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2227

Timber Mill, Ford Plantation, Stoodleigh

Revisions

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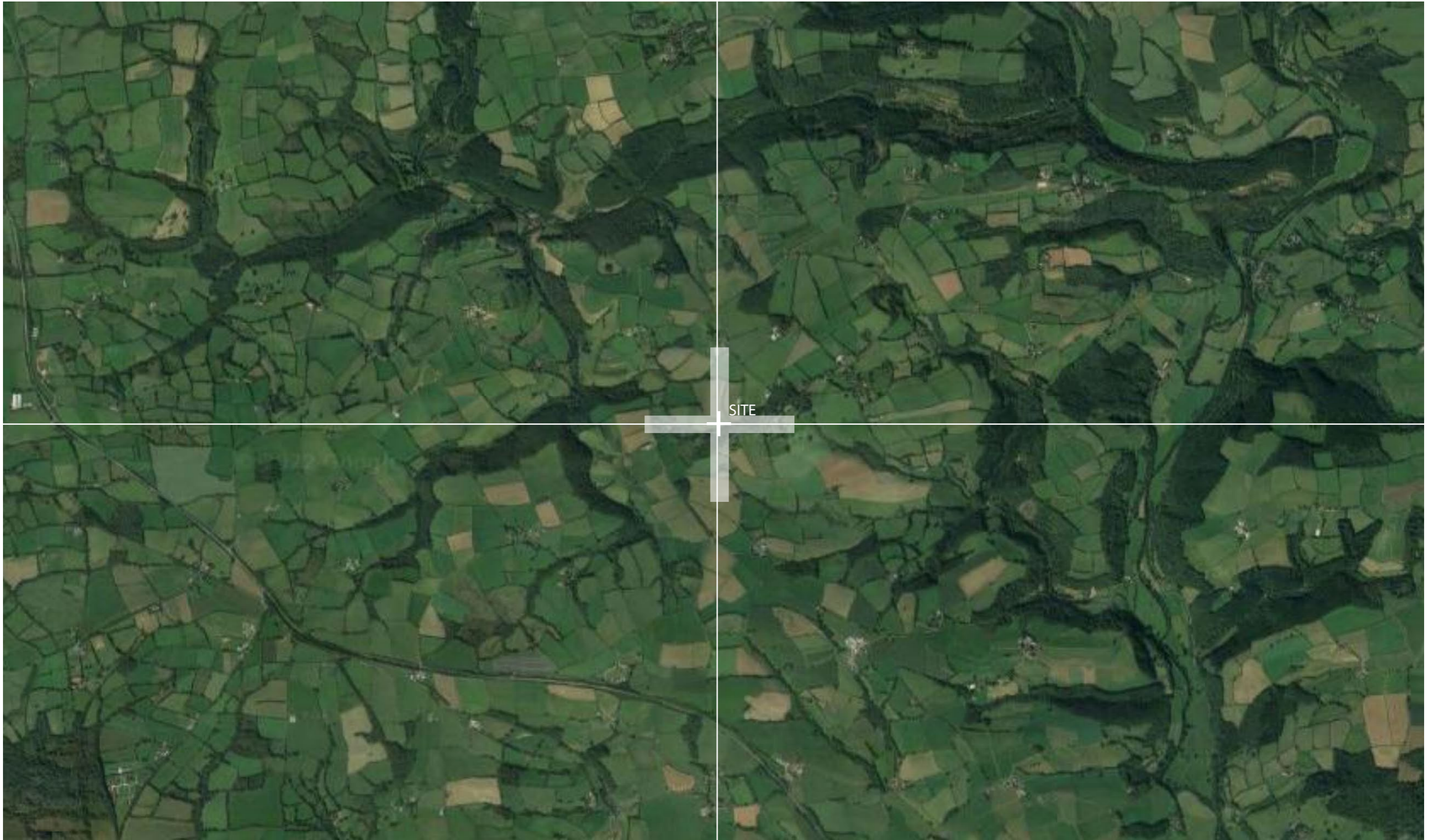


The purpose of this report is to investigate the viability for turning an old, run down, saw mill on the edge of Stoodleigh into a vibrant craft and restoration hub with associated dwelling for the owner

1.0

Introduction

- 1.01 Purpose of Report
- 1.02 Project Background, Brief & Need
- 1.03 Project vision



Site Location (macro)

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Site Location (micro)

1.01

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to investigate the viability in turning a currently run down former timber mill into a vibrant hub of craft based workshops and antique storage. Due to the value and sensitivity of some of the objects stored on site we are also proposing a dwelling for the owner / antique dealer.

This report is broken into two key parts. Firstly there is extensive context analysis that looks at the characteristics of Stoodliegh village and conservation area as well as the local constraints of the site and its immediate surroundings.

The second part of the report focuses on the proposed development of the site looking at site opportunities, adjacencies and general site layout and massing.

The design is not resolved in any detail however the fundamental principles / rules of how the site should be developed is explored in full.



Site overview

1.02

Project Background, Brief & Need

The client is the current owner of the site which is a former timber Mill that he acquired in Aug 2020. The use as a saw mill has long since expired and currently the buildings are used as storage for the clients antique business. The buildings are however starting to fall apart due to their age and exposure to the elements due to general lack of maintenance and the haphazard nature of their construction.

Mr Harris believes that there is an opportunity to take the site that currently is within use class B1 and develop a group of modern workshops that could form the basis of a craft business hub. This would provide the workshop spaces for the skills associated with antique restoration. However Mr Harris is open for other crafts / skills to use the proposed spaces as long as they are associated with creative / traditional skills.

Along with the proposed workshops will also be Mr Harris's workshop and associated display area for the potential sale of the antique items. Due to the nature and value of these items Mr Harris would also like to propose a dwelling on site that is connected directly to his workshop. This would enable him to be able to keep his antiques and the site secure in hours outside of the business use. The dwelling could be tied to the use of the site taking it out of the realm of traditional market housing.

Due to Stoodleighs location adjacent to the North Devon Link Road and its situation close to major towns and the motorway network Mr. Harris believes that it is an ideal location for his Antique business but could also provide a great place for a rural, craft enterprise that could have the potential to attract customers from far further afield.

Along with the craft workshops there will also be a very small cafe and social space that will provide the opportunity for the people on site to socialise / display work as well as a location for local walkers and residents to get a coffee and a slice of cake.



Shared workshop



Craft based workshop



Bristol, Paint Works creative hub

1.03

Inspiration and vision

The vision for the site goes beyond just its redevelopment and re-use within its use class but strives to create a collection of spaces that allows multiple skilled crafts people and creatives to come together in one place. This can then provide an focal point for people requiring those skills to discover a network of associated craftsmen. The ultimate scenario would be to have a collection of skills associated with the restoration of antiques where customers could appreciate the restoration process from the beginning to end. However a collection of artists, makers and potters would also develop a creative and interesting collective that would greatly impact the local village and would attract customers from outside the local area.

The workshops could be a mixture of lease type from renting desk and work bench space to single people or providing a whole workshop for a larger business. This model is also flexible so could also respond with growing businesses. the proposed site and framework has real potential to bring small craft businesses together where skills can be shared creating a perfect incubator for small skilled / creative start ups as well as longer established small business.

The real attraction is having a selection of skilled makers / crafts people in a beautiful rural setting. not only providing the space for them to work the site also offers the opportunity for a space fro them to relax with a small cafe and outdoor seating area. This could be a great way or the business to mix but also provide an informal way for members of the public to become acquainted with the business in a more informal manner.

Transparency will be crucial in providing a space where the skills can really be put on show and provide an interesting back drop to the site. There will need to be a visibility that can then foster a culture of openness and approachability for members of the public.

This space could also provide the opportunity for events that have a connection to the local community and beyond with craft and skills at its core.

