



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Tocher Knowe

WT Architecture

February 2024

PROPOSAL DETAILS

Site Address

Tocher Knowe, Roman Road, West Linton
Scottish Borders, EH46 7HB

Applicant

Douglas Armstrong and Belinda Beresford

Agent/ Architect

WT Architecture
www.wtarchitecture.com

INTRODUCTION

The proposals covered by this application have been developed in the context of the following policies and planning guidance:

Policy PMD1: Sustainability
Policy PMD2: Quality Standards
Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside
Policy EP3: Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy EP5: Special Landscape Areas
Policy EP13: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
Policy IS7: Parking Provision and Standards
Policy IS9: Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Biodiversity
Supplementary Planning Guidance - Landscape and Development
Supplementary Planning Guidance - Local Landscape Designations
Supplementary Planning Guidance - New Housing in the Borders Countryside
Supplementary Planning Guidance - Placemaking and Design
Supplementary Planning Guidance - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

WT ARCHITECTURE

WT Architecture are contemporary Scottish Architects working across Scotland and the UK in some of the most beautiful, sensitive and historic places. Our work covers projects large and small across Scotland; from landmark visitor centres and community hubs to beautifully detailed houses, extensions and bothies. Designing for these places means understanding the historic, climatic, seasonal, cultural, social and environmental nature of a site. We have worked successfully in protected landscapes, with listed buildings and in the context of national monuments, and approach every design process with an ambition to produce architecture that is respectful of the landscape and built environment it sits in. We are equally experienced in the climatic demands of working in some of Scotland's wildest and most exposed landscapes and skilled in meeting the challenges of complex inner-city sites.

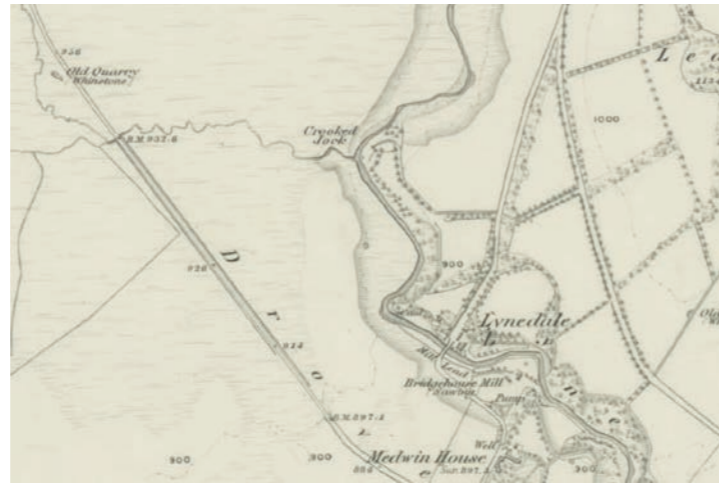
Everything we work on is created around an ethos of craftsmanship, collaboration and connection to place. Our ambition is to make buildings which are meaningful in the lives of those that inhabit them, responding to and growing from our clients' needs and desires, and which are timeless in their materiality and relationship to the context they sit in.

SITE & CONTEXT

Setting and Landscape Context

Tocher Knowe sits on a largely gentle sloping shoulder of ground, with land falling away sharply to the west and north down to the Lyne Water. Open ground extends to the east where the house is accessed from the public road by a private drive. The western and northern edges of the site are edged with a mature tree belt which extends down the slope towards the Lyne Water. There are long views of the Pentland Hills to the north as well as the more defined hills of Little King Seat, King Seat, Faw Mount and Mount Maw between the trees to the west and north. To the south west Mendick Hill provides a distant focus in gaps between stand alone trees. The maintained garden to the south falls away down the slope to a riding paddock while views to the east are characterised by clusters of trees on the gradual hillside of Lead Law.

The prevailing wind is largely from the south west though the trees offer a little protection against this. The house's position towards the north of the ownership boundary means it has largely uninterrupted sun throughout the year save for some over shadowing in the summer months when the trees closer to the house are full. Because of this, the garden enjoys a variety of biodiversity with areas of maintained garden, mature trees, meadow, and grasses offering a variety of habitats. This is reviewed more in the Arboricultural and Ecology Survey Reports.



