

Item No 06:-

16/03890/FUL (CT.5542/B)

**Coneygar Farm
Coneygar Road
Quenington
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 5BZ**

Conversion of and extension of existing building and change of use (part) from agricultural to domestic at Coneygar Farm Coneygar Road Quenington Gloucestershire GL7 5BZ

Full Application 16/03890/FUL (CT.5542/B)	
Applicant:	AW & EA Morris
Agent:	Mike Grosscurth (Surveys) Ltd
Case Officer:	Lydia Lewis
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Ray Theodoulou
Committee Date:	10th May 2017
RECOMMENDATION:	REFUSE

Main Issues:

- (a) Principle of Development
- (b) Design and Appearance, impact on non-designated heritage asset and AONB
- (c) Residential Amenity

Reasons for Referral:

The application is recommended for refusal and in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, permission from the Ward Member Councillor Theodoulou was required. Cllr Theodoulou has advised that as populations are getting older we can expect applications from the farming community where the parent farmers are wishing to retire and hand over to the next generation. It is socially beneficial if elderly parents continue to live near their children where possible and enjoy a standard of accommodation which is similar to that to which they have become accustomed.

In the present case the upcoming generation wishes to move into the family home and provide decent accommodation for the parents. Hence it is proposed to convert a more or less disused barn close to the family farm into new living space for the parents.

The whole farming complex forming the barn, the family house and other farm related buildings is located at the end of an un-made up track and is just about visible from the nearest minor road.

Councillor Theodoulou is of the view that the proposed extension of the barn is modest in dimension and will do no harm whatsoever to the AONB. The barn itself as it stands has no particular outstanding features.

Any adverse impact (and Cllr Theodoulou does not believe there is any) on the cluster of buildings in which the barn stands and its location in the AONB is at the very most de minimis and outweighed by the substantial social benefits of keeping the family together, decently housed and in the same location.

1. Site Description:

The application building forms part of Coneygar Farm. The farm covers some 650 acres and is located within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The applicants have advised that the last time the building was used for agricultural purposes was in the 1960s when 1000 laying hens were housed in this and other buildings around the farmyard.

It has also been stated that as of 2016 the stables have no practical use - they are far too small; the coach bay cannot accept anything larger than a small domestic car, and the first floor has been unused for decades due to unsafe access. It has also been suggested by the applicants' agent that the coach house is far too well built to have been designed for purely agricultural use - leastwise incorporation of the fireplace and chimney would suggest living accommodation in connection with the coachman thus more directly related to the house than the farm itself. The applicants' agent further states that use of the ground floor over the past 30 odd years has been domestic storage.

2. Relevant Planning History:

None.

3. Planning Policies:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
 LPR14 Conversion of Historic Agri Buildings
 LPR19 Develop outside Development Boundaries
 LPR42 Cotswold Design Code
 LPR46 Privacy & Gardens in Residential Deve

4. Observations of Consultees:

Conservation: Views incorporated within Officer Assessment.

Biodiversity Officer: No objections, subject to conditions.

ERS: If the Officer is minded to approve, a personal permission is recommended as an independent dwelling at this location may diminish the viability of the farm holding in future if the occupiers are not associated or tied to the farm business and the Council could expect potential nuisance complaints of noise or odour.

5. View of Town/Parish Council:

Quenington Parish Council: No objections.

6. Other Representations:

No representations have been received in response to the application publicity.

7. Applicant's Supporting Information:

Justification and Heritage Statement
 Protected Species Survey and Mitigation Strategy
 Design and Access Statement

8. Officer's Assessment:

(a) Principle of Development

The application site is located outside of an adopted development boundary and is therefore located within an area where Local Plan Policy 19 of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan 2001 - 2011 (referred to herein as the 'Local Plan') applies. Local Plan Policy 19 generally seeks to restrict the development of new build open market housing outside of development boundaries, unless supported by other policies in the adopted Local Plan.

Planning Inspectors have considered that Policy 19 is 'out of date' by virtue of the fact that the policy was 'time-expired, conforms to a superseded strategy, fails to reflect the advice in the

Framework (NPPF) in severely restricting rather than significantly boosting the supply of housing and conflicts with the emerging strategy. In any event, there are policies contained in the Local Plan that support the conversion of rural buildings and namely, Local Plan Policy 14 and 28.

The NPPF has at its heart a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. It states that 'there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles'. These are an economic role whereby it supports growth and innovation and contributes to a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The second role is a social one where it supports 'strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations'. The third role is an environmental one where it contributes to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that the three 'roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent'. It goes on to state that the 'planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.'

In instances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the Council has to have regard to Paragraph 14 of the NPPF which states that planning permission should be granted unless;

- ' - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.'

In the case of sites located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the second bullet point above is applicable by virtue of Footnote 9 accompanying Paragraph 14.