2.0

Site analysis

- 2.01 Village context and land use
- 2.02 Conservation area
- 2.03 Site description
- 2.04 Site constraints
- 2.05 Impact of site on conservation area and village

Agricultural buildings
 Dwellings
 Public / civic buildings



Stoodleigh use plan



Agricultural cluster



Linear dwellings

2.01

Village context and land use

To understand the importance of the site we have to understand the wider context of Stoodleigh and the local landscape. Stoodleigh sits 240m above sea level on the upper slopes of the rolling hills overlooking the River Exe valley. It is located centrally between the southern tip of Exmoor National Park and the North of Tiverton. The wider landscaped is characterised by patchwork of farmland that is broken up by plantations and woodland. Stoodleigh is no different with a strip of woodland that runs along the main East West axis through the village. The site itself is located on the edge of one of the areas of woodland that is designated as a Nature Recovery Network site.

Stoodleigh has a linear development pattern distributed along the roads that navigate the patchwork of fields that form the wider landscape. The development that defines the village runs for roughly 800m along Rackenford and West End Lane. The Church and a small cluster of dwellings and former farm buildings are located to the East end of the village on Church Style that runs perpendicular to Rackenford. Most dwellings / buildings sit adjacent to the road either as cottages that are parallel or clusters of buildings that are organised around courtyards. This most probably relates back to former agricultural uses and simple workers cottages. There is however some modern infill to the village with bungalows and houses that sit slightly further back from the road.

Outside of the traditional cottages and dwelling along the linear development there are also clear clusters of agricultural buildings. These vary from traditional stone barns and outbuildings to modern barns. The traditional clusters can be found within the village but most of the agricultural related buildings sit on the periphery as well as being dotted in the wider landscape. A good example of this is the traditional cluster of barns located to the South of the site only 100m away.

There is a very clear precedent for the proposed site to follow. Given its location to the edge of the village a more informal cluster of buildings would be entirely appropriate given the analysis of similar conditions on the periphery of the village.

2.02

Conservation area

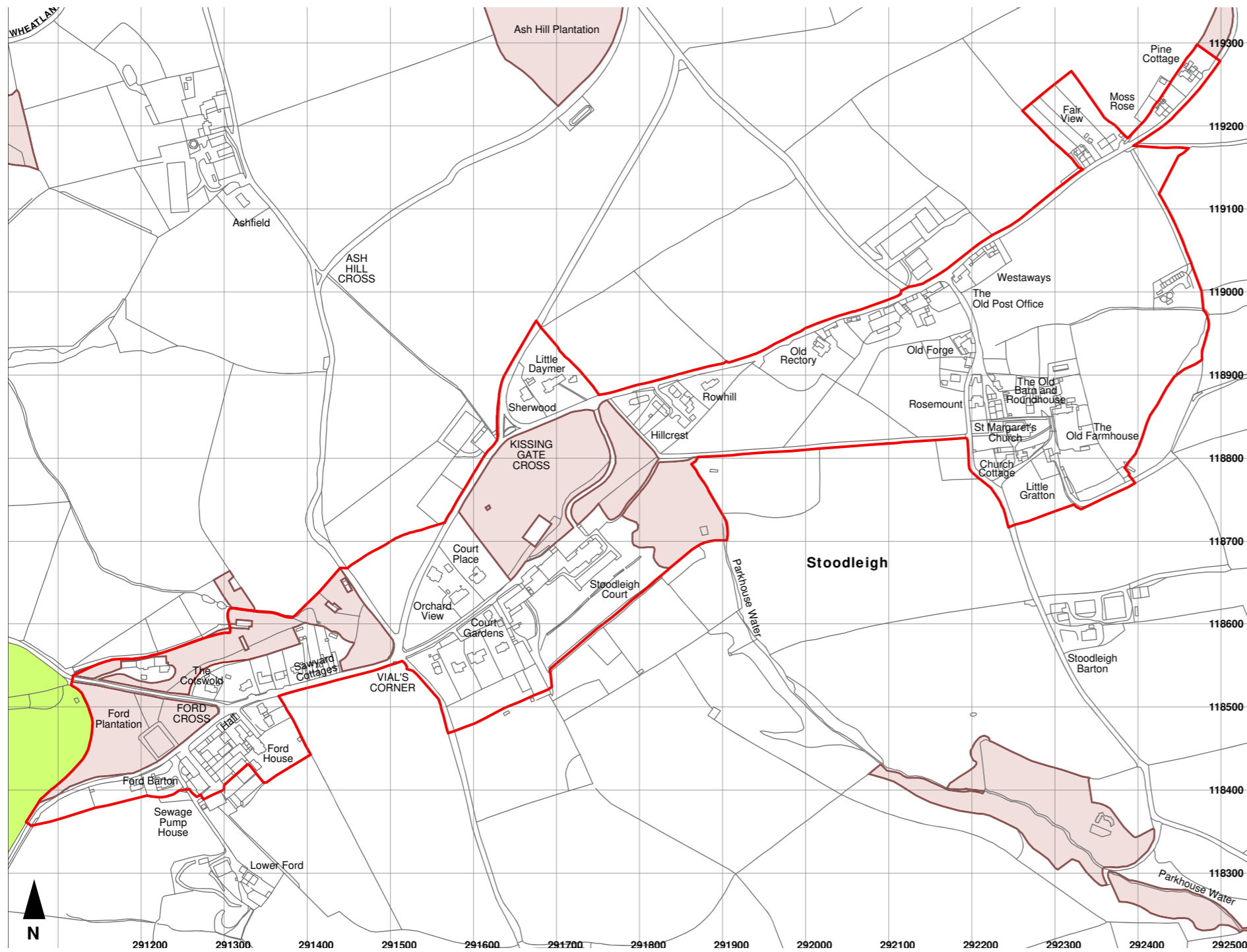
Although there is no management plan or character appraisal for Stoodleigh conservation area there are some very clear aspects that define the character in the village, especially at the West end . The conservation area very noticeably encompasses both built features as well as landscape feature such as woodland. This is especially relevant to the site as the woodland on the site is located in the Western tip of the conservation area.

Within the conservation area there are a number of listed buildings. These include St Margaret's Church and Stoodleigh Court but also includes a number of agricultural buildings throughout the village, with the most notable being a cluster of barns to the West side of the village. With the church and house aside the characteristics of the other important buildings are as follows;

- Slate roofs
- Rough faced stone walls with dark red and buff stone colour with buff mortar
- Some rendered walls with red brick reveal and corner details
- Sash windows divided into smaller panes with glazing bars
- Exposed oak frames

There are of course multiple dwellings within the conservation area that don't conform to the either the palette of material or the scale and proportions typically found in the area. The patchwork of woodland is also as important as the built fabric as the woodlands form the entrances tot the west side of the village.

The proposed development will respect the woodland currently on the site as well as use a considered palette of material that is also respectful of the important built fabric within the conservation area.