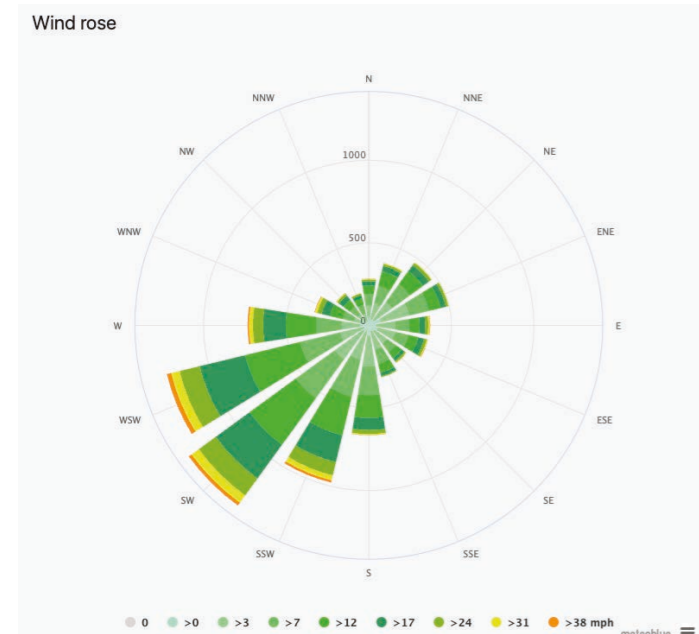
1843-1882



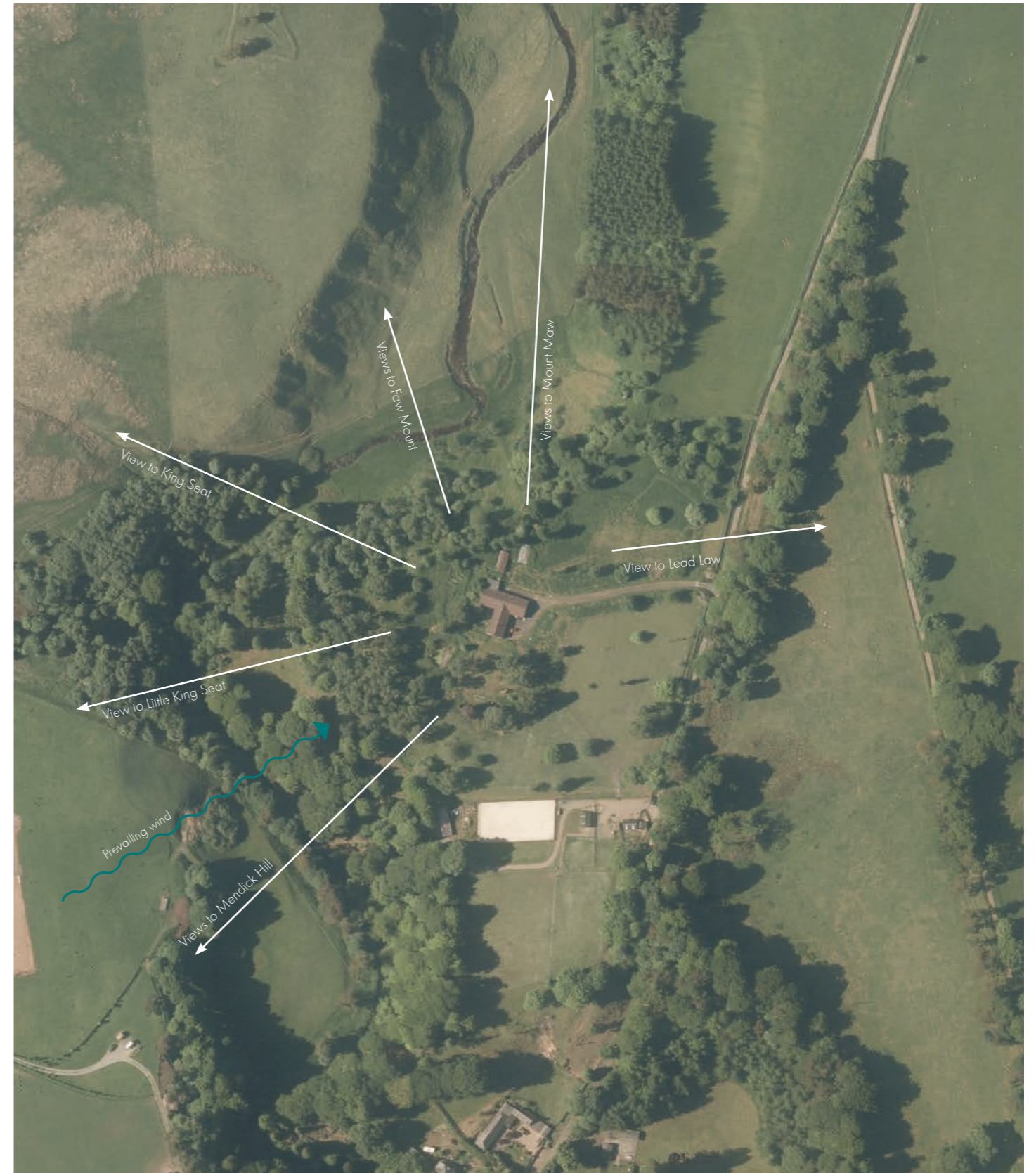
1900s



1955-1961



Wind Rose (Meteorblue)



SITE CONTEXT

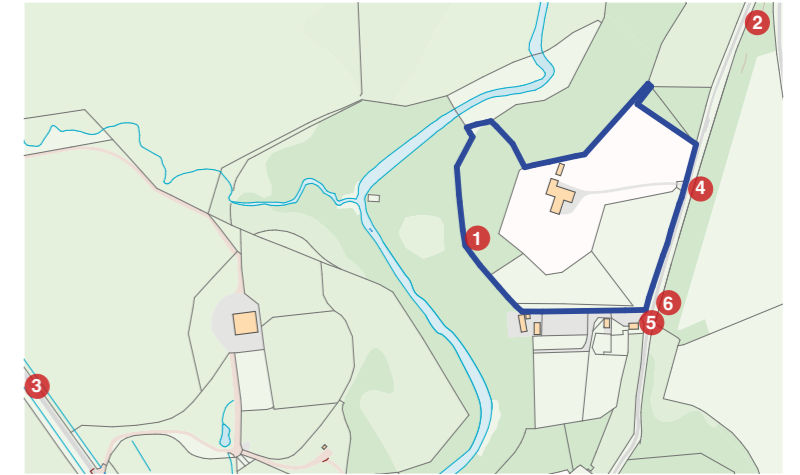
Setting and Landscape Context

Primary access from the settlement of West Linton to the south is from the A702 via Medwyn Road. Large detached houses in various styles line the south side of the Lyne Water valley, an ancient woodland in the gorge of the meandering river. The road turns into a single track road, crossing a stone bridge over Lyne Water at Medwyn House (Category B Listed Building in Scots Domestic style) before approaching the south east corner of the site next to a riding paddock on the left and access into Roamer's Wood, a community leased woodland on the right. At this point, the southern edge of the site lies approximately 170m north of the Local Development Plan West Linton settlement boundary. The Roman road carries on to Stonypath farm approximately 700m north of Tocher Knowe. The site can also be accessed from The Loan road further east passing Srongarbh House, an Arts and Crafts, Category A Listed Building. Historical records also identify the remains of a 'Crooked Jock' and a 'Lint Mill' at the south west corner of the site.

The wider natural environment away to the north away from West Linton is characterised by open agricultural land, open grasslands, clusters of woodlands, and the bucolic Lyne Water extending north through the valley. Dry stone walling typical of the Scottish Borders defines boundaries and more agricultural sheds also dot the landscape. Indeed the site sits within the Special Landscape Area of the Pentland Hills, characterised by large rolling hills of grass and heather with a quiet sense of wildness.



1 - Crooked Jock (Canmore)



