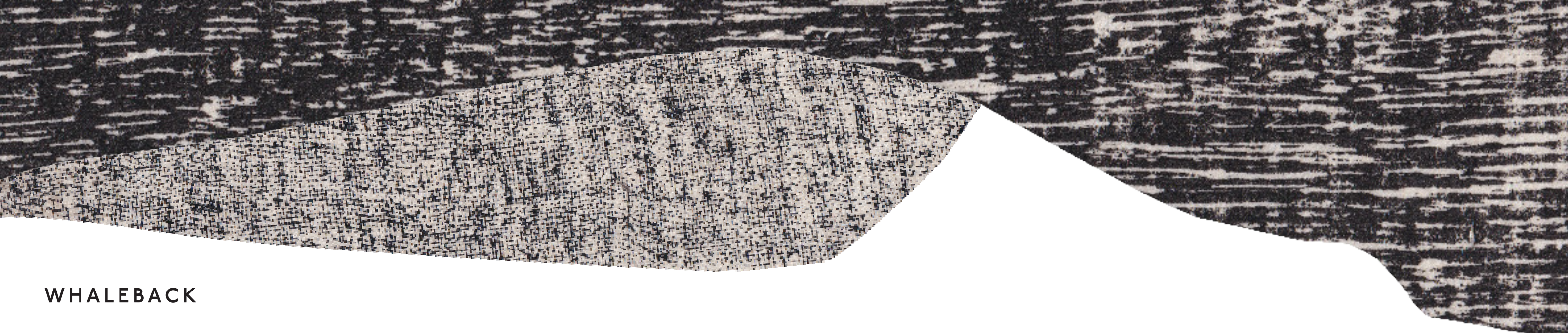




WHALEBACK

PLANNING STATEMENT

Sunte House, Birchen Lane

ADDRESS
Sunte House, Birchen Lane
Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1RZ

DATE
June 2025

REVISION
1

WHALEBACK LTD

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I. Introduction

- 1.1 Whaleback is instructed to prepare and submit a householder planning application for proposed works to the Grade II* Listed Sunte House, its associated outbuildings and for development within its grounds, including the construction of a new poolhouse.
- 1.2 The proposals have been sensitively developed to provide improved circulation space and thermal efficiency within the main house, better connectivity between the principal listed building and its grounds, and an enhanced leisure area to the west of the house. The submitted designs have been guided by and revised in response to detailed pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and Historic England as statutory consultee.
- 1.3 This application is submitted separately but concurrently with an application for proposed works to the former agricultural buildings located to the north-east of Sunte House.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement assesses the application site and its landscape context, the design proposals, the site planning history and the relevant planning policy framework. A planning appraisal is then provided to consider the merits of the pre-application scheme, followed by a conclusion.
- 1.5 This document supports the application and should be considered together with the following submitted documents:
 - Design and Access Statement and Architectural Drawings (Richard Parr Associates - June 2025)
 - Heritage Statement (Robinson Wild Consulting - June 2025)
 - Window Schedule (Robinson Wild Consulting - June 2025)
 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey and Bat Survey (Urban Edge - May and November 2024)
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Urban Edge - May 2025)
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Foul and Surface Water Drainage Strategy (Unda - June 2025)



Grade II* Listed Sunte House

2. Site and Surroundings

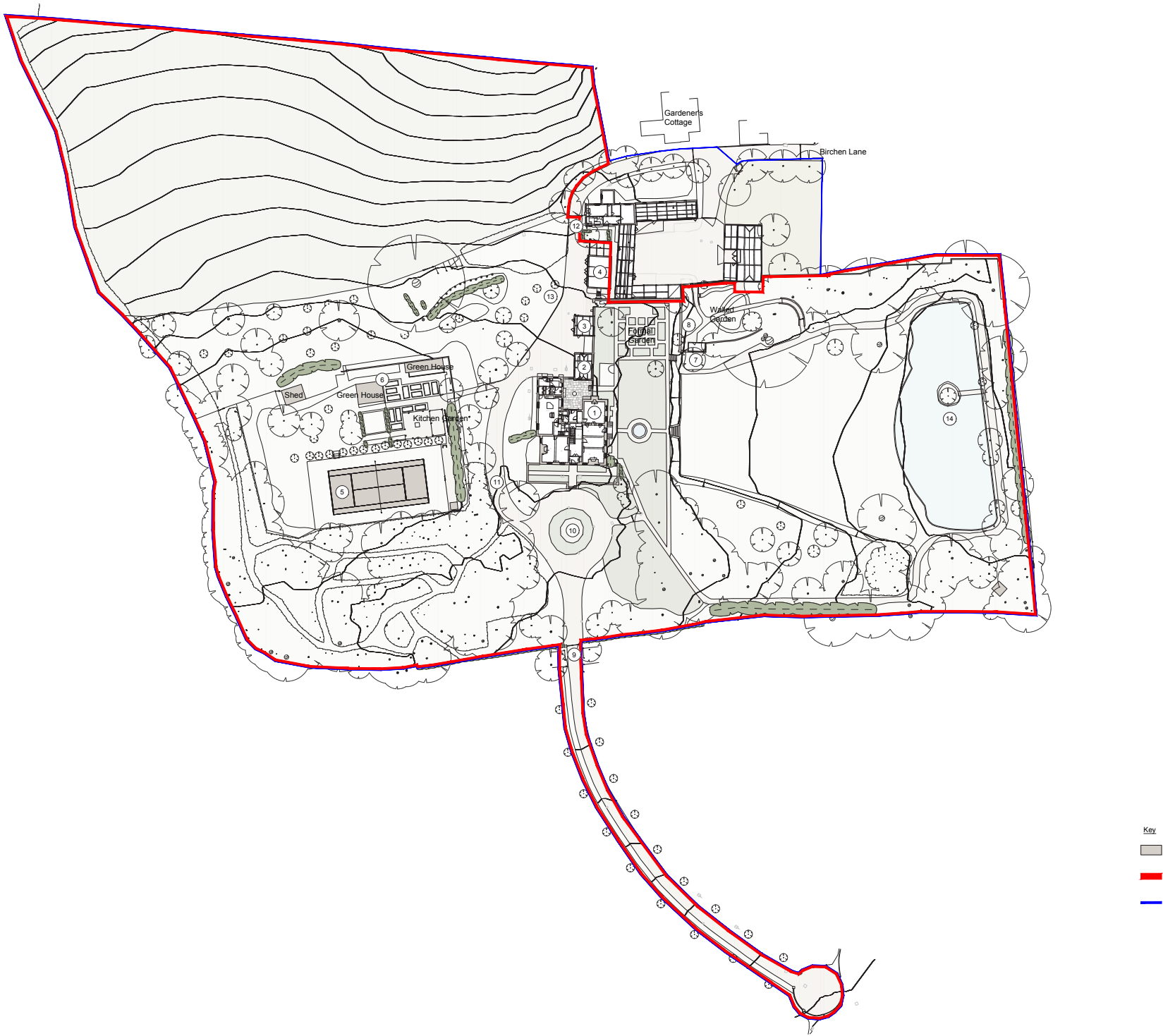
- 2.1 Sunte House is located on the northern outskirts of Haywards Heath, west of Lindfield and directly south of the High Weald National Landscape. The site is in a countryside location for planning policy purposes and lies within Landscape Character HW4 (High Weald Fringes) of the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2003).
- 2.2 The High Weald Fringes are a landscape of largely medieval origin with a persistence of wooded cover and historic country houses, farmsteads and parkscapes. The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007) classifies Sunte House as being within '45 Haywards Heath North Weald' which is identified as a landscape which has medium to high capacity for change. The landscape forms a wooded backdrop to Haywards Heath and provides a rural setting to listed buildings close to the edge of towns.
- 2.3 These landscape characteristics are particularly evident at Sunte House, where a Grade II* Listed Building sits alongside former agricultural buildings and with open fields enclosed by dense tree belts forming part of the site's wider setting. This contrasts starkly with the approaches to the site, which have a distinct suburban character reflecting the site's location adjacent to the settlement boundary of Haywards Heath.
- 2.4 The primary access into the site is from the south, via a long vehicular drive that starts at Gander Green to the southeast. This access passes a recently completed housing development and wrought iron entrance gates, before culminating at a turning circle within the Sunte House grounds.
- 2.5 The private road of Birchen Lane provides a secondary access into the northern part of the site, passing the cluster of former agricultural barns arranged around a central courtyard to the north-east of Sunte House.



