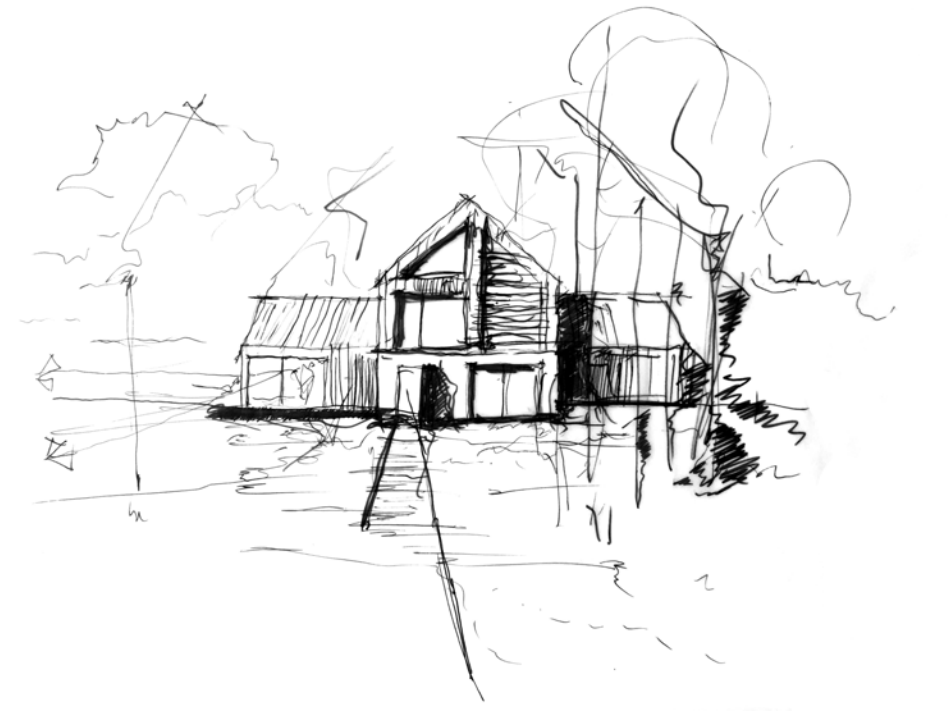




178 Bearwood Road

**Design Statement +
Landscape Appraisal**

INTRODUCTION

Previous Scheme	01
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SITE

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PROPOSED CONTEXT

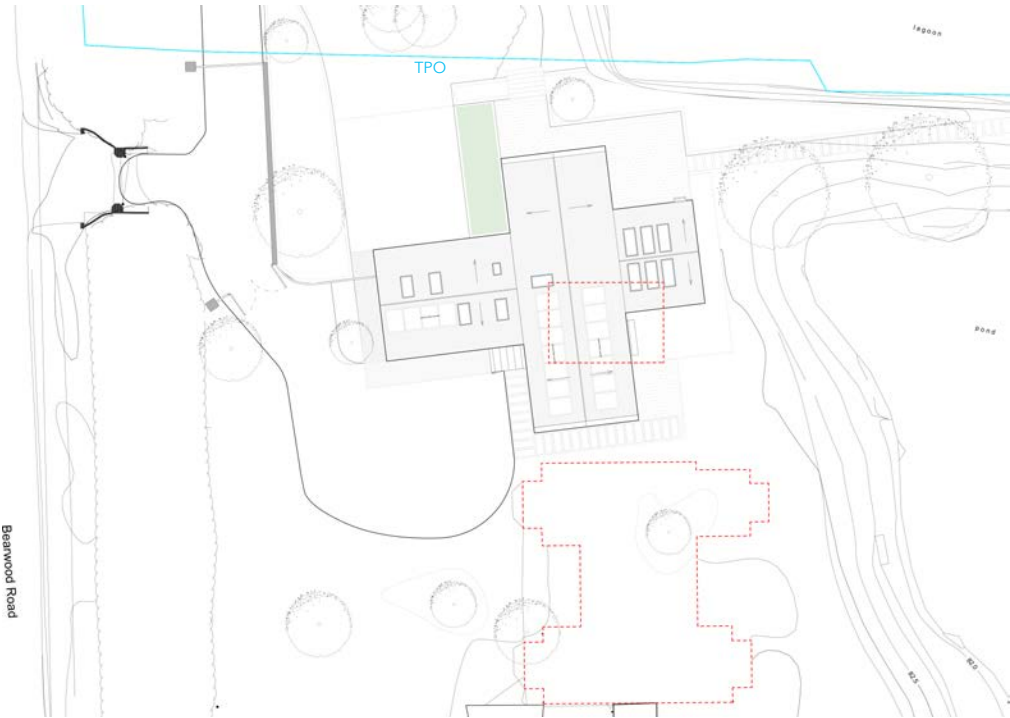
Overall Site	11
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SUMMARY

