



Louma Cottage

Hollybush Ride, Finchampstead

Full Planning Application

October 2024

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1.0 Introduction

Site Location: Louma Cottage,
Brooklands, Hollybush Ride,
Finchampstead, RG40 3QR

Site Area: 0.6 acres

Applicant: Private

Architect: Morse Webb Architects

This Design and Access Statement has been produced by Morse Webb Architects to support a Full Planning Application for the demolition of the existing self-contained dwelling ‘Louma Cottage’ and construction of a Self-Build replacement 3-bedroom dwelling in a ‘Woodland Cottage’ style. This report should be read together with the submitted drawings and specialist report(s) which are attached as part of the application.

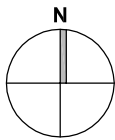
The application site comprises a detached dwelling located behind Brooklands within a woodland setting. Previously, this property served as a residential annexe to Brooklands; however, in 2024, it was granted approval for a change of use to a self-contained dwelling (Application No: 231383).

The existing buildings are not listed, nor does the site lie within the curtilage of a listed building or conservation area. The flood map for planning confirms the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 ‘Low Probability’ - See Flood Risk Summary report for further details.

1.1 Purpose

This Full Planning Design Statement has been prepared to demonstrate the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development application and how issues relating to access to the proposal have been dealt with.

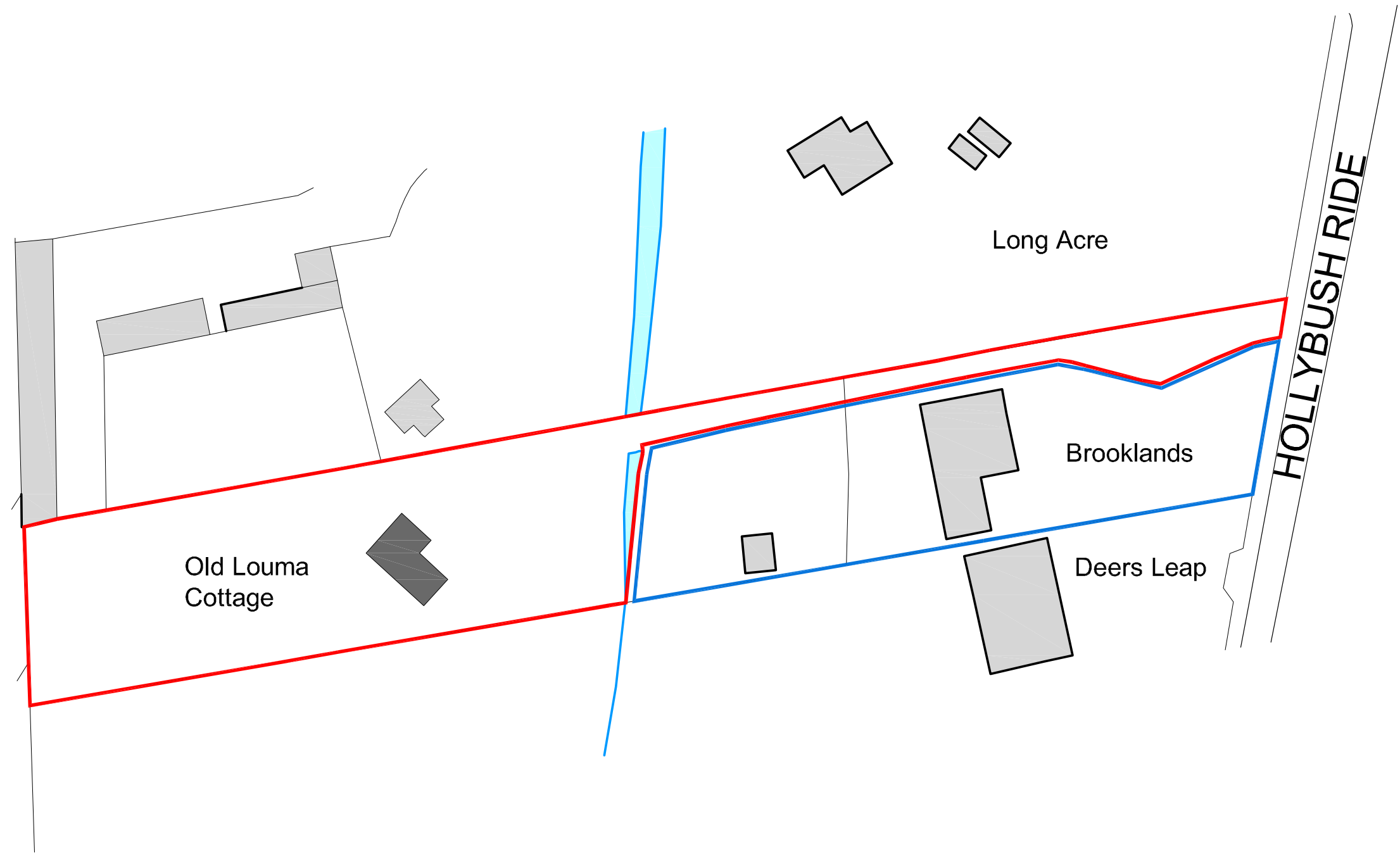
The Full Planning Design Statement also describes the context of the site and how the design responds to and evolves from an understanding of its setting, scale, massing, relationship to surrounding development, access, and movement. The submission seeks Full Planning Consent for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a replacement dwelling, with associated gardens and an access road (using the existing highway access shared with Brooklands).



