

Item No 06:-

16/00733/FUL (CD.6707/C)

**Methodist Chapel
Sheep Street
Stow-On-The-Wold
Gloucestershire
GL54 1AA**

**Change of use from a chapel to form 4 holiday flats and a retirement flat;
including external alterations and roof extension
at Methodist Chapel Sheep Street Stow-On-The-Wold Gloucestershire GL54 1AA**

Full Application 16/00733/FUL (CD.6707/C)	
Applicant:	Mr J Rice
Agent:	Luke Williamson Architect
Case Officer:	Deborah Smith
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Barry Dare
Committee Date:	13th July 2016
RECOMMENDATION:	PERMIT SUBJECT TO THE SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE BAT MITIGATION MEASURES

Main Issues:

- (a) Principle of Development and Sustainability of Location
- (b) Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Stow Conservation Area and the Setting of adjacent Listed Buildings
- (c) Car Parking Provision
- (d) Biodiversity
- (e) Other Matters

Reasons for Referral:

The application has been referred to the Planning and Licensing Committee for determination at the request of the Ward Member.

1. Site Description:

The application site comprises a former Methodist Church located within the town centre and within a Development Boundary as identified by the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011. Development in such locations is therefore subject to Policy 18: Development Within the Development Boundaries of Cirencester and the Principal Settlements. Policy 18 is generally supportive of the type of development proposed within this application.

The building is set on the corner of Digbeth Street and Sheep Street. The site falls within the Stow-on-the-Wold and Maugersbury Conservation Area (CA) and within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The building is not listed as being of special architectural or historic merit.

The building dates from the C19th and is constructed of a mix of natural Cotswold stone and red brick. It comprises a two-and-a-half-storey structure with a rectangular plan form and with a clock tower and porch area on the eastern elevation. There is a recessed area to the north of the clock tower which is currently used as an informal bin storage area. There is a small, private courtyard area to the rear of the building but otherwise, the building takes up the entire footprint of the plot. There is no existing on-site parking.

2. Relevant Planning History:

None relevant

3. Planning Policies:

LPR09 Biodiversity, Geology and Geomorphology
LPR15 Conservation Areas
LPR18 Develop within Development Boundaries
LPR26 Tourism
LPR39 Parking Provision
LPR42 Cotswold Design Code
LPR46 Privacy & Gardens in Residential Deve

4. Observations of Consultees:

Conservation Officer: views incorporated within Officer's report

Public Protection Officer: no objection

GCC Highways Engineer: no objection

5. View of Town/Parish Council:

Stow Town Council: objects as there is no provision for car parking - there is already a problem with parking in the town and this development would exacerbate the problem; parking is included with the emerging neighbourhood plan and contributions towards car parking will be sought; object to the use of timber cladding - the Council does not want any timber cladding used on any development within the town; there is insufficient space for bin storage and this area could affect the streetscene and become an environmental health issue; no provision is made for lift access to the retirement flat - it should be placed on the ground floor; consider that this is over-development of the site and suggest that only 3 flats should be allowed.

6. Other Representations:

3 third party objections: there is no area for loading or unloading as there are single yellow lines outside of the property; limited parking within Sheep Street and the town cannot keep absorbing additional parking; holiday users will use their cars, not public transport; the businesses adjacent to the chapel may generate noise which could be incompatible with holiday lets; there is an inadequate storage area for the bins and if they are placed on the green to the front of the chapel, it would create an eyesore; there could be environmental health issues with the bin storage area as it sits below the only window allocated to the residential flat; and it is over-development of this small building.

7. Applicant's Supporting Information:

Design & Access Statement
Bat Survey Report

8. Officer's Assessment:**Proposals**

The application scheme comprises the sub-division of the chapel to form 5 no. flats in total; 1 of the units is proposed as a 'retirement flat' (there is no suggestion by the applicant that this unit would be age-restricted by condition so it falls to be considered straightforwardly as a C3 residential unit) and the remaining 4 units are proposed as holiday lets. The building would be split vertically to provide the 4 holiday let units, with open-plan living space at ground floor and

bedrooms on the first floor. 3 no. of the holiday let units would comprise 1 bedroom units whilst the fourth holiday let would have two bedrooms. The 'retirement flat' is shown on the second floor and comprises a one-bedroom unit; all of the accommodation associated with this unit would be provided on one level.

A small covered courtyard area within the northern part of the plot comprises the only garden space associated with the chapel and this would provide a small outdoor space to unit 4 (a holiday let). There is an existing bin storage area to the front of the chapel (a recessed area adjacent to the clock tower) and the application proposals show this area to be retained for that purpose. The chapel is surrounded by buildings and thus there is no existing on-site parking and there is no potential to provide on-site parking.

(a) Principle of Development and Sustainability of Location

The application site is located within the town centre of one of the District's Principal Settlements and thus has very good access to a range of services and facilities. Policy 18 of the Local Plan allows for holiday let accommodation and residential units subject to a number of criteria. Criterion (a) of Policy 18 states that development will be permitted providing that:

'In the case of residential development, the number of dwellings proposed is commensurate with the level of community facilities, infrastructure, public transport, services and employment available within the settlement' and criterion (c) states that development will be permitted providing that:

'the siting, appearance and scale of the development respects the surrounding countryside, topography and the traditional form, character, appearance and setting of the settlement, and would cause no significant adverse environmental or visual harm to the site or its surroundings'.

The number of units proposed is considered to be commensurate with the level of services and facilities within the town and the external alterations proposed to the building to enable the conversion are relatively minor in nature and it is considered would not visually harm the building or its surroundings (the proposed alterations to the building will be covered in more detail later in this report). The proposed development therefore accords with Policy 18.

Policy 26 of the Local Plan relates to Tourism is relevant to the proposals and also allows for this form of development. Criterion 3 of Local Plan Policy 26 states that:

'The development of self-catering accommodation, other than for holiday lodges or permanent static holiday caravan sites, will be permitted only;

- i) Within areas where Policy 18 applies; or
- ii) Elsewhere, only by the renovation and conversion of existing buildings, including agricultural buildings.'

As the site is located within a Policy 18 area (i.e. within a Development Boundary), the scheme accords with this policy.

In addition, the NPPF is supportive of sustainable economic development in rural areas. Bullet point 1 of Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that planning policies should 'support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings.'

Overall, the site is considered to represent a sustainable location for holiday let units and a new residential unit.

(b) Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Stow Conservation Area and the Setting of adjacent Listed Buildings

The proposed development relates to an unlisted building within the Stow-on-the-Wold Conservation Area, wherein the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is statutorily obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the locality. There are a number of listed buildings adjacent to the site and the LPA is therefore statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of those buildings. The external impacts of the works as seen within the street scene have therefore been considered, as well as other potentially sensitive views where there may be impacts on the setting of adjacent listed buildings.

Whilst, the heavy subdivision of the internal spaces is regrettable, this is not a consideration for an unlisted building, beyond the implications for its external appearance. The scheme as proposed ensures that the building is retained and its current distinctive character and positive contribution to the conservation area is largely preserved. The materials, features and architectural detailing to the outward elevations seem to remain essentially unchanged.

The main external alterations to the building comprise the following elements. The windows are proposed to be replaced with double glazed units. This is understandable and metal framed units are shown. Acceptability is subject to design detail (which would be subject to a planning condition), to ensure suitably slender framing to both opening and non-opening elements, as well as appropriate division of the glazing. Some replacement timber windows are also proposed. These would replace modern C20 units of non-traditional design so no objection is raised in principle to their replacement, again, subject to appropriate conditions.

