

Conservation Challenge:

Redundant Agricultural Buildings

MSc Conservation of Buildings



Image of gable end of redundant barn, Bentley, Suffolk, taken by Author

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Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to look at the challenges faced by redundant agricultural buildings, concentrating on the issues associated with these redundant buildings, in particular within East Anglia, however, the report will also make a comparison with the approach and issues faced within Europe.

The variety of landscape within the UK and East Anglia can be attributed to our agricultural past. The developments of agriculture have contributed to the green landscape associated with our rural countryside. The types of buildings across this landscape vary across the regions. These styles have developed out of a need to fulfil a function, whilst utilising the materials available within that region. It is these attributes that developed this landscape.

With the range of agricultural buildings came a range a farming methods. These methods influenced the way in which the buildings were built and utilised, including the grouping of agricultural buildings.

Over time agricultural methods have changed, as a result of this the requirements from agricultural buildings has also changed. As well as changes to farming methods, additional demands on production volumes has lead to greater intensity in farming, also resulting in a review of agricultural incomes.

A driving force for diversification in agriculture is the Common Agricultural Policy, the ideas behind this is to provide improved agricultural productivity to ensure a stable supply of affordable food.

The combination of these factors has lead to agricultural farm buildings either being redundant, falling into disrepair, finding a new use – economic or residential or modern farmsteads being built around them. This redundancy resulted in the CPRE (1988) identifying five discussion topics in relation to farm diversification:

- Rural Employment
- Rural Housing
- Farm Income Support
- Preserving Traditional and Historic Buildings
- Encouraging Farm Diversification

When a building becomes redundant English Heritage (2006a) identify four key areas when considering the future of the building:

1. Original Use
2. Adaptive Reuse
3. No Use
4. Demolition

When considering the future of the buildings it is also necessary to consider legislative guidance, such as Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. The factors within this document must be considered as part of any proposal. As well as national guidance, local policies will also need to be considered. Each region will face different challenges and as a result local guidance should be produced to reflect these challenges.

As part of the research the issues of The Netherlands and Germany are considered. The Common Agricultural Policy also has a contributing factor within the European Countries and the same drivers for diversification and increased productivity have affected the future of these buildings. The Netherlands has only in the last 10 years allowed conversion to residential use, however, a number of earlier conversions can be found, suggesting issues with the enforcement of such policies at a local level.

Two case studies are identified. The first is a redundant barn on the Building at Risk Register, where the former refusal for conversion has lead to a building falling into further disrepair. The second is a conversion that has Planning and Listed Building Consent for conversion to a Bed and Breakfast, where conversion to a residential development is now proposed. This case study highlights the preference for economic conversion compared to residential. Although if a skilful design is employed should the default position be against residential conversion?

In conclusion the report identifies key areas to be considered as part of any proposal for the future of a redundant agricultural building:

- Retention of the historic fabric
- The need for a skilful design
- As proposed by the CPRE the following areas should be considered
 - i. Rural Employment
 - ii. Rural Housing
 - iii. Farm Income Support
 - iv. Preserving Traditional and Historic Buildings
 - v. Encouraging Farm Diversification
- Monitoring maintained redundant buildings to prevent deterioration
- Conversion should not seek to domesticate agricultural buildings.

1.0 Introduction

This report aims to look at the challenges faced for our redundant agricultural buildings. The report will focus on the issues associated with these redundant buildings within East Anglia, although will look at the comparison between the approach within England and compare this with European examples.

As farming methods and the approach to agriculture has changed the requirements of agricultural buildings has also altered. With these changes and the scale of today's agriculture this has resulted in a number of redundant agricultural building. The challenge that is faced is how to make these apparently redundant buildings a viable Heritage Asset.

The types of Agricultural buildings within East Anglia is defined by English Heritage (2006a, pp 16-17) as:

- High numbers of pre 1750 farmstead buildings
- Timber framed barns, many pre 1750, on the Flegg Loams, across the claylands of South Suffolk and North Essex and South Norfolk and High Suffolk
- Aisled barns of 12th to 19th century date, particularly in West Suffolk, the Broadland fringe in Norfolk, Essex, Hertfordshire and East Cambridgeshire
- Smaller combination barns incorporating stabling or cattle housing, dating from the 16th century, built on the dairy farms of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands
- Granaries, cart sheds and stables dating from the 17th century and earlier
- Cow houses, locally called neathouses for milking and feeding
- Cattle houses located on the edge of the grazing marshes of the Norfolk Broads that housed cattle along side aisles facing into a central nave where crops were stored
- Shelter sheds around straw yards and looseboxes which were increasingly common from the mid 19th century, particularly on estate farms
- Maltings which occasional survive on farms

This list demonstrates the range of buildings that can be found within the Eastern Regions agricultural built heritage, the challenges of retaining this diversity of buildings and how these building types are approached will be investigated further as part of this report.

2.0 The Development of a Rural Landscape

The variety of landscapes that can be seen across the UK and in particular the East of England can be attributed to our agricultural past. CPRE (2006, pp 2) states that over the years, agriculture has produced beautiful and varied rural landscapes, as well as food. In a crowded, highly developed nation, this green legacy is arguably one of our greatest and most precious assets. Millions of visitors from home and overseas enjoy our countryside.

Part of this variety is demonstrated by the agricultural buildings that are dispersed across this rural landscape. The different types of buildings and styles varies across the UK landscape. These styles have developed out of a need to fulfil a function whilst utilising the materials typical to that area. The historical development of farming types can be typified by the types of farm buildings located within that landscape.

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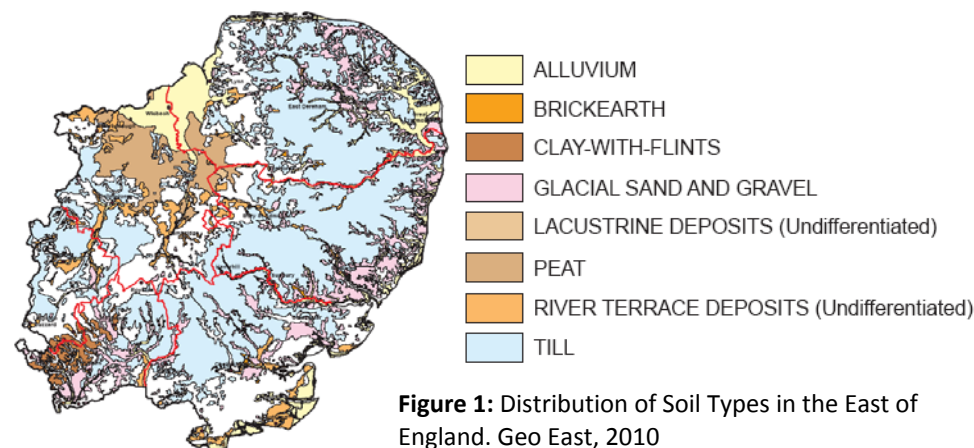
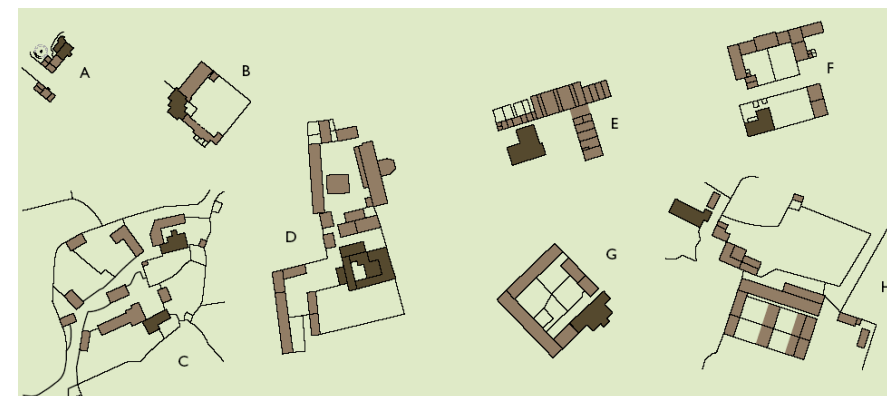


Figure 1: Distribution of Soil Types in the East of England. Geo East, 2010



Key

A: Linear Plan, B: L Plan, C: Dispersed Plan, D: Loose Courtyard, E: Regular Courtyard L Plan, F: Regular Courtyard U Plan, G: Full Courtyard, H: Regular Courtyard E Plan

Figure 2: Groupings of Agricultural Buildings, English Heritage, 2006, PP9

As well as styles developing to reflect the materials available the layout and form reflected the farming method and type typical to the area. English Heritage (2006a, pp 16) identifies that mixed farming was typical across the East of England Region but some areas specialised. The lighter soils concentrated in north and west Norfolk and Suffolk were best suited to sheep and corn and were subject to large scale enclosures in the 18th and 19th centuries. The claylands were best suited to dairying until the development of arable farming in these areas from the 18th century. English Heritage (2006a, pp 16) further explains how improvements in crop rotation lead to include winter feed crops (typically turnips) and improved grass varieties in the 17th century. This access to London saw an influence from market gardening (often specialising in fruit growing) and an increase in dairying.

The development of landscapes by farming types also had influences within the urban landscape. English Heritage (2006a, pp 16) explains that in the late 19th century larger scale town malting started to dominate this industry resulting in most farm malting going out of use.

This demonstrates the diversity of farming types that developed across the East of England between the 17th and 19th century. This assorted mix of functions lead to a range of building types typifying the East of England landscape.

3.0 The Demise of the Traditional Agricultural Building

With this range of agricultural types came a range of traditional farming methods. These methods influenced that way the buildings were built and their form. This also included the way in which the building types were grouped.

Figure 2 shows typical groupings of agricultural buildings. English Heritage (2006a, pp 16) states that types of farmsteads found within the East of England were dispersed farmsteads within the wood-pasture landscapes of the claylands, where there were also loosed courtyard steadings, often with two or more barns, granaries and stabling dating from the 17th century. Where the lighter soils existed in Norfolk and Suffolk regular courtyard plans, associated with larger estates built in areas post-1750.

Over the time agricultural methods have changed, this adjustment has lead to new requirements being expected from agricultural buildings. As well as the changes in farming methods, additional demands on production volumes has lead to a greater intensity in farming and the need for the income from agriculture to be reviewed. CPRE, (1988, pp 2) explains that at a time when real farm incomes are failing and agriculture's fortunes are less bright than at almost any time in the last 40 years, the attention towards farm diversification as a new source of income and to aid farm viability in the future.

Although agricultural policies have changed since this statement by CPRE in 1988, English Heritage (2006a, pp 4) explains that:

In recent years several factors have come together at the farm level to create concentrated pressure on farm incomes (MAFF, 2000, Lobley et al 2002). In the decade between 1995 and 2005 the total income from farming fell in real terms by 60 per cent (Defra, 2005).

However, Defra (2008) states:

In 2008, Total Income from Farming in the United Kingdom is estimated to have risen by 36 per cent in real terms. This is the highest level in real terms since 1997 and is 79 per cent above the low point in 2000 although still 52 per cent below the high point in 1995. The dramatic rise in farming's profitability in the early nineties followed the decline in the euro/sterling exchange rate after the United Kingdom left the Exchange Rate Mechanism. The equally rapid reverse in the second half of the decade was caused by increases in the exchange rate, lower world commodity prices and the impact of BSE.

Although the English Heritage statement shows a decline in agricultural incomes, this figure includes the incomes from 1995 and 2000, which as shown by DEFRA these where the high and low points for agricultural incomes. The DEFRA figures show an increase in income, however, the recent decline in the sterling/euro exchange rate may show a reduction in income for the 2009/10 figures.

