

## **Design and Access Statement**

### **Proposed New Dwelling**

**On land at Spinney Hill, Lewes Road,  
AshurstWood, RH19 3TB**

|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction                                  | 3  |
| The Vision and Design Objectives                 | 3  |
| 2. Assessment                                    | 4  |
| 2.1. Site Location and Context                   | 4  |
| 2.2. The Existing Situation                      | 6  |
| 2.3. Flood Map                                   | 7  |
| 2.4. Nature Conservation and Ecology             | 8  |
| 2.5. Water, Drainage and Hydrology               | 8  |
| 2.6. Planning Statement                          | 8  |
| 2.7. Draft Mid Sussex District Plan              | 9  |
| 2.8. National Policy Framework (NPPF) (Mar 2012) | 9  |
| 3. Sustainable Report                            | 10 |
| 3.1. Sustainable Development                     | 10 |
| 3.2. The economic role                           | 10 |
| 3.3. Social role                                 | 10 |
| 3.4. Environmental role                          | 10 |
| 4. Evaluation and Design Principles              | 11 |
| 3.1. Constraints and Opportunities               | 11 |
| 3.2. Key Design Principles                       | 11 |
| 3.3 The Proposed Site Plan                       | 12 |
| 3.4 Planning History                             | 13 |
| 3.5 Tree Shadowing & Leaf Fall                   | 14 |
| 5. Development Proposals                         | 15 |
| 4.1 Design Evolution                             | 15 |
| 4.2. Use and Amount                              | 15 |
| 4.3 Proposed Elevations                          | 16 |
| 4.4 Proposed Plans                               | 17 |
| 4.6. Access                                      | 20 |
| 4.7. Scale                                       | 20 |
| 4.8. Environmental Sustainability                | 20 |
| 4.9. Appearance of Development                   | 20 |
| 5 Conclusion                                     | 21 |

## 1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Proposed New Dwelling on Land at Spinney Hill, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, RH19 3TB.

Previous consent was approved for this site under application ref number DM/16/2268 - Spinney Hill, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex for the Erection of a 5 bedroom dwelling with new access.

The owner of the site has reviewed their requirements for the proposed home and has amended the proposal to incorporate additional floor space and rooms.

The increase in floor area is mostly contained within the extended basement area and is therefore actually underground.

The remainder adds a limited amount of floor space to the first and second floors however, this is all to the rear of the proposed house & so has no significant change to the East & North elevations or impact on any of the adjacent properties.

The updated proposal was submitted as a pre-application DM/21/1923 in July 2021 and received encouragement to submit the application without changes.

### **The Vision and Design Objectives**

The application seeks outline planning permission to construct a single detached dwelling on Land at Spinney Hill, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, RH19 3TB, with associated access, infrastructure and parking.

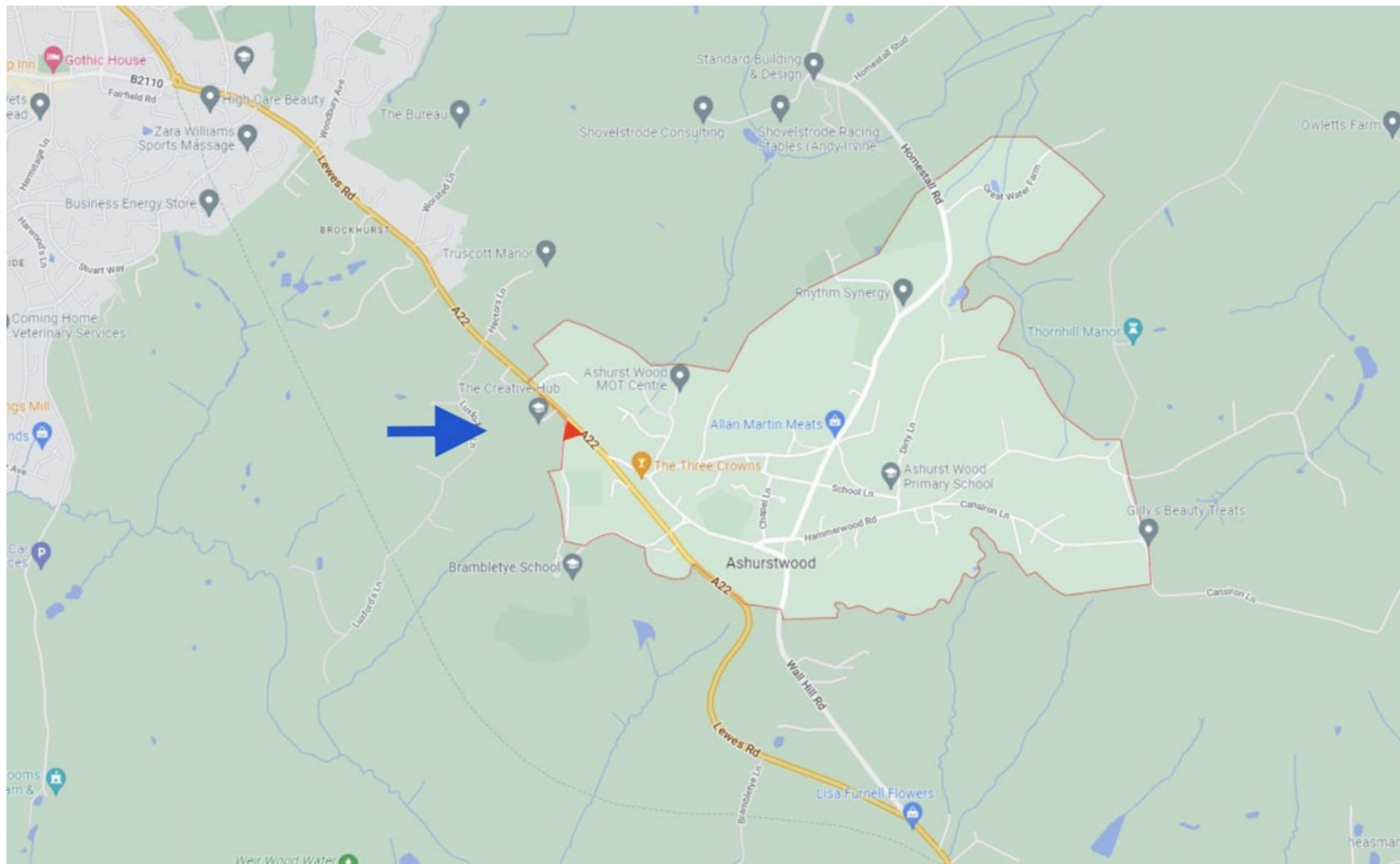
Identifying the distinctive components that define local character has been a fundamental starting point for the design of the site. Local character comprises a variety of design elements, from the way in which streets interconnect, development blocks and buildings are arranged, the use of common building materials, visual containment, and boundary treatments, all play an important part.

