

7.9 Local Collaboration

From the outset, Lucy and Nick have been committed to delivering a house that is not only well made, but rooted in how it is built. The project is intended to demonstrate how a contemporary rural house can be constructed using local skills, natural materials, and straightforward methods that can be understood and repeated.

The proposal is not just about the finished building, but about the process of making it. The use of timber structure, hempcrete infill and lime-based finishes lends itself to a slower, more tactile construction process, one that can accommodate learning and participation alongside delivery.

The site sits within reach of a number of further education colleges and training providers across Mid Sussex and the wider region, including those in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Crawley, where courses in carpentry, joinery, brickwork and construction skills are actively taught. These institutions represent a live network of emerging tradespeople working with both traditional and contemporary methods.

There is an opportunity for the project to engage with this network during construction. This could take the form of site visits, small-scale involvement in specific elements of the build, or collaboration with specialist suppliers and contractors already working with these materials. The intention is not to formalise this into a fixed programme, but to allow the project to remain open enough to support meaningful engagement where it adds value.

Lucy and Nick are supportive of this approach and see the house as something that can contribute, in a modest way, to a broader culture of building. The project is therefore positioned not as a one-off object, but as part of a wider shift toward lower-impact construction and a more direct relationship between design, material and making.

The construction process will also be documented, allowing knowledge gained through the project to be shared more widely. This reflects the ambition that the work should be legible — both in how it is built and in what it can offer beyond the site itself.

Skills Bootcamp in Construction – Bricklaying

Construction

Crawley

2 Weeks

X

Part Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Carpenters and Joiners – Architectural Joinery

Carpentry & Joinery

Crawley

1 Year

2

Full Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Carpenters and Joiners – Architectural Joinery

Carpentry & Joinery

Crawley

1 Year

2

Part Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Carpenters and Joiners – Site Carpentry

Carpentry & Joinery

Crawley

1 Year

2

Full Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Carpenters and Joiners – Site Carpentry

Carpentry & Joinery

Crawley

1 Year

2

Part Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Bricklaying

Brickwork

Crawley

1 Year

2

Full Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Bricklaying

Brickwork

Crawley

1 Year

2

Part Time

VIEW COURSE

NOCN L2 Ext Tech Dip Occupational Entry for Bricklaying

Brickwork

Crawley

1 Year

2

Part Time

VIEW COURSE

HNC in Construction Management for England

Construction

Crawley

2 Years

4+

Part Time

Gain the skills needed to plan, manage and deliver modern construction projects. This Higher Technical Qualification focuses on digital tools, project management and sustainability in the built environment.

VIEW COURSE

ASC L2 Dip in Skills for Employment in the Construction Industries

Brickwork

Crawley

1 Year

2

Full Time

VIEW COURSE



Screengrabs from local college websites



Photographs at hempcrete building workshop undertaken by Architect Benjamin Machin

8.0 Access Statement

8.1 Access Strategy

Access is integral to the proposal and has informed the siting, form and organisation of the dwelling from the outset. The house is designed to support long-term occupation by a wheelchair user, with movement through the site and building considered as a continuous and legible sequence rather than a series of compliant moments.

The strategy prioritises ease of arrival, clarity of movement and independence in daily use. This extends from the lane, through the landscape and into the house, and is embedded in the relationship between rooms, thresholds and external space. The intention is to provide a setting that can be used without adjustment or negotiation, and which remains adaptable over time.



