

17 Branch Hill Design & Access Statement.

Planning Application

January 2015

779

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Project No	Project The Kaye's Residence		Date: 28/01/2015	RIBA #	1 Vencourt Place, Ravenscourt Park Hammersmith, London W6 9NU Phone +44 (0) 20 8600 4171		
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This application is for the complete demolition of the existing dwelling at 17 Branch Hill, Hampstead.

- the dwelling has little architectural merit
- the dwelling makes a neutral contribution to its neighbouring context and to the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- there are no examples of good workmanship or architecturally significant elements worthy of retention.

The intention is to replace the existing building with a single family dwelling on a re-arranged slight larger footprint whilst still respecting the context and maintaining the overall back land character of the site and the Hampstead Conservation Area. It is proposed that the replacement dwelling will have a contemporary external form and scale that has a subservient presence against the larger and more traditional houses at number 1 and 2 Branch Hill. It is important to state that the height of the proposed building will not exceed the height of the existing with a relocation of massing on the site designed to maximise garden space against the sensitive neighbouring interfaces.

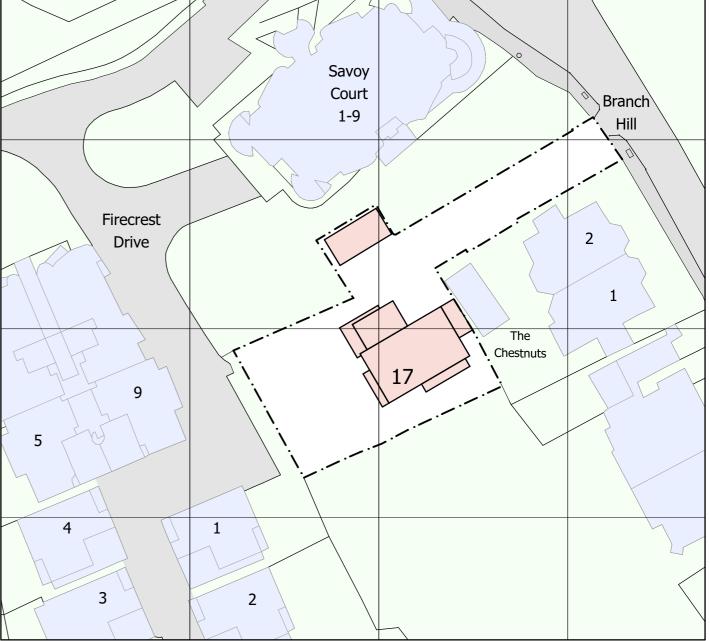
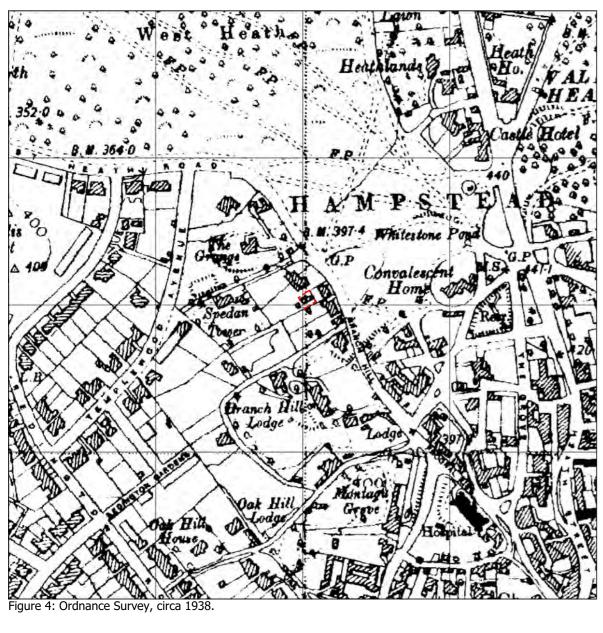


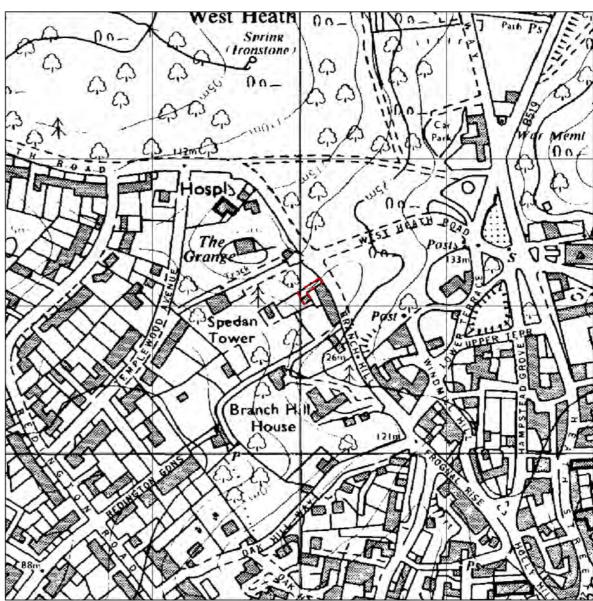
Figure 1: Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright 2014.



