

6.3 Landscape Character

The landscape character of the proposal is derived directly from the surrounding High Weald landscape and its existing patterns of woodland, meadow and enclosed pasture.

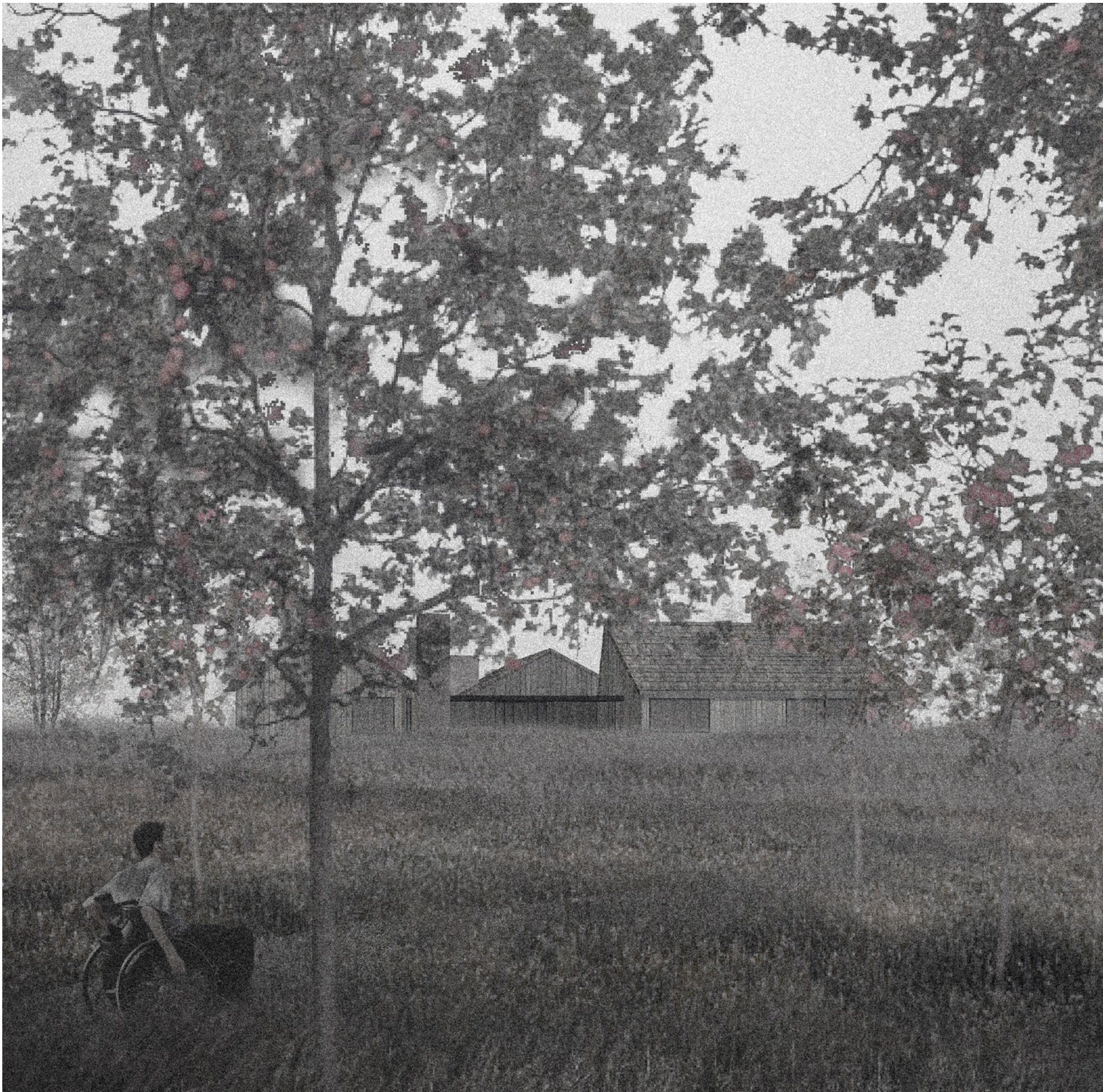
The woodland edge extends the ecological and spatial qualities of the adjacent ancient woodland into the site. Native tree and shrub species are used throughout, selected to reinforce local habitat continuity and strengthen the character of the existing field boundaries.

The meadow landscape to the east replaces areas of low-value grazed pasture with species-rich grassland. Its irregular geometry reflects the surrounding field pattern whilst increasing biodiversity and seasonal variation across the site.

The hedgerow network reinforces the grain of the wider landscape. New and reinforced hedgerow planting defines routes, encloses gardens and strengthens ecological connections between woodland, meadow and pasture.

The proposal does not seek to impose a formal garden upon the landscape. Instead, the character of the site remains pastoral and agricultural in quality, with cultivated areas positioned carefully within a wider naturalistic setting.

Together, these interventions produce a landscape that remains recognisably of its place whilst becoming more coherent, ecologically diverse and environmentally resilient over time.



Early collage from southern flower garden denoting accessible pathways and view to

6.4 Ecology and Biodiversity

The proposal delivers a significant enhancement in ecological value through the introduction of new habitats and the strengthening of existing landscape conditions.

The existing site is predominantly low-value grazed pasture with fragmented habitat potential. The proposal introduces a more diverse and interconnected ecological framework through:

- Strengthened woodland edge planting;
- species-rich native hedgerows;
- wildflower meadow and grassland habitats;
- and orchard planting and productive landscape areas.

These interventions establish a continuous ecological network across the site, strengthening habitat connectivity between woodland, meadow and surrounding agricultural land.

As demonstrated within the accompanying ecological assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain calculations, the proposal achieves measurable gains in habitat units, hedgerow units and overall ecological performance significantly above statutory requirements.

This ecological enhancement is not treated as mitigation applied after the design process, but forms an integral part of the proposal from the outset. Landscape, ecology and architecture are developed together as a single strategy.



Proposed habitats diagram produced by Ecologist

Proposed habitat	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Years to target condition	Difficulty	Total habitat units	Comments
Traditional orchards	0.264	High	Poor	Low	5	Low	1.33	Traditional orchard in the centre of the site.
Other neutral grassland	0.236	Medium	Poor	Low	2	Low	0.88	Flower-rich grassland in the east of the site.
Mixed scrub	0.132	Medium	Poor	Low	1	Low	0.51	Mixed native shrub planting along ancient woodland buffer.
Developed land; sealed surface	0.173	V.Low	N/A - Other	Low	0	Low	0.00	Access track and buildings
Vegetated garden	0.485	Low	Condition Assessment N/A	Low	1	Low	0.94	Area of enclosed vegetated garden comprised of lawn, wildflower grassland, native and nonnative shrubs and trees and hedgerows.
Rural tree	0.0814	Medium	Poor	Low	10	Low	0.23	20 native trees planted outside of the orchards and private garden area.
Total area	1.29	Total Units					3.88	

On-site habitat breakdown – Post-Development Creation

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	1.28
	Hedgerow units	0.54
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	42.34%
	Hedgerow units	2717.80%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Ecology biodiversity net gain final results

6.5 Experience and Approach

The landscape defines how the proposal is encountered.

