

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Moorings,
Upper Warren Avenue,
Caversham,
Reading
RG4 7EJ

September 2022



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared in support of the Planning Application for a replacement dwelling at Moorings, Upper Warren Avenue.

This statement sets out the development process that has led to the current proposals, and the rationale behind the scheme.

Moorings is a detached three bedroom bungalow on a private plot set back from Upper Warren Avenue. The clients purchased the property in 2021, with the site and house having been left in a poor condition by the previous owner. The intention from the outset has been to replace the existing house with a new high quality, sustainable dwelling.

The site is not within the AONB, a Conservation Area or SINC (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) and is within Flood Risk Zone 1. No property planning history is listed for Moorings on the online planning portal for Reading Borough Council.

Upper Warren Avenue consists generally of large properties set within generous grounds. A considerable number of properties along the road have been demolished to make way for replacement dwellings within a variety of styles; incorporating traditional, Arts and Crafts, neo-Georgian to flat roof contemporary along the road.

Under Policy H5, new houses are required to have an improvement in the dwelling emission rate to work towards achieving zero carbon homes. The principle of sustainable design has been considered from the start of the project, with renewable technology, sedum roofs and solar shading devices integrated within the scheme.



- 1. Existing south elevation
- 2. Existing south elevation
- 3. Existing north elevation
- 4. Existing west elevation

2.0 CONTEXT

Moorings is located along the north side of Upper Warren Avenue. The plot is well concealed from view of the road, with an access gate leading north up the drive to the property. The site is approximately 0.34 hectares with mature trees along the boundaries.

The existing bungalow has a dominant hipped roof with brown clay roof tiles, with white rendered and facing brick walls and white painted windows.

The trees on the plot had not been managed by the previous owners and so a first priority of the clients on taking ownership of the site was to ensure the safe removal of any trees in a poor condition. This exercise was completed by an experienced arboriculturalist.

A considerable number of existing properties on Upper Warren Avenue such as Norbrook House, formerly Hilgay (211136) and Heath Point (140083) have received planning approval for replacement dwellings, Heath Point within a contemporary style, adding to the variety of the street scene along the road.

As part of the supporting documentation for this planning application an Initial Bat Survey was completed by Windrush Ecology and an arboricultural report compiled by LandArb Solutions.

A Certificate of Lawful Development was submitted to the Council and validated on 19th July 2022 for the Proposed Use for the erection of a detached outbuilding. This is for the purpose of a new home office and gym to the rear of the garden and ancillary in use to the main house.



- 1. Aerial Map
- 2. OS Location Plan
- 3. Heath Point (Ref 140083)
- 4. Norbrook House Visual (Ref 211136)

3.0 BRIEF

The clients’ brief was for the new dwelling to be a unique, contemporary two storey home with sustainability integrated into the scheme from the start. A high quality design that would embrace the generous nature of the site whilst also providing privacy. This is intended to be a home for the clients for the long term, with planning for later life incorporated within the design.

The existing dwelling is in a poor condition and would not be viable to extend and alter to achieve the high thermal efficiency contemporary home which the clients are seeking.

The brief is for a five bedroom dwelling with a large open plan kitchen space and a separate living area. A separate double garage is required off the driveway on the approach to the house.

The clients are looking to sensitively develop the site whilst maintaining and improving the open nature of the plot with sensitive planting, sedum roofs and more.

A series of layers is proposed within the design to allow for an unveiling of the property throughout the approach, providing a balance of heavily glazed open to the rear and more private areas facing the street.



4.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

A number of properties along Upper Warren Avenue have been demolished and replaced with new dwellings, including but not limited to Norbrook House, Heath Point, 10 Upper Warren Avenue and very recently, High Ridge. There are a variety of styles to the properties along the road, with no defined character to the appearance of the houses.