## 2. Assessment

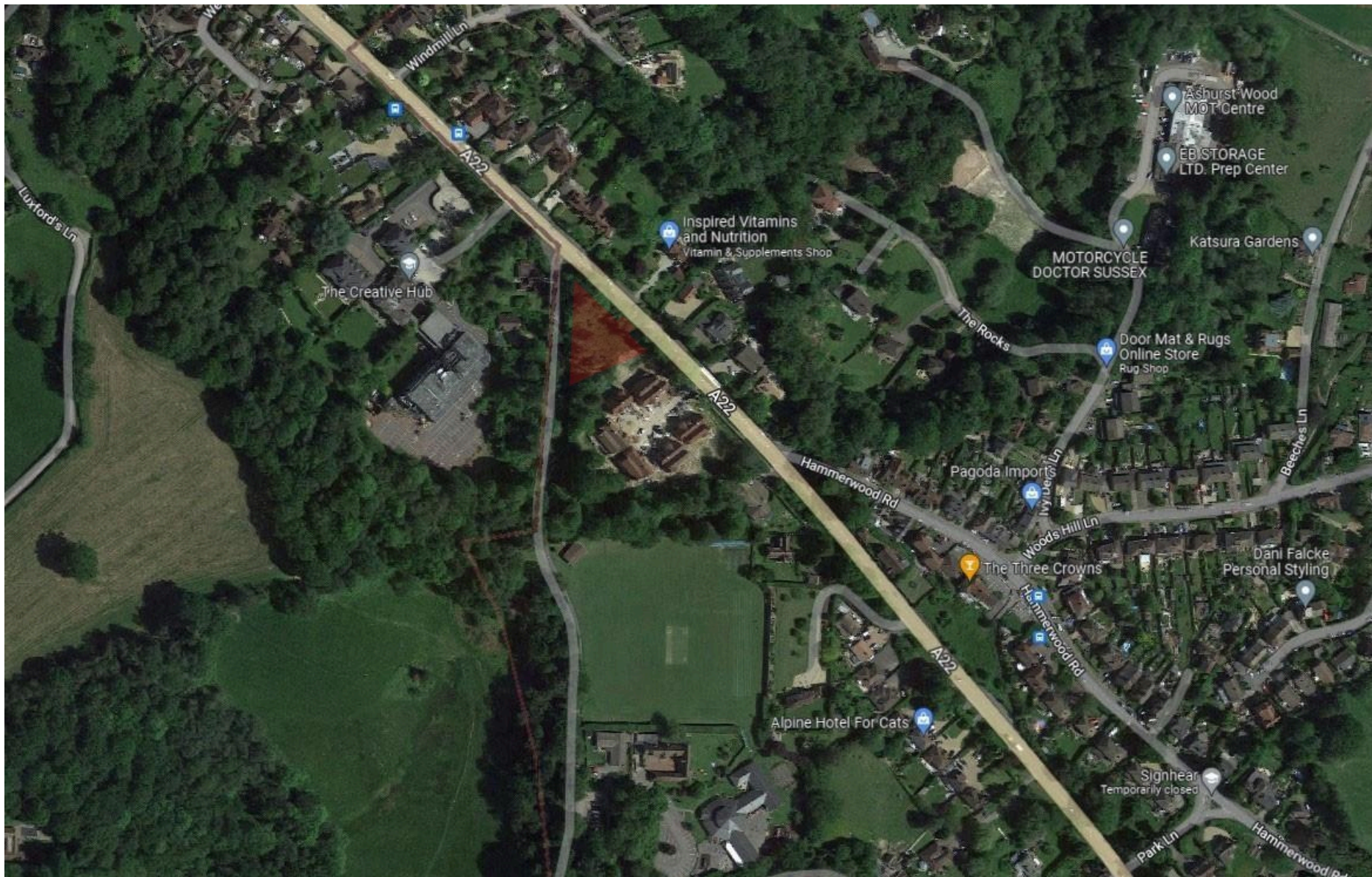
### 2.1. Site Location and Context

The new dwelling is proposed to be built on land adjacent to the new development, Willow Ridge on the A22 on the northern outskirts of Ashurst Wood as shown below. The site is triangular and is surrounded by residential areas.

