

Chownes Mead Hotel - Amendments to approved scheme (DM/18/2193 & DM/18/2201)

13 bedroom hotel comprising minor internal modifications & new rear extension to listed building with new-build pool house including treatment suites, spa and pool linking to a gym, yoga studio and members lounge (facilitated by the removal of the existing pool, pool house & agricultural barn).

New secondary access from Chownes Mead Lane (with the closure of the existing access), new car parking and a comprehensive localised landscape and garden design



SECTION 3.00 - 7.00 : Design

3.00 Design Overview

3.01 The Proposal - Background & Overview

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent were granted in 2018 (DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201) for change of use of Chownes Mead to a 12-bedroom hotel with new pool house and has since been implemented by the discharge of the relevant pre-commencement conditions (a lift shaft was installed within the main building and a Certificate of Lawfulness (DM/21/2630) was subsequently granted in August 2021). Accordingly, this permitted scheme can be completed at any time in the future.

Since this time, and following an extensive design development phase spanning over 5 years, two Planning pre-app submissions have been made to Mid Sussex District Council - The first in 2023 (DM/23/1480 - response dated 17.11.23 - MSDC) and the second in 2025 (Ancient Woodland - DM/25/0133 - response dated 12.11.25 - Place Services). Both responses (alongside the extant permissions) have been influential in the further design development of the current scheme acknowledging both the listed building and heritage setting of the site as well as the adjacency to the Ancient Woodland. Each response point is referred to in sections 8 and 9 of this DAS and should be read in conjunction with this design section.

The current proposals seek minor changes to the hotel design (including a single storey rear extension) to provide a 13 bedroom hotel as well as an alternative design for the pool house. These complimentary facilities will sit alongside the hotel in the form of new-build treatment suites, spa and pool linking to a gym, yoga studio and members lounge, the latter being proposed on the site of the large agricultural barn which will be removed. Additional on-site parking will afford access to the buildings and a comprehensive localised landscape and garden design roots the buildings and spaces in their setting.

A new secondary entrance will be provided accessed from Chownes Mead Lane with the closure of the existing secondary access. The siting of this will be further north west away from the neighbours at 1 Crabtree Cottages.

The architectural ambition is underpinned by the associated landscaping scheme by Nicholas Dexter Landscape Design around the buildings dovetailing into the wider parkland estate. The existing trees remain as key features with a scheme centred on maintaining and enhancing the sites natural character.

The proposals aim to reflect the spirit of the original Gertrude Jekyll design that includes the creation of a new pond (replacing the significantly smaller existing pond) adjoining the lower ground floor of the spa building which sits alongside the internal pool.

The proposals provide a cohesive and sensitive development of the site with the aim of providing a first-class hotel with complimentary facilities to enhance the guests', visitors', all staff and end-users' enjoyment & experience of the listed building and surrounding landscapes.

The new-build elements reference the listed building and Jekyll gardens in their materiality - the Wealden water washed stonework in particular providing a deep-seated link to Chownes Mead and tying the new contemporary buildings with their heritage counterpart with a sympathetic and contextual relationship. Acknowledgement of form and function with both traditional and contemporary detailing and high-quality materials reference the setting and interplay of the built form and linking spaces.

In line with other examples of country house hotels, these facilities will be available not only for guests staying at the hotel but also a limited number of members who would be able to visit during opening hours. The limited size and extent of the facilities would in-turn cap the number of guests/members on site at any one time.

3.02 Architectural Approach

The architectural proposals are led by the site context, the heritage setting and landscapes and the grade 2 listed former country house. The primary drivers are to establish strong but wholly sensitive connections between the existing building and its setting and the new build elements in overall concept, scale, materiality, connections and the relationship between built form and landscape. The functional requirements and user interfaces also drive the design which aims to provide cohesive and wholly integrated form responding to all aspects of the site.

The architectural approach is twofold - one allied with the listed building, the other new build elements. However, whilst there is a clear distinction between the heritage and contemporary elements, the narrative remains wholly cohesive.

Where carrying out the extension works to the listed building the narrative is to replicate form, massing, scale and materiality to ensure the aesthetic, detailing, quality and workmanship of the heritage building match the existing. Internally, the approach is to propose minimal changes and ensure the listed building remains predominantly as existing.

Conversely, whilst the design approach for the new build elements is contemporary in its form and detailing, the links with the site and listed building are borne out in the choice of materials which are grounded both in the setting and location and firmly connect the heritage with the new. The new buildings aim to utilise the topography by nestling into the landscape where possible and using the relatively significant level changes across the site to maintain ground hugging structures that utilise the Wealden sandstone wall as the constant that links old and new across the site.

The new buildings are broken down into two distinct volumes that relate to their internal functions and are split to reflect the different user groups. Members will access from the East side of the site through the new secondary entrance and hotel guests to the North side of the site accessing through the main entrance. The hotel will lead out towards the treatment suites, pool and spa facilities. The common link between the two new volumes is the corten steel clad link volume which services both buildings and forms an access ribbon from one side of the site through the common areas to the other.

The stonework meets the ground wherever used as both building and garden walls as is detailed to match the listed building and the Jekyll garden walls. The upper levels are less robust with two timber clad volumes in meticulously detailed locally sourced sweet chestnut rainscreen with sliding timber screens and sweeping overhanging zinc and vegetated shallow pitched roofs. The aim is to keep the profile of the new building low and subservient in terms of the relationship with the listed building, providing a calm exterior which nestles into the gardens and woodland backdrop.

3.03 Design Overview

The proposals comprise the adaptation to and extension of Chownes Mead (the listed building), converting from 12no. bedroom single family dwelling to 13no. bedroom hotel all with en-suites plus ancillary accommodation including reception, drawing room, library, meeting room, dining rooms, kitchens, staff areas, garaging, toilets, plant, laundry and storage areas. With removal of various structures (sheds, greenhouse, chicken coop etc) as well as the demolition of the large agricultural barn and removal of the pool, poolhouse, local terrace, etc, two new build elements will be constructed comprising treatment suites, spa and pool as well as gym, yoga suite and members lounge linked by a linear lobby between the two buildings.

Overall, the proposed design is spilt into three zones which are linked by both hard and soft landscape, a new pond and existing and new built form. The existing built form as well as the extant planning permission are key to the location of each element and formulate a cohesive and clear approach in terms of user experience and appreciation of the setting as well as access to the site.

