



Design and Access Statement

Proposed 13 Bedroom Hotel and Ancillary Facilities including New Spa, Pool, Treatment Suites, Gym and Members Lounge for
RCM Partnership LLP

0603.DAS.1500E

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Rev. C - Minor amendments // Mar. 26 // MR
Rev. D - New section 11.00 comparables as Conservation Officer request // Apr. 26 // ES
Rev. E - Amendments as Conservation Officer Comments + additional information // July 26 // MR

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1.00 Executive Summary



Chownes Mead Aerial Site Mapping [ref.Google Earth Pro]



Chownes Mead, an early 20th century country house 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.

Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent for change of use from a residential dwelling (use class C3) to a hotel (use class C1) were granted in 2018 (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201). Subsequently, following the discharge of relevant pre-commencement conditions, a lift shaft was installed within the main body of the building implementing the approval after which the client appointed a full design team to sensitively further develop the scheme for hotel with complementary facilities & relocated secondary entrance.

The developed brief for evolving the proposals for the site is focused on 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 proposal. The current design team consists of the following: -

RCM Partnership LLP	Client
DMH Stallard	Planning Consultants
ABIR Architects	Architects
Nicholas Dexter Landscape Design	Landscape Designers
Motion	Transport Planning Consultants
Orion Heritage	Heritage Consultants
Lizard	Ecology Consultants
Broad Oak Tree Consultants	Arboricultural Consultants
Tournay-Godfrey Ltd	Building Services Engineers
Reeve Structures	Structural Engineers
GTA Civils	Civil Engineers
Acoustic South East	Acoustic Consultants
Phlorum	Air Quality Consultants
Maltby Surveys	Building & Land Surveyors

Initially, in 2023, proposals were submitted to Mid Sussex District Council as part of a planning pre-app submission (DM/23/1480). These proposals are, for the most, located in areas where either permission has been historically granted (and survive in-perpetuity following a material commencement on site), or where built form and hardstanding currently exist. In addition a pre-app submission was made in January 2025 in relation to the Ancient Woodland with comments received in November 2025 (DM/25/0133).

The responses from both pre-app submissions have helped influence further design development culminating in the current submissions seeking full planning and listed building consent for a 13 bed hotel with ancillary and complimentary facilities. All proposals continue to be sensitively designed and considered to provide a cohesive approach to the site which complements its setting and adjacencies, local heritage & listed building as well as the extensive gardens and landscape setting.



Chownes Mead Approach from North Driveway (ref. Calisphere Collection)

SECTION 2.00 : Site Analysis

2.00 Site Analysis

2.01 Existing Site Plan



2.00 Site Analysis

2.02 Chownes Mead : The Grade II Listed Building & Setting

Chownes Mead is a Grade 2 Listed family dwelling located in Chownes Mead Lane near Haywards Heath, just outside the market village of Cuckfield. Lying around 36 miles South of London and 14 miles North of the South Coast it is situated within the Mid Sussex District Council boundary.

Chownes Mead was built between 1912 and 1920 for the Kleinwort banking family, as a sister house to the Heaselands Estate and, during World War II, requisitioned by the Canadian Army as their command headquarters before becoming a maternity hospital.

Post war, the house was lived in by Lord Woolton, (credited with ‘keeping the nation fed’ during the war) who served as the Minister of Food under Neville Chamberlin and was a member of Churchill’s ‘Caretaker’ Government until the 1945 general election.

Chownes Mead was auctioned in 1955 and has been lived in by just three families in the 70+ years since.

The property, approached through a pair of sandstone pillars leading to a gravel drive opens into to a quadrangle in front of the house which is arranged over three floors + basement.

It comprises large hall, 4no. reception rooms – drawing, study, dining and family, office, kitchen, larder, utility, gym & plant rooms, 12no. bedrooms some with ensuites, family bath and shower rooms and upper floor kitchenette. The basement cellar and stores are accessed both internally and externally and there is an adjacent garage for 4no. cars with living accommodation over, an outdoor pool, pool house, agricultural timber barn and coach house all set in circa 21 acres of ground with tennis courts and beautiful gardens. There exists an area designated as Ancient Woodland locally to the north east of the main house which extends to the south east and south west.

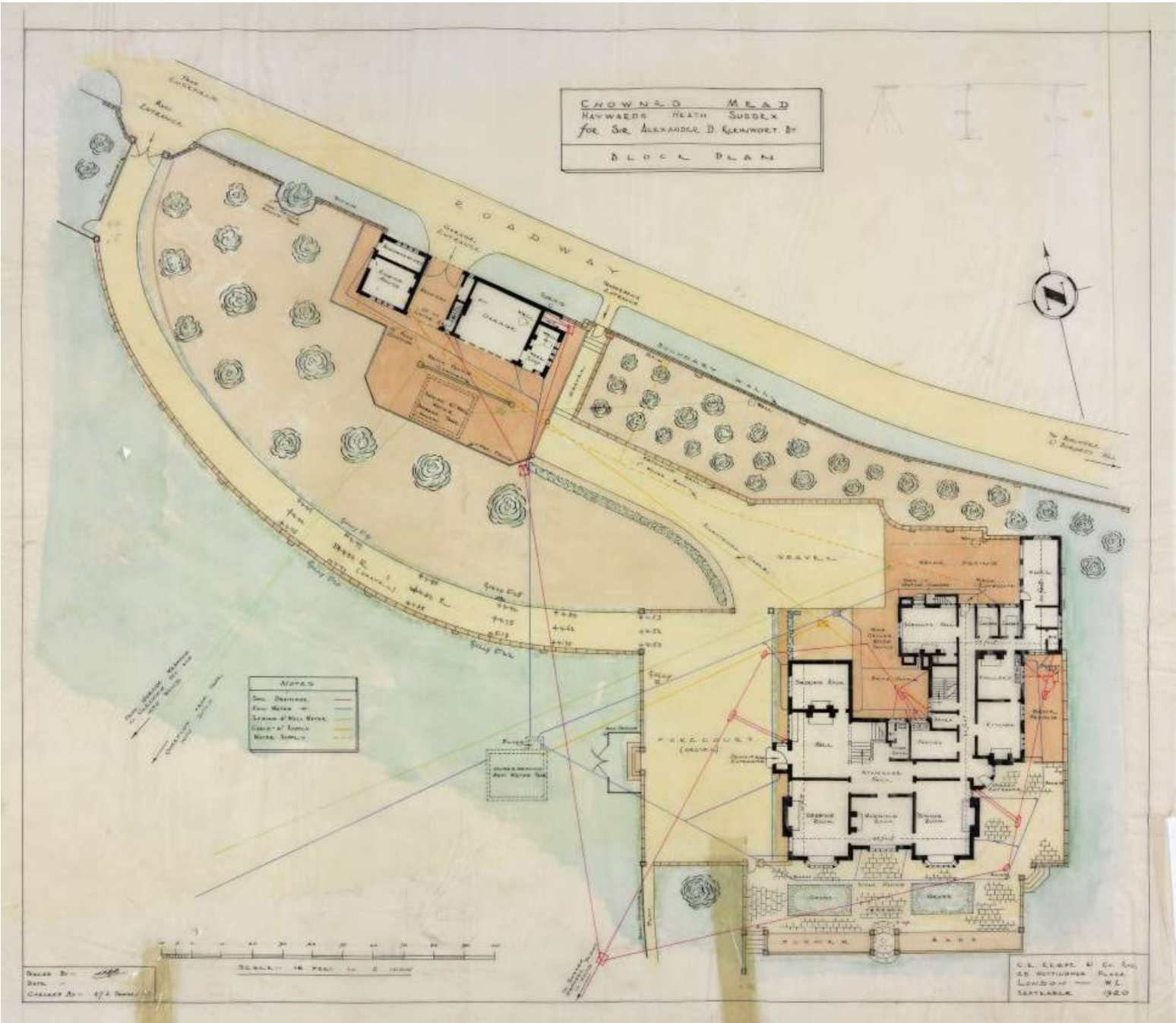
The coach house is located to the north east of the main house and is also Grade 2 listed and comprises a pair of 3no. bedroom semi-detached cottages with living, kitchen and dining spaces although this does not form part of the proposals.

The extensive gardens, designed by Gertrude Jekyll (who collaborated with Edwin Lutyens on many projects) comprise large areas of lawn and gardens located to the south and west of the main house which merge with the natural parkland and woodland. There is a natural dell in front (south-west) of the house which it is believed was once a lake and is surrounded by a variety of shrubs and larger evergreen trees, specimen trees and several sequoias and scots pines.

A secondary entrance from Chownes Mead Lane to the east of the site provides access to a yard housing a substantial agricultural timber barn building & estate office.