2 - View from the North on Roman Road



3 - View from the West looking back to site



4 - View East to Roamer's Wood and Lead Law



5 - View from South East



6 - Access into Roamer's Wood

SITE CONTEXT



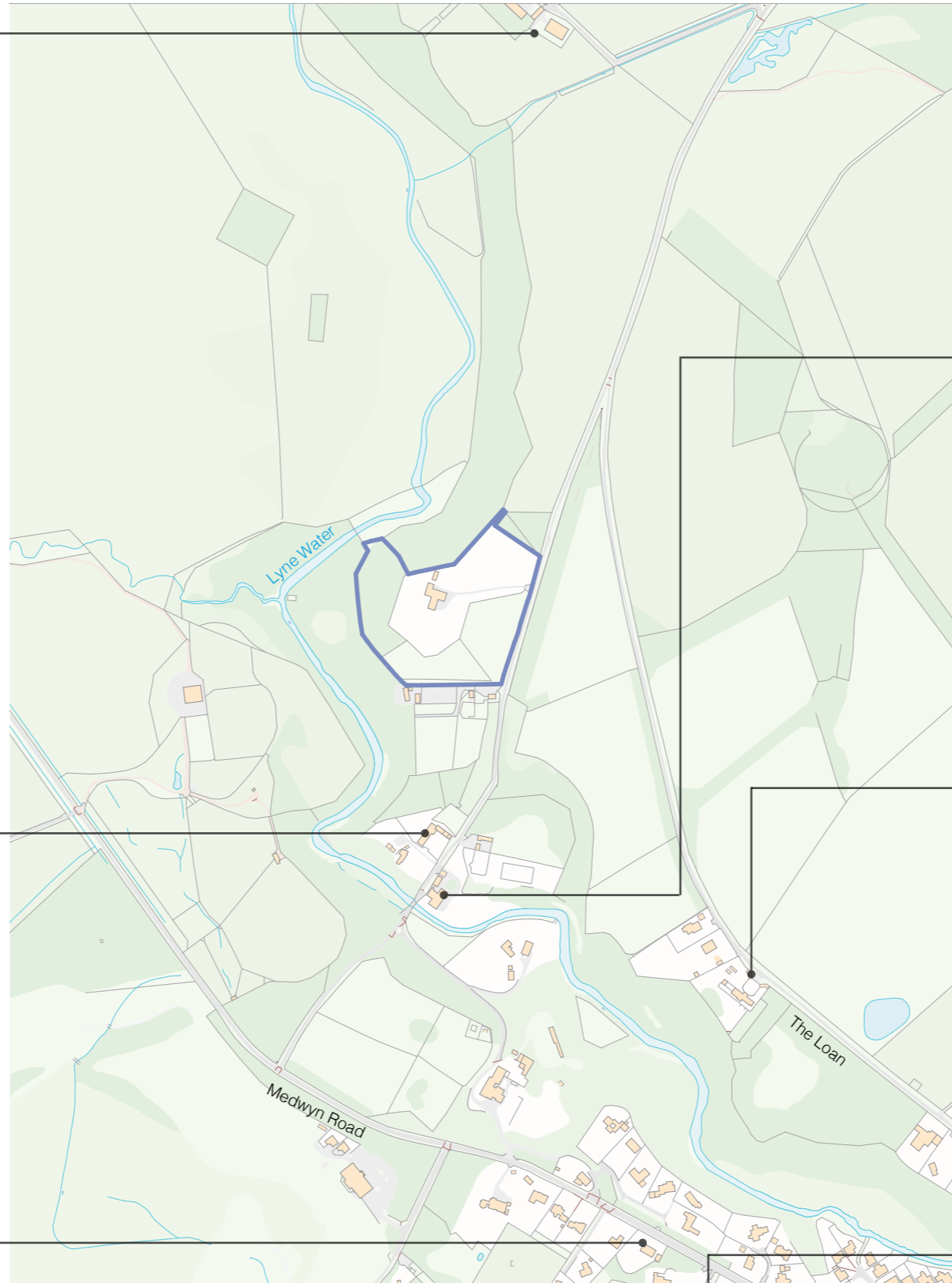
Stonypath Farm



Upper Lynedale House



Contemporary new build off Medwyn Road



Medwyn House aka Lynedale House - Category B



Srongarbh - Category A



Contemporary new build off Medwyn Road

SITE CONTEXT

Further south, the Conservation Area of West Linton is characterised by sandstone walls, slating, harling and some painted lime-wash, as well as corner protector details and stone boundary walls. When walking through the narrow winding streets, the variety of sandstone colours, textures, block sizes, coursing, and contrast with other stone architectural details is evident.



1 - Light grey sandstone with textured angle droving marks



2 - Coursed grey smie dressed sandstone with ashlar light grey quoins



3 - Warmer beige tones of sandstone with curved niche detail



4 - Rich red/orange sandstone with contrasting beige/grey rybats



5 - Smaller coursed red/pink sandstone, almost brick sized.



