

**OLIVER
LEECH**
ARCHITECTS

Design and Access Statement

Wheatlands, Rivar Road, Wiltshire SN8 3RL

February 2026

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Introduction

1.1 Project summary

1.1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by RIBA Chartered Practice Oliver Leech Architects in support of a planning application for Wheatlands, Rivar Road, Shalbourne, Wiltshire SN8 3RL.

1.1.2 This planning application seeks permission for alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings, landscaping and re-located driveway.

1.1.3 The proposed works will provide the applicant with a much improved, energy efficient and sustainable home. The fabric upgrades will make the house highly thermally efficient, to help meet the national carbon targets as set out within the NPPF.

1.1.4 The Applicant's vision has drawn on the following principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- › **To create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places** – NPPF Para. 131
- › **To ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping** – NPPF Para. 135(b)
- › **are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change** - NPPF Para. 135(c)
- › **To promote outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability and help raise the standard of design more generally in the area** – NPPF Para. 139

1.1.5 This document presents the site analysis, design development, and key principles that have informed the scheme.

Fig.1 Artist impression of new extension and entrance to house



The site & context

2.1 The site

2.1.1 The application site, named 'Wheatlands' is located on the eastern side of Rivar Road, with the village of Shalbourne to the north, and the hamlet of Rivar to the south.

2.1.2 The entire site encompasses about 6.5 acres, with the existing house curtilage set at its western edge, towards the road.

2.1.3 The house is set back from the road by approximately 15-20 metres. It has a private vehicular entrance directly off Rivar Road.

2.1.4 The site is surrounded on all sides by generally flat farmland, with a backdrop of the North Wessex Downs stretching out along its southeastern vista.

2.1.5 Shalbourne is a picturesque village with houses that date from the 16th and 17th centuries, and a pretty c12th church. The applicant site is located outside the village boundary and outside the conservation area, which covers most of the buildings in the village.

2.1.6 The nearest neighbours are to the immediate north of the site (Downside View). These semi-detached houses sit approximately 90m from the applicant property.

2.1.7 Due to the relative remoteness of the property, views of the house can only be obtained from the driveway access point, or above the hedges that line Rivar Road. The site is fairly well-contained with high hedgerows and trees along much of its boundary.

2.1.8 The site sits within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

2.1.9 There are not known to be any Tree Preservation Orders on the site.

Fig.2 Aerial view of applicant site



The site & context

2.2 Existing buildings

2.2.1 The existing house was built in 1994, entirely replacing an existing bungalow of a similar footprint that once existed on the site (assumed pre 1970s). Refer to application: K/21177

2.2.2 It consists of a two-storey main volume, with pitched clay-tile roofs and dormer windows. The walls are built from blockwork, faced in light green painted render. A single-storey pitched volume extends beyond the eastern elevation, forming an L-shaped footprint

2.2.3 There is also a two storey residential annex/garage. This building was erected at the same time (and under the same application) as the main house, and is built in matching materials. In 2004 a Lawful Development Certificate was granted confirming the use of this building as self-contained ancillary residential accommodation. Refer to application: K/50887/COL

2.2.4 Also in 1994, a replacement stable block was approved and subsequently built. This still stands today and sits to the north of the main house in similar materials. Refer to application: K/30789

2.2.5 The existing house has not been built to the high standards we expect today. The walls, floor and roof are poorly insulated, leading to excessive heat loss in the winter months and overheating in the summer months.

2.2.6 Our aim it to improve all the buildings site-wide to achieve very high standards of sustainable development, suitable for decades to come. There will be a focus on thermal upgrades to reduce lifetime carbon usage of the property.



Fig.3 Photo of west elevation two storey residential annex/garage



Fig.4 Photo of north elevation of stables



Fig.5 Photo of west elevation of main house



Fig.6 Photo of south elevation of stables

The site & context

2.3 Property history & curtilage

2.2.1 In 1994, the house, two storey residential annex/ garage, stables were built. These are all still standing today.

2.2.2 At a similar time the ménage was built for horses. It was not used as a business, but a hobby for the previous owners.