Photograph of clients at site visit

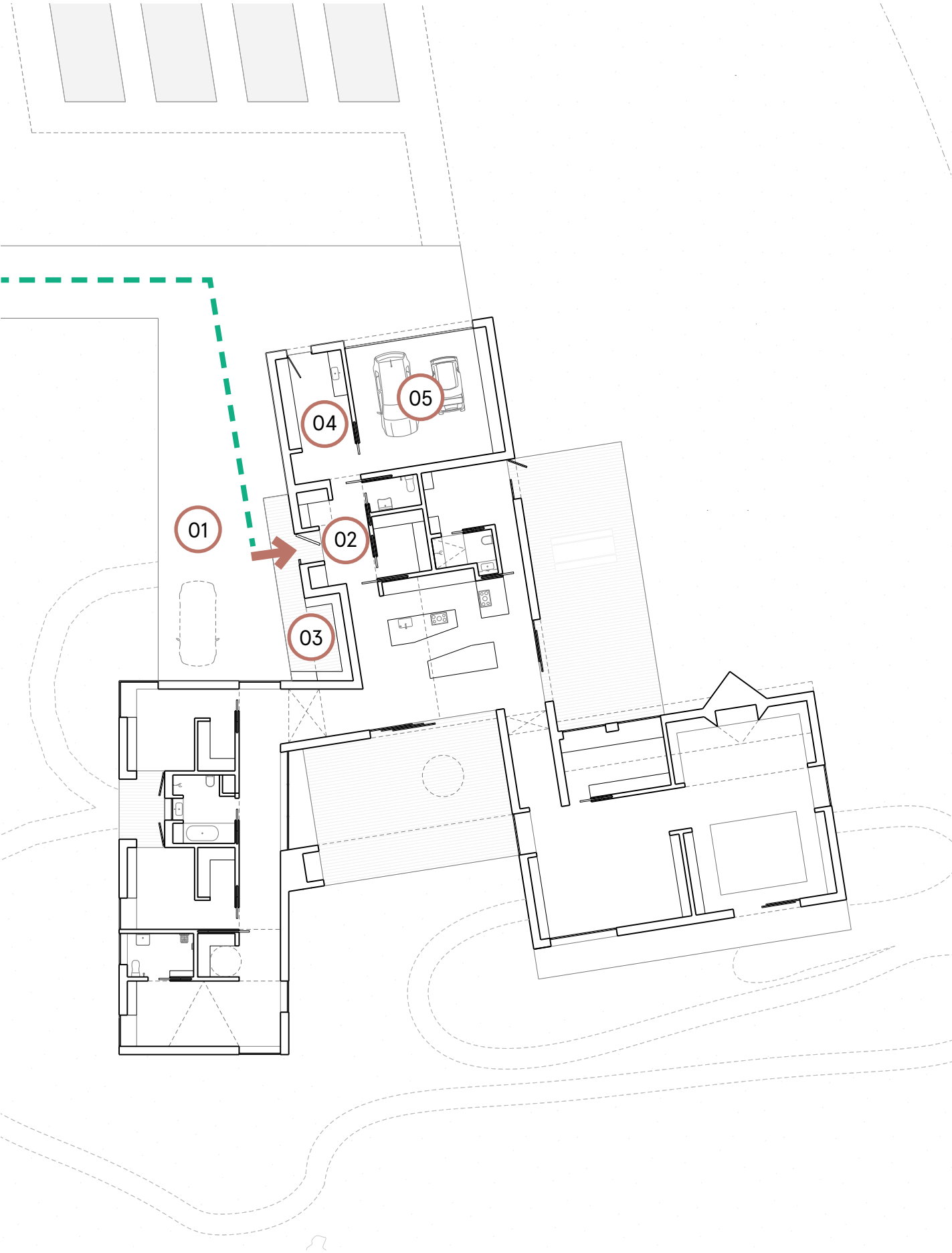
8.2 Approach and Arrival

Access from the lane is designed as a calm transition rather than a point of interruption. The entrance aligns with the established pattern of rural field access while providing clear visibility and a controlled point of entry.

From this point, movement towards the house is direct and readable. The approach avoids unnecessary changes in level and separates pedestrian movement from vehicle manoeuvring. Arrival is organised around a small forecourt, allowing a short and sheltered route from vehicle to entrance.

Key to plan adjacent

- 01 Yard
- 02 Entrance lobby
- 03 Covered recess seating
- 04 Utility
- 05 Garage
- Approach to dwelling
- Proposed Access



Location plan denoting proposed access to site

8.3 Entrance, Visibility and Highway Safety

A new vehicular access is proposed from Montes Hill, aligned with the established pattern of field entrances. The position has been selected to provide appropriate visibility in both directions while limiting intervention to the existing hedgerow.

Visibility splays will be provided in accordance with national guidance and maintained clear of obstruction. Their extent responds to the character and speed of the lane, ensuring a proportionate and safe arrangement.

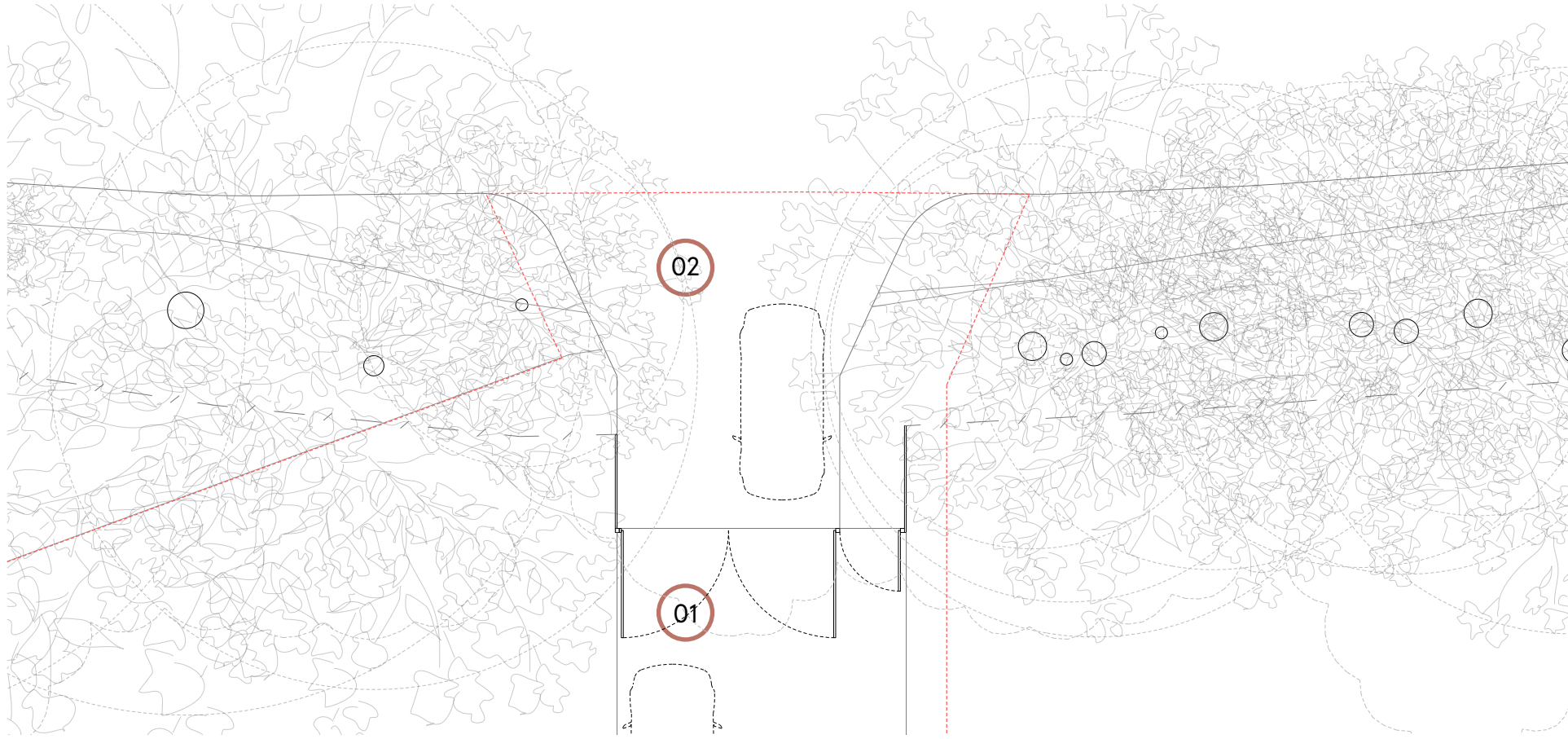
Vehicles can enter and leave the site in a forward gear, with adequate turning space provided within the site. Gates, where proposed, will be set back to allow vehicles to wait clear of the carriageway.

