



AYRBURN FARM HERITAGE AREA PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE USE

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AYRBURN FARM - HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

OUTLINE HISTORY

This brief historical outline is taken in most part from the Archaeological Assessment prepared by Peter Petchey in 2006.¹

Following on from the gold rush of 1862 the need to provide for the ever increasing numbers of prospectors, their families and the other trades and workers necessary to support the rush became urgent. This meant that large areas of land were given over to agriculture and Ayrburn Farm was one of the first.

Ayrburn was established by William Paterson, a Scot from West Kilbride in Ayrshire. He arrived in New Zealand in 1862, from Australia, and was followed the following year by his wife and five of his six children.

By 1865 it seems that the farm consisted of a large number of buildings and these would appear to be those which remain today, i.e. the stable, the cart shed, the dairy and the original homestead. This latter building is now part of the adjoining property and is used as a garage for the new timber framed homestead built around the turn of the century. The farm itself was only ten acres and was part of a commonage on Rees' run, ten acres being the maximum area one person could take up.

Paterson later purchased a number of other farms including Glencoe, on the Crown Terrace.

William Paterson retained the farm and expanded it considerably with his son until he sold it in July 1906 to the Kain Brothers. At this time the farm consisted of 247 acres of freehold land and 61,000 acres of leasehold. It carried 12,000 sheep, Merino and Romney, as well as cattle and horses. The farm also produced wheat, barley and turnips. At the time of the sale the buildings were noted as a stone house and stable, huts yards and a sheep dip.²

William Paterson continued to be actively involved in farming after selling Ayrburn and as President of the Lakes County A & P Show hosted the event on his property in December 1907.³ (Photo: Lakes District Museum).



THE GROUP

The buildings at Ayrburn form an unusual and cohesive group. They are dominated by the extensive two-storey stone Woolshed/Stable which incorporates a large stable, for possibly up to a dozen horses, a long hay attic, a grain barn and a later timber clad shearing shed attached to its rear. This building forms one side of a roughly triangular farm yard. Facing this and off-set slightly is the cart shed. The old dairy, a small rectangular stone building completes the triangle, along with a modern farm house.

Up above the farm yard on a higher terrace just behind the cart shed is the first homestead cottage, whose original form can still be discerned despite its conversion at some stage into a garage. Behind this is the extensive timber framed house, which no longer relates visually to the group and faces directly down the avenue of spruces to the main road.

¹PG Petchey Southern Archaeology Ltd, Ayrburn Farm DRAFT Archaeological Assessment, 2006.

²Papers Past – Otago Witness 25 July 1906

³Papers Past – Otago Witness December 1906

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Significance

Ayrburn Farm was one of the first to be established in the Wakatipu Basin, (in 1862), and was part of WG Rees' massive pastoral run. The need for farming and agriculture grew directly from the huge increase in population of the area following the gold rush of 1862 and the buildings at Ayrburn are a manifestation of the scale of this need. Most of the buildings were already in existence in 1865 and are shown on an early map.⁴

The buildings have rarity value in that they are an increasingly rare group of extremely early buildings still standing in the area. The Cart Shed is not a common building type to remain in this area and has rarity value of its own for this reason.

The Stables are of considerable interest as well. While the bottom level of the stables has been subsumed by the slatted floor of the sheep yards, it is highly likely that a cobbled floor and other evidence remains beneath. The scale of the Woolshed/Stable building is most unusual in the district and signifies the extent and success of the Paterson farm.

Architectural Significance

The buildings at Ayrburn form a simple but elegant group and employ many of the forms and details typical of their era. This includes massive stone walls, small windows (some with multi-pane sash windows) and corrugated iron roofs.

The form of the Cart Shed is extremely powerful and describes its function clearly. The numerous bays demonstrate the scale of agricultural activity carried on at the farm, but the long and low form reflects the non-mechanical nature of most of the implements used on the farm at that time.

