Little Mentmore, East Kennett, Wiltshire:

Written Programme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: SU 11976 67269

Prepared by:
Royston Clark
MCIfA

On behalf of:
Mr and Mrs
Lawson-
Johnson

Document No: ACW1566/1/0

Date: August 2023

AC archaeology

PROPOSED EXTENSION, LITTLE MENTMORE, OVERTON HILL, EAST KENNETT, WILTSHIRE:
Written Programme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief
NGR: SU 11976 67269
Museum Accession Number: DZSWS:37-2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Written Programme of Investigation has been prepared by AC archaeology Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Lawson-Johnston. It sets out proposals for undertaking archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to the main building and a new garage at Little Mentmore, Overton Hill, East Kennett SN8 4EY (see Appendix 1 for site location and details of development).

1.2 Planning consent has been granted for the development which includes the following condition:

> Condition 4:
>
> *No development shall commence within the area indicated by application PL/2023/01553 until:*
> *a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
> *b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*
> *REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.*

1.3 The BGS website describes the underlying geology as New Pit Chalk Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 93.9 and 89.8 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Superficial deposits are also recorded in the area and consist of Head, 1 - gravel, sand, silt and clay. These are sedimentary deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site is located within a general area of archaeological interest as recorded in the Wiltshire Council Historic Environment Record (HER).

2.2 The site area is located in close proximity to the settlement of West Overton, possibly to the east of East Kennett (HER SU16NW416). This is based on historic map analysis with placenames such as Church Dditch, Home Plot and Home Mead, which are all indicative of settlement. The church of West Overton was mentioned in a Saxon Charter of AD 972, although there is no surviving evidence for the church.

2.3 There is also evidence for a medieval farmstead with a courtyard plan located approximately 30m to the north of the site area at Orchard Farm (HER NWI69557).

2.4 A modern stone circle is located 50m to the south east of the site (HER SU16NW558).

2.5 There is also evidence for earlier periods in the form of prehistoric cist burials (HER MWI77618) and a possible Roman building at Manor Farm (HER MWI177617). Both are located to the south of the site area.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring are:

- To monitor, under constant archaeological supervision the groundworks associated with the new development (foundation and service trenches etc);
- To record and excavate any archaeological features that may be exposed or adversely affected by the groundworks;
- To provide an archive and interpretive report on the results of the monitoring;
- To contribute to research agendas, for example, the Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework Research Strategy 2012 – 2017 (Somerset County Council 2012). The following example are relevant research aims:

  Theme A: Settlement Sites and Landscapes – urban, rural, prehistoric – Research Aims
  30) Develop and test methodologies to identify Early Medieval rural settlement;
  33) Widen understanding of the origins of villages.

3.2 The archaeological monitoring project will be managed by Dr Royston Clark on behalf of AC archaeology Ltd. Site monitoring will be undertaken by suitably experienced staff members of AC archaeology Ltd. The site archaeologist(s) will familiarise his or herself with the content of this document prior to commencement of fieldwork.

Archaeological monitoring and recording

3.3 All topsoil and subsoil removal for the foundation and service trenches, together with any ground reduction, will be monitored by the site archaeologist. Attendance by the archaeologist will be comprehensive (i.e. present during all ground disturbance) and will continue until the full depth of the groundworks has been exposed, or, where there is no further possibility of archaeological remains being exposed.

3.4 All stripped areas and spoil heaps will be scanned with a metal detector by a suitably experienced operative and in accordance with the requirements of Wiltshire Council's Archaeological Service.

3.5 Where it can be established either a) that previous disturbance has been so thorough that archaeological deposits could not reasonably be expected to survive, or b) that sufficient natural deposits have been exposed to indicate an absence of archaeological deposits, then (following consultation with the WCACA), monitoring of the groundworks will be reduced to an intermittent level or terminated.

3.6 Following completion of machining, or as soon as safe working conditions allow, areas containing features of potential archaeological interest will be cleaned using hand tools, where necessary, in sufficient detail and extent to define the presence or absence of archaeological features. Where archaeological features are present, a plan will be prepared, and appropriate levels of sampling and recording undertaken within the normal construction timetable.