Key policies in reference to the proposal are:

- CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3 Adaption to Climate Change
- CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
- H5 Standards for New Housing
- H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network
- TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (March 2021)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Principles and Design (CC7)

The existing property is a small scale bungalow on a large plot, with the rear garden extending over 70 metres to the north. The bungalow does not have particular architectural merit and is not within a Conservation Area. The condition of the property is lacking, without any upgrades to modern standards by the previous owners. The dwelling is single storey with a dominant tiled hipped roof and ridge height of around 6.5 metres from the surrounding ground level within a relatively level site.

The proposed replacement dwelling is two storey in nature with a single storey garage between the property and Upper Warren Avenue. The location of the replacement dwelling is similar to that of the existing bungalow, aliging to the same south elevation position on the site. The house is located behind mature trees and vegetation, screened from the view from the highway. This screening is to be maintained and enhanced through a Landscaping Plan.

It is noted within the Planning Officer's comments for the recent approval of High Ridge that although the proposed dwelling in this instance is '*significantly larger than the existing dwelling and extends forward towards the highway in relation to the existing dwelling*' the approval was provided as '*the size and scale of the proposed replacement dwelling is considered characteristic of the surrounding area and not a intrusive addition to the street scene*'. The Planning Officer goes on to note that '*There are several examples of large, detached dwellings along Upper Warren Avenue, all with varying designs and materials. There is no commonality amongst the appearance of the dwellings along Upper Warren Avenue. Due to the large plots, extensive vegetation and proected trees along Upper Warren Avenue, the dwelling houses are largely obscured from the highway*'.

The proposed height of the replacement dwelling is circa. 6.3 metres, which is less than that of the existing dwelling. The footprint of the new dwelling is 60% larger than that of the existing at ground floor level, which is proportional and not an excessive increase in size. The increase in size of the dwelling proposed is a considerably smaller increase than other replacement dwellings on Upper Warren Avenue and is a sensitive and modest house which is proportionate to the size of the plot.

The proposed garage is under three metres in height and is proposed to be located over 13 metres from the highway. This volume projects further towards the road than the existing dwelling, but only as a linked outbuilding similar to others proposed on the street. This is in effect, similar to the approved garage at High Ridge which the Planning Officer refers to within the Delegated Report for the application as '*The combination of existing vegetation to the front of the property combined with the proposed detached garage would result in limited views of the replacement dwelling from the highway. There are examples along Upper Warren Avenue, however, of detached garages forward of the principal elevation of the main house*'. Due to the mature trees in this area, LandArb Solutions have been consulted from the start to establish an above ground proposal to ensure that the tree roots are suitably protected and are not harmed within the proposed works.

A contemporary design has been taken with the proposal, to reflect the preferences of the clients for a modern property. Large areas of glazing populate the rear of the house, with a more modest and screened approach to the more visible front of the property. The use of a flat roof design enables a full two storey dwelling at a height lower than that of the existing bungalow's



4.0 PLANNING CONTEXT (cont.)

ridge height - remaining sensitive to the site and context. A similarly modern property was approved at Heath Point on Upper Warren Avenue, adding to the interest and variety of styles within the streetscene.

The proposal has been designed to sit modestly on the site, with respect to the streetscene and overall characteristics of Upper Warren Avenue, taking into account all considerations that have been raised by the Council with respect to similar replacement dwellings.

Sustainable Design and Construction (H5)

The proposal has been developed with sustainability integrated within the design from the outset. The spatial layout has been orientated to optimise south light within the social spaces on a north facing plot, which are protected from the summer sun by the projecting first floor to provide shade. Smaller openings creating greater privacy from the street and reduced solar gain on the south elevation, with the north elevation heavily glazed in contrast to maximise the cooler north light. The Living Room, tended to be used later in the day, is orientated to the west to maximise the evening light into this space. This will ensure minimal requirements for artificial lighting to be required with natural lighting optimised across the dwelling.

A sedum roof will cover the single storey projections and the garage providing improved biodiversity across the building footprint.

The house will be heavilty screened from Upper Warren Avenue, and is concealed from the neighbouring properties by mature trees.

