

Boons Park

Design and Access Statement
Planning Application

6 November 2014

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This document relates to proposals for a new build residential project for a single family dwelling complex in Toys Hill, Kent.

Following our 1st pre-application meeting in July, and based on positive feedback at the time, we ascertained that in principle the replacement of the existing Boons Park buildings is acceptable, provided that the new buildings are of a good design and a higher quality than the existing.

We presented our proposals for a classical Georgian villa and we were asked to ensure that we approach the classical design in a scholarly manner, to ensure that the buildings and detailing are faithful to the classical Georgian style that we have proposed.

Although the existing house does make a contribution to the local landscape, it is rather the siting of the house rather than the architectural merit of the building itself (Ref: Heritage Statement by Heritage Collective dated 2013). We propose a new building that sits comfortably in the landscape and by nature of its rational and carefully proportioned facades, high quality materials, will make a very positive contribution to the landscape around it.

2.0 Design



Existing Site Plan



View 1



View 2

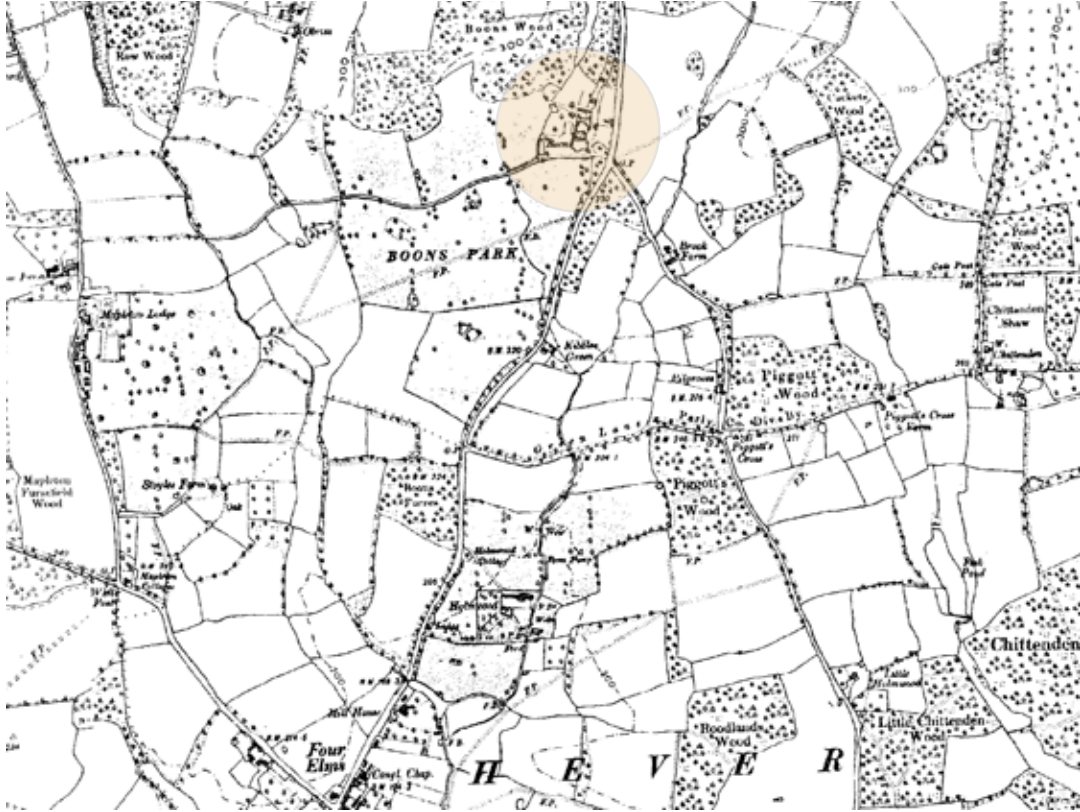


View 3



View 4

Existing Site



Historic Map, 1897

The site lies on the southerly slopes of Toys Hill in Kent, in the parish of Westerham. The local area comprises a low density of detached houses and farmsteads. The landscape is dominated by small to medium fields, dense woodland and hedgewoods. The site is located near to the village of Four Elms, and is bounded on the east side by Toys Hill Road. The road passes fairly close to the house, offering brief glimpses when driving past. The road originally ran directly past the house but was rerouted in the 1890s.

The site comprises two natural zones; the northern part with buildings has landscaped gardens while the southern part is ex-agricultural open grassland.

The existing large house and outbuildings on the site form a loose courtyard arrangement, typical of Kentish farmsteads in the Downs. The existing courtyard grouping once had a second courtyard to the north, however this has been lost. The existing grouping of buildings have a variety of origins and architectural styles. None of the buildings are listed.

The site lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within the Wealden Greensand character area in the Kent Downs, as described in the Kent Farmstead Guidance document.



Main House, South Elevation



Main House, Rear West Wing



Stable Block, East Elevation

The existing buildings comprise a collection of different architectural styles and form an informal grouping around a courtyard. The buildings include a main house, barn, stables block and numerous outbuildings. Two of the buildings stand out as being of more architectural interest; the main house and east stable block.

The main house was built around 1890 in an Arts & Crafts style. Although impressive in scale, it does not represent a particularly good example. Particularly, the formal symmetry of the main façade with cosmetically applied Arts & Crafts elements, does not display the principles of this style.

The Victorian stable block to the east of the courtyard pre-dates the main house and is a typical but unremarkable pleasant Victorian building with decorative barge boards.

The group of buildings does not display any particularly local distinctiveness. Although there are numerous examples of Arts & Crafts in the area, the house at Boons Park is not an exemplary example of this.

We commissioned Heritage Collective to make an independent assessment of the buildings which is included with this application. The report confirmed that the existing buildings are not of particular merit nor local distinctiveness.

Our client's brief was for a new build house, and we are proposing to replace the existing buildings with a new house and outbuildings. The existing buildings are currently empty and in poor condition. The complex was last used as an institution and has been much altered inside. The current buildings are not suitable for re-use due to the complex and illogical layouts which do not lend well to alteration.



Main House, East Elevation



Barn and Stable Block, South Elevation



Barn and Stable Block

Existing Buildings

The new house that we are proposing will sit comfortably in the landscape much in the manner that a historic country house would have done. The new house will be of quality build and will contribute positively to the local landscape character and help to provide upliftment to the immediate locality.

We are proposing a classically- proportioned Georgian house executed in a scholarly manner. The advantage of a new build will also offer much higher thermal performance and thus demand less heating and fuel consumption, as well as being designed to be perfectly suited to the needs of our client and their family.

The house will be detailed to outperform the current building regulations, and we will work towards achieving a Level 4 Code for Sustainable Homes. Due to the sensitivity of the landscape views, elements such as solar thermal and photovoltaic panels have been omitted from the scheme. Instead, efficient insulation and potential use of bio-fuel or geothermal energy sources are a preferred consideration.

We have commissioned an independent organisation, Heritage Collective, to comment on the application of Georgian style and the overall design effectiveness which is included in the application.

We have also commissioned ecology surveys for bats, reptiles and newts. The findings are available in a separate document included with the application.

1. Ashlar Stone Facade
2. Lime Render
3. Natural Slate Roof
4. Timber Windows/Doors painted white with Stone Architrave surround
5. Timber Sash Windows painted white with Timber and Leadwork surround
6. Stone
7. Rolled Lead
8. Traditional Stone Bottle Balustrade



Proposed South elevation



The proposal of Boons Park draws inspiration from the typical villa-style classical house of the Eighteenth Century (most typically James Gibbs). The house is symmetrical on two axes and has a rational plan design with emphasis on capturing long views through the house and maximising the countryside outlook.

This classical villa type has origins with Andrea Palladio's villas. Palladio designed for a hot climate with high ceilings and small windows and later James Gibbs anglicised the design and made it appropriate for the English climate with larger windows and lower ceilings. House designs thus gained more horizontality and were less imposing.