Another driving factor for diversification is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). CAP as described by European Commission Agriculture and Rural Affairs (ECARA, 2005?, pp 6) has its roots in 1950s western Europe, whose societies had been damaged by years of war, and where agriculture had been crippled and food supplies could not be guaranteed. The emphasis of the early CAP was on encouraging better agricultural productivity so that consumers had a stable supply of affordable food and ensure that the EU had a viable agricultural sector. ECARA (2005?, pp 7) further explains that This shift of emphasis, which was effected in 1999 (the “Agenda 2000” reform) and which promotes the competitiveness of European agriculture, also included a major new element – a rural development policy encouraging many rural initiatives while also helping farmers to re-structure their farms, to diversify and to improve their product marketing. A ceiling was put on the budget to reassure taxpayers that CAP costs would not run out of control. Finally, in 2003 a further fundamental reform was agreed.

These pressures on agriculture have lead to buildings either being redundant due to changes in farm structure and farming practice, falling into disrepair, conversion to a new use or remained in low grade use as modern farmsteads have grown around them (English Heritage, 2006a, pp 4).

This redundancy and disrepair has lead to the CPRE (1988, pp 2) to indentifying five discussion topics regarding farm diversification:

- Rural Employment – the impact is frequently minimal and short term
- Rural Housing – buildings are usually priced beyond local families
- Farm income support – the benefit is most likely to be a one off payment, rather than sustainable broadening of farm income sources
- Preserving traditional and historic buildings – residential conversions, the most common type, often have a detrimental environmental impact
- Encouraging farm diversification and new land uses – at best, farm buildings appears to do little to promote less intensive agricultural production or new environmental – benign land uses; at worst actually encourage farm amalgamation and provide a financial injection fir intensive, environmentally – unsustainable farming.

These issues are reiterated within Essex County Councils (1989, pp 3) policy guidelines. These guidelines have formed the basis for many local authorities policies in relation to the conversion of agricultural buildings, particularly barns, across the East of England.

4.0 Policies for Agricultural Buildings

When an agricultural building becomes redundant and starts to fall into a state of disrepair, English Heritage (2006a, pp 4) outline a number of options that can be adapted, these are shown in Table 1.

Where the original use is maintained this results in limited issues for the agricultural building, this is also relatively similar for an agricultural adaptive reuse, however may involve internal remodelling which may need to be considered. Where it is proposed to demolish or demolish and replace an agricultural building, and where Listed, this will involve detailed consultation with the Local Authority and other interested parties before its

removal is permitted. Where a building is of no use and still maintained, again, this posses limited threats to the building, as long as maintenance is continued.

When considering the future of these buildings the legislative guidance must be considered. Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7), outlines the principles that should be considered when considering the reuse of agricultural buildings. PPS7 (2006, pp 12-13) states:

The Government’s policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. Planning authorities should therefore set out in LDDs their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic, residential and any other purposes, including mixed uses. These criteria should take account of:

- the potential impact on the countryside and landscapes and wildlife;
- specific local economic and social needs and opportunities;
- settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing;
- the suitability of different types of buildings, and of different scales, for re-use;
- the need to preserve, or the desirability of preserving, buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest, or which otherwise contribute to local character.

Function	Management	Comment
1. Original Use	Agriculture	The Building is used for its original purpose and continues to play a part in the farming system
2. Adaptive re-use	Agricultural	The building continues to be used fro agriculture but has been adapted to perform a new function.
	Economic	The Building is no longer used for agriculture and has been converted to an economic use.
	Residential	The building is no longer used for agriculture and has been converted to a residential dwelling.
3. No use	Maintained	The building is no longer used but is maintained
	Non maintained	The building is no longer used and is not maintained
4. Demolition	No development of footprint	The building is no longer used and has been demolished.
	Development of footprint	The building has been demolished and replaced by a new development

Table 1: Table outlining the options for agricultural buildings, based on English Heritage (2006a, pp 4)

This policy sets out that PPS7 supports reuse, with a reuse for economic development being preferred, but where residential conversion is more appropriate this should be supported. This statement is reiterated by Essex County Council (1989) where it highlights the difficulties faced when converting to residential purposes and the potential loss to the historic fabric and original purpose by this conversion. In order to prevent the domestication of agricultural buildings, the Essex County Council document highlights the areas that should be considered when converting agricultural buildings.

This document has formed the basis of many Local Authority Policies across the East of England. An example of this can be found in Appendix A. Appendix A shows a copy of Broadland District Councils Advice Notes for the conversion of traditional farm buildings. This gives a pictorial guide of the areas that should be considered when proposing conversion to ensure that the development of their economic and social past is not lost.

In summary, when considering the future use of the agricultural buildings the Policy Guidelines of Essex County Council (1989, pp 10 – 11) set out that the following should be considered:

- A) There is a presumption against residential conversion of any barn which is of architectural or historic interest
- B) The proposed conversion does not alter the character of the original building particularly in the following respects:
 - i. The original structure
 - ii. The original external cladding materials
 - iii. The internal spatial character
 - iv. All original external openings
 - v. The skyline silhouette and roof planes
 - vi. The immediate & the landscape setting of the building
- C) The proposed use does not conflict with agricultural interests in the area
- D) The proposed use is not detrimental to the character or appearance of the surrounding area or, as the case may be, the group value with the adjoining buildings
- E) The proposed use does not generate traffic or a magnitude or type that might be likely to cause additional traffic hazards and/or damage to minor roads
- F) There is strict control over the cartilage and setting of the listed building and permitted development rights under the general development order will be withdrawn
- G) The introduction of new alien structural members will not be permitted
- H) Only full planning applications for change of use accompanied by an application fro listed building consent showing all proposed works and a complete structural statement will normally be considered
- I) Where the site is identified as being of archaeological interest, the applicant discussed the proposals with the county archaeological offices at an early stage and takes measures to avoid unnecessary archaeological disturbance
- J) Where archaeological disturbance is unavoidable arrangements should be made for an adequate archaeological record to be made in advance of the works.

Further guidance and support on the conversion of traditional farm buildings is given in the English Heritage (2006b) document 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice'. This document sets out the philosophies and approach that should be taken where conversion is the only viable option in order to retain and maintain the farm building.

These guidance's give a presumption against the conversion to residential use, however, in contrast Pickard (1997, pp 299) states:

'Two further issues which can be significant in achieving the successful continued use of listed buildings are adaptive reuse and enabling development. Government policy on the former is cautious, stating that 'the best use will often be the use for which the building was designed, and the continuation or reinstatement of that use should certainly be the first option when the future of the building is considered' (Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage, 1994: 3.10). This attitude perhaps in part reflects concerns that the unskilful adaptation can destroy much of the character of a building. However, the need for adaptive reuse of some buildings is generally accepted and if undertaken skilfully can enhance the qualities of a building.'

5.0 European Contrast

This section looks to compare European examples of redundant agricultural buildings with that of the East of England. In particular this area of study looks at the issues facing Germany and The Netherlands.

In order to understand the issues faced within The Netherlands and Germany it is important to establish the issues facing these countries agricultural industry. Henseler (2007, pp 1) identifies that

'Rural development at the Dutch-German border follows nationally different guidelines of regional planning and is underlaid by a different implementation of European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Main features of the current transformation in farming across Europe are not only farm diversification, multifunctionality of farming or a decreasing number of farms, but also increasing phenomenon's of redundancy and conversion of farm buildings. Both imply social-economic changes, regarding to the single farm business, they also concern the rural communities and regions causing immediate spatial impacts on rural settlement, on rural cultural landscape, on regional identity, on job market and income situation, thus on the entire local and regional development.

This statements reflects the same sentiments described by the CPRE and outlined within section 1.0 of this report, therefore it can be seen that these areas although having different policies, they face similar challenges.

The types of buildings, are identified by Henseler (2007, pp 7) within these two areas as having a regional specific shape and style.

Henseler (2007, pp 7) continues by setting out the differences between the German and Dutch legislation.

'In the Netherlands each province defines it's own "rules for Conversion" and makes its restraints by setting maximum surface area for reuse - mostly in combination with the duty to knock down a certain amount of buildings - or admit only certain pattern of utilization. In contrast Germany conversion follows other statutory regulations, especially based on the Federal Building code. Thereby we have a nationwide validated law to abide within. However, other regulations set certain limits for conversion for residential purposes as far as the single farmstead is concerned. But on the other hand, Germany is supporting conversion to a wider extent which includes financial support for nearly every purpose. Actually we have to consider conversion is mostly used for housing or for broader agricultural purposes (diversification, multifunctionality).

The German approach applies a policy that is consistent across the whole of the country, where in contrast the Dutch system is more provincial. The system within the UK has a national set of guidelines on the approach, primarily set out within PPS7, with Local Authorities setting out their own policies based on this main guidance, for example Essex County Council and Broadland District Council (See Appendix 1) as previously explained.

Van der Vaart (2005, pp 146) explains that public policy has strived and still strives to regulate the development of rural areas. Since 1960, the policy on rural areas in The Netherlands has designated the countryside to the main functions of agriculture, nature and recreation. This policy implied that conversion of redundant farm buildings to pure residential purpose or non-agrarian business was not permitted. Over the last 10 years, the policy has become less restrictive. This policy line started at the municipal level, trickled up to the provincial level and finally reached national level.

The formation of a policy that starts at a lower level and becomes a national policy is the reverse of legislation within England.

Although, the policies within The Netherlands are relatively new, Van der Vaart (2005, pp 147) poses the question of how is it possible that there are so many reused farm buildings when the policy has been so restrictive for such a long time till 1990?.....Even when the reuse of a farm building for either residence or some kind of economic activity was formally not allowed, hardly any farm house remained empty after the farmer had stopped farming and moved out. At the municipal level it turned out to be

difficult to control the change of redundant farm buildings.



Image of converted barn, Frisian, The Netherlands, reproduced from Van der Vaart, 2005, pp 147



Image of converted barn used for community functions, Spoughton, Suffolk, taken by Author



Image of barn for conversion, Nuremberg, Germany, reproduced from Barnsetc, 2010

Therefore, it appears that the strict controls within The Netherlands did not halt the conversion of the redundant farm building for residential purposes, with a number of unlawful conversions being undertaken prior to the change in policy in 1990.

In summary Van der Vaart (2005, pp 151) shows considerable comparison with the concerns of English Policy by stating that:

'Not only do the traditional farm buildings lose important features through redundancy and change of use: the changes to the buildings on functioning farms should not be underestimated either. For modern agriculture most of the traditional buildings are no longer functional, so when they are part of a working farm many of the traditional farm buildings and related structures may be either torn down or rebuilt.....In general, the reuse of farm buildings had a positive effect on their upkeep. The exterior of the traditional farm building was kept more or less intact, so their looks could be considered as the rural heritage. On the other hand, this study showed that due to the change of use the agricultural history of the interior was lost.'

6.0 Case Studies

This part of the report looks at two redundant agricultural buildings and some of the issues surrounding their conversion.

6.1 Case Study 1 – Grade II* Barn, Bentley, Suffolk

This redundant barn is located on the outskirts of Bentley, a small village in Suffolk. Bentley is in the Local Authority of Babergh District Council. The barn is Grade II* and on Babergh’s Buildings and English Heritages at Risk Register. The barn is described by Babergh (2010) as a large and fine early C16 barn. Timber-framed, with brick-nogged side walls and brick parapet end gables. The timber frame is in 15 bays, and has serpentine wall braces.....Some holes in roof; structural support to one gable end; walls in poor condition following demolition of abutting buildings.....Alternative uses are being investigated. This is a nationally important site for bats: 7 species use the building for roosting, including some as maternity roosts. Possibility of a Building Preservation trust taking on the

building and its bats. The demolition of these abutting buildings was granted in 2000 (Babergh, 2010a).

In 1999 (Babergh 2010b) an application for conversion to a residential unit was received by the Local Authority, an Appeal against this decision was lodged, but again refused.

At present Babergh District Council acknowledge this building as a one of importance and significance, however, there appears to be little progress between the owner and the Local Authority in order to find a suitable viable future for the building.



