

windmill hill, 21

planning application - 31 August 2008

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21 windmill hill - architect's statement

analysis of surrounding area

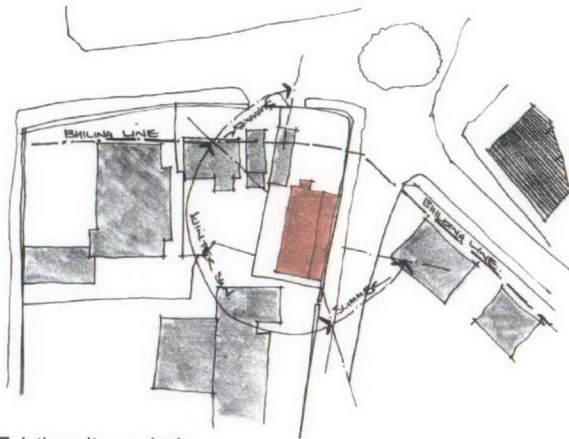
The site is located at the western end of Windmill Hill at the junction of Lower Terrace and Admiral's Walk. The existing property, a two storied detached dwelling house, is within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

The area around 21 Windmill Hill is predominantly suburban, with mostly substantial free-standing family houses surrounded by gardens.

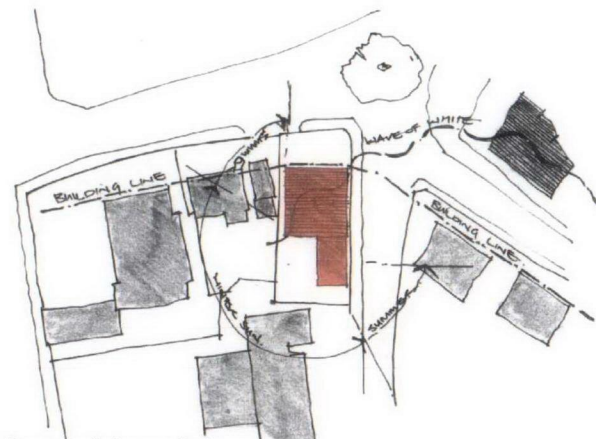
Hampstead is characterized by its mixture of architectural styles, and the area around 21 Windmill hill demonstrates this clearly, with its mixture of Georgian, Edwardian, Arts and Crafts and also 60's, 70's and 90's buildings. Not all of which can be considered good examples of the Architecture of the period, but all are houses which are true to the time in which they were built.

21 Windmill Hill is bordered to the west on Lower Terrace by the a doubled storied Edwardian Villa with its pitched slate tiled roofs and wide eaves, on Windmill Hill by a single storied 1960's/ 70's house (which although it has a large footprint is not visible from the road) and the modernist Fleet House and 1970's Broadside House on Admiral's Walk. Perched over and looking at the site is the white rendered gothic Terrace Lodge and further up the hill the white clapboarded Admiral's House. These white houses relate to each other, and also to other rendered and clapboard houses in the area, creating a pleasant foil to the red and yellow stock brick buildings which surround them. On the opposite side of the road overlooking 21 Windmill Hill are a row of two and three storied Georgian townhouses.

It is an area where over the centuries individual owners have engaged architects to build new family homes. This tradition continues. Camden Council encourages the building of good contemporary houses over pastiche replicas and gives planning permission for buildings of Architectural merit even where they replace existing buildings. In the immediate vicinity of 21 Windmill Hill is a recently built house designed by the architect Rick Mather which the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (HCAS) notes as being 'a unique building that may not echo the material of the area but makes a distinct contribution of its own to the conservation area'.



Existing site analysis

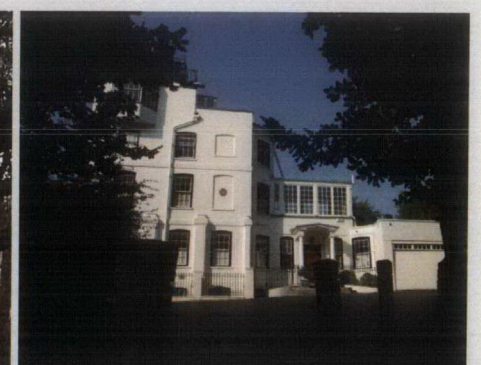


Proposed site analysis



The ethos of the Hampstead Conservation Area is to retain the character and spirit of the area by identifying and protecting houses which are good examples of the architecture of the age and encouraging where appropriate new houses which are contemporary, well considered and which will add to and continue its legacy.

