

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR LEIGHWOOD  
HOUSE BARN, NORTH CHAILEY.  
ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES LEWES  
Report number: ASL 50-15  
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Archaeological Impact Statement has been prepared for the owner Mr Skraba, in consultation with Sussex Architectural Services, who were instructed to prepare a scheme for renovations and alterations within the barn. As a result of which in January 2015, Archaeology Services, Lewes (ASL) were commissioned to prepare an Archaeological Impact Assessment for proposed alterations prior to planning application and this has been prepared by Lisa Jayne Fisher, Principal Archaeologist at ASL.
- 1.2 The building covered by this report is known as Leighwood House barn, and is located at Leighwood Farm, North Chailey, East Sussex, BN8 4DT (Fig.1 and 2 ) centred on TQ 3743 2126.
- 1.3 It is not a designated listed building and does not lie in the Weald AONB.
- 1.4 At present the building is used as a traditional barn and has been subjected to renovations in very recent years, namely to make the building water tight. The East Sussex Heritage Environment Records (HER) contains little information about the barn, but it is thought to date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it appears on first edition OS maps. In addition to the conversion, a proposed 2 bay Sussex style garage is to be built and this impact assessment covers this area as well.
- 1.5 The overall objectives of this Historic Building Record are to give guidance on how the significance can be retained, reinforced or enhanced for any future use, repair, alteration or development as well as giving a basic overview of the date, sequence of construction, and principal architectural features of the building. With this in mind, this should not be taken as a definitive, archaeological record.
- 1.6 The specific aims of this study are to inform the owners who may want to know more about the history of their property as well as aiding commissioned professionals, such as planners, surveyors and architects whose job it is to conserve and protect the building whilst enabling it to be carefully adapted for contemporary living. Finally this serves as a record for the future; to inform academics and to create a long-term, permanent record for posterity.
- 1.7 This assessment is my considered view based upon the recent survey and the discussions during the site meeting on 19/12/14 and the survey on 16/1/15 aided by Kellie Irwin, as well as the notes made at that time in discussion with all parties and during a follow up visit on 28/1/15. This record is based upon my knowledge and experience of such buildings and is intended as advice. Many of the views which inform the conservation of historical buildings are to some extent subjective – particularly with regards to more recent extensions and alterations – therefore I would like to state that there is no guarantee that the opinions expressed within this document will be endorsed by the local planning authority.

- 1.8 Methodology. The methods employed to produce this study have been non-intrusive and based on a careful, measured and visual study of the interior, including roof voids as well as the exterior of the building.
- 1.9 Drawing conventions used:

	Surviving Timber-Framed Wall
	Surviving Brick or Stone Wall
	Features evidenced but destroyed or masked from view
	Beam or feature immediately overhead
	Conjectural or very approximate
	Structural timber
	Details unknown or doubtful

- 1.10 Other conventions used include doors only shown in plan where known which explains why some rooms have no visible means of access in some plans as they are not known. Sections will show only features cut by the cutting line only, with the exception of wallplates, rafters, and the roof line.

## 2.0 Location and historical background

- 2.1 Leighwood House barn is just outside the village of Scaynes Hill to the west and North Chailey to the east. It is set wholly within the former working farmyard of Leighwood Farm, south east of the main house entrance and lying on a flat area where the land falls away to the north-east. An Archaeological Notification Area has been defined for the farm due to the potential remains of a medieval and post-medieval farmstead although records searched at ESRO do not contain any estate maps or documentary evidence to back this up as yet. Leighwood House was built in approximately 1956 and lies approximately 5m to the north-west of the barn. It is likely that the complex stopped functioning as a farm in approximately 1970's when the previous owners are thought to have purchased the land and the current owner bought the property in 1999, which included the barn and other outbuildings. A steel and asbestos roofed open sided hay barn was erected adjacent to the main barn (south east) in modern times, probably within the last fifty years or so which is probably just before the farm was sold on and ceased to be a working enterprise. A square outbuilding exists approximately 10m south east of the barn which also shows up on the tithe map but is not included in this impact assessment.
- 2.2 An Ordnance Survey (OS) Unions map from 1803 shows no buildings on the site but a small patch of woodland. A later OS map from the first series (5) dating to 1813 still shows just the same parcel of woodland. The first plan of a barn is shown on a tithe map dating to 1840

(ESRO TD/E136) as a building with an adjacent structure abutting the barn to the north east side creating an L-shaped footprint.

- 2.3 The first edition OS map from 1874 shows the barn with an outshot now added to the front with the main barn footprint still on the same footprint as the current barn. A later OS map from 1890 shows the main barn but without the outshot. A later edition from 1930's shows an open fronted attachment which is possibly a hay storage area. It is clear that this outshot has changed over the years and it is likely that the current structure has been re-built at some point after 1910.
- 2.3 The underlying geology of the site is fairly complex with a wide ranging confluence of different beds, mainly Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand with pockets of other geologies lying very close by at 20-40m away which includes; Upper Grinstead Clay (north east), Horsham Stone (west), Weald Clay Formation (north), Ardingly Sandstone (north east) and finally Cuckfield stone (north east). (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The barn lies at an approximate height of 47.08m above sea level.
- 2.4 The barn has never been listed or surveyed and this report will now complete the details for this site, including the preparation of up-to-date drawings and photographs prior to development if permitted.
- 2.5 This impact statement assesses the effect that the proposed development will have upon the historical fabric and the archaeology of this standing building. It suggests strategies for minimizing impact upon features which are considered to be of historical/archaeological significance.

### **3.0 Overview of the building**

- 3.1 The footprint of the barn runs SW-NE and for ease of description this will now be referred to as running east to west with the 'front' of the building assumed to be the south elevation.
- 3.2 The barn is a standard three bay barn with a tiled, half hipped roof and an original brick built animal stall floor in the western bay. The barn originally had two full height doors at present only one full height door is in place with the other partially blocked with a smaller door inserted. The building is constructed mostly from purpose cut timbers with occasional modern replacements, mostly studs and struts (see plates 4,9,10 and 13). The dating of the barn is based on both the structural style of the timbers as well as architectural elements such as types of principal posts and the scantling of the timbers used in the construction. Based on such observations, the barn can be dated fairly confidently to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of this structure on this site remains and this is aligned parallel with what would have been the original farm entrance.
- 3.3 At some point in the 20th century the roof had some rafters replaced. In more recent years the original cart entrance in the south elevation was reduced in size as well as two infill panels in the west and south elevations being replaced with new studs and struts. The barn was re-clad in new weatherboarding which has been painted black and it is likely that repairs to the brick plinths and replacement of rotted studs and struts also took place at the same time.

### **4.0 Detailed architectural description**

- 4.1 Layout

The barn is a traditional three bay floor plan which is likely to have once had a threshing floor in the middle bay as evidenced by the construction of two full height wagon ways in the south and north elevations. The threshing bay measures 3.10m wide and is flanked on both sides by single bay crop storage areas, measuring 3.02m in the west bay and 2.71m in the east bay. There is no evidence for a first floor hay loft.

#### 4.2 Wall design

All four elevations are of standard timber frame construction utilizing timbers with consistent styles and scantlings with interrupted raking struts, studs and side/end girts to all elevations and intermediate posts in the side elevations at truss A and D. Interestingly the raking struts do not run from the principal posts but from the first set of studs at every corner and so act more like supports upon which to nail the weatherboards rather than true supporting struts. All principal posts are 180mm x 170mm in width with chamfered leading edges and have no jowls. There is evidence for wear on the beams in the west and north elevations, probably from animals in this end bay of the barn where the stalls were and the beams in this area have also been whitewashed up to side girt level. A laid brick floor with evidence of animal stalls also exists in the west bay between truss A and B only (see 5.4). The exterior walls are replaced weatherboarding (recent renovations in the last few years) and there is no evidence (for example stave holes in the wall plate soffits) for previous infilling such as wattle and daub.