Planning permission was granted in February 2015 for the ‘Enclosure of existing swimming pool within a pool house building.’ Mid Sussex District Council, ref: 14/04433/HOUS. Following this Planning permission and Listed Building Consent were granted in August 2018 for ‘Change of use from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to a hotel (Use Class C1) including installation of a lift shaft and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building. Conversion of the garage building with ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level to a yoga studio at ground floor level and additional hotel room at first floor level. Extension to the pool enclosure building previously permitted under reference 14/04433/HOUS.’ (Approval references DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201).

A planning pre-app was submitted in 2023 (DM/23/1480) and formal advice communicated on 17.11.23 by MSDC. A further planning pre-app re. Ancient Woodland was subsequently submitted in January 2025 (DM/25/0133) with formal advice received in November 2025 from Place Services (for MSDC). Both pre-app submissions are referred/responded to within both this DAS as well as other consultants documentation.



ref. RIBA Picture collection - Design for Chownes Mead, Haywards Heath, West Sussex for Sir Alexander D. Kleinwort, Block plan.

2.00 Site Analysis

2.03 Site Photographs : A01-A04 Approach & Entrance



A01 - Looking West towards the Coach House from Chownes Mead Lane



A02 - Looking North along Chownes Mead Lane



A03 - Looking West towards main entrance to site (see 11 on site plan) from Chownes Mead Lane with Coach House to left of frame



A04 - Looking West towards secondary entrance to site (see 13 on site plan) from Chownes Mead Lane



Key Plan

2.00 Site Analysis

2.04 Site Photographs : B01-B06 Chownes Mead - Grade II Listed Building



B01 - Looking South East towards Chownes Mead with garages to left of frame



B02 - Looking North East towards Chownes Mead



B03 - Looking North West towards Chownes Mead



B04 - Rear of Chownes Mead looking South



B05 - Garages & accommodation over to the North of Chownes Mead



B06 - Looking North towards Chownes Mead, terraces and gardens



Key Plan

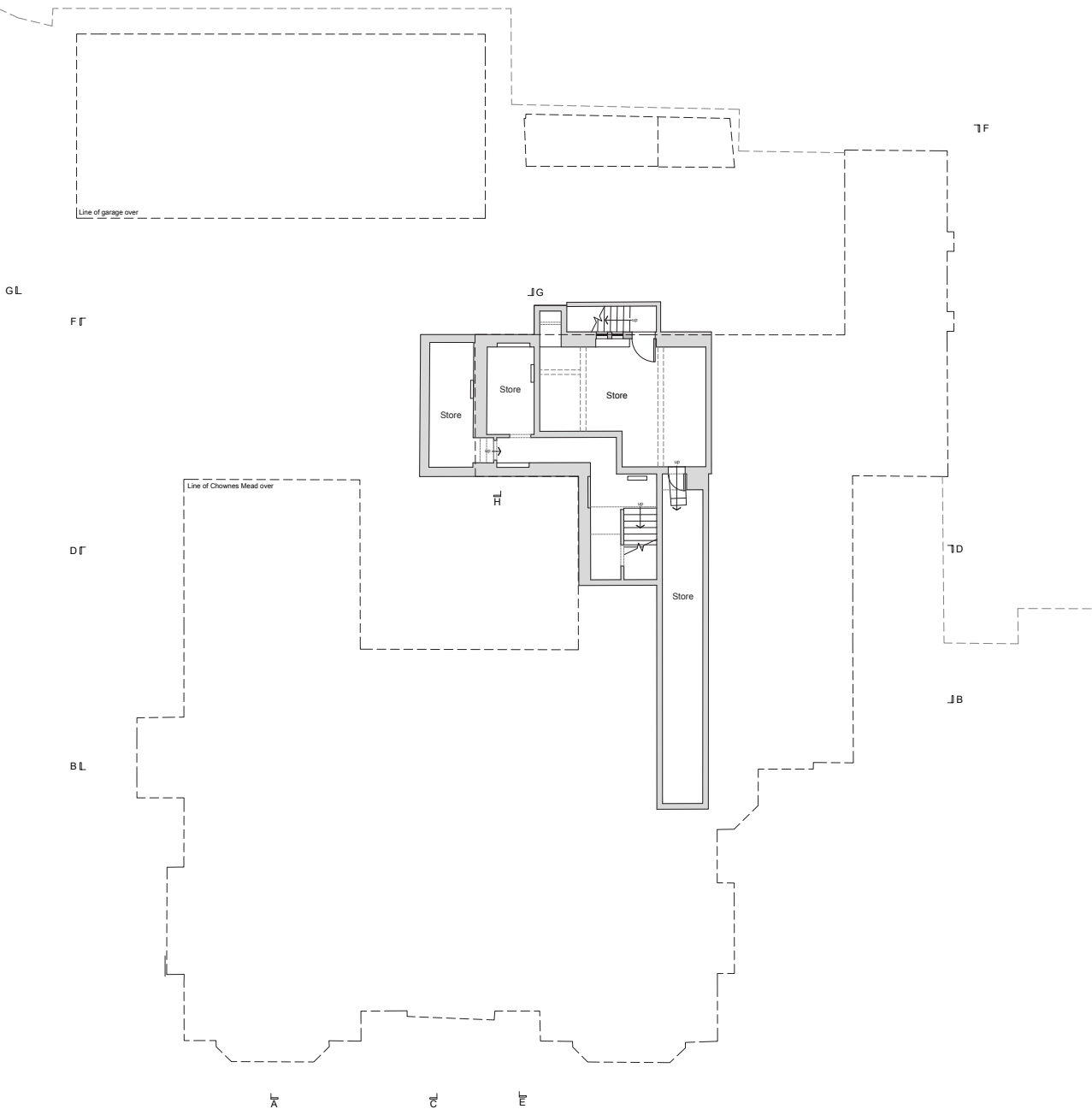
2.00 Site Analysis

2.05 Lower Ground & Ground Floor Plans : Chownes Mead - Grade II Listed Building

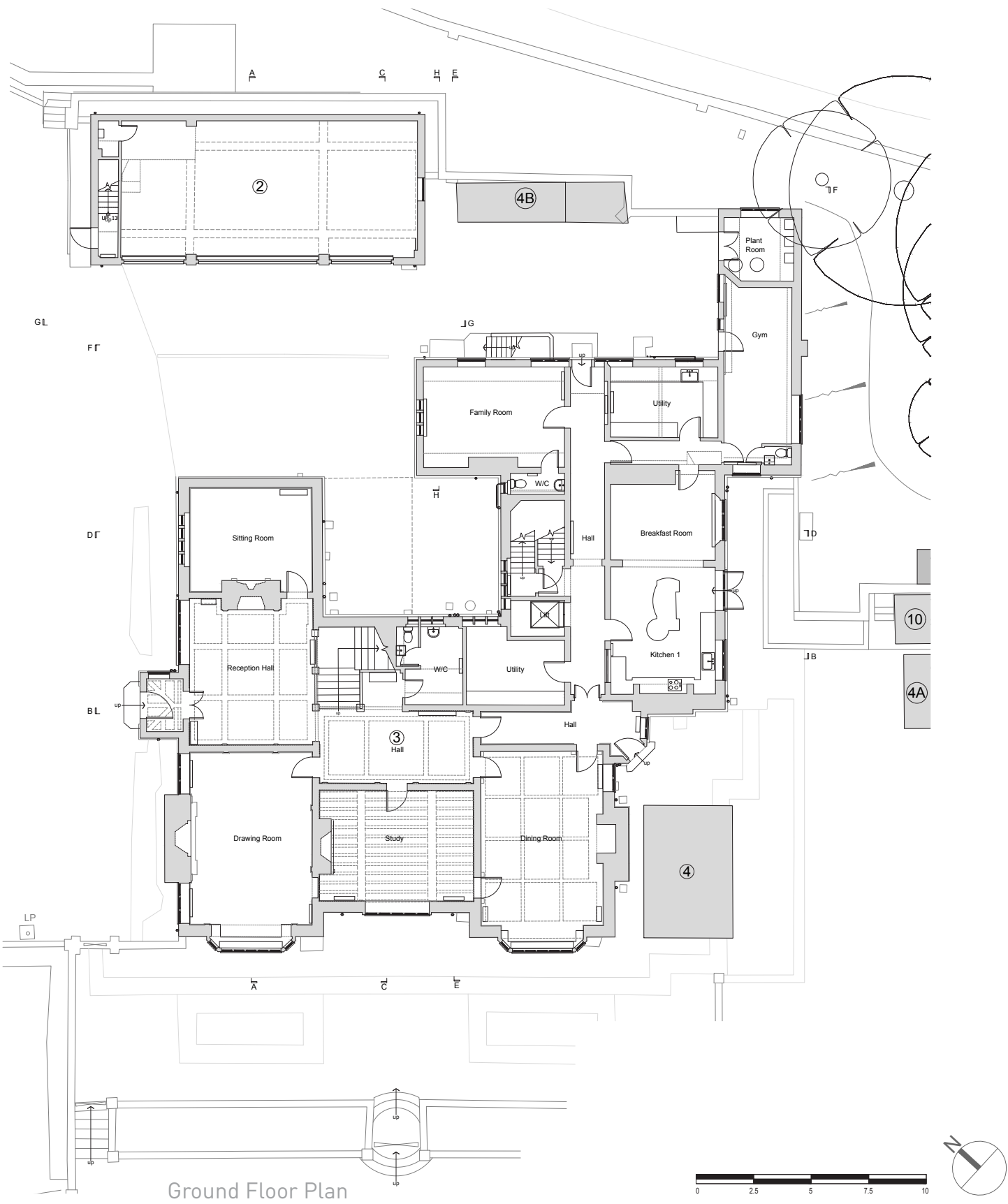
The entrance level from gravel car parking area at ground floor comprises porch way leading to large oak panelled reception hall, in-turn leading to a sitting room and rear hall from which the remainder of the main reception rooms are accessed. The drawing room has a large fire place and ornate ceiling and views to the south west looking over the paved terrace and formal rose garden with parkland beyond. Its south-west facing bay is symmetrical with the opposing dining room bay. The study is south-west facing with a door leading through to the double aspect dining room with arched stone fireplace and carved oak panelling and overlooks the south east and south west terrace. Double doors from the hall open into an area which originally served household staff. The kitchen/breakfast room overlooks the south east terrace, behind is a utility room, gym, boiler room and a family room looking over the rear yard. The lower ground floor is accessed both from within via the secondary rear stair as well as externally from the rear yard and is mainly storage and services. A quadruple garage with accommodation over at first floor sits to the rear (north east) of the family room.