Sunte House and associated buildings, set within a part rural, part suburban context (Google Earth)

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.6 Constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century, Sunte House is a Grade II* Listed, two-storey residence set within landscaped gardens. The building features red brick with stone quoins, a steeply pitched slate roof, pedimented dormers, and deep wooden modillion eaves corning. The property has two wings running parallel on a north to south axis, forming an enclosed, rear courtyard between. As assessed within the accompanying Heritage Statement, the western wing comprises fabric from the late 19th and late 20th Century fabric, whereas the eastern outrigger forms part of the original building.
- 2.7 A series of curtilage listed outbuildings (known as the Dairy, Tool Shed and Garage buildings) are positioned to the north of the dwelling, regularly placed until they meet the group of former farm buildings and a building known as The Cottage. A driveway springs from the turning circle to the south of Sunte House, bending past the western elevation of the principal listed building before terminating at a tarmac parking area adjacent to the Dairy.
- 2.8 To the west of the house is an area comprising of an outdoor tennis court, kitchen garden and a collection of greenhouses and other garden structures. It is enclosed and visually separated from the rest of the site by virtue of dense vegetation, trees and a perimeter wall.
- 2.9 The site also includes a Grade II Listed red brick and stone garden wall, and a Grade II listed 18th Century garden store building within a walled garden to the northeast of Sunte House.



Existing site plan, with the Dairy, Tool Shed and Garage annotated (Richard Parr Associates - June 2025)



Grade II* Listed Sunte House as viewed from southern entrance gates



Sunte House rear elevation (background), with Dairy outbuilding in foreground



Rear courtyard formed between the eastern and western wings of Sunte House

3. Site Photographs



One of two modern greenhouse to the west of Sunte House, adjoining to a northern garden wall.



View of western kitchen garden from ground floor of Sunte House, with mature vegetation and trees effectively screening this area of the site and existing driveway visible in the foreground



Second greenhouse within the western section of the site, sited perpendicular to the northern greenhouse

4. Planning History

4.1 The planning history most relevant to the assessment of this application are listed below:

SUNTE HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED OUTBUILDINGS

- **HH/013/88/LBC.** Partial demolition of outhouse adjacent to rear of Sunte House and canopy link to house. Approved 23 February 1988.
- **HH/062/87/LBC.** Various internal alterations to room arrangement, provision of additional windows, relocation of rear entrance and removal of redundant chimney stack. Approved 1 May 1987.

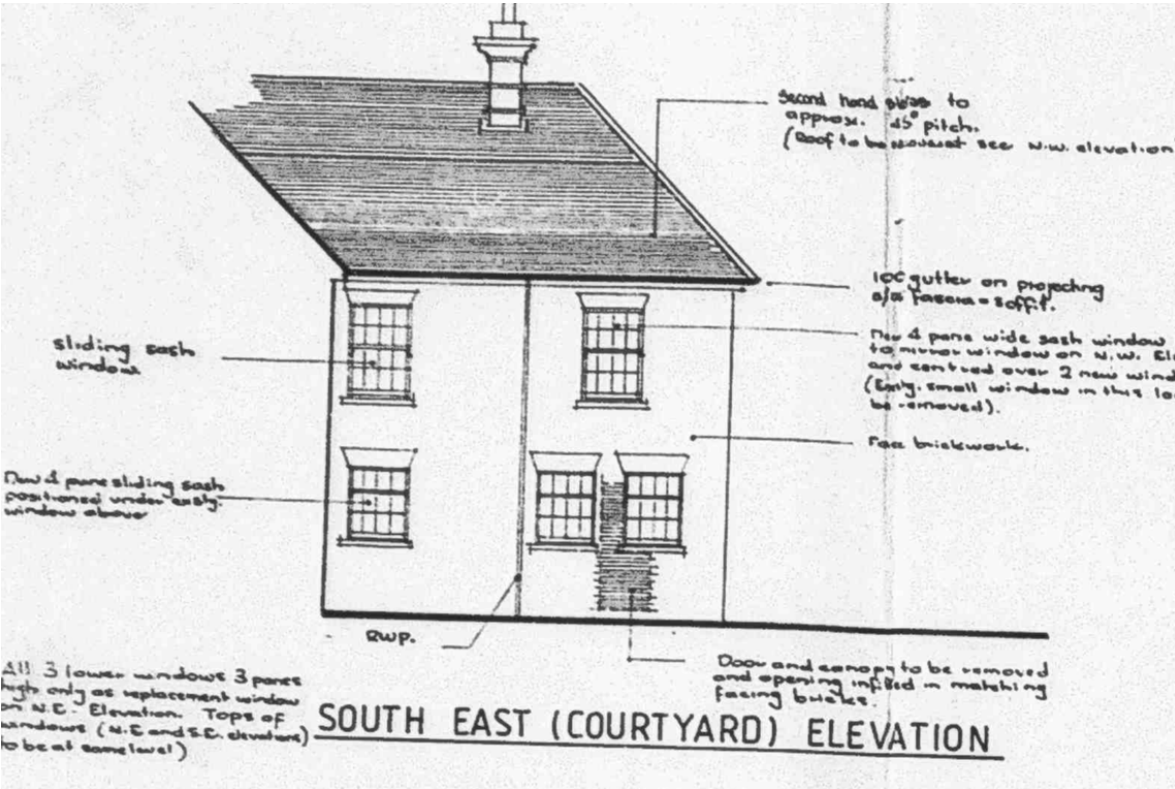
WIDER GROUNDS

- **10/02297/FUL.** Construction of oak framed shelter within grounds and curtilage of Sunte House. Approved 15 September 2010.
- **HH/093/98.** South entrance and boundary gates. Approved 5 August 1998.
- **HH/094/98/LBC.** South entrance and boundary gates. Approved 5 August 1998.
- **HH/136/87** Construction of tennis court and swimming pool in old vegetable garden. Approved 2 July 1987.
- **HH/137/87/LBC** Construction of tennis court and swimming pool in old vegetable garden. Approved 2 July 1987

- 4.2 Pre-application enquiries have also been submitted to the LPA and Historic England in relation to the householder proposals included in this application:
- **DM/24/2028:** Pre-Application Enquiry at Sunte House, Birchen Lane Haywards Heath RH16 1RZ. LPA feedback received 5th December 2024 & 2nd May 2025.
 - **PA01202317:** Pre-Application Advice: Sunte House, Birchen Lane, Haywards Heath, RH16 1RZ. Historic England feedback received 20th December 2024.