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4	Site History		JH				
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The application site/building at the rear of Nos 1 and 2 Branch Hill is shown before the significant developments to the south and W/SW in the grounds of Branch Hill House and on the enlarged site around Spedan Tower





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5	5	Existing Context		JH		© Spence Harris Hogan Limited 2012		

Branch Hill comprises of a mixture of semi-detached terrace brick houses and unit blocks ranging in height between 3-6 storeys. The West Heath features predominantly to the end of Branch Hill contributing heavily to the street's woodland aesthetic. Architectural styles range from Victorian and Edwardian with a number of lower scale contemporary houses and 1980's style apartments blocks.

The semi-detached houses at number 1 and 2 Branch Hill act as the entrance houses to the site, since the site in question originally formed a part of a larger estate.

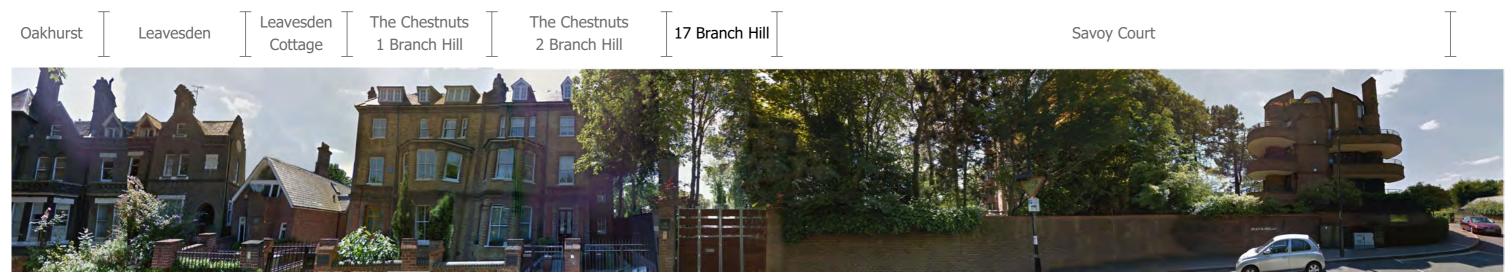


Figure 6: Photo montage of Branch Hill. Author: SHH











Figure 9: View from site looking E. Author: SHH

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6	Existing Site		JH	© Spence Harris Hogan Limited 2012		

Number 17 Branch Hill is located just south of the West Heath. The plot was originally formed and developed with a separate access from the principle roadat the same time as numbers 1 and 2 Branch Hill. Now 3 out of the site's 4 main boundaries directly face the rear garden's of its neighbours, spawning substantial trees and vegetation on these interfaces which, in their maturity of the years since developments have occured, are valuable in offering mutual screening between all the neighbouring properties. The site's W/SW boundary faces units of a similar height across Firecrest Drive. These units are approximately 22 metres from the existing house with vegetation established on this boundary to limit overlooking at the lower levels. Significant windows on these units seem to be used for the primary circulation routes inside.

The site has a drop in level of approximately 3 metres from the entrance gate of the site to the rear garden. The landscape has been altered to create a sharp drop in the site creating on-grade access to both the ground and lower ground floor level, to the driveway and garden respectively.

The existing 3-storey building was constructed in the early 2000's after the demolition of previous premises on the site. The house is 2-storeys high at entrance/driveway level and the natural grade of the land slopes down to an additional lower ground floor level at the rear of the site. Red brick and dark timber panelling are the main exterior materials used in the existing building with some metal detailing and clear glazing for the windows. The building is not listed nor deemed architecturally significant to the Hampstead Conservation Area. The current users of the existing building experience high on-going living and maintainance costs due to ineffecient choice of materials during the construction.