Plate 1 The exterior of the barn from the farm entrance looking north



Plate 2. Worn whitewashed beams in truss A-A



Plate 3 Worn white washed beams in north elevation between truss A and B



Plate 4 west elevation truss A-A

- 4.2.1 There are two areas which have been completely replaced, either in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century or early 21<sup>st</sup> century and these consist of the right hand side of truss A (including the end girt, see plate 4), and the lower part of the south elevation between truss A and B (also plate 4) as well as that between truss C and D, although the side girt and wall plate are original.



Plate 5 North elevation between truss A and B

- 4.2.2 The west bay has evidence of wear on the face of the timbers, due to the action of animals (plate 2 and 3). This bay has been whitewashed at some point in its history and this has evidently been worn away in places. The whitewash only extended as far as the side girt (see also plate 5).



Plate 6 Full height door in north elevation between truss B and C

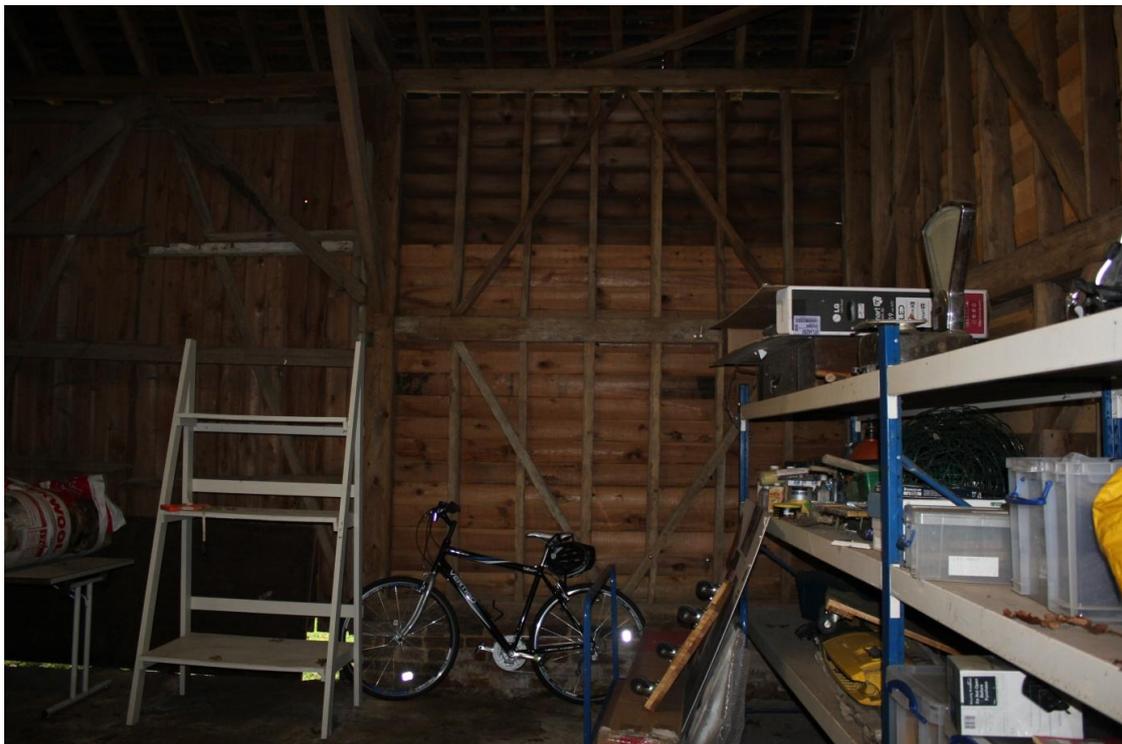


Plate 7 North elevation between truss C and D

- 4.2.3 The east bay between truss C and D (plate 7) has no evidence of animal husbandry, the beams are not whitewashed or worn and there is no brick flooring for stalls evident. It is likely that this bay was used for crop storage but there is no evidence for older mortices cut into principal posts or side/end girts and therefore no evidence for an inserted floor.



Plate 8 The east elevation in truss D-D

- 4.2.4 The scantlings of the raking struts and studs are fairly thin and very straight, indicating a fairly recent date; the studs are not heavy and square as would be anticipated from earlier mid 18<sup>th</sup> century barns (Martin, 2006, 72) and measure, on average, only 60mm in width. The studs throughout the building are approximately 350mm apart. The architectural style of the wall structure with interrupted raking struts and the thin scantlings would be suggestive of a date somewhere in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Replaced  
studs  
and  
struts



Plate 9 The south elevation between truss D and C with partially blocked door between truss C and B



Plate 10 The south elevation with replaced lower studs, struts, sole plate and plinth

- 4.2.5 The plinth is brick built with lime mortar in Sussex Bond. They measure 215mm x 105mm x 60mm with plain frogs (no stamp) in a hand made fabric. There is some evidence of burnt headers but the overall shape of the bricks would be suggestive of a cheap batch of seconds; they are fairly mis-shapen in places and are not prime stock bricks. The same size bricks have been used for the animal stall area. Visible courses of bricks in the plinth at the SE corner are seven, whereas in the north east corner there eight. These appear to have been built on a

further foundation of bricks offset from the main plinth at right angles. The plinth between truss A and B have been replaced on the south elevation and the door between truss B and C was also infilled at the same time by a new brick built plinth and sole plate.



Plate 11 The exterior of the south elevation with re-built plinth between truss A and B

- 4.2.6 The studs are morticed into the side girts and the soffit of the wall plates as well as the sole plates but not pegged.



Plate 12 Morticed studs in soffit between truss C and D

- 4.2.7 The tie beams at open trusses B and C have straight bracing to both sides (plate 14).

#### 4.3 Entrances

The barn was originally built with a full length door in the wagon ways to both north and the south elevations. These have small head braces to the flanking principal posts either side.

The full height entrance to the south has now been partially blocked off by the insertion of a stud wall, side girt and brick built plinth. The full height doors in the north elevation are still in place but are likely to be replacements (plate 6).



Plate 13 The partially filled in wagon way in the south elevation

#### 4.4 Roof

The double half-hipped roof is contemporary with the walls and consists of a purlin roof with two raking struts at truss A (later replacements), B, and C but not at D, with straight nailed joists. There is a pair of jack rafters to the collar with dragon ties across the corners to both side elevations. Three jack rafters run to the hip rafters and thereafter common rafters run along the roof with no principal rafters present. Interestingly none of the common rafters sit on the trusses but flank the tie beams at truss B and C either side. Half hips to both sides are a common feature of late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction (Brunskill, 1982, 145). The exterior roofing material consists of peg tiles; these are probably the original tiles used to construct the roof but it is likely some have been replaced over the years.



Plate 14 The roof looking west



Plate 15 The roof looking east

#### 4.5 Floor

It is likely that the ground floor would have had a standard threshing floor situated in the middle bay as previous discussed above but the floor has been replaced in later years with a concrete surface. The west bay has a brick animal stall floor still in place (plates 16-18). This shows evidence of some wear and the bricks are the same size and fabric as the plinth of the barn but this does not mean it is necessarily part of the same phase of construction. It is

likely that these stalls were later inserted when a change of function meant that the barn was no longer used for threshing which was common in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when threshing moved towards mechanical threshing in the fields (Brunskill, *ibid* 145). The floor consists of a flat floor with a brick trough constructed (plate 19) towards the west side which has 4 courses of stretcher bond, 300mm high. It is probable that the same brickyard provided the bricks at a later date for the construction of the animal stall.



