



Design Rationale

Project Conway - Staff Village

Remenham, Berkshire

Contents

1.0	Introduction	5
2.0	Client Requirements and Functional Improvements	6
3.0	Design Evolution and Aesthetic Response	11
4.0	Contextual Integration and Heritage Sensitivity	12
5.0	Conclusion	13

Introduction

Conway Estate, Formerly Strowdes Estate

This is an updated proposal for the Staff Village, situated within the historic walled garden at the southern edge of the Conway Estate. The revised design builds on an existing consent (Ref. 240847), which granted permission for four single-storey ancillary staff dwellings and a central shared hub. The revised proposal reflects updated client requirements and sustainability objectives, while remaining ancillary to the main estate dwelling.

Our role

This Design Rationale has been prepared by LA London Architects, previously known as Lees Associates.

The project team

- Architect: LA London Architects (LAL)
- Project Manager: Webster Hart (WH)
- Interior Designer: Laplace (LPC)
- Planning Consultant: Avison Young (ASY) and Whaleback (WLB)
- M&E Engineer: Slender Winter Partnership (SWP)
- Structural Engineer: Heyne Tillett Steel (HTS)
- Civil Engineer: Elliot Wood (EWD)

This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawing pack prepared by LA London Architects:

PCY_LAL_ZZ_ZZ_DR_A_P0001	Site Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0002	Site Plan - Staff Village
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0003	Staff Village - Proposed Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0004	Approved/Proposed Comparative Block Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0005	Approved/Proposed Comparative Elevations & Sections
PCY_LAL_SV_00_DR_A_P0006	Proposed Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_RF_DR_A_P0007	Proposed Roof Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0008	Proposed Sections
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0009	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0010	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_00_DR_A_P0011	Proposed Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_RF_DR_A_P0012	Proposed Roof Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0013	Proposed Sections
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0014	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0015	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_00_DR_A_P0016	Proposed Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_RF_DR_A_P0017	Proposed Roof Plan
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0018	Proposed Sections
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0019	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_ZZ_DR_A_P0020	Proposed Elevations
PCY_LAL_SV_XX_DR_A_P0021	Staff Village Materiality

Client Requirements and Functional Improvements

Context

The consented scheme provided essential on-site accommodation and facilities for estate staff. The revised design builds on this principle, seeking to enhance the quality, flexibility, and long-term performance of the development, while retaining its core function as staff and ancillary accommodation which is intrinsically linked to the main house and wider estate.

Key improvements include:

- Refined **internal layouts**, offering three compact cottage-style houses with two ensuite bedrooms, open-plan kitchen/living spaces, and powder rooms;
- A revised **landscape strategy**, incorporating a mixture of private and communal garden spaces, with scope for food growing and outdoor use;
- A productive **green house**;

- Enhanced **sustainability measures**, including low-embodied carbon materials (timber frame with brick and stone cladding), discreet solar PV installation, and rainwater harvesting;
- Improved **environmental performance**, with air source heat pumps, air conditioning, smart lighting controls, and low-impact external lighting;
- Secure, **pedestrian-focused access**, with car parking located outside the walled garden and on-foot circulation within.
- Restoration and **enhancement of the garden wall**, with new brickwork clearly differentiated from the historic fabric

The proposal continues to support the operational needs of the estate, providing appropriate and comfortable on-site accommodation for staff.