Image of gable end of redundant barn, Bentley, Suffolk, taken by Author

The former refusal and subsequent appeal by the applicant, appears to have led to little progress and resistance between the parties. This position highlights the need for close working and understanding by all stake holders to ensure progress and a future for the buildings.



Image of redundant barn, Bentley, Suffolk, taken by Author



Images of proposed barn conversion, Broxted, Essex, taken by Ian Abrams

SUFFOLK		
BABERGH		
	SITE NAME	Barn north east of Bentley Hall, Bentley Hall Road, Bentley
	PRIORITY	A (A)
	DESIGNATION	Listed Grade II*
	CONDITION	Poor
	OCCUPANCY	Vacant
		OWNERSHIP: Private
Built C15, timber framed and brick nogging. It is redundant and only suitable for a very low-key use as it is structurally unstable and water is penetrating the walls in places, accelerating decay of its structure. English Heritage is involved in discussions to secure the future of the barn. An options appraisal and condition survey is being undertaken.		
Contact: Clare Campbell 01223 582738		

Extract from Heritage at Risk Register showing details of Case Study 1, English Heritage, 2008

6.2 Case Study 2 – Grade II*Barn, Broxted, Essex

Carpenter (2010, pp 5) describes the barn as a Grade II*, exceptionally long timber framed and isled structure of 15th Century origins, comprising 9 bays. It is timber framed and weather boarded with a red plain tiled half hiped roof. There is an arch bracing to tie beams, a crown post roof, with down bracing to the tie beams, on alternative sides. There are jowled main posts, braced to the tie beams. Scarfs are face halved and tabled, laterally keyed, with two face pegs and one bladed abutment. There are two midstreys on the western side.

The building is one of a number of grouped buildings, and described by Carpenter (2010, pp 5) as important whether individually or as a group. This group comprises of two Grade II* and two Grade II Listed Buildings.

Carpenter (2010, pp 6) further explains that in 2006 Planning Permission and Listed Building consent was granted for the conversion of the barn to 8 bed and breakfast rooms, this was granted subject to conditions, including archaeological conditions, however the Permission has not been implanted. This approved application showed provision for 4 bedrooms and bathrooms at each end of the barn, provided on a mezzanine first floor. The ground floor was left open and unaltered, accommodating ancillary bed and breakfast accommodation, such as a dining area, sitting area and servery. The proposals for this conversion can be found in Appendix B.

The current owners already have an existing bed and breakfast business adjacent to the barn, however, have expressed difficulties in maintaining high occupancy rates for the existing accommodation, subsequently the previous consent has not been implemented and has lapsed.

A new application has been submitted for the conversion to one residential unit, Carpenter (2010, pp 7) explains that this conversion provided a means of finding an economically viable use for the barn. The current owner is unable to afford maintaining the barn in nil use.

The revised proposal provides a similar layout to the already approved scheme, with the insertion of two mezzanine floors at either end, providing 6 bedrooms and bathrooms to the first floor. The proposal would leave 5 bays of the 9 open to the void.

Full plans for the proposal can be found in Appendix C, these have been prepared by Ian Abrams (2010).

Current legislation requires economic reuse to be the preferred option for any approval for the change of use of a residential building, however this proposal highlights that if a skilful design is applied and certain criteria met that the proposal for the change of use to residential can offer the same benefits and draw backs of an economic change of use.



7.0 Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that the challenges facing agricultural buildings is diverse, ranging from changes in farming techniques to the financial restrictions imposed from a competitive market. European Policies impose challenges and encourage diversification and multifunctionality. As a result of these issues the challenge faced by farm buildings is complex and diverse. These challenges and concerns are not solely limited to the East of England or just the UK, but appear to have an effect within Europe, where this report has investigated some of the issues facing The Netherlands and Germany. As a result the key issues faced can be summarised by the following key items:

- Retention of the historic fabric when a building undergoes adaptive reuse, either for Agricultural, Economic or Residential purposes
- The need for skilful design to ensure that this fabric is retained when conversion is proposed. This is particularly important and highlighted when this use is residential.
- When considering developments within the rural landscape this should be assessed under the following criteria:
 - i. Rural Employments
 - ii. Rural Housing
 - iii. Farm income support
 - iv. Preserving traditional and historic buildings
 - v. Encouraging farm diversification
- Where a redundant building is maintained, this should be monitored to ensure that this maintenance is ongoing and deterioration does not occur.
- Proposals for conversion should not seek to domesticate the agricultural building and ensure that its original function is still dominant within the styling.



Image of group of redundant barns forming a small courtyard, Sproughton, Suffolk, taken by Author



Image of reused barn used for small commercial units, Washbrook,, Suffolk, taken by Author

8.0 Recommendations

As a result of this short study and report it is recommended that the following elements are considered when appraising the options for redundant agricultural buildings:

- It is understood that the rural landscape is typified by it agricultural buildings, it is also understood that where possible the agricultural building should be retained for the purpose that it was originally intended, thus causing the least disruption to the historic fabric. Schemes to support these principles should be encouraged.
- Where a building is redundant and maintained, again, support and monitoring should be introduced to prevent the building falling into a state of disrepair.
- Where conversion is a viable option, the end use should ensure the agricultural features are retained where feasible. This should be supported, as it is presently, by an overriding national legislation and policy and supported by local policies that are specifically tailored to buildings and issues typical to that region and area.
- All designs should be well considered and justified to ensure the integrity of the Heritage Assets whilst also ensuring the long term viability of the building. This isn't to say that residential conversion should be a last resort, but it should seek to work with the existing features, rather than remove or adjust them.

9.0 Reflection

As already discussed under my Amenity Societies report the subject of Legislation is one that I have been looking forward to. I have enjoyed the research and investigations into what has lead to the situation that we see today with redundant agricultural buildings.

I have found this subject to be very broad and although I have limited my research to the East of England, I feel that I have been limited by the word count equivalent and by a 10 minute presentation. I would have liked to have explored this subject in greater detail and been able to show this with a slightly longer presentation. However, it could be argued that meeting this criteria is all part of the challenge!

I would have liked to have been able to research some of the financial incentives and restrictions that are meet within this subject, however, this is potentially something for another research subject.

I have enjoyed the European comparison within this module and it has allowed me to see that the challenges faced within England are also seen within areas of Europe.

In summary I have found this element of the module challenging but exciting and the elements researched will definitely be taken forward into my professional career.



Image of former Apple processing buildings, converted to commercial premises, Washbrook, Suffolk, taken by Author

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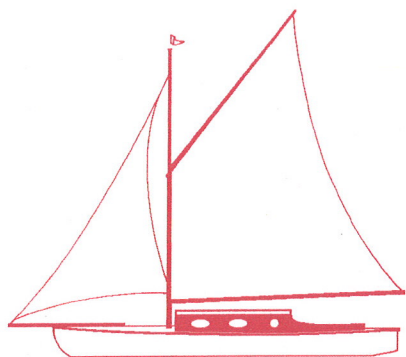
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Image of group of barns converted to residential use, Harkstead, Suffolk, taken by Author

APPENDIX A

See 4.0 Policies for Agricultural Buildings, Page 4
Broadland District Council Advice Note 16; The Conversion of
Traditional Farm Buildings



ADVICE NOTES

Broadland District Council Planning Information

No. 16

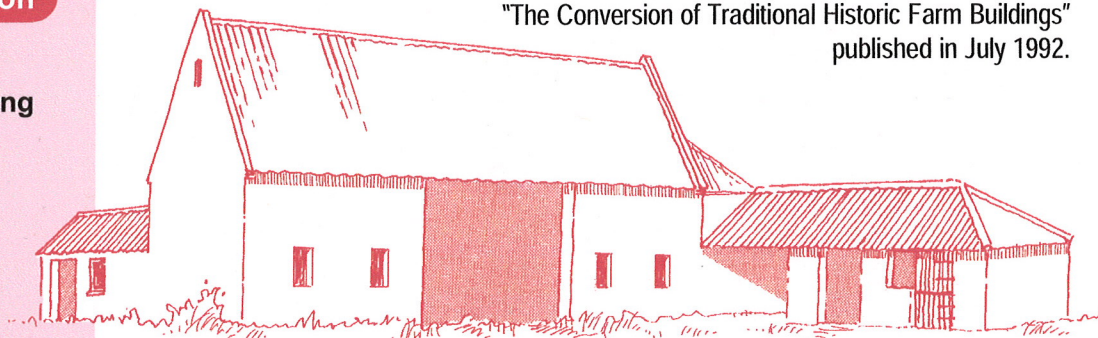
The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings

(Technical Advice Note)

Introduction

This Technical Advice Note should be read in conjunction with the Council's Policy Note 6 "The Conversion of Traditional Historic Farm Buildings" published in July 1992.

Existing

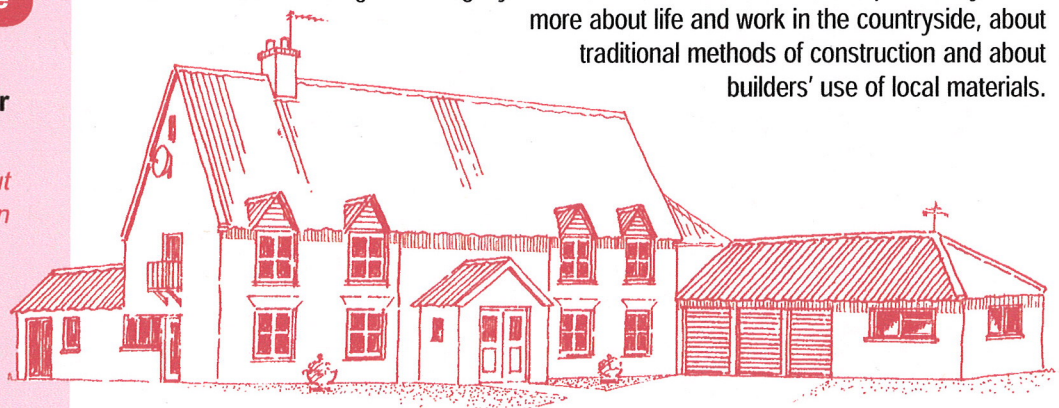


Purpose

Traditional Farm Buildings are a legacy of our rural architectural and social past. They tell us more about life and work in the countryside, about traditional methods of construction and about builders' use of local materials.

After

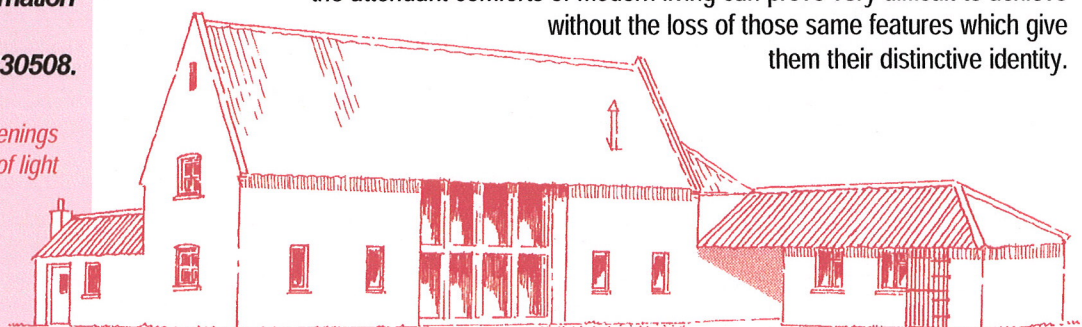
Chimneys and dormers out of keeping - over fenestration



Characteristics

If you require further information about this leaflet please telephone Norwich 430508.

