

Design and Access Statement
New house at Ellerdale Road
Rear of 87 Fitzjohn's Avenue

London

NW3 6NY

By

HENNING
STUMMEL
ARCHITECTS Ltd

3	Proposal History
4	Topography Current appearance
5	Access Pre-application
7	The commission
10	Policy Character of the conservation area Nature of this development
11	Design
13	Proposed floor plan Locating the house on the land
15	Generating the spaces
16	Dealing with storage- keeping spaces uncluttered
17	The roof
18	Chimney
19	Roof lights
20	Height and scale Materiality
21	Glazed bricks
22	The courtyard Access Refuse and Cycle storage
23	Amenity space
24	Appearance from the outside
25	Sustainability Amenity Transport Construction Management Plan
26	Summary

The application relates to a double garage site at the rear of 87 Fitzjohn Road, located on the south side of Ellerdale Road and in the Fitzjohn's Netherhall Conservation Area. Ellerdale Road falls steeply westwards from Fitzjohn's Avenue. Surrounding buildings principally date back to 1870s.



Aerial view of the site

Proposal

The proposal seeks to demolish the existing garage and provide a one storey, one bedroom dwelling house that meets the requirements of life time houses. This will be a car-free development.

History

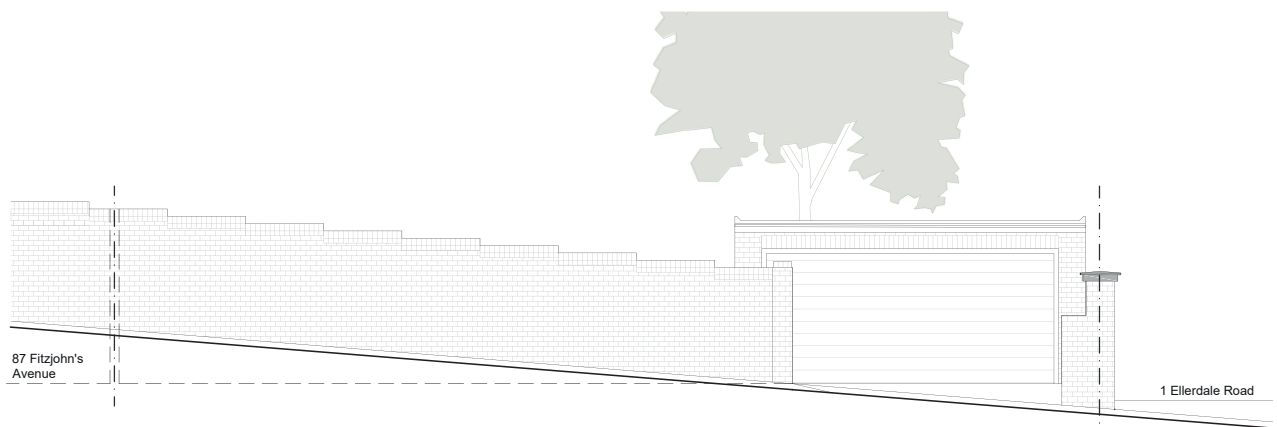
Formerly the plot was part of 87 Fitzjohn's Avenue. Presumably the large house was split into apartments and direct access from house to garden was limited to the lower ground floor apartment, which still has a sizeable and well maintained planted courtyard. The remaining garden must have been sold off separately. A double garage with access drive was built at the Western end of the disposed garden, taking up about 40% of the garden plot. The remaining garden area was left and is now completely overgrown. Our clients purchased the land in 1995 and have used the site for the storage of their cars.



Fitzjohn's Netherhall Conservation Area in 1894, 1915 and 1934



Historic picture of Fitzjohn's Avenue



Existing elevation of the site from Ellerdale Road

Topography

The plot of about eight and half meters by fifteen and half meters runs parallel with the pavement. Whilst the pavement slopes down towards the West, the land within the garden walls is fairly level, so that it lines up with the lower ground floor of the Villa at 87 Fitzjohn's Avenue. It is only at the western end of the site, that the level within the site matches that of the sloping Ellerdale Road.

Current appearance

Apart from access to the double garage, the plot is surrounded by substantial brick walls. The northern boundary of the garden is built of stock bricks and as the site falls off there are incremental steps in the wall. Through-out its length however the wall is always at least six foot in height, so that the site is hidden from view and passers by would not be aware of its neglected state.



Current appearance (view from Ellerdale Road)

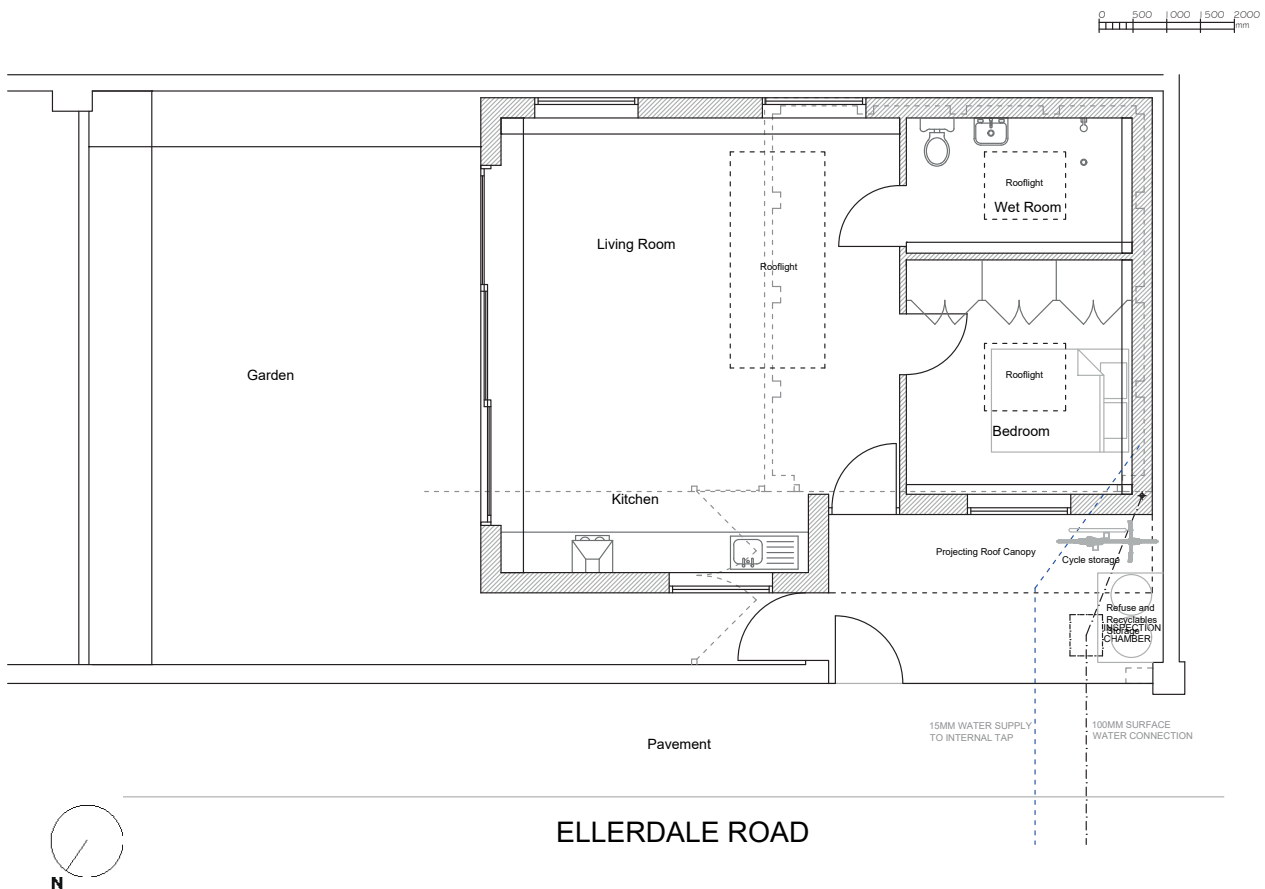
Access

Barrier free access to the site is at this location, where the site level and street levels align.

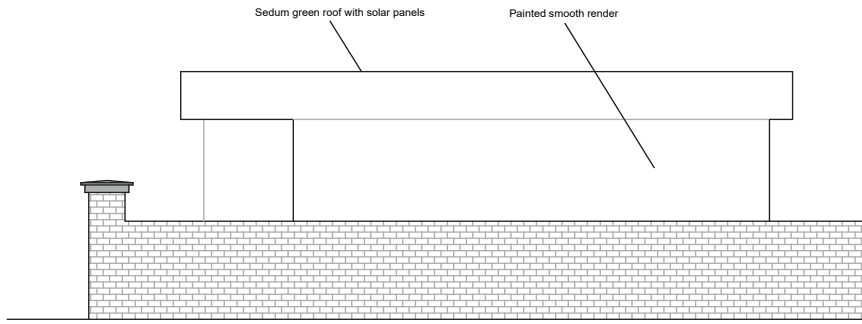
Pre-application

A pre-application was lodged in February 2016 under ref. 2015/6205/PRE. This was for a one bed house and whilst still conceived of as a freestanding house the development towards a courtyard solution can be seen.