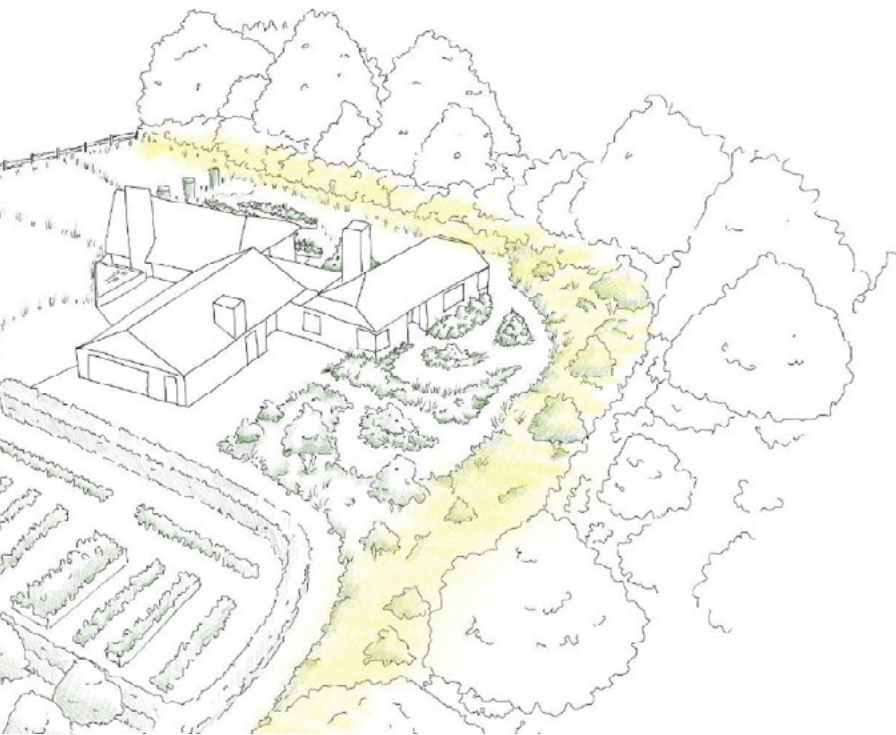
Arrival to the site occurs through a controlled opening within the existing hedgerow structure. This is conceived not as a suburban entrance condition, but as a restrained intervention that maintains the continuity of the surrounding landscape whilst marking entry.

Movement through the site is gradual. The building is initially filtered by woodland planting and partially concealed within the landscape structure before becoming more fully revealed through approach.

This sequence of enclosure, filtering and release establishes a slower and more deliberate experience of the landscape. The house is encountered through movement rather than presented immediately as a singular object within the field.

Views are carefully framed through woodland edges, meadow planting and orchard spaces. The arrangement of planting and topography reduces the visual prominence of the development within wider views whilst strengthening the experiential relationship between architecture and landscape.

The proposal therefore seeks to create an approach that is embedded within the rhythms and spatial qualities of the surrounding countryside rather than detached from it.



Concept sketch for proposed woodland buffer



Artist's impression of the approach to the house along the entrance driveway and woodland

6.6 Integration with Architecture

The relationship between architecture and landscape is reciprocal.

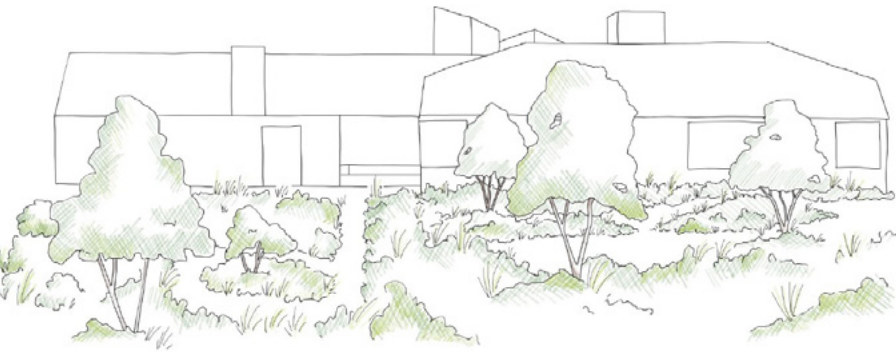
The organisation of the building is informed directly by the surrounding landscape structure – its enclosure, orientation, routes and open conditions. In turn, the landscape reinforces the spatial logic of the architecture through the formation of courtyards, thresholds and planted rooms.

The house is not conceived as an isolated object placed upon the land. Built form, planting and topography operate together as part of a single composition in which architecture and landscape are inseparable.

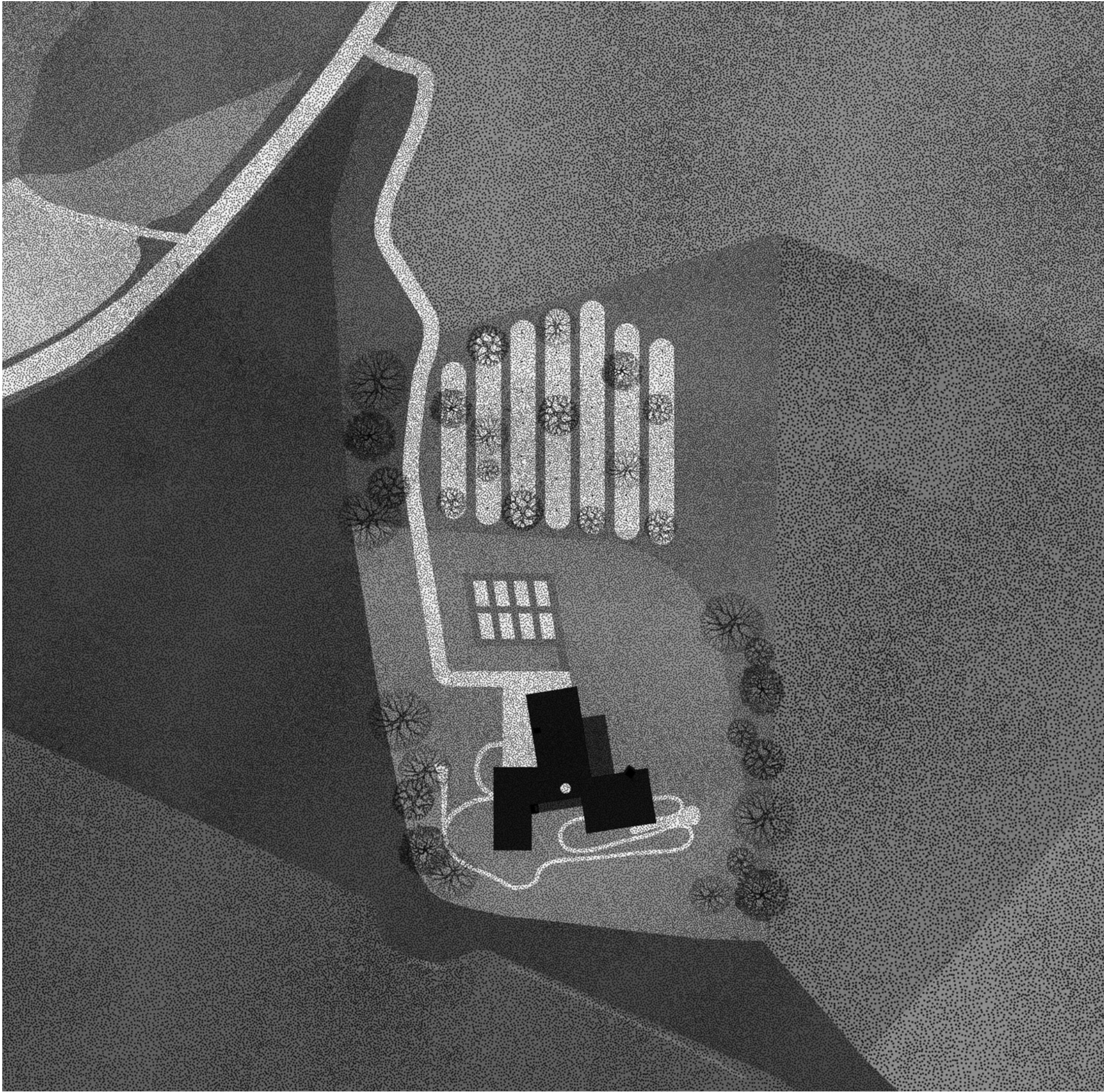
Woodland planting reinforces enclosure around the western edge of the site, whilst meadow and orchard landscapes extend outward from the principal living spaces. Courtyards and gardens are shaped by this landscape structure and become part of the daily occupation of the home.