The UDP states that 'the council seeks to encourage outstanding architecture and design, both in contemporary and more traditional styles. Innovative and imaginative design can play an important role in the enhancement and renewal of the built environment. Unless a development is within an area of homogeneous architectural style of a high standard that is important to retain, high quality contemporary designs within the policy framework will be welcomed'.



analysis of existing house

21 Windmill Hill has been identified in the HCAS as a building which does not make a positive contribution to the special character of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

The existing house is a two storied brick dwelling house which was built just before the second world war on land which previously formed part of the garden of Frogal Rise House.

The town planning scheme no3. Map of 1933 (which includes the tube station opened in 1907) does not indicate 21 Windmill Hill. The sub-division of the garden of Frogal Rise is haphazard with three houses, 14 Lower Terrace, 21 Windmill Hill and then 22 Windmill Hill, all being built on the land. 14 Lower terrace is an Art and Crafts villa, 22 Windmill Hill is sprawling 1970's house, and 21 Windmill Hill , a pastiche Georgian rectory with various later additions.

21 Windmill Hill sits awkwardly on its small site, hemmed in on all sides. The formal south west elevation is pushed against the south west boundary. The house does not relate to the houses on Lower Terrace or the houses on Admiral's Walk, as it sits back from the street front, and does not take the best advantage of its aspect, as regards views and sunlight.

The rather awkward mix of architectural styles and finishes can be best seen in the north west elevation facing Lower Terrace. The facade is made up of London stocks with rough pointing at ground and first floor level and with a red brick cornice above. The roof is finished with very heavy interlocking concrete pan tiles and an incongruous bay window which protrudes from the first floor level is finished in cement render . Further extensions have in-filled the gap between the house and the brick boundary wall which is punctured with a mixture of windows and doors.

Surrounding the property is a red brick garden wall which formed the boundary of Frogal Rise House, built in the early 19th century. It has a relationship with the Georgian houses opposite and has a patina of age which cannot be replicated. The wall is very beautiful and in our opinion makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and therefore should be repaired, retained and accentuated.



the proposal

The proposed scheme is to demolish the existing 2 storey building and the erection of a 2 storied (with basement) contemporary house, which includes 4 bedrooms..

acceptability of the proposed demolition of an unlisted property in a conservation area

Policy B7b states that the Council will resist the loss of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of conservation areas. The existing building has been identified in the HCAS as making a neutral contribution to the Hampstead Conservation Area.

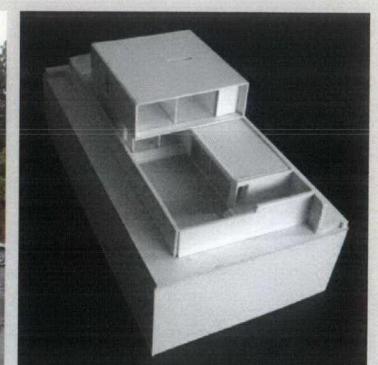
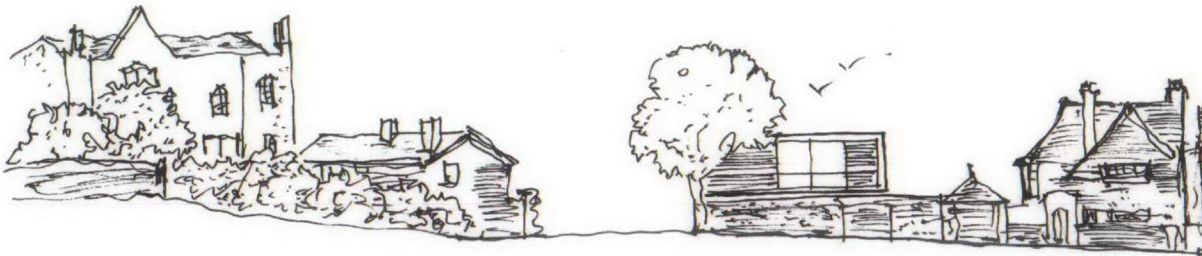
As noted above, the house is an awkward and unresolved mix of styles and materials with various unsympathetic additions. The house is neither a good example of Architecture, nor authentic to its age. As a building, it does not relate well to the neighbouring houses nor does it take full advantage of the site. It is therefore understandable why its contribution to the conservation area is considered to be neutral.