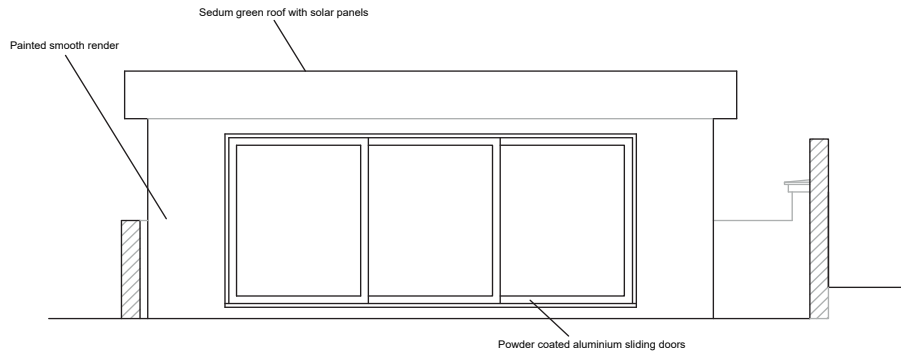
The positive feedback encouraged the clients to seek an architect to further pursue and refine this project.



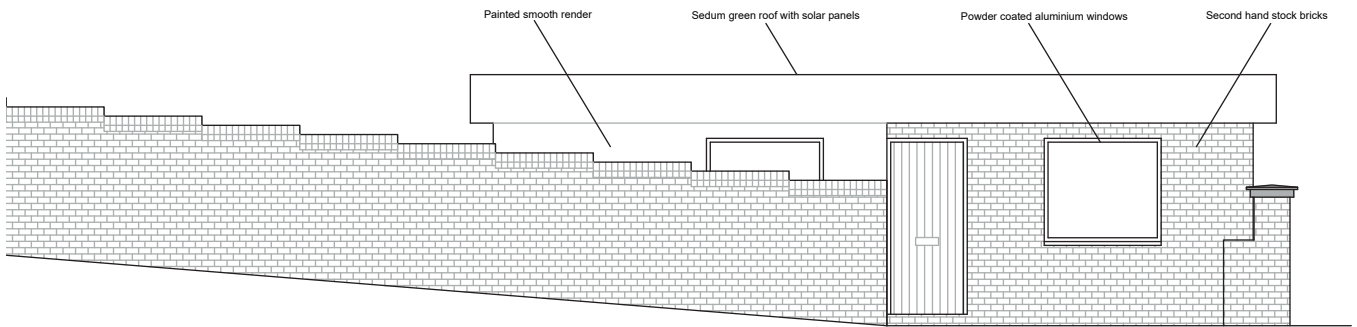
Pre-application floor plan



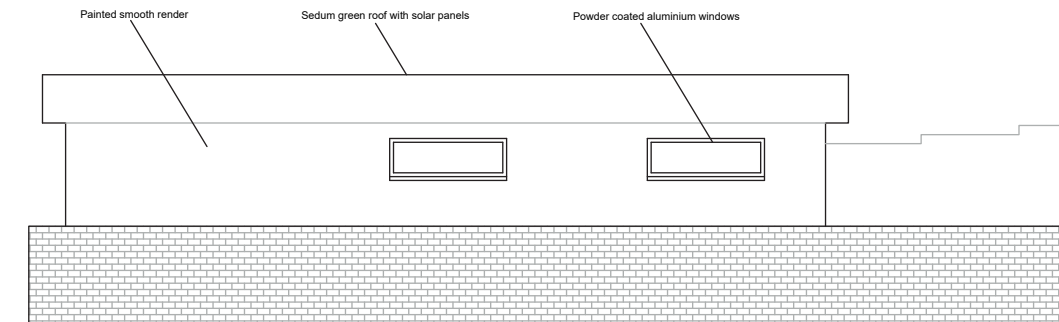
Side (south west) Elevation



Side (north east) Elevation



Front (north west) Elevation



Rear (south east) Elevation



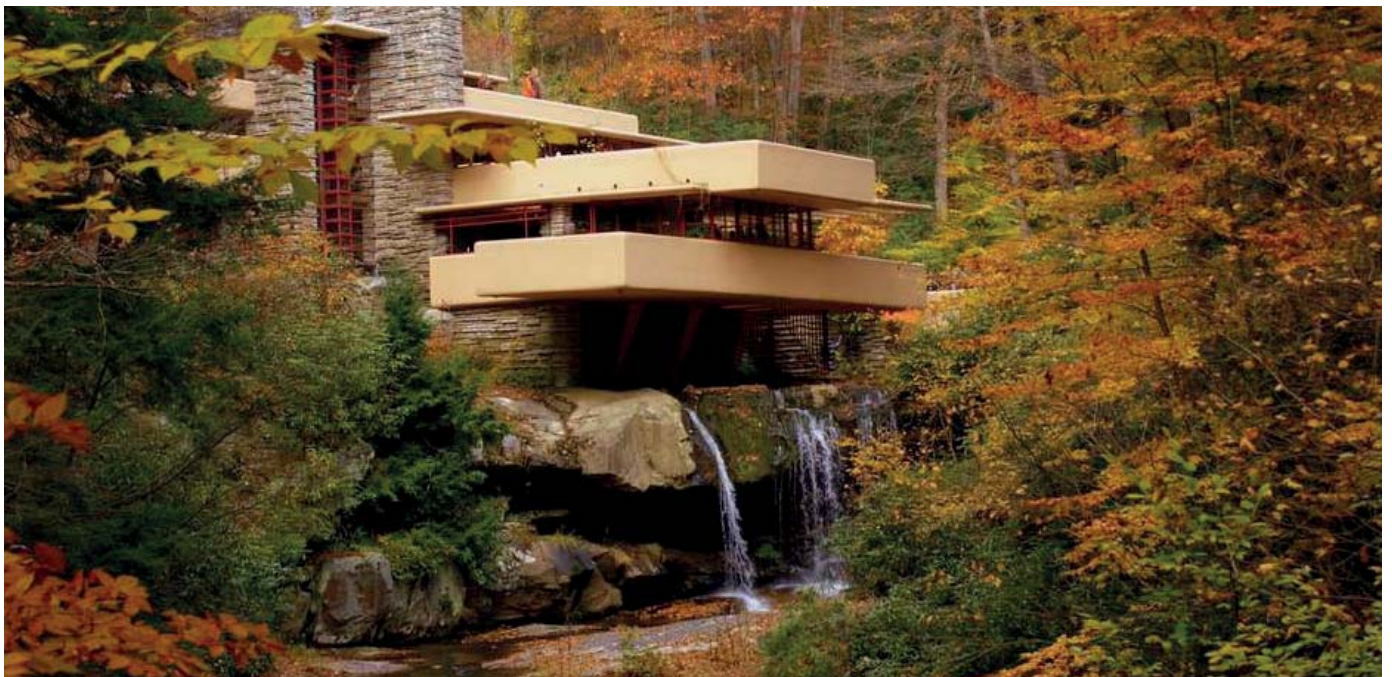
Pre-application elevations

The commission

The client has a real appreciation for modern art and architecture. On a trip to the States the client enjoyed experiencing architecture of Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright. Particularly the simplicity, modesty and refinement of the Farnsworth House left a great impression.



Farnsworth house



Fallingwater house



Henning Stummel Architects 'The Tin House'

The client and her family enjoyed visiting our project, Tin House in West London and commissioned us to design a small courtyard house for this plot in Hampstead.