Wagon door openings provide majority of light



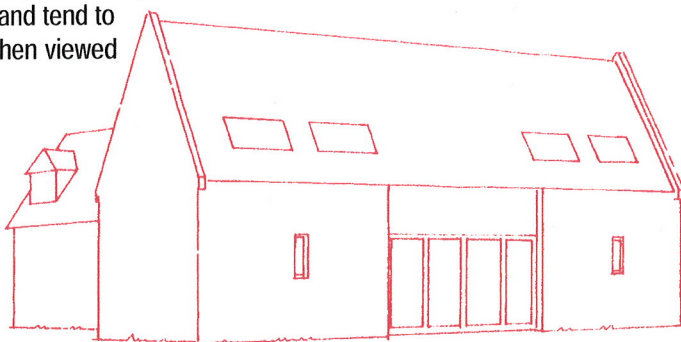
Conversions

Roofs



Roofspace is often the single most important visual feature of farm buildings. They are usually large unbroken slopes and tend to dominate elevations when viewed from a distance.

Roof lights are visually disruptive.



The insertion of roof lights and particularly dormers is alien and tends to disrupt simple lines.

When additional light is necessary preference will be given to the creation of new wall openings which can be less visually damaging. An alternative may be a suitable opening in the gable end and if this is not possible limited exception may be considered on less prominent roof slopes. In this case roof lights should be of a 1 traditional cast iron pattern and flush fitting.



Roof trusses should remain unaltered and when necessary be repaired using traditional methods of joinery. All or at least part of the roof structure should remain visible from the inside. Roof trusses and other internal timber work

should be cleaned gently by hand (*not sand blasted*), and should not be stained or sealed.



Walls

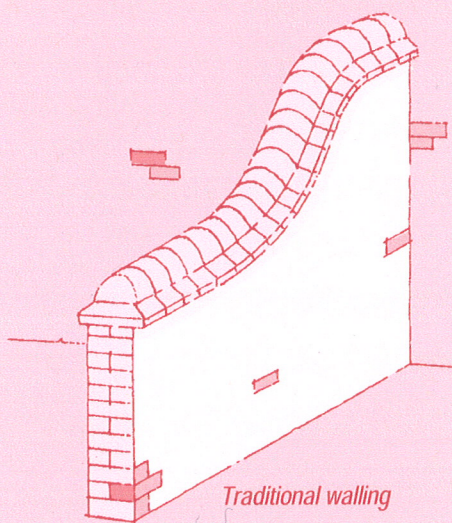
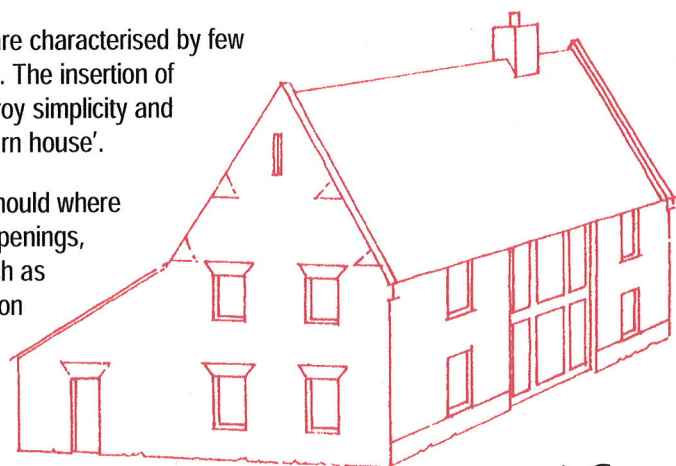
Traditional farm buildings are characterised by few window and door openings. The insertion of multiple windows can destroy simplicity and create the all too familiar 'barn house'.

New windows and doors should where possible respect existing openings, making use of features such as honeycomb vents, ventilation slots and stable doors.

Additional fenestration should follow the scale and proportion of existing openings, but above all wall space should continue to dominate.

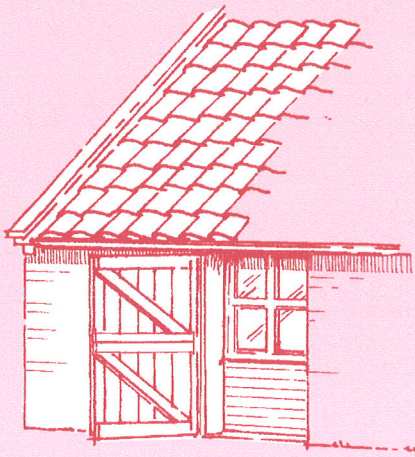
Large wagon door openings provide the most obvious opportunity to gain natural light, while recessing frames can help achieve side light benefits as well as appearing less conspicuous.

Rebuilding work should be kept to a minimum. When necessary repairs should be carried out using traditional methods and materials. For instance care should be taken when choosing new bricks to ensure that they are compatible in colour and texture with existing. Similarly reclaimed material should be suitable for its proposed new use.



Traditional walling

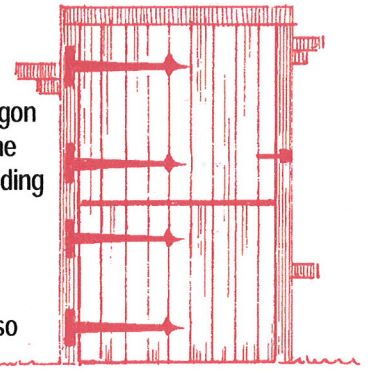
Materials



Scarfed timber repairs are preferable to complete replacement. Unless the natural appearance of oak is being retained, then dark stained timber is more traditional than the more recent fashion of light or golden brown wood finishes.

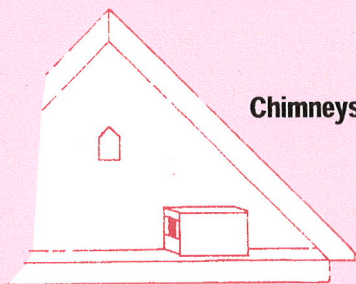
The retention of existing shutters, stable doors and wagon doors and ironmongery is to be encouraged and can help the new conversion retain its external simplicity as well as providing added security.

The retention of thatch and use of reclaimed pantiles will also be considered favourably.



Mortar Mixes

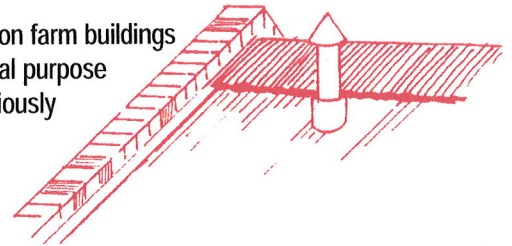
Mortar mixes should be in line to match as closely as possible the colour and flexibility of original work. Cement mortar can be both damaging and visually obtrusive. Pointing should where possible resemble existing - 'stick' and flush pointing are common.



Chimneys

The provision of nesting boxes for owls in the roof space is recommended

Chimney stacks are not commonly found on farm buildings with perhaps the exception of some special purpose outbuildings. Their domestic form can seriously damage the unpretentious agricultural appearance and they will therefore be resisted. As an alternative the use of small metal flues located away from the ridge on less prominent elevations will be preferred.



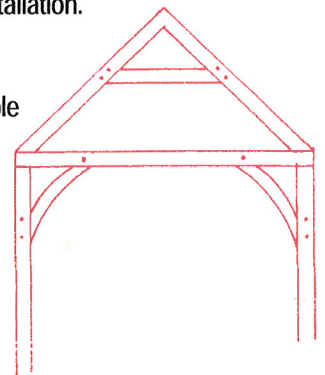
Heating

Heating systems can have an affect upon both the exterior and interior of a building. Careful considerations should be given to the installation of the most compatible type.

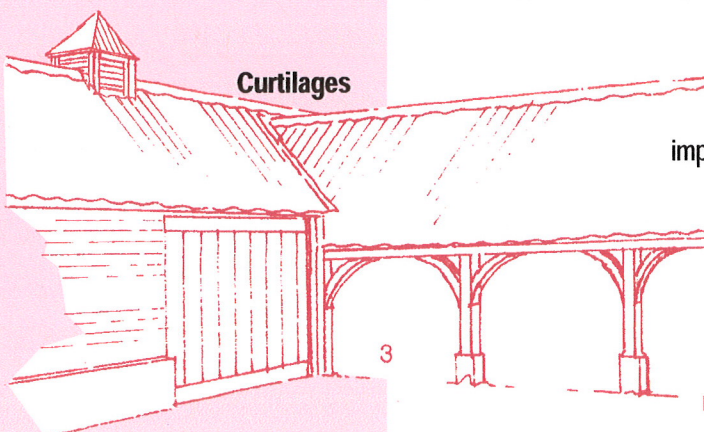
Conventional high temperature central heating may cause drying out and subsequent movement in timber. Underfloor low temperature piped systems can prove more friendly and less obtrusive. Specialist advice should be sought before installation.

Internal Space

Existing internal space should be disrupted as little as possible in order to retain the original character of the building. Sub-division when necessary should follow the form and layout of the original building, retaining existing features where possible with at least part of the roof structure remaining visible from ground level. Open plan designs will also help the penetration of natural light.



Curtilages



Farmsteads usually consist of a number of planning buildings which fit together in a practical and convenient pattern. It is important that these buildings are preserved as near as possible to their original form without alien additions or extensions, in their open setting and without unnecessary sub division. Where there is a need to define private space this can be achieved with indigenous boundary hedging or traditional walling.

Motor Vehicles

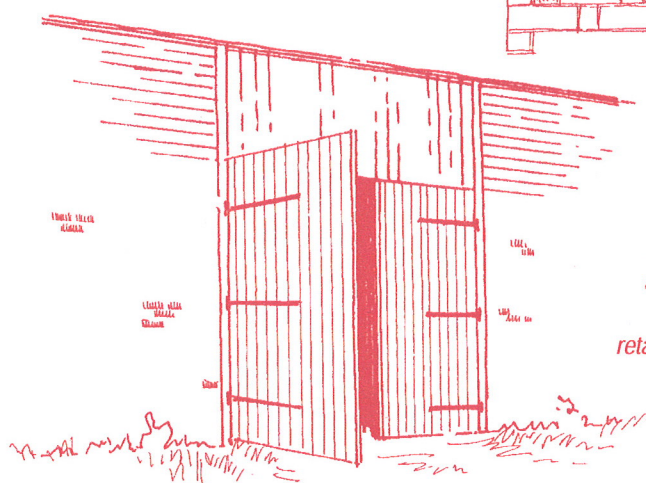
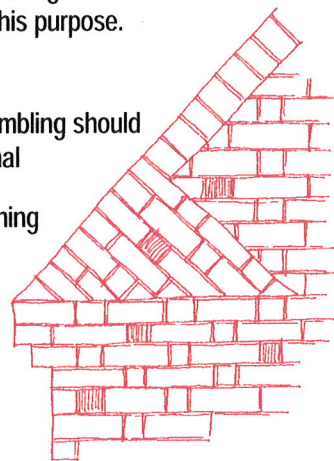
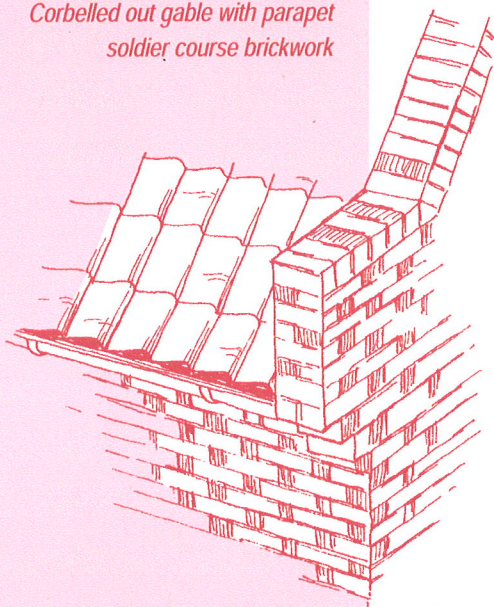
Motor cars detract from the setting of farm buildings making their appearance domestic. New garage buildings will however be discouraged when there are suitable outbuildings, such as open cart sheds which can serve this purpose.