RED LINE INDICATES SITE BOUNDARY

1001- LOUMA COTTAGE, FINCHAMPSTEAD - DESIGN STATEMENT





1.2 Site Location

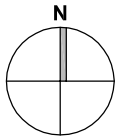
Hollybush Ride is one of the area's premier locations, a peaceful road that abuts National Trust land with lakeside pathways leading to a network of attractive walks. Despite its tranquil setting, the area is conveniently located, with the M3 and M4 motorways easily accessible. It sits between the major towns of Reading (11 miles north), Wokingham (6 miles northeast), and Bracknell (8 miles east), alongside the village of Crowthorne (3 miles east) and the small village of Finchampstead (1.5 miles southwest). It is an affluent area, with the village ranking as Britain's 31st wealthiest. It has a high standard of living and is rated as one of the most desirable places to live in the United Kingdom.

The property is positioned within a tree preservation order woodland which covers a wide area at the rear of properties on Hollybush Ride, Heath Ride and Nine Mile Ride. There are other examples of development at the rear of properties within this area including the adjacent dwelling on the north, Long Acre. Due to its position within the woodland the application site is largely secluded from view when assessing aerial photos and it is also not visible from the highway.

Wokingham station offers direct services to London Waterloo, Gatwick Airport, and Reading, the third-largest interchange hub outside of London. Everyday shopping facilities are well-served in Crowthorne and Wokingham, with more comprehensive facilities available in Guildford and Reading. The area is also very well served for both state and private schools, including the highly sought after Wellington College within walking distance, Bearwood College, Eagle House School and Holme Grange. Leisure facilities are abundant, with outstanding golf courses, spas, and health clubs nearby.

The site is in a suburban area, part of an existing residential settlement in the defined settlement of Finchampstead. Due to the site's central location, there are numerous nurseries, junior, primary, and secondary schools in close proximity. 1.5 miles west of the site lies California Country Park, a public park managed by Wokingham Borough Council. The park covers over 150 acres, consisting of lowland heath and bog-land, including a six-acre lake and Longmoor Bog, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve.

Finchampstead North population – 5,468 (2021 Census)



2.0 Existing Site

As previously mentioned, there is one existing building on the site: a self-contained detached dwelling, Louma Cottage, located to the rear of Brooklands on Hollybush Ride, Finchampstead. Hollybush Ride is a residential road off Lower Wokingham Road, lined with various detached properties on generous plots, surrounded by abundant trees and woodland.