Plan of Stoodleigh conservation area



Village hall and adjacent listed dwelling



St Margaret's Church



Linear Infill development



Listed barns to the South

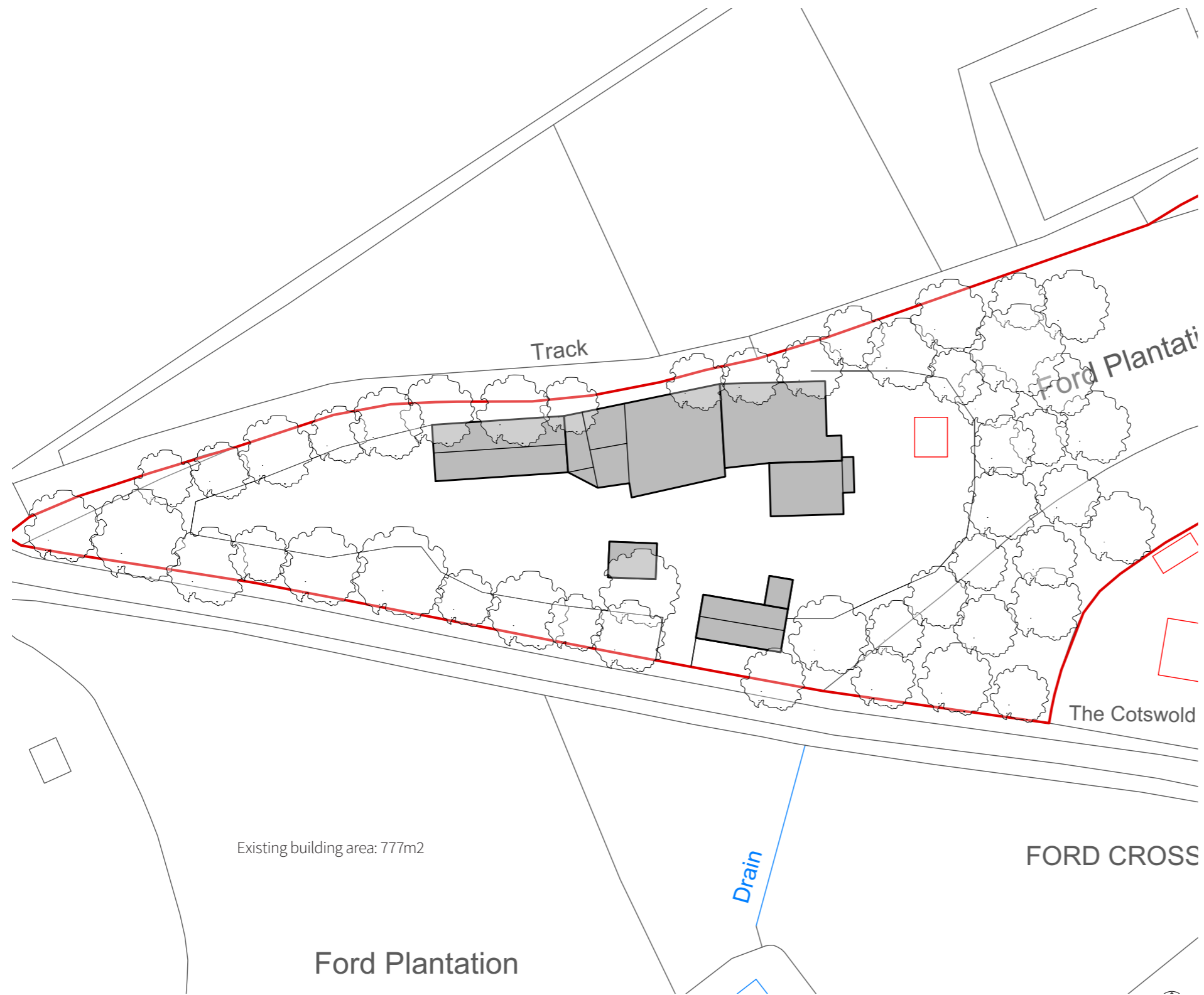


Plan of Stoodleigh conservation area



Stoodleigh Court

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2.03

Site description

Ford Plantation is located in the western corner of the village and is accessed off of the road that connects West End Lane to Rull Hill. The site itself covers an area of 7778m² and is shaped like a triangular wedge with the narrowest part to the West end. The site is most probably covered in trees for 50% of the area, given its location in the conservation area the majority of these trees will be protected given their trunk diameter.

Surrounding the site to the North is agricultural land that is separated from the site boundary by a gravel track that serves the dwelling to the North East. To the East side of the site, through the woodland, sits a bungalow that then gives way to the linear residential development of the village along the main access road. To the South side of the site on the opposite side of the road is more woodland and a storage pond. The main road through the village is located to the South of the site less than 50m away.

The site boundary is predominantly defined by the woodland. To the Southern edge along the adjacent road there is a considerable amount of banking made from earth moved on the site. This bank defines the Southern edge and Eastern edge of the clearing and provides considerable visual screening of the site at low level. This combined with the trees and shrubs means that there is very limited visibility into the site.

Access to the clearing and buildings is provided through the main gate located roughly a 1/3 along the southern boundary of the site. The opening is defined by a drop in the bunding and is kept secure by two large side hung timber gates, this also screens any potential visibility into the site.

The site has a slight gradient running East to West, with the site being lower in the West and slightly higher in the East.

The existing buildings - Collection of mono pitch timber and steel frames that have been clad in timber and metal profile sheeting. It appears as if the larger building to the west end was built first with the additions being added over time to the East. The buildings are now in a very run down state that are no longer fit for purpose. The saw mill use has long since gone with the buildings now being used as storage and workshop space for the restoration of My Harris's Antiques.



Site from above



Site overview from the south



Site viewed closer from the west



Site from the West



Site from the East



Site from the north

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View of the storage buildings and sheds



Track to the northern boundary



Narrow corner to the west end of the site



Access from the adjacent road



Woodland to the east of the site

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West side of the buildings



Courtyard area and buildings



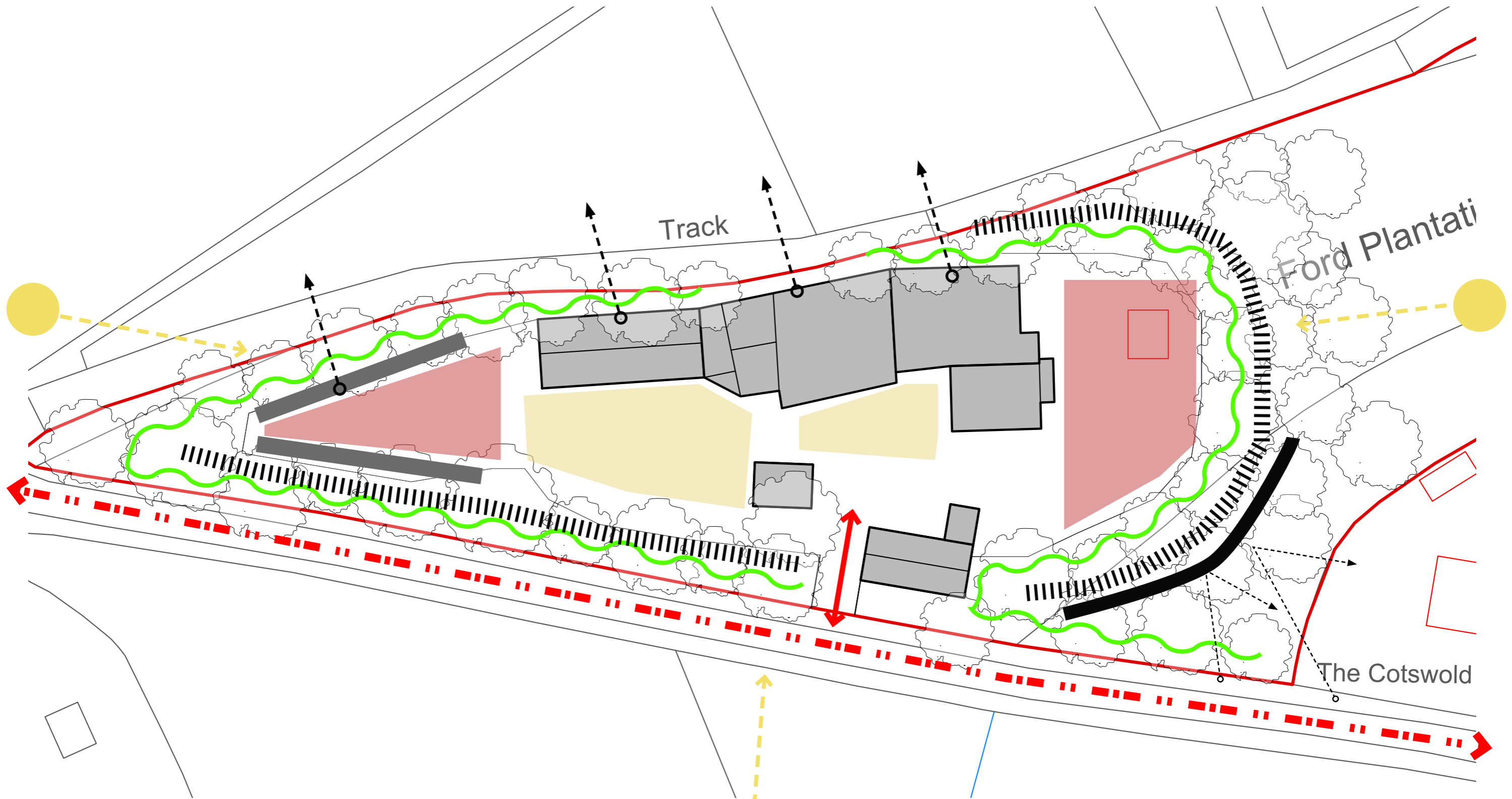
Gated access



Courtyard looking west



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2.04

Site Constraints

Due to the woodland forming part of the conservation area and the protected status of the trees the opportunities and constraints will only apply to the clearing and access to the site as the woodland will remain predominantly unchanged.

