

**Alderbury House,
Salisbury
Heritage Impact Assessment
Ptolemy Dean Architects
October 2026**



Alderbury . 23 March.

ALDERBURY HOUSE, SALISBURY

Proposal for changes to the walled garden

Heritage Impact Assessment and Statement of Significance

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment and Statement of Significance is made in support of a re-landscaping proposal for the walled garden at Alderbury House near Salisbury. The Walled garden lies adjacent to Alderbury House, its associated Coach House and close to its garden lodge building. The house is listed at Grade II* and the garden lodge at Grade II, whilst the remaining structures are curtilage listed as a result.

Alderbury House is a substantial building by S. P. Cockerell constructed in the 1790's. It consists of a principal range, faced with stonework salvaged from the demolished campanile of Salisbury Cathedral, and two red brick service ranges. Archival research undertaken as part of the project identified a surviving cost book which confirms that the house, service range, coach house and walled garden are all part of single composition by S. P. Cockerell. Consent was granted in March 2022 (PL/2022/00073) to repair and remodel those ranges so that they created an improved relationship with the very beautiful walled garden that lies to the east. An elevation that had been badly remodelled in the 1960's (Figure 01) has now been reordered to express architecturally its compact service ranges once more (Figure 02).

This application is largely concerned with the re-landscaping of the walled garden by Charlie Hawkes Landscape Design, but there are proposals included in his work that potentially impact the walled garden structure. These include changes to the landscape around the Coach House, where a 1970's 'kidney' swimming pool is to be removed and to the north of this where a new garden shed and workshop is proposed. In addition, there are additional openings proposed into the wall itself and further to the east a garden folly building which is to be introduced as an 'eyecatcher' overlooking an existing tennis court.



Figure 01. South service range east elevation, with a muddle of different levels and steps in combination with the assorted 1960's fenestration



Figure 02. South service range east elevation, now re-ordered to express its compact ranges

2. Summary of historic development

In order to better understand how the present walled garden has evolved into its present form, it is helpful to reconsider the historic development of the Alderbury Estate. The history of Alderbury House is surprisingly comprehensive, which assists greatly in understanding its buildings and therefore assessing its significance. The remarkable and rare survival of the ‘Cost Book’ from the privately held Fort family archive provides detailed information on the construction of the building. Foundations were being laid for the main house in 1790, with those for the stables range and walled garden starting during the following year 1791. Construction of the house appears to have been hampered by a fire in 1793 and was therefore only completed by 1799, which is the last date mentioned in the cost book. Unfortunately, no original Cockerell drawings survive of any part of the work.

The first document to show the walled garden is the 1840 tithe map (Figure 03). The two eastward service ranges of the main house are shown very distinctly, unconnected at their eastern ends and with a large yard space between them. Also shown is the coach house on the northern edge of the main walled garden. Although shown as a very thin-looking range, it is likely that this had been completed to its full extent. By this time, the Coach House had its own smaller walled service enclosure to its east, separated from the main walled garden by a wall. Absent from this plan is the further small walled garden enclosure to the north of the service range. This area was relandscaped by Charlie Hawkes in 2023-4.

A separate building south east of the walled garden had already disappeared by the date of the first edition OS map of 1885 (Figure 04). This first detailed and accurate plan shows the walled garden with a characteristic cruciform arrangement of paths and glasshouses in its NE corner. Apparent also is the addition of further service and glasshouse buildings built up against the north and east sides of the second walled garden area to the east of the Coach House. This second walled area would have provided a discrete location for additional support and service accommodation.

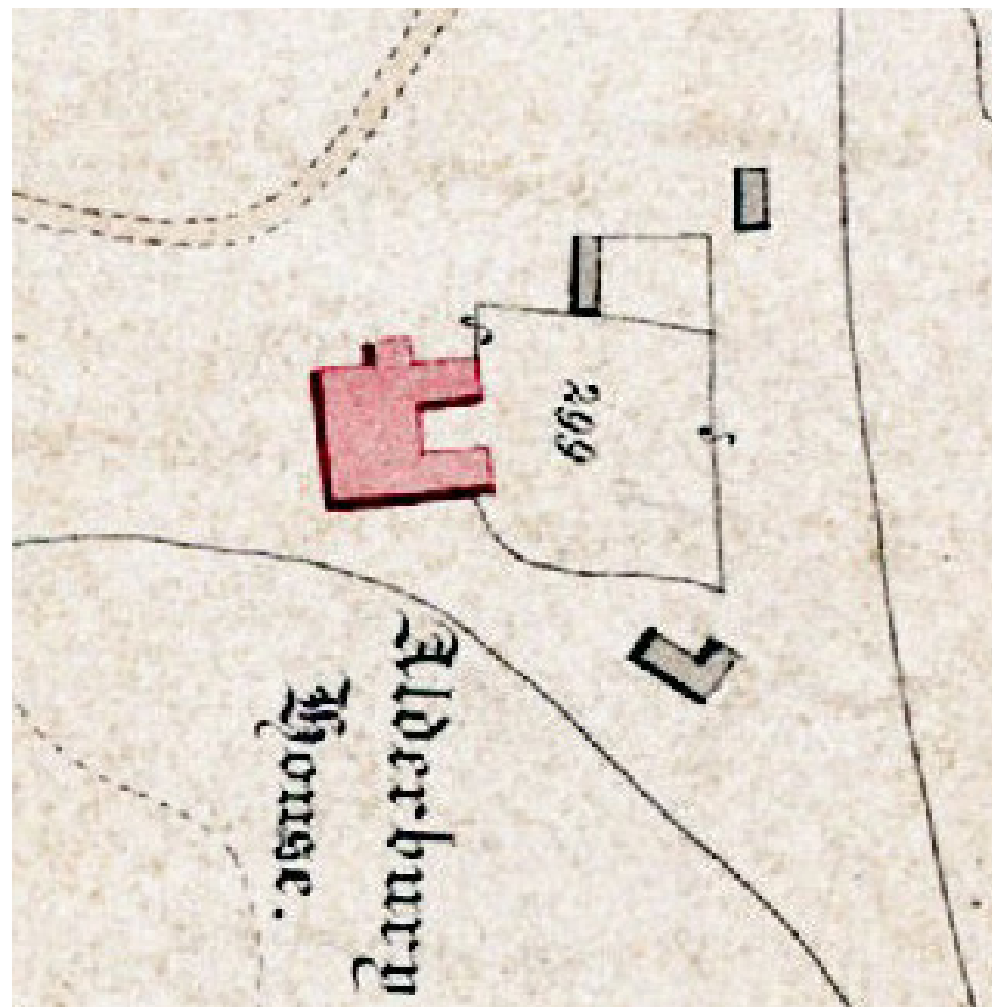


Figure 03. 1840 Tithe Map (Know Your Place Wiltshire)



Figure 04. 1885 OS 1st Edition Map (Know Your Place Wiltshire)

The second edition OS map of 1901 (Figure 05) shows the house and estate in its prime. It is interesting to note that the main walled garden is not strictly orthogonal; a consequence of the topography of the site that falls south and westwards towards the main house.

