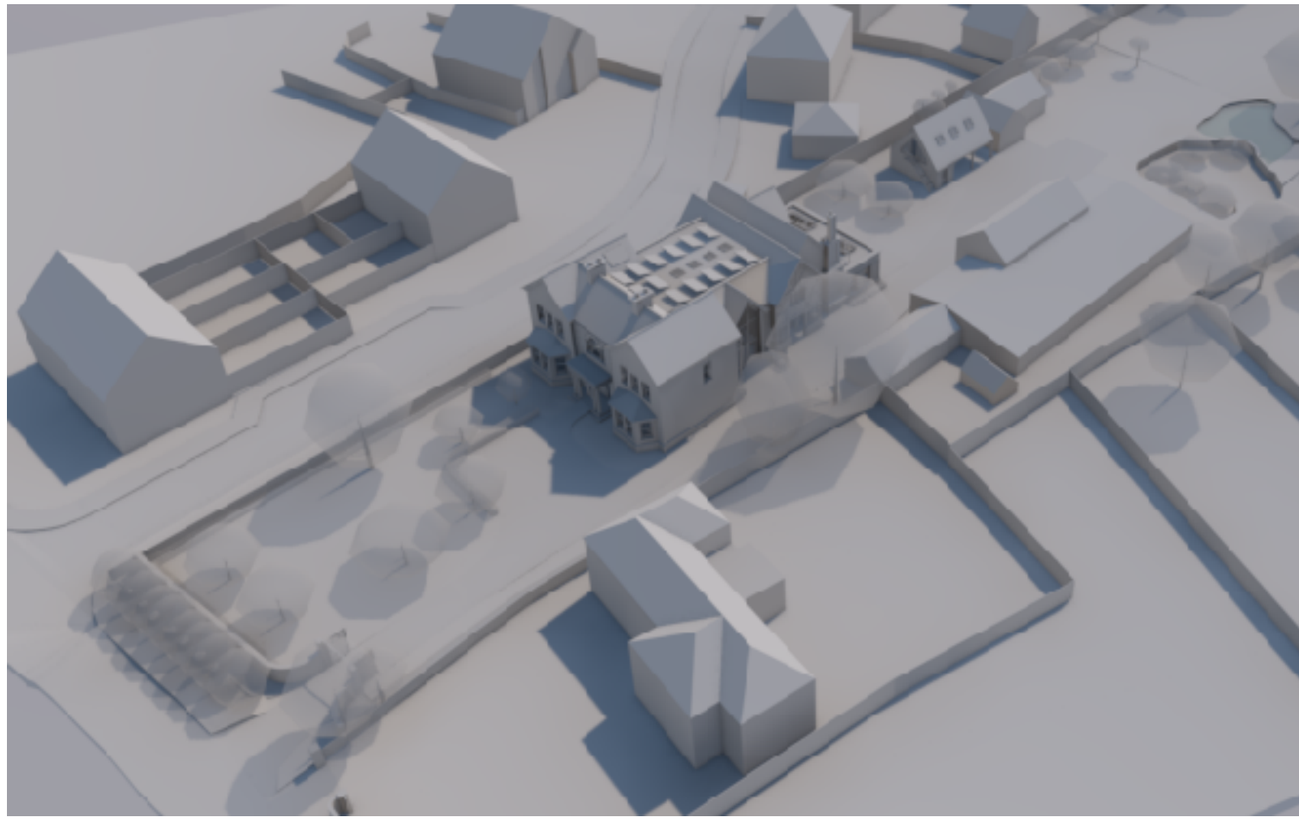
Design and Access Statement

Clear View Cottage,
Whistley Green,
Reading,
RG10 0DU
2907 C002P4 - 251216



INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Hives Architects on behalf of the Applicant, Mr N Horscroft, in support of a Planning Application for the demolition of the existing house and construction of a new dwellinghouse.

The full description of the proposal is: Demolition of existing dwelling (Clear View Cottage) and construction of a new dwelling, and carport with storage over, a front garden wall and gate, solar panels on outbuilding, and associated landscape changes.

This document provides a more visual guide to the proposals, and is to be read in conjunction with the planning statement prepared by ETP Planning.

The aim of this document is to explain the design process and decisions and to present the schematics to support the drawings submitted.

The documents submitted with the application include:

- Planning form, CIL form, Self Build CIL form
- Planning Statement (ETP)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey ref: SWE-P25-0246-R1 (Sam Watson Ecology)
- 2907 C002 Design and Access Statement
- 2907 001 Location and Block plan
- 2907 002 Existing floor plans and elevations
- 2907 003 Proposed floor plans
- 2907 004 Proposed elevations
- 2907 005 Proposed Garage floor plans and elevations
- 007 Proposed Street Elevation and Garden Wall

Existing house and front garden with outbuildings visible to side and rear

The site is located in Whistley Green, a small village in the Parish of St Nicholas, Hurst, in the Local Authority of Wokingham, in Berkshire.

The area has a suburban character: dwellings are dispersed, there are many detached houses, and a relatively low density of buildings. Properties around the site vary widely in size; some properties are large, with large gardens, and our site is one of the largest plots in the village.

