

37 Alma Street, NW5

Design and Access Statement

2017-11-30



Site context

Location

The house is located within the Inkerman Road Conservation Area. Alma Street runs roughly east-west and defines the south western boundary of an urban block, bounded also by Anglers Lane (to the south east) and Raglan Street (to the north east).

Surrounding context

A two storey mid-Victorian house situated in a predominantly residential area with houses of uniform character and scale.

Historical context

The street dates from 1856 and was named after an important victory in the Crimean war (the battle of the river Alma). After the building of the railways in the mid.1800's it was a street mainly inhabited by crafts-people and manual workers, with many families living in each house. Gradually by the end of the century the street had improved in its conditions and in Charles Booth's poverty survey of 1898 it was already "very decent indeed; two families to a house generally".

The (now invisible) river Fleet ran nearby and Anglers Lane takes its name from the daily activities along its banks. Long since culverted it passes un-noticed on its way to the Thames.



View of Alma Street looking south east

Brief and client requirements

Ground floor

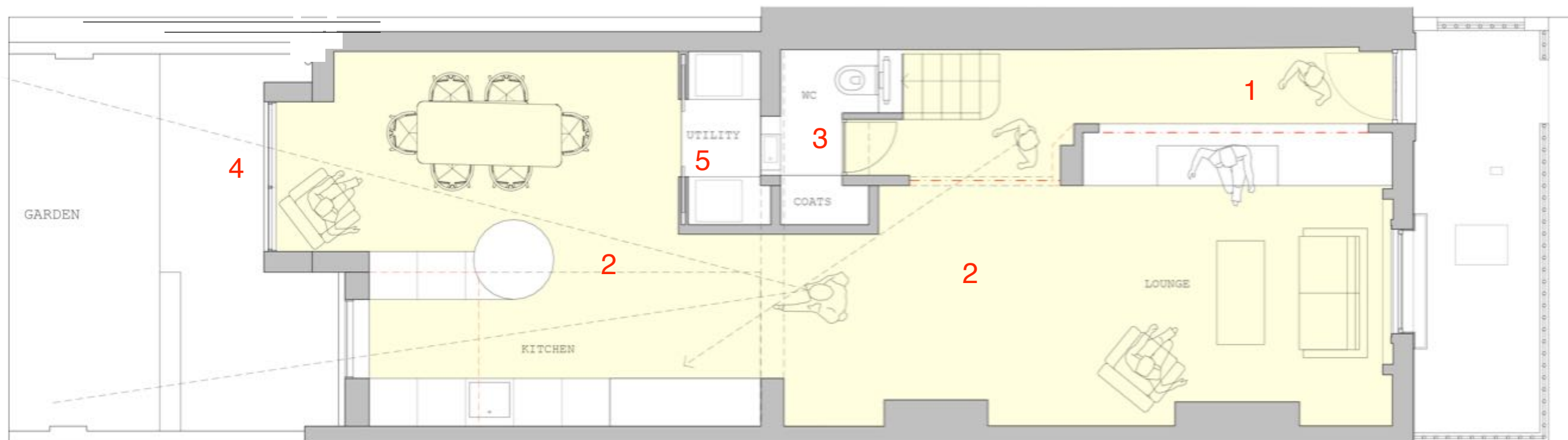
To modernise the house and make it more suited to the growing family's needs. Immediately at the entrance threshold to create a new entrance "experience" (1) that gives a feeling of increased space and feels less cramped. Above all to review the ground floor and create more connectivity (2) between spaces, making a more active view through to the garden and the long views through the house more open. To re-think the kitchen and the dining area and open to the garden terrace (4). Add a downstairs self-contained utility and toilet with cloakroom (3/5). Reduce glazing to the covered internal patio and add a large openable rooflight.

Stair and first floor

Make changes to the stair and levels so that a new shower room for the children (6) gives separation with a re-arranged main bathroom (7). Create a more flexible bedroom at the centre of the floor (8), that is intended to be used as a study for home working. The front bedroom becomes a generous bedroom that can also offer flexibility for guests or parents visiting.

Roof addition

Since the grant of planning permission 2016/6267/P in January of this year, and further discussions with the client on the space constraints of living in the house, notwithstanding the proposed improvements, it was decided to work on a design for a new floor at roof level that would be as "invisible" as possible when viewed from the street.



