

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT & PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed First Floor Extension

Ashbrook Cottage
6 Lower Titmore Green
Little Wymondley
Hertfordshire
SG4 7JP

April 2026



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1. Introduction

This combined Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement supports a proposal for a first floor extension over an existing single storey extension at Ashbrook Cottage.

The application follows the withdrawal of application reference 22/03096/FPH, and responds directly to officer concerns regarding the interpretation of “original dwelling” and the assessment of cumulative floorspace increase under Paragraph 149(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. Site Description and Context

The application site is located within the hamlet of Lower Titmore Green, comprising approximately 20 dwellings and a public house arranged in a clustered settlement pattern.

The surrounding character is defined by mid-19th century cottages and former agricultural buildings, the majority of which have been extended and modernised.

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt but is not within a Conservation Area, is not listed, and is not affected by flood risk or AONB designation.

The site location and wider context are illustrated on the appended plans.

3. Planning History

96/0655/FPH – Approved extensions

22/03096/FPH – Withdrawn

The withdrawn application was subject to officer concern that the cumulative increase in floorspace represented a 134% increase over the “original dwelling”, and was therefore considered disproportionate under NPPF Paragraph 149(c).

However, this assessment was based on an incorrect understanding of the original form of the dwelling.

Historic photographic evidence (appended to this report) demonstrates that;

- The building originally comprised two cottages
- Each cottage had attached side and rear lean-to outbuildings

These structures form part of the pre-1948 “original dwelling”, and therefore materially increase the lawful baseline against which extensions should be assessed.

4. The Proposal

The proposal comprises a first floor extension above an existing single storey side extension, with no increase in footprint.

The development provides improved accommodation including ground floor accessible facilities for an elderly resident requiring full-time care.

The proposed first floor layout (appended) is shown in and demonstrates the integration of the extension into the existing plan form.

Key Design Principles;

- Vertical extension only – no encroachment into undeveloped land
- Subservient to host dwelling in scale and massing
- Continuation of existing building line and form

5. Design and Appearance

Scale and Massing

The extension is modest in visual terms;

- It sits directly above an existing ground floor extension
- It does not extend beyond the established building footprint
- It maintains the overall proportions of the main dwelling

As shown in the proposed elevations (appended);

- The additional storey is visually contained
- The development reads as a logical evolution of the building rather than a dominant addition

Materials

The proposal proposes the use of the same materials as the existing property, including;

- Brickwork to match the existing dwelling
- Slate roofing to match existing
- Timber windows

This ensures visual continuity and reinforces the traditional character of the building.

Impact on Character

Given the varied and extended nature of surrounding properties, including significant enlargement at nearby dwellings (e.g. 8–9 Lower Titmore Green, ref. 21/02635/FPH), the proposal is entirely consistent with the prevailing pattern of development within the hamlet.

6. Green Belt and Planning Policy Context

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where national and local policy seek to prevent inappropriate development.

National Policy

Paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF states that *the extension of a building is not inappropriate provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.*

The key issue is therefore whether the proposal constitutes a disproportionate addition, having regard to;

- The scale of the original dwelling
- The cumulative impact of extensions
- The effect on openness (spatial and visual)

Local Plan Policy

The proposal has been assessed against the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031), in particular;

Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt

Seeks to protect the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, allowing development only where it accords with national policy.

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Requires development to respond positively to local context, maintain amenity, and achieve a high standard of design.

Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions

Ensures development does not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity.

Policy CGB1 – Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt

Reinforces restraint in rural development and supports the principle of proportionate extension.

Policy CGB4 – Expansion of existing buildings in the Green Belt

6.1 Correct Identification of the Original Dwelling

A central issue in the previously withdrawn application was the interpretation of the “original dwelling”.

The earlier assessment incorrectly assumed a smaller historic footprint, leading to the conclusion that the cumulative increase amounted to 134%. However, historic photographic evidence (appended) clearly demonstrates that;

- The property originally comprised two separate cottages
- Each had attached lean-to outbuildings

These structures existed prior to 1 July 1948, and therefore form part of the “original dwelling” as defined by the NPPF and this materially increases the lawful baseline.

6.2 Assessment of Disproportionate Additions

There is no fixed percentage threshold within national or local policy that defines “disproportionate”. Case law and appeal decisions consistently confirm that percentage increases are a guide only, not determinative.

The assessment must consider;

- Volume and footprint
- Visual impact
- Spatial perception of openness

The proposed extension;

- Introduces no increase in footprint. The increase in volume is modest
- Has limited visual impact. The extension can be read as part of the existing building envelope
- Sits within an established built cluster. There is no encroachment into undeveloped land

As demonstrated in the proposed elevations (appended) the development does not appear visually intrusive and the perceived massing remains subordinate to the host dwelling

Relationship to Existing Development Pattern

The hamlet of Lower Titmore Green is characterised by extended historic cottages which have been incrementally enlarged over time. Notably, nearby properties (e.g. 8–9 Lower Titmore Green, ref. 21/02635/FPH) have undergone significant enlargement, establishing a clear precedent for proportionate growth.

The proposal is therefore;

- Consistent with the established pattern
- Not an outlier in scale or form

Conclusion on Disproportionality

When assessed on the above criteria

- The baseline “original dwelling” is significantly larger than previously assumed
- The proposal introduces no additional footprint
- The visual and spatial impact on openness is limited

Accordingly, the development does not constitute a disproportionate addition and falls within the exception set out in NPPF Paragraph 149(c) and is compliant with Policy SP5.