**Map View** (site marked in red)



Aerial View



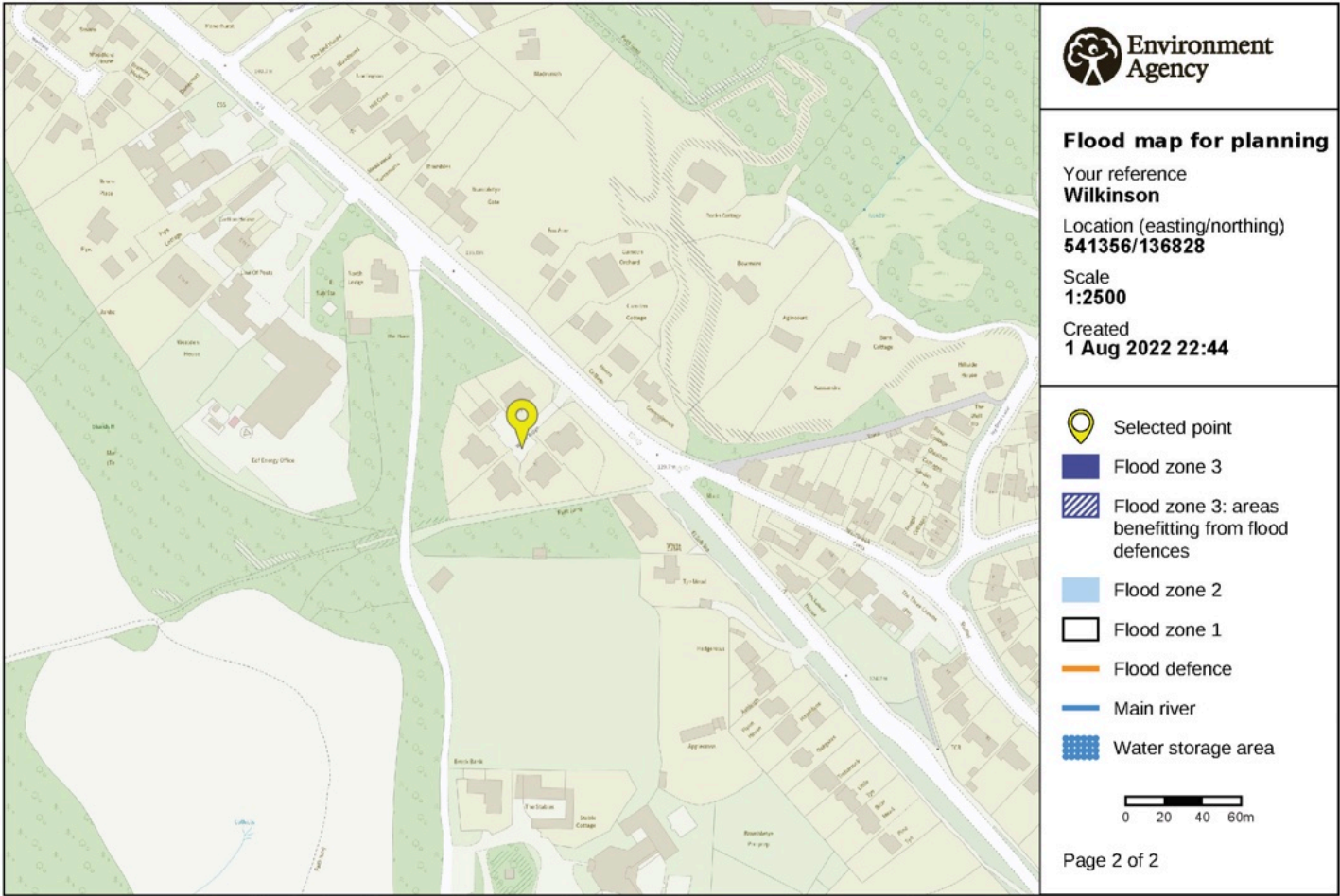
## 2.2. The Existing Situation

The site lies to the south west of Lewes Road on the north western side of Ashurst Wood. It has a road frontage of approximately 46m and an overall maximum depth of approximately 35m. The plot is triangular. The road frontage contains a variety of trees and vegetation of mixed height and maturity. The west boundary of the site is separated from the Brambletye School access by an (approximately) 18m wide tree belt. The bulk of the site sits a little below the Lewes Road level at the base of a short steep bank which drops to the north of Spinney Hill. The site is generally screened by perimeter planting and is situated within an established residential character area to the western side of Ashurst Wood.



2.3. Flood Map

The flood map from the ‘Flood Map for Planning service’ government website shows the site to be in flood zone 1 with a low probability of flooding.



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## 2.4. Nature Conservation and Ecology

The application site comprises a contained site in an urban area, it is not considered to be disturbing to ecology and therefore no ecological study has been undertaken. Thoughtful design has allowed for the retention of the principal features of ecological value within the site, namely the boundary hedgerows and vegetation within the existing land. The dwelling has been located to minimise any abscission (leaf fall) and is set within a clearing. Appropriate timing and methods of site clearance and construction site management and appropriate lighting will prevent adverse impacts on the site's potentially limited biodiversity. There should be no adverse impacts on potential Wildlife Sites in the wider area. This triangular-shaped site forms part of the front/side garden of the new dwellings built at Willow Ridge. Together with Willow Ridge to the south-east, both occupy a triangular-shaped site located just outside the built up area of Ashurst Wood within a Countryside Area of Development Restraint and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site sits about 3m or so lower than Willow Ridge and is surrounded by dense vegetation. The surrounding area is residential with dwellings opposite the site along Lewes Road, but adjoining the site to the rear (north-west) boundary is the access to Brambletye School, two dwellings (North Lodge and The Barn) and a large office building beyond to the west (Wealden House, EDF Energy office). Camden Cottage to the east (diagonally to the site) is a Grade II listed building. The site and wider Spinney Hill/Willow Trees site has been designated in the 'made' Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan as a proposed housing site under Policy ASW8 (Principle of development is accepted) and it lies within 7km of the Ashdown Forest buffer zone.

## 2.5. Water, Drainage and Hydrology

The new dwelling will have its own services of electric and water supply and connect to the existing foul drainage system and the storm water will be discharged by infiltration subject to satisfactory ground conditions to comply with the building regulations Part H or discharged to a watercourse which will be fully explored.

## 2.6. Planning Statement

The site lies within a developed residential area. It is sustainably located and the principle of residential development in such locations is agreed.

### **Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan (Submission Version, Mar 2016)**

Mid Sussex District Council formally 'made' the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan part of the Local Development Plan for the Parish of Ashurst Wood as of 30 June 2016. The policies contained therein carry full weight as part of the Development Plan for planning decisions within Ashurst Wood.

The most relevant policies are:

- Policy ASW1: Protection of the Countryside
- Policy ASW5: Sites for New Homes
- Policy ASW8: Willow Trees and Spinney Hill, Lewes Road
- Policy ASW12: Residential Development outside the Built Up Area Boundary
- Policy ASW13: Residential Development on Garden Land
- Policy ASW14: Design and Character
- Policy ASW20: Impact of New Development on Traffic
- Policy ASW21: Parking Provision

## 2.7. Draft Mid Sussex District Plan

### Submission Version, Aug 2016 (MSDP)

The Submission District Plan 2014-2031 was submitted for Examination on the 17th August 2016. The first of the Examination hearings have taken place. The Plan is a material planning consideration. Weight should be given to relevant policies in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

The most relevant policies are:

- Policy DP2: Sustainable Economic Development Policy DP5: Housing
- Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy DP10: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP14: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy DP15: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Policy DP19: Transport
- Policy DP24: Character and Design Policy DP25: Dwelling Space Standards
- Policy DP36: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

## 2.8. National Policy Framework (NPPF) (Mar 2012)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 sets out the three dimensions to

sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. This means ensuring sufficient land of the right type to support growth; providing a supply of housing and creating a high quality environment with accessible local services; and using natural resources prudently.

