

Section 8.00 & 9.00 comprises point-by-point responses to both the Pre-Application Advice provided by MSDC dated 17th November'23 ref: DM/23/1480 and advice provided by Place Services dated 12th November '25 ref. DM/25/0133.

Each area has been analysed and design development carried out to seek alignment with the comments provided by the MSDC Conservation Officer / Place Services in turn. Each area is referred to over the following pages. All to be read in conjunction with Orion Heritage statement and all other relevant consultants reports, drawings, documentation etc.

MSDC (DM/23/1480) stated :

*“Impact to Listed Building and setting
The Conservation Officer has provided the following comments in respect of your proposal:*

*‘Chownesmead is a Grade II listed former country house dating from the 1920s in the neo- Elizabethan style. The former coach house and garden structures such as the terrace, retaining walls, garden walls and gate piers are included in the listing. The house, which is located in extensive gardens originally designed by Gertrude Jekyll, is located in a semi-rural position on the western side of Haywards Heath.
Planning permission was granted in 2015 for a pool house building enclosing an existing swimming pool to the south east of the house, and subsequently in 2018 for change of use of the building to a hotel, with associated alterations including internal alterations to the house, including a new lift shaft, conversion of an existing garage building to the north of the house to a yoga studio at ground floor with residential accommodation above, and an extension of the previously approved pool house building.*

The current pre-application enquiry follows on from this recent planning history, in envisaging a hotel use for the house, but with more extensive works, in particular externally:

- To the house itself, at ground floor a new extension to the kitchen, 2 dining areas with links to the kitchen and to outdoor dining areas, and new doors from the library onto the external terrace. The proposed extension links to the garage to the north of the house.*
- At first floor, reworking of layouts to provide self-contained en-suite facilities to each bedroom.*
- At second floor, reworking of the manager’s apartment to create 2 additional ensuite bedrooms, one involving a new roof extension, and amendments to the previously approved bedroom layout elsewhere.*
- Alterations to the proposals for the pool house and treatment suites, to position the built form further to the south and east, with the pool and spa facilities below the existing external terrace at lower ground floor level, opening onto a new fresh water pond in the natural dell.*
- A treatment room building at ground floor above this, with a bar and servery area relating to the outdoor eating areas.*

- Further to east, an existing barn is proposed to be replaced with a members lounge, gym and yoga studio.

- The existing secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane is proposed to be relocated further to the west, away from Crabtree Cottages”.*

SECTION 8.00-9.00 Planning Pre-App’s DM/23/1480 & DM/25/0133

Responses to and Comparables with Current Full Planning/Listed Building Consent Applications

Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

A1
“The proposed extension to the ground floor of the building is within the courtyard area to the north east of the building. This area is flanked to south and east by what appears to be the original service area/wing of the house, which while not as architecturally grand or imposing as the main part of the building containing the family rooms, is nonetheless of character and interest retaining original features such as leaded windows and doors onto the courtyard. The yard itself, with its herringbone brick pavers, is also an attractive feature of the setting of the house. Although towards the rear of the building, the yard area is visible in closer views from the main entrance drive to the house, and forms part of the context within which the main entrance façade is appreciated as one approaches the house along this drive. For these reasons I would question whether this is an appropriate position for an extension. In my opinion, a kitchen extension might be better positioned to the opposite side of the existing service wing (currently containing a gym), which although it would be visible from the terrace to the south east of the house, could if appropriately set back in relation to the main building (as the existing wing is), be appropriately subservient in views of the house from the terrace and gardens, and would allow the character of the courtyard facing elevation, which is in fact probably the more significant in terms of the context in which the house is appreciated, to remain largely intact, as well as the courtyard itself. In conjunction with this I would not object to a more modest extension to the northern end of the existing kitchen wing linking across to the modern garage building, providing this preserved the key features of the wing, and the character of the courtyard space.”

A2
“During our site visit we noted that the existing windows to the library are original, and the original fabric beneath them both internally (wood panelling, part of the designed decoration of the room) and externally (a stone plinth). The existing window is also part of the designed composition of the elevation. For these reasons I consider that the proposal to remove the fabric below the window sill, and replace the existing windows with French doors, is contentious, and will detract from the special interest of the listed building. This aspect of the proposal should be omitted from the formal scheme.”

A1
Whilst the comments of the LPA re. the pre-app proposal for the repositioning of the extension to the East of the listed building (in close proximity to the new spa and pool building) are acknowledged, there is a clear rationale for the positioning of the new extension to rear (North East) of the main building as cited opposite. However, mindful of the comments made, the overall size of the proposal has been reduced by c25Msq (c. 40%) in order to limit any perceived impact on the listed building.



A1 - External view of services courtyard



A2 - External and internal view of windows to library

The main drivers behind the retention of the proposed extension to the north east of the listed building (on the north west side) are -

- To maintain a clear gap on the south east side between the listed building and new build spa. The separation between these is c. 4M wider than that approved in the extant permission (DM/18/2193 and DM/18/220). The design team believe this separation should be maintained clear as shown.
- To limit impact close to ancient woodland.
- To provide access for deliveries to kitchens, laundry, plant, staff and refuse areas where they are most conducive (on the north west side of the site).
- Vehicular access to the south east side of the building would be locked by the existing built form.
- Discreet - away from guests and visitors
- Maintains historical narrative of service wing to rear of building.
- Architecturally subservient/relatively unseen and matching existing form, scale, mass, materiality and detailing.

Further references can be found in the heritage statement by Orion Heritage.

The overall extension to the rear has been reduced significantly and simplified from that presented at pre-app. The principal amendments are as follows –

1. Reduction overall by c.3000mm in width and c.8300mm in length (c.25m²)
This in turn enables retention of the internal central corridor running north-east to south-west. This will be used for staff access at the rear allowing direct connection with the service areas to the north-west of the hotel.
The retention of much of the original service yard area also includes the external access stairway to the basement level as well as the north-east window to room 1, which will be obscured glass.
2. The roof over the new extension will mirror the existing service wing roof with a Sussex hipped end and ridge height to match. A small central stepped lead valley will be positioned between the two.
3. The bin storage is reduced in size and detached from the new extension.

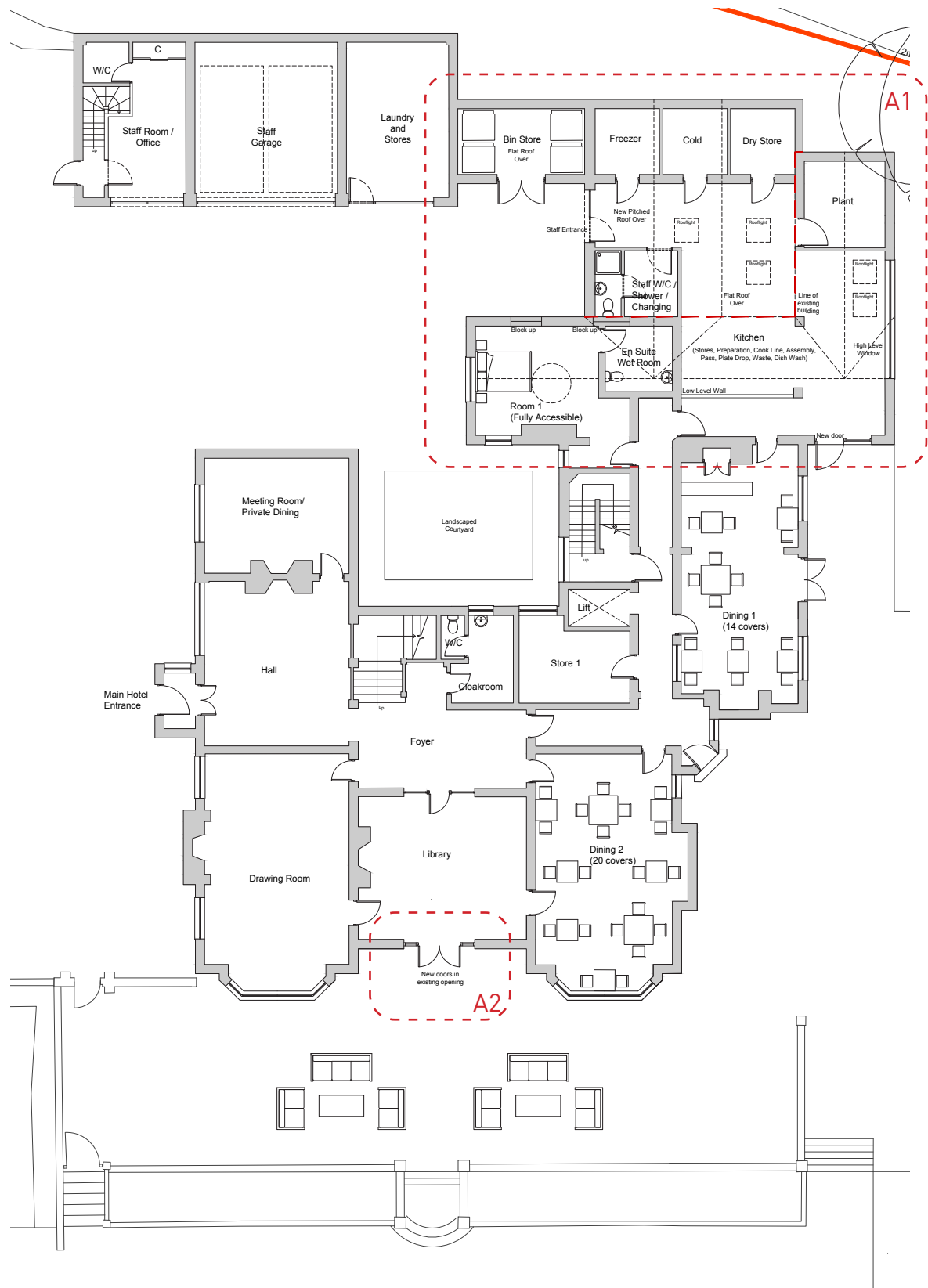
The new extension will be detailed to match the existing service wing with a materials palette of handmade clay Keymer tiles with bonnet hips and hogsback ridge, lead flashings, and English Bond face brickwork. Conservation style rooflights will be positioned discreetly to provide top light to the kitchen and staff areas. Herringbone brick pavements will be carefully taken up and re-used elsewhere in the proposals.

Overall the design reflects that of the existing service wing in order to maintain subservience in its relationship with the main listed building. Separation from the garage is more successful not only architecturally but also from a flow/service provision.

A2
The comments of the LPA re. the pre-app proposal to remove the bay window and fabric below the window sill and replace with French doors are acknowledged and have been omitted from the current scheme. This area will therefore remain as existing.

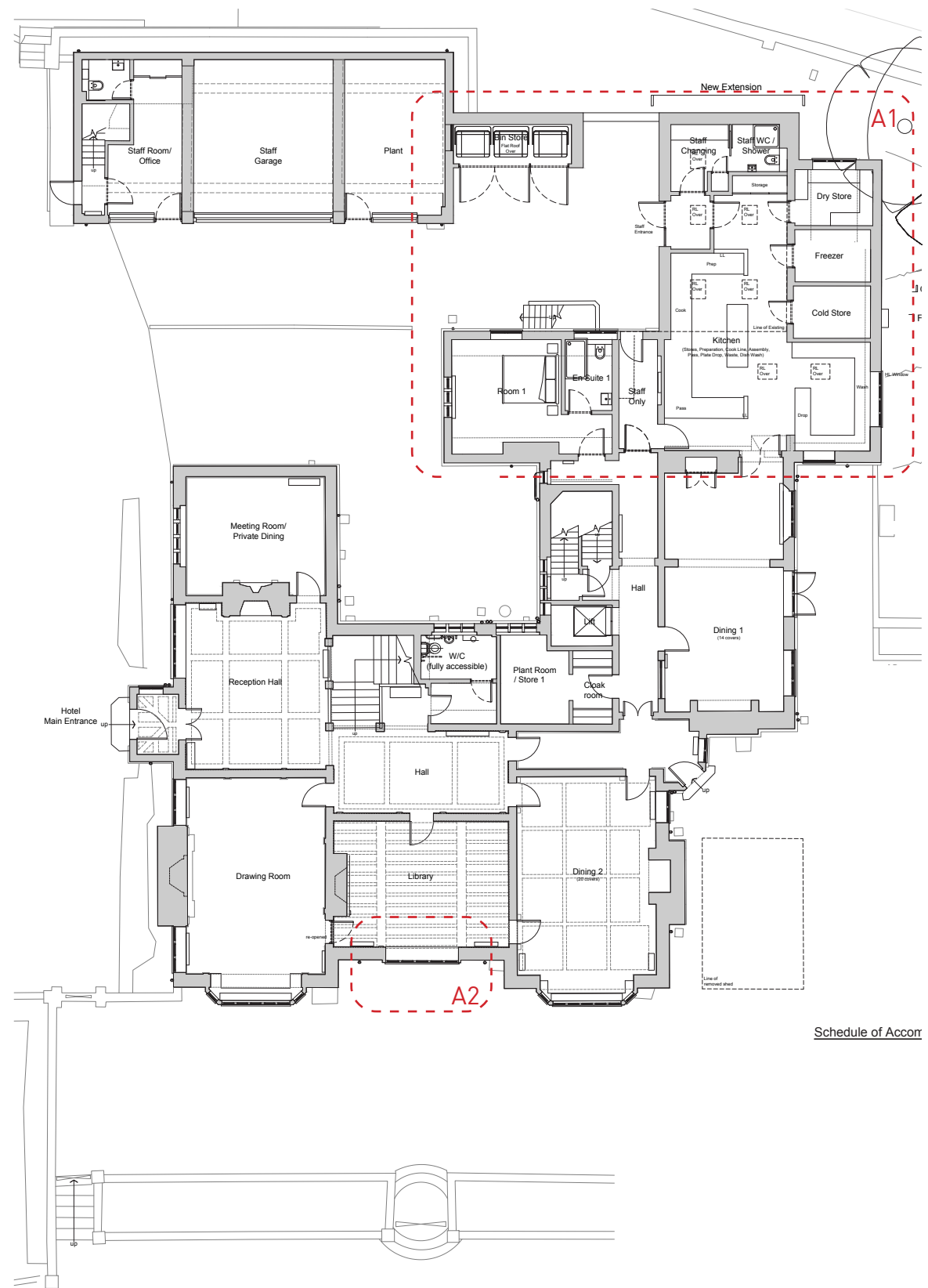
8.00 Pre App DM/23/1480 and Current Proposal Responses & Comparables

8.01 Proposed Ground Floor Extension (A1) & Library Windows (A2)



Pre-App (DM/23/1480)

Chownes Mead Listed Building - Ground Floor Plan (NTS)



Current Proposal

Schedule of Accommodation



8.02 Proposed First Floor Bedroom 4 & 5 (B1)

To be read in conjunction with drawings on following page

Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

B1
"At first floor, the alterations to the existing floor plan are in general relatively minor in their impact, and are not considered contentious subject to detail in light of the existing permission. This is with the exception of the proposed works to bedroom 5, which involve bisecting the room by the insertion of an ensuite. This room is one of the principle family bedrooms, and the adverse impact on its original proportions which would result from the proposed work would in my opinion unacceptably impact on its character. This aspect of the proposal should be reconsidered- potentially the room, which is already linked with the adjacent master bedroom, could be incorporated into a suite with that room?"

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

B1
The comments of the LPA re. the pre-app proposal to insert an en-suite shower room into principal room 5 and bisect the space have been addressed with re-design to suit.

The current proposal maintains room 5 as existing, retaining its original features, cornicing, skirtings etc insitu including its entrance door from the landing (previously repositioned). The adjacent dressing room and ensuite to existing bedroom 4 is adapted to form a lobby, accessed from a new entrance door within the panelling of the hallway to match all other doorways on the landing area by replicating panelling, architrave, over door frieze and door / ironmongery to match existing complete. The new en suite is positioned off of the lobby (in the position of the existing en suite), modified to suit new layout to bedroom 4. The remaining part of the original dressing room is proposed as bedroom 5's ensuite.



