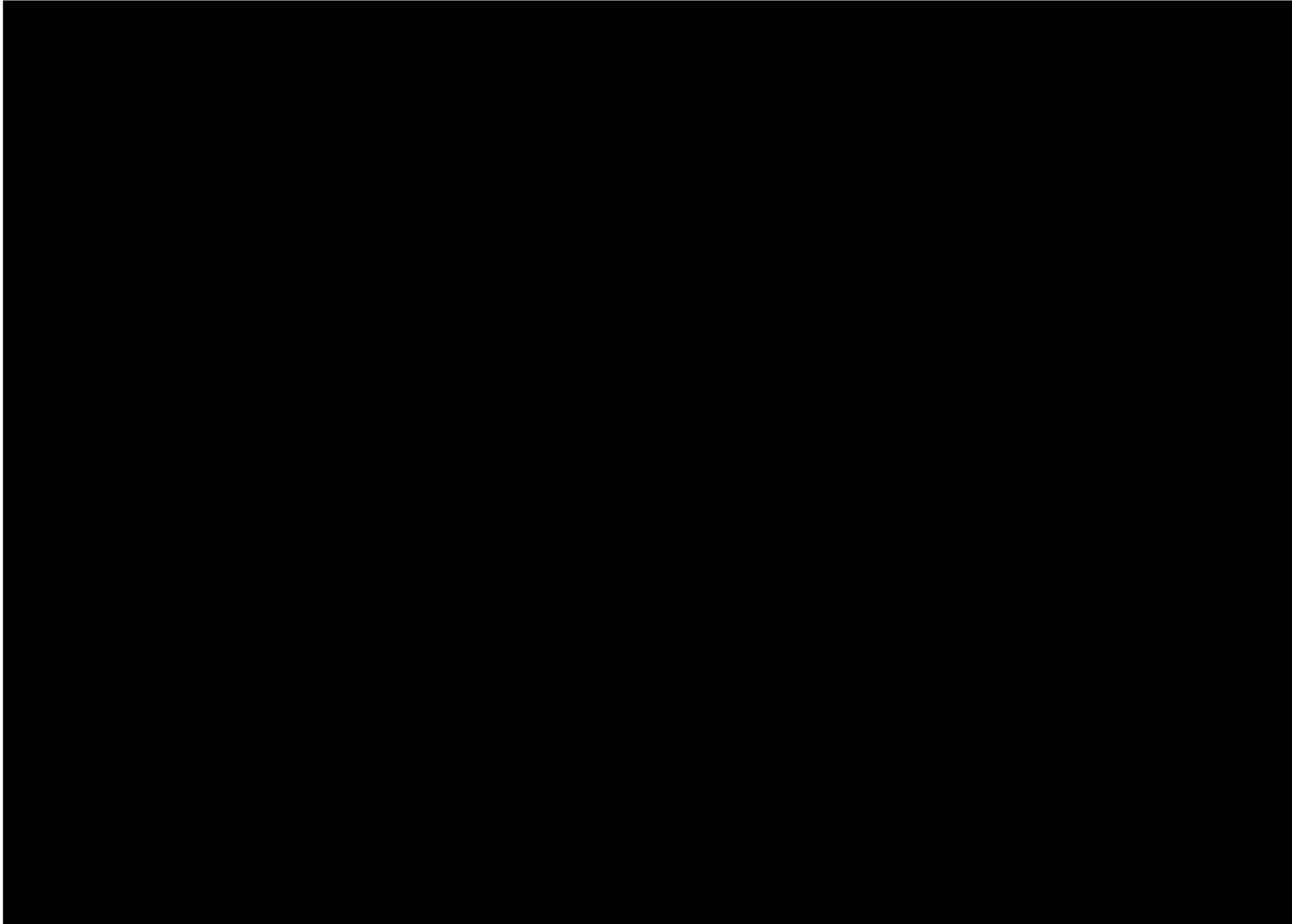
[141753](#) | Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling. APPROVED