The application site lies south of Whistley Green (road), where the site access is located. The plot is a very large plot with a frontage over 23m wide, and a depth of over 150m. The Site borders to the east with Nursery Gardens, a recent development of semi-detached, detached and terraced houses. The road into this site runs alongside the eastern boundary, with gardens backing onto the eastern boundary deeper into the site. Whistley Green Farmhouse, a large detached house, lies to the west. Its large garden extends down to the main outbuilding on the site. A number of dwellings back onto the western boundary.

The 2 storey dwelling on the site is set back over 50m from the road, with mostly fruit trees and lawn, and the drive leading to the house and outbuildings, with ample parking in the centre of the site. The plot includes a number of outbuildings, including stores, garages, and a large ancillary outbuilding used as an office, cinema room, bar and gym. The large outbuilding is partially 2 storeys high.

The village has a pub, and other local amenities and shops are available in the nearby village of Hurst.

Twyford station is about 1 mile away, with regular rail services to Reading and to London.

There are bus stops nearby, with a regular service to Wokingham and Twyford.

CONTEXT

This area of the village displays architectural variety, with properties ranging from period cottages, victorian homes, some tudor elements locally, and more contemporary buildings.

Roofs are predominantly gabled, finished in plain clay tile or slate, and walls commonly feature brickwork, render, and timber detailing.

The architectural grain is low-density, with buildings that read as individual homes rather than suburban repetition. A small terrace next to the site appears to be designed to mimic a single large dwelling.

The prevailing scale is two storeys plus pitched roof over.

The material palette is restrained and largely traditional, featuring brick, render, and timber cladding.

Traditional detailing is common, including brick arches, cornicing, and timber-framed porches.

Many older properties incorporate Tudor revival or Arts and Crafts influences, particularly evident in gable treatments and window proportions.

In conclusion the area does not have a strongly defined character and offers a variety of architectural styles.

Lodge Road houses

Whistley Green Farmhouse

Hurst Gospel Hall

Whistley Green road house

Whistley Court Farm

Old Swan Cottage

7, 9 Nursery Gardens

1-3 Nursery Gardens

EXISTING SITUATION

The plot extends to approximately 0.5 hectares, comprising a large private garden with mature landscaping and an existing office building to be retained as part of the proposal.

The existing dwelling, Clear View Cottage, is a house positioned unusually deep within the plot, set back over 50m from Whistley Green Road.

This results in an atypical relationship with the street, with a large, underused front garden area separating the property from the main road.

The dwelling has been vacant for several years and appears to be mostly victorian with perhaps an original part before this. It is not of any particular architectural merit, and with signs of subsidence. The house provides only small rooms in an unusual layout with a partially connected two storey element at the rear, it is not feasible to retain it to achieve the client's brief.

The application site excludes part of the large rear garden, and part of the site which is currently used by the neighbours. The application site measures approximately 0.35 hectares, whilst the rear garden area excluded from the application will be preserved to retain the landscape and open character of the setting.

The plot is generous in size, much larger than most plots nearby and atypical of properties in Whistley Green. It was originally part of the nursery which included the now developed Nursery Gardens. The large front garden with lawn and fruit tree planting, and hedgerow boundaries contribute to the green suburban character.

Front facade of house and outbuildings

Rear View of the house

Drive and garages along west boundary

Outbuilding with office, cinema and gym

Garage, rear of the site

Rear Garden with pond

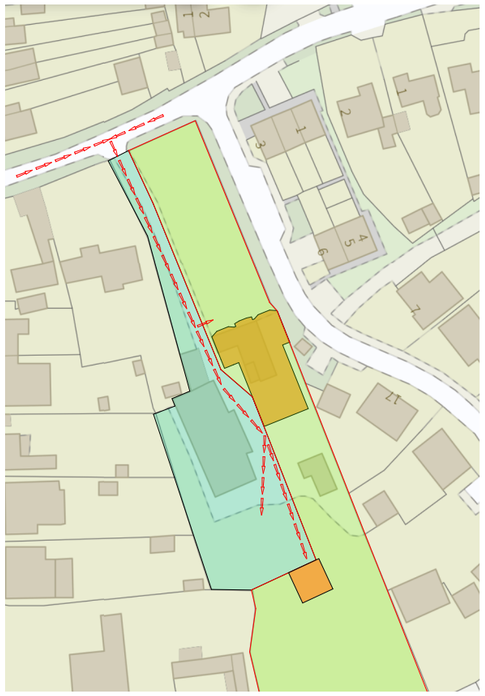
Front Garden with drive

As part of the design development process, alternative positions for the new dwelling were carefully considered.