The Tin House:

RIBA London Award
2016

Most Innovative
House

Homebuilding
& Renovating/
Telegraph

Shortlisted:
RIBA Stephen Lawrence
Prize

RIBA House of the Year

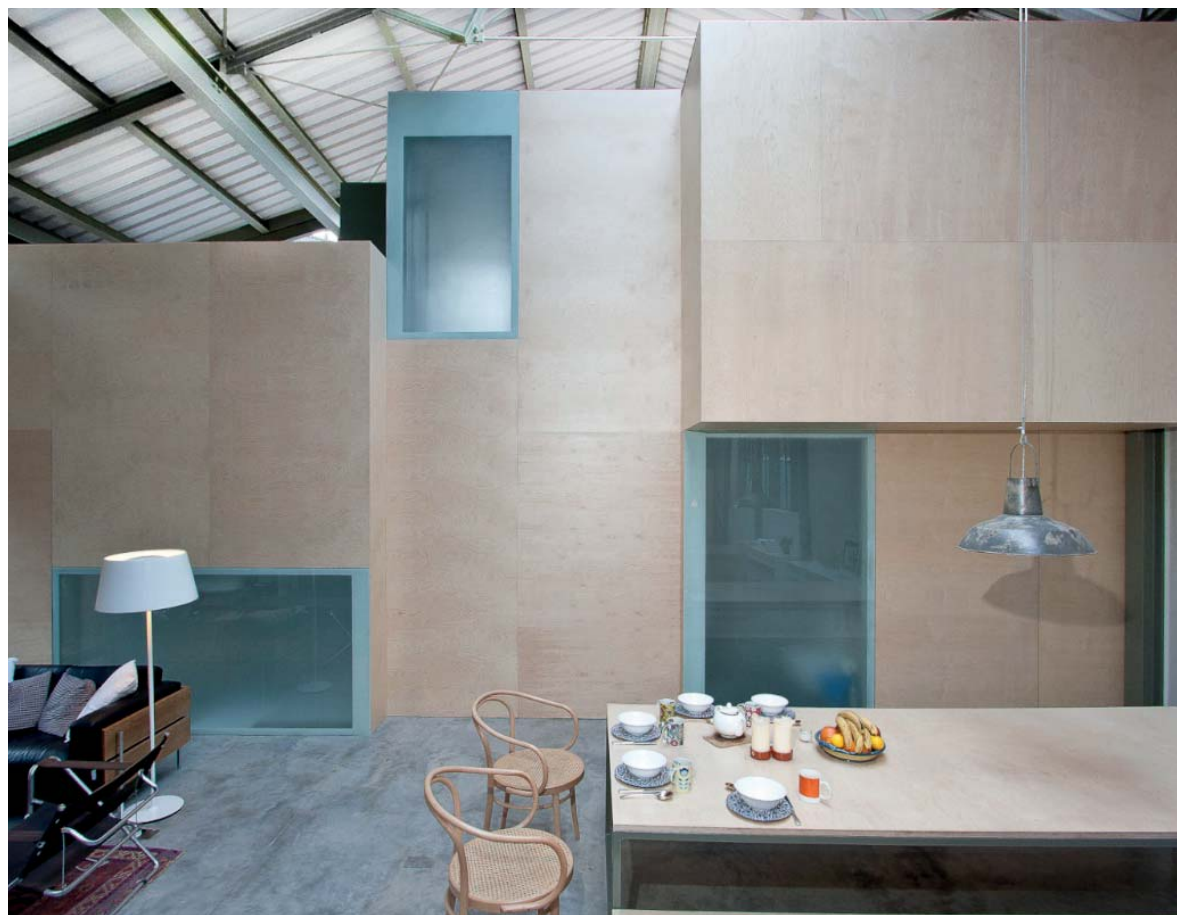
WAN Award
House of Year

Blueprint Award, best
Non-public Project.

World Architecture
Forum - House of the
Year



Henning Stummel Architects 'Camden Workshop'



Camden
Workshop:

RIBA London
Award 2014

Policy

The borough promotes efficient use of land, supports growth in accessible areas and seeks to maximise the supply of new houses. The constraints of being in a conservation area on the other hand, require that the effect of the proposal on the surroundings be limited and that any intervention be an enhancement.

Character of the conservation area

The neighbourhood is dominated by substantial red brick Victorian houses within sumptuous walled gardens and set in the undulating topography of Hampstead.

Nature of this development

This is an infill proposal and it will of necessity, be of a different scale and type.

Our strategy is to design a low and discreet house, that will not be seen from the public realm. We want the perception of the conservation area to remain almost unaltered, but to bring into use a space that is currently uninhabited.

Leaving aside the slope of Ellerdale Road, the site itself is essentially a level rectangle defined by brick walls, accessed from the North at the Western side of the plot.

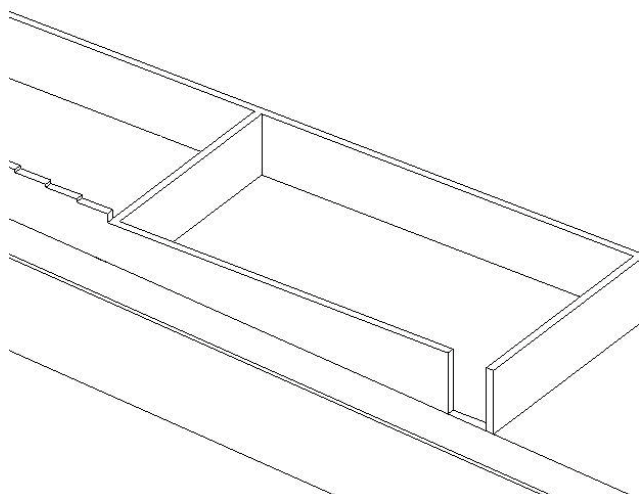
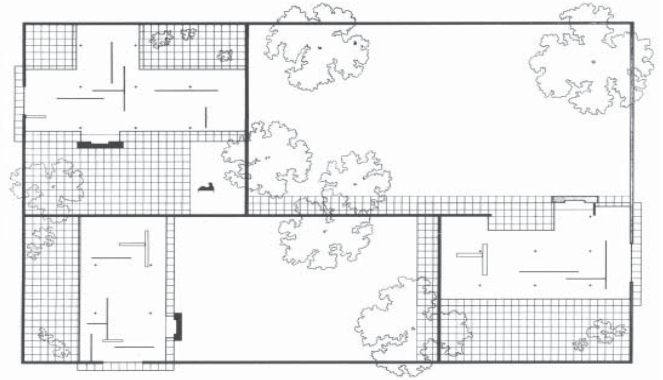
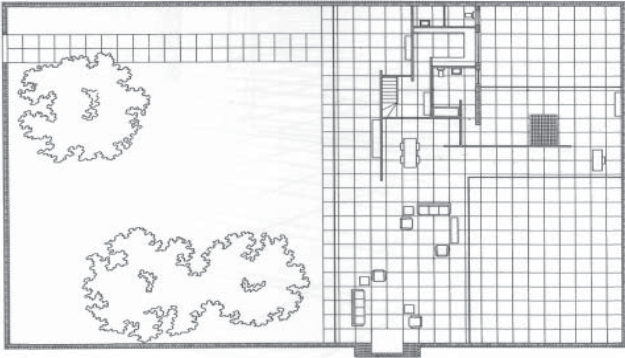


Diagram of the site

Design

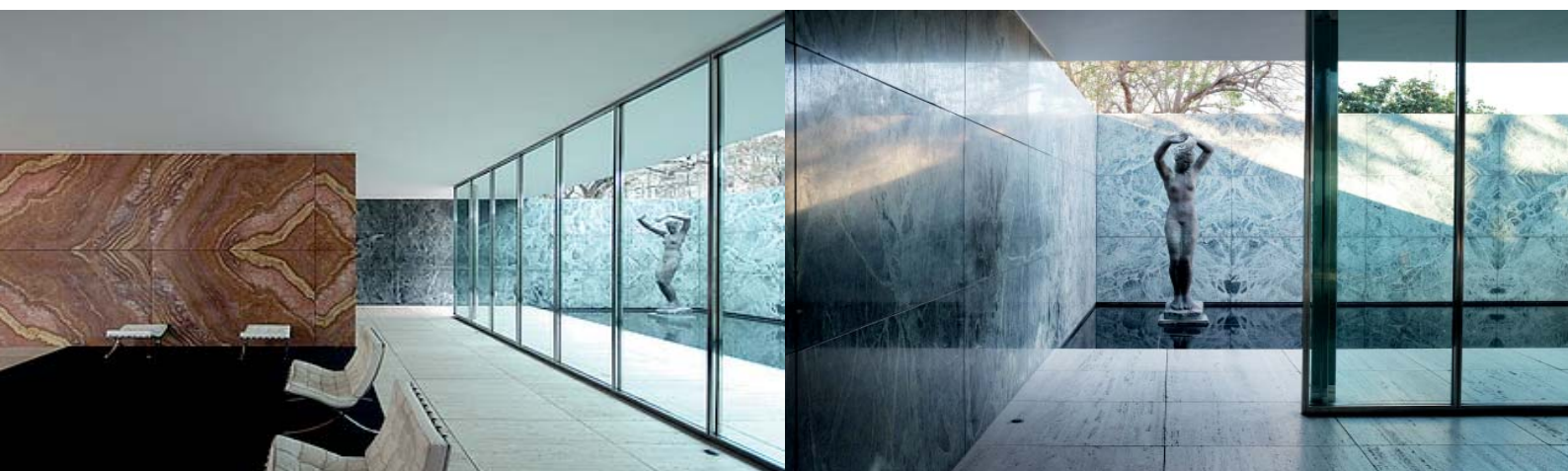
Mies and the idea of dissolving the barrier between inside & out

It is interesting to note, that Mies designed several courtyard houses. These have been influential in the design of this submission.