3.7 All deposits exposed will be examined, fully excavated and recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system. The excavation of archaeological deposits which will be left undamaged and in situ by the groundworks will not normally be undertaken. All archaeological features and deposits will be excavated by hand and to the following minimum sample levels:

- 50% of discrete features (pits, postholes etc, but a sample only of features occurring in high numbers e.g. stake holes), 25% of linear features with non-uniform fills and 10% of linear features with uniform fills;
- Should in situ structural remains be encountered, then sufficient excavation will be undertaken to confirm the function, sequence and chronology and method of construction;
- In the case of industrial features these will normally be investigated to a 50% sample level but, following consultation with the WCACA, full excavation and recording may be undertaken where appropriate;
- All artefacts or deposits revealed will be recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma single sequence recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's General Site Recording Manual;
- A photographic record of all archaeological deposits will be made in both plan and section. This will comprise digital photographs only, illustrating in both detail and generally the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate the progress of the work.

3.8 Should human remains be encountered, they will wherever possible be left *in situ*. Where this is not possible, excavations within the relevant area will be halted until the appropriate licence can be obtained from the Ministry of Justice and removal properly effected. The decision to leave human remains *in situ* will be taken in conjunction with the WCACA.

3.9 In the case of significant deposits being exposed that require time for further investigation, the site contractor will be expected to allow reasonable delays within the site investigation and construction timetables to enable the archaeological contractor to complete the recording of such deposits. In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached between the contractor / site agent and the archaeological contractor, or where a delay of more than 24 hours is requested, the archaeological contractor shall inform and seek the advice of the WCACA.

3.10 All pre-20th century finds will be retained at least for initial inspection. The presence of later material will be noted, but examples will not be retained, except where they are items of intrinsic interest, or their further examination is considered necessary for the interpretation of the site.

3.11 All deposits with palaeo-environmental potential (e.g. containing carbonised and/or waterlogged remains) will be bulk sampled, as appropriate and in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (English Heritage 2011). The selection of suitable deposits for sampling will be determined by the Site Archaeologist in consultation with AC archaeology's palaeo-environmental advisor (Dr Mike Allen) and where necessary, with the WCACA. Consultation with the Historic England Regional Scientific Officer will be sought, as appropriate.

3.12 A detailed archaeological record will be made of all exposed deposits of archaeological interest, using notebooks, context records, plans and sections at suitable scales and by photography (digital imagery only). All artefacts recovered will be assigned to uniquely-numbered contexts and where necessary recorded three-dimensionally.

4. SITE ARCHIVE

4.1 The site archive will contain all the data collected during the watching brief including records, finds and environmental residues. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent.

4.2 The archive will be prepared to the standards outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991), and in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission, 1994). Deposition shall take place as soon as practicable after the site works and any subsequent mitigation activities and in any case within 12 months of the completion of the project.

4.3 Subject to the formal agreement of the landowner, it is intended that the finds together with the site archive will be deposited with the Devizes Museum (Accession No DZSWS: 37-2023) As part of the overall commitment to the post-excavation programme, all storage boxes will be supplied by AC archaeology and all archive costs covered. All materials will be marked, packaged and presented in accordance with their standard requirements. Digital photographs taken as part of the project will be stored in archive as uncompressed tiff images. A set of monochrome prints of the images, produced on photographic paper by a commercial photographic laboratory, will also be provided. Security copies of paper records in digital format will be maintained and stored at the AC archaeology offices prior to deposition.

4.4 In the event that the results of the monitoring are largely or wholly negative, no archive will be deposited, but additional photos etc. will be included within the report.

5. REPORTING

5.1 A written report will be prepared following completion on site. The contents of the report will vary depending on the findings, but as a minimum will contain:

- an introduction to the archaeological and historical background of the site area;
- a statement of the methods used during the watching brief;
- a descriptive account of the results, to include relevant illustrations/ photographic plates;
- an account of the nature, extent, date, condition and significance of any finds, with specialist opinions as appropriate;
- an interpretation and a conclusion considering the validity of the results and any limiting factors.

5.2 Following the initial assessment by AC archaeology's Finds Officer the following specialists (as required) will undertake various components of the report:

- a report on prehistoric pottery will be undertaken by Imogen Wood, freelance researcher;
- a report on later prehistoric and Romano-British pottery will be undertaken by Mark Corney, freelance specialist;
- a report on any medieval or later pottery will be carried out by Dan Carter AC archaeology;
- a report on the animal bone will be undertaken by Royston Clark AC archaeology;
- a report on any worked flint will be carried out by Royston Clark AC archaeology;

- a report on metal objects and metalworking residue will be undertaken by in-house staff of AC archaeology;
- coins will be identified by Mark Corney, freelance specialist;
- assessment of palaeo-environmental samples will be undertaken by Mike Allen, freelance specialist;
- Scientific dating (Carbon-14) will be undertaken by Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC).