With specific reference to decision-taking, the document provides the following advice at paragraph 187:

*"Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."*

Paragraph 197 states that: *"In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*

In relation to the AONB designation of the site, Paragraph 115 states that:

*"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads."*

### **3. Sustainable Report**

#### **3.1. Sustainable Development**

The NPPF describes sustainable development as the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. It sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 6 states that the policies in paragraphs 18 - 219, taken as a whole, constitute the government's view as to what sustainable development means for the planning system. In this part of the report the main factors that inform the judgement as to whether the proposal would be a sustainable form of development are summarised. In reaching that view all matters referred to in the report have been taken into account.

#### **3.2. The economic role**

The proposed development would result in the creation of construction jobs during the build period. The additional, albeit limited, population could help generate more local spending in the local community, provision of infrastructure and services, and generate New Homes Bonus funding as well as additional Council Tax receipts. These are all material considerations that weigh in favour of the development.

Therefore it is considered that the proposal would satisfy the economic role of sustainable development.

#### **3.3. Social role**

The provision of 1 new dwelling will make small but a useful contribution to the district's housing supply and would help meet the identified need for housing. The NPPF seeks to promote a "strong, vibrant and healthy community by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being." Due to the location of the site close to the built-up edge of Ashurst Wood where there are a number of services, it is considered that the location of the site is sustainable.

Therefore overall it is considered that the proposal would satisfy the social role of sustainable development.

#### **3.4. Environmental role**

The proposed development is on land that is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is an overriding need to ensure that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is recognised and that development should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. Given the fact that there is existing development on all sides of the site, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on the wider countryside or AONB.

The proposed development in terms of layout is considered to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and hence would not result in an adverse impact to the character of the surrounding built environment. The proposal would not result in any highway safety problems.

As such, the environmental role of sustainable development would be satisfied by this proposal.

## **4. Evaluation and Design Principles**

### **3.1. Constraints and Opportunities**

The assessment of the site and its context has identified a number of constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed development.

This analysis of constraints and opportunities has informed the development proposals:

- Retention of existing Trees, hedgerows and other important landscape features in and surrounding the site, including account of any tree shadowing incorporated;
- Mitigation of visual impact of the proposed development on views from the immediate and wider landscape to the east and west as well as existing residential properties;
- The built development will have regard to the existing built context and character of the area;
- The topography of the site provides an opportunity and constraint in relation to dwelling design;
- Allowance of a safe and secure driveway;
- Suitable, usable and acceptable garden land.

