

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PARK CRESCENT

A DESIGN STORY BY:
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ARCHITECTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for a single-storey rear extension and garage conversion at 21 Park Crescent, Reading, RG30 2NL. The proposal seeks to enhance the existing family home by creating additional flexible living accommodation, converting the existing garage into a home gym, and forming a landscaped courtyard that strengthens the connection between the dwelling and its garden setting.

The statement sets out the design rationale underpinning the proposal, explaining how the scheme responds to its context and how it aligns with the objectives of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It demonstrates how issues of scale, form, materiality, landscape integration, sustainability, and residential amenity have been carefully addressed to ensure the development is both sensitive to its surroundings and beneficial to its occupants.

The document is structured to provide a clear account of the site and its context, the design process and response, the landscape strategy, parking provision, and the anticipated impact on neighbouring properties. It concludes with a summary of compliance with local and national planning policy, showing that the scheme is a well-considered, high-quality addition to the property that enhances its long-term functionality, sustainability, and architectural value. This DAS is compliant with Development Management Procedure (England) 2015, and the Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (PPG, Paragraph 031, reference ID 14-031-20140306). The DAS illustrates the design principles and concepts that underpin the application proposal and address the requirements set out in the PPG website 'Making an Application'. Specifically, responding to the PPG

requirements 'What should be included in a DAS', A Design and Access Statement must:

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account. A development's context refers to the particular characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to

the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly. Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant's approach to access and

how relevant Local Plan policies have been taken into account. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to

the proposed development have been addressed.

This document is therefore structured in the following way in order to meet the requirements set out above:

Section 1.0 is a general description of the project.

In **Section 2.0**, we have set out our understanding of the context, assessing the site's immediate and wider context in terms of physical characteristics.

Section 3.0 outlines the relevant planning policy context.

Outlined in **Section 4.0**, is the design evolution, which sets out the design constraints and opportunities, the conceptual approach and explores a number of design options.

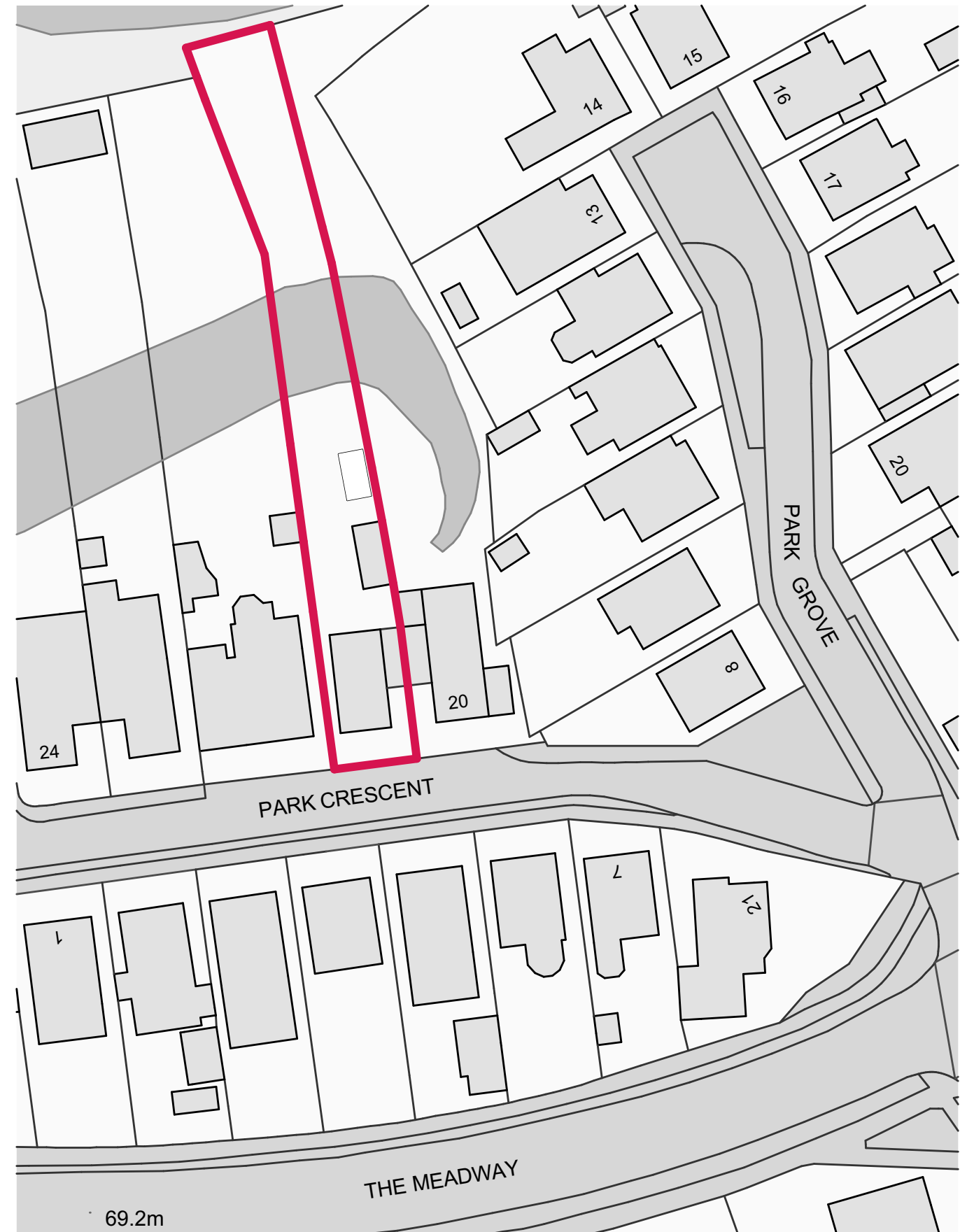
Section 5.0 details the design response, which is the subject of this detailed planning application. Here we describe the scheme under the Layout, Use, Amount, Scale, and Appearance sub-headings suggested in DCGL Circular and sets out some of the technical strategies of specific aspects of the design.

