

## Application details

Ref: 6/2015/0466	Applicant: Mr and Mrs J Yeung	Case officer: Ros Drane
Address: Acton (Harris's Cottage), Langton Matravers, BH19 3JS		
Description: Erect single-storey extension, insert roof lights and convert door to window		
Planning Committee: 30 September 2015		

## Reason for decision process for this application

The Planning Committee is considering this application because:

This application has been referred by the Chairman of the Planning Committee because he felt that the issues are finely balanced.

## Recommendation

To **refuse** planning permission for the reasons set out in the attached appendix.

## Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Acceptable.
Whether the scale and design of the proposals harm the character and setting of the original building and the Acton conservation area	The positioning, scale and design of the proposed dining room extension and the roof lights will be demonstrably harmful to the character and setting of the cottage and the intrinsic character and appearance of the Acton conservation area.
Whether the scale and design of the proposals harm the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside including the Dorset area of outstanding natural beauty	No harmful impact.
Impact on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties	No harmful impact.

## Summary

The planning matters related to this application are finely balanced. On balance, officers are recommending refusal.

## Main report

### The site

Harris's Cottage is a grade II listed building located in the centre of the hamlet of Acton. The property has a historic traditional character with rubble stone walls under a stone roof. A large garden extends on the south eastern side enclosed by stone walling and some planting. Land levels rise from north to south across the garden. The property is within the Acton conservation area and Dorset area of outstanding natural beauty. A public right of way runs along the track on the northern and eastern boundaries.

## **Proposed development**

Erect a dining room extension off the existing modern single storey kitchen extension on the south eastern side of the cottage. The proposed extension will be single storey and have Purbeck stone walls with painted timber windows and doors under a flat lead sheet roof with a glazed roof light. It will project approx. 3.1 metres off the side of the kitchen and be to the same depth. The existing pitched roof space of the kitchen extension will be converted to provide an en suite shower room. Two new conservation roof lights will be inserted in the front and rear roof slopes to serve this new room. It is also proposed to change an existing door in the rear wall of the kitchen to a window. There is an associated application for listed building consent application number 6/2015/0467 which covers these proposals, and the internal works required to allow the changes.

## **Relevant planning history**

Planning application number 6/1999/0562 and 0563 to erect a kitchen/dining room/conservatory extension with a bedroom over, form a new pitched roof over an existing rear flat roof, alterations and new storage building and vehicular access was refused in December 1999. The final plan deleted the conservatory proposal and proposed a reduced the depth of the extension to 4.6 metres but maintained an overall projection of approx. 5.8 metres off the south eastern end of the cottage.

The application was refused on the grounds that the extent of projection of the extension and its asymmetrical design would be harmful to the simple form and character and setting of the cottage. Also, the application lacked information about levels and the impact of potential changes in land levels on the listed building and the conservation area.

Following these refusals, further applications for planning permission and listed building consent were submitted, application reference numbers 6/1999/0850 and 0851. These applications proposed a narrower kitchen extension approx. 4.2 metres deep, projecting 5.3 metres off the end of the cottage with a symmetrical pitched roof. This plan included a bedroom in the roof space, a new roof for the existing rear lean to and new stone sheds. Permission and consent was granted subject to conditions which removed permitted development rights for further additions or alterations (including the installation of roof lights or the conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation). The reason for this condition was to safeguard the character of the site and the amenities of adjacent and nearby properties.

Works commenced but during construction the owners decided to change the proposal and the Council agreed an amended plan which allowed the kitchen extension be completed with a pitched roof and no first floor accommodation.

Subsequently, planning application number 6/2000/0374 to remove part of the boundary wall to form a vehicular access was refused on grounds that the new opening would harm the setting of the listed building and the conservation area.