Access - Access will remain in the same place as its well established with the drop in bunding and mature trees to either side. This access forms a natural partition in the site in terms of separating the more public light industrial use from the dwelling.

Vegetation - As discussed the site has a large area of coverage by mature woodland that also forms part of the Nature Recovery Network as defined in the Devon Environment Viewer. The proposed site area sits within a clearing to the West side of the site that narrows to a point. The woodland coverage is thick to the East which then forms a thin perimeter around the main clearing of the site. The vegetation coverage thins to smaller trees and shrubs to the North side behind the existing buildings.

Bunding - Surrounding the Southern and Eastern side of the clearing is some substantial bunding. This is over 1.8m high in places and has most probably been formed when clearing the site to lay the concrete hard standing area. The bunding especially along the adjacent road forms some considerable visual screening making the buildings on site almost invisible from the Southern approach.

Circulation area and lay down - The buildings are located along the northern boundary apart from a couple of timber sheds. This means that the vehicle access and parking area is situated to the south side. This has the advantage of allowing an open area to provide light to the southern faces of the existing buildings. The circulation / open space also continues to the east side of the buildings as well as into a tapering wedge to the west.

Under used space - The wedge to the west side of the site sits under used as it is a difficult shape. The open area to the east side of the site is also under used as there is little requirement for large external storage space.

Site shape - The site is shaped as a wedge that leaves certain areas difficult to use, especially when considering the placement of units such as workshops.

Sun path - Due to the site clearing being defined by tall trees there is the potential for a large amount of solar shading, especially through the winter months. This makes the siting of the proposed buildings extremely important as they will need to take advantage of any summer sun that's available.

Views into the site - Views into the site are limited due to the heavily vegetated nature of the site perimeter. Combined with the bunding it's extremely difficult to get glimpses of the site use and the existing buildings.

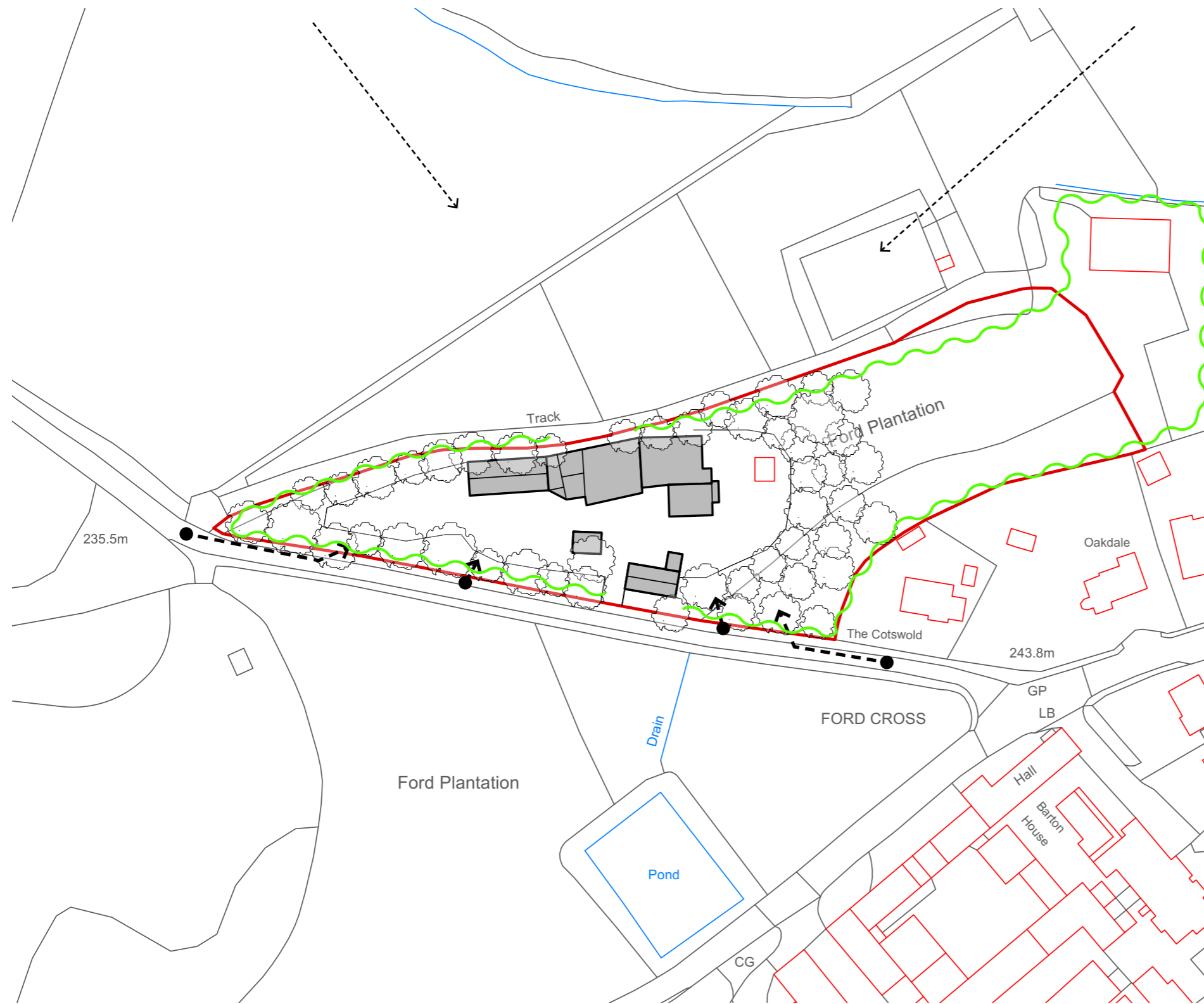
Views out of the site - There are some broken views out of the site that are provided by some thinning of the surrounding trees and shrubs. This is most notable on the northern boundary where there is the potential for great views across the rolling countryside. These views are currently concealed by the existing buildings.



Woodland forming screening to road



Woodland forming screening to road



2.05

Impact of site on conservation area and village

The impact of the site on the conservation area and the wider landscape is extremely limited. As discussed on the site constraints the site is bordered on all sides by mature vegetation making any views into the site extremely limited and obscured.

It may be possible to get long distance glimpses of the site from the North East and the North West from around 1km or more. However the Northern boundary of the site is well vegetated and even making out the outbuildings would be difficult.

Immediate views into the site are only available when travelling along the road that the site is accessed off. Due to the mature vegetation and extensive bunding it is extremely difficult to get any considerable views to the buildings or any activities taking place on the site.

It is easy to conclude that the site has a minimal impact on the conservation area in its current form. As the trees form part of the Nature Recovery Network and the conservation area the trees that currently screen the site will largely remain as they are.



3.0

Planning policy

3.01 Local planning policy

3.01

Local planning policy

There are a number of local planning policies that apply to the sites development these include; DM8, DM18 and DM19 along with general policies relating to appropriate design in sensitive areas.