Figure 10: Aerial view of 17 Branch Hill, Hampstead (red outline). Author: Bing Maps

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7	Hampstead Conservation Area		JU	© Spence Harris Hogan Limited 2012		

The property is in Sub-Area 6 and the site is a discrete, isolated and individual plot behind Branch Hill itself, presenting no street main frontage and enclosed by mature landscaping and tree cover. It is at the very edge of Sub-Area 6 sitting between the two buildings known as The Chestnuts (which form the boundary to this part of the Conservation Area) and Birchwood Drive/Firecrest Drive (a denser more contemporary development of varying scale).

The special character of Hampstead Conservation Area is derived from a range of particular factors and attributes including the topography of the area and the range and mix of the buildings within it. The sub-area is notable for its topography and significant tree cover. Nestling within the slopes and the trees are many buildings and developments which represent several eras and styles, including the Council's Spedan Close development from the late 1970s in the grounds of the listed Branch Hill House someway to the south of this application site.

On the frontage of Branch Hill the pair of buildings known as the Chestnuts are identified in the Council's 2002 Conservation Area Statement as making a positive contribution to the area as are a handful of nearby buildings further down the Hill. The Statement identifies them as "notable because of their value as local landmarks, or as particularly good examples of the local building tradition". In contrast, on the other borders of the application site the 6 storey Firecrest Drive block of flats and the stylistically similar houses in Birchwood Drive built at the same time, sit outside the conservation area.

The existing building on the application site makes a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area. Pre-application discussions with Camden conservation planners identified that no objection would be made to the demolition of the existing building as long as the replacement respects that existing context and the character of the Conservation Area (see pre-application advice from officers). This is in keeping with the Hampstead Conservation Area guidlines section H5 where demolition consent is granted to buildings that do not demostrate their contribution to the Conservation Area and where a positive alternative is proposed to replace it.

The existing character for the Conservation Area includes a variety of building types, ages and styles with the immediate context of Branch Hill being a good example of this mix. The backland lot faces a variety of styles from traditional townhouses, to blocks of flats and similar scale houses all facing the site. As stated in section H22 of the Hampstead Conservation Area guidlines concerning new development, contemporary architecture can contribute to the charater of the area so long as the proposal is considerate to its context. The pre-application undertaken also concluded that a contemporary replacement would be acceptable for this site (see pre-application advice from officers).



Figure 11: Aerial perspective on Branch Hill and surrounding context showing mixed styles and densities. Author: Bing Maps.

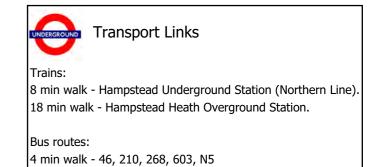
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8	Access Statement		JH					
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The design process has been undertaken with equal access in mind in terms of not only Part M of the Building Regulations, but DUP policy DES1 and 'Lifetime Homes' guidance.

Existing vehicle access from Branch Hill will not be changed with the proposed works.

Pedestrians enter 17 Branch Hill through the main vehicular entrance gate. Step-free access from the pedestrian walkway of Branch Hill to the main entrance door to the house will be maintained. A demountable ramp is proposed at the entrance of the proposed building.

There are several transport options in the area for those without private transport to use. Hampstead Underground Station is located 800 metres away provides access to the Edgware branch of the Northern Line, which 4-5 stops away lead to the major interchanges of Euston and Kings Cross St Pancras stations. Bus routes 250 metres away provide routes to destinations such as Finchley, Swiss Cottage, Muswell Hill, Edgware and Central London. An 18 minute walk will bring you to Hampstead Heath Overground Station providing train routes to destinations such as Clapham Junction, Stratford and Richmond.



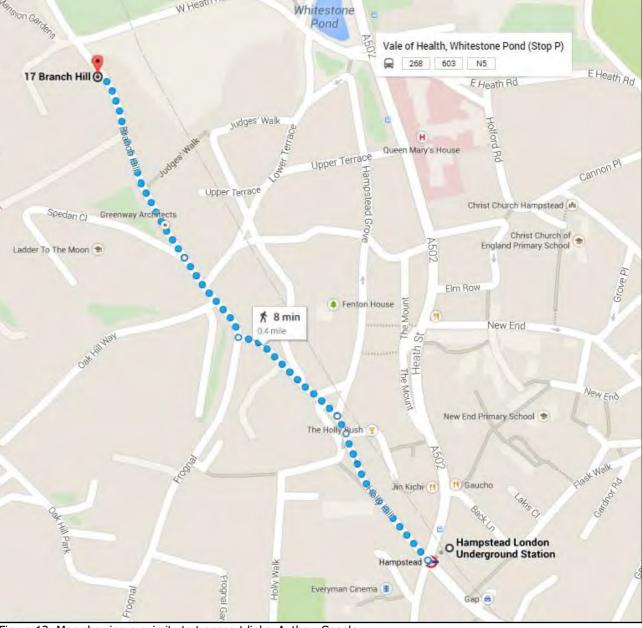


Figure 12: Map showing proximity to transport links. Author: Google.