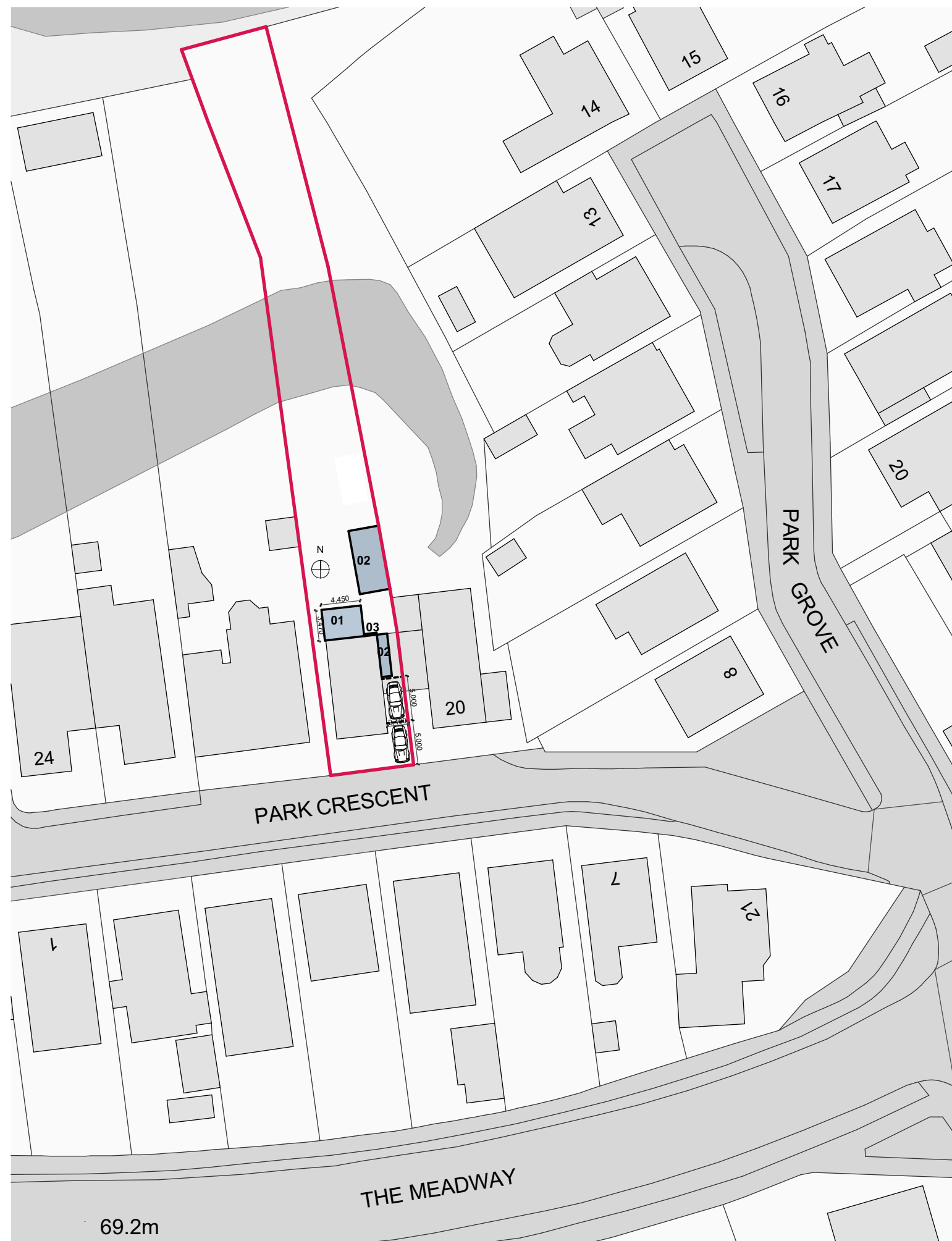
Landscaping is outlined in **Section 6.0**

Section 7.0 sets out the accessibility aspects of the design. A suite of application documents support the application and this document should be read in conjunction with these reports.



2. CONTEXT





SITE PLAN

- 01. Single story extension
- 02. Garage conversion
- 03. Bay window

SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

21 Park Crescent is a detached dwelling within a mature suburban neighbourhood in west Reading, characterised by pitched-roof housing set back from the road with generous private gardens. The area is residential in nature, with a mix of inter-war and later housing stock, many of which have undergone extensions and alterations.

The site benefits from a private driveway, front garden, and enclosed rear garden, backed by trees and adjoining woodland which provide a green backdrop and enhance local character. The property is sustainably located with convenient access to local schools, services, and public transport, in accordance with the sustainable settlement pattern promoted in the Reading Borough Local Plan.



3. PLANNING CONTEXT



PLANNING POLICY

The planning policy context in which the Proposed Development will be examined is as follows (the Development Plan):

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

PRBC Local Development Framework
Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)
CS7 Design and the Public Realm
CS24 Car/Cycle Parking

ENV24

DESIGN GUIDE TO HOUSE EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING DOCUMENT Adopted, March 2021

CC3: Adaption to Climate Change

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25

As well as the above, the following documents and the policies and guidance contained within these will also be material considerations:

The National Planning Policy Context (2019)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG online 2019)

Sustainable Design and Construction 2011 SPD

4.DESIGN PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The design process began with a comprehensive site analysis, assessing orientation, vegetation, neighbouring properties, and prevailing wind patterns. This initial study identified both constraints—such as overshadowing from adjacent dwellings—and opportunities, including mature boundary planting and woodland views to the rear. The analysis confirmed that a courtyard-based arrangement could harness natural light, create privacy, and connect indoor living with outdoor amenity.