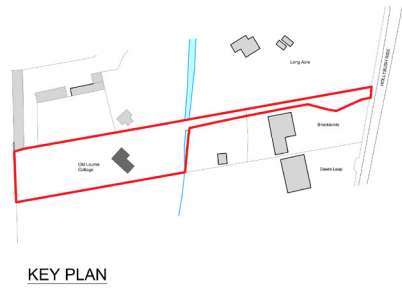
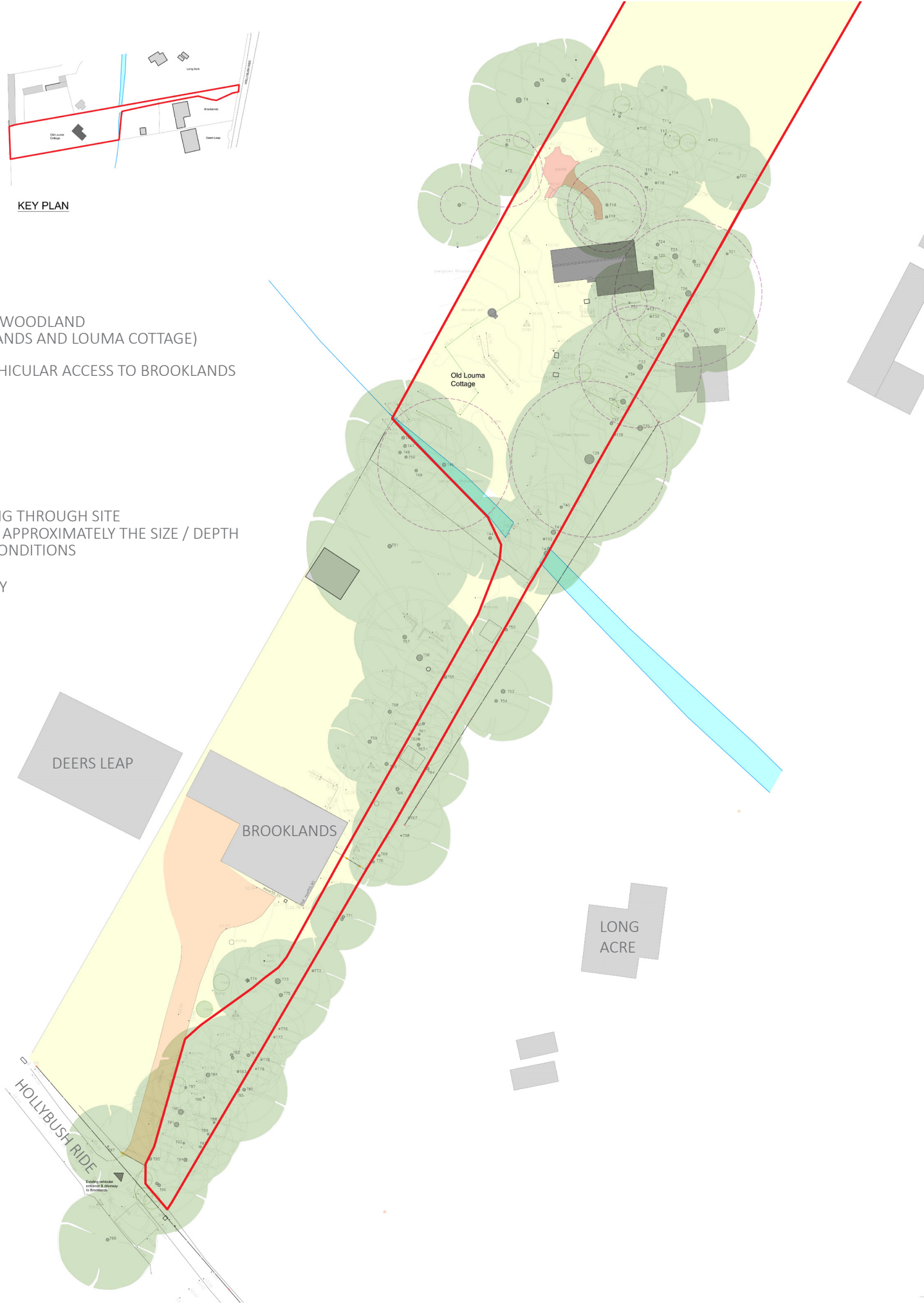
Louma Cottage has existed for many years and is an established part of the landscape west of Hollybush Ride, pre-dating the construction of Brooklands in the 1990s. Previously Louma Cottage acted as the residential annexe to Brooklands, its use was changed to a self-contained dwelling in 2024. The site shares its existing vehicular access from Hollybush Ride with Brooklands.

The cottage is situated within a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) woodland clearing and is not visible from the public highway due to the mature trees and vegetation surrounding the site. A tree consultant has provided guidance on root protection areas (RPAs) and any necessary mitigation for building within these areas, as well as landscaping advice.

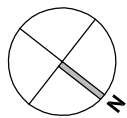
Brooklands is also owned by the applicant but is not included within the site boundary. The replacement dwelling, associated access road, and garden form the application site, while the woodland behind Louma Cottage is not intended to serve as amenity space for the proposal and will be protected with natural fencing. Set behind Brooklands, the site is not visible from the highway and will enjoy complete privacy from both noise and passing views.

The property lies just south of outbuildings behind Long Acre. Hollybush Ride has 42 detached properties, with 17 on the west side and 25 on the east. The east side also provides access to Ashdale Park (44 properties) and Little Fryth (33 properties), totalling about 120 homes in the immediate area. Louma Cottage, on the western fringe, is smaller than many nearby homes, which are larger in both footprint and volume. While the area is relatively built-up, it contrasts with the dense woodland to the west.

Louma Cottage is thus not isolated but is part of the residential character of the area. It is also close to the neighbourhood centres of Finchampstead on Nine Mile Ride and Crowthorne Station on Duke's Ride.



- RESIDENTIAL GARDENS AND WOODLAND (ASSOCIATED WITH BROOKLANDS AND LOUMA COTTAGE)
- EXISTING DRIVEWAY AND VEHICULAR ACCESS TO BROOKLANDS
- EXISTING PAVED AREAS
- EXISTING LOUMA COTTAGE
- SMALL-SCALE DITCH RUNNING THROUGH SITE 'WINTERBOURNE' - SHOWN APPROXIMATELY THE SIZE / DEPTH DEPENDENT ON WEATHER CONDITIONS
- APPLICATION SITE BOUNDARY

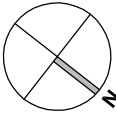


3.0 Existing Site Arrangement

The existing building is a single-storey detached property with a simple design. While some external and structural improvements have been made over time, the materials are now neither robust nor in keeping with the surrounding vernacular.

The applicant and design team intend to replace the existing building with a unique property that complements the secluded, mature woodland setting. The new dwelling will be appropriate in scale and materials, with careful efforts to protect the woodland and preserve the character of the site and surrounding area.

Louma Cottage is not visible from the road, and the shared highway frontage with Brooklands will remain unaffected, as vehicular access will not change. The proposed site layout has been carefully planned to protect the woodland and prevent future pressure on the trees.



SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAM
1001- LOUMA COTTAGE, FINCHAMPSTEAD - DESIGN STATEMENT

4.0 Built Context

Hollybush Ride has no specific architectural typology, with varying styles and built forms. The surrounding context comprises principally of large detached properties set slightly back from the road behind mature hedges and gated driveways, with front-facing parking. These homes are on spacious, wooded plots accessed by tracks perpendicular to the road. Most properties are traditionally constructed using a mix of materials, including red or orange brick, render, and tile hanging. Timber cladding and some modern designs, as seen on ‘Hollywood’, are also present along Hollybush Ride.

Properties along Hollybush Ride also vary in height, with both chalet bungalows, two and three-storey buildings common place. The immediate neighbour, ‘Deers Leap’, is a good example of a three-storey, detached property, traditional in massing and form. ‘Pennywood’ and ‘Brackenridge’ are two examples of new builds on Hollybush ride with basements and multiple storeys. Gabled and hipped roofs with the ridgeline running parallel to the highway are most common along Hollybush Ride. Roofs are covered in predominantly clay roofing tiles.



PHOTOGRAPH OF DEERS LEAP, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF MALTING, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF ALHAN, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF HOLLYWOOD, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF VILLA GINA, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF HEATHERCROFT, HOLLYBUSH RIDE



PHOTOGRAPH OF DILLIGENCE, HOLLYBUSH RIDE

5.0 Design Principles

5.1 Arrangement

The proposed scheme replaces the existing building with a unique cottage that better suits the wooded site and setting. The current highway entrance will be retained and shared with Brooklands, with a new access road branching off from Brooklands’ existing driveway, set back from Hollybush Ride.

This new access road will run along the northern border of Louma Cottage, behind Brooklands. By retaining the existing highway entrance, visibility splays and safe egress are easily achieved and do not affect the existing. The new access road will not be visible from the highway, as is set back behind trees and hedges, it runs parallel to the northern boundary-again shielded by mature trees and hedging.

The replacement building is positioned away from tree root protection areas, partially utilising the footprint of the existing cottage. Any driveway, parking, or patio areas will be constructed with root protection in mind, primarily using permeable materials , no-dig surfaces and cellular confinement sub-bases. All tree protection methods to be designed by the Arboriculturalist.

Parking is located to the front of Louma Cottage keeping all associated amenity spaces to the frontage, minimising future pressure on the trees. A turning space is included within the parking area for easy manoeuvring. The protected woodland behind the cottage will be preserved, with natural hedging forming a boundary that also acts as a deer barrier.

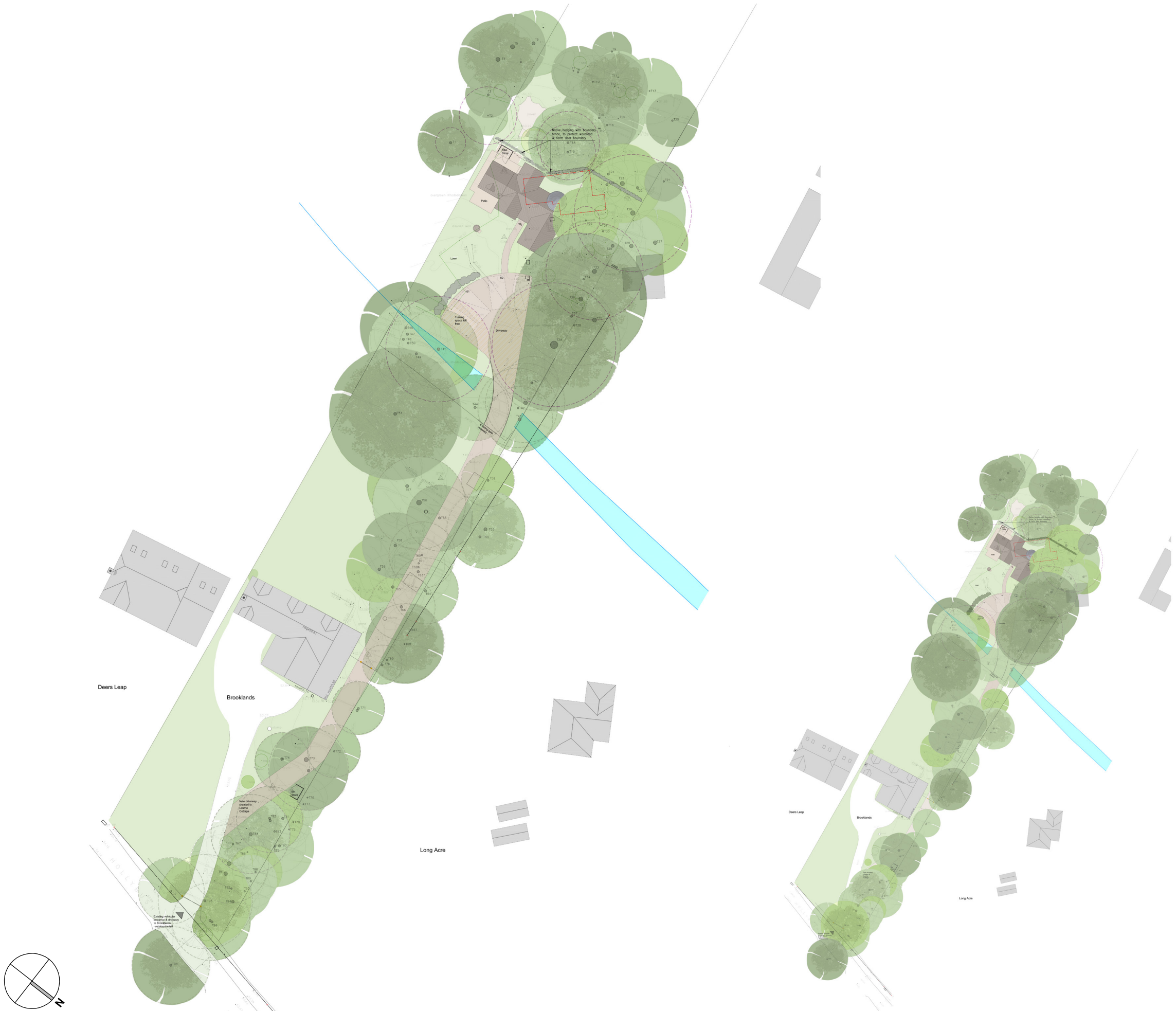
The proposed arrangement references neighbouring properties, featuring a single detached property aligned parallel to both the existing build-line along Hollybush Ride and Brooklands. The dense vegetation surrounding the site ensures no impact on the street scene or neighbouring properties, as it shields views into the site.