## **Pre-application discussions**

Pre application advice for these proposals has been given by the Design and Conservation Officer. He concluded that:

The proposed flat roofed extension would not be supported. This extension would be viewed as an element of the front elevation of the property and the following concerns are raised:

1. The flat roofed form does not complement the more traditional forms of the existing buildings. Note one aspect of the 1999 scheme (approved 2000) was roofing over of an unsympathetic flat roofed element. Reintroducing flat roofs at the property would a retrograde step.
2. The window details would appear at odds with the vernacular character of the frontage.

3. The cumulative width of extensions relative to the historic frontage would significantly reduce subservience.
4. The telescopic arrangement based on diminishing forms would appear visually awkward and lacking in balance. Whilst it is appreciated that some other buildings within the conservation area (not necessarily listed) have diminishing extensions, the proportion of these extensions is typically more modest. In this regard the existing extension is already of a relatively substantial size unsuited to further enlargement.

It is suggested that use of one of the two existing living rooms as a dining room would represent a simpler option than adding an extension.

He also expressed concerns about introducing a doorway in the front of the extension, adding a flue and an additional roof light in the front roof slope of the extension but had no objection to the replacement of extension door with a window, the creation of a first floor en suite in roof void, and replacement windows in the rear lean.

### **Relevant issues for this application**

#### **Principle of development**

The site is outside of a defined settlement boundary within the open countryside. There is no objection in principle to the alteration or extension of buildings within this location however, in each case proposals will be judged on an assessment of the impact of the development on the character and setting of the original building and the character of the open countryside.

#### **Relevant Planning Policies:**

National Planning Policy Framework.

Purbeck Local Plan Part 1:

Policies - CO – countryside and LHH - landscape, historic environment and heritage

Officers have also considered:

National planning practice guidance

#### **Whether the scale and design of the proposals harm the character and setting of the original building and the Acton conservation area**

It is a statutory duty under section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for the Councils to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, and section 72 of the same Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. This is amplified by the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular paragraph 133), and Policies LHH and D within the Purbeck Local Plan and supporting guidance.

Acton is small tightly defined hamlet located on the Purbeck limestone plateau to the south west of Langton Matravers. Historically, many of the cottages were used by quarrymen working in the local stone industry. Harris's Cottage is a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century detached two storey stone cottage which very much represents the vernacular style. Its qualities have been recognised by its designation as a Grade II listed building.

The historic cottage has a simple robust form, a balanced, albeit asymmetrical arrangement of openings, and makes use of materials sourced from the immediate locality. It is an attractive late example of the vernacular whose setting is enhanced by open space to the front.

In terms of scale, the dining room extension would appear subservient to the existing building forms, because it is lower in height and set back slightly behind the front wall of the kitchen extension. However, in cumulative terms, a further extension will mean that the total proportion of

the frontage occupied by extensions would almost equal that of the cottage and subservience would be much reduced. A further extension of the building will result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building elongating and staggering the form. This will detract from the scale, proportions and simplicity of the original building, appearing as overwhelming and demonstrably harmful to the buildings defining character and appearance.

The flat roofed design of the structure would be inconsistent with that of the existing building which has pitched roofs.

For these reasons the positioning, scale and detailed design of the dining room extension would detract from the character and setting of the original building resulting in demonstrable harm to the appearance of the property and its setting.

There is no objection to formation of an en-suite within the roof space of the modern extension; however introduction of a roof light on the front elevation of the property will introduce an unnecessary element of visual clutter. With reference to paragraph 85 of the District Design SPD, roof lights are generally best restricted to less important rear elevations. The provision of opposing roof lights either side of a roof slope is furthermore a poor design detail. In certain perspectives this will create a clear view through the roof introducing an element of transparency which will detract from the visual character of the building.

The existing cottage makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Acton conservation area. The conservation area holds interest principally as an irregular and dense cluster of vernacular cottages with a historic relationship to the mining industry. Though the proposed extension and roof lights will not be easily viewed from 'public' areas, by harming the vernacular character and simplicity of the cottage it will nonetheless weaken the integrity and character of the conservation area.