The rigours of time which have caused the horizontal lines to dip and sway create a delightful expression of its age. The Woolshed/Stable has a very strong aesthetic with strong simple lines that clearly define its past and present use.

Technical Significance

The buildings are constructed of stacked stone schist with mud mortar and lime plaster which is typical of the early vernacular construction techniques of the area and hark back to the Scottish roots of many of the early settlers themselves, of whom Paterson was one.

The remaining timber shingles under the corrugated iron of the Cart Shed (and possibly the other buildings too) have considerable rarity value today and define their age very clearly. (Timber shingles were the common roofing material of the first buildings, but it soon became clear that it was an inferior material and when corrugated iron began to be imported into New Zealand from the 1870s onwards it took over as the usual roofing finish and has lasted in many cases through to the present day.)

Social Significance

The scale of the agricultural buildings compared to that of the first homestead (now a garage on the adjoining section) demonstrate the importance of the functional aspects of the farm when it was established over any issues of domestic comfort.

⁴ PG Petchey Southern Archaeology Ltd, Ayrburn Farm DRAFT Archaeological Assessment, 2006.

Landscape Significance

The farm was established within two years of the area first being settled by WG Rees in 1860 and it has been continually farmed since then. Considerable plantings of exotic trees and avenues were carried out at the beginning and this has continued through to the present day.

The group value of the buildings is also high. The buildings form a cohesive group with each clearly expressing its function and contribution to the group. Such intact groups are unusual in the Basin today.

Archaeological Significance

Since the site has proof of human occupation prior to 1900 it falls under the definition of an archaeological site and an Authority will be required from the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga before any work is carried out.

PROPOSALS

The proposed Heritage Area at Ayrburn contains a collection of highly significant farm buildings. They are unusual in having survived as a group and have been used for farming continually since their construction in the early 1860s. Farming practices in the Wakatipu Basin have not survived the changes of the 21st century and a proposal has been made to subdivide part of the farm and to create a "Heritage Area" at its core encompassing these historic buildings. The original cottage and later Homestead are to be separate from the Heritage Area but they will remain intact as a visual part of the group.

