

Design and Access Statement
Replacement dwelling at 50 Lewes Road, Ditchling
Prepared by Sandy Rendel Architects
14th December 2023
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1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for detailed planning permission for a new single family dwelling to replace the existing bungalow at 50 Lewes Road, Ditchling.

This document sets out the nature of the existing site, the development proposals and the design rationale for the adopted approach. It should be read in conjunction with the architect's drawings and supporting documents and aims to show our sensitive approach to the design of a new dwelling house within this protected landscape.

The proposal is submitted on behalf of the owner of the site, Rob and Vikki Beacroft, who own and live in property with their children.



View from the garden south towards the South Downs

1.1 The Team

Sandy Rendel Architects

Sandy Rendel Architects is an award winning practice founded in 2010. Our work addresses the unique physical, environmental and cultural contexts of each project to deliver architecture of long-term value and enduring meaning. We are committed to a sustainable approach to architecture by ensuring our work has the minimum environmental impact, through its construction and ongoing energy use, and the maximum life, through its durability and tolerance to change.

In 2017 we were named RIBA South East Emerging Practice of the Year and our project on the banks of the River Ouse in Lewes was awarded the inaugural South Downs National Park Residential Design Award in 2019 for the best new house to have made a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment within the National Park. More recently our self-built micro home in South London was shortlisted for the 2021 Grand Designs RIBA House of the Year and our Dutch Barn Conversion and Viewing Tower at Morlands Farm was named RIBA South East Small Project of the Year 2022.

Whaleback

Whaleback is a Town Planning and Design consultancy that specialises in projects relating to the protected landscape of the South Downs National Park. It provides comprehensive planning services, offering expert professional advice and support at all stages of the design and planning process.

Whaleback specialises in sustainable development in sensitive landscapes or involving historic buildings and seek to establish positive dialogue between applicants, planning authorities and consultees. They are passionate about ensuring close integration between the natural and built environments to the benefits of both.

Based in Sussex they serve an area focused on and around the South Downs National Park.

Studio Engleback

Studio Engleback is an environmental design practice that specialises in ecourbanism, a whole system approach to planning and design. This is landscape led, evidence based, and advances biophilic and salutogenic design to improve environmental and human health and wellbeing.

St Aubyn Tree Consultancy

St Aubyn Tree Consultancy provide a full range of consulting for arboriculture including Tree Surveys and Arboricultural Impact Assessments. Using the latest technology, coupled with in-depth knowledge they provide the comprehensive and thorough consulting reports, inventories and management plans.

Imprint Ecology

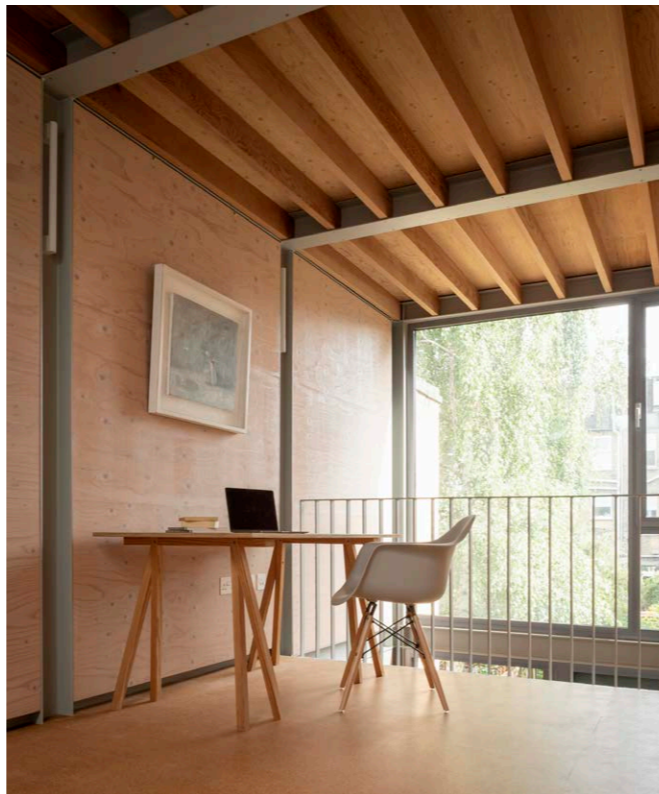
Imprint Ecology are an Ecological and Conservation Consultancy offering a full range of wildlife surveying, ecology reports, appraisals and impact assessments.



142 South Street, Lewes



Bury Gate Farm, nr. Pulborough



The Slot House, South London



Morlands Farm barn and viewing tower at Sussex Prairie Gardens

2.0 Design and Access Statement

2.1 Site Context

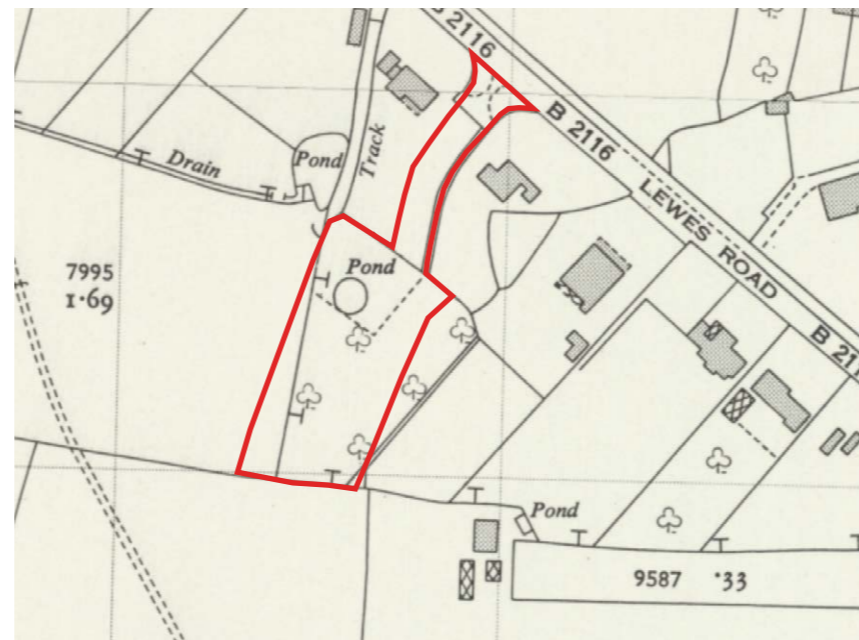
The site lies within the South Downs National Park, Lewes District Council and the Ditchling and Westmeston Ward.

It is located to the south of Lewes Road on a backland plot accessed via a shared drive between the larger Victorian/Edwardian houses that front the street and set around 0.5m below the street level. It is on the southern edge of the Ditchling Settlement Boundary but is outside the Ditchling Conservation Area which covers the historic center of the village.

It is bounded to the south and west by paddocks and detached houses to the north and east. This southern fringe of the village is a landscape of small fields with hedgerows in contrast to the open escarpment to the Downs to the south.

The surrounding built context is varied with a mix of styles and materials but typically pitched roof dwellings of 2/3 storeys constructed from brick and clay tiles and sometimes flint all locally sourced as a result of the underlying geology.