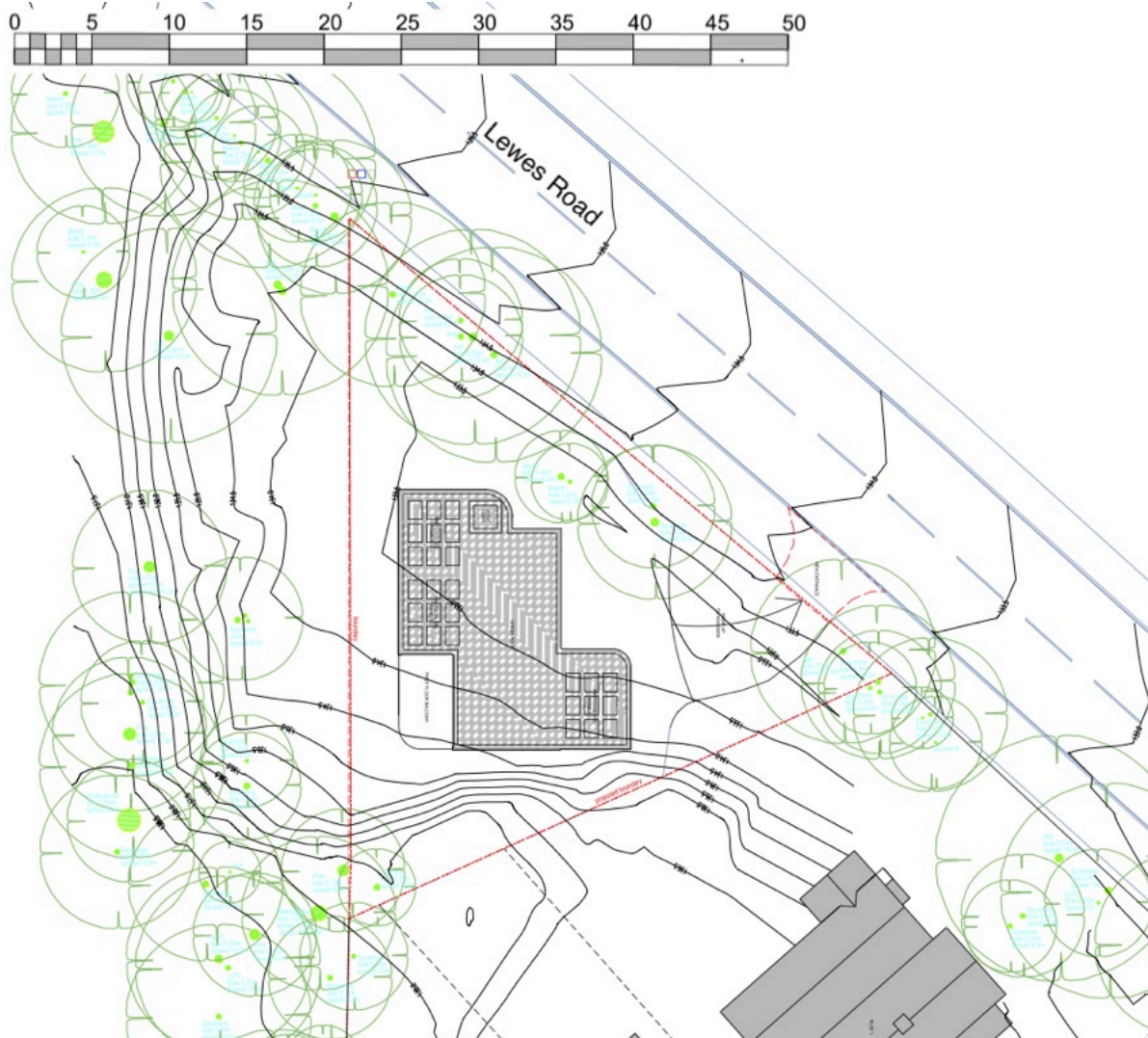
### **3.2. Key Design Principles**

The site provides an excellent opportunity for a dwelling which retains the rural feel of the existing area. The site has limited environmental designations and physical constraints and provides the opportunity to establish a sustainable development which is both physically and visually well contained.

The following design principles are a direct result of the evaluation of the site's context, constraints and opportunities:

- To promote the highest quality sustainable design, creating a 'place' which is both safe and attractive and which enhances quality of life, health and social well-being;
- To create an enduring high quality built form, public realm and landscape that sensitively responds to its setting by using best practice contemporary design that is rooted in local character whilst avoiding a clumsy pastiche of architectural styles; Integration of the development into the existing town streetscene, particularly in relation to scale, density and public realm;
- To provide an appropriate transition with the adjoining land use (fields and residential dwellings) with particular reference to existing landscape character;
- Respond to the existing topography and key views into and out of the site;

### 3.3 The Proposed Site Plan



The plans show a dynamic floor plan which responds to the topography and shape of the application site. Generally, the development site is viewed obliquely from Lewes Road, as people travel along these roads. The new dwelling will be set some way back from the street and will only be seen from Lewes Road when one is stood right in front of it. Even then, the dwelling will be seen through a veil of trees.

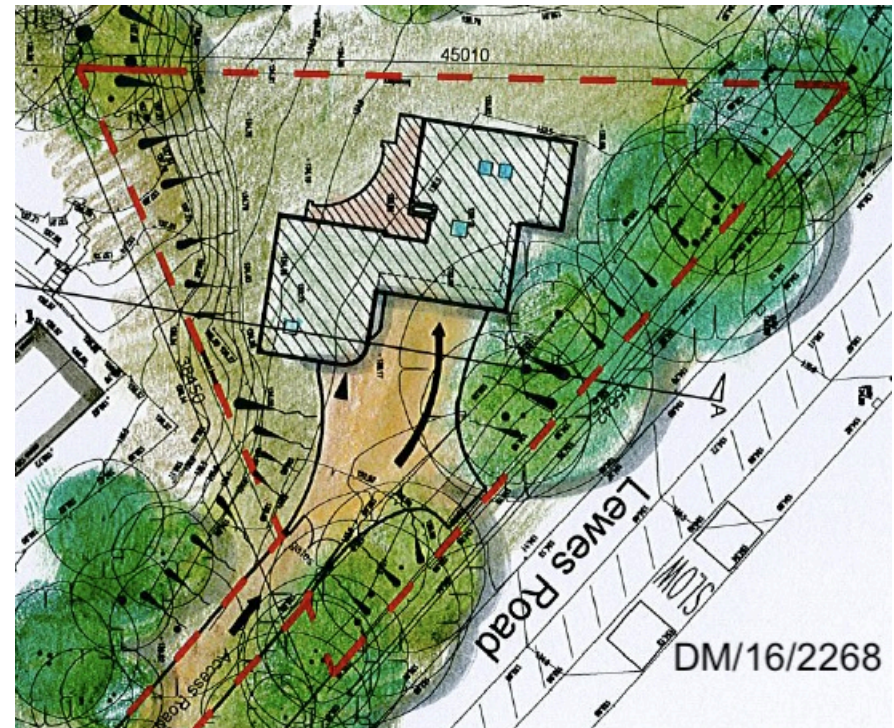
The visual amenity of the existing trees and hedge at the front boundary will be retained and the new access falls within a gap between trees. The new dwelling has minimal impact on the setting of any of the surrounding dwellings. Given that the site is located within a garden area associated with other buildings, and set within the context of a much larger ribbon development of residential properties, it is not considered that the proposal would detract from the visual quality of the AONB.

### 3.4 Planning History

The site has one previous entry:

- DM/16/2268 - Spinney Hill, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex Erection of a 5 bedroom dwelling with new access

As can be seen below the proposed footprint is virtually identical to the original footprint DM/16/2268



### **3.5 Tree Shadowing & Leaf Fall**

Tree shadowing and leaf fall has been a concern with the development of this site due to the quantity of trees, bushes/shrubs etc. on and surrounding the site. This is inevitable with all dwellings nestled in with trees. The trees are not protected by a TPO and will be managed by a suitably worded condition on any approval. Protection of the trees on site is paramount, and the shadowing and leaf fall is unavoidable but managed correctly provides a setting that is both unique and distinctive.

The key point is that the location of the dwelling has been sympathetically designed to suit this part of the site to minimise the felling of any trees, mitigate any abscission and minimise the visual impact and retain the amenity provided to the street by the existing trees.