Plate 16 The purpose built brick floor, raised within the at the western bay



Plate 17 The floor looking west



Stall  
posts  
evident

Plate 18 The floor looking north



Plate 19 The brick built feeding trough (now capped with cement) looking north



Plate 20. The exterior eastern elevation

4.6 Miscellaneous



Plate 21 Incised marks on principal post C



Plate 22 Incised marks on raking struts



Plate 23 Animal tethering post



Plate 24 The later brick outshot, likely re-built and re-roofed within the last twenty years or so



Plate 25 The interior of the brick outshot



Plate 26 The proposed location of the two-bay garage (scales 1m)

## 5.0 The Impact Assessment

- 5.1 This impact assessment has been prepared based on the basic drawings supplied but it should be noted that detailed information has not been provided for the specific designs regarding specific elements as discussed below. As such this assessment is based on my opinion regarding the current plans. It would be hoped that the majority of the structure will be kept so as not to lose the historical significance, which is, after all, the main reason for allowing the barn to be converted. The building does have a landscape value showing a traditional barn in its wider landscape setting with other associated agricultural buildings adjacent, although not necessarily conforming to a traditional farmyard layout.
- 5.2 This assessment is based on the historical fabric only and is not considering the aesthetics in the modern additions, in particular the designs for the windows and wall elevations in the eastern extension.
- 5.3 The existing barn, as it stands, does not hold *great* significance and is not of any *great* age although it does hold some historical value. A previous attempt at converting the barn went to inspector appeal in 1998 ( T/APP/P1425/A/98298598/P2) and the Inspector in Appeal stated that *"Nothing that I read, heard, or saw indicated these buildings to be of particular architectural or historic interest."*
- 5.4 The nature of the impact within the barn includes the proposed removal of the rear (eastern) wall which will facilitate the width of the new extension. In order to do this it is proposed that truss D-D is removed entirely. As this wall is entirely original it may be prudent to consider whether it is possible that this design can be reviewed, along with the removal of trusses B and C, which is necessary in order to create enough head height at first floor level. However, as full specifications for this have not been available yet it is difficult to comment further or give alternative compromises. In the very least, clearer details of this

need to be submitted. This truss has been subject to a full archaeological survey and fully recorded (see plates 8 and 15 and cross section in figure 10).

- 5.5 It is proposed that several windows (fig. 5-8) are to be inserted into the exterior elevations, none of these give great cause for concern but it would be advised that a slight modification to the current designs to facilitate the clear division between the original wagon way and the walls on the north elevation would be prudent. The original full height opening should be reflected in the design of the weatherboarding by some form of vertical break or timber fillet. This would maintain the appearance of the position of the original doorway and could be facilitated by the insertion of weatherboarding running vertically rather than horizontally to define the area of the doorway.
- 5.6 The creation of internal partition walls gives no cause for concern.
- 5.7 The insertion of a first floor has been highlighted in a colour coded plan of the proposed development (figure 3) as well as elevation plans (figs. 5-8) and the level of this impact should be set at a moderate level as the majority of the additions do not give a major cause for concern. However, as previously mentioned, the full designs for the removal and replacement of the trusses at B and C have not been disclosed as yet and so it remains to suggest that, in my opinion, if the designs could allow the trusses to remain, this would benefit the historical value of the asset.
- 5.8 As the proposed alterations have not yet been fully devised, pending the results from this impact assessment, it is not possible to comment on the final proposed materials as these details are not available as yet.
- 5.9 The later brick built outshot extension discussed in 2.3 above has not been included in this impact assessment and in my opinion is not viewed as highly significant due to the construction materials and later date of this addition in relation to the age and archaeological significance of the rest of the barn. Therefore, this area is not included below in the mitigation guidance and any additions to this structure should be relatively free from development conditions.
- 5.10 In addition to alterations within the barn, a separate two bay garage is proposed within the grounds. This potentially impacts the site of the farm pond which would have given access to water for the animals housed in the barn when it was in use. As such, this is potentially of archaeological interest and was highlighted on the HER as being of some archaeological value. However, having visited the property to look at the potential impact of this, it became evident that the greater proportion of the pond once existed in the neighbouring property, as evidenced by water-loving plant species still growing in the ground beyond the boundary fence and high levels of water retention in this area. The current owner has informed me that the pond was filled in several years ago (likely to be after 1950) and any likely remains of this will have already been impacted. It is possible that the silted remnants of the base of this pond may be evident with possible artefacts present, but given the 'young' age of the barn and the accompanying range of buildings the proposed construction of a garage would, in my opinion, not impact greatly.
- 5.11 The addition of a new extension to the rear of the property of a single storey construction planned to run at right angles to the barn will not impact greatly on the historical fabric of the barn itself. In doing so, *some* historical timbers will be removed; namely studs (the majority of which are modern replacements) but it is my understanding that the historical timbers such as the side girts and the wall plate will remain. This needs to be confirmed. It would be advisable that to retain a clear division of where the new extension meets the

original fabric of the barn that an additional timber fillet or change of direction in the weatherboarding would again clearly show the division between the old and new elements.

- 5.12 Early map regression shows evidence of an attached building running at right angles to the present (?) barn which may or may not pre-date the existing structure. There is thus potential for the new extension to impact below ground archaeology and it may be decided that a watching brief should be conducted during the excavation of the foundation trenches in order to record any archaeology which may be evident. However, with a steel structure already impacting this area it is unlikely that remains of a previous building may be evident. In general, it is unlikely that foundation trenches are present for earlier buildings as there is usually very little evidence for timber framed barns set into the ground as any plinth created for a base tends to sit on the ground surface (David Martin *pers.comm*).
- 5.13 The conversion of this building to a modern living space will include the removal of the flooring of the original animal stalls. This area has been photographed and measured for posterity and included in this impact assessment so it is of my opinion that no further action is necessary.
- 5.14 A small adjacent building which also shows on the tithe map is planned for conversion to a games room. This should create minimal impact on the walls of this building and should give no real cause for concern.
- 5.15 This impact statement relates to alterations in ground floor and proposed first floor levels as shown in figure 3 below. It would be advised further that any mitigation proposals as discussed should be carried out in accordance with advice and approval from the Conservation Officer from Wealden District Council and if a Watching Brief is requested, this should be monitored by a professional and suitably qualified archaeologist.
- 5.16 The principal significance of this building is as an existing landscape feature of textbook 19<sup>th</sup> century design, which is mostly intact. Provided sufficient historical fabric is left in-situ to indicate its age and design, loss of some areas of infill of the frame are not considered by me to be a worry.
- 5.17 As the HER has flagged up the fact that this barn is undesignated historic building, the building needs to be assessed as an historical asset, which is outlined in this report. The loss of historical fabric to be removed is a moot point; the farmstead is not within the area of Natural Outstanding Beauty, and it cannot be seen directly from the road but may be visible from adjacent footpaths. If the removal of walls is thought to be considered important by the Local Authority, internal re-design may be necessary, in particular the loss of the end wall and the open trusses.

## 6.0 Archive

- 6.1 On completion of the archaeological report ASL will arrange for a paper copy of the report to be archived and deposited in the East Sussex Records Office at The Keep in Brighton.
- 6.2 Digital copies of the approved HBR report will be provided to:
- the Owner/Developer
  - the HER
  - the Local Planning Authority
  - the project archive (see above)

## 7.0 Acknowledgments

- 7.1 The author wishes to thank Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist for his help and guidance before the site visit, Kellie Irwin for her assistance on the day and to David Martin for his guidance and drawings.

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**Principal Archaeologist**  
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**2015**

Sources:

Brunskill, R.W., 1982. Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain. Victor Gollancz, London.  
Martin, D and B, 2006. Farm Buildings of the Weald 1450-1750. Oxbow, Oxford.