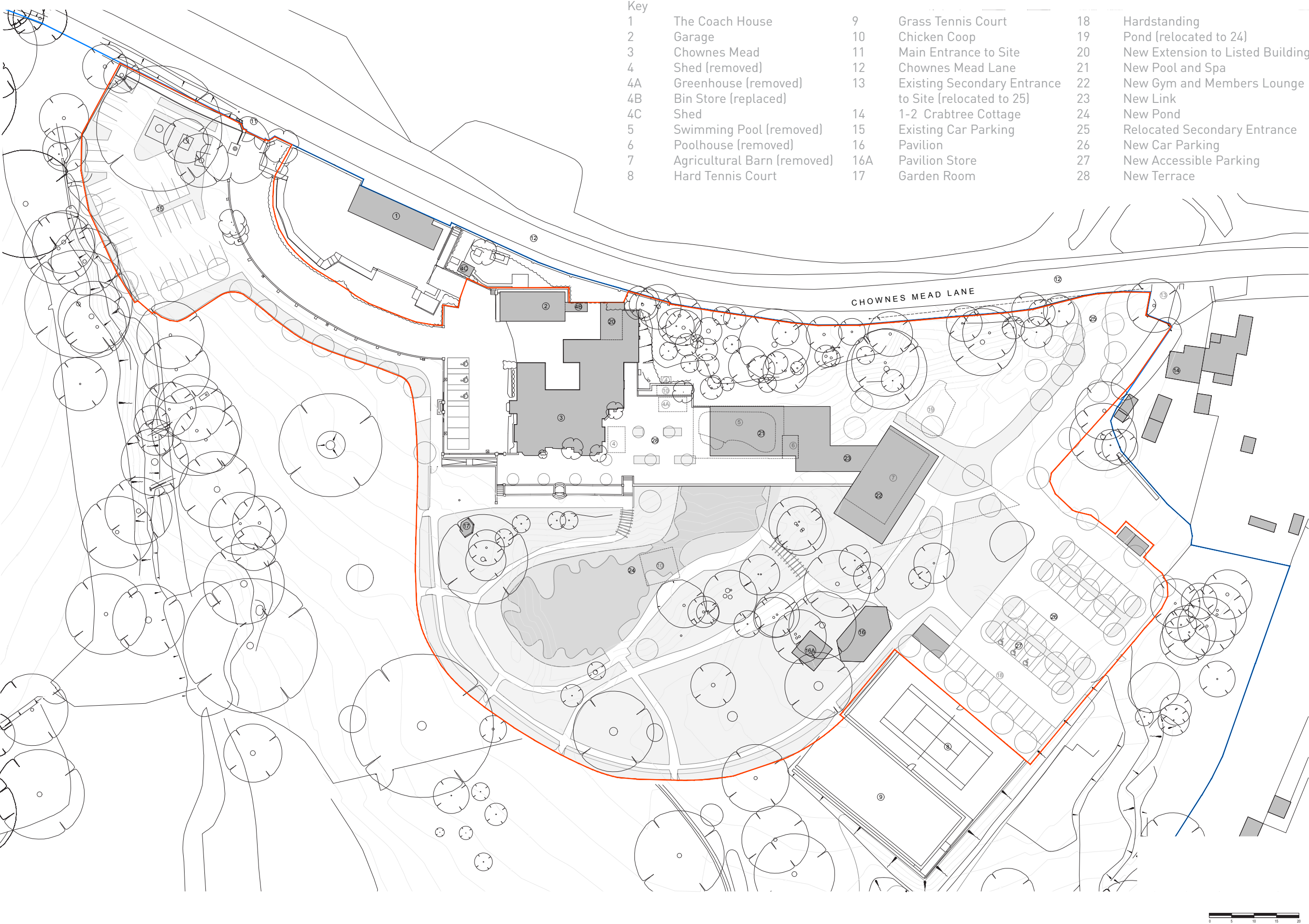
The new hotel is located within the existing listed building with discreet and sensitive alterations at all three levels which enhance the layout and add to the user experience of the building. A small single storey extension is proposed at the rear of the building which provides kitchen, ancillaries and staff areas for the hotel and reinforce the subservience of the original service wing.

The new treatment suites, spa and pool building is set centrally between the listed building and the new gym and members lounge building, with the north western facade some 19M away from the hotel across an open terrace. The new gym building is located to connect to the south eastern (secondary) entrance and is linked through to the pool building. Whilst zonally the buildings are separate, they provide a holistic and cohesive triptych with the new build being set predominantly on the footprint of the existing pool and extant pool building, as well as the gym building being positioned mostly on the footprint of the existing agricultural barn.

Visitor circulation and vehicular movements are spilt by the use of both entrance ways (including the repositioning of the south east side entrance) for separation of the hotel guests and members as well as staff and to reduce impact locally at both sides of the site.

3.00 Design Overview

3.04 Proposed Site Plan



Listed Building Kitchen Extension & Internal Modifications

4.01 Design : Massing and Use

The massing of the new extension to the rear of the listed building is such that it echoes the existing rear outrigger in design, height, pitch of roof, linear form and layout, linking to its counterpart by an internal hidden lead flat roof valley gutter. The mass is such that it is highly respectful of its relationship with the listed building and remains wholly subservient in its design, detailing and use, acting as a service extension which serves the main hotel. The new extension will be used in conjunction with the existing outrigger as a large kitchen area servicing the hotel dining areas with access to freezer, dry and cold store as well as staff changing and shower area.

4.02 Design : Layout

The extension at the rear of the listed building has been designed to read as part of the original service wing and as an ancillary service area. The existing gym, plant and utility room will be extended to the North-West to provide an enlarged kitchen area to serve the hotel.

The layout of the new extension is set out to provide an enlarged kitchen area which is serviced and entered from the rear and includes staff entry and shower, wc and changing area, dry store, freezer and cold store as well as an enlarged kitchen area for preparation, cook, assembly, pass and into service, return, plate drop and dish wash. The kitchen area is positioned such that there is direct access into the main dining space (and onto the secondary space) as well as access out onto the terrace area for al fresco dining.

The original internal hallway running North-East/South-West and leading from the centre of the main house to the rear of the property remains in order for there to be a staff exit to the rear yard to bins store , staff areas and plant etc. It also provides direct access into the kitchen and creates a lobby for separation of back of house from the guest areas.

The existing quadruple garage is proposed to serve staff areas and plant location for ease of access and maintenance with a central garage space retained for staff minibus parking which will be used to facilitate pick-up and drop-off of multiple members of staff.

The internal areas of the listed building are generally maintained as existing, with some internal alterations that are generally non-intrusive in terms of their impact on the heritage features and finishes. These are described in more detail in the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage.

Care has been taken to preserve as much as possible of the existing fabric with a view that any internal alterations are an improvement to the internal layouts and flow as well as the use of the building as a hotel with en suite shower/bath-room facilities to each room. The existing second floor level is significantly simpler in its detailing and finishes than the lower two floors and this is borne out in the changes proposed. A detail analysis of internal layout alterations can be seen in both the demolitions/modifications drawings section (10) and the Planning pre-app/full-app. comparables section (8) within this document.

