

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE: ASHFOLDS, HORSHAM ROAD, RUSPER, WEST SUSSEX RH12 4QX

APPLICANT: MS N FRANKLAND

APPLICATION: FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE EXTENSION AND ALTERATION OF AN EXISTING GARAGE/OUTBUILDING AND ITS CONVERSION INTO A TWO-BEDROOM SELF-BUILD DWELLING, TOGETHER WITH THE REMOVAL OF AN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ANNEX AT ASHFOLDS, HORSHAM ROAD, RUSPER.

COUNCIL: HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL



1. Introduction

This Planning and Design Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the extension and alteration of an existing garage/outbuilding and its conversion into a two-bedroom self-build dwelling, together with the removal of an existing residential annex at Ashfolds, Horsham Road, Rusper.

The application seeks to respond positively to previous concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and subsequent appeal decision, through:

- A reduced and more sympathetic design approach
- A net-neutral residential impact, achieved through removal of the annex
- A commitment to self-build delivery, secured via a Unilateral Undertaking
- Enhanced sustainability and environmental performance

This proposal is not speculative development, but a family-led self-build scheme, intended to allow the applicants and their immediate family to remain within the local community.

2. Site Context



Location plans and site boundary

Ashfolds is a substantial detached dwelling set within a generous residential plot located on Horsham Road, approximately 200 metres southwest of the defined built-up area boundary of Rusper.

The site is characterised by:

- A crescent-shaped access drive with entry points at the northeast and southeast
- A secondary access leading south into adjoining land under the same ownership

- Mature hedging and trees forming strong natural boundaries
- Limited visibility from the public realm due to well-established screening
- A Public Right of Way (Footpath 1494) runs parallel to the northern boundary.

The existing outbuilding subject to this application is located well within the site and reads as a subservient structure within the wider plot. Importantly, the surrounding area is not uniform in character; while rural in nature, it includes a nearby commercial site with large-scale buildings and structures, other residential properties set within generous plots, and sporadic development along Horsham Road, including Dial Post Barn. This varied context demonstrates that the site does not sit within a homogenous or highly sensitive landscape.



Street view surrounding area.

3. Planning History

Relevant planning history includes:

- **DC/20/1608** - Replacement garage with home office (Approved 2020)
- **DC/24/1896** - Erection of extension and alterations to barn style garage to form 1 no new dwelling. Demolition of annexe and erection of 1 no detached dwelling. (Refused, 2025)
- **DC/25/1256** - Erection of a single storey rear extension and alterations to existing garage/outbuilding to convert to a single dwellinghouse. (Refused, 2025; Appeal Dismissed)

The key reasons for refusal and dismissal related to:

- The principle of development in the countryside
- Perceived harm to rural character, particularly from subdivision and intensification

However, it is important to note:

- The LPA has not raised objection to the removal of the annex
- The current proposal materially differs from the refused scheme, including reduced scale and a net-neutral residential impact

4. Existing Residential Annex

The existing annex at Ashfolds benefits from residential use, established through long-term continuous occupation.

A comprehensive body of evidence has been assembled to support this position, including utility bills, photographs, floor plans, and a documented list of previous occupants. In addition, historic plans and title information indicate the presence of a building on the site dating back as early as 1929, as referenced within the original deeds. Collectively, this material demonstrates that the annex has functioned as a separate residential unit over a prolonged period and that such use is lawful through the passage of time.

The established use of the annex is a material consideration in the assessment of the current proposal. It confirms that the site already accommodates more than one residential unit and that the principle of residential use in this location has long been accepted.



Importantly, the proposed development would result in the cessation of this existing residential use, through the removal of the annex building. The scheme therefore does not introduce an additional residential unit in net terms but instead facilitates a reconfiguration of existing lawful residential accommodation within the site.

4.1 Replacement of Existing Annex and Rationalisation of Built Form

The proposal includes the removal of an existing residential annex within the Ashfolds site and the reconfiguration of built form through the extension and conversion of the existing garage/outbuilding.

The annex is a poor-quality structure of limited architectural and environmental merit. It is externally finished in black cladding and exhibits substandard construction, poor insulation, and low energy efficiency. As a result, it performs poorly in sustainability terms and would require significant intervention to bring it up to modern residential standards. In its current condition, it does not make a positive contribution to the character or quality of the site and is considered to have reached the end of its functional lifespan.