The proportions and articulation of the house and outbuildings have been informed by our research into the published works of Andrea Palladio and James Gibbs who studied the ancient Greek and Roman orders.

Order and balance are important, and the relationships between the elements contribute to achieving this.

Boons Park's principle elevations have been designed with proportion in mind. The facades are related back to a classical application of 1:1, 1:1 1/2, 1:2 etc. Thus the elements of the façade can be illustrated via the application of squares/circles and part squares/circles to show the various subdivisions of the ratios. Thus the architectural elements relate back to a whole and this balances the proportions of the architecture.

Boons Park is somewhat different in that the volumes and areas are limited by the existing built volumes and areas on the site; thus height and footprint are governed by the existing ensemble. That said, the horizontality of the built proportion helps the building to sit more comfortably in the landscape. The main cornice has been kept low to emphasise this.

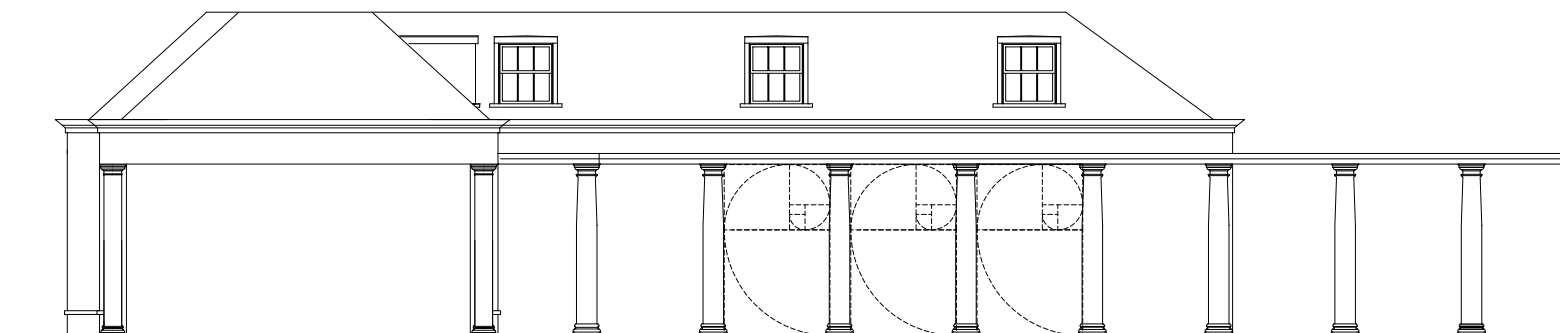


A James Gibbs design

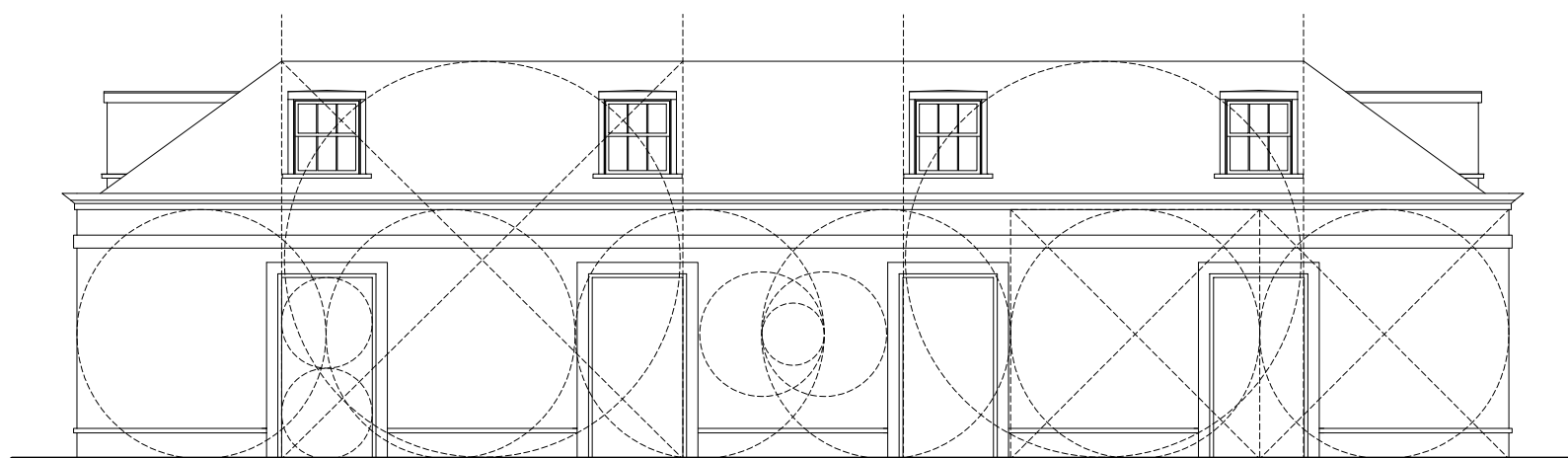
Classical proportions - main elevations



Main North Elevation



Courtyard Building - Function Hall West Elevation



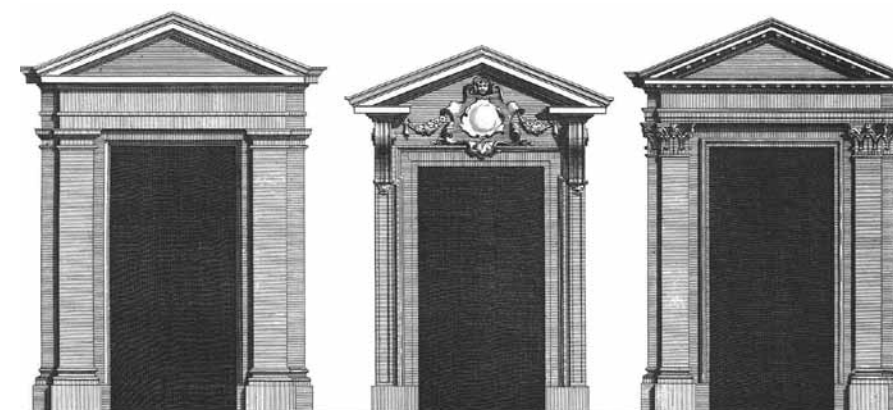
Courtyard Building - Function Hall East Elevation

The outbuildings have also been treated with the same approach. The elevation is subdivided into relative parts and these together make up the whole and contribute to a balancing effect.

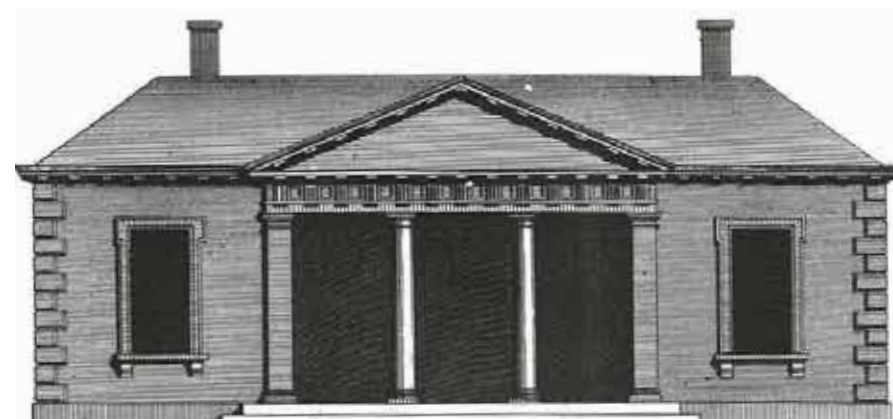
The outbuildings are linked to the main house via a colonnade of stone Doric columns. The spacing of the columns is as important as the negative spaces they describe and intercolumnation is normally described as a proportion of the diameter of the columns themselves. The spacings here describe perfectly a golden ratio, and the wider intercolumnation helps bring light into the pool hall and function room.