After the sale of the house in 1961, the park was split into two, with the lake and south-western area retained in the ownership of the Fort family descendants. The OS map of the mid-1970's period shows this somewhat unfortunate divide of the historic landscape (Figure 06). By this date, the division wall between the main walled garden and the secondary area to the east of the Coach House had been taken down to create a single, larger walled area. On all of these maps, including the 1840 tithe map, there is a detached building north east of the walled garden which was discretely placed behind the garden lodge, which faces north to the lane and Alderbury Parish Church. This building is not a part of the Cockerell ensemble, it is timber framed and clad in corrugated iron.

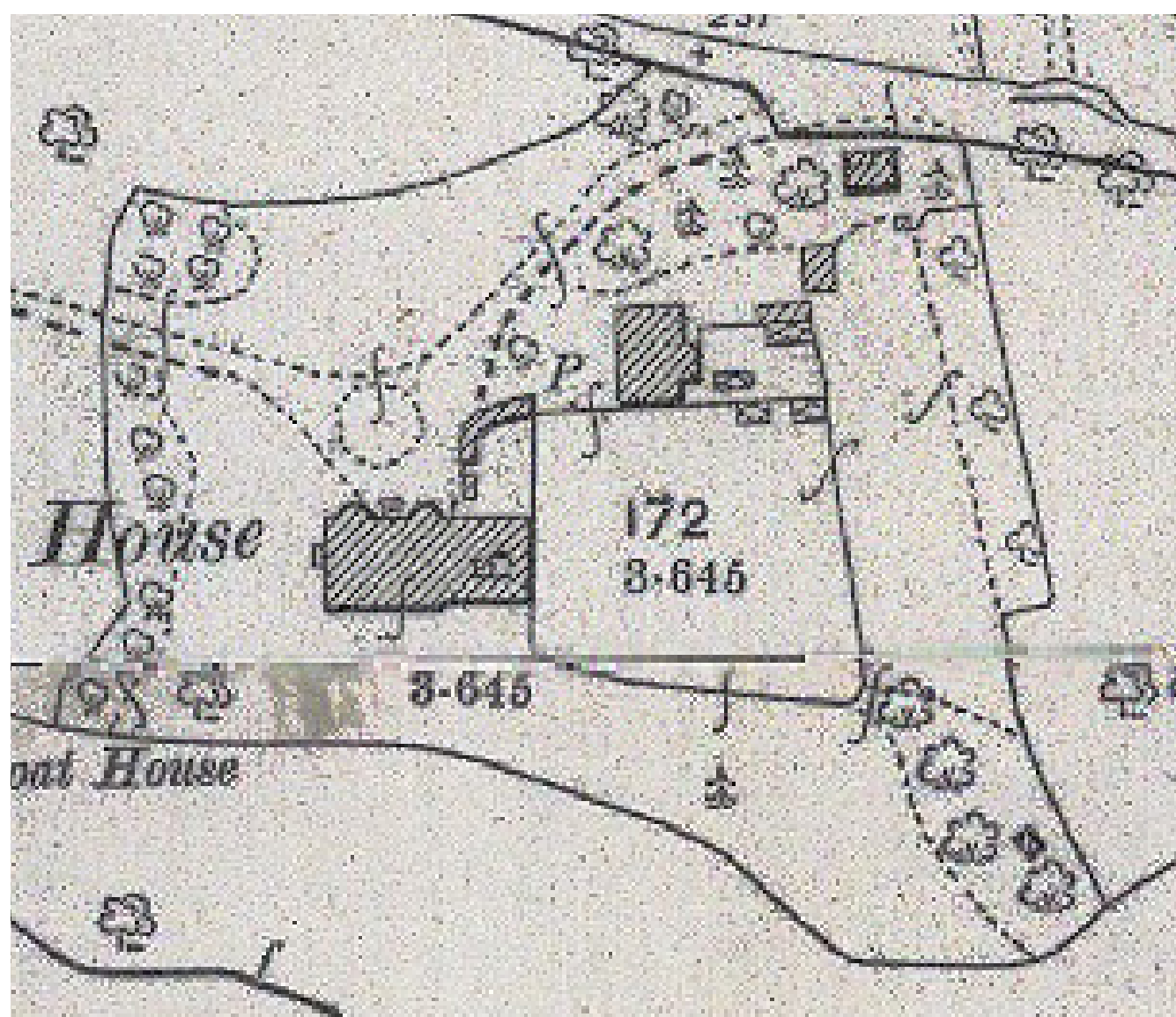


Figure 05. 1901 OS 2nd Edition Map (Know Your Place Wiltshire)