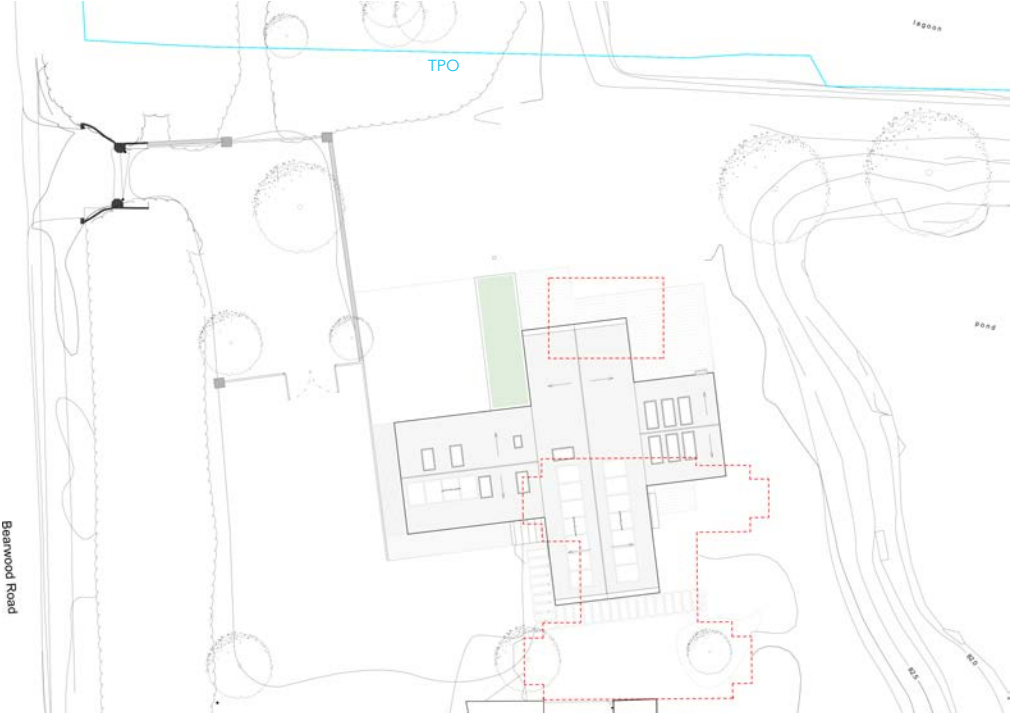
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01 - Submitted Scheme



