

# Shatwell Farm studio

The design of this architectural archive and studio on a Somerset farm is achieved with economy, but still provides generous interiors, writes *Hugh Strange* of *Hugh Strange Architects*. Photography by *David Grandorge*

**L**ocated on a working Somerset farmyard, the new architecture/family archive and studio at Shatwell Farm sits at the foot of a valley within a mix of buildings that includes barns, a wood store and sheds dating from the 19th century through to the 1970s. This is the most recent architectural project commissioned by the farm's owners, following Stephen Taylor Architects' cowshed and barn (AJ 21.02.13) and Skene Catling de la Peña's Dairy House.

With a construction budget of £250,000 and providing 120m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation, the project mixes simple construction techniques, prefabrication and cheap industrial materials with high-quality locally sourced hardwood to create a building that, through an evident economy >>



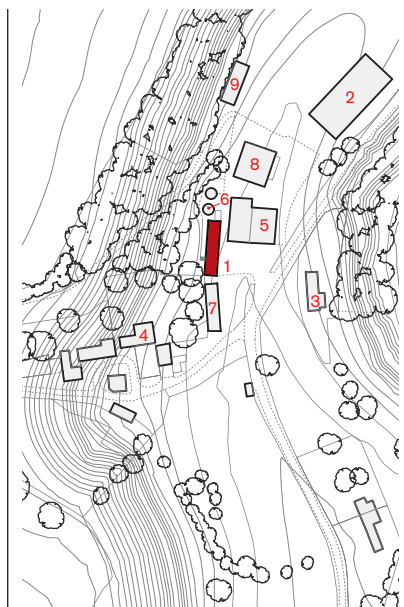
**Left** The new building is independent of the retained wall

**Opposite** The archive room is lit by a large rooflight

#### Site plan

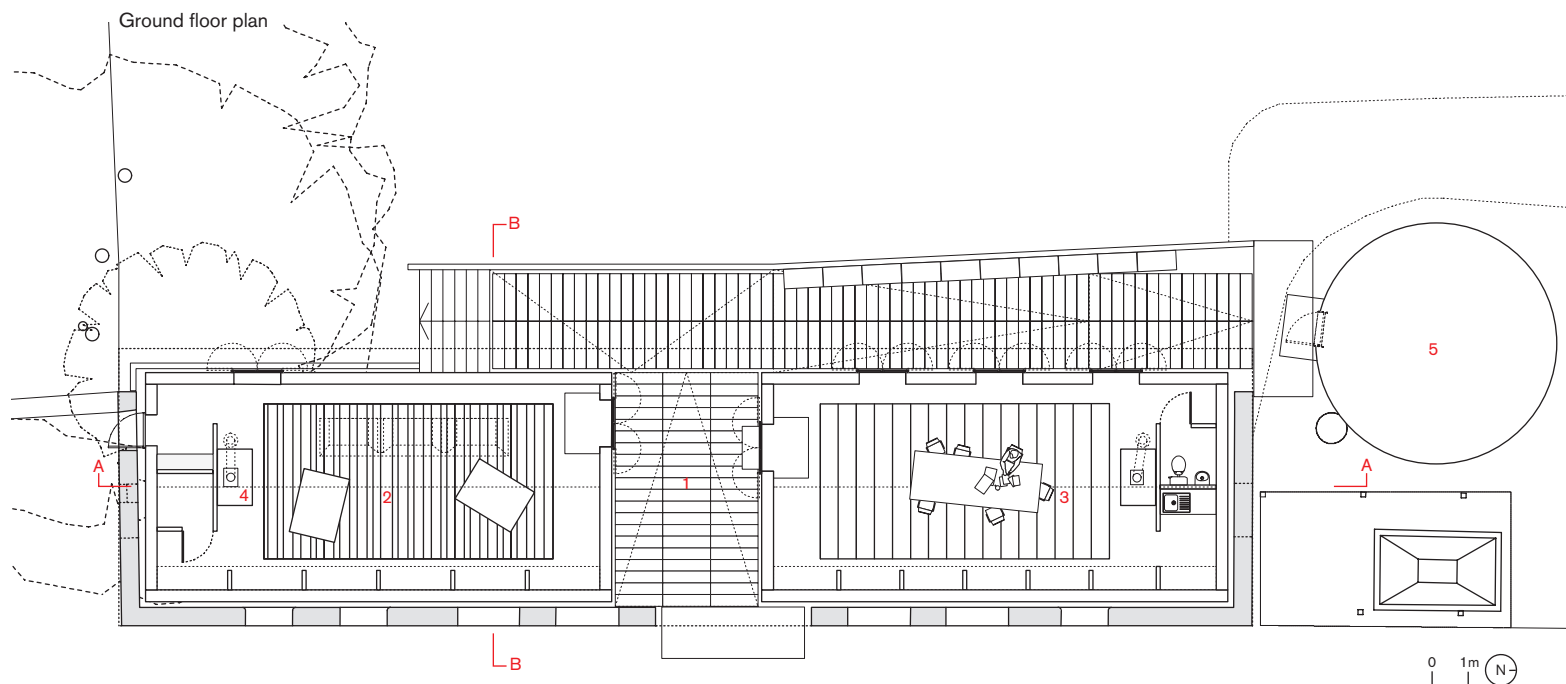
1. Architecture Archive
2. Stephen Taylor Architects' cowshed
3. Skene Catling de la Peña's Dairy House
4. Shatwell Farm house
5. Workshop
6. Silos
7. Wood store
8. Tractor shed
9. Hay barn