The development aims to respond positively to the existing context by using traditional materials and minimising hard-standing, thus preserving the mature green and woodland character of the site.

The applicant wishes to maintain and protect as much woodland as possible, establishing the site’s rear boundary and dictating the proposal’s arrangement away from root protection areas. Throughout the design process, consideration was given to how the replacement property complements the woodland setting.

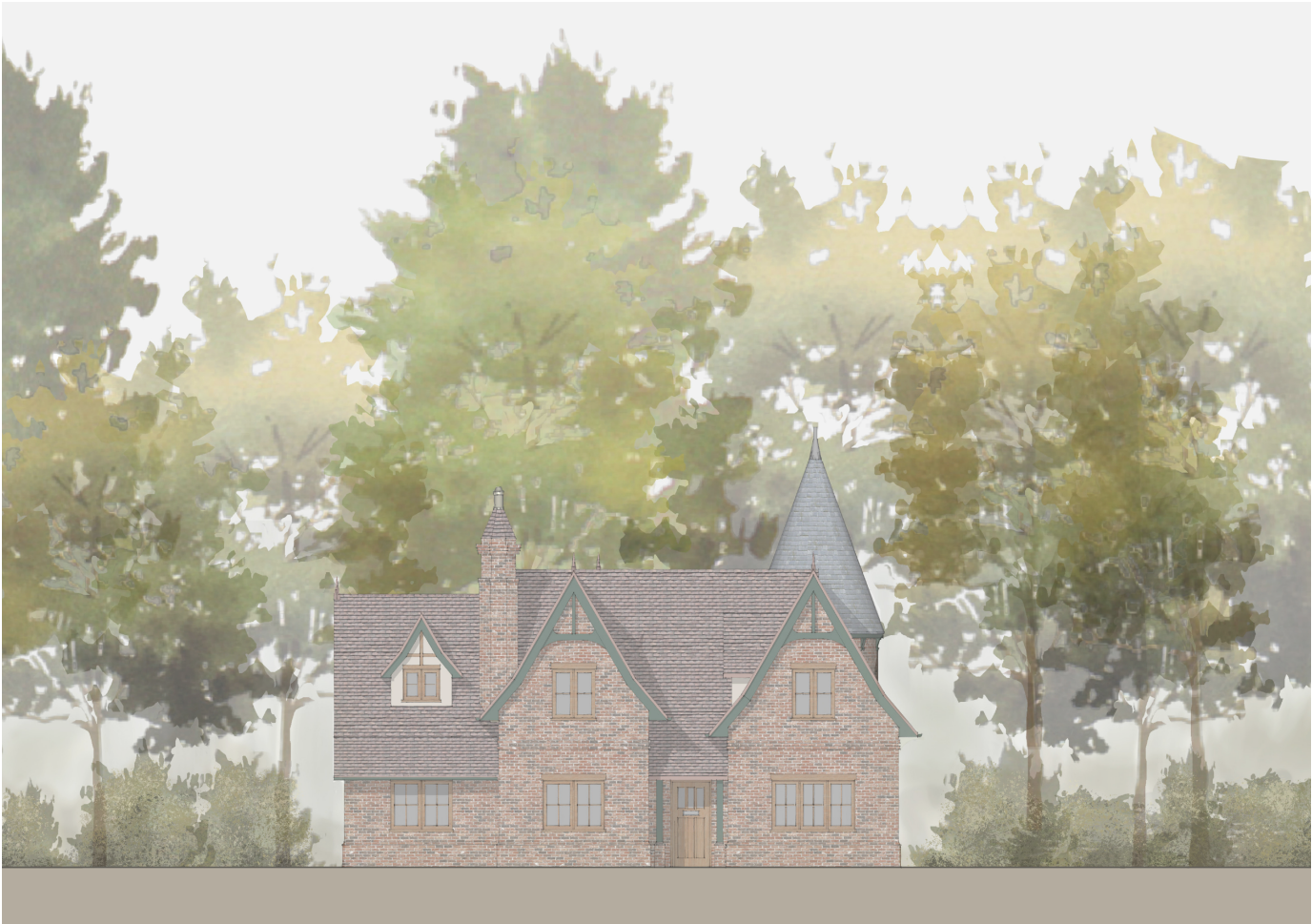
5.2 Mass and Scale

The proposed replacement dwelling is 2-storeys high to match the scale of properties along Hollybush Ride. Although 2-storeys, the eaves have been kept low to reduce the overall roof height. The design features low sprocketed eaves paired

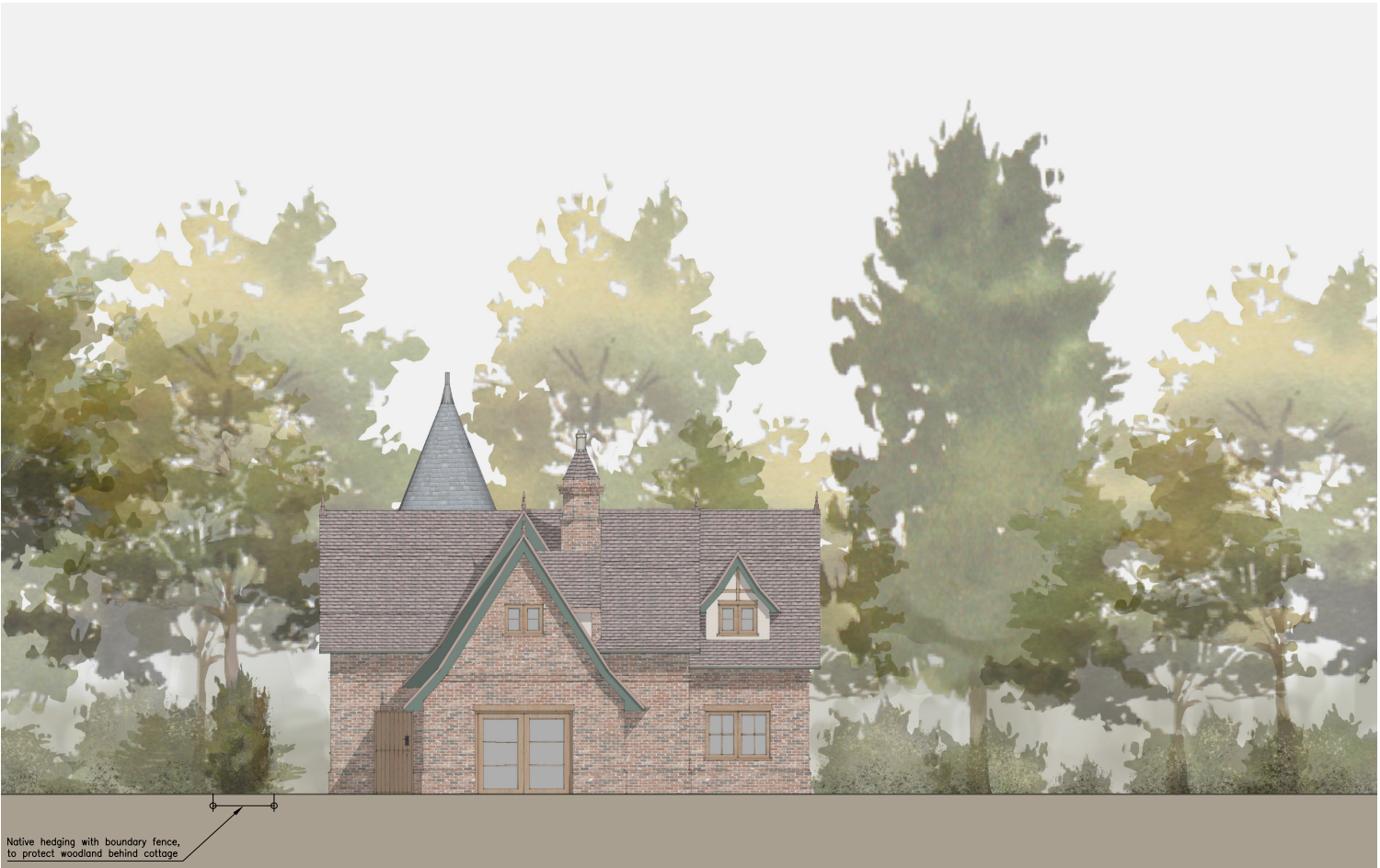


PROPOSED SITE PLAN- SHOWS WHOLE SITE INCLUDING NEW ACCESS ROAD, UNDER TREE CANOPIES.

