# **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

Case No: 25/01601/LBC

**Proposal:** Change of use from day school to residential dwelling.

Demolition of ancillary buildings to the rear and construction of new rear extensions with internal

alterations

**Location:** The Old Day School, High Street, Bluntisham

**Applicant:** Mr Simon Claridge

**Grid Ref**: 536769 274581

Date of Registration: 8th September 2025

Parish: Bluntisham

# **RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE**

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) as the Officer's recommendation of refusal is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

## 1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This application seeks listed building consent for the change of use from a day school to a residential dwelling along with the demolition of some ancillary outbuildings to the rear and the construction of new rear extensions. It should be noted that the submission also details works which require planning permission and which are the subject of a separate application (25/01600/FUL). This report seeks to separate the planning and listed building consent considerations but they should be read and understood in conjunction with one another. It should also be realised that a high level of less than substantial harm to the listed building has been identified during consultation with Conservation Officers and this applies to aspects of works both requiring listed building consent and planning permission.
- 1.2 The building is Grade II listed and within the Bluntisham Conservation Area. There are other listed buildings of varying grades in the vicinity of the application site.
- 1.3 This application has been accompanied by the following:
  - Design, Access and Heritage Statement;

- Preliminary Roost Assessment;
- Required location and existing and proposed plans;
- Marketing Information\*

\*Please note, this was obtained from earlier (but recent) applications for a similar development on this site by the same applicant. The information is considered to remain relevant and Officers have received confirmation from the agent that the applicant accepts this information being transferred to this application for consideration.

1.4 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

#### 2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives economic, social and environmental of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
  - delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
  - building a strong, competitive economy;
  - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
  - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website National Guidance

## 3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
  - LP2: Strategy for Development
  - LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
  - LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings
- 3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
  - Bluntisham Conservation Area Character Statement (1999)

#### 4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 24/01614/FUL Change of use from day school to residential, demolition of ancillary buildings to the rear and construction of new rear extensions (Withdrawn)
- 4.2 24/01615/LBC Proposed works to facilitate change of use from day school to residential including demolition of ancillary buildings to the rear and construction of new rear extensions. (Withdrawn)
- 4.3 25/01600/FUL Listed Building Consent for the change of use from day school to residential dwelling. Demolition of ancillary buildings to the rear and construction of new rear extensions with internal alterations Pending Consideration (associated with this application).

#### 5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Bluntisham Parish Council recommend approval and support bringing the building back into use whilst retaining the historic aspects.
- 5.2 HDC Conservation Team Objection High level of less than substantial harm to the building and less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area.
- 5.3 HDC Ecology Team No representations received at the time of determination.
- 5.4 Historic England No comments to make seek advice of specialists.
- 5.5 CCC Historic Environment Team No representations received at the time of determination.

# 6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Three comments in support of the proposals have been received. These are available to view on HDC's Public Access Site but are broadly summarised below:
  - Building has been used infrequently, has been subjected to vandalism and looks tired and run down.
  - Building would make a great family home and the works would turn it into something wonderful.

- 100% supports renovation of the building.
- No highway safety concerns as a result of proposal.
- It will remain aesthetically in keeping with its surroundings and improvement to the streetscene.
- No other sustainable use other attempts to use have failed.
- Can see no reason why this would not be permitted.

#### 7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
  - Impact on Heritage Assets
  - Biodiversity

# Impact on heritage assets

- 7.2 The Old Day School is Grade II listed and located within the Bluntisham Conservation Area. The building is referenced within the Bluntisham Conservation Area Character Statement (1999). It states' it is a well preserved and early example of a small rural school and presents as a simple, well-proportioned building in a pared down Tudor style constructed of local gault brick with stone detailing. Its earliest plan form remains legible and historic features, such as the clock, panelled doors, and the tablet displaying the coat of arms of the founder, enhance its architectural and historic authenticity'.
- 7.3 Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Para. 212 of the NPPF sets out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification' Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 7.4 The High Street comprises mainly residential properties with dwellings of varying age, scale and design along its length. The northern end of the High Street (to the east) is more modern with historic development more prevalent to the west of the street and to the southern end. There are a number of listed buildings (of varying grades) along the High Street (on both sides) at various points. The Old Day School was constructed in 1842 and the railings and walls to the front were listed along with the building in February 2024. The detached rear toilet block building and rear wall, were omitted from this listing. Previous applications under reference numbers 24/01614FUL and 24/01615/LBC which sought permission for a similar development were withdrawn following engagement with Officers due to heritage concerns. Whilst the current applications must be assessed upon their own merits, for the reasons set out below they have not overcome the heritage concerns of the previous applications and they are considered to be harmful to both the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area. The Old Day School is a detached, predominantly brick and slate structure with a mixture of timber and ironwork windows and a number of pitched roof extensions/ancillary structures to the rear. The remaining site is predominantly hard surfacing with brick walls forming the rear and side boundaries. The front boundary is a low-level wall with iron railings above. There is a Grade II\* Listed building to the immediate north and south-east with additional Grade II Listed buildings to the east, and south.
- 7.5 This application proposes the change of use of the building to a residential dwelling along with the demolition of some ancillary buildings to the rear and the construction of new rear extensions. Further to this, some general renovation is proposed as detailed within the submitted Heritage, Planning, Design and Access Statement and plans reference 25-202-203 and 25-20-204. Within the statement these are detailed as works 1-32 and, amongst other works propose works to ceilings, rainwater goods, glazing, door repairs and so on. HDC's Conservation Team and Historic England have been consulted.
- 7.6 Historic England did not wish to comment on the scheme but advised that this should not be read as 'no objection' and recommended that the views of specialist conservation advisers (Conservation Team) be sought. Conservation Officers object to the scheme with overriding concerns summarised as:
  - The 1931 cloakroom and later kitchen extension illustrate the changes in educational standard during the 20<sup>th</sup>

Century. Thus, these form part of the significance of the building, and their demolition can only be supported to provide an appropriate extension to the building which will secure its long-term future use. The extension (as set out below) is considered to be inappropriate.