6.3 Floorspace Comparison

The original dwelling was significantly larger than previously assessed. The proposed increase is limited to first floor accommodation and is materially less than the previously cited 134% figure.

6.4 Very Special Circumstances

The proposal enables 24-hour care for an 86-year-old North Hertfordshire resident, supporting independent living and reducing reliance on institutional care by providing ground floor accessible accommodation and a layout suitable for carers and continuous supervision without compromising the existing family home.

7. Residential Amenity

The proposal results in no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

8. Access and Inclusive Design

Existing access and parking are retained, with improved internal accessibility.

9. Conclusion

The proposal has been carefully designed to align with both national and local Green Belt policy, and when assessed against the correct baseline of the original dwelling, does not represent a disproportionate addition.

Furthermore, the absence of any increase in footprint, combined with the limited visual impact and strong functional need, reinforces that the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and accords fully with Policy SP5 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Original cottages



Current Cottage



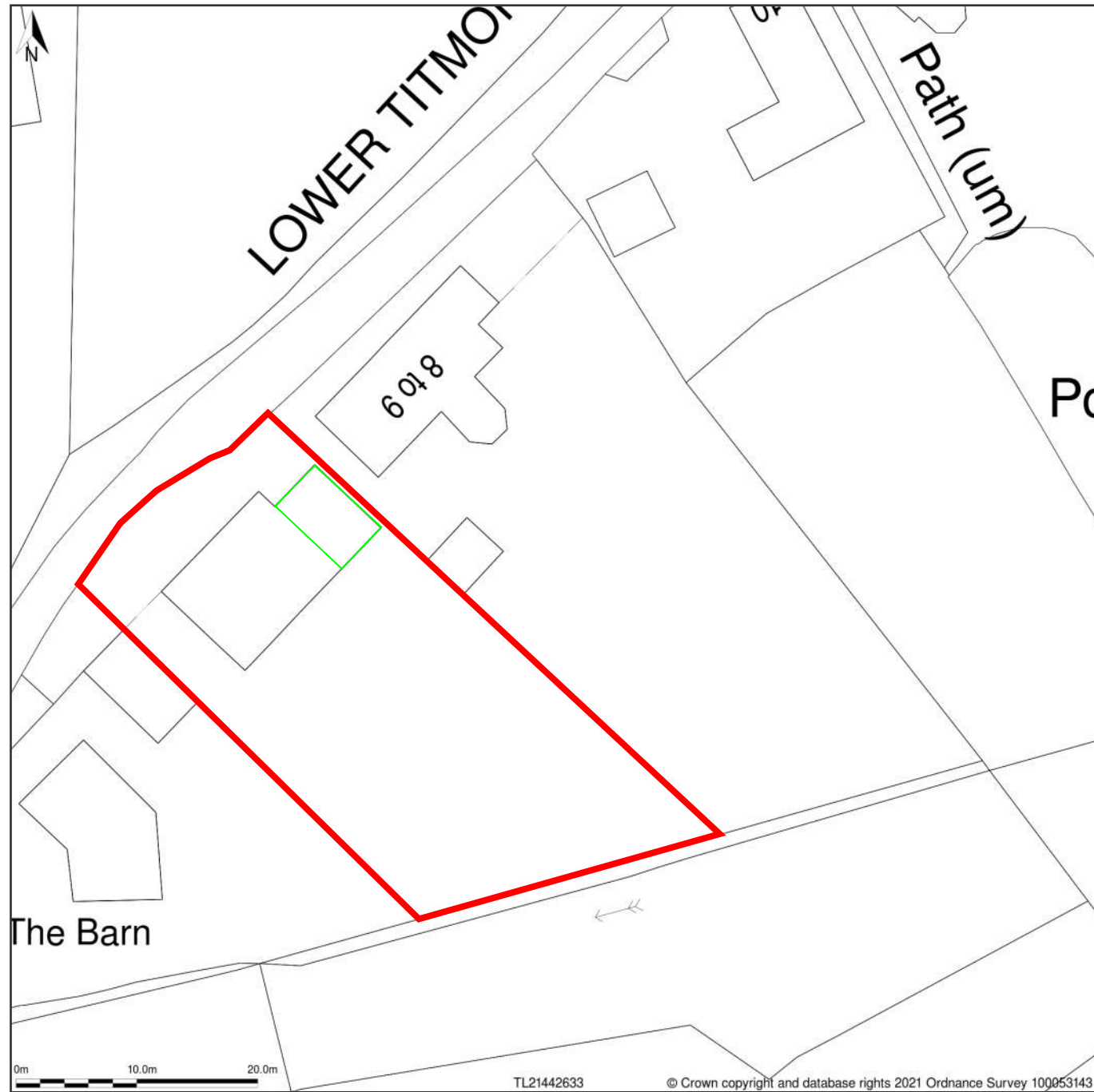
Adjacent property 8 Lower Titmore Green



Adjacent property 4 Lower Titmore Green



Ashbrook Cottage Lower Titmore Green, Little Wymondley, Hertfordshire, SG4 7JT

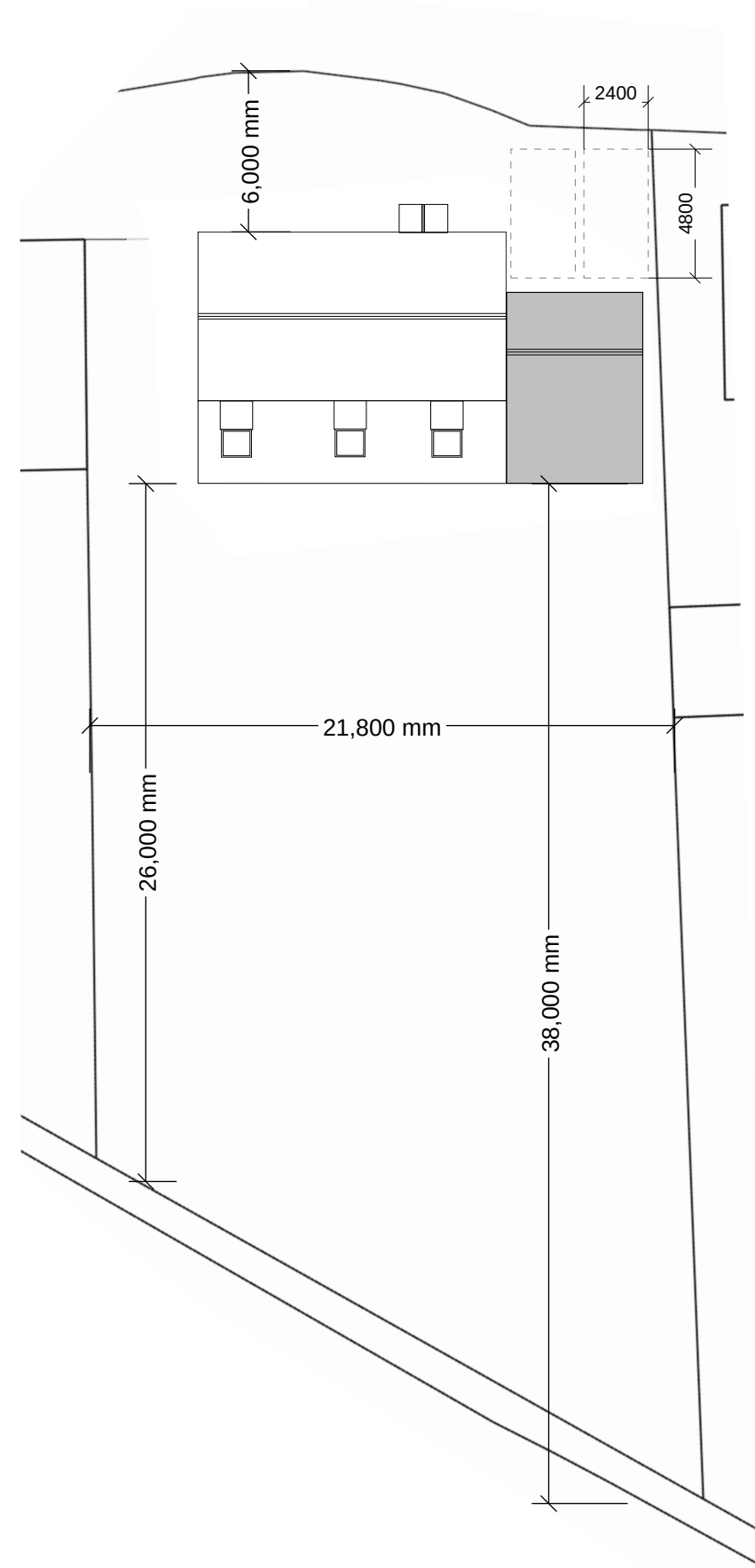


Block Plan shows area bounded by: 521404.05, 226288.07 521494.05, 226378.07 (at a scale of 1:500), OSGridRef: TL21442633. The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.