In light of harm caused to the above heritage assets paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires broad mitigating public benefits either directly or not directly related to conservation to be considered, with reference to the definition provided within National Planning Practice Guidance. No obvious public benefits appear to derive from the proposals that would outweigh the reason for refusal of the application.

#### Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework.

Core principles – bullet points 4 – high quality design and 5 - taking into account character.

Section 7 – requiring good design - in particular paragraphs 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 64.

Section 11 conserving and enhancing the historic environment – in particular paragraphs 128, 129, 131, 132, 134 and 137.

Decision taking.

Purbeck Local Plan Part 1:

Policies - CO – countryside, D – design, LHH – landscape, historic environment and heritage.

Officers have also considered:

National planning practice guidance

Purbeck District design guide supplementary planning document adopted January 2014.

Acton conservation area appraisal.

#### **Whether the scale and design of the proposals harm the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside including the Dorset area of outstanding natural beauty**

The proposed alterations are contained within the hamlet of Acton and although considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the property and its immediate setting, they will



have no notable impact in the wider landscape. The natural beauty of the surrounding landscape will not be harmed in any way by the proposal.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework.

Purbeck Local Plan Part 1:

Policy - LHH – landscape, historic environment and heritage.

Officers have also considered:

National planning practice guidance

Purbeck District design guide supplementary planning document adopted January 2014.

Dorset AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidance 2008

**Impact on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties**

The positioning and single storey height of the proposed extension means that it will have no obvious impact on the living conditions of the occupants of the neighbouring properties. The proposed roof lights are flush fitting and serve the proposed en suite bathroom. Existing first floor windows already allow some views. They will not introduce a significant opportunity for increased over looking of neighbouring properties.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework.

Purbeck Local Plan Part 1:

Policy - D – design

Officers have also considered:

National planning practice guidance

Purbeck District design guide supplementary planning document adopted January 2014.

**Other Planning Issues**

Consideration has also been given to the following planning issues that are not key to this application.

**Nature conservation – bats** – standing advice from Natural England does not require a bat survey in this location.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework.

Purbeck Local Plan Part 1:

Policy - BIO - biodiversity and geodiversity.

Officers have also considered:

National planning practice guidance

Purbeck District design guide supplementary planning document adopted January 2014.

Dorset biodiversity appraisal and mitigation plan.

**Representations received**

Who	Relevant points
Langton Matravers Parish Council	No objection.
Purbeck District Council – Design and Conservation Officer	Objection – on grounds that harming the vernacular character and simplicity of the listed building will weaken the integrity and character of the conservation area.
Dorset County Council – Rights of Way	No objection. Notes that free passage of public rights of way must not be obstructed at any time.

**Neighbour comments received and case officer response**

In addition to the representations above, the Council received 5 comments from neighbours and residents about this planning application. The representations are all available in full on the Council’s website and this report addresses the key planning points that they raised. The following table sets out a summary of the key issues from the comments as well as the case officer’s response to them.

Issue	Case officer response
Support the application – believe it will be an enhancement with no harmful impact on the building or the hamlet	Noted.
Support the application – no impact on neighbours	Noted.
Support the application – improves living accommodation for permanent residency	Noted.

**Community infrastructure levy**

The development proposal is not liable to a community infrastructure levy charge.



## Appendix – Recommended reasons for refusal

1. Harris's Cottage is an attractive vernacular Grade II listed cottage of simple proportions. It makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality and the Acton conservation area. The proposed dining room extension would result in a cumulative disproportionate enlargement of the building which will have a harmful impact detracting from the character and setting of the original building. The design of the proposed dining room and the introduction and positioning of roof lights are unsympathetic and do not complement the architectural character of cottage. They fail to positively integrate into their surroundings weakening the integrity and character of the Acton conservation area.  
The development is considered to contrary to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework Core Principles, bullet points 4 – high quality design and 5 - taking into account character, Section 7 – Requiring good design – in particular paragraphs, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 64 and Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment in particular paragraphs 128, 129, 131, 132, 134 and 137 and the supporting National Planning Policy Guidance. It also conflicts with policies CO – countryside, D- design, LHH - landscape, historic environment and heritage of the adopted local development plan, Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 and Purbeck District design guide supplementary planning document adopted January 2014 and the aim of the Acton conservation area appraisal.