6 - Random rubble coursed sandstone, variety of pink/red/beige tones



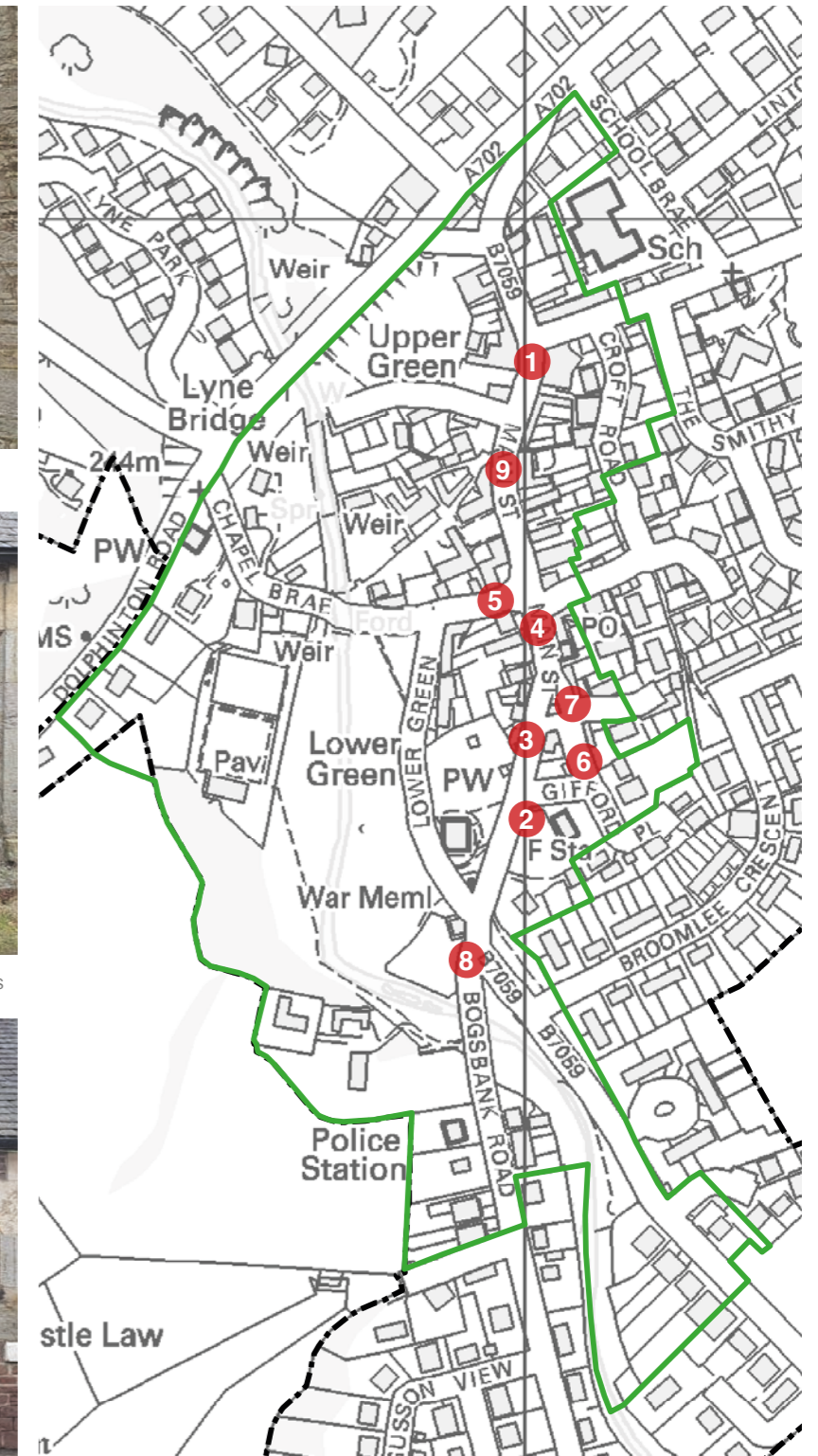
7 - Grey sandstone with quoins in relief



8 - Pink sandstone with grey rybats/quoins



9 - Rich red sandstone with brick scale regular coursing, rybat contrast



West Linton Conservation Area

SITE ANALYSIS

Existing house

The existing dwelling is a 1.5 storey bungalow constructed in the 1970s. The form, appearance and materiality of the building is typical of a standard suburban bungalow house type characterised by a low pitch, tiled roof and predominantly smooth-rendered walls. The house is set out in a T-shaped plan with an attached garage extension the north. A separate shed and poly tunnel are located close to the house to the north.