The arrangement of paths, planting and external spaces also supports the accessible design principles embedded within the proposal, ensuring that movement between house and landscape occurs continuously and without hierarchy.

This integration between building and landscape is central to the quality of the proposal and underpins its ambition to create a dwelling that is specific to its setting and capable of enduring over time.



Concept sketch for proposed woodland garden meeting the main house



Development collage of proposed landscape concept as integrated design of landscape and architecture

6.7 Creating an Accessible Landscape

Accessibility is embedded within the organisation of the landscape and forms a fundamental part of the proposal rather than a secondary technical requirement.

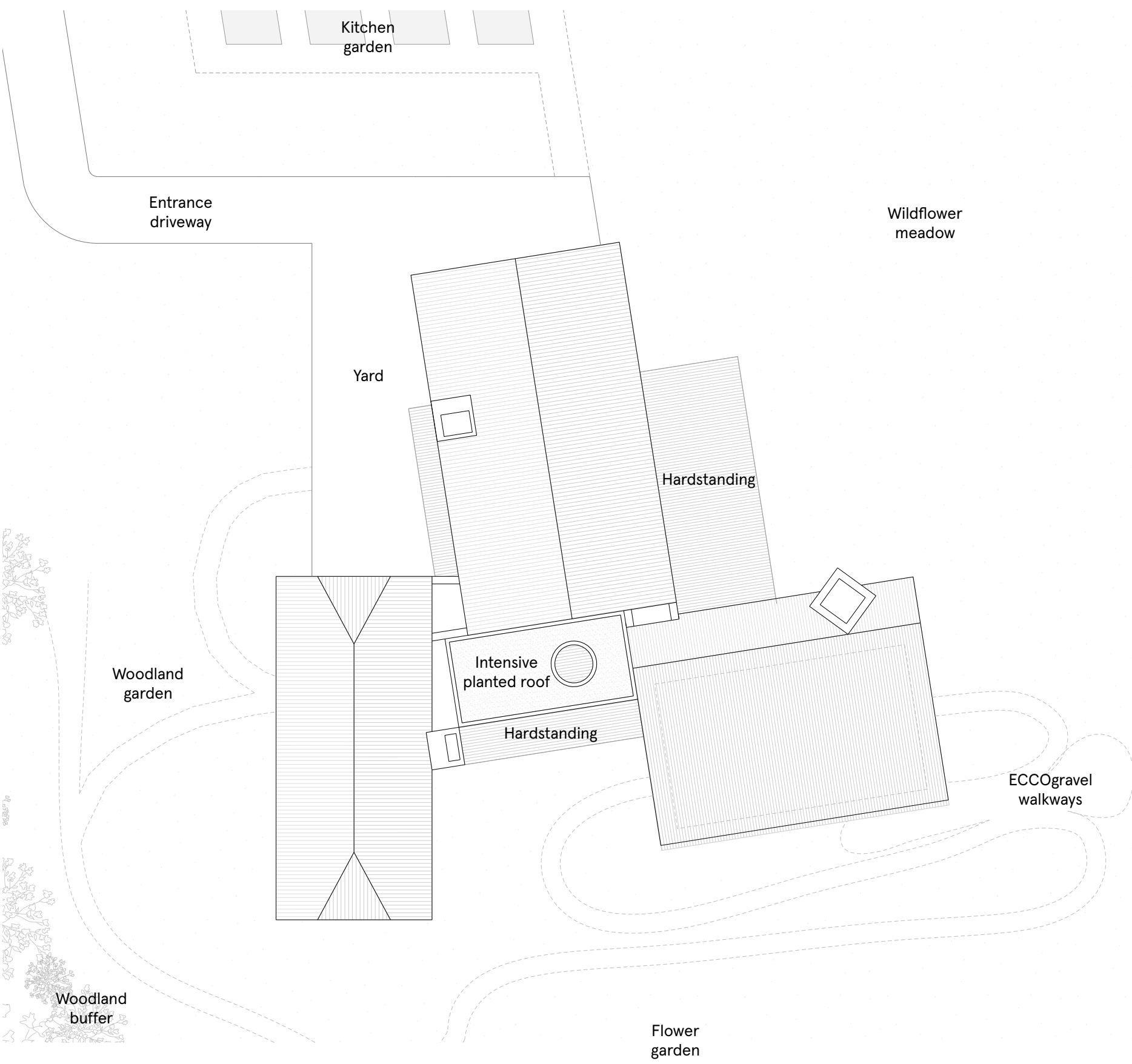
The landscape establishes a continuous and legible network of step-free routes connecting the arrival sequence, courtyard, gardens and wider landscape. Movement through the site is intended to occur naturally and without segregation.

Paths are carefully integrated within the wider planting structure and landscape strategy. Rather than imposing rigid geometries, routes follow gentle gradients and gradual movement through woodland, meadow and garden spaces.

Primary circulation routes are designed to exceed minimum accessibility requirements, supporting comfortable wheelchair movement and long-term independent use of the site.



