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Design and Access Statement

Dunford House, Dunford Hollow, West Lavington, West Sussex GU29 0AF
P20020-RFT-00-XX-RP-A-4500-S4-P01

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1 / Introduction



Aerial view of site location

This application seeks permission to renovate and restore Dunford House to provide a high quality conference and training centre with associated events and ancillary spaces.

Dunford House has a Grade II listing and is located within the expansive grounds of Dunford Hollow in Heyshott south of Midhurst, West Sussex within the South Downs National Park.

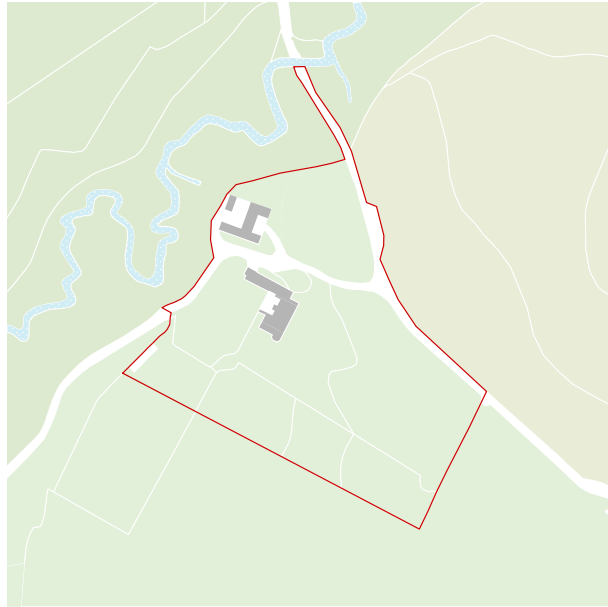
The Dunford Hollow grounds abut Costers Brook to the north-west and are within a mile of the A286, the primary vehicular route to the south of Midhurst town.

Historically used as a single family home and more recently as a conference centre with overnight accommodation, the Dunford House complex is an amalgam of the main house, adjoining managers accommodation (the Bungalow) and a separate coach house buildings.



Aerial view of Dunford House

2 / History



1848

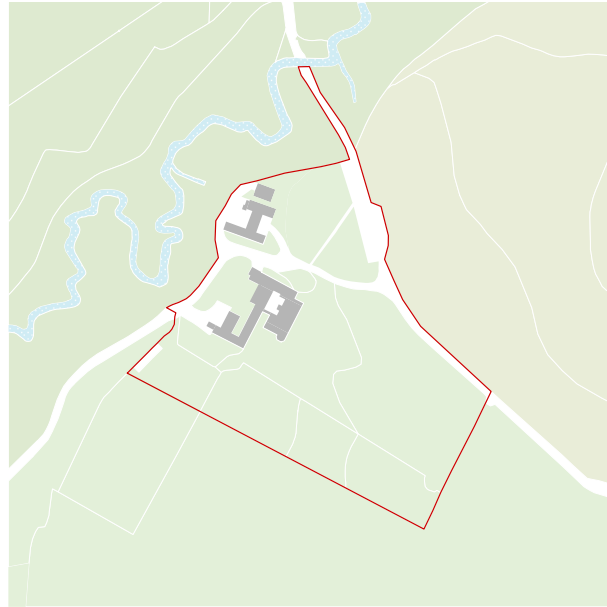
Dunford House was built between 1848 and 1853 for the manufacturer and politician Richard Cobden, on the site of the earlier farmhouse where he was born and was designed by Frederick K Wehnert of Wehnert and Ashdown.

It has been suggested that the notable garden designer Sir Joseph Paxton, who advised Cobden on planting, was involved in the design of the associate glass houses.

Depictions from the mid 19th century show the completed house in an Italianate style with adjoining four and five storey towers.

The estate appears on the 1st edition OS map in 1875 and the main house had a u-shaped footprint with a rear wing to the north. Also depicted is a formal garden, kitchen garden, glass house, stables and coach house, entrance lodges and a nearby farm complex.

