

5 ST. STEPHEN'S CLOSE CAVERSHAM

READING, BERKSHIRE, RG4 8BX
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

CONTENTS

- 01** INTRODUCTION
- 02** EXISTING SITE
- 03** LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT
- 04** PROPOSED SCHEME
- 05** APPENDIX

BACKGROUND

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Gareth Cotter Architecture, appointed as Architects by the Applicant, to outline and justify the proposed works at 5 St Stephen's Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8BX.

The property is a residential terraced dwelling situated directly adjacent to Christchurch Meadow. The proposed works outlined in this document are submitted as a Householder Planning Application and encompass the following key architectural and remedial interventions:

- **Second-Storey Roof Infill & Extension:**
The existing roof will be extended forward to align exactly with the neighbouring roofs. This creates a continuous second storey across the terrace, forming a new habitable room and window.
- **Facade Improvement & AC Relocation:**
The AC unit is relocated and wall-mounted above ground in a louvred enclosure to improve the public-facing street scene.
- **Environmental & Ecological Mitigations:**
The inclusion of flood-resilient mounting for the AC unit and the undertaking of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) to ensure local bat populations are protected. A separate minor Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by the Architect

This document demonstrates that the proposed works are contextually appropriate, sympathetic to the existing streetscape, and fully compliant with Reading Borough Council's planning and environmental policies.



02 EXISTING SITE

SITE LOCATION

St Stephen's Close is situated in Caversham, Reading, immediately north of the River Thames. The application site is accessed via a public pedestrian path utilised by local residents for access, which is directly opposite a block of single-storey garages and a dead-end vehicular access road.

The immediate landscape context consists of a number of notable features. Christchurch Meadow borders the site to the south and east. This extensive, mature parkland is designated by Reading Borough Council as both a Local Green Space and a Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley). Due to the proximity of these protected green spaces, the local street scene is subject to strict scrutiny regarding visual clutter and disjointed massing.

Furthermore, the south side of the site falls within Flood Zone 3 (High Probability) due to its proximity to the Thames floodplain with the rest of the site being located in Flood Zone 2. Consequently, any development or ground-level works within the site boundary must incorporate robust resilience measures against potential floodwater to prevent equipment damage and ensure no net loss of flood storage capacity.



SURROUNDING VIEWS

The existing building at No. 5 is a mid-terrace property constructed in a traditional red/brown multi-stock brick, featuring dark-framed casement windows and a white, mono-pitched front porch canopy.

The architectural characteristics of this specific terrace block is its stepped and staggered roofline. The photographs clearly illustrate that while neighbouring properties (such as Nos. 4 and 6) feature an extended, continuous second-storey roof massing, No. 5 currently has a stepped-back profile. This creates a highly visible, disjointed architectural “gap” in the terrace’s second-storey roofline. The internal space behind this stepped-back profile is currently a restricted-height loft store.



01 View of front facade from the pedestrian path



02 Rear south facing view of the property



03 View from the adjacent residential garages



04 View of property from Christchurch Meadow

03

PLANNING CONTEXT

LOCAL PLANNING

The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to accord with the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Policy H9: Householder Extensions

Extensions should respect the scale, height, and massing of the host dwelling and the street scene.

The proposed second-storey extension is designed strictly as an infill. By extending the roof to align with neighbouring roofs, the proposal restores architectural symmetry and a continuous roofline to the terrace block

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Development must maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

The addition of the second-storey window matches the rhythm/style of the neighbouring properties on the Proposed North East Elevation. Relocating the AC unit to be wall-mounted above ground in a louvred enclosure provides additional visual improvements

Policy EN18: Flooding and SuDS & Policy EN36: Biodiversity

Addressed specifically in Section 04 below regarding flood mitigation and ecological surveys along with the separate Minor Flood Risk Assessment report

- Local Green/Public Open Space Policy EN7
- Major Landscape Feature EN13
- Reading Central Area Policy CR1-10



04 PROPOSED SCHEME

SECOND STOREY ROOF EXTENSION

The primary architectural intervention of this proposal is the forward extension of the second floor to maximize the usability of the dwelling.

01. Massing & Scale

The roof is extended forward to align exactly with the neighbouring roofs. This effectively fills the existing visual “gap” in the terrace, creating a cohesive, continuous second-storey volume across the streetscape.

02. Use

The previously restricted-height ‘Loft Store’ is converted and extended into a highly functional “New Office/Guestroom”, optimising the internal layout without expanding the ground-floor footprint.