A new rooftop room with en-suite

Second floor - roof level

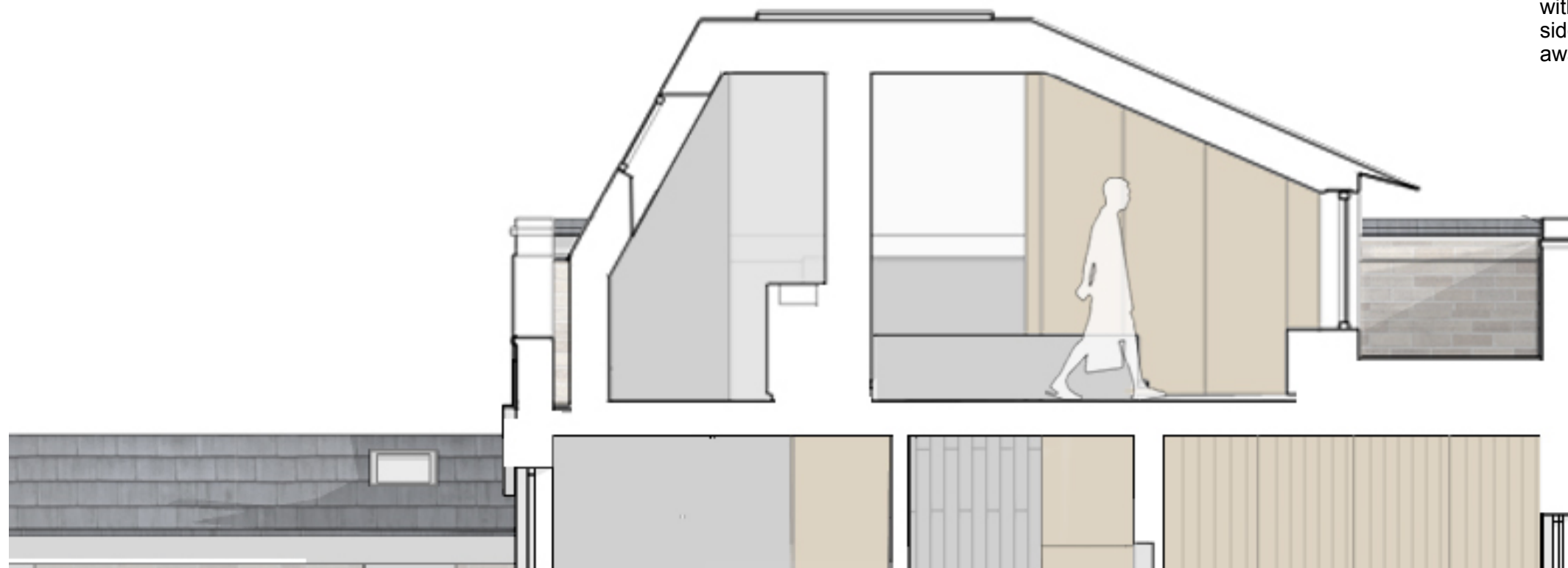
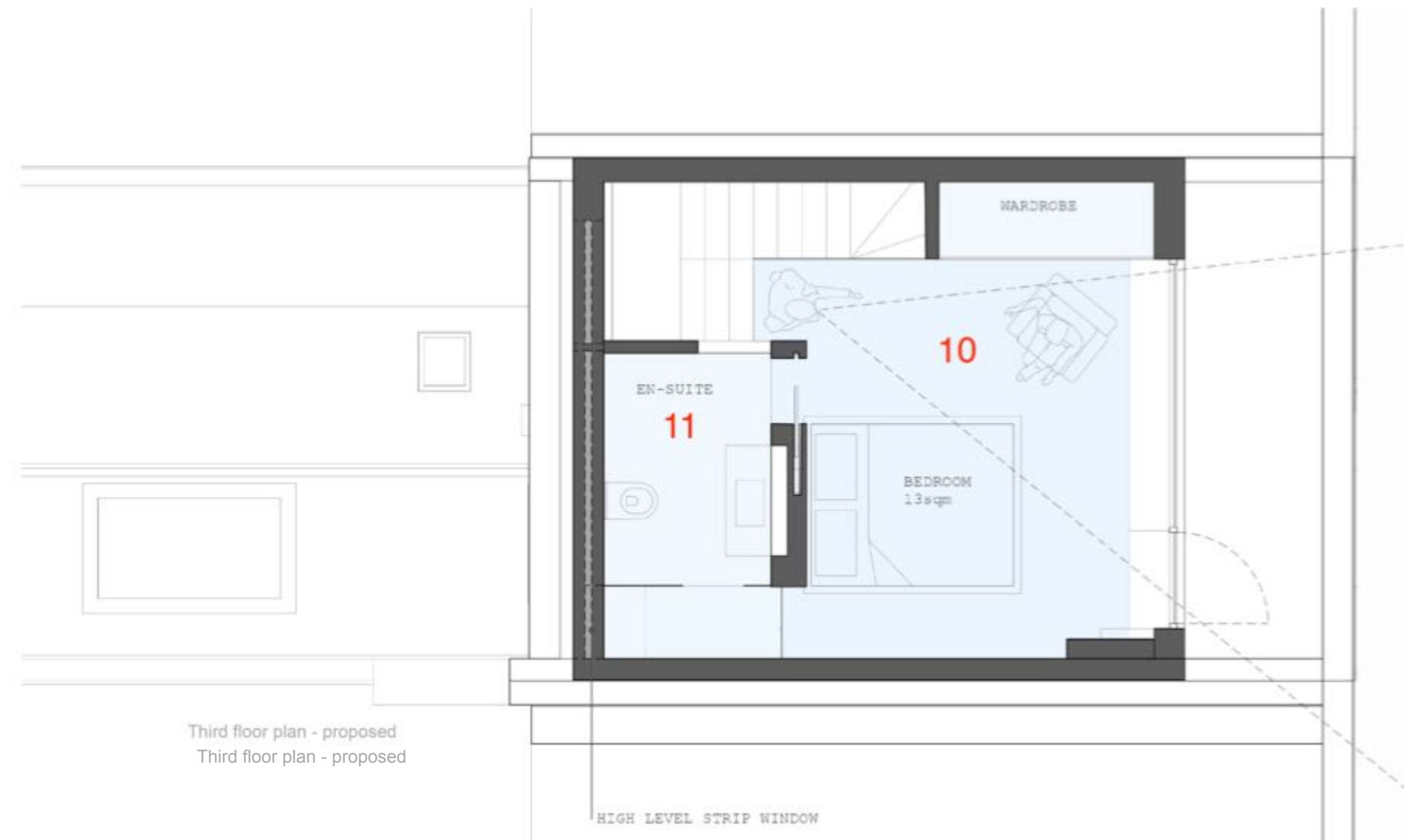
The proposed accommodation at roof level comprises a main bedroom (10) with en-suite shower/toilet room (11). The bedroom is of a comfortable size (13m² not including the en-suite), and has good light from the south west through a feature full width horizontal window.