Courtyard houses by Mies Van der Rohe

Mies realised, that with the advent of large panes of float glass and the possibility of wall to wall glazing, internal walls could extend into the external realm. Whereas traditional masonry construction generated boxlike spaces, with modest and usually vertical openings for doors and windows, modern construction with steel and concrete could lead to an architecture where the threshold between inside and outside is blurred. A space could be defined by internal and external walls.

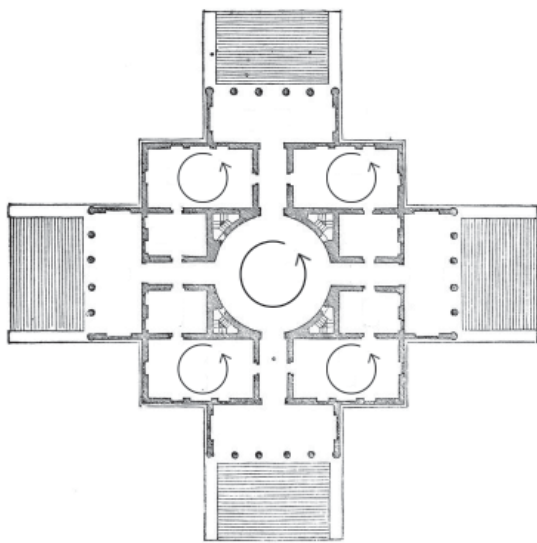


Barcelona Pavilion's courtyard

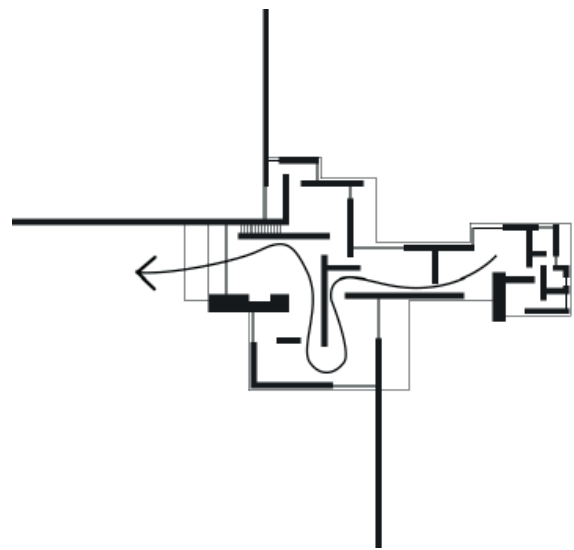
With the Mies Courtyard houses the typically single story property is defined by an eight-foot garden wall, parts of which have a flat roof lid and full height glazing. The roof might rely on a few slim steel columns, but space, whilst divided by screens or bathroom boxes is open and flowing. Van der Rohe was determined to leave the idea of cubicle like rooms in the past and to generate space in a 'new' way.

A criticism of this architecture is the lack of privacy, the absence of withdrawing space. This was a particularly salient issue in the 'Farnsworth House' which, set in a beautiful rural river front setting, was like a fish tank. The lack of privacy culminated in a bitter dispute between client and architect.

In this instance, we're looking at a one bedroom house within a private courtyard, so that these issues can be addressed.



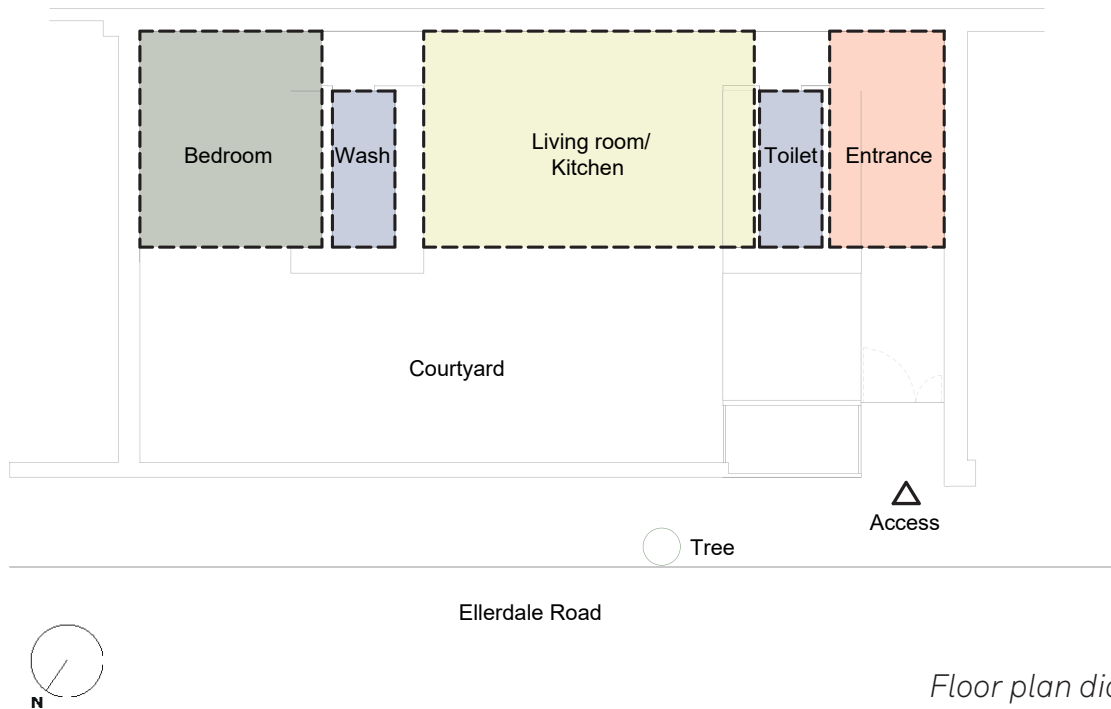
*Palladio's Villa Rotonda.
Box like space*



*Mies Van der Rohe's Brick Country House.
Flowing space*

The proposed floor plan

The brief demanded three areas: an entrance area, a living/dining room kitchen and a bedroom, as well as a toilet and a washroom. All areas are to be wheelchair accessible to meet the standards of Lifetime Homes.



Locating the house on the land

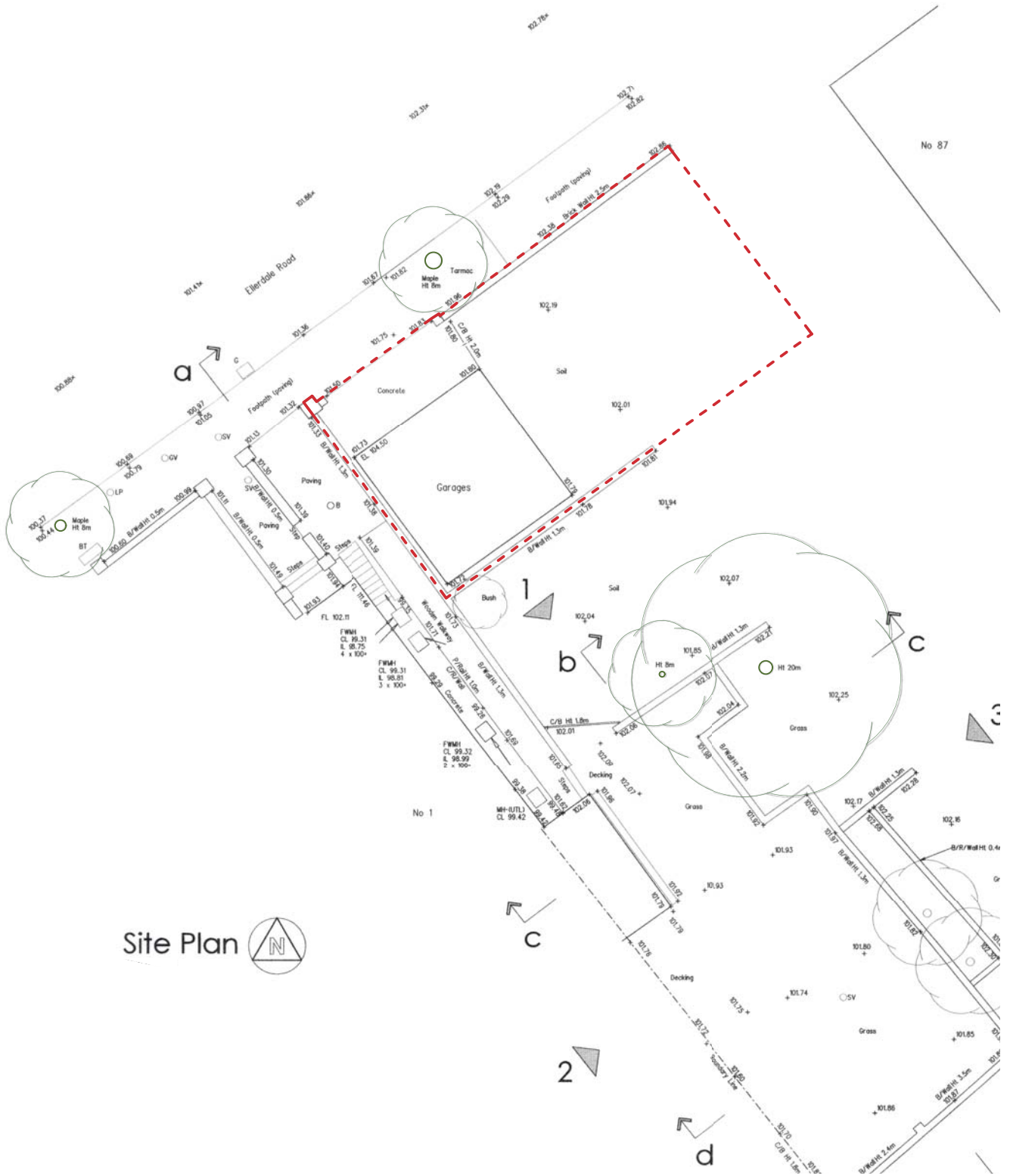
We decided to locate the project on the southern half of the plot, facing North.