## **8.0 Appendices**

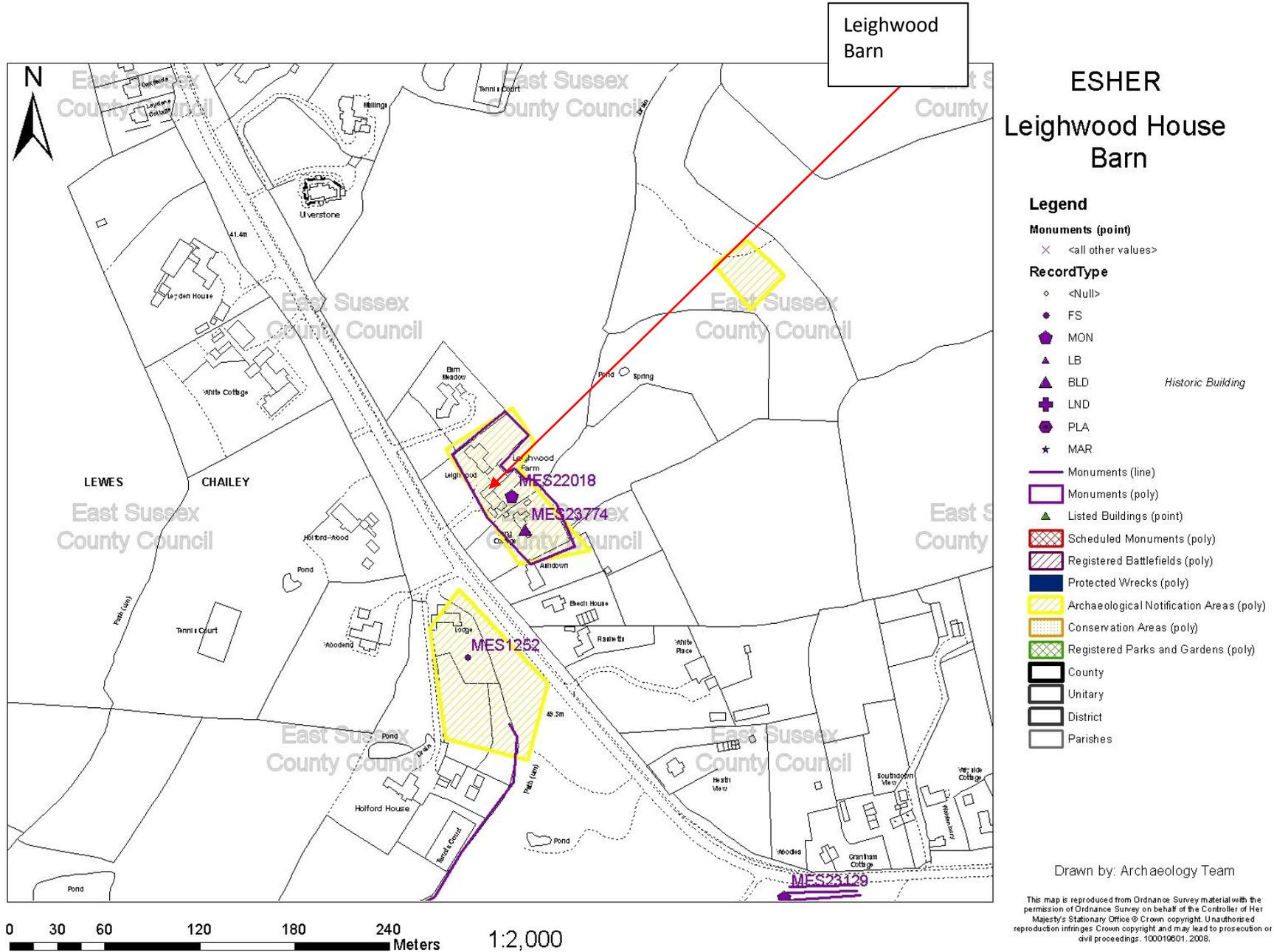


Fig.1 HER map showing Archaeological Notification Area

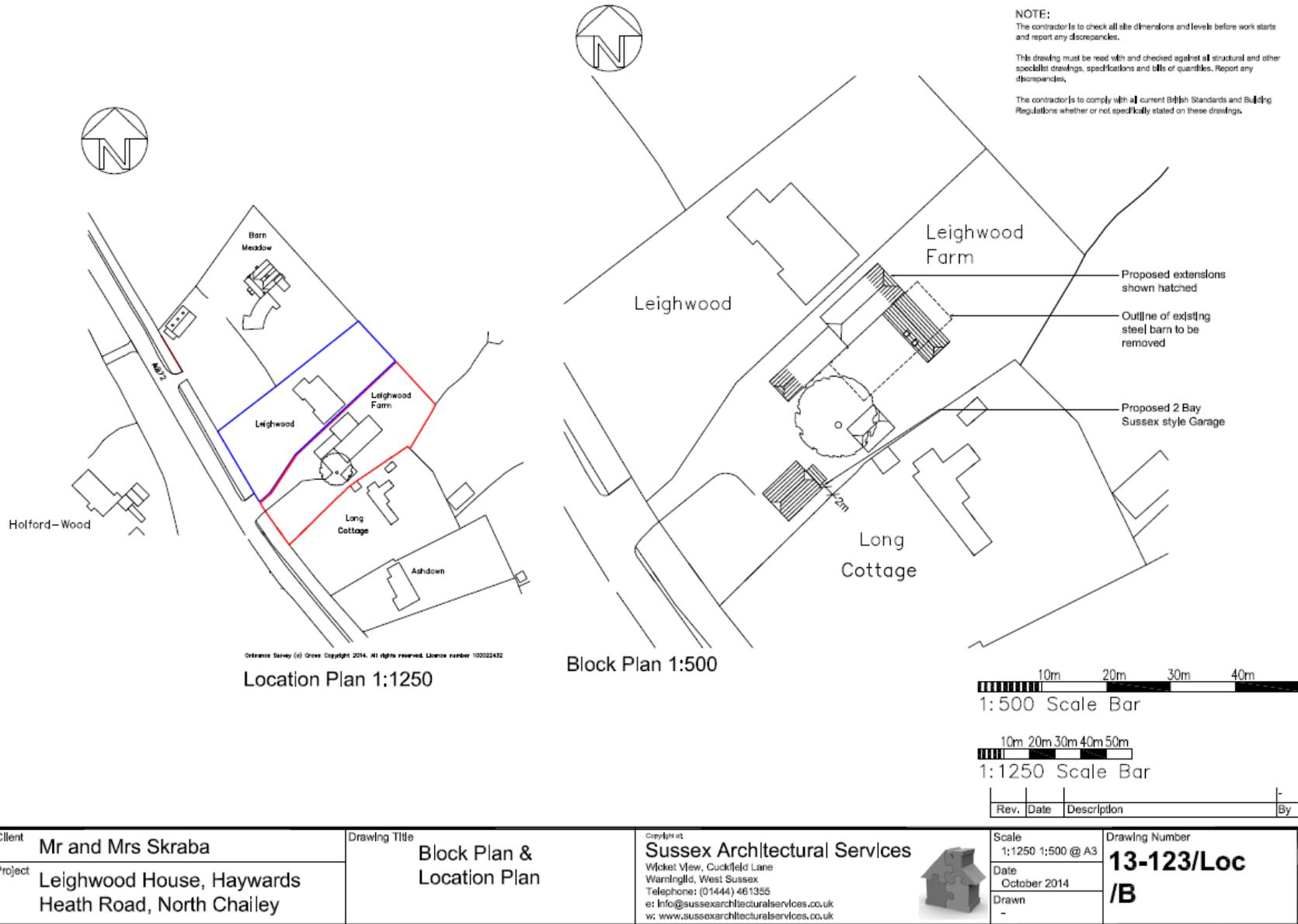