Hipped roofs are typical of the Georgian period and the height of the roofs of the courtyard buildings relates to the horizontal spacing of the windows and dormers.

Door and window openings adhere to the same proportional ratio.

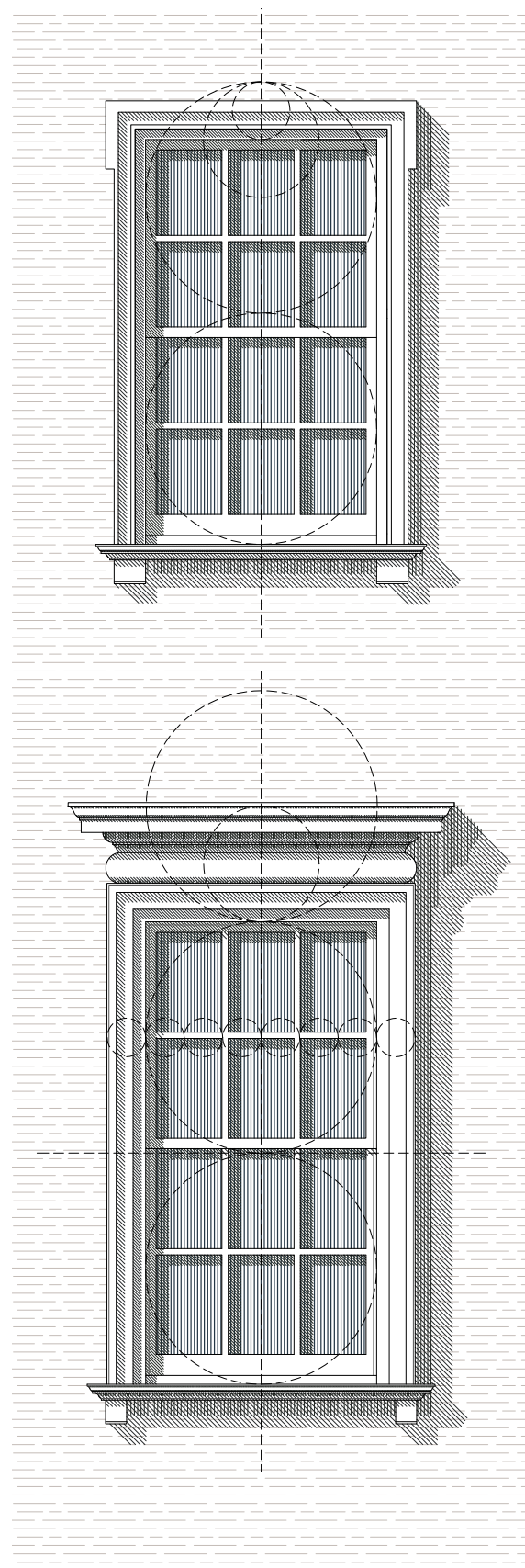


James Gibbs's Designs for Door Cases

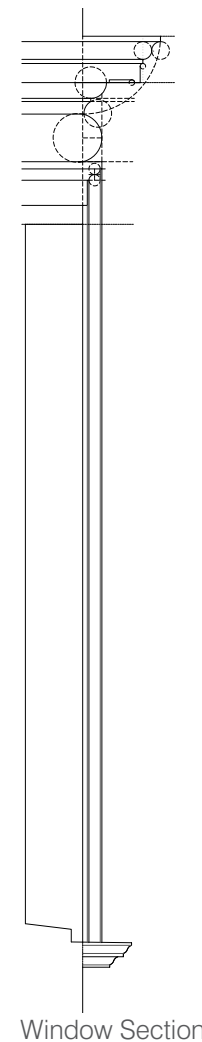


A James Gibbs Design

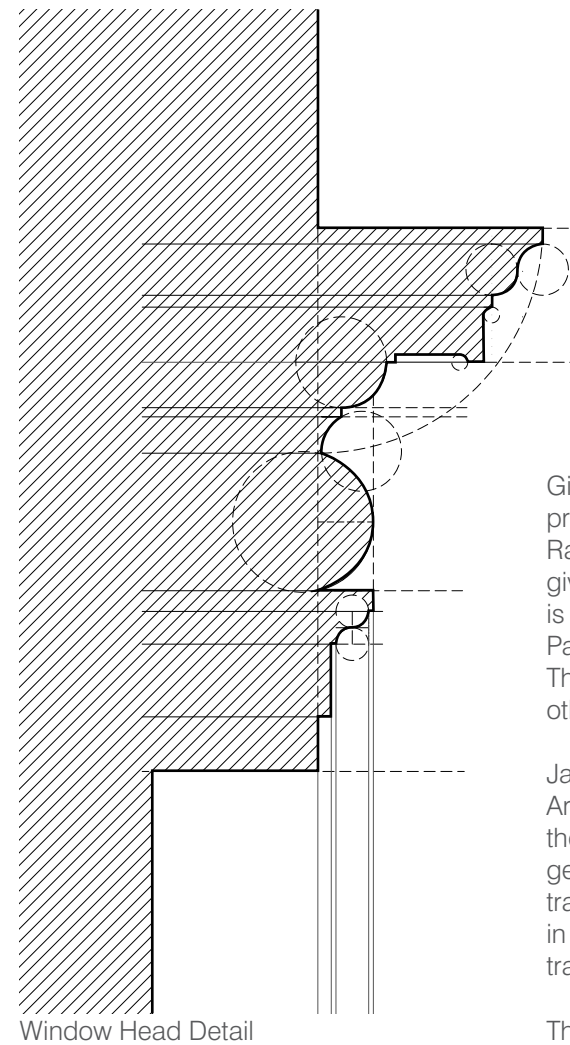
Classical proportions - the buildings



Typical Proposed Windows



Window Section



Window Head Detail

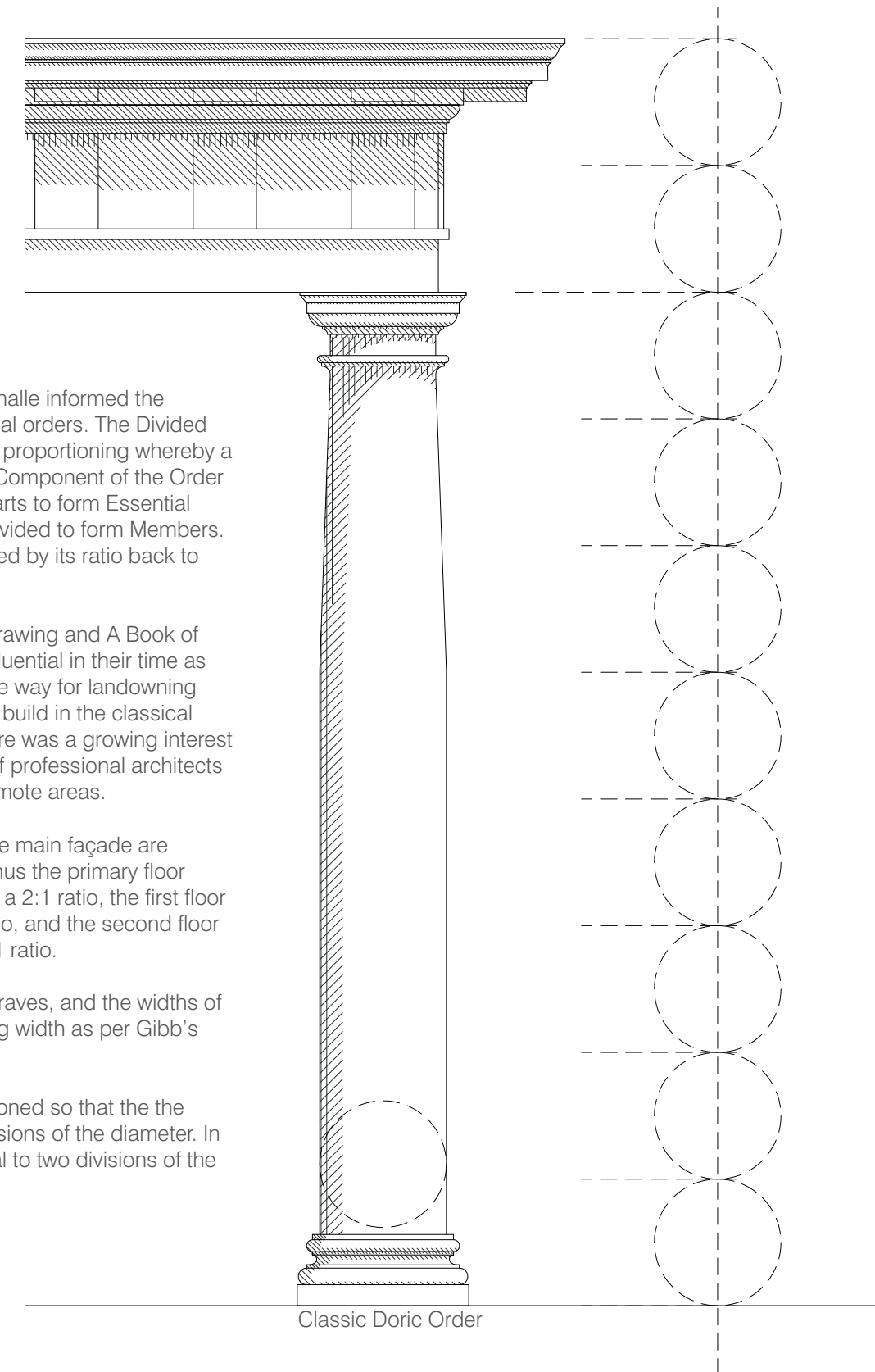
Gibbs's Divided Ratio rationale informed the proportioning of the classical orders. The Divided Ratio works as a system of proportioning whereby a given length of a Principal Component of the Order is divided into equal sub parts to form Essential Parts, which are then subdivided to form Members. These can then be measured by its ratio back to other components.