Renewable technology is to play a key role in bringing this house to as close to an off-grid use as possible with solar panels proposed on the main house roof and an air source heat pump to power the heating of the property and the water system. The proposal is intended to have greater than the 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate as required by Policy H5.

The proposed internal floor areas far exceed that of the H5 Local Plan requirements for minimum gross internal floor areas, and include the built-in storage as per the policy requirements. The proposal also has minimal effect on the existing garden provision due to the extensive size of the garden.

The new driveway will be of permeable gravel construction to allow surface

water drainage. High levels of insulation have been allowed for to provide a thermally efficient property, reducing the energy demand of the house.

Windrush Ecology have provided a Preliminary Roost Assessment for the property confirming that no evidence of bats have been found at the property and no constraints should be imposed upon the works.

LandArb Solutions have provided an Arboricultural Assessment for the site to ensure full protection of the existing trees on the site and have worked closely on the proposals from the start of the design development.

Access and Highways (TR1)

The proposed garage will provide parking for two cars plus secure cycle storage. The highways access will remain as it is currently, with the replacement of the existing gate with electric gates.

There will be ample space on the new driveway for parking for a number of cars in addition to the double garage. There is also sufficient space for the required turning circles.

Cycle storage will be provided within the garage outbuilding, with ample storage space to accommodate the required provision.

Safeguarding Amenity (CC8)

The site at Moorings is densely screened at all boundaries to its neighbouring properties. The proposed dwelling has been sited on the footprint of the existing house, maintaining the line of houses within the streetscene. Although the proposed dwelling is two storeys, the wraparound design at first floor level and inset balcony with screening to the Master Bedroom, along with the existing tree provision, results in no instances of overlooking to the neighbouring properties. Any first floor side windows are for bathrooms only and are proposed to be obscure glazed.

The proposal would not be overly imposing in relation to the existing as the overall height is lower than the existing ridge height. The new footprint aligns with the width of the existing property, with the small exception of a single storey projection to the west.

5.0 PROPOSAL

A process of considered site analysis and design development led to the current proposal. The existing property is a poor fit to optimise the views and access into the site, and the new dwelling takes advantage of the opportunities presented by the generous plot.

Creating a strong cross axis with the proposed garden walls separates the functions and levels of privacy required for each area of the new dwelling. The grounded brick walls create layering, allowing the owners to gradually reveal the property at their discretion.

This replacement dwelling proposal results in a small increase in the existing external footprint on the existing property whilst providing, not only a significant improvement in the spaces delivered due to the constraints of the existing structure being removed, but also a high quality, sustainable design.

The new property is two storey, across a continuous level throughout the ground floor of the dwelling. The location of the new dwelling is on the site of the existing house, centrally positioned in the width of the plot. This maintains the line of the dwellings on the street, remains out of the root zone of the mature trees on the site as far as reasonably possible of the adjacent trees, whilst maximising the mature garden to the north.

The existing driveway from Upper Warren Avenue drive is to retain the existing entrance point from the road, with replacement gates. The driveway will follow a similar line to the existing, weaving through the mature trees to the south of the plot.

The proposed garage outbuilding is to be relocated forward of the street elevation of the house, in line with those along Upper Warren Avenue, but linked to the property by the garden walls. The outbuilding will provide parking for two cars, bicycles and external storage.

The new dwelling is orientated on a central east-west axis, with a clear difference in the approach to the north and south elevational treatments to enable privacy to the south, with greater optimisation of views to the north.

The main dwelling sits lightly to the north of the central wall, forming a modest entrance to the property. Only once entering through the front door, does the property and plot beyond reveal itself.