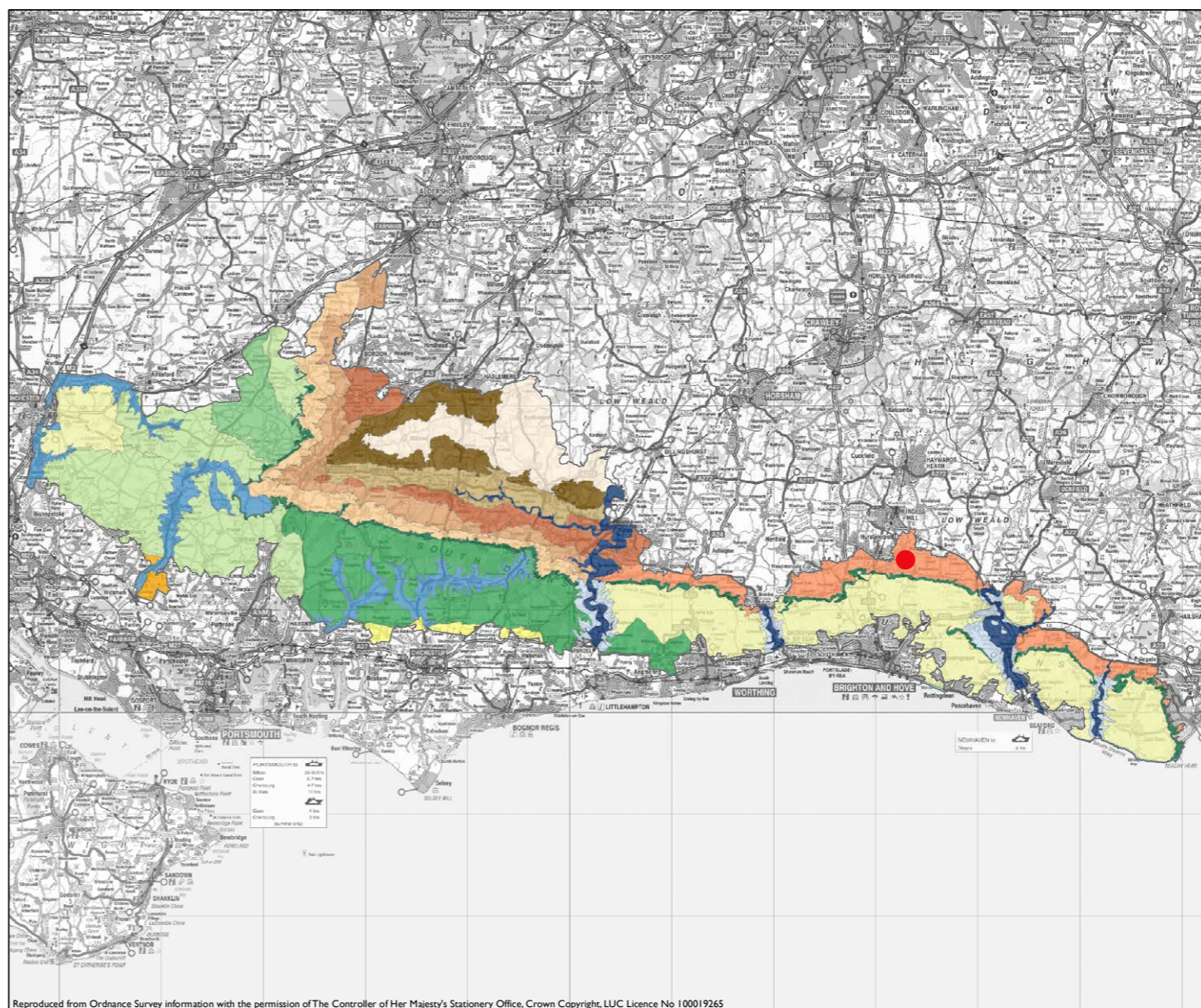
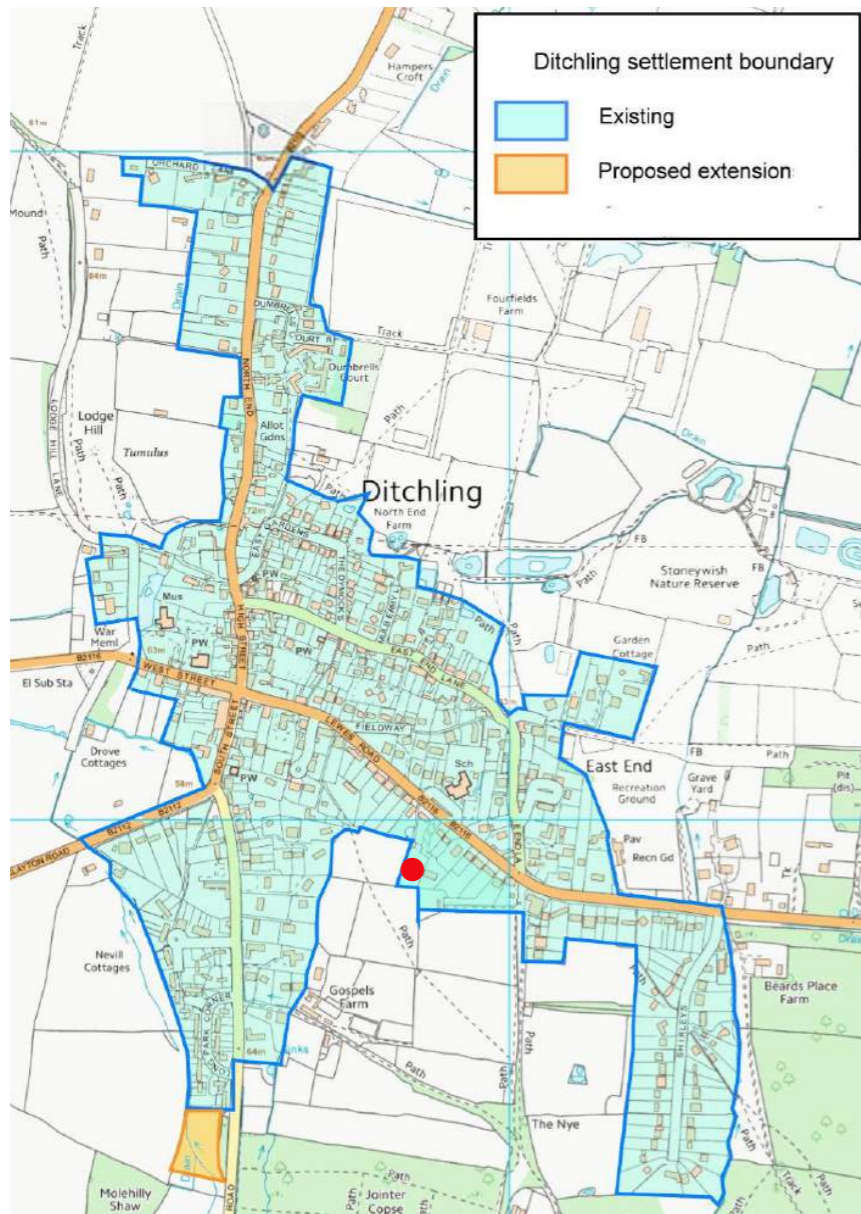
The site falls within the 121: *Low Weald* National Character Area and the *Adur to Ouse Scarp Footslopes* of the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment.



Historic OS map from the 1955



Aerial view of the site and its surrounds



2.2 Setting - Opportunities and Constraints

Located on the southern edge of Ditchling the plot offers broad panoramic views to the south and south west towards the South Downs. More local views over the adjoining fields are restricted by the boundary planting.