Detailing

Existing detail such as parapet walls, copings or brick tumbling should be retained, repaired or rebuilt when necessary as original

Existing window and door patterns are important in retaining authenticity.

*Corbelled out gable with parapet
soldier course brickwork*



*Existing windows
and door patterns
are important in
retaining authenticity*

Structural Survey

A Structural Survey Report should include

- a general description of each element of the building/s.
- condition of the structure including, walls, joinery, roof structure, roof covering and foundations.
- assessment of repairs needed.
- assessment of new work needed to enable conversion including any work necessary to meet building regulation requirement e.g. thermal insulation, fire proofing, light and ventilation.

Rainwater Goods

The absence of rainwater goods on some farm buildings is not uncommon, particularly on thatched buildings where there is a large eaves overhang.

When guttering and downpipes are present they are traditionally of metal (cast iron) and mounted on stirrup brackets rather than direct to fascia boards, this practice will be encouraged.

Building Regulations

In addition to planning permission (or listed building consent) conversion work will normally need to comply with current Building Regulations.

Schemes which are prepared in the interest of aesthetics or preserving architectural and historic character may not necessarily meet the requirement of Building Regulations.

Vice versa changes to meet Building Regulations may result in disruptive or unacceptable levels of change to historic fabric.

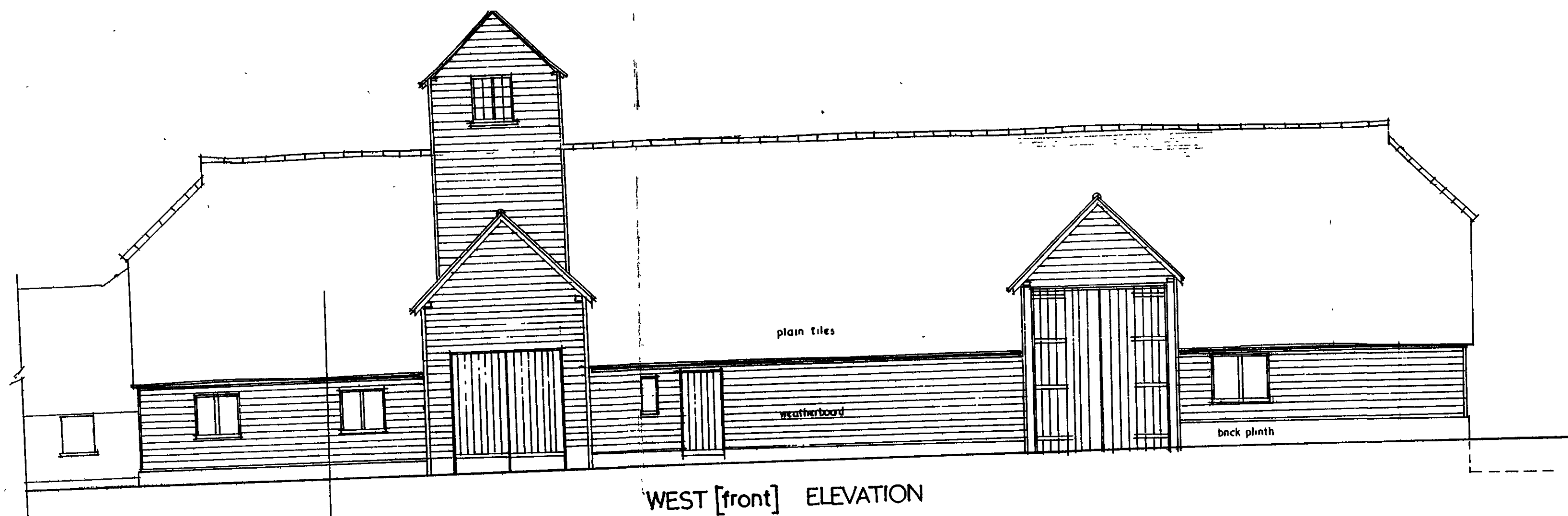
Applicants are therefore strongly advised to seek advice at an early stage from the Building Control Section, in order to seek compatibility between these different legislative requirements.

APPENDIX B

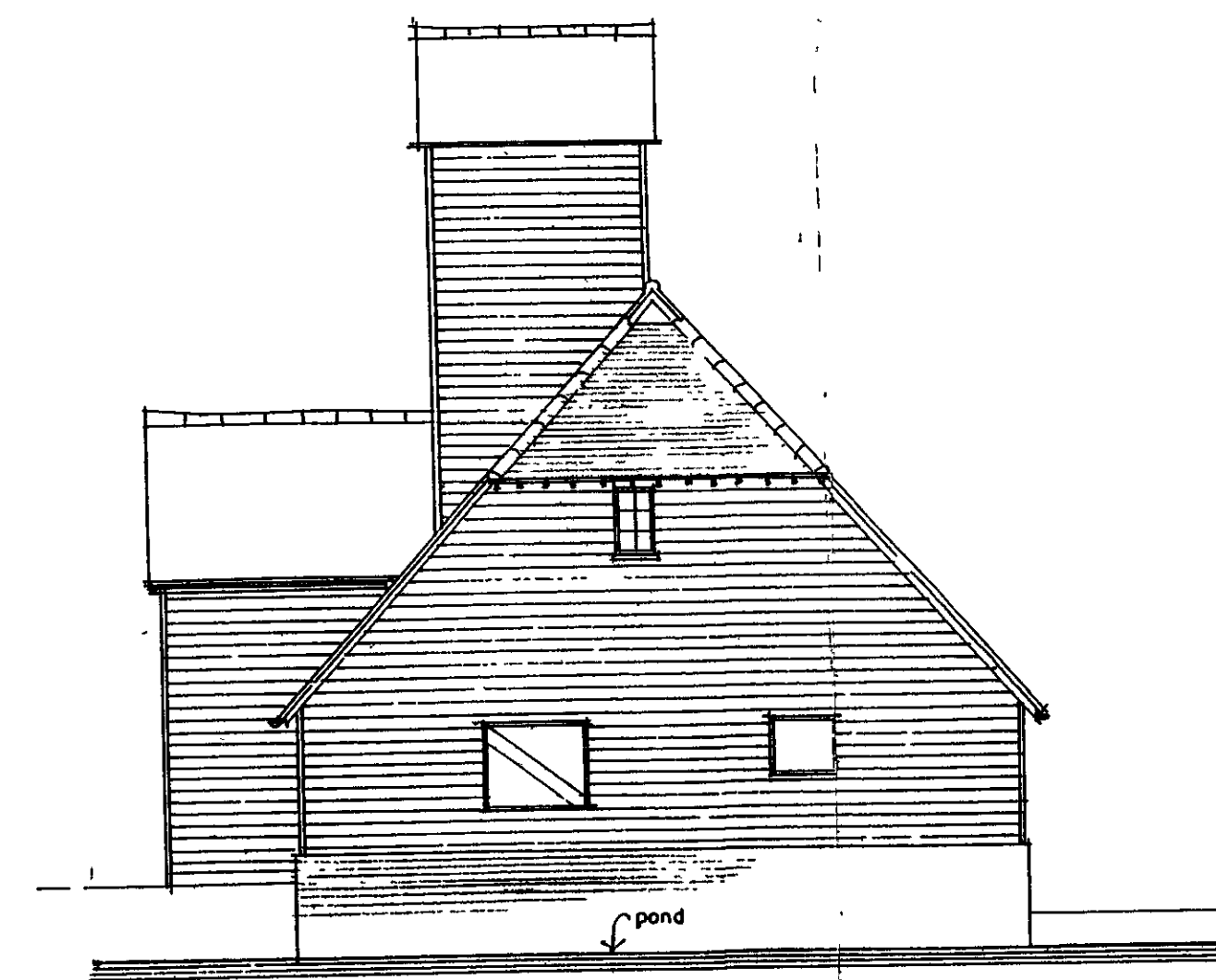
Plans for Case Study 2—Bed and Breakfast Conversion