The hedgerow will be locally opened to form the access and reinforced to either side. Vegetation within the visibility splays will be managed to remain below 600mm, maintaining clear sightlines while retaining the wider rural edge.

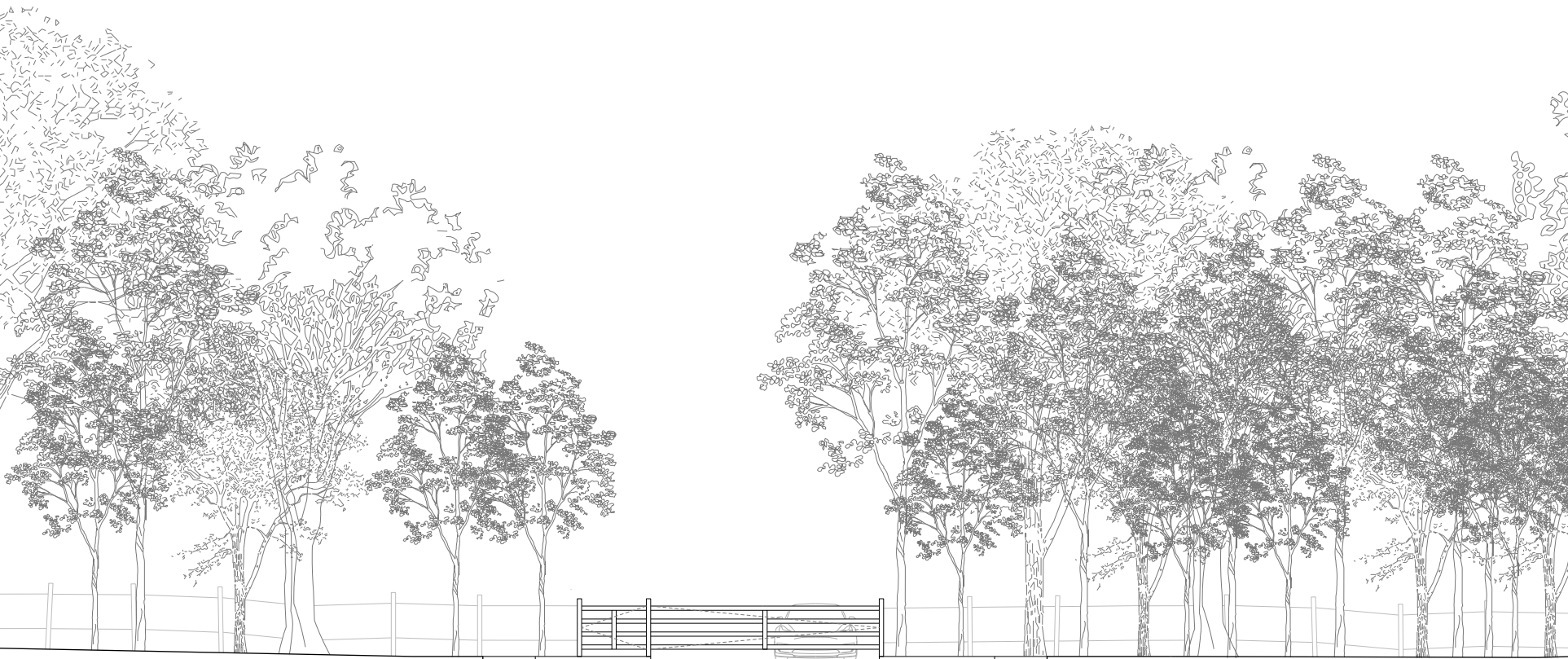
The access is designed as a simple, legible opening, avoiding an engineered or suburban character. It provides a safe and policy-compliant point of entry consistent with the lane and its use.

Key to plan adjacent

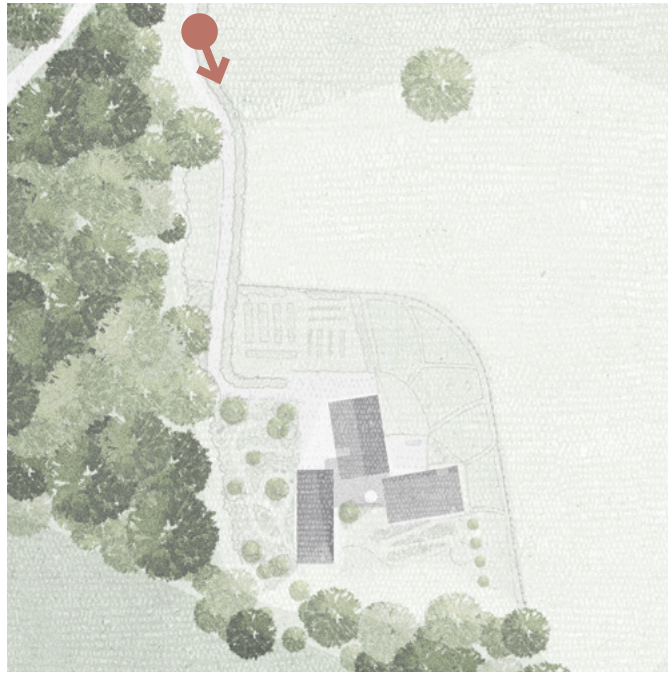
- 01 Space for two cars at the entrance
- 02 Wide view both up and down the road