Policy 14 of the Local Plan states that the conversion of agricultural or similar buildings of historic interest and traditional design to an alternative use will be permitted unless the proposal, inter alia, would be significantly detrimental to the form, details, character or setting of the building.

The reasoned justification to this policy states that conversion for residential use may in some cases be acceptable but is often too destructive to the simple character of the building; as:

- Much original fabric may be lost by the introduction of new openings;
- Unbroken walls are disrupted with new doors and windows;
- Rooflines can be broken up by rooflights, dormer windows or chimney stacks;
- Interior spaces are subdivided by the introduction of floors and partition walls;
- Enclosed gardens, garages, sheds, fuel tanks and washing lines, all spoil the agricultural setting and the cohesiveness of the farmstead, or the splendid isolation of the field barn.

Local Plan Policy 28 states, inter alia, that conversion of rural buildings will be permitted where the building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion, to the proposed use, without substantial alteration, extension or re-building that would be tantamount to the erection of a new building. To comply with Local Plan Policy 28 it must be demonstrated that the structure would be capable of conversion effectively as is, subject to meeting the sequential test in respect of alternative uses set out in Clause 2 of the policy given its location in open countryside. Limited weight is however currently attributed to the sequential test set out in Local Plan Policy 28 given the introduction of more up to date policy guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) which is a material consideration.

It is noted that Paragraph 55 of the NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless the proposal represents the re-use redundant buildings that lead to an enhancement (amongst others) or is to meet an essential need for a rural worker.

The application proposes the conversion of an existing agricultural building to domestic to form one two bedroom dwelling. The unit would provide a retirement dwelling for the current owners of Coneygar Farm, allowing their son who currently lives in the farmhouse with the applicant to take over the farm. This will be a gradual process over a few years and the applicants would therefore still participate in a lesser degree in the day to day management of the farm.

Whilst the conversion of the building itself is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to a personal condition (an independent dwelling would not be acceptable in this location owing to its location within a working farm), the principle of extending the building is not as straightforward and is discussed in more detail below.

(b) Design and Appearance, impact on non-designated heritage asset and AONB

The subject of this application is an unlisted but attractive traditional farm building of a traditional form and of historic interest, dating from the C19. The building due to its age and surviving historic character and interest is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Section 12 of the NPPF requires that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining or enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Paragraph 135 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Section 7 of the NPPF requires good design. Paragraph 58 states that decisions should ensure that developments: function well in the long term and add to the overall quality of an area; establish a strong sense of place, creating attractive and comfortable places; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the identity of the surroundings and materials, whilst not stifling innovation. Paragraph 60 states that local distinctiveness should be promoted or reinforced and Paragraph 61 that connections between people and places, with the integration of new development into the built and historic environment.

Policy 42 of the Local Plan requires that development should be environmentally sustainable and designed in a manner that respects the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the Cotswold District with regard to style, setting, harmony, street scene, proportion, simplicity, materials and craftsmanship.

The proposals involve the conversion of the building to a two bedroom dwelling, including a single storey extension along the rear of the building. The proposals also involve internal works to form the living spaces and the insertion of a new internal staircase and a number of new windows to the rear façade. The building is a simple linear structure which forms part of a larger complex of farm buildings facing onto a large yard. The farm complex has a clear inward facing character, with the outside facades of the complex exhibiting a strong linear characteristic, with very sparse fenestration.

The building is of ashlar stone with a clay tile roof and dressed stonework surrounds to the windows and doors. The front elevation has a large opening to one end with a chamfered stonework to the jambs and arched head and a pedestrian door and two casement windows to the other end. Tallet steps lead up between the building and the adjacent stables to access the first floor by a door in the gable end. The blank rear elevation of the building backs onto the domestic gardens of the farmhouse.

The building retains its historic agricultural character through its simple linear form and appearance, its single aspect arrangement addressing the yard and its characteristic features such as the design of the openings to the front and the external tallet steps. The form and appearance of the barn and its established relationship to the neighbouring structures are key elements of its historic significance which are desirable to preserve. The inward-facing character

of the farm buildings and the unbroken line of the external wall of the complex is a key element of its historic character.

The width of the proposed extension originally spanned the whole width of the rear elevation, this has been amended and set in by 300 mm either side.

The proposed extension to the rear of the building will harm the historic form and appearance of the building and introduce an incongruous element to a currently unbroken rear façade of the building and adjacent stables. The extension would also confuse the important and characteristic single aspect arrangement of the farm buildings around the central yard. Despite the proposed use of vernacular materials elsewhere, the impact would be compounded by the considerable extent of glazing in both the walls and roof of the extension, which is without precedent in the existing structure. The proposals also involve the introduction of three large first floor windows in the rear elevation of the building, further disrupting the characteristic unbroken nature of the rear of the farm complex. The demolition of the characteristic external Tallet steps would result in the loss of an important and characteristic feature and harm the significance of the building. The proposal would not be prominent when viewed from the public domain, primarily only glimpsed from the public footpath to the south. Nevertheless, the effect of the proposal lies in more than its degree of public perceptibility. The proposal would cause clear harm to the simple character, vernacular appearance and historic significance of the building and its contribution to the distinct inward facing character of the agricultural complex.