1

2



1. Proposed North Elevation

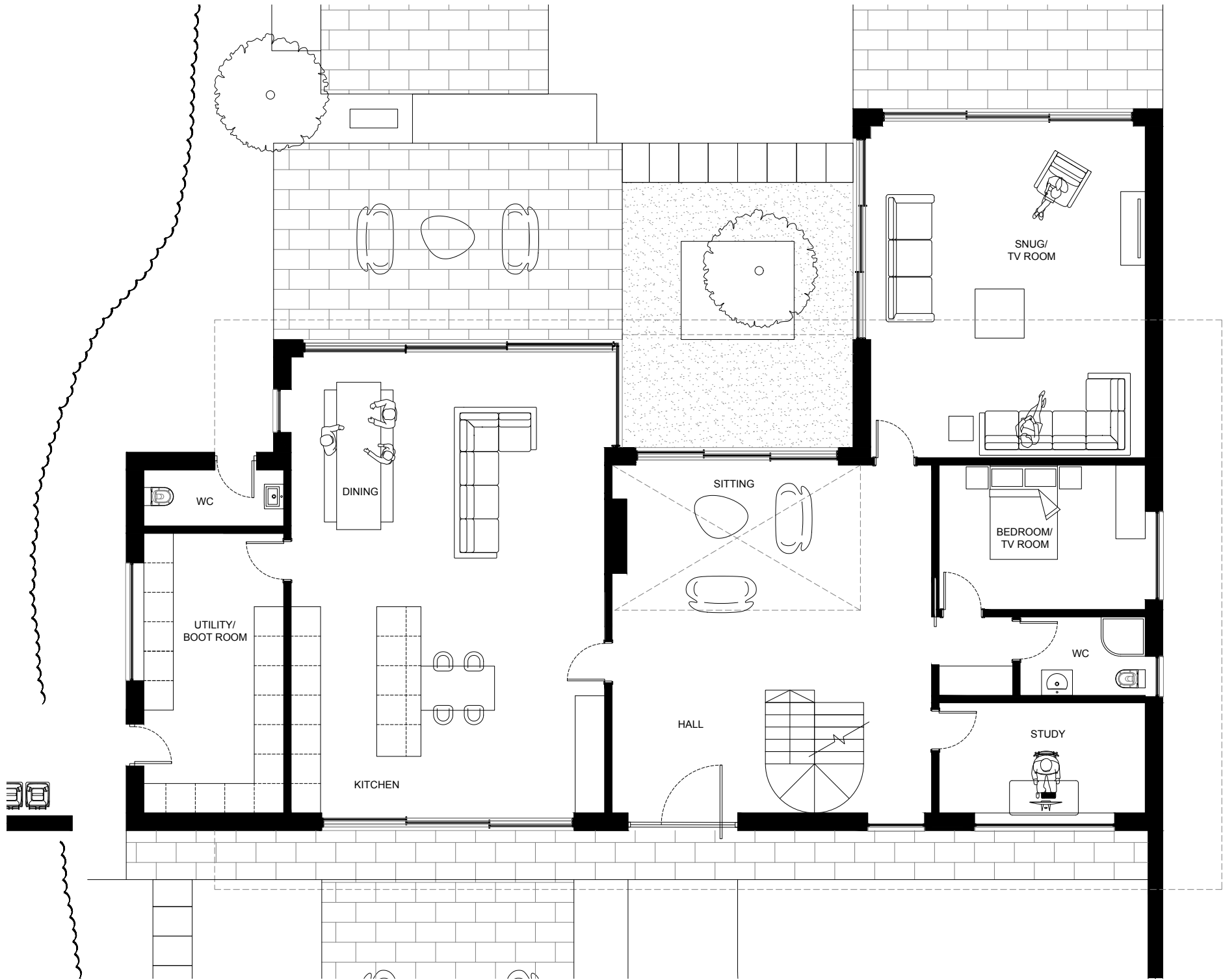
2. Proposed South Elevation

5.0 PROPOSAL

An open plan kitchen, dining and seating area along with the associated Utility Room occupy the west of the ground floor, with the living area occupying the north-west corner to take advantage of the evening sun. A large central hallway with a double height space maximises the cooler north light to bring natural light into the depth of the house. A ground floor bedroom and study are located within the south-east section of the house, providing key ancillary spaces.

Glazing has been carefully placed to optimise views of the gardens beyond from every position within the house. Each space is carefully lit to ensure good levels of natural daylight and access to the garden.