The sloping roof, together with the roof over-hang and storage bench (located below the window sill) results in a horizontal window view, that restricts the amount of glass visible from the outside to a minimum. However, it achieves a wide panoramic outlook with good light, for the occupants of the room, especially when viewed from the bed level. The internal feel is to increase the feeling of width to the narrow site and give the impression that the room feels more spacious.

The plane of the glass window is set back from the front facade by 1.5m, and the outdoor space is to be used for maintenance purposes only. It is accessed through a side hung window located above the height of the storage bench, adequate for occasional access needs.

The floor of the bedroom and en-suite is to be laid as one continuous surface without joints, in light coloured resin. This further accentuates the feeling of spaciousness while providing a good waterproof floor to the en-suite, that is easily cleanable.

A single long tubular finned radiator provides the heating to the bedroom and is located along the skirting recess at the bottom of the storage bench, with ventilation behind. Fitted wardrobes on the east side allow storage of clothes and for objects to be put away behind sliding full height doors.



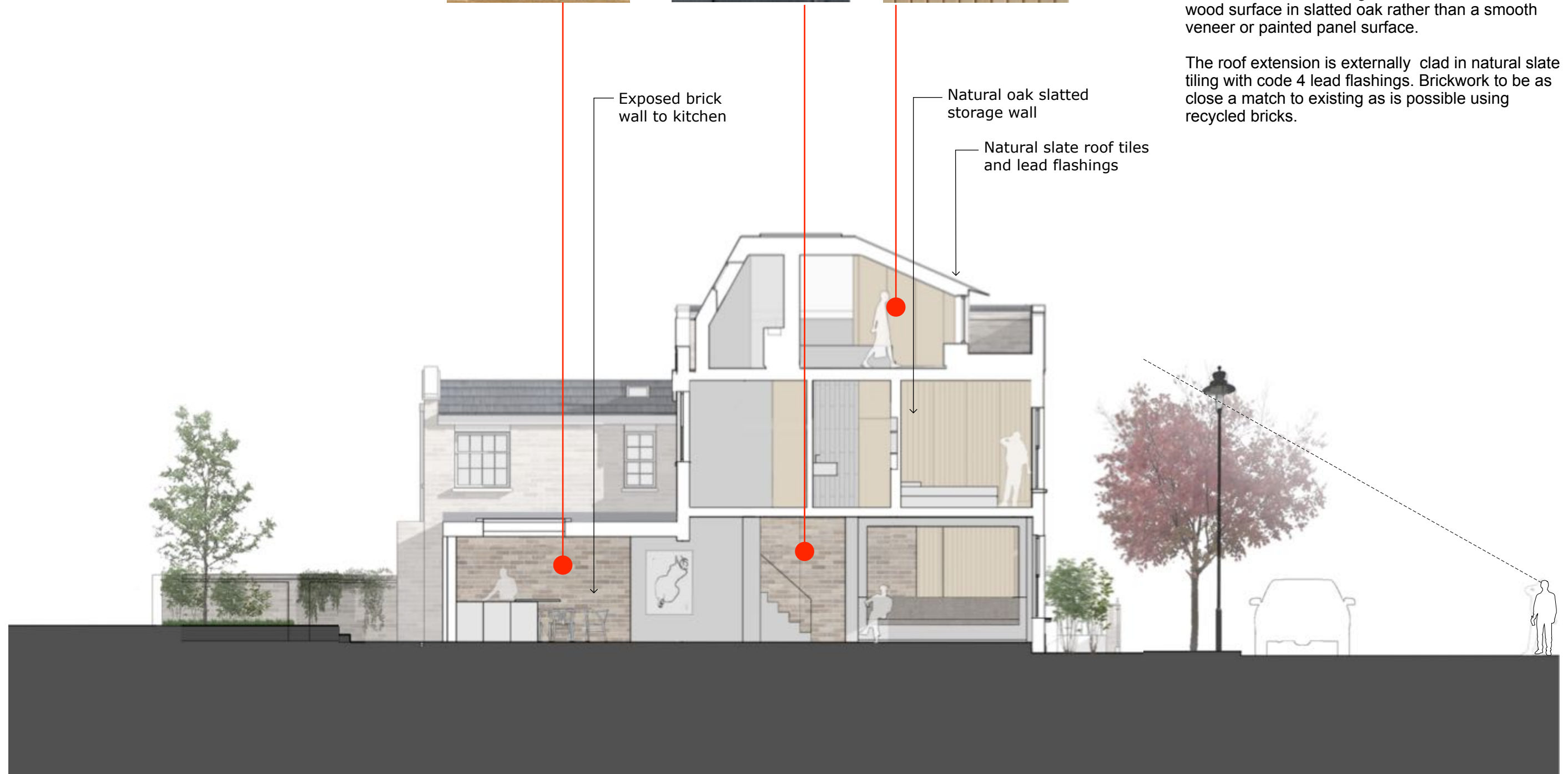
Materials and textures

The east wall brickwork is exposed along the hallway and through the kitchen/dining space as a contrast to the west wall, which is kept smooth and plain in colour.

The idea is to introduce the rougher and coarser texture (brick) to complement the smooth and more refined decorated surfaces that are mainly the finishes in the existing house.

In the main bedroom a feature is the storage wall to the east side, and this again is treated as a natural wood surface in slatted oak rather than a smooth veneer or painted panel surface.

The roof extension is externally clad in natural slate tiling with code 4 lead flashings. Brickwork to be as close a match to existing as is possible using recycled bricks.