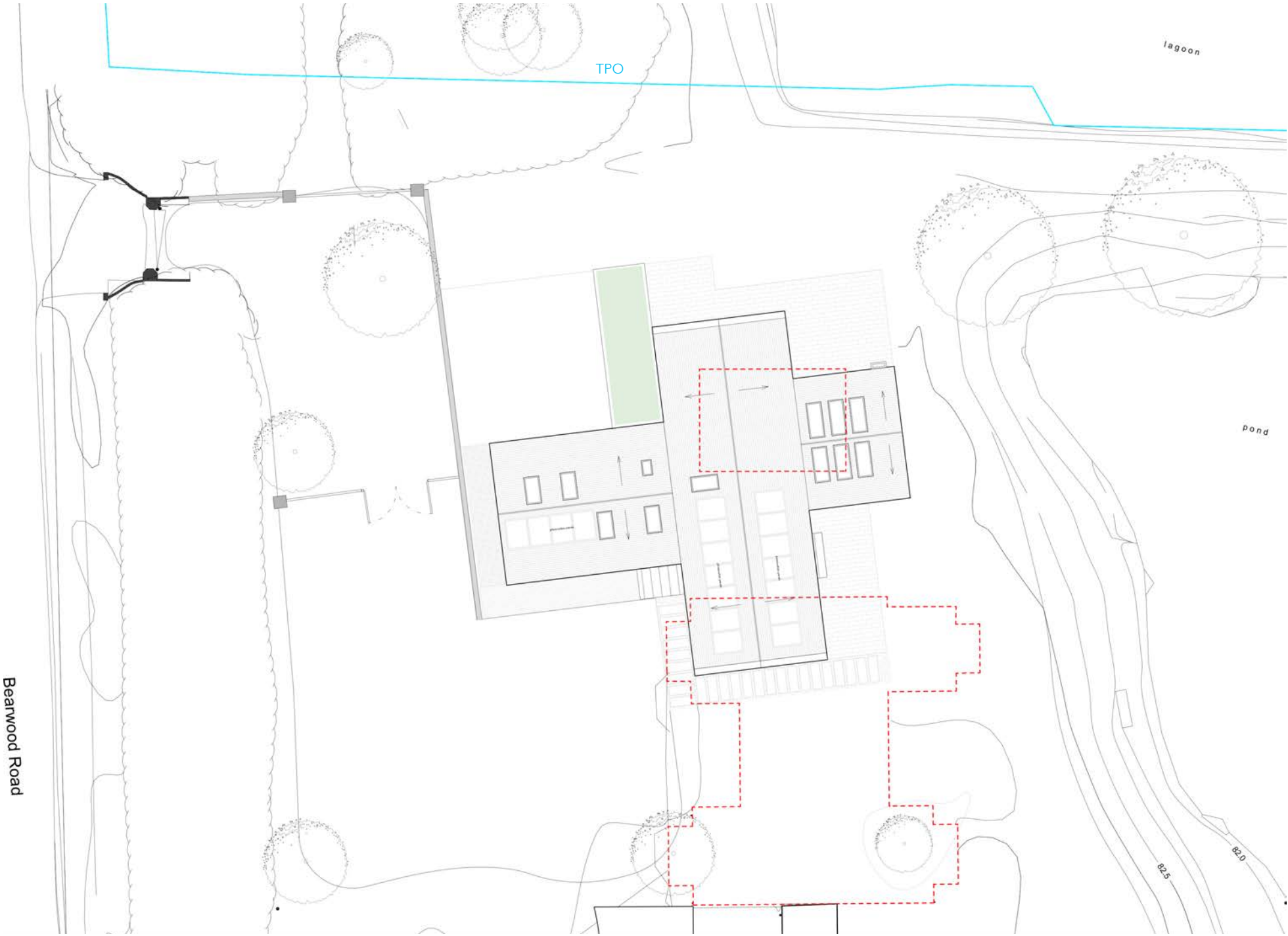
02 - Approved Scheme



The owners of 178 Bearwood Road gained planning consent on the 28th June 2024 for the proposed erection of 1 no. four bedroom detached dwelling with associated landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage. The scheme that has been approved *REF:L240665* included a revised site of the proposed dwelling from the initial submission. This revised location came about through comments from the Tree & Landscape Officer regarding “harm the valued landscape, countryside, TPO woodland and the general landscape character of the site”.

In response to this the dwelling house was moved south circa 11.5m providing an approximate gap of 20m between the north of the property and the TPO.