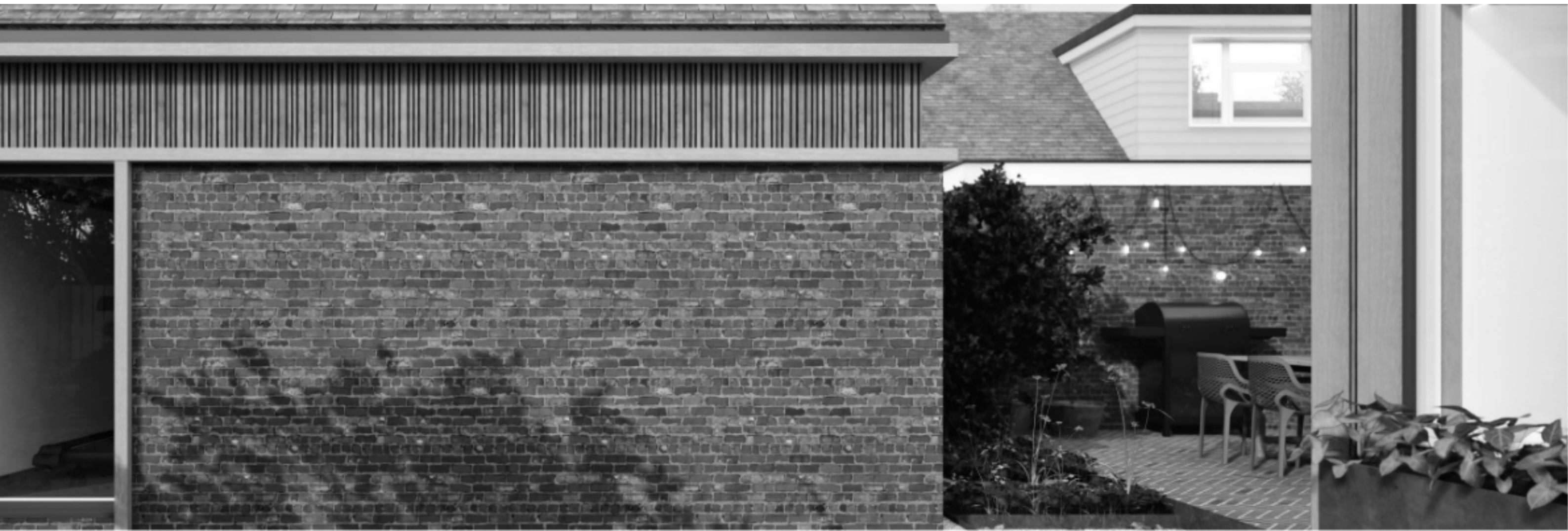
Following this, three sketch design options were prepared to test alternative layouts and relationships between the extension, garage conversion, and garden. Each option explored varying levels of enclosure, transparency, and positioning of the new volumes in relation to the courtyard. This iterative stage allowed the design team and client to evaluate functionality, circulation, and visual character.

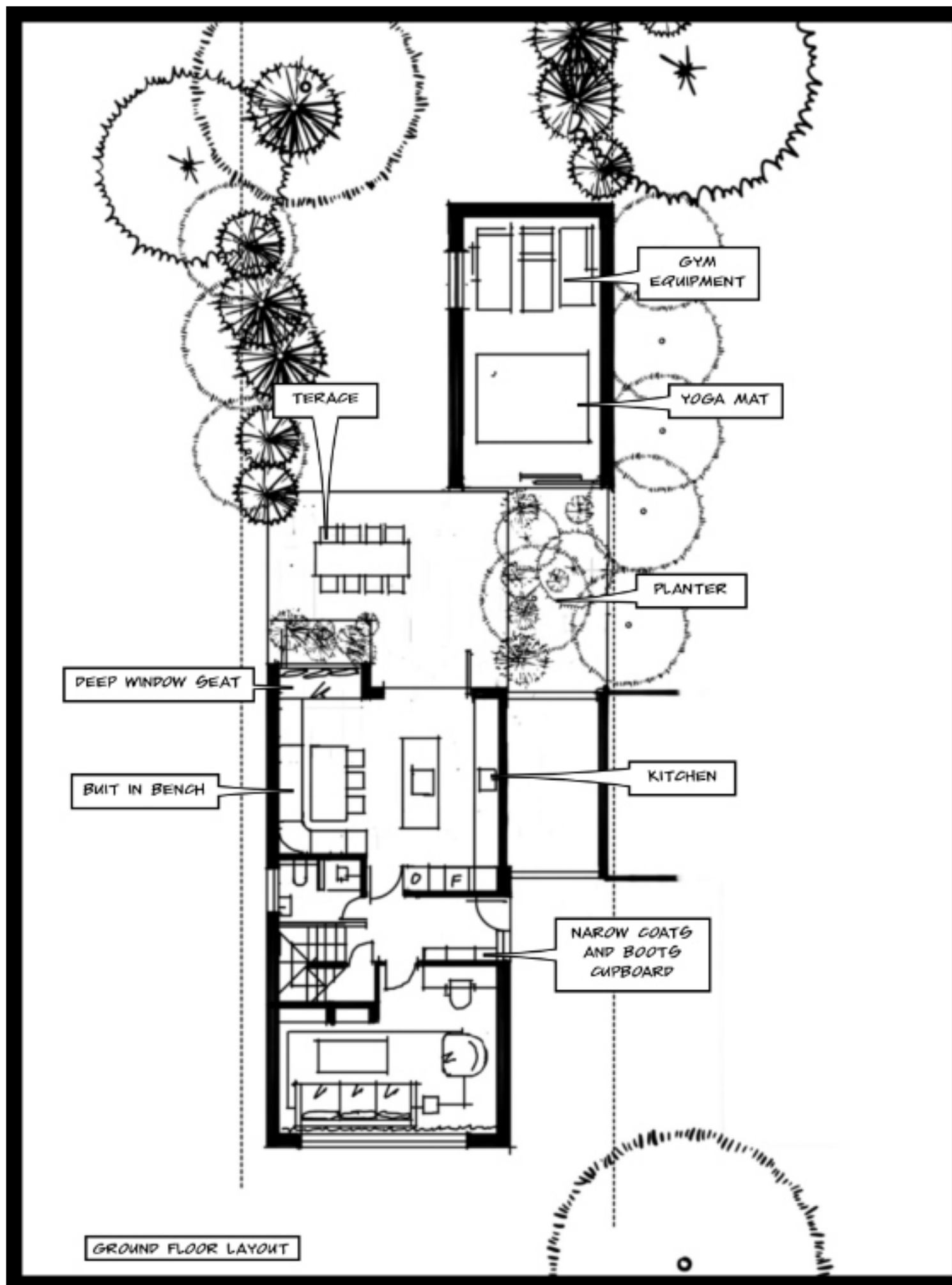
Through critical review, the preferred option emerged as the most balanced solution: a single-storey rear extension with a defined courtyard and re-purposed garage, integrating landscape features such as corten planters and seating. This option successfully blended architectural expression with spatial quality, delivering a scheme that is both contemporary and contextually sensitive while meeting the practical needs of the household.