The historic doorway to the side of the clock tower is to be retained, with a recessed boarded infill, which is considered to be acceptable. Although traditional roof forms should generally be maintained, a new small area of flat roof is proposed to allow for a linkage from the tower to the flat on the second floor. This is discretely placed and should not be visible in views of the building from below. This structure would be clad in lead which is considered to be acceptable in design terms. The number of rooflights originally proposed has now been rationalised and only two conservation studio style rooflights are now shown in the northern roof slope and not visible in the public realm. It is recommended that final details of the bin store enclosure are subject to a condition given that this element of the scheme would be visible in the public realm.

It is positive that voids are shown to the apartments within the main space, so as not to run floors into windows, as this would be too intrusive as viewed externally. There are only two locations where floors and window clash: one to the rear, to the courtyard area, which is not a concern; and one to the front high-level eastern window. It is recommended that Officers agree the detail of this 'clash' as part of the condition compliance for the site as it may be possible to agree a tapering down to the window, or at least to better understand the visual impact of this element.

In summary, subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposed conversion scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the setting of nearby listed buildings, sustaining the significance of those designated heritage assets. The proposals would therefore accord with Sections 72(1) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 of the NPPF, and Policy 15 of the Local Plan.

(c) Car Parking Provision

The Town Council and some local residents have raised concerns regarding the lack of on-site parking provision and on that basis; we have consulted with Gloucestershire County Council Highway Engineers.

The site is adjacent to Sheep Street (a Class 1 highway) and Digbeth Street (a Class 4 highway) with pedestrian access from Digbeth Street. There are dedicated parking bays on Sheep Street which continue along Park Street to the east which are restricted to 2 hours parking between the

hours of 8am and 8pm. Digbeth Street is a one-way street and has parking restrictions between 8am and 6pm.

The town is well-served by public transport and there is railway station in Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Whilst it is acknowledged that parking is in high demand within the town, there is short-term on-street parking which, while restricted during the day, could be used during the evenings by holiday users. In addition, there is a pay and display car park on Mangersbury Road which is within easy walking distance of the site and if no parking happens to be available in the vicinity, there is also a public car park associated with the Tesco Supermarket to the north.

It must be noted that holiday let accommodation generates less trips, with the average trip generation at 2 per unit per day. This is also seasonal and would not be likely to occur for 52 weeks of the year. A domestic residence would typically generate 5 trips daily. This trip generation must also be considered in the context of the existing use of the building as a chapel; it is assumed that visitors to the chapel would have utilised car parking in the vicinity. The existing use of the building as a chapel falls within Use Class D1, a Use Class that includes alternative uses including clinics, a health centre, day centre, nursery, art gallery and museum. These uses could generate traffic movements and parking requirements over and above those generated by the use proposed as part of this application so it is reasonable to assume that the proposed use would result in a betterment in terms of parking.

In light of the limited number of trips generated by the proposed use of the building, it is considered that the parking available in and around the town and within walking distance of the site would adequately meet the needs of the users and comply with para. 39 of the NPPF. Therefore no objection is raised in relation to the lack of parking provision within the proposals.

(d) Biodiversity

The Bat Survey Report produced by Windrush Ecology and dated January 2016 submitted in support of the application has identified the presence of bats within the building (within the clock tower and in the loft space above the second floor meeting room). The droppings suggest that brown long-eared bats, pipistrelle bats and perhaps Natterer's bats may be present. All species of bats are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012 and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The report outlines possible mitigation measures to be implemented in the event of the development being approved and whilst these mitigation measures may be considered appropriate, the Council's Biodiversity consultant requires night-time activity studies, as per published best practice guidelines. The applicant has commissioned these additional studies and it is expected that the results will be available prior to the Planning Committee meeting.

At the time of writing, the results of the additional survey work are awaited; therefore the Officer recommendation seeks delegated approval of the scheme subject to satisfactory mitigation measures being agreed to ensure that the proposed development could be undertaken without having an adverse impact on protected species or their habitat.

(e) Other Matters

Given the nature of the accommodation proposed and in light of the town centre location of the site, it is considered acceptable that no outdoor private amenity space is provided. A bin storage area is considered essential and can be provided on site.

The placement of the building and the arrangement of the accommodation means that the development would not lead to a loss of privacy, amenity or light to existing residents in adjoining and adjacent properties. On this basis, the proposals accord with Local Plan Policy 46.

9. Conclusion:

The site is located within a Development Boundary wherein new residential development is considered to be acceptable in principle. Furthermore, the conversion of the building secures the future of an undesignated heritage asset. The provision of a residential unit makes a small contribution towards the Council's housing delivery targets and the provision of holiday let units contributes to the economic growth of the town. Both forms of development are supported by the NPPF. The proposals therefore accord with Policies 18 and 26 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

Following some amendments to the detailed design of the scheme, Officers are satisfied that the conversion works can be undertaken without harming the character or appearance of the conservation area or the setting of nearby listed buildings and thus the proposals accord with Local Plan Policy 15 and Section 12 of the NPPF.

The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed development could be undertaken without harming the protected species or their habitat in accordance with Local Plan Policy 9 and guidance in Paragraphs 109 and 118 of the NPPF. It is expected that the results of the additional bat survey work will be available within the next few weeks at which point, the Council's Ecological consultant will advise on the acceptability of the proposed mitigation measures. Subject to this matter being appropriately addressed, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

It is acknowledged that concerns have been raised in relation to the lack of car parking provision on site but those concerns must be balanced against the fact that the site lies within one of the District's Principal Settlements where on-street parking is available in the immediate vicinity and a public car park is within easy walking distance of the site. Another factor that weighs in favour of the proposed development is that 4 of the 5 units proposed would be holiday lets; users of these units have different patterns of movement and are likely to require car parking overnight rather than at peak periods during the day. On this basis, the proposals are considered to accord with Paragraph 39 of the NPPF.

The Officer recommendation seeks delegated authority to permit subject to the satisfactory resolution of the bat mitigation.

10. Proposed conditions:

The development shall be started by 3 years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following drawing numbers: 100/B, 105/B, 106/D, 107/B, 108/C and 109.

Reason: For purposes of clarity and for the avoidance of doubt, in accordance with paragraphs 203 and 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notwithstanding Classes C2 and C3 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or any other change of use permitted by any subsequent Order, Units 1-4 as shown on approved drawing numbers: 105/B and 109 shall be occupied as holiday accommodation only and for the avoidance of doubt they shall not be occupied as permanent, unrestricted accommodation, second homes or a principal or primary place of residence.

Reason: This is development which is only permitted at this location because it provides holiday accommodation. This needs to be carefully controlled and further consideration given to any alternative use of the building.

All door and window frames shall be recessed to match the existing door and window frames in the existing building.

Reason: To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policies 15 and 42 and guidance in the NPPF.