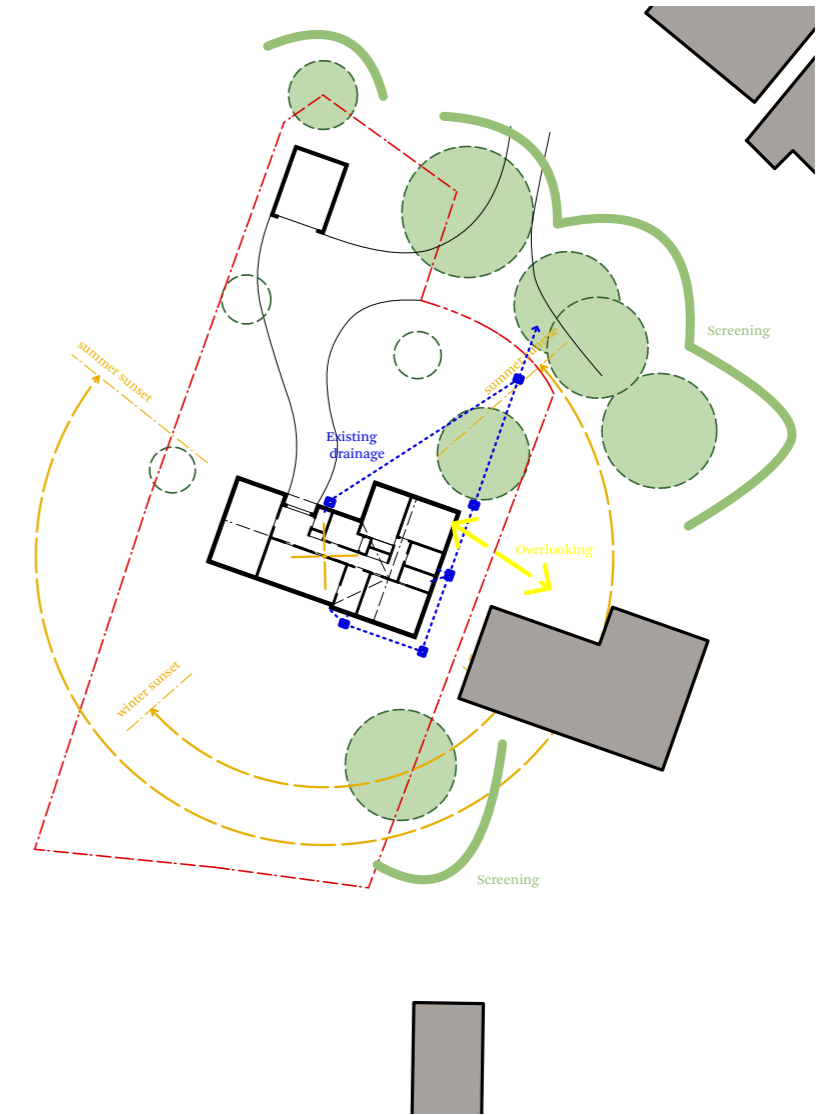
It is bounded to the north, east and south east by other houses but well screened from them and with little possibility of overlooking from ground floor level. As backland development set back from Lewes Road it offers an unusually tranquil setting so close to the village center.

The plot size is generous in relation to the footprint of the existing bungalow and its position in the middle of the site allows a large south facing garden and good sunlight and daylight to all sides.

The existing house is of little architectural or material interest and its replacement is seen as an opportunity for a high quality, sensitive design that reflects the distinctive character of the area and has a positive impact on the immediate and wider environment.



Site location and views



The site plan showing the sunpath and screening

2.3 Setting - Site Visibility

As identified in the accompanying LVIA the existing single storey building has minimal impact on local views, with mature boundary hedging and some trees screening much of the building to views from neighbours. Many of these elements are off-site.

To the north it is set behind the substantial detached houses fronting Lewes Road. The deep access, along a driveway between larger 2/3 storey properties, is bounded by mature hedgerows and trees all of which prevent views of the house from the road.

Views from nearby public vantage points are restricted to those from the south and west along the Ditchling 43a footpath which runs from north west to the south east as indicated on the adjacent aerial photo.

In long range views, particularly from the higher ground of the South Downs, the site is perceived as part of a wider verdant village/rural edge. It can be identified if one looks for this particular house, but it is not the most prominent feature of the village/countryside edge.



Key for plan views -
Footpaths indicated in dashed blue line.

2.3 Setting - Site Visibility



View from footpath - View 1



View from footpath - View 2



View from footpath - View 3



View from footpath - View 4

3.0 Existing Building

The existing property is a single storey 4-bedroom chalet style bungalow with detached garage. It was built in the mid-1970's as one of a matching pair on land to the rear of the houses fronting Lewes Road following planning approved in outline at appeal (ref. E/72/1380) and subsequently a reserved matters application (ref. LW/75/0859)

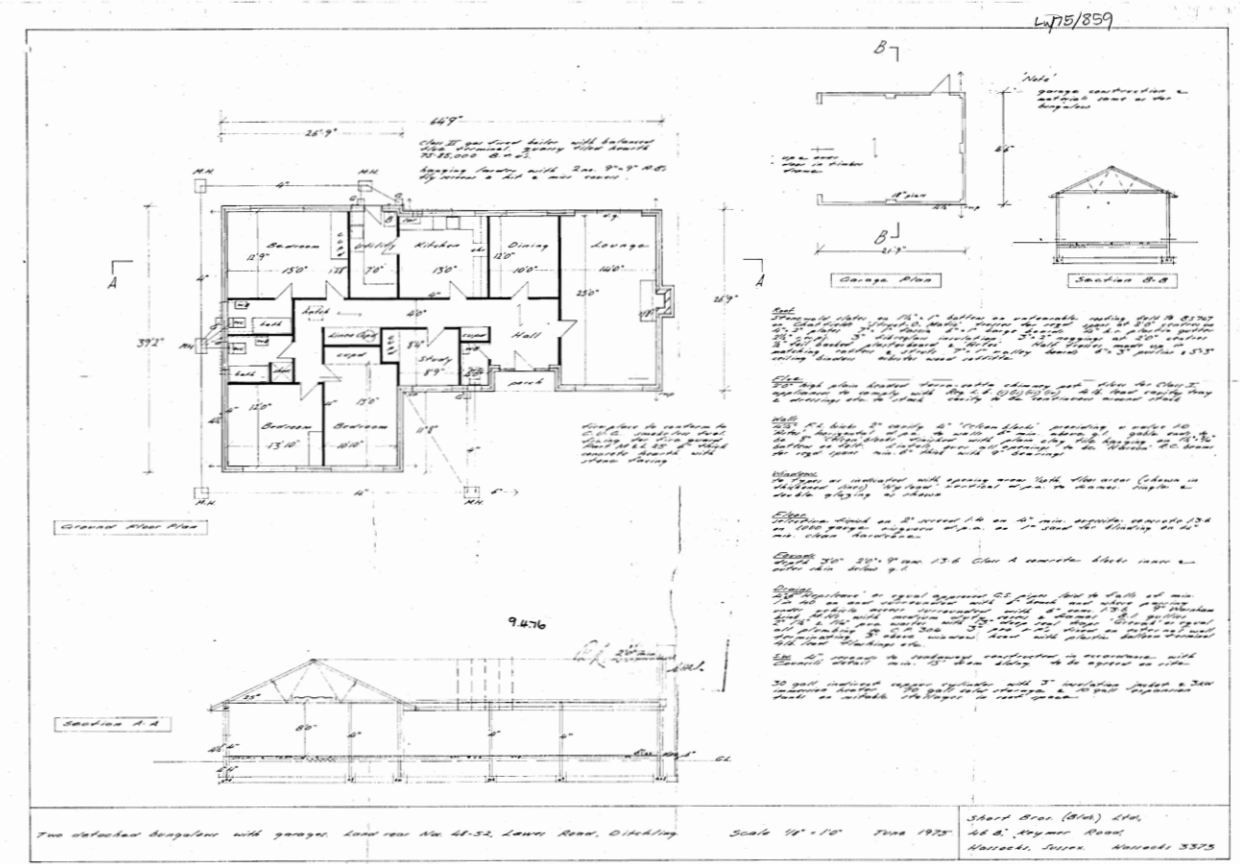
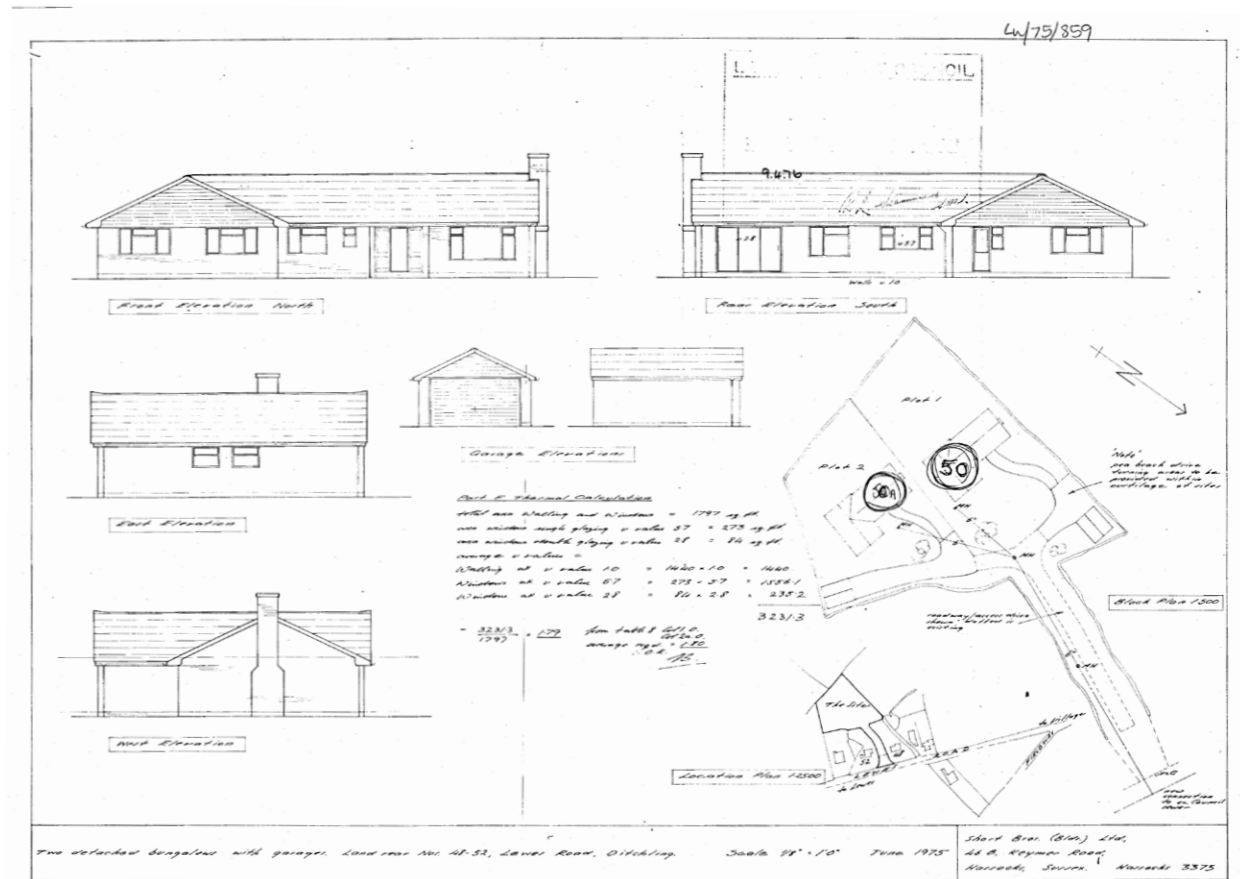
It is constructed of brick and lightweight blockwork with some tile hung cladding to the gable ends and a low pitched concrete tile roof. It is uninsulated apart from the replacement UPVC windows.