James Gibbs's Rules for Drawing and A Book of Architecture were highly influential in their time as they provided an accessible way for landowning gentry and their builders to build in the classical tradition in a time when there was a growing interest in the classics and a lack of professional architects trained in the classics in remote areas.

The window openings to the main façade are graded in terms of status thus the primary floor ground floor windows have a 2:1 ratio, the first floor windows have a 1 3/4:1 ratio, and the second floor dormer windows have a 1:1 ratio.

Windows have stone architraves, and the widths of these are 1/6 of the opening width as per Gibb's Rules

The Doric Order is proportioned so that the height is equal to eight divisions of the diameter. In turn the entablature is equal to two divisions of the diameter.



Classic Doric Order

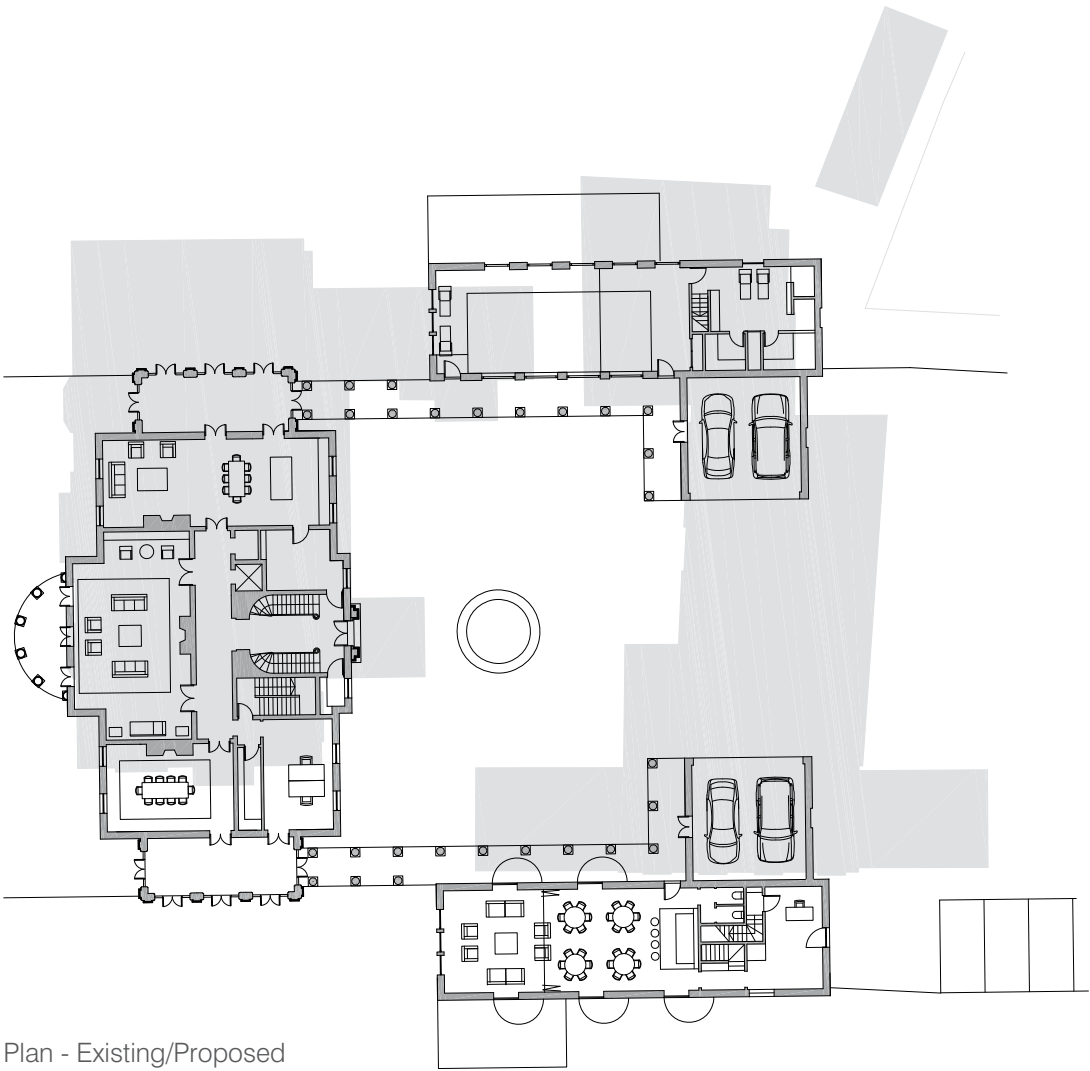
Classical proportions - architectural details



South Elevation - Existing/Proposed



East Elevation - Existing/Proposed



Plan - Existing/Proposed

The property is currently classed as C2 Residential Institutional. The proposal is to return the property to C3 Residential use.

The new house totals 1,150 m² / 12,400 ft²
The new ancillary buildings total 710 m² / 7,640 ft²
Please refer to the schedules below for comparative figures for areas and volumes.

The new buildings are designed to fit within the existing volume of the buildings on site. The new buildings are arranged to respect the siting, scale and arrangement of the existing buildings.

Existing Areas			Existing Volumes		
Main House	1,144 m ²	12,314 ft ²	Main House	3,494.5 m ³	37,615 ft ³
Barns	837 m ²	9,009 ft ²	East Victorian Stables	1,188 m ³	12,787 ft ³
Total	1,981 m ²	21,323 ft ²	Central Barn	818.4 m ³	8,810 ft ³
Proposed Areas			West Barn Wing	411.1 m ³	4,425 ft ³
Main House	1,151 m ²	12,389 ft ²	Small Sheds	80 m ³	861 ft ³
Pool Hall	257.3 m ²	2,769 ft ²	Total	5,992 m ³	64,498 ft ³
Function Hall	312.5 m ²	3,364 ft ²	Proposed Volumes		
Coach House east	49.5 m ²	533 ft ²	Main House	3,449.5 m ³	37,130 ft ³
Coach House west	49.5 m ²	533 ft ²	Pool Hall	739.5 m ³	7,960 ft ³
Collonade Walkway	111.4 m ²	1,199 ft ²	Function Hall	736.5 m ³	7,928 ft ³
Total	1,931.2 m ²	20,787 ft ²	Coach House east	233 m ³	2,508 ft ³
			Coach House west	233 m ³	2,508 ft ³
			Collonade Walkway	266.6 m ³	2,870 ft ³
			Total	5,661 m ³	60,936 ft ³

Existing & Proposed



The new buildings are positioned roughly on the site of the existing buildings, with the main house in a similar position and of a similar size to the original.