Former extent of The Dairy and canopy link before their demolition was approved under listed building consent HH/013/88/LBC

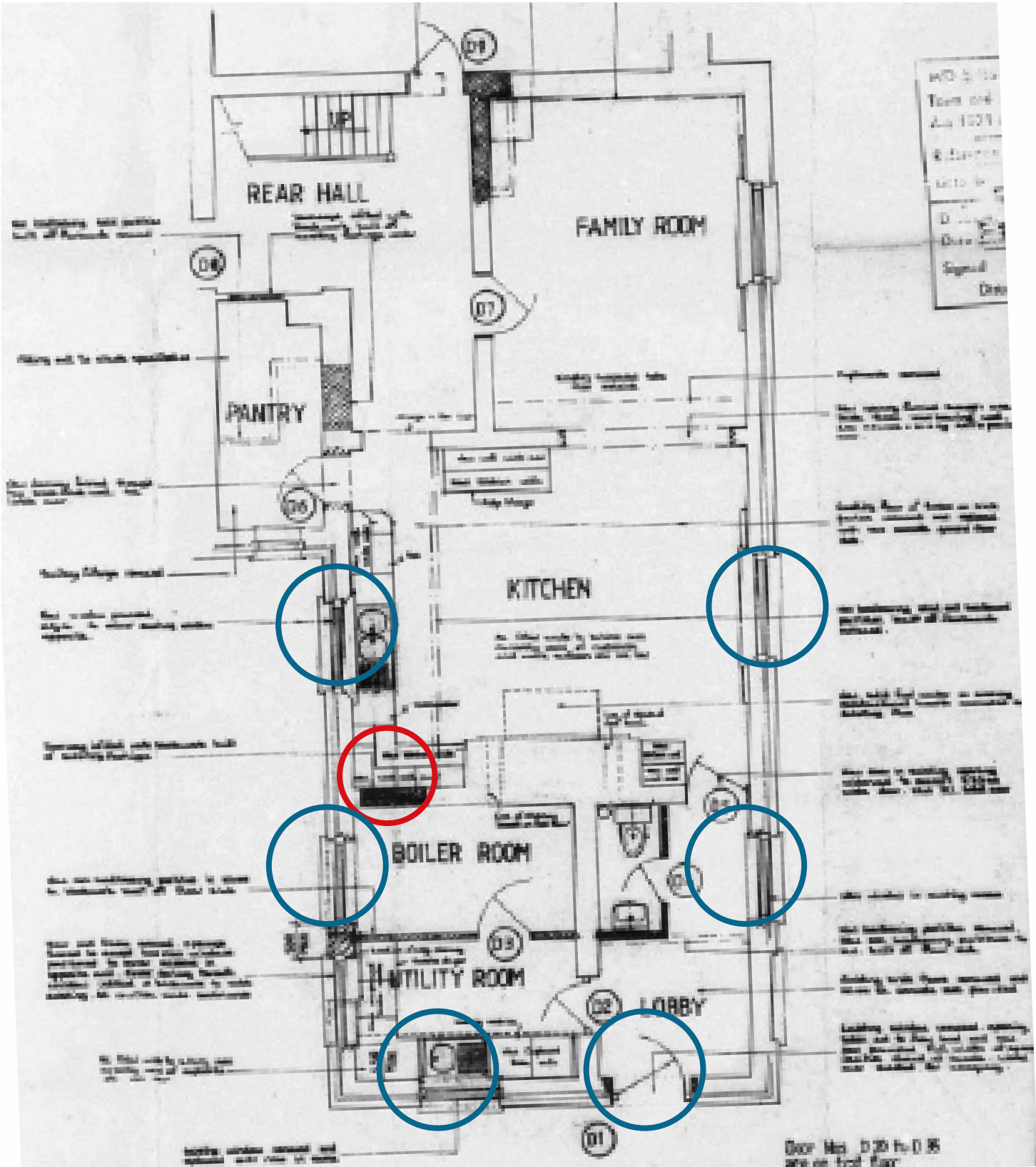


Former ground floor doorway to western wing shown as infilled under consent HH/062/87/LBC

4. Planning History

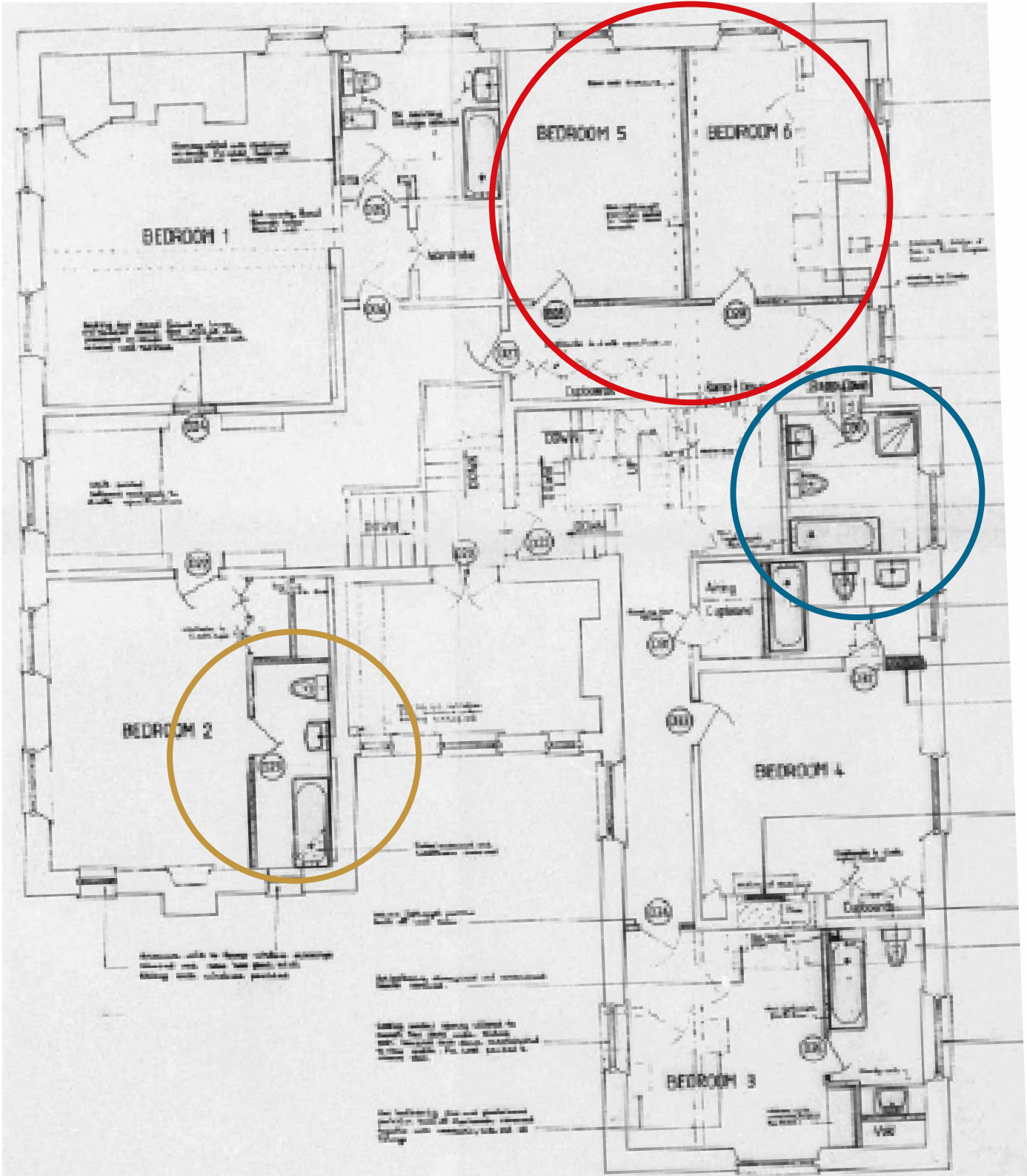
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT HH/062/87/LBC