03. Access

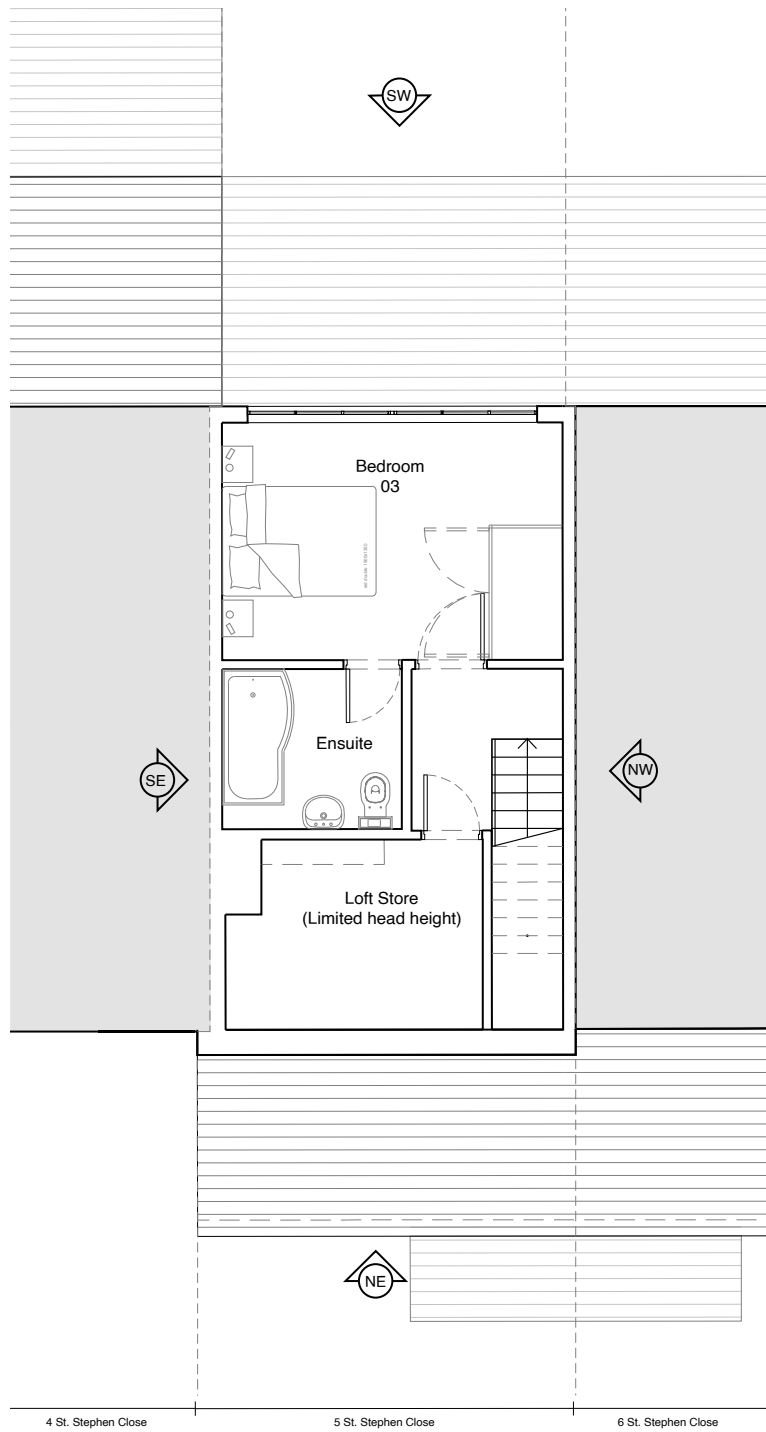
The existing internal access to the second floor is fully retained. This ensures the newly extended space integrates seamlessly with the rest of the dwelling, avoiding the need for additional staircases or disruptive structural reconfigurations to the lower floors.