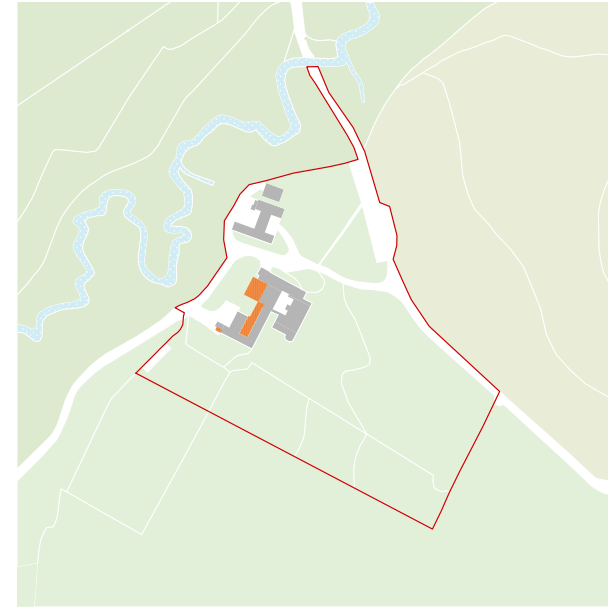
The family lived in the house until 1919.



1950/60/70

The house was conveyed to the ownership of YMCA England in 1951 to be used for educational purposes. At this time some internal changes occurred including the addition of en-suites to bedrooms and the rearrangement of rooms in the northern and rear wing. The building was also extended to the north-west, on the site of the earlier garden and former detached glasshouse. The YMCA closed in 2018.

In the latter half of the 20th century the top floor of the five storey tower was removed and the stack to the adjacent four storey tower was truncated.



2023

The proposed alterations look to infill the existing ad-hoc arrangement of buildings that have been added in Dunford House's lifetime.

By way of careful refurbishment and subtle contemporary interventions, the proposals would revitalise Dunford House to be enjoyed for the foreseeable future.

Dunford House, being the birthplace of Richard Cobden, an influential Victorian politician has an inherent historical importance, as exemplified by the Grade II listing.

Since the Cobden family left Dunford House, under the care of the YMCA significant architectural changes occurred such as the truncating of the original characterful water towers and the incongruous extensions of the service wing which have arguably been damaging to the character of the original house.



Richard Cobden c. early 1860s

2 / History

Images shown here illustrate the house in its early life as a family home to the Cobden's as well during its use in the 1920s by the London School of Economics.



The Cobden Family outside Dunford House. Early 1860s



Dunford House. The Drawing Room.

Photograph of existing drawing room



Photograph of house in 1920

3 / Context

The house is situated in mature grounds over an undulating landscape.

To the south east the house faces an open field lined with mature oak trees before the grounds falls away to the access road.

To the south west the grounds rise up to a meadow which previously would have been the formal gardens.

To the north west, the extensions carried out for the YMCA are sited on the previous kitchen garden on a raised level. Beyond that the Costers Brooks encloses the ownership of the grounds.

From the north the road rises from Dunford Hollow and provides access to both Dunford House and the neighbouring farm house.

Beyond the brook to the north the site is bounded by ancient woodland. Further north of the woodland sits a previous industrial site which is now being reclaimed.