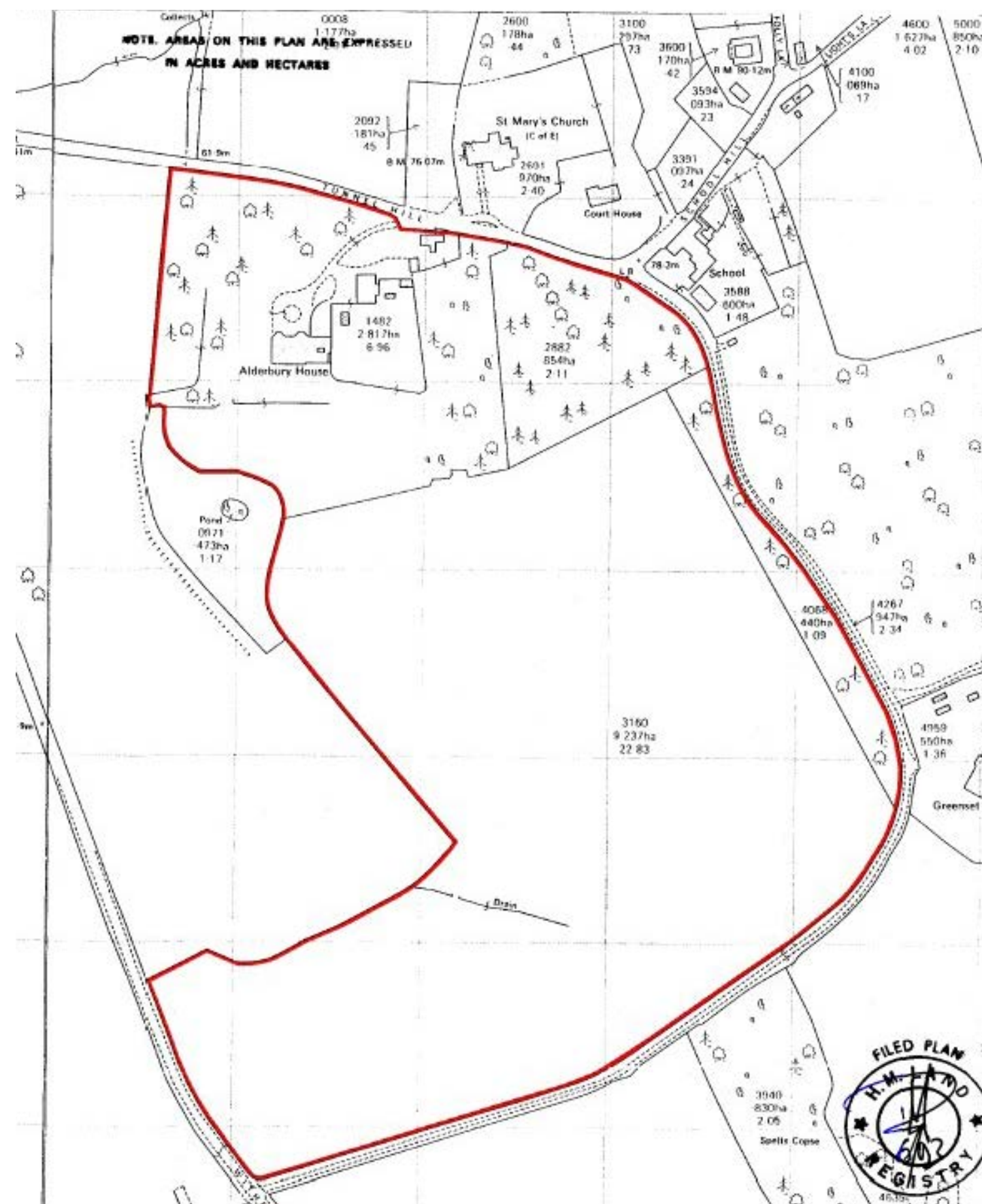


Figure 06. Alderbury House title registry plan, showing the divide of the historic landscape (Client Archive)

The current OS map (Figure 07) shows the walled garden toned in grey, extending up to the east of the Coach house, with the free-standing out range and Garden lodge to the north east. It can be compared with the Google earth view, where the kidney-shaped swimming pool occupies the area of walled garden to the east of the Coach House (Figure 08).

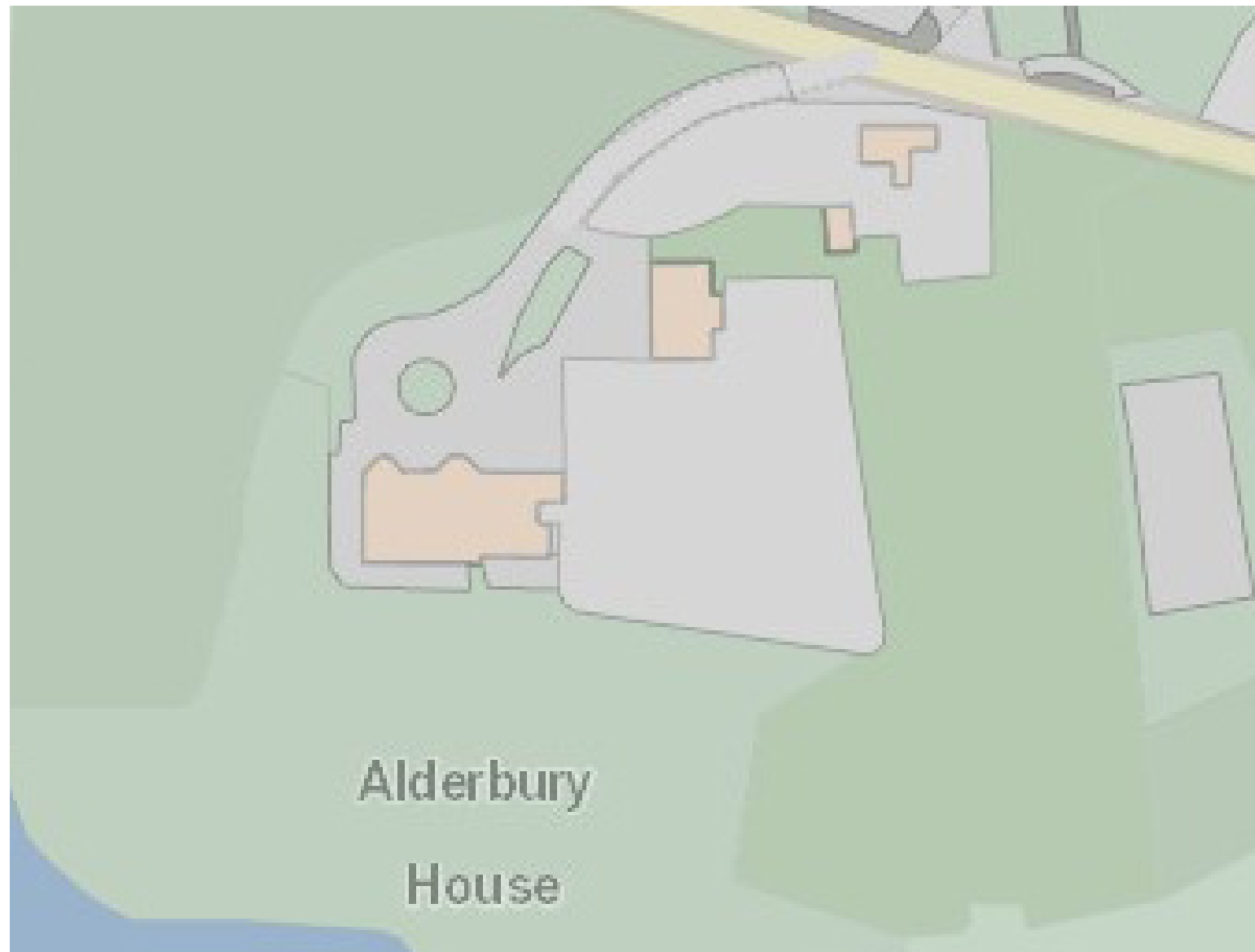


Figure 07. 2019 OS Edition Map (Know Your Place Wiltshire)



Figure 08. Aerial view of Alderbury House, 2026 (Google). This view shows the recently created landscaping already achieved by Charlie Hawkes to the west of the walled garden.

Unsurprisingly, there are very few images of the walled garden from earlier years, as this was a working part of the estate. An aerial view, perhaps of mid-C20th date, shows the western part of the walled garden prior to the 1960's and 1980's alterations (Figure 09). The existing SW entrance of the walled garden is shown, but none of the buildings to the east of the Coach house. These lost service ranges can be made out on a further aerial view, taken from a moving aeroplane further to the south east (Figure 10). Unfortunately, there are focus challenges to this image, but the former glass houses are shown in the north east corner, along with the division wall between the main body of the walled garden and the smaller area to the east of the coach house. The garden itself appears to be traditionally cultivated for domestic produce with its cruciform plan of pathways in tact.