Fig.2 Site location in North Chailey

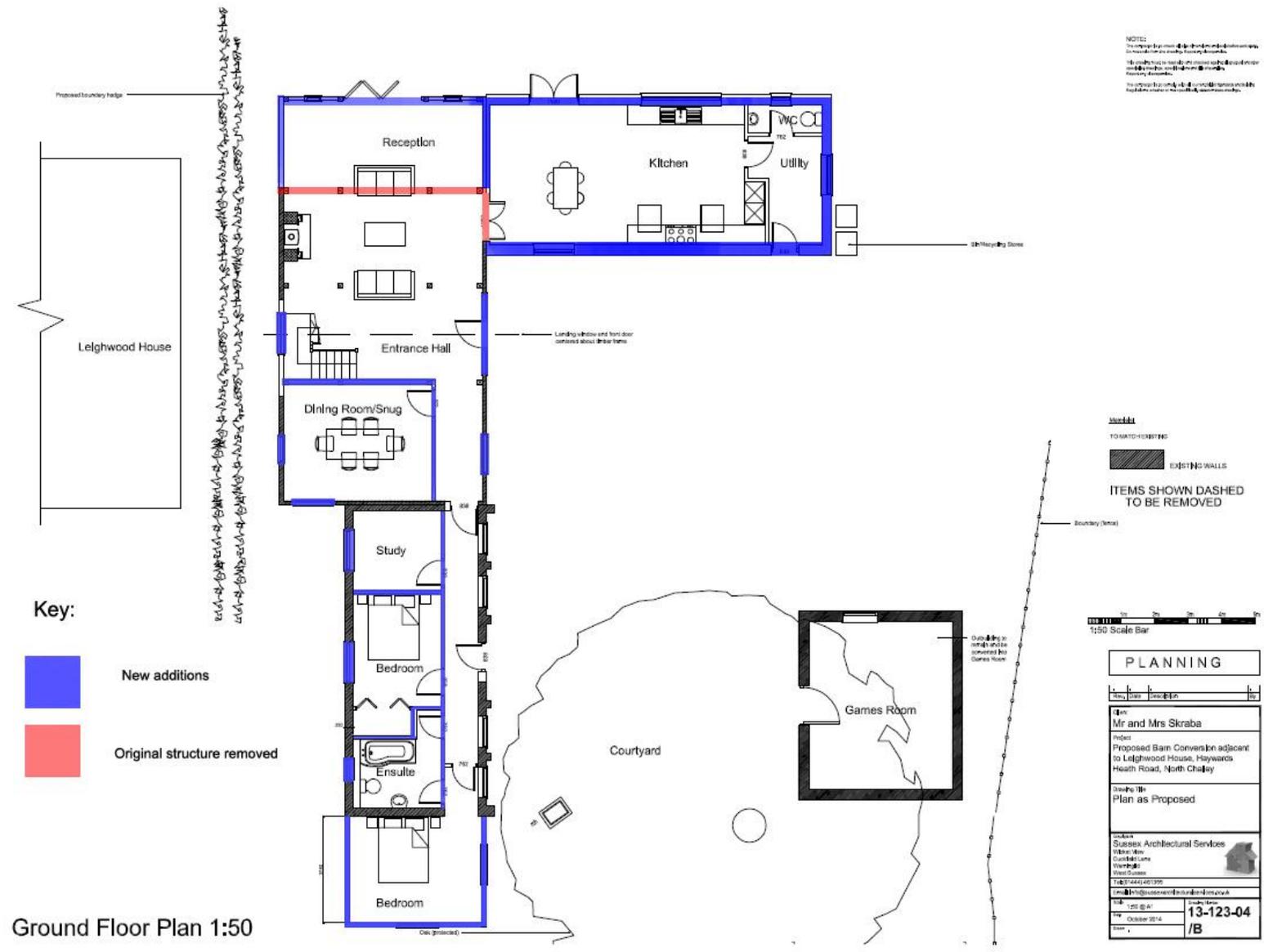


Fig.3 Proposed alterations in plan