Panoramic view of front of house and grounds to south



Looking east from roadway up to house

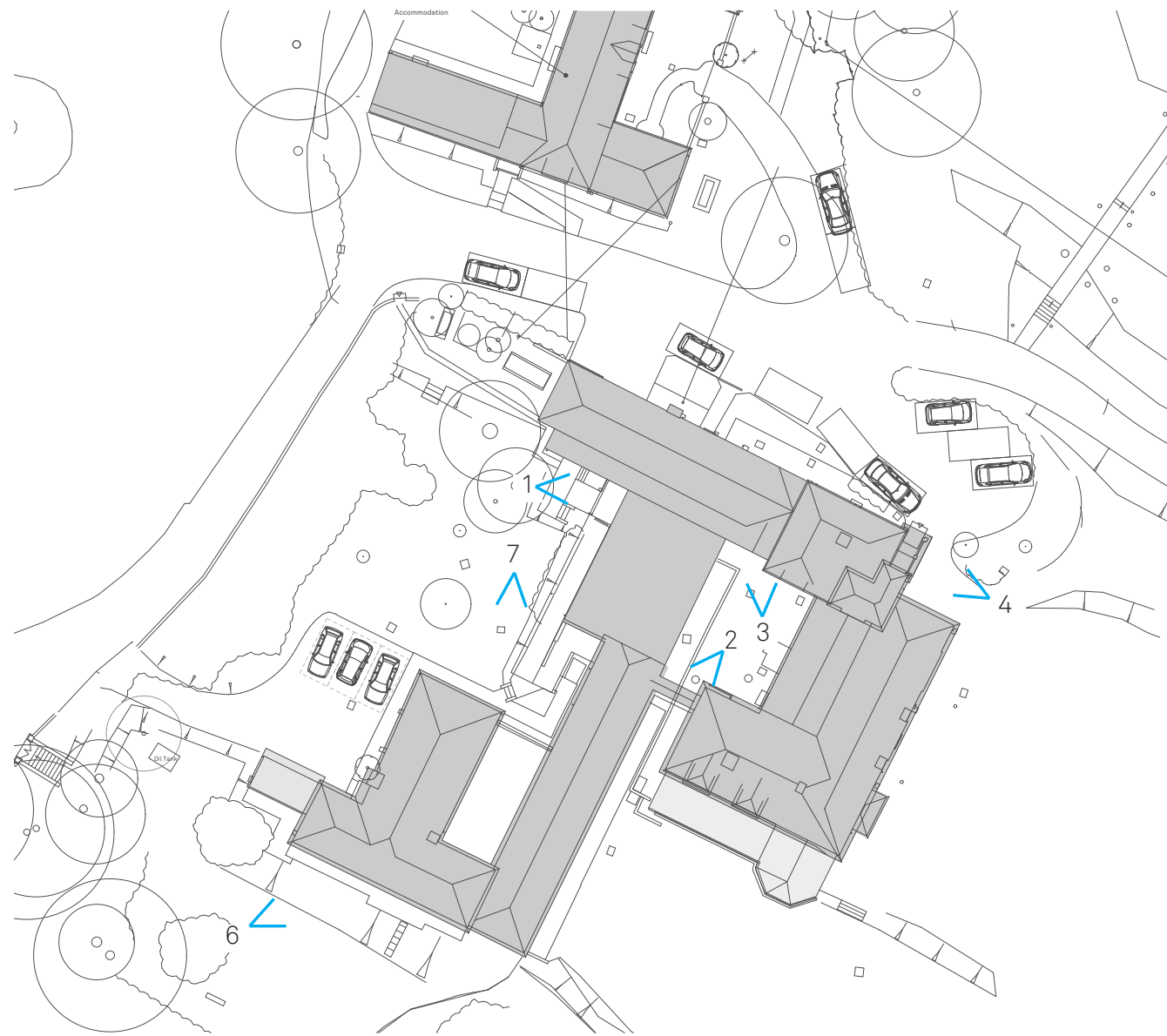


Looking south from rear of site at everyday parking area



Looking at west elevation of house at the glass house

4 / Existing Condition



Existing site plan

Existing & Proposed Uses

The house is currently used as a conference and training centre (C2 use class) with ancillary manager accommodation, referred to as 'The Bungalow'.

The proposals presented here are to retain its use as a conference and training centre, with an additional new events space for weddings and short stay wellness events.

Area - Gross Internal Areas

Dunford house has an existing GIA of 1897m² as per the below table.

The proposals do not require the removal of any existing internal area, only the demolition of the external steel pergola structure adjoined to the existing conference centre, a much later addition of little to no heritage importance relative to the original house.

There is therefore a noted 188m² of new building proposed with no offset made by demolition of existing area, essentially via additional circulation and breakout space.

Refer to table below for full breakdown of existing, demolished and proposed area.

Access

Access arrangements would remain largely as per the existing conference centre with parking remaining in position, disabled bays to be located at the top of the slope near the entrance, and disabled platform lift etc. provided to the conference room as existing.

Given the listed nature of the building the addition of a new internal lift has been discounted to access upper floors in the refurbishment of the main house.