B7 states that "in all other cases consent for demolition will normally be granted only where it can be shown that the building detracts from the character of the area or where the contribution of the replacement, when compared with that of the existing building, would be more or equal benefit to the conservation area ". 21 Windmill Hill has been identified as having a neutral impact on the Conservation Area, and we contend that the new house, because of its design, materials and attention to detail will be of more or equal benefit to the conservation area.

design and massing

The design, bulk, appearance and choice of materials of the proposed replacement property has been carefully considered.

The height, scale, massing and proportions and bulk of the house are informed by and respects its context. The generator of the house design was the existing red brick wall which surrounds the house on two sides. From the street all that will be seen of the new house will be the rendered box which will float slightly above the brick wall, the mellow old bricks acting as a foil to the crispness of the contemporary architecture.



The proposed house, like the existing, is completely detached. By being sited closer to Lower Terrace than the existing house, the street corner will be emphasized and the Street Elevation strengthened. The proposed house creates a more consistent building line and a better sense of enclosure to the street than the existing building.

The ground floor is designed as a courtyard house, blurring the boundaries between inside and outside. The external courtyard becomes part of the house with the existing red brick garden wall providing a sense of enclosure.

The first floor is a rendered white box. The East and West Elevations are largely transparent, with timber screens that provide privacy and sun shading.

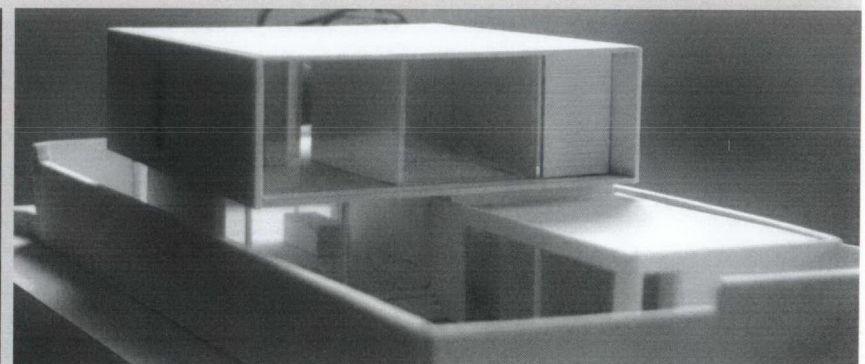
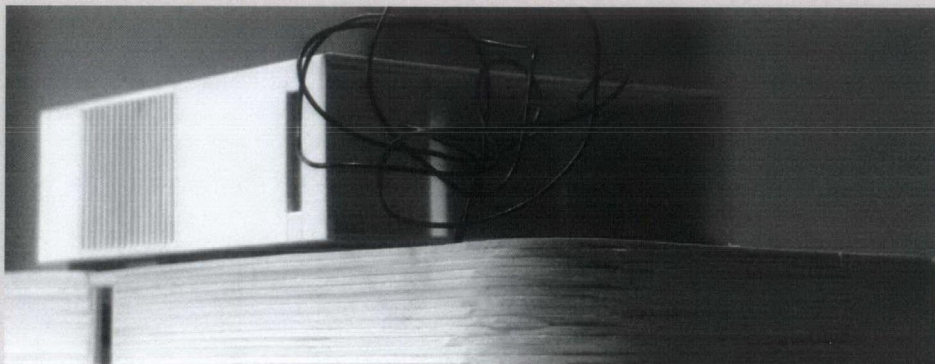
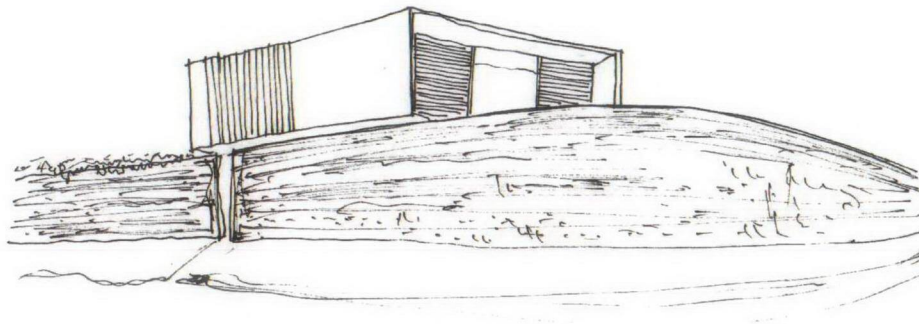
The 'white box' picks up on the white render and white painted weather boarding of Admiral's House and Terrace Lodge. These houses, which create a ribbon of white which snakes long the ridge and cascades down the hill, contrast pleasantly with the brick of the surrounding houses. 21 Windmill Hill will continue the cascade of white further down the hill.