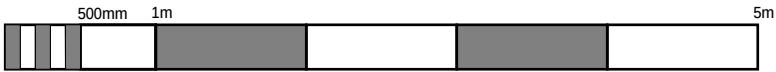
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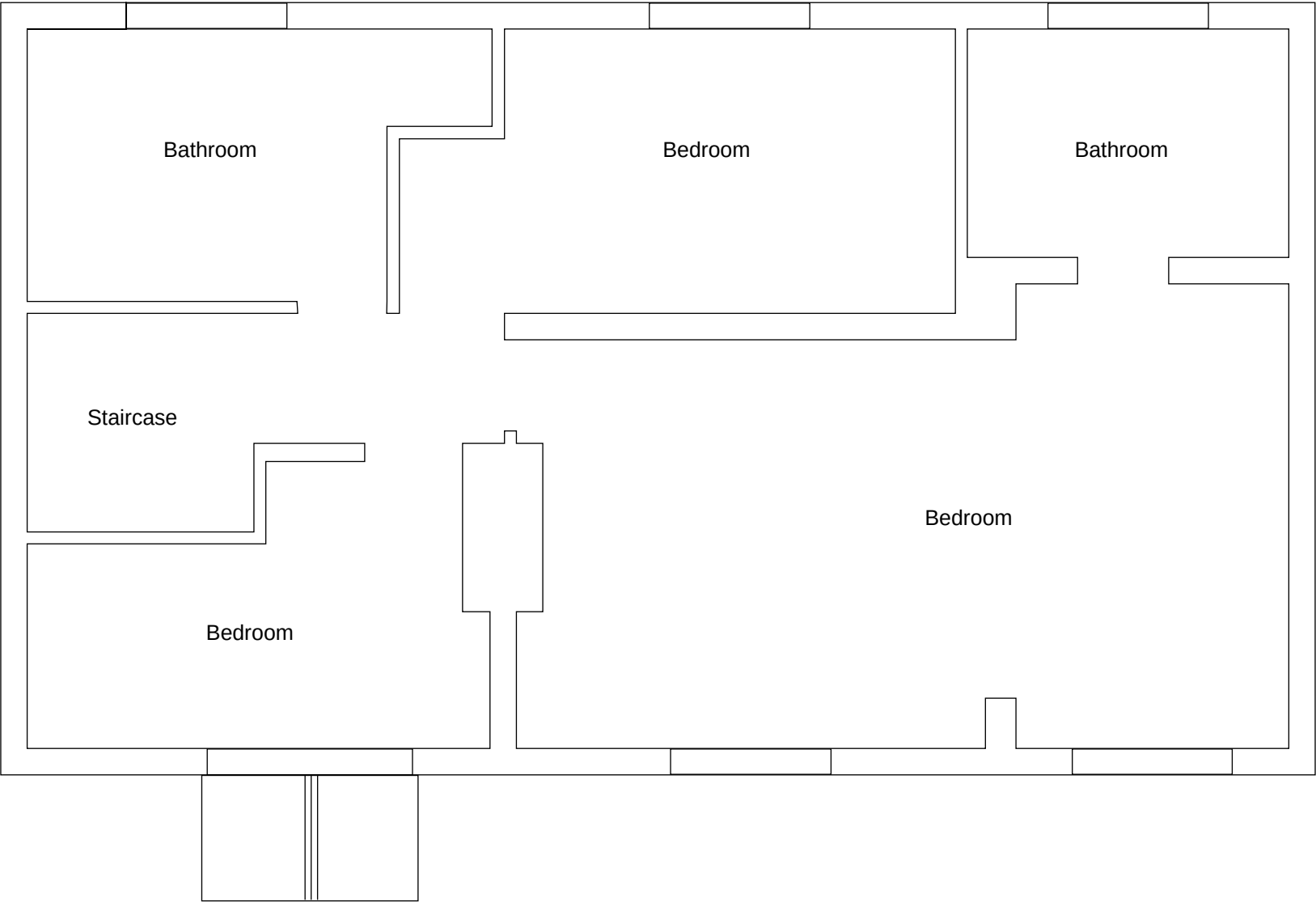


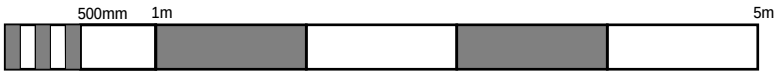
SITE PLAN 1:250



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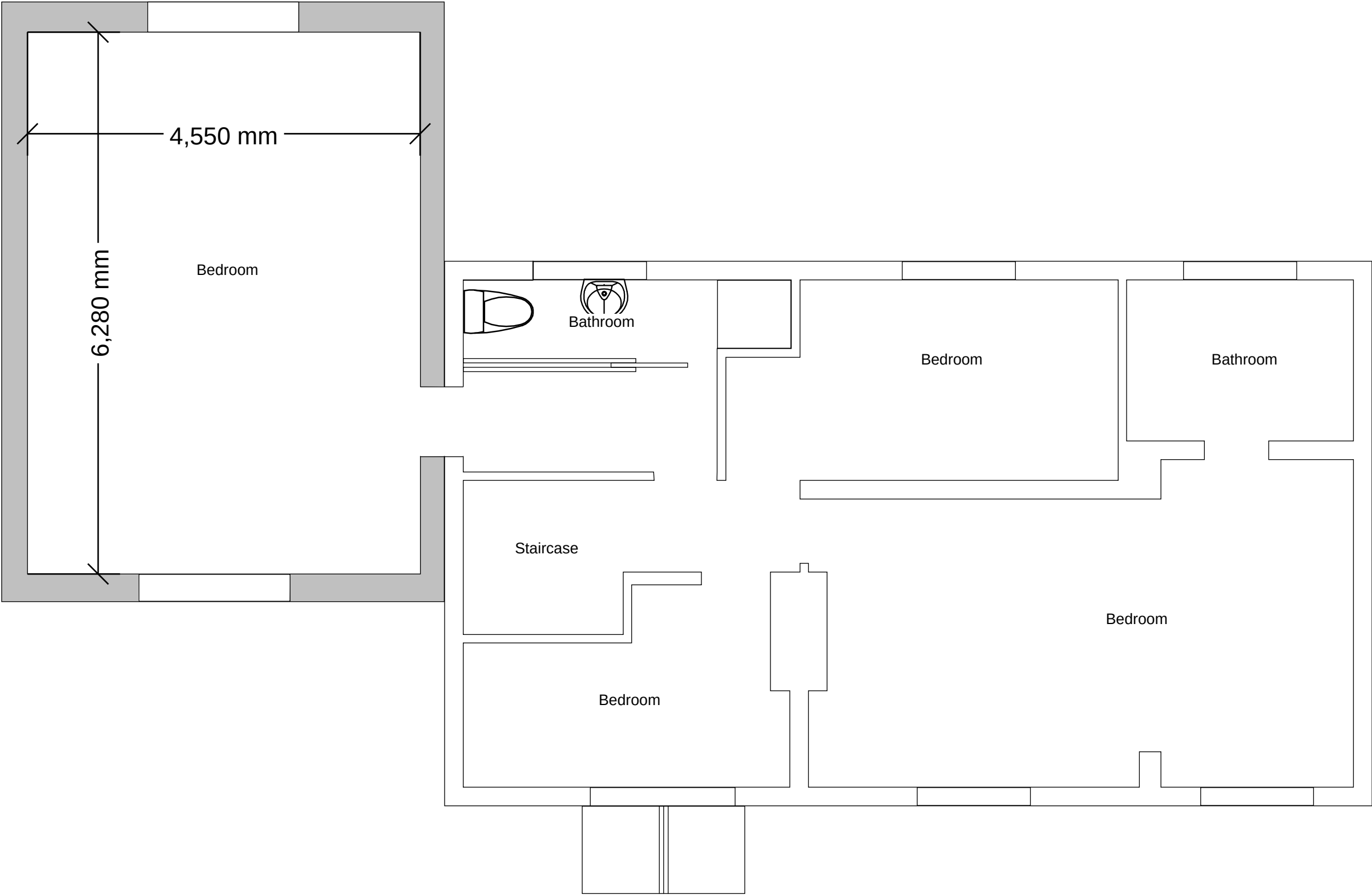
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LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
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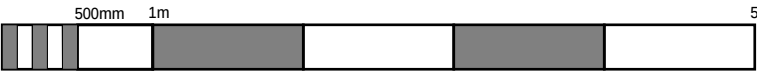