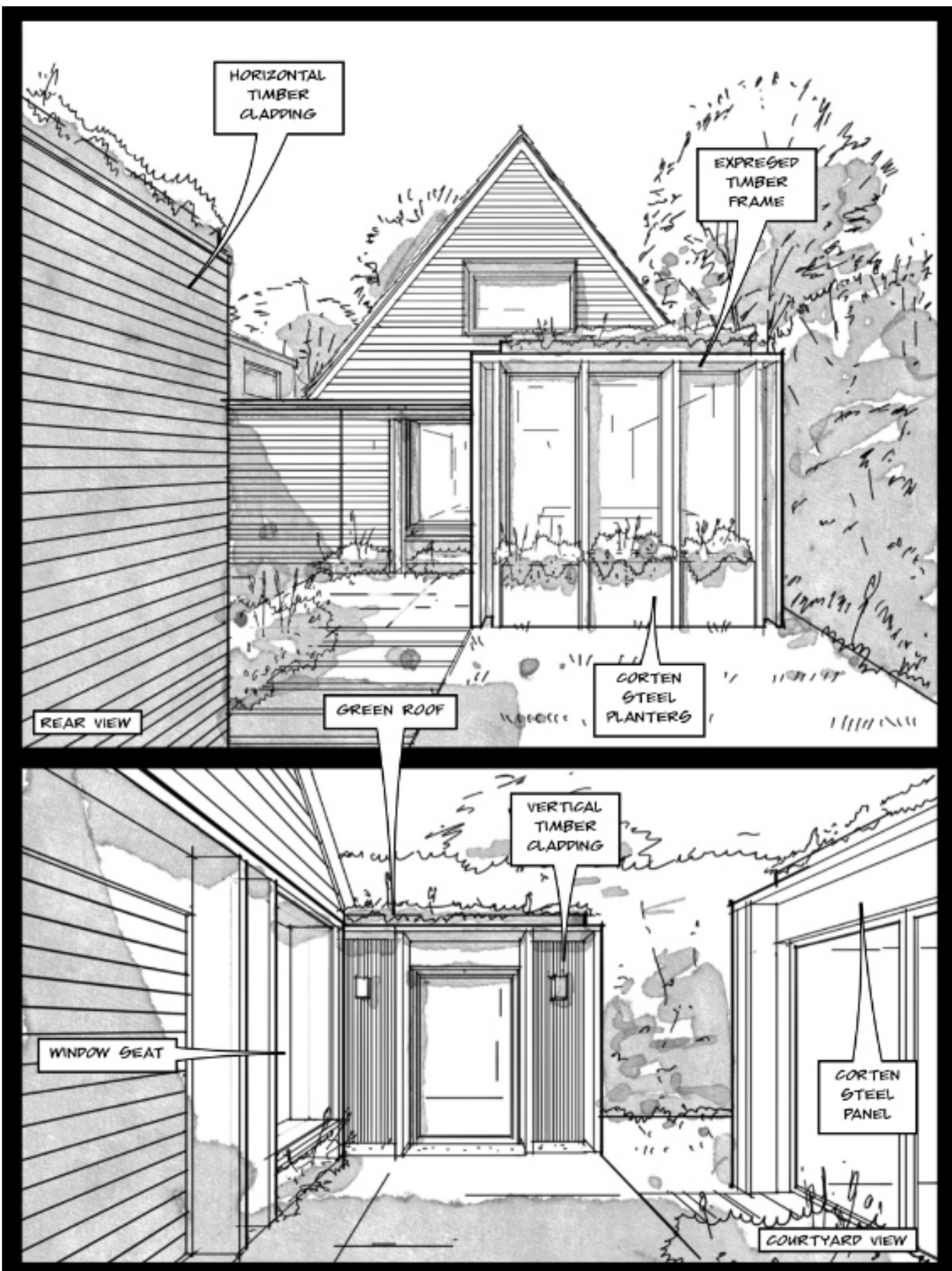
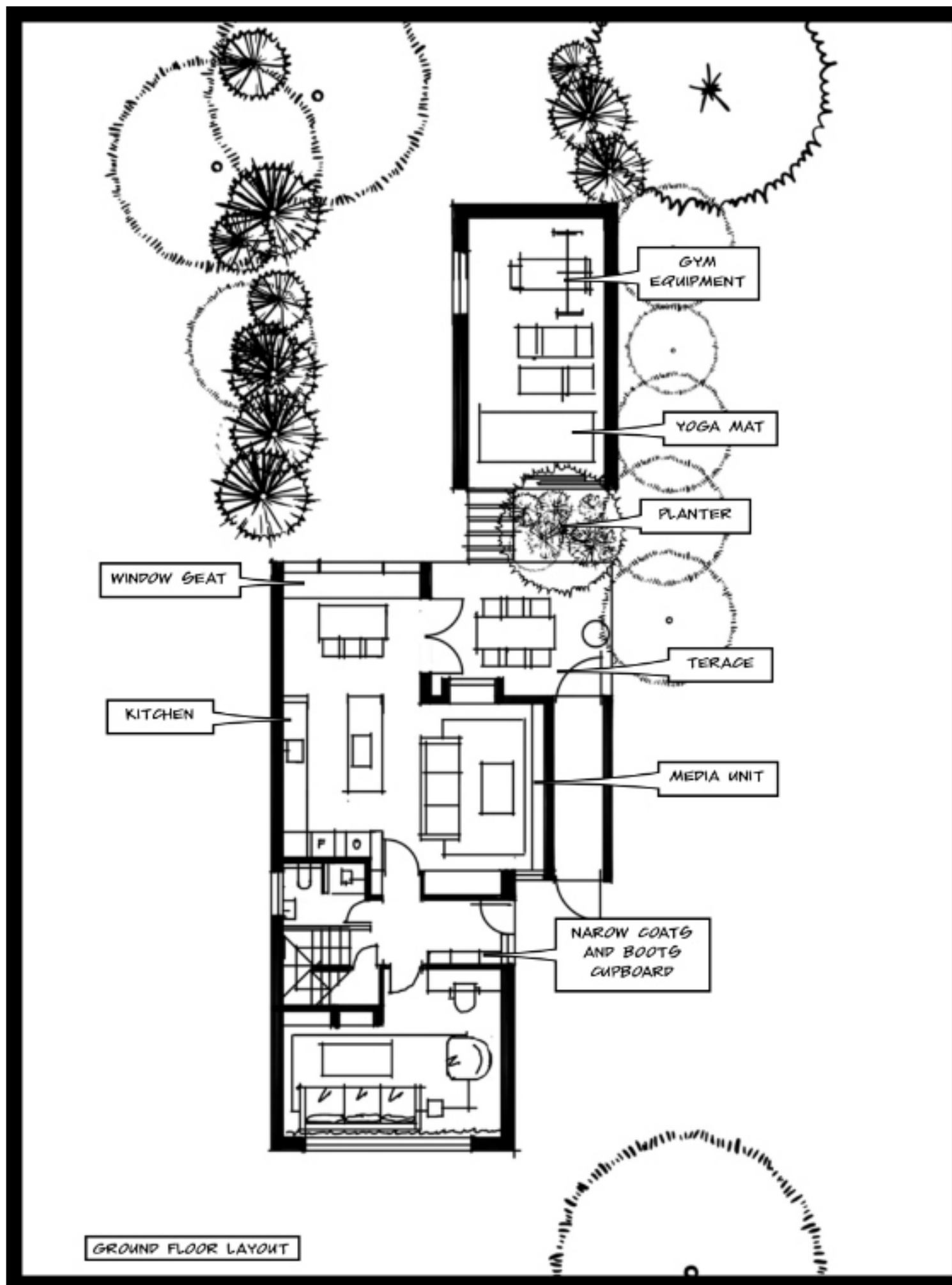