The layout and form of the extension proposed together with some elements of its design are considered to detract from the character of the existing building, which currently makes a positive contribution to this part of the Cotswolds AONB as a non-designated heritage asset.

In light of comments received from the Conservation Officer, it was recommended that the applicant submit further information to support the application, particularly with regard to the need for the dwelling and how this would support the economic viability of the farm. It is considered that a smaller scale, more sensitively designed extension may be acceptable on the basis that any harm caused could be outweighed if sufficient benefits were identified.

The applicants agent outlined within the submitted justification and heritage statement that of the three remaining farm cottages one is occupied by a protected life tenant, one by the main farm worker, the other is required for seasonal casual workers albeit currently let. When asked for more information, the applicants agent stated that this was not relevant, with the applicant stepping back the short term need is to fill that manpower gap with replacement labour - simply to maintain the same manpower capability, thus whilst currently let the accommodation is already earmarked or a full time worker to maintain the status quo.

To further support the application, the applicants have submitted a letter in support of the application. This outlines the need for the proposals and states that it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the future economic wellbeing of the farm depends on the need to establish separate accommodation for the two generations. No further information has been submitted to support this statement.

The applicant also states that 'the extension is an essential part of the plan since, without it, there would be insufficient useable space - a tiny galley kitchen and a living room area spoilt by the need to accommodate a staircase. The extension cannot be seen from virtually any vantage point because of the high garden walls. The use of glass will be similar in effect to that of a greenhouse - which could well have been built there by our Victorian predecessors.'

Although the applicants do not currently require a wheelchair, the applicant's agent has made it clear that ground floor space is critical and the extension has been designed to accommodate a wheelchair should any future unforeseen need arise.

The Council consider that the building is of sufficient size to allow conversion to domestic use without extending the existing building. Whilst the need for ground floor accommodation is

understood, it does seem rather excessive which is proving difficult to justify given the harm caused.

The applicants' agent has referred to a number of other applications which they consider to be similar. These will be briefly discussed below although it must be remembered that every application is determined on its own merits. Horcott Farm (references: 16/03149/FUL and 16/03150/LBC) - this did not propose an extension, it was conversion only. Old Bull Pen (reference: 15/02234/FUL) - this was not part of a wider farm complex in the same way as the application building and furthermore it is noted that the width of the extension did not span the width of the building and it was less domestic in design and appearance than the application proposal. Ready Token (references: 16/00254/FUL and 17/00061/FUL). This relates to extensions to a residential pair of semi-detached cottages.

It is acknowledged that there may be some benefit gained from the proposal however, although further information has been requested, the Council remain unconvinced that the justification submitted is sufficient to outweigh the harm caused. As such, and for the reasons outlined above, the proposals are considered contrary to Local Plan Policies 14, 28 and 42 and Section 7 of the NPPF. The proposals will fail to sustain the significance of the heritage asset and the Cotswolds AONB and are therefore also judged to be contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF.

(c) Residential Amenity

Policy 46 of the Local Plan states that extensions to existing dwellings should provide adequate areas of open space around dwellings, so as to ensure reasonable privacy, daylight, and adequate private outdoor living space.