B1- Bedroom 5 to remain as existing



B1- New entrance door to be formed in area of panelling adjacent to HL window

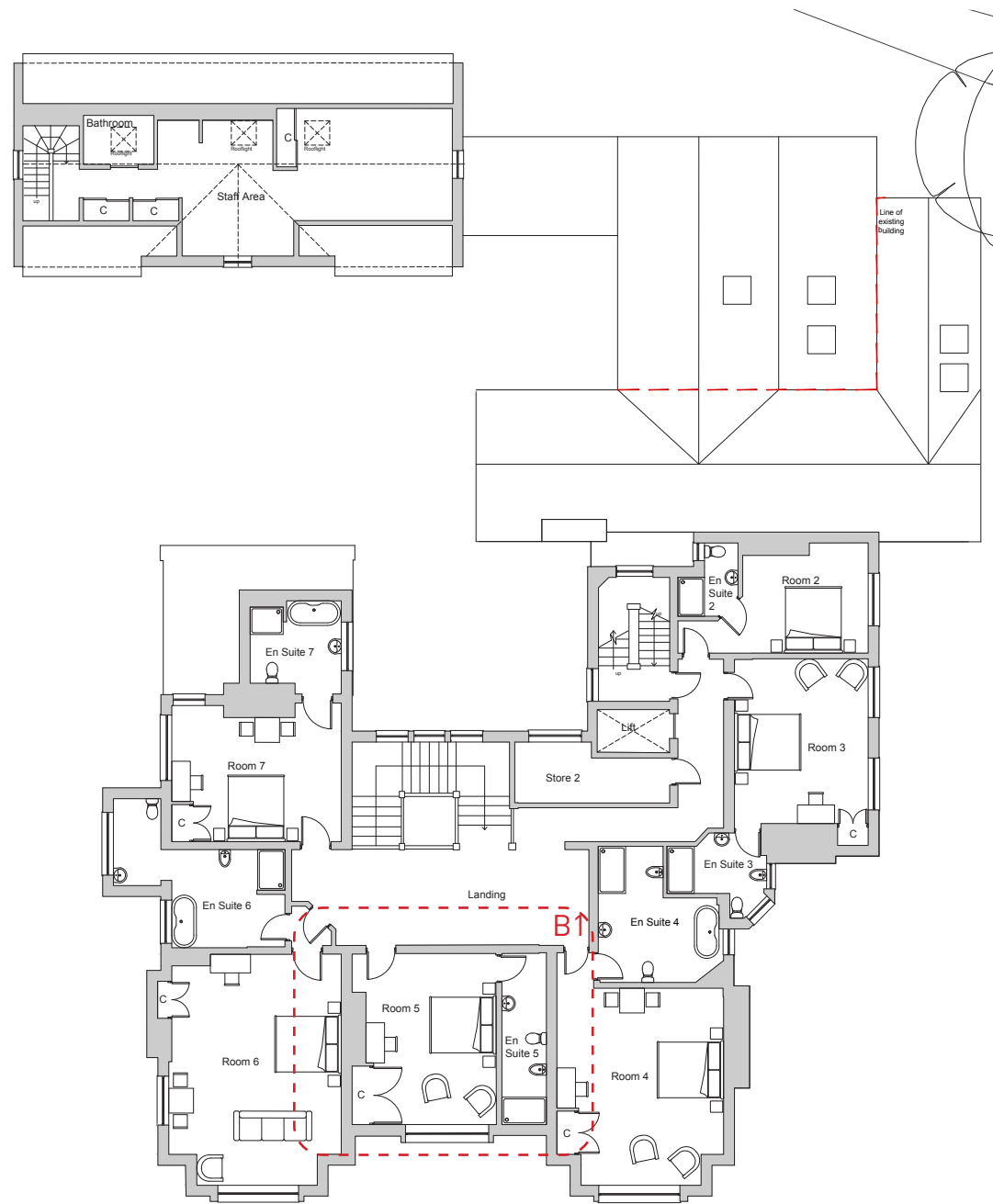


B1- HL window to remain as existing

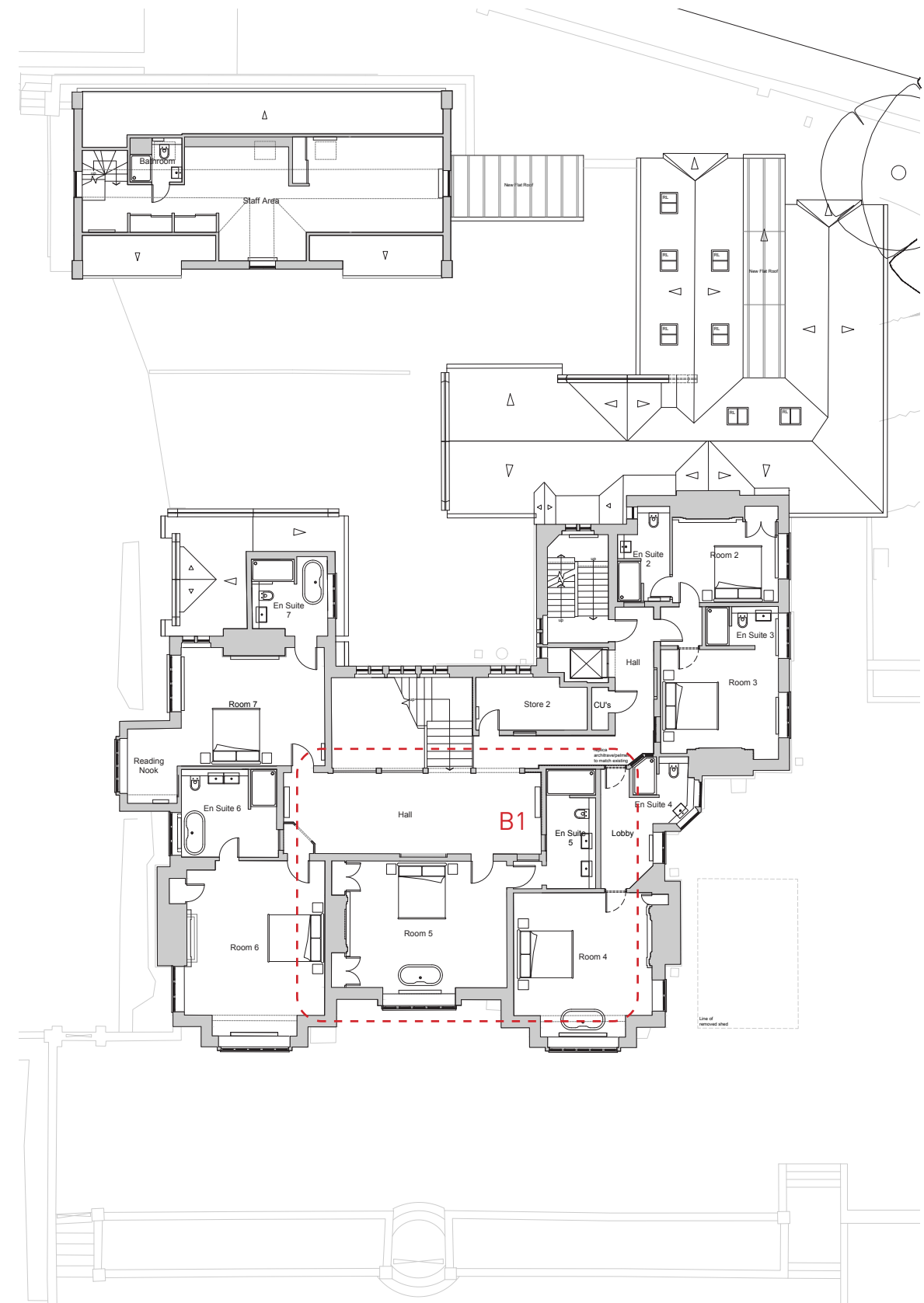


B1 - Example of existing door within panelling, to be replicated in new proposed door

8.02 Proposed First Floor Bedroom 4 & 5 (B1)



Pre-App (DM/23/1480)
Chownes Mead Listed Building - First Floor Plan (NTS)



Current Proposal



8.03 Proposed Reading Nook (C1) & Second Floor Bedroom 13 (C2)

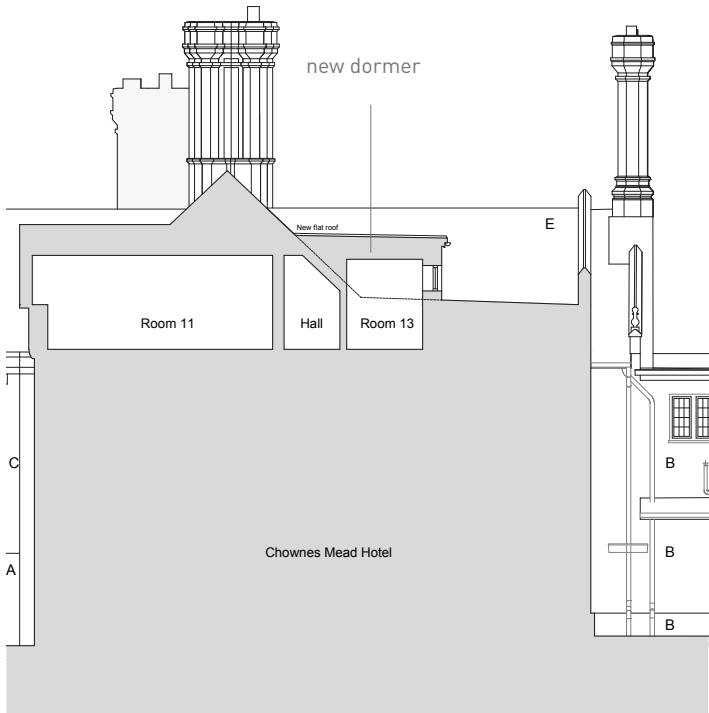
Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

C1
“The proposal also shows the removal of wall enclosing the proposed ‘reading nook’- this would result in an unacceptable loss of historic plan form and fabric and I would suggest should be omitted from the scheme.”

C2
“At second floor, the majority of works relate to the insertion of ensembles to the existing attic bedrooms. Although this will have some impact on their proportions, given the secondary importance of these spaces this aspect of the proposal is on balance considered acceptable. It is also proposed to alter the roof form above the existing kitchen and adjacent bathroom/ walk through cupboard space to create an area of flat roof which allows the formation of a link between the spaces, to provide an additional ensuite bathroom. Further detail including proposed sections, elevations and a roof plan would be needed for fully informed comment, however in principle this may be acceptable, provided that there is no adverse impact on the external appearance of the building, and that as discussed on site, the internal character of the adjacent corridor, with the angled intrusions revealing the shape of the original roof above, is preserved. The level of interest of the joinery within the walk through cupboard space should also be considered- it is proposed to partially remove this, which is work which should be assessed in an accompanying heritage statement, and if necessary amendments- such as the reuse of the joinery in question elsewhere in that room - considered.”



C2 - Proposed North East elevation



C2 - Proposed section

To be read in conjunction with drawings on following page

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

C1
The comments of the LPA re. the pre-app proposal to remove part of the wall enclosing the proposed reading nook are acknowledged and thus this area will remain as existing.

C2
The comments of the LPA re. the pre-app proposal for the removal of part wall (including cupboards) to form a link between kitchen and bathroom are acknowledged. Proposed sections and elevations are included within the planning application package which shows no adverse impact on the listed building. The new link will have a traditional lead rolled flat roof over and this will be considerably withdrawn towards the rear of the section of roof set back behind the primary rear double gables. The new roof will not be visible from courtyard area at the rear. The existing joinery is not believed to be of significant heritage value, and it is not proposed to reuse these within the new proposals in a specific location. However they may be re-purposed in storage areas if appropriate.



C1 - Existing reading nook

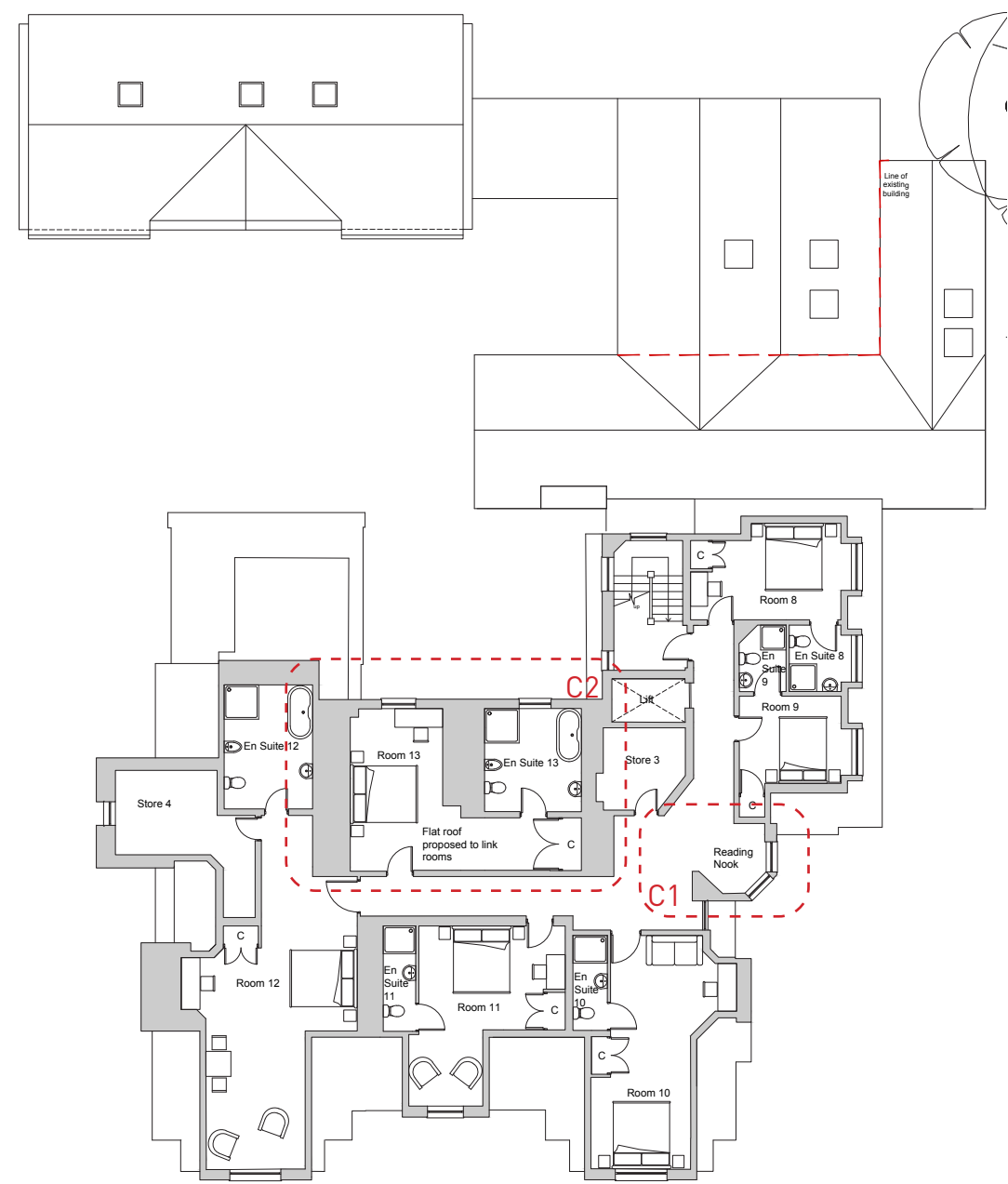


C2 - Existing joinery/cupboards

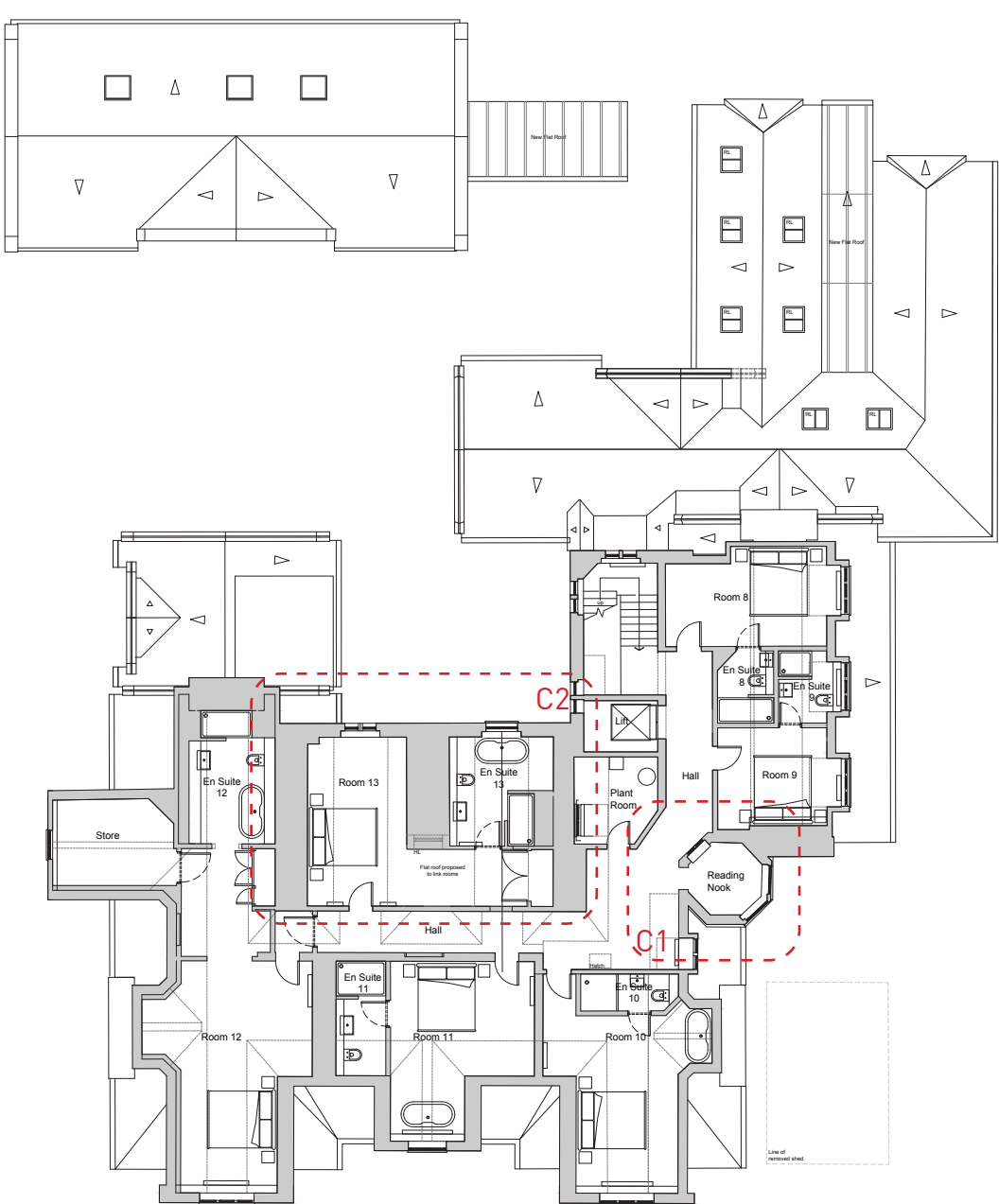


C2 - View of existing elevation from courtyard

8.03 Proposed Reading Nook (C1) & Second Floor Bedroom 13 (C2)



Pre-App [DM/23/1480]
Chownes Mead Listed Building - Second Floor Plan (NTS)



Current Proposal



Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

D1
‘The proposed two storey pool and treatment room building is a more substantial structure than the approved pool house. However, the building is set further away from the listed house, creating greater separation between the two, and the additional storey is set below the terrace, taking advantage of the drop in the levels of the gardens to the south west of the house.’
‘In my opinion, this approach is not necessarily contentious in principle, but the building and surrounding landscaping will require very careful planning and detailing, including the choice of materials, to minimise the bulk and visual prominence of the development in the context of the house, ensure that it complements rather than detracts from the house and its setting, and to preserve the character of the Jekyll designed gardens, including the existing listed terrace walls. The submitted visuals, which I appreciate are only conceptual, show for example a rather stark treatment of the retaining wall to the north west of the pool house itself, continuing along the house’s garden frontage. We would expect a more sensitive treatment with appropriate detailing and planting to blend the built form into the landscape, and not to detract from or compete with the original listed terrace walls. I also wonder whether the cocktail bar and servery to the north west end of the ground floor of the building is necessary in this form and position, particularly given the proximity of the house, or could be omitted or relocated to reduce the bulk of the building.’

D2
‘Firstly, I do have concerns about the potential noise generated by the plant associated with the spa and gym. To adequately assess this issue, we would require detailed information about the proposed plant, its location, whether it is internal or external, and any measures that will be implemented to mitigate noise. Depending on the expected noise breakout, we may need to request an acoustic report to ensure that the noise levels will not adversely affect the surrounding area.’

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

D1
Subservience & Separation
As noted in the pre-app response, the upper level of the proposed spa and pool building is set c.4M further away from the listed building than the extant permission. The intention is to create a greater separation between existing and new build elements, reinforcing the subservience of the new buildings, the current proposal widening this gap to c.19M overall.