Accessible pathways at Omved Gardens in London



General landscape arrangement

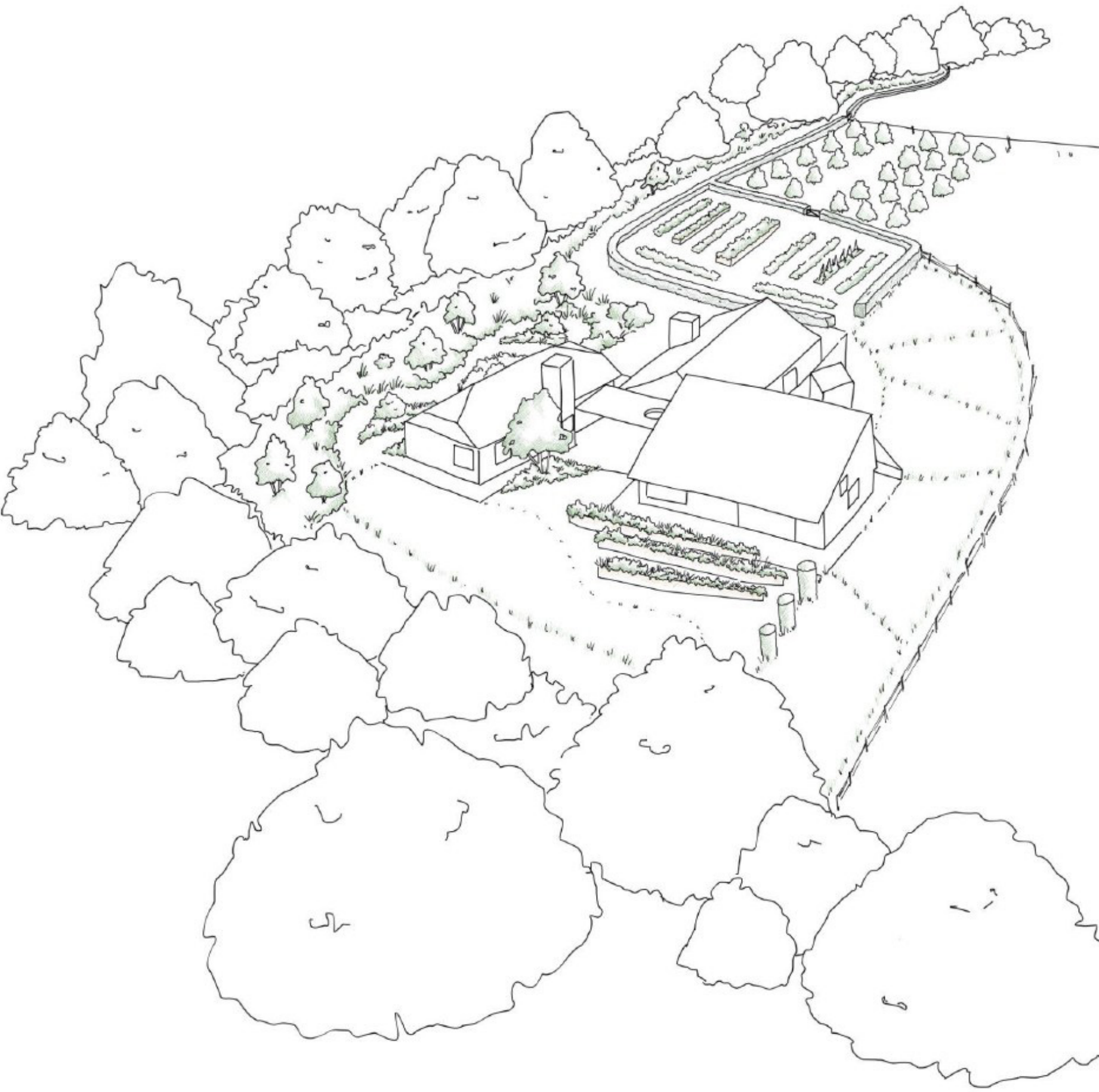
Surface materials are selected to balance accessibility, durability and environmental performance. Stabilised gravel systems are proposed where appropriate, allowing wheelchair accessibility whilst maintaining the appearance and permeability of a rural landscape surface.

Planting adjacent to routes is coordinated to support close interaction with the landscape. Raised planters, productive gardens and seasonal planting areas allow the landscape to be occupied directly and comfortably from seated positions whilst maintaining visual connection to the wider site.

Accessibility therefore informs both the spatial organisation and experiential quality of the proposal, ensuring that house and landscape can be inhabited fully and equally over time.



Detail of ECCOGravel



Concept sketch for proposed landscape denoting raised accessible planters and walkways

The landscape is conceived as a working and evolving environment shaped through seasonal change, growth and long-term stewardship.

Rather than imposing a fixed or highly controlled landscape composition, the proposal establishes a robust framework capable of adapting and maturing over time. Woodland, meadow and hedgerow conditions are intended to develop gradually through cyclical management and ecological succession.

Woodland areas will be managed through selective thinning and, where appropriate, coppicing. This supports long-term woodland health whilst encouraging understorey growth and habitat diversity. Timber arising from management operations may also be reused within the site for boundaries, habitat structures and minor landscape interventions.

Hedgerows will be retained, reinforced and extended through traditional management practices including rotational trimming and laying. This approach maintains dense habitat structure whilst strengthening the continuity of the wider field pattern.

Meadow areas will be managed through low-intensity cutting and seasonal grazing regimes where appropriate, allowing native grasses and wildflowers to establish and reseed over time. Productive gardens and orchard areas closer to the house will be maintained at a finer grain, creating a contrast with the looser and more naturalistic character of the surrounding landscape.

Taken together, these strategies establish a landscape that is resilient, ecologically productive and capable of long-term stewardship. The proposal therefore seeks not simply to minimise environmental impact, but to establish a lasting and positive contribution to the wider landscape setting.

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7.0 Design Statement

7.1 Siting the House

The siting of the house was developed through a detailed understanding of the High Weald landscape, its relationship to the existing farmstead, and the constraints identified through early consultation. A number of potential locations within the wider holding were considered, with this position selected as the optimum balance between access, landscape containment, environmental performance and visual impact.

The chosen site sits within a contained part of the field, defined by existing tree cover and hedgerow structure, forming an intimate nook within the wider field pattern. Held within the embrace of surrounding trees, the site offers a natural setting for domestic life while allowing the building to be read in association with Cockhaise Farm rather than as an isolated object within open countryside.

The position avoids the lower, more sensitive valley areas, including those at risk of surface water accumulation, and instead occupies a gentle shoulder in the landform. This reduces visual prominence in wider views, including from the Public Right of Way, and allows the building to settle into the slope rather than sit exposed upon it.

The siting also responds directly to existing access conditions. The house is located in close proximity to Montes Hill, utilising a new point of access referencing the wider farm gate type, thereby reinforcing the agricultural logic of the site.

Application site



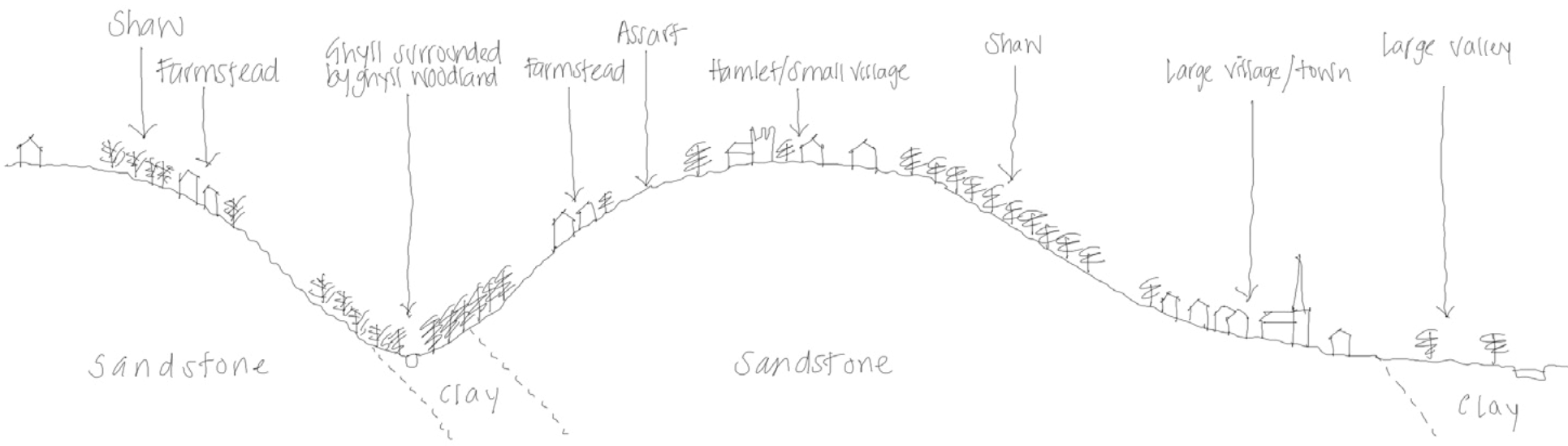
Collage of Cockhaise Farm extents in the context of surrounding farmstead buildings

The selected site allows for the orientation of the house to be informed by a close reading of both sunlight and the existing tree structure. The building is arranged to open towards the east and south-east, allowing morning light to enter the principal living spaces and establishing a strong visual connection to the orchard and wider landscape. Longer views are drawn out in these directions, reinforcing the relationship between the house and its setting.