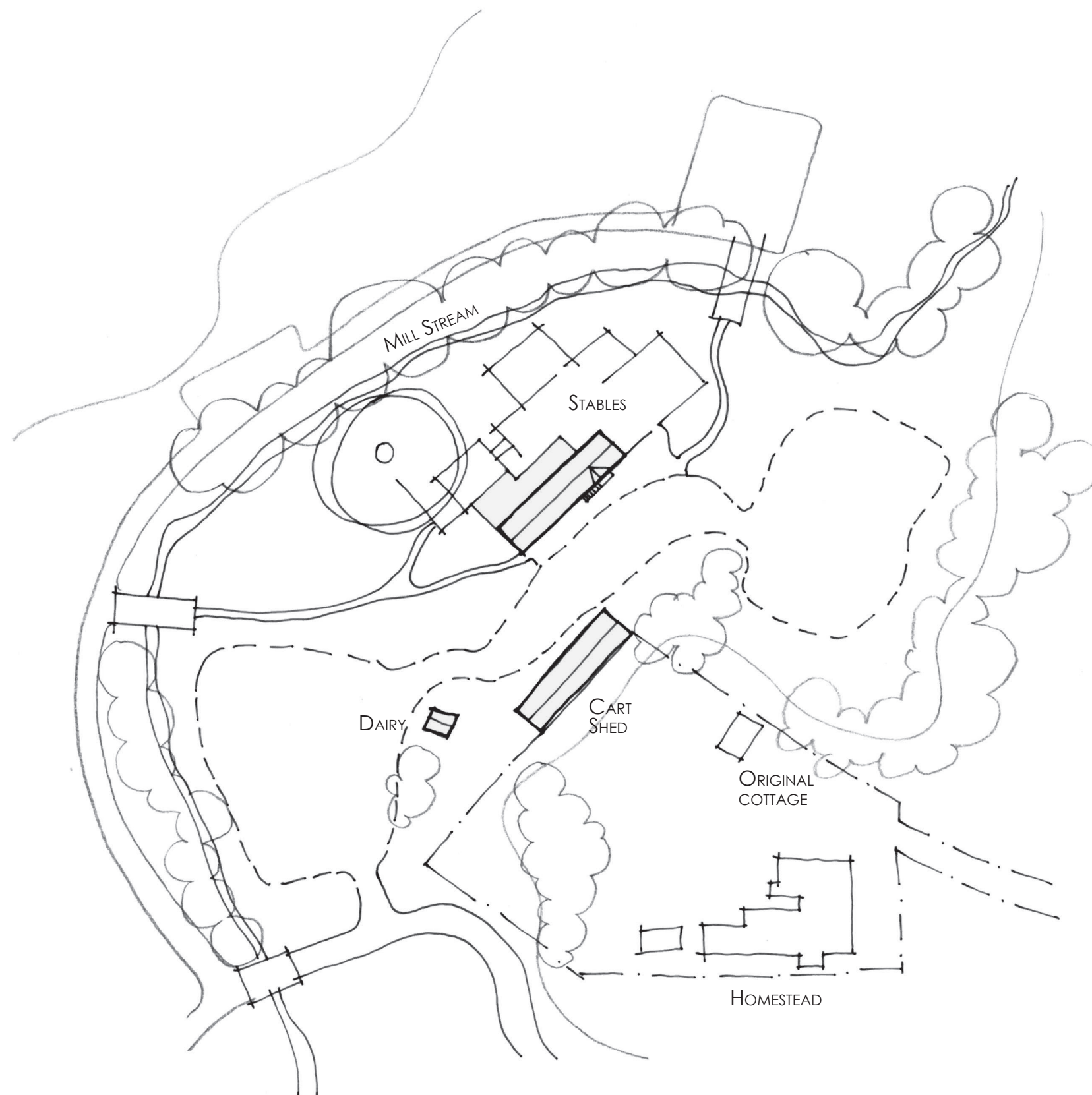
The proposals envisage a part commercial, part public, part community use for the Woolshed/Stable with removal of the 20th century Woolshed and minimal changes to the original stone building. No structural alterations to the Stable, other than earthquake strengthening, is proposed. The current use of the Stables as part of the sheep pens has concealed its original form and volume - with its regular subdivisions of stall posts and stalls - and it is proposed to expose these again and reduce the floor level back to the original.

The Cart Shed does not lend itself as readily to adaptive re-use and it is proposed to use this to display historic farm machinery as well as to display interpretative panels describing the history of the farm. The Dairy would form part of this display. It will be repaired and conserved "as found" and according to good conservation practice.

BRIEF HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The changes required as part of the proposals are minimal and will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the buildings and will in fact enhance them. The works to the Cart Shed, Dairy and Stable will ensure that any further deterioration in the buildings is avoided and that the buildings remain intact for future generations.

The change from a "private" farm use to a "public" community use will allow the enjoyment of these previously hidden buildings by a much wider range of people. This does not only include potential future residents of the development, but the wider community as well. An ability to interact with such an important part of the Basin's history will increase the appreciation of heritage in the District generally.