## **5. Development Proposals**

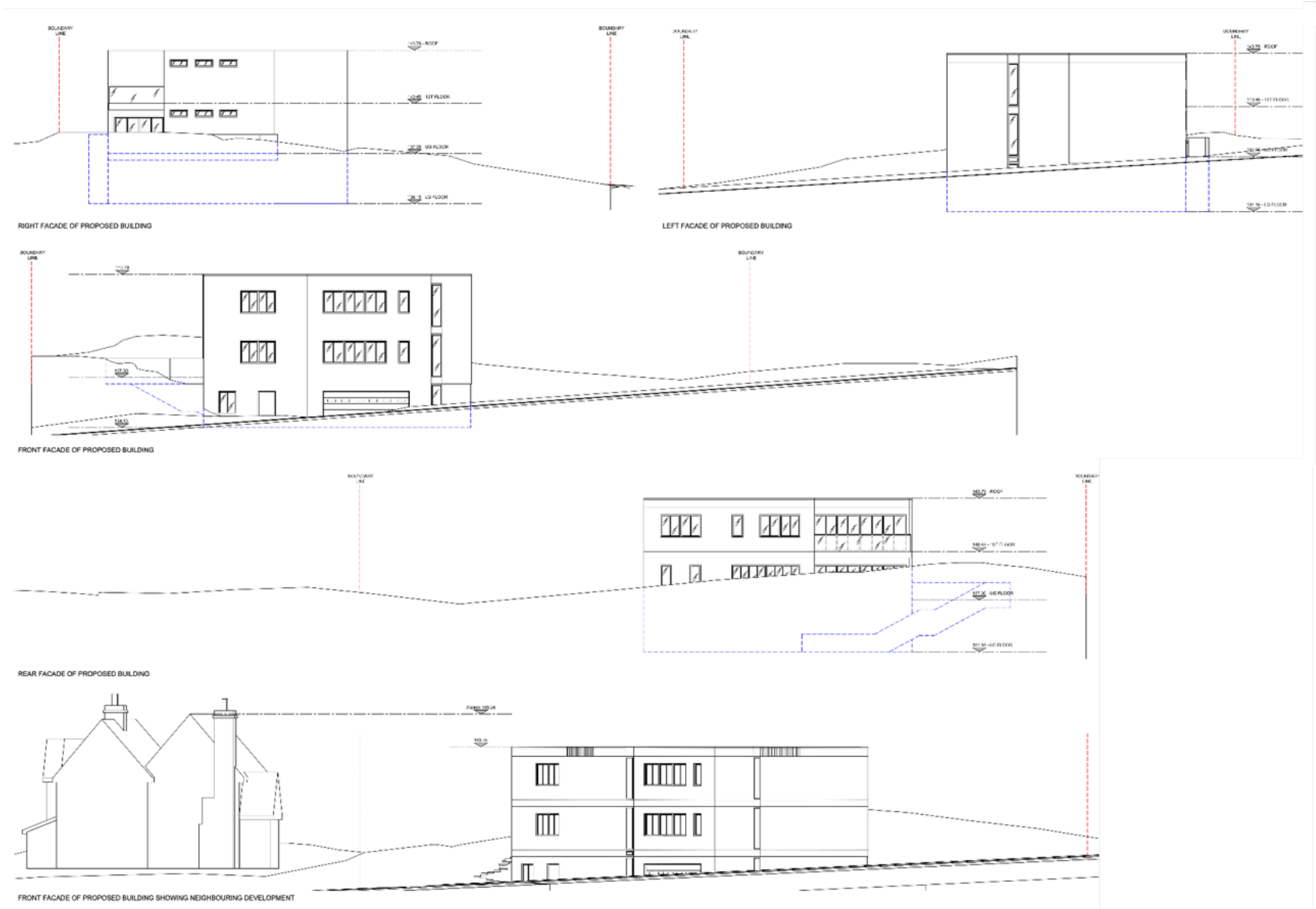
### **4.1 Design Evolution**

The development proposals have been guided by an iterative design process, which has been informed by the environmental and technical work, which has included an analysis of landscape, ecology, heritage, water and drainage, levels and movement. It has also considered the development's relationship with the existing houses and the surrounding land use and building context.