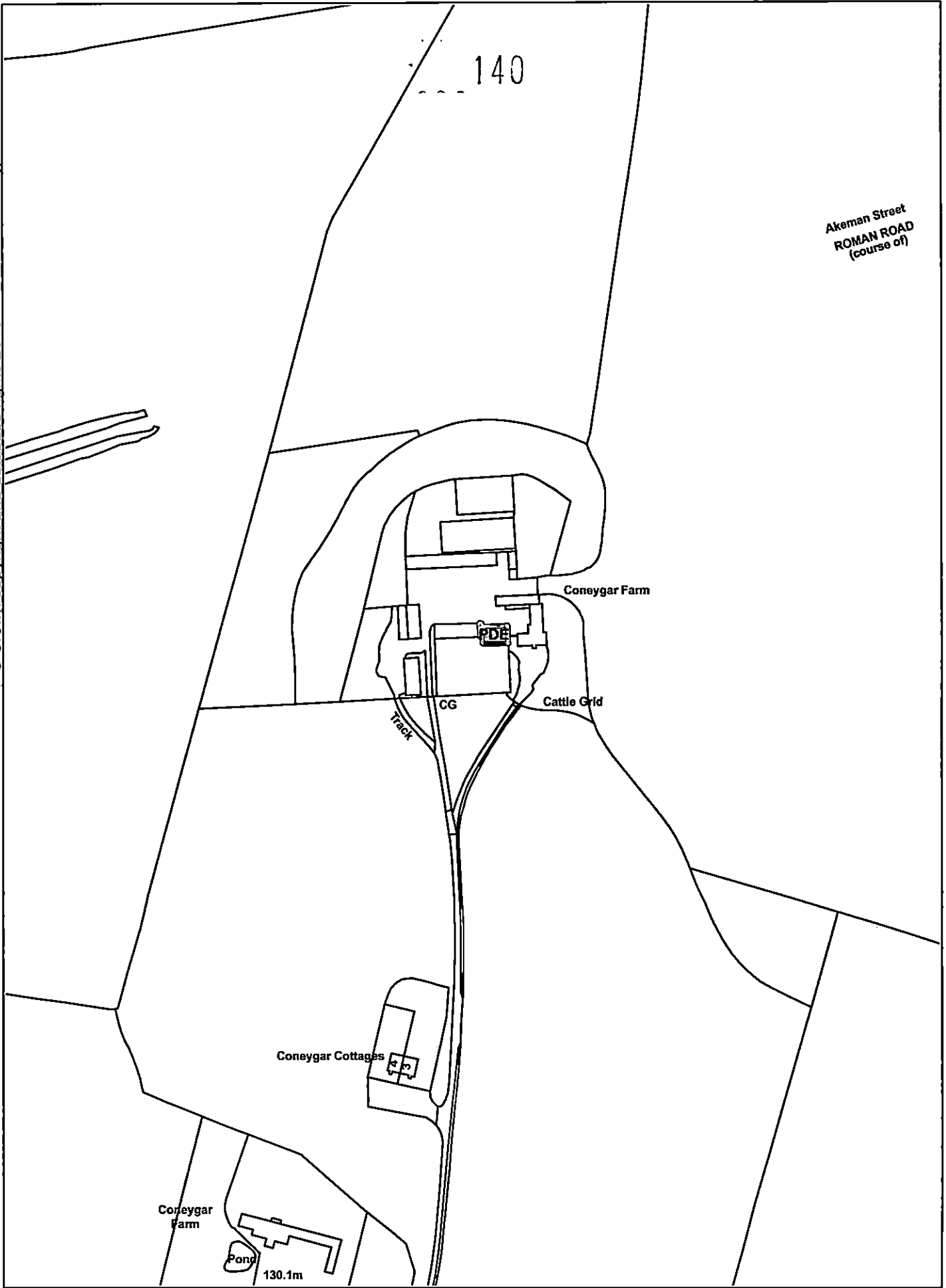
Given the context of development in relation to the surrounding properties it is considered the proposal would not cause significant harm to neighbouring living conditions of the neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing and overlooking, as such, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy 46 of the Local Plan, and Section 7 of the NPPF and is acceptable in respect of any potential impact on neighbouring living conditions.

9. Conclusion

Whilst the conversion of the building itself is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to a personal condition (an independent dwelling would not be acceptable in this location, owing to its location within a working farm). However, the layout and form of the extension proposed together with some elements of its design are considered to detract from the character of the existing building (which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset), which currently makes a positive contribution to this part of the Cotswolds AONB. Insufficient information has been submitted to justify the harm caused. The proposed extension and alterations are therefore unacceptable and permission is accordingly recommended for refusal.

10. Reason for Refusal:

1. The proposed extension and alterations by reason of their form, scale and design would undermine the simple form, character and appearance of this non-designated heritage asset. The proposal will therefore fail to sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage asset or the setting of the site within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as such would be contrary to Policies 14, 28 and 42 of the Cotswold District Local Plan and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