Similarly to the existing house, passers-by will get brief glimpses of the house from the road when driving past. The North Elevation central pediment conceals a rooflight behind that allows natural light into the grand stair hall below. A voluminous entrance hall is consistent with traditional Georgian country houses and using natural light ensures a dramatic and light-filled entrance space. From the outside the rooflight is designed to be flush with the slate roof and will be very unobtrusive.

The north facade of the house is mainly visible from the north-east higher corner of the site, and at this angle the roof light will be concealed behind the pediment parapet. Further down Toys Hill road the vegetation will conceal any views from the side end, and any glimpses from further down the site will have too low a viewing angle to see the glazing.

The existing driveway enters the property at the junction to the east of the main house, however the proposal is to move the drive to the northern edge of the property where it is safer to enter and exit.

The proposed driveway follows the north boundary of the site before turning southwards on axis with the new house and courtyard. The approach makes evident the symmetry of the buildings.

The house and ancillary buildings are arranged around a courtyard in the centre of the northern lawned area of the site. The north side of the site is slightly elevated and looks down over the southern end.

Proposed Site Plan



Gertrude Jekyll gardens, Surrey



Gertrude Jekyll, Munstead wood



Gertrude Jekyll, Munstead

The natural landscape is undulating and characterised by small farmsteads, rich hedgerows and small fields once producing hops and fruit.

The site is dominated by well- established mature trees, varying in size and quality. Native species include Oak, Lime and Beech varieties. Numerous exotic Cyprus trees are also to be found, of varying quality.

The site divides naturally between landscaped gardens surrounding the house to the north, and open grasslands to the south. There are large copses of young Oak trees emerging in the southern grasslands that will change the landscape in the next few decades from open grassland to semi-wooded.

The existing garden has remnants of previous landscaping. A row of Lime trees link to a garden path with stone steps connecting to a sloping lawn and ornamental pond. Old farm irrigation canals with sluice gates link the pond with the stream running down the west side of the site. There is remnants of an old brick-walled kitchen garden adjacent to the road. We will re-establish this feature. To the north-west of the site is an informal orchard with apple and pear trees that will be retained and formalised.

The proposed classical house is located in the centre of the northern gardens. Each garden has a different character and this can be developed upon by expressing their individual features and qualities. There will also be a dynamic between the more architectural features and softer more natural foliage.

The proposed gardens will be influenced in design by the exploration of colour and texture of Gertrude Jekyll, whose gardens are hugely influential in English garden history.

Walking through the gardens will reveal unexpected views and visual surprises. New soft hoggin-paved paths will weave through the different gardens linking up in a continuous route around the house, to encourage exploration of the different landscape characters.

Locally-appropriate species will be favoured, with an emphasis on the context of the garden within the local landscape and ecology.

Hard Surface Types

1. Gravel Driveway
2. Flagstone Paving
3. Hoggin Gavel Paths



Landscape

The principle south elevation features a semi-circular projecting balcony proportioned in the classic Doric order proportions and featuring a plain entablature and projecting cornice detail.

Windows are traditional painted timber sashes with 6 over 6 panes. Double glazed windows are to be slim profile units with discreet matching white glazing spacers. Windows and doors are painted white with fine timber beading details as is typical of the period. Windows and doors have detailed stone architrave surrounds with projection mouldings much in the typical style of James Gibbs.

The two conservatories to the east & west of the main house feature engaged flat pilasters and large glazed doors to maximise light.

The quality of the finishes are important as the fine details contribute to the overall feel and conviction of the whole design. Architectural details include hand-finished projecting cornice and door and window surrounds. The sculptural relief of these details add depth and interest to the elevations.



Rendered elevational study



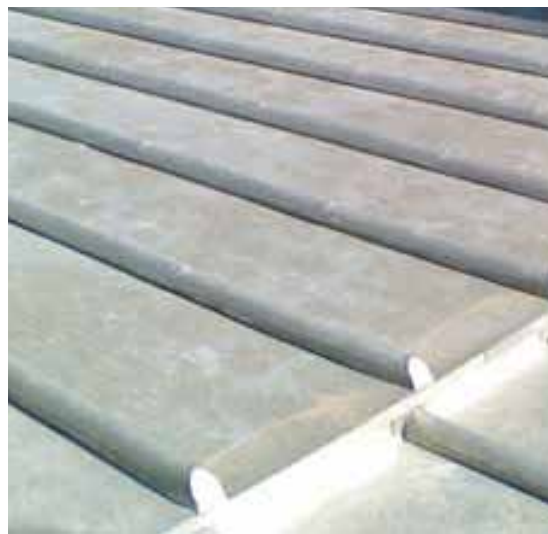
Stucco Ashlar Finish



Portland Fancy Beach Whitbed



Portland Bowers Whitbed



Rolled Lead Roof



Welsh Slate

The palette of proposed materials have been chosen to compliment a formal Georgian house in a country setting.

The main house facades to be finished with traditional hand-set stone cladding. The stone is to be a pale limestone (Portland Stone or similar), with matching stone detailing to windows and doors.

The walls to the courtyard buildings are to be finished with a smooth trowel-finished lime-based stucco render. The render is to be painted with lime-based paints in a similar colour to the stonework, with horizontal scoring in imitation of ashlar stonework. The intention is to continue the aesthetic of stone coursing throughout the complex of buildings. Stone detailing around windows, doors and cornices will be continued in a similar fashion to the main house.

The hipped roofs are finished in natural slate (Welsh) which is found in examples of 19th century buildings in the area. Roofs to the conservatories and collonade are to be finished with traditional rolled lead detailing.

Proportions have been carefully worked out to create a harmonious balance to the composition.

Materials

3.0 Access

Road access onto the site is via a new proposed entrance at the north-east corner of the site. This position is preferred as the visibility is better when entering or exiting the site.