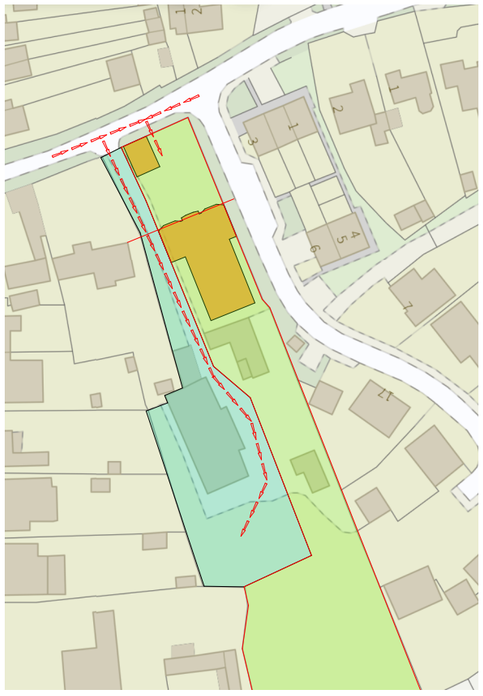
Original proposals by the client suggested the house be moved adjacent to the large outbuilding, and further back from the road. Our initial thought was to position the front of the new house in line with Whisltey Green Farmhouse, in order to maximise the rear garden space. Ultimately a position was chosen between these, in order to retain a large front garden, whilst also moving away from the largest outbuilding, and away from trees along the western boundary. This also created the required 5m clearance from the substation at Nursery Gardens.

The proposed siting creates a balanced relationship between street presence, privacy, and landscape character.

This adjustment allows the proposed building to relate more appropriately to Whistley Green Road, aligning more closely with the established building line of nearby dwellings, while maintaining generous green space that contributes to the open, village setting.



Original propsed siting next to outbuilding

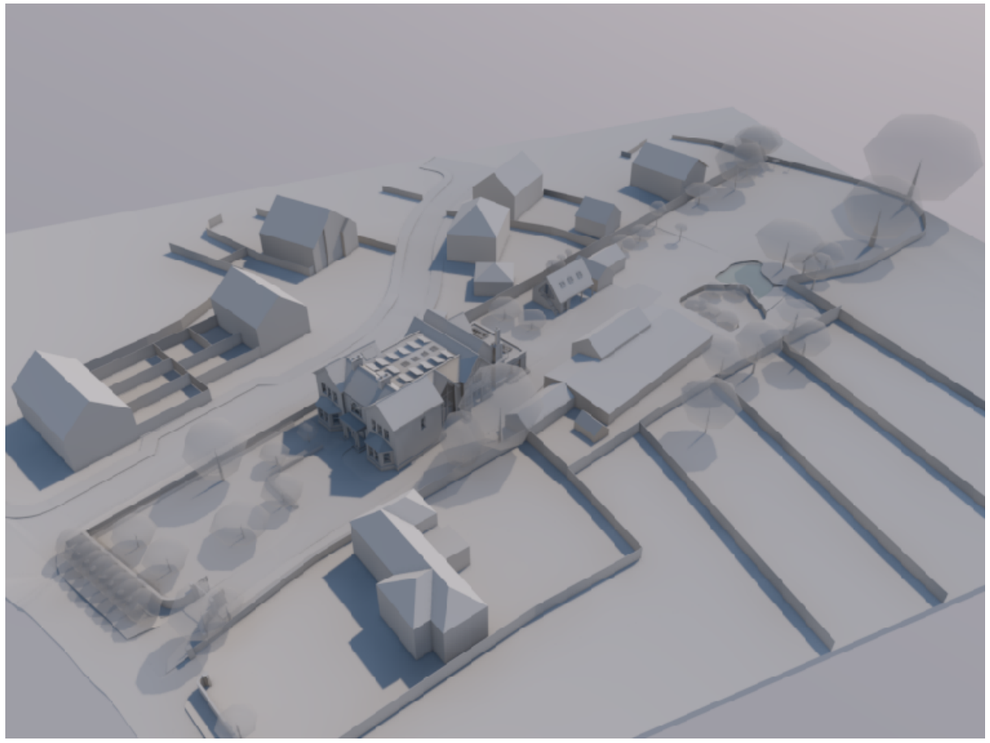


Proposal to align with neighbour

Originally a garage was proposed to the front of the house, but in order to retain the open landscaped character of the front garden it was later decided to move this behind the house.

The proposed location for the house is further back from the neighbouring property, Whistley Green Farmhouse, to retain the stepped organisation of frontages, retaining the loose building line. The large front garden helps to reduce visual impact and ensures privacy. The overall width of the proposed house is similar to that of Whistley Green Farmhouse, which fits with the established scale and rhythm of the street scene.

The proposed house has therefore been separated from the retained outbuildings to create a spacious rear garden and foster a comfortable relationship between the two buildings.



Proposed location of the house to retain large front garden

IMPACT ON AMENITY

The proposed dwelling has been designed to comply with the amenity and privacy standards set out in the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD, which seek to ensure appropriate separation between dwellings to protect residential amenity. The layout achieves comfortable distances to all boundaries, achieving or exceeding typical minimums for two-storey development.

To the west, the proposed dwelling maintains a 9.2 m separation from Whistley Green Farmhouse, which, combined with the building being set back from it's rear facade ensures there is no harmful impact in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy. Large trees along the west boundary further provide screening between the properties.