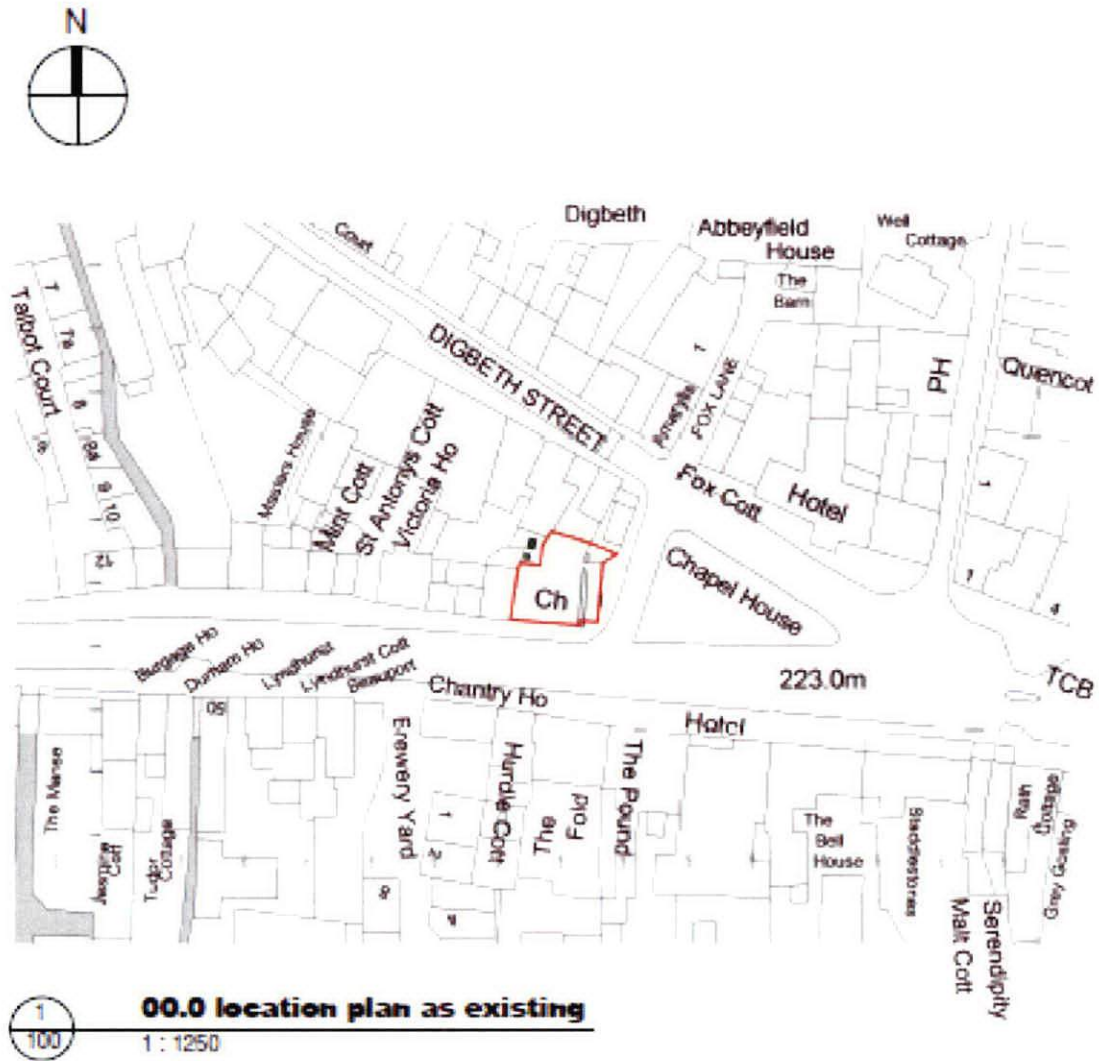
The new rooflights shall be of a design which, when installed, shall not project forward of the roof slope in which the rooflights are located.

Reason: To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policies 15 and 42 and guidance in the NPPF.

Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the floor junction to the east window, windows, doors, rooflights and the bin store enclosure shall not be installed/inserted/constructed in the development hereby approved, until their design and details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

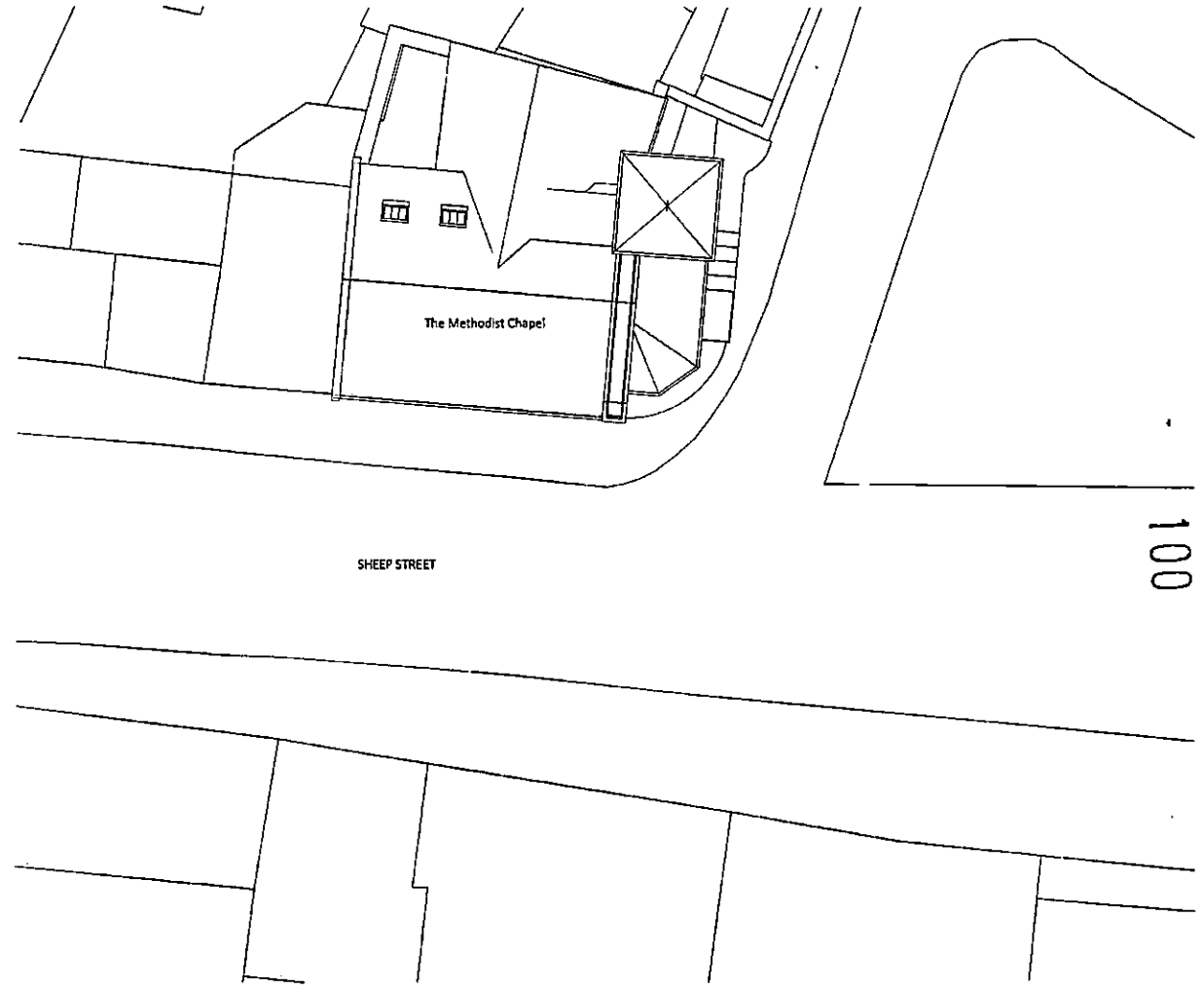
The design and details shall be accompanied by drawings to a minimum scale of 1:5 with full size moulding cross section profiles, elevations and sections. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policies 15 and 42 and guidance in the NPPF.