5.3 As a minimum, a short note on the circumstances and nature of the project will be provided for publication in the county journal within one year following completion of the site work unless further site work is required.

5.4 Copies of the full report will be supplied to the client, the planning officer, WCACA and WHER. A digital copy of the site data will also be provided in an approved format. A hard copy, together with a PDF version will be submitted to the WHER.

5.5 An OASIS record will be completed.

6. MONITORING

6.1 During the archaeological investigations the WCACA will be invited to inspect and advise on the work as required. Unless otherwise agreed with the WCACA, at least two weeks' notice will be provided before work commences on site.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Archaeological staff will operate under AC archaeology's Health and Safety Policy and in accordance with current Health and Safety legislation, to include (but not exclusively rely on upon) the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act* 1974, the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* 1992 and the *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations* 2015.

7.2 Archaeological staff will not work within the reach of the excavator arm on mechanical plant and would be at a safe distance should the quick hitch device fail. The machine operator will ensure that all necessary parts of the plant are fully functional and properly maintained.

7.3 In accordance with the provisions of the AC archaeology Health and Safety Policy, the site archaeologist will be responsible for ensuring that operations under their control are carried out in accordance with the approved procedures.

7.4 Archaeological staff will not work in unsafe conditions; even where not to do so will result in the possible under-recording of the archaeological resource.

7.5 All site staff hold Construction Industry CSCS accreditation.

8. INSURANCE

8.1 AC *archaeology* carries Public Liability Insurance cover to £5,000,000, Employer's Liability to £10,000,000 and Professional Indemnity cover to £5,000,000.

9. COPYRIGHT

9.1 AC archaeology Ltd will provide the client with unrestricted permission to use the report resulting from the archaeological investigations, but will retain, along with its specialist contributors, the copyright of the report and all associated archive material.

10. REFERENCES & GUIDELINES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*. CIFA: Reading

English Heritage, 1991, *The Management of Archaeological Projects. Second Edition* (MAP2) English Heritage (Historic England) (London)

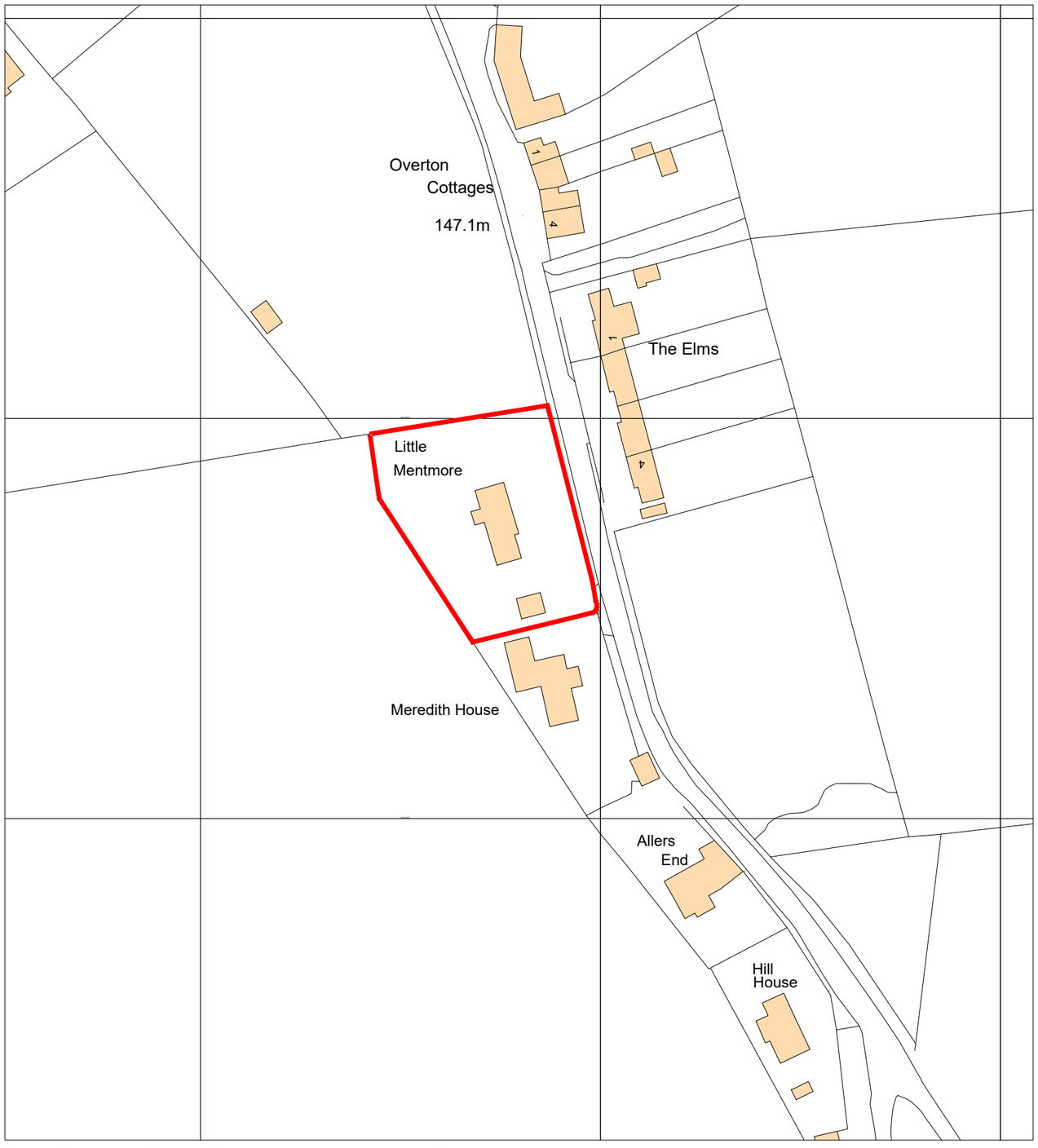
English Heritage, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation.* 2nd Edition English Heritage (Historic England) Centre for Archaeology Guidelines