Long section looking south east

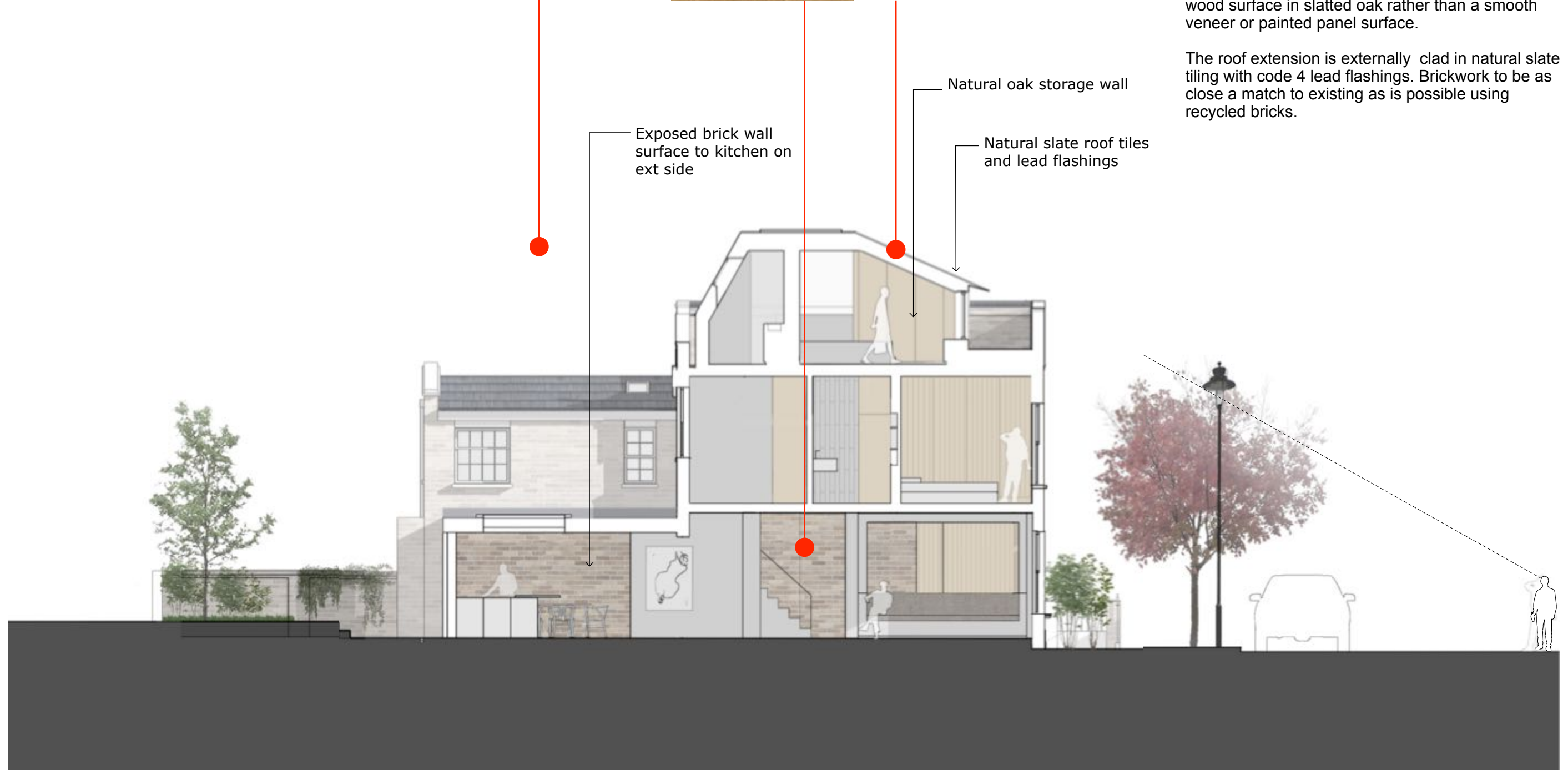
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