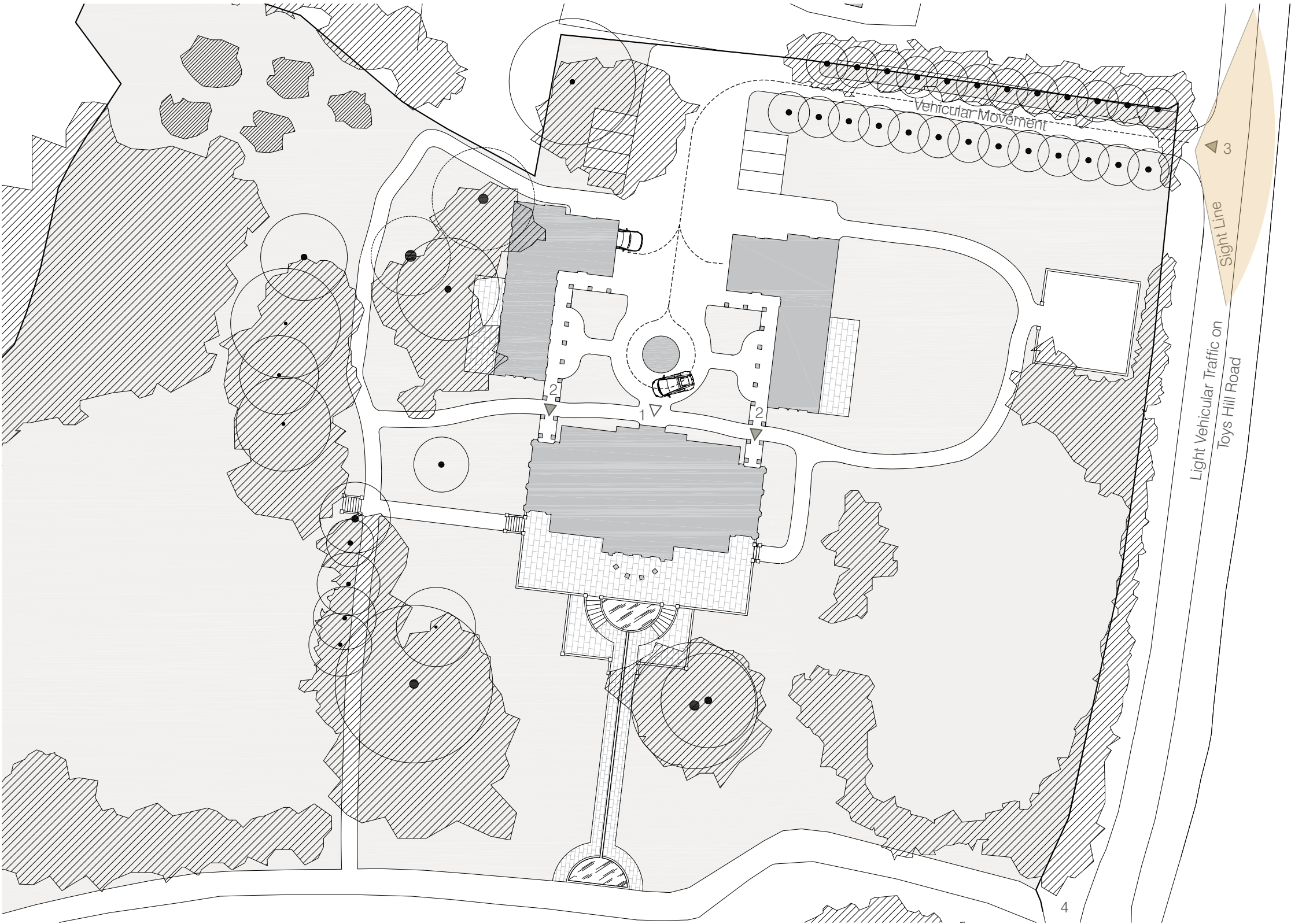
The viewing angle northwards up Toys Road is very good, and the viewing angle southwards down Toys Road is adequate. This could be much improved by tidying some of the overgrowth of bushes on the boundary edge.

The viewing angles from the existing exit onto Toys Road is not good, and quite unsafe as approaching traffic cannot be seen from a distance.

Vehicle approach to the house is along the north boundary, before turning south on axis with the main house, capturing the view through the courtyard. Vehicles can approach the main door to the house and a generous turning circle is planned to allow direct access to the front door and paths linking the two conservatory entrances.

The entrances to the main house are either via a central front door (one step up), or through the east and west conservatory doors that link to the roofed collonade (level access). Thus ambulant and disabled access into the dwelling. Once within the dwelling, all levels are accessible via a passenger lift. The function room (east courtyard building) also has ground level WCs.

- 1. Main Entrance: △
- 2. Level Access Entrance: ▲
- 3. Proposed Entrance with Improved Visibility
- 4. Original Entrance