SMA, 1993, Guidelines on the Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Society of Museum Archaeologists

Somerset County Council, 2012, *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework.* Somerset County Council.

APPENDIX 1: SITE LOCATION

HW
30/01/2023



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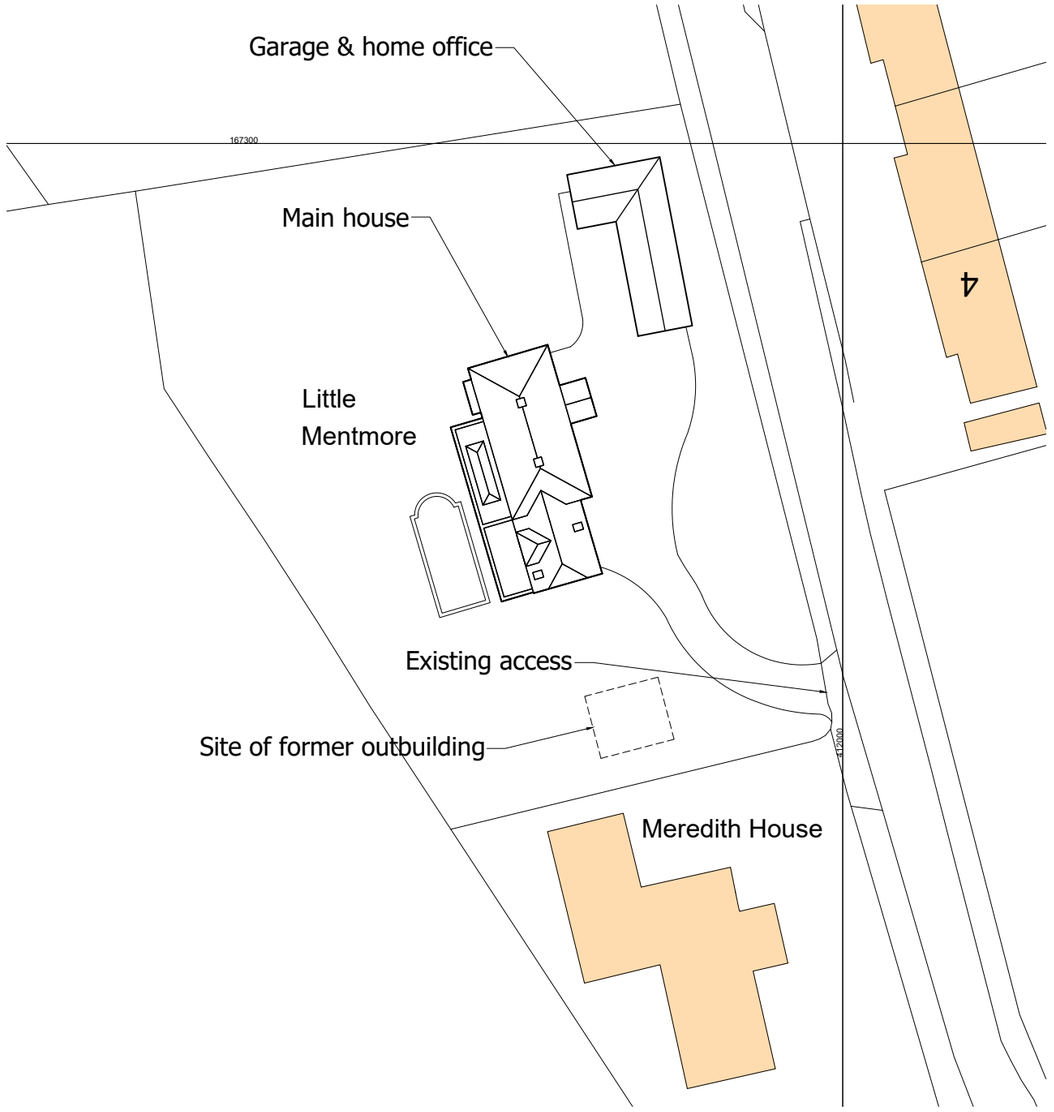
SITE LOCATION PLAN
SCALE 1:1250