- Removing the lean-to cloakroom (C.1896) the girls entrance and slate roof results in an unacceptable loss of early historic fabric and an erosion of the historic and social significance of the building.
- The proposed rear extension (proposed living area) is substantial and extends across the rear of the building, a glazed link passage connects this with the bedroom and bathroom wing. These are relatively large, modern, glazed, flat roof structures which appear overly dominant and which would swamp the original building. These do not integrate well with the character of the original building. Whilst the theory of the glazing is noted (in order to allow views through the building to showcase the original building) this, in practice is unlikely to be achieved due to internal furnishings, paraphernalia, window treatments etc which the LPA would have no control of.
- Further to the concerns with regard to the relationship, scale and massing of the extensions these works would also result in the requirement for existing windows to be internalised resulting in the loss of historic glazing as well as the loss of eaves detailing where the flat roof would need to cut into the slate roof. The current space between the infants room and exiting kitchen extension would be infilled meaning that views of the chimney stack and side elevation of the infants room would either be lost or eroded.
- The Statement details that works to the boundary wall will be required but no specific details such as detailed drawings, engineer assessment or analysis of the railings or their proposed repair, storage and protection have been provided.
- The proposal would result in the subdivision of internal historic spaces which would erode the open floor plan and volumes of the principal spaces. This (along with the associated works) will result in the loss of historic fabric, undermines its original use and understanding of the space and how it functioned historically. The addition of a mezzanine to the main front classroom (as well as its subdivision) fundamentally undermines the unaltered nature of the building and the legibility of its earliest plan form.

- Insufficient detail has been provided to detail how the mezzanine would be supported or constructed. This will result in the need to remove one of the principal roof trusses and the loss of the original ceiling. No details as to how the roof will be supported following this removal have been provided. It would also cut across the line of the gable end window. Furthermore, the side of the mezzanine will be a solid wall so views of the gable window will be blocked in views from the hall and the proportions of the window internally will be obscured.
- The creation of a large opening in the original back wall of the Hall and the relocation of the original Tillard coat of arms will result in the loss of historic fabric and is not supported. The flues of the cloakroom chimneys appear to conjoin together via a substantial and ornate stack to the rear of the roof. Within the proposed plan form however part of the back wall will be removed in this location— no section or engineers drawings have been provided to understand the physical implications of this work or the impact on the chimney stack.
- 7.7 In terms of the proposed schedule of renovations, Conservation Officers have also raised concerns with regard to (referenced as numbered within the submitted documents):
  - Works 14 Removal and infill of original windows is not supported in principle.
  - Works 21 Plaster removal and damp sealing insufficient details have been provided.
  - Works 30 Damp and mould treatment there is a fundamental concern about the sealing of brickwork.

Conservation Officers are satisfied that the remainder of the proposed minor renovation works could be dealt with by condition in the event that Members choose to grant listed building consent. These would not however overcome the fundamental objections to the works in their entirety as set out above.

- 7.8 It is noted that there are some omissions which make it challenging for Officers to complete a thorough assessment of the scheme. Listed building consent may only be granted for works which are included as part of an application for listed building consent and which affect the special architectural and historical interest of the structure.
- 7.9 Under the earlier applications (24/01614/FUL & 24/01615/LBC) there were no proposals to undertake any works to the main roof,

floor, wall or windows and none for the installation of insulation or dry lining. These would generally be expected as part of a residential conversion. Whilst in this case the submission is an improvement as it acknowledges these works, it fails to provide specific details on these measures and so it is not possible to understand how these works may impact features such as retained windows or the clock mechanism. There is considered to be a fundamental lack of information regarding the floors, roof, ceiling, structural alterations and boundary wall and that in this regard, the impact of the works essential to secure the re-use of the building have not been detailed or justified.

- 7.10 Overall, whilst Conservation Officers recognise that the long-term future of the building needs to be secured and would be supportive of bringing the building back into use, this can only be achieved in conjunction with an appropriate scheme being presented. In this case they consider that whilst a residential conversion may be a possibility for the buildings re-use, in this instance the scale, massing and modern design of the proposed extensions as well as the other proposed works, as set out above are inappropriate and there is a lack of detail to support the application. The proposed scheme would result in a significant increase in the footprint of the building and is incompatible with its character, proportions and history. Conservation Officers conclude that the impact on the listed building would result in a high level of less than substantial harm and that the impact on the Conservation area would be less than substantial harm.
- 7.11 The NPPF (2024) at Para. 215 details that "where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use." In this case, this would result in the provision of a single private dwelling. Therefore, any public benefits would be limited (in comparison to restorative works to return the building to public use for example). As such, the level of harm in this instance is not considered to be outweighed, by the public benefits of bringing the building back into use.
- 7.12 Based upon the extent of the proposals set out in the preceding sections of this report and the advice of Conservation Officers as specialists, Officers conclude that the works would be contrary to Policies LP2 and LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

## **Biodiversity**

7.13 In considering Ecological matters, given the age and condition of the building and the fact that it is vacant there is the potential that

it could support important or protected species. The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment prepared by Sound Ecology, dated July 2025 and received on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2025. This concludes that no notable or protected species would be impacted by the development and that no further surveys are required. It goes on to make some recommendations for precautionary working methods and enhancements which could be secured by condition in the event that Members choose to grant listed building consent.

7.14 Overall, having regard to the above, the development is acceptable with regard to its approach to biodiversity and subject to condition would accord with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

#### Conclusion

7.15 The alterations and proposed extensions by virtue of their siting. scale, mass, design and material finish would result in the addition of an incongruous form of development which would cause a high level of less than substantial harm to this Grade II Listed building and less than substantial harm to the surrounding Bluntisham Conservation Area. In addition, it would fail to respond positively to its surroundings, contribute to the character and identity of the area, or successfully integrate with the host building. The proposed internal works to facilitate the conversion would also result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the building and insufficient detail has been provided to allow Officers to fully assess all elements of the heritage impact, The public benefits of bringing the building back into use in this instance would not outweigh the identified harm. The scheme as a whole is contrary to contrary to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

# 8. RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE for the following reasons

8.1 The alterations and proposed extensions by virtue of their siting, scale, mass, design and material finish would result in the addition of an incongruous form of development which would cause a high level of less than substantial harm to this Grade II Listed building and less than substantial harm to the surrounding Bluntisham Conservation Area. In addition, it, it would fail to respond positively to its surroundings, contribute to the character and identity of the

area, or successfully integrate with the host building. The proposed internal works to facilitate the conversion would also result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the building and insufficient detail has been provided to allow Officers to fully assess all elements of the heritage impact, The public benefits of bringing the building back into use in this instance would not outweigh the identified harm. The scheme as a whole is contrary to contrary to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

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#### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Enquires about this report to **Kevin Simpson – Senior Development Management Officer -**<u>kevin.simpson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</u>



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Head of Planning Services Pathfinder House St. Mary's Street Huntingdon

Cambridgeshire PE 29 3TN Application Number: 25/01601/LBC Case Officer Kevin Simpson Proposal: Listed Building Consent for the change of use from day school to residential dwelling. Demolition of ancillary buildings to the rear and construction of new rear extensions with internal alterations Location: The Old Day SchoolHigh StreetBluntisham Observations of Bluntisham Town/Parish Council. Please √ box as appropriate Recommend approval because ......(please give relevant planning reasons in space below) The PC Rolly sypot the application to bring the building back into use while retaining the historic aspects of the dwelling of the site Recommend refusal because... (please give relevant planning reasons in space below) No observations either in favour or against the proposal Clerk to Bluntisham Tewn/Parish Council. (For GDPR purposes please do not sign) Date: 6-10-25 Failure to return this form within the time indicated will be taken as an indication that the Town or Parish Council do not express any opinion either for or against the application.