Internal visuals of the residential annex.

4.2 Principle of Replacement and Rebalancing

The proposal should not be viewed as an intensification of development, but rather as a rebalancing or trade-off of built form within the site.

The existing annex, measuring approximately 117 sqm, is to be removed in full. In its place, the existing garage /outbuilding, which has a comparable footprint of approximately 117.8 sqm, will be adapted and modestly extended to accommodate residential use. This results in a broadly equivalent quantum of development across the site.

Accordingly, the proposal does not materially increase built form but instead redistributes it in a better location and breathing space from the main property. This rationalisation simplifies

the layout of the site, removes a visually poor structure, and consolidates development into a more coherent and functional arrangement.

4.3 Unilateral Undertaking

The applicant is willing to enter a Unilateral Undertaking under Section 106 to directly address the concerns raised in the previous refusal and appeal decision. This will secure the demolition of the existing residential annex prior to any development, ensuring no net increase in built form, and restrict the proposed unit to a genuine self-build dwelling for family occupation. The applicant is not a developer and is simply seeking to create a modest home to remain within the area in which they have grown up, alongside close family support. Their willingness to accept these controls demonstrates a clear commitment to policy compliance, ensuring the proposal does not result in intensification or harm to character, and provides a robust mechanism to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

5. Existing Outbuilding and Proposed Development



Existing outbuilding used as a garage and home office.

The proposed development comprises a single storey rear extension to the existing outbuilding, together with alterations to the front elevation and the conversion of the building into residential accommodation.

The building will remain visually similar in appearance, and its visual presence remains low and proportionate within the site. Importantly, a portion of the garage accommodation is retained, maintaining some reference to its original ancillary function and avoiding a complete shift in character. Externally, materials are proposed to match those of the existing building. This approach ensures that the development integrates seamlessly with the established group of buildings at Ashfolds and avoids the introduction of incongruous or visually intrusive elements.

Key design changes from refused schemes include:

- Reduced bulk and massing
- Significantly reduced glazing
- Predominantly flat-roofed extension with a modest gabled element
- Materials to match existing building (brick and tiles)

The development will retain:

- Existing access arrangements
- Adequate parking and turning space
- A portion of the existing garage proportionate.