The proposal is for the complete demolition of the exiting structure and to replace it with a single family dwelling with a height of 2 storeys at entrance level and 3 storeys at garden level as the natural grade of the land falls to the rear of the site. The garden will be split into 2 levels each having on-grade access from the Ground and Lower Ground floors. The existing building is deemed not to positively contribute to the Hampstead Conservation Area and therefore the demolition adheres to policy outlined in Camden's Local Development Framework, policy DP25 item c, that states that non-listed buildings that postively contribute will not receive consent for demolition.

The intention is replace energy inefficient and architecturally insignificant existing structure with a well-appointed and beautifully detailed contemporary building. The discreet approach to the proposed dwelling's detail design maintains and contributes to the existing garden and subsurvient character of the back land site, with particular attention paid to landscaping, screening and privacy. The design was framed around policies of Camden's Local Development Framework, particularly policy DP25 item b; a development that preserves the character of the conservtion area and the appearence of the area. Pre-application discussions with Camden Council advised the need for the proposal to remain subservient to the residences at number 1 and 2 Branch Hill and design changes henceforth have aimed to reflect this feedback in terms of bulk and scale. After engaging in pre-submission discussions and hearing the potential concerns from the neighbours at 1 and 2 Branch Hill in terms of sunlight and amenity, a compromised option of a curved roof has been introduced on the building's eastern boundary. This curve in the roof form allows more sunlight into the rear garden of the neighbours than the preapplication scheme.

As no measurable street presence is applicable the building's immediate context is to rear gardens of its neighbours, maintaining the characteristic of privacy and discreet visual interaction. The proposed dwelling maintains an 18 metre separation between the neighbours with only the circulation area windows of the neighbours featuring prominently on the sites western boundary (see figure 14).

The proposed building's footprint increases 4 metres in a W/SW direction while the building's Southern edge decreases approximately 7.5 metres. The first floor on the W/SW elevation has been set back and reduced in height to create a 'stepped' form that better suits the approach to the garden and the neighbours. The resulting form following the preapplication advice reduces the proposals overall bulk and acknowledges its scale in relation to numbers 1 and 2 Branch Hill.

The proposal not only maintains the existing mature landscaping but augments it along the southern boundary to increase privacy and to further contribute to the woodland character of the site. Significant trees will not be affected in the proposed scheme as outlined in the Tree Report entitled "SHH 17BRH AIA 01" accompanying this report.



Figure 13: View of driveway. Author: SHH.



Figure 14: View of neighbouring buildings on W boundary. Author: SHH.