Please send response to email address below:-

Development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

(Development Management)

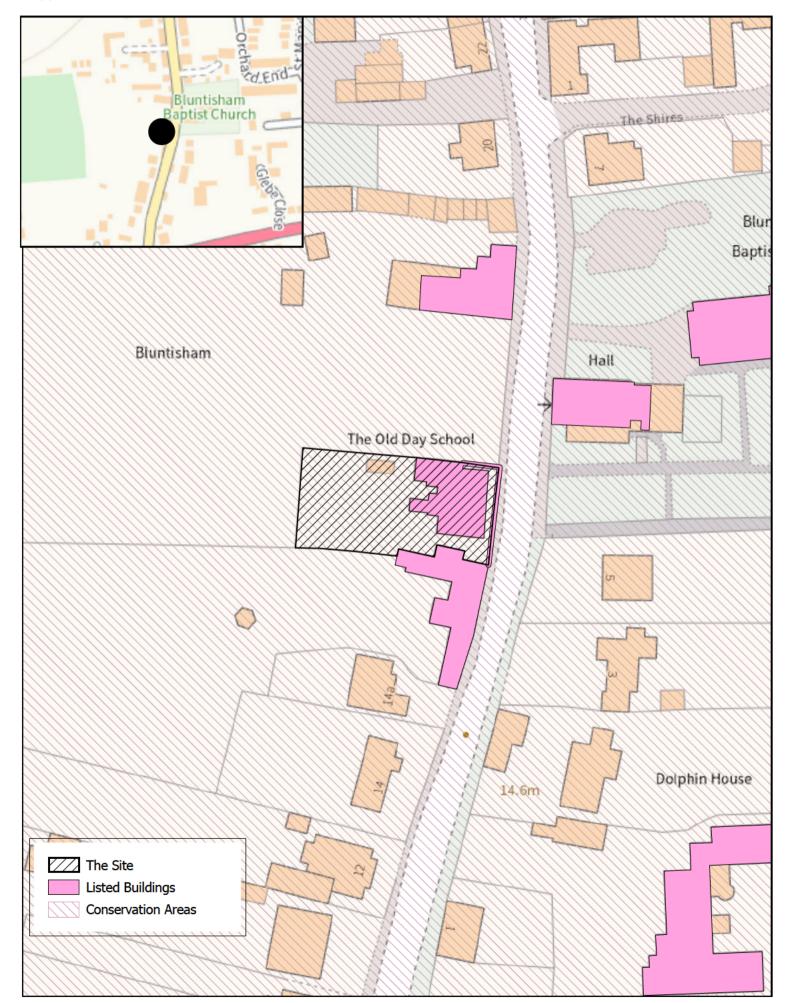
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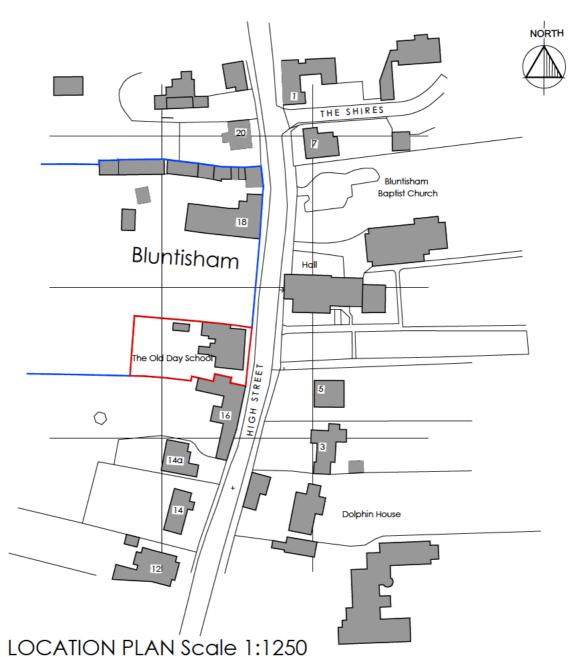
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Site Area = 0.073ha.