Coneygar Farm Quenington

Scale: 1:2500

Organisation: Cotswold District Council

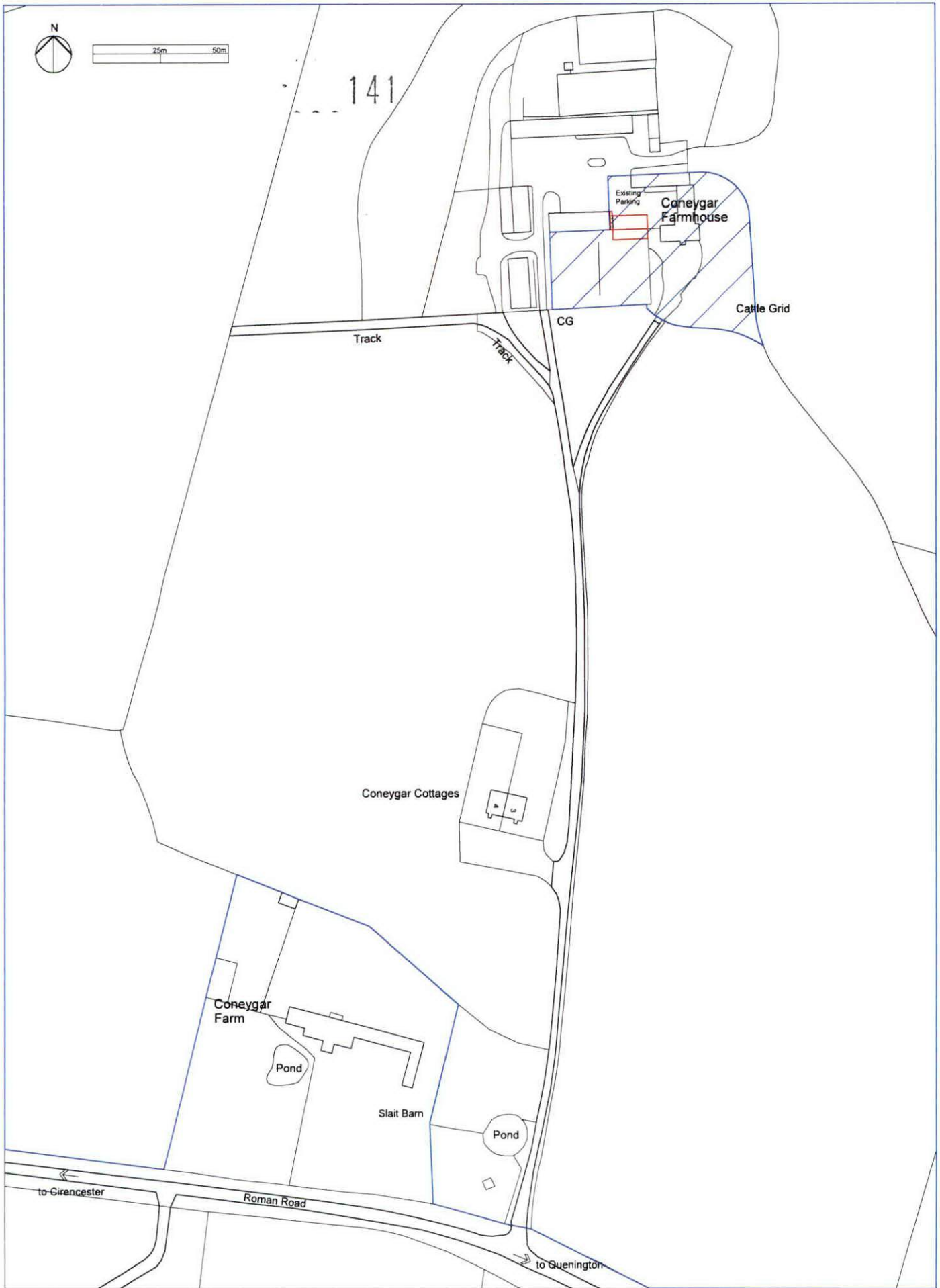
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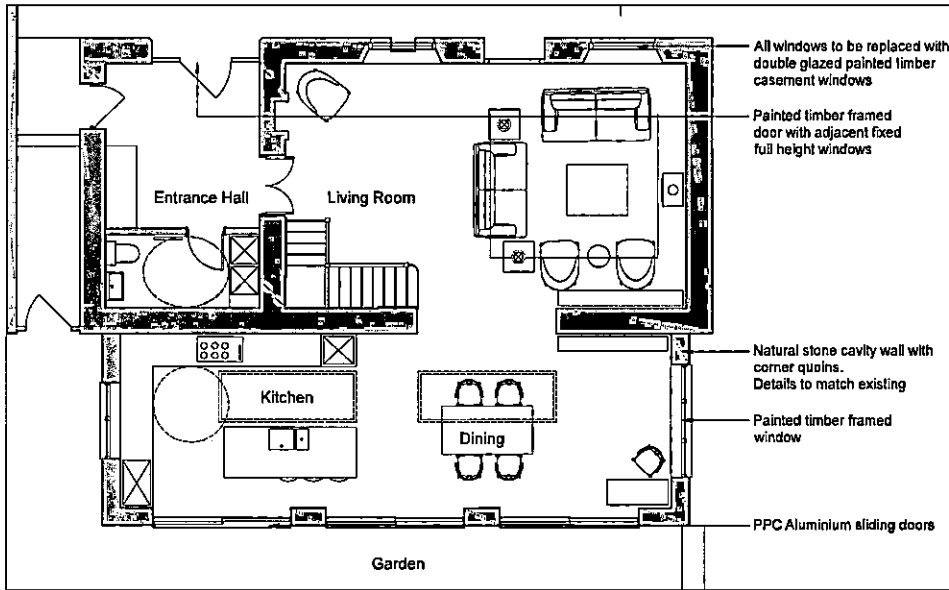