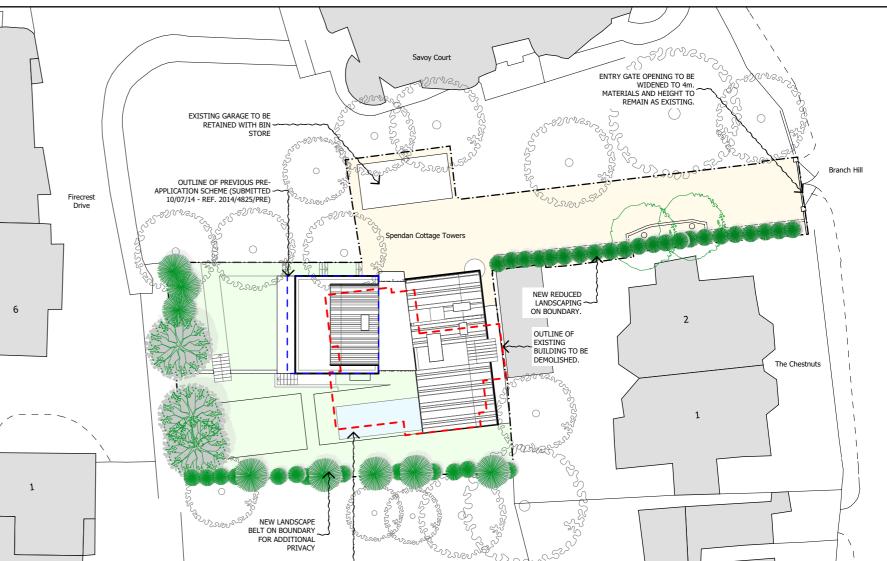


Figure 15: Proposed site plan (NTS). Author: SHH



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1 Proposal - Design

The design approach to the proposed scheme looks to create an appropriate contemporary replacement that befits the unique location and dimensions of the site. The off-street location of the site creates a unique opportunity for well designed modern architecture to contribute to the variety of the Hampstead Conservation Area without affecting the existing street scene in any way.

To further acknowledge the building's subservient role in its immediate context, simple yet elegant design features are used to contrast the more complex decoration and massing of the proposed scheme's more traditional neighbours. The building's form contributes to the theme of simplicity with a 2 'winged' layout separated by a centralised circulation space that splits the wings in the centre. Each wing runs parallel to the site's boundaries allowing sensible special planning in both the interior and exterior spaces of the scheme.

The extent and location of the proposal's fenestration respects the existing relationship the site has with its neighbours. Pre-application advice stated several locations that were of concern to the amenity of the neighbours and each has been changed to coincide with this advice. To prevent overlooking issues, no windows appear on the first floor of the E/NE elevation that face the rear gardens of numbers 1 and 2 Branch Hill. Obscured glass is used for the side lights on the window bay in the master ensuite. The elevation to the E/SE similarly has limited glazing to prevent overlooking concerns into the rear garden's of Leavesden and Oakhurst. The N/NE elevation again proposes limited glazing for similar privacy issues. The least sensitive elevation in terms of overlooking occurs on the proposed building's W/SW and this is where the larger fenestration is present, which also takes advantage of the mid-afternoon and afternoon sun. The neighbouring window nearest to the W/SW elevation is 18 metres (60 feet) away. These large neighbouring windows appear to be used for hallways and vertical circulation.

The exterior finishes are limited to a select pallete of materials to further accentuate the proposal's modest design approach. The predominant material will be a white cement render for the majority of the exterior walls. Highly detailed grey zinc will be used for the curved roofs on each wing. Warm laminate hardword will be used as shutters and to accentuate the 'split' in the 2 wings. The laminate will be used to prevent premature ageing in the timber over time. In the rear garden a natural black/grey stone will be used on the retaining wall and the material will continue through to the building to give a visual foundation. Light grey obscured glass will be used on areas sensitive to overlooking issues and lightly tinted glass will be used on the glass balustrades. Standard clear double-glazing will be used on the majority of the windows unless otherwise specified.



Figure 16: Rendered perspective of entrance looking south. Author: SHH



Figure 17: Rendered perspective view from garden looking north. Author: SHH

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11 Proposal - Spatial planning (Ground)

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Ground Floor:

The layout of each floor is split into two 'wings' with each separated by a central circulation space. The ground floor uses are divided into family and formal spaces, the formal on the more private Eastern boundary and the family accessing the sun and garden on the Western elevation. Each floor is arranged in a split level to concur the natural grade of the site and to address bulk issues to the Western edge of the site.

Vertical circulation through each floor runs perpendicular to the driveway via the main stairwell to the S/SE. Secondary stairs are proposed from the entrance to the garden level, from the central corridor to the mezzanine level, from the lower ground to basement level and internally in bedroom's 2 and 3.

Users enter the building on-grade from the driveway on the N/NW elevation. The central corridor is where the vertical circulation occurs with floor voids creating a triple-height volume. Adjacent to the entrance are cloakroom facilities as well as a guest bedroom with room sizes that comply with Lifetime Homes requirements. A study and formal living area form the remaining uses on this wing on the Eastern boundary. The kitchen, family living and family dining areas are situated on the Western wing via a secondary stair allowing on grade access to the garden. The space has a double-height volume.