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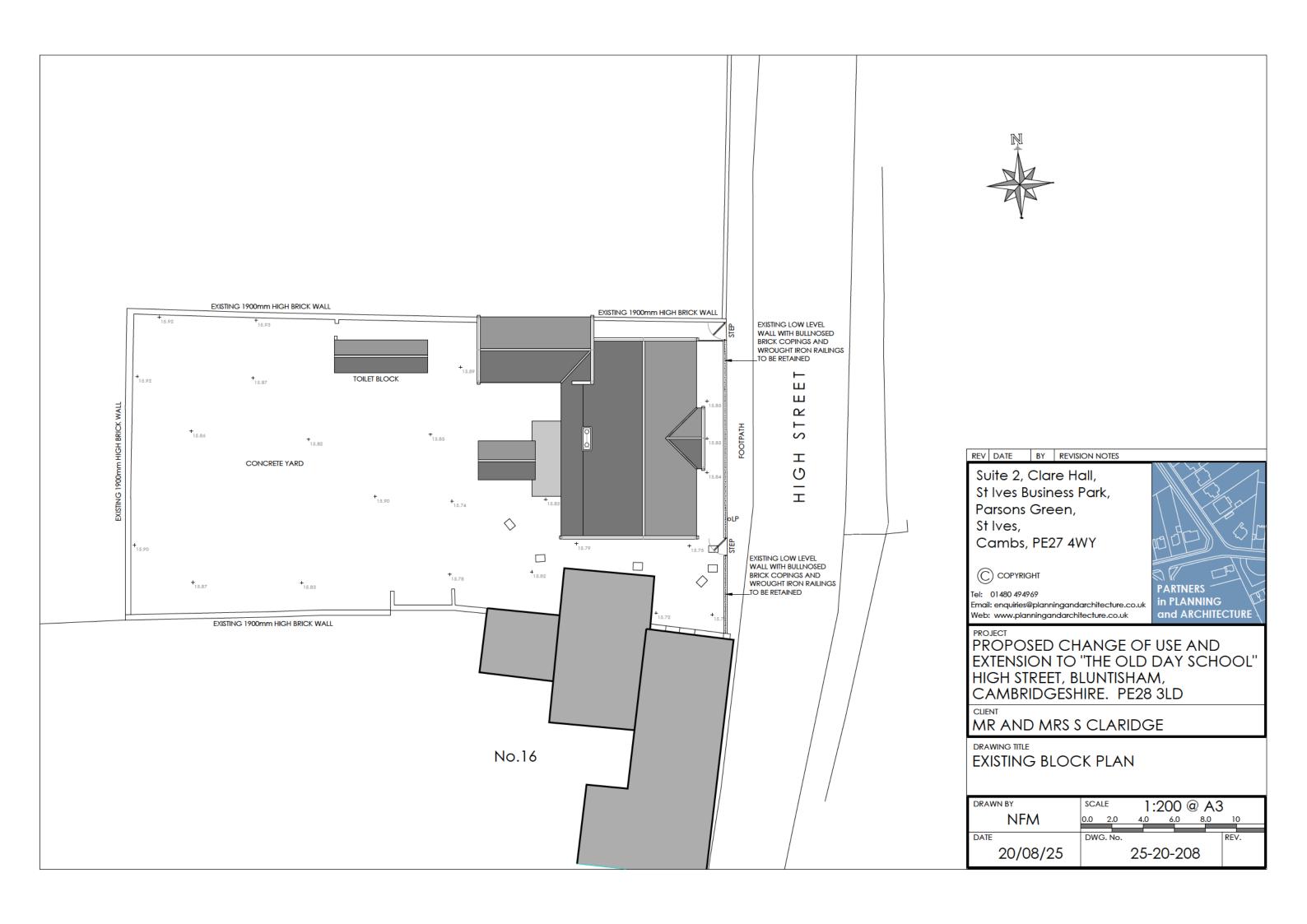
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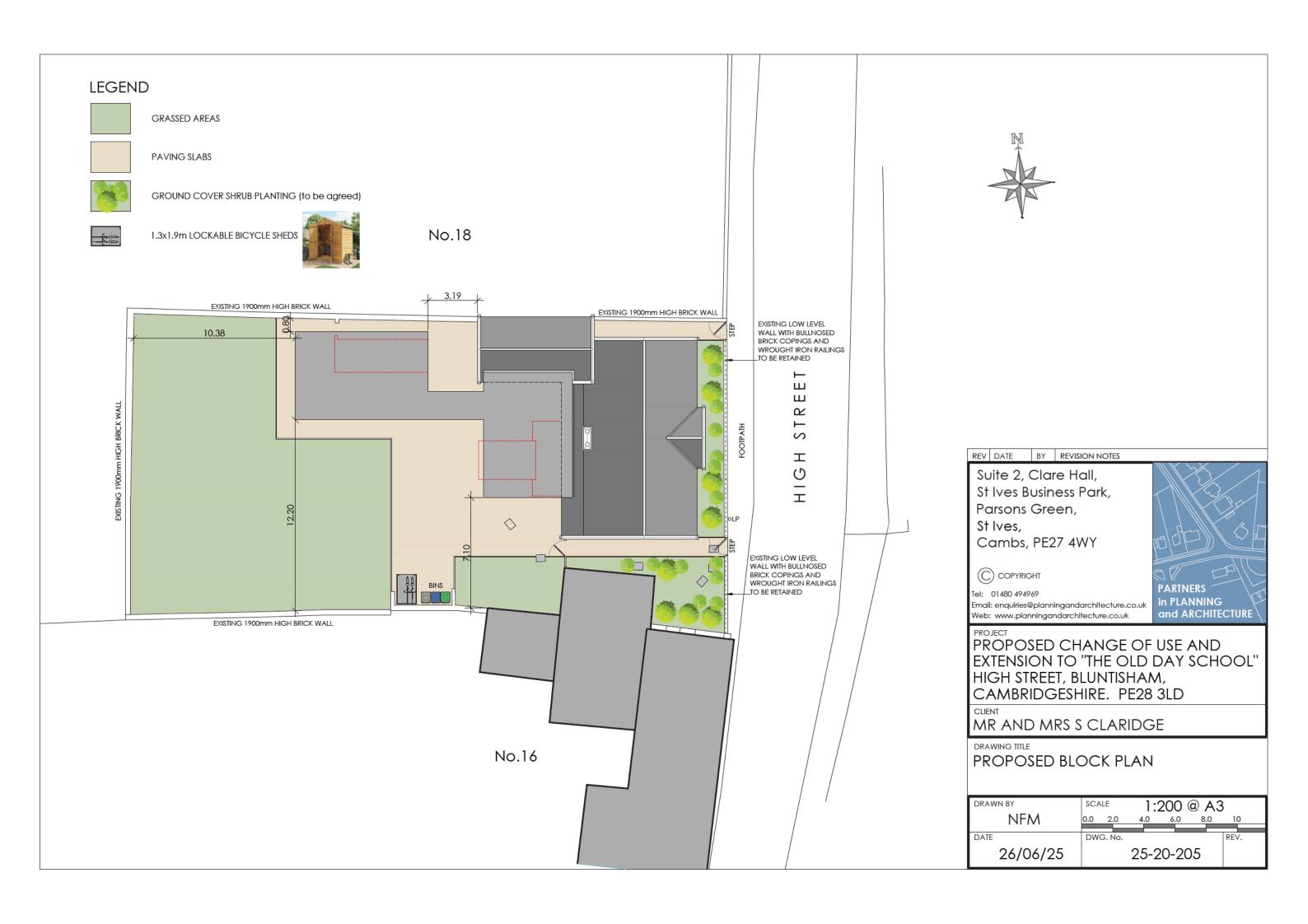
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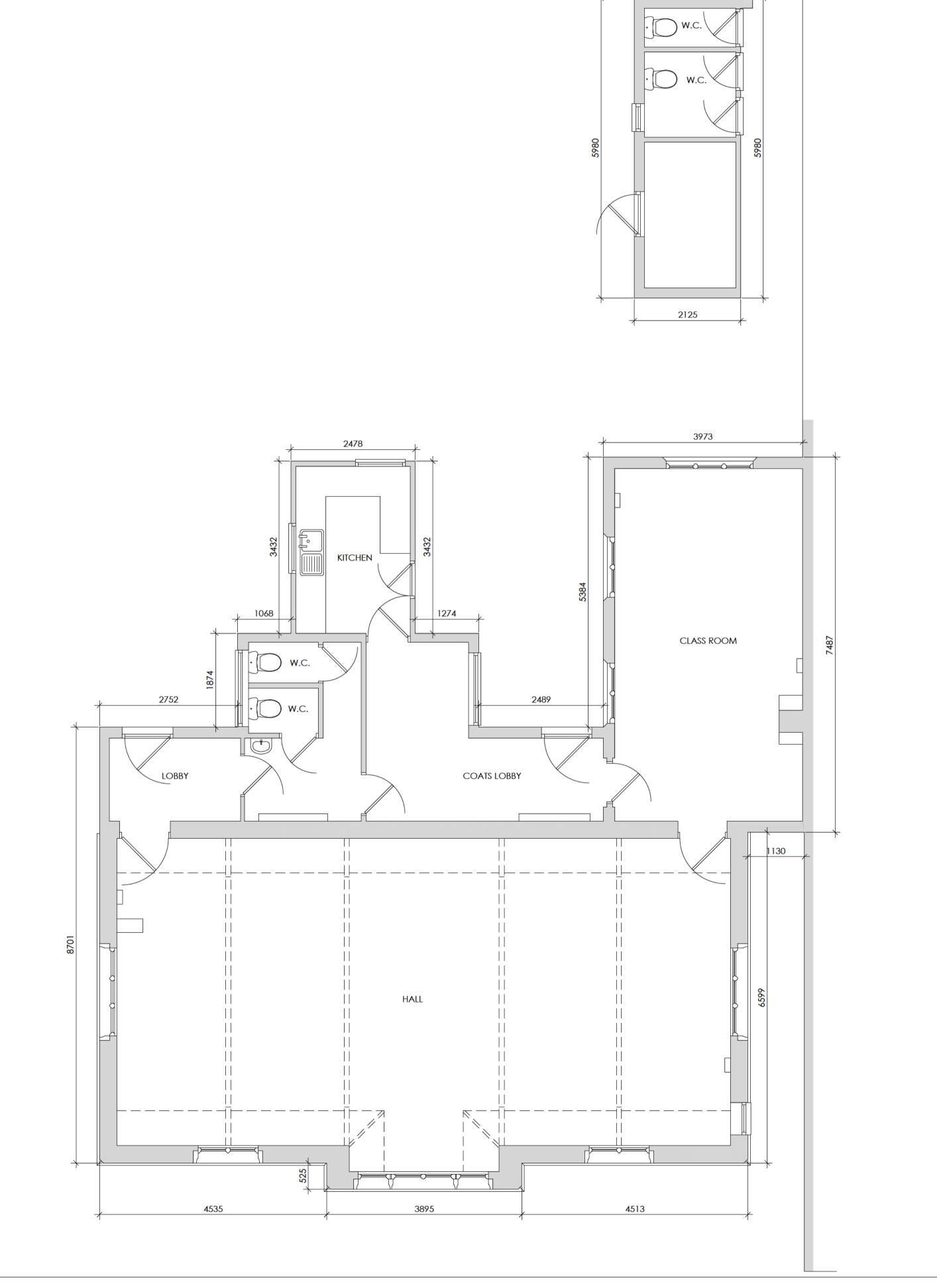
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PROPOSED LOCATION PLAN