04. Daylight & Sunlight

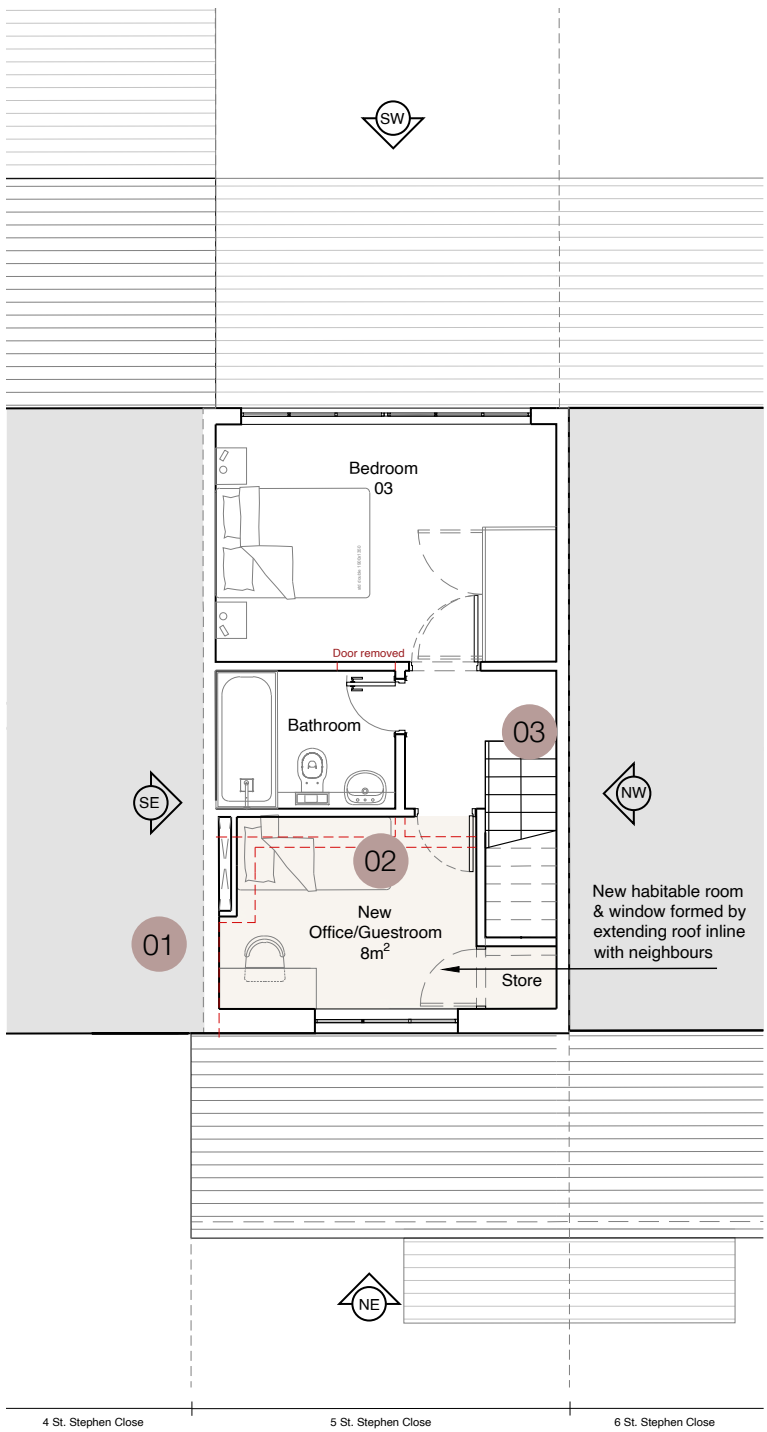
As the proposal aligns with the established roofline of adjoining properties, it introduces no new or atypical massing.

Given the existing terrace context, there will be no material loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties, and the impact is considered negligible.

Existing Second Floor



Proposed Second Floor



ELEVATION ALTERATIONS

The proposed alterations to the elevations seek to harmonise the property with its neighbours while vastly improving the public-facing facade.

01. Fenestration

A single new window is introduced on the Proposed North East Elevation at the second-floor level. This window is sized and positioned to match the fenestration of the adjoining properties, maintaining the established architectural rhythm of the terrace.

02. Materials

All new external materials (roof tiles, brickwork, and window frames) will be meticulously matched to the existing property to ensure a seamless integration into the street scene.

03. AC Relocation

The existing first-floor AC unit will be relocated. It will be wall-mounted above ground level on the front elevation.

04. AC Enclosure & Landscaping

The AC unit will be entirely concealed within a bespoke louvred enclosure, mitigating both visual and acoustic impacts. Additionally, new hedging at the front boundary will soften the elevation and provide natural screening from the public pathway

Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ecology and Biodiversity

Given the alterations to the existing roof structure, the protection of local ecology is a material consideration.

A Daytime Bat Walkover and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Windrush Ecology Ltd on 25th March 2026. The survey confirms that the building has negligible suitability for roosting bats, with no bats or evidence of bats identified during the inspection. The report concludes that bats are absent from the building.

No evidence of nesting birds was recorded internally or externally, and the building is considered unsuitable for bird nesting species.

As such, the proposed development will not result in any significant ecological impacts, and no further bat surveys or licensing are required.

Notwithstanding this, works will proceed with appropriate precautionary measures, and in the unlikely event that bats are encountered, works will cease and advice will be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

The site is located within an amber/green risk area for Great Crested Newts. However, the proposed development is limited to a roof-level extension and minor above-ground works, with no material changes to the existing building footprint or surrounding garden areas.

As no ground disturbance or habitat alteration is proposed, the development will not adversely affect potential Great Crested Newt habitat. The impact is therefore considered negligible.

Contaminated Land

The Council noted that the site sits within a contaminated land zone associated with historical engineering works in the wider area. The proposed scheme consists solely of an upper-floor roof extension and a wall-hung AC unit. There are no ground excavations, trenching, or foundation works proposed. There is no risk of mobilising historical contaminants or exposing occupants to contaminated soil.

Arboricultural Impact (Tree Protection)

The Council’s validation criteria require a Tree Survey if any trees are located within 15m of the proposed development. We can confirm that the physical footprint of the proposed works (the second-floor roof extension and the wall-hung AC unit on the front elevation) is situated strictly outside the 15-metre radius of any trees and do not require additional foundations. Consequently, the proposed development does not encroach upon any Root Protection Areas (RPAs), and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) or Tree Survey is not required for the application.

CONCLUSION

Summary

The proposed works align with Reading Council's planning policies and provides a minor but complimentary addition to the existing streetscape blending in with its neighbours. The flood risk for the property remains as existing with acoustic and visual improvements made to the front facade.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered acceptable and approval is respectfully requested.