Key (refer to page 3 for full legend)

- 2 Garage
- 3 Chownes Mead
- 4 Shed
- 4A Greenhouse
- 4B Bin Store
- 10 Chicken Coop



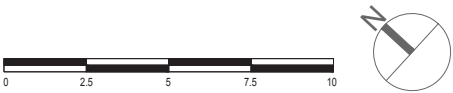
Lower Ground Floor Plan



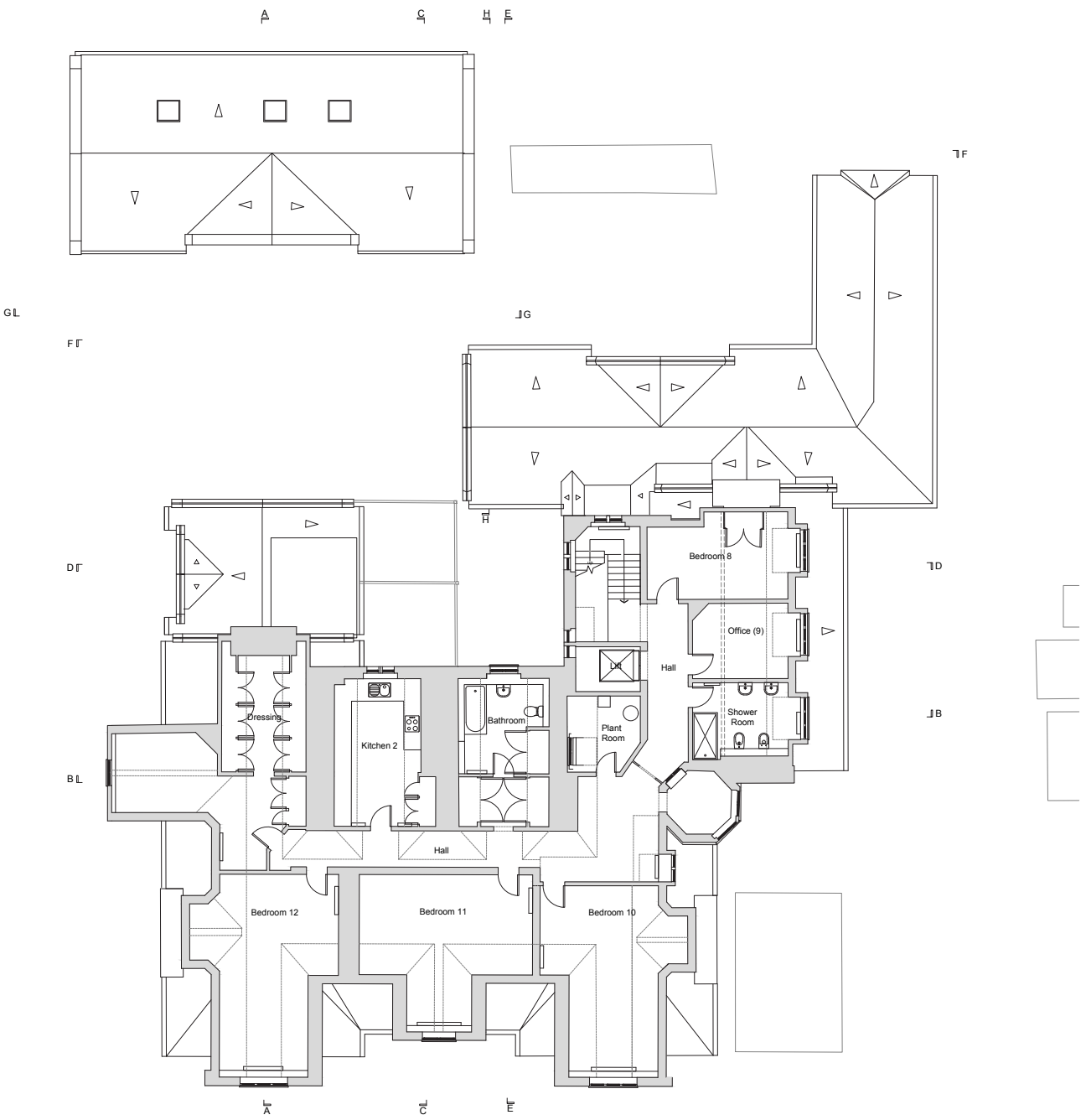
Ground Floor Plan

2.00 Site Analysis

2.06 First & Second Floor Plans : Chownes Mead - Grade II Listed Building



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

The first floor level is accessed via a grand oak staircase leading to a galleried oak panelled landing from which all the main bedrooms are accessed.
At this level there are 6no. bedrooms, 4no. with en suite bath/shower rooms including one with dressing room.
The two primary front bedrooms are double aspect overlooking the gardens to the south west.
A family bathroom is accessed from the landing area adjacent to the lift and secondary stair.

The second floor accommodation is formed within the roof scape, with all 4no. bedrooms and study + family shower and bathrooms and kitchen all accessed from the secondary staircase and lift only.

Bed 1, living, kitchen and bathroom are located at first floor level within the garage building.

2.00 Site Analysis

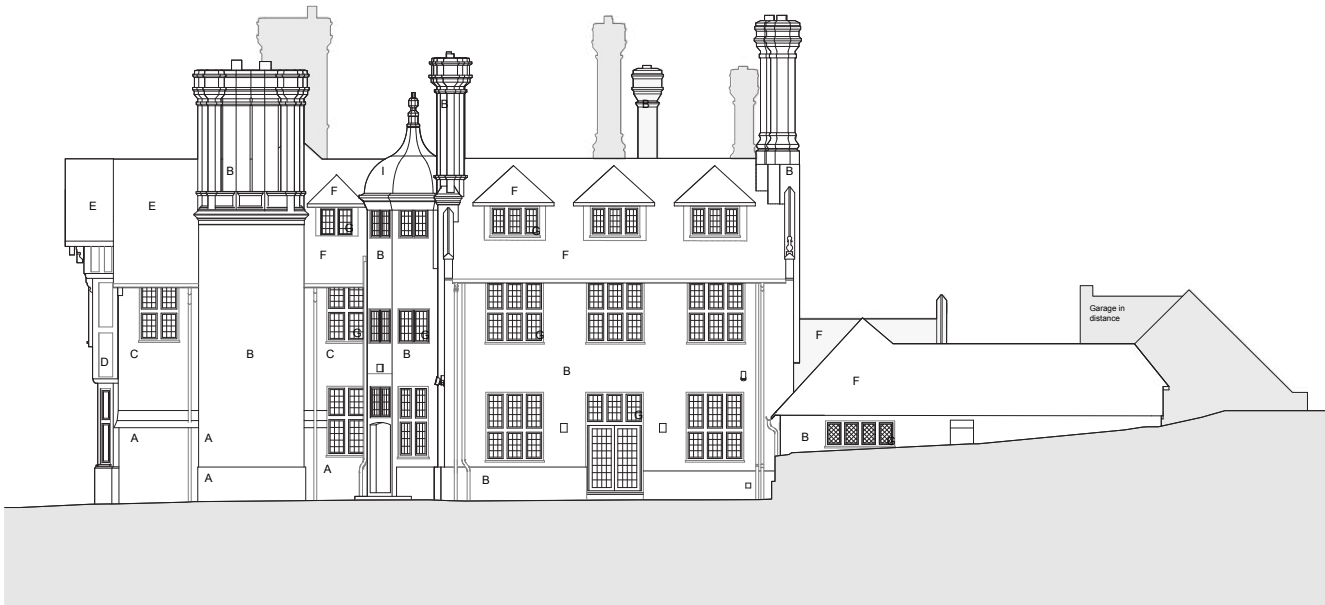
2.07 Elevations : Chownes Mead - Grade II Listed Building