▼
03 - Revised Location



This application seeks to relocate the property circa 5.5m north from the approved scheme and 5m south of the original submitted proposal. The dwelling will sit approximately 12m south of the TPO line to reflect the original design concept more appropriately celebrating the natural axes across the site with views to the mature oaks to the northeast across the lagoon and east across the pond. The owners wish to create a greater connection to the woodland to the north of their plot, while still providing suitable separation between it and the dwelling.

In addition the revised site location will provide a greater visual separation between the proposal and the existing annex, reducing the visual mass on the site and bringing the house closer towards the centre of the plot.

Design

The design of the scheme has not changed from the previously approved proposal outlined in approval *REF:L240665* shown in approved drawings and design statement.

Access

The primary access into the site and building will not be changed through this proposed revision of location.

▼
04 - Ex Site



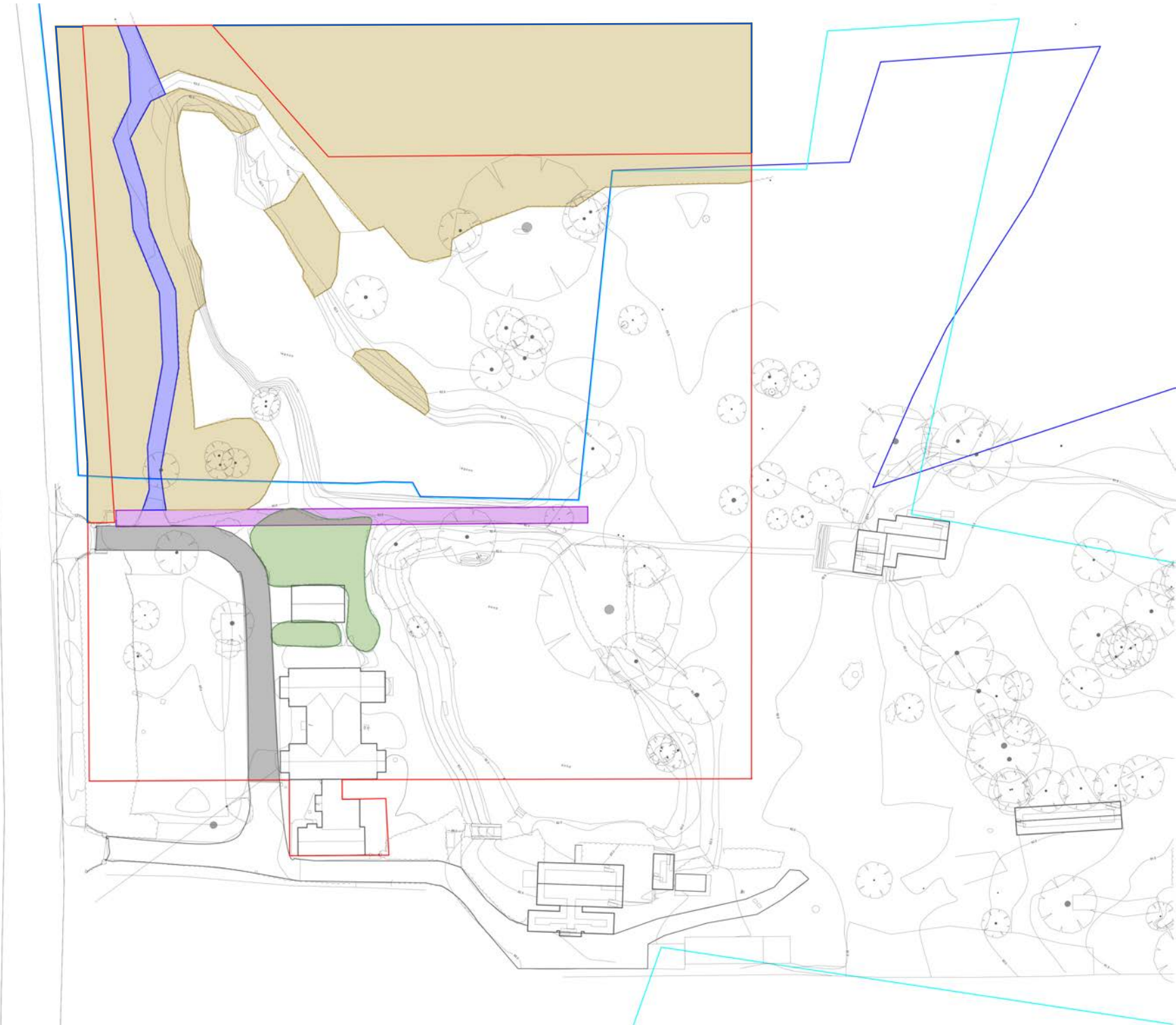
— 1978 TPO
— 1973 TPO

The occupants are conscious of the beauty of their natural setting and wish to maintain, improve and protect the existing landscape character. The siting 5.5m north of the approved scheme re-establishes the view from the main living areas of the dwelling to the mature oak to the northeast.

This greater connection between the dwelling and the woodland area north of the TPO boundary was a key concept of the originally proposed scheme.

In addition the proposed landscape design will improve the biodiversity from implementing native planting.

▼
05 - Existing Garden Zoning



As part of this document an assessment of the local landscape character will be carried out in order to ascertain which areas will need to be improved as part of the proposed works.

The existing garden has two TPOs that incorporate the majority of the north and east of the site. The definition of the TPOs are as follows:

- 20/1973 - Woodland TPO: Mixed hardwoods consisting of mainly Birch, Chestnut and Oak
- 87/1978 - Woodland TPO: Birch, Chestnut, Oak, Various