To the east, the distance to the nearest dwellings at Nursery Gardens is 17m, which is more than the 15m front to flank distance required by policy. Although this property has it's front door facing the site, it also has windows facing north and south away from the site, further reducing impact from our proposal.

A first-floor roof terrace is positioned on the rear of the house, and is over 25m away from the nearest property at Nursery Gardens, which is also not directly facing the balcony. It is therefore felt that there is no negative impact on neighbour amenity from this private roof terrace. The terrace is accessed from the master bedroom, and is partially recessed within an overhanging gable.

The set-back of the dwelling within the plot, combined with established and enhanced planting, helps soften views and helps maintain a high level of privacy.

The layout also considers the nearby electrical substation, maintaining a separation distance of over 5 metres, to meet HS47 guidance requirements.

Overall, the design comfortably meets local policy requirements and delivers a well-considered relationship with surrounding properties.

Proposed Block Plan showing separation distances from Nursery Gardens houses

DESIGN PROCESS

Initial design studies were undertaken to explore alternative building footprints, massing configurations, and roof forms.

The client brief was well defined at the time of appointment, to achieve a 500m2 dwelling with a large entrance hall, a double height atrium space, and at least 4 bedrooms.

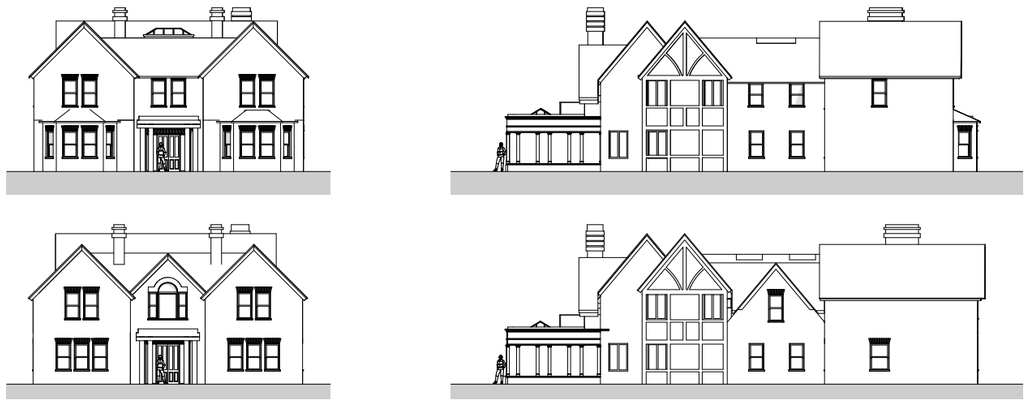
The client also had a strong desire to create a house with a more formal symmetrical frontage and more arts and crafts inspired varied arrangement of spaces at the rear.

Floor plan initial sketches

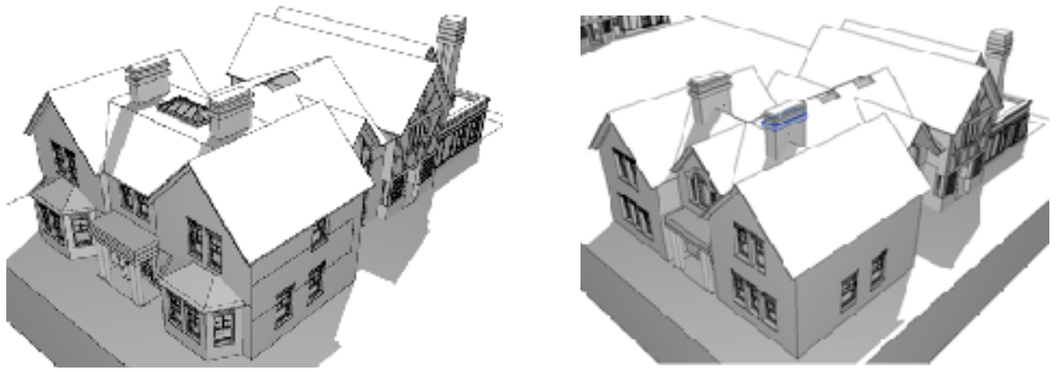
Massing and roof shapes initial sketches

The objective was to establish a layout that created a compact plan form to achieve energy efficiency, whilst adding interest to the large flanking facades by creating a sequence of varying styles and architectural interest.

Between these two contrasting architectural expressions, a transitional middle section was developed, drawing inspiration from Tudor elements to provide visual continuity and a gradual stylistic progression through the depth of the house.



Various Elevation options during design stage



Roof massing options

PROPOSAL

The design provides a high-quality family home that both respects the character of Whistley Green and makes a positive contribution to the local street scene. The architecture has been carefully considered to respond to the local village context while introducing subtle variety in the treatment of different elevations to ensure interest and complexity around the facade.

Front Elevation:

The principal façade, visible from Whistley Green Road, adopts a balanced symmetrical composition. The proportions, symmetry, and traditional detailing ensures the building sits comfortably alongside neighbouring properties and reinforces the established character of the street.