The lower ground floor is positioned wholly below the existing terrace level and utilises the topography of the site to nestle into the landscape adjacent to the dell. The only exposed element of the pool level is the south western facade which comprises an extension of the sandstone garden walls with glazed apertures linking visually the pool to the new pond.

Quantum
In contrast to the planning pre-app, the treatment suites and spa / pool building has been considerably reduced in overall size at the upper (terrace) level by c.111Msq. (pre-app. c.368Msq and current c.257Msq).

The extant permission size in comparison is also greater by c. 57Msq, totalling c.314Msq.
In addition, the greenhouse, shed and chicken coop were originally all to be retained at a further c.43Msq. increasing this to c.357Msq. overall.

The reason for the reduction in size is threefold - firstly, and most importantly to reduce the overall massing, bulk and perceived visual prominence adjacent to the listed building reinforcing the subservience, secondly to ensure the entrance to the treatment suites / spa and pool is visible from the hotel and terrace, and thirdly to integrate the cocktail bar and servery, refining the architectural design.

Cocktail Bar & Servery
With regard this, whilst the comment re. cocktail bar form and location is acknowledged, the form / design has been refined and bulk reduced as suggested. The removal of the north western smaller ‘box’ element is proposed with a reworking of the cocktail bar & servery element to integrate into the main form of the new build with only its primary north west elevation facing the terrace area. The south west elevation is closed off at the corner to create a break in architectural language and reinforce the repetition of the treatment room apertures. The location is such that service to the terrace area is provided as well as connections with both the dining rooms and kitchen areas.
Hours of service will be carefully managed to ensure that any potential disturbance of guests is avoided.

Architectural Form Simplified
The form of the upper floor element has also been refined into a simple rectangular form with a mono-pitch flat roof falling north-east to south west. The lower section of roof to the front is some 2.6M lower than the highest part of the extant permission where it is viewed alongside the listed building.

The main link (stair and circulation) element has been repositioned further south west and is also reduced in size at the upper level by c.12Msq. by moving the stair and lift core into the gym building.

The approach to the south east from the hotel is now visually clearer with the entry point to the south west of the treatment suites whereas previously it was hidden around the corner. In addition, the more cohesive linear form of the link lobby provides direct access into the heart of both of the new build elements for continuity physically and visually of the common circulation areas. Gym and Yoga Studios are split for acoustic separation, the yoga space quiet and contemplative overlooking the ancient woodland. Above, the members lounge is also split which provides a smaller space which may be conducive to meetings or smaller group gatherings.

The location of the gym building is positioned on the line of the existing agricultural barn and hardstanding which ensures no impact on sensitive areas.

Building Line Acknowledged
The new proposal acknowledges the building line of Chownes Mead on the south west and now doesn’t extend any further forward (closest to Chownes Mead). The extant permission extended c.1.5M-2.5M further south west in front of the building line (as did the pre-app). The reduction in size and position reduces the bulk to the south of Chownes Mead whilst complementing the setting and reinforcing subservience.

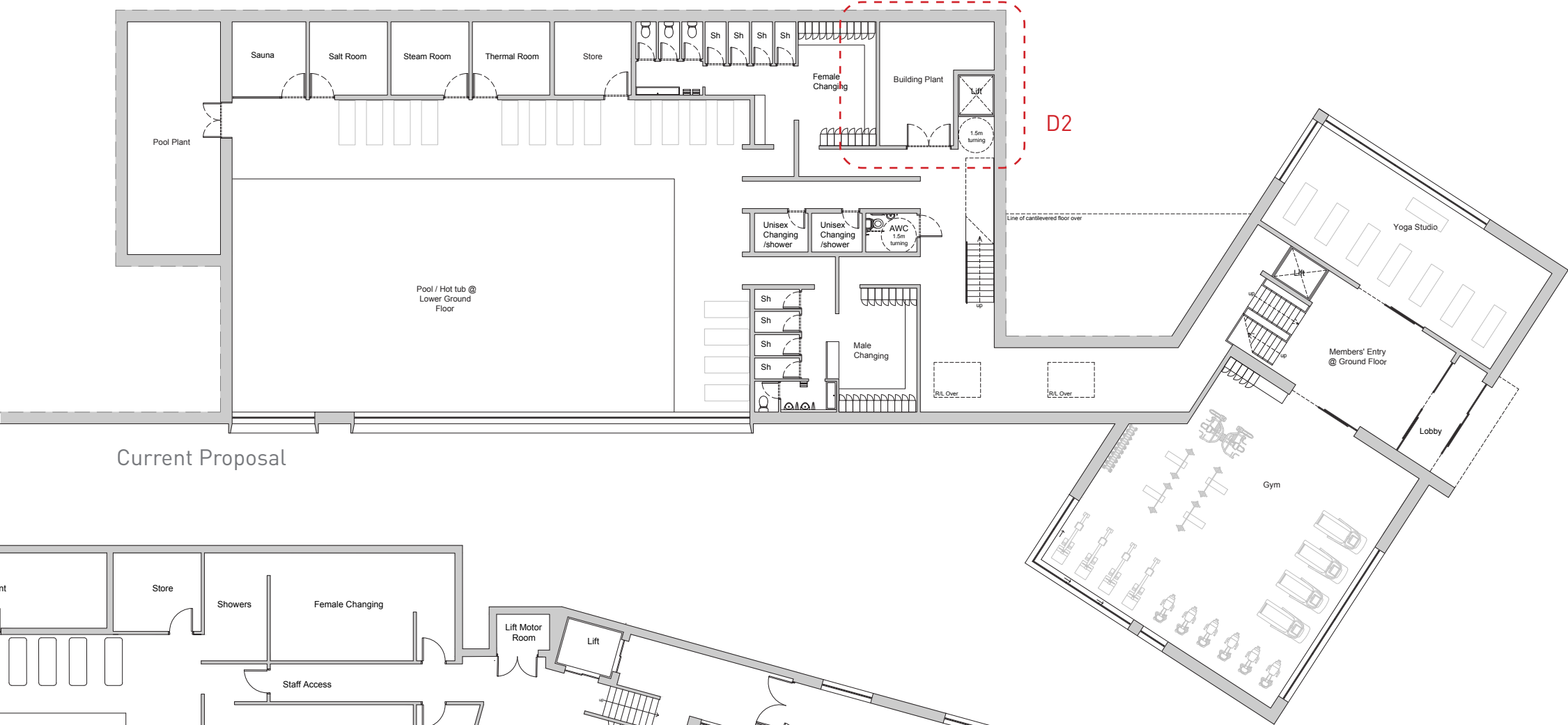
Detailing & Materials
Detailing and selection of materials have been carefully considered to ensure the listed building is referenced (in particular the sandstone walling) and the new build elements work seamlessly with their heritage counterparts, wholly complementing the setting and, alongside a mature and sensitive landscaping scheme, preserving the character of the Jekyll designed gardens, and working with the existing listed terrace walls.

Large scale bay details are included within the drawn information to provide some indication as to the proposed detailing of the new build elements echoing the quality and workmanship of the listed building, reinforcing craftsmanship.

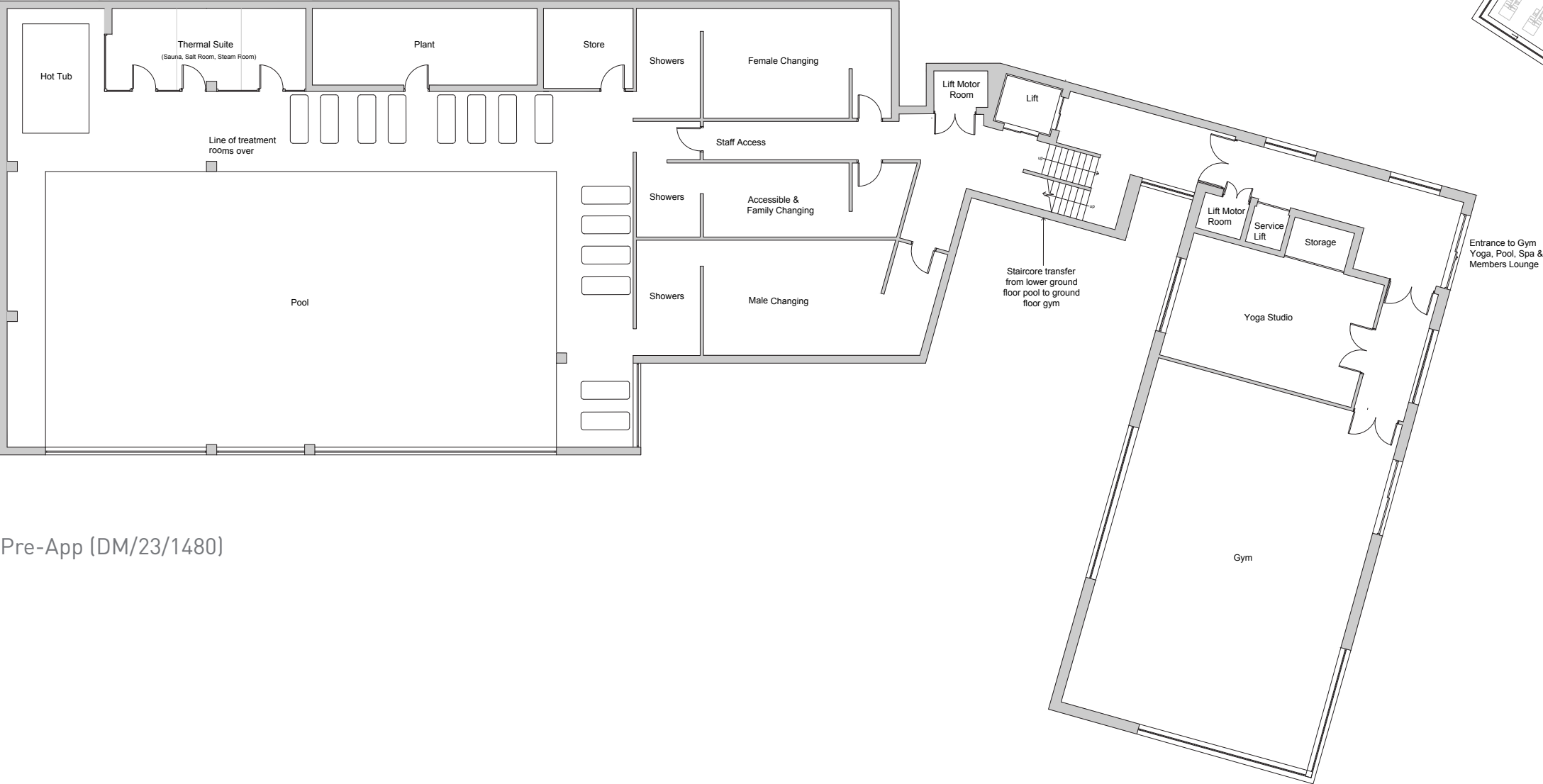
D2
The refined and reduced layout of the treatment suites and pool / spa building has enabled a reworking of the plant areas which were positioned towards the north west end of the building at the upper floor level in the pre-app submission. The current layouts propose repositioning this element below ground to the south eastern end of the building to mitigate any noise breakout impacts from the plant area that would potentially impact the guests of the listed building or neighbours.

An acoustic consultant (Acoustic South East) has been appointed as part of the design team and reference should be made to their report regarding areas highlighted.

8.04 New Leisure Facilities - Pool/Spa/Gym/ Yoga: Lower Ground / Ground Floor (nts)

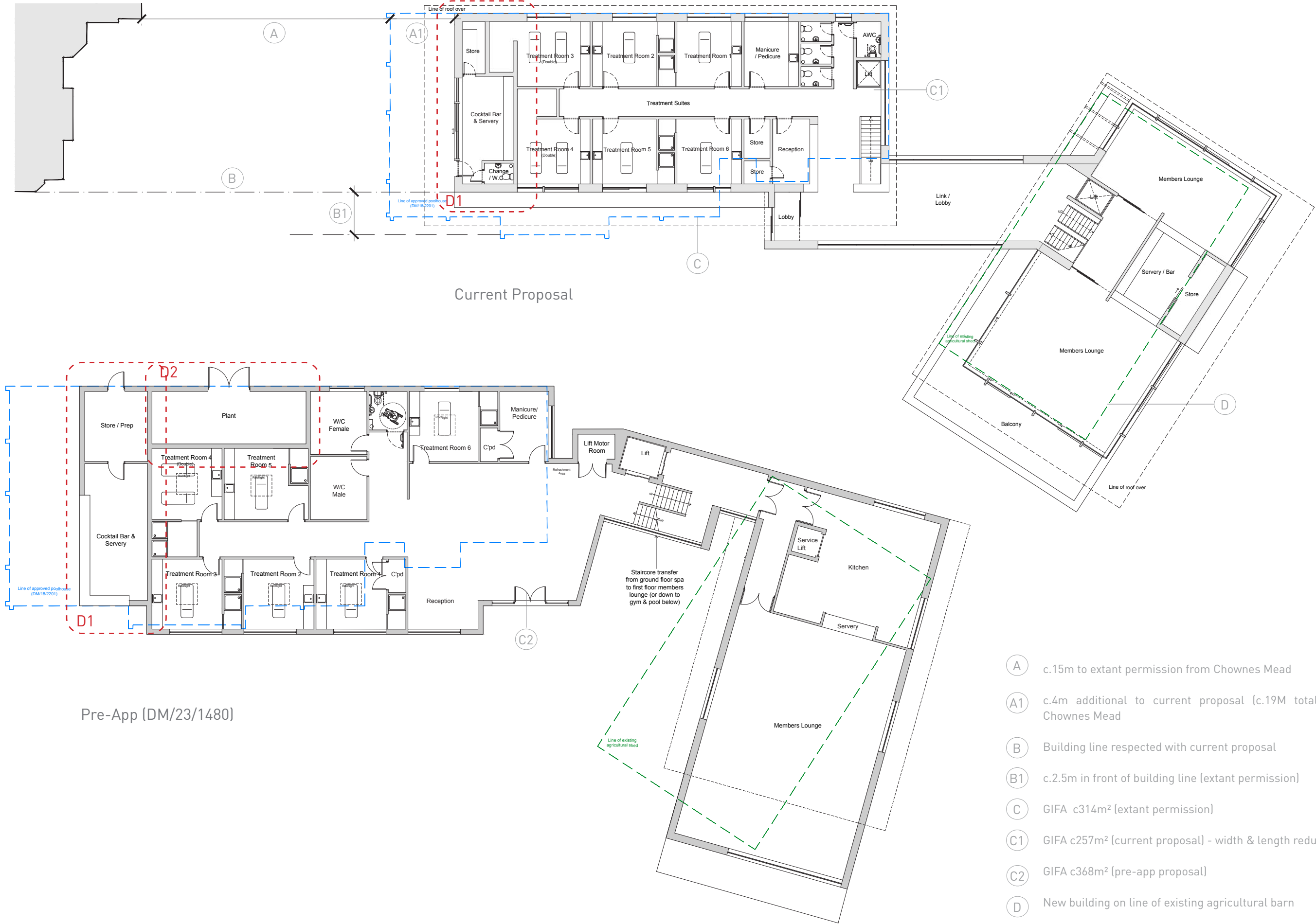


Current Proposal



Pre-App (DM/23/1480)

8.04 New Leisure Facilities - Treatment/Members Lounges : Upper Ground / First Floor (nts)



Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

E1
'The existing barn to the south east of the house is not of any special interest, and its replacement is not considered contentious in principle. I do have some concerns regarding the scale and visual prominence of the proposed replacement 2 storey building; although a new structure in this position and linked to the pool house may not be contentious in principle, care should be taken to minimise its scale (footprint and height) and its impact on views of the house and the character of the garden setting. As with the pool house, the detailing of the development and the surrounding landscaping will also be key, including the maintenance or implementation of appropriate planted screening.'

E2
'Additionally, I am concerned about potential noise from people using the facilities, especially in the outside areas for food and drink, and from weight drops in the gym. It would be helpful to have more information on the operating hours and activities planned for these areas to better evaluate the potential noise impact on the neighbouring properties and whether any additional information is needed.'

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

E1
Scale & Visual Prominence
As noted in the pre-app response, the agricultural barn is not of any special interest and its replacement considered as non-contentious in principle.

Whilst the officer’s comments regarding scale and visual prominence are acknowledged, the overall massing and monolithic nature of the timber barn with its singular facing material to all walls, has been taken into consideration and the approach to the proposals is aimed at breaking down this massing into a sensitive two storey element.

This has been achieved by utilising the continuity of the sandstone walling to ground the building with a heavy mass and proposing a lightweight element above. Compared to the pre-app. the current proposal details the upper element housing the members lounge set back from the walls below and in terms of its materiality utilises timber and glazing to further break down the perceived massing.

In turn, the entrance area has been located further south west, breaking down the length of the gym building form. The overall length of the building has also been reduced by around c.1M at ground floor gym and c.3M at first floor members lounge, reducing further the scale and perceived length of the building with the break for the entrance with corten steel canopy element.

Mindful that the existing agricultural shed is c5.4M high at its ridge, when viewed from the listed building due to the topography and tree screening the new build element is very discreet, almost unseen. Whilst the proposals are for a more integrated response the upper level members lounge is only a half storey above the terrace level overall.

E2
An acoustic consultant has been appointed as part of the design team. Reference should be made to report by Acoustic South East regarding areas highlighted.

The heavyweight / mass of the sandstone walling will also assist with the mitigation of any noise breakout.

8.00 Pre App DM/23/1480 and Current Proposal Responses & Comparables

8.06 Site Works & Landscaping

Pre-App Response (DM/23/1480) by MSDC

- F1

'The reinstatement of the pond within the dell is not considered contentious, and may be considered beneficial, if this is shown to be part of the original Jekyll plans for the garden, and in particular if accompanied by other, appropriately informed, restoration of historic garden features/plantings.'
- G1

'The relocation of the secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane is not considered contentious subject to detail including of the impact on any planting/trees to the boundary. Likewise the proposed parking area may be acceptable subject to detail, given the existing hard standing in this position. A detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme would be required to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on the garden setting of the house.'
- I1

'Another area of concern is the possibility of contaminated land, particularly with regard to the old pond. Our mapping suggests that the old pond was infilled with made ground. It is important to highlight that "made ground" refers to land that has been altered or disturbed by human activities such as construction, excavation, or waste disposal. This type of land has the potential to contain pollutants, although it is currently unknown what contaminants, if any, might be present.'
- I2

'Upon visiting the site, it was apparent that the pond area still possesses considerable depth, so it is unclear how much made ground could have actually been placed. However, I would still advocate for a phased approach to address this concern. Given the planned redevelopment of the site, I would recommend, at the very least, conducting a desktop study to determine whether any further investigation or remediation efforts are necessary. This phased approach, including the need for a preliminary study, can be conditioned if there is a desire to obtain permission before commencing such an in-depth investigation.'

Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

- F1

Reference should be made to all drawings and documentation by Nicholas Dexter Landscaping Design in conjunction with the proposed pond within the dell as well as the Jekyll influenced sensitive landscaping and garden design which marries with the architectural approach, responding wholly to the listed building and heritage setting.
- G1

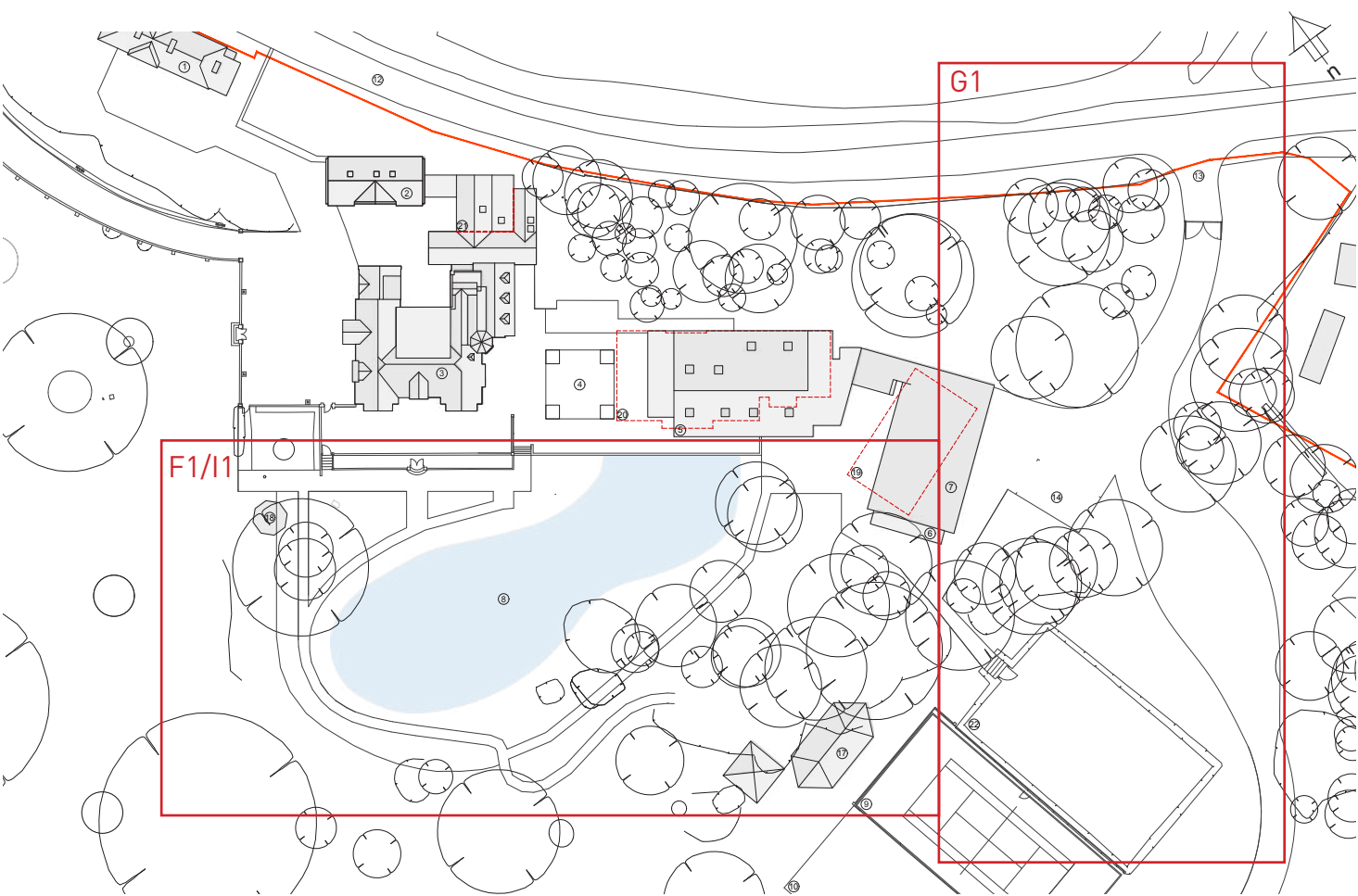
Reference should be made to all drawings and documentation by Nicholas Dexter Landscaping Design in conjunction with both the drawings and report from Motion Transport Consultants, and the approach set out in the Ancient Woodland dialogue within the DAS.

These all demonstrate that the landscaping scheme, secondary entrance relocation, parking area etc marries not only with the architectural approach, responding wholly to the listed building and heritage setting but also no adverse impacts on the garden setting of the house.

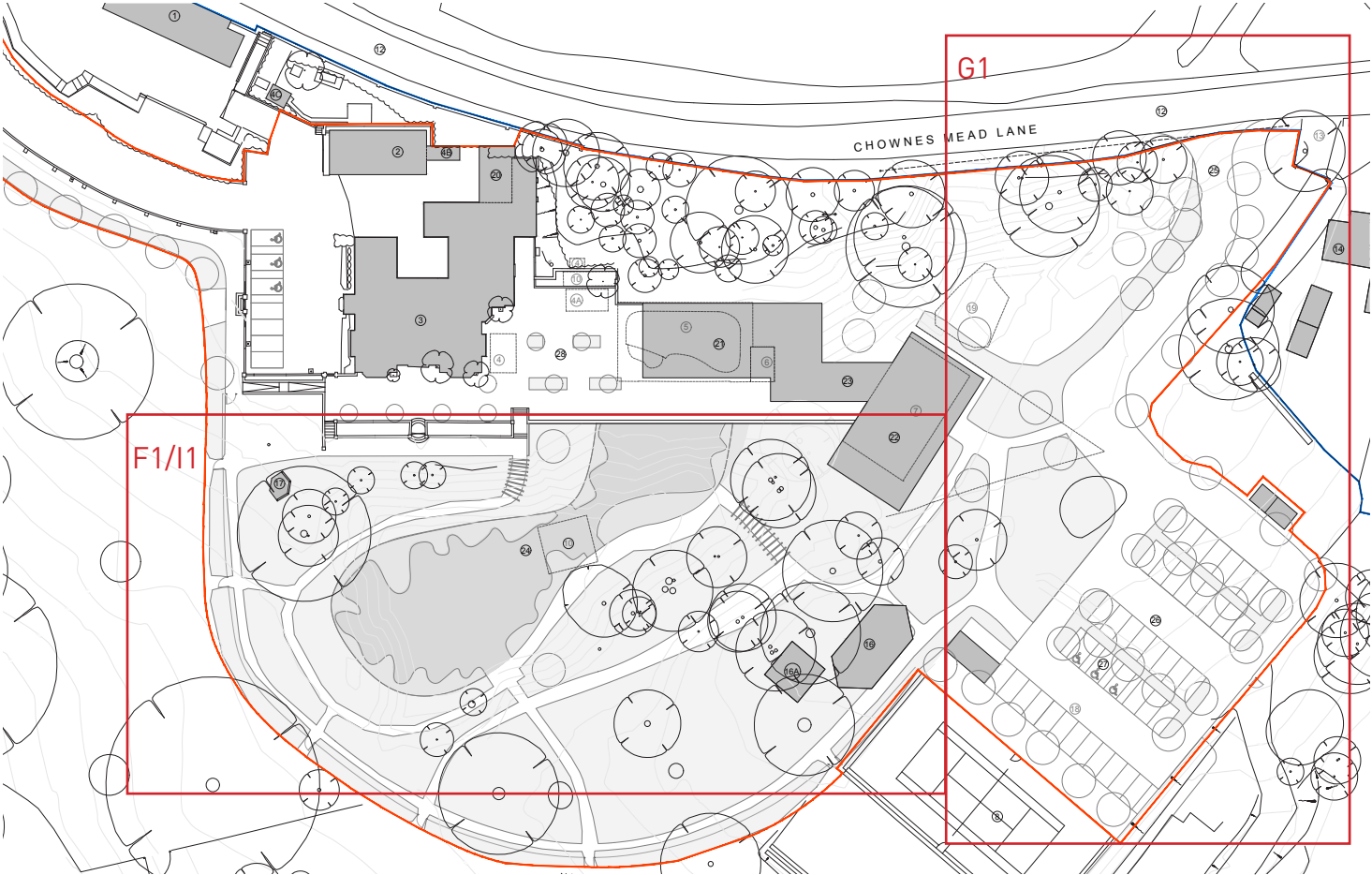
Indeed, mindful of the amount of hardstanding and areas that have been identified in the Place Services pre-app response ("Based on the site visit carried on the 1st May 2025, it is acknowledged that the majority of the site is no longer functioning as Ancient Woodland, with most of the site classified as 'developed land; sealed surface)', the scheme is a marked improvement with a sensitive, respectful and contextual approach to the site.
- I1 and I2

Reference to be made to Lizard Landscape and Ecology Consultants report as well as Place Services Pre-app response.

The suggestion of a phased approach and Condition applied to this is acknowledged and agreed as the most sensible way to approach this element.



Pre-App



Current Proposal

9.00 Pre App DM/25/0133 (Ancient Woodland) and Current Proposal Responses

9.01 Ancient Woodland : Overview

The Ancient Woodland was not referred to historically in previous planning applications made for the site, however the response from MSDC to the Planning Pre-App of 2023 (DM/23/1480) on 17.11.23 stated -

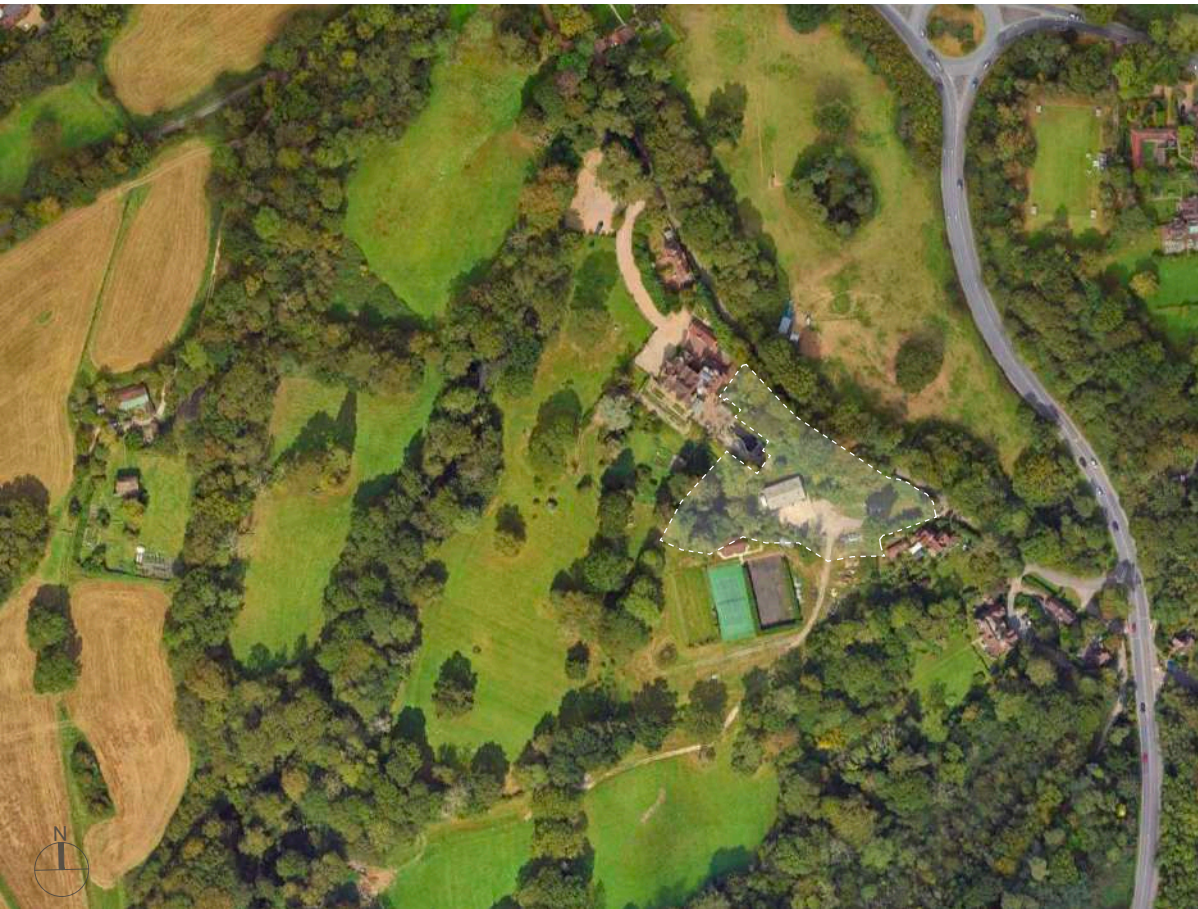
“Ancient Woodland

As you may be aware, part of the site (the rear of the building, patio, pool area and land to the east incorporating the agricultural building, hardstanding area and additional access) falls within Ancient Woodland with the land beyond including part of the tennis court falling within the 15 metre buffer zone. Whilst I appreciate the previous permission of the smaller pool building was to be built on part of the land within the Ancient Woodland buffer and there is existing hardstanding on parts of this, consideration would need to be given in any application in respect of the enlarged parts of the building and additional hardstanding created and the impact to the Ancient Woodland. As you are aware, Ancient woodland includes the soils. Regard would need to be made to para 174 of the NPPF.”

Whilst this area has been the subject of further significant studies within the design team during the pre-amble to this application submission (reference should be made to reports by both Lizard Ecology and Broad Oak Tree Consultants for detailed information), it was deemed that a separate Planning Pre-app should be made. Dated 17.01.25 (DM/25/0133), reference should be made to DMH Stallard Letter dated 17.01.25 ref. PR/408912.1, 0603.AWPL.100 / December 2025 by ABIR Architects Ltd and Lizard Ecology Assessment of Ancient Woodland, if required.

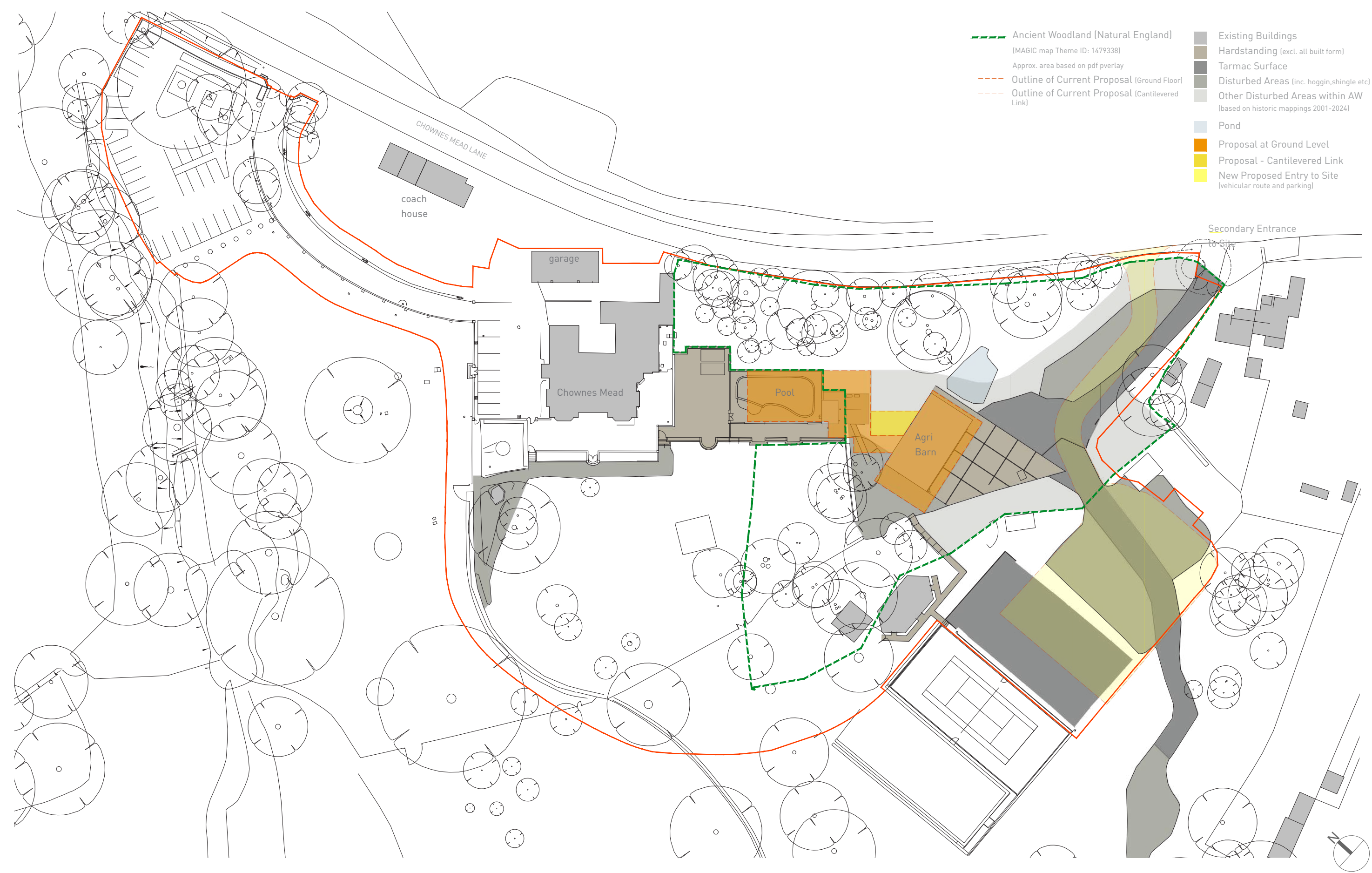
A site meeting initiated by the design team took place on site on 1st May 2025 with Hamish Jackson (Ecologist, Place Services), Joanne Fisher (Planning Team Leader, MSDC) and members of the design team present to discuss concerns of any perceived impacts of proposed scheme on the Ancient Woodland (AW). Subsequently a formal response was received from Hamish Jackson, Senior Ecological Consultant of Place Services on 12th November 2025 (ref 11092).

Details of the response received and how the design team have addressed the response is detailed in the following pages of this section.