2.2.2 Sometime prior to 2014, a swimming pool was built to the east of the main house, with associated equipment.

2.2.3 From aerial photography (see images opposite) one can see a historic consistency in the domestic curtilage of the property.

2.2.4 In c.2005, the adjacent fields were brought into the same ownership as the land surrounding the house. A pool was built during this time that extended into the newly purchased land and has since formed part of the residential curtilage of the property.

2.2.5 Despite the residential curtilage having been extended when the swimming pool was constructed pre-2014, the proposals of this application remain within the formerly identified residential curtilage as shown in the 1999 photo, bar the re-lining and re-paving works associated with the swimming pool.

2.2.6 Significant environmental enhancements are being proposed both within the application site and adjacent land within the Applicants' ownership. These include the introduction of quality landscaping, enhancing existing planting by removing out of keeping hedging and replacing with native hedging, removing outbuildings and the ménage, as well as reinstating a wildflower meadow. The objective is to provide a more bio-diverse landscape more fitting for its setting within the National Landscape. Further details are provided in Chapter 3.3.

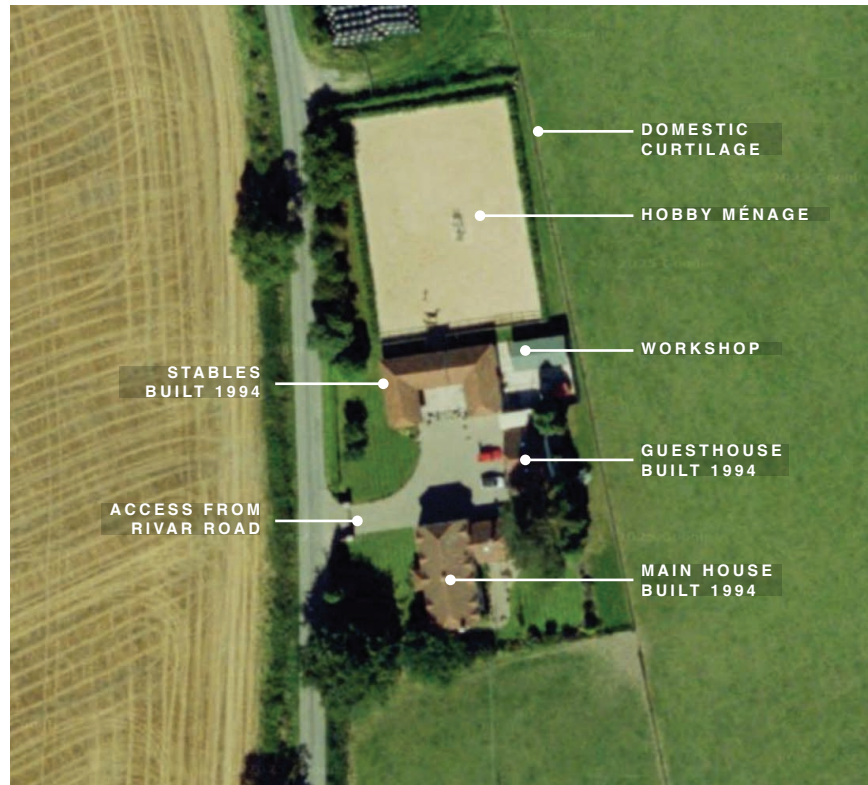


Fig.7 December 1999 (source: Google Earth)



Fig.8 February 2014 (source: Esri World Imagery Wayback)



Fig.9 July 2020 (source: Google Earth)



Fig.10 June 2024 (source: Google Earth)

Fig.11 Aerial imagery of the current site (source: Bing Maps)



Planning

2.4 Planning context

2.4.1 The Application Site falls outside a defined Limits of Development, within 'open countryside'. It also falls within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, but lies beyond the Shalbourne Conservation Area designation.