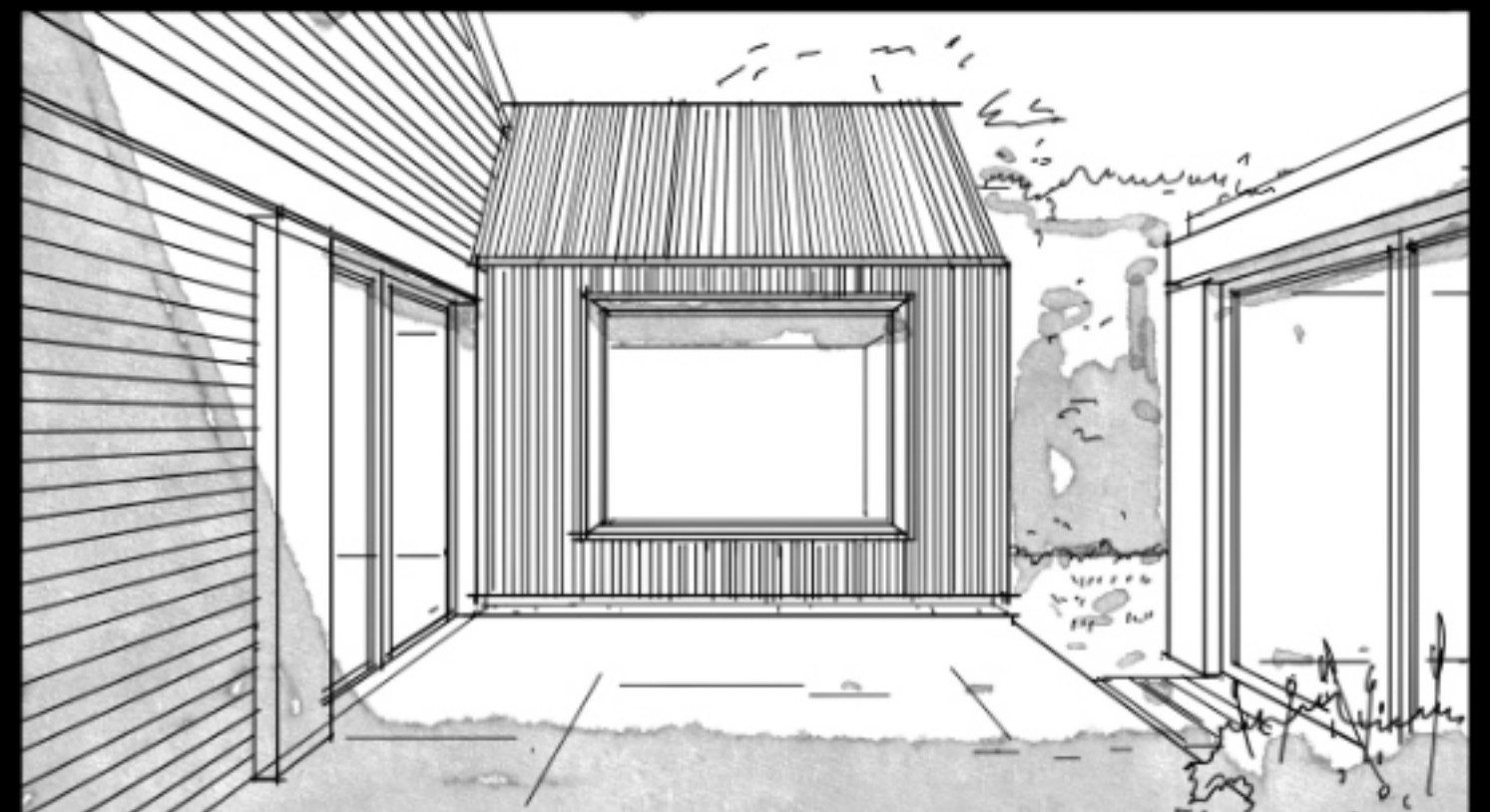
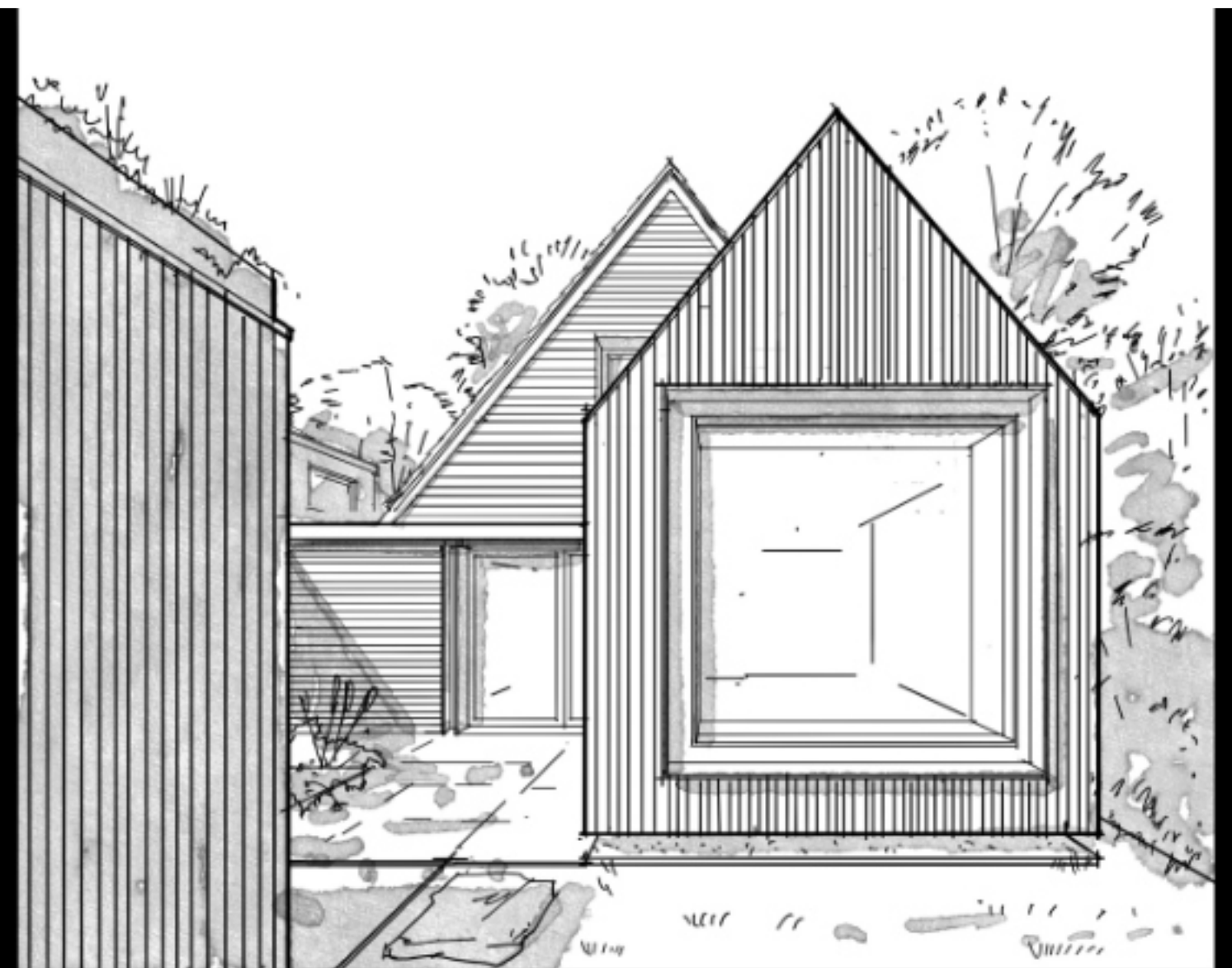