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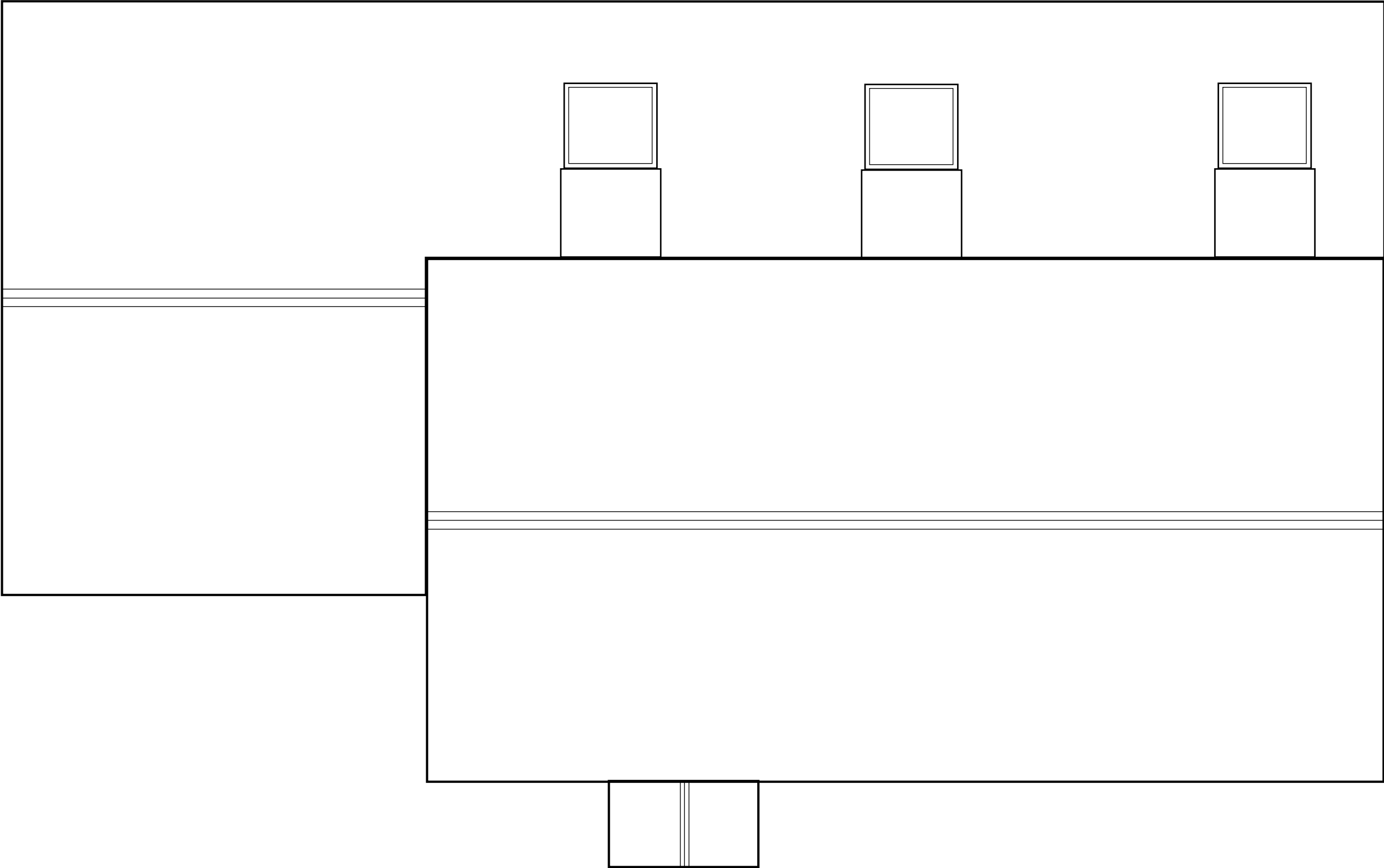
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LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
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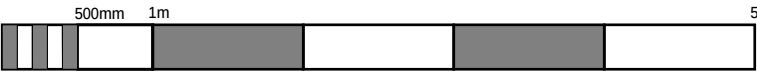