Access Plan

4.0 Appendix



Rendered North elevation



Rendered West elevation

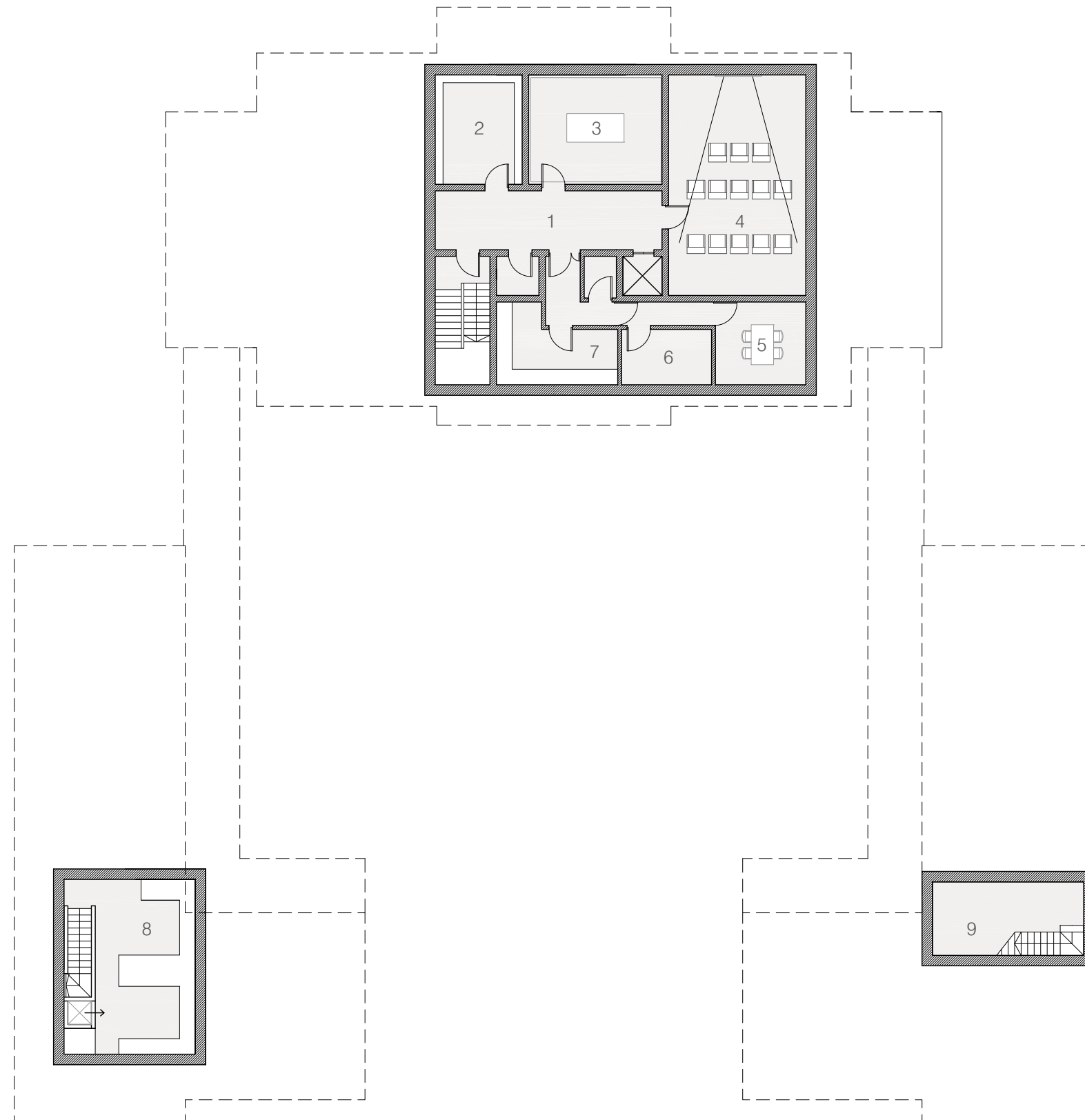


Rendered Sectional elevation looking West



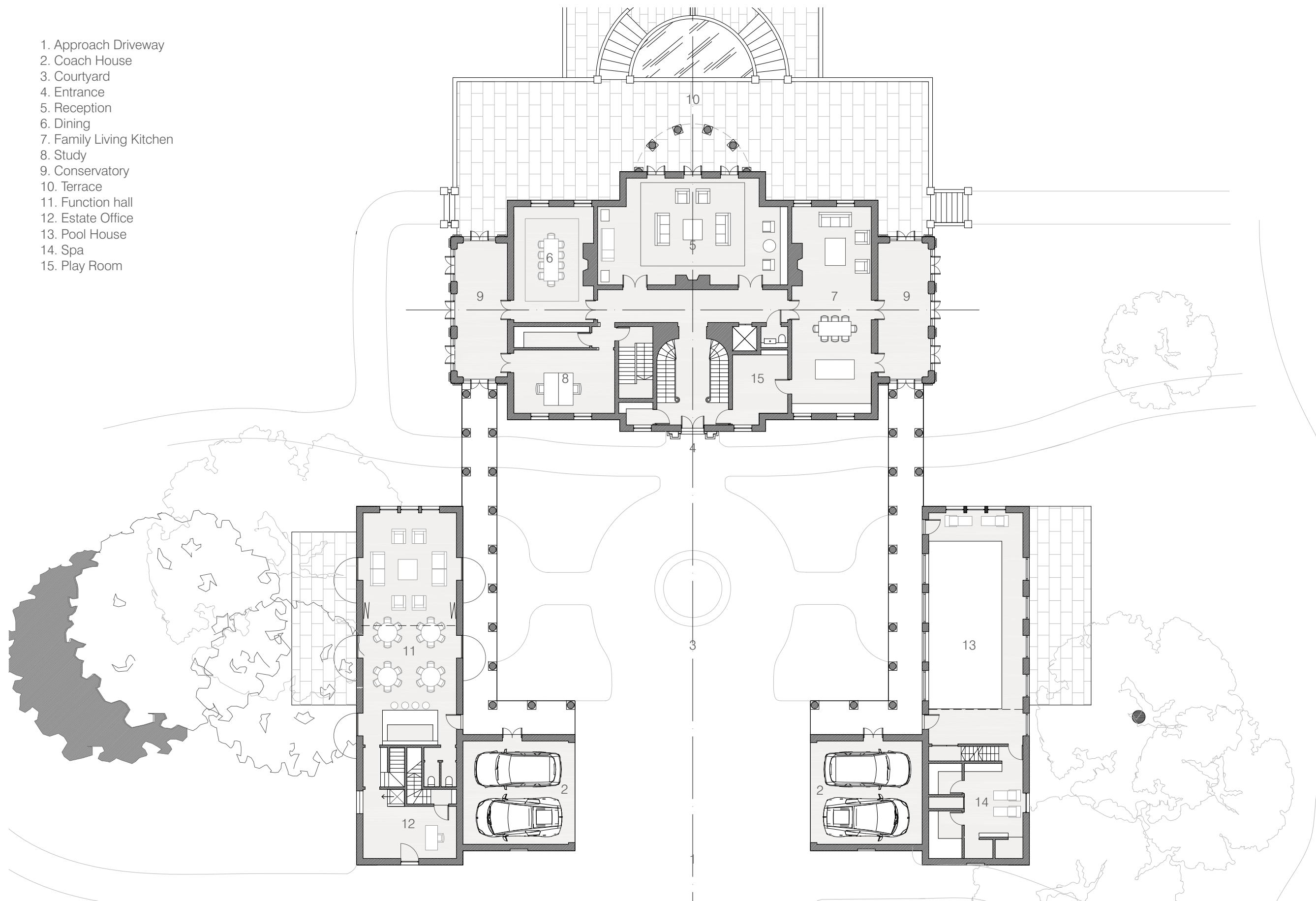
Rendered Sectional elevation looking East

- 1. Hallway
- 2. Wine Cellar
- 3. Snooker Room
- 4. Cinema
- 5. Staff Room
- 6. Store
- 7. Laundry
- 8. Kitchen
- 9. Pool Plant Room



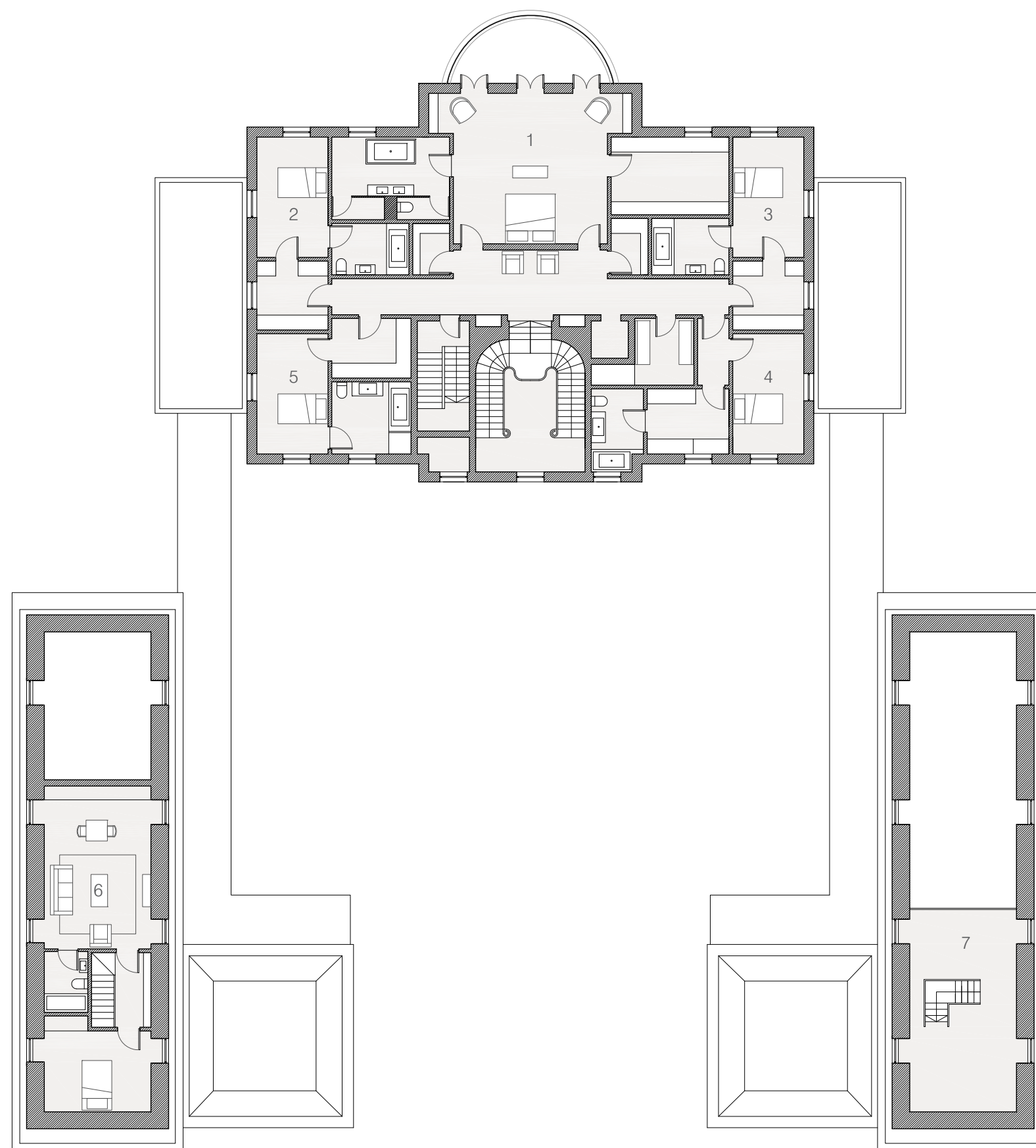
Basement floor plan

1. Approach Driveway
2. Coach House
3. Courtyard
4. Entrance
5. Reception
6. Dining
7. Family Living Kitchen
8. Study
9. Conservatory
10. Terrace
11. Function hall
12. Estate Office
13. Pool House
14. Spa
15. Play Room