Existing North West Elevation



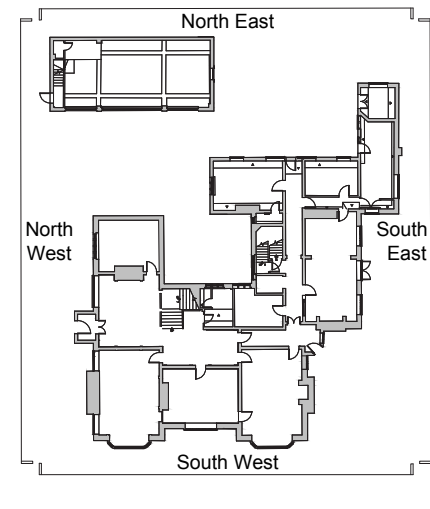
Existing South West Elevation



Existing South East Elevation



Existing North East Elevation



- Material Key
- A Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled walling
 - B Red face brickwork
 - C Clay tile hanging
 - D Neo-Elizabethan style half-timber
 - E Horsham stone tiled roof
 - F Clay tiled roof
 - G Timber framed windows
 - H Stone mullion windows
 - I Lead roof



2.00 Site Analysis

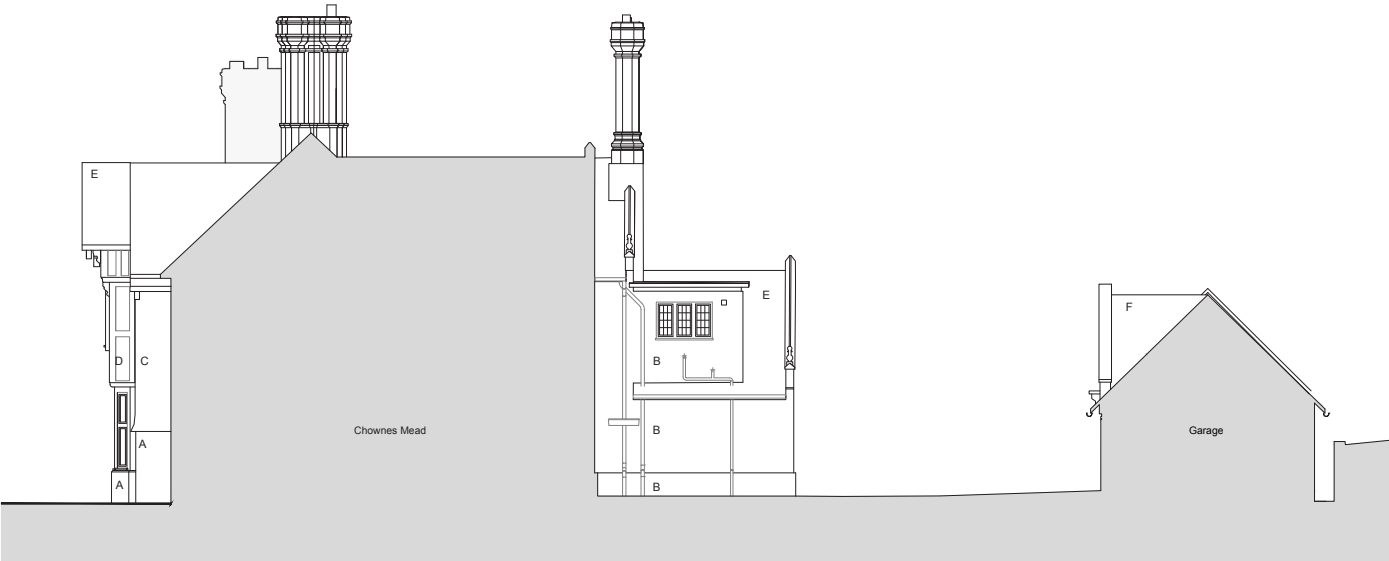
2.08 Sectional Elevations : Chownes Mead - Grade II Listed Building



Existing Section A-A



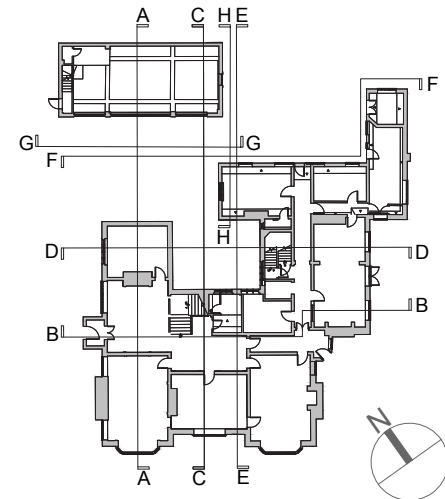
Existing Section B-B



Existing Section C-C



Existing Section D-D



Key Plan (NTS)

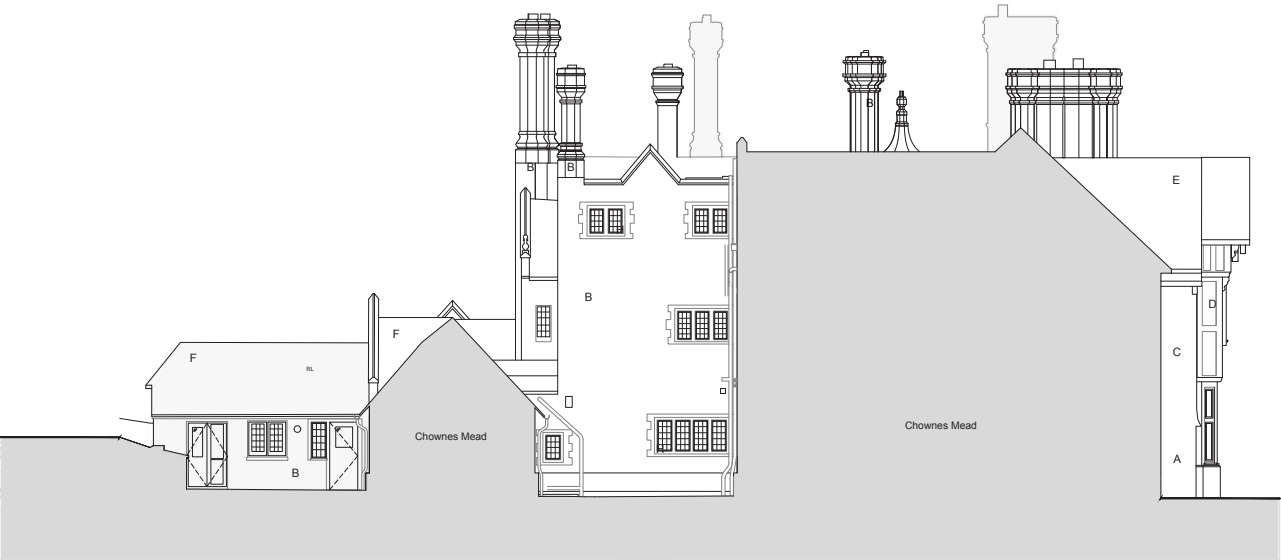
Material Key

- A Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled walling
- B Red face brickwork
- C Clay tile hanging
- D Neo-Elizabethan style half-timber
- E Horsham stone tiled roof
- F Clay tiled roof
- G Timber framed windows
- H Stone mullion windows
- I Lead roof