4.03 Design : Scale

The scale of all of the new built form is conceived by the relationship to and with the listed building in terms of the context, hierarchy and relevance of human scale and the heritage and setting of Chownes Mead and its landscaping/ gardens.

The extension at the rear of the listed building has been designed to remain subservient to the main house and to read as an ancillary service area.

The new form takes its cues directly from the listed building outrigger and mirrors the clay tiled pitched roof in both angle of pitch and ridge height. Thus, when viewed from the rear service courtyard area the roof is no higher than the existing.

4.04 Design : Appearance

For specification, photographs and details of the proposed materials, refer to section below 6.05 Design : Appearance : Materials.

The extension to the listed building comprises materials that are wholly reflective of the original rear outrigger.

The external walls are proposed in red facing brickwork to match existing . The external facing is set out in English Bond. The pitched roof is proposed to match existing with Keymer handmade clay tiles in a random mix of 20% Elizabethan and 80 % Antique with Hand made clay hogs back ridge tiles and Bonnet hip tiles.

A traditional lead flat roof will form the centre valley section of the two (butterfly) pitched roofs and will be formed with rolls and laid to fall over drips and steps to an outlet on the North East side. Fascia’s will be painted timber to match existing and soffits will be left open with exposed rafter feet detail.

Rainwater goods will be black painted cast iron to match existing.

Rooflights are proposed and will be flush conservation style with central bar detail by the conservation rooflight company oea.

Windows and doors will be softwood white painted with all section sizes and profiles matching identical to existing.

4.05 Proposed Lower Ground & Ground Floor Plans

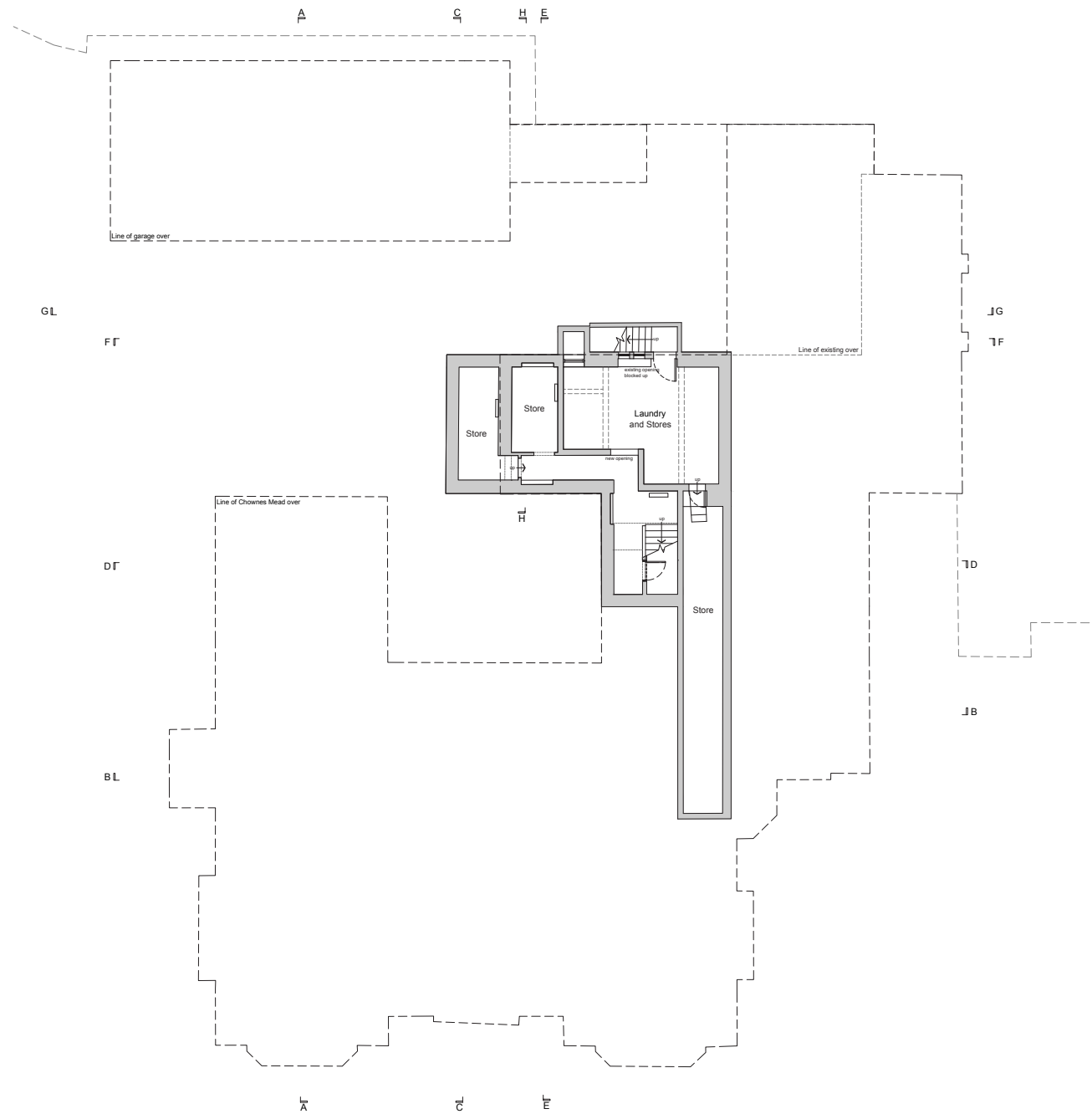
Schedule of Accommodation:

Lower Ground Floor - Laundry & Storage

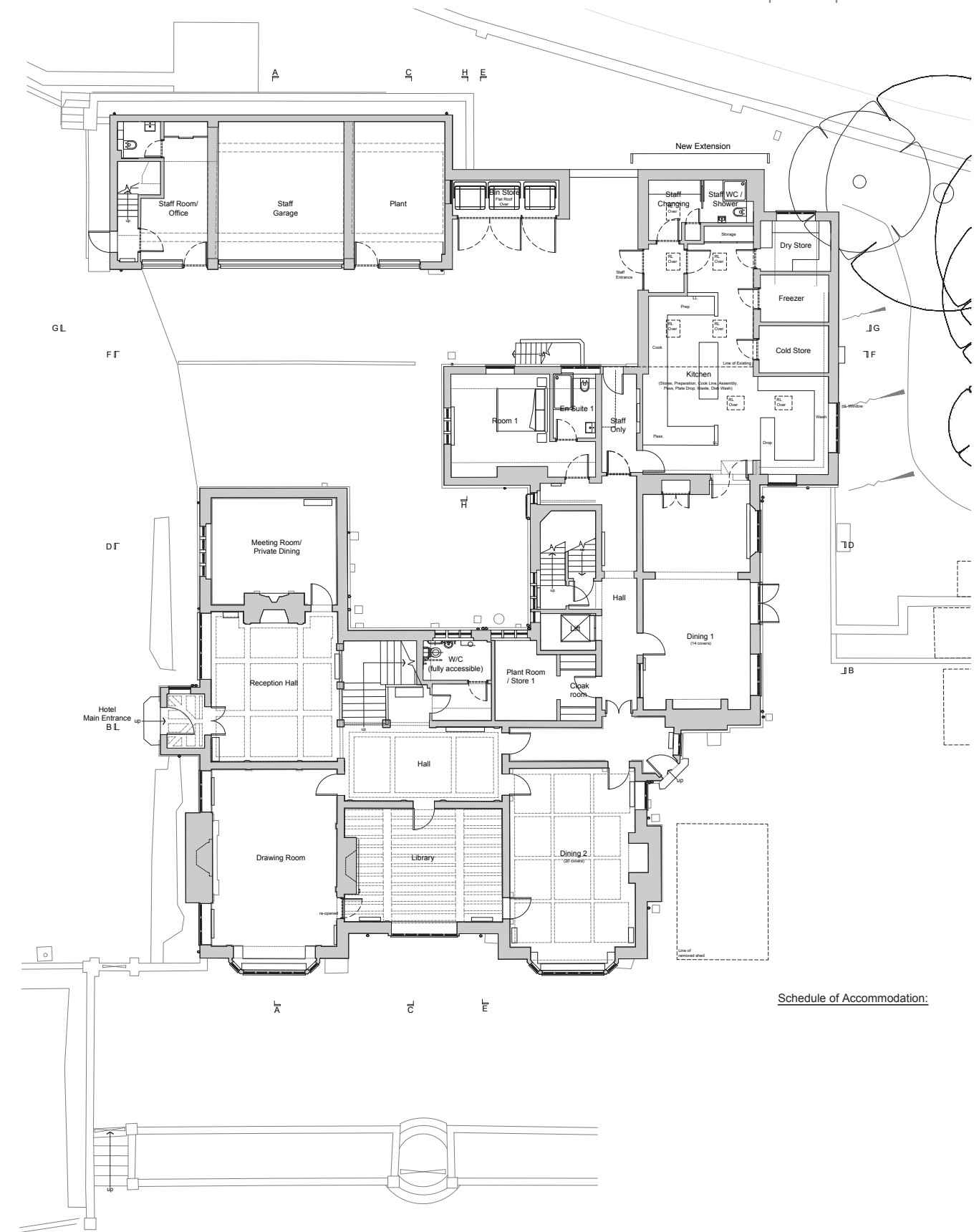
Ground Floor - Hotel entrance, public areas,(dining, meeting, drawing rooms etc), kitchen/ancillaries, staff areas + guest room 1 with en suite

Proposals comprise :

Ground floor - extension to rear to form enlarged kitchen, minor internal alterations and subdivision of garage to provide plant area and staff room.



Lower Ground Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

Schedule of Accommodation:



4.00 Design : Chownes Mead

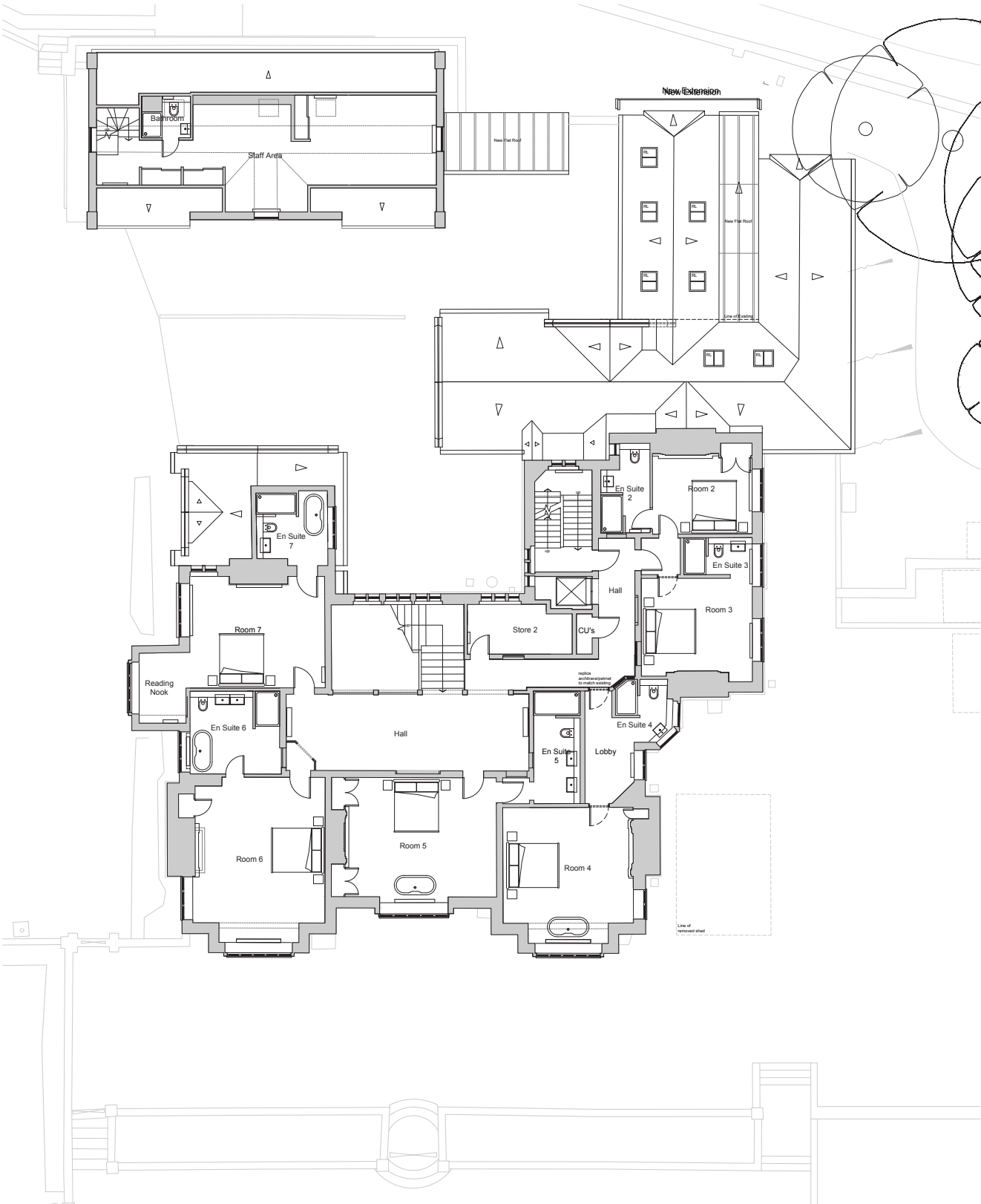
4.06 Proposed First & Second Floor Plans