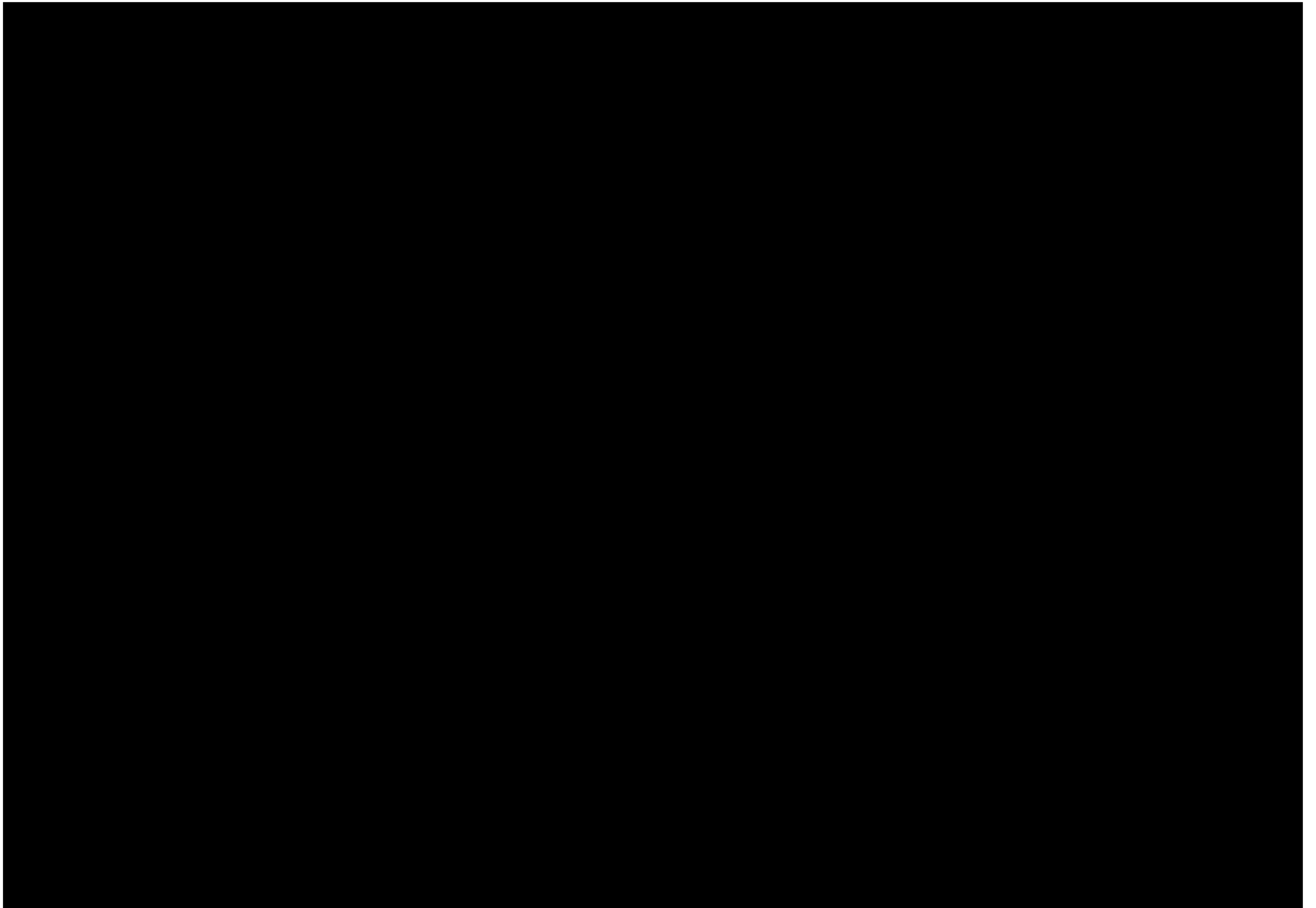
[142502](#) | Application for a certificate of existing use for use of land for breeding, grazing and training of polo ponies and for polo matches. REFUSED

Previous planning decisions demonstrate the Council's acceptance of a replacement development at Youngs Farm. These include approvals for replacement dwellings in 2014 and 2018, together with acceptance of a 35% volumetric guideline under Local Plan Policy TB01, with basements previously excluded from the calculation. The site's established residential curtilage has also been confirmed through householder consent for extensions to the stables under reference 152328.

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□ Design Evolution

Overview

APPLICANT'S BRIEF

The revised proposal is for the replacement of the existing dwelling with a five bedroom house, designed as an evolved form comprising a principal front range and a secondary rear range. The dwelling will incorporate further single storey side extensions and a contemporary rear extension, in a varied material palette that takes precedent from the local vernacular and nearby/neighbouring properties.

The replacement dwelling will be positioned further back within the site, to existing levels and reoriented so that its principal frontage faces Kentons Lane, with the rear of the property towards the open countryside. This arrangement is intended to provide an appropriate relationship with the road, improve the setting of the dwelling, and make better use of the site.

The proposal also includes:

- Removal of the existing northern outbuilding;
- Construction of an ancillary 'wellness' building;
- Formation of a new vehicular access from Kentons Lane and provision of an associated driveway serving the replacement dwelling;
- New planting and landscaping throughout the site to integrate the development with its surroundings.

There are no proposed works to the existing stable buildings and the existing access route will be retained for field access only.

The proposal seeks to provide a high quality replacement dwelling that draws on precedents of traditional farmhouses that have evolved over time to create a form, massing and aesthetic that is sympathetic to the agricultural and rural character of the site and surrounding countryside.