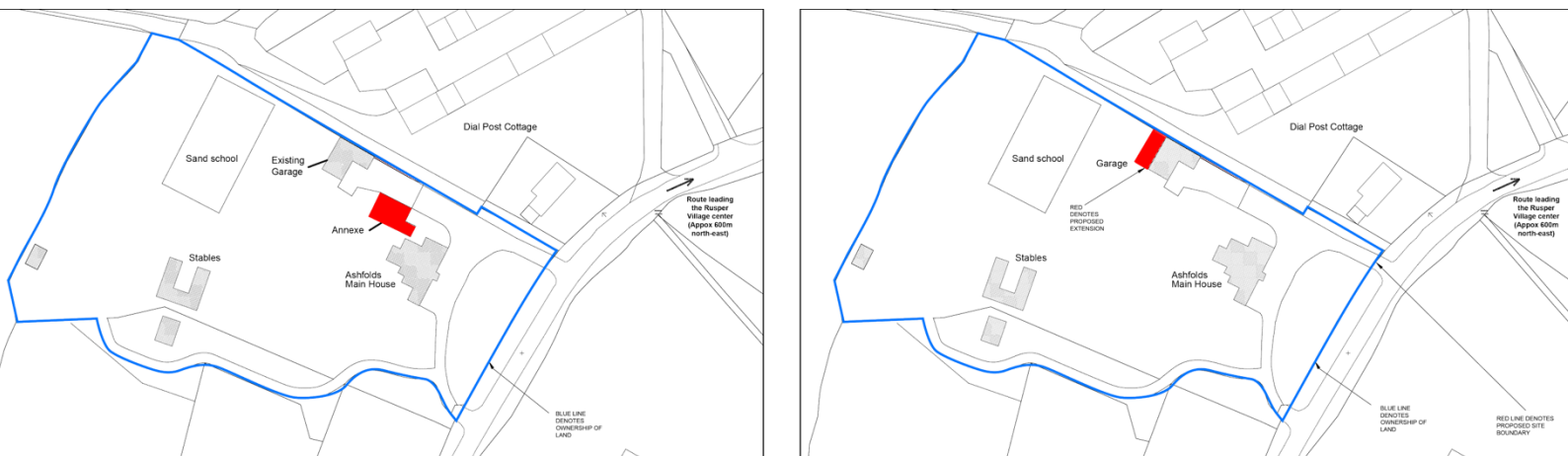
5.1 Design

The design has been carefully reconsidered in response to previous feedback, with a clear focus on reducing visual impact and ensuring that the building remains subservient within its setting.

It is acknowledged that the proposed conversion will introduce a more recognisably residential appearance to the building. This will arise through the inclusion of domestic-scale fenestration, the definition of a separate garden curtilage, and the provision of dedicated access and parking. However, this change must be considered in the context of the wider proposals.

The site is already residential in nature, and the introduction of a single additional dwelling within an established curtilage does not represent a fundamental change in land use. Crucially, the removal of the existing annex offsets this change, resulting in no net increase in residential units and an overall improvement to the visual and environmental quality of the site.

While the building will no longer read purely as an incidental outbuilding, its scale, form, and materiality ensure that it remains visually subservient within the wider Ashfolds setting. As such, the proposal does not introduce an unfamiliar or harmful pattern of development.



Location to show comparison of annex building to be removed, vs the addition of garage/outbuilding extension and better spacing between proposed dwellings and plots.

5.2 Rural Character and Settlement Pattern

The site is located within the countryside, where the prevailing character is one of dispersed development set within generous plots. The proposal respects this pattern by maintaining a low-density form of development and retaining substantial spacing and landscaping around the building.

Although a separate residential curtilage is proposed, this will be sensitively defined and reinforced through existing and additional planting. This will ensure that the subdivision does not appear prominent or intrusive in the wider landscape.

Importantly, the proposal does not extend built form into previously undeveloped land, but instead reorganises existing development within the established site. As such, the overall rural character of the area is preserved.



Visual comparison showing current (annex) and proposed (removed annex and rear outbuilding development) from street view.

6. Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

The proposal delivers clear sustainability benefits:

- Re-use of existing building reduces embodied carbon
- Replacement of a poorly performing annex with a highly efficient dwelling
- Construction via Scandia Hus, known for sustainable, energy-efficient homes
- Compliance with Water Neutrality requirements
- No trees will be removed, and existing planting will be retained.

Supporting documents for this application include:

- **Preliminary Ecology Appraisal**
- **Water Neutrality Report**

7. Access, Parking and Use

Access to the proposed dwelling will be taken from the existing driveway serving Ashfolds, with the northern portion of the drive shared. Parking and turning space will be provided to the east of the building within the site.

This arrangement avoids the need for new access points and ensures that the proposal can be accommodated without adverse impact on highway safety or the surrounding area.

The dwelling is intended as a self-build unit, further emphasising the modest and site-specific nature of the proposal.

The Local Highway Authority has confirmed:

- No unacceptable impacts
- No conflict with national policy

8. Residential Amenity

The proposal will not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity:

- Significant separation distances maintained
- No overlooking or loss of privacy
- No material increases in noise or disturbance

The site's size and layout ensure that both Ashfolds and the proposed dwelling will enjoy high-quality living environments.

9. Response to Previous Refusals

The Inspector's concern (Appeal Decision para. 12-13) was that:

- The proposal would intensify residential use
- Subdivision would erode the loose rural pattern

This revised scheme addresses those points:

1. Net-Neutral Residential Impact

- Removal of the annex ensures no increase in dwelling numbers

This directly mitigates concerns regarding intensification.