In accordance with paragraphs 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, consideration has been given to whether or not there are public benefits that would outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets caused by the proposed development. The Council can find no evidence of any public benefit that will outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets and the application should be refused.

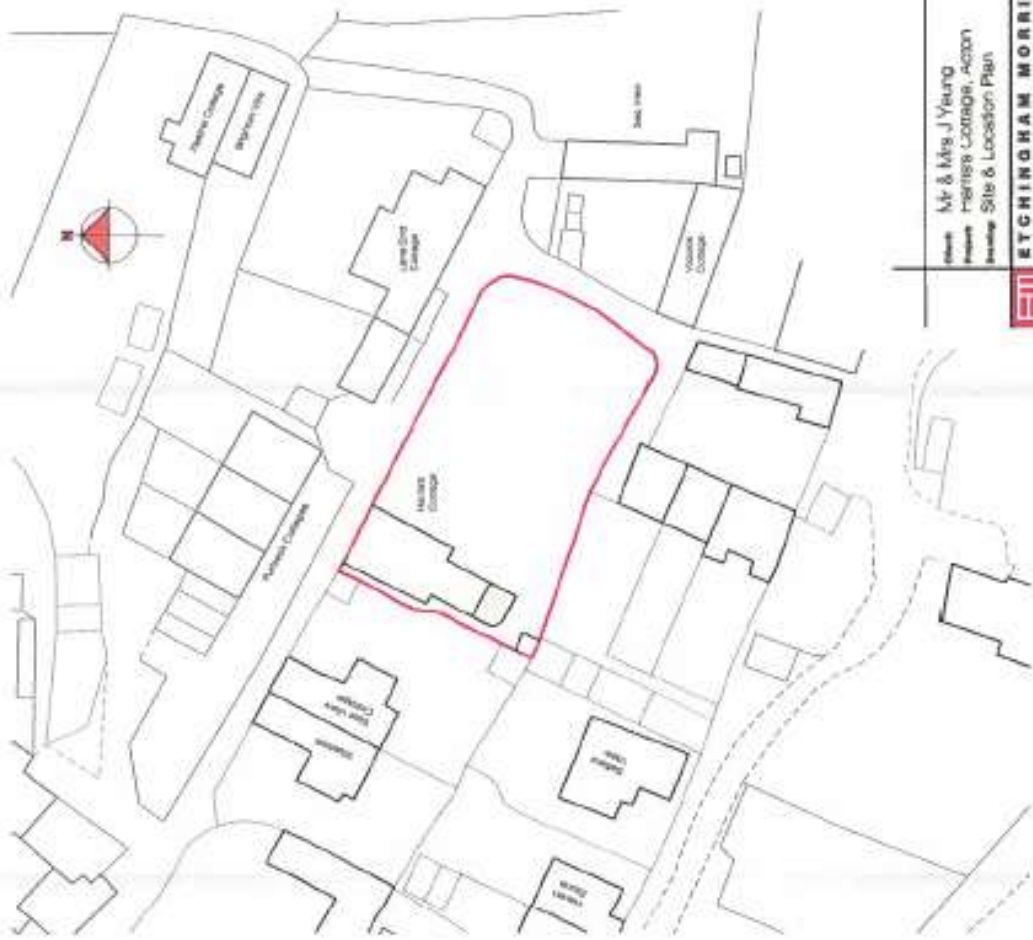
2. Informative Note - Refused Plans. The plans that were considered by the Council in making this decision are: ST534-01a, ST534-02 and ST534-03d submitted on 29 July 2015.
3. Statement of positive and proactive working: In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The Council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by; offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions. For this application: The agent did take the opportunity to enter into pre-application discussions; The applicant was informed/ advised how the proposal did not accord with the development plan, and that no material considerations are apparent to outweigh these matters; The applicant/ agent and the Council have worked together to minimise the reasons for refusal.