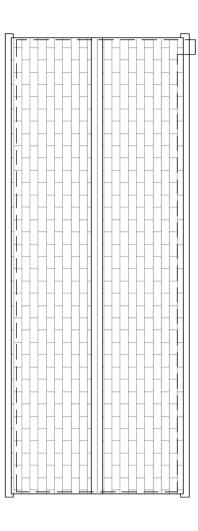
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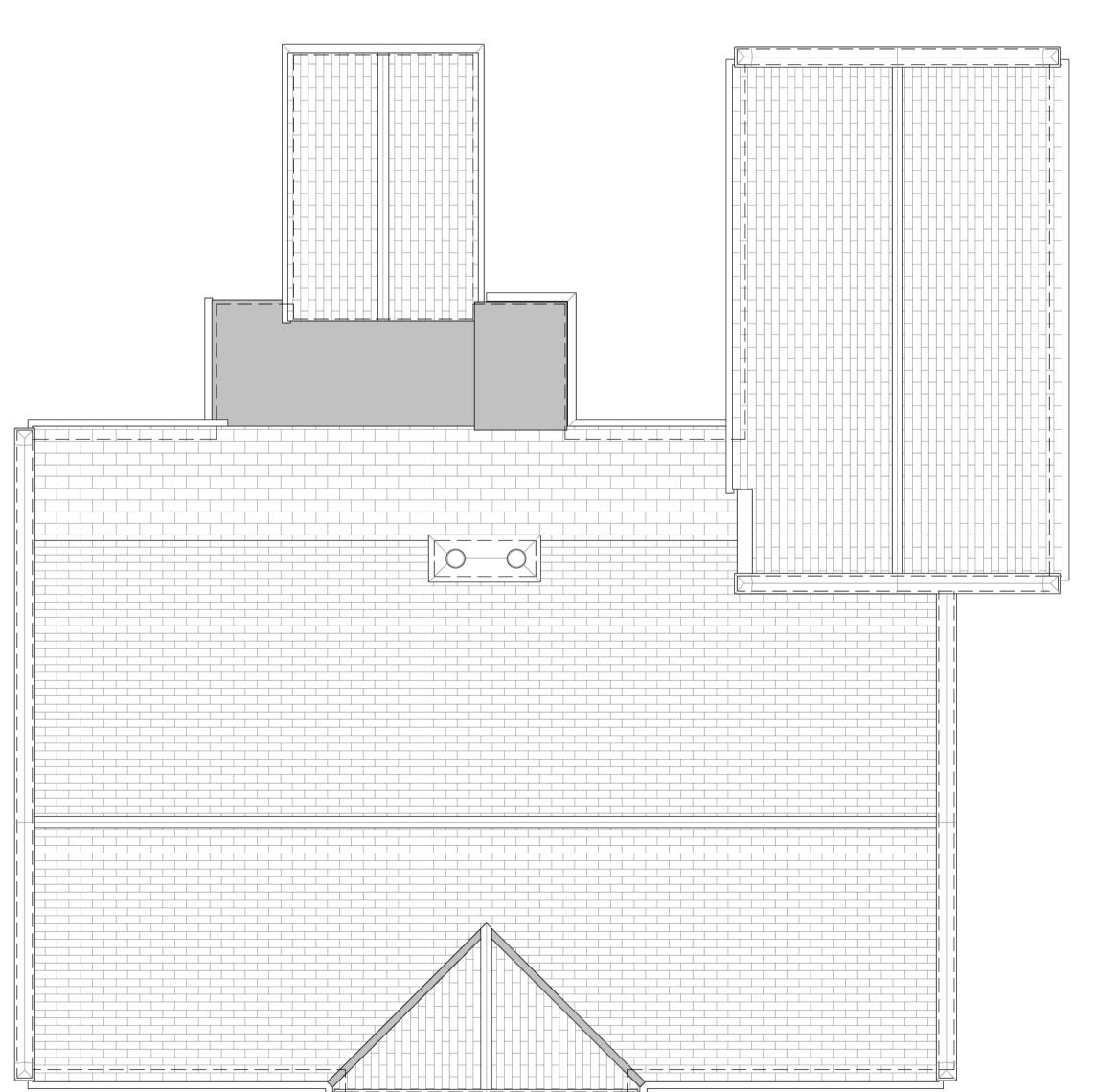






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REV DATE BY REVISION NOTES
A 20/08/25 NFM Dimensions added.