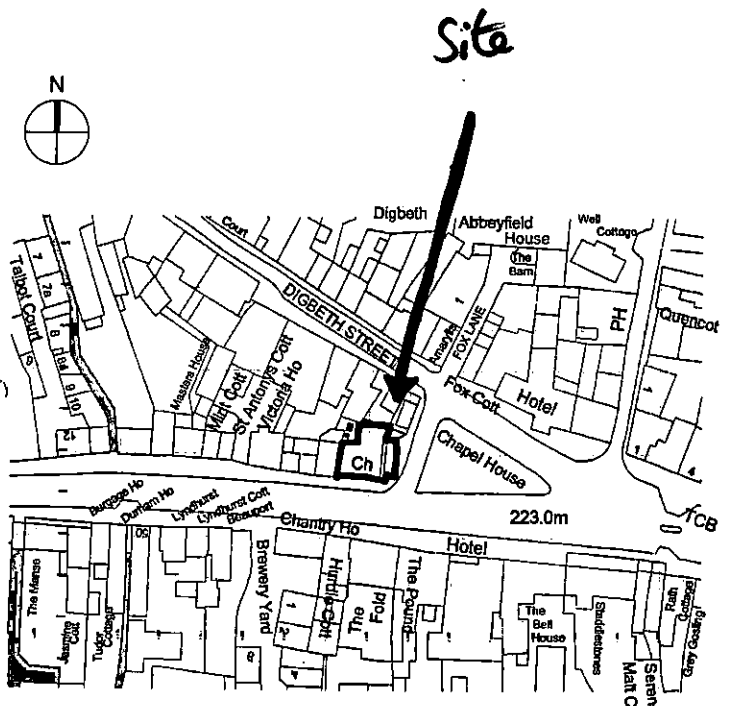


The Methodist Chapel, Stow on the Wold

Location



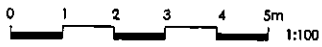
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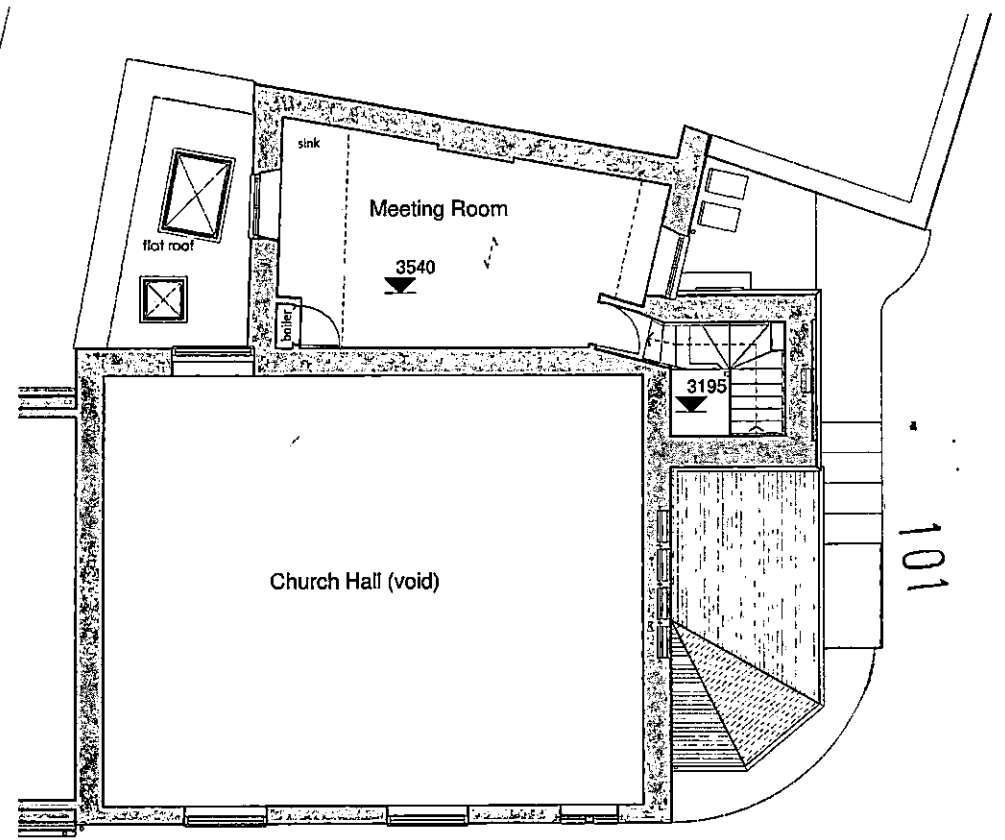
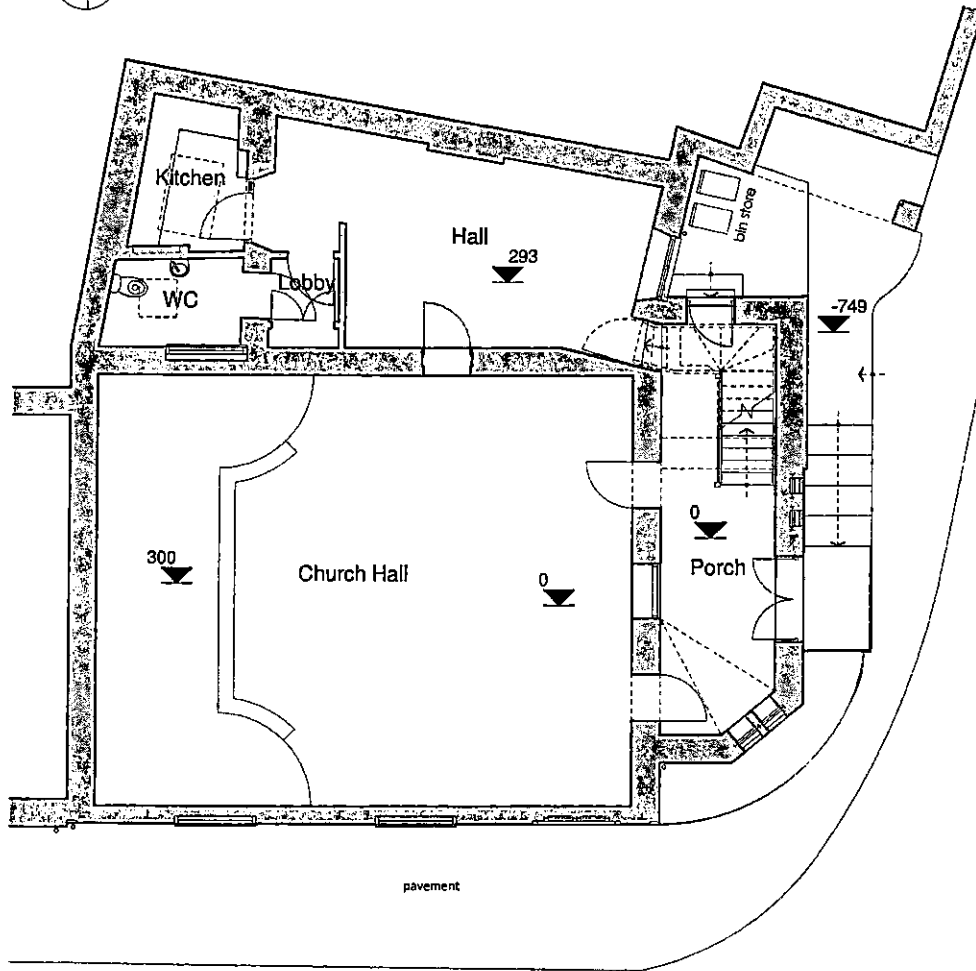
1 00.0 location plan as existing
1 : 1250

16/05/33/FUL

PLANNING



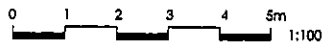
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revision: A