- 4.2 The 1987 consent approved several external and internal alterations to Sunte House. It is important to re-visit this approval, as it identifies areas where modern fabric was introduced, which has guided the current proposals by focusing the majority of the proposed interventions on those later additions.
- 4.3 At ground floor level, the approval allowed the infilling of an internal doorway adjacent to the chimney breast, the insertion of new windows on the eastern and western elevations of the western wing (following the infilling of an external doorway) and the addition of a new external door to its rear elevation.
- 4.4 The installation of modern partitions (positioned below original beams) to create 'Bedrooms 5 and 6', the formation of an independent bathroom, and the creation of an en-suite for 'Bedroom 2' were approved at first floor level, amongst other alterations.
- 4.5 At attic level, consent was granted for the removal of a series of partition walls.
- 4.6 The relationship between these modern alterations and the proposed alterations is assessed in greater detail within the *Planning Appraisal* section of this statement and within the accompanying Heritage Statement.

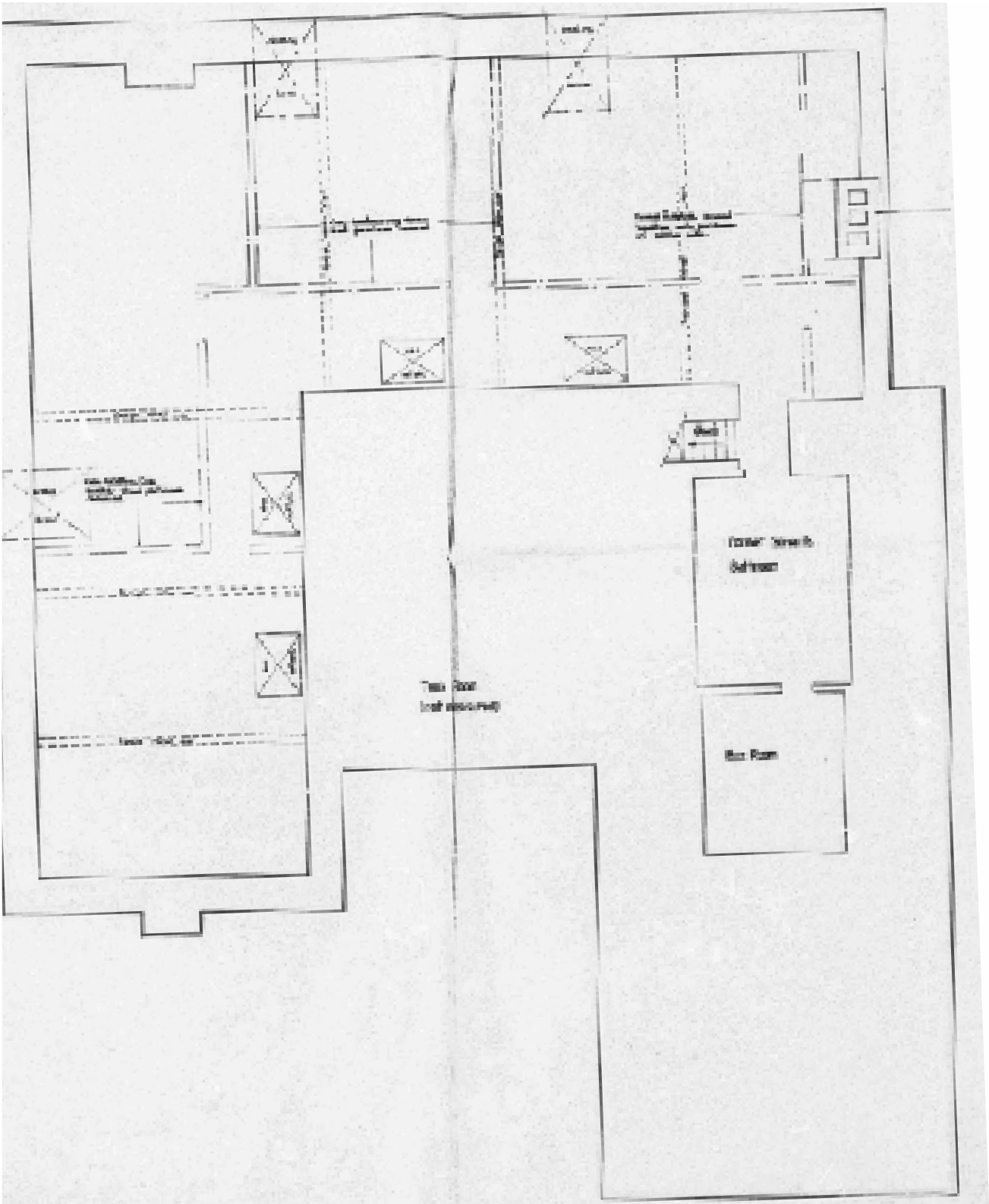


Ground floor plans as approved under consent HH/062/87/LBC, with infilled doorway marked in red and new openings marked in blue

4. Planning History



First floor interventions as approved under consent HH/062/87/LBC, including partitioned bedrooms (marked red), formation of bathroom (marked blue) and en-suite (marked yellow), as well as substantial steel additions and reconfigured central staircase