Proposed view from Wosley Road



Proposed view from Christchurch Meadows



Existing view from Wosley Road



Existing view from Christchurch Meadows

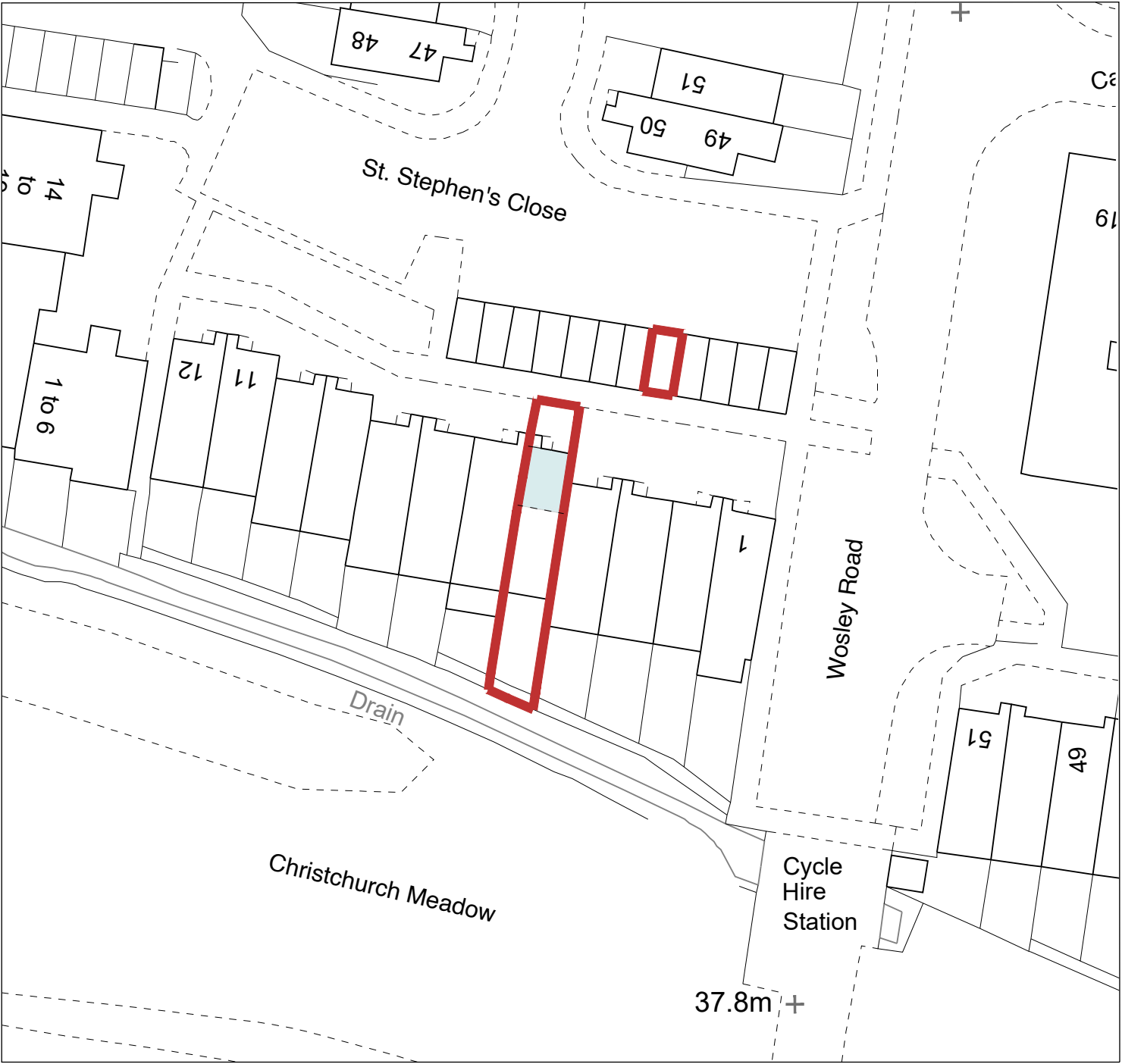
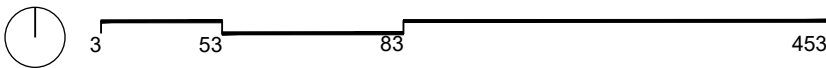