The flat roof of the proposed house will sit 1.5m below the ridge of the existing house. This roof will be visible from the Georgian terrace houses on Lower Terrace, and we therefore propose to clad the roof in stone. Further we propose that the flat roof of the single storeyed portion of the house, which sits lower than the garden brick wall, be a green roof planted with grasses and wild flowers.

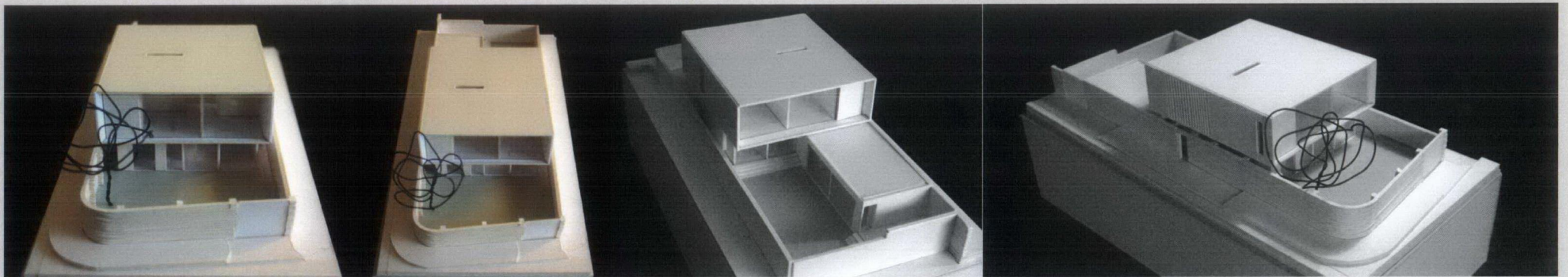
Like Terrace Lodge and 14 Lower Terrace, the proposed house is picturesque, a sculptural form in the cityscape. Traditional materials, brick, render, timber and stone will be used in a contemporary way and will weather naturally over time.

The overall design approach is contemporary, innovative and creative and results in a contextual addition to the street. We consider our proposal to be a great improvement on the existing property, incorporating a higher standard and quality of design, in accordance with policy B1.

The new house will, we contend, continue the tradition of good contemporary architecture which is characteristic of the Hampstead Conservation Area. Paul+O Architects is an architectural practice which is committed to designing outstanding contemporary buildings which are both contextual and an appropriate response to their site conditions. Paul+O Architects achieved planning permission in 2003 for a new country house in Suffolk under PPG7.



In contrast to many houses which were granted planning permission under this legislation which were pastiche replicas, the country house design by Paul+O Architects was contemporary but used traditional building materials, flint, render and timber. The planning submission was supported by CABE, as well as the Suffolk Preservation Society and since it was built, the house has been shortlisted for a number of awards. The same integrity of design and attention to detail invested in the construction on this country house will also be invested at 21 Windmill Hill.



impact on residential amenity

overlooking

The overlooking from the proposed house will be no greater than the existing building. The current house has windows in all the elevations at second floor level. The proposed house has large windows on the north west and south east elevations only. Any overlooking onto the houses on Windmill Hill or the adjacent house on Lower Terrace is reduced. The house has been designed to give both our clients and their neighbours more privacy.

The Georgian houses in Lower Terrace are at a sufficient distance to ensure that views from the new house would be limited and could not be considered to be unreasonable and is not greater than the current overlooking. The views from and onto the windows in the north west elevation will further be reduced by the incorporation into the design of timber screens.