View from front garden

Central, Side Elevations:

Behind the more formal front section, the house is designed to appear organically grown with further gables in more contemporary and Tudor styles, facing the west side. This softens and reduces the volume of the building visually and adds variety in the architecture. As these are important facades, they include further detail and interest, and on the west side include a double height glazed atrium space as one of the character spaces. The Tudor style gable with oak and render elements, marks the rear entrance into the house, including a recessed porch.

On the east, a more restrained facade with interlocking gables in different render colours, and lean-to roof add interest and break up the elevation facing Nursery Gardens.

View from Whistley Green Farmhouse

View from Nursery Gardens

REAR ELEVATIONS AND CAR PORT

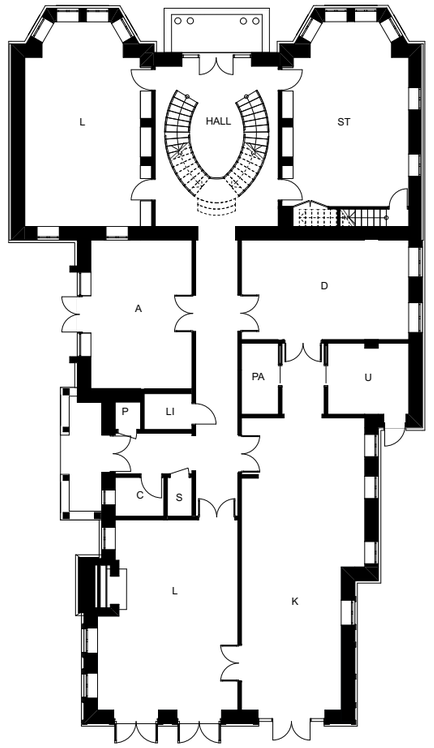
The rear elevation elements including a feature chimney are designed in the Arts and Crafts style with overhanging gabled roofs, and interlocking gable sections. The composition is deliberately less formal, with varied rooflines, generous glazing, and natural colour rendered finishes and plain roof tiles.

A single-storey part of the building is designed as an orangery with windows and roofs facing the rear garden. The large glazed openings and doors leading directly to the garden provide abundant natural light and solar gains.

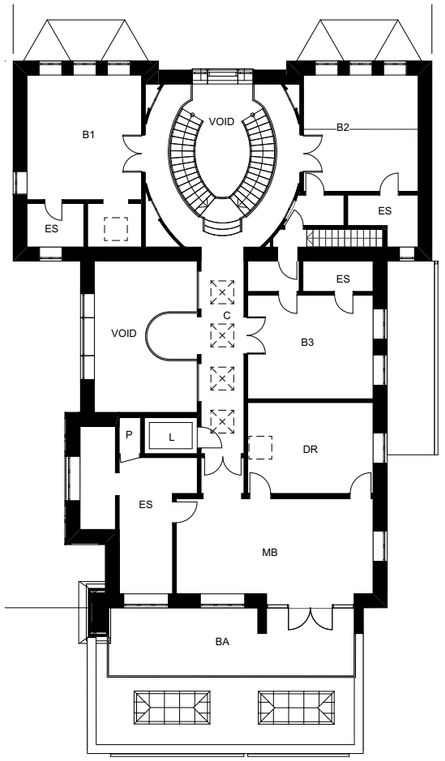
The proposed car port is of a simple gabled form, with timber frame to provide open space for 2 cars, and additional store room over.

Garden view showing from left to right:

Existing outbuilding with office, gym and cinema roof, the proposed house with orangery and balcony over, the proposed car port with store room over, and the existing garage



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

Plans are designed to create a compact building form, and to express the formal front part of the house and more organically formed rear areas.

Side elevations are largely stepped to create interest and reduce the impact of the overall volume, including interlocking gables, single storey lean-to elements and the orangery at the rear.

MATERIALS

The proposed dwelling is proposed in materials that reflect those found in the local context. The building presents as a progression from formal victorian style front facade through to a tudor style transition and more freely shaped Arts and Crafts expression at the rear.

Front Elevation (Formal Symmetry):

The principal façade incorporates red brickwork, natural stone detailing, and areas of knapped flint panelling, with careful window positioning with a central stone porch and stone lintel over the arched window above.

A red clay tiled roof completes the composition, establishing a strong, formal presence in the street scene.

Central West Section (Tudor Transition):