0 20m N









of means, sits unpretentiously in its farmyard environment while providing generous interiors.

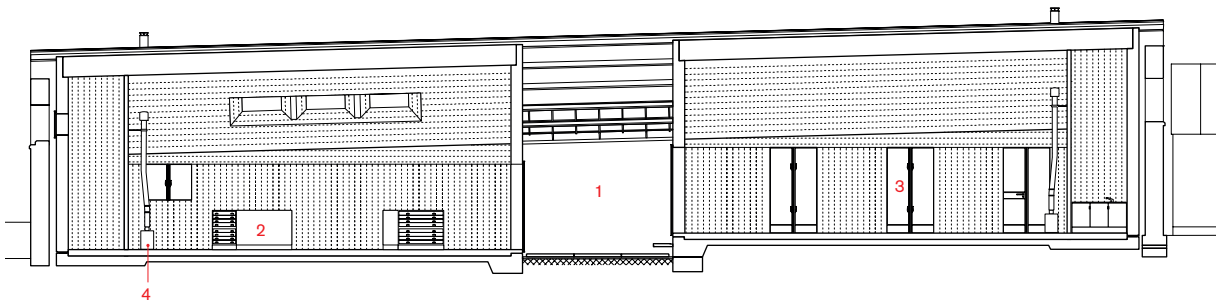
The dilapidated walls and roof of an old stone and brick barn have been removed, and the remaining walls carefully stabilised and repaired. Within these, two timber structures have been inserted, with a single new roof extending the full length of the building to provide a covered entrance. Identical in size, the two timber volumes are subtly differentiated through their fenestration and fit-out. The north building provides a studio space and is characterised by large French windows that offer views to the wooded valley outside. In contrast, the south building houses a drawing archive and display space, and is predominantly top-lit by a generous rooflight. To the rear of the building, a modest external space is enclosed >>

**The project mixes cheap industrial materials with high-quality hardwood**



Section A-A

1. Covered walkway
2. Archive
3. Studio
4. Wood-burning stove
5. Silo



**Below** View to  
east elevation





by the retaining wall to the sloping side of the valley with a generous external stair giving access up to the surrounding woodlands.