The windows on the South East elevation are further away than the existing windows from the south eastern boundary of the property. They overlook, at a distance, the roof of 22 Windmill hill, and again there is no significant increase in overlooking.

views

There are no planning policies to protect against the views of occupants towards / over public views, and we would contend that the new house does not compromise the amenities of the adjoining properties. The new flat roof is 1.5m lower below that of the existing ridge line and will be clad in stone.

light pollution

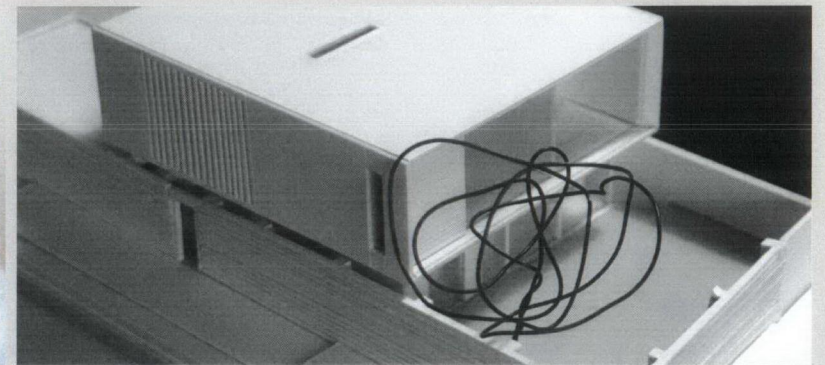
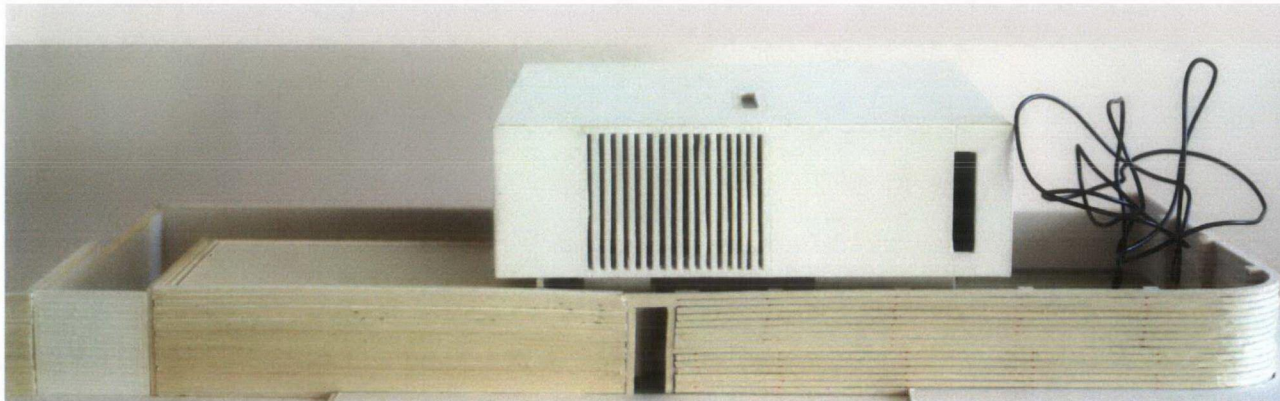
Additional light pollution will be minimal. Although much of the ground floor is glazed the top of the windows sits below the level of the brick wall and light spillage will be contained by the perimeter wall. The windows at first floor level will, in addition to the internal blinds, have external timber screens.

sunlight and daylight levels

The proposed house is designed to take full advantage of the sun and daylight and will not overshadow the neighbouring houses or reduce the natural daylight more than the existing house.

the quality of the accommodation for the future occupants

The proposed dwelling house comprises 3 levels: basement, ground, and first floor.



The basement comprises of laundry, spare bedroom, bathroom and games room. Full height glazing ensures sufficient light and ventilation into these rooms.

The ground floor accommodates 1no. off-street parking space (which replaces the existing garage), an open plan kitchen/dining/living space, playroom and study. The large sliding glass windows link the internal spaces seamlessly to the external courtyard. A new brick wall, using a similar soft red brick of the existing garden wall, is proposed along the western boundary of the house to create an enclosed courtyard giving privacy to both the proposed house and 14 Lower Terrace.