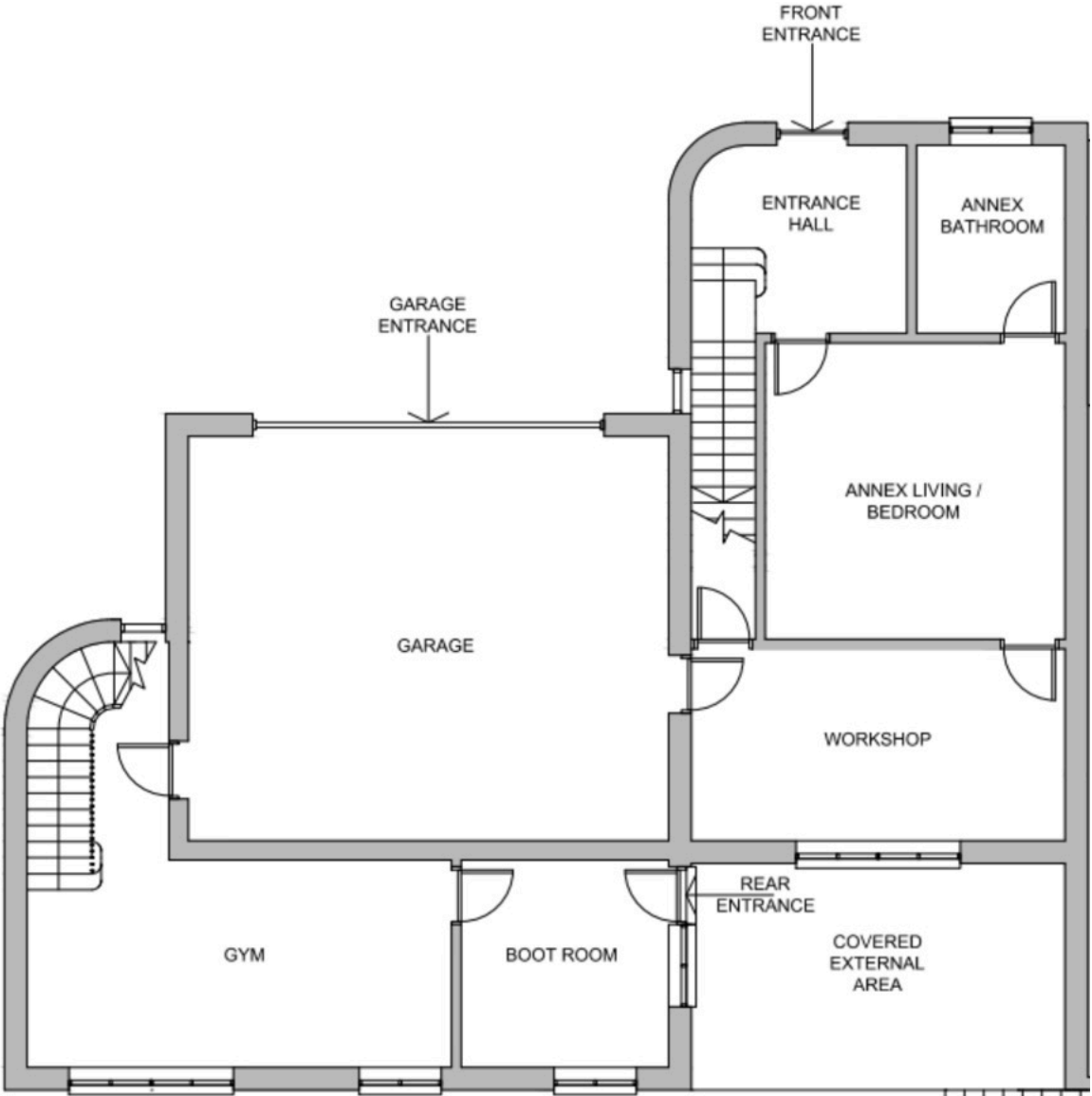
### **4.2. Use and Amount**

The proposed dwelling will be designed to complement the surrounding properties and area. It is a contemporary design. The dwelling has been based on the Government's Technical Housing Standards and contains 5 bedrooms all with ensuite, an open family room/kitchen and dining room, and a large lounge. Please see drawings below for the house type layouts and elevations. The new dwelling has a total gross habitable area of approximately 450m<sup>2</sup>. The dwelling will also focus on energy efficiency and carbon reduction to reduce its ecological footprint and be compliant with the new part 'L' and 'O' of the building regulations 2022.