Figure 09. Early C20th aerial view of Alderbury House showing the southern elevation of the service range and walled garden beyond (Lady Wrenbury's private collection)

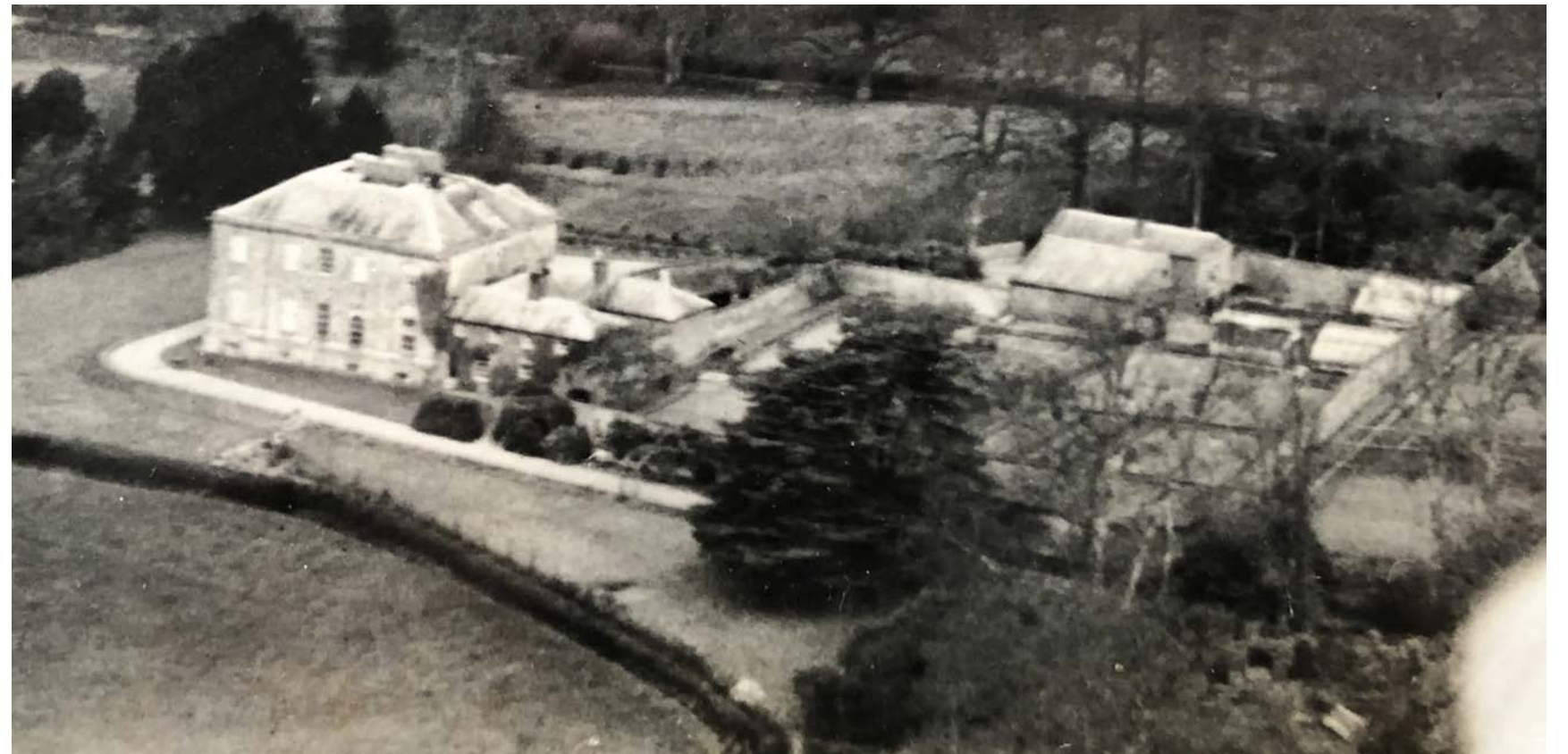


Figure 10. Aerial view of Alderbury House from the south east shows the parallel roof forms of the two service range buildings (Lady Wrenbury's private collection)

During the 1960's, a significant scheme was carried out to convert sections of the service range of the main house into a separate flat, which would then open out into the walled garden. This effectively began a process of converting the working walled garden from the domain of grounds staff to more polite occupation.

Alderbury House came into new ownership in 2020. At this stage, the service range of the house had become semi-abandoned and was in poor condition. Although much altered and spoiled, it was apparent that the connection between the house and the walled garden, created in the 1963 scheme, would be desirable to retain (Figure 11 and Figure 12). A feasibility study was produced in 2021 which became the basis of a scheme which was brought to completion in 2024.

It was proposed that the elevation to the east, that looks into the walled garden, should be remodelled into a garden frontage retaining and improving the connections between the house and garden on this side. The existing rather unbalanced elevation created in 1963 (Figure 13), was remodelled to form a new garden front with french doors opening out into the walled garden from a new kitchen and dining area formed in this area (Figure 14).



Figure 11. The west doors



Figure 12. Opened out to the garden



Figure 13. East elevation, as existing in 2021



Figure 14. East elevation consented proposal, completed 2024

After consent was granted, the landscape architect Charlie Hawkes was commissioned to develop a landscape scheme for the site. Although his vision would eventually cover the whole site, an initial application focused on improving the setting of the house to the south and west, as per his consented plan (Figure 15). This was submitted and approved as a separate consent (PL/2023/07607). It was recognised that a proposal would need to be developed for the north and east sides of the house, but it was also recognised that it would be better to see the building works further advanced on this side in order to better determine what needed to be done.