05 APPENDIX

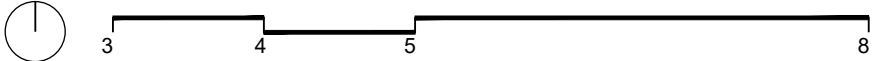


© Crown copyright 2026 Ordnance Survey 100053143

Existing Site Location Plan
1:1250



Proposed Block Plan
1:500



PLANNING

NOTES

Existing Site Boundary

SCALE
As Shown@ A3

DRAWN
GC

CHECKED
--

DATE
Feb.2026

PROJECT
5 St Stephens Close,
Reading, RG4 8BX

DRAWING
Existing Site Location Plan
Proposed Block Plan

SHEET
2602-EX-100

REVISION

DATE
01.04.26

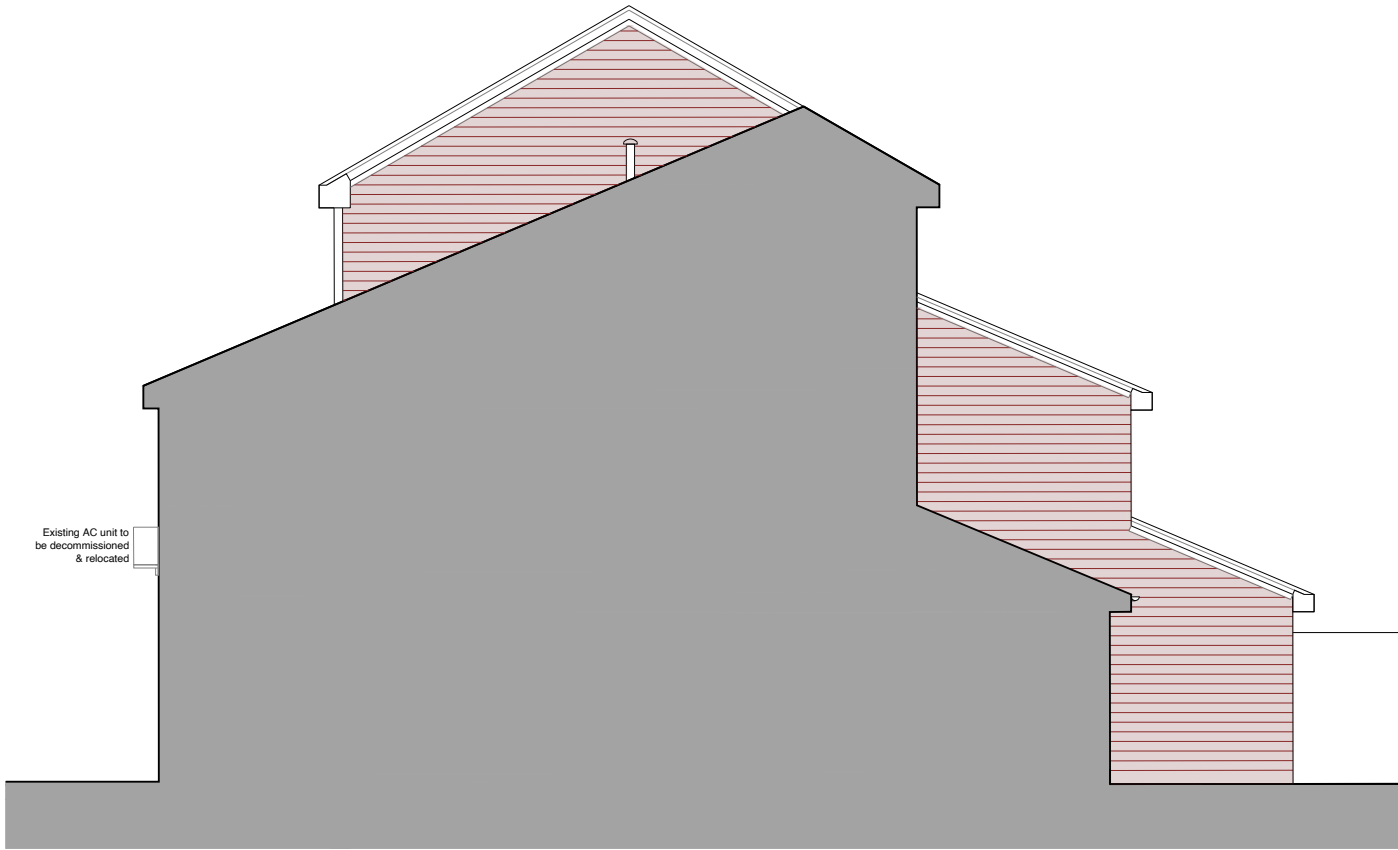
REV
--

AMENDMENTS
Issued for Planning

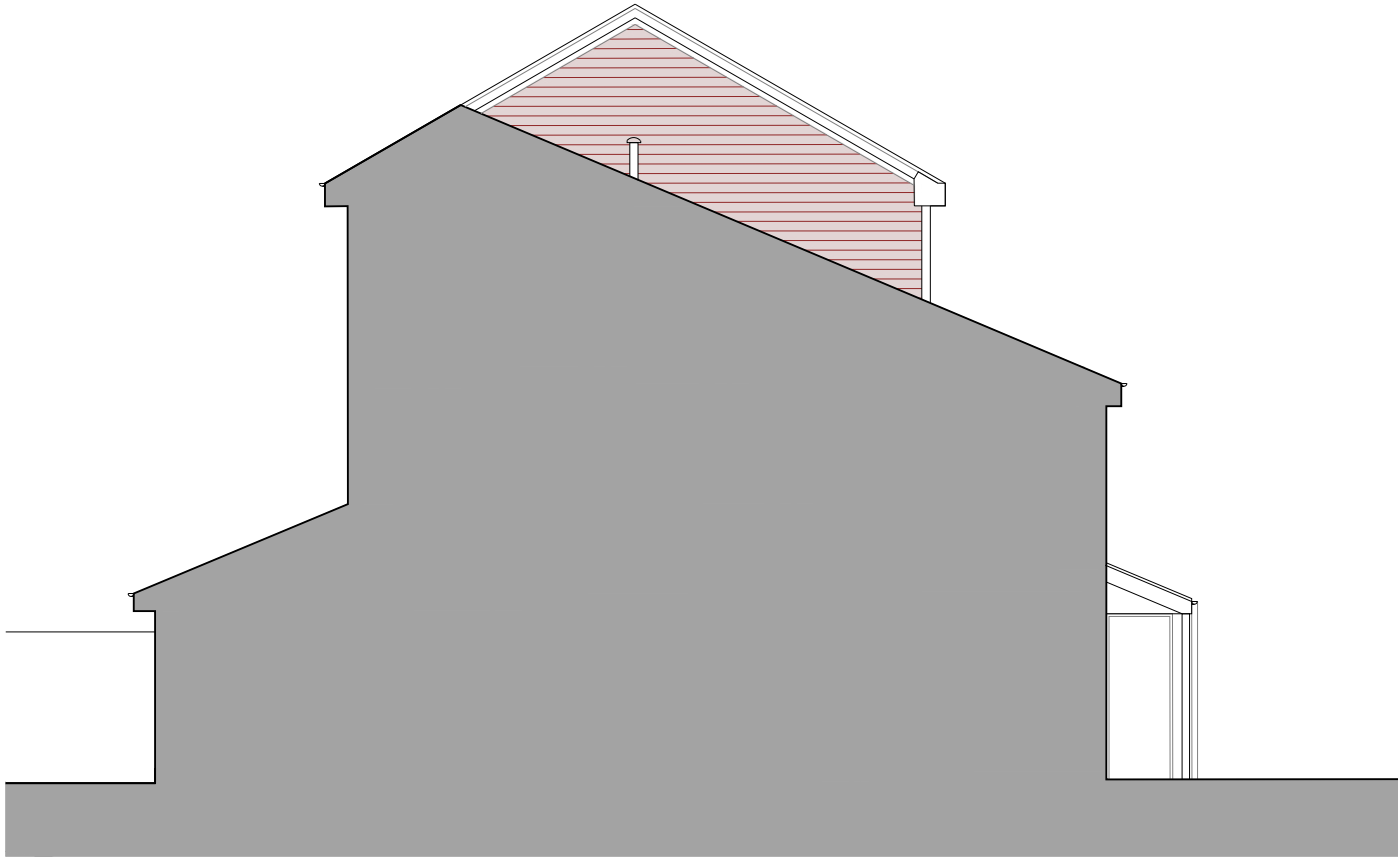
BY
GC

Copyright: All rights reserved. This drawing must not be reproduced without permission. Do not scale this drawing for construction purposes. Contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers must verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work or making any shop drawings. Dimensions are in millimeters unless otherwise stated. All fire related elements and items as set out within the Fire Engineers Fire Strategy Report, Fire Engineer & Building Control for review and sign off, prior to procurement and installation. The production of amended or updated information from the said design/information by the user is entirely the responsibility of the user and Gareth Cotton Architect's shall have no responsibility.