2.4.2 In support of this proposal, Core Policy 51 (Landscape) states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact on landscape character and particularly on special qualities of the National Landscape.

2.4.3 A 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is at the heart of the Framework, to deliver the economic, social and environmental objectives underpinning the document, outlined in paragraph 8. The policies of the NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system. The proposals, as set out in the following pages, aim to significantly upgrade the energy performance of the buildings, using modern air-tight building techniques coupled with low carbon technologies.

2.4.4 Further context and how the proposals comply with local policies are covered in detail within the Planning Statement.

2.4.5 There are no TPOs to any trees on the site, and there are no proposals to remove any trees within the site.

Proposals

3.1 Summary of design

3.1.1 The proposals relate to:

- **Extensions and Alterations to existing dwelling.**
- **Demolition of two storey residential annex/garage, stables, sheds and workshop building**
- **Erection of replacement outbuildings comprising garage/workshop, greenhouse, summerhouse, plant room and oil store**
- **Closure of existing vehicular access and its relocation off Rivar Road with new gate, driveway and parking areas**
- **Refurbishment of swimming pool**
- **Landscaping and associated works.**

3.1.2 Demolition of the existing outbuildings is sought to de-clutter the site, to enhance the immediate setting and improve the wider landscape, both visually and functionally.

3.1.3 The proposed new single-storey rear extension sits in a similar location to the existing two storey residential annex/garage. A new single-storey side extension links this to the existing house by wrapping around the northern elevation to create a more coherent visual language for the building.

3.1.4 The proposed new extensions will be more contemporary in appearance, but the chosen forms and materials will complement the existing house. A low lying pitched roof encloses new living quarters for the dwelling, with the roof overhangs protecting the windows from summer overheating and to provide outdoor sheltered spaces.

3.1.5 A new workshop and garage building provides replacement space for storage, garden machinery and car parking that would be otherwise lost due to demolition of annexe.

3.1.6 The new extension and workshop building are arranged to create a garden entrance courtyard, shielded from winds.

Fig.12 Artist impression of new extension rear elevation



Proposals

3.2 Site layout

3.2.1 Two principal changes proposed within this application. Firstly, the entrance into the site is proposed to change. The existing access off Rivar Road will be closed off (allowing continued pedestrian access / bin collection only). A new entrance will be created in the north western corner of the site, near to an existing access to neighbouring fields. These proposals are fully supported by the highway consultant (see separate report).

3.2.2 A new permeable gravel driveway will lead vehicles from the newly created entrance towards the house. The existing layout contained approx 1666m² of hardstanding including areas of concrete paving and hardstanding within the ménage. This will be removed, instead promoting permeable finishes (gravel and sandstone setts/paving).

3.2.3 It is currently challenging to access Rivar Road from the current site entrance due to poor visibility. As shown in the Highway Report, the proposed new location of the driveway will provide a safer access to Rivar Road.

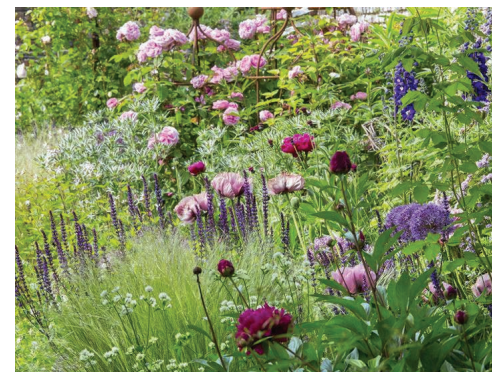
3.2.4 The second principal change is to de-clutter the existing site, demolishing the existing stables, two storey residential annex/garage and workshop buildings. In their place, a new garage and workshop will be erected, running east-west to benefit from a south facing roof for PV panels.

3.2.5 The new extension is set on a north-south axis to benefit from the views across the wildflower meadows to the hills beyond. As a result of this intentional layout of the buildings, two garden 'courtyards' are created. A 'gravel garden' becomes a richly planted entrance courtyard, whilst a south facing 'potager picking garden' allows the existing house to maintain unobstructed views eastwards.