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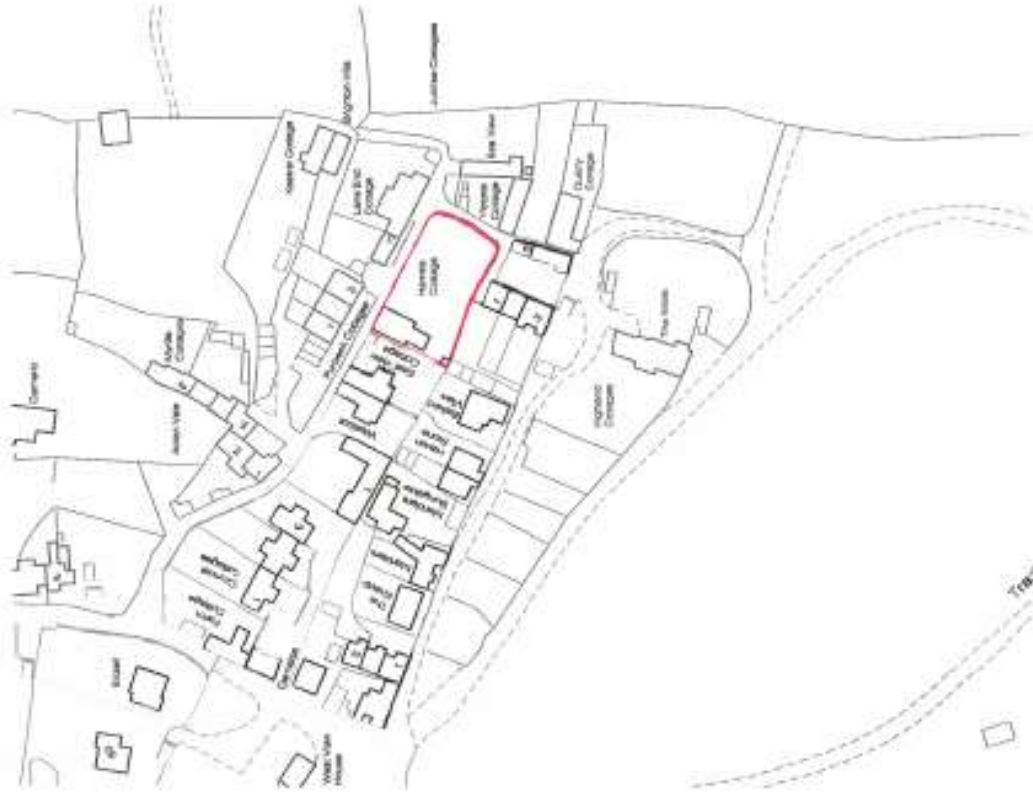


Site Block Plan



	Client: Mr & Mrs J Yeung Address: Harris Cottage, Acton Building: Site & Location Plan
	ECTINGHAM MORRIS ARCHITECTS LTD 111-113, High Street, Acton, London W3 7TA
The 15,000 Area of 12,141 sq ft Program: 1000 sq ft Tel: 0202 421181, 0202 421236 E: info@ectingham-morris.co.uk	Date: 01/2015 Scale: 1:1,500 Page No: ST534-01a