Schedule of Accommodation:

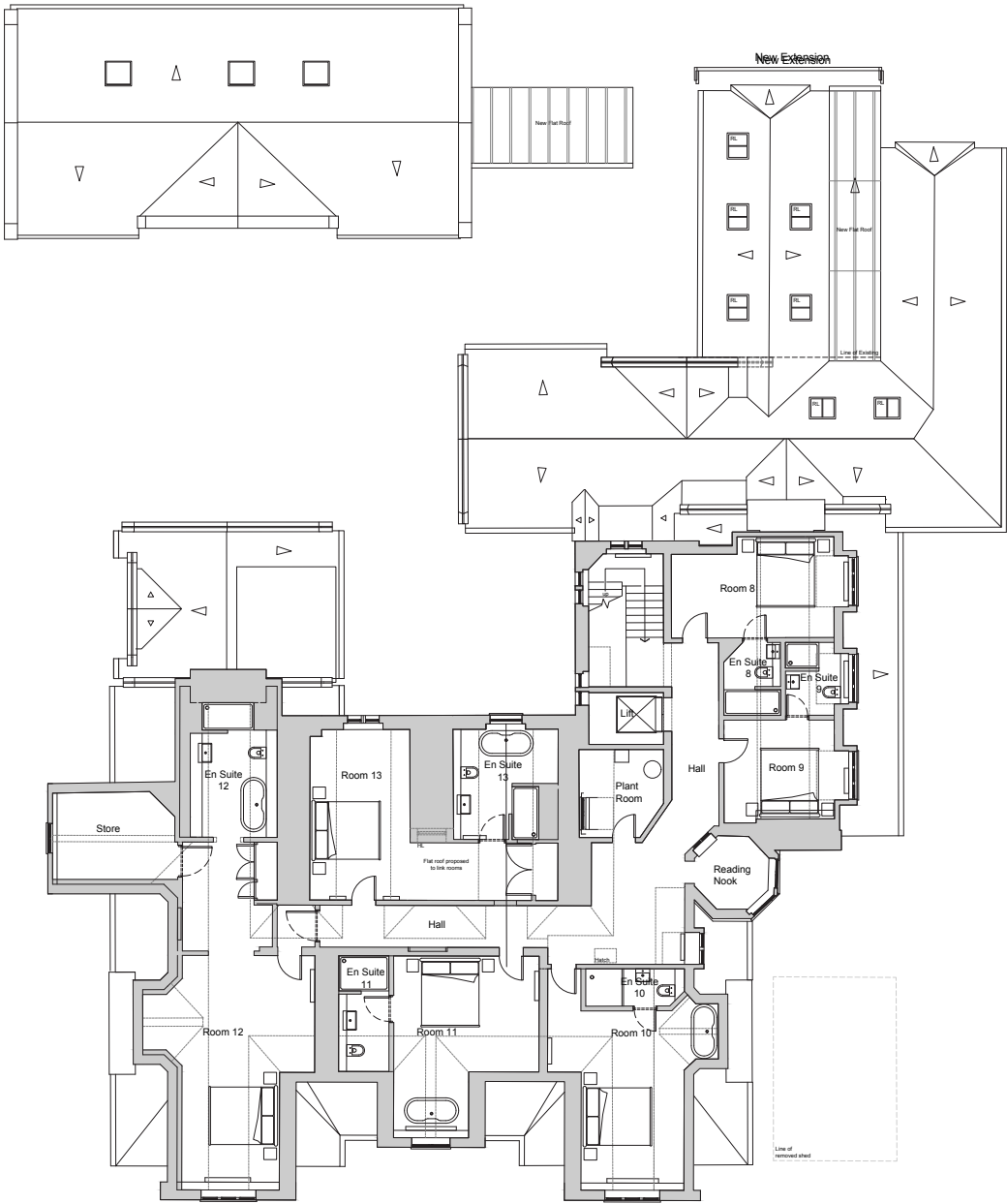
First Floor - guest rooms 2-7 all with en suites, hotel services and storage
Second Floor- guest rooms 8-13 all with en suites, hotel plant services and storage

Proposals comprise :

First floor : minor internal alterations to form ensuite bath/shower rooms.
Second floor : minor internal alterations to form ensuite bath/shower rooms + new dormer to rear.