AI-generated image for illustrative purposes only, indicative, not to scale; refer to scaled drawings.

Pre-application Analysis

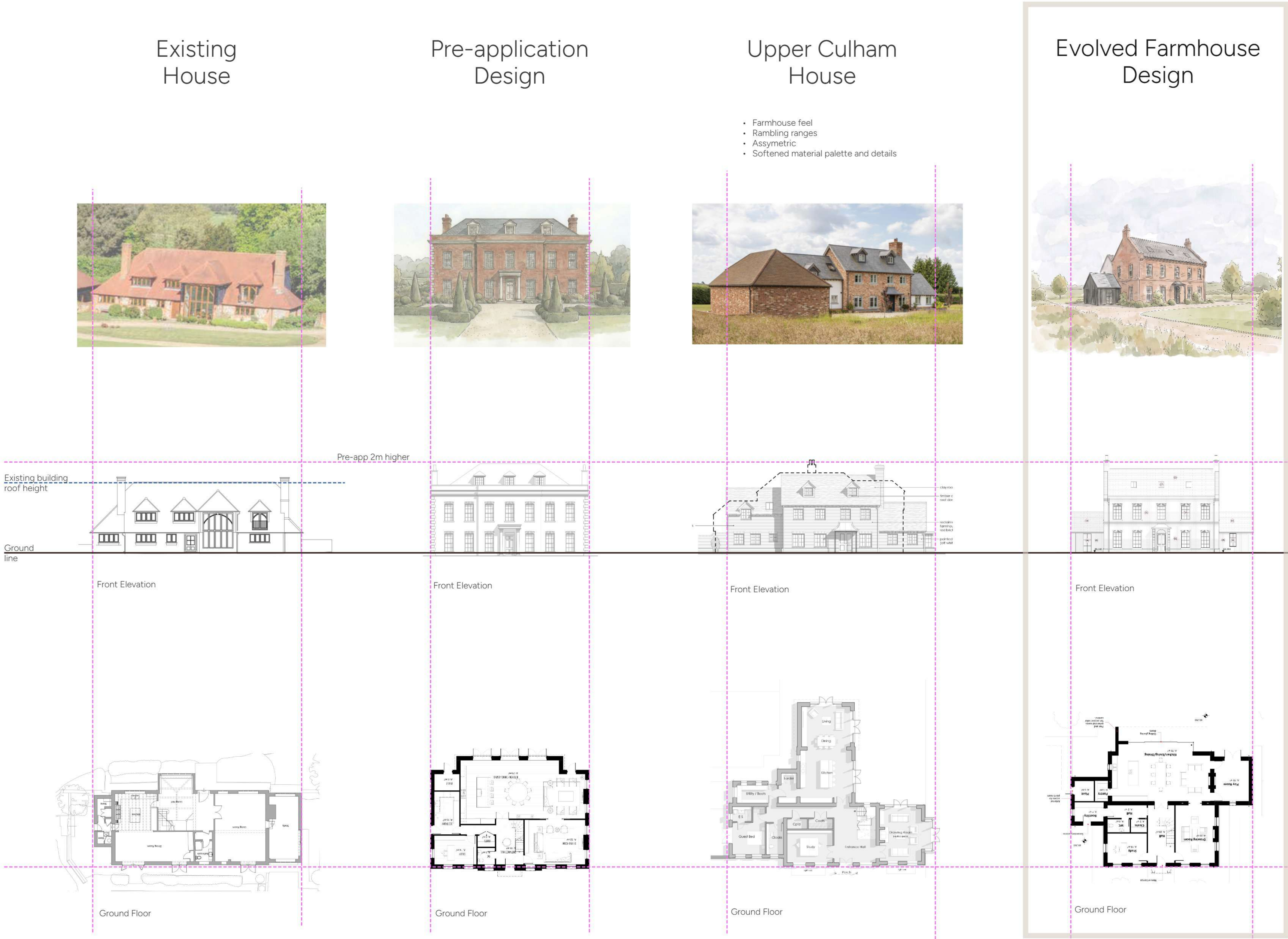
PRE-APPLICATION ANALYSIS

The 'evolved farmhouse' proposal is shown against the existing dwelling, the pre-application design and neighbouring Young's Cottage (Upper Culham House) to demonstrate how the scheme has developed in response to its context and to pre-application feedback.

Taking its lead from the local farmhouse character of Young's Cottage, the revised proposal replaces the single formal block of the pre-application design with a fragmented plan of lower, asymmetric ranges. This breaks down the massing and gives the building the informal, evolved character of a working farmhouse.

The overall height has been reduced, while the pre-application scheme stood higher, bringing the ridge down to relate closely to the neighbouring property. The front range is significantly narrower and more subordinate, with the additional width taken up by lower side extensions, and the material palette has been softened to reflect the neighbouring buildings.