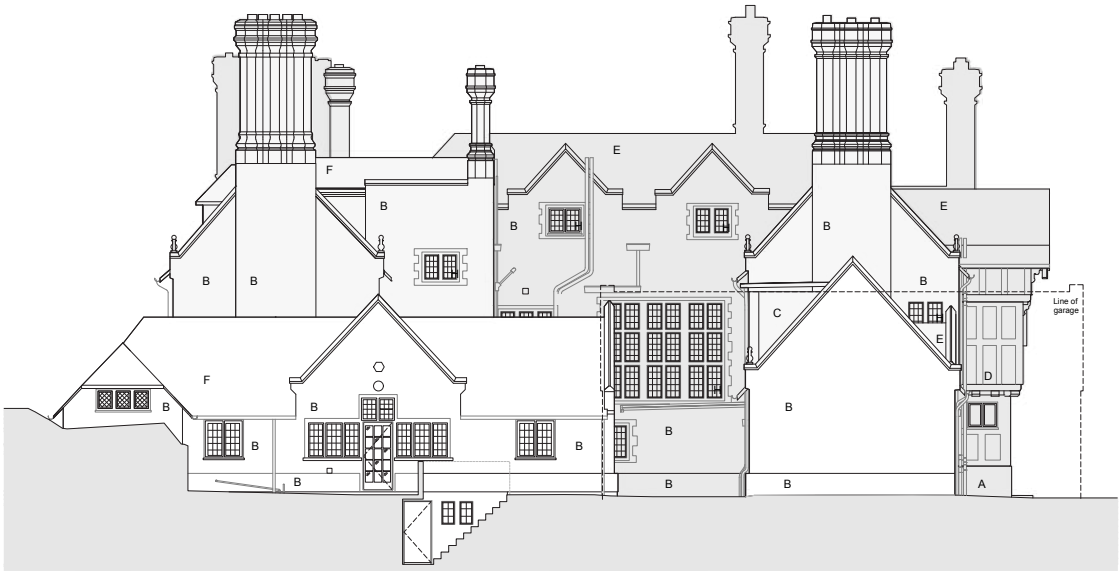


2.00 Analysis

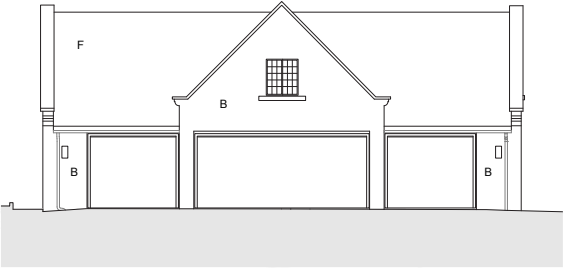
2.08 Sectional Elevations : Chownes Mead -Grade 2 Listed Building



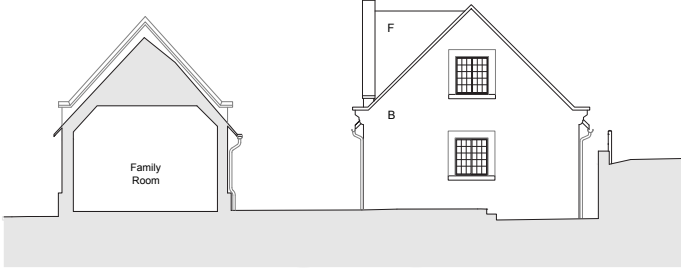
Existing Section E-E



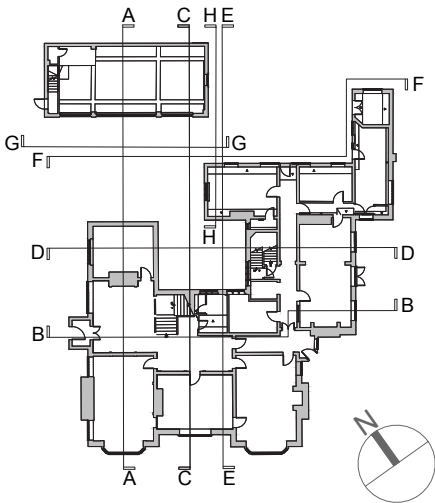
Existing Section F-F



Existing Section G-G



Existing Section H-H



Key Plan (NTS)

Material Key

A	Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled walling
B	Red face brickwork
C	Clay tile hanging
D	Neo-Elizabethan style half-timber
E	Horsham stone tiled roof
F	Clay tiled roof
G	Timber framed windows
H	Stone mullion windows
I	Lead roof



2.00 Site Analysis

2.09 Selected Materials : Chownes Mead -Grade II Listed Building & Boundary Walls



1. Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled walling with tile hanging over
2. Neo-Elizabethan style half-timber upper floor
3. Red facing brickwork with sandstone quoins and plinth course
4. Wealden Sussex sandstone garden wall & decoartive finial
5. Red facing brickwork with bullnose plinth course

6. Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled quions
7. Neo-Elizabethan style half-timber with sandstone plinth course below
8. Lead rainwater goods
9. Wealden Sussex sandstone mullions and transoms to windows
10. Stained timber joinery

11. Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled plinth
12. Wealden Sussex sandstone coarse tooled plinth detail
13. Red facing brickwork, white painted timber joinery & clay tiled roof
14. Wealden Sussex sandstone garden wall
15. Red facing brickwork bullnose plinth detail

2.00 Site Analysis

2.10 Site Photographs : C01-C04 Pool & Terrace to South East of Chownes Mead



C01 - Looking North towards swimming pool, Chownes Mead and gardens beyond



C02 - Looking North West across swimming pool towards Chownes Mead



C03 -Looking South East from poolhouse towards rear of barn



C04 - Looking North West towards Chownes Mead and terrace



Key Plan

2.00 Site Analysis

2.11 Site Photographs : D01-D02 Dell to South West of Chownes Mead



D01 - Dell area Looking North towards poolhouse and Chownes Mead



D02 - Looking North East over dell towards Chownes Mead



Key Plan

2.00 Site Analysis

2.12 Site Photographs E01-E05 Agricultural Timber Clad Barn & Secondary Entrance



E01 - Looking North west (front elevation of timber clad barn)



E02 - Looking East towards timber clad barn



E03 - Looking North towards timber clad barn (left) and secondary entrance (right)



E04 - Looking South West towards timber clad barn from secondary entrance



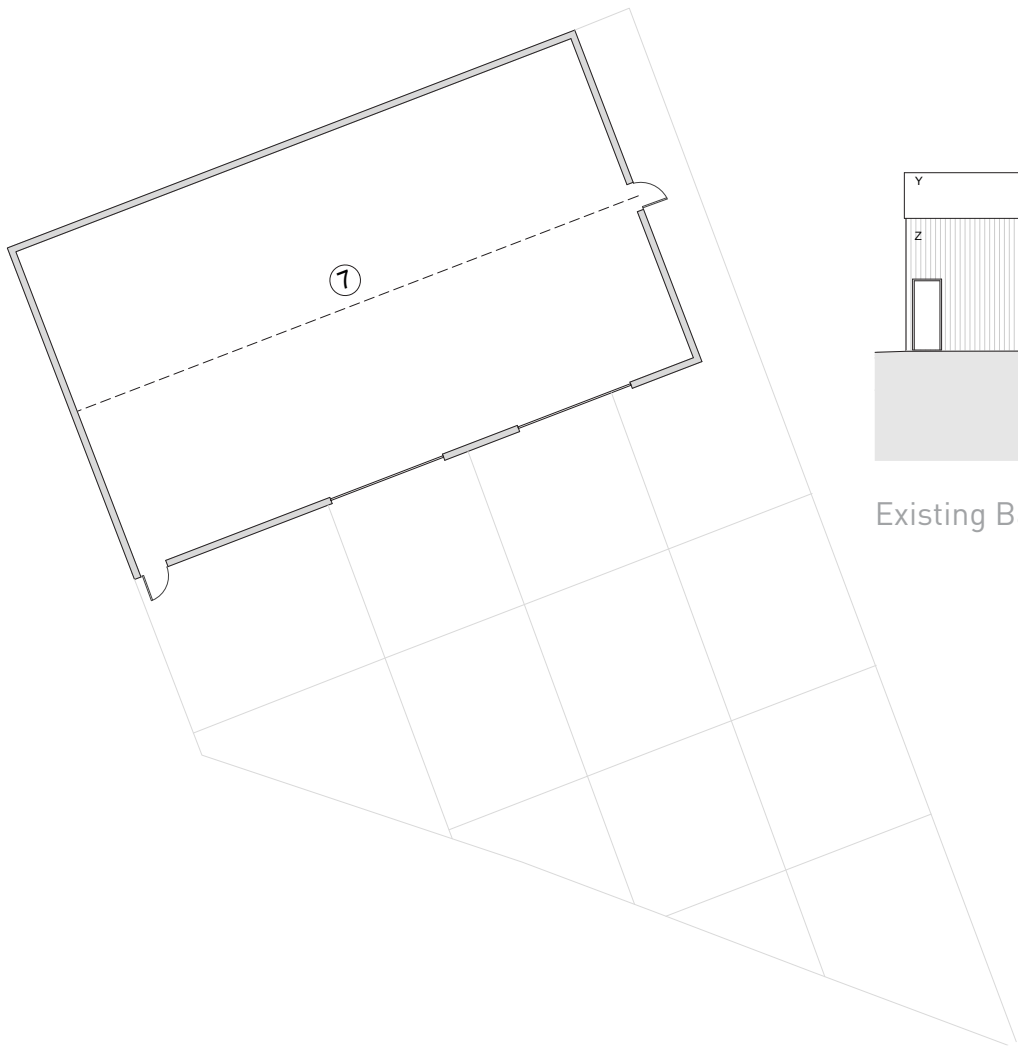
E05 - Looking East towards secondary entrance gate to site