DM8

Rural workers' dwellings Applications for rural workers' dwellings will be permitted where:

- a) It can be demonstrated that the nature and demands of an existing rural business are such that a full time worker has an essential need to be permanently resident at or near their place of work so they are available at most times;*
- b) The need cannot be met within a nearby settlement, or by existing housing at or near the site or through the conversion of a suitable redundant or disused rural building at the site;*
- c) The size and scale of rural workers dwellings will be commensurate with the scale of the operation and designed to reflect the location and setting of the proposed site; and*
- d) The rural enterprise has been established for at least three years, is currently financially sound, and has a clear prospect of remaining so.*

Where a rural business is not yet established a mobile home may be permitted for a temporary period, on the basis of criteria b) and c) above, and evidence of:

- (i) An essential need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times*
- (ii) A firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise*
- (iii) Sound financial planning Permissions for rural workers dwellings will be subject to an occupancy condition. Removal of such a condition will only be permitted where there is clear evidence that there is no need for the condition to remain in place.*

Although the business is yet to be established on this site Stag & Squire has been a successful antique company for some time and would be looking to relocate the business to the site. However there is a clear requirement for the dwelling to be located adjacent to the workshop and showroom due to the value and security needs of the stock located on site.

DM18

Rural employment development

In countryside locations, planning permission will be granted for new-build employment development or expansion of existing businesses, provided that the development is of an appropriate use and scale for its location. Proposals must demonstrate that:

- a) The development would not lead to an unacceptable impact on the local road network;*
- b) There would not be an unacceptable adverse impact to the character and appearance of the countryside; and*
- c) There are insufficient suitable sites or premises in the immediate area to meet the needs of the proposal.*

The proposed will seek to demolish the existing buildings as they are a collection of poorly considered decaying structures that are not fit for purpose. We are asking to not change the use of the proposed workshop element but add the one dwelling that's tied to a rural working use.

DM19

Protection of employment land Non-employment use or development of employment land or buildings, including sites that are established, allocated or have planning permission, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes.

Alternative uses will be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

- a) Firstly, there is a sufficient range of suitable and available employment sites in the local area;*
- then*
- b) There is no commercial interest in the re-use of the site for employment, demonstrated by suitable marketing at an appropriate price for at least 18 months.*

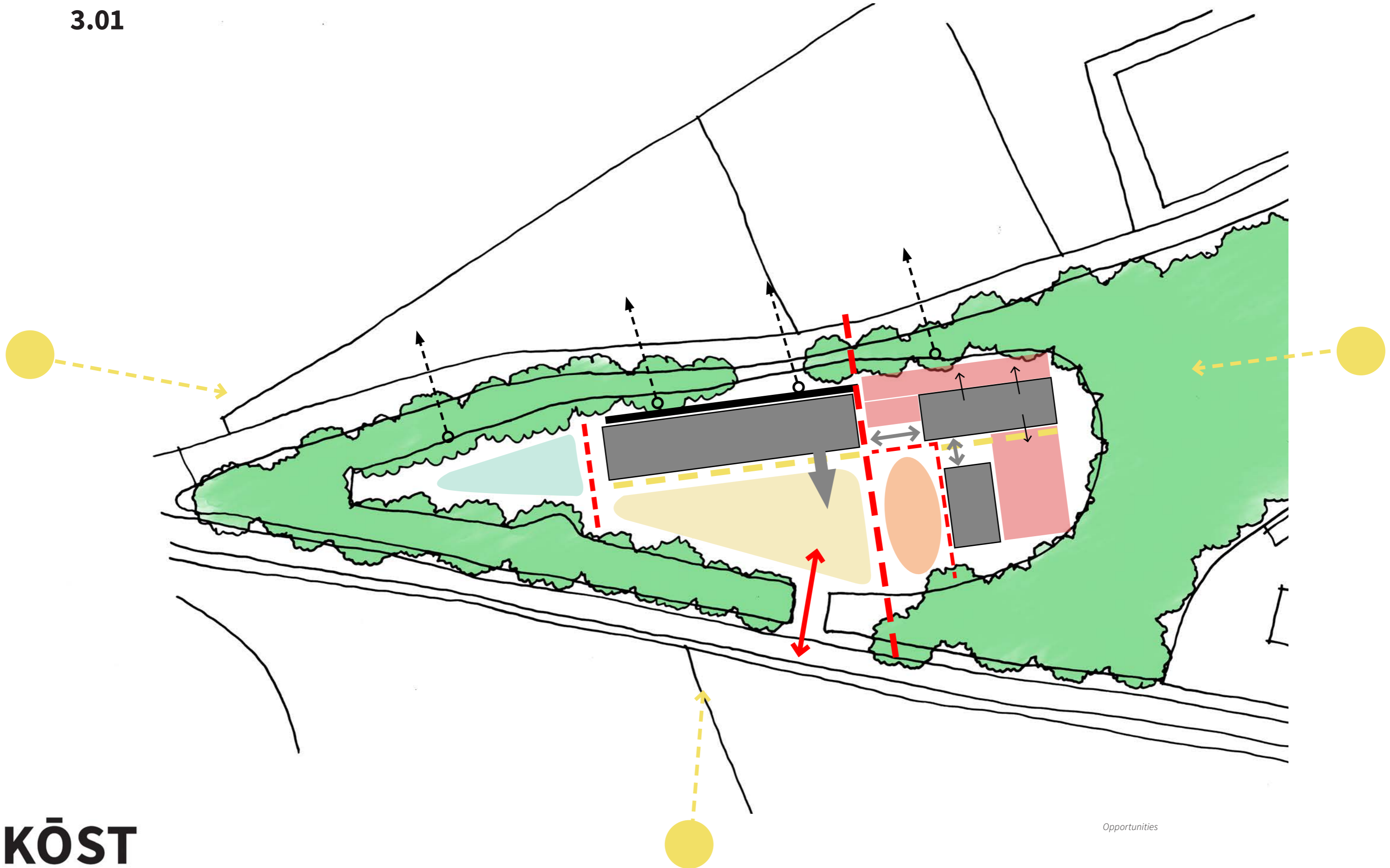
The proposed will seek to demolish the existing buildings as they are a collection of poorly considered decaying structures that are not fit for purpose. We are asking to maintain the use class of the site apart from for the linked dwelling.

4.0

Proposed Design

- 4.01 Site opportunities
- 4.02 Proposed site strategy
- 4.03 Proposed site layout
- 4.04 Scale and mass
- 4.05 Precedents, materials and detailing