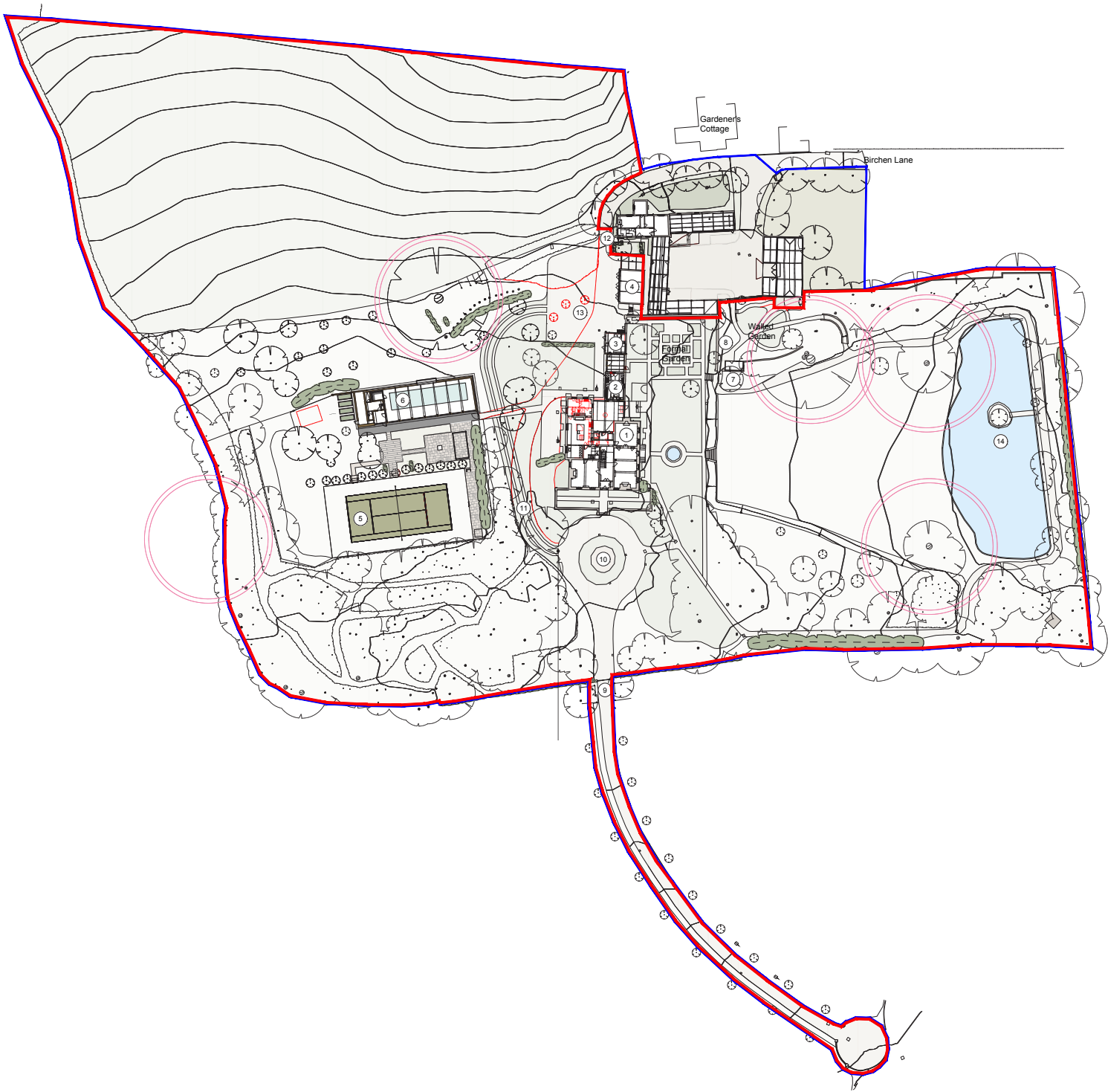
Removal of partition walls at attic level as shown and approved under consent HH/062/87/LBC

5. Design Proposals

- 5.1 The proposals are for the sensitive re-development of the Sunte House site to provide improved circulation space and thermal efficiency within the main house, better connectivity between the principal listed building and its grounds, and an enhanced leisure area to the west of the house.
- 5.2 The designs have been shaped and refined in response to extensive, collaborative pre-application discussions with the LPA and Historic England, as set out in the following *Planning Appraisal* section of this statement.

MAIN HOUSE

- 5.3 At ground floor level, a number of internal and external alterations are proposed, guided primarily towards areas of modern fabric. These include the formation of windows and external door openings to the western wing in positions where former or existing openings exist, the opening of the former internal doorway adjacent to the kitchen chimney breast, and the creation of a hallway to the rear of the main internal staircase.
- 5.4 A glazed breakfast room is proposed within the courtyard of Sunte House, designed to unite the main house with the Dairy. The extension would utilise a flat roof form within the side return of the two-storey wings, before transitioning into a tiled gabled roof that integrates with the existing roof form of the Dairy.
- 5.5 At first floor level, minor internal alterations are proposed, including the creation of a partitioned laundry room within the existing bathroom, the addition of a doorway beneath the original beam separating newly formed dressing rooms and alterations to the en-suite serving 'Bedroom 1.
- 5.6 At attic level, new partitioning and the installation of three rooflights to the courtyard roof slopes is proposed to enable the creation of additional bedroom spaces.
- 5.7 A programme of window replacements across the building is also proposed in order to improve the thermal efficiency of the main house, bringing the building up to modern standards. A comprehensive window schedule and photographic survey accompany this application to support the assessment of the proposed replacements, which should be referred to for further detail.



Proposed site plan (Richard Parr Associates - June 2025)

5. Design Proposals

EXISTING OUTBUILDINGS

- 5.8 A glazed extension is also proposed to connect the Dairy and the Tool Shed, further enhancing the relationship and connectivity between the outbuildings and the main house. The link extension would have a pitched roof form, purposefully set below the hipped roof of the Dairy, and with timber roof framing visible behind the glazed exterior. Minor partitioning works are also proposed within each outbuilding.
- 5.9 The Garage will be retained for covered vehicular parking, but would be subject to minor external works consisting of the demolition of its modern northern side canopy and replacement of an existing external staircase.
- 5.10 A realigned cobbled track will lead vehicles from the turning circle south of Sunte House to an enhanced and expanded surfaced area adjacent to the Garage building. It is submitted that the surfacing works do not require express planning permission nor listed building consent, as assessed further in the *Planning Appraisal* section of this statement.