Consented scheme

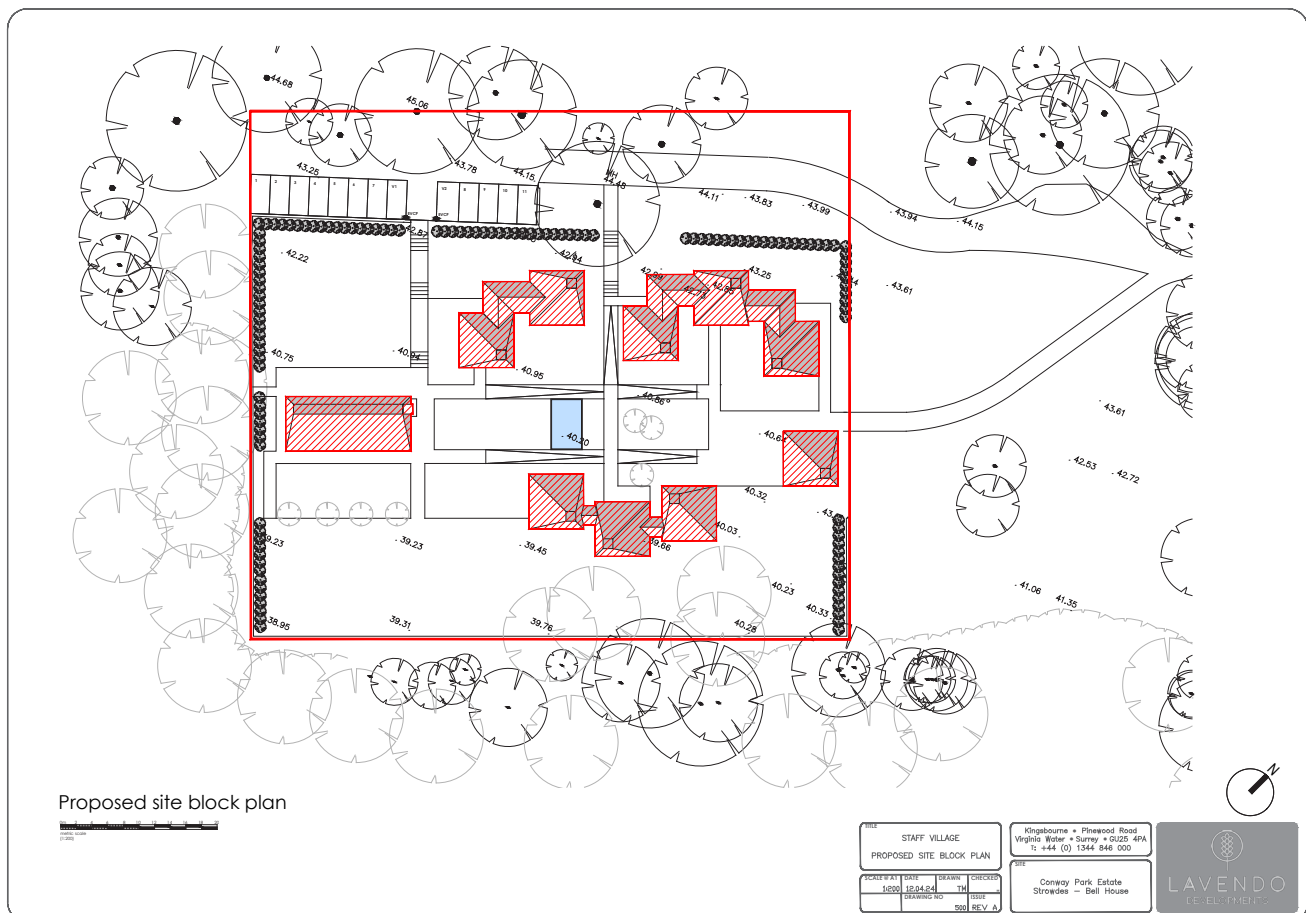


Fig 1 - Consented Block plan

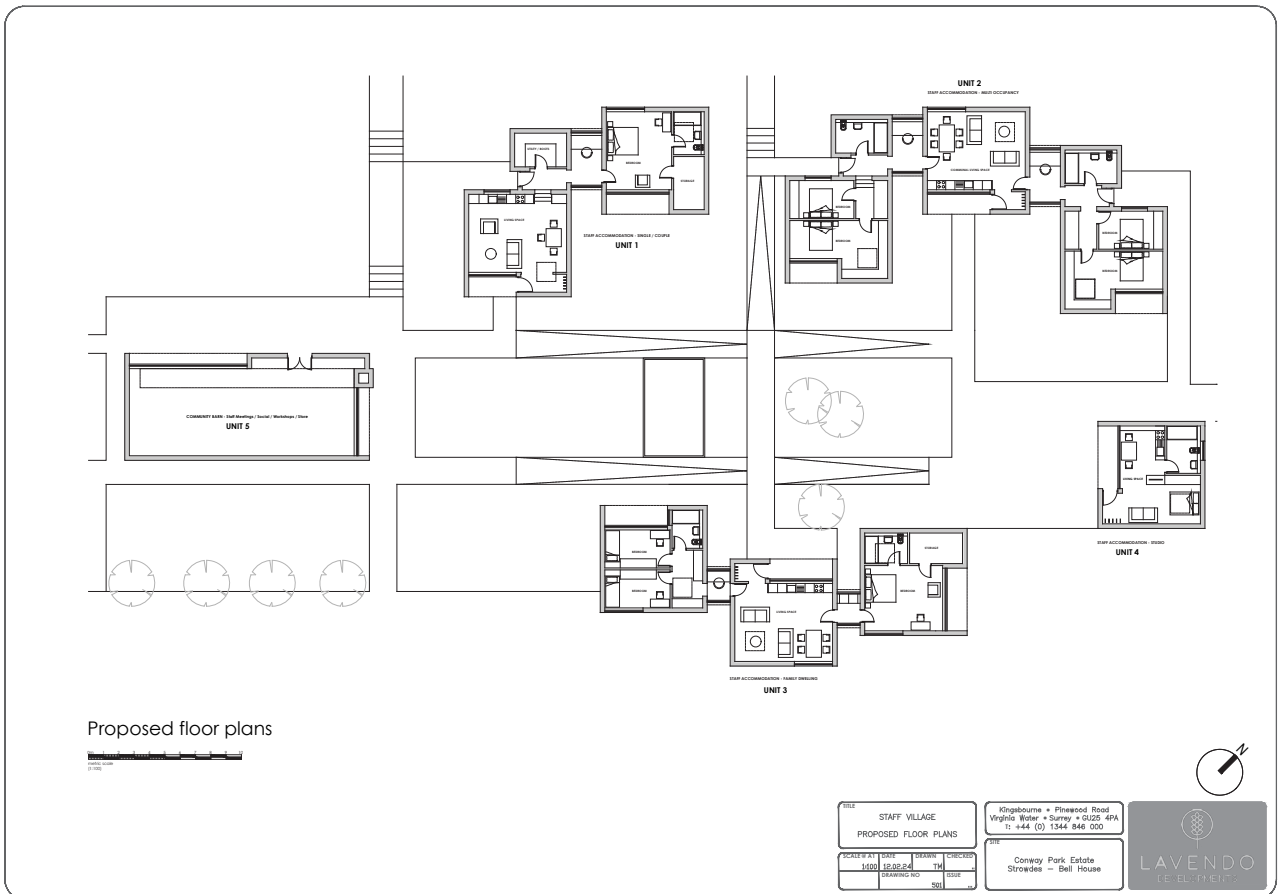


Fig 2 - Consented proposed floor plans

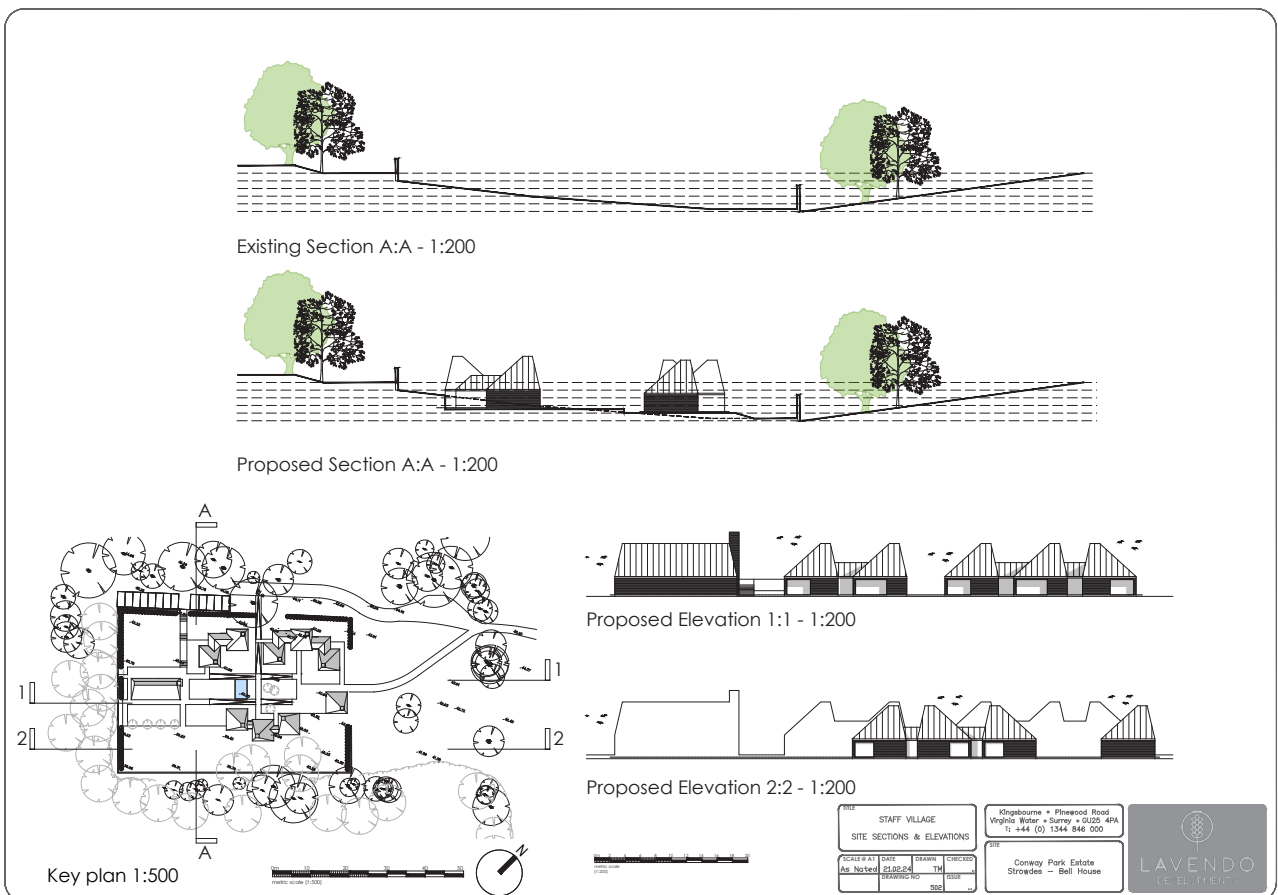


Fig 3 - Consented sections and elevations

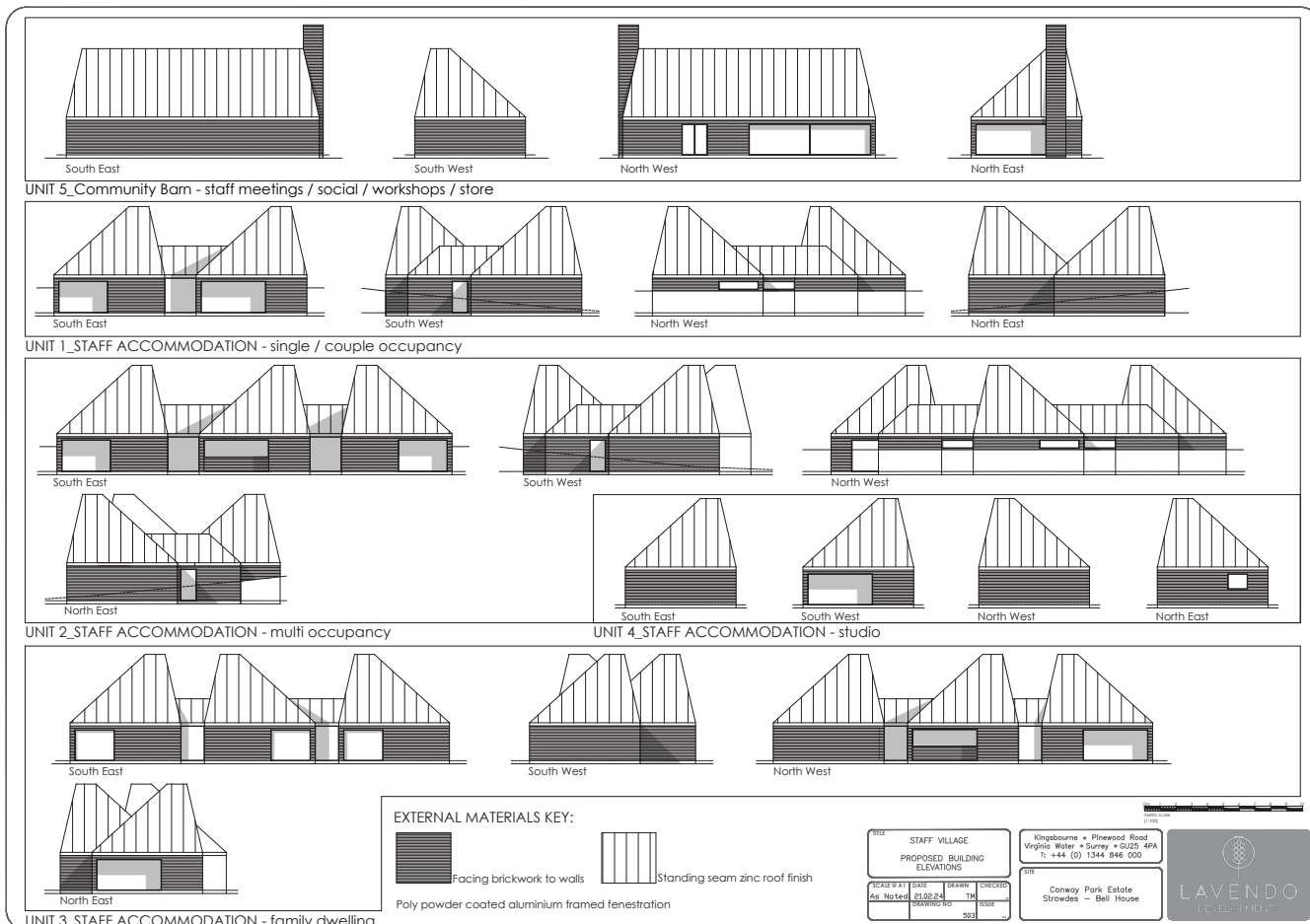


Fig 4 - Consented elevations

Proposed scheme

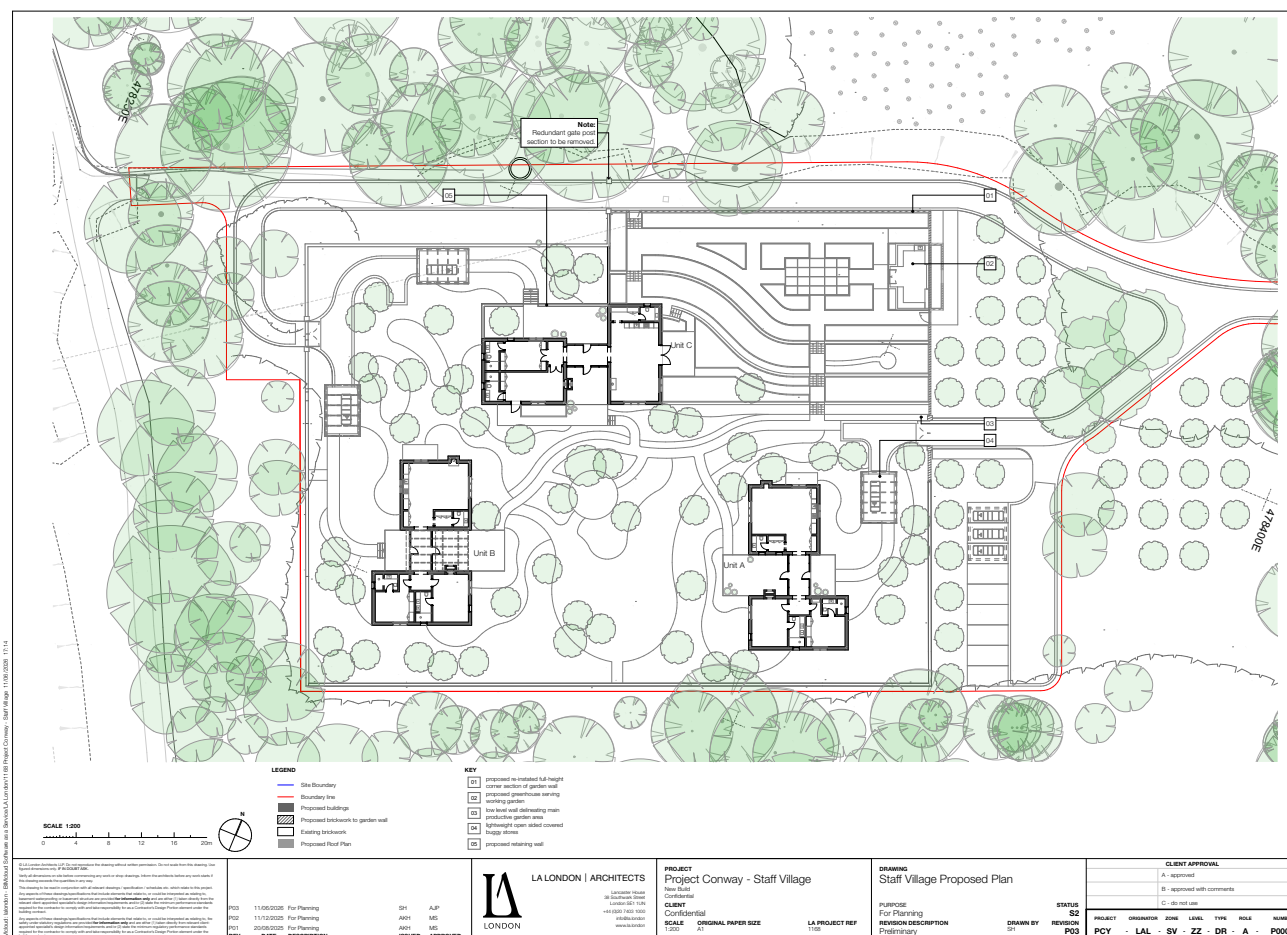


Fig 5 - Proposed Staff Village Site Plan



Fig 6 - Proposed elevations

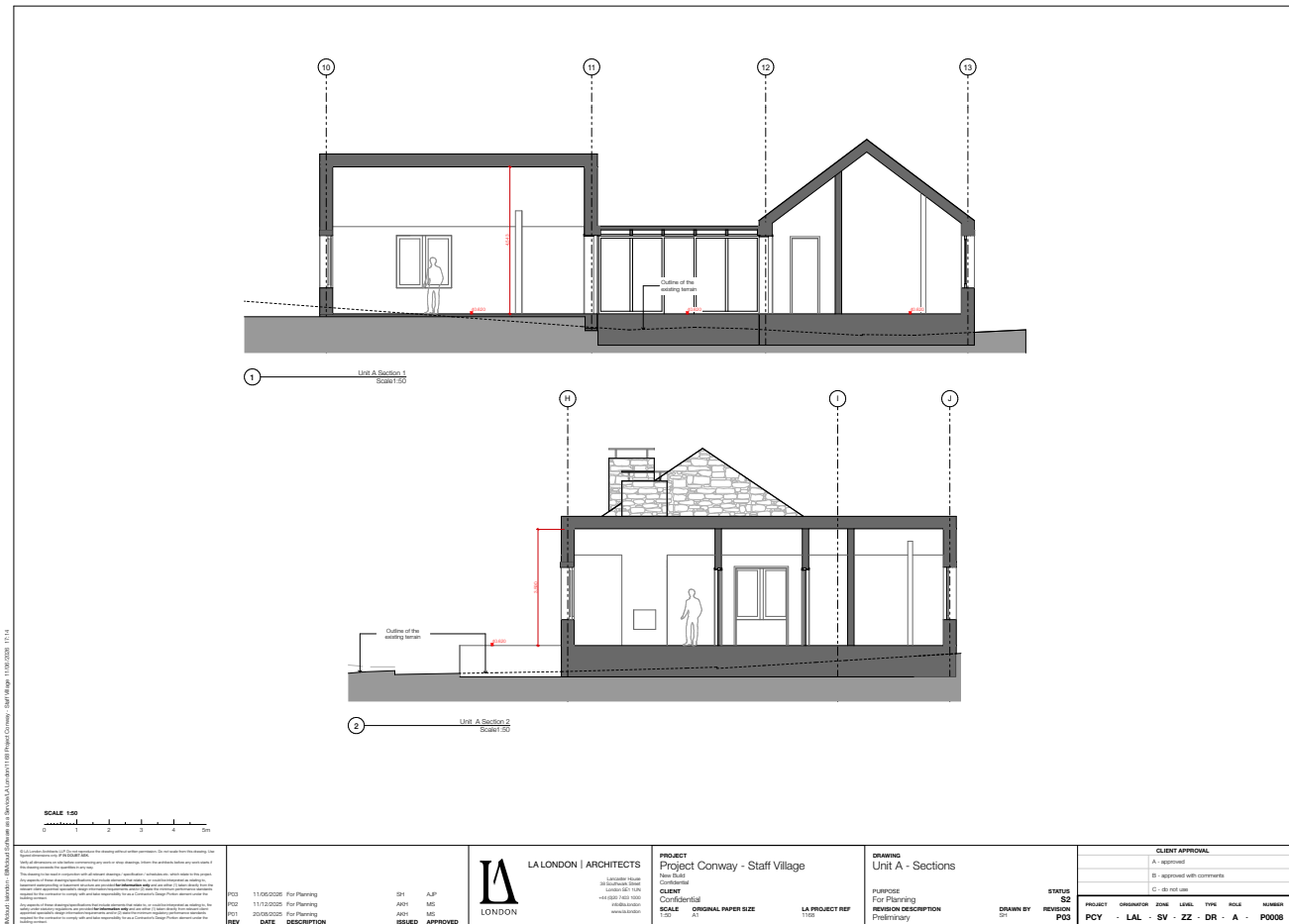


Fig 7 - Proposed sections



Fig. 8 - Proposed views of Staff Village

Design Evolution and Aesthetic Response

While the overall footprint and arrangement remain consistent with the previous approval, the design has been refined to reinforce a more recognisable **cottage vernacular**, aligning with the scale and character of the historic walled garden.