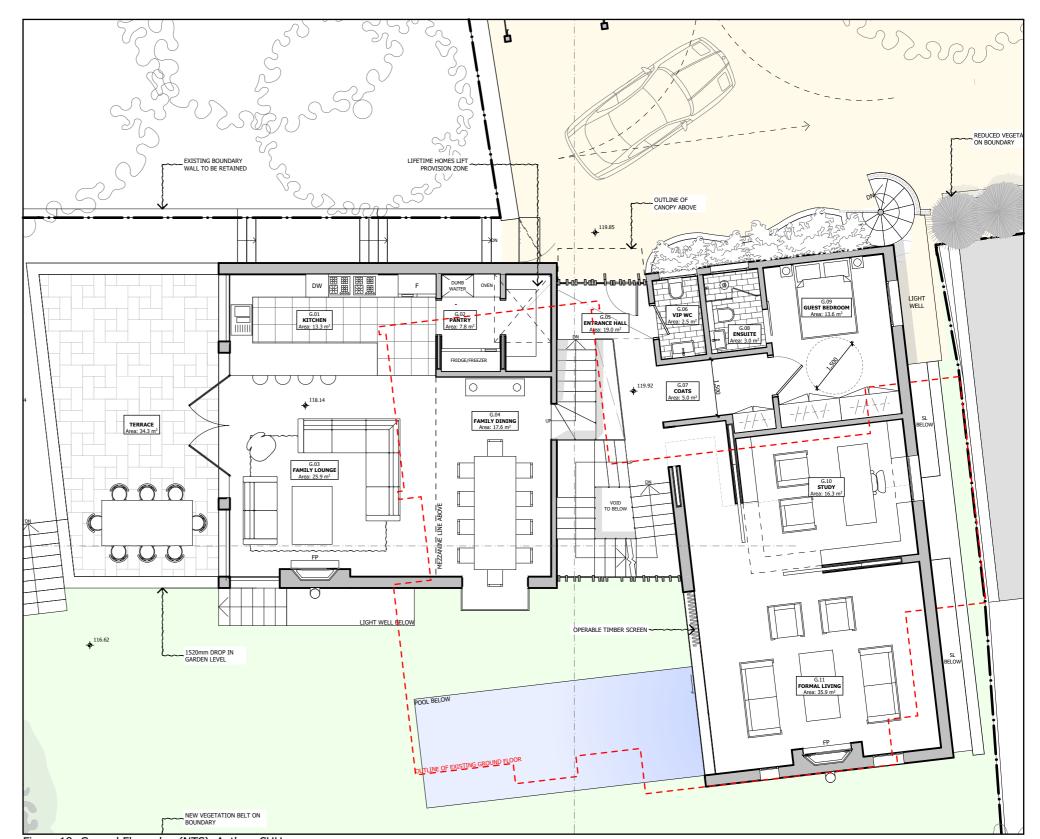


Figure 18: Ground Floor plan (NTS). Author: SHH



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Proposal - Spatial planning (Mezzanine)

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Mezzanine:

The mezzanine level sits directly above the pantry and family dining spaces of the ground floor (garden level). Its sole use is a formal dining area and is accessed via a small stair from the main central corridor.

A low-level glazed wall provides a visual link between the double-height family living area below. The N/NE end of the room has a small box window and the S/SW end has a double-height window bay with a void connecting the lower and upper floors. The bay window overlooks the pool and have blinds in use for privacy.