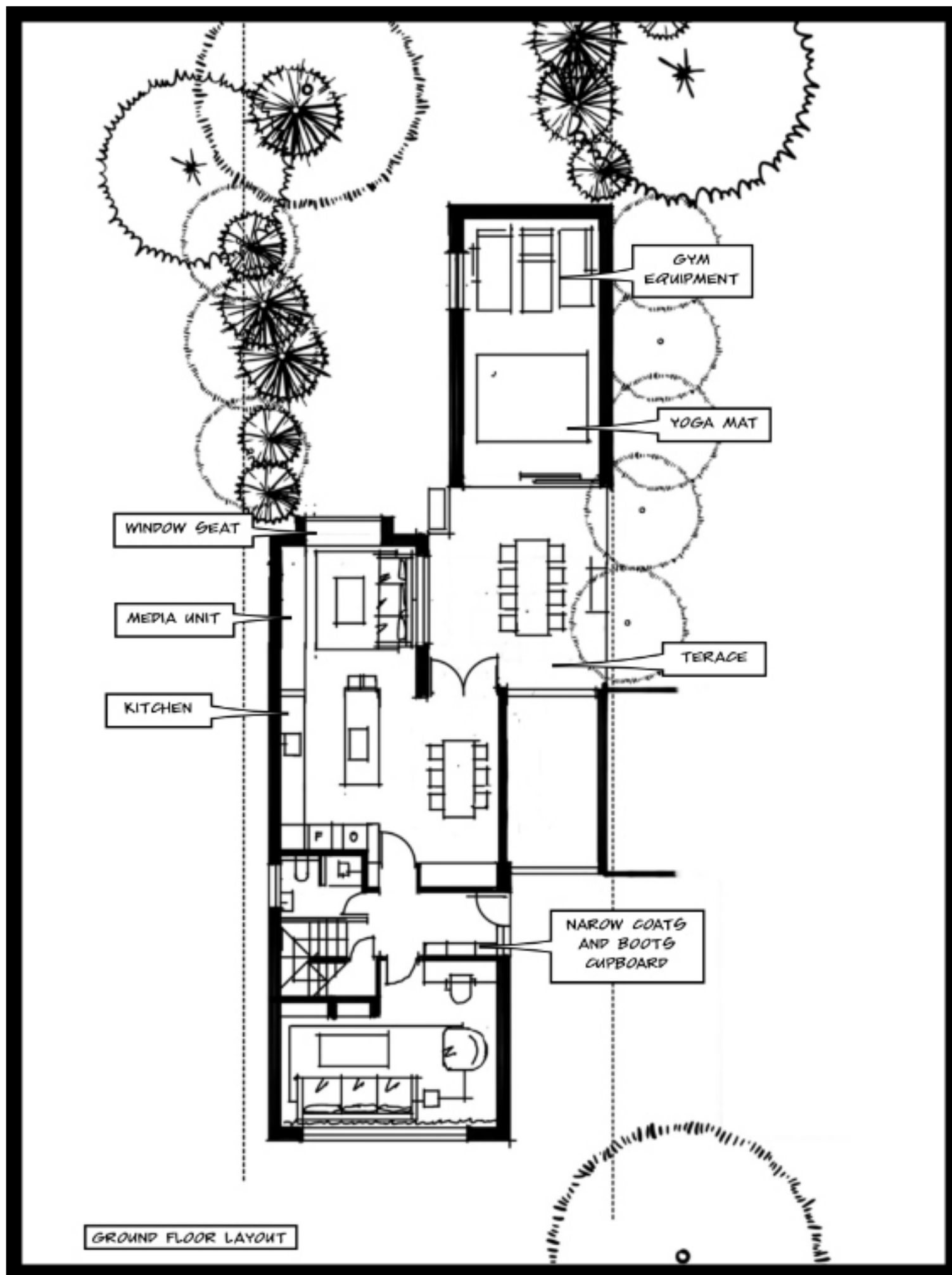
DESIGN EVOLUTION