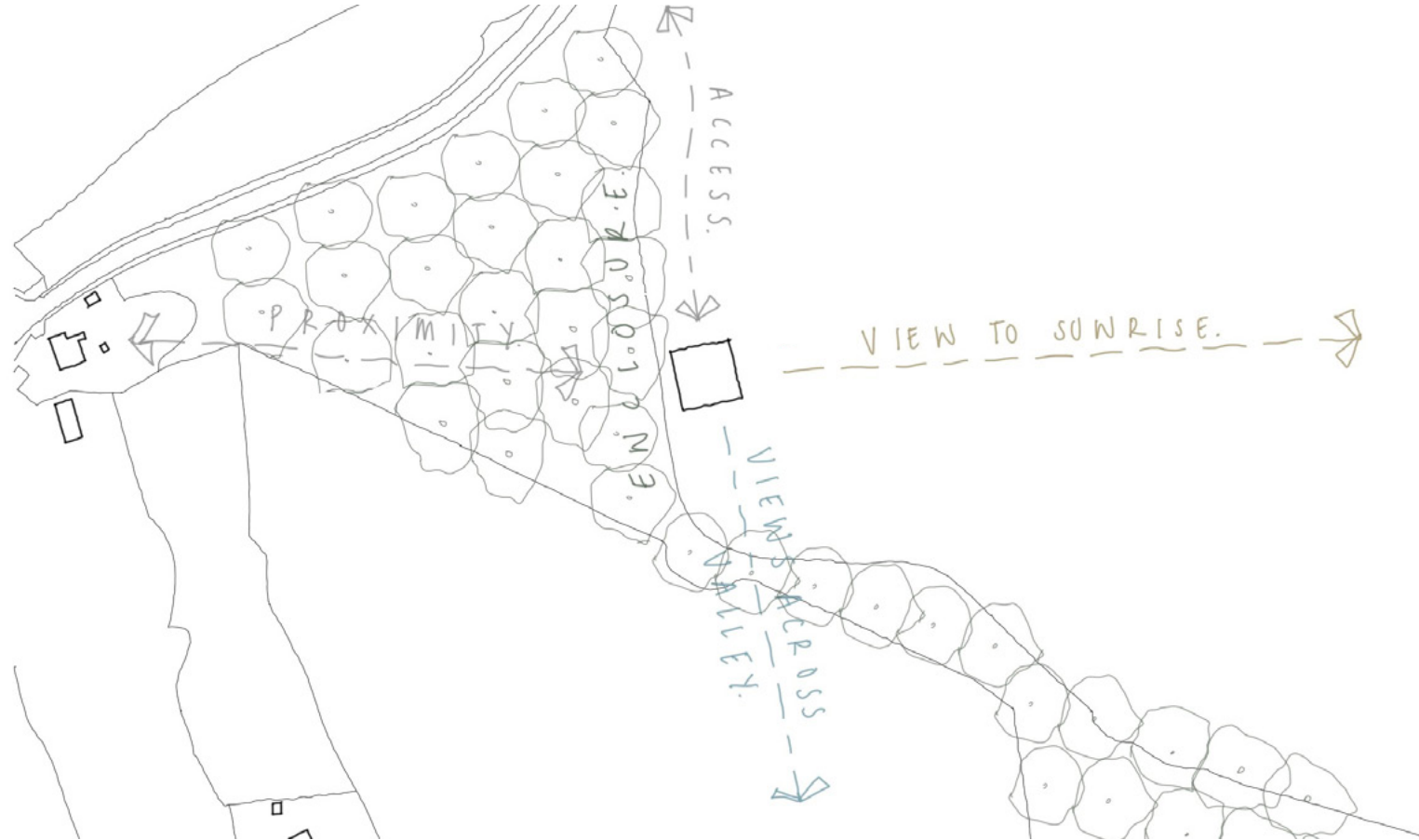
To the south and south-west, existing mature trees provide natural shading, tempering the intensity of the afternoon sun and reducing the risk of overheating. The architecture works with this condition rather than against it, using the tree line as an environmental modifier that enables generous glazing without excessive solar gain. The courtyard form further refines this approach, creating a series of sheltered, sunlit external spaces that shift in character throughout the day.



Reference image of approach atmosphere



Analysis sketch exploring historical development patterns in relation to landscape