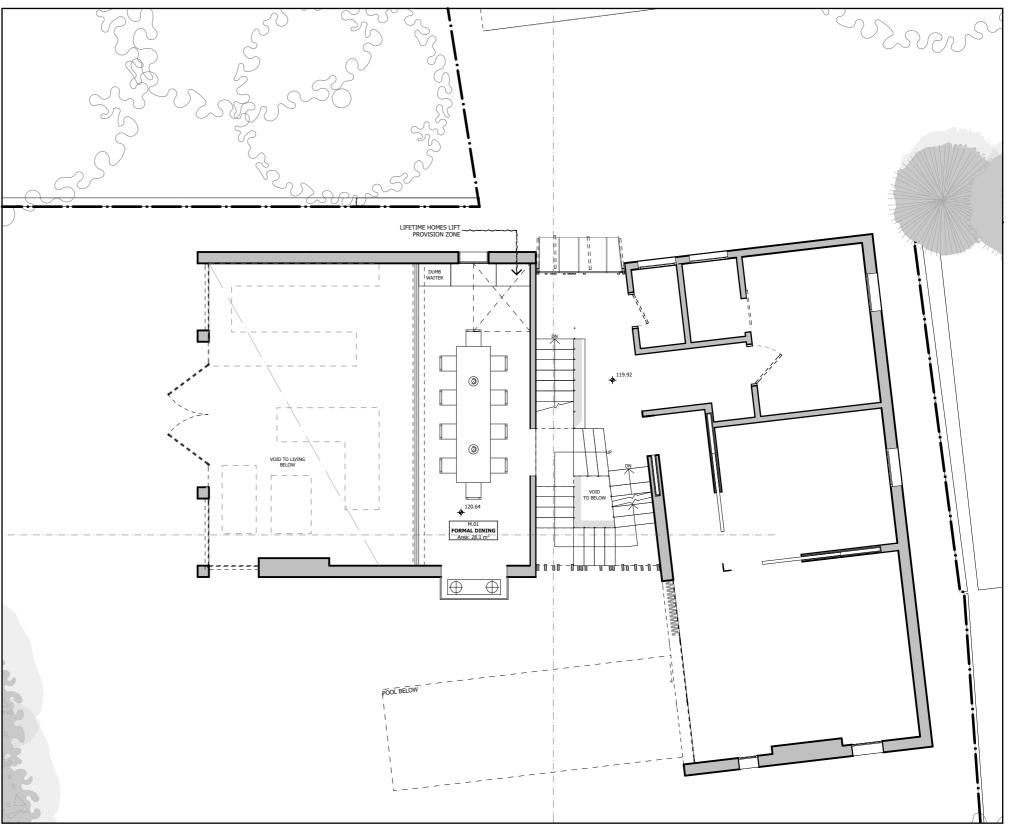


Figure 19: Mezzanine plan (NTS). Author: SHH



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First Floor:

The first floor is where the majority of the sleeping accommodation is located. The Eastern wing contains the master suite with all major windows orientated away from the neighbouring gardens. A small window bay located in the master ensuite has side and top light obscured glazing with a solid wall facing the neighbouring garden. Bedroom 4 is located on the building's northern corner with an ensuite and robe area. No windows are proposed on the NE elevation to prevent overlooking into number 1 and 2 Branch Hill. Skylights are introduced into several rooms where windows have been removed in order to mitigate overlooking issues.

The Western wing contains Bedroom 2 and 3, each with a walk-in robe and a shared bathroom. The bedrooms are 1 metre lower in floor level to address bulk issues on the W/SW facade. Both bedrooms have a terrace area.

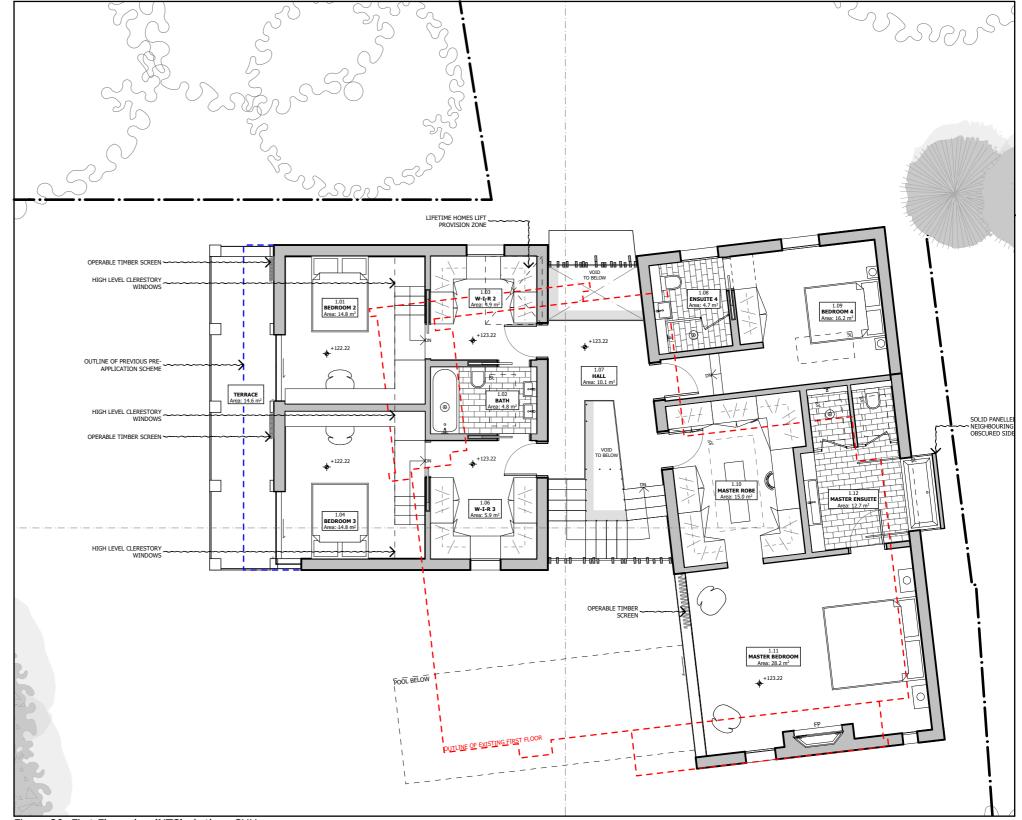


Figure 20: First Floor plan (NTS). Author: SHH



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14	Proposal - Spatial planning (Lower Ground)		JH		shh.co.uk © Spence Harris Hogan Limited 2012			