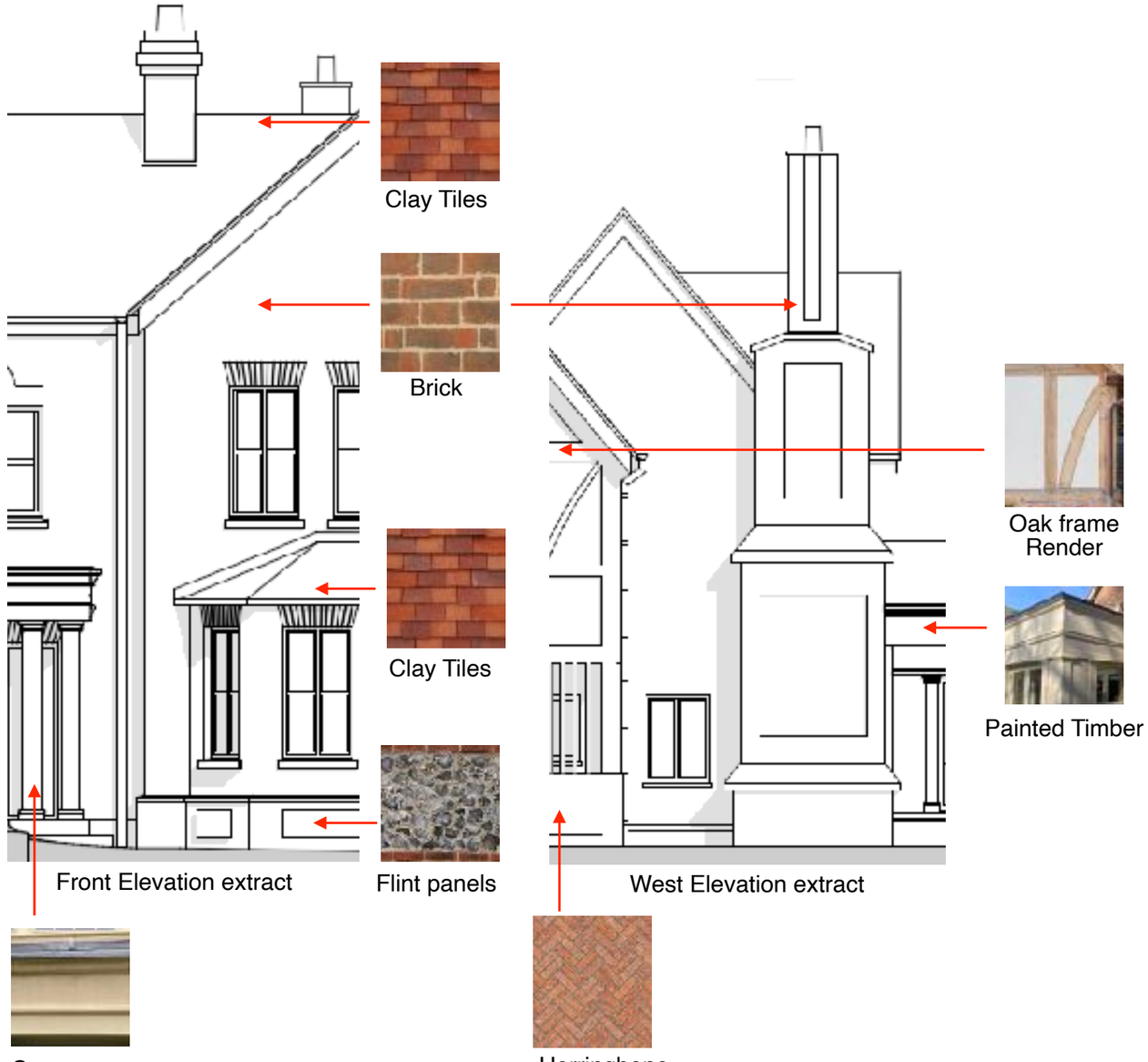
The central portion introduces a timber and render finished structure in green oak to evoke the Tudor character. Herringbone brick panels are integrated within selected bays and in the feature chimney. This is proposed to re-use existing brick and will create a visual link with the past. The continuation of clay roof tiles and brick plinths ensures a smooth material transition between the front and rear.

Rear and Side Elevation (Arts and Crafts):

The rear composition adopts a simpler and more relaxed treatment with smooth render finishes and natural materials that highlight craftsmanship and proportion over ornamentation. Large window openings reinforce the domestic, garden-oriented character of this part of the house.

Orangery:

A single-storey painted timber clad orangery extends from the rear elevation, providing an additional material, to reflect the stone porch in colour, and to create rooms with top light and fine timber ornamental detailing. The balustrade over is set back and proposed in glass to reduce visual impact.



Conditions:

Final selection and manufacturer details for external materials and windows and doors are proposed to be further dealt with by condition.

STREET ELEVATION

The proposed dwelling has been designed to sit comfortably within the established street scene of Whistley Green, respecting the rhythm, scale, and character of surrounding properties.