In this way, the volume would be a little further from the pavement and even less conspicuous from the public realm. The floor plan would be long and narrow, allowing each of the primary spaces good window frontage.

We were interested to carefully consider the threshold between public and private. Finally, we considered the mature plane tree located on the pavement and decided to keep a distance.

We checked the planting on adjacent land to ensure that this will not be affected by our development.

We checked the planting on adjacent land to ensure that this will not be affected by our development.



Existing trees in the surrounding area

Generating the spaces

We decided to create a toilet box and a washroom box, both freestanding, and to use these to generate the three rooms. These are arranged as a sequence of spaces on the southern side of the site, so that the perimeter wall is the outside wall of the house and this remains legible and the connecting passages are along its side.

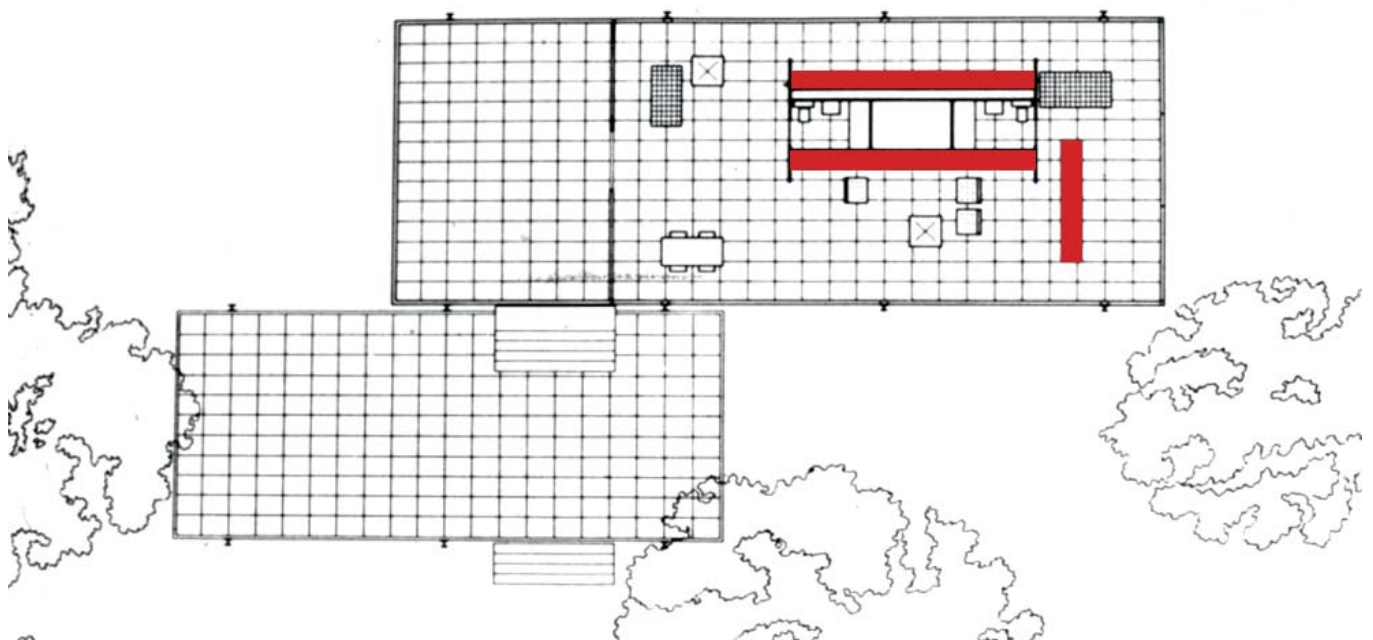


Proposed floor plan

Dealing with storage – keeping spaces uncluttered

We chose to enlarge boxes to accommodate inbuilt storage with a view to reducing the amount of furniture required. The toilet box was widened to include a built-in wardrobe in the entrance area and a kitchen in the living room. The washroom has a cupboard on the bedroom side and fireplace on the living room side. This is to accommodate a small wood burning stove that meets London requirements.

These ideas were a reoccurring theme in the work of Mies, most notable in the Farnsworth House.



Farnsworth house. Floor plan

The roof

A flat roof lid over this area and floor to ceiling glazing located between the boxes, but set back from the surface, defines the internal spaces.

The boxes offer the structural support required for the flat roof, so that no columns are required. The front surface of the lid is to line up with the surface of the boxes. The flat side of rolled steel C section will run the length of the façade, with joisting spanning the shorter length i.e. front façade to back wall.

This flat roof is to be a green sedum roof, as houses along Fitzjohn's Avenue overlook the site so a green roof will help nestle this house into its courtyard plot.



Examples of green roof

Chimney

We propose a prominent chimney on rectangular plan penetrating the flat roof. This vertical element is a juxtaposition to the otherwise horizontal composition. It is also a clue to the outside world.

We can accommodate the air source unit within the volume of this chimney. Concealing the machinery in this way will be preferable to a free-standing unit on the roof. Finally, the air intake and the exhaust air from a heat recovery ventilation can be installed within the chimney.