Extract of ground floor plan denoting entrance gates and vehicular access



Elevation denoting access to site



Key plan to viewpoint



Artist's impression of the proposed approach to the house through the landscape from the north

8.4 Parking and Transfer

Parking is positioned immediately adjacent to the principal entrance to minimise travel distance. The forecourt is dimensioned to allow side and rear transfer from a vehicle, including the use of mobility equipment and assisted movement where required.

The space is conceived as usable ground rather than a standard parking bay, allowing for turning, waiting and unloading without constraint. Visitor parking and service access are accommodated without compromising the primary accessible route.

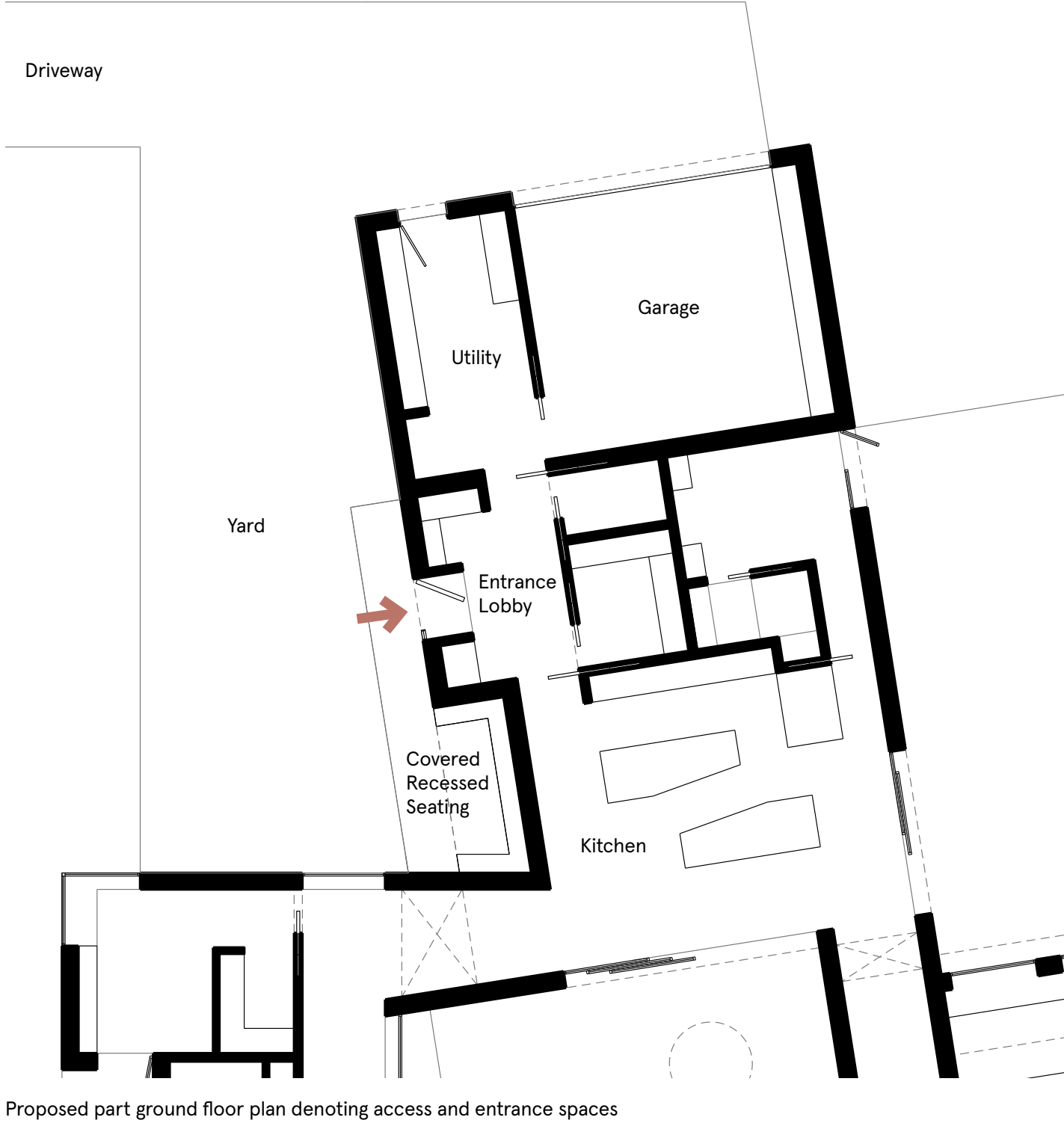
8.5 External Movement

The landscape closest to the house is designed as part of the accessible environment. Principal routes are firm, even and durable, with gradients moderated to allow comfortable use throughout the year.

Where changes in level occur, they are absorbed into the wider ground rather than resolved through isolated interventions. Routes are sufficiently wide to allow passing and turning, and are laid out to follow natural movement patterns between entrance, courtyard and garden.