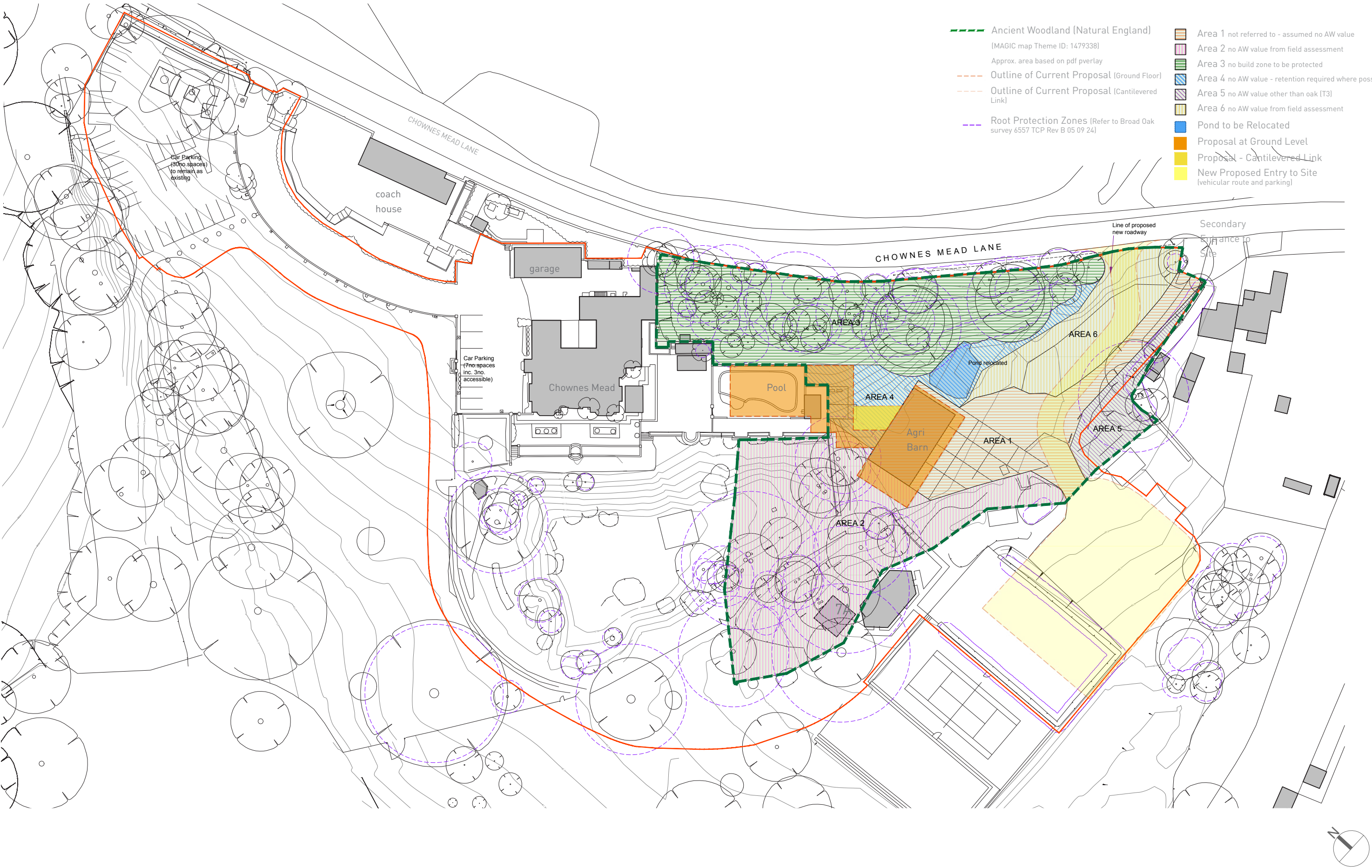


Chownes Mead Aerial Site Mapping (ref.Google Earth Pro)- Ancient Woodland outline ghosted over

9.02 Existing Site Plan : Areas of Hardstanding & Proposal Overlay



9.03 Place Services Consultation: Areas 1 - 6 (to be read with summary 9.04)



9.04 Place Services Consultation : Summary of Report

The following text is taken from the report dated 12.11.25 written by Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons) Senior Ecological Consultant of Place Services at Essex County Council and should be read in conjunction with the areas indicated in the mapping on previous page.

Each point has been addressed as required to ensure there are no impacts on the Ancient Woodland. Refer to ‘Current Proposal Response by Design Team’ for each bracketed numbered point eg. (1,2 3 etc) after each paragraph.

Based on the site visit carried on the 1st May 2025, it is acknowledged that the majority of the site is no longer functioning as Ancient Woodland, with most of the site classified as ‘developed land; sealed surface’. As a result, a pragmatic approach is required for any subsequent application to demonstrate compliance under the NPPF 2024, following the previous loss of irreplaceable habitat permitted as part of historic planning applications. (1)

It is agreed that the trees within location 2 in the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’ included abundant non-native specimens, which included Coastal redwood, holm oak, Monterey cypress and wellingtonia. Whilst this area has retained a continuously wooded area, it was noted that the ground within the site had been reprofiled and no evidence of ancient woodland indicator species were present during an optimal survey period. Therefore, it is agreed that this is area does not hold the value of an Ancient Woodland from a field assessment. (2)

However, the small strip of woodland to the east of the site (referenced as location 3 in the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’ does contain the following ancient woodland indicator species1: Buebell, Wood anemone, Wood speedwell and Primrose. Therefore, it is agreed that this area forms part of the remnant Ancient Woodland and should be protected from any proposals. (3)

The area referenced as location 4 in the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’ was adjacent to a pond and dominated by Pendulous sedge, Rhododendron, Willow sp. and Bramble agg. Therefore, it is highlighted that Pendulous sedge is another ancient woodland indicator, where the species have clearly not been planted. Therefore, if this species were not planted, there is a possibility that the ground flora does indicates remnant woodland habitat. Nevertheless, given the pond in close proximity, we do not consider that this is strong indicator species. As a result, it is not considered reasonable that this area should be classified as ancient woodland, following the permitted clearance works. However, the pond and surrounding habitat should be retained as much as possible within the proposed designs.(4)

It is also agreed that location 5 referenced within the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’ consists of a single Oak tree beside a Cherry laurel hedge. It is not clear when this Cherry laurel hedgerow was planted, but the only remnant of the ancient woodland is the Oak tree, with no ancient woodland indicator species. (5)

With regard to location 6 referenced within the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’, it is agreed that this area contains imported and disturbed soils and contains a mixture of bramble and grassland species. No obvious ancient woodland indicator species were present at this location and therefore it is agreed does not hold the value of an Ancient Woodland from a field assessment. (6)

As a result, the planning application submission will need to demonstrate how further direct and in direct impacts will be avoided on the remaining woodland area (location 3). This could be included within the finalised Ecological Impact Assessment and should be in line with Government standing advice: Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK. (7)

HJ goes onto say -

However, given the extent of the remnant woodland remaining, it is not considered that a buffer zone of 15m will be reasonable and instead the applicant should demonstrate that root protection areas will be protected as part of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment in line with British Standard BS 5837 ‘Trees in relation to demolition, design and development’. The finalised proposals will then be outlined as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, to be secured as a pre-commencement condition of any consent. The development should be designed around retaining the remaining remnant ancient woodland and the design should evidence that the natural buffers are provided around this habitat are retained / enhanced where possible. Furthermore, invasive species should be removed to minimise potential encroachment to the ancient woodland and other local woodland habitats. It is also understood that there may be an intention to amend the access of the site to the Pool House. Therefore, at an ecological perspective, the access should be retained in the first instance. However, if this is considered a necessary element as part of the proposals, this should ideally be undertaken without removal of the existing trees, along with evidence that the remnant woodland will be protected and buffered. (8)

9.04 Current Proposal : Response by Design Team

As background, the design team acknowledge the following definitions which include Ancient Woodland as set out in the NPPF 2024 -

“Irreplaceable habitat: Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)”.

it goes on to state that

“193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons (70) and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

(70) For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat)”.

Furthermore, and as stated by DMH Stallard in their letter accompanying the planning pre-app submission of January 2025 (DM/25/033) -

“The position with respect to the impact on Ancient Woodland is complex given that development has been approved within the designated Ancient Woodland in the past, which includes the erection of a new agricultural building in November 2013 (Ref: 13/03362/FUL) and the planning permission referred to in August 2018. The design team are striving to avoid any additional incursions into Ancient Woodland but in some instances that is proving to be impossible and in others we are considering providing a link building / access as a ‘bridge’ between the two volumes of the spa building to avoid disturbance to the Ancient Woodland below”.

They go on to say -

“Request for pre-application advice
The prospective applicant and design team fully acknowledge Local Plan policy DP37 that protects against adverse impacts of development on ancient woodlands as well as paragraph 193(c) of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).....”

“.....You will be aware the Council has previously granted planning permission for development within the defined extent of the ancient woodland to the south-east of Chownes Mead.”

The design team have carried out considerable work in piecing together not only the current position on the ground but also the historic narrative of the area referred to as Ancient Woodland. All documentation submitted with the planning pre-app (DM/25/0133) has provided the evidence that has not only shaped the scheme design but has been acknowledged in Place Services response as suitable in the development of the current scheme.

In addition to the guidance within NPPF 2024, the design team have also considered the draft revised NPPF 2025 (16th December ‘25) which the Government published for consultation and concludes on 10th March 2026.

All responses to the Place Services report should be read in conjunction with areas 1-6 highlighted on plan on previous pages and as identified in the Assessment of Ancient Woodland prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology (ref. LLD3233/Rev 01, 6th January ‘25).

Responses as follows -

(1) As Place Services state, it is acknowledged that the majority of the site is no longer functioning as Ancient Woodland, with most of the site classified as ‘developed land; sealed surface. Thus, as recommended, the Design team has taken a pragmatic approach in demonstrating compliance under the NPPF 2024 as suggested and as referred to earlier in this section.

(2) the design team acknowledges that it is agreed that location 2 in the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’ does not hold the value of an Ancient Woodland from a field assessment. This area has therefore been considered as suitable for the location of some limited elements of the proposals including reinstating the pond in the dell (part of which falls outside area 2).

(3) The small strip of woodland to the east of the site (referenced as location 3 in the ‘Assessment of Ancient Woodland’) does contain ancient woodland indicator species. The design team acknowledges that it is agreed that this area forms part of the remnant Ancient Woodland and should be protected from any proposals. With this agreed, the proposals do not enter this area whatsoever and in addition, the area directly adjacent has been highlighted to form part of a schematic study produced by Reeve Structures (Structural Engineer) where the foundations and groundwork for the built form are carefully considered and designed to avoid any impact on area 3 during the construction process.

(4) The area referenced as location 4 was adjacent to a pond. It is not considered reasonable that this area should be classified as ancient woodland, following the permitted clearance works. However, the design team acknowledges the pond and surrounding habitat should be retained as much as possible within the proposed designs.

The pond within this area has been considered and whilst the recommendation is to ‘retain as much as possible’, following assessment from the ecologist it has been confirmed it is of low quality and heavily shaded by willows with duckweed present. In addition, whilst considering the location of the existing agricultural barn and its proposed removal and replacement with the gym building, the design team propose the pond is included in the relocation to the south west of the pool building in the dell. This will not only maximise biodiversity but also limit any issues with construction in close proximity. The surrounding habitat will be retained as much as possible and enhanced with the new planting proposed.

(5) the design team acknowledges that It is agreed that location 5 consists of a single Oak tree beside a Cherry laurel hedge....but the only remnant of the ancient woodland is the Oak tree, with no ancient woodland indicator species. The proposals retain the oak tree insitu including its root protection zone with no construction to take place locally.

(6) the design team acknowledges and agrees location 6 contains imported and disturbed soils and contains a mixture of bramble and grassland species. No obvious ancient woodland indicator species were present at this location and therefore it is agreed does not hold the value of an Ancient Woodland from a field assessment. Part of this area is proposed to accommodate the relocated secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane.

(7) Reference should be made to Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology report with reference to how further direct and in direct impacts will be avoided on the remaining woodland area (location 3).

(8) The design team acknowledge the remnant ancient woodland (location 3) and the proposals have been carefully and respectfully designed around this. For the most the new build pool and spa building adjacent to location 3 are positioned on the existing terrace / pool areas as well as the location of the pool house and local hard-standing/ paved areas.

The landscape design also highlights that natural buffers are provided around this habitat and where existing are retained / enhanced where possible. Root protection areas are acknowledged and protected. Furthermore, invasive species are proposed to be removed to minimise potential encroachment to the ancient woodland and other local woodland habitats. Reference should be made to reports/ drawings/ documentation from Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, Broad Oak Tree Consultants and Nicholas Dexter Landscape Design.

(9) The design team acknowledge the comments made in respect of Bats and reference should be made to reports/ drawings/ documentation from Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology & Broad Oak Tree Consultants for a Ground Level Tree Assessment for any additional trees to be impacted by the development.



SECTION 10.00: Listed Building Proposed Modifications

10.00 Proposed Demolitions / Modifications

10.01 Listed Building - Ground Floor Plan



A1 External view of gym and utility to be removed/extended



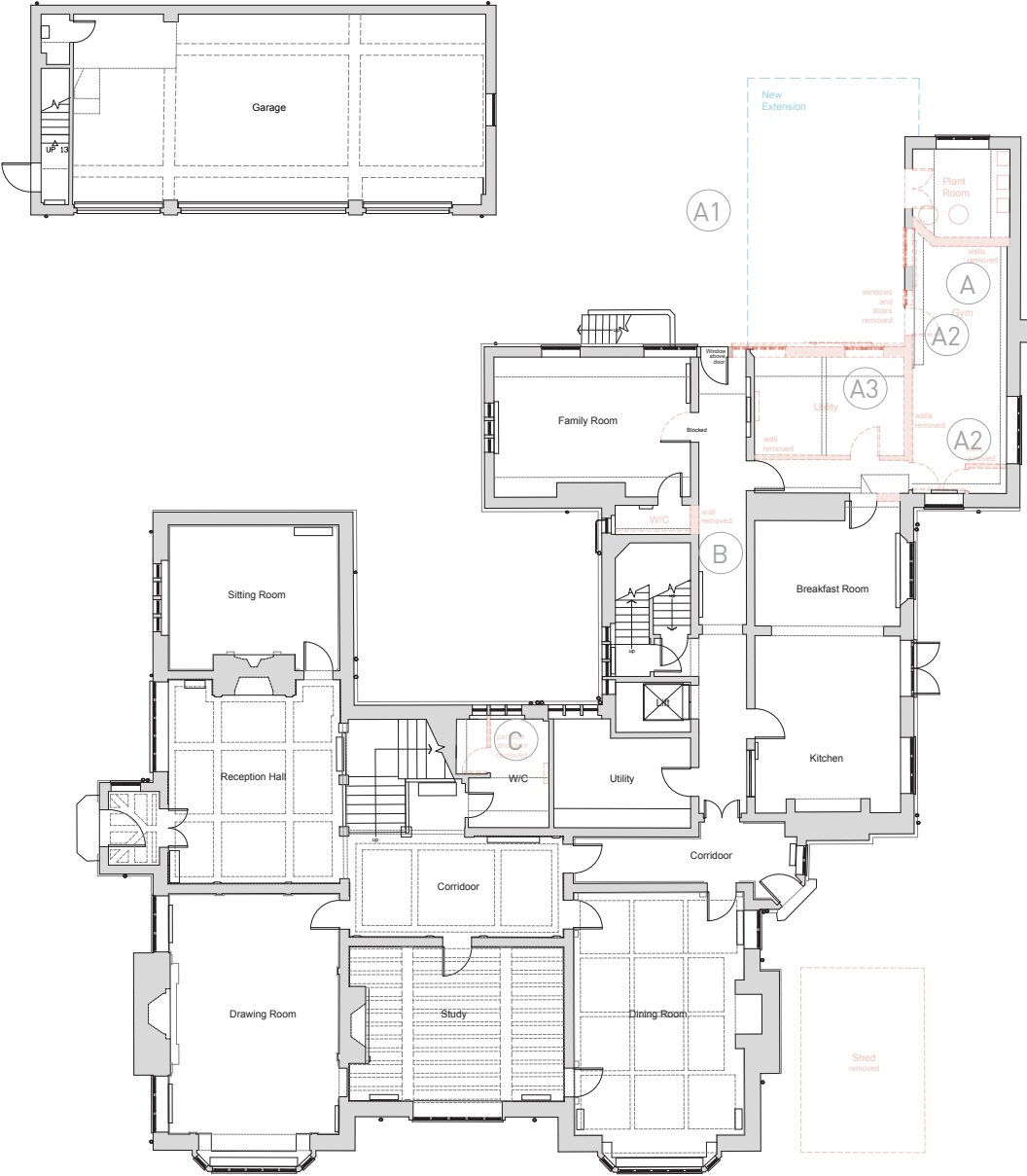
A2 Internal views of gym and WC to be removed



A3 Internal views of utility to be removed

C Internal view of WC to be modified

- A Gym/plant and utility room internal walls, and part external walls/windows/door onto courtyard to be removed to form new internal layout with new adjacent extension.
- B WC/Hall wall to be removed to form new opening to bedroom lobby.
- C WC wall and door to be removed/ modified to provide a fully accessible WC.