The substantial flat roof at first floor level is proposed to accommodate solar panels, with the ground floor flat roofs to have a sedum roof to provide an area of improved biodiversity, to slow and reduce rainwater run-off. Rainwater pipes will be linked to a below ground rainwater harvesting tank for garden irrigation purposes.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

5.1 MATERIALS

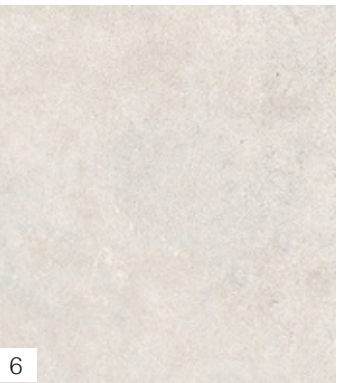
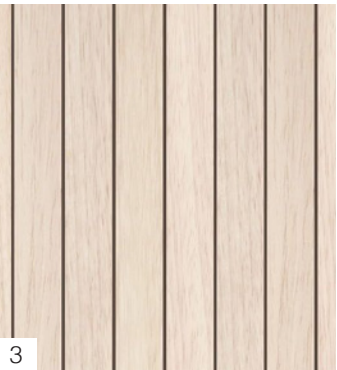
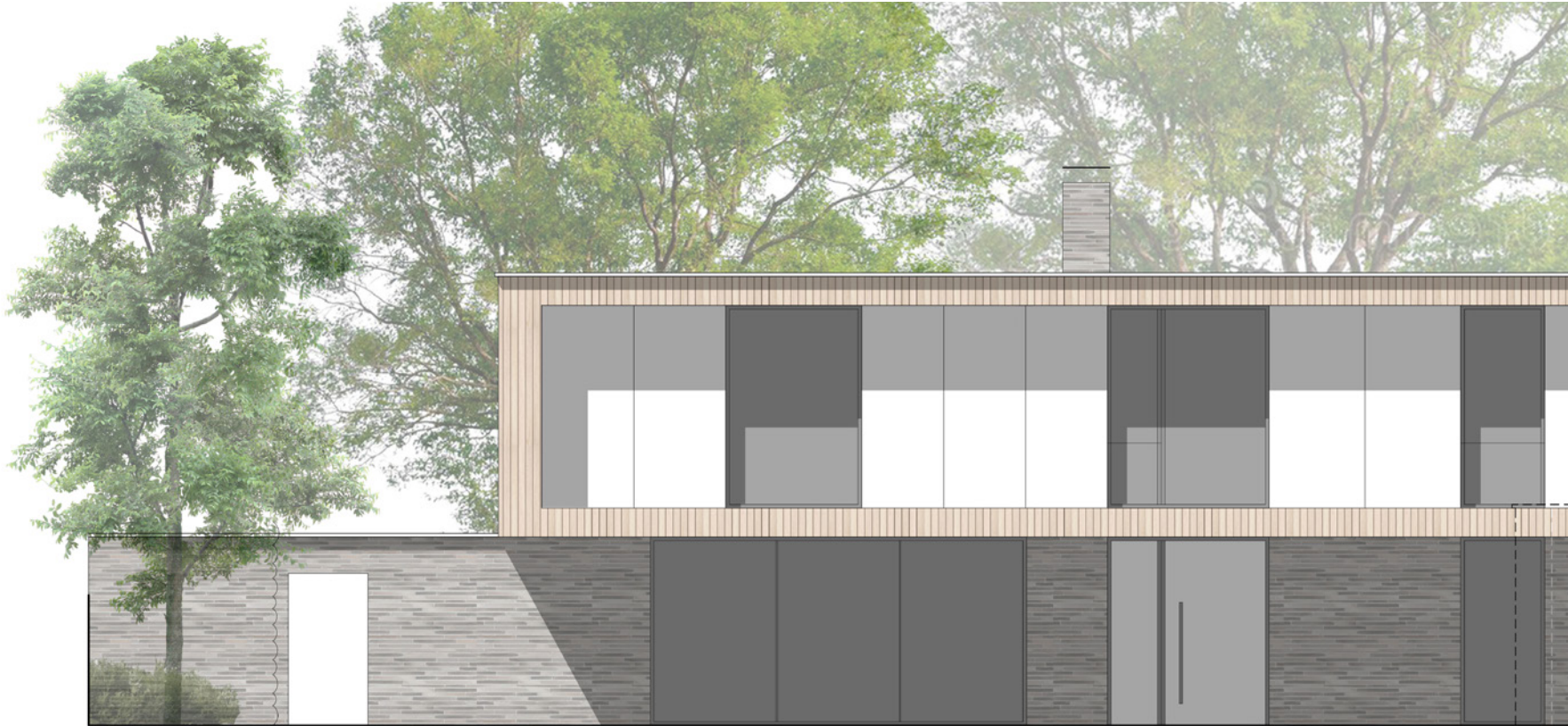
The proposed materials of the property are grey linear brickwork, vertical timber cladding and aluminium panels. This presents a simple, clean material palette of complementary colour tones.