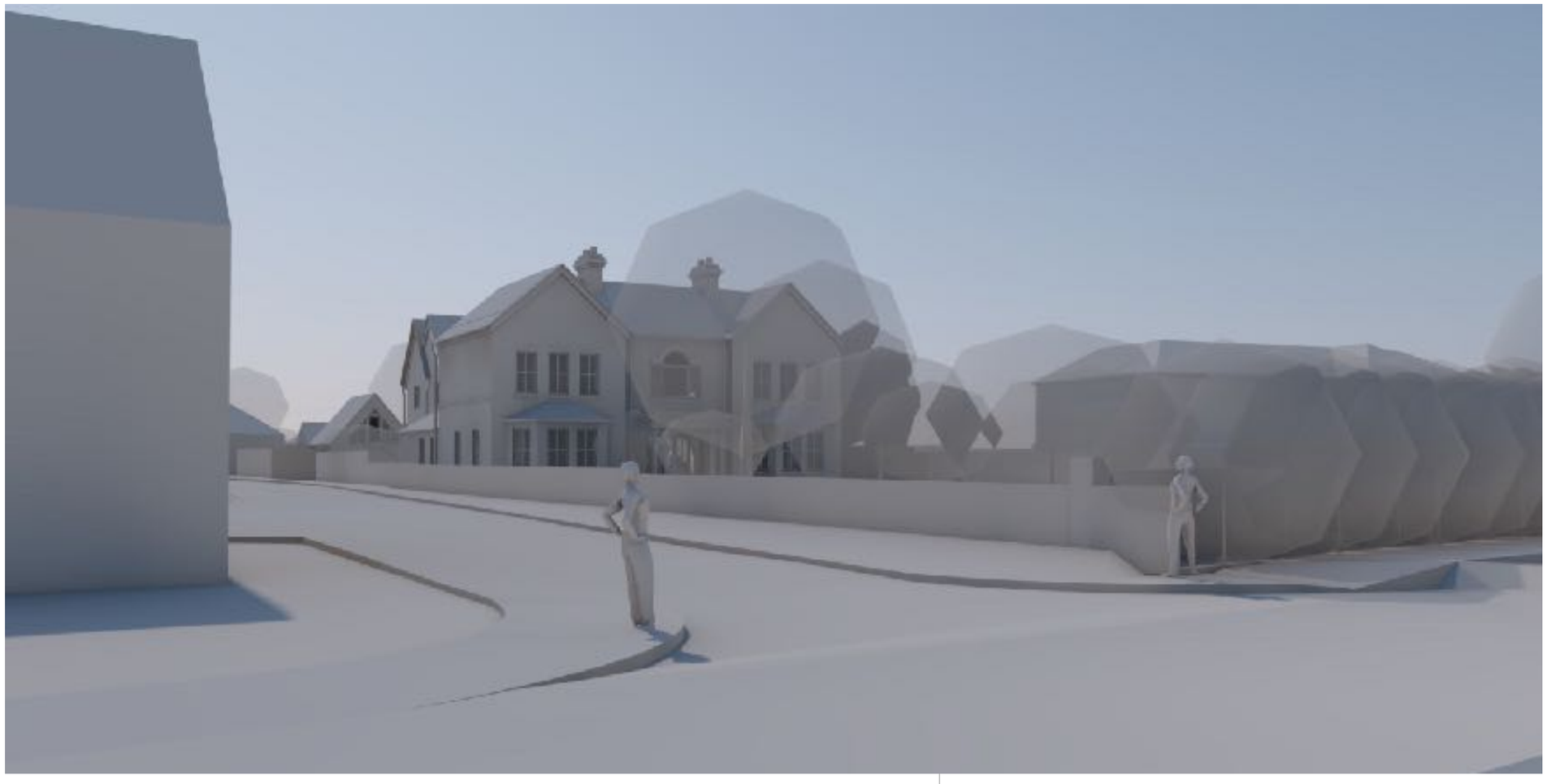
The ridge is higher than Whistley Green Farmhouse, but is set 12m further from the road to reduce this impact. The proposed ridge is lower than the ridge of No. 17 Nursery Gardens, similarly set back from the main street.

The symmetrical frontage and traditional materials of the house will contribute to the village character while expressing a refined and contextually appropriate architectural identity.

The house will be large, but modest considering the very large size of the plot, which is much larger than neighbouring plots.

The front boundary treatment currently consists of a ditch and hedge planting, both of which are proposed to be retained. Behind this we propose a new front garden wall, which would be similar in height to the neighbours, with curved walls running into the set back gateposts and gate, to give more presence to the existing entrance.

The proposed carport with a store room over would be located behind the house, far away from the road, and would not have any detrimental impact on amenity or character of the area.



Proposed Street View

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The proposed dwelling has been carefully developed with a strong emphasis on energy efficiency, sustainability, and environmental responsiveness.

The proposed house has been modelled in Passivhaus software to inform the energy balance and reduce energy use by using PH principles.

The house is oriented on the plot so that the fenestration enables good daylight levels throughout, and to maximise solar gain from the South (with shading to avoid summer overheating)

Additional areas of fenestration which may give rise to localised overheating will be automatically openable or shaded with exterior blinds using interior temperature information so as to further reduce summer overheating risk.

The initial PHPP calculation shows that the building will easily comply with Part O requirements.

The building has been designed with a compact form factor of 3.1 (usable floor area/external surface area) to minimise operational energy demand and this also reduces the embodied energy of the construction through the use of fewer building materials.

A Passivhaus fabric-first approach to the construction design prioritises high levels of insulation (leading to low U values), exceedingly airtight construction, high performance windows and minimal thermal bridging all of which further minimise operational energy demand.

The excellent fabric efficiency and efficient ventilation system will be complemented by an air source heat-pump to provide low carbon space heating and hot water, and energy usage is further lowered by a PV/battery installation, which will harvest solar energy in summer and low-cost overnight electricity in winter to provide a truly low energy services installation.