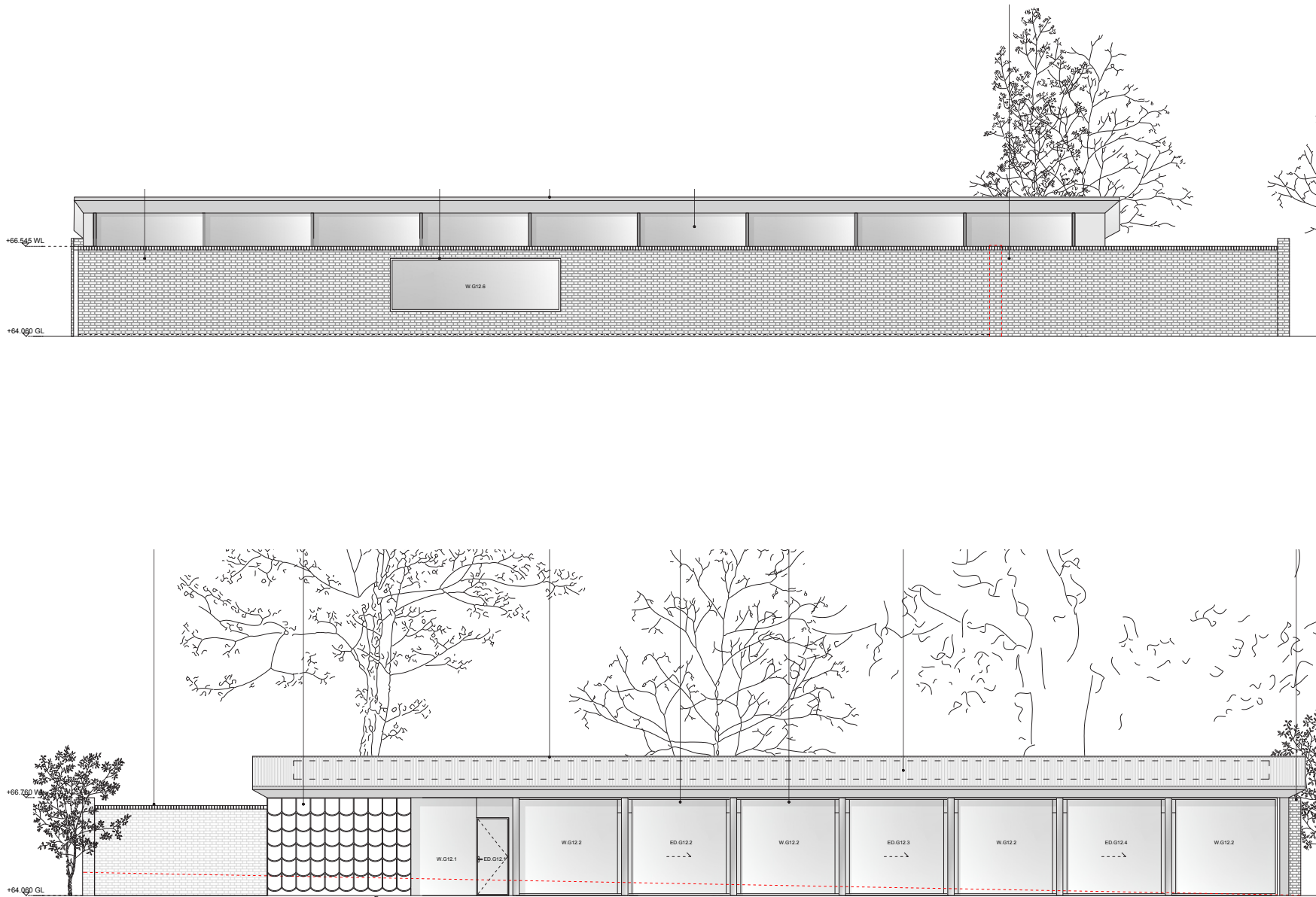


Proposed link extension to outbuildings (Richard Parr Associates - June 2025)

5. Design Proposals

WESTERN LEISURE AREA

- 5.8 To the west of Sunte House, a new pool house is proposed adjoining to the northern perimeter wall, following the demolition of the two modern greenhouses.
- 5.9 The pool house will measure 27 metres by 7 metres internally and incorporate all typical facilities expected of such a building, including a swimming pool, changing rooms, shower room with W.C. and a plant store.
- 5.10 Full height glazing will be used for the elevations, complemented with hand made tiles. An oriel window would also be introduced within the existing perimeter wall, offering views across the landscaped grounds and to the wider countryside beyond.



Proposed poolhouse elevations (Richard Parr Associates - June 2025)

6. Planning Policy Framework

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 A presumption in favour of sustainable development is found at the heart of the NPPF, for both plan-making and decision-taking, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.2 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives): economic, social and environment.
- 6.3 NPPF sections relevant to the assessment of this pre-application scheme are:

— Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

— Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places

— Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

— Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN (2018)

- 6.4 The following planning policies from the Mid Sussex District Plan are relevant to the assessment of this planning application:

— Policy DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

— Policy DP26 - Character and Design

— Policy DP34 – Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets

— Policy DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

— Policy DP38 - Biodiversity

— Policy DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction

— Policy DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

EMERGING MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN 2021-2039

- 6.5 The Regulation 19 Consultation for the emerging Mid Sussex District Plan has recently closed and the draft Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. The policies within the draft plan are gathering weight, but will not hold full statutory weight in the assessment of planning applications until the plan is formally adopted.

HAYWARDS HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2016)

- 6.6 The following planning policies from the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP) are relevant to the assessment of the pre-application scheme:

— Policy E5 - Landscape Gap Outside Built Up Area

— Policy E7 - Sustainable Drainage Systems

- Policy E9 - Local Character
- Policy H9 - Extensions to Existing Dwellings

OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY OR GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

- 6.7 The following supplementary planning documents and guidance documents have been extensively referred to in the development of the design proposals:

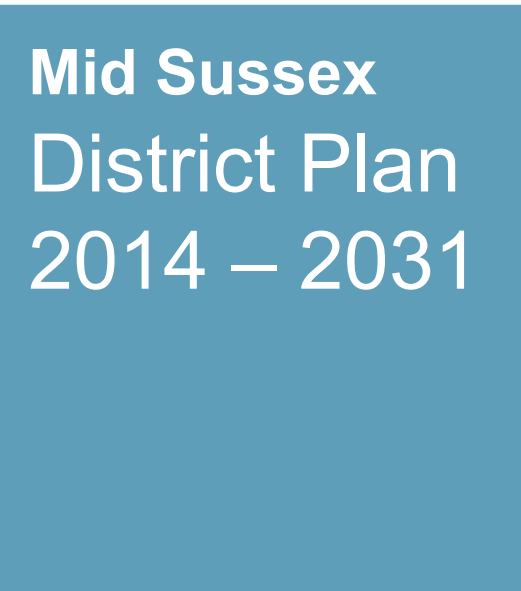
— Design Guide SPD (2020)

— LLFA Policy for Management of Surface Water (2018)

— Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007)

— West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)

— HEAN18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency (July 2024)



Mid Sussex District Plan (2018)

7. Planning Appraisal

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Haywards Heath and relates to an existing residential plot.
- 7.2 The proposed development comprises works associated with Sunte House as a single dwellinghouse, all of which are within the established residential curtilage. As such, the principle of development is accepted, subject to an assessment of the proposals against the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan, as well as any other material planning considerations, as outlined below.