The linear brick defines the key spine walls of the scheme at ground floor level, with punctured openings providing glimpses through into the more private spaces. A single chimney projects above the roof line also formed from linear brick.

The band of vertical timber cladding wraps around the whole first floor volume, defining the edge of the canopy and as a clear but lighter tone contrast to the brickwork.

A sedum roof tops the flat roofs of the single storey volumes, providing a sustainable and biodiverse aspect.

The potential for sustainable design to be integrated into the design is substantial. Opportunities are being explored alongside the use of renewable technology to ensure that the replacement dwelling is sustainable and energy efficient in the long term for the clients.



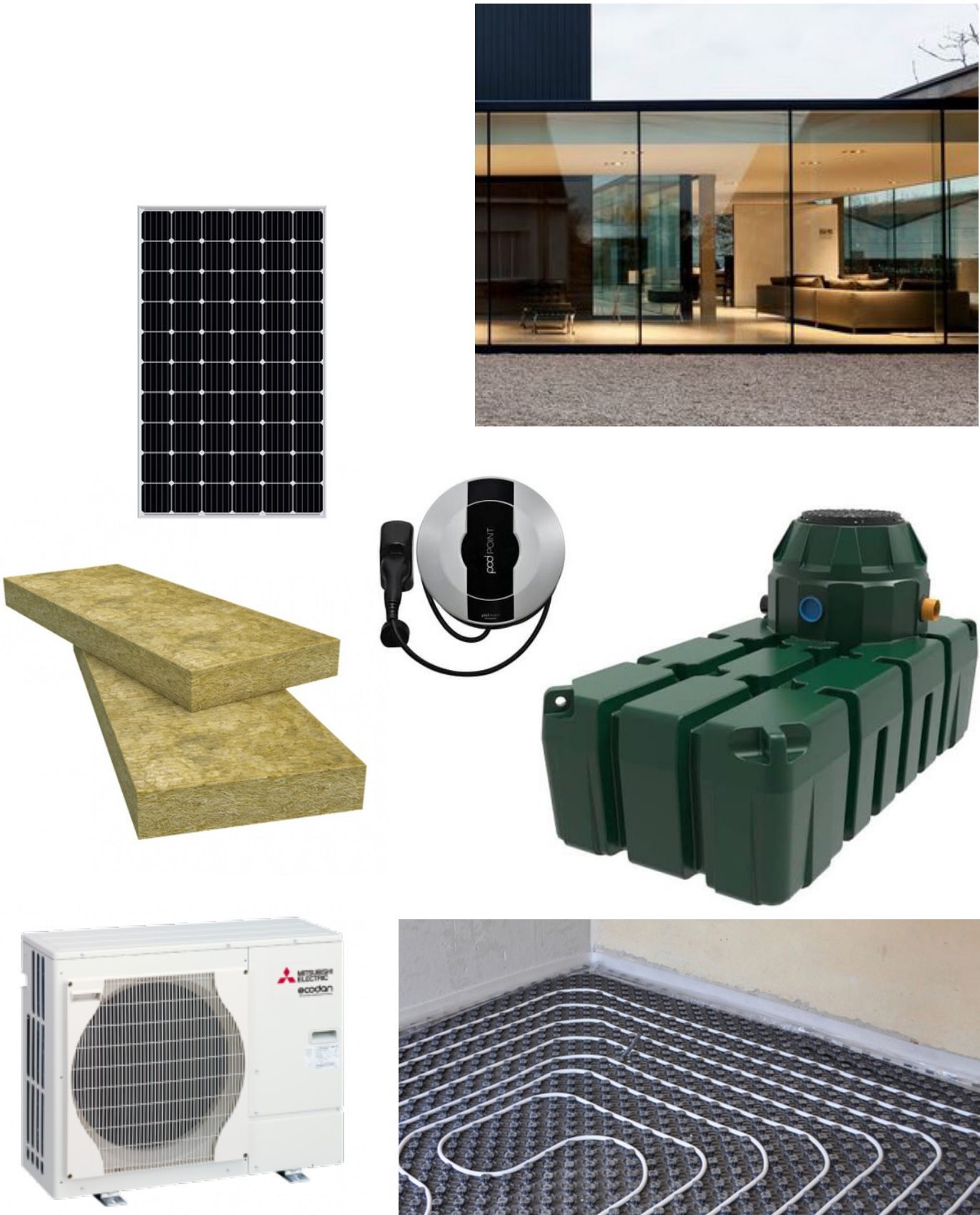
- 1. Slimline sliding doors
- 2. Grey linear brickwork
- 3. Vertical timber cladding
- 4. Sedum roof
- 5. White oiled oak flooring
- 6. Large format porcelain paving