The courtyard forms the primary external room of the house. It provides a level, protected surface for daily use and enables movement between the different parts of the dwelling without reliance on longer external routes.

Informed by precedents of accessible landscape design, gradients are kept shallow wherever possible, with longer routes incorporating moments of rest and reduced fall to ease movement over distance.



8.6 Access into the House

The principal entrance is level and legible as the main point of arrival. Thresholds are flush and detailed to avoid interruption to movement. The entrance provides sufficient space for approach, opening and assisted use without compression.

Doors are sized and specified to allow straightforward wheelchair access, with clear openings and appropriate manoeuvring space. The entrance sequence is conceived as part of the architecture of the house, rather than a secondary accessible provision.

8.7 Internal Arrangement

The dwelling is arranged on a single level, removing the need for vertical circulation and allowing all principal spaces to be used directly. The plan is organised to reduce reliance on corridors, enabling movement to follow the logic of daily use.

Circulation space is embedded within rooms and at key junctions, allowing turning and passing without interruption. Doors and openings are positioned to avoid conflict with furniture and movement.

The relationship between kitchen, living and courtyard is central to this approach, allowing continuous movement through the most frequently used spaces and supporting shared occupation without restriction.



Proposed ground floor plan

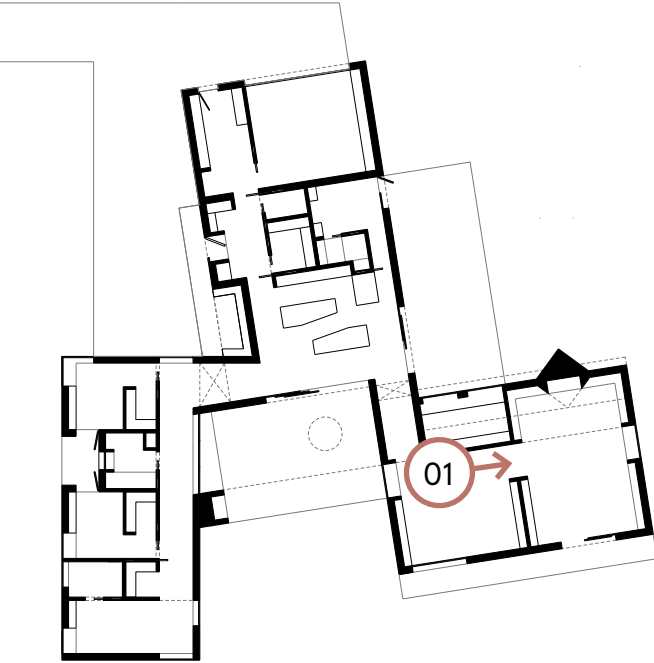
8.8 Rooms and Use

The principal bedroom, bathroom and living spaces are designed to function as a coherent and fully accessible environment. Bedrooms allow approach and transfer, while storage is integrated at usable heights.

Bathrooms are planned from the outset to support assisted and independent use, with clear transfer space, level-access showers and allowance for future fittings. Structural provision for adaptation is incorporated within the fabric of the building.

The kitchen is designed as a primary working space, with sufficient clearance for turning and side approach, and the ability to accommodate seated use where required.

External elements are also considered in this way. For example, features such as raised planting can be designed to allow side-on wheelchair access and incorporate discreet support, extending usability into the garden rather than limiting it to the interior.



Key plan



Collage of proposed interior

8.9 Adaptability

The house is designed to accommodate change over time. This includes the potential for additional support fittings, changes to internal layouts, and the integration of equipment without major alteration.

This approach is reflected in the single-storey arrangement, generous circulation, and the close relationship between parking, entrance and principal rooms. Accessibility is therefore understood as an ongoing condition rather than a fixed requirement.

8.10 Practical Use

Refuse storage and servicing are located to allow straightforward access from the house, avoiding unnecessary travel across uneven ground. External routes remain continuous and unobstructed, with lighting and surface treatment supporting safe use in all conditions.

The intention is that the house can be occupied and maintained without friction, and that everyday tasks remain simple and manageable.



Proposed section through house

9.0 Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement has set out the basis of the proposal and the approach taken to its development. The scheme has been informed by a close reading of the site, its landscape setting and its existing patterns of use, alongside a clear understanding of the policy context within which it sits.

The design has been developed through a structured and iterative process, including two rounds of pre-application advice and engagement with an independent Design Review Panel. This process has been instrumental in shaping the proposal. Key aspects of the scheme — including its siting, massing, landscape relationship and environmental strategy — have been tested and refined in response to this review, resulting in a more resolved and grounded outcome.

The house is positioned carefully within the site to balance visibility, access and relationship to the surrounding landscape. Its form and organisation draw from local precedents while remaining specific to the conditions of this place. The building is arranged as a cluster of simple volumes, reducing its apparent scale and allowing it to sit comfortably within the field pattern and surrounding tree structure.

Access has been considered as a fundamental part of the design from the outset. The layout, thresholds and external spaces are designed to support long-term, independent use, responding directly to the needs of the client. In particular, the arrangement of spaces and movement through the building has been developed to support wheelchair use in a way that is integrated and dignified, going beyond minimum compliance to provide a robust and adaptable domestic environment. Movement through the site and building is clear, legible and without unnecessary complication.

The environmental strategy is embedded within the architecture of the building. Energy demand is reduced through form, orientation and construction, with a fabric-first approach supported by efficient systems and on-site generation. The material strategy reinforces this position, prioritising low embodied energy, simplicity of construction and long-term durability.

Materials are selected and used in a way that reflects both local character and contemporary construction methods. The use of timber structure, hemp-based construction and a continuous shingle skin creates a coherent and legible building, grounded in its setting and in the way it is made.