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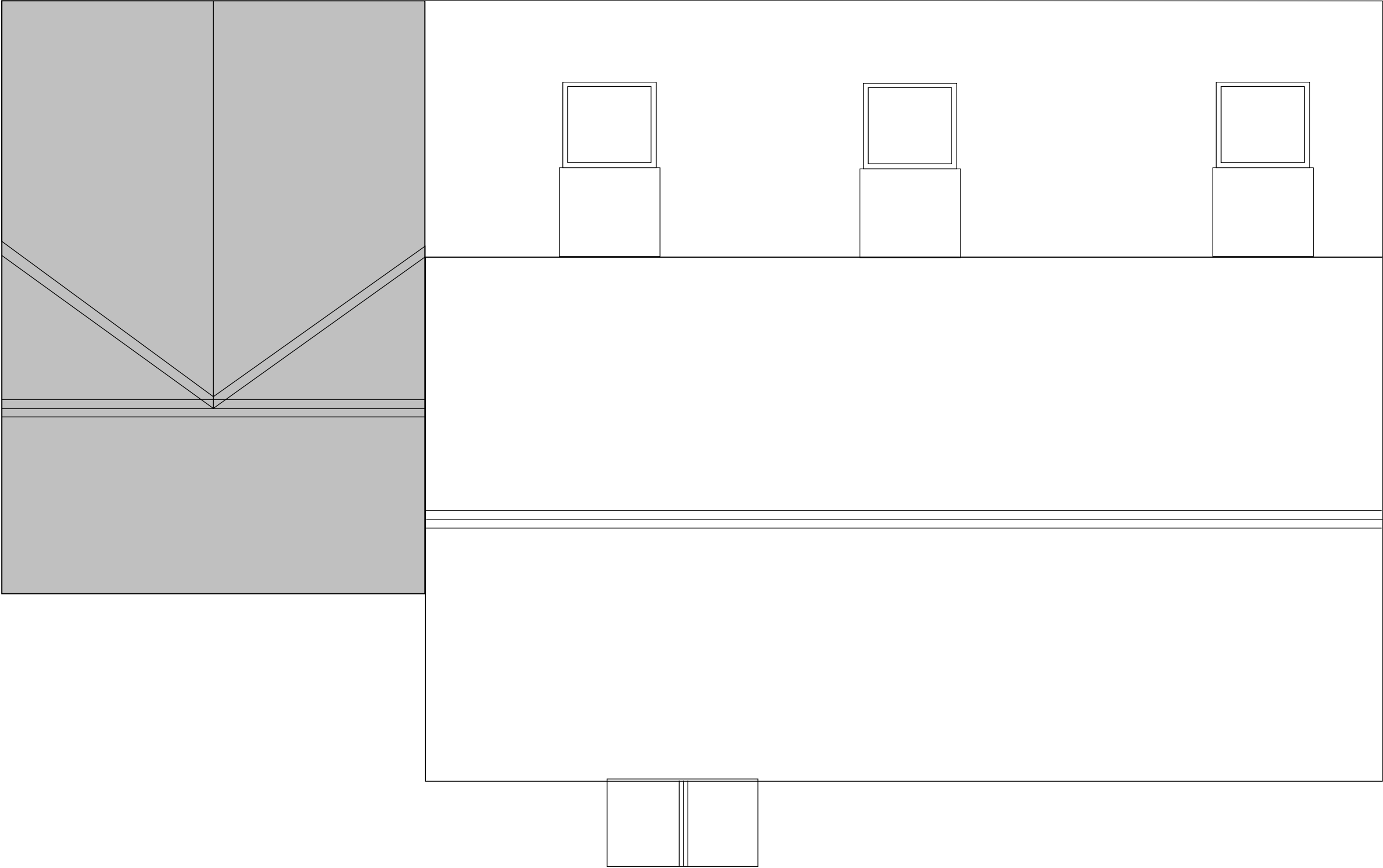
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LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
EXISTING ROOF PLAN
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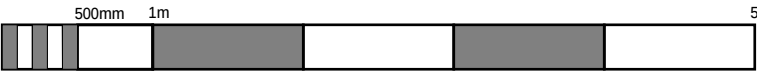




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LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
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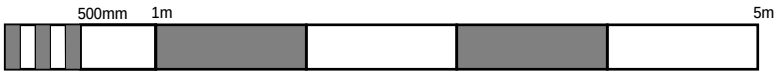




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ASHBROOK COTTAGE
LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION
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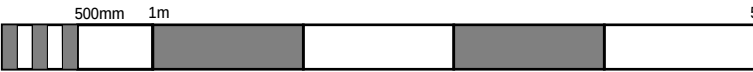