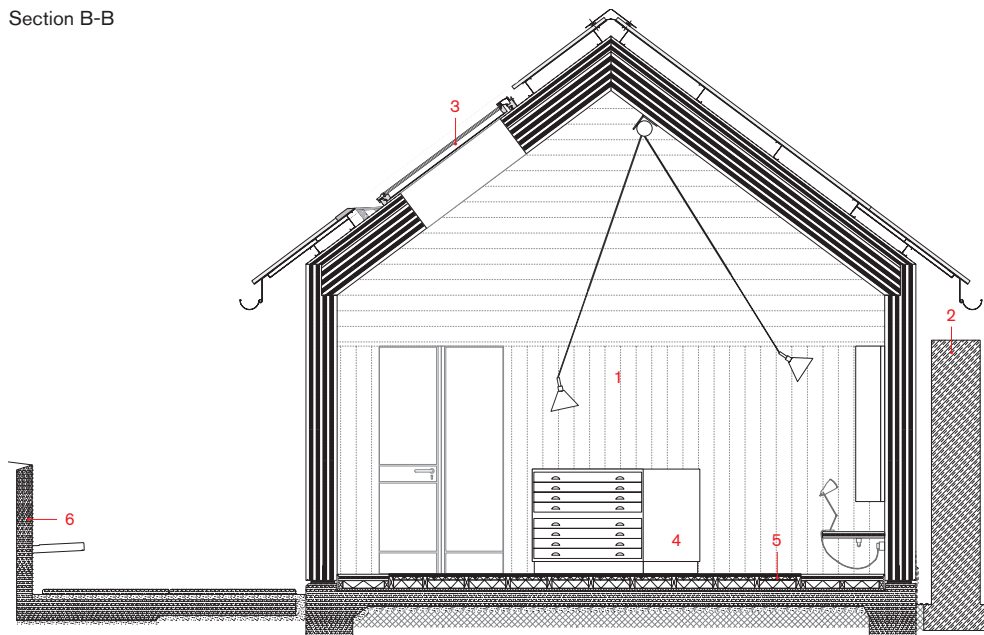
The new building shell is constructed of a single layer of solid cross-laminated timber without insulation, external wall cladding or internal lining. The wood panels range from 300mm to 420mm in thickness and simultaneously provide insulation and thermal mass, creating the suitable stability of temperature and relative humidity for storing drawings. Sitting on a rough in-situ cast concrete base, the simple timber forms are protected by a profiled cement roof similar to those of the surrounding barns. The vented space between this and the timber cladding prevents overheating during hot summer months.

In contrast to the engineered spruce construction, the floors of the two large rooms are fitted out with hardwood 'mats' using timber felled from the surrounding woodlands and dried in the neighbouring wood store. Rough-sawn cedar floorboards to the office and smooth-sanded and oiled ash and beech to the archive distinguish the different characters of the spaces. Specially commissioned display panels and curtains marry standard packing blankets with bespoke craftsmanship. ■  
*Hugh Strange, director, Hugh Strange Architects*

#### Project data

COMPLETION February 2014  
 GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA 120m<sup>2</sup>  
 CONSTRUCTION COST £250,000  
 CLIENT Private  
 ARCHITECT Hugh Strange Architects  
 STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Price & Myers  
 TIMBER CONTRACTOR Eurban/Stora Enso  
 DISPLAY PANELS Jude Dennis/Lars Wagner  
 CONSTRUCTION MANAGER Paul Rawson  
 WINDOWS & DOORS SUPPLIER REA Metal Windows  
 JOINERY Andrew Balls  
 ANNUAL CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS Not confirmed

Section B-B



1. Archive
2. Existing stone wall
3. Rooflight
4. Drawing plan chest
5. Hardwood timber floor mat
6. In-situ cast concrete retaining wall

0 0.5m

**Right** View into the studio room

**Opposite** The covered space between buildings provides a sheltered area for unloading

**For more on this project**



*AJ Buildings Library*