2. Reduced Visual Impact

- Smaller extension footprint
- Reduced glazing
- Subordinate design approach

3. Retention of Rural Character

- Loose spatial arrangement maintained
- No suburban-style plot subdivision
- Strong boundary vegetation retained

4. Contextual Character

The Inspector's view of a uniform rural character is respectfully challenged:

- The site sits adjacent to commercial-scale development
- Nearby buildings (e.g. Dial Post Barn) demonstrate varied form and scale
- The area is characterised by mixed and dispersed development, not uniformity

Therefore, the proposal complies with:

HOPF Policy 25 - conserving landscape character

NPPF paragraph 180 - recognising intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside

10. Planning Policy Context

While the site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary, several key material considerations weigh significantly in favour of the proposal when assessed against the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Housing Land Supply and the Tilted Balance

Horsham District is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, engaging the presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with:

- **NPPF Paragraph 11(d)** - tilted balance
- **NPPF Paragraph 60** - need to significantly boost housing supply

In these circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

Efficient Use of Land and Net-Neutral Residential Impact

The proposal makes effective use of previously developed land within an existing residential curtilage and results in a net-neutral residential position, secured through the removal of the existing annex.

This directly supports:

- **NPPF Paragraph 124(c)** - making efficient use of land
- **HDPF Policy 4** - supporting appropriate development outside built-up areas where justified
- **HDPF Policy 26** - countryside protection (noting limited and contained form of development)

Specifically, the removal of the annex ensures that there is no net increase in residential units, no material intensification of use beyond the existing lawful residential context, and a reduction in built form within the site.

Character and Appearance

The revised scheme has been designed to ensure full compliance with:

- **HDPF Policy 25** - protecting landscape and townscape character
- **HDPF Policy 32** - high quality design
- **HDPF Policy 33** - development principles requiring development to respect local character

- **NPPF Paragraph 135** - achieving well-designed places

The revised scheme has been designed to ensure full compliance with:

- **HDPF Policy 25** - protecting landscape and townscape character
- **HDPF Policy 32** - high quality design
- **HDPF Policy 33** - development principles requiring development to respect local character
- **NPPF Paragraph 135** - achieving well-designed places

Highways, Amenity and Technical Matters

There are no technical objections to the proposal:

- The Local Highway Authority raises no objection, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 115, which requires refusal only where impacts would be severe
- The proposal accords with HDPF Policy 33, with no adverse impact on residential amenity
- Environmental matters, including ecology and water neutrality, have been appropriately addressed through supporting technical reports

When assessed in the context of the housing land supply shortfall and the tilted balance under NPPF Paragraph 11(d), the proposal represents a policy-compliant and sustainably justified form of development.

The limited and contained nature of the development, combined with the net-neutral residential outcome and absence of technical objections, results in a scheme that accords with both National and Horsham District planning policy objectives.

12. Conclusion

This Planning and Design Statement demonstrates that the proposed development at Ashfolds represents a carefully considered, proportionate and policy-compliant scheme that has been

specifically revised in response to previous concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority and the subsequent appeal decision.

The proposal delivers a rebalanced and more sustainable form of development through the extension and conversion of an existing outbuilding, supported by the removal of the existing residential annex, resulting in a net-neutral residential position across the site. This is a fundamental and material distinction from previous schemes, directly addressing concerns relating to intensification and the perceived impact on rural character.

The design approach ensures that the building remains subservient within the wider Ashfolds setting, with reduced massing, simplified form, and sensitive use of materials. Importantly, the proposal does not introduce a fundamentally new pattern of development but instead represents a rationalisation and consolidation of existing built form within an established residential curtilage.

In landscape and settlement terms, the development respects the dispersed and low-density character of the surrounding countryside, retaining strong boundary screening, generous spacing, and a modest residential curtilage that is sensitively defined and integrated. The scheme therefore preserves the visual integrity and rural character of the area, consistent with HDPF Policies 25, 32 and 33 and NPPF paragraph 135.

From a planning policy perspective, the proposal carries significant positive weight. The Council haven't demonstrated a five-year housing land supply and supports sustainable development under NPPF paragraph 11(d). The scheme also makes effective use of an existing building and previously developed land within the site, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 124(c), whilst delivering a low-impact, family-led form of housing supported by self-build aspirations.

No technical objections have been raised in respect of highways, ecology, or environmental matters, and all relevant constraints, including water neutrality, have been appropriately addressed.

Crucially, the applicant has demonstrated a clear and genuine commitment to addressing previous planning concerns through the willingness to enter a Unilateral Undertaking, securing annex removal and ensuring the development is a family-led self-build scheme. A draft Unilateral undertaking is attached to this application.