Although the two Woodland TPOs are relevant for the site’s ecological context in general, the area to the north of the proposed dwelling within the TPO area has been totally overrun by wild rhododendron since at least the 1950’s (when the property was purchased by the current owner’s family). In 2020, initial rhododendron management was started with the removal of the largest bushes.

Diagram 05 shows the current landscape character accurately. The TPO area to the north of the site and west of the lagoon is still mostly made up of rhododendron with sporadic silver birch trees that must have been present before the rhododendron took over. The typical lifespan of a silver birch is 60-90 years, and some of the trees are dead.

In addition a vehicle path that was in place prior to the TPOs runs directly through this area. This path is made up of asphalt, hardcore and stones and grants access to the north of the site.

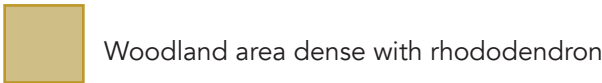
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Woodland dense with Rhododendron | Historic Vehicle Path - asphalt, hardcore stones |
| Tarmac path put in place before TPO | Asphalt Driveway |
| Rhododendron Cultivar | 1973 TPO |
| | 1978 TPO |



Rhododendron

Much of the designated TPO in the area to the north of the proposed dwelling is covered with wild rhododendron. Until 2020, other than the vehicle path, this area was completely overrun by wild rhododendron, but has since been cut back in an initial management effort.

Most of the surrounding trees to the north-west have been classed as low quality by the initial arboricultural report. This has been highlighted as an area for enhancement and replacement trees will be proposed that support the existing local flora and fauna and wildlife habitats alongside full management of the rhododendron.



▼
07 - Rhododendron Cultivar



Rhododendron Cultivar

The area immediately surrounding the garage is dense with rhododendron cultivar and other ornamental bushes which were planted when the site was purchased in the 1950s. These are being pruned and will be transplanted ahead of the construction of the proposal.

 Rhododendron Cultivar



▲
Pruned rhododendron cultiuvar
◀
Photo taken circa 1965 showing
rhododendron cultivar and other
planted bushes



08 - Driveway



Driveway

The existing hard standing asphalt driveway is adjacent to the TPO line. Although used for access and parking it does detract from the landscape character of the site as well as reducing potential biodiversity within the ecological context.