Together these changes lower the scale, massing and impact of the proposal, producing a building that sits more naturally in its rural setting and draws its character from its immediate neighbours.



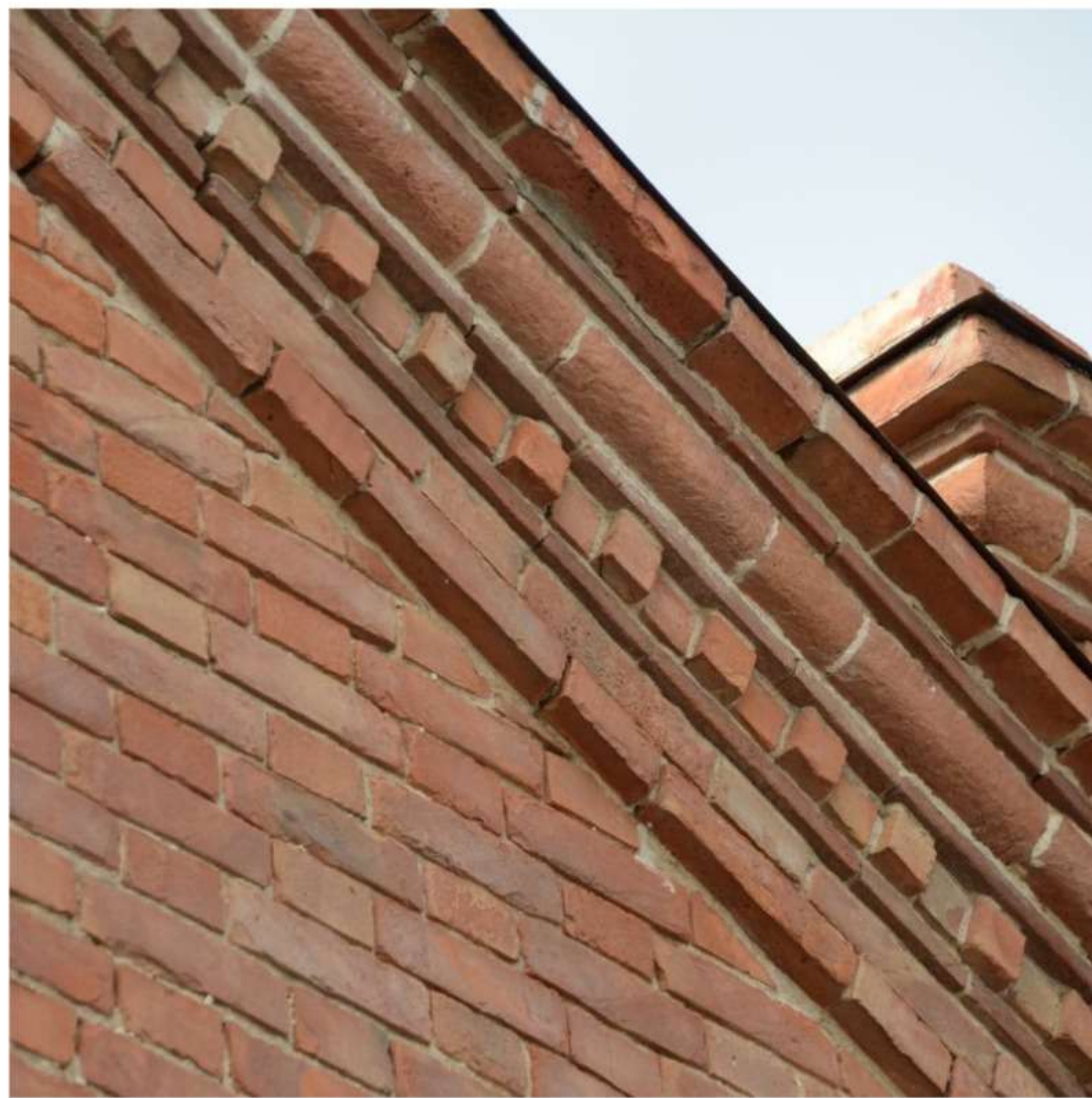
Precedent Images



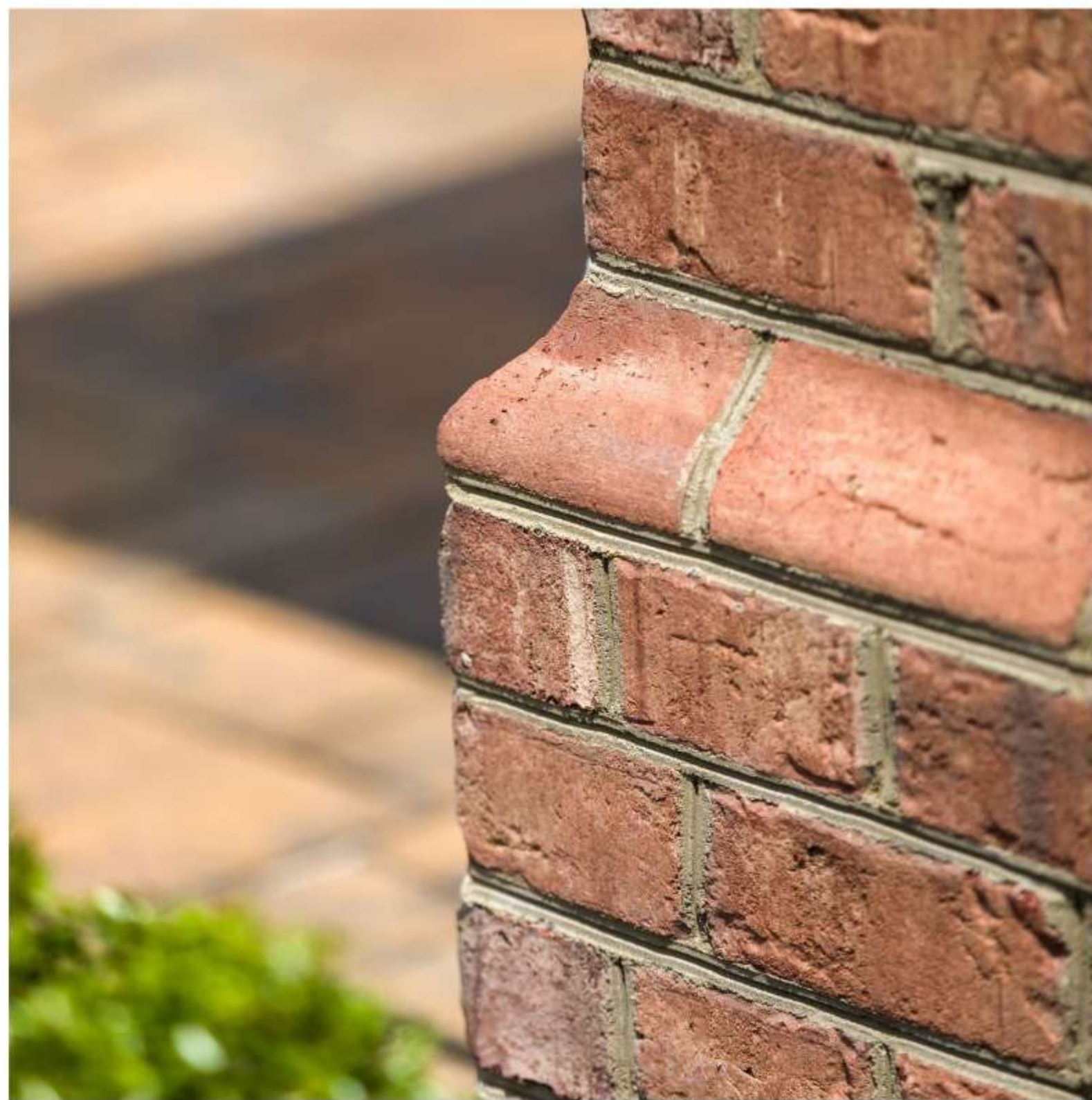
Traditional farmhouse with brick front range, painted section and side porch



Local example of traditional farmhouse with horizontal form, sash windows and clad outbuilding



Brick corbelling and Flemish bond



Brick plinth



Red brick and timber clad extension



Neighbouring property - Upper Culham House



Contemporary stained cladding



Slate Roof Tile

Site Strategy

ORIENTATION & ARRIVAL

The new main house is oriented so that its principal elevation faces west towards Kentons Lane, the new driveway and arrival. Its set back location and the proposed planting scheme, reduce the views/prominence of the property from the road.

Although the entrance faces west, the plan is arranged so that key living spaces open to the south east, enjoying good levels of morning sun and daylight, direct access to the main garden and benefitting from the countryside views beyond. West facing rooms benefit from evening light and reinforce the sense of arrival at the end of the day.

The sun path arcs on the site plan show morning sun from the east reaching the rear and side of the house, midday sun moving across the southern garden, and late afternoon sun catching the west facing front elevation and arrival space.