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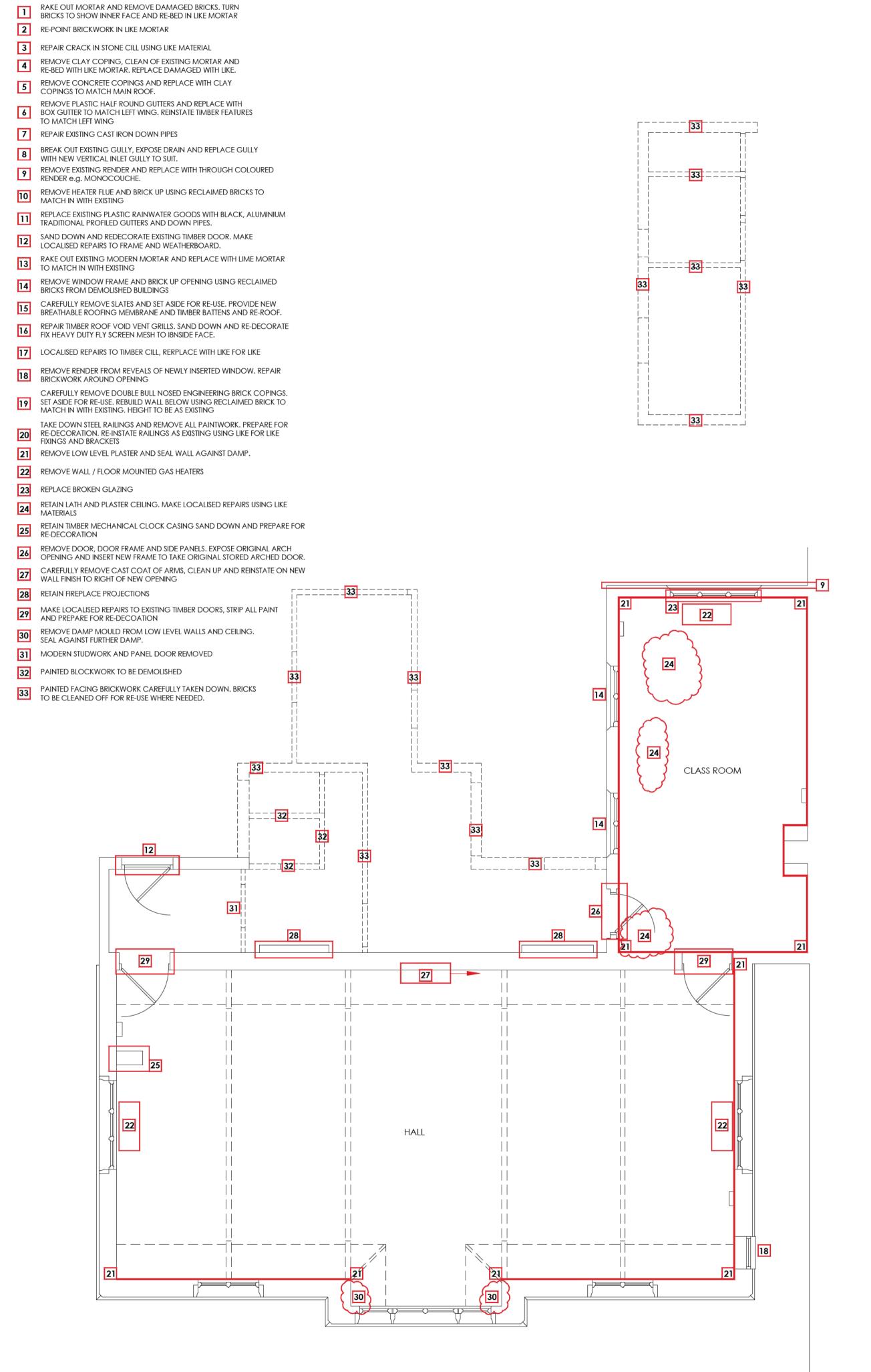
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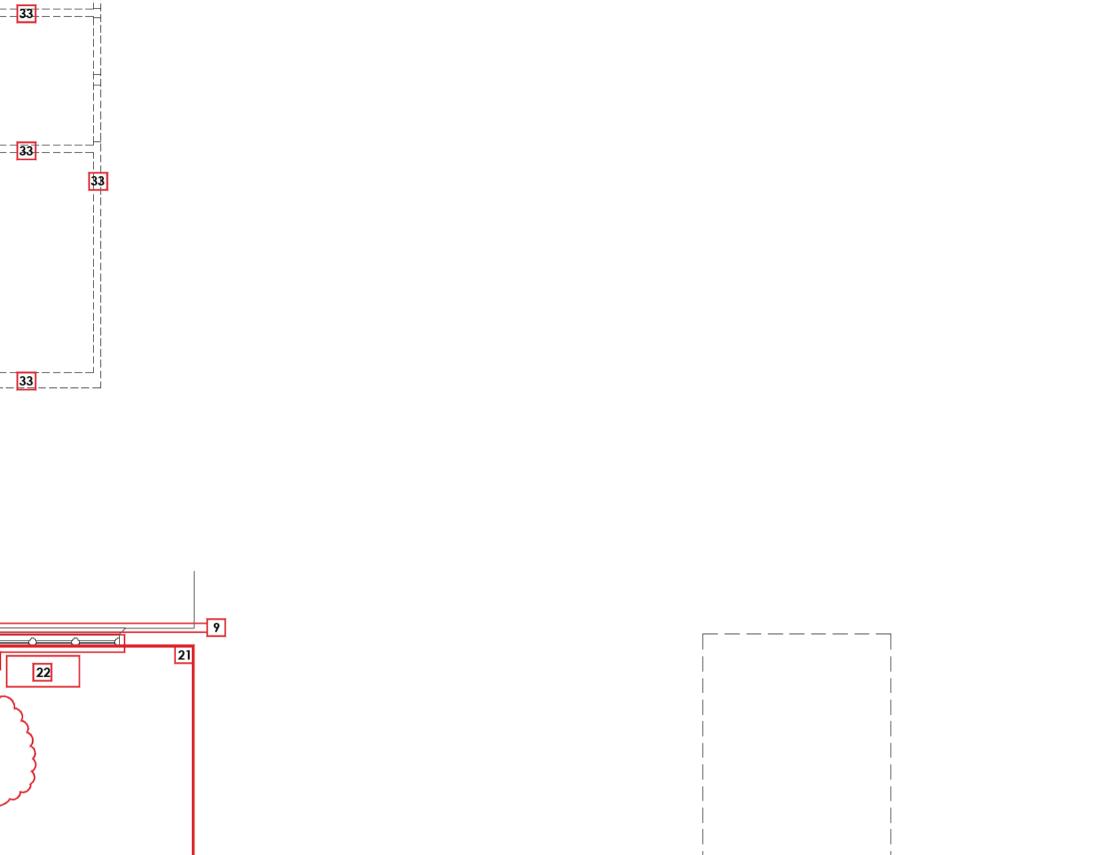
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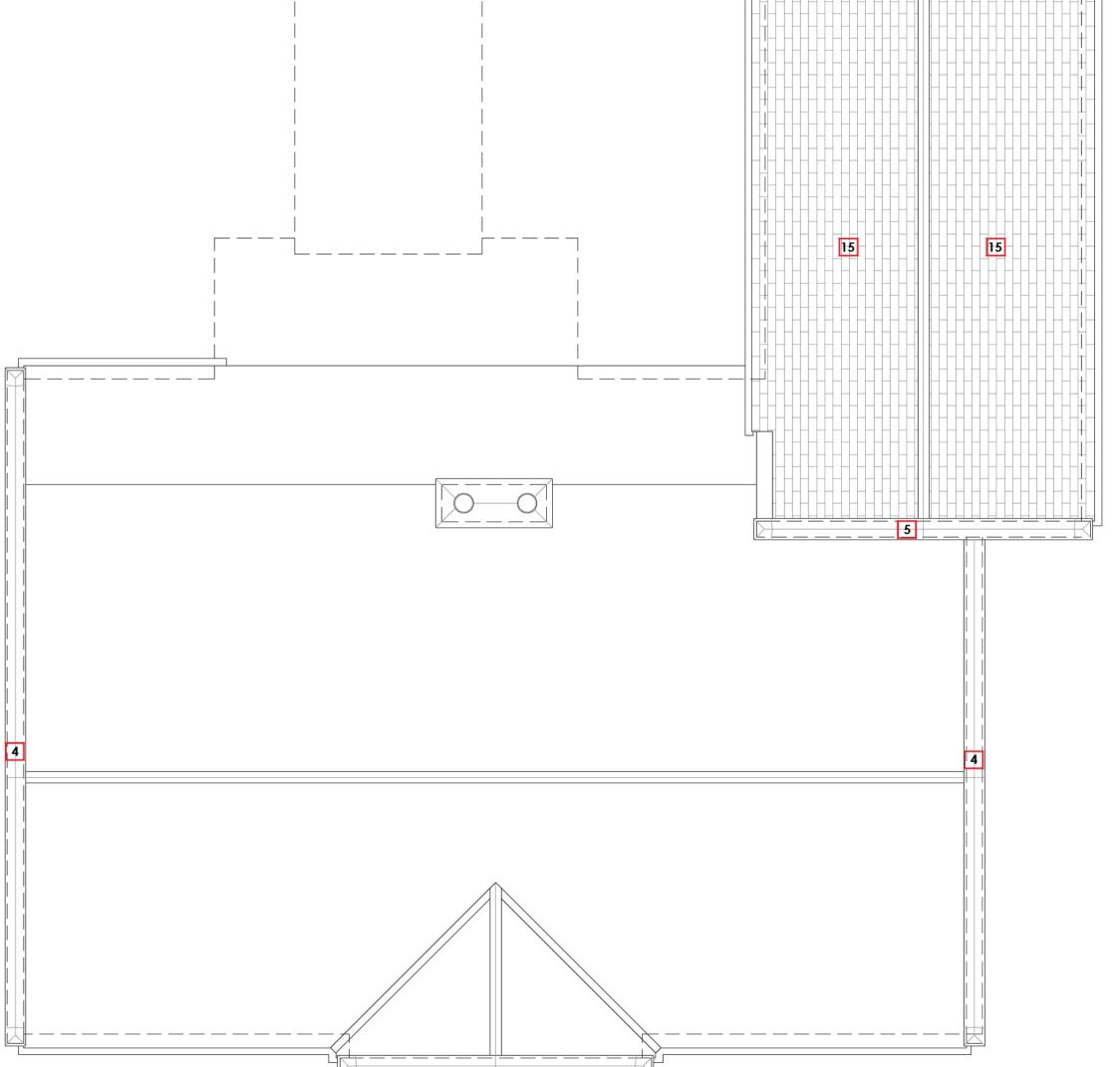