It is a non-descript building of limited architectural interest, contributing little to the built character of the area.

It sits centrally within its plot with a mature garden surrounded by mature hedging and some substantial trees. The hedging restricts views to or from the immediate surrounds but does offer a broad aspect to the south towards the South Downs and Ditchling Beacon.



Existing House



Existing House - Planning and Building Regulations drawings
ref. LW/75/0859



Existing House - Garden Elevation

4.0 Design and Access Statement

4.1 Design Brief

Our clients' brief was to explore the options for extending or replacing the existing bungalow to provide a high quality contemporary dwelling that would suit the changing needs of their young family and provide a long-term flexible, enjoyable and highly sustainable home. Their ambition was to make the best use of the site whilst remaining sensitive to the neighbouring properties and broader context.

We have carefully considered the constraints and opportunities of the site and existing buildings and have explored a broad range of extension and new-build options in developing the current proposals.



Pre-Application Proposals
South West Aerial Axonometric View

4.2 Pre-Application Advice

A pre-application submission for the remodelling/extension of the existing bungalow was made on 8th September 2023 and a response was received from Larissa Brooks on 27th October (ref. SDNP/23/03810/PRE). The key points detailed in the written feedback were as follows;

'In my opinion the proposed development is likely to be supported at the application stage, however the material for the roof may need to be reconsidered.'

'The dwelling will remain single-storey and maintains its 'L' shape, meaning it can still be read as a pair of dwellings with no. 51. As such, the remodelling aspect of the proposals is supported. Regarding materials, there is a local precedent for the use of lime as a building material thus there are no objections to the lime slurry coated brickwork. Aesthetically the lime slurry coated brickwork and copper standing seam roofing work well together, however I have concerns that the copper roofing may have a negative impact on the dark night skies and the landscape character of the SDNP due to the high reflexivity of the material before it weathers.'

'... it is not considered that the proposals will have a detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity by way of loss of light/ privacy.'

'... the outbuilding will replace an existing outbuilding, and although it is increasing in size, it will remain subservient and physically dependent on the host dwelling.'

'Proposals should adhere to the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA. Exact details of ecological enhancement (e.g., installation of bird/bat boxes and their locations etc) should be provided within the submitted Ecosystem Services Statement and/or plans at application stage.'

This current application is a further evolution of the proposals submitted at the Pre-App Stage. Overall the building form and design approach remains very similar to the earlier proposals. However, following further analysis of the existing fabric and its suitability for upgrading and retrofitting, it has been determined that rebuilding the house from slab level upwards is a more viable solution than the previously proposed partial demolition/extension and retrofitting.

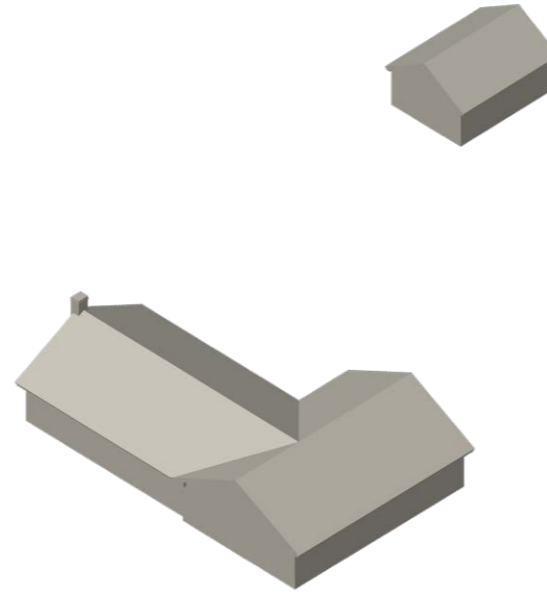
In addition the proposed materiality of the external walls has been amended and a further extension to the existing footprint at the south east gable proposed. The reasoning behind these changes is described in more detail later in this report.

4.3 Use and Amount

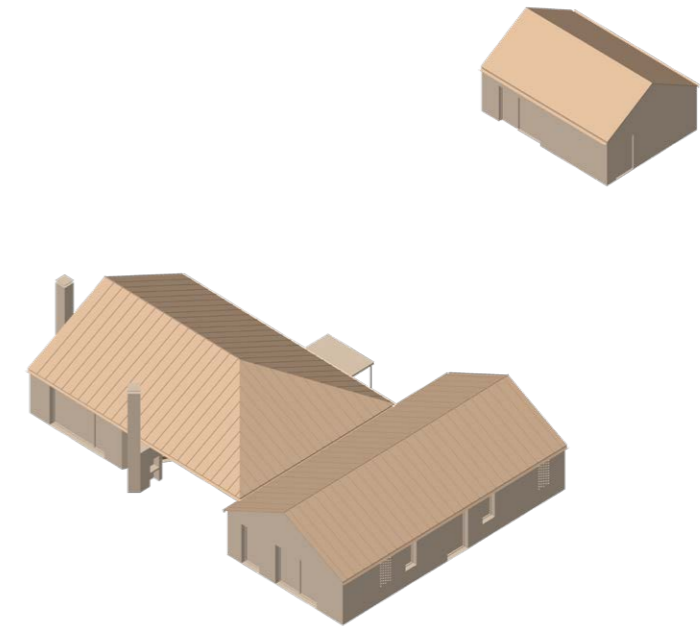
The existing building is a 4 bedroom detached house of 174m² GIA. For the purposes of Policy SD30 of the South Downs Local Plan and the Extensions and Replacement Dwellings TAN this classifies as a large dwelling and the restrictions for small/medium dwellings do not apply.

This proposal retains this residential use with an enlarged 4 bedroom single storey dwelling of 249m² GIA. This equates to an increase of 75 m² as the figures outlined opposite demonstrate.