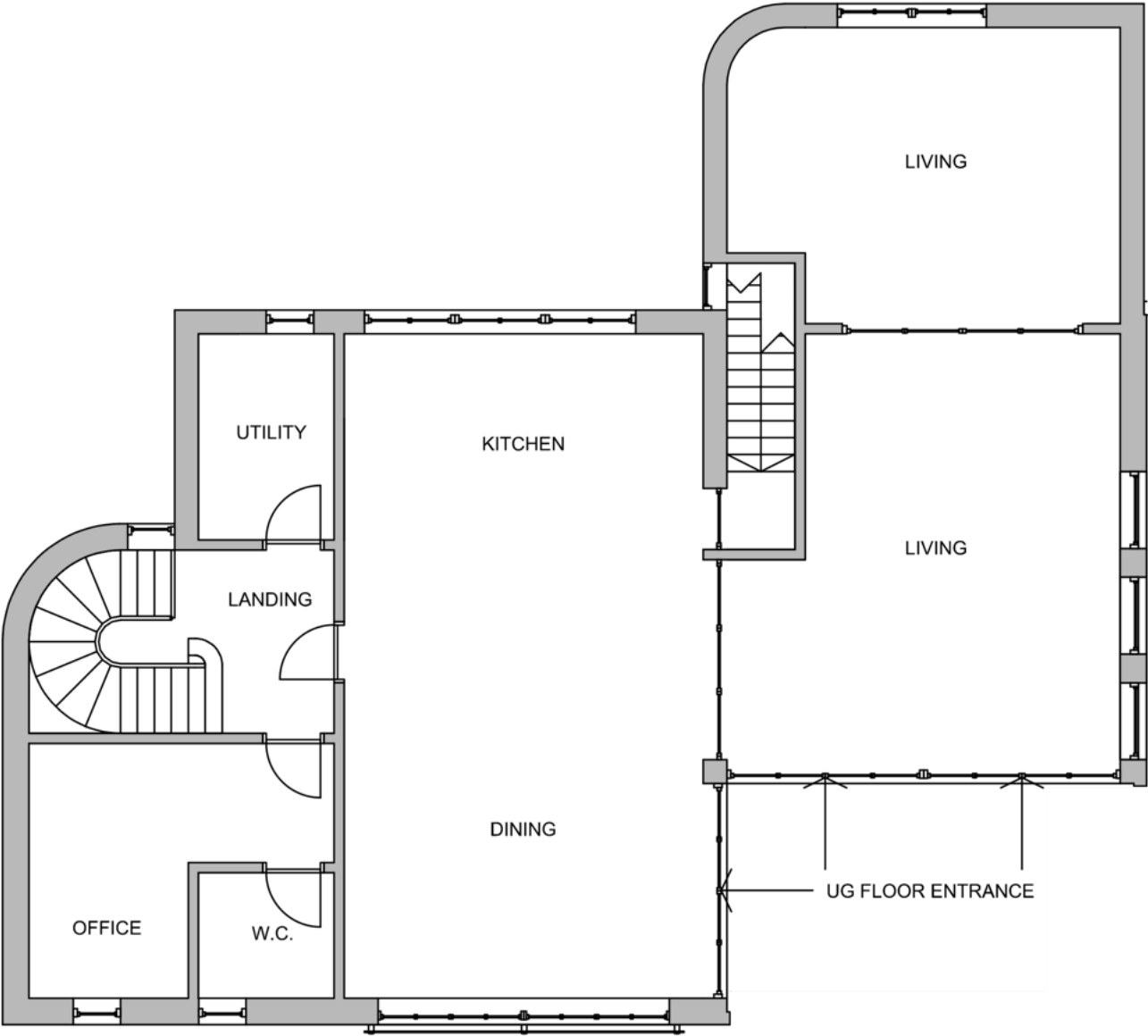
4.3 Proposed Elevations



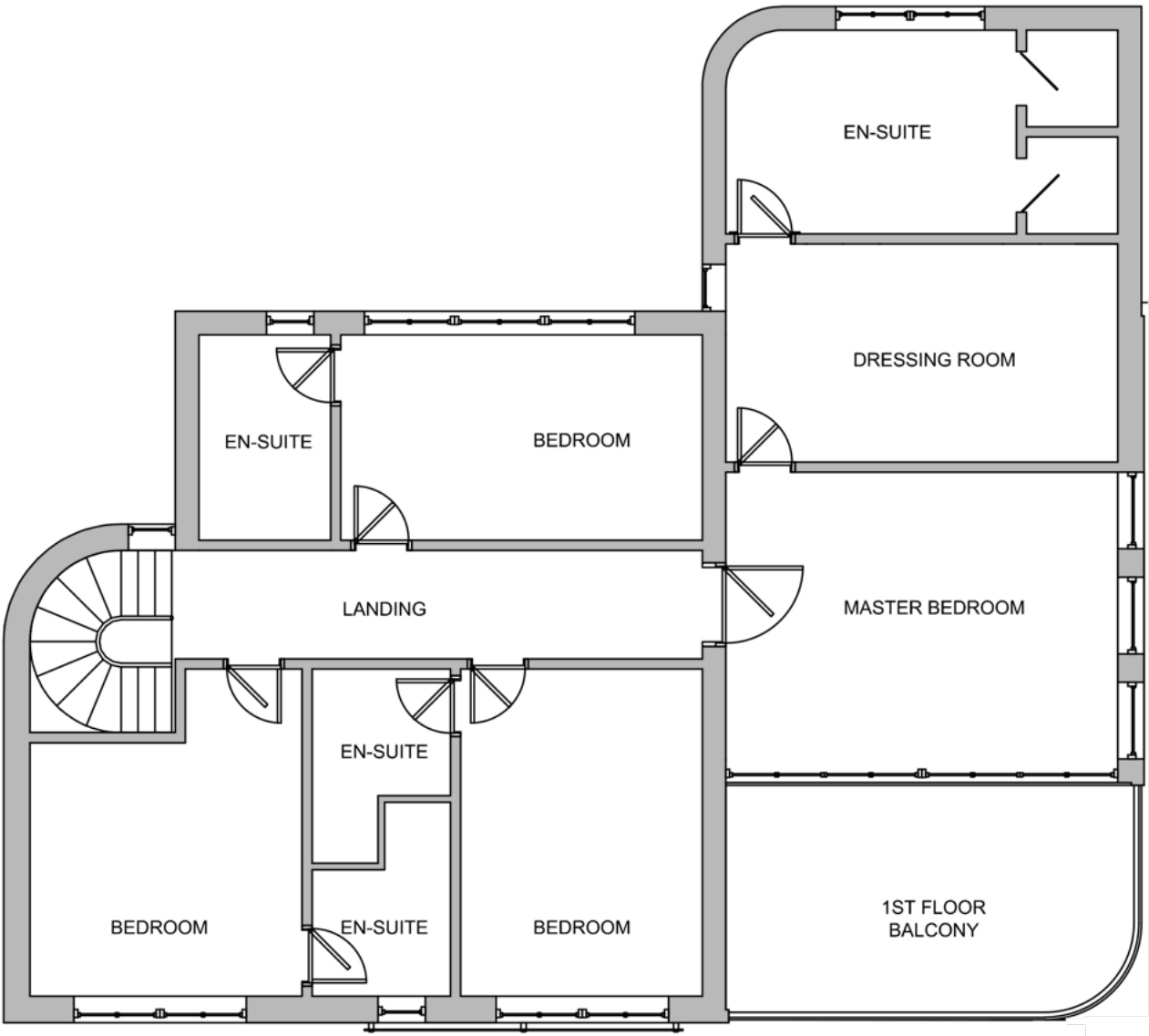
4.4 Proposed Plans  
A. Ground Floor



B. 1st Floor



C. 2nd Floor



#### **4.6. Access**

The current access position and design will be served from Lewes Road and has been assessed by West Sussex County Council as part of the application ref: DM/16/2268 as being satisfactory. The new drive area will be hard surfaced, using a non-slip bound material to enable disabled people to access the properties in a safe manner but be permeable for drainage. Visibility splays of 2.4 m by 70 m have been demonstrated on the proposed site plan. Lewes Road is subject to a 30 mph speed restriction in this location. 70 m equates to a stopping sight distance speed of approximately 42 mph. The LHA are therefore satisfied that sufficient visibility has been demonstrated from the new access point and do not envisage any highway safety or capacity concerns as a result of this new access on to the highway network in this location.

#### **4.7. Scale**

Ashurst Wood and the surrounding areas have a population of circa 1,900 residents and the dwellings are a diverse mix of types. Attention has been given to the dwelling design including the scale and massing to blend harmoniously with the existing styles. The scale and massing of the proposal is consistent with the existing dwellings and the surrounding area. Well-proportioned fenestration in a contemporary style will provide and enhance the appearance to the property. The siting of the dwelling achieves satisfactory separation distances to all of the existing neighbouring dwellings. The topography has a fall towards the southwest. The proposed layout and space standards required around the dwelling are achieved. The private garden area is practical, safe and private.

#### **4.8. Environmental Sustainability**

The dwelling will be designed with energy efficiency in mind. The construction will utilise modern methods of construction,

including increased insulation for the external walling, floor and roof construction. Achieving excellent air tightness, thermal bridging and energy efficiency. Less air movement and leakage provides an indoor building environment that is significantly more comfortable, controllable whilst achieving lower energy bills. It will also comply with the new Building Regulations 2022. Internal water use will be reduced by installing water efficient domestic appliances and low WC cisterns. All timber used in the dwelling will be FSC & PEFC certified from sustainable managed forests and locally sourced, if possible, which will be of low environmental impact.

#### **4.9. Appearance of Development**

The new dwelling is situated to provide a sympathetic dwelling to visitors and sits well within the site with interest. The new dwelling design is a 3 storey flat roof structure. It is important to use good quality materials to ensure that their look will improve with age and weathering. All the materials will be chosen due to their low maintenance and longevity and are subject to the approval of the LPA.

## 5 Conclusion

- 1 The proposal has emerged with close reference to the previous approval ref: DM/16/2268 with access from Lewes Road, with close reference to Mid Sussex District Council design guidance and the NPPF.
- 2 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3 The dwelling will be sustainable and accessible in line with the NPPF and the services within Ashurst Wood and the surrounding area which would be used even more by the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. As such it will help to support services in nearby villages and enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community. This would accord with the guidance in the NPPF (paragraph 55).
- 4 It is considered that the scale, massing and style of the proposed dwelling and the siting would not detract from the setting and introduce additional character within the street scene and would represent congruent and harmonious development and therefore we commend this application to the council.