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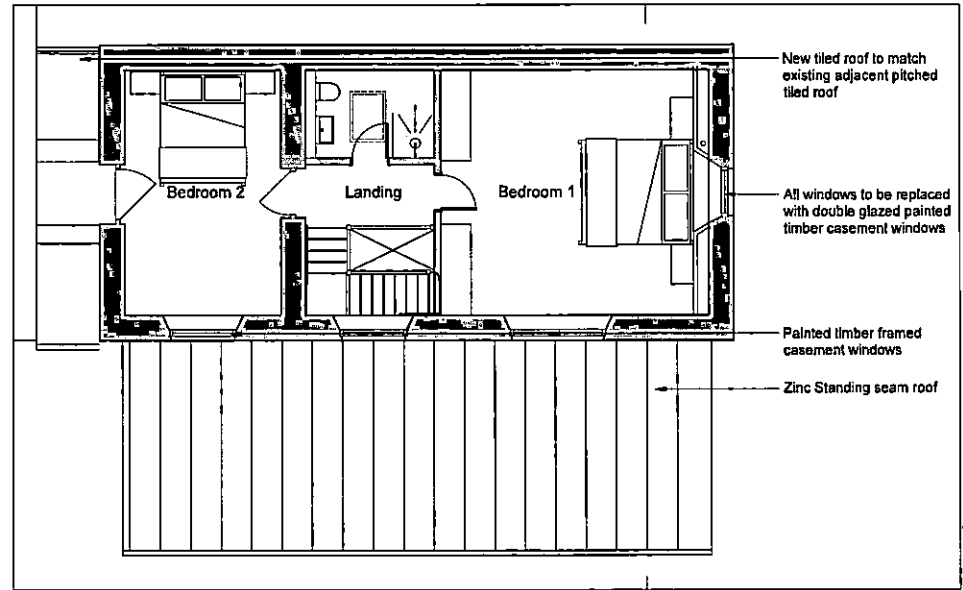




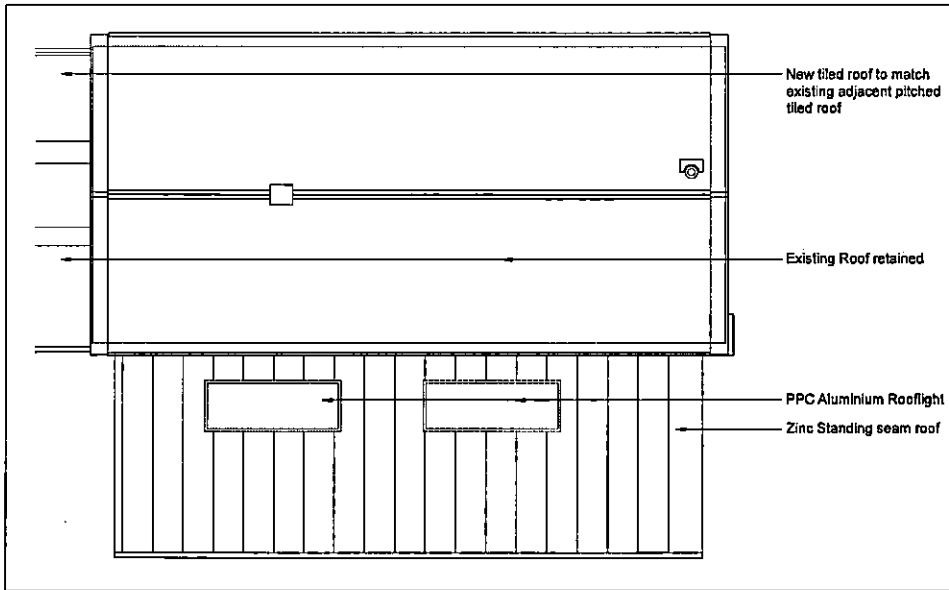
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A	Issued for Information	19.08.16	job title Coneygar Farm, Quenington	project number 16CF	drawing number 00	revision A	