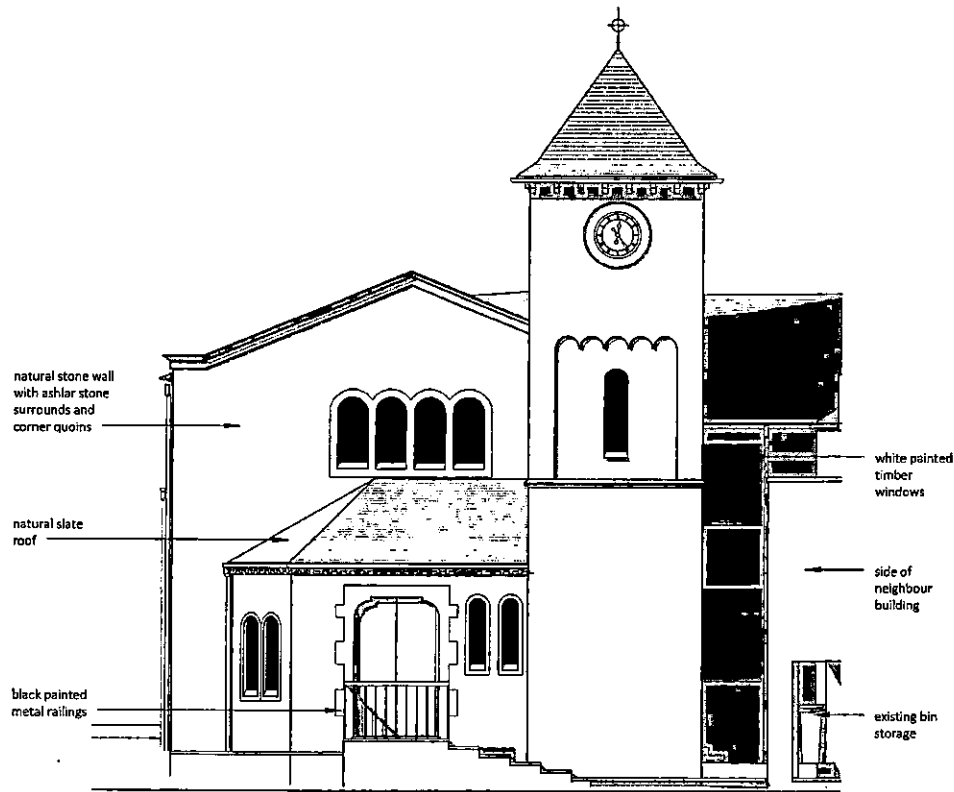
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1:100

2 03.0 FF as existing
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PLANNING



drawing no: 103
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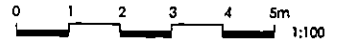
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103 east elevation - existing
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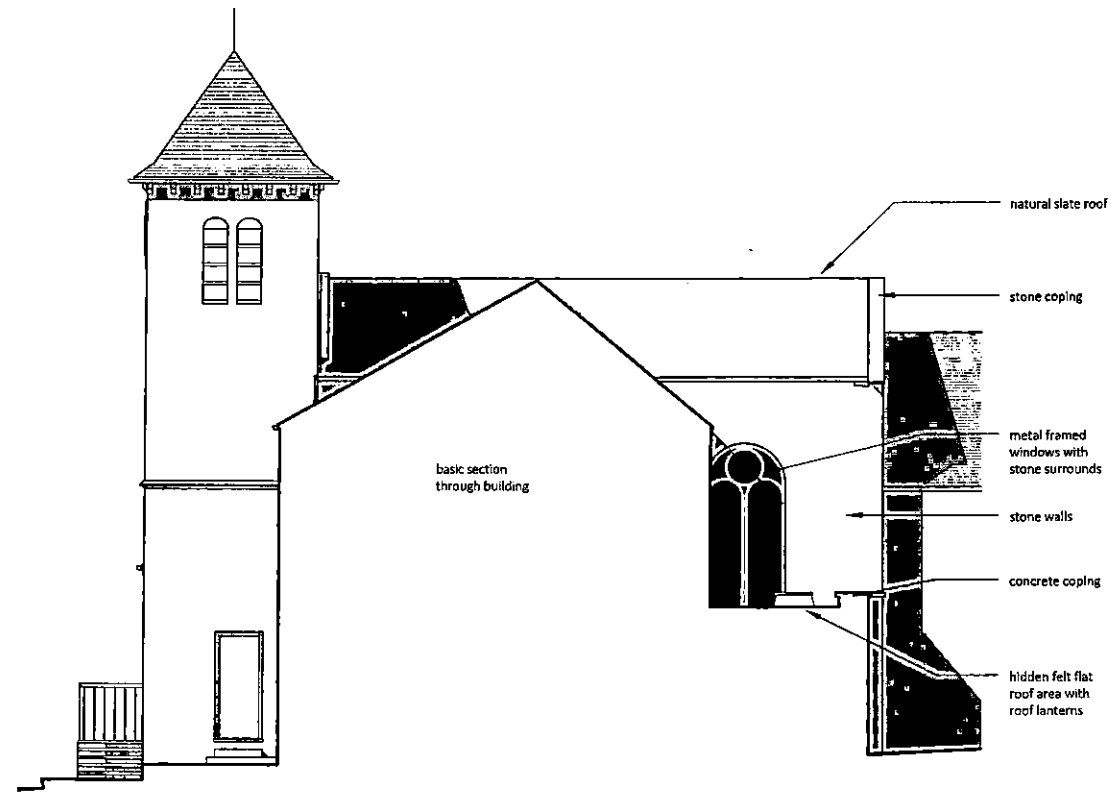
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102