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



4.00 Design : Chownes Mead

4.07 Proposed Elevations



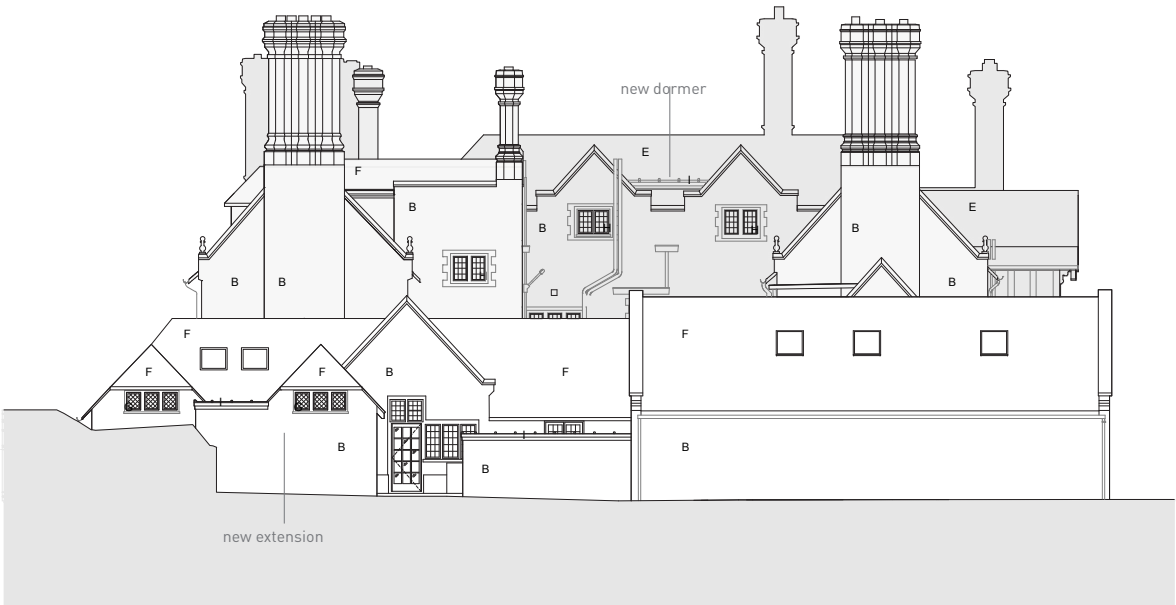
Proposed North West Elevation



Proposed South West Elevation

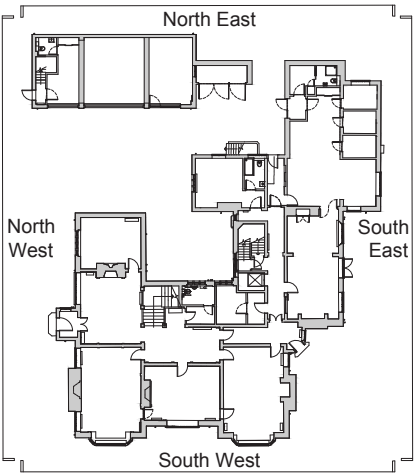


Proposed South East Elevation



Proposed North East Elevation

Proposals (elevational) comprise :
Ground Floor : single storey pitched roof extension to rear (of kitchens)
First Floor remains as existing.
Second floor : lead dormer to rear of bedroom 13



Key Plan @ GF (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



4.00 Design : Chownes Mead

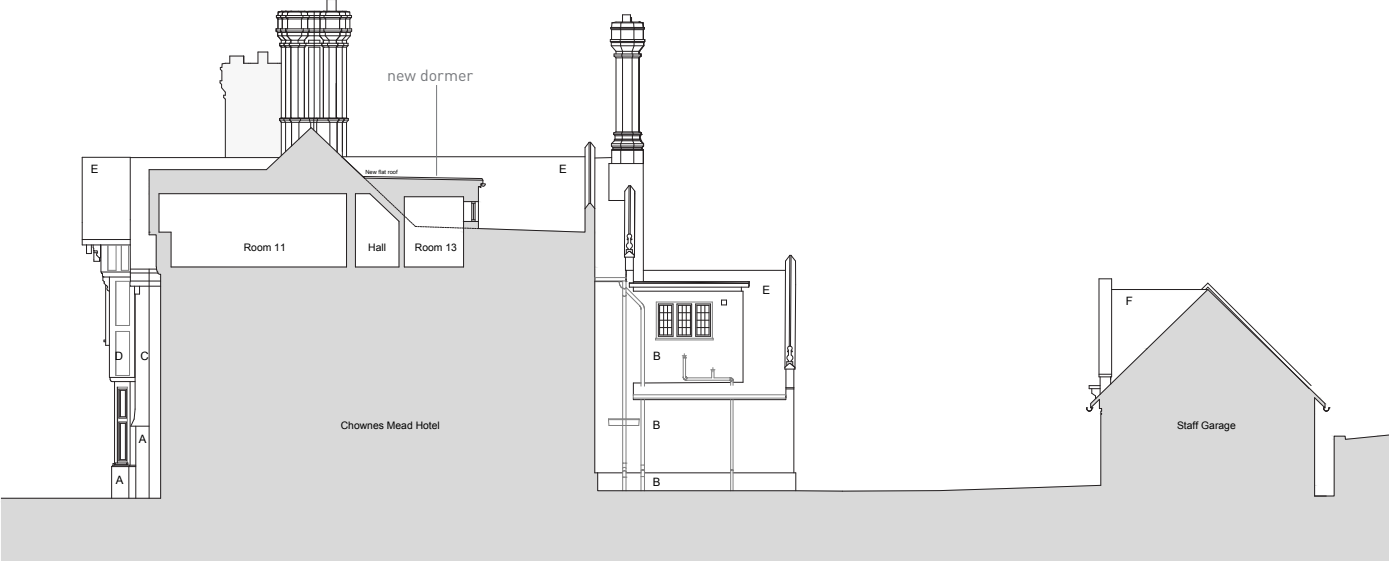
4.08 Proposed Sectional Elevations



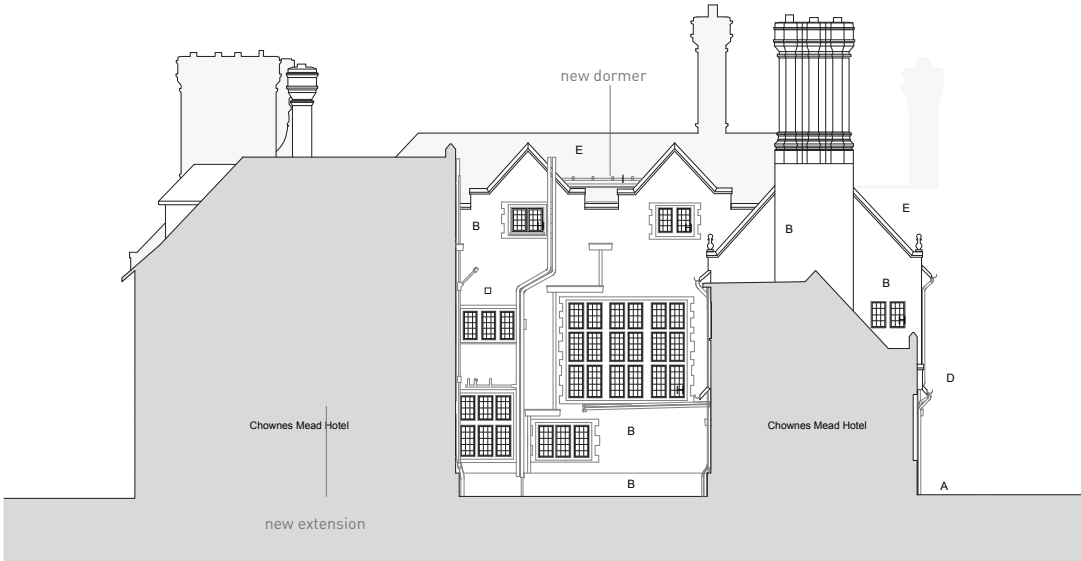
Proposed Section A-A



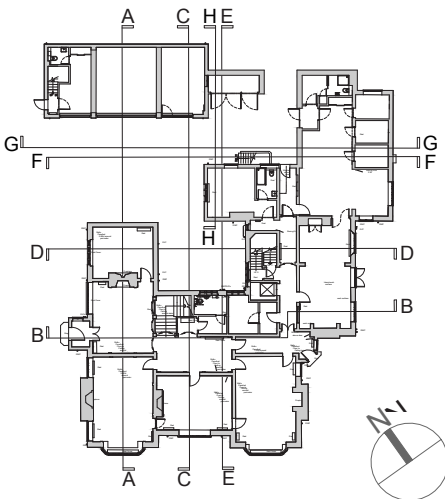
Proposed Section B-B



Proposed Section C-C



Proposed Section D-D



Key Plan (NTS)