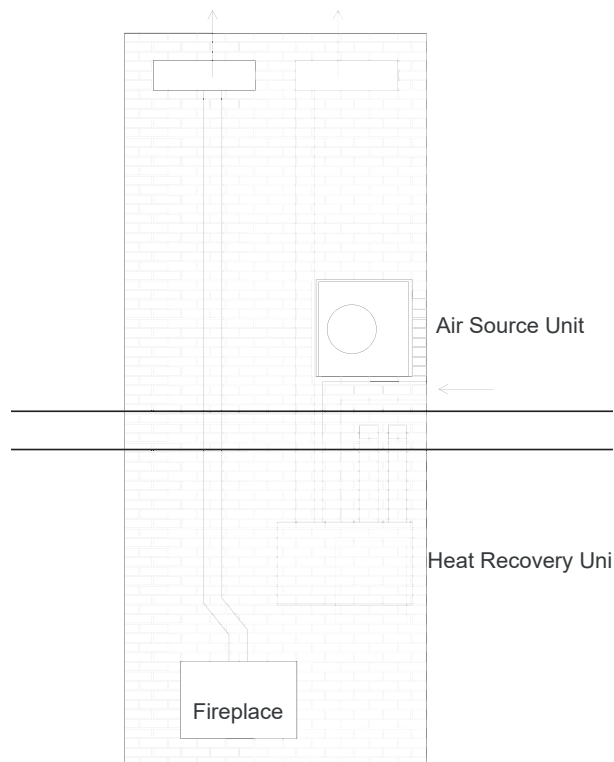


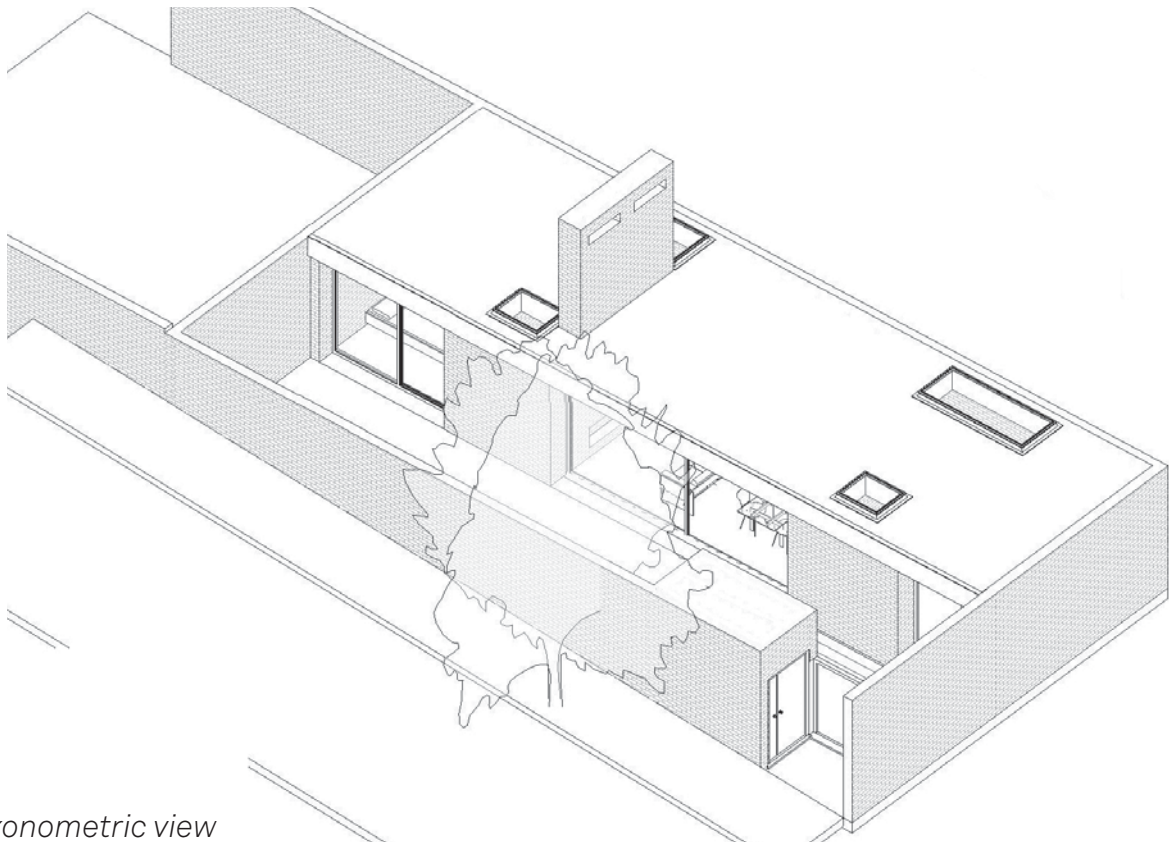
Diagram of the chimney



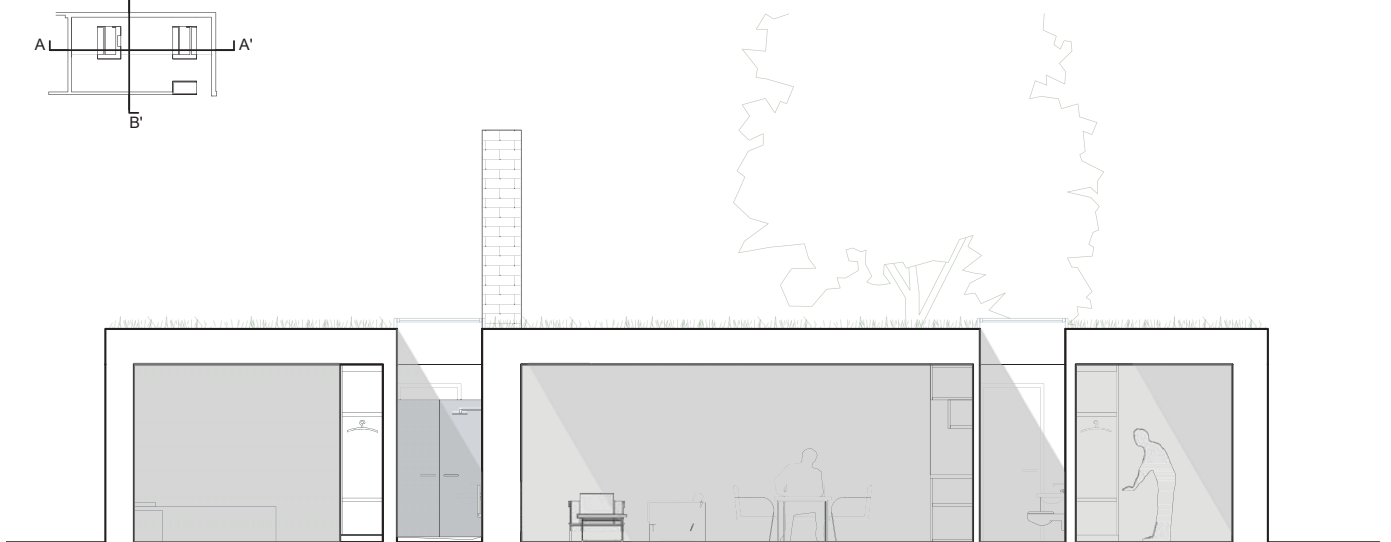
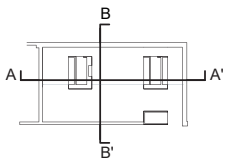
Air source unit

Roof lights

We will have cut outs for glazing above the WC and the washroom as well as the passages, which are furthest away from the façade. Windows in the walls of the 'boxes' would undermine their integrity and it will be more powerful to experience these carved out spaces with top-light.



Axonometric view



Proposed section

Section A-A'

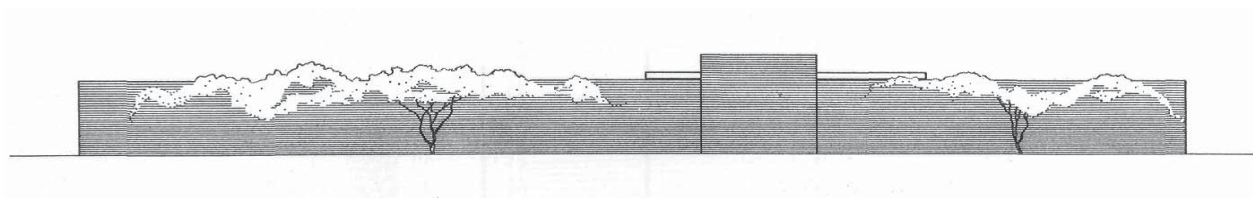
Height and scale

The proposed house would be 288cm high, which is 20 cm higher than the existing garage. The house would have an internal area of 65 square meters, which is half the area of the plot. It is larger than the existing garage which has an internal area of 33sqm. The proposed house area meets the requirements set out by the National Housing Standards which seek at least 50sqm for a one bedroom house.

Materiality

The dominant local material is London stock brick and it is clear that externally the perimeter walls will need to blend into the neighbourhood.

We like the idea of the house being carved out of the courtyard and the boxes echoing this materiality. An idea pioneered by Mies.



3 courtyard house. Mies Van der Rohe

This would give the project a monolithic sculptural quality, as if it were extracted from the ground. This idea is heightened by the topography. The sloping pavement is above the site, which will make the house appear sunk into the terrain.

We were concerned that using stock bricks internally would result in a gloomy house, particularly with mature trees and tall houses in the neighbourhood.

Glazed brick

The client herself was born in Berlin and there you have a tradition of using white glazed bricks to brighten gloomy courtyards.

We found a British manufacturer that produces glazed bricks in UK stock sizes. This opened the possibility of building walls that are stock brick on the outside and white glazed brick on the inside of the garden wall.

This project is very much about entering a hidden garden and the idea of discovering a different world within. We feel that the use of white glazed bricks as a 'lining' for all the garden walls, internal and external and as a material for the boxes would create a bright, monolithic and tranquil setting. The use of glazed bricks should be extended to the insides of WC and one washroom.



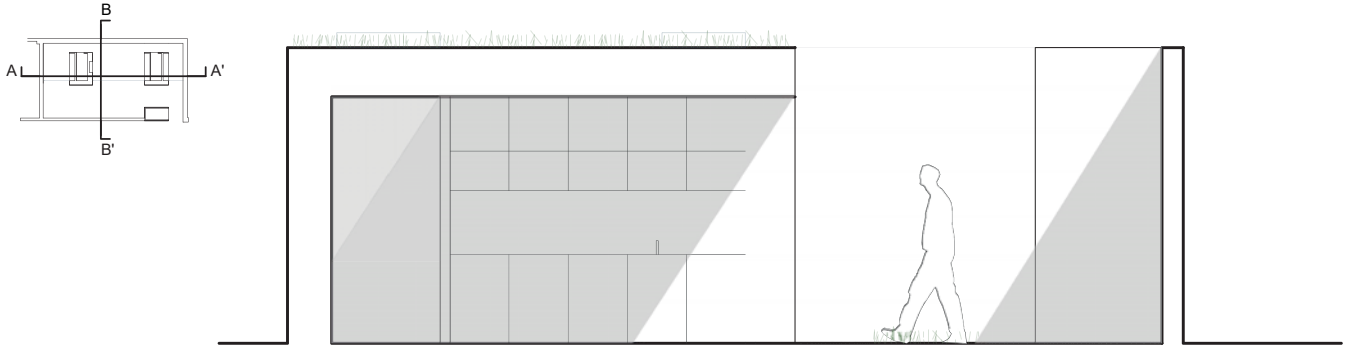
White glazed bricks



Glazed bricks building in Berlin

The courtyard

The other half of the site is external courtyard space. Beyond being the dedicated garden area for this house this space also has different functions.