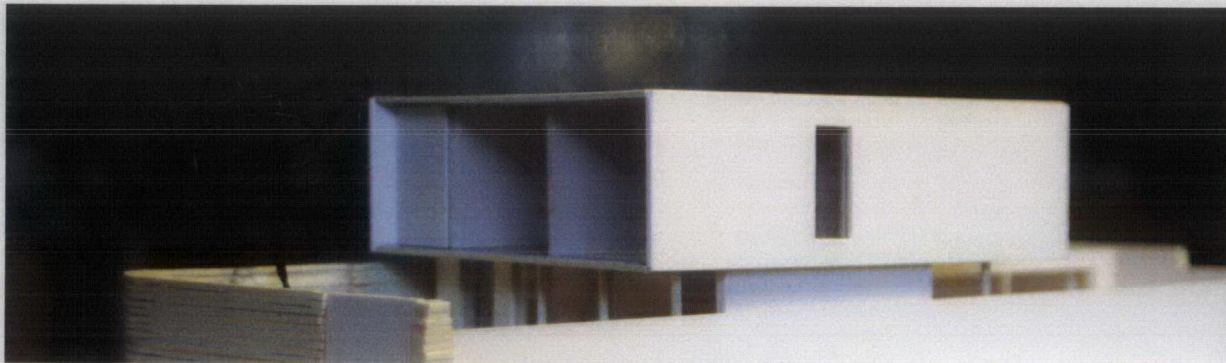
The first floor consists of the main bedroom, two additional bedrooms and two bathrooms. Full height glazed sliding windows provide access from all the bedrooms onto a narrow verandah. Timber screens will provide privacy and solar-shading. All bedrooms are of a generous size and all rooms receive adequate daylight, sunlight and outlook.

The size of the garden is retained to ensure sufficient outdoor space, which combined with the large open plan kitchen / living room will create a house which is ideal for family living.

Our client initially thought of making extensive alterations to the existing house. We put forward a number of proposals to ascertain whether the existing house, which has already been added to in piecemeal fashion, could be modified to make a better living space more suited to our clients needs. It quickly became evident that a much better layout could be achieved by demolishing the existing house and building a new one. Because the proposed house is not considered to make a positive contribution to the area, our clients saw this as an opportunity to commission a new house which might be a very good example of contemporary Architecture. With careful design and considered use of materials, this house would not only suit their needs better but would make a positive contribution to the surrounding area.

disabled access

The existing house sits around 800mm lower than the existing street level. Consequently the living areas are accessed down a set of steps making disabled access difficult. The proposed house will have level access from the street to the living areas. Although there are no bedrooms at ground floor level the proposed playroom and study could if required be converted into a bedroom and plumbing will be installed for future provision of a disabled bathroom. Provision will also be made for a stair lift where a level change is proposed.



sustainability

The UDP seeks to achieve sustainable new development of the highest quality in the most sustainable locations while protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment. It aims to improve the quality of life of the people who live, work in and visit the borough.

The new house is positioned so that it makes the most of the sunshine and daylight.

The existing house is reasonably dark and damp, and for this reason the client currently keeps the heating on for most of the year, including much of the summer, to keep the house warm and dry.

The proposed house will be filled with light. Good cross ventilation, coupled with the overhangs and timber screens will ensure that the house is cool in summer, but more importantly, the double glazed sliding windows at ground floor combined with stone floors will ensure that the house has natural thermal gain in the winter.

The house will have low temperature underfloor heating and we are currently investigating the feasibility of ground source heat pump to provide the heat for this and for domestic hot water.

The house has been designed for maximum energy efficiency. The proposed external walls will be 300mm concrete with insulation. The proposed windows will all be 8.10.8 double glazed with argon gas with a U-value of 1.5w/(m²k). This will ensure that the new building exceeds the overall u-values requirements under the current building regulations.

Our client is very aware and wants to ensure the use of non-toxic building materials. Sustainable materials will be given careful consideration when specifying. Water use will be minimised with the installation of a grey water recycling tank which will collect rainwater for flushing toilets and washing facilities.

trafficing and parking

The proposal includes off-street parking to replace the existing garage.

impact on adjoining trees

No mature trees, street trees or trees with a preservation order on them will be affected by the development.