The proposal comprises three independent dwellings located within an existing historic walled garden at Conway estate, near Henley-on-Thames.

The design approach is founded on the retention, repair and reinforcement of the walled garden as the defining spatial and heritage feature of the site, ensuring that new development is contained, legible and landscape-led.

Existing garden walls are retained where possible, with limited sections rebuilt using reclaimed brickwork to reinstate their original alignment and enclosure. This strategy restores the historic structure of the garden and creates a clear framework of defined garden spaces, including private gardens, a shared common garden and a kitchen garden. The arrangement supports privacy, legibility and a strong sense of place while maintaining openness within the site.

The three houses are designed as separate, clearly identifiable buildings, avoiding suburban repetition or continuous built form. Their siting allows views through the site and ensures that landscape remains the dominant visual element. Access and movement are intentionally low-key, with pedestrian and buggy routes integrated into planting to minimise visual and environmental impact.

Architecturally, the dwellings adopt simple, traditional forms with pitched roofs, reflecting the character of historic garden buildings rather than larger estate houses. Materials are selected to respond directly to the local context.

The external walls of the dwellings are constructed in British stone with generous mortar joints to provide texture and depth consistent with traditional masonry. The stone walls incorporate a continuous concrete plinth at ground level, providing a clear and durable base to the buildings and reflecting the proportion and function of traditional masonry plinths in a restrained contemporary manner.

Chimneys are expressed in the same stone to reinforce vertical emphasis and roofscape character.

Roofs are finished in Welsh slate for durability and regional appropriateness.

Windows are formed in a locally suitable timber, providing warmth and natural character. Concrete frames are used around window and façade openings as a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional detailing, giving clarity and rhythm to the elevations without resorting to pastiche.

Entrances, terraces and pergola elements are carefully integrated to create sheltered thresholds and strong connections between internal spaces and the surrounding gardens.

External terrace areas are finished in natural Yorkstone paving, selected for its durability, muted tones and established use within traditional garden and estate settings.

The overall design prioritizes landscape, heritage sensitivity and high-quality materials to deliver three modest, well-integrated dwellings that preserve the character of the walled garden and its rural setting while meeting modern residential requirements.

Contextual Integration and Heritage Sensitivity

The site is fully enclosed within the footprint of the historic walled garden and lies outside the boundary of the Grade II* Registered Park. The proposal includes restoration and repair of the garden wall, with new brickwork clearly differentiated from the historic fabric, as agreed in consultation with the planning authority.

The buildings are single-storey and discreet, with limited visibility beyond the site due to the topography, mature trees, and enclosing wall. New landscaping and planting will further reinforce the secluded and domestic character of the scheme.

Conclusion

The revised Staff Village proposal represents a sensitive and well-considered evolution of the previously approved scheme. It strengthens the quality, comfort, and sustainability of the development while maintaining a low-impact, ancillary character that is appropriate to its role within the Conway Estate. The scheme continues to support estate life and operations and remains consistent with local planning policy, design guidance, and environmental objectives.