Dunford House (Gross Internal Area)				
Scope	Existing (m ²)	Demolished (m ²)	New (m ²)	Proposed Total (m ²)
House	1148	0	0	1148
Conference Room(s)	99	0	97	196
The Bungalow	157	0	91	248
Covered Area	29	29	0	0
Coach House	382	0	0	382
Warren	82	0	0	82
TOTALS	1897	29	188	2056

5 / Design Proposals

Existing parking spaces (marked *) assumed to be standard dimensions (2.4 x 4.8m)
Proposed parking spaces (2.5 x 5m)



The key design interventions and additions consist of a careful restoration and extension of the existing Bungalow structure to provide an event space (C), a new build extension to provide a principle conference and events space (B) and an infill connection between the retained existing conference centre and the refurbished bungalow providing ancillary and breakout spaces.

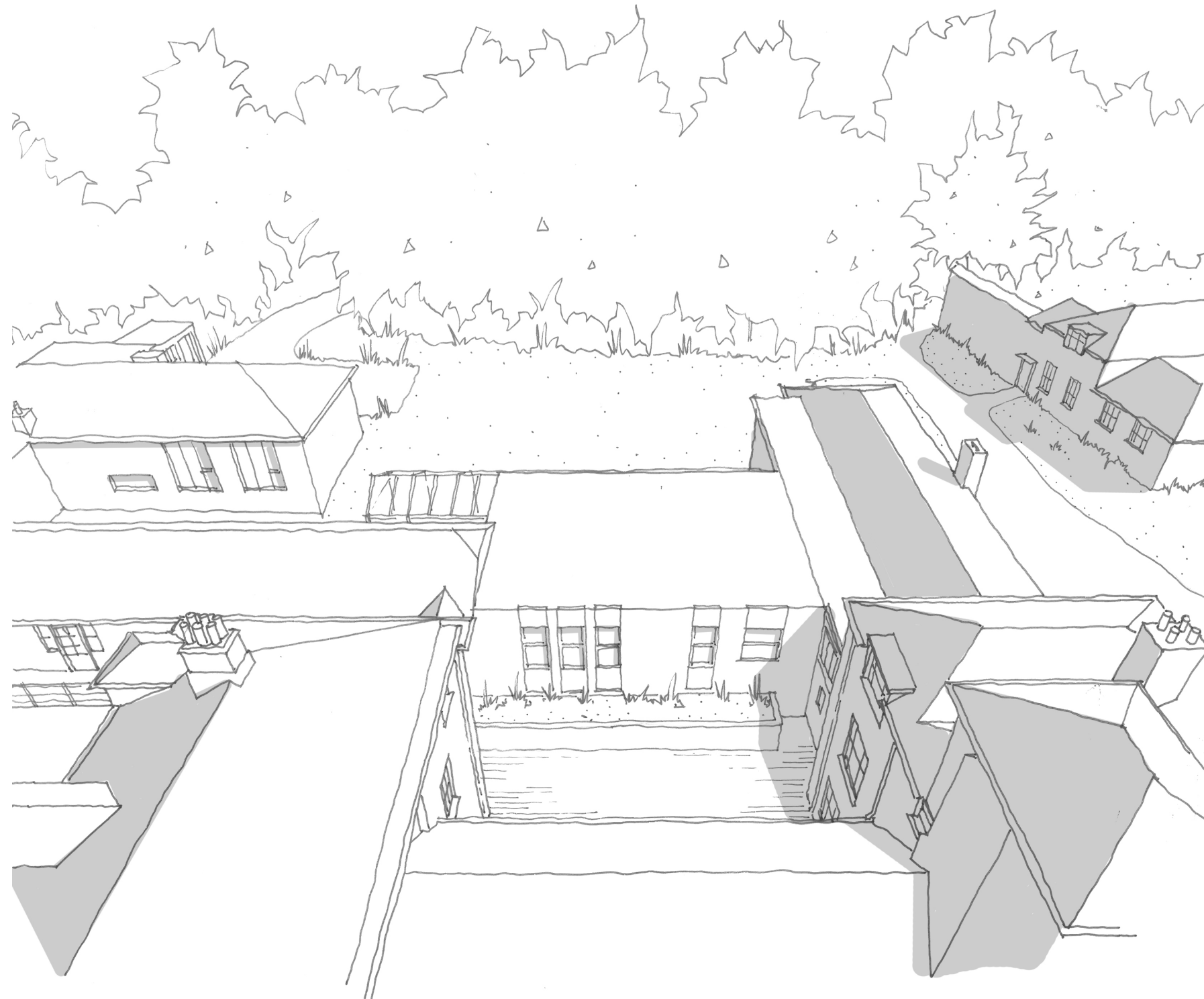
Please refer to drawings submitted in support of this application for details.