See Section 6.2, Page 6, Plans reproduced from Uttlesford District Council, 2006

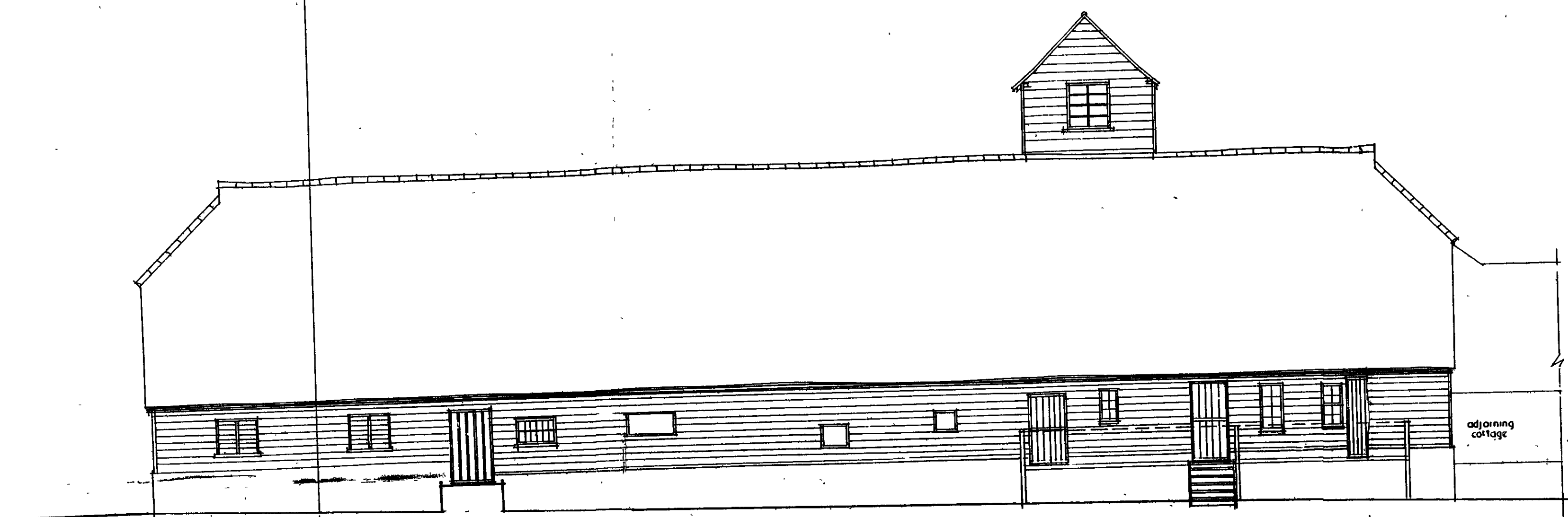
UTT/0552/10/LB
UTT/0551/10/FUL



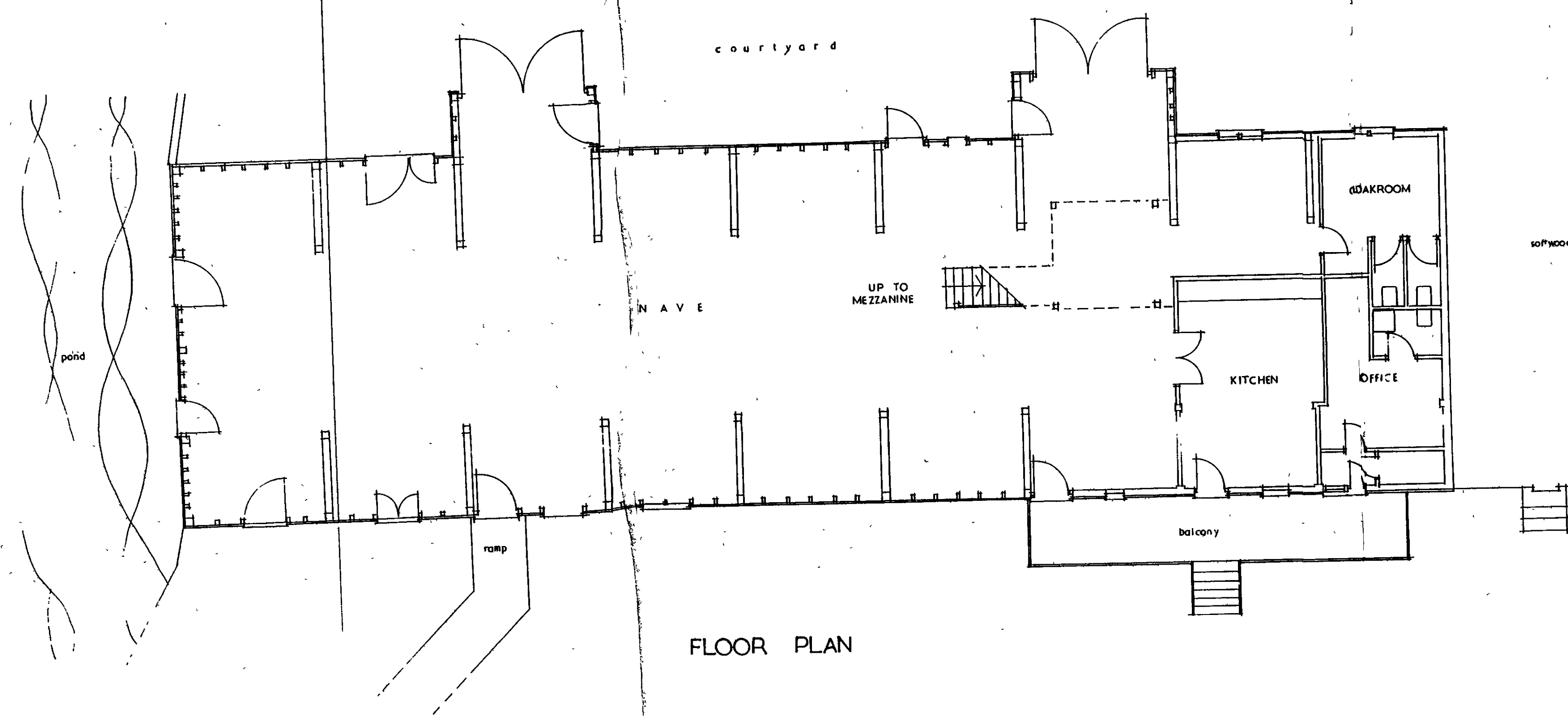
WEST [front] ELEVATION



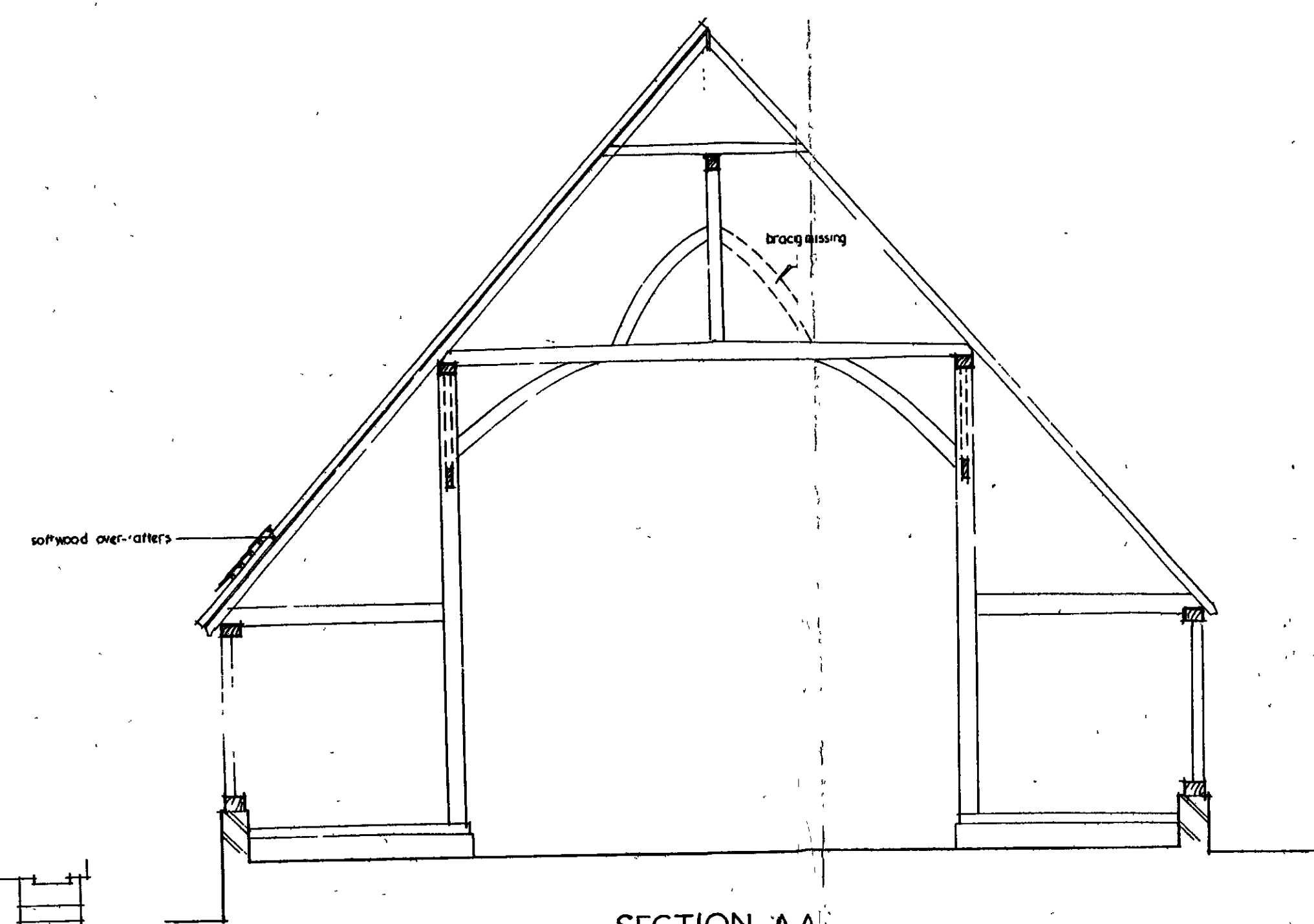
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN



SECTION A-A

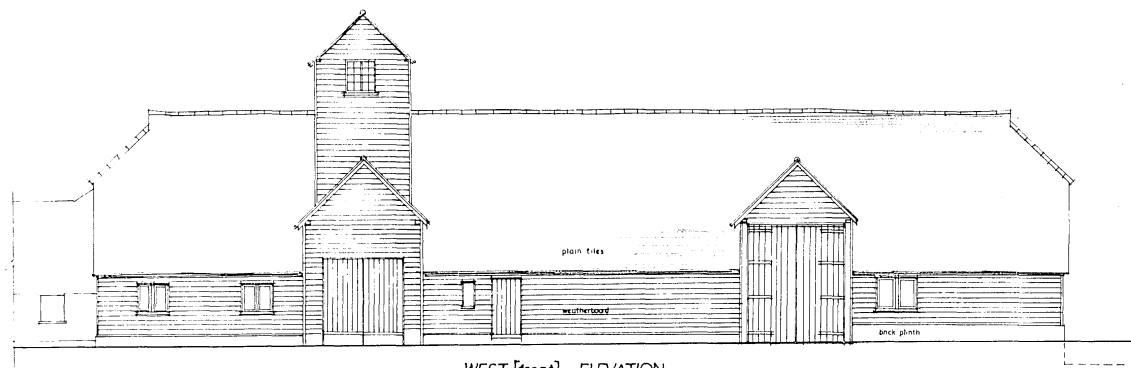
ANDREW KELLOCK ARCHITECTS
THE OLD WHITE HART
BROOK STREET
GREAT BARDFIELD
ESSEX
CM7 4AQ
PHONE / FAX 01371 811333

PROJECT
The Barn
Church Hall Farm
Church End Broxted
Essex
MAIN TITLE
Plan Elevations & Section
AS EXISTING

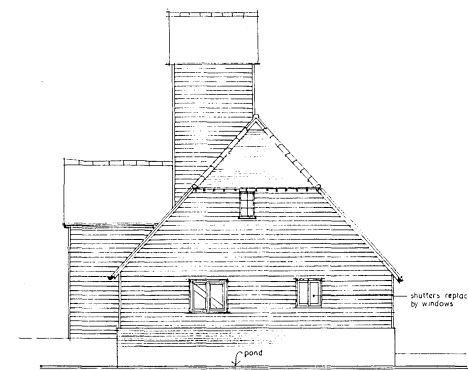
DATE 10-05 SCALE 1:100
JOB NO 257 DWS NO PI