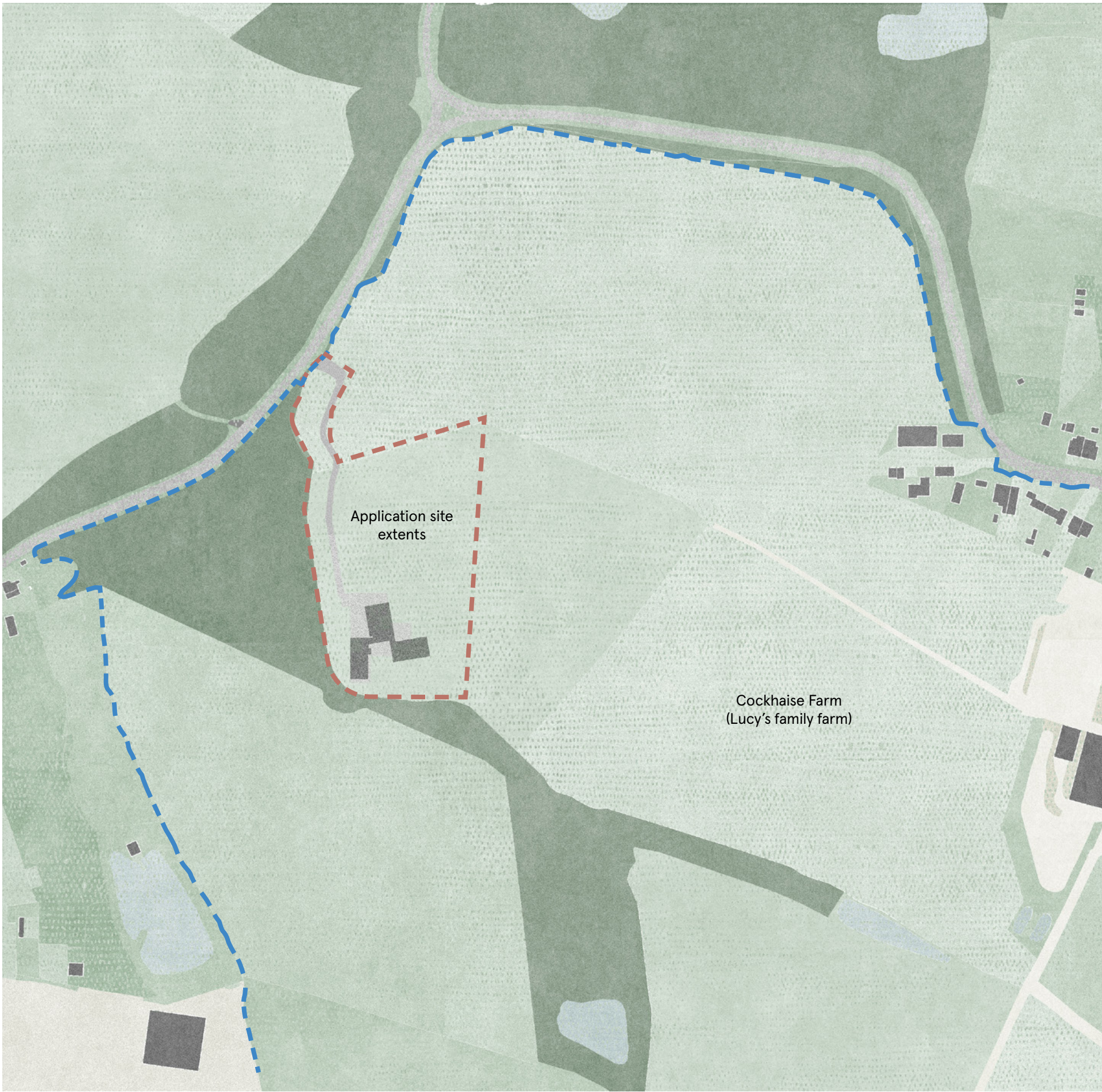


Analysis sketch exploring constraints and opportunities at site

The siting establishes a deliberate relationship between the house and the wider landscape strategy. The immediate setting is conceived as a threshold between domestic occupation and productive land, with orchard planting, meadow and habitat creation extending outwards from the building. This reinforces the proposal's role as part of a working landscape rather than a discrete residential plot.

Overall, the siting was derived from a careful balance of access, topography, visibility, environmental performance and landscape character. The intention has been to locate the house where it can sit quietly within the structure of the land – embedded, sheltered and appropriate to its setting.

- Cockhaise Farm
- Application site



Collaged location plan of proposed house and landscape

7.2 Organisation and Layout

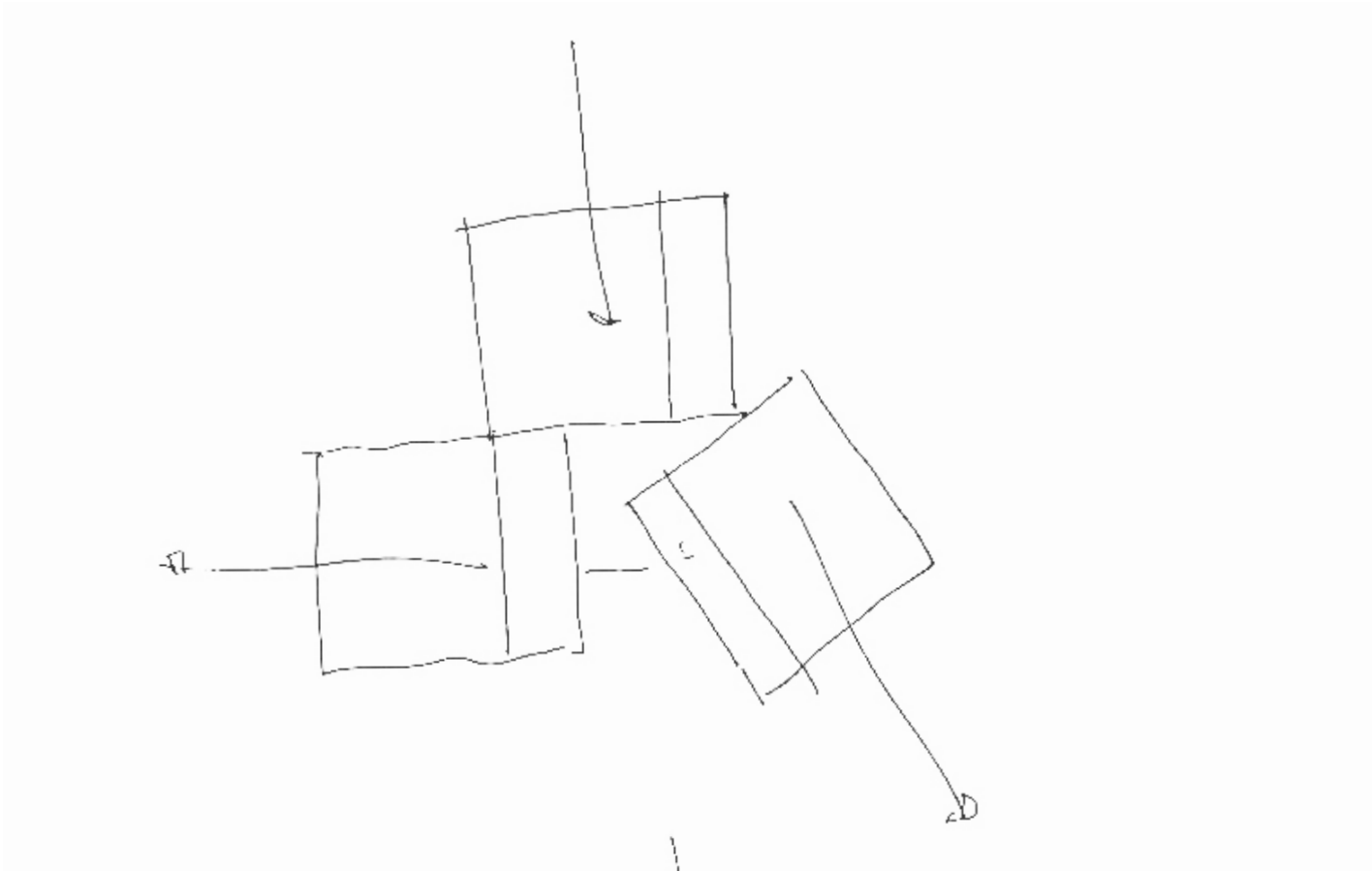
The house is organised as a small cluster of interconnected volumes arranged around a central courtyard. This composition draws from the loose courtyard typology of local farmsteads, allowing the building to be read as a group rather than a singular mass, while establishing a clear and legible internal order.

The plan is conceived as a predominantly single-storey dwelling, with all primary accommodation arranged on one level. This ensures full accessibility across the house and allows for direct, level relationships between interior and exterior spaces.

The organisation is structured around three principal elements: intimacy, community and utility. These are expressed as distinct volumes arranged around the courtyard, each with its own character while remaining part of a unified whole.

The more private “intimacy” wing is positioned to the quieter side of the site and contains the bedrooms and associated spaces. The “community” wing forms the heart of the house, accommodating dining and living spaces, and opening directly towards the orchard and wider landscape. The “utility” wing anchors the house to the point of arrival, incorporating entrance, storage and kitchen, reinforcing the agricultural logic of the site.

The courtyard acts as the central organising device, both spatially and environmentally. It provides a sheltered external room and a point of orientation, with movement through the house occurring around it. This ensures clarity of navigation and constant visual connection to the landscape.



Development sketch exploring plan organisation



Development sketch exploring spatial experiences of emerging plan



Development sketch exploring plan organisation



Development model exploring form conceived in relation to emerging plan



Collaged site plan showing proposed spatial organisation

Circulation is simple and intuitive, with a direct relationship between all parts of the house. Spaces are arranged as a sequence rather than a corridor, allowing movement to be understood through use and view rather than signage or hierarchy. This approach supports long-term accessibility and ease of occupation.