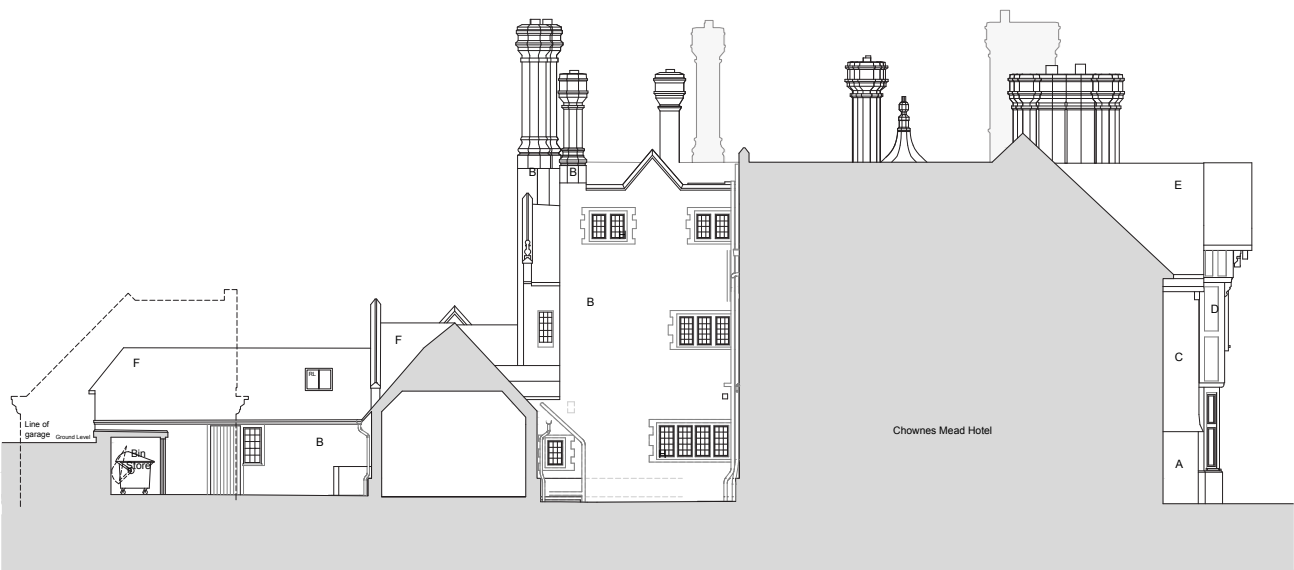
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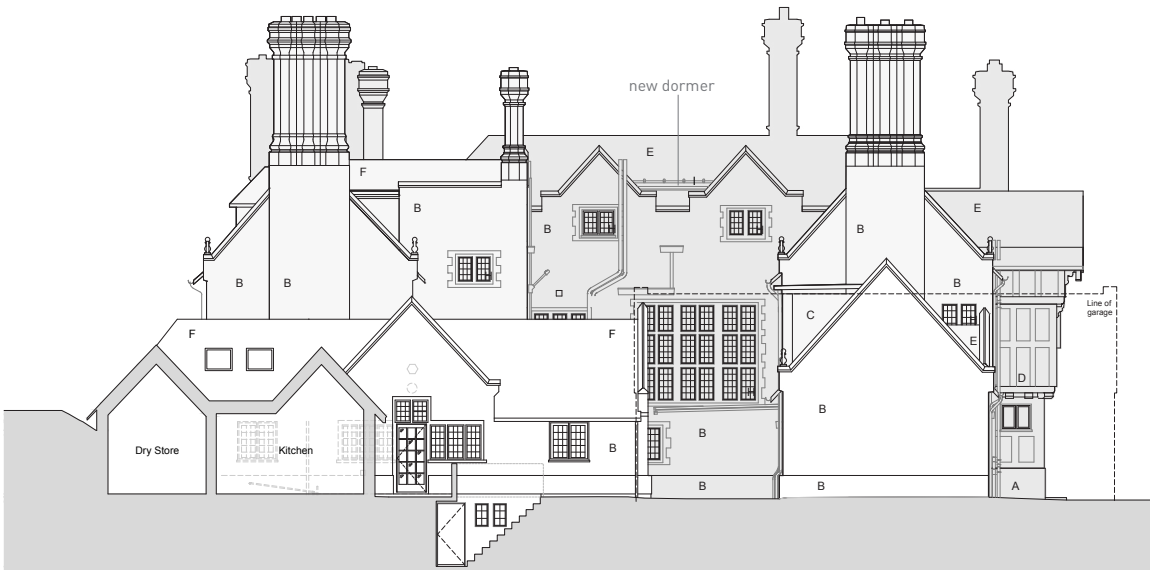


4.00 Design : Chownes Mead

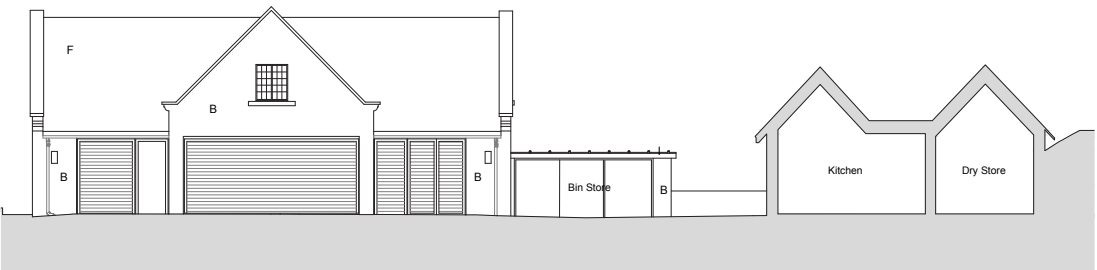
4.09 Proposed Sections & Sectional Elevations



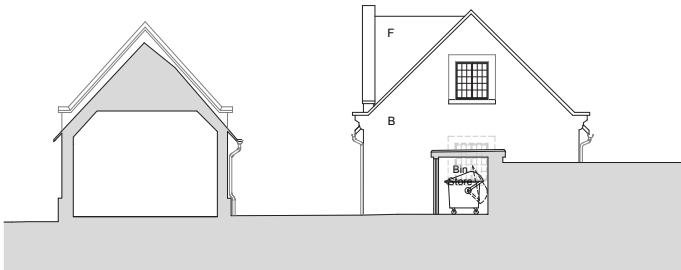
Proposed Section E-E



Proposed Section F-F



Proposed Section G-G (shutters closed)