Although the proposed dwelling is larger than the existing, it has been designed to sit comfortably within its context. It is respectful of the prevailing character, sensitive to the site's prominence and visibility and careful to minimise its impact on the surrounding landscape.



The Existing House and Garage - Block Massing



The Proposed House and Annexe - Block Massing.

Existing House

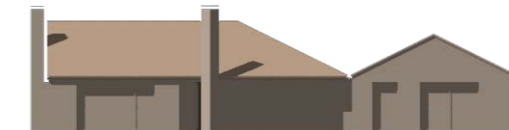
Gross Internal Floor Area of House - 174.2m²
 Gross Internal Floor Area of Garage - 33.3m²
Total Gross Internal Floor Area - 207.5m²

Proposed Scheme

Gross Internal Floor Area of House - 249.4m²
 Gross Internal Floor Area of Annexe- 47.7m²
Total Gross Internal Floor Area- 297.1m²



The Existing House - South Elevation



The Proposed House - South Elevation

4.4 Orientation and Layout

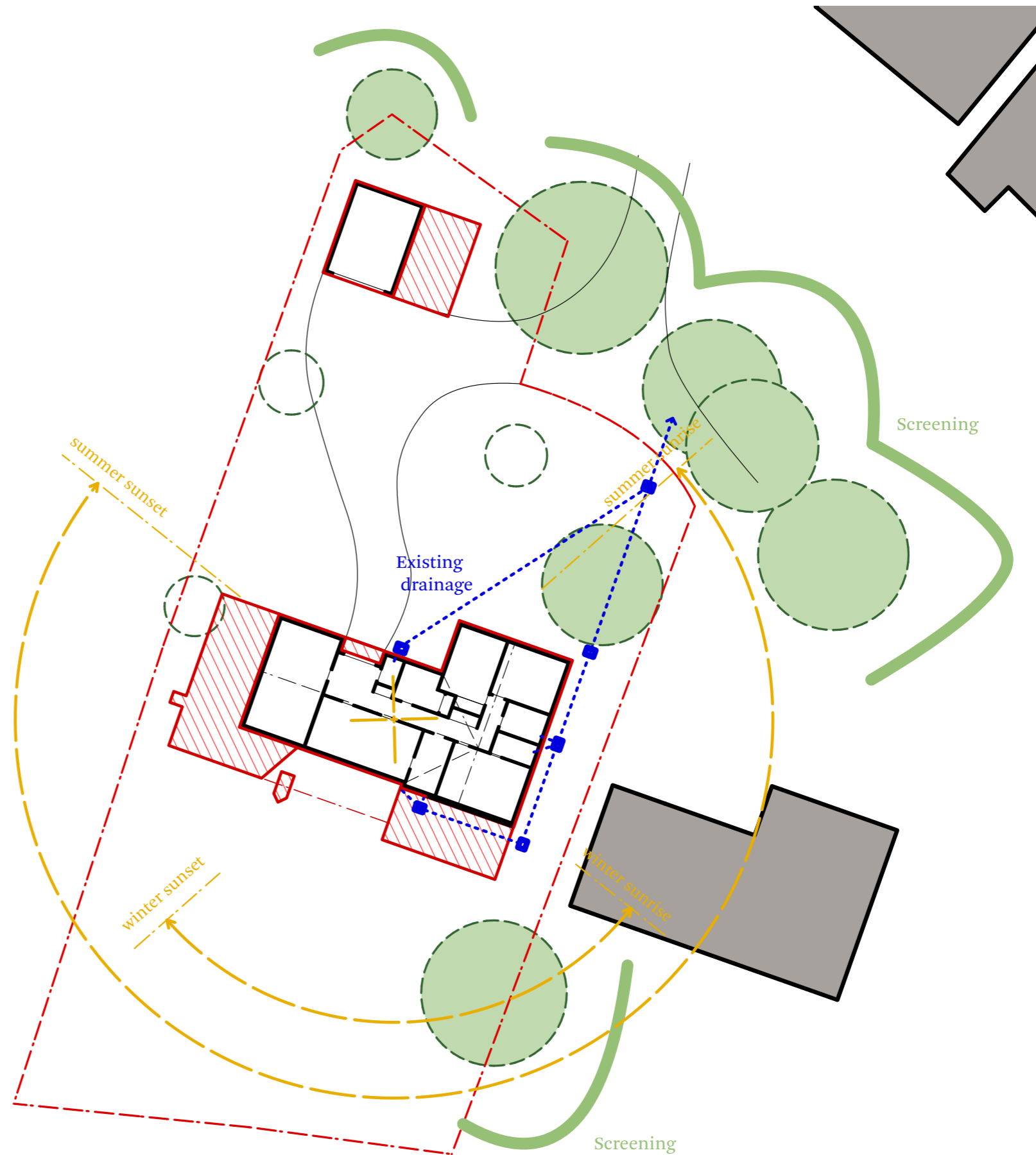
As part of the design development we have undertaken detailed site investigations into the construction and condition of the existing buildings which has heavily influenced the design, siting and orientation of the house.

This analysis has confirmed the viability of the existing foundations and slab for reuse but also highlighted that the existing walls and roof do not have the potential to be suitably upgraded to achieve the long life, high performance envelope that is desired to meet the sustainability requirements of the brief.

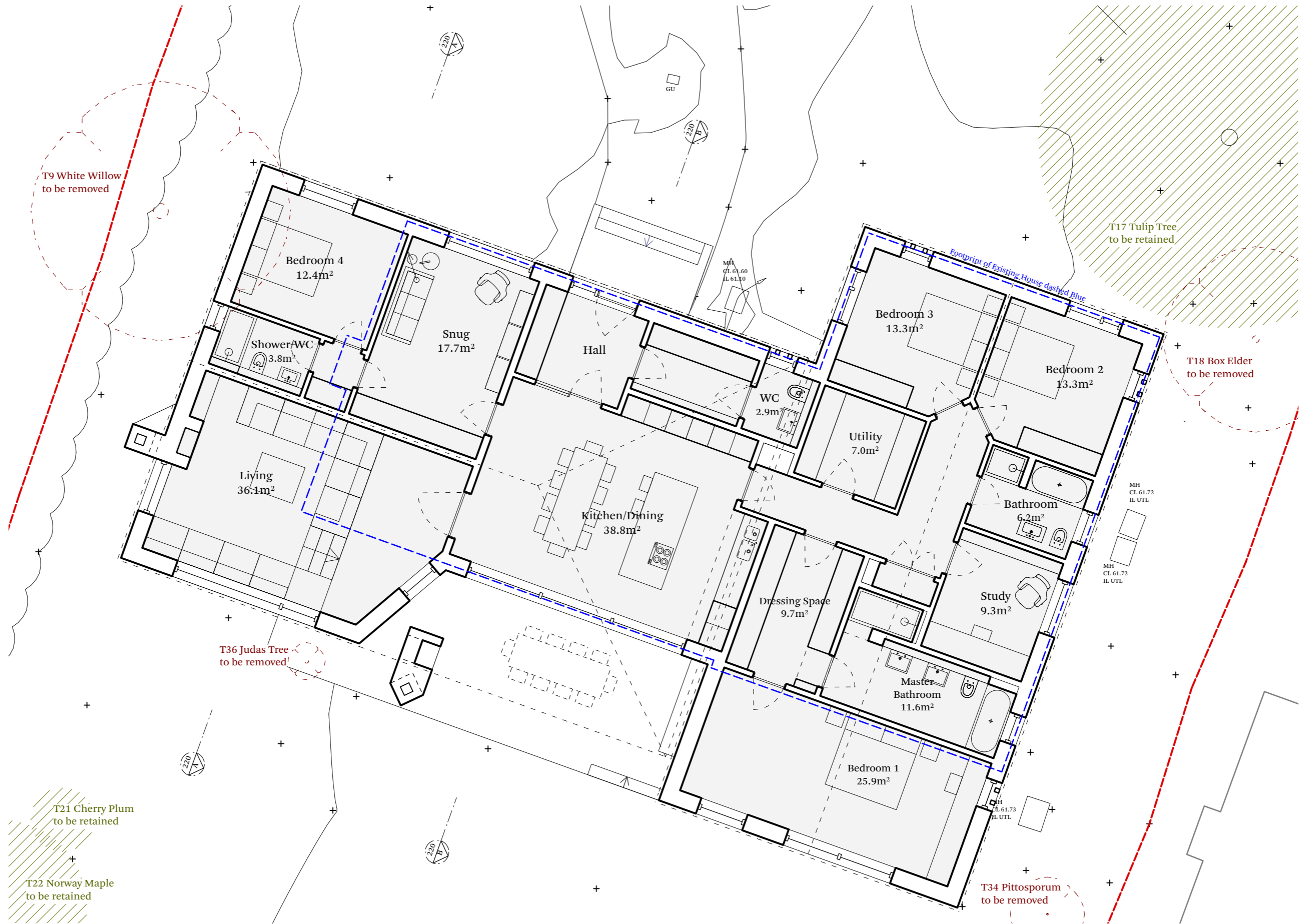
Therefore the new house is positioned over the existing footprint and utilises as much of the existing carbon-heavy substructure as possible as part of holistic approach to sustainability that considers embodied as well as operational carbon. Where possible both the new external and internal walls are aligned with those of the existing house and built off their foundations.