3.2.6 The layout and landscaping proposals were designed in collaboration with Justin Spink and have been developed to enhance the setting within the National Landscape.

Fig.13 Proposed site plan





Proposals

3.3 Landscaping (by Justin Spink)

3.3.1 The proposed changes to the garden at Wheatlands are light touch in nature and are intended to improve both the functional use of the garden and its appearance. They would be implemented in a way that is appropriate and sympathetic to the architecture of the house and its setting.

3.3.2 It is judged that the changes would improve the overall character of the National Landscape, in particular through the following:

- **Tree planting** – extensive tree planting is proposed to enhance the character of the setting, including native trees such as beech, oak, walnut and hawthorn, alongside other trees that are suitable for the site to increase biodiversity.
- **Wildflower meadow** – the establishment of a wildflower meadow in the field to the south and east of the property is already underway. This would continue to be managed according to best practice, enhancing the native flora and creating a haven for wildlife. Fencing would be kept to a minimum to allow wildlife corridors across the site.
- **Native hedges** – the design for the garden includes the removal of Leyland cypress hedging (*Cupressocyparis leylandii*) on the west and north boundaries. This is out of keeping with the setting and offers limited benefit to wildlife. It would be replaced with native hedging such as beech, holly and yew. As well as enhancing the character of the area, this new native hedging would also help to screen the property from the road.

3.3.3 In implementing the proposed landscaping changes, existing materials would be reused where possible. Where new materials are needed, these would be selected to link aesthetically to the house and the local area. These materials include sandstone paving and setts, and timber decking.

3.3.4 The proposed changes to the garden and ménage would be a visual enhancement to the setting of the house.

Proposals

3.4 Massing & scale

3.4.1 The proposals have been carefully designed to be sympathetic to the host dwelling, with an overall improvement to the site and to the wider area.

3.4.2 The ridge height of the first-floor extension roof has been kept intentionally lower (300mm lower) than that of the existing house, to retain subservience. This extension will be discreet and be clearly read as part of the same language as the existing house, using similar matching materials for coherent visual appearance.

3.4.3 The rear single storey extension is treated slightly differently and has been designed to not match but to complement the existing house, but with a clear character of its own. It has been kept intentionally lower than the building it replaces - the ridge is 1m lower than the existing annexe - so as to not block views from the first floor of the house. The low-lying roof has other benefits including creating a deep roof overhang to protect the building from overheating and create usable covered outdoor space. Due to the low pitch a zinc finish has been preferred (clay tiles cannot be used on such a pitch).

3.4.4 The extensions will have large expanses of glazing which will soften the massing offering views through, reflections and interaction with the surrounding gardens and landscape.

3.4.5 The new garage/workshop roof will be clad in a matching clay tile to that of the main house, and the ridge has been kept lower than the height of the existing stables (250mm lower). The outbuildings are materially smaller in overall size than the existing outbuildings on the site. Clad in timber these will be more utilitarian in character and more appropriate for garden outbuildings.

3.4.6 The proposed built-forms are not substantially larger than the existing in volumetric terms and smaller in relation to total footprint and floor areas - please refer to Appendix at the rear of this document for full area calculations.



Fig.14 Silhouette comparison

Proposals

3.5 Materiality & appearance

3.5.1 The materials used externally have been carefully considered to respect and complement the existing house, and improve the character of the setting.

3.5.2 The propose includes upgrading the existing house externally, with breathable external insulation with a natural lime render finish, a traditional local material. This upgrade is part of a wider fabric improvement of the existing building to reduce energy consumption and use of carbon through heating. The brown/red tiled roofs are repeated on the first floor extension and garage building.

3.5.3 The single storey ground floor extension is faced in handmade brick in a pale buff colour that from a distance will match the colour of the lime render. Once close to the building an appreciation will be gained of the subtle difference and the beauty of the brickwork.