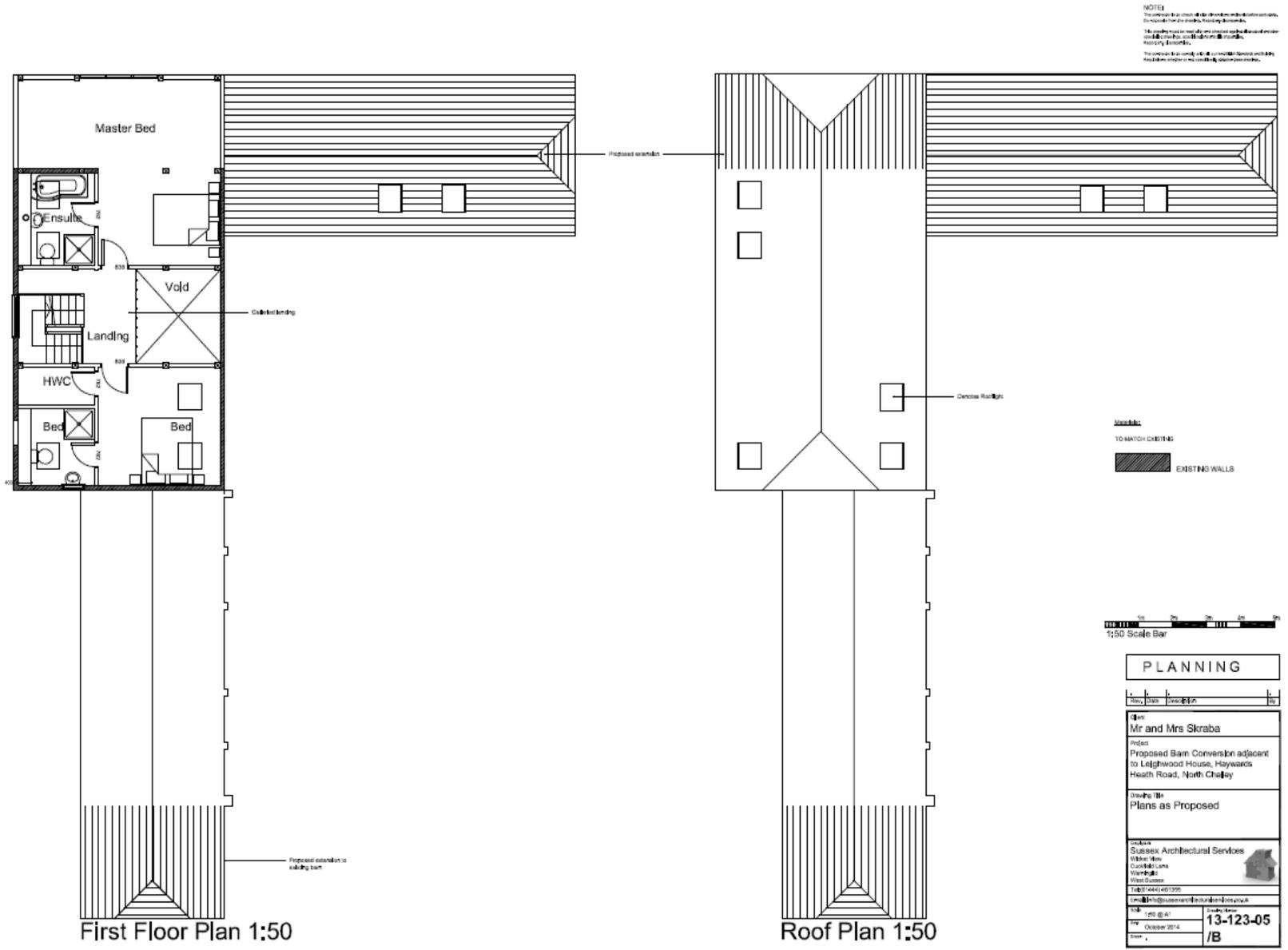


Fig.4 Proposed inserted first floor plan

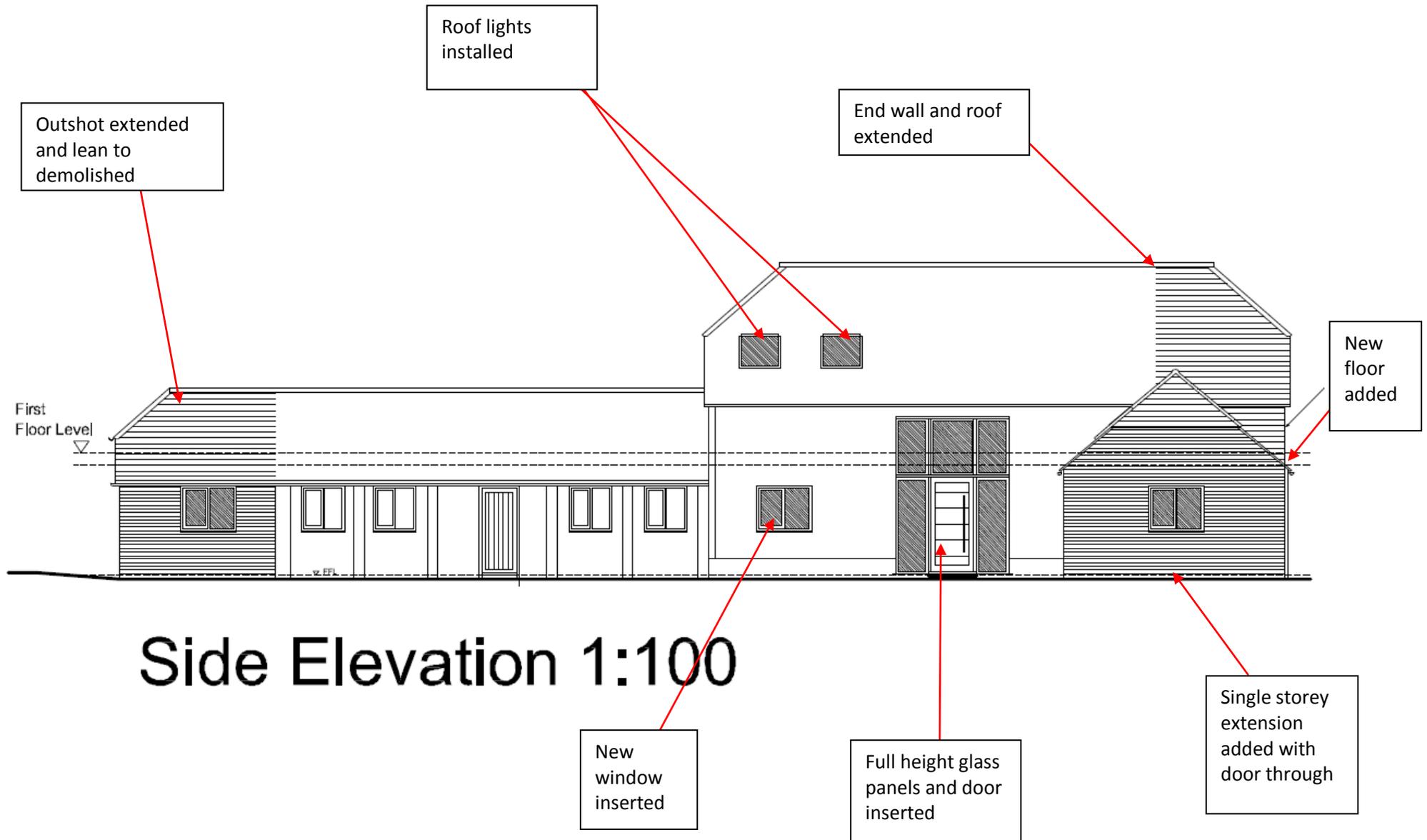
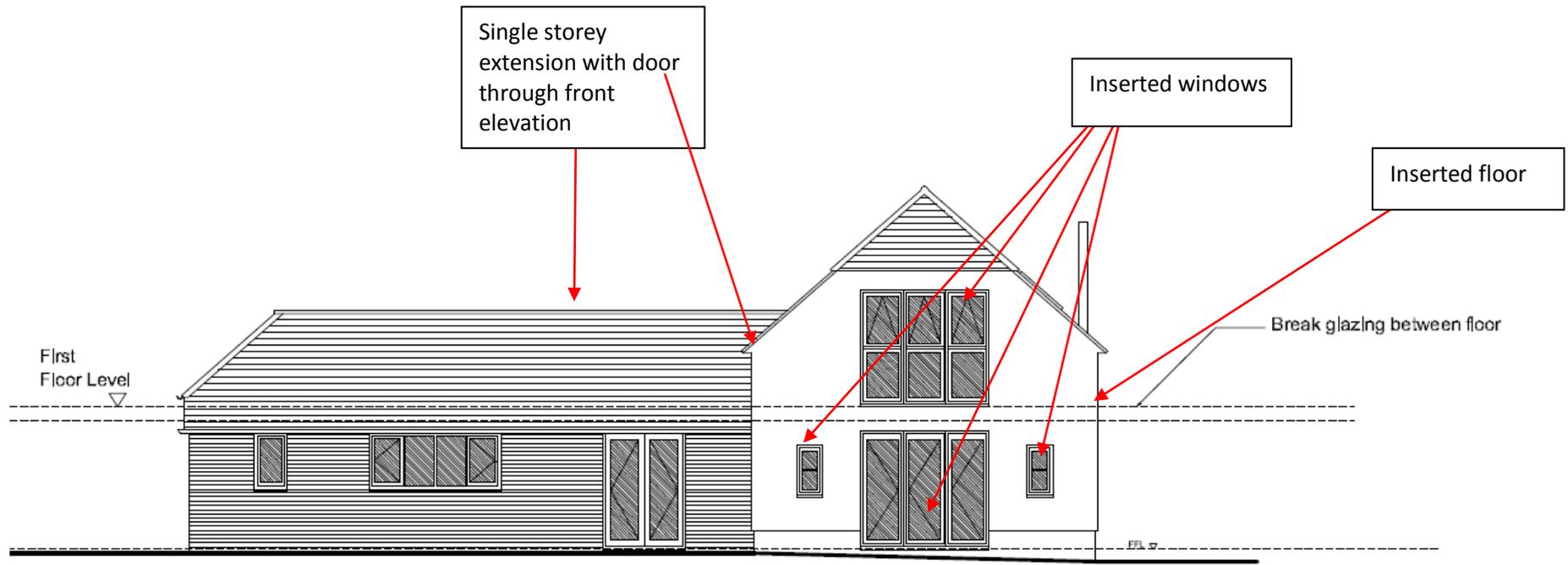