HERITAGE AND DESIGN

- 7.3 **MSDP Policy DP34** states that alterations or extensions to listed buildings should respect their historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric.
- 7.4 **MSDP Policy DP26** requires development proposals to be, amongst other considerations, of a high quality design and layout, while being sensitive to the countryside.
- 7.5 The design proposals have been guided by a desire to enhance circulation, connectivity, and the overall usability of the site, while remaining respectful and sensitive to the historic significance and architectural character of Sunte House, a Grade II* Listed Building. The proposed interventions are primarily focused on areas of the house altered or added after 1987, while also drawing on opportunities to reinstate historic features that have been lost over time
- 7.6 The proposed courtyard extension has been significantly reduced in scale and re-designed in response to pre-application feedback received from both the LPA and Historic England. The previously proposed double, mono-pitched roof form has been omitted, with the revised pitched element now matching the roof profile of the adjacent Dairy. This approach reflects the scale and roof form of the former link that existed before 1987, prior to its demolition under Listed Building Consent HH/013/88/LBC. Historic photographs of this structure (shown opposite) have informed the pitched design element of the courtyard extension.
- 7.7 This overall design approach has been supported by the LPA in the most recent tranche of pre-application feedback, although a recommendation was offered requesting an increase in the amount of glazing.
- 7.8 Glazing is utilised for large parts of the courtyard extension, ensuring that the original and historic elevations of Sunte House remain clearly legible and so that a clear hierarchy is maintained between the extension and the listed building. However, the extent of glazing remains the same as shown within the latest pre-application submission to the LPA, with the applicants seeking to balance the LPA’s preference for increased glazing with Historic England’s recommendations to incorporate more solid, traditional materials to the roof. The tiled elements not only offer visually integration with the Dairy’s clay tiled roof, but also provides benefits in terms of reducing solar gain and overheating - as highlighted specifically by Historic England.

- 7.9 The proposed extension between the Dairy and the Tool Shed reflects the location of the former canopy structure that historically linked the two buildings, since removed under consent HH/013/88/LBC. In direct response to pre-application feedback from the LPA, the new link has been designed with a lower ridge height, positioned beneath the hipped roof of the Dairy to preserve its original roof form. This approach results in a more discreet structure, largely concealed by an existing brick wall and in views from the eastern lawn - which holds significance for its reflection of the Victorian Gardenesque style. The use of glazing provides a lightweight appearance that appears subservient to the curtilage listed buildings, while exposing the proposed timber roof structure to deliver an extension of high architectural quality.
- 7.10 The proposed alterations to Sunte House are predominantly confined to modern, post-1987 interventions to the listed building, ensuring no impact on original 17th Century fabric. New windows and doors are proposed in locations where there is either an existing modern opening (as evidenced in the plans approved under Listed Building Consent HH/062/87/LBC) or clear evidence of former openings.
- 7.11 Both the LPA and Historic England previously raised queries regarding the proposed opening of the internal wall flanking the kitchen chimney breast. However, a review of the approved plans under HH/062/87/LBC confirms that this section of wall originally contained a doorway, which was since infilled during the late Twentieth Century and, as such, constitutes modern fabric.
- 7.12 Reinstating this gap would therefore restore the historic plan form in this part of the house. Care has been taken to ensure the proposed opening is limited to the original width of the doorway, with a nib wall retained alongside the chimney breast as this is considered to be historic fabric dating from the 19th century.
- 7.13 The LPA also raised queries regarding the proposed formation of a secondary access door linking the courtyard side of the western wing to the newly formed extension, in exchange for the existing access to the rear of the western wing. This query stemmed from a desire to preserve the historic flow of this part of the house and to minimise any potential impact on 19th-century fabric. It is important to note that Historic England raised no objections to these proposals during pre-application discussions.
- 7.14 Phasing plan overlays within the accompanying Design and Access Statement (at page 55) demonstrate that the area affected by the proposed alterations comprises modern fabric, as approved under the 1987 consent. The proposed breakfast room access will replace a modern window, while the existing door to the rear of the western wing formed part of the post-1987 alterations - this application proposes to reinstate the former window opening in place of the existing door, consistent with the building’s earlier configuration. As such, the works would not result in harm to 19th-century fabric and return this part of the house to its historic arrangement, where residents would have previously accessed the western wing from the coutyard side and not via the rear elevation of the wing.



Historic photograph showing former extent of the Dairy

- 7.15 The proposed rear hallway affects modern fabric and small sections of historic internal walls. As illustrated in the phasing plan opposite, the extent of this impact is minimal, and the limited loss of historic fabric in this area does not compromise the ability to understand the listed building’s historic layout or overall significance. This minor intervention can be balanced against the wider improvements to the building’s layout, such as the removal of the wall adjacent to the chimney breast and the reinstatement of the windows on the western side and rear elevations of the western wing.
- 7.16 At first floor level, the LPA expressed support for the proposals during pre-application discussions, noting that they affect only modern fabric. Historic England also acknowledged the modern nature of the impacted partitions, but highlighted a preference for smaller, cellular rooms to better reflect the building’s historic plan form. In response, the proposals have been revised to retain the orthogonal room layout, with only minor interventions are now proposed to modern fabric. These include the introduction of a doorway between the new dressing rooms, the reconfiguration of the existing bathroom and alterations to the Bedroom 1 en-suite, which clearly impact on modern features as evidenced by the plans approved under HH/062/87/LBC.
- 7.17 At attic level, the proposed partitioning reinstates a layout that existed prior to the works approved under Listed Building Consent HH/062/87/LBC and in an area that contributes less to the overall significance of the building, as outlined in the accompanying Heritage Statement. The proposed rooflights would be discreetly positioned and have limited visibility from the wider

7. Planning Appraisal

- grounds, as demonstrated in the accompanying viewpoint analysis prepared by Robinson Wild Consulting.
- 7.18 The proposed window replacement programme has been informed by a detailed study of the existing windows, undertaken by Robinson Wild Consulting. The study concludes that all windows identified for replacement date from the late twentieth century, having been installed as part of a comprehensive removal and replacement scheme at that time.
- 7.19 A thermal imaging survey (included within the accompanying Design and Access Statement) shows that cold bridging is present to the existing windows - although managed to a degree by what is considered to be modern insulation adjacent to the windows.
- 7.20 As such, the new windows will replace windows of no historic value to Sunte House and deliver a whole house approach to environmental sustainability in accordance with the advice set out in HEAN18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency (July 2024). By improving the energy efficiency of the listed building, while targeting impacts to non-historic windows, the continued use and ongoing conservation of the house as a listed building is supported.
- 7.21 The new windows will all be of a material (timber), style (sash) and glazing pattern (four by four panes) that references the existing modern and former historic windows, while utilising slimline double glazing to maintain the window profile and improve thermal efficiency.
- 7.22 Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of the General Permitted Development Order (2015) places no restrictions on the formation of hard surfaces within the curtilage of a listed building. The realigned driveway and expanded parking area would therefore not require planning permission, provided they are constructed of porous materials.
- 7.23 Listed Building Consent is also not considered a requirement, as the proposals would not affect any part of the listed fabric and would therefore have no impact the buildings’ special architectural or historic interest - this being the key test for whether consent is required, as set out in Chapter 2, Part 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 7.24 Nonetheless, the proposed realignment and parking area are shown on the submitted plans to illustrate how they relate to the overall masterplan strategy for the site. These surfaced areas will be finished in materials (cobblestone and permeable sub-base) of a sympathetic and rustic appearance, appropriate for the countryside location and within the setting of Sunte House as a listed building.
- 7.25 The proposed poolhouse to the west of Sunte House draws inspiration from the 1987 approvals for an outside swimming pool in this same area (under approvals HH/136/87 and HH/137/87/LBC). The poolhouse would integrate with the northern garden wall in the same manner as the existing greenhouse it would replace, employing a mono-pitched roof form reminiscent of Victorian lean-to glasshouses. Glazing is used throughout as a reference to these traditional structures and to maintain legibility of the adjoining garden