PROPOSED SITE PLAN- SHOWS MATURE TREE CANOPIES COVERING SITE



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION (FRONT)



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION (SIDE)

with steeply pitched tiled roofs to create a cottage-like appearance. Additionally, the efficient and minimal depth of the proposed layout further reduces the ridge height.

5.3 Character and Context

The proposed scheme has been designed with two main aims, one to create a unique home that complements its woodland setting, the second to ensure reference to local vernacular using traditional materials.

Given the secluded nature of the site within a mature woodland clearing, the applicant wanted to design a “woodland” cottage that improves upon the dilapidated Louma Cottage. The design draws inspiration from “storybook” architecture, featuring steep roof pitches, sprocketed eaves, gables, small dormers, and traditional windows.

The proposed detached replacement Louma Cottage, will be constructed from red/orange facing brick, rendered dormers, deep overhangs at the eaves with prominent fascia boards to gables and additional timber structures/features throughout. The ridge line will run parallel to Hollybush Ride and Brooklands to match the immediate and general context. The design will be traditional in aesthetic, with timber features and window detailing, corbelled brick string courses, as seen locally on listed and farmers cottages.

To save space and minimise the footprint near root protection areas, a spiral staircase was incorporated into a tower at the rear, located partially within the footprint of the existing cottage. This tower, with its slate conical roof, enhances the ‘woodland’ design. Obscured stained glass ‘slot’ windows provide light while minimising visual impact and pressure on the protected trees. Additionally, a brick chimney at the front references the original Louma Cottage’s prominent chimney.

All windows on the rear (west) elevation will be fixed or obscured/stained glass and kept small to minimise impact on the protected trees. Additionally, there will be no windows on the side (north) elevation, following the Arboriculturalist’s advice to protect the TPO trees.

5.4 Landscaping

The existing site is predominantly grass, residential garden and mature vegetation and trees. The proposal intends to improve the site’s usability, whilst protecting the mature trees and nature of the site. The existing street scene will not be impacted due to the site being hidden by mature defensible planting along Hollybush Ride. The proposed parking area will have planting to separate from Louma Cottage and the amenity space. Parking for 3 has been allowed with one turning space for manoeuvring. Also provided is a cycle store to encourage sustainable means of transport.

6.0 Sustainability

6.1 Sustainability Statement

Replacing the existing property with a functional and robust building, sensitively designed to complement the unique woodland setting, will significantly enhance both the site and its surrounding area.

The first step in reducing the energy consumption and environmental impact of the new dwelling is to consider the building fabric itself. High levels of insulation minimise the flow of heat to and from the inside. Air tightness should be considered to ensure that a minimum of heat is lost through the fabric of the building.

Finally, the ventilation strategy is key to ensure comfortable conditions for the occupants without any unnecessary requirement for cooling or additional heating. Therefore the proposed dwelling will achieve a high degree of sustainability with the intention of considerably exceeding a Building Regulations pass.

This will be achieved with the use of:

- High levels of thermal insulation
- Heat pump where required
- Appropriate layouts within the dwelling
- Adherence to the Accredited Construction Details to ensure maximum air-tightness

6.2 Materials

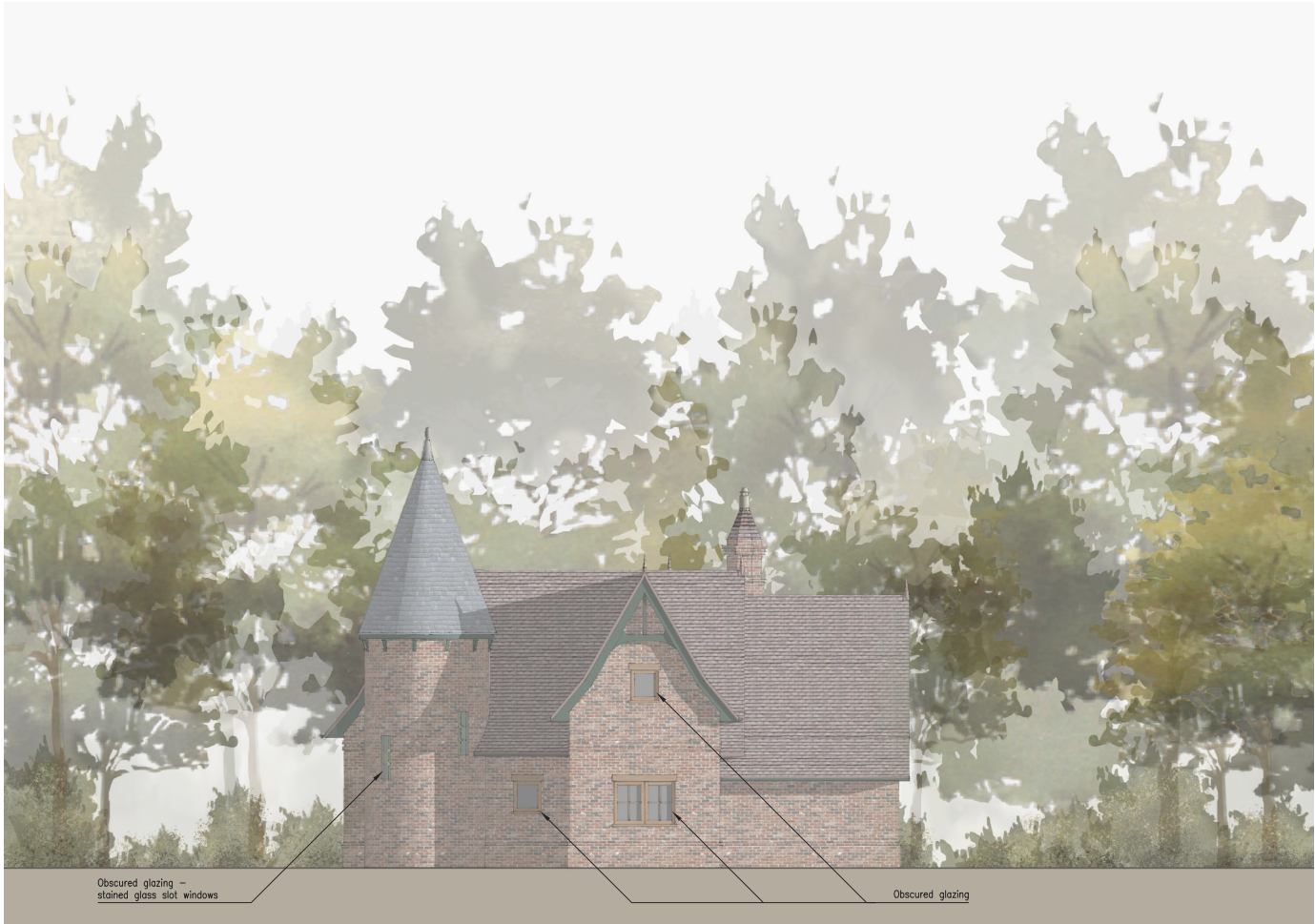
Where possible materials will be sourced locally and/or selected from the Green Specification Guide. Timber will ideally be sourced responsibly from forests that are sustainably managed and felled from a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified source.