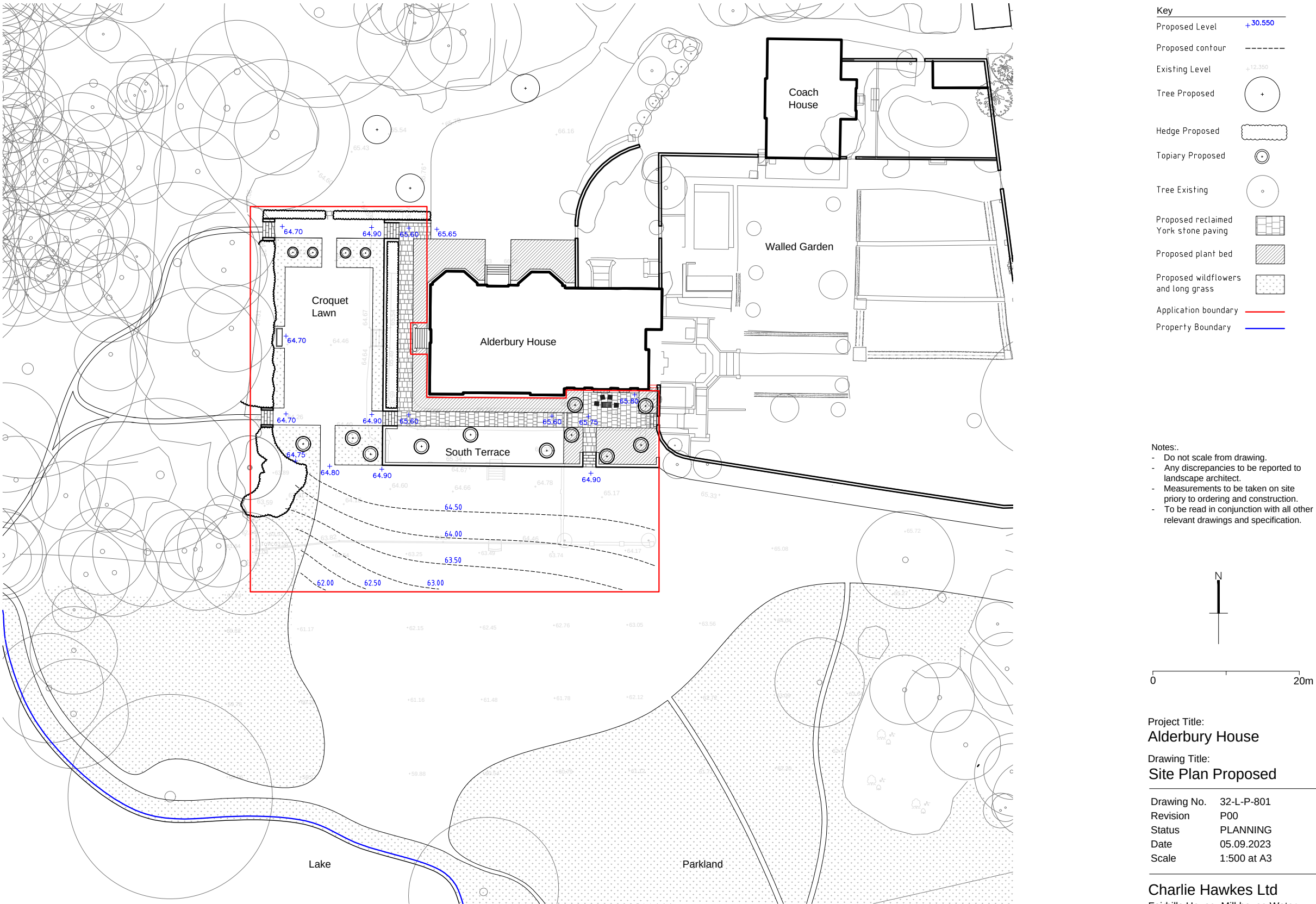


Figure 15. Alderbury House, Proposed Site Plan (Charlie Hawkes Ltd)

In June 2024, a further application was made to try to improve levels and entrances to the north west corner of the walled garden where it abutted the former service range (now kitchen). The proposal, which, was consented, replaced a 1960's double door entrance to the walled garden that was badly decayed with one to match the more historic proportions and pattern that had survived elsewhere. The existing entrance and associated landscape had become very rundown and visually intrusive (Figure 16). The 'traditional' Cockerell era brick opening appeared to survive best on the south west corner of the walled garden (Figure 17). The work has now been carried out in association with a scheme to repair the brick walls of the walled enclosure north of the service range and to re-landscape it (Figure 18 & Figure 19).



Figure 16. The C20th gateway opening to the right prior to the commencement of the works.



Figure 17. Cockerell period door opening to the SW, which is set in a thicker brickwork panel



Figure 18. 2025 completed works to area north west of the main house, with a new single doorway



Figure 19. 2025 completed landscaping works to walled area north west of the main house

Elsewhere, there are hints of other original brick openings that have not been utilised, one of which remains on the west wall to the north of the main house service range (Figure 20). This opening would have made sense on plan but dramatic changes of level on site made it unachievable and this might have caused it to be abandoned mid-construction. And there are also later copies or re-openings of blocked openings, such as that in the south east corner of the walled garden, which appears to be a later opening (Figure 21). This opening is provided with a metal gate, which appears to be of C20th manufacture.



Figure 20. On the west face of the wall, the historic opening is closed by bonded brickwork



Figure 21. The opening in the S.E. corner of the walled garden which was evidently a later insertion

3. The Walled Garden As Existing

The walled garden as it exists now remains partly cultivated and partly left to grassland (Figure 22). It offers fine views to the north of the Parish Church (Figure 23) and from the north it is possible to look south and to see over the wall to the Wiltshire and Hampshire hills beyond (Figure 24). It is an undeniably attractive place to be, especially now that the revised service range of the house looks out over it (Figure 25).



Figure 22. View overlooking the revised service range into the partly cultivated walled garden



Figure 23. View over the garden wall north, towards the Parish Church



Figure 24. View over the Wiltshire Hills south of Alderbury house



Figure 25. View from revised service range out over the walled garden



Figure 26. View towards newly revised service range

The area to the north of the walled garden in the former service yard of the Coach house is more confused. An extensive glasshouse survives on its north wall, complete with vines (Figure 27). There is then the kidney shaped swimming pool from the 1970's surrounded by concrete paving, which is set at a higher level than the eastern front of the Coach house (Figure 28). The eastern elevation of the Coach house, although amended by C20th alteration is surprisingly grand, more so than any other aspect of the building, with its composed brick pediment and tripartite arrangement of ground floor openings (Figure 29). This rather suggests that this part of the building was intended to be seen, and that the walled service yard that was created to the east of it was a later afterthought, added during, or perhaps immediately after, construction.



Figure 27. Glasshouse located east of the Coach house along the north garden wall.



Figure 28. Walled area north of the walled garden with 'kidney' shaped pool and lean to glasshouse



Figure 29. East elevation of the Coach House

This would explain the somewhat haphazard and not altogether satisfactory arrangement of walls where they meet the Coach House. Presently the north wall of the walled garden collides mid-way with the northern wing of the Coach House, splitting this elevation into two (Figure 30). Coupled with this, there are raised ground levels which are so high at this part that the brickwork appears very green and damp (Figure 31). Elsewhere, the eastern frontage of the Coach house appears somewhat truncated proportionately (Figure 32).

This also gives rise to significant issues of dampness in the building itself (Figure 33). On the north side of the walled garden, earth has been mounded up in a semi-disused area where bins are stored (Figure 34). These arrangements, like those previously encountered to the north west corner of the walled garden, adjacent to the service range, rather suggests that the plan of the walled garden and Coach House was set out on paper, but amended to suit the more 'lively' topography that was found on site.



Figure 30. Unsatisfactory wall arrangement with the Coach House and north wall of the walled garden



Figure 31. Unsatisfactory area created by the arrangement of the garden wall with the Coach House



Figure 32. Raised ground levels to eastern side of Coach House, and truncated proportions



Figure 33. Dampness inside Coach House



Figure 34. Area north east of the Coach House

The wider area north of the Coach House and walled garden serves as a service area, which is helpful for storage of items and garden maintenance. There are scars from previous and now removed lean to additions to the walled garden north side which may have related to former potting sheds to service the glass houses (Figure 35). Also on this side is a more modern lean to which accommodates a gardeners WC (Figure 36).