This approach also ensures the house retains a sympathetic relationship to the adjacent bungalow with which it is originally a pair as well as the mature garden and broader setting. Where the footprint has been extended it does not exceed the line of the southern face of the neighbouring house (50A) to ensure its aspect or sense of enclosure is unharmed.

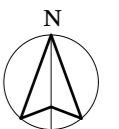
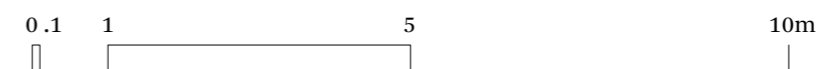
Internally the principle rooms are located on the south and west sides to make best use of the light, aspect and outlook over the garden and landscape with a bedroom wing on the east side as existing.



Footprint and siting diagram in relation to the existing buildings



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



4.5 Scale, Massing and Form

The scale, massing and form of the building have been tested and developed through numerous iterations that have been informed by the baseline evidence on landscape context, key views, biodiversity and geodiversity set out in the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

The new building respects the massing and form of the existing bungalow and its neighbour at 50A Lewes Road. It adopts a similar L-shaped form, remains single storey and retains the shallow pitched roofs and expressed gable ends to the north, south and west faces. However, rather than mimicking the design and detailing of the existing property, the new house uses a more contemporary language that subtly abstracts the vernacular with the aim of creating a sustainable and sensitive built form that is worthy of regard in its own right.

The deeper plan to the east/west leg and improved insulation for all the roofs generate slight increases in ridge height over the adjoining bungalow (50A Lewes Road) of 700mm for the east/west leg and 80mm for the north/south leg. This increase is mitigated by cutting away the roof form at the junction between the two roofs with a new valley which breaks down the volume and visual mass of the proposed building.

When compared to the broader context the highest point of the proposed roof remains considerably lower than the other surrounding properties which have ridge heights in comparison as follows;

1 Nye Lane	-	(68.35m) +1.05m
44 Lewes Road	-	(70.97m) +3.67m
46 Lewes Road	-	(69.90m) +2.60m
46A Lewes Road	-	(68.23m) +0.93m
48 Lewes Road	-	(69.92m) +2.62m
52 Lewes Road	-	(70.42m) +3.12m
54 Lewes Road	-	(70.65m) +3.35m
56 Lewes Road	-	(71.00m) +3.70m
58 Lewes Road	-	(71.60m) +4.30m

Overall its scale is appropriate to the plot size and the broader context and the building sits comfortably within its plot and retains generous areas of garden to the north and south.



Aerial axonometric of proposed massing from the south west



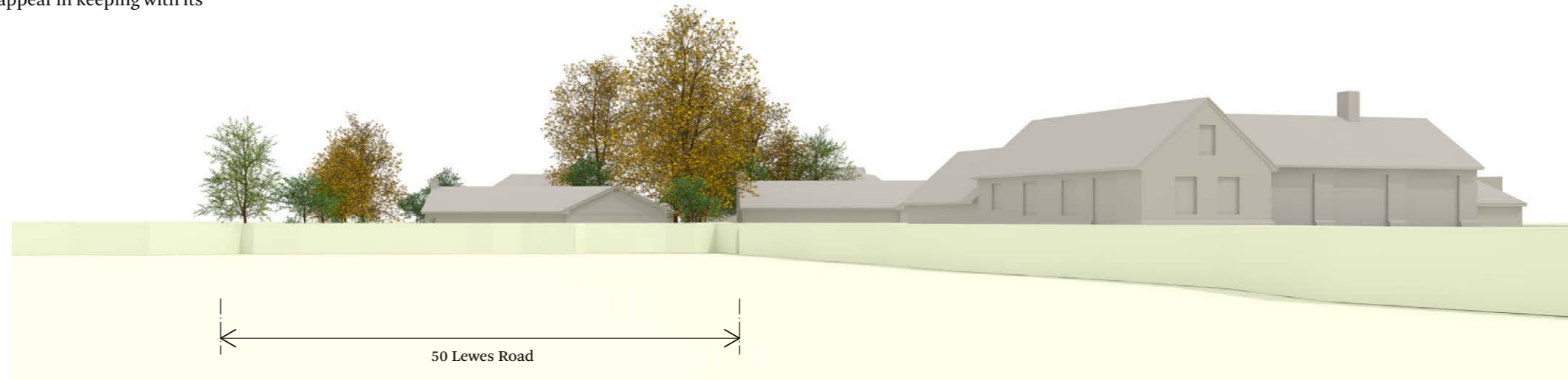
Garden view from the south west

4.6 Visibility and Landscape Impact

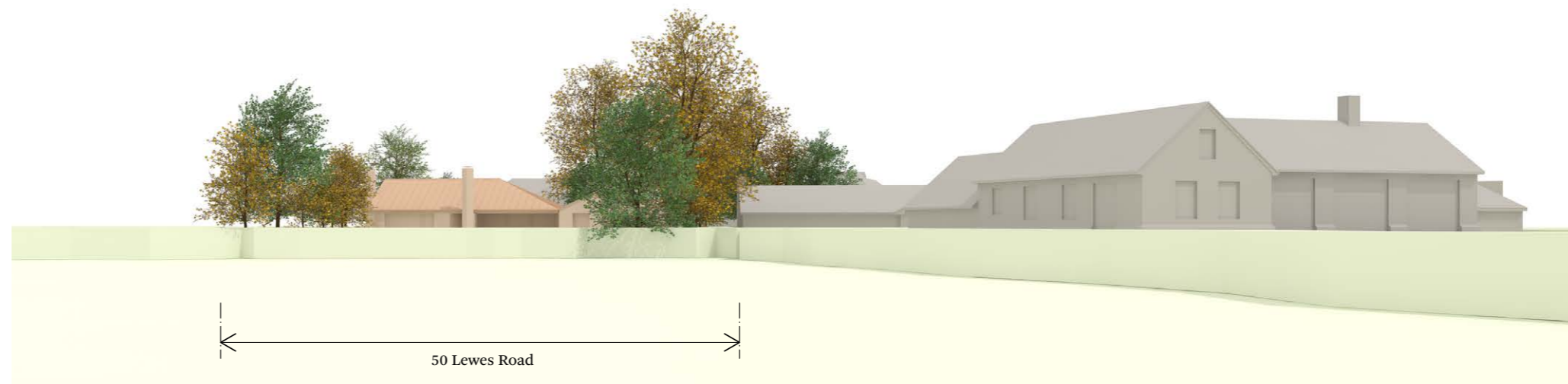
The design, massing and exact positioning of the proposed scheme on the site have all been carefully considered to have minimal impact on neighbours and when viewed from the surrounding landscape.

We have taken account of the detailed analysis in Studio Engleback's Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and the resultant proposal is a low-key, contemporary and sensitive dwelling that reflects both its immediate and broader setting in the landscape.

The eaves and ridge are kept low to hover over the boundary planting. Its single-storey form is articulated into distinct blocks and will not restrict views back and forth between the village and the Downs. The pitched roofs echo the vernacular language of the surrounding built form and appear in keeping with its siting on the edge of the settlement boundary.