- wall which, although not original, partly delineates the historical kitchen garden boundary.
- 7.26 The proposed poolhouse would be located within a part of the Sunte House grounds identified as having low heritage significance. Its siting - enclosed by an existing garden wall and established planting - ensures it is not visible in key views of or from the principal listed buildings. The poolhouse would remain both visually and functionally subservient to Sunte House by virtue of its incidental use and the use of lightweight materials, preserving the setting of the Grade II* listed building and resulting in no apparent harm.
- 7.27 The poolhouse has been reduced in length by 5.3 metres in direct response to pre-application feedback from the LPA and Historic England concerning the scale of the earlier proposal. Consolidating all elements within a single structure avoids the need for future piecemeal additions and enables a coherent, high-quality design, while the removal of three structures to accommodate the poolhouse reduces the clutter of buildings in this part of the site. The Sunte House grounds are substantial and a poolhouse of this scale can therefore be comfortably accommodated within the site, without appearing cramped.
- 7.28 Overall, the design proposals have been developed with sensitivity to the historic form and fabric of both the principal and curtilage-listed buildings, focusing interventions on areas already subject to modern alteration and delivering new structures of a high-quality design. The proposals conserve the significance, architectural interest and setting of Sunte House as a Grade II* listed building and, in some instances, enhance through the reintroduction of structures lost in the late twentieth century and reinstatement of the historic internal layout. As such, the proposals accord with MSDP Policies 26 and 34, and HHNP Policies E9 and H9.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 7.29 Sunte House is situated in the High Weald Fringes and Haywards Heath North Weald Landscape Character Areas, where historic country houses and farmsteads located within wooded, rural settings are commonplace.
- 7.30 The development proposals respond to the character and special architectural interest of Sunte House as a Grade II* Listed Building and the additional built form resulting from the scheme would be understood in the context of existing buildings.
- 7.31 There would be no views of the proposals from the public footpath to the south of Sunte House, being entirely screened behind the southern boundary wall, dense vegetation and Sunte House itself. Views from within the wider landscape would also be limited given the scale of the proposals and the screening provided by the landscaped grounds. As such, the setting of Haywards Heath and the landscape buffer with neighbouring towns/parishes would not be impacted.
- 7.32 Overall, the proposals would preserve the rural landscape character, in accordance with MSDP Policies DP12 and DP26, and HHNP Policy E5.

NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

- 7.33 The nearest neighbouring properties to the site are Birchen Lodge and Lime Tree House, respectively located to the north and east of the former farmyard buildings.
- 7.34 The closest element of the scheme (the link extension between the Tool Shed and the Dairy) is approximately 55 metres from Birchen Lodge and 70 metres from Lime Tree House. The proposed development maintains a substantial distance from these dwellings, ensuring there will be no impact on neighbouring levels of light, outlook and privacy.
- 7.35 The proposals would therefore cause no harm to neighbouring amenity.

SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.36 MSDP Policy DP39 states that all development must seek opportunities to improve the sustainability of development.
- 7.37 The development proposes an extensive approach to environmental sustainability, including the proposed installation of an air source heat pump, solar panels to the proposed poolhouse and a whole house approach to the main house. This includes replacement double glazed windows and basement tanking to prohibit water ingress, without compromising the ‘breathability’ of the listed building.
- 7.38 The proposals take a robust approach to mitigating climate change. All available avenues have been explored to achieve a high standard of environmental sustainability by proposing a mix of renewable energy measures and fabric upgrades, in accordance with MSDP Policy DP39.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

- 7.39 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 but over one hectare in size, which triggers the requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment.
- 7.40 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Unda - June 2025) accompanies this application and should be referred to for further details.
- 7.41 The report concludes that the site is not at unacceptable of fluvial flooding and that surface water flooding can be mitigated in consultation with MSDC Building Control department.
- 7.42 Surface water drainage from the proposed poolhouse will drain to soakaways, while there are no changes proposed to the existing foul water drainage arrangements.

ECOLOGY AND TREES

- 7.43 The application is accompanied by ecological and arboricultural reports, prepared by Urban Edge, and should be referred to for further detail.
- 7.44 The ecological surveys found relatively low levels of roosting bats and the presence of smooth newts within ponds, but eDNA testing returned a

7. Planning Appraisal

- negative result for great crested newts.
- 7.45 Mitigation to reduce the likelihood of damage to bats and their habitats is proposed in the form of a Bat Mitigation Class License, obtained prior to works commencing. Non-statutory biodiversity enhancements are also proposed, including through the use of bat boxes and integral bat tubes to the proposed poolhouse.
- 7.46 The development would only lead to the removal of small, garden ornamental tree species, which offer no contribution to the wide locality in terms of visual amenity, and their loss can therefore be justified. All Category A and B trees will be retained and protected during construction works.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 7.47 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became a mandatory statutory requirement in April 2024 and certain types of development must demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity when compared to pre-existing site conditions if they are to secure planning permission.
- 7.48 Some forms of development are exempt from demonstrating BNG, such as householder applications, and therefore mandatory BNG requirement would not apply to the householder proposals at Sunte House

CONCLUSION

- 7.49 The masterplan proposals represent a new chapter in the history of Sunte House, with the new occupiers bringing forward proposals that respect and enhance the special interest of the Grade II* Listed Building.
- 7.50 The proposals seek to focus alterations to areas of the house that have been subject to modern interventions or to restore features that have been lost over time, such as the structures that once linked the Tool Shed and the Dairy to Sunte House. The poolhouse designs have been developed with reference to traditional Victorian glasshouses, located within an area of the gardens that has lower historical signifance and well concealed in key views of Sunte House.
- 7.51 The rural landscape character would be unaffected by the proposals given the established screening characteristics of the site, while neighbouring amenity would also be protected. The third party reports accompanying this application demonstrate that there would be no harm to protected animal species or the arboricultural characteristics of the site, providing mitigation measures are implemented. Flood risk and drainage have also been shown to be acceptable.
- 7.52 It is therefore respectfully requested that the application is approved without undue delay so that the benefits of the scheme can be delivered.



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