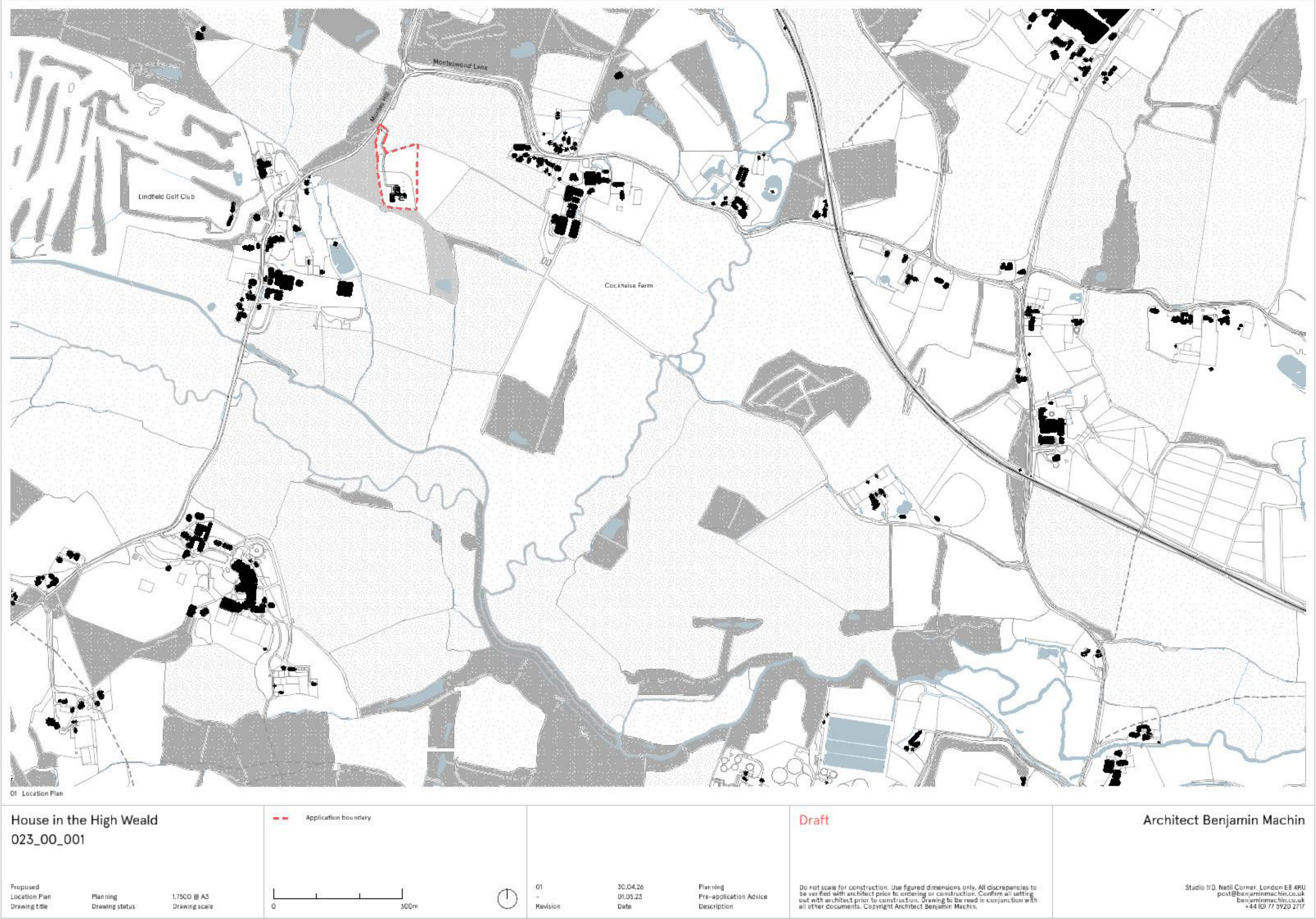
The proposal therefore demonstrates an exceptional quality of design. This quality arises from the way the building is made — through the integration of site, form, construction and use into a single, coherent approach. It is architecture that is specific to its place, carefully resolved, and capable of enduring.

In this respect, the scheme is considered to meet the requirements of national and local planning policy, including the provisions for isolated homes in the countryside, and is fully compliant with the criteria for exceptional design.