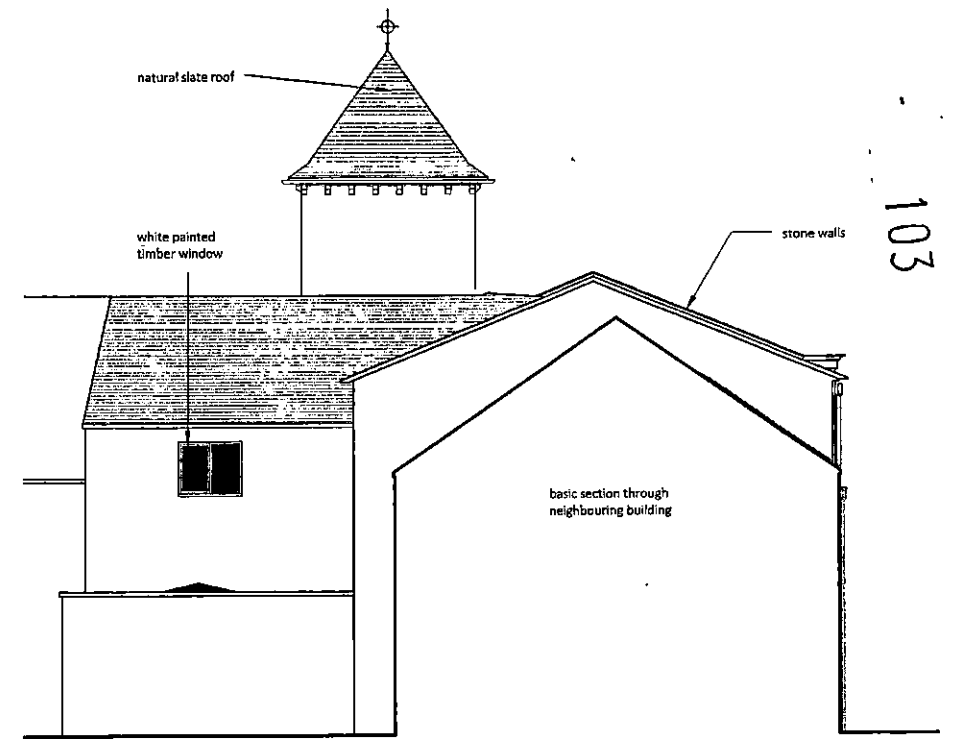
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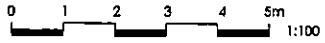
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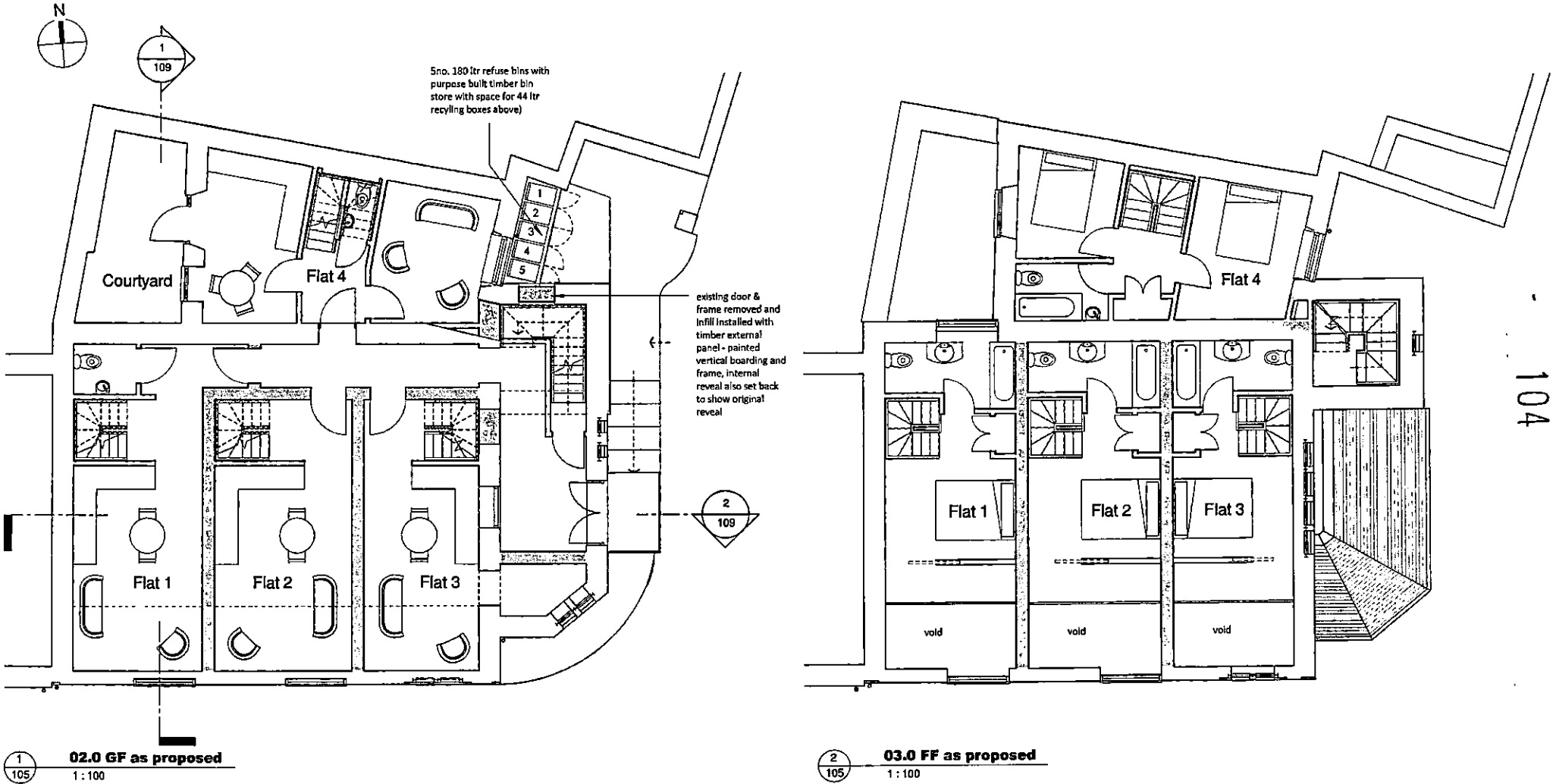
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104
west elevation - existing
1:100

103

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 revision: B



1 02.0 GF as proposed
 105 1:100

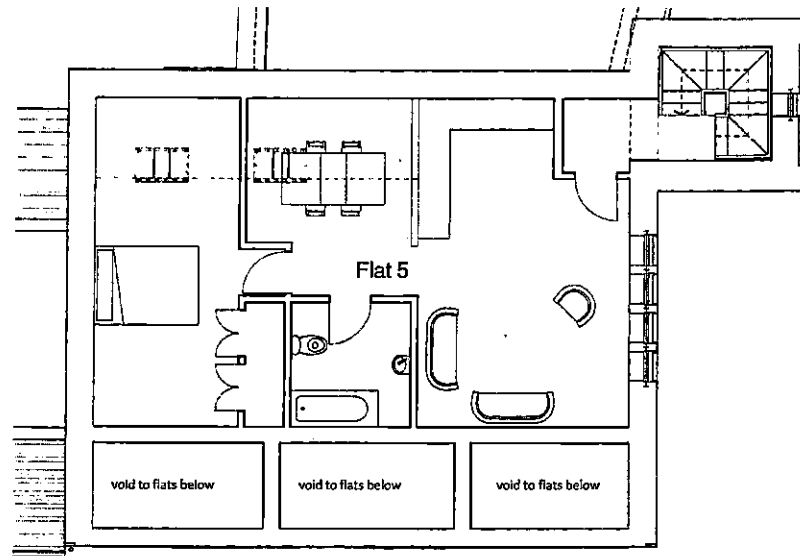
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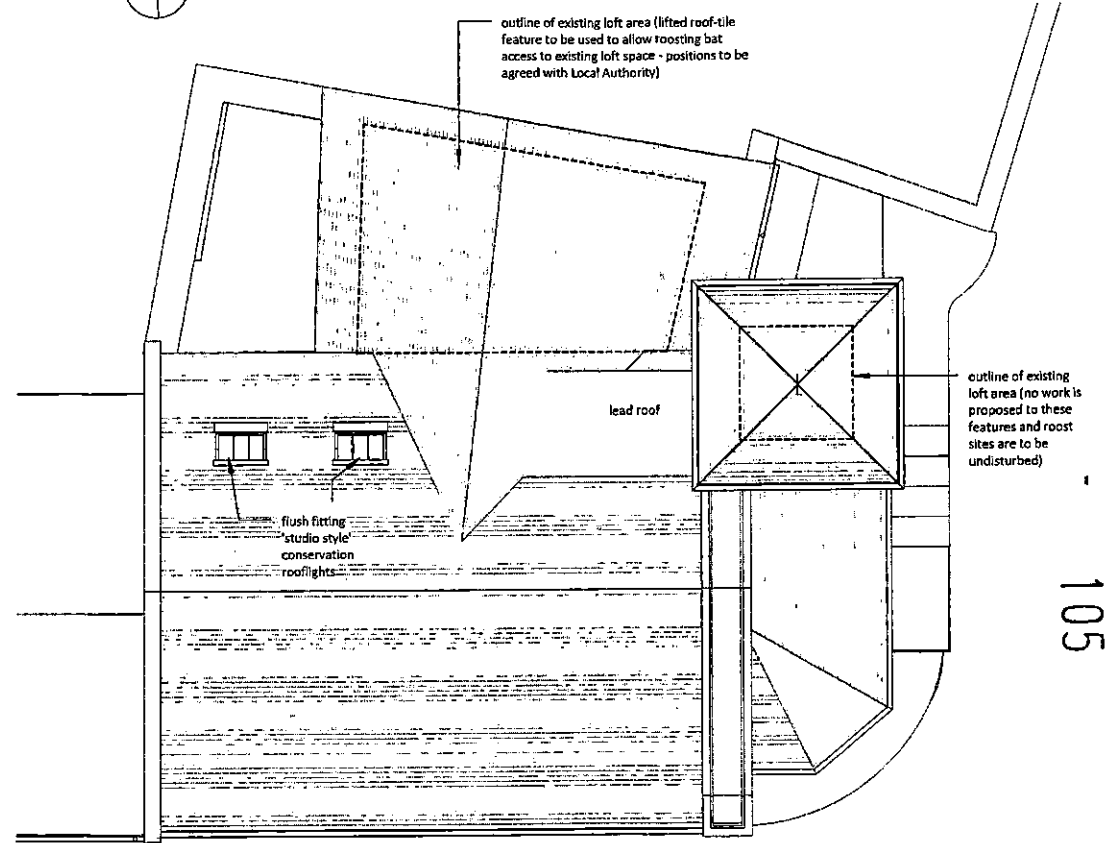
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job no: 15124
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revision: D