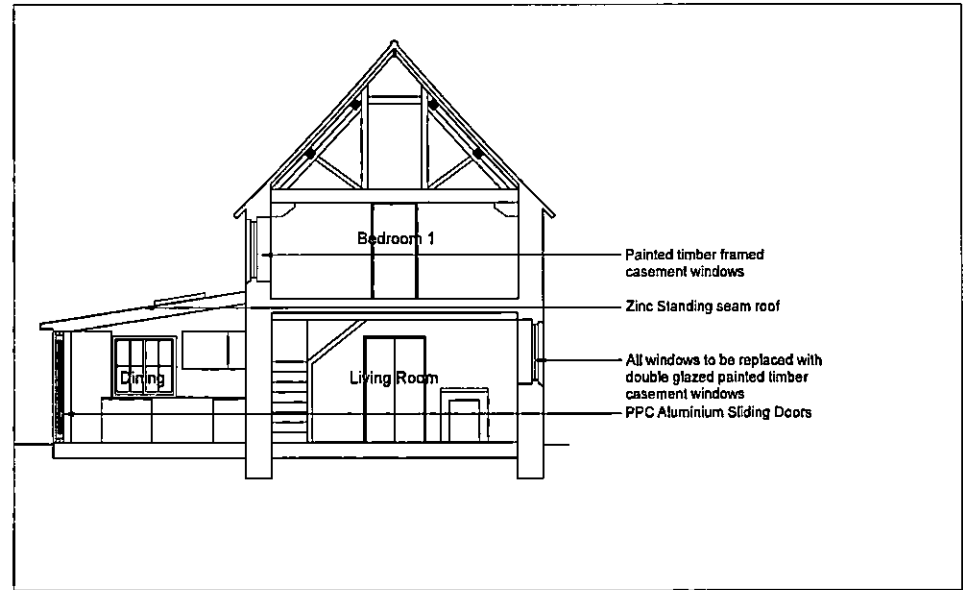
01: Ground Floor Plan



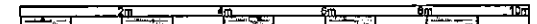
02: First Floor Plan



03: Roof Plan



04: Section



notes

01 All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor, such dimensions to be his responsibility
 02 Report all drawing errors, omissions & discrepancies to the architect.

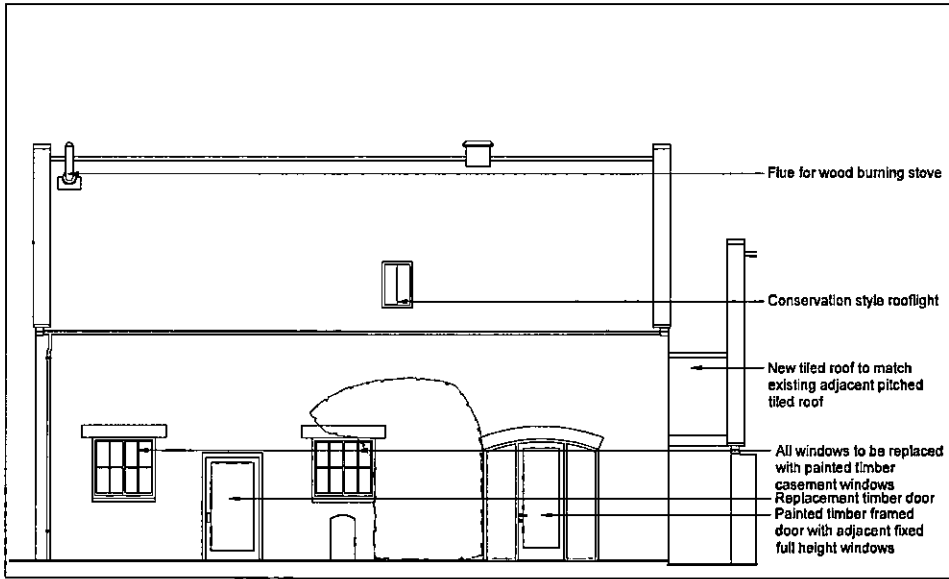
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	B	Issued for Comment	31.10.16
	C	Issued for Planning	07.11.16
	D	Issued for Planning	10.11.16
	E	Issued for Planning	26.03.17

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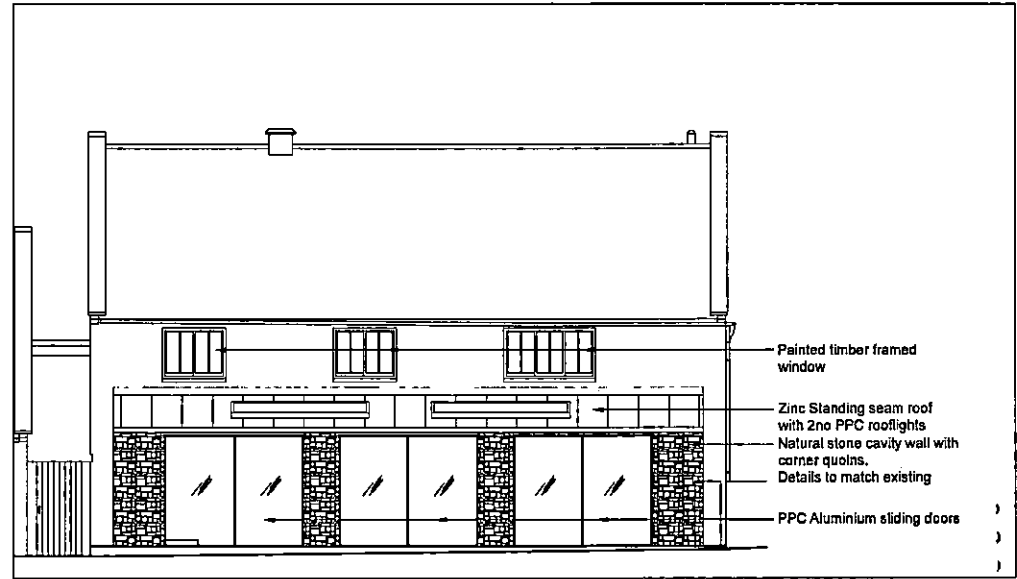
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drawing title / location		drawn by
Proposed Floor Plans and Section		JR
status	scale	checked by
PLANNING	1:100 @ A3	JR
project number	drawing number	revision
16CF	10	E