Proposed Section H-H



Proposed Section G-G (shutters open)

Key Plan (NTS)

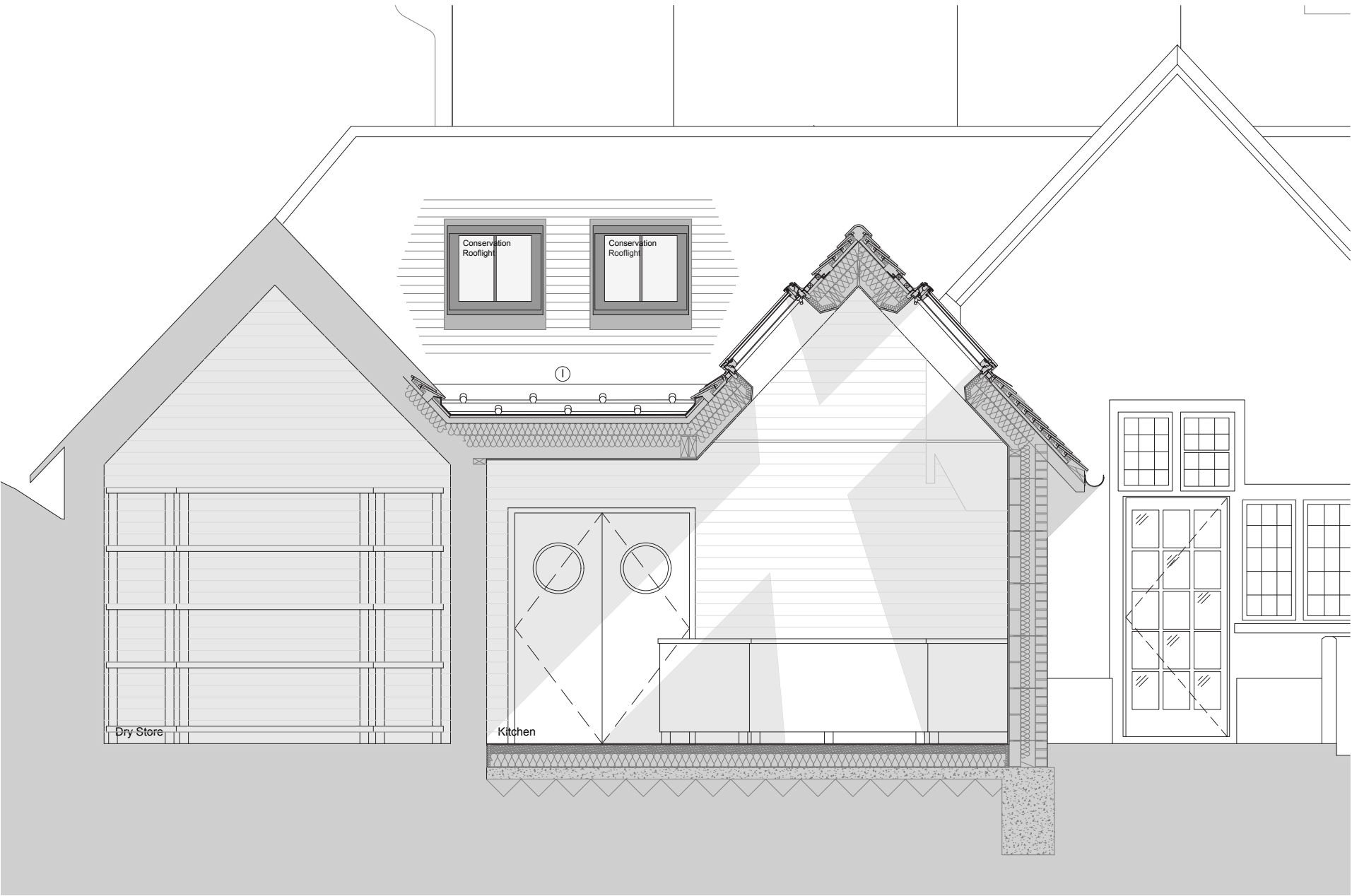
Material Key

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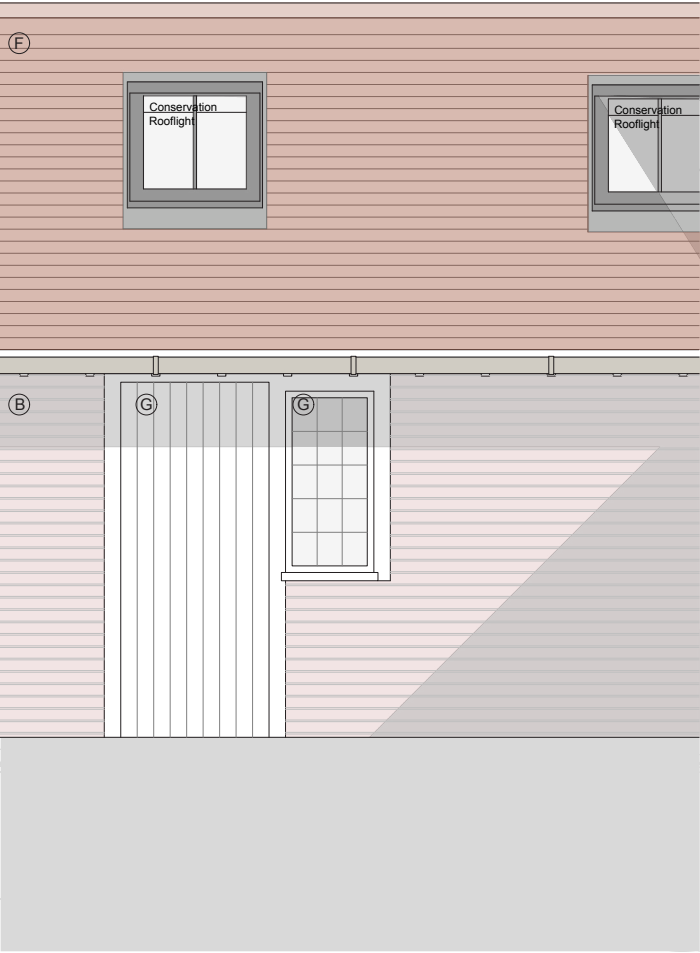
4.00 Design : Chownes Mead

4.10 Design : Appearance : Bay Study Chownes Mead Kitchen Extension



Proposed Detail Section

- Material Key
- (B) Red face brickwork
 - (F) Clay tiled roof
 - (G) Timber framed windows and doors
 - (I) Lead roof
all to match existing



Proposed Detail Bay Elevation