1
106
04.1 SF as proposed
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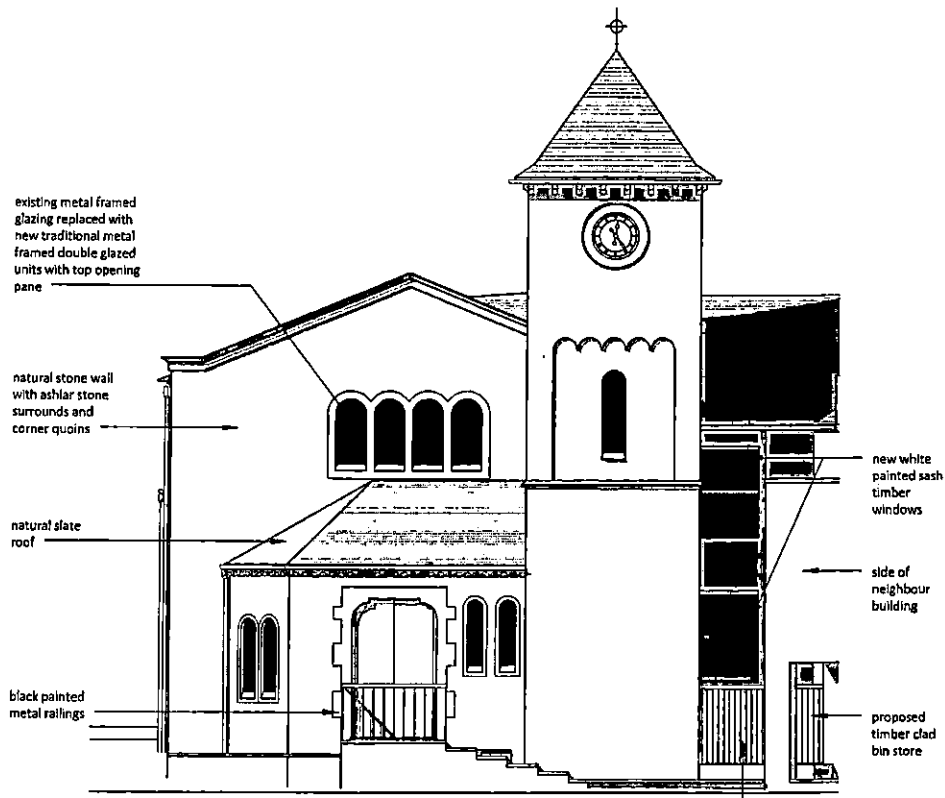


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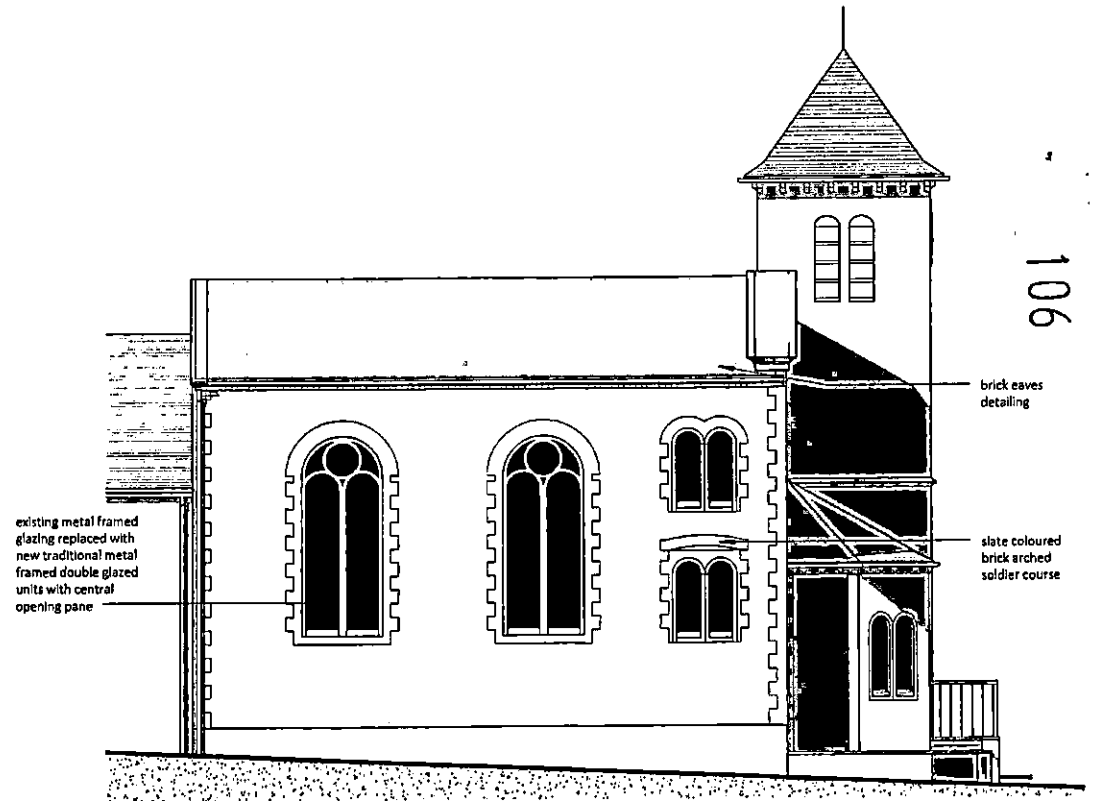


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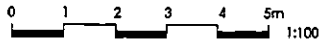
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bin store to be constructed from 20 x 100mm oak boards with 5mm gap between boards (oak supported on inner treated softwood frame) - details subject to Local Authority approval