3.5.4 Due to the low pitch of the roof a standing seam roof has been proposed in a pale natural finish. This will tie the house in with its surrounding, picking up the pale blue/ grey hues of the sky. Choosing a pale colour rather than red/brown allows the existing house to remain dominant and therefore the extension is more subtle and subservient. Zinc is durable, sustainable and recyclable. Importantly it is also lightweight allowing low roof pitches and open spans beneath.

3.5.5 A mixture of painted and exposed timber framing to windows will be used, to match in with the existing house. Timber cladding is proposed for the garage/ workshop as more appropriate and commonly used on garden buildings. In this way these buildings remain secondary to the main house, and subservient in nature.

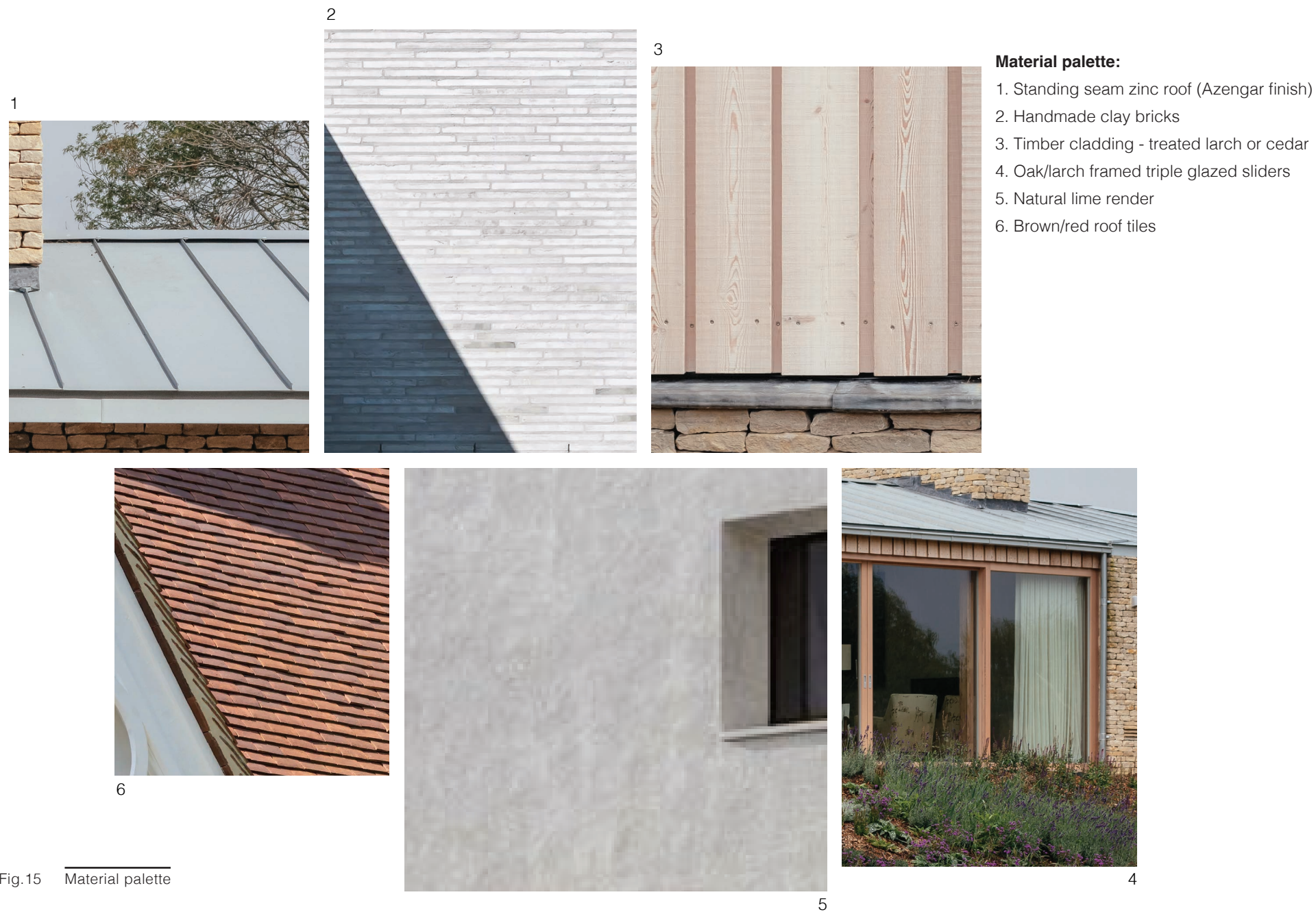


Fig.15 Material palette

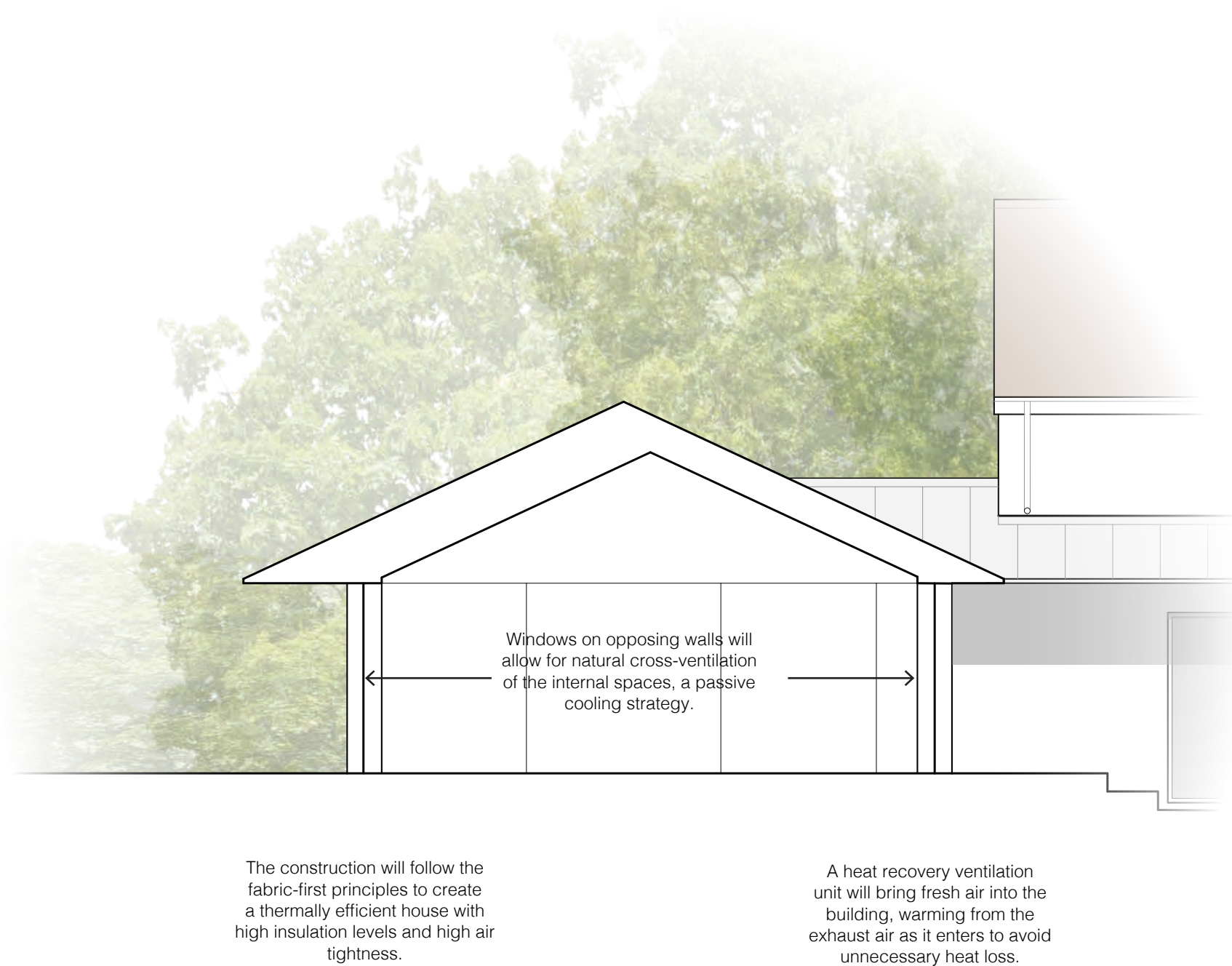


Fig.16 Sustainability diagram

Proposals

3.6 Construction & sustainability

3.6.1 The existing house is built to poorer standards than we would expect nowadays. It is built from concrete blockwork with little insulation, and poor airtightness, meaning the house uses far more energy than it should.

3.6.2 The existing house will undergo a deep retrofit, increasing insulation to all existing fabric, new glazing and improved airtightness.

3.6.3 The proposed new extension will be built using timber frame construction reducing total embodied carbon when compared with traditional masonry construction. Precision engineered timber panels built off-site mean there is little material wastage, and reduces water consumption during the build.