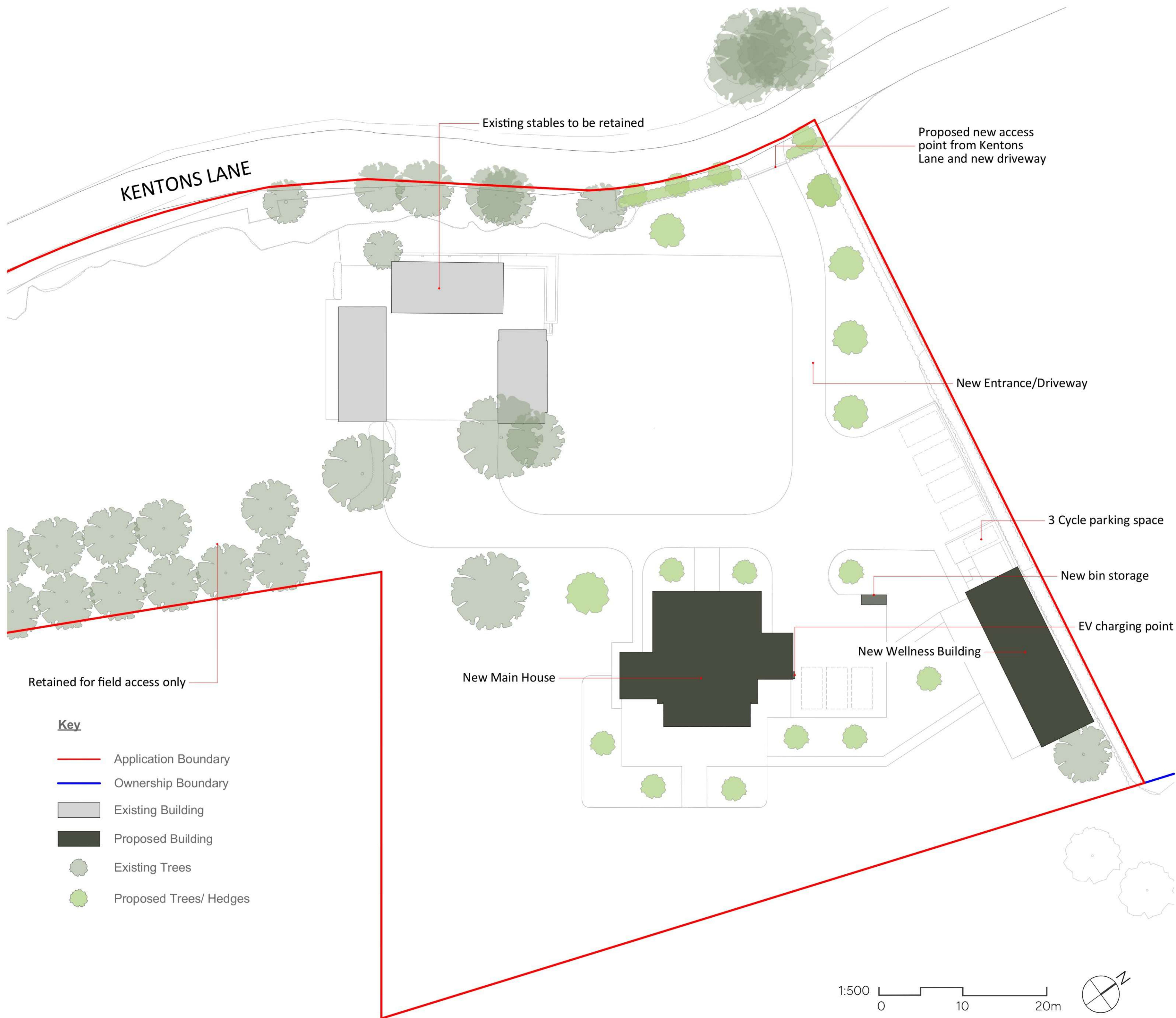
The existing access point from Kentons Lane will become redundant and the existing driveway will provide secondary field access from within the site.

RELATIONSHIP TO OUTBUILDINGS

The existing outbuildings remain grouped to the southwest, where they continue to function as clearly secondary structures to the new main house.

The pool building is positioned to the north of the new main house, aligned with the open side of the plot. This location gives it a calm, slightly detached character that suits its use, while ensuring that it does not compete visually with the main house. It is close enough to be convenient, but set far enough away to feel like a distinct destination within the grounds.

This arrangement also ensures that the most private parts of the main garden sit to the south and east of the house, away from the outbuildings, with clear separation between everyday family life and the more occasional use of ancillary spaces.



Volume Comparison

EXISTING AREA & VOLUME ASSESSMENT

The new development's volume acknowledges that the original dwelling relates to the house as it was first built, or as it stood on 1 July 1948 if built before that date, in accordance with the definition in Annex 2 of the NPPF.