INITIAL SKETCH DESIGN OPTIONS









5. DESIGN RESPONSE

CONCEPT

SITE CONTEXT AND DESIGN RATIONALE:

The proposal comprises a single-storey rear extension and a conversion of the existing garage into a home gym. Together, these interventions create a defined courtyard at the heart of the home, designed for year-round outdoor living and family activity.

The rationale is to enhance the livability and sustainability of the dwelling by:

- Expanding the ground floor to accommodate flexible, light-filled family spaces.
- Re purposing redundant garage space into a home gym to support health and well being.
- Strengthening the relationship between house and garden through a courtyard typology that provides shelter, privacy, and outdoor amenity.

This approach aligns with Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), requiring new development to demonstrate high design quality, a sense of place, and a positive contribution to local character.

ARCHITECTURAL AND SPATIAL QUALITIES:

The architectural language is defined by timber vertical cladding set within rhythmic framing, balanced by corten steel planters and extensive glazing. This creates a warm, contemporary identity that remains sensitive to its suburban setting.

Spatial qualities include:

- Glazed rear façade maximising daylight and framing views of woodland.
- Window seats offering moments of pause and enhancing spatial richness.
- Courtyard living as an organising device, blending indoor and outdoor rooms.



This reflects the principles of Policy CC8 (Responding to Context), ensuring design responds positively to its immediate environment and reinforces local distinctiveness.

SCALE, MASSING AND RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING DWELLING:

The extension is single-storey in height, ensuring it remains subservient to the host dwelling and consistent with the rhythm of rear garden developments in the area.

The massing is deliberately restrained, using a linear form with flat roof and timber screening that harmonises with the existing brickwork and pitched roof. This is in accordance with Policy H9 (Residential Extensions and Alterations), which requires that extensions be of appropriate scale, not overbearing, and visually integrated with the host property.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY:

A key consideration in the design process has been the effect of the proposals on the amenity of neighbouring residents. The existing garage, currently underused, will be converted into a home gym, with its roof replaced and the eaves line raised modestly by approximately 900mm. This adjustment is necessary to achieve suitable internal height for the new use and to integrate the garage visually with the adjoining extension.

Despite this change, the scale and siting of the garage remain modest and the overall building envelope continues to sit comfortably within the side boundary. The structure is positioned well away from neighbouring habitable room windows and primary garden areas. As such, the increase in height will not result in loss of daylight, overshadowing, or an overbearing impact on adjacent properties.

The rear extension itself is single-storey in height and projects modestly into the rear garden. Its design ensures that it is subordinate to the host dwelling and does not extend beyond typical rear building lines found in the locality. Careful orientation and glazing placement mean that there will be no issues of overlooking or loss of privacy.

Taken together, the scale, position, and sensitive massing of the proposed development ensure that the scheme will not cause adverse harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties, fully in line with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy CC8 (Responding to Context) and Policy H9 (Residential Extensions and Alterations), as well as the guidance set out in the NPPF on safeguarding residential amenity.

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION

The scheme embeds landscape as an active design component:

- Courtyard planting in corten planters softens architectural edges.
- Herringbone brick paving extends from interior to garden, visually unifying the spaces.
- Retention of boundary vegetation maintains green screening and biodiversity.