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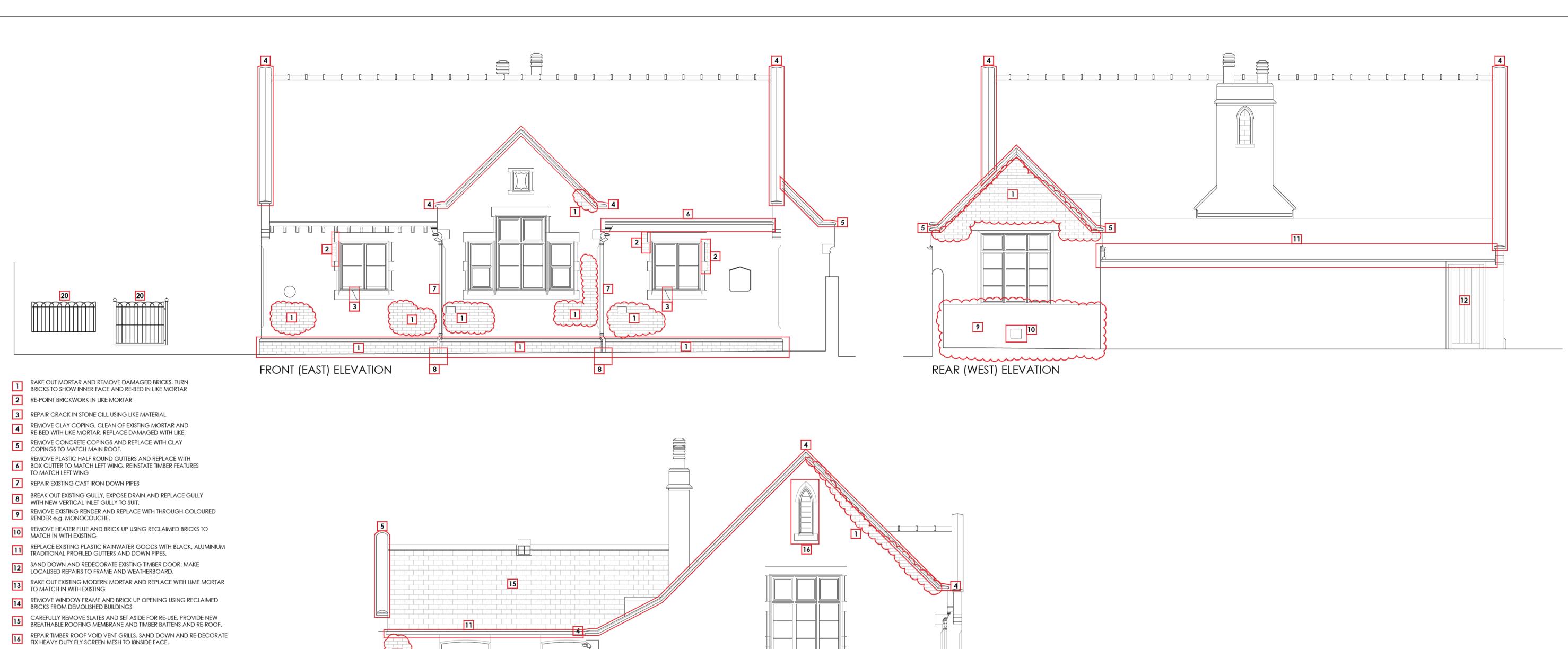
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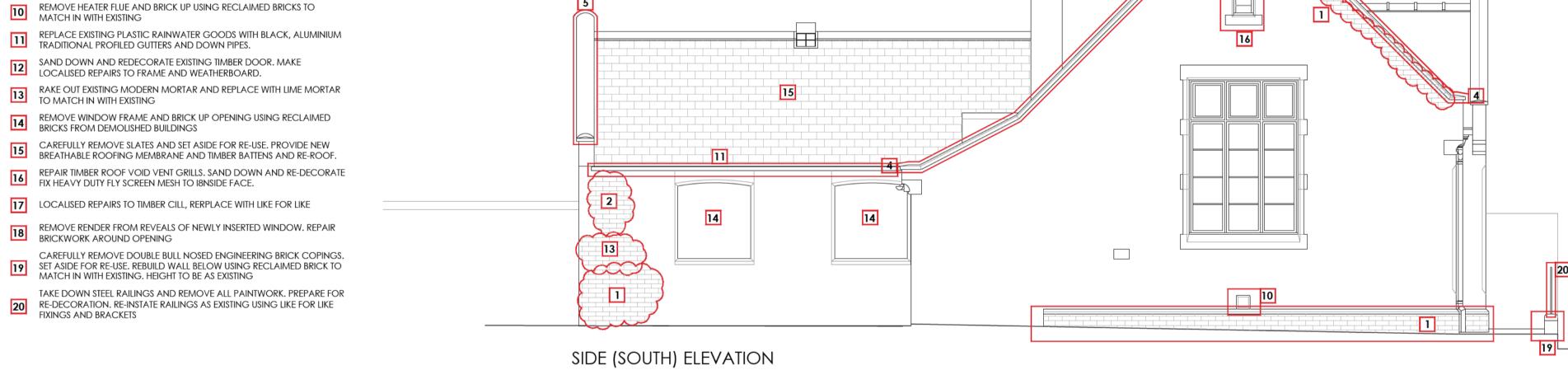
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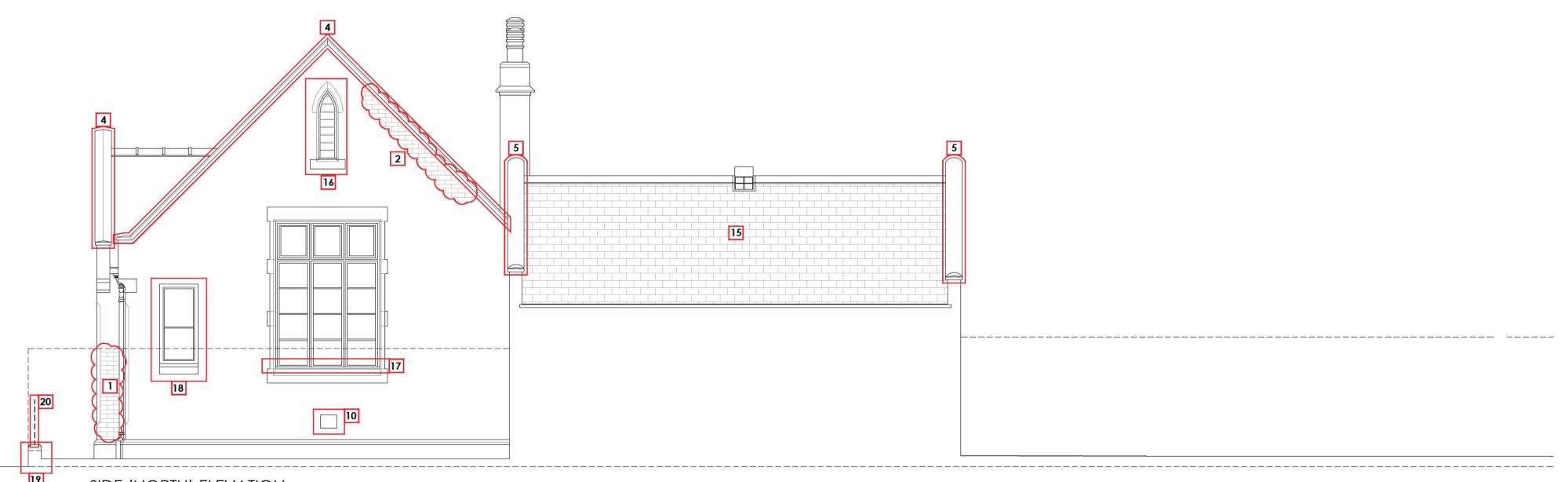
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RENOVATION DETAILS
FLOOR AND ROOF PLAN

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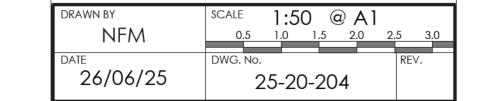
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DRAWING TITLE RENOVATION DETAILS ELEVATIONS



SIDE (NORTH) ELEVATION