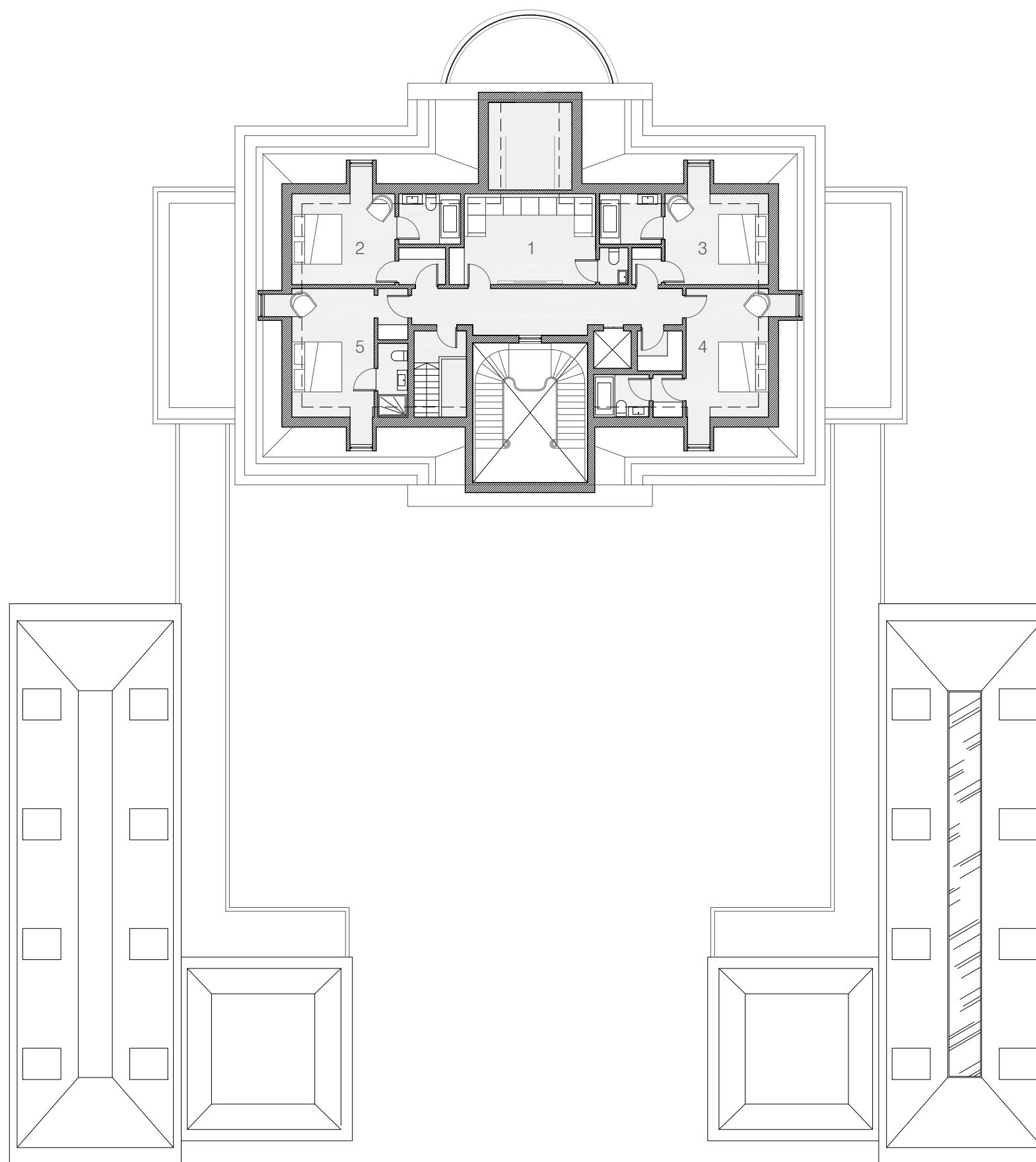
Ground floor plan

- 1. Master Bedroom Suite
- 2. Bedroom 01
- 3. Bedroom 02
- 4. Bedroom 03
- 5. Bedroom 04
- 6. Staff Flat
- 7. Gym

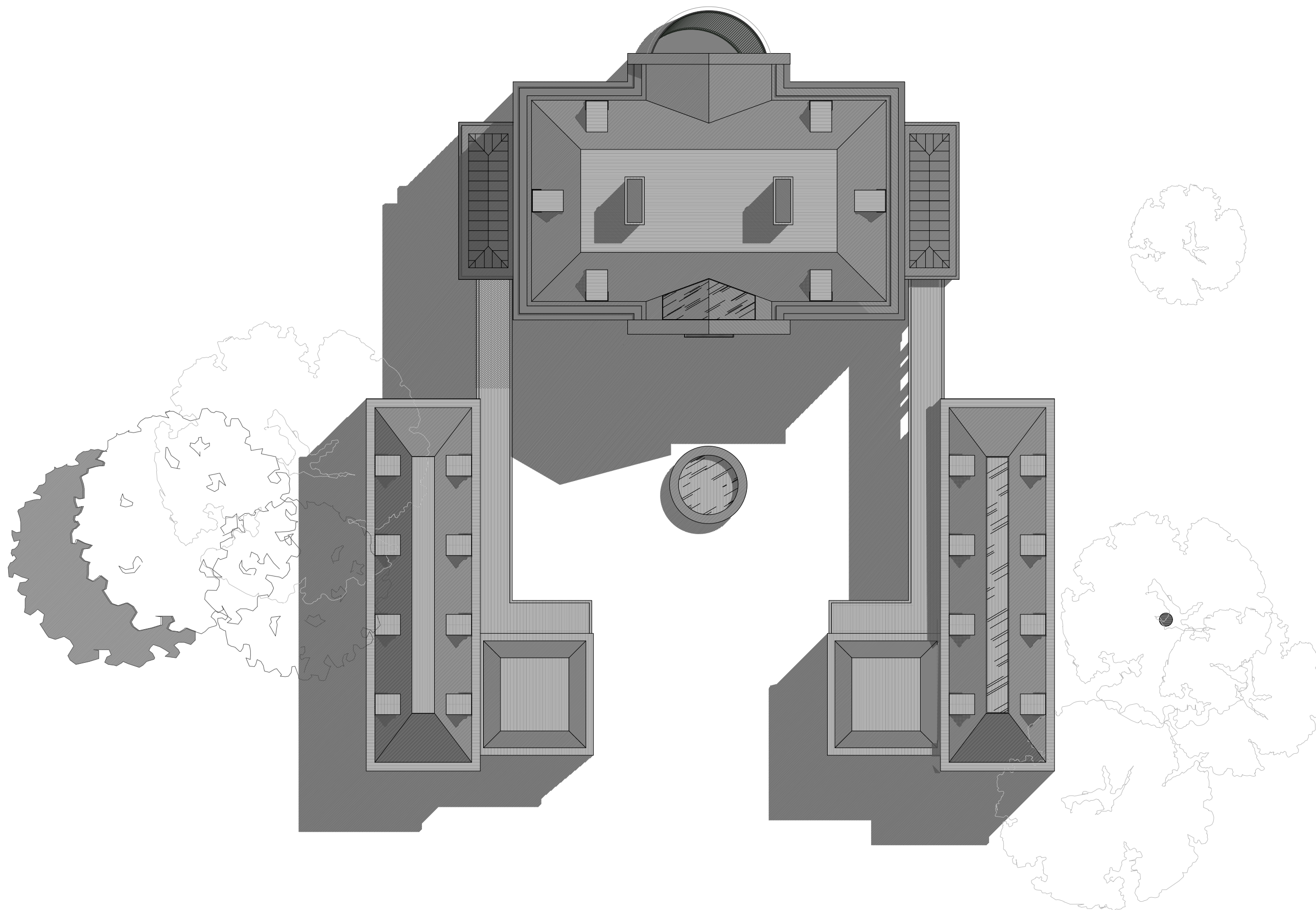


First floor plan

1. Cinema Lounge
2. Guest Bedroom 01
3. Guest Bedroom 02
4. Guest Bedroom 03
5. Guest Bedroom 04



Second floor plan



Roof plan

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