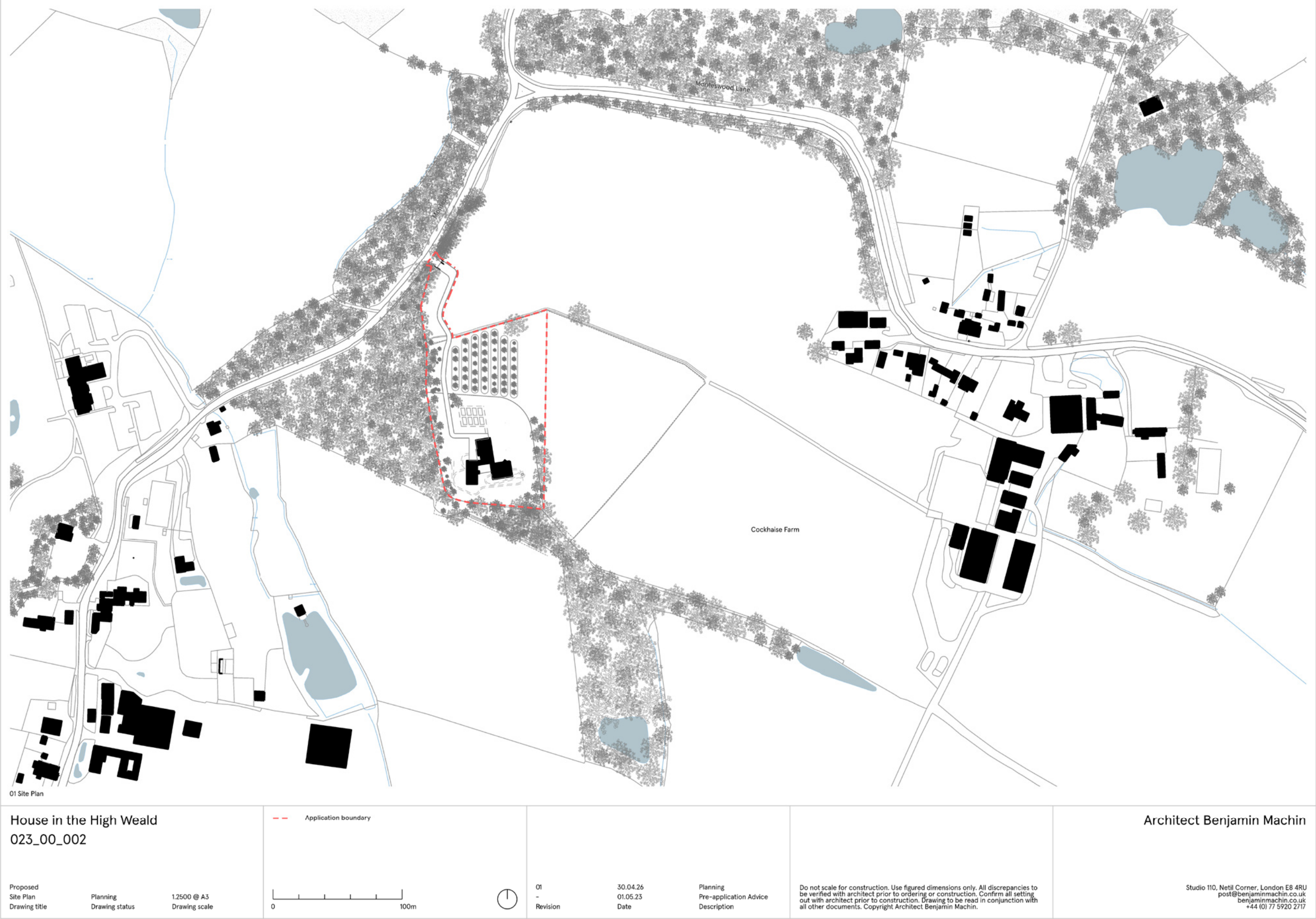
Lucy and Nick, alongside the design team, are committed to delivering a building of lasting quality. The project is intended not only as a home, but as a demonstration of how careful design, low-energy construction and a clear relationship to place can be brought together in a considered and buildable way.

Taken together, the proposal is not a singular gesture, but the outcome of a sustained and careful process of looking, testing and refining. It brings together site, form, construction and use into a single, coherent approach, where each decision supports the next. The building sits easily within its landscape, is precise in how it is made, and is robust in how it can be lived in over time. It is low in energy, durable in its construction and generous in its use. In this way, the project demonstrates a level of clarity, consistency and resolution that is appropriate to the ambitions of the proposal and capable of enduring beyond the moment of its making.