Windows are typically horizontal in format and finished with dark brown framing. The clay tiled roof features projecting eaves and is atypical in form, detailing and materiality relative to the local vernacular style of traditional pitched, slate-covered roofs with closed eaves. The cream paint finish to the rendered walls contrasts with the muted natural tones of the surrounding landscape and makes the building highly visible from various points in the surrounding landscape. The width of the plan means that the gables of the house, visible between areas of existing woodland planting are broad and bulky in comparison with typically narrower vernacular gable elevations. Areas of timber wall cladding on the west and south facades are finished in a dark brown stain to match the tones of the window and door frames. Generally the existing building is of poor design quality and does not relate to its context.

The ground floor level is constructed on a suspended floor with a ventilated solum below. Access is via steps to a front door. There is no accessible entrance to the existing house and the natural slope of external ground falls away to the south and west.

The fabric of the existing building is in poor condition, with lack of insulation and poor detailing contributing to dampness and mould-growth. The orientation and building envelope construction mean that the house receives little benefit from passive solar gain or thermal mass heat retention. Heating is provided by oil-fired boiler with LPG bottles fuelling hob-cooking. The energy performance of the house is extremely low and operational carbon use high.

Existing access is via a tarmac finish access track from the Roman Road, with tarmac and concrete parking areas. Existing drainage is to a private septic tank with outfall at the hillside to the west of the site. Existing surface water drainage is presumably to soakaway though their exact locations are unknown.