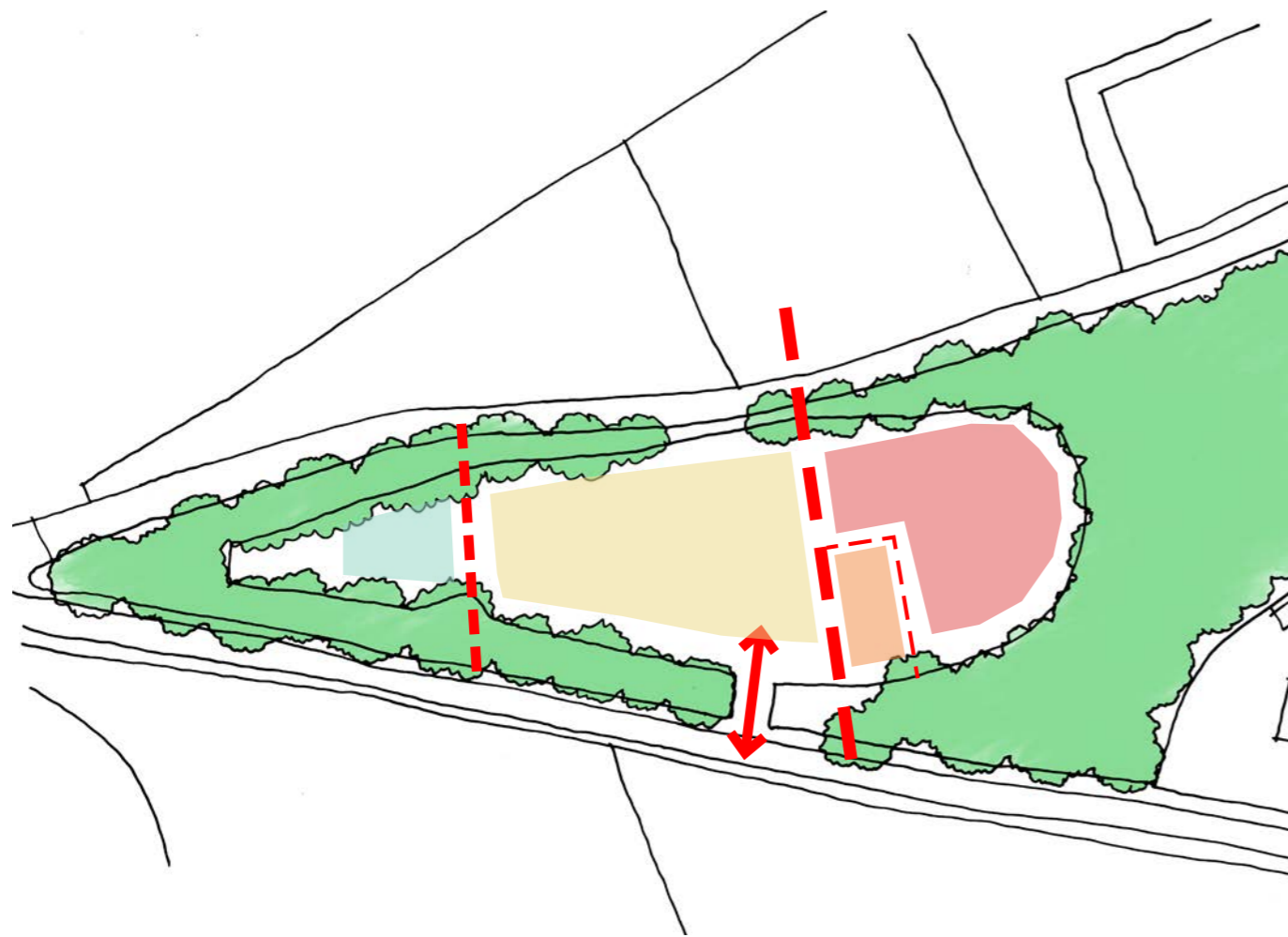
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Opportunities

Public



Site division and privacy

With the mix of workshops and a dwelling it is crucial to have a strategy to split up the site and create definitive boundaries between the two that are legible and easy for users to understand. The entrance location sets up a clear line across the site that divides dwelling to the East and Workshops to the West.

The dwelling to the East side will have access to a private courtyard / drive off of the entrance and will be clearly domestic. This drive area will be separate from the main house with a garage element to help form a barrier between the more private areas of the dwelling. This will create the feeling of being isolated when your in the house with no issues of overlooking of amenity or living spaces.

Private

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4.01

Site opportunities

Sun path - With a heavily shaded site its extremely important to get the positioning of the buildings correct to maximise any potential sunlight on offer. To maximise the sun at peak times in the day it made most sense to keep the buildings to the North side of the site, like the existing buildings. This means that their south facing facade has maximum exposure

Access and parking - Access has remained in the same location as existing due to the mature trees and bunding already established. This sets up a natural divide to the site with the workshops to the West of the entrance and dwelling to the East. With the buildings positioned to the North side of the site it leaves the parking and circulation area to the south side of the site.

Building location - As discussed with the sun path the proposed buildings both workshops and dwelling are best positioned to the Northern boundary of the site. Thresholds are created with buildings projecting from the main linear mass helping to define spaces. For example to the West a perpendicular strip could define a cafe break out / landscaped space. To the West a the garage could create a barrier protecting the private areas of the dwelling.

Feature entrance - Opposite the entrance there should be an arrival feature that signifies the entrance to the site and provides the space for the antiques to be displayed. Signifying the end product of the craft that has gone into the restoration process. This cold be a glazed gable end or some other architectural feature.

Utilising the wedge - Using currently wasted and dead space is important and the wedge to the West is a perfect opportunity for some landscaped social space

Privacy of the dwelling - The dwelling will have a drive space off of the main access. This will be bound by the garage and a link to Unit 1, thee then effectively screen the main part of the dwelling meaning no amenity or living space can be overlooked.

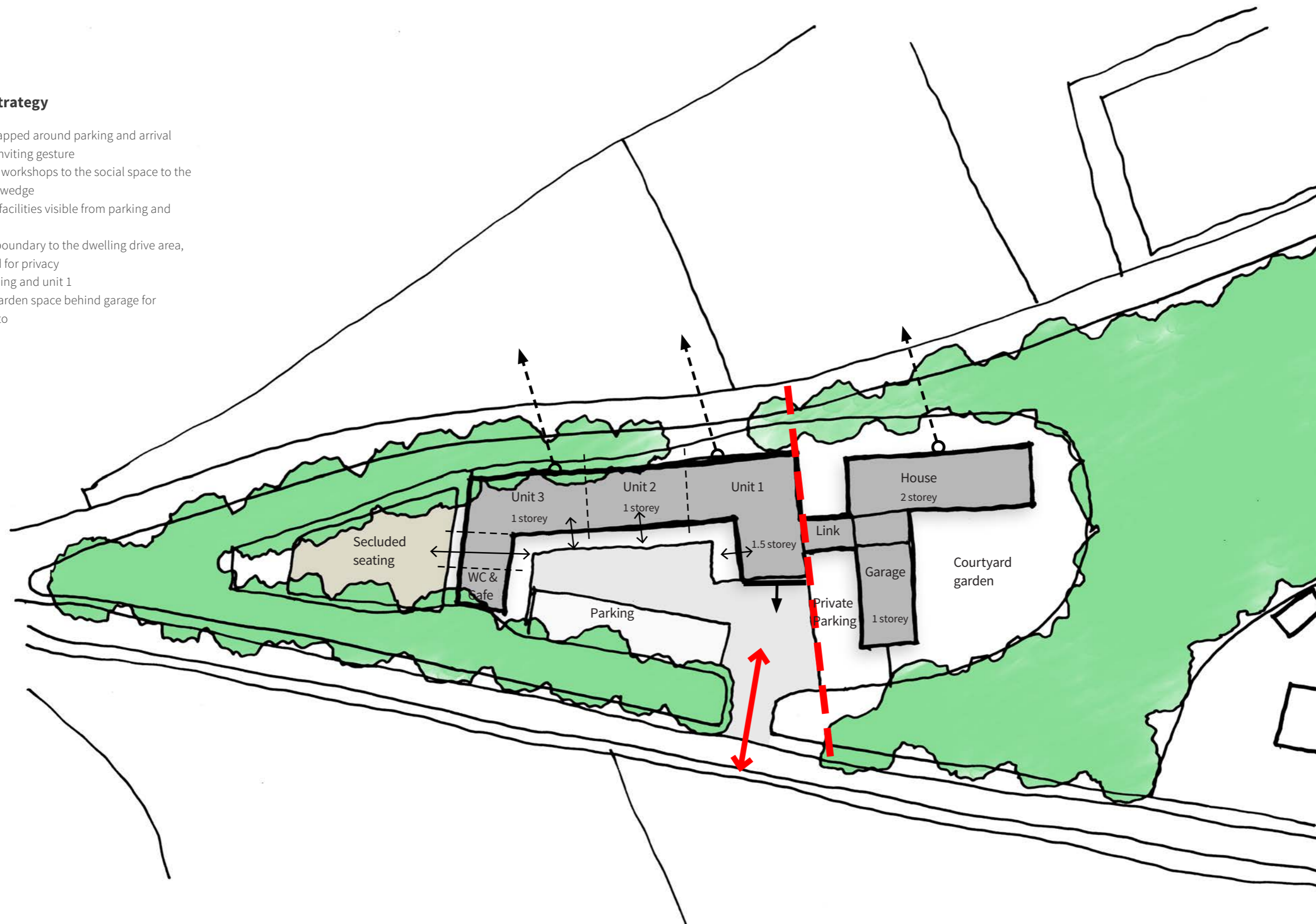
Views out the site - Some broken views may be obtained through the trees to the North. This ill be a key view to get small glimpses of from the dwelling.