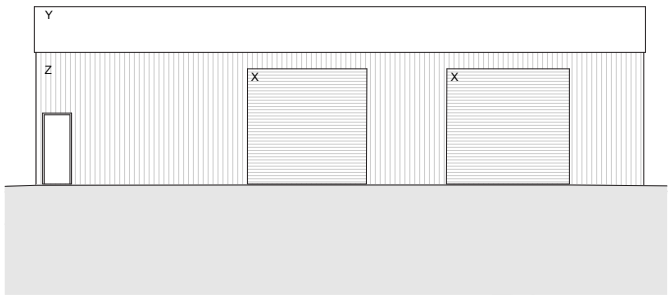
Key Plan

2.00 Site Analysis

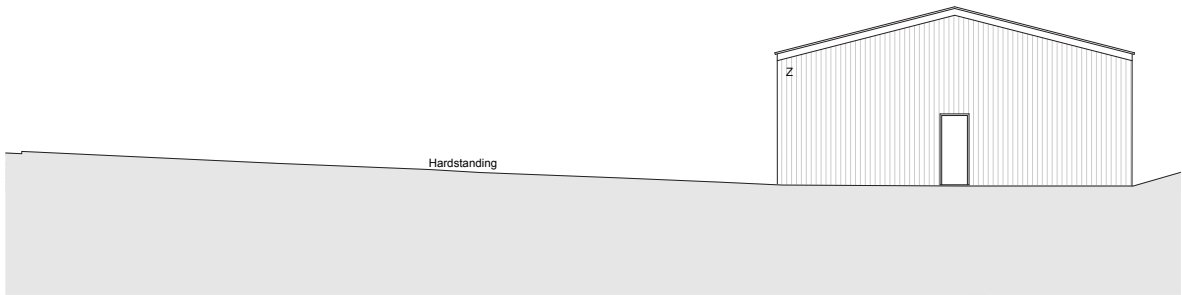
2.13 Plans & Elevations : Agricultural Timber Clad Barn



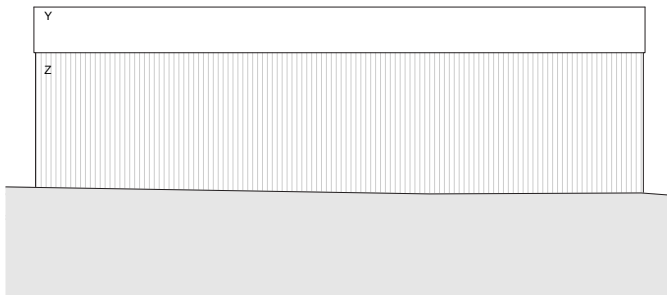
Existing Barn Ground Floor Plan



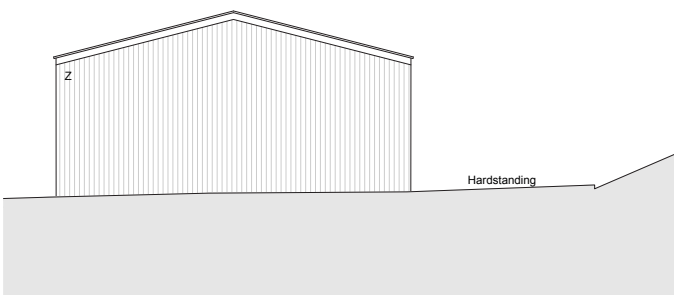
Existing Barn South Elevation



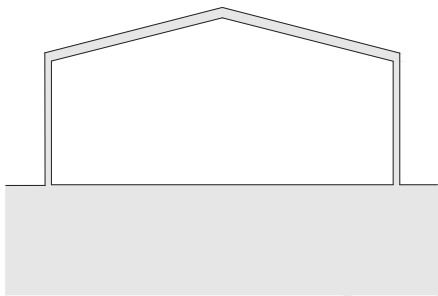
Existing Barn East Elevation



Existing Barn North Elevation



Existing Barn West Elevation



Existing Barn Cross Section



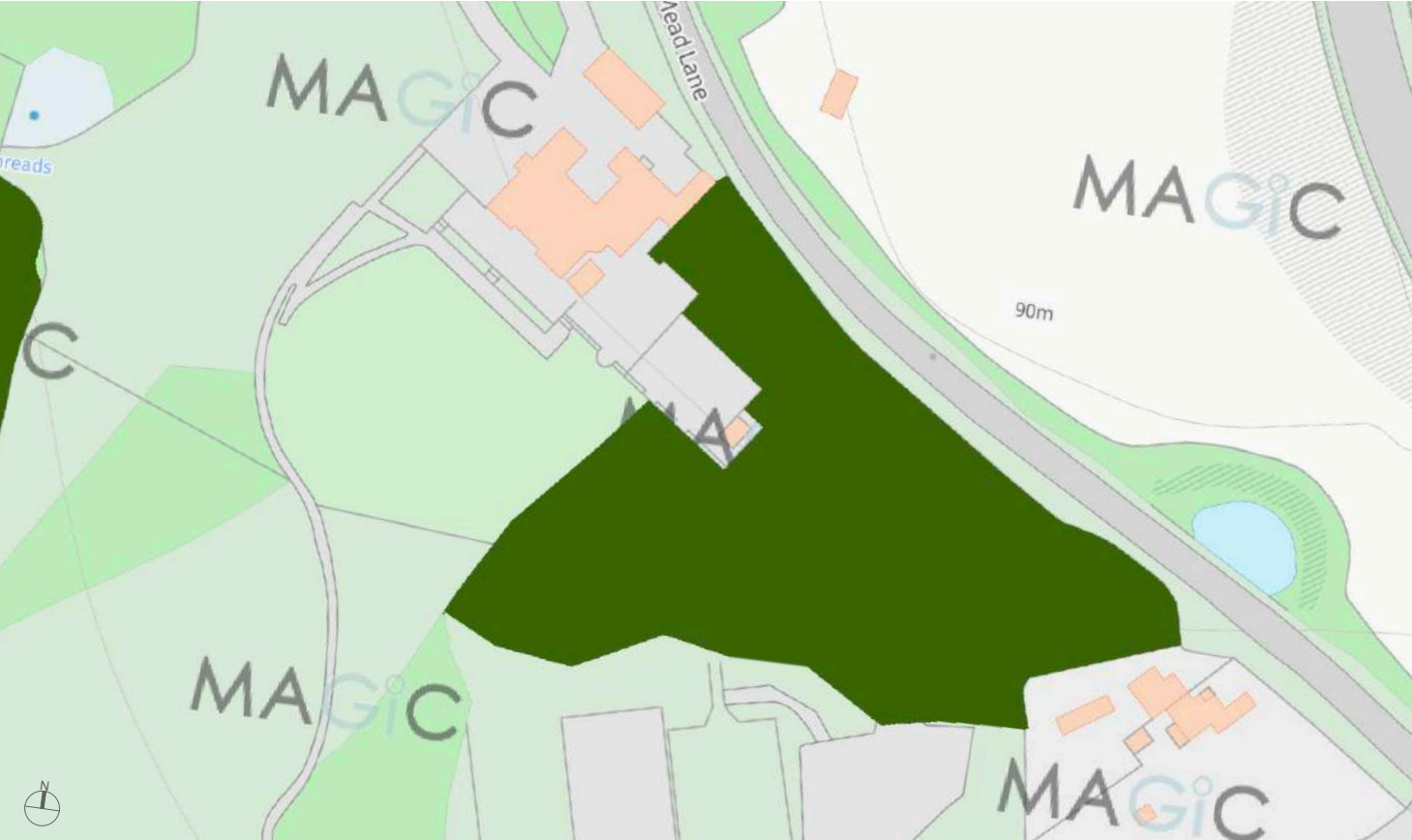
Key Plan



The agricultural barn is a large portal framed structure with vertical timber boarding (Z) to the external walls and a profiled sheet roof (Y). The barn was approved under application 13/03362/FUL in 2013 for the 'Erection of a new agricultural building' which includes a substantial area of hardstanding to its south side and is accessed from the secondary entrance on Chownes Mead Lane.