BLOCK PLAN
SCALE 1:500

NORTH

SITE LOCATION &
BLOCK PLAN

1:1250/ 1:500
@ A3

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22075.100-D

PROJECT

Little Mentmore, East Kennett, Marlborough. SN8 4EY

REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENTS
-	-	-

SCALE BAR - 1:1250 (0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50m) - 1:500 (0, 10, 20, 25m)

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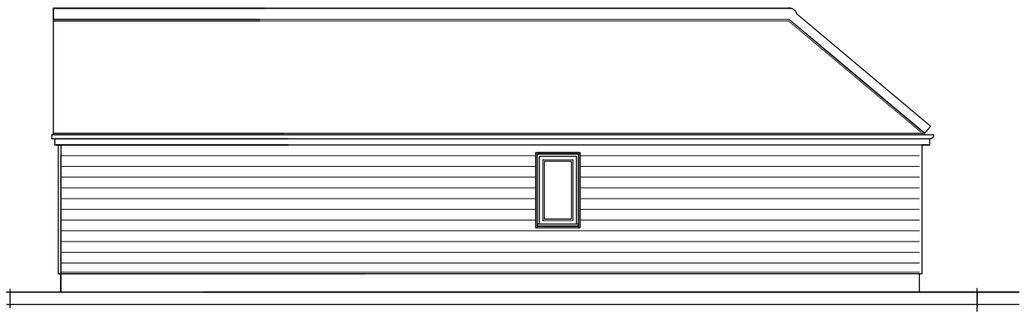
SOUTH



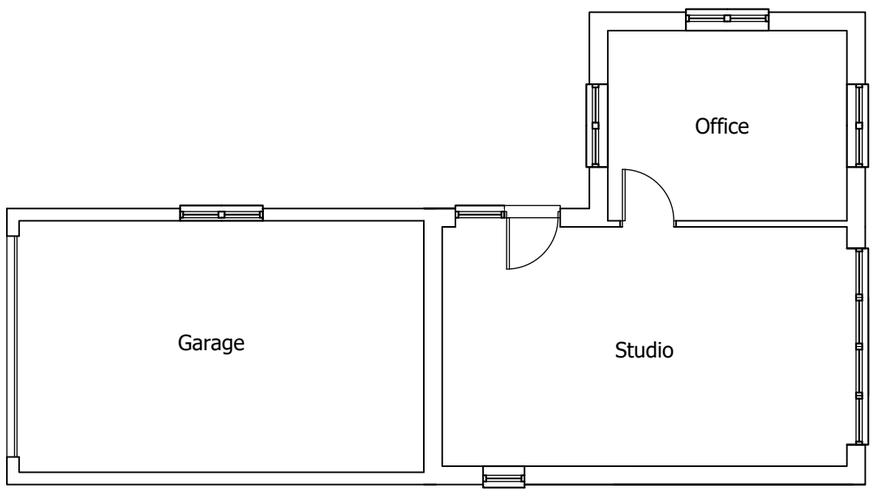
WEST



NORTH



EAST



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

NORTH

Proposed Garage & Studio 1:100 @ A3

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PROJECT

Little Mentmore, East Kennett

REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENTS
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0 1 2 3 4 5m

SCALE BAR - 1:100

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