Views into the site - Due to the existing screening through bunding and vegetation very little extra screening will be required. Adding to that all the buildings are positioned on the North side of the site away from the road and sensitive boundary.

4.02

Proposed site strategy

- Workshop units wrapped around parking and arrival space providing an inviting gesture
- Access through the workshops to the social space to the West in the tapering wedge
- Small cafe and WC facilities visible from parking and social space.
- Clear and defined boundary to the dwelling drive area, most probably gated for privacy
- Link between dwelling and unit 1
- Private courtyard garden space behind garage for dwelling to open onto

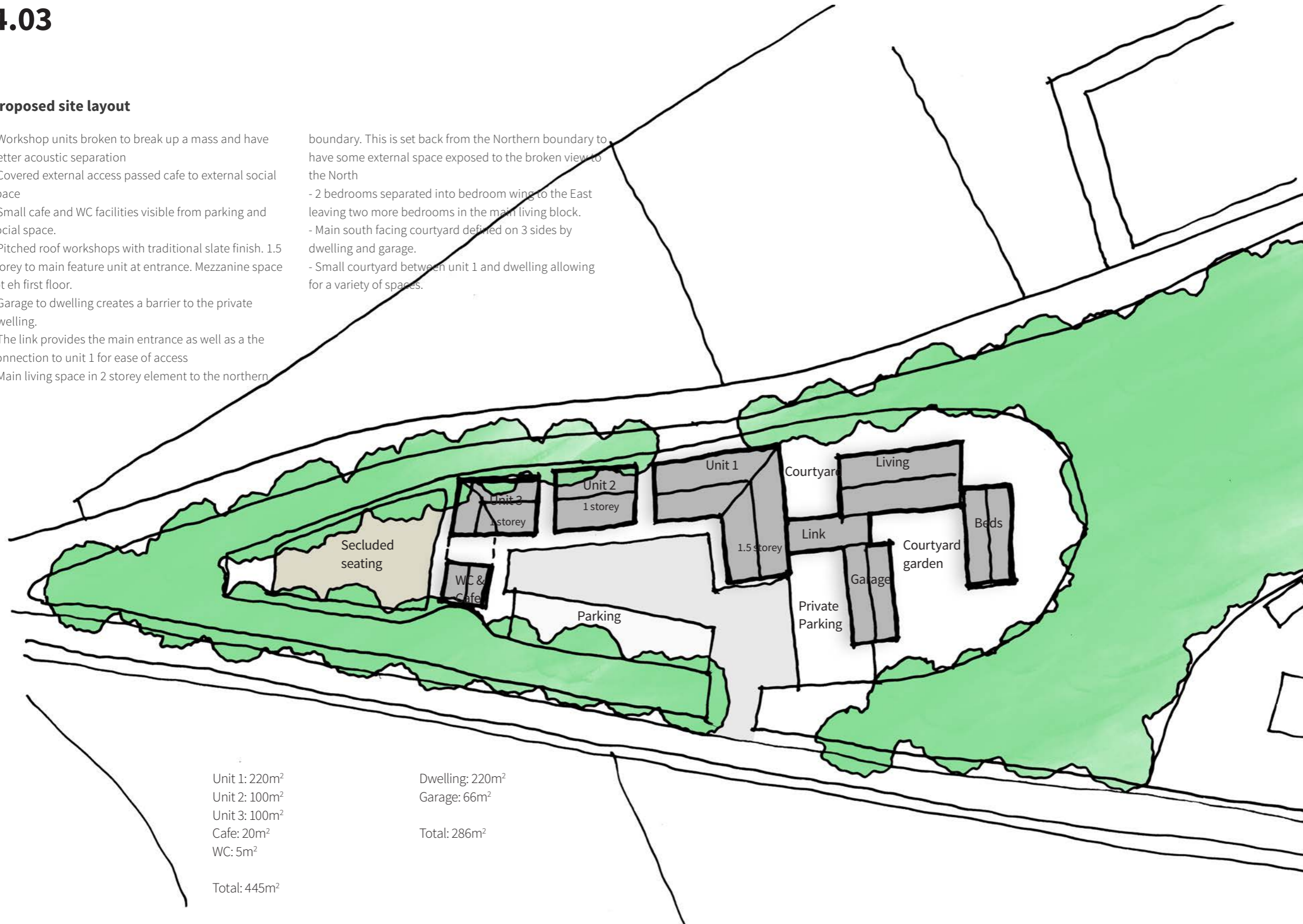


4.03

Proposed site layout

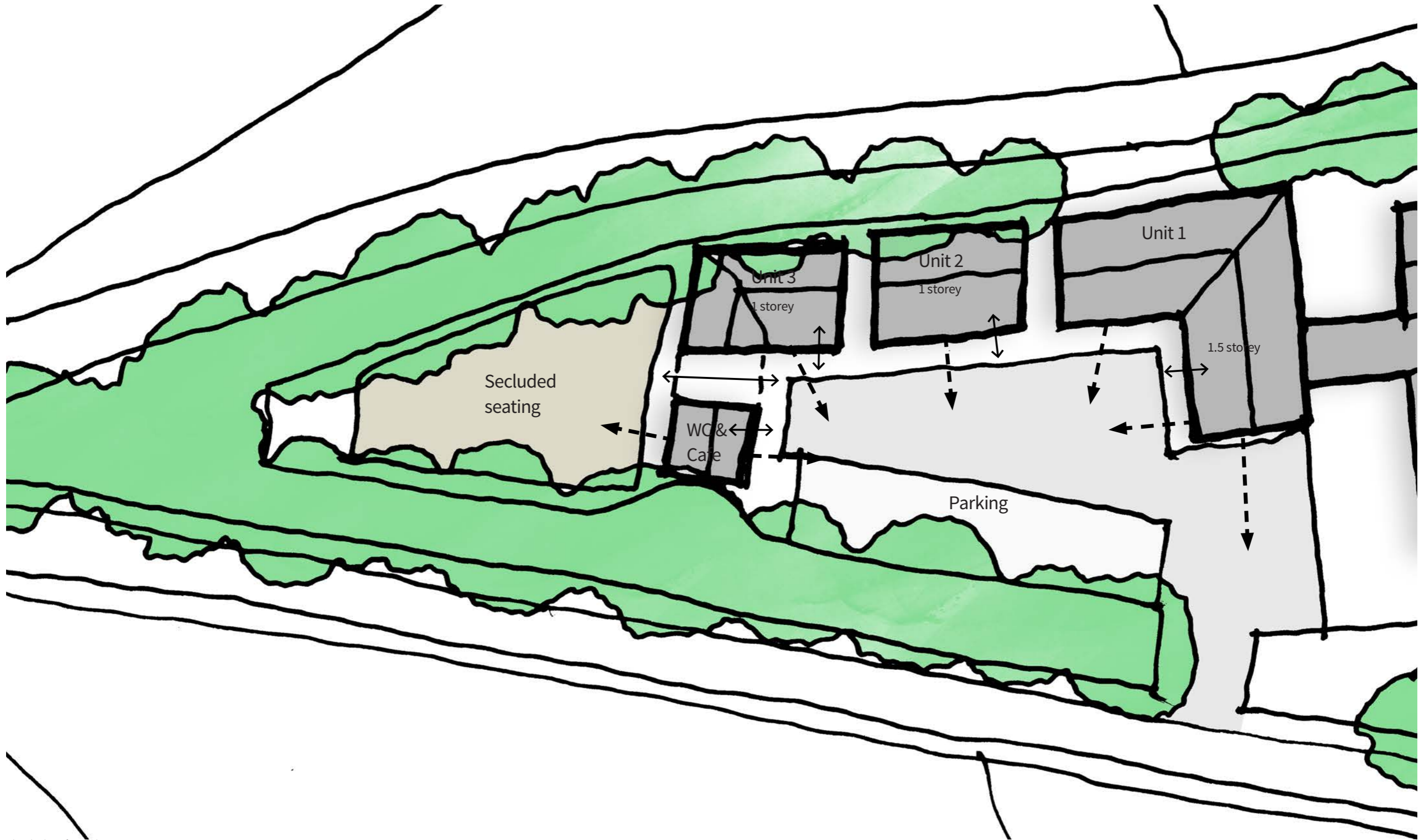
- Workshop units broken to break up a mass and have better acoustic separation
- Covered external access passed cafe to external social space
- Small cafe and WC facilities visible from parking and social space.
- Pitched roof workshops with traditional slate finish. 1.5 storey to main feature unit at entrance. Mezzanine space to the first floor.
- Garage to dwelling creates a barrier to the private dwelling.
- The link provides the main entrance as well as a connection to unit 1 for ease of access
- Main living space in 2 storey element to the northern