2.00 Site Analysis

2.14 Ancient Woodland : Introduction



ref. DEFRA (Magic) mapping



ref. Google Earth Pro

Designated Ancient Woodland exists in the area indicated in the images opposite as identified on the DEFRA (Magic) Map-pings and in the area dotted green on the site plans over the forthcoming few pages. Some areas within the Ancient Wood-land have been disturbed over the course of many years, much by the introduction of built form or hardstanding.

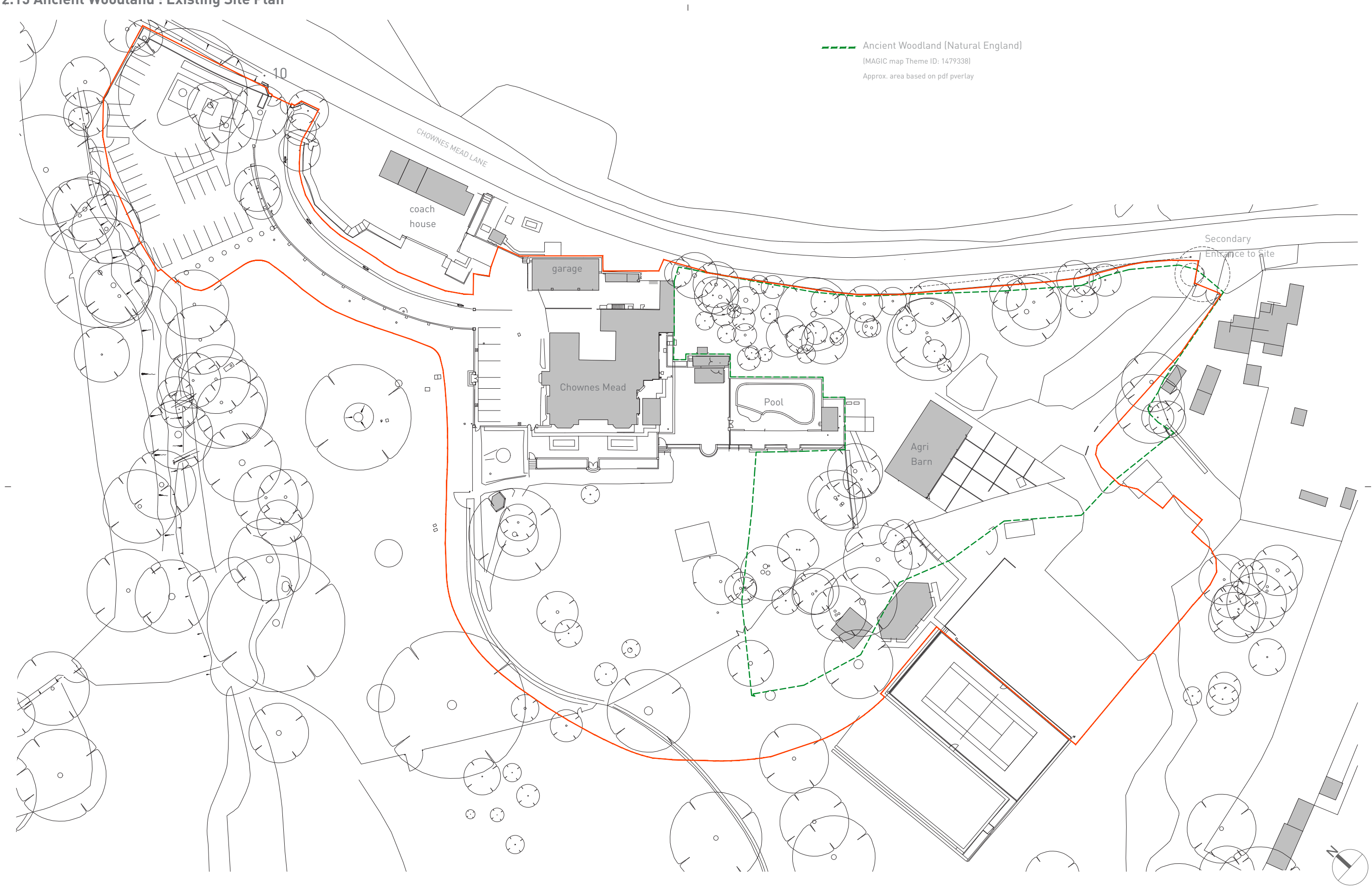
The designation is acknowledged in the Natural England register as Chownes Shaw (Ancient and Semi natural woodland - ASNW) at the co-ordinates X531,720 & Y123,717.

A detailed analysis of the Ancient Woodland has been carried out by Lizard Ecology and Broad Oak Tree Consultants and should be read in conjunction with this and all other relevant sections of the DAS. Areas 1-6 (opposite) are referred to in all other documents and section 9 of this DAS.

Reference should also be made to the Planning Pre-app submission (DM/23/1480) and subsequent comments from Place Services for MSDC (DM/25/0133).