View of proposed cafe area



View from site entry (showing existing stables and cart shed, and woolshed lean-tos to be demolished)



View inside original stable. Existing slatted floor and original floor level to be reinstated



View of proposed cafe area



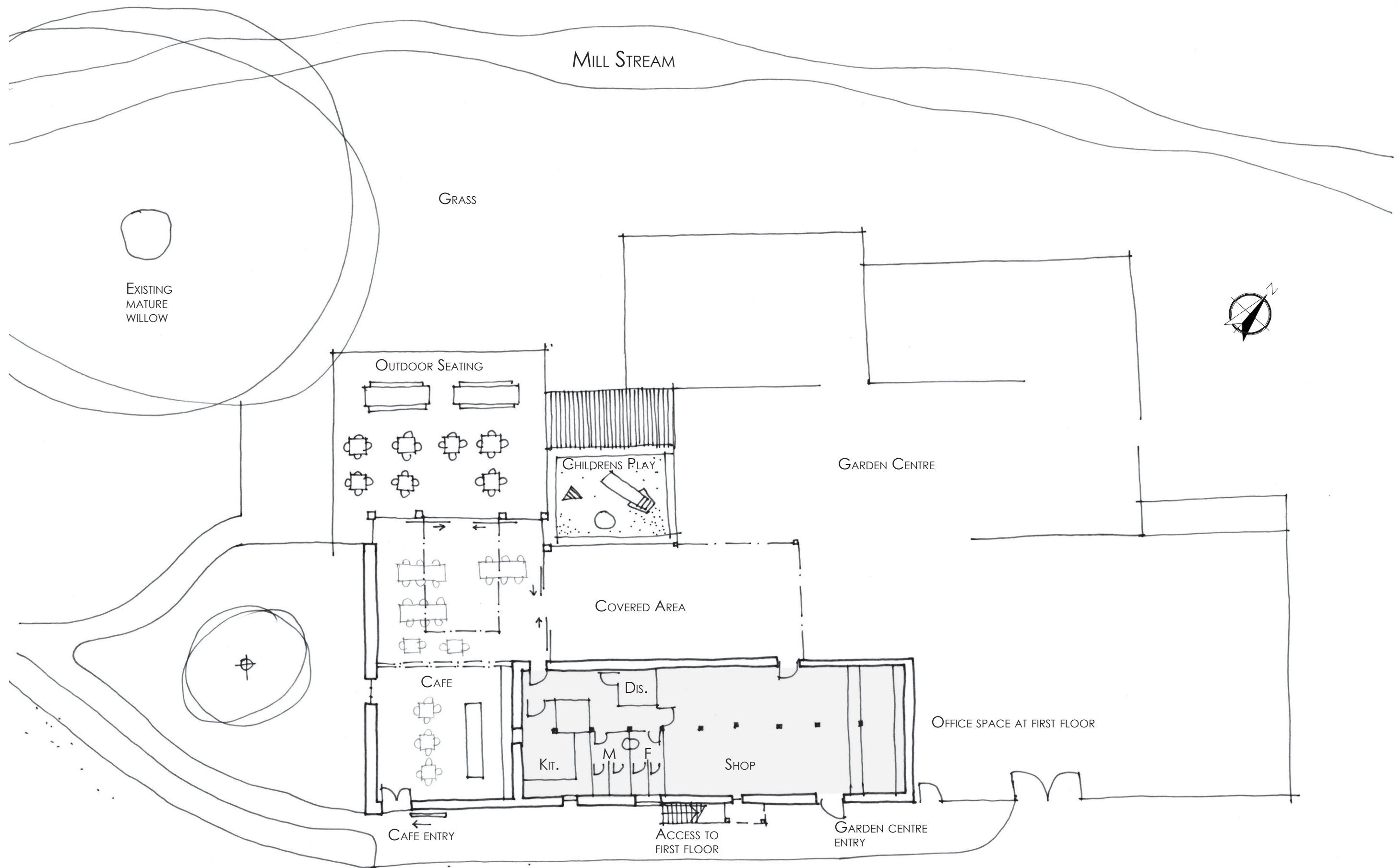
Detail of gable