View 1. Existing view from the south



View 1. Proposed view from the south

Massing comparisons between existing and proposed house



View 2. Existing view from the south west



View 2. Proposed view from the south west

Massing comparisons between existing and proposed house

4.7 Appearance and Materials

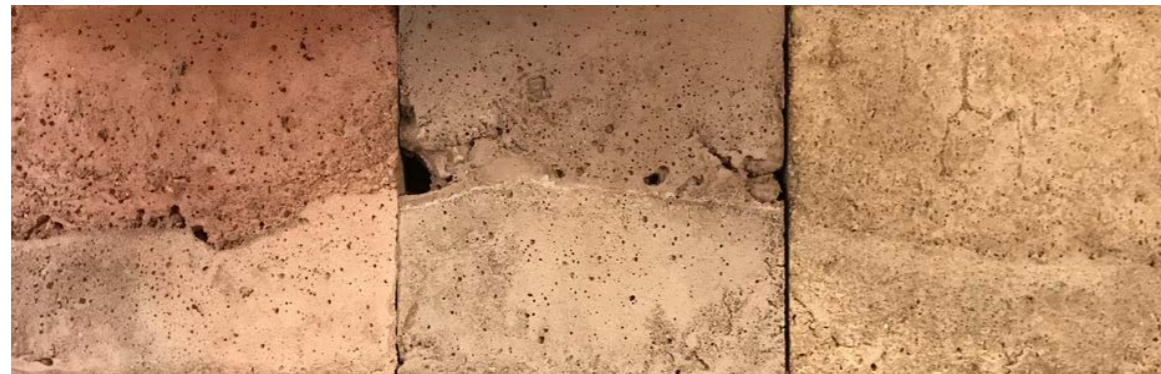
The aspiration was to design a building that is familiar within and makes a positive contribution to the landscape yet is also clearly contemporary and avoids pastiche or mimicry.

We have developed an abstracted vernacular language that will sit sensitively within its context but also add another layer to it. This abstraction is carried through into the detailing with a stripped back aesthetic where the clarity of form and materiality are celebrated and extraneous details avoided.

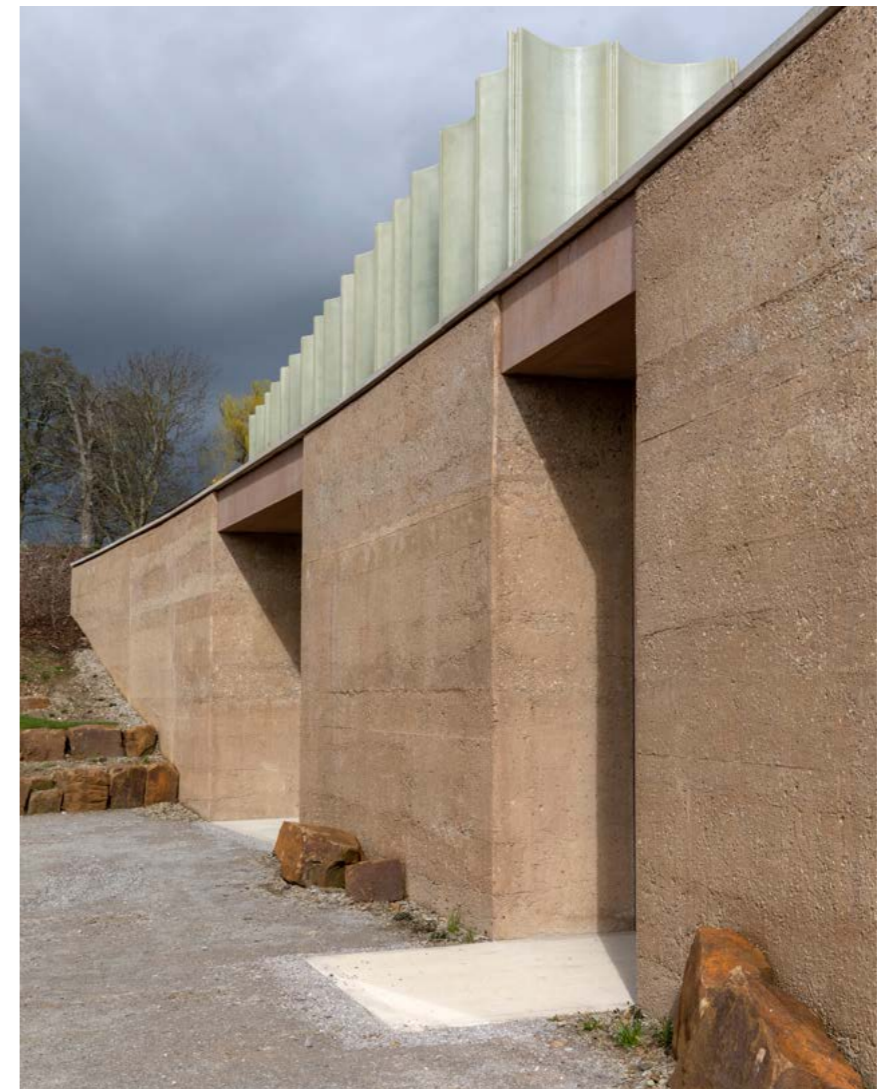
To support this approach we have selected robust, self finished materials with subtle tonal variations and differing grain, which will weather well as they age and reflect the colours and tones of the local fired clay tiles and brickwork which dominate the local material palette as a result of the underlying Gault Clay Geology.

For the new external walls we are proposing a bespoke masonry cast from the demolished brick walls of the existing house and supplemented with waste material from local brick manufacturers. The mix will be laid by hand and rammed in thin layers to give a subtly banded and variegated appearance. This will be accented by a crisp pigmented concrete for the plinth and lintels.

The roof will be copper clad with crisp standing seam detailing and matching rainwater goods to counterpoint the more textural walls below. It will naturally weather to a dark red/brown and echo the darker tones of weathered clay tiled roofs surrounding.



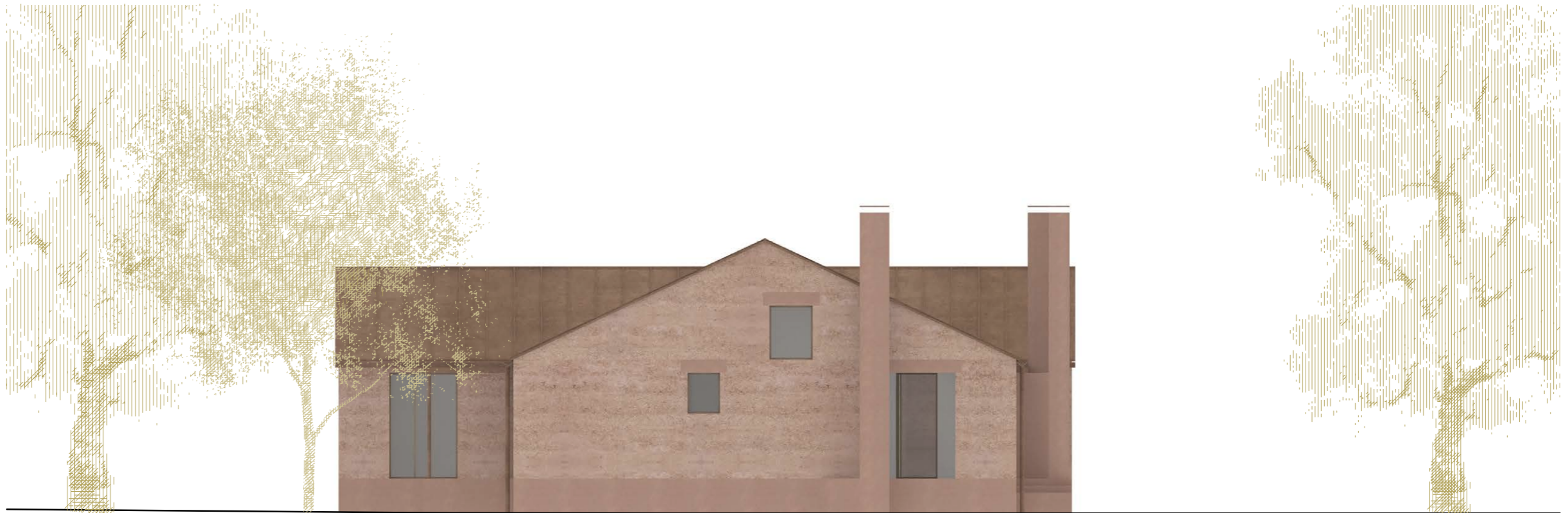
Sample cubes testing colour and texture of crushed recycled brick and red sand



Reference images of materiality.