In response to the pre-app request for a clear and transparent volumetric assessment, the existing dwelling has been measured at a gross external volume of 1,055.67m³, the figure previously accepted by the Council on applications ref F/2014/1313 and 172862, which we adopt as the agreed baseline. The following summarises the pre-app proposal volume and the revised proposed volume:

	Volume	Net Volume Increase
Existing	1055.67 m3	-
Pre-application Design	1,620 m3	53.5%
Proposed	1,417 m3	34%

SCALE AND MASSING

The proposal responds directly to the pre-application concerns on scale and massing. The built volume has been reduced from the pre-application figure of 1,620m³, ("*approximately 53.5%*" over the baseline) to 1,417m³. This results in a net volume increase of 34%, ensuring it meets Policy TB01.

Floor-to-ceiling heights have been reduced from 2.9m to 2.5m and 2.6m. As a result, the ridge height is now well below the previously proposed level of approximately 10.25m, reducing the building's overall vertical emphasis.

The proposal provides the required accommodation while maintaining a carefully controlled overall form. The articulated roofline and fragmented plan divide the building into a series of smaller, connected volumes, avoiding the uniformity previously identified and creating the appearance of an informal evolved building.

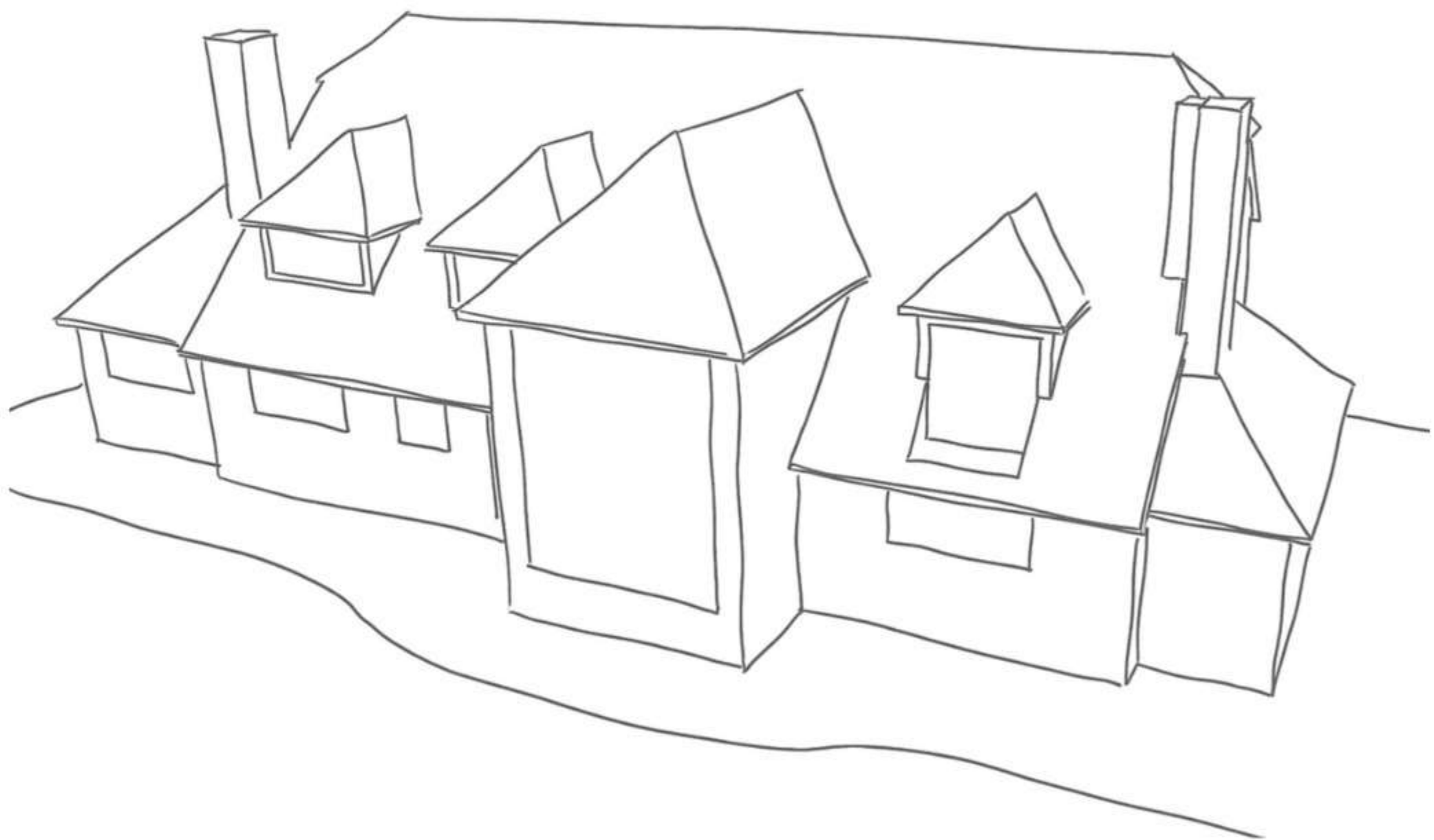
This lower, more articulated form responds to the informal clusters of development that characterise the surrounding area and re-establishes a modest building that sits comfortably within its rural setting. The classical columns and cornices, previously considered formal, grand, and assertive, have been removed. They have been replaced with a simpler farmhouse architectural language, rooted in the agricultural origins of the site and appropriate to its rural context.