View of first floor proposed office space



Northwest view of woolshed/stable



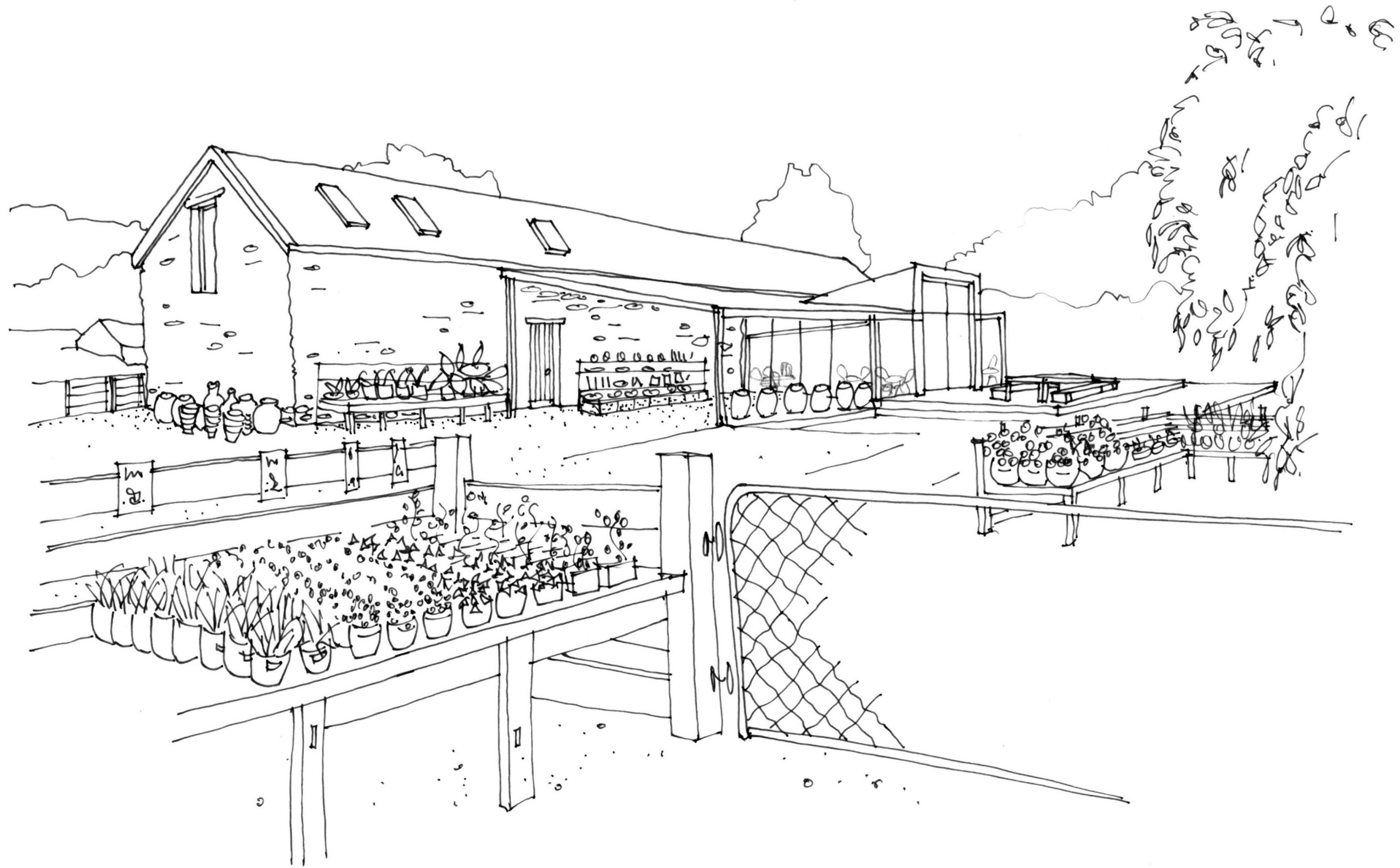
PLAN

Proposed Adaptive Re-use of Woolshed /Stables

SCALE: 1:200 @ A3

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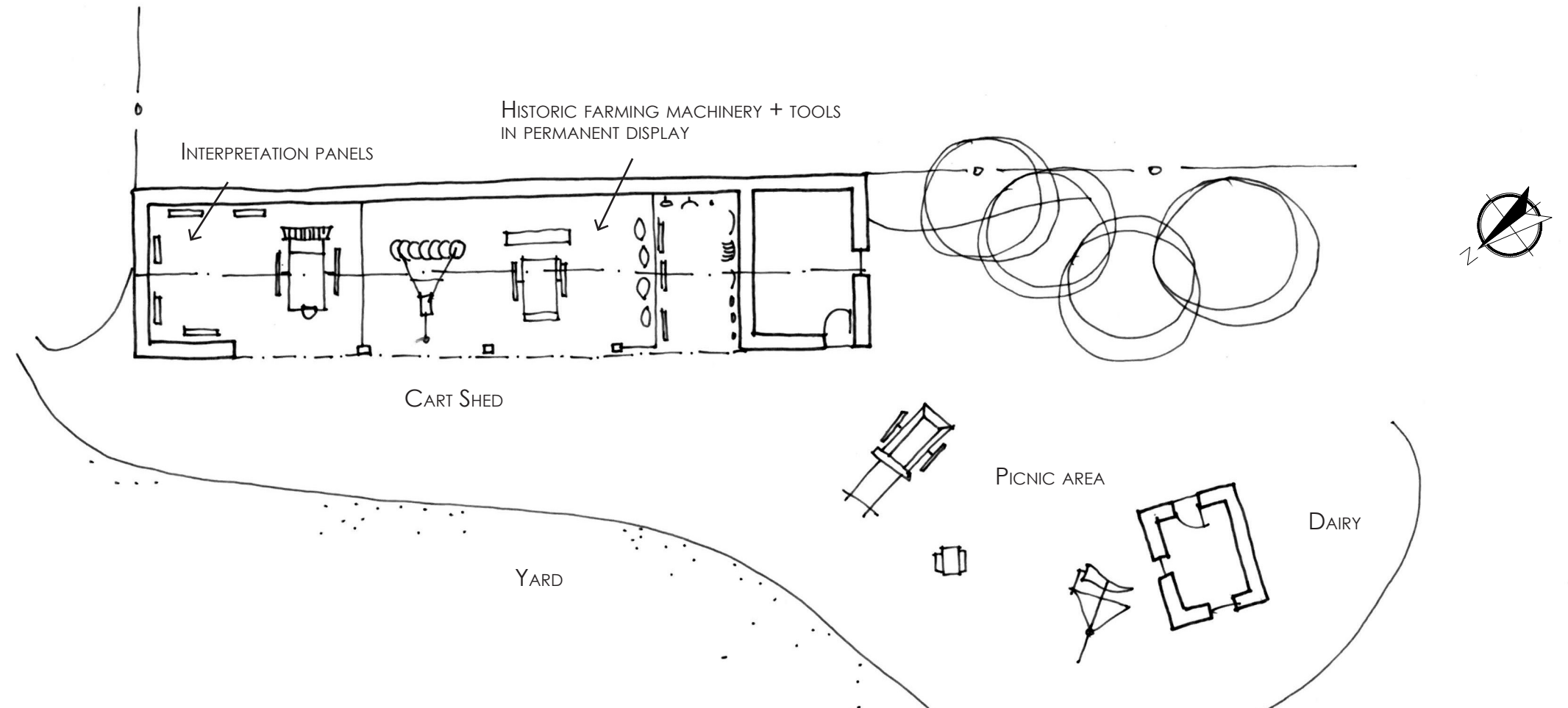
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SKETCH looking South

Proposed Adaptive Re-use of Woolshed /Stables

Examples of historic agricultural machinery for display inside cart shed



View of shingle roof



View of dairy



Northwest elevation

PLAN

SCALE: 1:200 @ A3

Cart Shed - Proposals

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