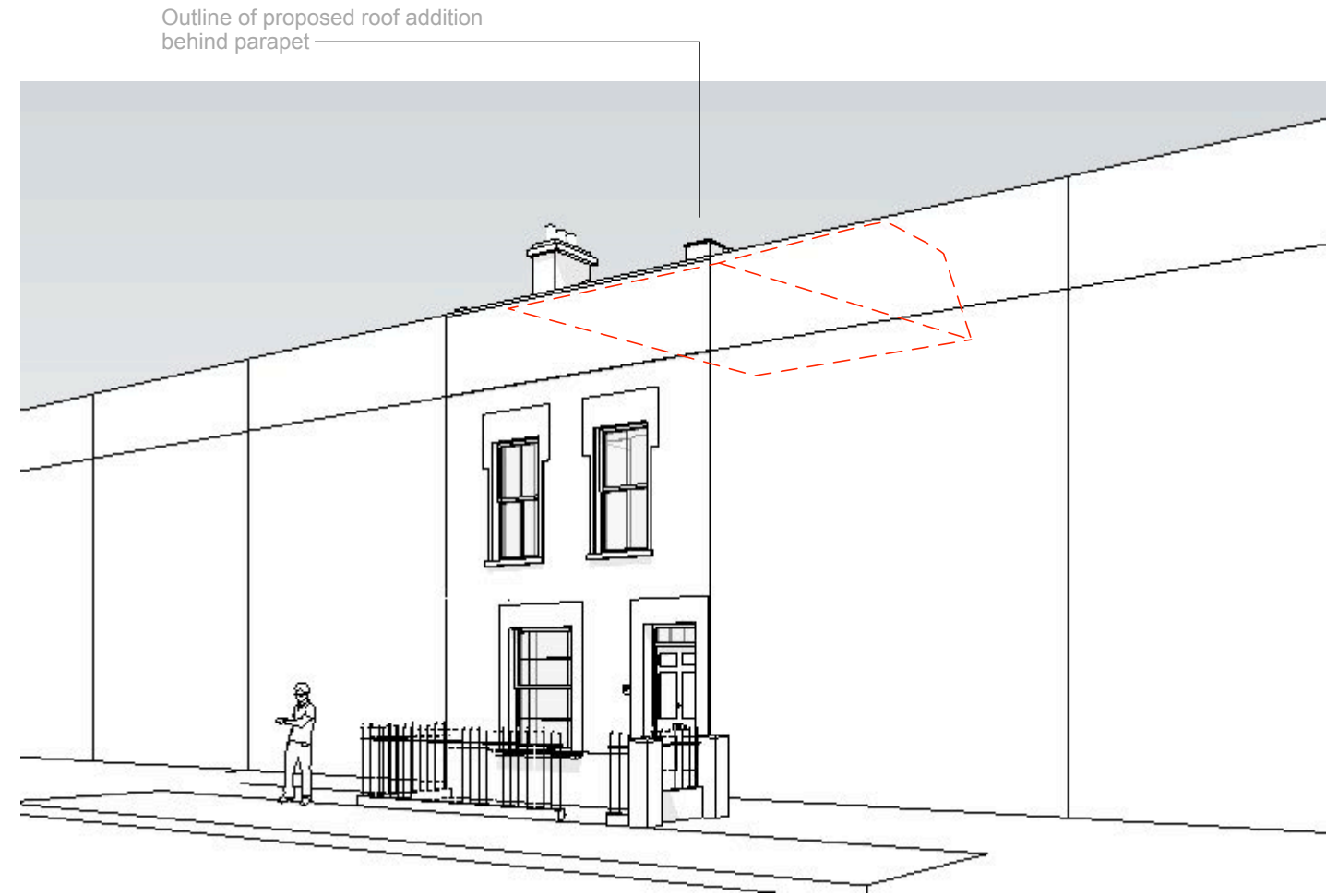
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Long section looking south east