Externally, the grounds are to be carefully restored and maintained with the existing unsightly carpark situated on Dunford Hollow being upgraded and screened with a new tree lined, native hedgerow.

- A** Original house
- B** New Conference Centre
- C** Refurbished and extended 'Bungalow'
- D** Coach House
- E** Warren

Proposed site plan

5 / Design Proposals



View of new conference room and existing courtyard space

The existing courtyard is an external enclosure created by the later 60s/70s (existing) conference centre and service wing buildings against the existing rear facades of the original Dunford House.

The courtyard is currently in a poor condition with the later addition buildings ageing and weathering poorly.

While the courtyard provides sheltered external space within the collection of

buildings, the decrepit condition and lacklustre facade treatment of the later additions clash with the 3 original faces of Dunford House making the courtyard as a whole feel unloved and 'back of house'.

Additionally the rear of the existing conference centre is architecturally cluttered and is detrimental to the setting of the original house.



Photographs of existing courtyard and rear of conference centre

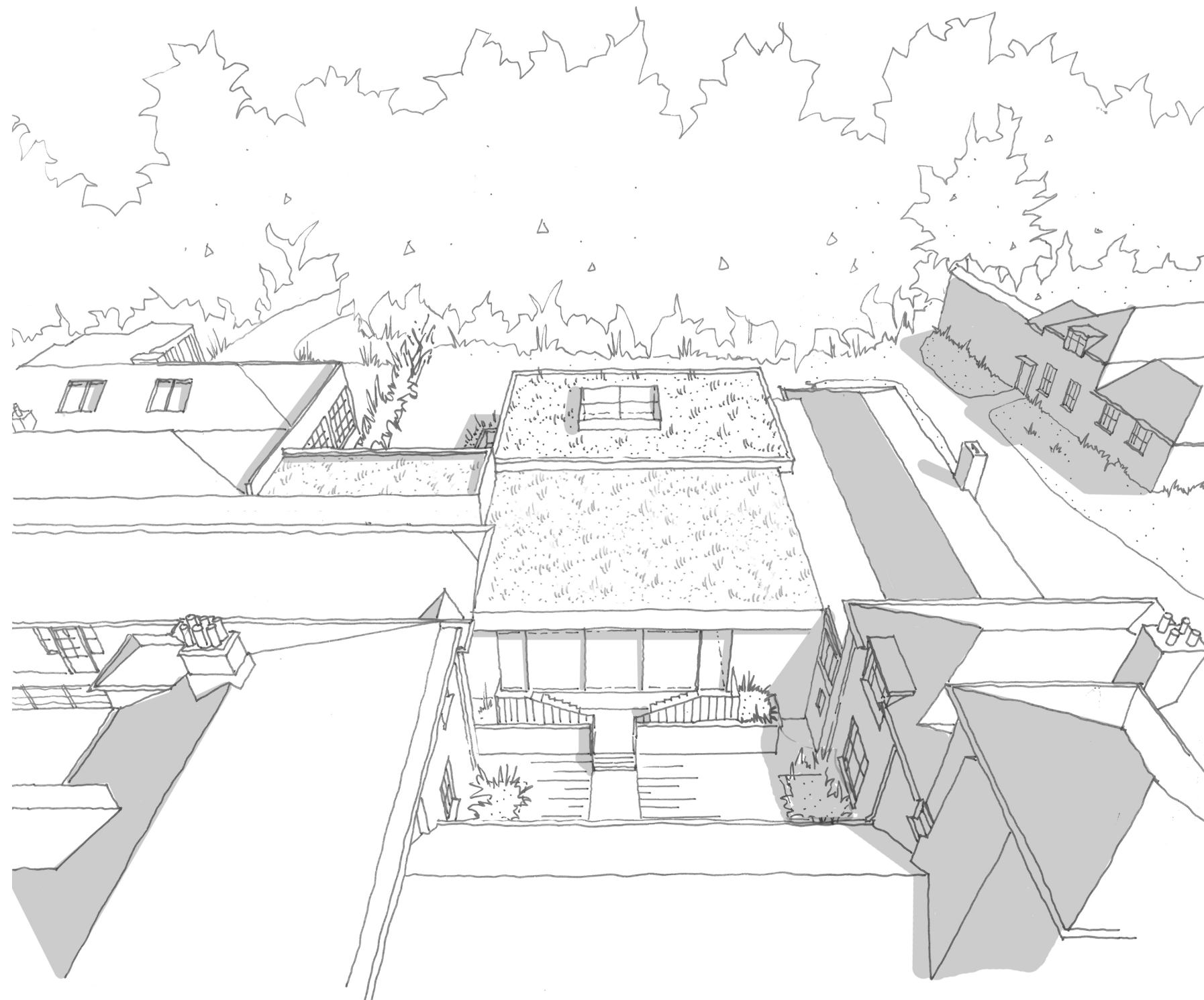
5 / Design Proposals

The proposed design will re-purpose the existing conference centre structure while removing the accumulated additions such as the lean-to structure at the rear. The 'cluttered' existing facades are proposed to be replaced with simple fenestration and a refined, complimentary palette of materials influenced by the original Dunford House.

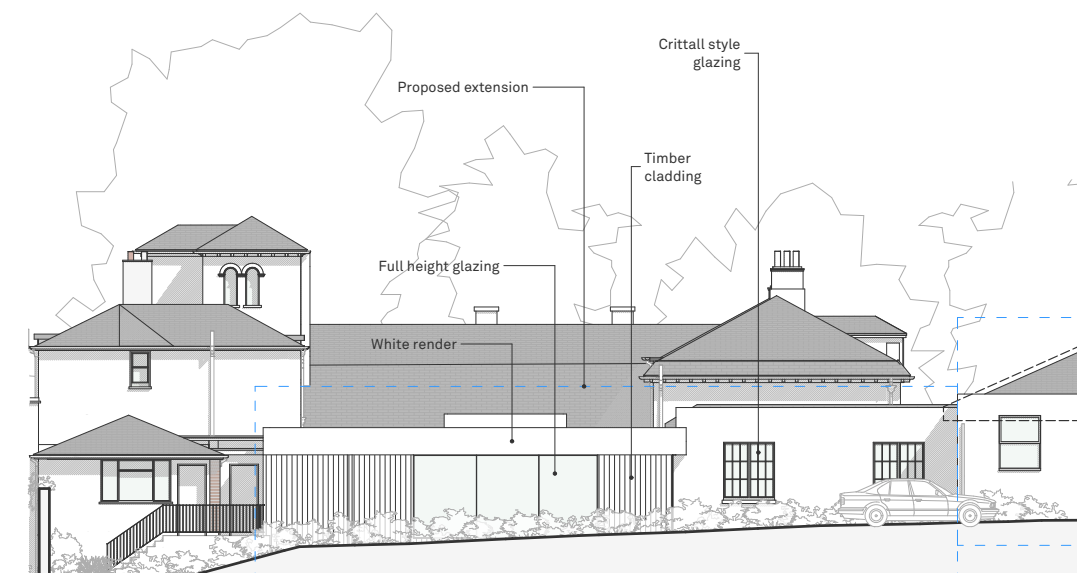
The courtyard will be refurbished with

the addition of a new stepped access to the conference centre giving the courtyard a sense of both procession and destination.

Green roofs will be employed in the restoration and new build works as well as additional planting beds and raised planters to embed the new elements into the landscape.



View of new conference room and existing courtyard space



Proposed north west elevation of the new conference centre



Proposed courtyard facing elevation