3.6.4 The timber structure will allow for a highly insulated envelope that meets high standards of air-tightness. The design aims for u-values that will far exceed building regulations and reduce overall energy consumption. Materials will be locally sourced wherever possible. This will ensure low embodied energy from transportation.

3.6.5 Through high levels of insulation and a combination of active and passive ventilation strategies, the building will be able to self-regulate in response to different climatic conditions throughout the year.

3.6.6 Glazing at ground floor level is protected from unwanted solar gain by a deep roof overhang on all sides. Dual aspect spaces enable the spaces to naturally ventilate, providing comfortable spaces in both winter and summer.

3.6.7 Solar photo-voltaic panels are proposed to the south facing roof of the garage. Coupled with batteries this will significantly reduce the overall energy consumption of the house, especially during summer when electricity consumption from the grid will be negated.

Proposals

3.7 Parking & access

3.7.1 The access to the site will be changed. The existing access block off, remaining only accessible for pedestrians and for bins. A new access is being proposed in the northwest corner of the site. This is covered in detail in the accompanying Planning Statement and Highways Consultant Report.

3.7.2 The new entrance gate will be sited back from the highway in the proposed design, allowing a car to pull off the road completely whilst entering the site. Currently, visitors and delivery vans block the highway which is dangerous. The proposed design will improve safety from cars both leaving and entering the site, and any passing cars.

3.7.2 There will be adequate on-site parking for three or more cars.

3.8 Water management & drainage