WT/1947/05/FUL
WT/1948/05/LB

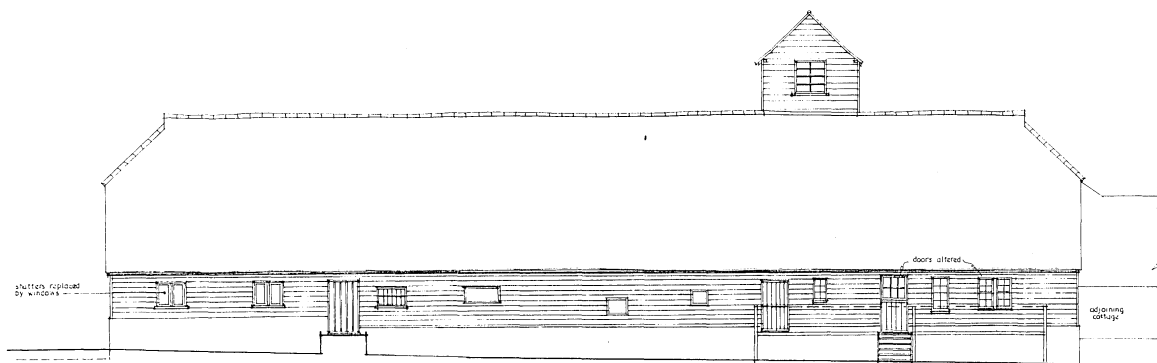
UTTERLEY
10-05-05



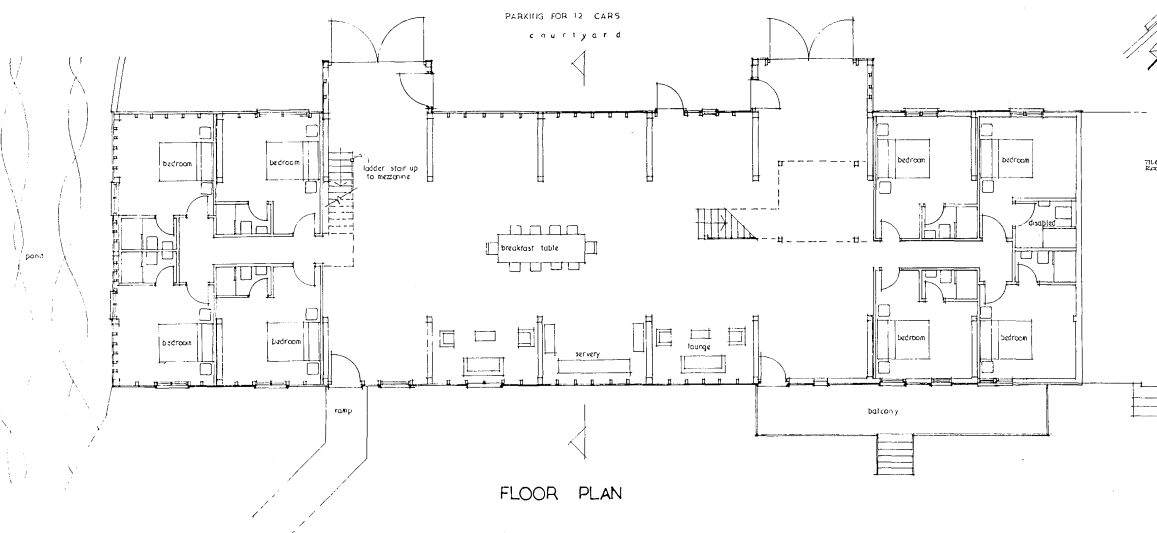
WEST [front] ELEVATION



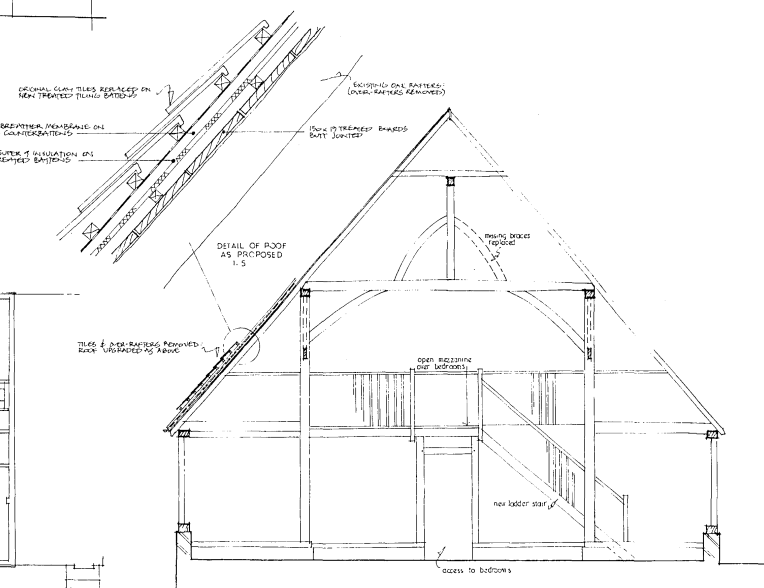
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN



SECTION AA

ARCHITECT
THE OLD WHITE HART
8000 STREET
GREAT BADDOW
ESSEX
CM9 4AD
Phone: 01274 431331

Job Title
The Barn
Church Hall Farm
Church End Broxted
Essex

Drawn By
Plan Elevations & Section
AS PROPOSED

Date
10-05

Scale
1:100

Job No
227

Sheet
P2

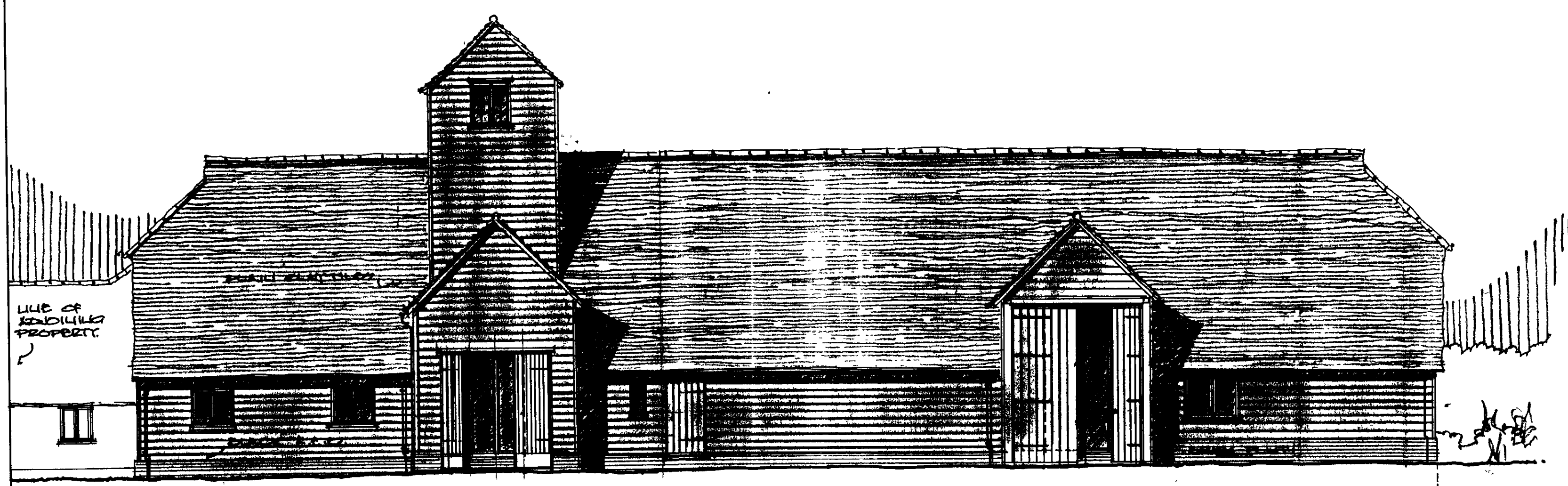
APPENDIX C

Plans for Case Study 2—Residential Conversion

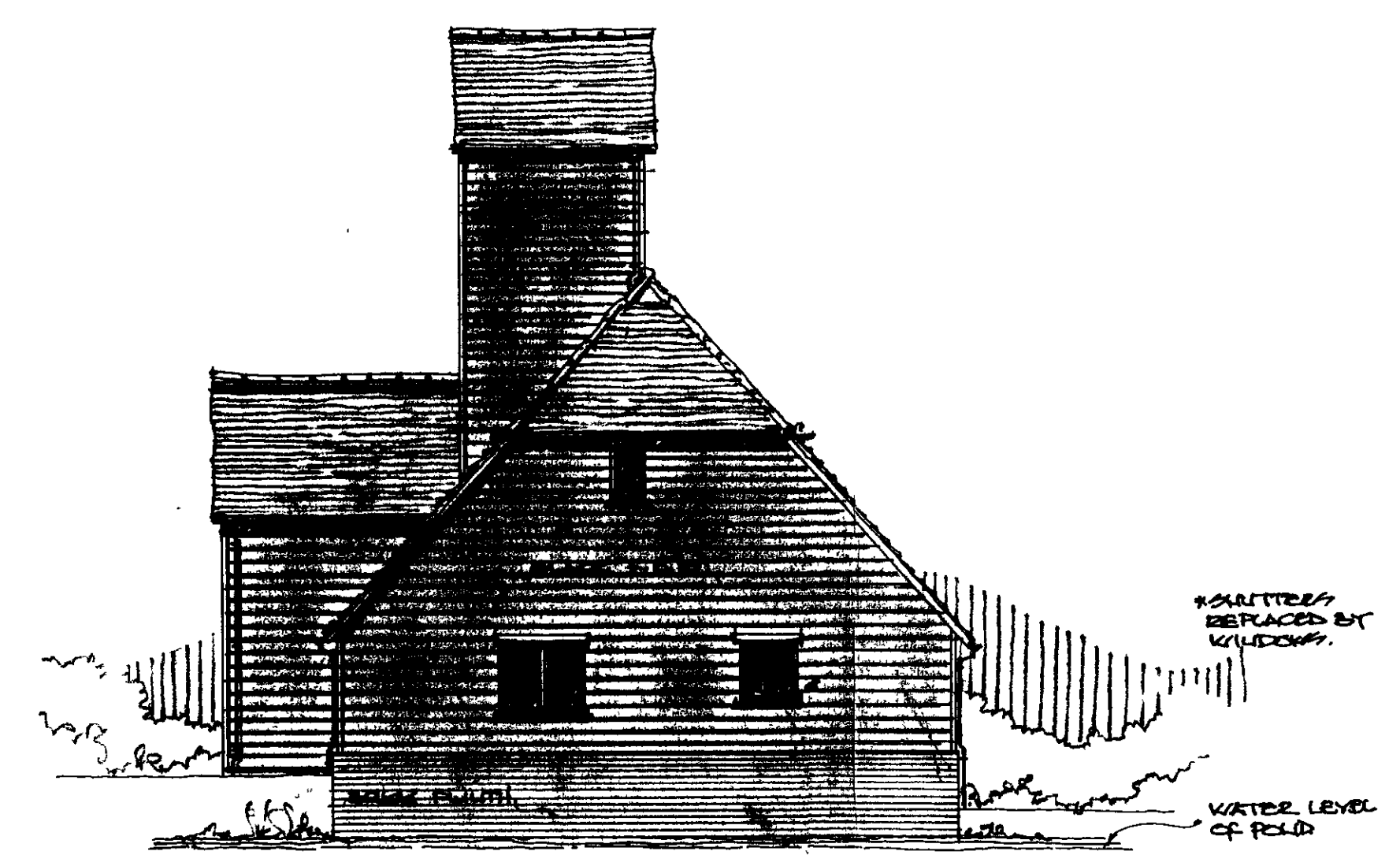
See Section 6.2, Page 6, Plans reproduced from Ian Abrams, 2010

DO NOT SCALE from this drawing.
 Contractors must verify all dimensions
 on site before setting out, commencing
 work, or making any shop drawings.
 DT/0552/10/LB
 DT/0551/10/FUL