Proposed section

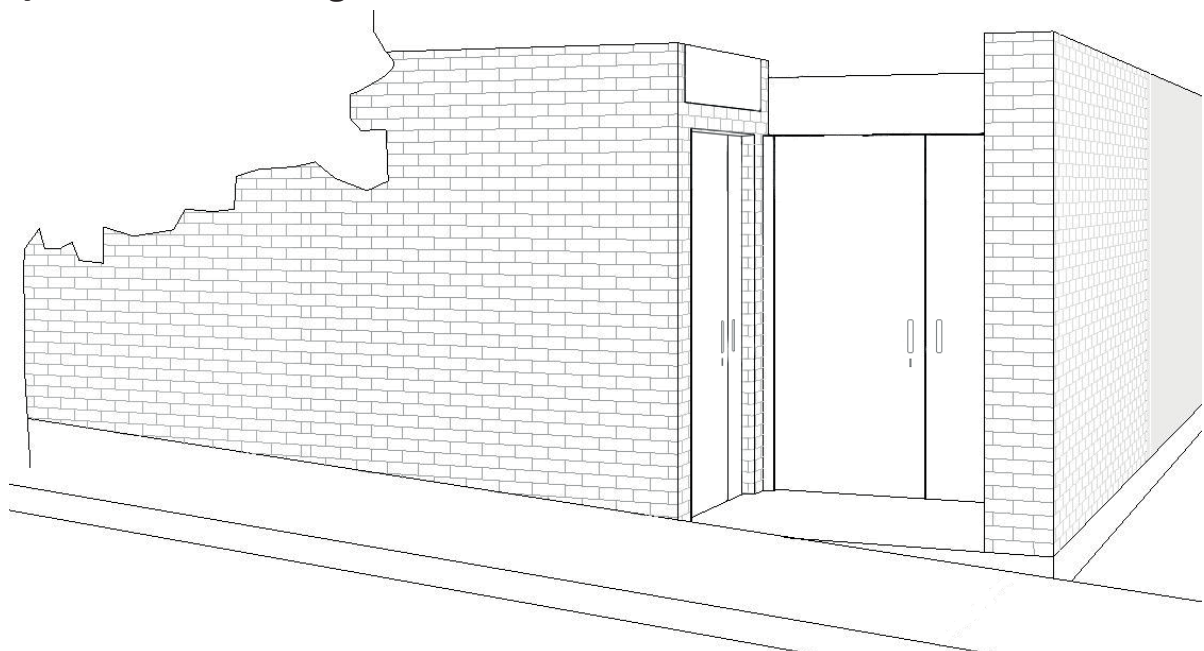
Section B-B'

Access

Access from Ellerdale Road has to be at the level western side of the plot. We imagine a patinated bronze gate set back into the plot.

Refuse and Cycle storage

Next to the site entrance we propose a small enclosure to accommodate bicycle and bin storage

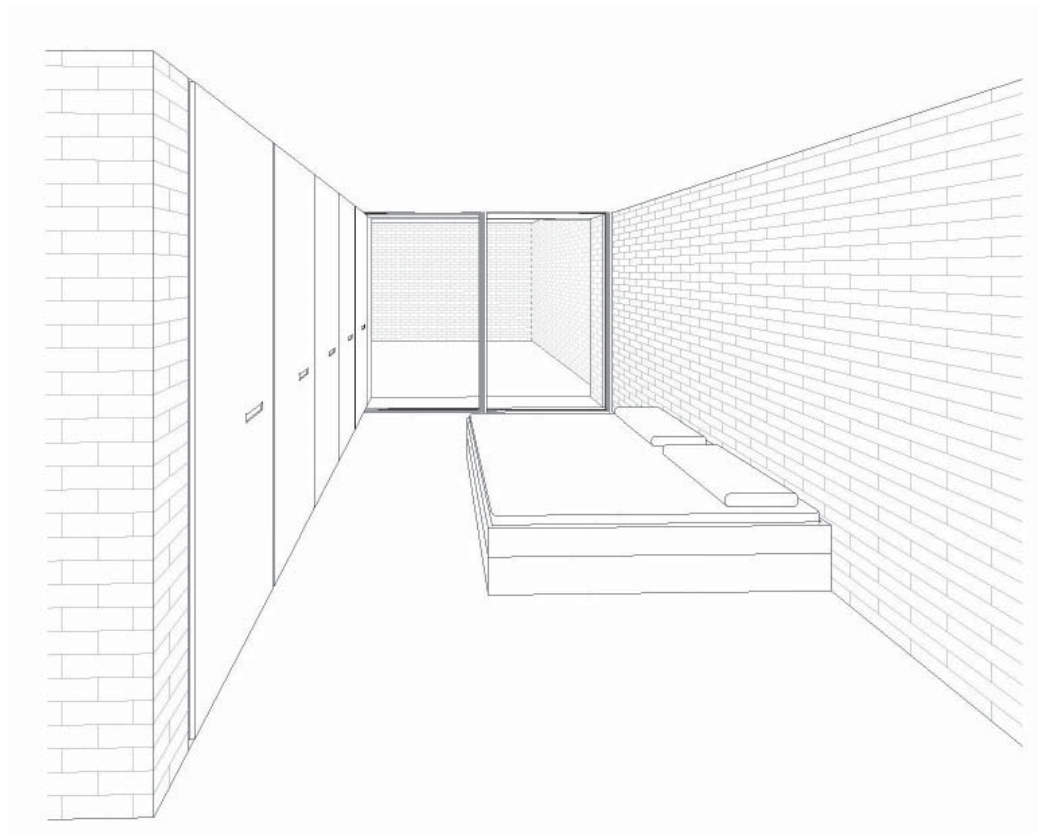


External view of the access and refuse and cycle storage

Amenity space

The courtyard outside of the livingroom and bedroom is the garden space for this house but as we have consciously worked to dissolve the barrier between the inside and outside there is an interesting ambiguity, where the courtyard space is perceived as an extension of the living room space. The added advantage is that a house that is small would be perceived as being bigger. The total amenity area is 56.4 sqm.

The external areas are to be planted and external paving is to be made of permeable materials.



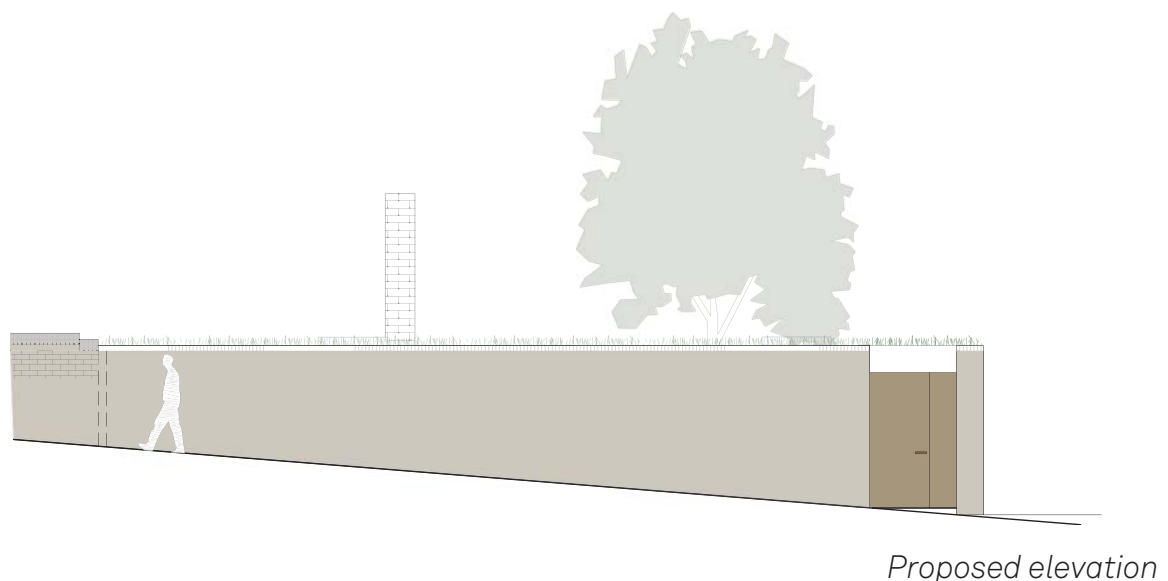
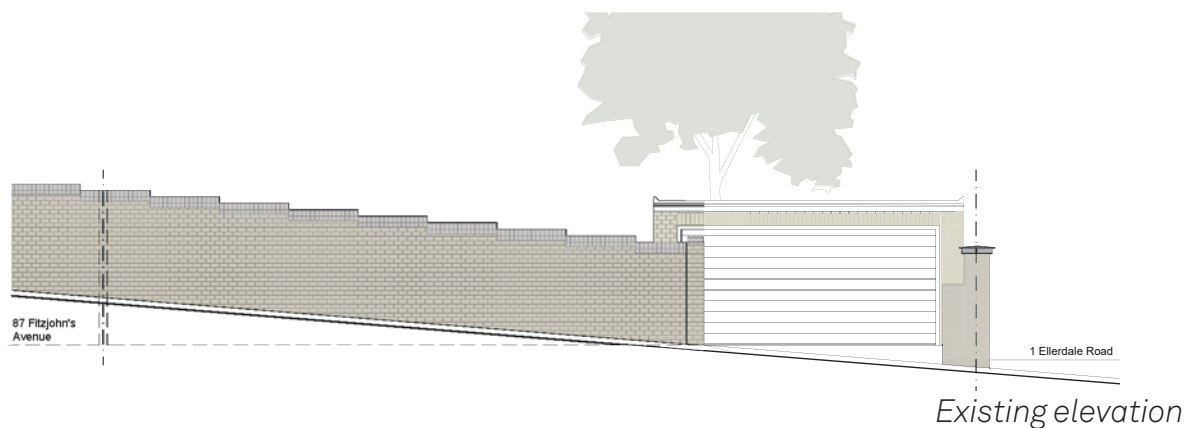
View from the bedroom. The courtyard as an extension of the inside