3.8.1 Surface water will be reduced and drained naturally where possible, with minimal hard landscaping. Water collected on roofs will be collected in water butts or rainwater harvesting tanks to be used for irrigating the garden.

3.8.2 The existing house is connected a septic tank for foul drainage and this principle will be maintained.

3.8.3 Consideration has been given to the choice of external landscaping materials in respect to drainage. The perimeter veranda of decking allows permeable drainage, along with limited soil disturbance, and the drive surface would be permeable. There is an overall reduction in non permeable finishes due to the removal of the existing concrete hard-standings.

3.9 Dark skies

3.9.1 The proposals acknowledge the North Wessex Downs 'Dark Skies' policies, and light pollution will be minimised. There will be no garden uplighting to avoid unnecessary light pollution. External lights will be set on timers and/or PIR movement sensors to turn off when not in use, with hoods to prevent spillage. All glazed rooflights will have window coverings. Light fittings will not be pointed out of windows or rooflights.

3.10 Bats & Ecology

3.10.1 A bat survey was commissioned by the applicants. Please refer to the enclosed Bat Survey Report by Daniel Ahern Ecology. The recommendations contained within this report will be strictly followed. It is additionally proposed to add four swift boxes within the elevations of the proposed buildings, one hedgehog house and one insect block.

3.11 Biodiversity

3.11.1 The applicants' vision for the project is to enhance the home and its setting in the wonderful local landscape. A key part of delivering this vision is to improve upon the biodiversity of the site.