Fig.5 Proposed alterations in south east elevation



# Rear Elevation 1:100

Fig.6 Proposed alterations in north east elevation

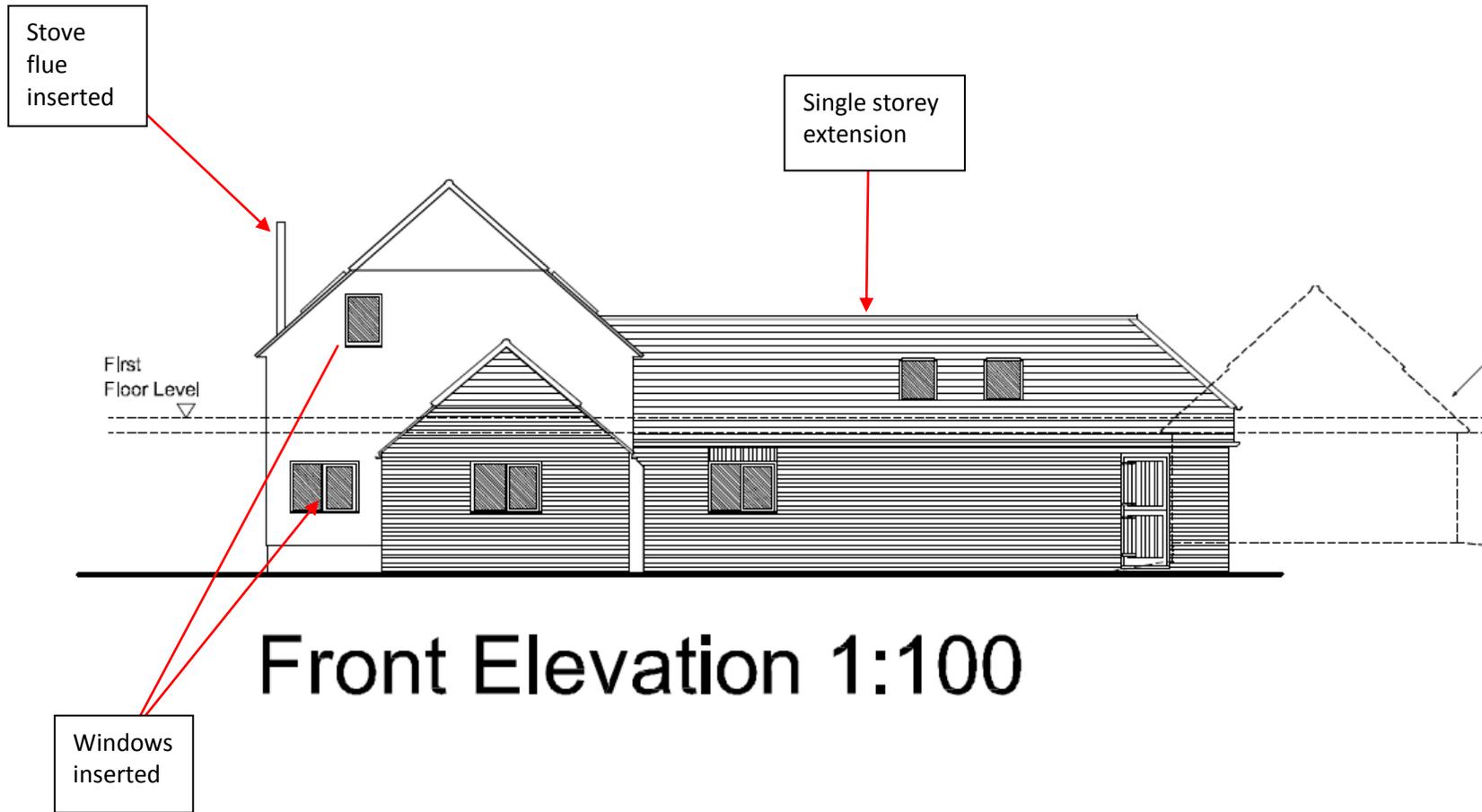
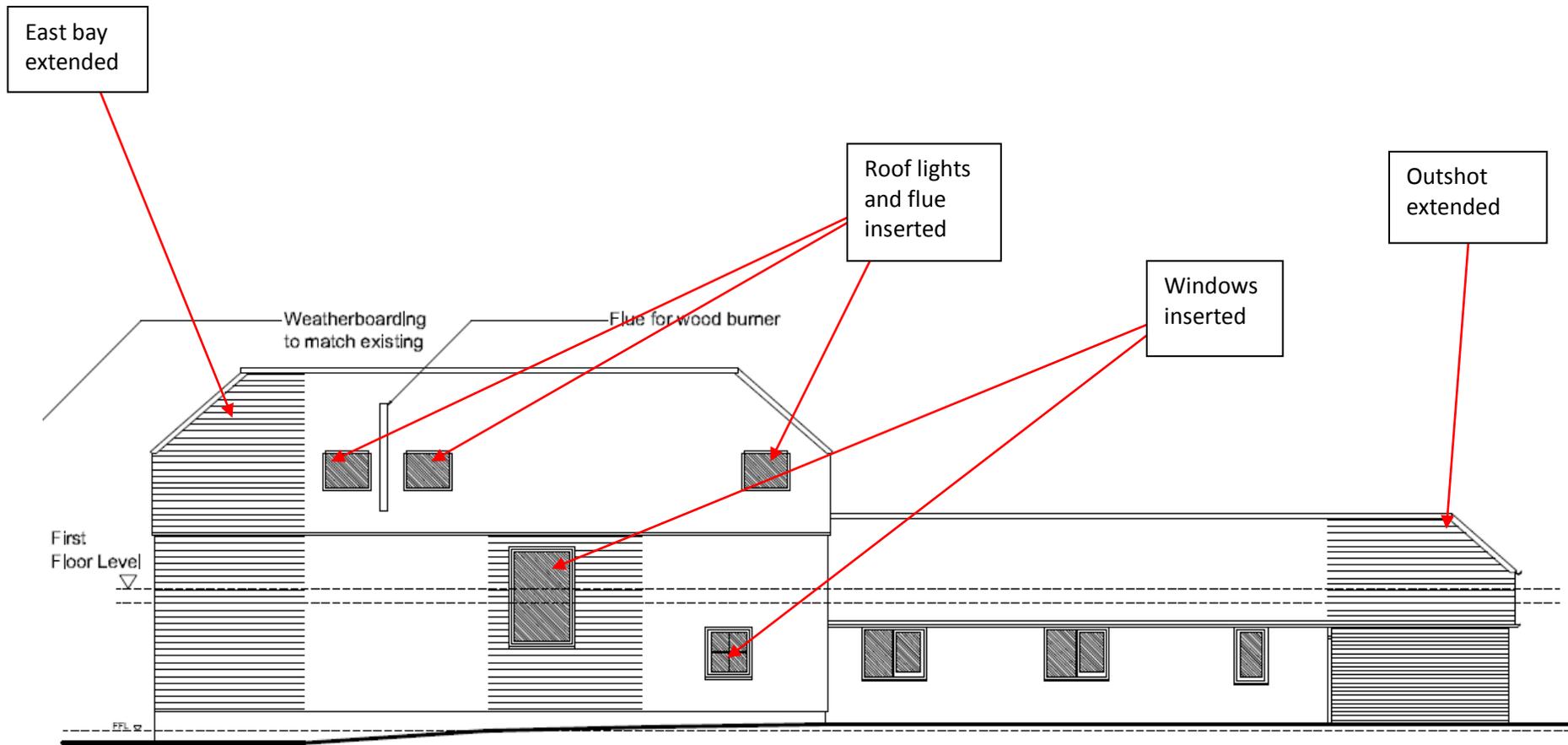