5.2 SUSTAINABILITY

A sample of some of the options available for renewable & sustainable technology to be integrated into the scheme to achieve the required 10% renewable or low carbon energy source on site:

- Air Source Heat Pump
- High levels of insulation across the property.
- Wet underfloor heating across the property.
- Double glazed windows with low-e coatings to south facing glass.
- Rainwater Harvesting via a below ground tank
- Electric car charging point
- Solar panels on the main roof.
- Solar shading devices

A formal Energy Statement has been completed to accompany the planning application to set out how the 19% reduction will be achieved within the proposals.



5.3 LANDSCAPE

Sustainability is a key component of the brief for this project and the clients would like to improve the biodiversity of the site, whilst maintaining and protecting the existing landscape.

The existing mature trees provide an enclosed feel to the site. The clients are in discussions with a garden designer to develop the scheme to fully integrate the architecture within the landscape of the plot.

The new driveway will be gravelled with permeable construction to allow surface water drainage and to protect the tree roots. A discrete area for the bins has been provided outside of the Utility Room within a covered outdoor area, screened off from view behind the garden wall.

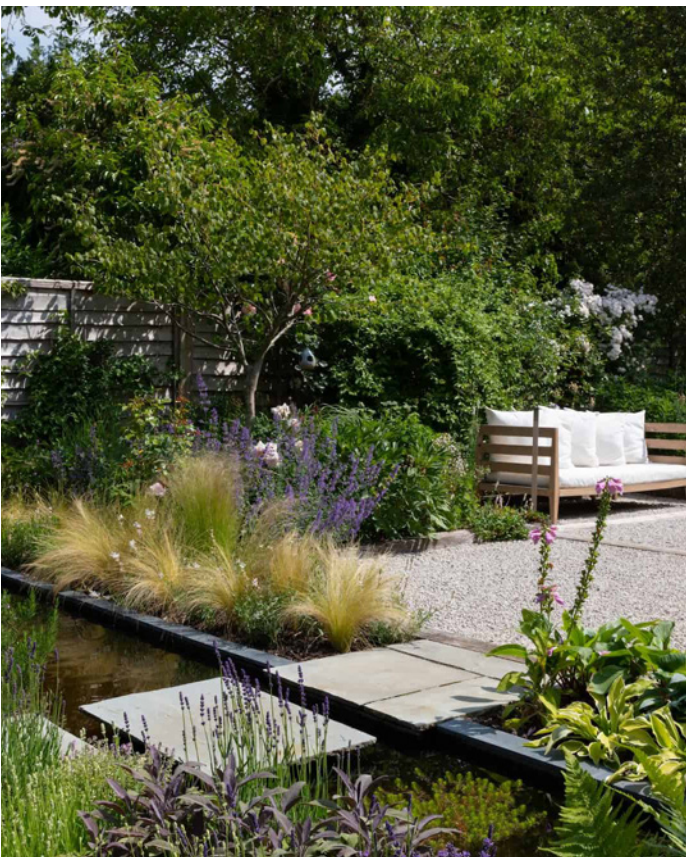