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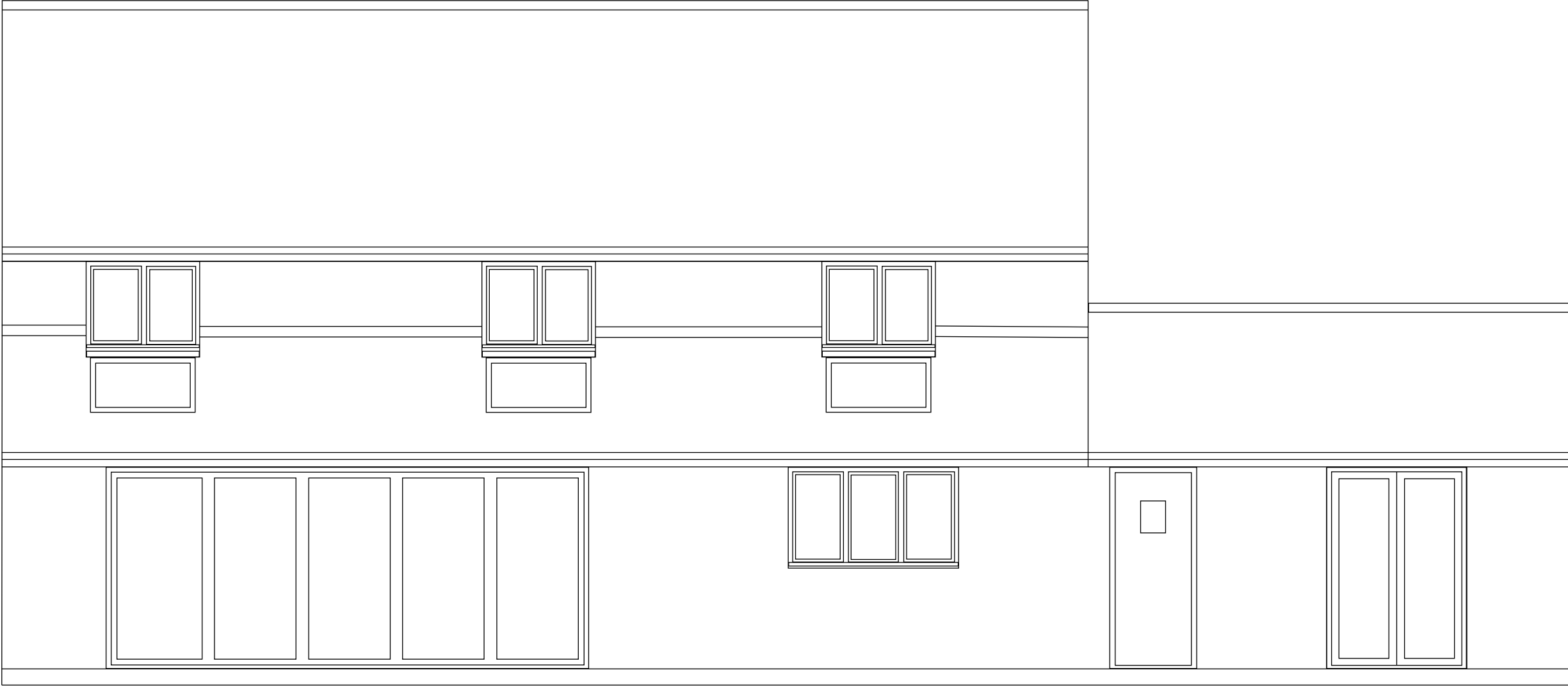
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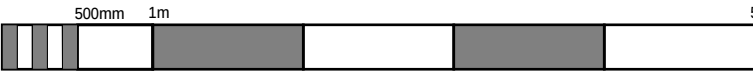




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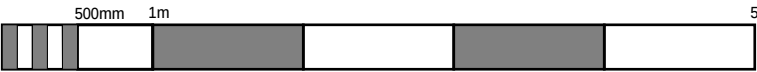