Asphalt Driveway



▼
09 - Tarmac Path



Tarmac Path

Several meters south of the TPO boundary there is a tarmac path that sits above a water supply to current stand pipes, as well as the now unused electricity supply to all the properties within the wider site.

The TPO boundaries were sited several metres to the north of this existing path to allow access to the electricity cable and water supply without damaging roots within the TPO.

 Tarmac path put in place before TPO



▼
10 - Vehicle Access



Historic Vehicle Path

A historic hardcore and asphalt vehicle path is still in place that was present when the site was originally bought in the 1950s before the TPO was put in place. Partially covered with grass this path runs the full length of the TPO adjacent to Bearwood road.

Historic Vehicle Path



11 - Proposed Garden Zones



The proposed development will further enhance the ecological context and landscape character of the site beyond the originally submitted wider landscape management plan.

Diagram 11 shows the proposed management which will include the removal of all wild rhododendron west of the lagoon. Native saplings as detailed in the 1973 TPO will be planted across the TPO area shown in green. A strip of rhododendron on the far western boundary will be retained to adhere to Paragraph 4.28 of the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan. Elsewhere on the site, rhododendron will be gradually removed to allow the native trees to re-populate naturally. A strip of rhododendron to the north of the site will be retained to act as a visual barrier for privacy. In addition, the unsightly asphalt path adjacent to the TPO will be removed as will the asphalt driveway. The driveway will be replaced with more biodiverse gravel and planting as per the landscape designer's proposals.

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Rhododendron to be removed and native sapling trees to be planted in the TPO area - TPO suggested trees are Oak, Birch and Chestnut |  Historic Vehicle Path |
|  Rhododendron on boundary to be retained in accordance with Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood plan para 4.28 |  Rhododendron to be gradually removed to protect existing species |
|  Tarmac path to be removed |  Asphalt Driveway |
|  Rhododendron retained to northern boundary |  1973 TPO |
| |  1978 TPO |



◀
12 - Rhododendron around existing tree

Rhododendron Management

Alongside the proposed improvements, specific care needs to taken with abundance of rhododendron, specifically within the TPO area to the west of the lagoon.

The owners have started to manage the rhododendron by cutting back the largest bushes that had overrun that part of the site. This management is currently sporadic depending on the current state of the Rhododendron growth.

Proposed future management will exceed existing measures and will be in accordance with the guidance set out in the Forestry Commission’s Managing and Controlling Invasive Rhododendron document. As per Chapter 5 of the Forestry Commission’s document, the cut stump method will be implemented across the site without the need for heavy machinery that could cause damage to existing flora and fauna. Specifically, rhododendron on site will be cut back to stumps, reservoirs drilled, and 20% glyphosate solution immediately applied to the reservoir.

Any re-growth of rhododendron will be treated using the cut stem method as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Forestry Commission’s document.

The Tree and Landscape Officer's previous comments stated that the original siting of the dwelling will “harm the valued landscape, countryside, TPO woodland and the general landscape character of the site.”

Although understandable concerns, the Tree and Landscape Officer had no way of knowing that the TPOs had been put in place to the north of an existing tarmac path, as well as electricity and water supplies. It was also not obvious from the original proposal that the TPO area close to the proposed dwelling is currently overrun with wild rhododendrons and that no high-quality native trees remain.

By moving the dwelling 5.5m north, the owners wish to re-establish the site line from the main living area to the mature oak to the north-east of the site, which the approved siting does not allow. They also wish to enhance and preserve the site as a valued landscape.

In return for moving the approved dwelling, this proposal will further improve the immediate natural context through full rhododendron management, re-planting of native tree species, and removal of the tarmac path and driveway close to the TPO boundary.

Together with the arboricultural and ecological reports that formed part of the approved application, we strongly feel that the above proposal highlights areas of significant improvement to the landscape character and site-wide biodiversity.