OUTBUILDING MASSING & VOLUME

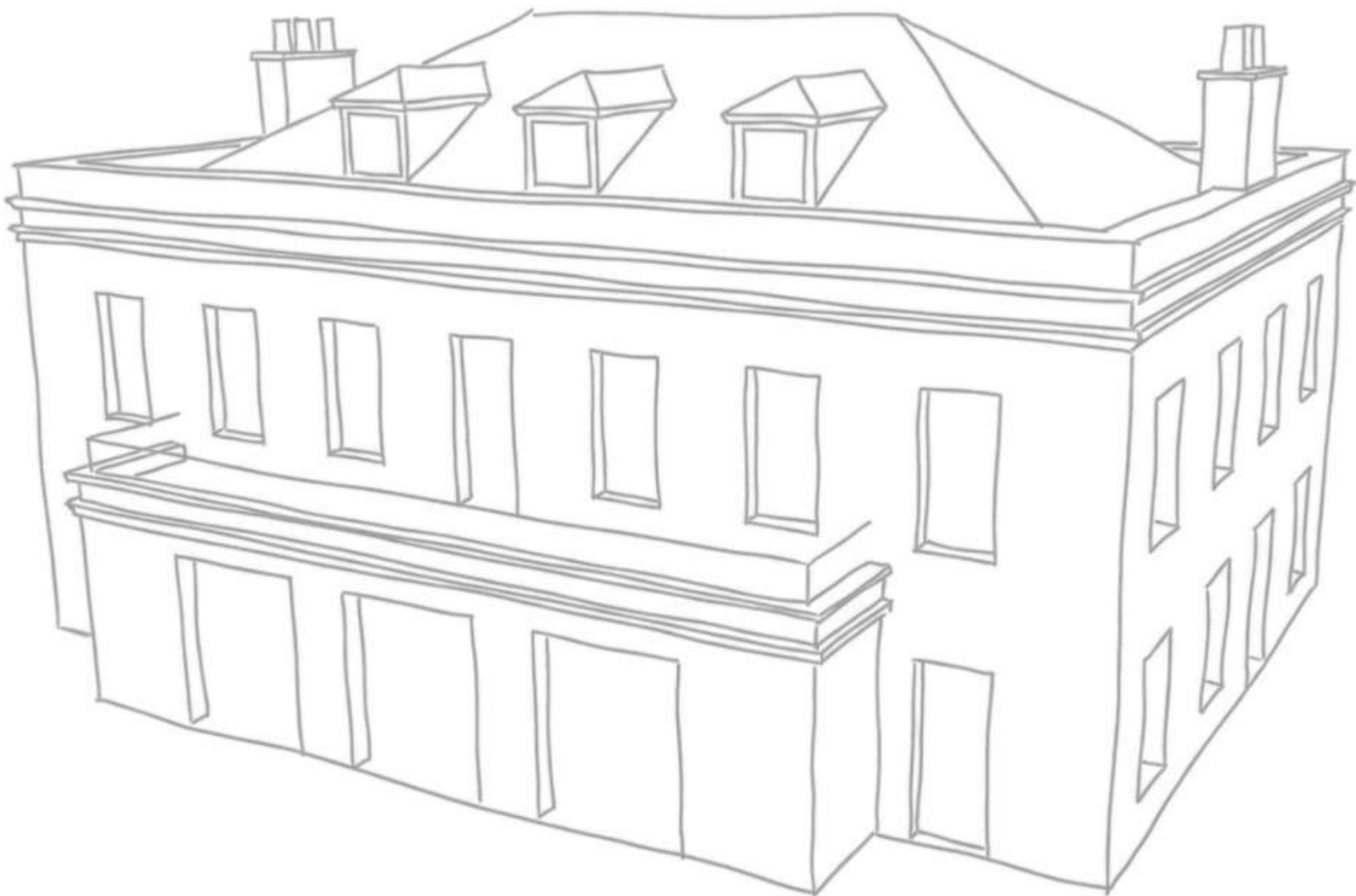
The proposed wellness building replaces the existing north outbuilding at the same volume of 450m³, resulting in no increase over the original. It retains the modest scale, low ridge and simple agricultural form of the building it replaces, so it continues to read as a subordinate outbuilding that sits comfortably within its rural setting.

Type of Development	Volume
Existing North Outbuilding	450m3
Proposed Replacement Outbuilding	450m3
% Increase from original building	-0%

Existing



Pre-application Design



Proposed