Existing North West Elevation



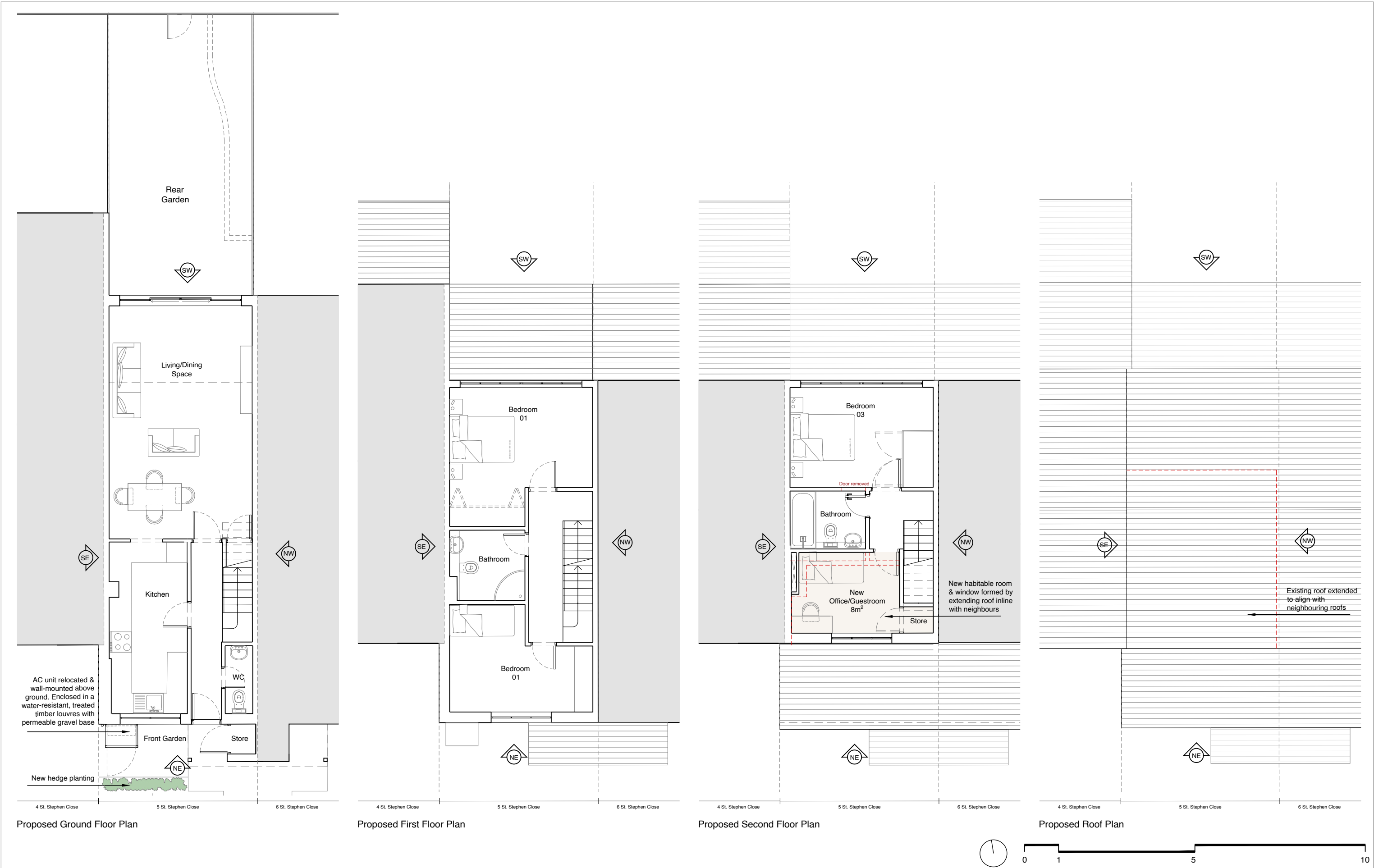
Existing South East Elevation

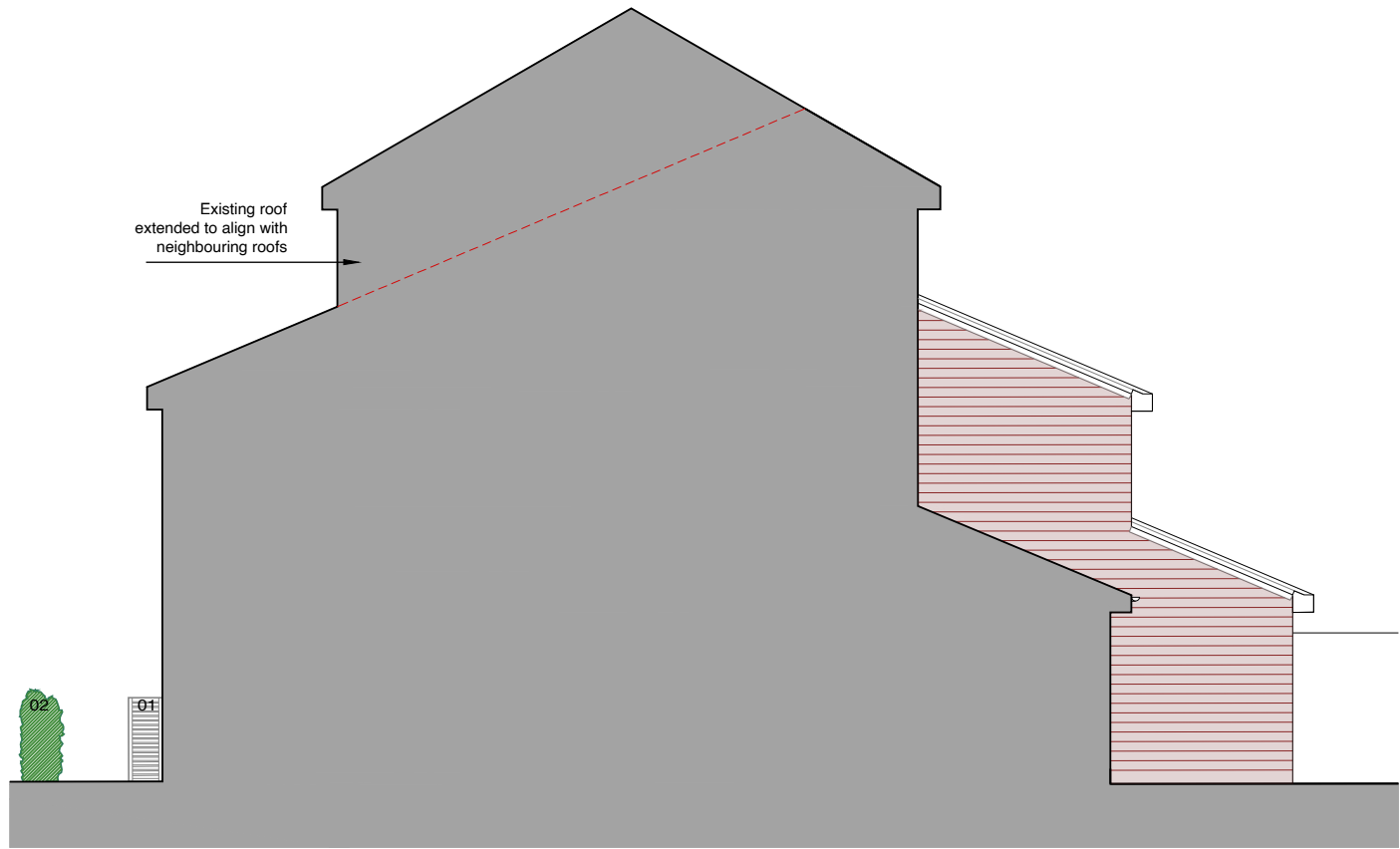


Existing North East Elevation

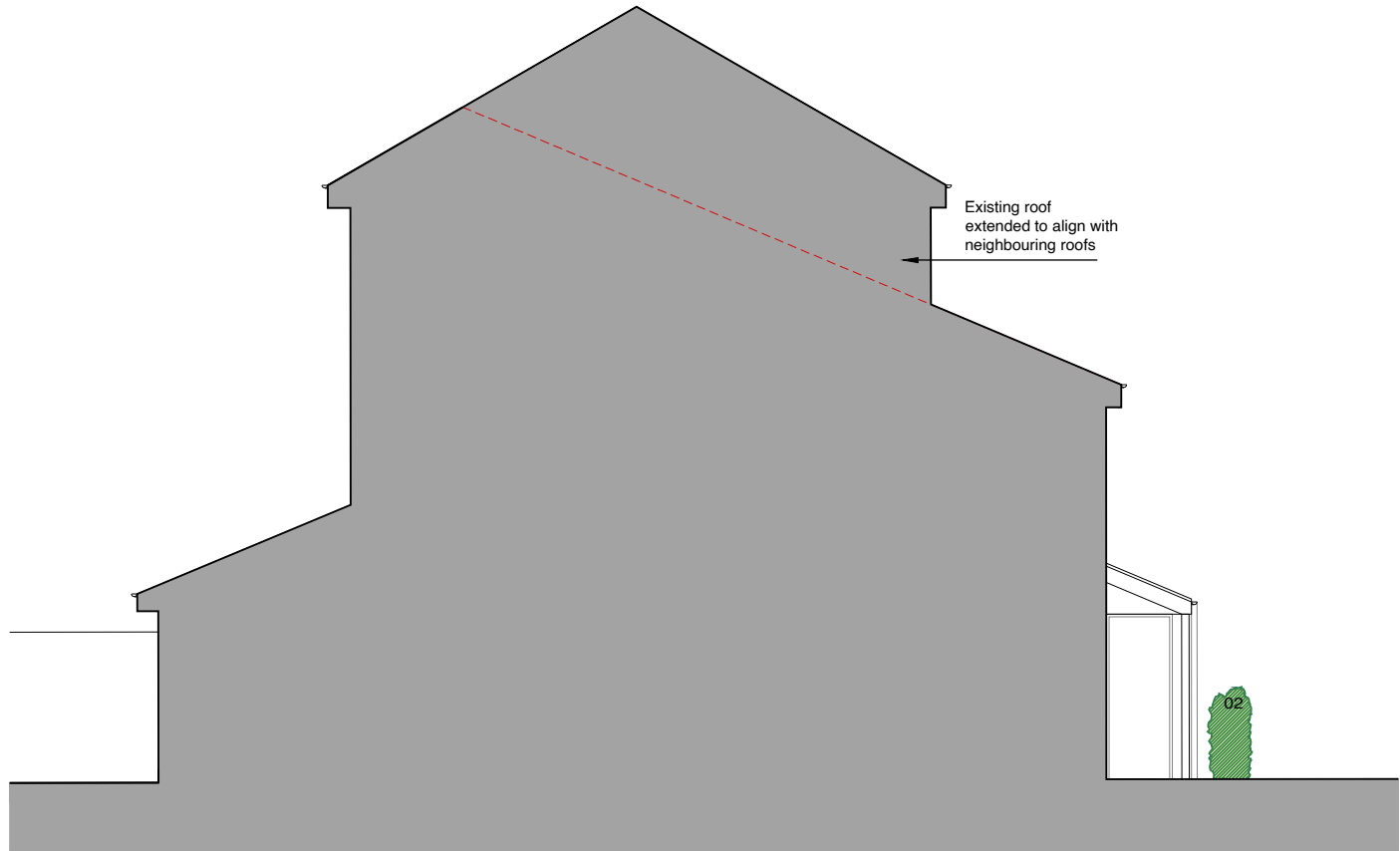


Existing South West Elevation





Proposed North West Elevation



Proposed South East Elevation



Proposed North East Elevation



Proposed South West Elevation

- Material & Landscape Key**
1. Water-resistant, treated timber louvered enclosure for AC unit. Permeable gravel to ground below
 2. New hedge planting
 3. Red roof tiles to match neighbouring buildings
 4. New double glazed UPVC window. Finish to match existing.
 5. Dark composite roof tiles to match existing. Existing roof tiles reused whenever possible
 6. Roof ridge vents to match neighbouring buildings
 7. New rainwater goods, fascia & soffit to match existing