Appearance from the outside

We are proposing to replace the existing stepped wall along the Ellerdale Road. The new wall would be of one height and about 245 cm at the western end adjacent to the new entrance and running down to about 160cm at the Eastern end. We suggest that this new wall be built in stock brick and have white glazed coping bricks, to give a hint of what lies beyond and because the glaze is an extremely resilient surface. The square bronze entrance gate is to be set in, creating a little ante space and facilitating access to bin and bicycle storage.

The other clue hinting at the hidden presence of a house beyond will be the chimney.

The proposed elevation will be a clear improvement when comparing it with the existing double garage.



Sustainability

We've designed the house to be a super-insulated and an airtight construction and propose the use of heat recovery ventilation and an air source heating system combined with underfloor heating. Because the surrounding houses and trees are quite tall the use of photovoltaics is likely to be inefficient.

We are looking to achieve a Water efficiency of 110litres a day per person.

Amenity

The proposal will have very little impact on the surrounding properties. The boundary walls on the South and West side of the property will need to be raised (from six foot) to 2.88 meters, which is only marginally higher than the existing volume of the garage. These walls are to be raised in stock brick to match the appearance of the existing walls and the higher surround will deal with issues of maintaining privacy, a necessary requirement seeing that we are looking at a change of use for this property.

Transport

We understand that the site is located within PTAL area rated 3, that's to say the local provision of public transport is deemed to be good and offers a good alternative to private car ownership. We understand further that this will need to be a car free development.

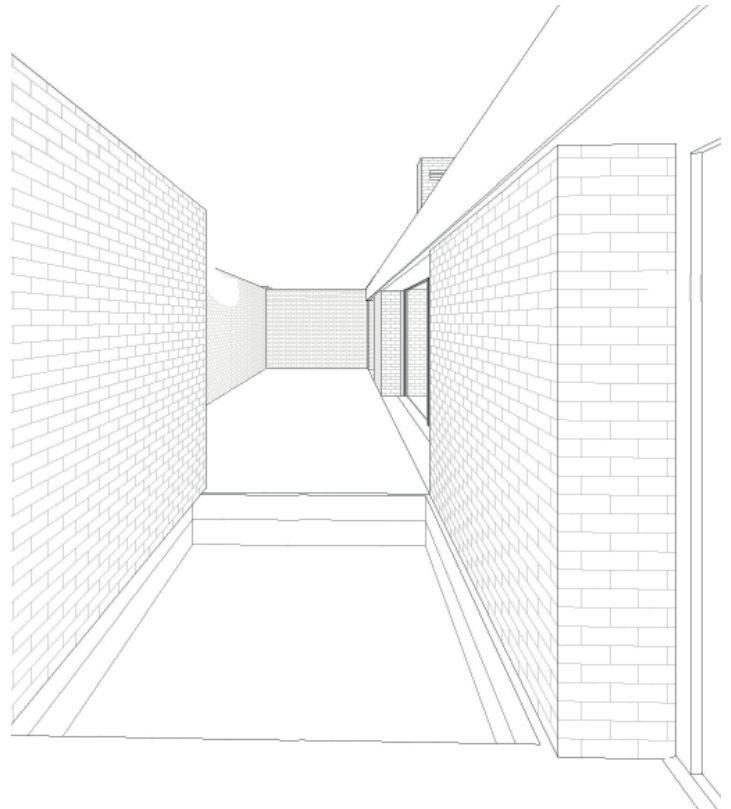
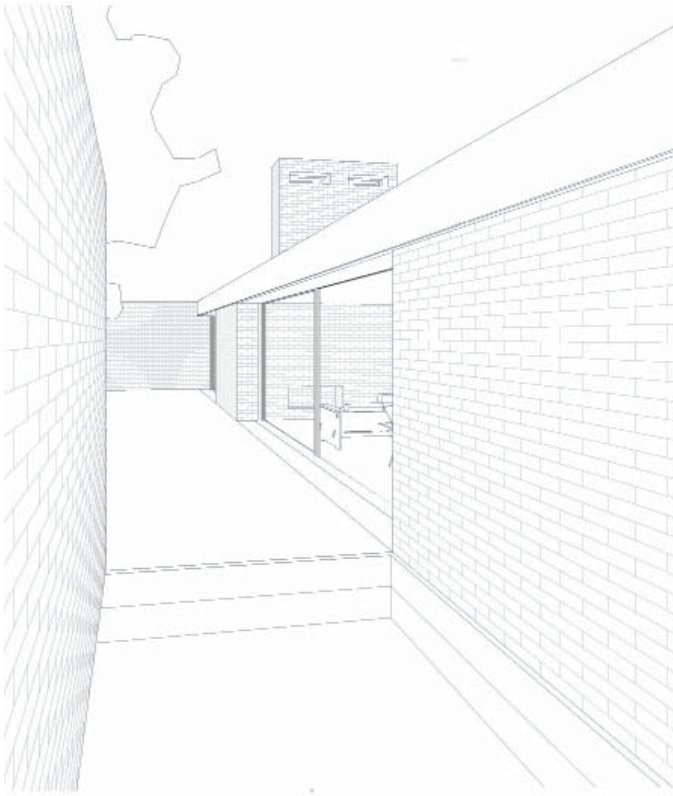
Construction Management Plan

For a house of less than 100sqm a construction management plan is not required.

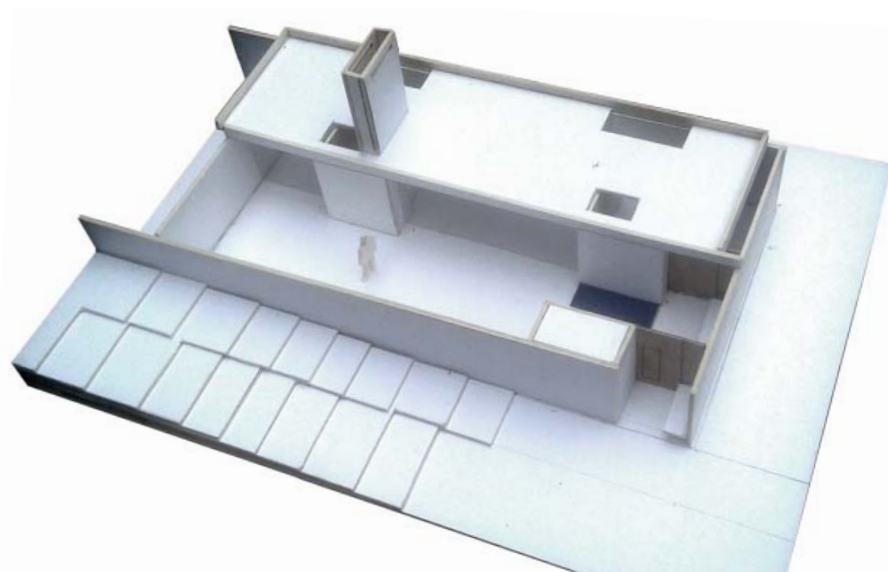
Summary

This is a proposal for a modest but thoughtful modernist house in the Fitzjohn Netherhall conservation area. From the public realm, it will almost go unnoticed, which will make discovering this hidden and tranquil place all the more delightful.

It makes sense to replace a double garage with a fully wheelchair accessible new dwelling.



Views of the courtyard from the entrance



Model of the proposal