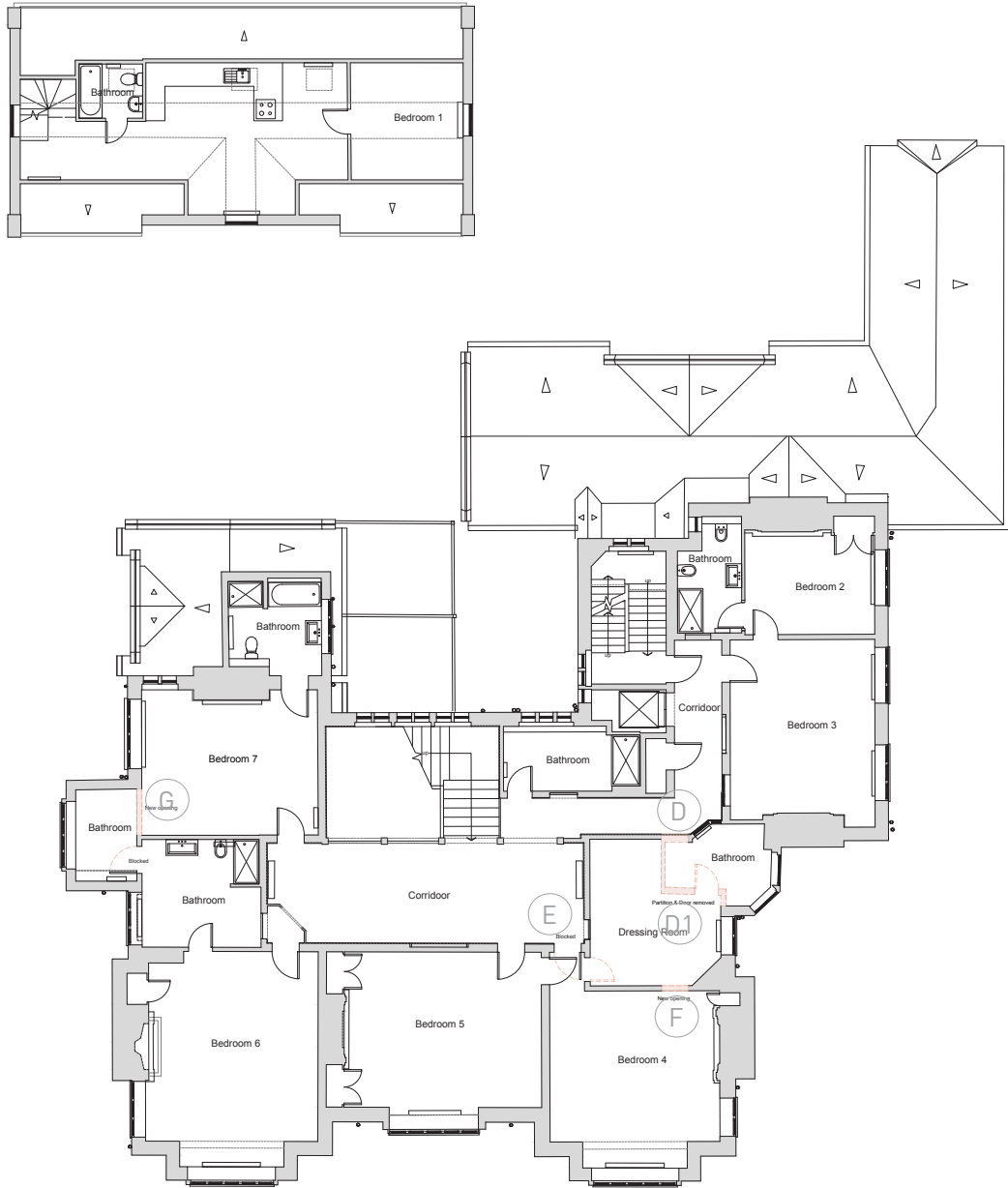
red lines on plans denotes walls etc to be removed

Existing Ground Floor Plan



10.00 Proposed Demolitions / Modifications

10.02 Listed Building - First Floor Plan



red lines on plans denotes walls etc to be removed

Existing First Floor Plan



D New door with architrave and detailing to match existing formed in existing panelling



E Existing door to bedroom 4 closed off (but retained insitu)



D1 shower room door/walls removed



G New opening through to reading nook (to left of window) in bedroom 7

- D New opening/ door formed in existing panelling with architrave and detailing to match existing, bathroom walls to be modified.
- E Existing door to bedroom 4 closed off but 'mothballed' insitu retaining heritage
- F New opening formed to provide en suite access to bedroom 4.
- G Bathroom wall and door modified to provide new reading nook.

10.00 Proposed Demolitions / Modifications

10.03 Listed Building - Second Floor Plan



I Wall (right) to be removed



K Wall (right) to be removed



K Wall (right) to be removed

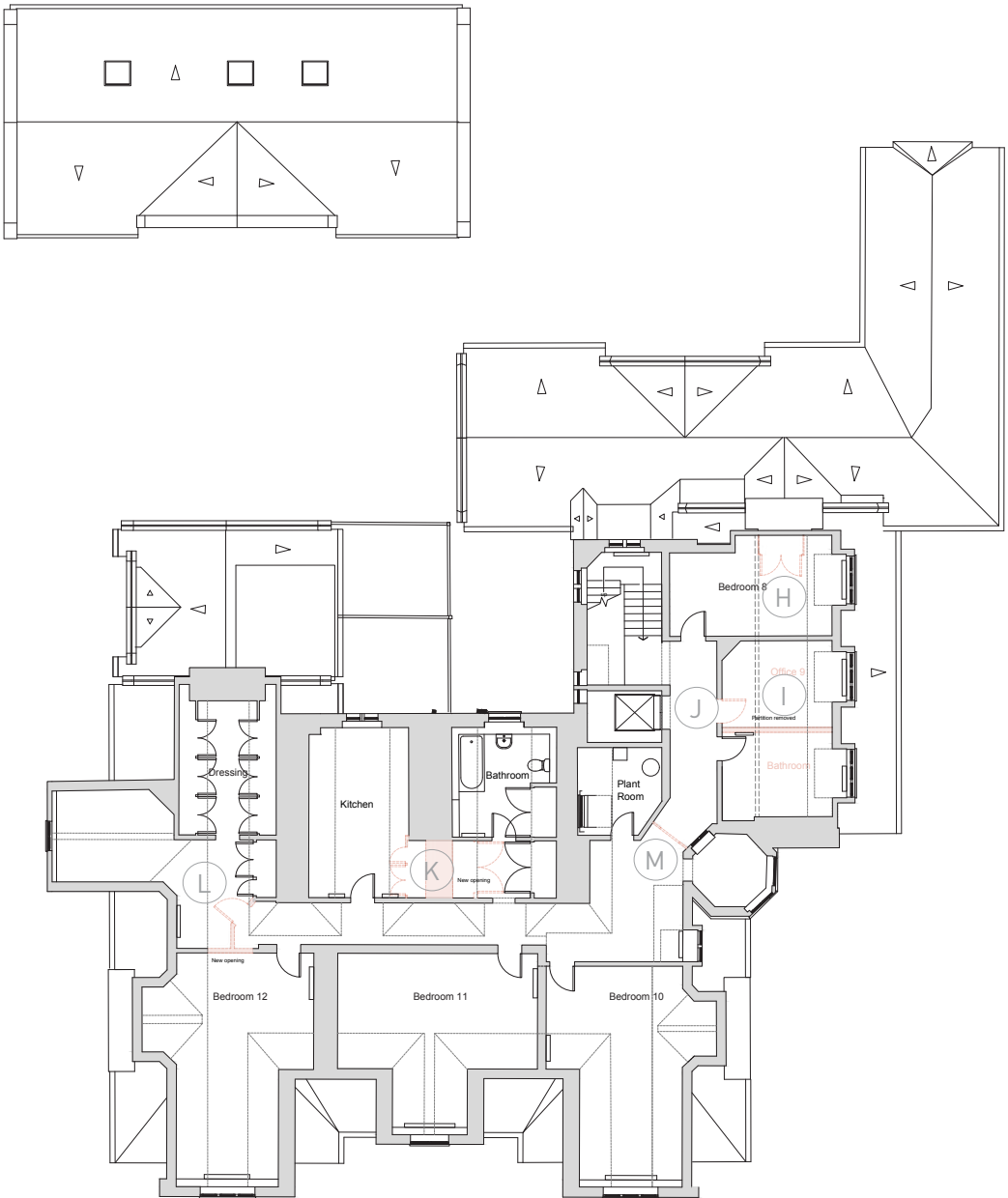


L Wall (right) to be removed



M Wall (right) to be removed

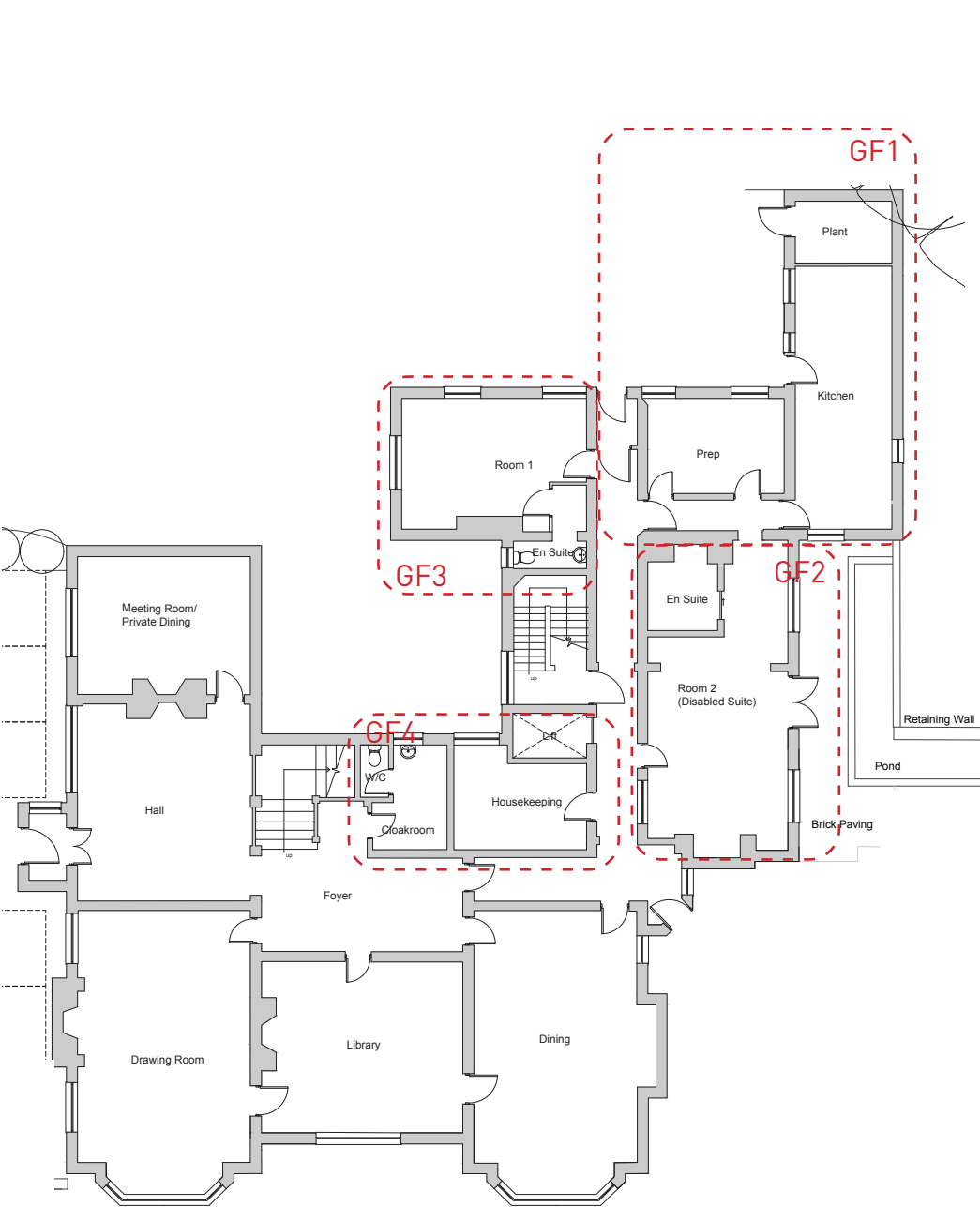
- H Cupboard removed
- I Partition and door removed to provide new bedroom and en suite.
- J Doorway opened.
- K Cupboards removed and walls knocked through to provide new en suite access from bedroom 13.
- L Walls and door removed to provide new en suite access.
- M Walls adjacent to reading nook removed.



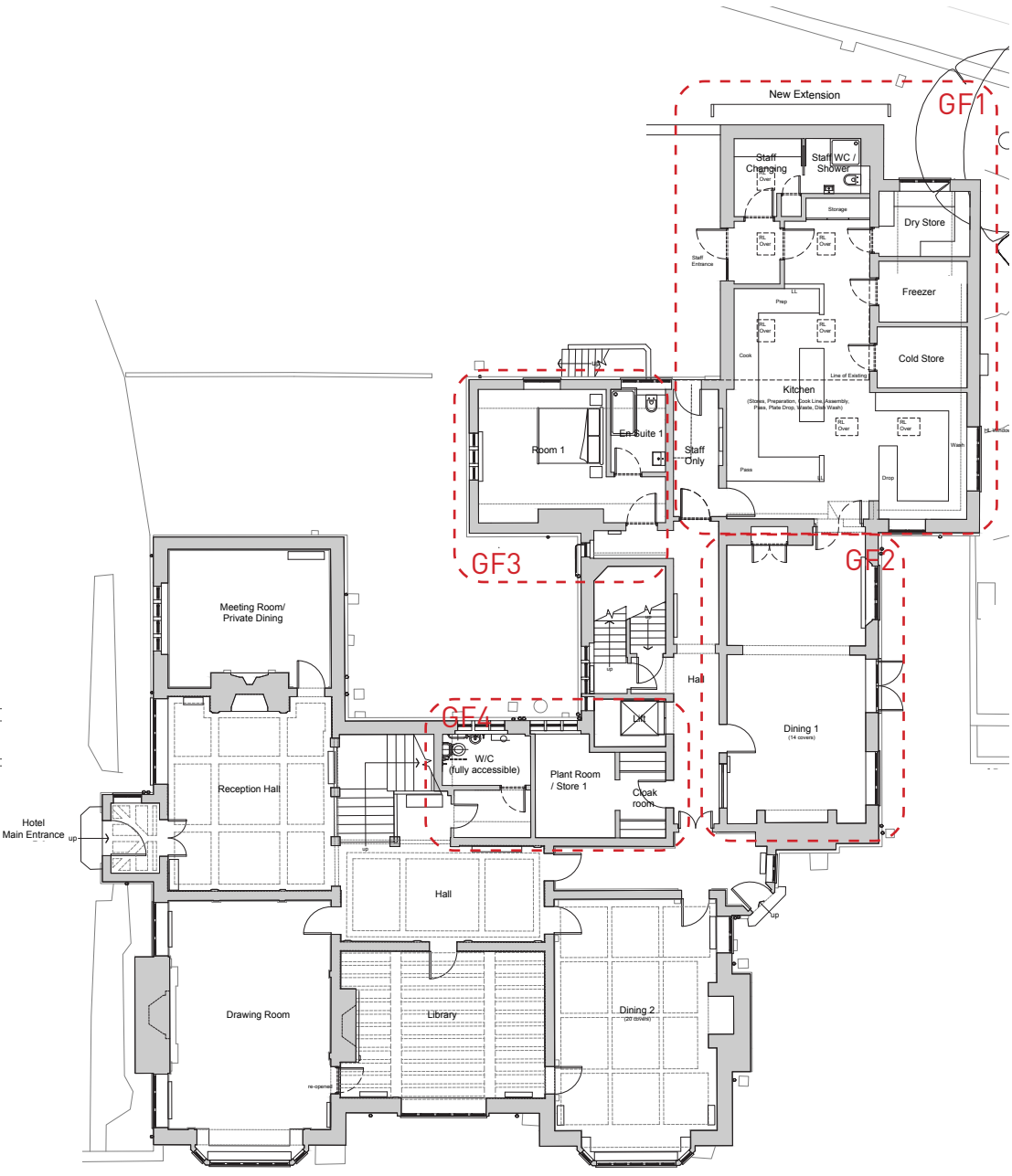
Existing Second Floor Plan

SECTION 11.00 Extant Permission & Current Application Comparables
Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201) and
Planning Application & Listed Building Consent Application (DM/26/0833 & DM/26/0834)

11.01 Chownes Mead Listed Building - Ground Floor Plan (NTS)



Extant Permission (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201)
(drawing transposed from approved planning drawings by others)

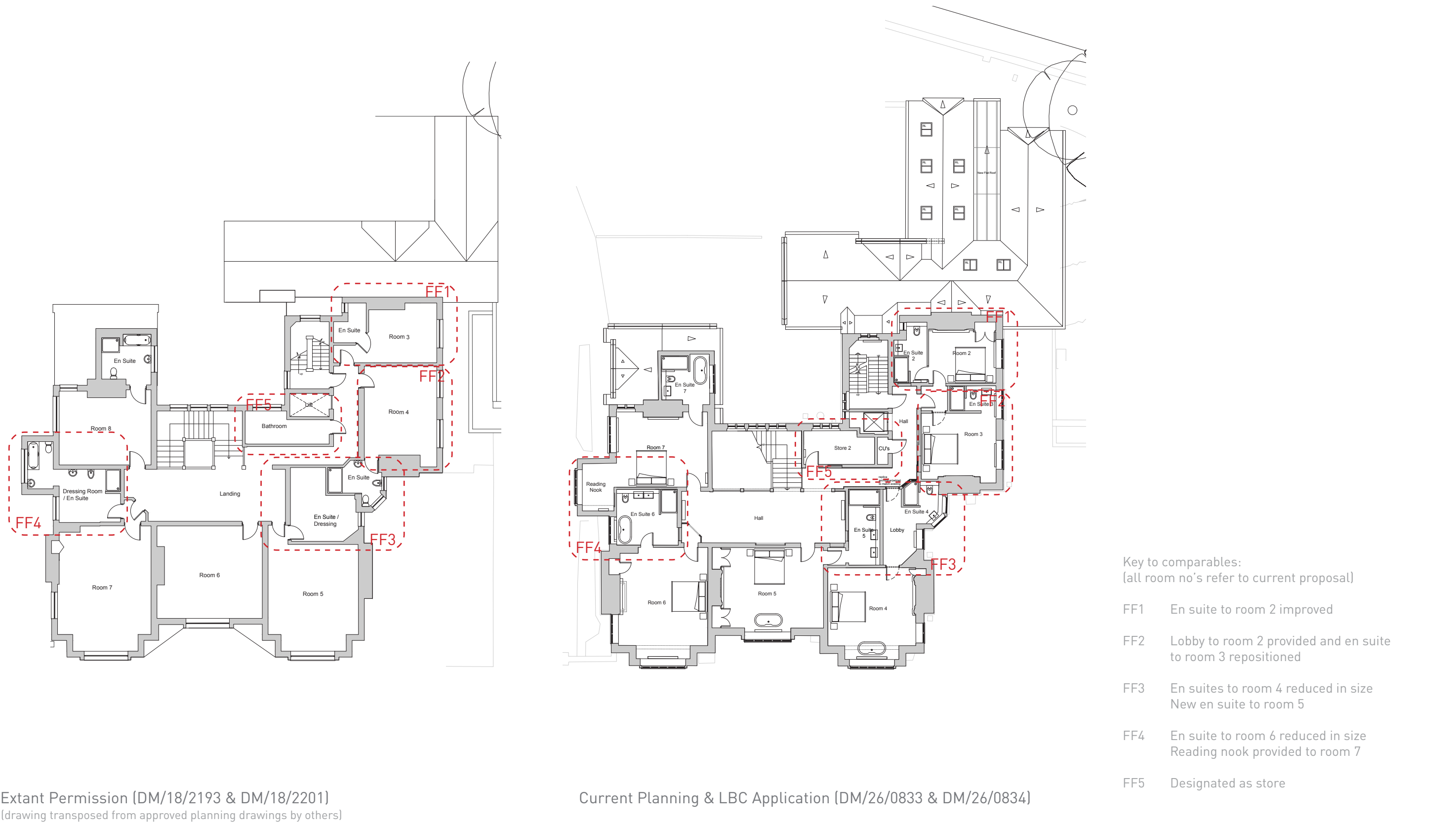


Current Planning & LBC Application (DM/26/0833 & DM/26/0834)