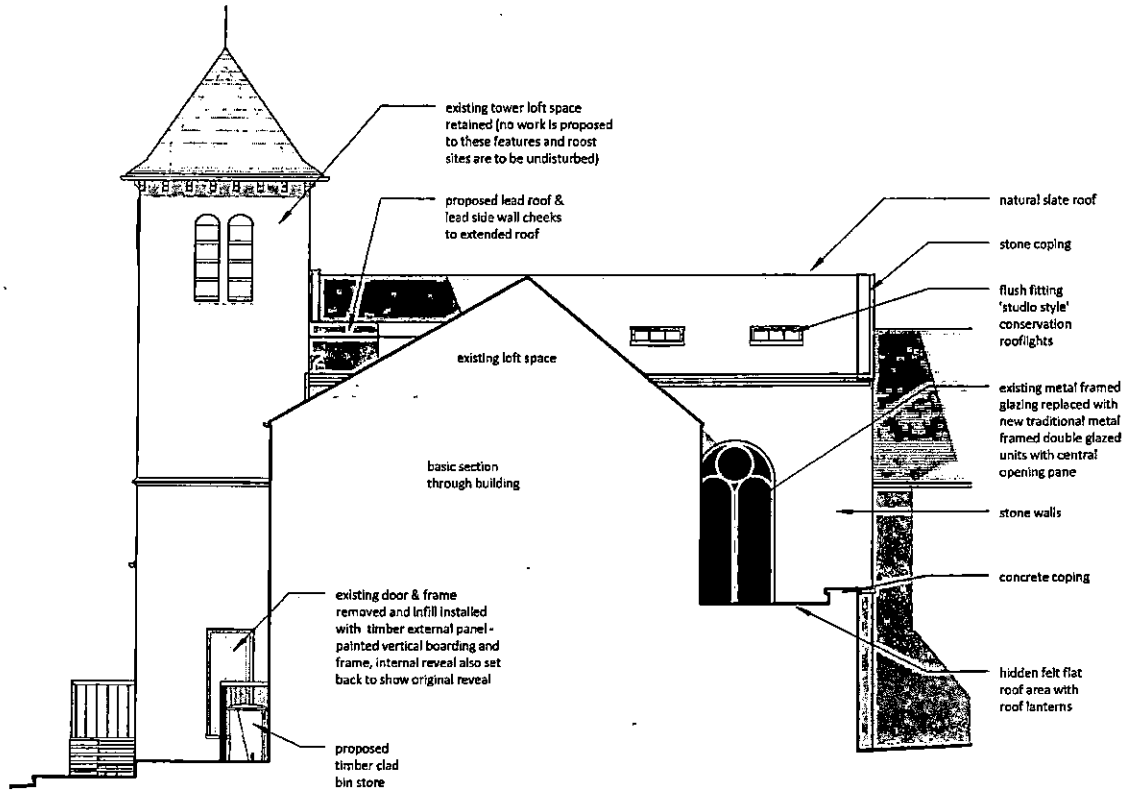


2 Setting out check south
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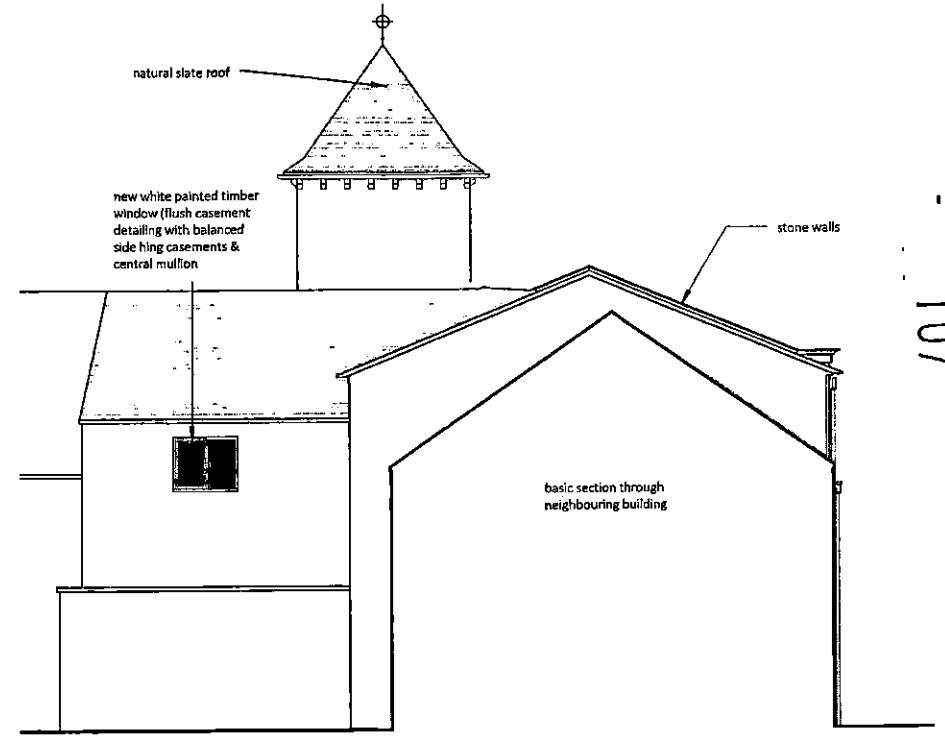
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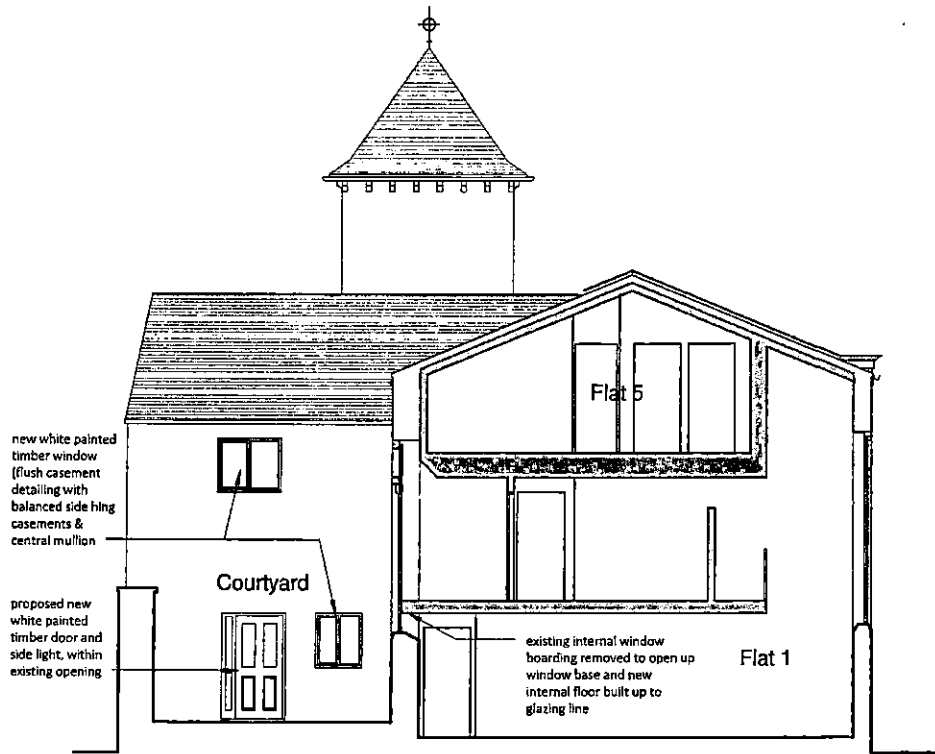


1 north elevation - proposed
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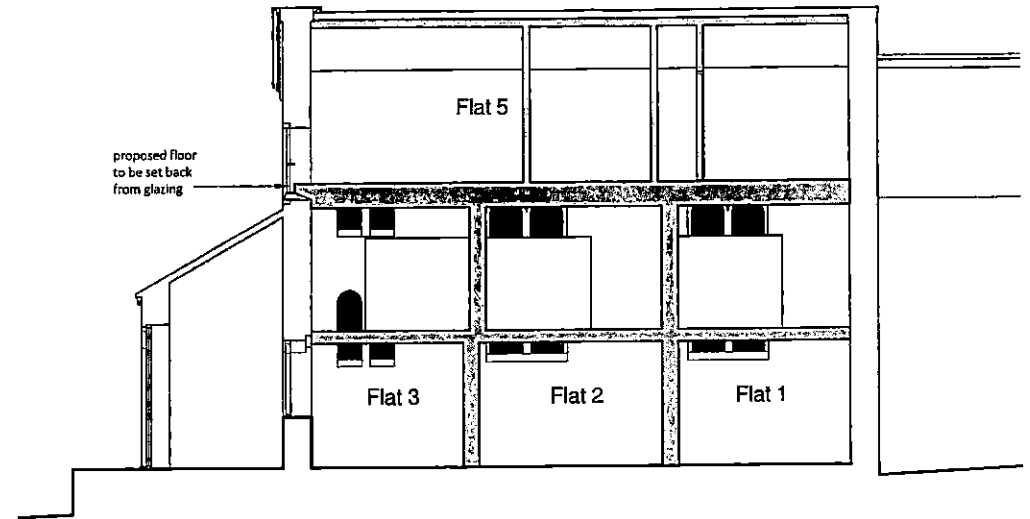


2 west elevation - proposed
 108 1:100

107



1
109 North South Section as proposed
1 : 100



2
109 East West Section as proposed
1 : 100