- boundary. This is set back from the Northern boundary to have some external space exposed to the broken view to the North
- 2 bedrooms separated into bedroom wing to the East leaving two more bedrooms in the main living block.
- Main south facing courtyard defined on 3 sides by dwelling and garage.
- Small courtyard between unit 1 and dwelling allowing for a variety of spaces.



Unit 1: 220m²
 Unit 2: 100m²
 Unit 3: 100m²
 Cafe: 20m²
 WC: 5m²
 Total: 445m²

Dwelling: 220m²
 Garage: 66m²
 Total: 286m²



Sketch plan of workshops



Sketch plan of dwelling site

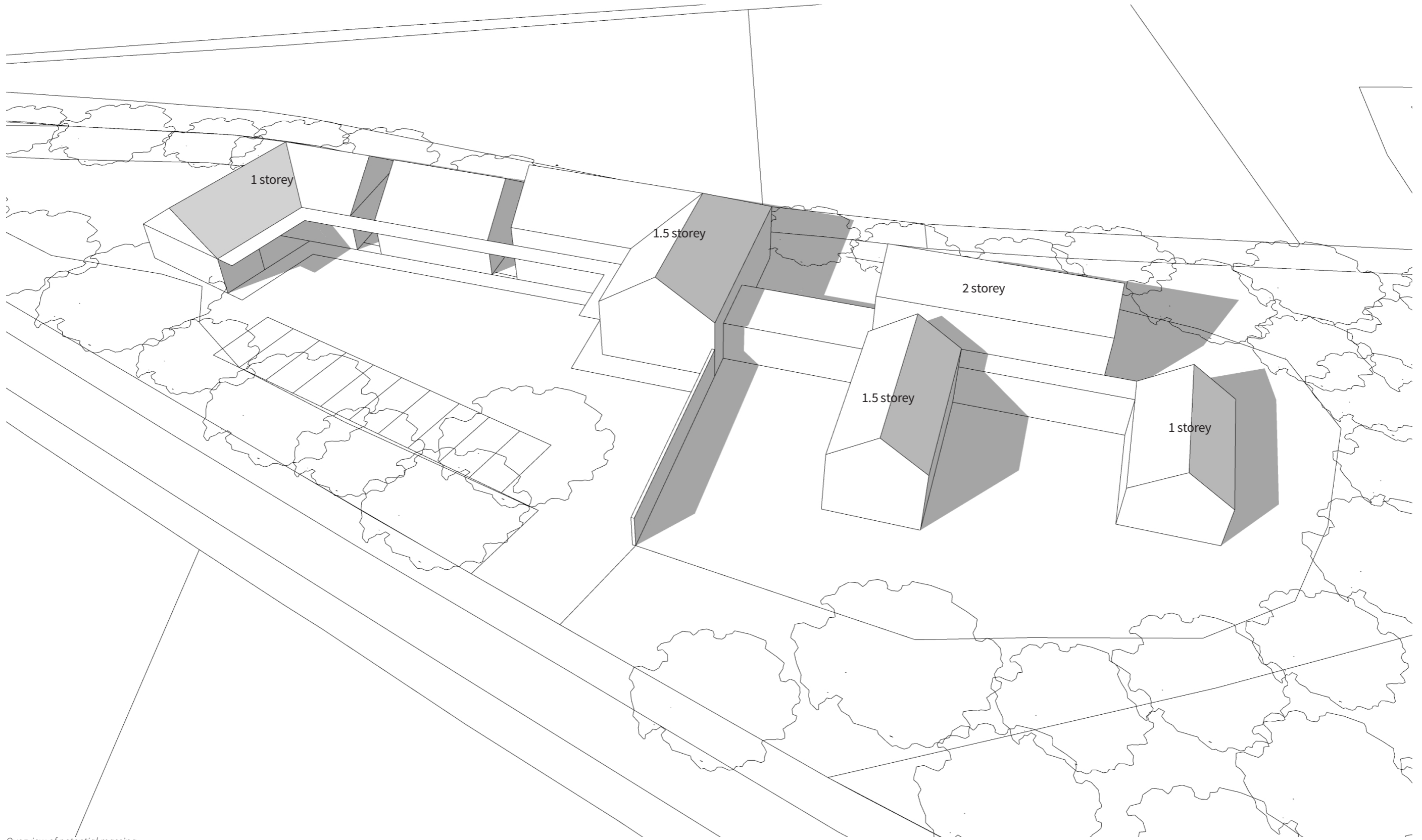
4.04

Scale and mass

The proposed footprint is less area than the footprint of the existing collection of buildings. The advantage of demolishing the existing and starting again is that we have the ability to alter the massing of the proposed development. Breaking up the units into smaller masses and spreading them further across the site will help greatly reduce its visual bulk.

The majority of the buildings are only 1 storey with the exception being unit 1 at 1.5 storeys and the living area of the dwelling being 2 storeys. The dwelling mass is located on the Northern boundary where it is least visible and unit 1 provides some definition to the arrival of people to the workshops and acts as a showcase to the work taking place on site.

All the massing is appropriate to the wider area and the village of Stoodleigh in general. The visibility of the buildings will also be low due to the existing bunding and screening on site.



Overview of potential massing



Narrow timber cladding with shadow gaps and crisp zinc roof



Oak and glass gable



Feature barn doors



Oak and glass gable



Sliding panels and glass doors

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Simple timber detailing



Feature openings and integrated joinery



Timber screens



External joinery features to encourage interactions



Feature barn doors

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Feature openings



External landscaping and social area



Cafe deck and landscaping

4.05

Precedents, materials and detailing

The proposed material palette has already been defined in the analysis of the conservation area's existing material palette. Predominantly the roofs will be traditional pitched roofs of slate with crisp verge and eaves detailing. The walls will be a mixture of expressed timber frame and natural stone with some timber cladding / louvres.

Transparency is the key to allowing visitors and the businesses communicate with one another, thus creating an open and approachable environment. Glass will both light the workshops naturally but will also provide that transparency and visibility. Using traditional timber framing to define these glazed areas will relate back to local agricultural barns near by.

Given its use features such as sliding doors help for security but also relate to a larger agricultural and light industrial scale. The doors might be louvre panels or solid doors.

The entire development will be using a similar material palette of timber, stone, slate and glass to give it an overall coherence that also relates back to the village. We like to use traditional materials and building forms in a contemporary way through technical and minimal detailing to help elevated humble junctions / tectonics into the realm of craft, something that should relate well to the buildings use.