Figure 35. Area north of the Coach House walled garden with corrugated iron sheds



Figure 36. Gardeners WC along garden wall north of the Coach House

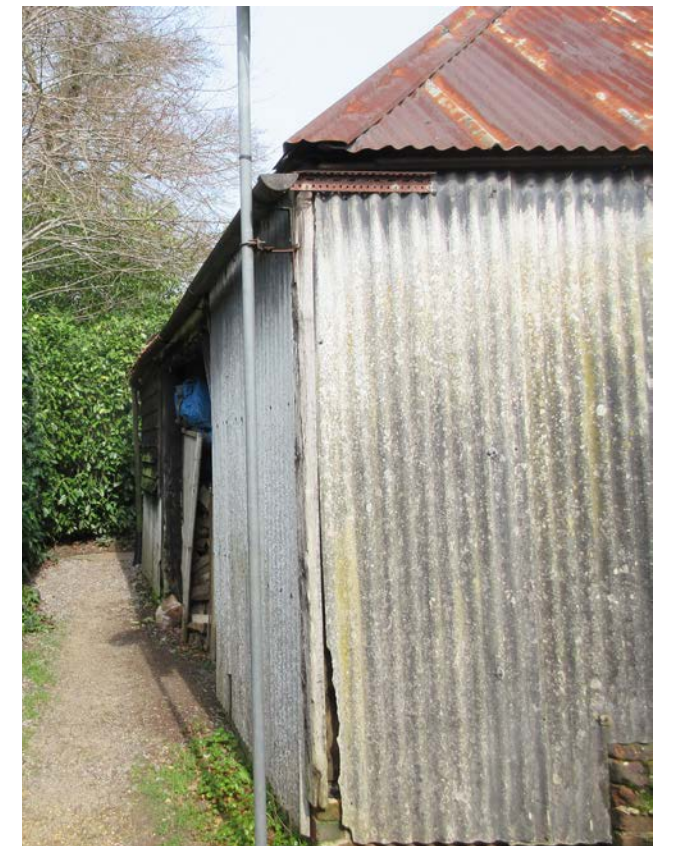


Figure 37. Corrugated iron, timber framed out range

Opposite the north wall of the walled garden is the long-established corrugated iron clad outrange which now accommodates logs (and bats) (Figure 37). To the west of this is an electrical feeder post which was installed by a utility company and required for the servicing of the estate (Figure 38).



Figure 38. Electrical feeder post

The rear south facing side of the listed lodge building is well shielded by planting and much altered by C20th extensions (Figure 39).



Figure 39. C20th works to Alderbury House lodge.



The eastern wall of the walled garden follows the topography of the ground which falls to the south (Figure 40). A section of it has been totally removed to allow for more convenient vehicle access (Figure 41). To the west of this is the modern tennis court, which represents a re-surfacing of one that was installed here in the 1960's (Figure 42). The connection of this area back to the walled garden was achieved by the vehicle entrance to the north and the smaller gateway to the south, both possibly inserted in the 1960's. The atmosphere of this part of the site is one of slight abandonment with poor connection back to the house and the rest of the gardens, although the distant view towards the house is attractive (Figure 43).



Figure 40. Walled garden following the significant slope in the landscape to the south



Figure 41. Section of wall removed for vehicular access



Figure 42. Tennis court located east of the walled garden



Figure 43. View looking west past the tennis court to the walled garden

4. Summary Statement Of Significance

The walled garden in the context of Alderbury House is of ‘high significance’ to the composition as a whole, not least as it forms a part of the documented creation of the estate by S. P. Cockerell in the 1790’s. The redbrick walls set in lime mortar are an enhancement to the site and contribute to a good understanding of what a late C18th country estate should comprise. But it is clear that the layout of the walled garden was made on plan in a location away from Alderbury and did not take full account of the topography of the site. Amendments and alterations took place during or soon after construction, and there were also apparent changes of brief also, including the addition of the secondary yard to the east of the Coach House, which compromised sight lines to this building’s prime elevation. Subsequent changes have attempted to increase permeability of the walled garden, some of which are overly wide and disproportionate, e.g. the large vehicle opening to the east wall and the double gates to the west wall (since removed). With the walled garden evolving from a serviced staff area to a family area, there is scope to improve the setting of the area to enhance significance and to perhaps improve on compromises which have directly resulted from somewhat haphazard alterations made to accommodate topography and changes of brief.