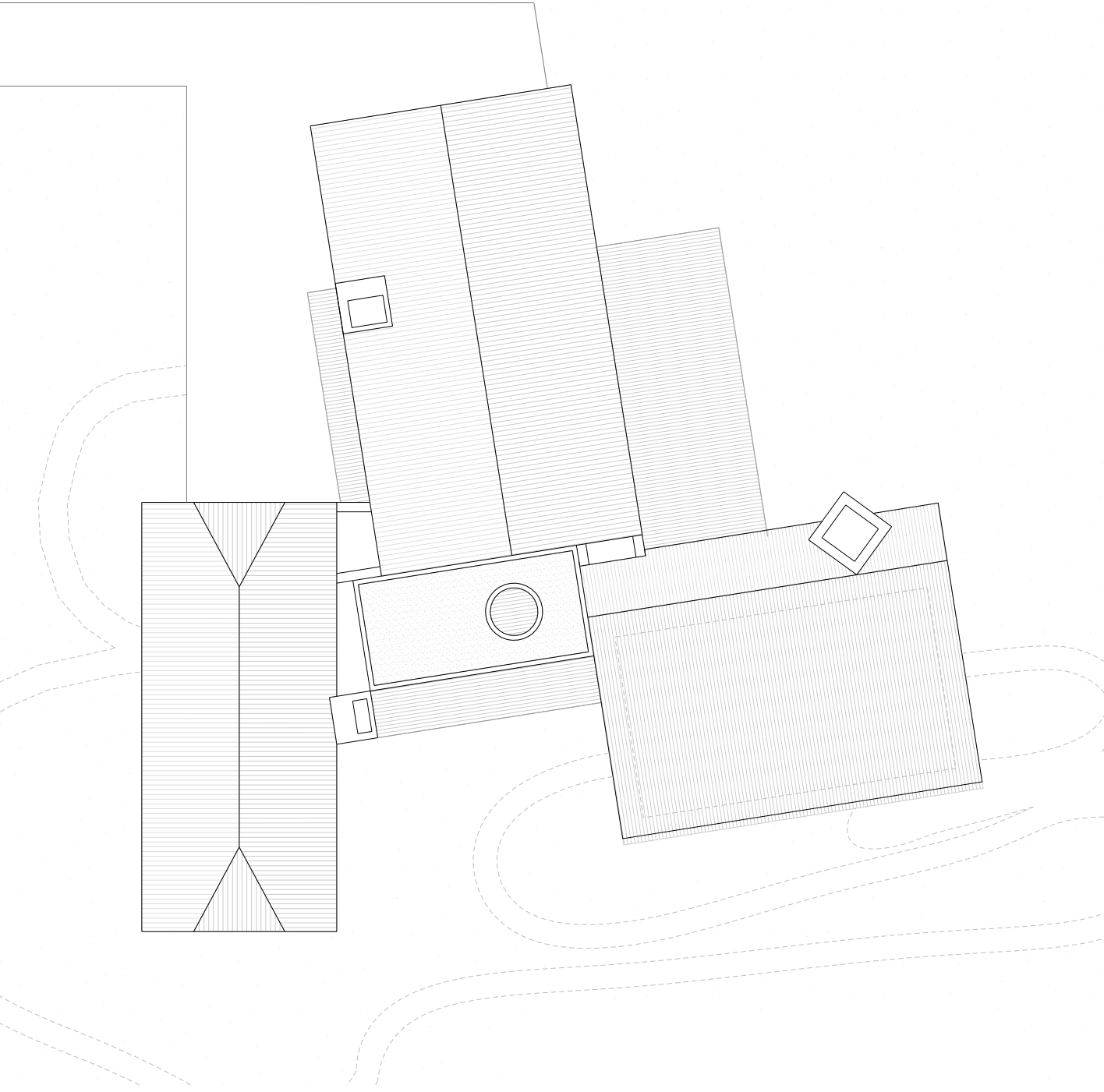
The organisation also responds to environmental conditions. The community spaces are oriented to capture morning light and long views, while the more private rooms are set within the more sheltered parts of the plan. The courtyard and building depth allow for controlled light, shade and natural ventilation throughout.

- 01 Entrance Lobby
- 02 Garage
- 03 Kitchen
- 04 Kitchen Terrace
- 05 Sunrise Terrace
- 06 Guest Bedroom
- 07 Bedrooms
- 08 Master Bedroom
- 09 Dining Room
- 10 Reception

Key to main image



Proposed figure ground floor plan



Proposed first floor plan

7.3 Structure and Form

The form of the house is derived from the study of local agricultural buildings across the High Weald. These are typically simple, robust volumes with clear structural logic, expressed through pitched roofs and a restrained material palette. The proposal adopts this language, not through direct imitation, but through a careful abstraction of proportion, mass and construction.

The house is conceived as a series of timber-framed volumes, each expressed as a distinct element within the wider composition. The structure is legible both internally and externally, with the rhythm of the frame informing the scale and ordering of the elevations. This approach allows the building to read as a group of smaller elements, reducing its apparent scale within the landscape.

The primary structure is timber, supported on a low masonry base. This reflects local building traditions while minimising the use of high-carbon materials. The use of timber also allows for a precise and controlled construction, supporting the ambition for a building that is both materially honest and carefully detailed.

Roof forms are expressed as a series of simple pitched volumes, responding to the varied typologies found in local barns and outbuildings. These are arranged to reflect the internal organisation of the house, while also mediating between the domestic scale of the courtyard and the wider agricultural landscape.

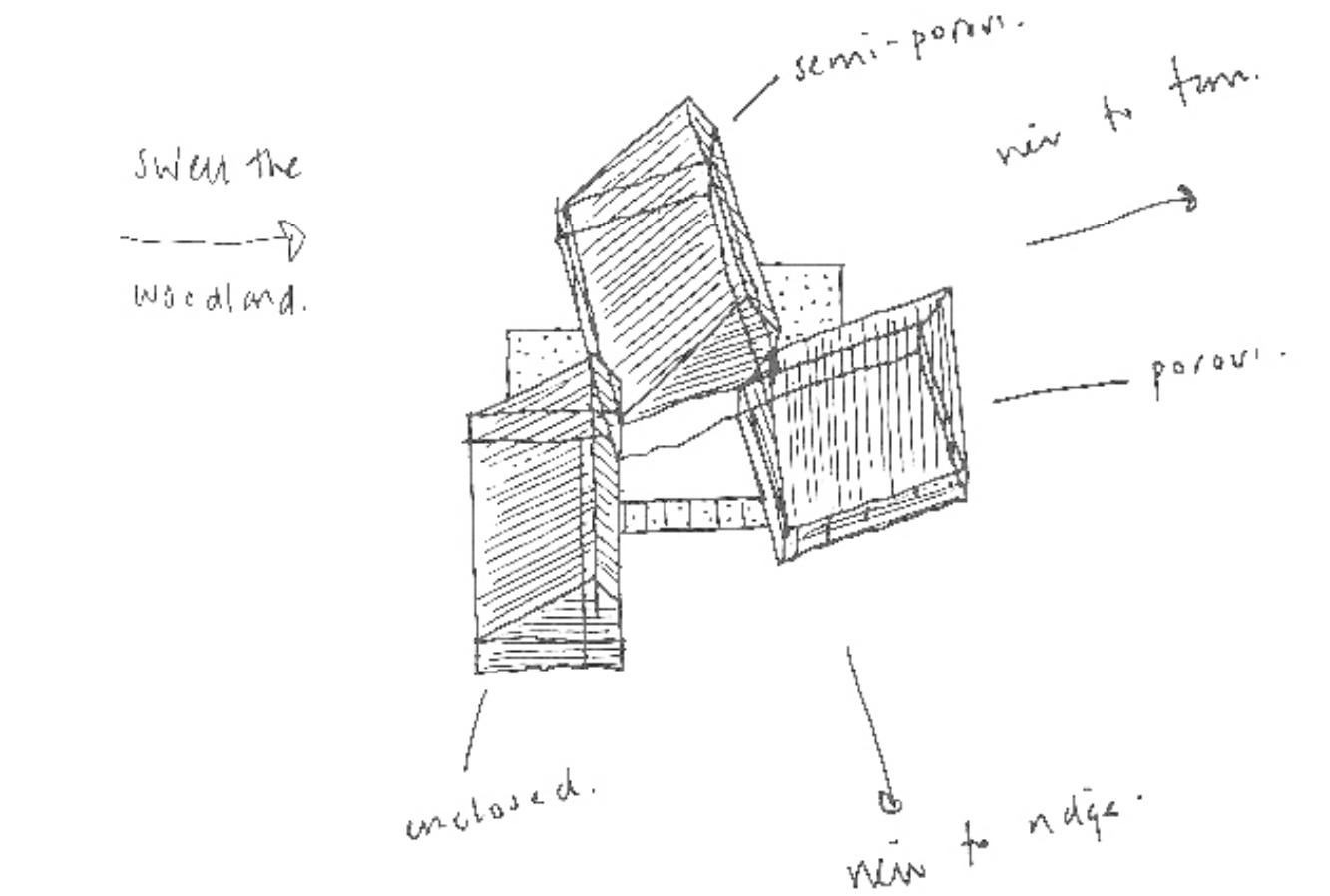
The articulation of the form is informed by both environmental and spatial considerations. Deep eaves and carefully positioned openings provide shading and shelter, while allowing for controlled views out to the surrounding fields and woodland. The buildings are not symmetrical or uniform, but respond subtly to orientation, use and landscape.