Fig.7 Proposed alterations in south west elevation



# Side Elevation 1:100

Fig.8 Proposed alterations in north west elevation

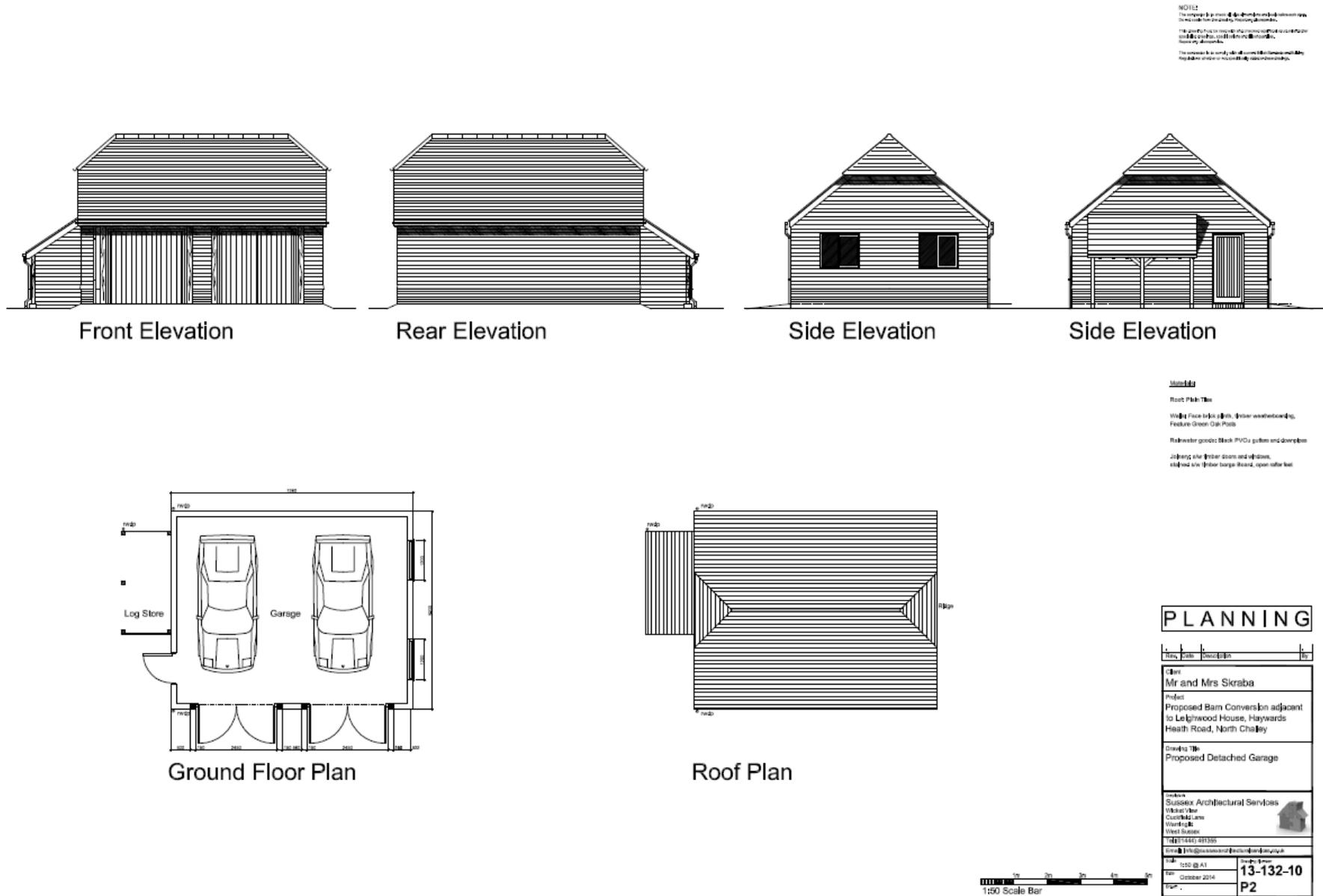
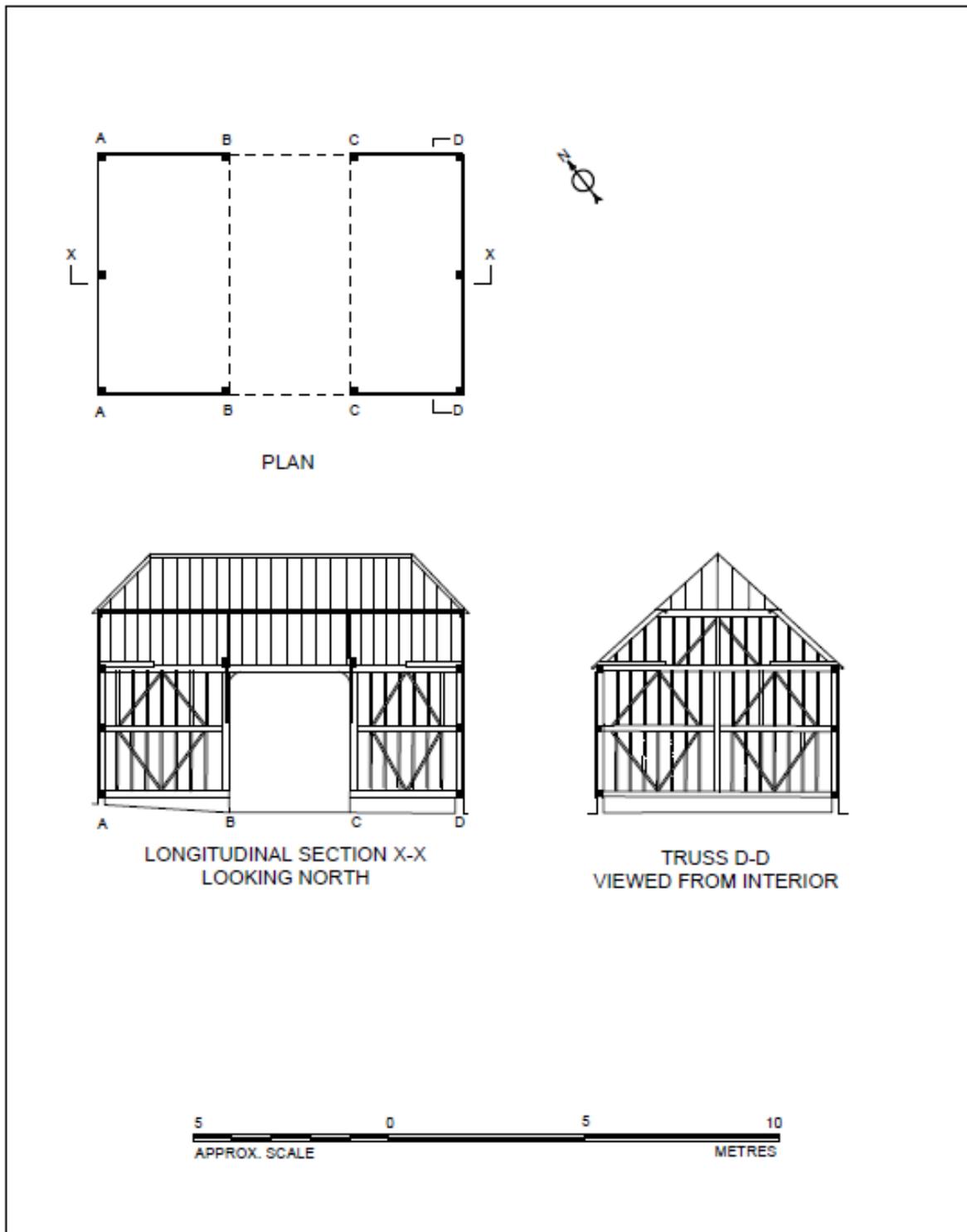


Fig.9 Proposed two bay garage



<b>BARN AT LEIGHWOOD HOUSE, NORTH CHAILEY, EAST SUSSEX</b>				Project Ref	<b>ASL 50-15</b>
<b>PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS</b>				Drawing No.	<b>1</b>
Drawn By	<b>D Martin</b>	Revision No	-	Date of original survey	<b>2015</b>
				Date of this revision	<b>2015</b>

Fig.10 Scale reconstruction drawings for Leighwood Barn