Top image shows example of weathered standing seam copper roofing.

Bottom image shows example of rammed masonry walling with expressed layers.

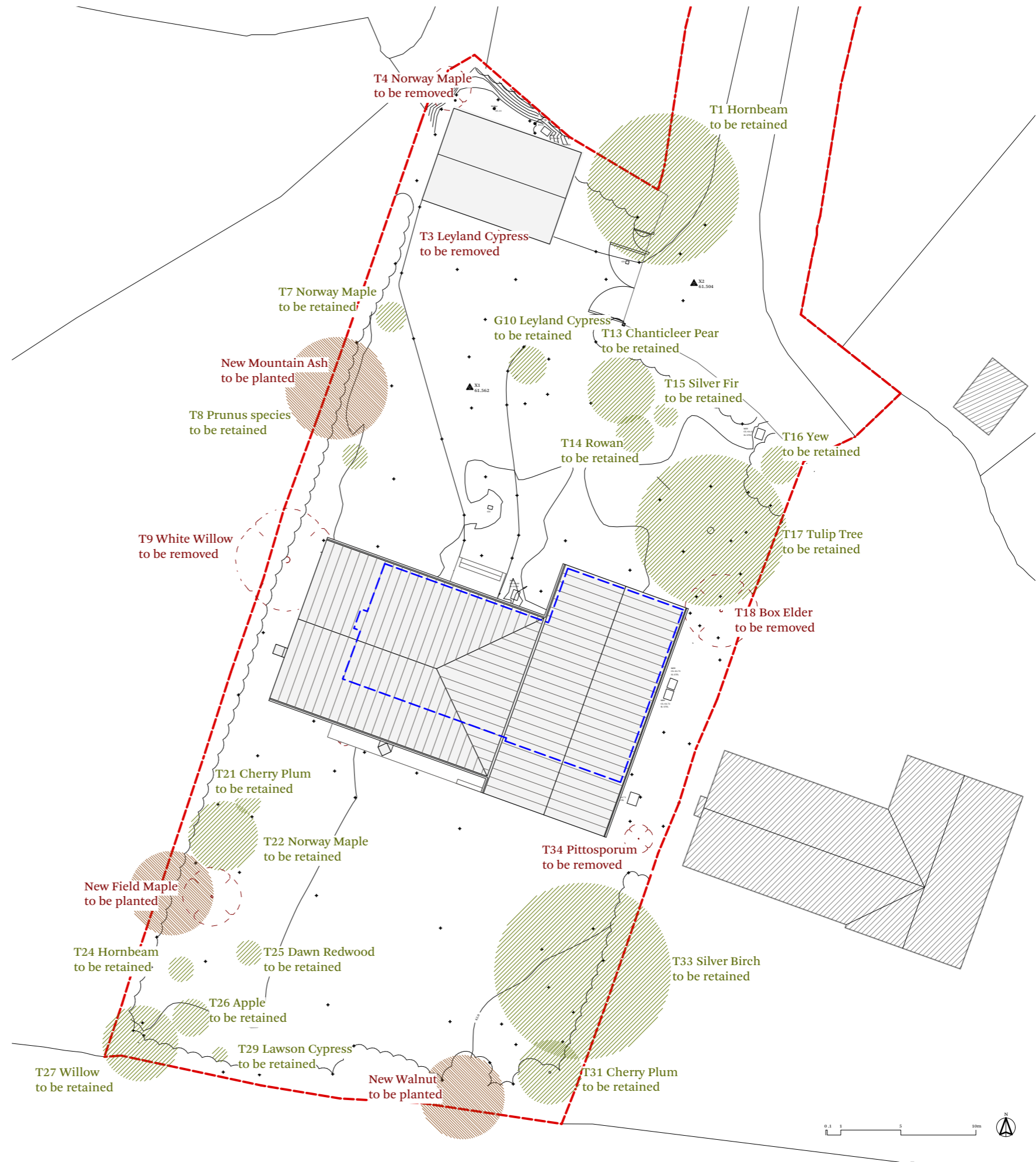


Proposed North and West Elevations

4.8 Landscape Strategy and Trees

The design makes use of the existing mature planting in the existing garden with minimal alterations to suit the enlarged footprint.

We have worked closely with St Aubyn Tree Consultancy and Studio Engleback to ensure the existing trees are protected both during and following the works. with the removal of only a few of lower quality and significance. For the replacement planting we have followed their recommendations for the siting and type to provide appropriately sized native species that which suit the broader landscape.



4.9 Sustainability

We have taken a holistic approach to sustainability that considers embodied as well as operational carbon in the design and targets the LETI Climate Emergency Standards for both.

For embodied carbon we are proposing to adopt the following construction measures;

- Retention and reuse the carbon heavy insitu concrete foundations and slabs from the existing house.
- Timber frame structure for both the house and annexe.
- Recycling demolition brickwork waste from the existing house within the new external walling and utilising its pozzolanic properties to reduce the cement requirement.
- Reuse of the existing roof tiles on the new annexe roof.
- Specification of high quality, self-finished, durable long life materials which where possible are sourced locally.
- Adaptable layout to provide a long-term loose-fit building that allows for changing future patterns of use.

In addition to minimise operational energy, further reduce the carbon footprint of the house and achieve the targets of SDNP Policy SD48 and the Sustainable Construction SPD we are proposing the following;

- Excellent insulating properties of the building fabric
- Efficient services and lighting to reduce energy usage in the longer term.
- Passive energy strategy with careful consideration of solar orientation for shading and glazing to maximise natural daylighting and control solar gain.
- High efficiency, low emissive solar glass triple glazing.
- Modern construction techniques to improve air tightness and minimise thermal bridging.
- Efficient heating and ventilation control systems including a mechanical heat recovery ventilation system and air source heat pump.
- Low water consumption fittings and low energy lighting
- 2 no. car charging points.

4.10 Access and Accessibility Statement

The existing access to and from Lewes Road via the shared driveway will be retained including the existing gates. This is of a good standard and serves the existing requirements of the site.

Covered level access is provided into the the rear of the property via paving down the east side.

Internally level access will be provided to the majority of the ground floor to achieve an M4(2) compliant dwelling.

4.11 Refuse and Recycling Strategy

Refuse and recycling bins will be stored inside the gate at the north of the site to the east of the annexe. In accordance with the existing arrangements the bins will be wheeled from here to the kerbside on collection days.

Garden waste will be composted on site.

4.12 SDNP Dark Night Skies

The site falls within the Urban Zone (E3) Dark Sky Zone of the SDNP Dark Skies TAN 2021.

Given the existing high ambient brightness of the area, and the fact that this is a previously developed site, it is considered the proposed development would have a negligible impact on the Urban E3 Dark Night Skies Zone. However the impact of lightspill has been carefully considered and following design measures have been adopted to ensure the proposals do not cause any undue harm;

- External lighting will be kept to a minimum to preserve the character of the site and be limited to the entrance side of the house (north) which is screened by the dense perimeter planting and not visible for any public vantage points.
- Light spill from the interior is mitigated by the large roof overhang covering the external terrace on the south side outside the kitchen/living room.
- No rooflights are proposed.
- Black-out curtains will be provided to windows.

4.13 Noise

The site has an established residential use and as such the general level of noise associated with the proposal would cause no additional issues of disturbance to neighbours. The higher levels of insulation for the new structure, doors and windows will reduce the potential for noise leakage from the previous property on the site.

Located over the existing footprint, the new house will maintain the separation between it and any adjacent buildings to limit noise impact and it can therefore be concluded that no adverse impact is likely to occur and that a good standard of amenity can be achieved both for the new house and its neighbours.

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