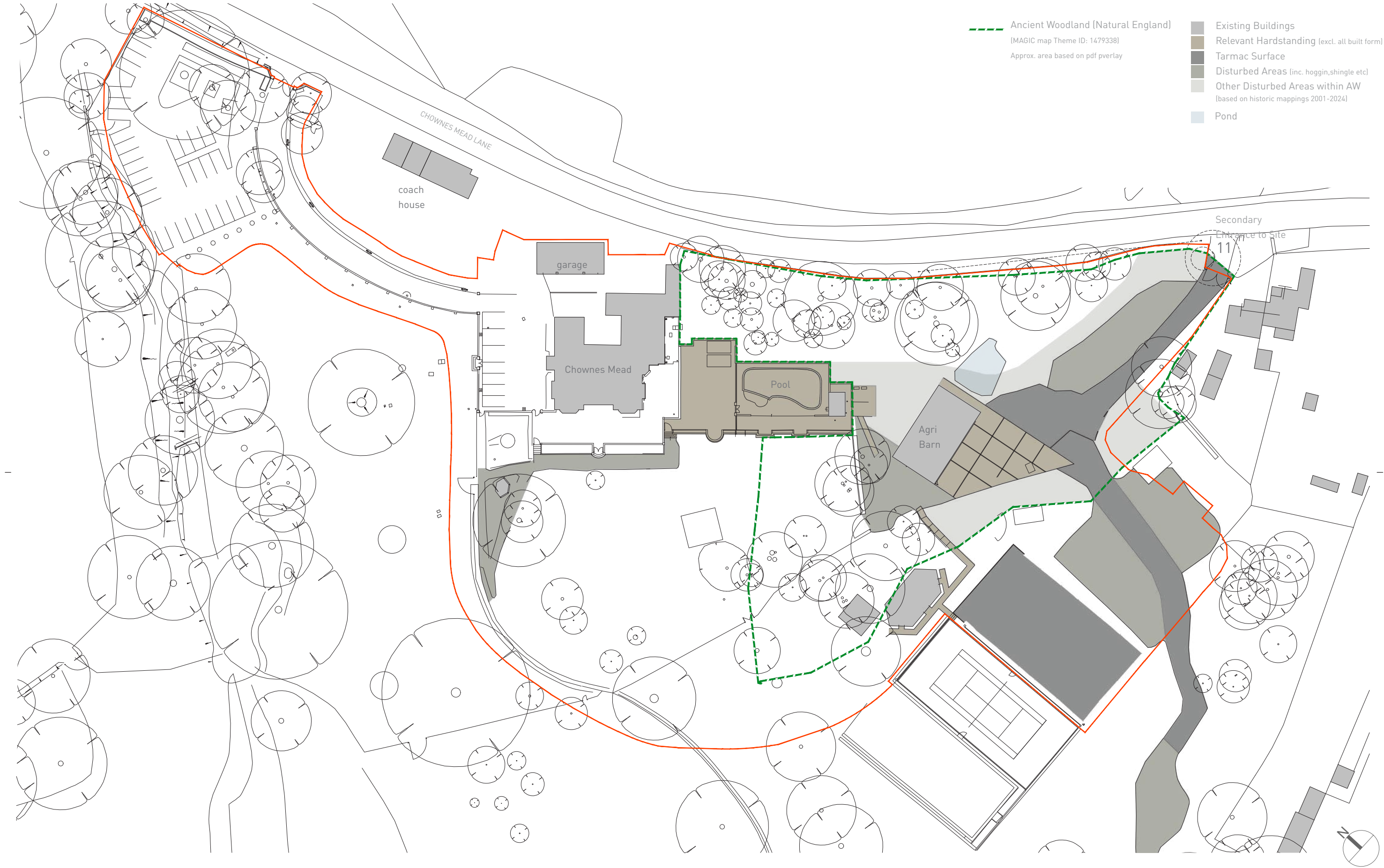
2.00 Site Analysis

2.15 Ancient Woodland : Existing Site Plan



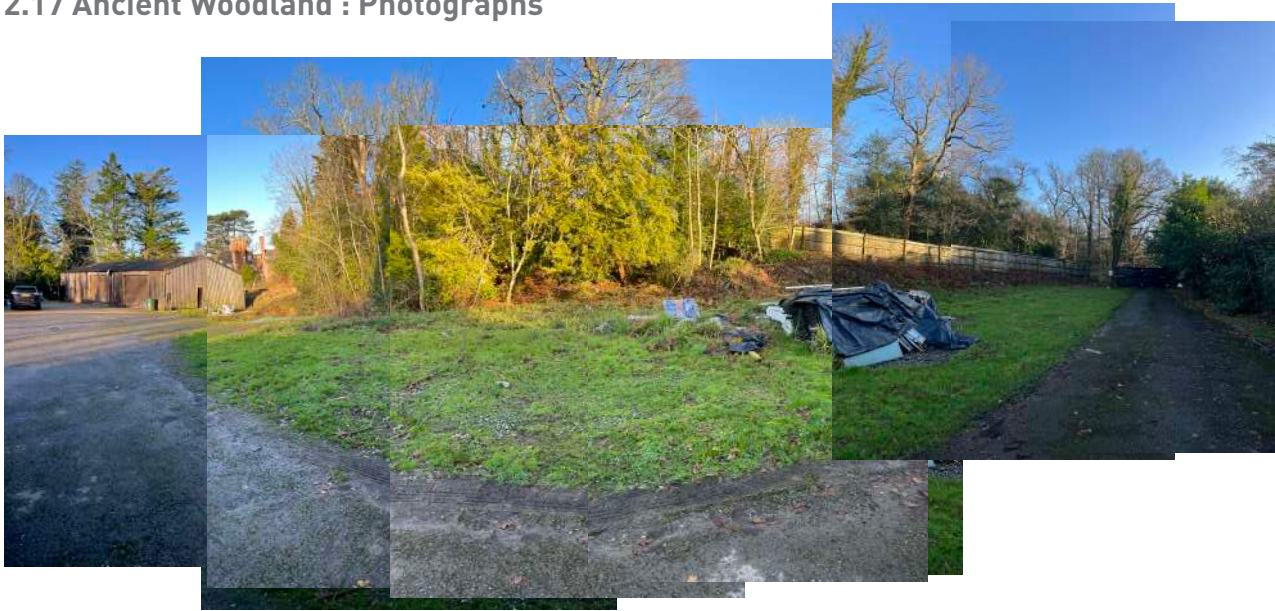
2.00 Site Analysis

2.16 Ancient Woodland : Areas of Hardstanding



2.00 Site Analysis

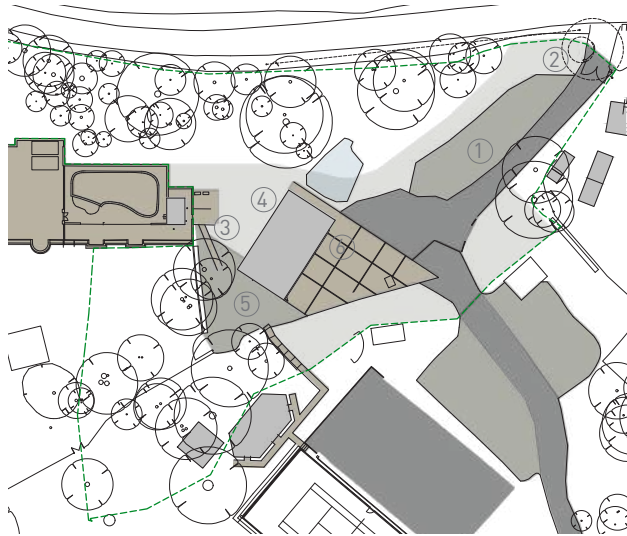
2.17 Ancient Woodland : Photographs



F01 - Area of hoggin surface



F04- Disturbed ground to North of barn



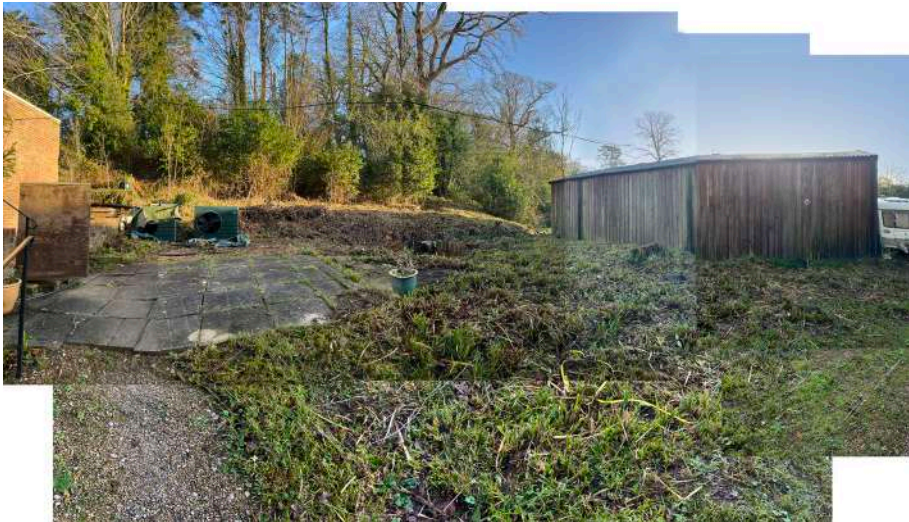
Key Plan (NTS)



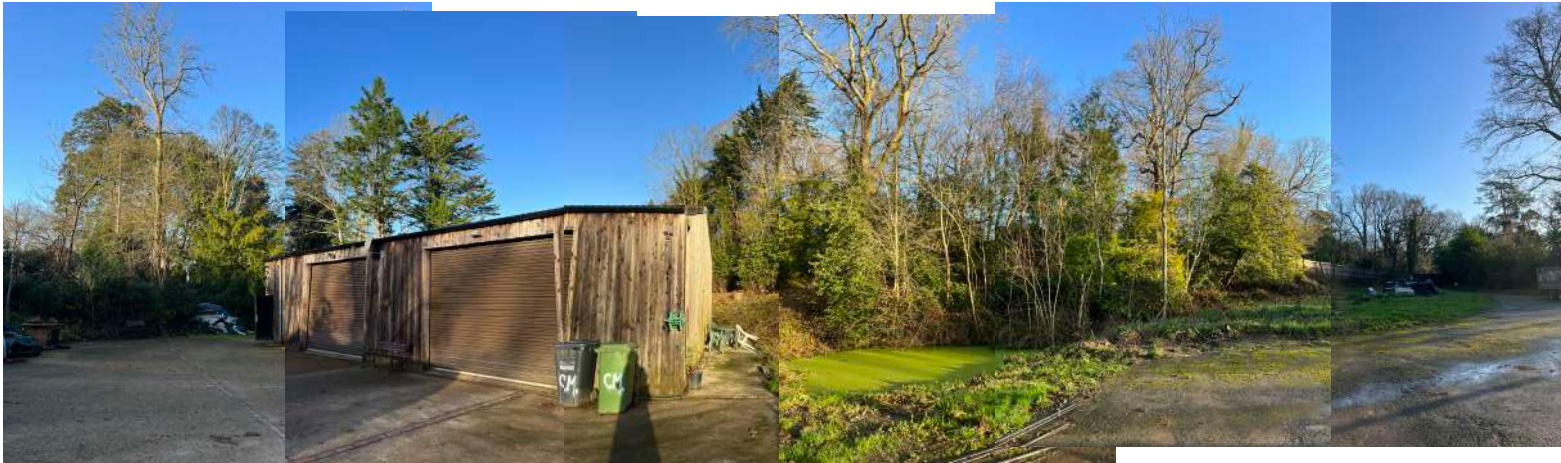
F02- Area of proposed new entrance to left of existing entrance



F05 - Area of hoggin to West of barn



F03- Link area between pool and barn



F06- Area of hardstanding to South of barn