This approach reflects Policy EN11 (Waterspaces and Natural Environment), which seeks to protect and enhance landscape and biodiversity.

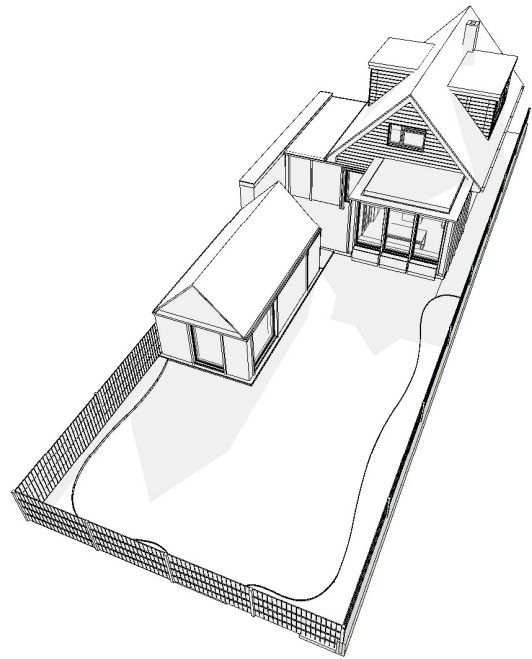
SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The proposal incorporates sustainable design measures:

- Maximised natural daylight through expansive glazing, reducing reliance on artificial lighting.
- Natural ventilation via sliding doors and openable windows.
- Timber cladding from renewable sources and corten steel with long life cycle performance, reducing maintenance and embodied carbon.
- Repurposing the garage reduces the need for new building footprint, making efficient use of existing fabric.

This supports Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and Policy CC10 (Sustainable Design and Construction), which promote energy efficiency, sustainable materials, and resource-conscious construction.

FRAMING NATURE: A CONTEMPORARY COURTYARD EXTENSION







6. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

STRATEGY:

The landscape strategy for the proposal is conceived as an extension of the architecture, dissolving the boundary between inside and outside to create a seamless flow of space and atmosphere. The courtyard becomes the central organising feature, framed by the new extension and the converted garage, where hard and soft surfaces interlock to define an outdoor room that feels at once intimate and generous.

The courtyard flooring is composed of a herringbone brick surface, a robust and tactile material that reinforces continuity with the architectural palette. The reddish tones of the brick harmonise with the existing house and the brickwork of the garage, grounding the design in its suburban context while lending warmth and texture underfoot. This surface continues into the circulation routes, connecting the dining terrace, the rear garden, and the thresholds of the internal spaces.

Planting is carefully curated to soften and animate the courtyard. Corten steel planters run along the glazed façade of the extension, filled with climbing and trailing plants that weave greenery into the structure itself, reinforcing the sense of enclosure and intimacy. These planters mark the threshold between inside and outside and give the architecture a rooted quality, allowing planting to form part of the visual composition. Around the perimeter, gravel beds with scattered planting and stepping stones add texture and permeability, while boundary planting and retained mature vegetation provide enclosure, biodiversity, and seasonal variation.

The terrace is deliberately designed for outdoor dining and social life, with furniture set within the shelter of the courtyard and softened by surrounding greenery. Views outward are framed by planting and trees, ensuring the space feels private and calm despite its openness. As a whole, the landscape works to enhance the usability of the home throughout the year, offering a variety of settings for reflection, gathering, and everyday living, in a way that is deeply integrated with the architectural design.



7.ACCESSIBILITY



INTRODUCTION

Attached to this DAS are the additional documents and plans. This DAS to be red in conjunction with all drawings and the prepared documents.

PARKING

The garage conversion does not reduce functional parking provision. The property retains a generous driveway, sufficient to accommodate vehicles in accordance with Reading Borough Council's standards. No additional bedrooms are proposed, ensuring there is no uplift in parking demand.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal at 21 Park Crescent represents a carefully considered and modest extension to the existing dwelling, one that enhances the home's functional performance while elevating its architectural quality. By converting the underutilised garage into a home gym and introducing a single-storey rear extension, the scheme achieves a balance between meeting the evolving needs of the household and respecting the character of the surrounding area. The resulting design is contemporary in its expression yet sensitive to context, with scale and massing deliberately restrained to ensure the new elements remain subservient to the main dwelling.

The scheme has been developed with a clear understanding of its context, drawing from site analysis and a robust design process that explored multiple alternatives before selecting the solution that best integrates with both the dwelling and the garden. The courtyard concept is central to this, creating a sheltered outdoor room that supports family life and strengthens the connection between home and landscape. The use of high-quality materials such as vertical timber cladding, corten planters, and herringbone brick surfaces reinforces the visual identity of the proposal, bringing warmth, depth, and longevity to the design.

Careful attention has been given to the relationship with neighbouring properties. The modest scale of the extension and the sensitive treatment of the converted garage ensure that there is no adverse impact in terms of privacy, daylight, or overbearing presence. The raised eaves to the garage are a proportionate adjustment that does not alter this relationship and instead improves the architectural coherence of the dwelling. The amenity of neighbouring residents remains fully safeguarded in line with local planning policies.

The landscape strategy has been developed as an integral part of the proposal, embedding greenery and natural textures into the architectural composition. The courtyard, planting, and permeable materials contribute positively to biodiversity, microclimate, and visual amenity. These interventions not only support the wellbeing of the occupants but also reinforce the ecological and environmental resilience of the property.

Taken together, the scheme demonstrates compliance with the Reading Borough Local Plan, particularly Policies CC7, CC8, H9, EN11, and CC10, as well as the design principles of the National Planning Policy Framework. It offers a contemporary and sustainable enhancement to the property that respects local character, supports healthy patterns of living, and enriches both the dwelling and its immediate environment. In this way, the proposal delivers lasting architectural and social value, providing a home that is better connected to its landscape and more responsive to the needs of its occupants, while contributing positively to the quality and character of the area.