West elevation



East elevation



North elevation



Failing render due to exposure



Broken pipework and damp

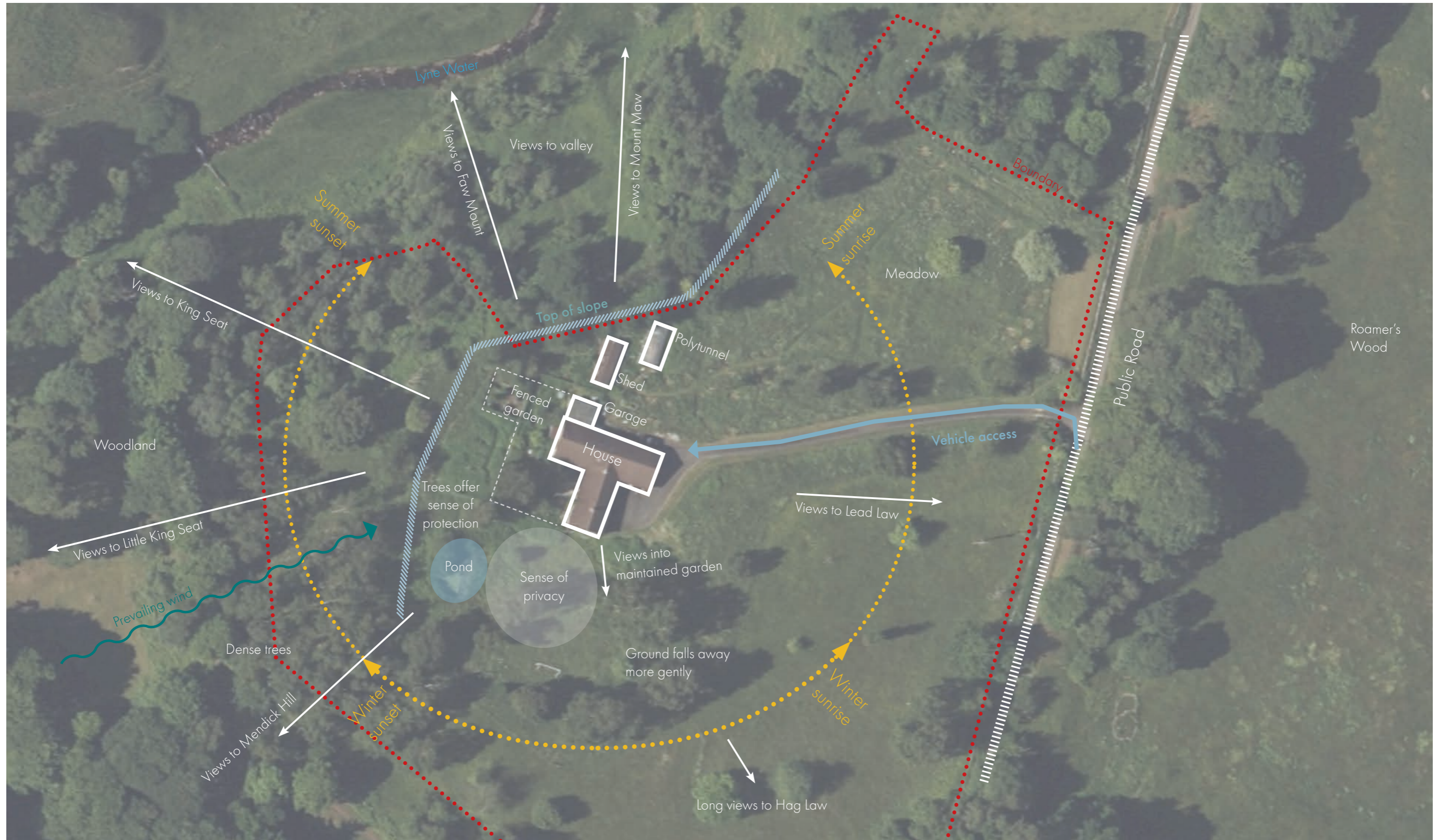


Damp and mould



Existing oil tank

SITE ANALYSIS



SITE ANALYSIS

Key Views



1 - Views through trees north west to Mount Maw and Faw Mount



2 - Views through trees north to Lyne Water



3 - Views north east through 'meadow'



4 - Views west through trees



5 - Views east to Lead Law



6 - View south west to Mendick Hill



7 - Views south into parkland



8 - Views at southern boundary

SITE ANALYSIS

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out for the site based on surveys carried out between June and October 2023. Full copies of the Protected Species Survey and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal reports are included in the application submission.

The primary aims of the survey were:

- To assess the potential use of the buildings by bats and birds.
- To assess the site for any signs of badger.
- To assess the site for any signs of otter.
- To assess the site for any signs of Great Crested Newt.
- To indicate any further survey requirements.
- To provide guidance in relation to protected species and the proposed development.

No evidence of use of the site or existing house by roosting bats, great crested newts, badgers or otters was found. The proposed development does not therefore impact on these species. However areas of the site could potentially provide supportive habitats for these species and as a result various safeguarding and mitigation measures are recommended to be observed prior to and during construction of the proposals. Full details of these recommendations are set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Evidence of active nests for swallows, house martins and wrens were identified within the existing house and sheds structures through the surveys undertaken. The PEA recommends that construction commences outwith the breeding bird season, or, if this is not possible, that preventative measures and pre-construction monitoring are carried out in compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Flooding

There is no flood risk noted for the site

Aboricultural

An Aboricultural Impact Assessment was undertaken by TD Tree and Land Services in November 2023. This is described in more detail in the Design Proposals section to communicate the impact and the mitigation measures for the proposals.



Pond looking west



Meadow looking south west to Mendick Hill



Courtyard Downy Birch

POLICY CONTEXT

Designations

Tocher Knowe is located within the Pentland Hills Special Landscape Area. **Supplementary Planning Guidance on Local Landscape Designations** notes that development on the lower slopes of valleys should be “carefully sited, designed and landscaped to integrate within the valley landscape.”

Although the site does not sit within the boundaries of any other landscape or ecology designations is it nearby to the following areas:

- Tweed Special Area of Conservation (the site sits on the edge of the Lyne Water Valley through which the River Lyne runs, which is part of the Tweed Special Area of Conservation).
- Potential Local Biodiversity Sites (pLBS) at Lyne Water, Lyne Dale Woodland and Siller Holes which include areas of native woodland, ancient woodland and post-industrial grassland and ponds.

Planning History

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| August 2010 | Alterations and Extension to house. Ref. No: 10/01019/FUL
Approved application for conversion of loft and ground floor garden room extension |
| May 2010 | Alterations and Extension to house. Ref. No: 10/00465/FUL
Refused application for first floor extension |