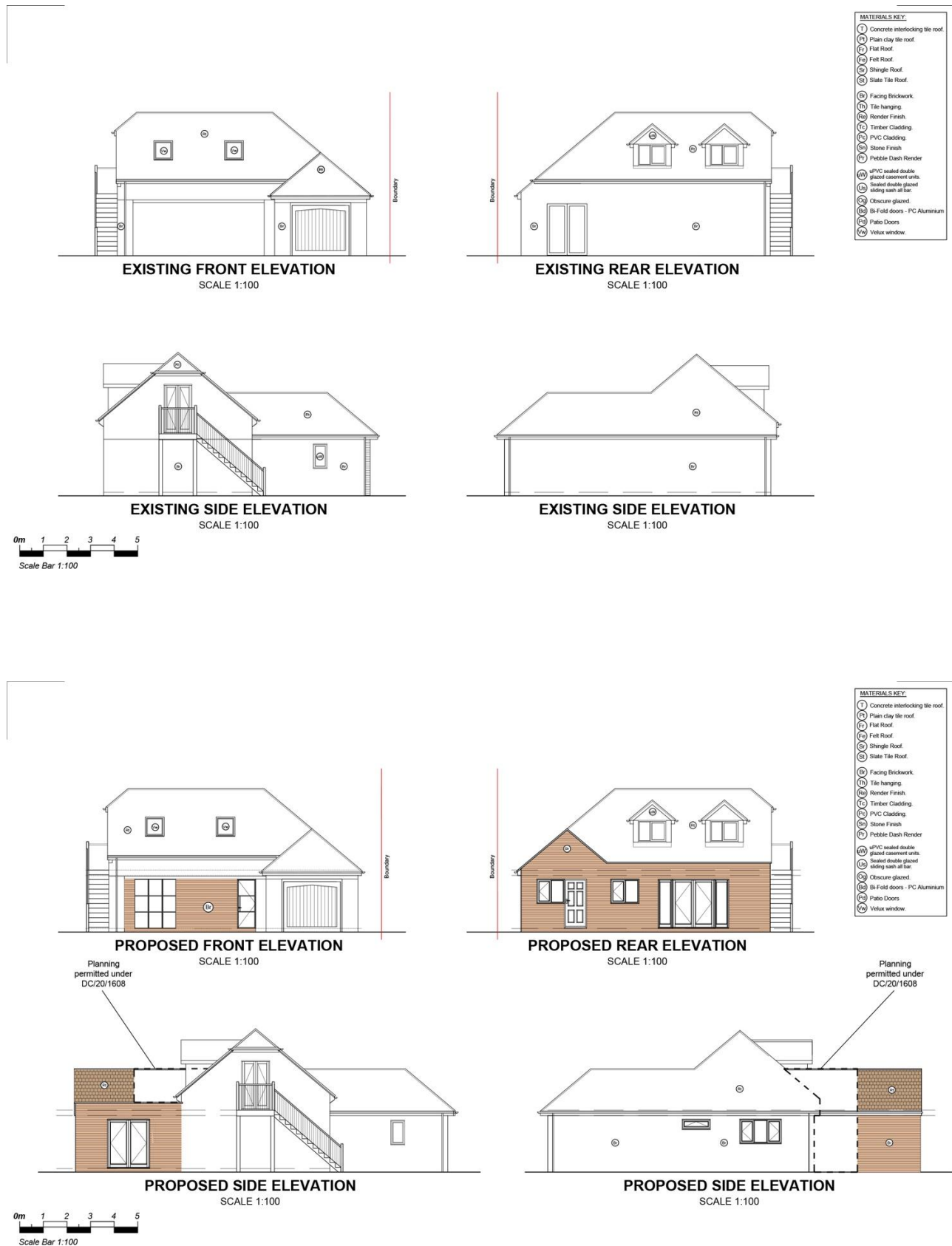
Overall, when assessed in the round, the proposal represents a balanced and sustainably justified form of development which:

- Respects the character and appearance of the area
- Avoids any net increase in residential units
- Delivers genuine local and family housing need

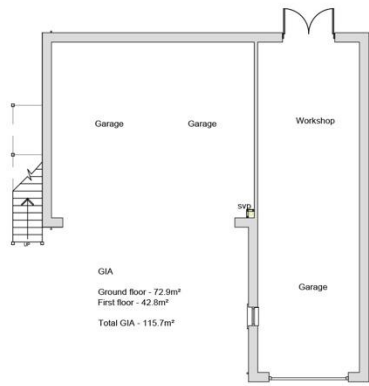
- Makes efficient and appropriate use of existing buildings
- Complies with relevant national and local planning policy

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Horsham District Council grants planning permission for the proposed development.