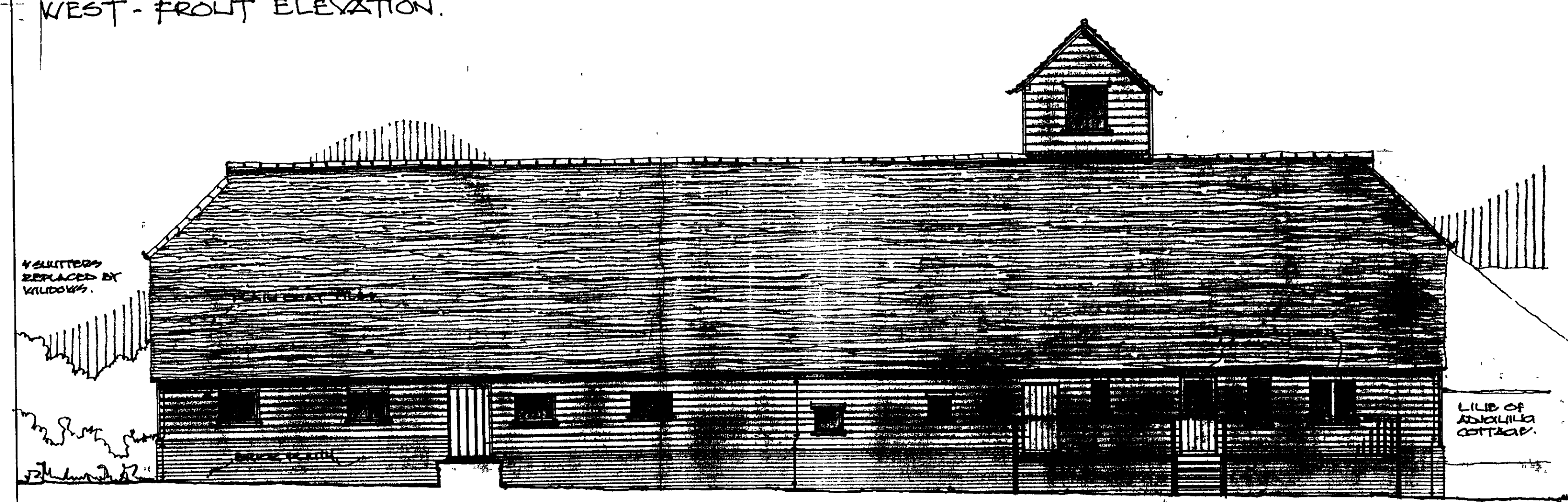
Notes



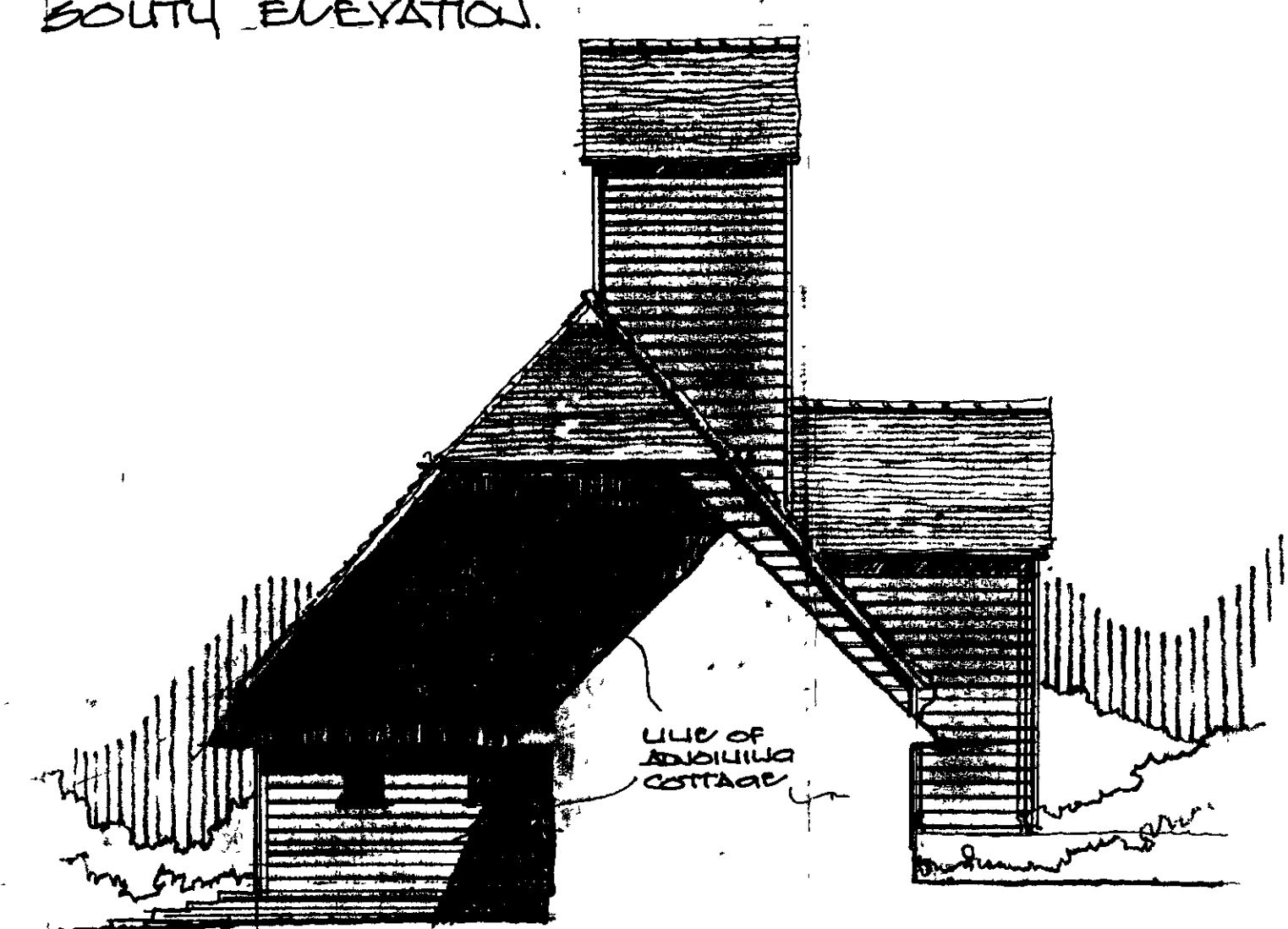
WEST-FRONT ELEVATION.



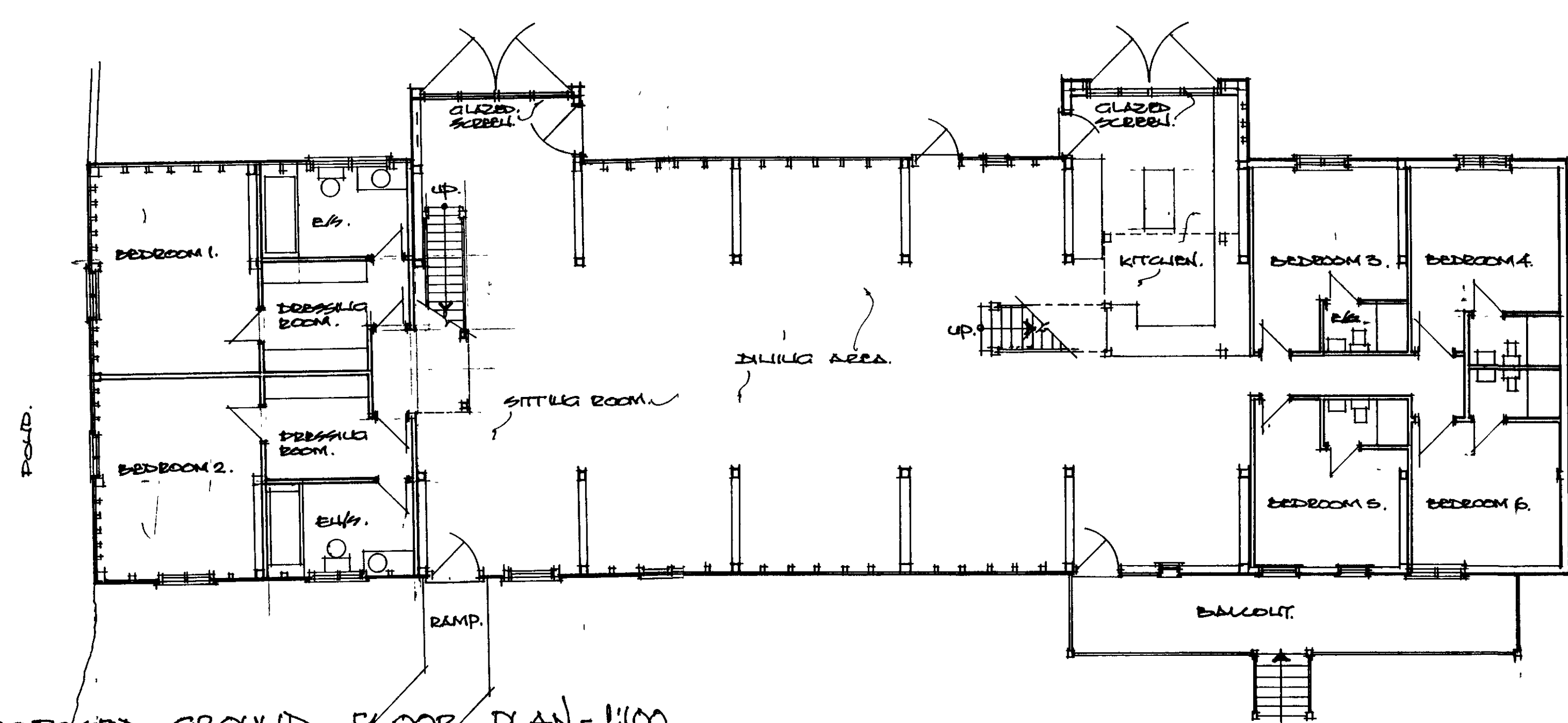
SOUTH ELEVATION.



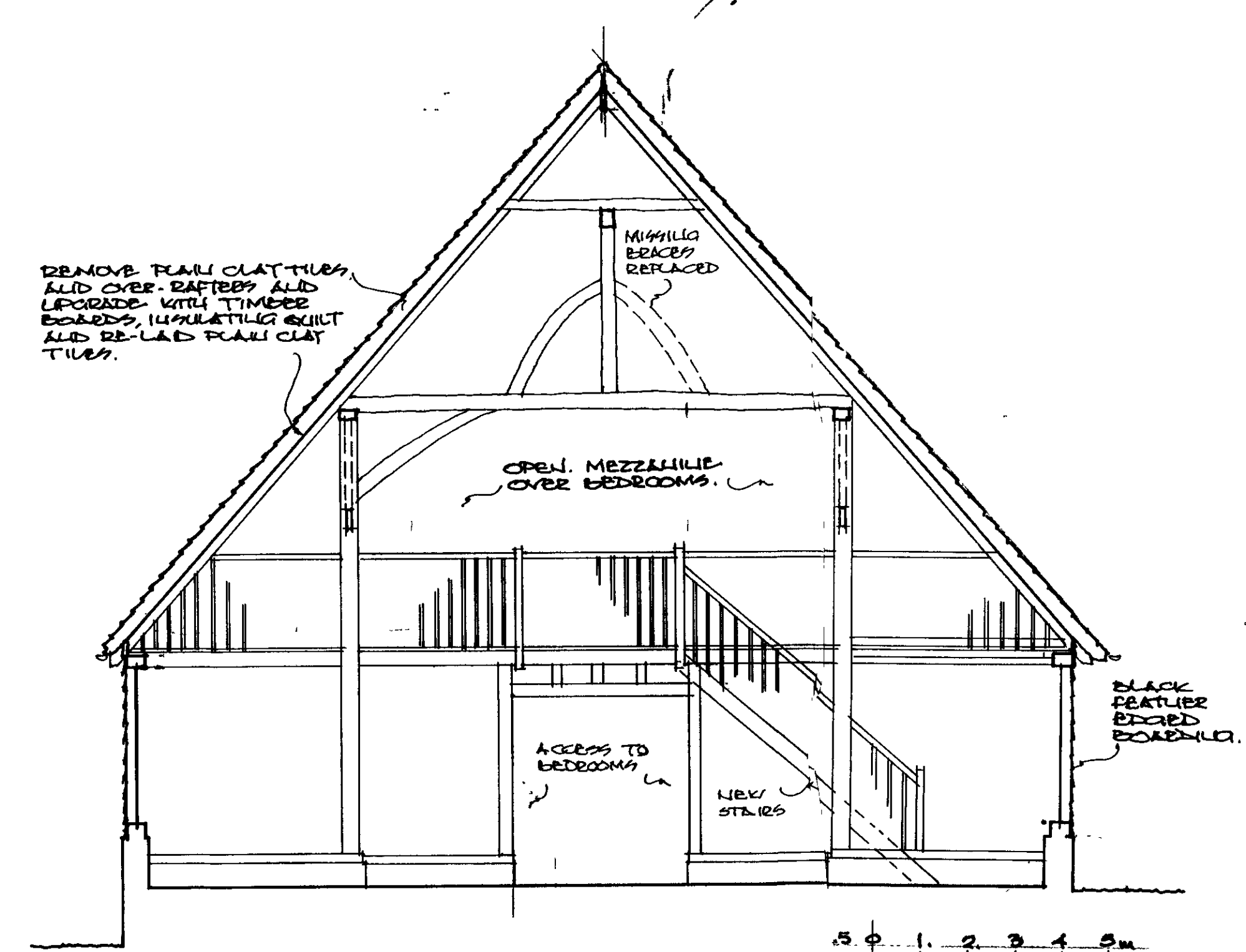
EAST ELEVATION.



NORTH ELEVATION.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN - 1:100.



TYPICAL SECTION - SCALE 1:50.

Rev	Description	Date

IAN ABRAMS
 CHARTERED ARCHITECT

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 TELEPHONE: 01793 543 533
 FAX: 01793 543 533
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 WWW.IAN-ABRAMS-ARCHITECTS.CO.UK

Client
JAM & TONY WILDMAN.

Job title
**CHURCH HALL FARM,
 CHURCH ELD.,
 BROXTON,
 ESSEX, CM6, 2BZ.**

Drawing title
**PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
 GROUND FLOOR PLAN &
 TYPICAL SECTION.**

Scale	Date	Drawn
1:100/50	MAR 10	I.A.A.
Drawing No	Rev	
58610.01.		

APPENDIX D

Electronic Copy of Presentation and Handout