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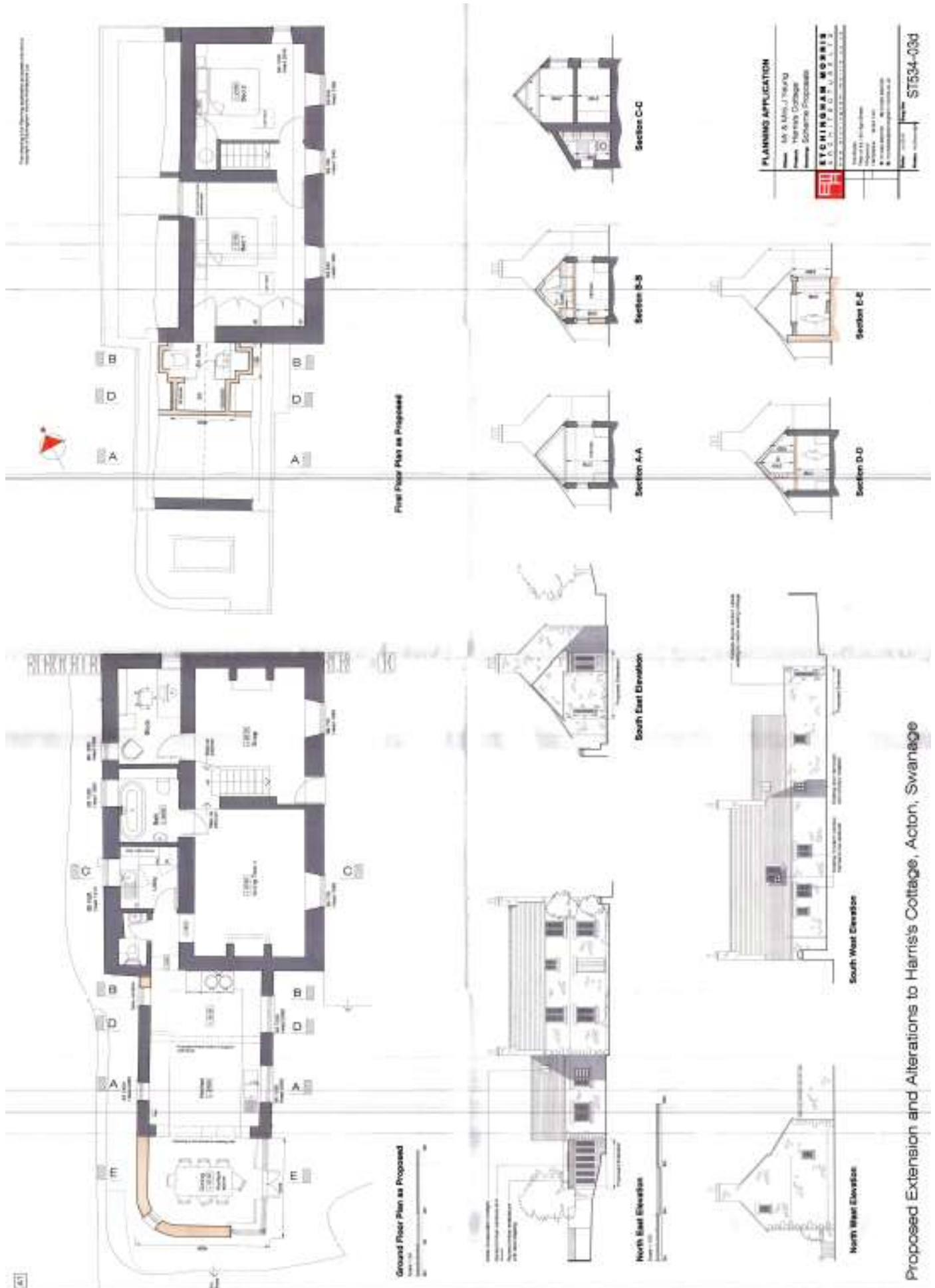


Location Plan



Proposed Extension and Alterations to Harris Cottage, Acton, Swanage B-H19 3JS





Proposed Extension and Alterations to Harris's Cottage, Acton, Swinage