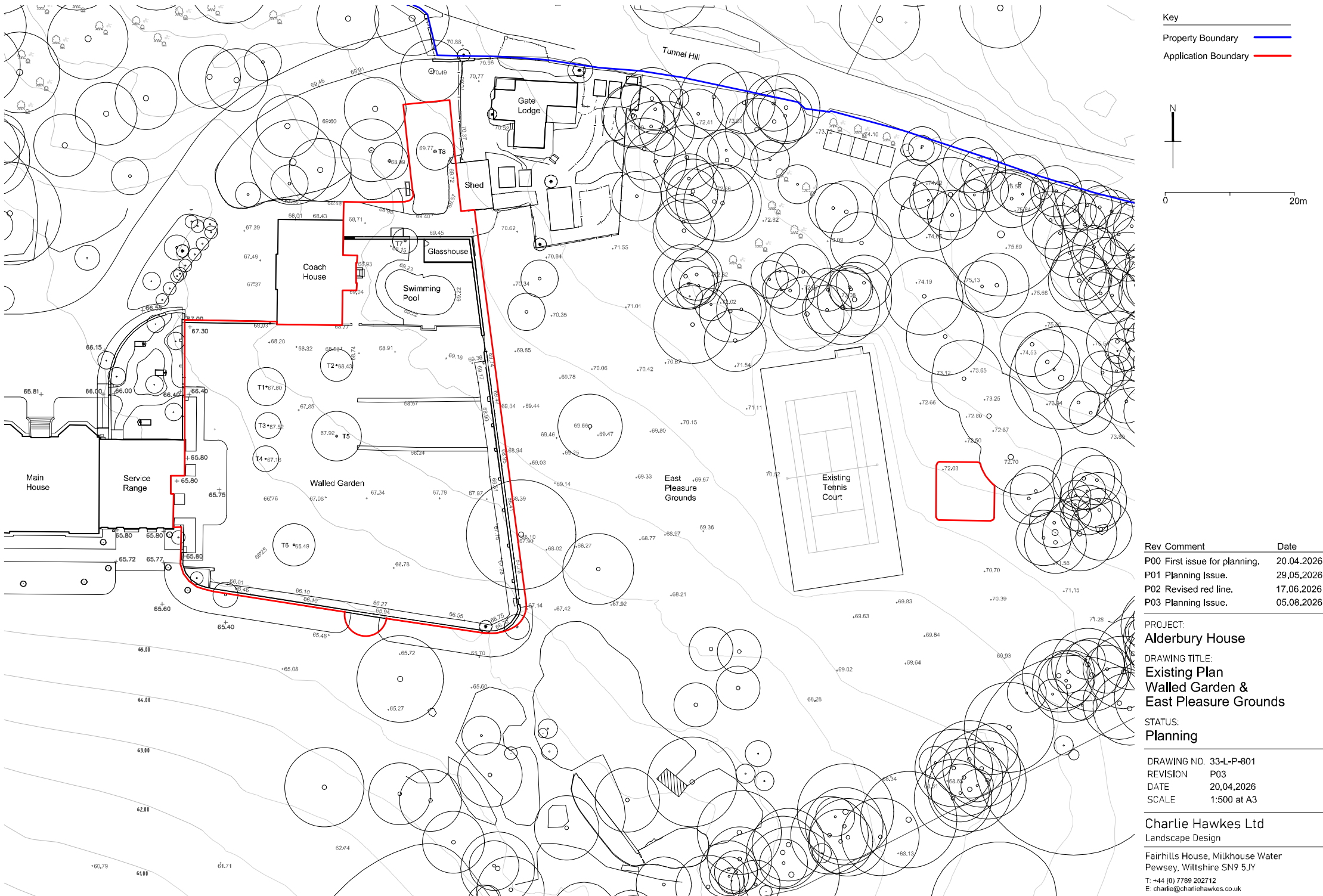


Figure 44. Landscaping plan as existing (Charlie Hawkes)

5. Proposed changes

The Charlie Hawkes landscaping plan (Figure 45) seeks to re-establish a linearity to the layout, making use of the gently falling topography through the introduction of a central rill. New planting, pathways and layouts are envisaged to enhance the setting of the historic walled garden while also retaining a number of the older fruit tress. The existing ‘kidney’ pool is to be infilled and replaced by a new swimming pool in the NE corner of the garden where it will benefit from a distant view of the Wiltshire and Hampshire hills.

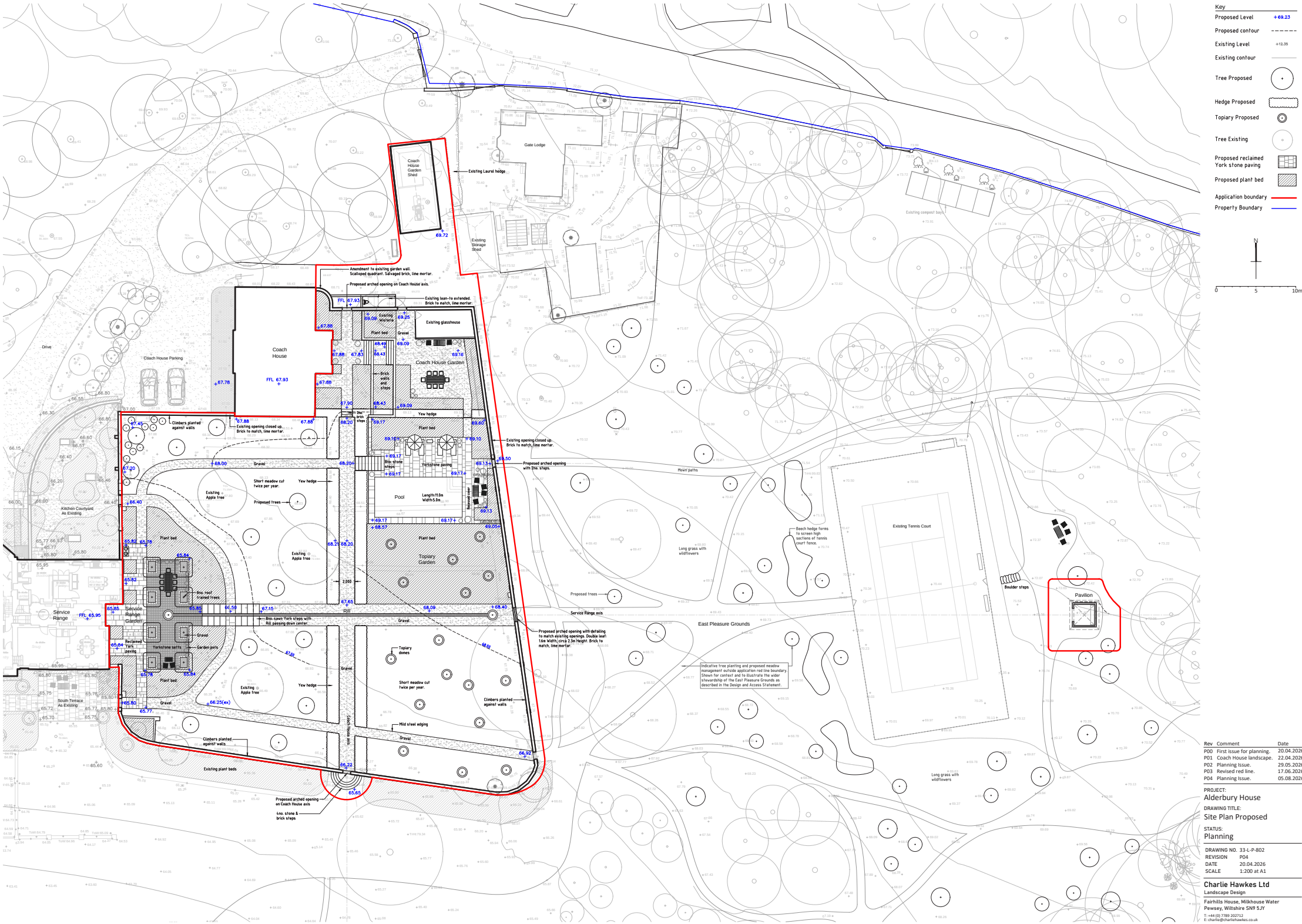


Figure 45. Charlie Hawkes updated proposed landscaping plan

More direct architectural interventions relate to where the existing wall cuts into the Coach House. Here, it is proposed to reform the wall to allow the whole of the east front of the Coach House to be included within the walled garden, enhancing its architectural presence. Although this building is not listed in its own right, it is felt to be an important element of S. P. Cockerell’s vision and composition, whose present arrangement is compromised by the wall and associated high ground levels immediately adjacent to it. Associated with this work is the creation of a new garden route to a proposed new range for equipment storage and gardeners’ welfare. This proposed building (Figure 46) takes its corrugated iron cladding from the cue set by the adjacent log store building. There is no desire here to seek to emulate S. P. Cockerell’s authentic works in brick.