6.3 Water Resources

Where possible permeable hard landscaping surfaces will be used to enable surface water to percolate naturally into the watercourse. All drainage will be connected to a septic tank.

It is also incumbent upon a scheme with good sustainable credentials to limit the consumption of water within the dwelling. To this end, fittings will typically be specified to meet Part G of the Building Regulations and/or the Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 standard for items as follows:

- Flow restrictors & aeration taps
- Low-flow, aerated showers
- Dual-flush WCs
- Low-volume baths



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION (REAR)



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION (SIDE)

6.4 Great Crested Newt Protection

The property and its land have no pond in which Great Crested Newts (GCN) could breed. We are also unaware of any neighbouring properties with ponds that could support GCN. The closest lakes, being Kingsmere and Simons Wood, are much greater than 250sqm and thus would typically be considered too large for GCN. Despite this we acknowledge there could be a possibility for migration of GCN onto the property's land.

For this proposal, a sensitive, phased vegetation clearance will take place and since there are no ponds on site, no pond-draining will be necessary. However, efforts will be made avoid attracting GCN to the site. Should GCN migrate onto the property's land from neighbouring areas, there are log piles, tree stumps and hedgerow-type vegetation on the property, situated away from the building area.

For the protection of GCN, site areas will be fenced using appropriate site fencing, with access for vehicles, pedestrians and storage of materials restricted in these zones.

Storage of materials/waste will be undertaken on areas of hard standing. Waste will be stored in skips or removed off site as soon as possible to avoid creating refuges that could be colonised by newts.

Site works will avoid the creation of temporary water bodies which may be attractive to GCN. For this purpose, excavations will be backfilled as soon as possible following creation, to reduce this risk.

6.5 Biodiversity Net Gain

This proposal is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements as the site is below the 0.5-hectare threshold for non-major developments and qualifies as a self-build project, in line with Section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has informed the design to ensure minimal ecological impact. The proposal incorporates additional natural hedging and planting to enrich local habitats while retaining and protecting existing biodiversity features, such as boundary vegetation and woodland.

The proposed cottage has been carefully designed to integrate with the existing woodland, demonstrating a proactive commitment to supporting and enhancing the site's biodiversity, even without a formal BNG requirement.



7.0 Conclusion

The location and character of this site have presented specific challenges and constraints for the applicant and design team. It is hoped that through a comprehensive analysis, the proposal has evolved successfully to address these conditions.

In response to the local context and site requirements, this self-build proposal aims to blend seamlessly with its surroundings. It is designed to sympathetically engage with local buildings while minimising impact on neighbouring properties along Hollybush Ride, despite the site's secluded nature.

Though the design incorporates some 'storybook' elements, it remains fundamentally traditional, featuring a red brick cottage with a tiled roof and traditional timber details. The design is intended to draw respectfully from the historical richness of the local context.

Set back from the road, this unique design has minimal impact on the surrounding properties and street scene, maintaining a low-key and harmonious presence. Influences from the local context and similar woodland sites have been used to enhance the design, connecting the scheme to the local area and preserving the variety and quality of housing in this part of Berkshire.