The composition avoids a singular, dominant form. Instead, it operates as an assembly of elements that together establish a coherent identity. This approach reinforces the reading of the house as a contemporary farmstead, embedded within the landscape rather than imposed upon it.

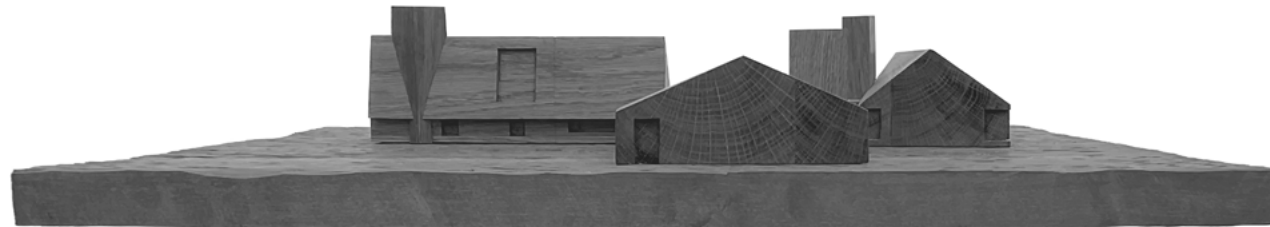
The relationship between structure and form is therefore direct and deliberate: the way the building stands up is closely tied to how it is perceived. This clarity is central to the architectural intention, ensuring that the house remains grounded, legible and appropriate to its setting.



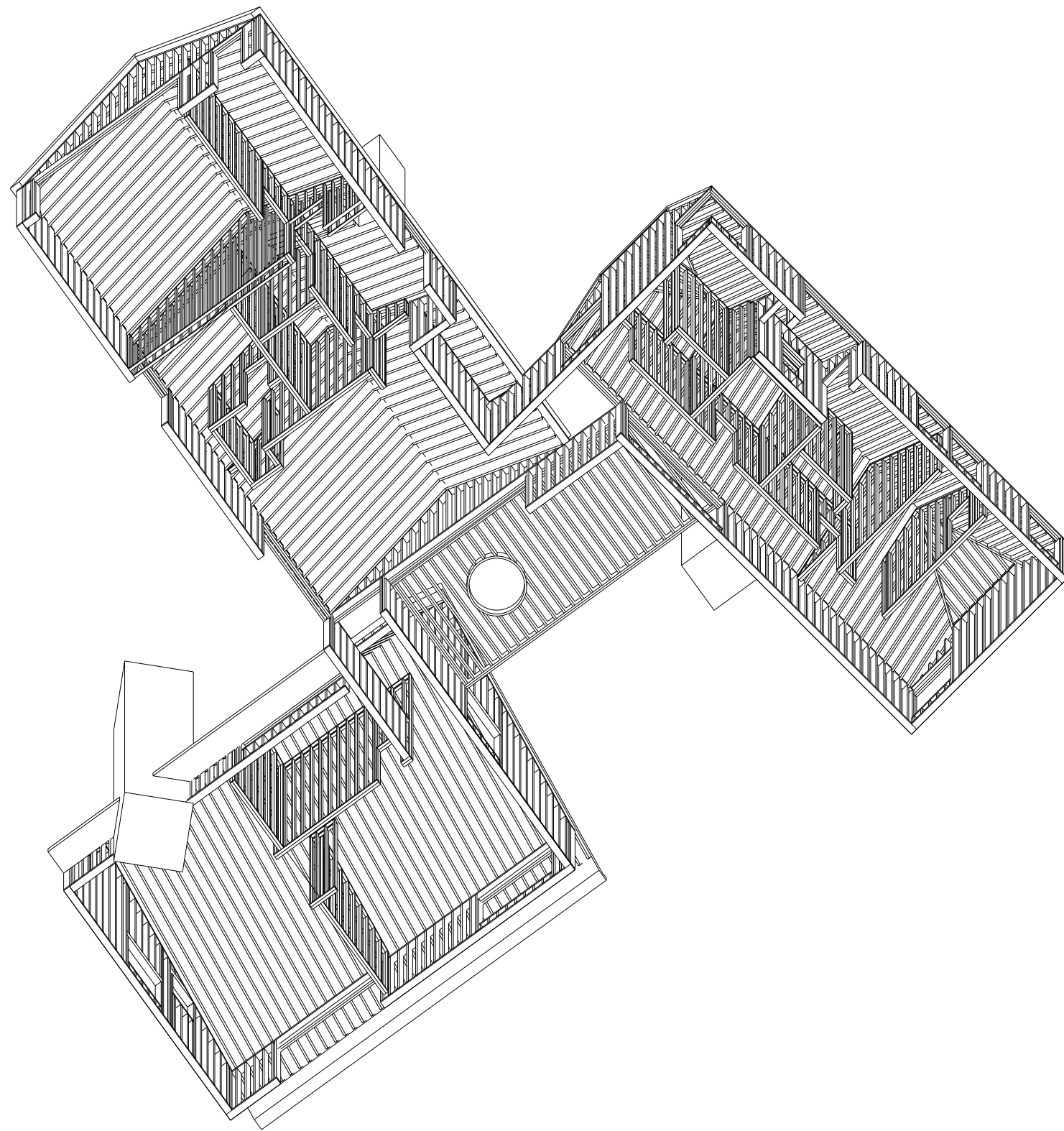
References for structure and form from local farmstead types



Development sketch exploring structure and form



Development model exploring structure and form



Development worm's-eye axonometric projection exploring timber structure and form