Initial PHPP calculations give a space heat demand of 17kWh/m2/yr which is approximately 25% of a typical new build built to Part L 2021 standards and 50% below the new Future Homes Standard.

Heat-recovery ventilation throughout will provide excellent indoor air quality for occupants as well as further lowering energy demand.

Materials from the proposed demolition such as bricks will be reused on site locally in herringbone brick inserts, and if not possible will be recycled off-site. As far as possible, locally sourced and durable materials will be used to reduce embodied carbon and ensure long-term sustainability as well as future end of life recycling.

The Zero Avoidable Waste Framework (ZAW) will be employed to mitigate construction waste as far as possible and a dedicated location for general waste and that for recycling has been provided both internally and externally once the proposed house is occupied.

Water use of <110 litres per day will be achieved through the use of a low water usage washing machine and dishwasher along with aerated showers and taps.

Collectively, these measures deliver a dwelling that achieves significantly lower operational and embodied energy use, responding to both local character and national objectives for sustainable design.

Thermal Passivhaus Model view

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

All recommendations from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey (SWE-P25-0246-R1) have been integrated into the scheme.

Although the development is exempt from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, the design includes targeted enhancements to promote local biodiversity and strengthen the site's ecological value.

Key measures include the installation of bat and bird boxes on trees, thus providing roosting and nesting opportunities for local wildlife.

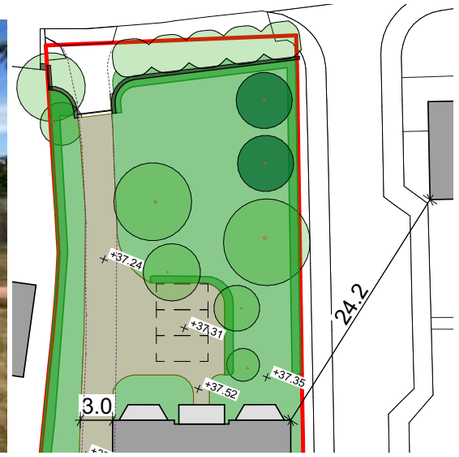
Planting of four native trees is proposed, in addition to further native hedgerow planting to supplement existing. This will enhance biodiversity and the verdant character of the area.

Retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows is proposed to maintain ecological connectivity.

Use of permeable surfacing is proposed to enhance water retention on site.

Together, these measures will ensure the site continues to contribute positively to the local ecological network and supports the long-term resilience of wildlife within the Whistley Green area.

Front garden where new trees will be located



Proposed Native trees at the front (Dark Green)

Rear garden where new trees will be located

Proposed Native trees at rear (Dark Green)

Proposed bird box

Propsed bat box

ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will remain as existing from Whistley Green.

The proposal includes the installation of a replacement gate set further back from the main road, enhancing both functionality and highway safety.

The existing driveway, which extends to the rear of the site and already serves the retained outbuildings, will be maintained.

3 additional parking spaces including a wheelchair accessible space are proposed to create easy access to the front of the house. These spaces will be over 20m away from the street, and will be screened by existing planting and new hedging.

The surface of the existing drive and new additions is proposed in resin-bound gravel finish, providing a durable, permeable, and visually sympathetic alternative that suits the village setting, and an improvement on existing tarmac finishes.

The existing arrangement includes a garage with one parking space and two external spaces to the rear, which will be added to with an additional car port with EV charging, also at the back of the site to reduce visual impact. The car port will be located where there is currently already parking space.

A total of 7 spaces are available on site currently. It is proposed that a total of 8 spaces will be provided in the proposed plan to allow one additional space for the replacement house as this is larger than existing.

Ample space is provided for turning vehicles within the site, so that they can exit in a forward gear.

The house will be provided with level access, and inclusion of a lift suitable for wheelchairs, to future proof access to the whole house for our clients.

CONCLUSION

Our proposal for a replacement two-storey dwelling at Clear View Cottage has been developed through a careful and contextually based design process that responds sensitively to the village surroundings.

The design replaces a somewhat dilapidated, 2 storey house with an energy efficient 2 storey family home to suit the size of the unusually large plot.

The existing cottage could not be retained, as it could not meet client requirements for a highly energy efficient and modern house, with larger rooms and a modern layout. However, it is the intention to re-use some of the existing brick within the new building.

The replacement house respects local character while contributing positively to the architectural diversity of the area. Its symmetrical frontage fits in well with the scale and architecture of the street. The rear and side elevations provide architectural interest through inclusion of different styles, materials and shapes.

The existing house was set away from the street, and the proposal will retain a large front garden, and retain the trees on site. The set back from the street helps to reduce impact of the proposals on the street scene.

Overall, the design represents a thoughtful and site-specific response, delivering a dwelling that will enrich the architectural character of Whistley Green by providing a well considered addition to the local built environment.

On site renewables, including solar panels and Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed to help reduce energy consumption to well below current requirements. The choice of traditional materials such as brick and clay tiles should ensure the building will provide a family home of great quality and comfort.