3.11.2 The applicants commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain Report (see separate report by Wessex Ecology). This reported the proposals will yield a 191.4% Net Gain in Biodiversity.

Fig.17 Artist impression of the new extension interior



Proposals

3.12 About Oliver Leech Architects

3.12.1 Oliver Leech Architects is a RIBA Chartered Architecture practice based in London. The studio has a growing portfolio of private commissions and has a strong reputation for designing buildings of exceptional quality that are sympathetic to their context. Their projects have been shortlisted for regional and national awards as well as being widely published in architectural press. The studio was a finalist for Young Architect of the Year 2023 and House Architect of the Year 2025.

3.13 Conclusion

3.13.1 The applicants greatly admire and respect the rural setting of the property within the wider National Landscape. Their vision is to transform the environmental quality of the site through sympathetic architecture, appropriate refurbishment and substantial landscape improvements, in particular tree planting.

3.13.2 The proposal offers a chance to respond to the growing concerns of global warming and the Government 2050 Government emissions target by providing a carbon neutral, energy efficient family home.

3.13.3 For all of the reasons set out in this report, we consider the proposal to be high quality, sympathetically designed and designed in accordance with relevant policies.



Fig.18 New build house in the Cotswolds, completed 2022. Finalist for British Home of the Year 2023.



Fig.19 New build house completed in Esher, Surrey, 2022. Finalist for British Home of the Year 2023, and Wood Awards 2023.



Fig.20 New build house completed in Houghton, Hampshire, 2024. Winner of British Home House of the Year 2025

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Appendix: A

Area and volume calculations

	EXISTING HOUSE			REVISED DESIGN		
Floor Areas						
	Volume (m3)	Footprint (m2)	GIA (m2)	Volume (m3)	Footprint (m2)	GIA (m2)
Ground Floor (A)	996.0	185.9	157.5	1,551.8	311.2	275.0
First Floor (A)			132.3			157.6
Self-contained annexe and garage (B)	271.8	60.0	86.0			
Sub-total Accomodation	1,267.8	245.9	375.8	1,551.8	311.2	432.6
Stables (C)	491.0	111.7	95.4			
Workshop (D)	111.7	33.1	30.0	320.4	72.0	63.2
Sheds (E,F)	50.4	30.0	27.0			
Greenhouse				44.1	18.3	16.9
Summer house				25.0	10.0	8.5
Sub-total Outbuildings	653.1	174.8	152.4	389.5	100.3	88.6
Grand total	1,920.9	420.7	528.2	1,941.3	411.5	521.2
Hardstandings						
Hard landscaping			636.0			257.0
Horse ménage			1,030.0			
Gravelled areas						657.1
Sub-total Outbuildings	0.0	0.0	1,666.0	0.0	0.0	914.1

The liability of Oliver Leech Architects Ltd in respect of the information contained in the document will not

Appendix: B

Fire Statement

Information on space provisions for fire appliances and assembly points

The drive to the front is available to the property for the positioning of fire appliances, and either the driveway or the rear garden is suitable as an evacuation assembly point. There is vehicle access for a pump appliance to within 45m of all points within the dwelling house, with access from the road.

Information on passive and active safety measures

A mains operated fire alarm and detection system, as described in BS5839-6: 2004, will be installed within the circulation spaces.

Passive measures are also proposed, internally timber finishes where applicable will be treated with suitably rated surface spread of flame retardants in accordance with Building Regulations and to the BCO's requirements.

Information and data on construction products and materials

If required, new steel-work elements of structure supporting floors will achieve a 30 or 60 minutes fire-resistance in accordance with Building Regulations.

Information on means of escape and evacuation strategy

A considered and robust means of escape strategy is integrated into the design which meets the minimum requirements for a single family dwelling. As the proposed design is a two storey dwelling, every habitable room will be provided with an escape window or door.

Information on access and equipment for firefighting

All entrance doors are manually operated.