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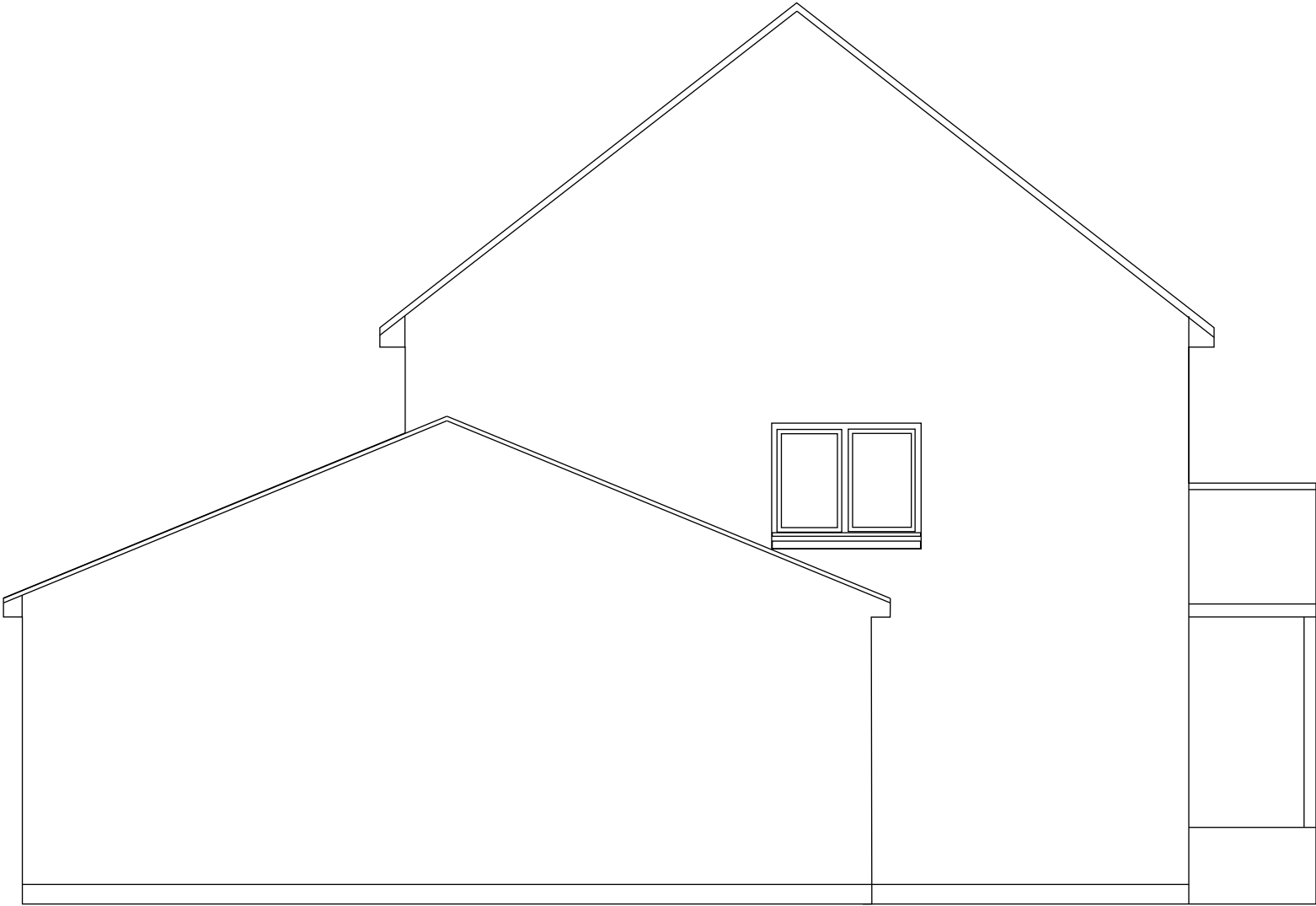
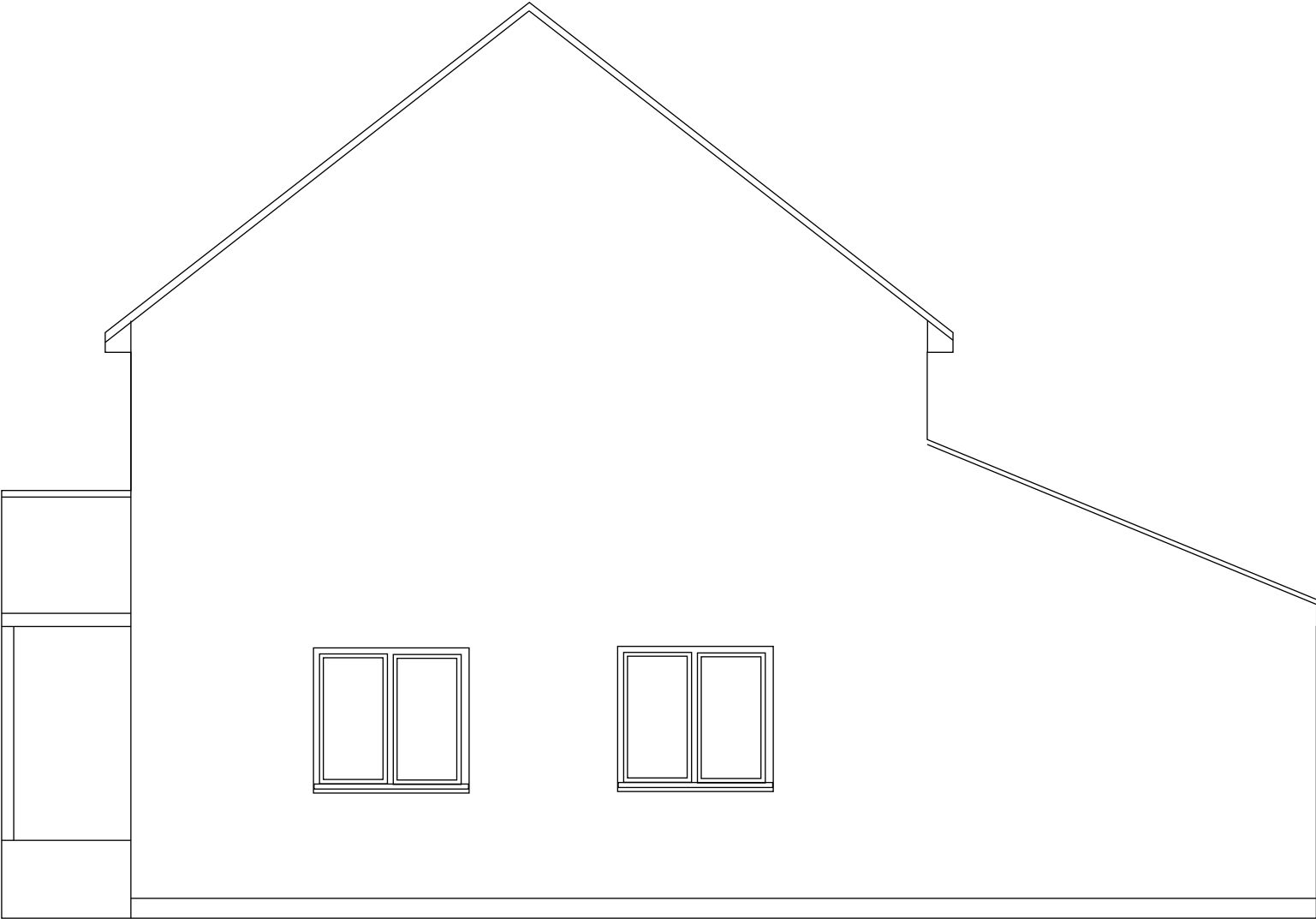
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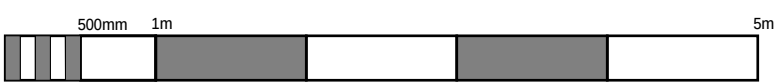




SCALE 1:50

ASHBROOK COTTAGE
LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
EXISTING SIDE ELEVATIONS
2801_244_010





SCALE 1:50

ASHBROOK COTTAGE
LOWER TITMORE GREEN
SG4 7JT
PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATIONS
2801_244_011