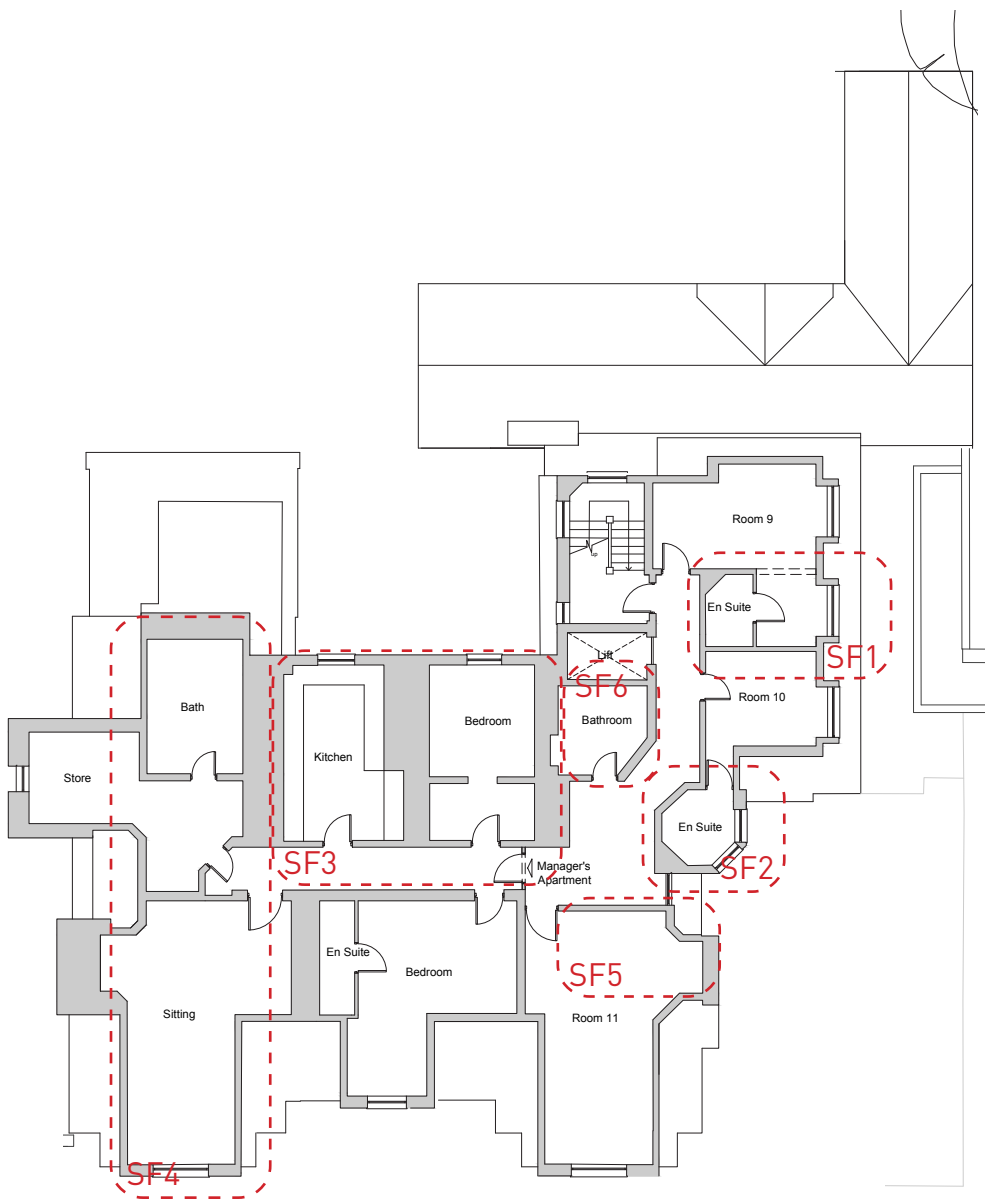
- Key to comparables:
(all room no's refer to current proposal)
- GF1 Small single storey extension to kitchen c.35m²
 - GF2 En suite removed, room designated as dining
 - GF3 En suite and entry to room 1 reconfigured
 - GF4 WC, cloaks/store reconfigured (WC fully accessible arrangement)



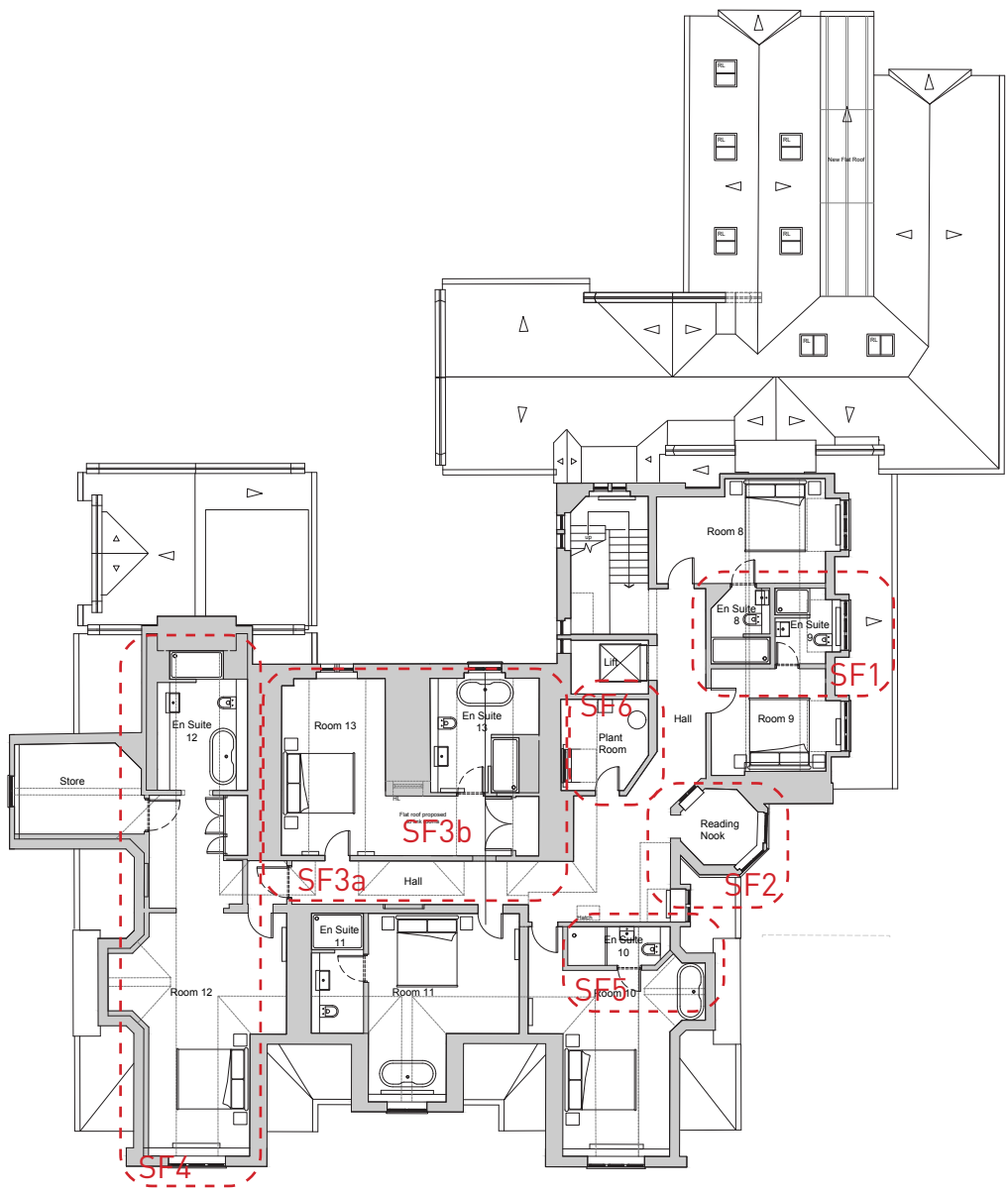
11.02 Chownes Mead Listed Building - First Floor Plan (NTS)



11.03 Chownes Mead Listed Building - Second Floor Plan (NTS)



Extant Permission (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201)
(drawing transposed from approved planning drawings by others)



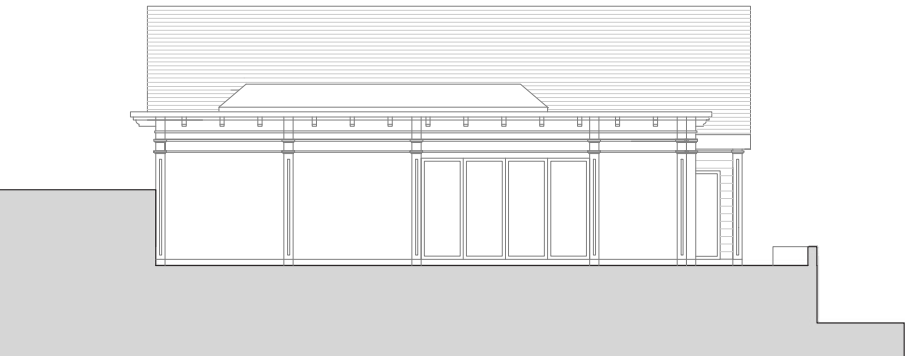
Current Planning & LBC Application (DM/26/0833 & DM/26/0834)

- Key to comparables:
(all room no's refer to current proposal)
- SF1 En suite provided to room 9
 - SF2 Reading nook retained in lieu of en suite
 - SF3a Designated as hotel guest room (13) in lieu of managers apartment
 - SF3b Flat roof between for access
 - SF4 Designated as hotel guest room (12) in lieu of managers apartment
 - SF5 En suite provided to room 10
 - SF6 Designated as plant room

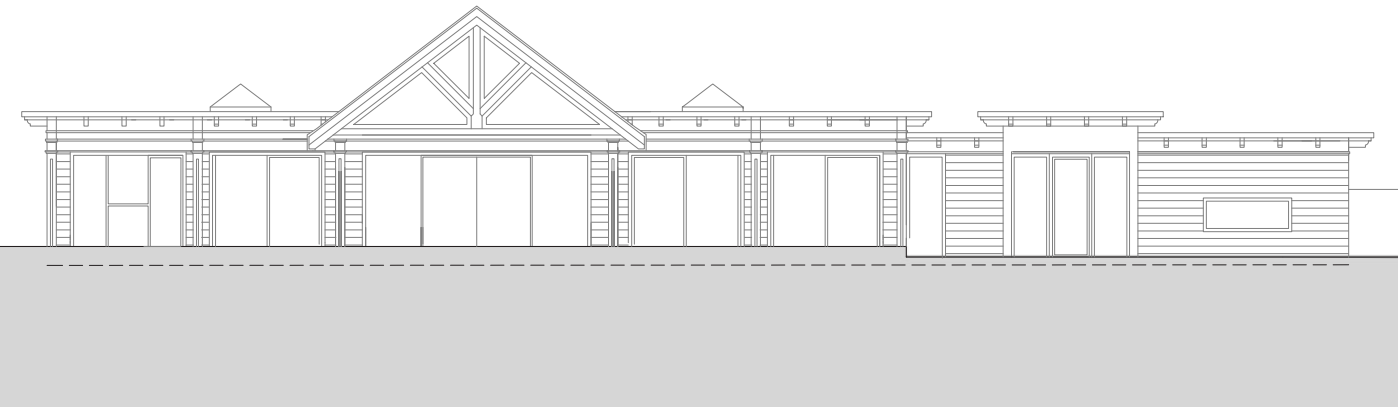


11.00 Comparables: Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201) and Current Application (DM/26/0833 & DM/26/0834)

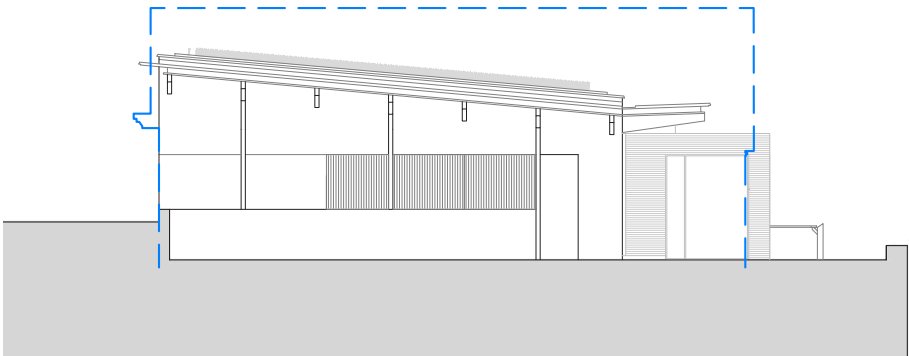
11.04 Spa/Poolhouse building - Plans and Elevations (NTS)



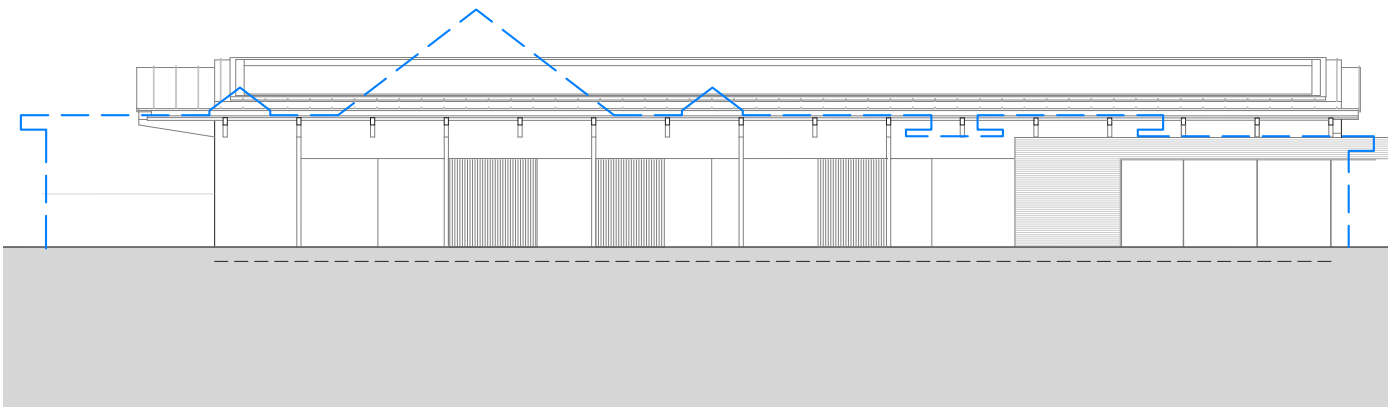
North West Elevation



South West Elevation



North West Elevation

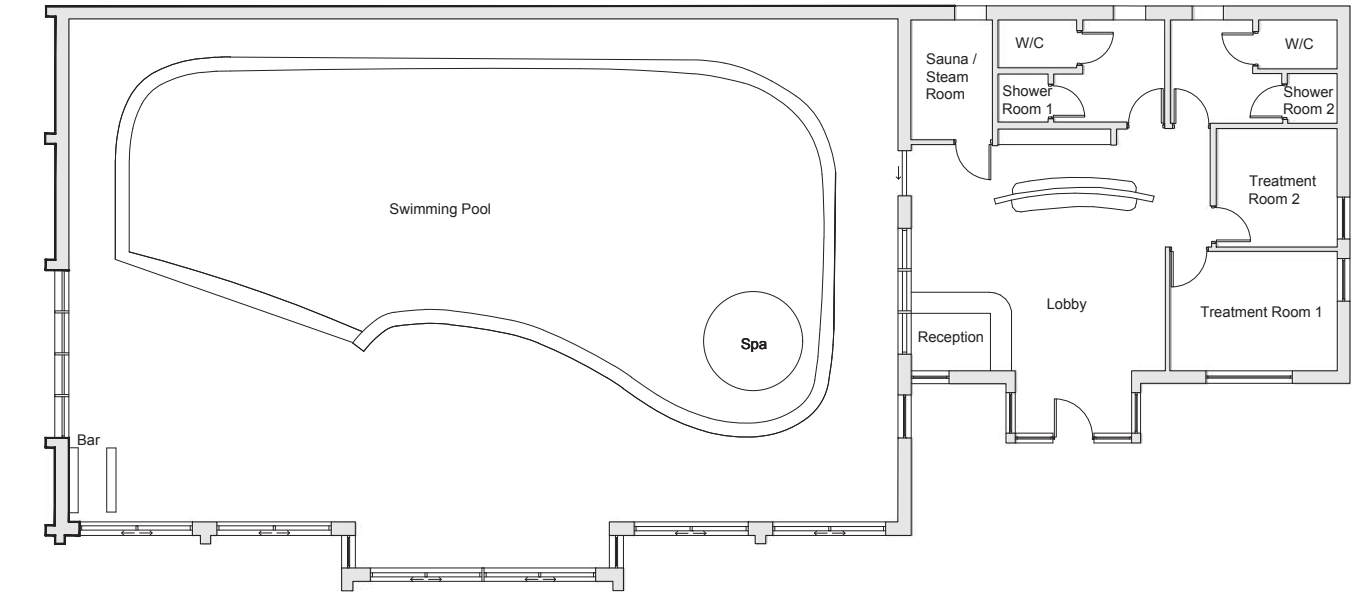


South West Elevation

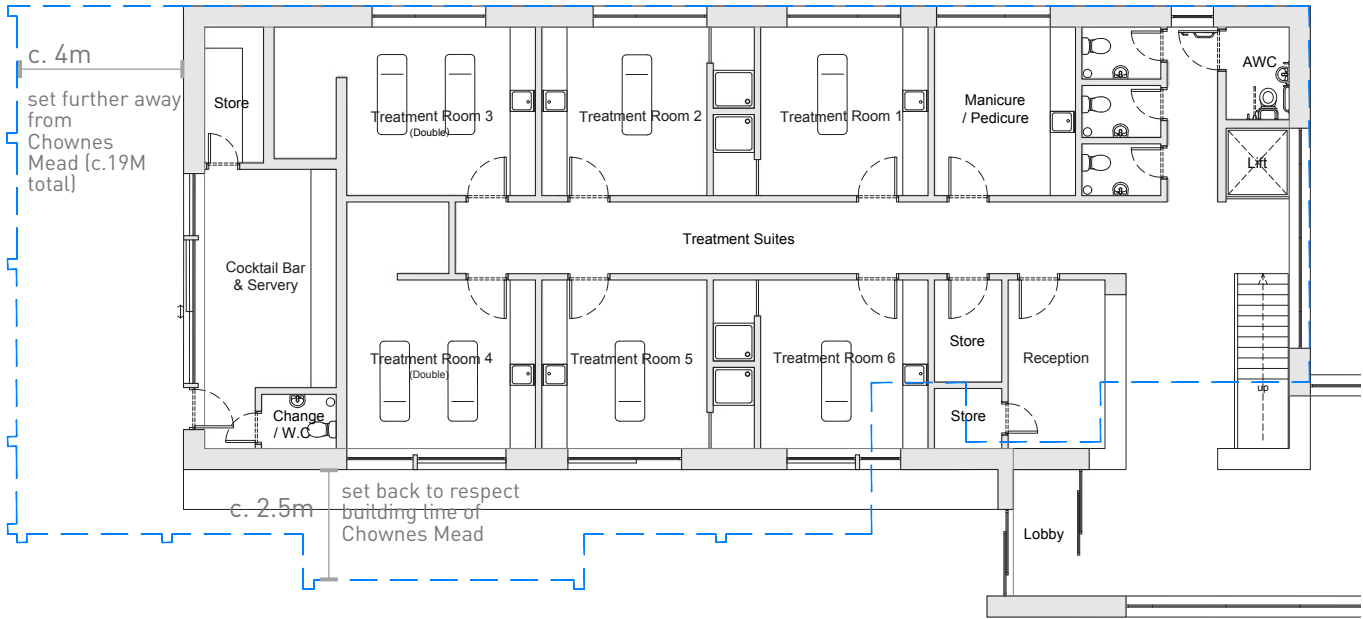
Line of extant permission
(DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201)

GIFA's:
Extant c.314m²
DM/26/0833 c.257m²

reduction of c.57m² at ground floor
level. Remaining pool area
proposed at lower ground floor



Ground Floor Plan
Extant Permission (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201)
(drawing transposed from approved planning drawings by others)



Ground Floor Plan
Current Planning & LBC Application (DM/26/0833 & DM/26/0834)
(Swimming Pool etc all at LGF level).