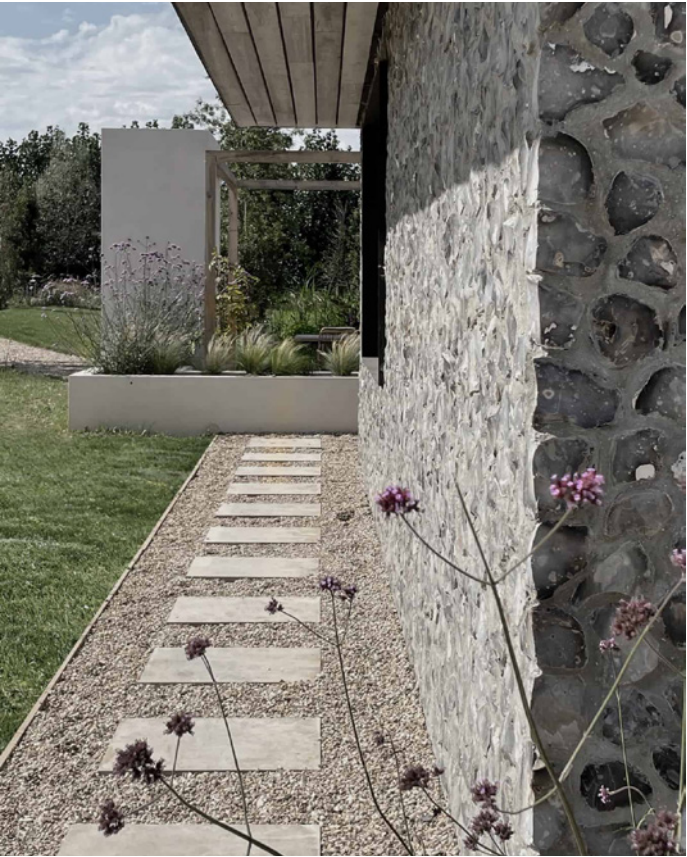
The owners and project team have worked closely with Windrsuh Ecology and LandArb Solutions to create a strategy across the site to preserve and enhance the existing landscape within the scheme.

5.4 ACCESSIBILITY

The property has been designed to cater for the owners as a forever home. The accommodation is across one level finished floor level at each level, with a ground floor bedroom and ensuite provided as a further consideration.

Circulation spaces are generous, to allow sufficient width for 2 people to walk side by side. Bathrooms have wet rooms and walk-in showers for full and easy level access.

Parking is provided adjacent to the property, with only a short distance on a paved path to reach the level threshold of the front entrance door.



6.0 SUMMARY

Careful consideration has been made during the design development of this scheme to provide a high quality proposal which is an improvement upon the existing dwelling, and complementary to the site and neighbouring properties.

The Reading Borough Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance have been reviewed to result in a comprehensive strategy to propose a replacement dwelling within these guidelines as a sustainable and well-designed scheme.

The owners and the project team are looking to proactively engage with the Council to ensure an open discussion with the Council throughout the process of this application.