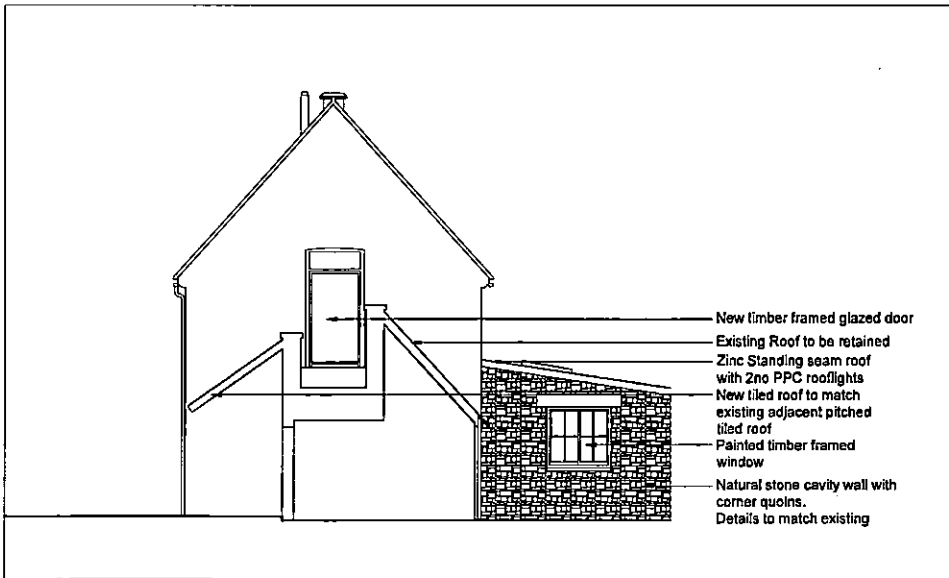
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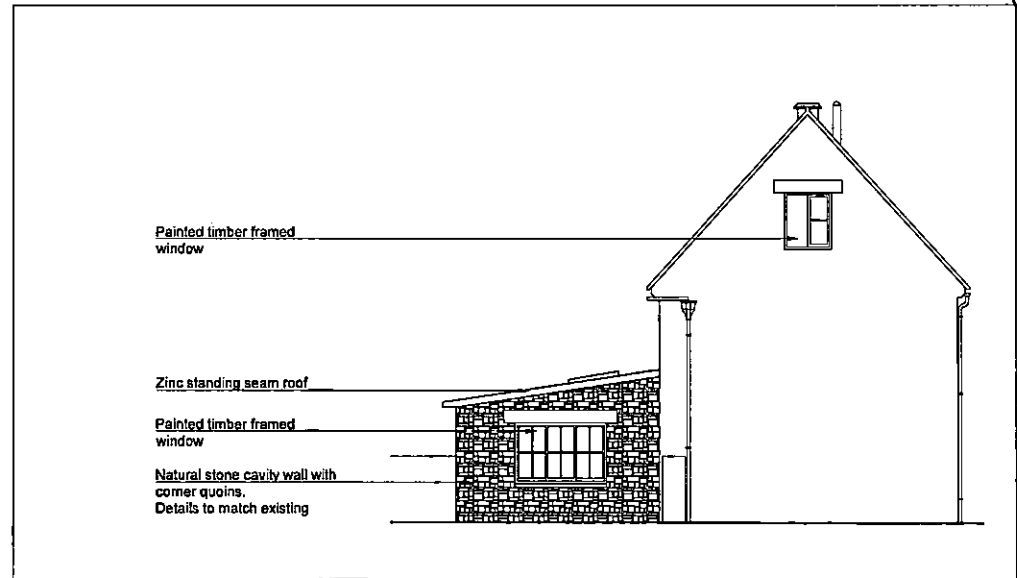
01: North Elevation



02: South Elevation



03: West Elevation



04: East Elevation

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notes
01 All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor, each client is to be his responsibility
02 Report all drawing errors, omissions & discrepancies to the architect.

key	rev	description	date
	-	Issued for Planning	13.09.16
	A	Issued for Planning	07.11.16
	B	Issued for Planning	10.11.16
	C	Issued for Planning	29.03.17

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drawing title / location Proposed Elevations		drawn by JR
status PLANNING	scale 1:100 @ A3	checked by JR
project number 16CF	drawing number 11	revision C