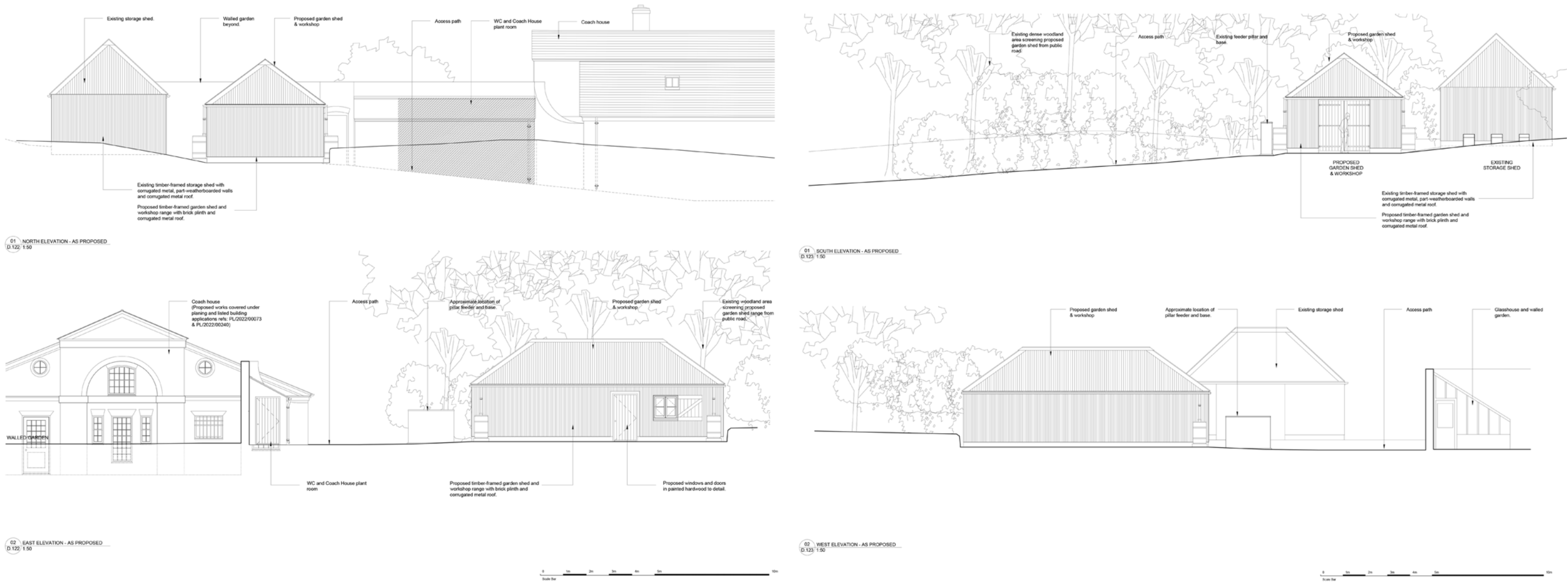


Figure 46. Garden shed proposed elevations

Beyond the walled garden, and on axis with both the rill and the re-arranged service range of the house, is a suggested eye catcher structure, which is designed to accommodate items for the tennis court. Beyond these practical considerations, this structure is a garden folly that seeks to tie the tennis court area and the densely planted pleasure gardens that surround it to the rest of the gardens, so that a garden circuit can be envisaged (Figure 47).

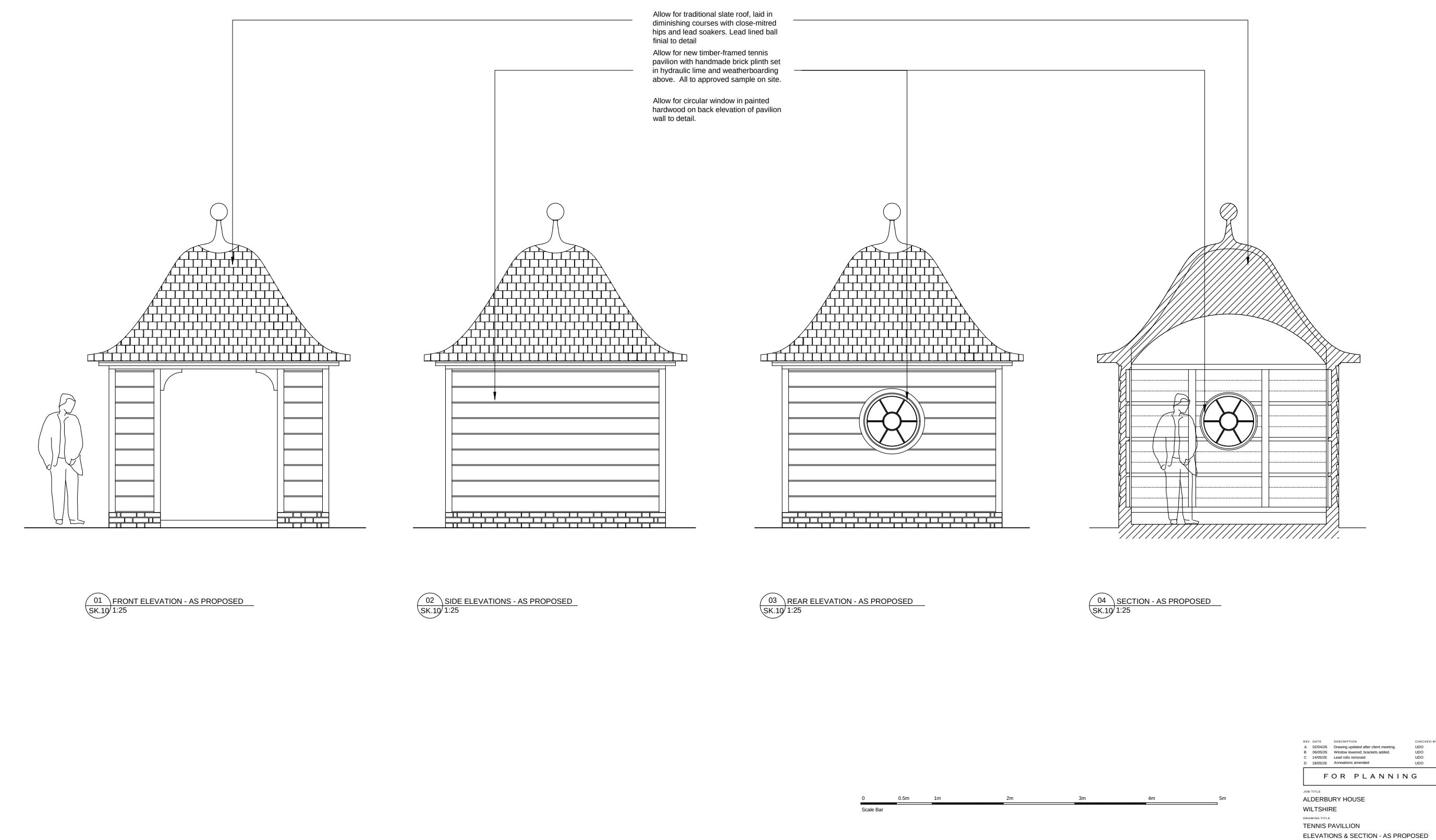


Figure 47. Tennis pavilion elevations as proposed