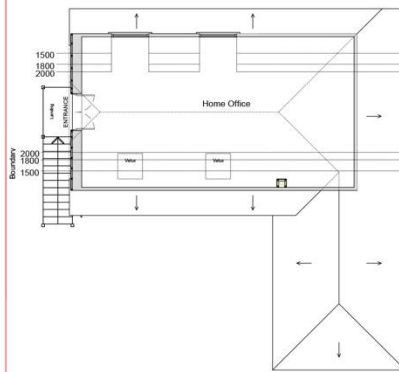
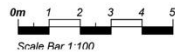
Existing and proposed outbuilding elevations



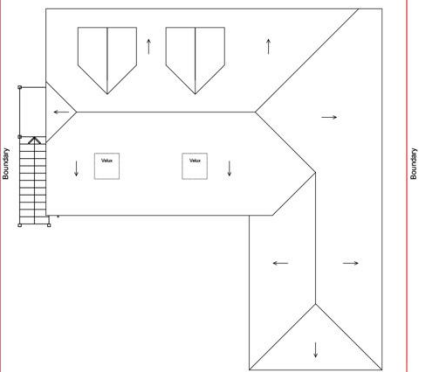
Existing and proposed outbuilding plans



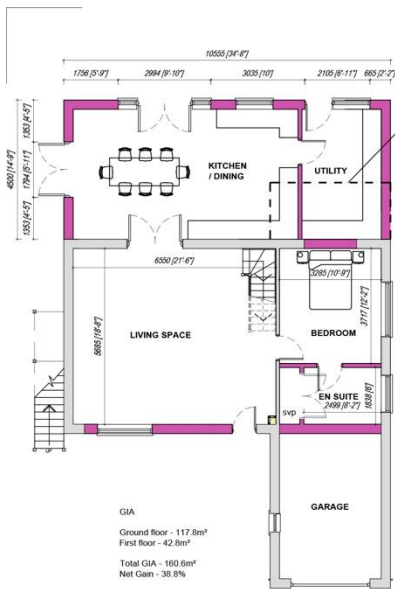
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100



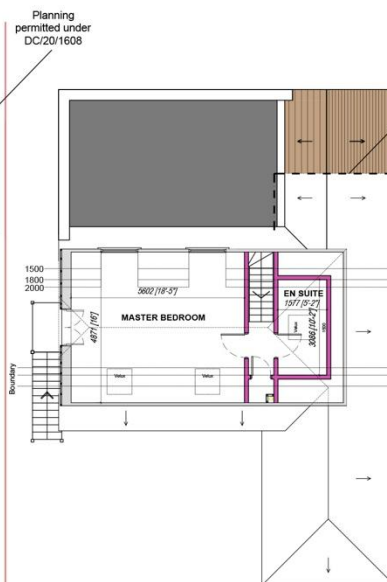
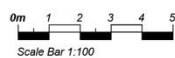
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
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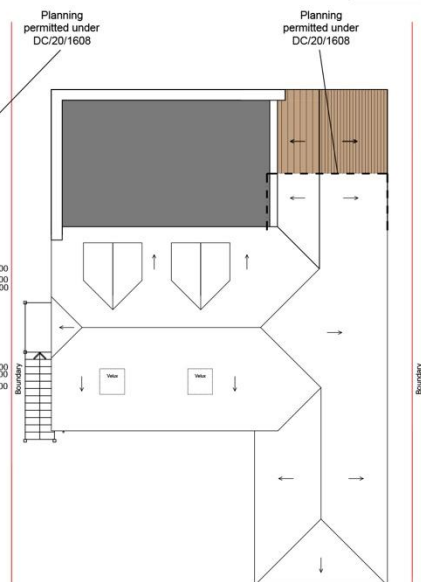
EXISTING ROOF PLAN
SCALE 1:100



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
SCALE 1:100