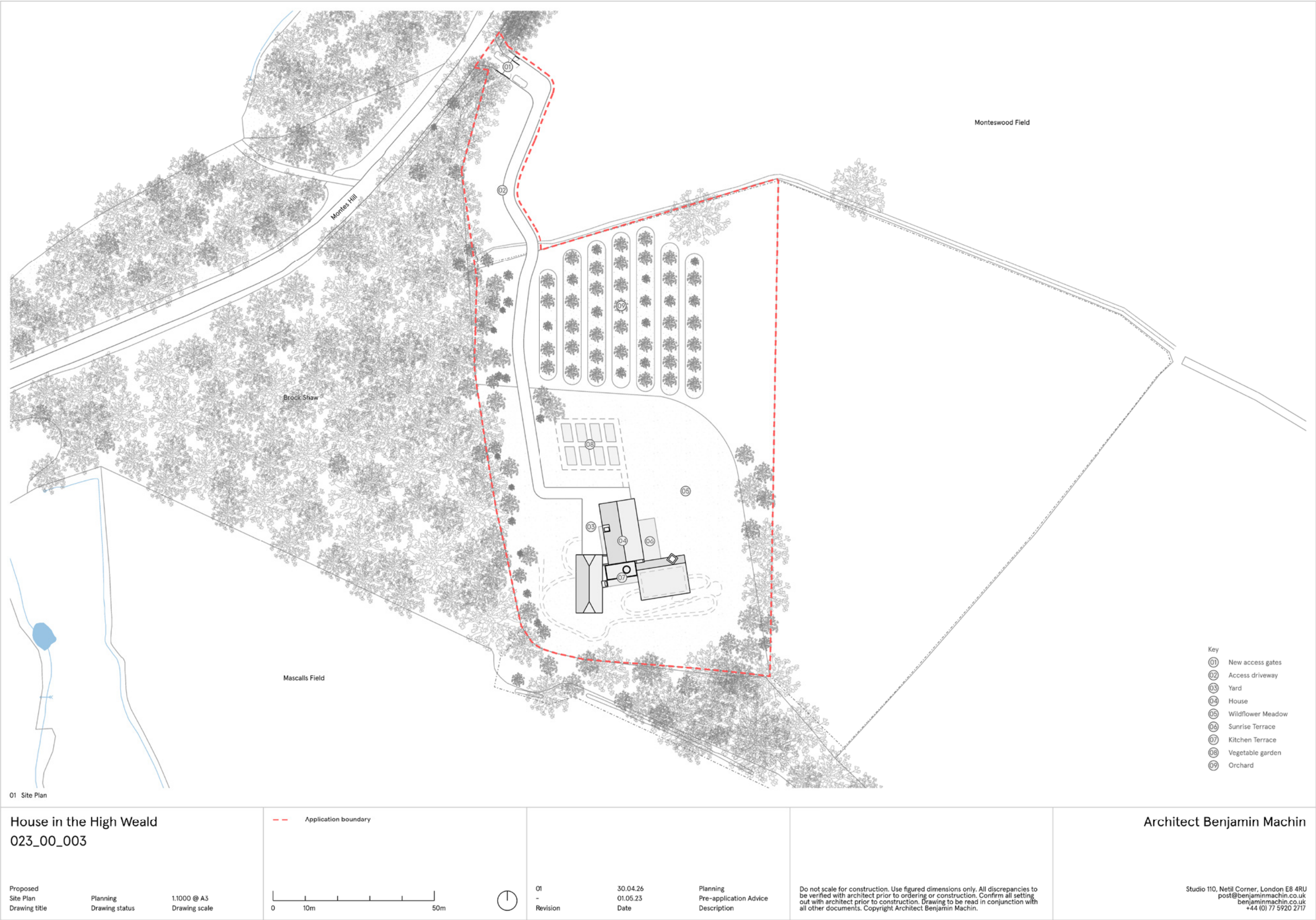




Proposed location plan



Proposed site plan



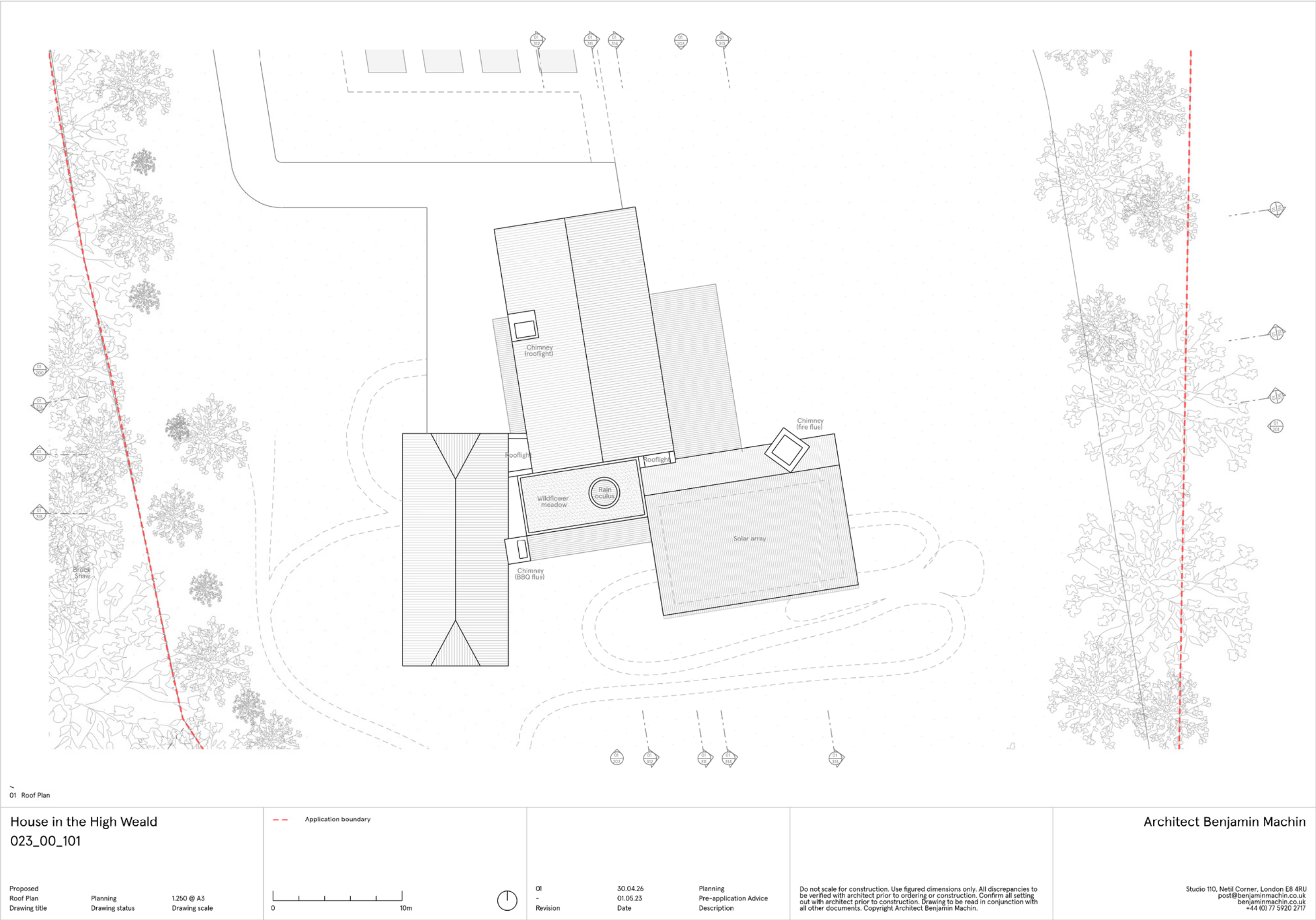
Proposed site plan



Proposed figure ground plan



Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed roof plan



Proposed site sections



Proposed site sections