Chownes Mead, a grade 2 listed country house built between 1912 and 1920 is set in circa 21 acres of private landscaped gardens, and located on Chownes Mead Lane near Cuckfield / Haywards Heath with a family owner-occupier.

Both the Full Planning and Listed Building Consent applications follow the (now implemented) Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent for change of use from a residential dwelling (use class C3) to a hotel (use class C1) granted in 2018 (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201) by seeking to further develop the scheme for hotel with complementary facilities & relocated secondary entrance. The proposals comprise the minor amendments to the layout of the listed building as the main hotel accommodation, with complementary facilities comprising pool & spa facilities and a members lounge & gym and detail a sensitively designed, considered sustainable development which enhances the heritage setting and preserves the listed building and gardens into the future.

The landscape-led contextual approach will integrate the historic with the contemporary and underpinned by craftsmanship, focuses on the quality of both internal and external spaces, their materiality and context.



Chownes Mead Hotel

Chownes Mead Hotel :

A Grade 2 listed country house hotel with new build contemporary ancillary facilities referencing the local vernacular whilst creating a triptych of interconnected internal & external spaces that enhance the setting of the heritage building whilst connecting with adjacent landscaped spaces & the parkland beyond.

The new buildings will reflect and transcend some of the qualities of Chownes Mead.

Bringing together users with context, landscape & heritage, the proposals will foster a sense of place whilst utilising & combining traditional building materials with modern detailing & construction techniques, both sympathetic to and appropriate for their unique setting & marrying all the elements of the site.

SECTION 12.00: Conclusion

REEVE STRUCTURES

Indicative Structural Approach

The proposed structural approach has been developed to allow construction in close proximity to the adjacent Ancient Woodland while ensuring that no excavation or ground disturbance extends beyond the development boundary. Along the woodland edge, a line of contiguous CFA piled retaining walls is proposed to form a stable retained boundary to the site.

This piled structure allows the ground to be retained without the need for over-excavation or battering of slopes toward the ancient woodland, thereby minimising potential impacts on tree roots and the surrounding soil structure. In addition to providing permanent ground retention, the piled wall would also form a robust edge condition that could support temporary works such as suspended access walkways or scaffold systems, enabling construction and maintenance activities to take place entirely from within the site without encroachment into the woodland area.

Above ground floor level, the primary superstructure has been conceived as a prefabricated panel-based timber system supported on glulam beams and steel framing. This approach allows a significant proportion of the structure to be manufactured off-site and installed as prefabricated elements, reducing the duration and extent of construction activities adjacent to the woodland boundary. The use of this panelised system therefore minimises on-site works and disturbance in sensitive areas while maintaining an efficient structural load path to the foundations.

SECTION 13.00: Appendix A: Structural Approach

Ground Conditions

Reference to the British Geological Survey indicates that the site is underlain by Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand / Sandstone strata. These records provide only preliminary information and the ground conditions should be confirmed by intrusive ground investigation undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of a geotechnical engineer.

For the purpose of preliminary structural design, the ground is assumed to comprise dense sand / sandstone bearing strata capable of supporting conventional shallow foundations, subject to confirmation.

Foundations

Based on the currently available information, the proposed foundation solution is assumed to comprise reinforced concrete strip foundations supporting loadbearing walls, together with ground-bearing concrete floor slabs.

The final foundation type, founding level, and allowable bearing pressures shall be confirmed following completion of a site-specific intrusive ground investigation and geotechnical assessment.

Allowance should also be made for:
variability in sandstone weathering profiles
potential perched groundwater conditions
localised zones of weaker sand strata

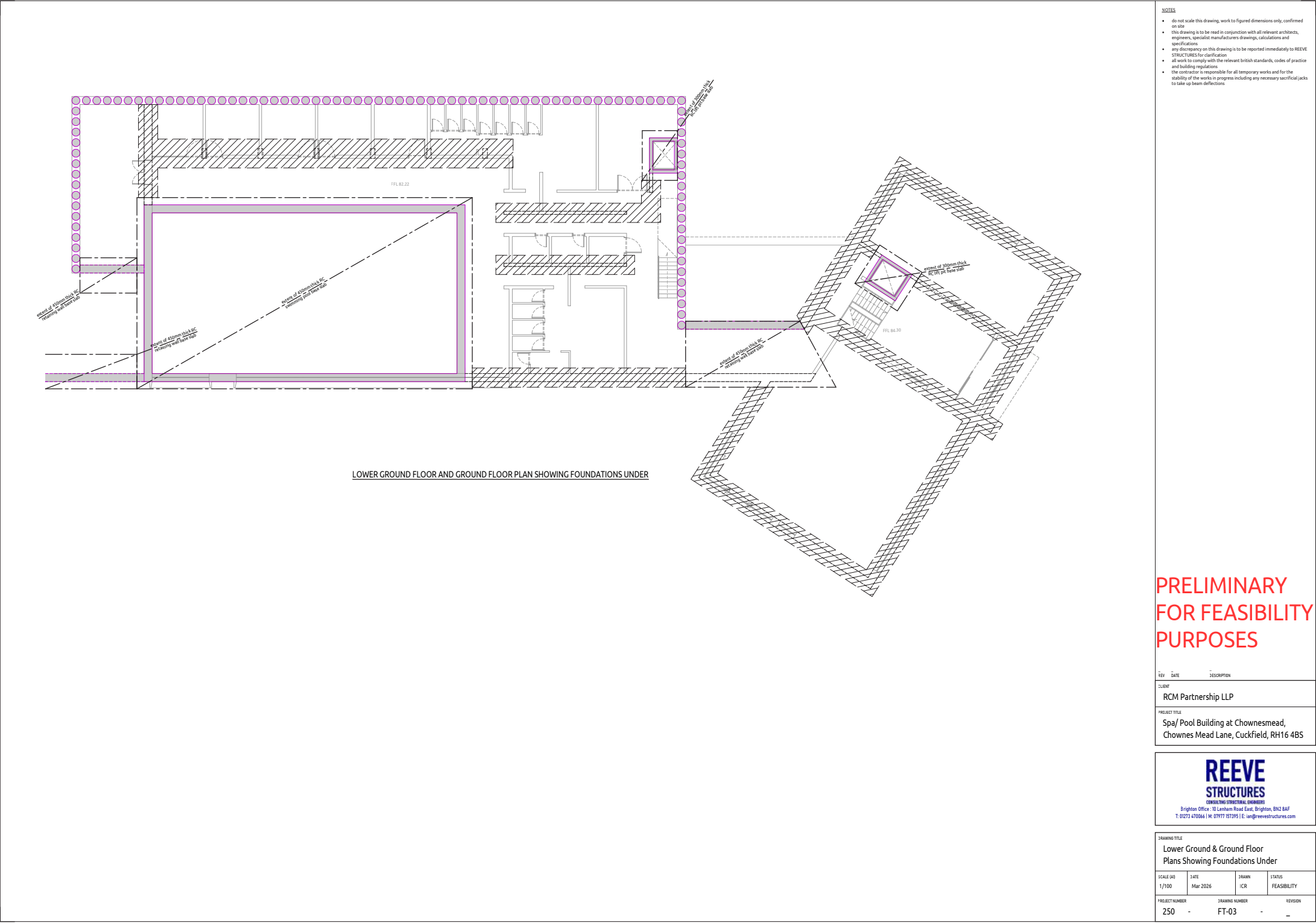
Any required foundation revisions arising from the geotechnical investigation shall be incorporated into the final structural design.

Retaining Structures

Where level differences occur across external or internal walls, and where boundary conditions allow excavation to be battered back to a safe angle of repose appropriate to the ground conditions, the retained ground will be supported using reinforced concrete cantilever retaining walls founded on strip or pad foundations.

Where level differences occur adjacent to site boundaries and where over-excavation is not feasible due to constraints such as the presence of ancient woodland or restricted working space, the retained ground will be supported using contiguous flight augered piled retaining walls designed to limit ground movement and minimise disturbance beyond the site boundary.

The final retaining wall type, embedment depth, and structural configuration shall be confirmed following geotechnical investigation and assessment of soil parameters.



The upper ground and first floor roof structures comprise plywood decking supported on timber joists, designed to support the dead and imposed roof loadings in accordance with the Architect's details. The roof build-up comprises a combination of intensive sedum roof blankets and zinc standing seam roofing.

Floor Construction

The steel beams transfer dead and imposed gravity loadings from the slabs to the supporting walls, columns and retaining structures, which in turn transfer the loads safely to the ground through the foundations.

Lateral stability to the treatment area of the building is provided by the external wall construction spanning between floor and roof levels, which transfers lateral loading into the roof diaphragm.

Within the Members' Lounge area, lateral stability across the width of the building is provided by a series of glulam portal frames arranged at approximately 3.5 m centres.

Horizontal forces acting on the structure are therefore resisted through the combined action of diaphragm behaviour in the roof and floor structures, shear walls, portal frames and braced bays, providing a continuous and robust load path transferring lateral loads safely to the foundations and supporting ground.



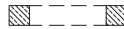
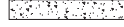
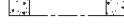
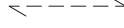
REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
CLIENT		
RCM Partnership LLP		
PROJECT TITLE		
Spa/ Pool Building at Chownesmead, Chownes Mead Lane, Cuckfield, RH16 4BS		

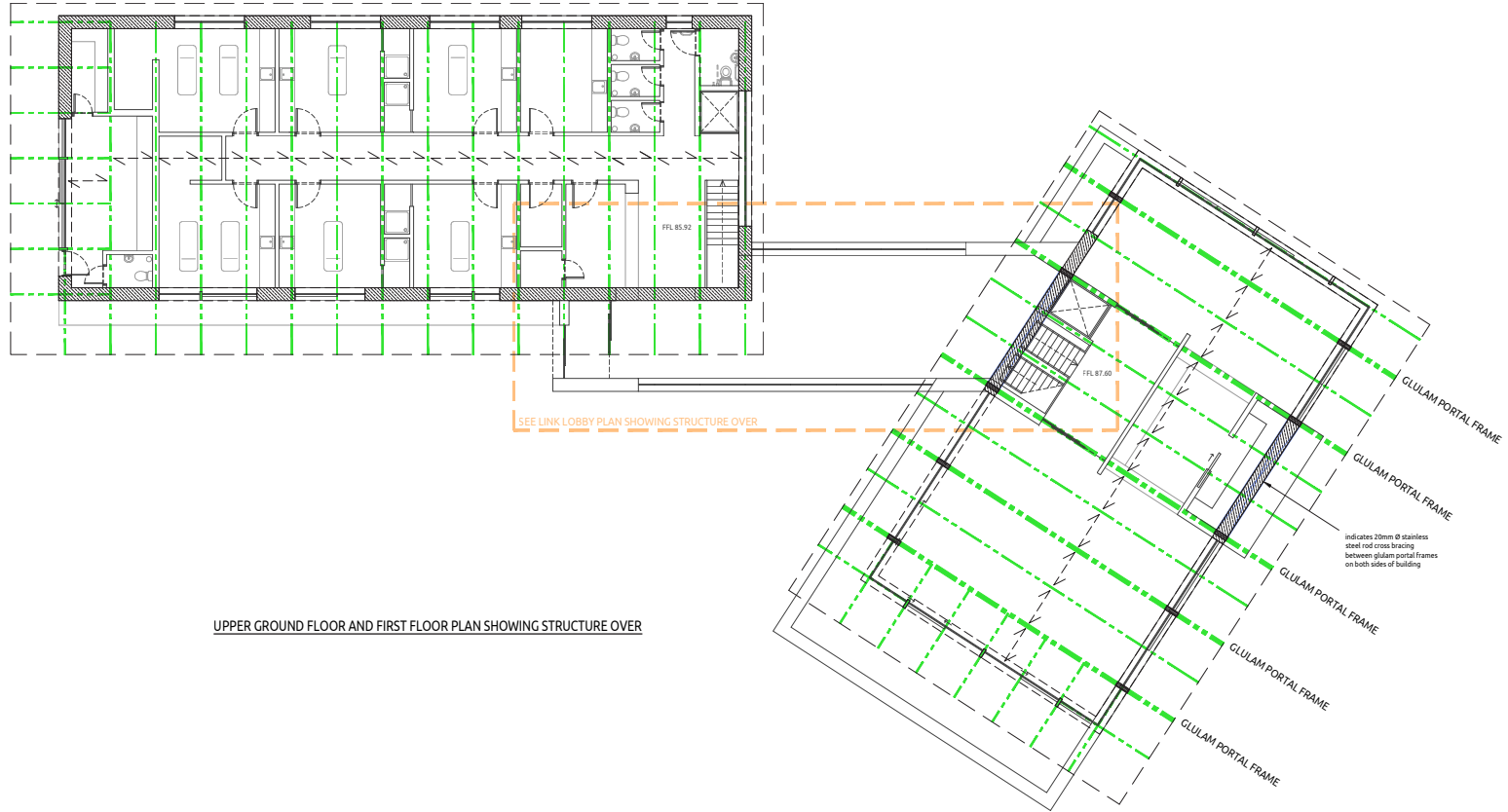
REEVE
STRUCTURES
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

Brighton Office: 10 Lenham Road East, Brighton, BN2 8AF
T: 01273 470066 | M: 07977 157395 | E: ian@reevestructures.com

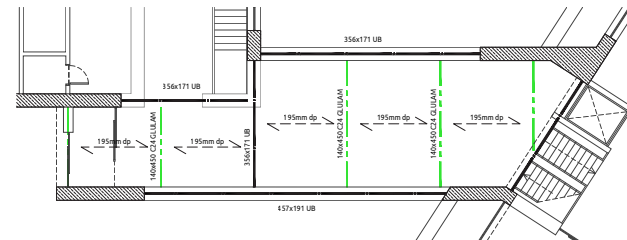
DRAWING TITLE			
Lower Ground & Ground Floor Plans Showing Structure Over			
SCALE (AS)	DATE	DRAWN	STATUS
1/100	Mar 2026	ICR	FEASIBILITY
PROJECT NUMBER		DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
250 -		FT-02 -	-

LEGEND

-  hatch indicates extent of timber framed external walls with glulam/steelwork columns as required to suit architectural and structural detailing (47x195 C24 studwork with 12mm plywood sheathing)
-  indicates lintel/beam structure at head of window/door opening constructed using multiple timbers/ glulam beams to suit opening
-  hatch indicates extent of reinforced concrete wall panel (250mm thick)
-  indicates lintel/beam structure at head of window/door opening constructed using reinforced concrete beam
-  indicates extent of CFA piled retaining wall structure (450mm diameter at 600mm c/c + 150mm RC facing)
-  hatch indicates extent of gravity cantilever retaining wall stem (300mm thick)
-  indicates span of roof joists (47x147 C24 at 400mm c/c unless noted otherwise)
-  indicates span of 175mm thick reinforced concrete suspended floor (unless noted otherwise)
-  indicates glulam beam (main roof beams : 165x540 C24 unless noted otherwise)
-  indicates steel beam
-  indicates extent of reinforced concrete ground bearing slab to retaining structures and swimming pool base
-  indicates extent of reinforced concrete strip foundations



UPPER GROUND FLOOR AND FIRST FLOOR PLAN SHOWING STRUCTURE OVER



LINK LOBBY PLAN SHOWING STRUCTURE OVER

NOTES

- do not scale this drawing, work to figured dimensions only, confirmed on site
- this drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers, specialist manufacturers drawings, calculations and specifications
- any discrepancy on this drawing is to be reported immediately to REEVE STRUCTURES for clarification
- all work to comply with the relevant british standards, codes of practice and building regulations
- the contractor is responsible for all temporary works and for the stability of the works in progress including any necessary sacrificial jacks to take up beam deflections

PRELIMINARY
FOR FEASIBILITY
PURPOSES

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1.000		RCM Partnership LLP
PROJECT TITLE		
Spa/ Pool Building at Chownesmead, Chownes Mead Lane, Cuckfield, RH16 4BS		

REEVE
STRUCTURES
ENGINEERING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
Brighton Office: 10 Lamber Road East, Brighton, BN2 8AF
T: 01273 475066 | M: 07977 157195 | E: info@reevestructures.com

DRAWING TITLE			
Upper Ground, Link Lobby & First Floor Plans Showing Structure Over			
SCALE (AS)	DATE	DRAWN	STATUS
1/100	Mar 2026	ICR	FEASIBILITY
PROJECT NUMBER		DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
250		FT-01	-

ABIR ARCHITECTS

Chownes Mead Hotel

March 2026