Basement:

Leisure and service accommodation is located on the lower ground floor. Areas requiring natural light and ventilation are located on the Southern corner of the floor plate with the service areas to the North.

An indoor/outdoor pool is separated by a guillotine window that opens out on grade to the lower garden level. A Jacuzzi, gym and changing facilities are located adjacent to the pool. A light well on the building's Southern corner provides access, light and ventilation to a playroom and cinema area, both separated by a removable wall.

A circular stair leading from the driveway via a light well leads down to addition self-contained accommodation for staff. A kitchenette/utility room is adjacent to the staff area.

Uses that require no natural light are located at the N/NE corner for the floor plate. A wine cellar and storage area are located off the main central corridor with a plant room located adjacent to the light well for air ventilation.

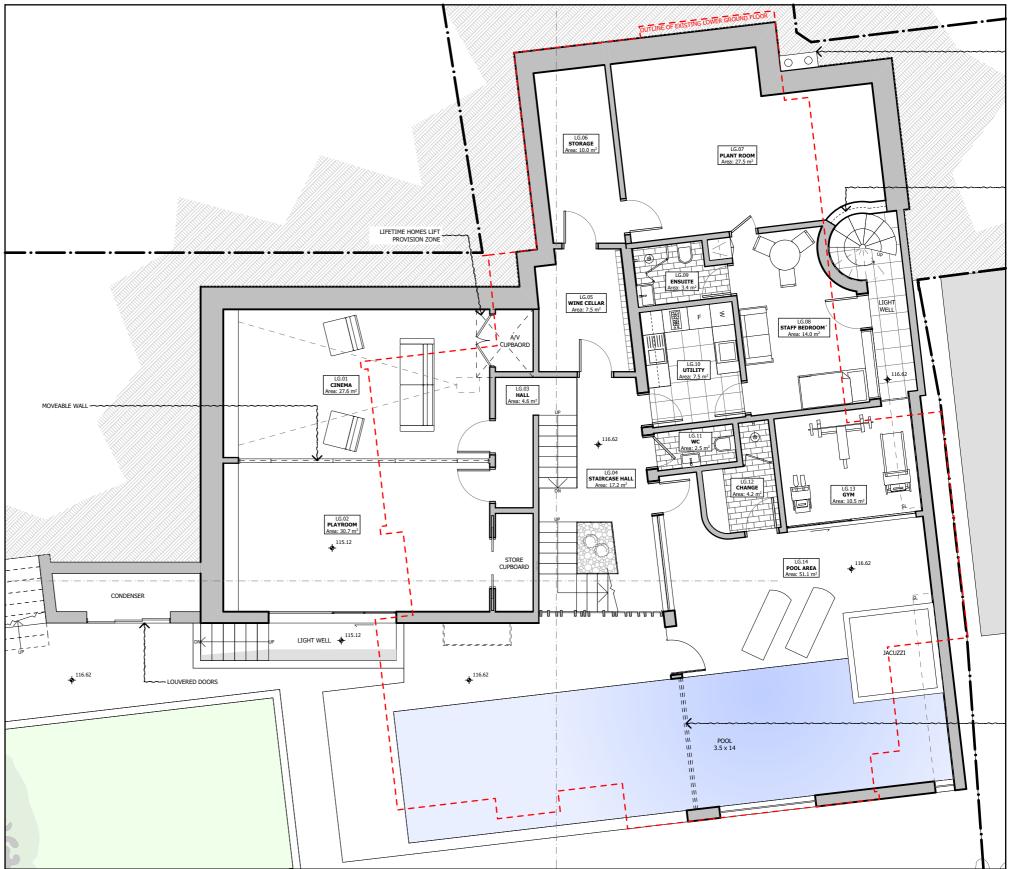


Figure 21: Lower Ground Floor plan (NTS). Author: SHH