View from south west side of street (as existing)



View from south west side of street (as proposed)



Views from the same point in the street

3D Study model

The two views are set up on the 3D model from the same point and show that the proposed extension is almost totally concealed from view at that point, on the opposite pavement.

The red dotted line has been traced around the massing of the roof extension and then the extension itself removed, leaving the diagrammatic line to illustrate where it lies, behind the facade.



1. View of 8 Alma Street looking north



2. View of 21 Alma Street looking south



3. View of 51 Alma Street looking north

Local Precedent Roof Additions

Streetscape

Several additions have been made to the roofs along the street scene in Alma street (images 1-3). Generally of poor quality these changes (although most are not easily seen from the pavement level) do not compromise the street's strong unified character.

Valley roof changes

Looking at aerial information showing the roof-scape of the neighbourhood there are numerous rooftop additions that have modified the valley roofs, some of which are visible from the street and others more recessed. None of these additions seem to have any particular architectural quality or distinction (see annotated image below with changes A-E). Raglan Street, beyond, can be seen to have similar changes where box-like additions have eliminated the valley roof profile

4. Aerial view of Alma Street looking north (Raglan Street beyond)





1. Evacuated tube solar thermal panel for low angle water heating



2. Greenwood MVHR compact unit for whole house heat exchange ventilation



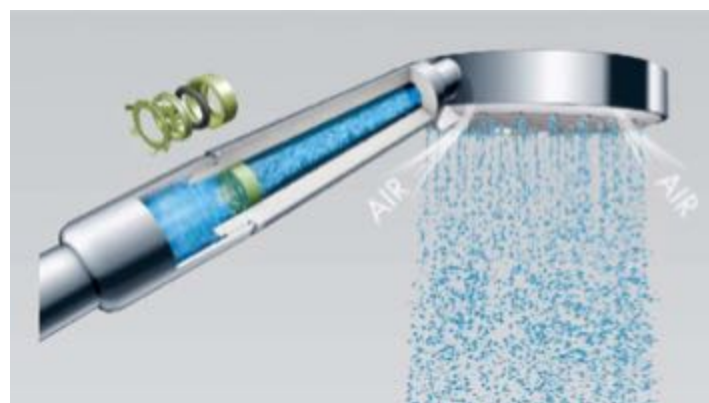
3. Viessmann 222F Condensing boiler with compact thermal storage



4. Underfloor heating installation - electric membrane low consumption



5. Knauf thermoshell solid wall insulation with membrane (anti interstitial condensation)



6. Hans Grohe water saving aerated shower head

Sustainability strategy

Opportunities

The house is limited in the possible incorporation of sustainable and renewable technology due to size and the overall scope of the intervention. However even with these limitations some significant upgrading is possible.

Passive provisions

Insulation and ventilation can be improved. The ground floor will be re-laid and insulated between the joists with u/f ventilation overhauled. Roof insulation will be upgraded. A compact MVHR unit will provide good general air circulation and draw air out through the bathrooms exploiting heat recovery. External walls are solid but can be insulated on the inside with provision to avoid interstitial condensation. A completely new roof will mean that the entire structure is replaced with much higher thermal insulation performance.

Solar installation - renewables on site

Three solar thermal panels can be installed on the roof without needing excessive surface area. This hot water is fed into a thermal store and reduces significantly grid energy requirement and consequently hot water costs by over 50%

Space heating

In a smaller dwelling traditional radiators take up space and restrict furniture positions. They also do not transfer heat as effectively or healthily as other methods. Underfloor low temperature heating offers more flexibility and even heat distribution. Boiler optimisers that detect outside temperatures and control boiler output increase efficiency and also lower running costs. Electrical underfloor membranes such as the Norwegian product supplied by "UK Warmfloor" show 40% more efficiency than other electrical membrane products.

Main water usage

Water saving eco-taps to bathroom and kitchen with water flows on showers limited to 9l/m. There is also an opportunity to harvest waste heat from showers and baths using a heat recovery drainage arrangement that further contributes to reducing emissions and need for grid energy.

Boiler replacement

Replacing the existing boiler with a new high efficiency boiler will significantly reduce energy use and heating costs. Boilers such as those by Viessmann have compact buffer tanks incorporated that can help smaller houses which have limited room for very large thermal stores.



View of Alma Street seen from the south east (n.37 marked with an arrow)

Lifetime Homes and accessibility

As an existing building the host property is limited in its ability to be upgraded to allow increased accessibility. It is a compact cottage type home built over 150 years ago which the client is not proposing to completely re-work. There is a limited budget but an intention to improve the property significantly over existing, and to add a modest roof extension.

Internally, given the reasonably wide ranging scope for modifications it will be possible to make the following upgrades that will aid accessibility in the house:

1. Door openings at 750mm clear where possible
2. Electrical switches and sockets accessible height
3. Turning space in living and dining room
4. Front room can be converted to bedroom (GF)
5. New toilet created on ground floor
6. Walls designed to take grab rails
7. Wall and floor to take hoist supports
8. Main bedroom with level threshold to own shower
9. Level threshold at garden to dining space

Summary

A careful attempt is made to upgrade and adapt a period property to meet contemporary family needs.

The changes to the street facade at roof level are set back and designed to sensitively provide additional space in the dwelling that does not detract from the unified streetscape character of Alma Street. The addition is intended to sit complementarily to the period features of the existing building.

The ground floor internally is re-modelled and generally opened up to increase connectivity and views through the property. A new ground floor toilet is added along with a utility room.

On the first floor a new bathroom is added at the rear, together with modifications to the bedrooms. Storage is increased and the "middle" bedroom is re-thought as a quiet study work room.

Although a tight site with many constraints, the resulting modified dwelling proposes to solve the family's space problems in a sensitive way.



Long section looking south east