

Design and Access Statement
A proposed new dwelling on the site of Moatfield Farm Barns
Prepared by Sandy Rendel Architects
20 October 2025
Ref: 268/16C/251020

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1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for detailed planning permission for a new house to replace two redundant agricultural buildings at the site known as Moatfield Farm Barns. This document sets out the nature of the existing site, the development proposals and the design rationale for the adopted approach. It should be read in conjunction with the architect's drawings.

The proposal is submitted on behalf of the owner of the site, Mr. Toby Chapman, who lives at Moatfield Farm, which lies a few hundred meters to the north.

The proposal is for the construction of a new single storey house and detached annexe including a garage and refuse store.



View from the cow shed looking south toward the hay barn. Open pasture land can be seen to the east with historic woodland in the distance.



View of the cow shed looking north-west. A dense hedgerow runs parallel to the lane along the western boundary of the site.



View from the north towards the site entrance and the mature oak tree.

1.1 The Team

Sandy Rendel Architects

Sandy Rendel Architects is an award winning practice founded in 2010. Our work addresses the unique physical, environmental and cultural contexts of each project to deliver architecture of long-term value and enduring meaning.

We are committed to a sustainable approach to architecture by ensuring our work has the minimum environmental impact, through its construction and ongoing energy use, and the maximum life, through its durability and tolerance to change.

In 2017 we were named RIBA South East Emerging Practice of the Year and our project on the banks of the River Ouse in Lewes was awarded the inaugural South Downs National Park Residential Design Award in 2019 for the best new house to have made a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment within the National Park.

More recently our Dutch Barn Conversion and Viewing Tower at Morlands Farm near Henfield was named RIBA South East Small Project of the Year 2022 and shortlisted for the RIBA House of the Year. We were named Individual House Architect of the Year in the Architect of the Year Awards 2024 and our new house at Bury Gate Farm in West Sussex won a 2025 RIBA South East Award and was shortlisted for the Architects' Journal House of the Year.



142 South Street, Lewes



Bury Gate Farm, nr. Pulborough

ECE Planning

ECE Planning is a Chartered Town Planning practice, operating throughout the UK from head offices in Sussex. Our team is managed by Chris Barker and Huw James and comprises of a team of eleven planning professionals.

Most of our senior team members have previously worked within Sussex planning authorities, including Horsham District Council and we therefore have a wealth of experience in delivering projects of this nature.

Furthermore, we have a proven track record of success in delivering award winning schemes in sensitive environments with several Sussex Heritage Trust Awards, Civic Trust Awards and RIBA Awards given to projects we have been involved with over the last 10 years.'



Morlands Farm barn and viewing tower at Sussex Prairie Gardens

2.0 Design and Access Statement

2.1 Site Context

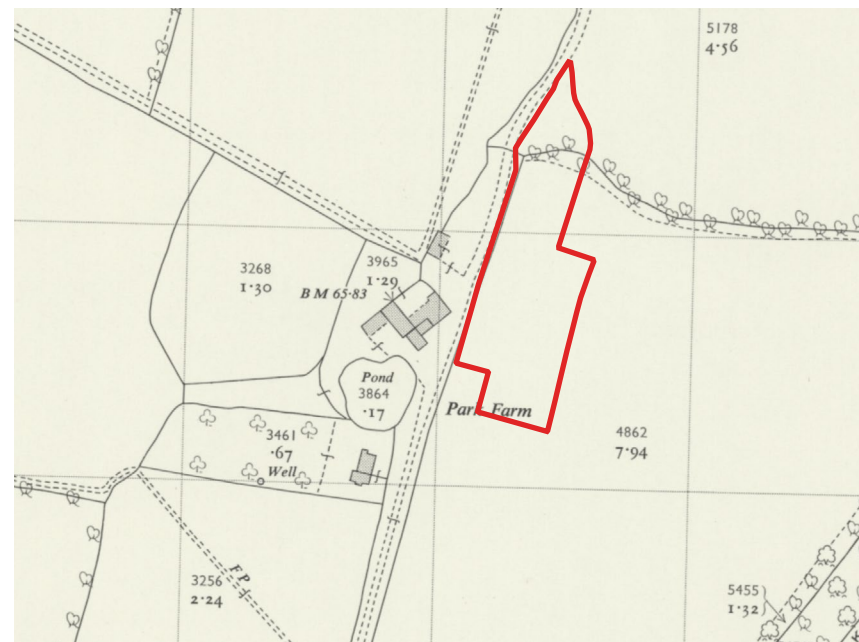
The site is located to the east of Moatfield Lane which is a private road accessed from King's Lane. Immediately to the west of the site on the other side of the lane is a collection of traditional farm buildings, parts of which have been converted to residential use and a large contemporary stable block built around an enclosed yard. Further down the lane to the south is Park Farmhouse, which is Grade II listed. Opposite this on the east of the lane are a collection of modern stables and barns which appear to have been granted planning consent in 1994. These stables and another manege adjoin the southern boundary of the site.

The site is brownfield land currently occupied by two modern steel framed agricultural barns which are subject of an extant consent described in the next section.

Access into the site is via a gated entrance at the north off Moatfield Lane. It is bounded on the western side by a mature, dense hedgerow providing high levels of privacy from the lane and the buildings to the west and south. The site is open to the fields to the east, with a timber post and rail fence, and a band of historic woodland beyond.

Currently the hay barn sits at the southern end of the site filling nearly its full width from east to west. The cowshed runs roughly north to south starting close to the mature oak at the northern end and aligned parallel with the western boundary.

The site falls within the National Character Area 121: Low Weald.



Historic map from the 1896



Aerial view of the site and its surrounding

2.2 Planning History

Prior approval for the conversion of the existing barns to 2no. dwellinghouses was granted under Class Q in 2020 (ref. DC20/1907). Subsequently an application was submitted and granted for Full Planning Permission for an equivalent development of 2 dwelling houses utilising the existing barns in 2021 (ref. DC/21/0699) with minor alterations to amend aspects of the design which wouldn't be allowed under the constraints of Class Q.

Both these approvals lapsed before they were implemented but a new Class Q Prior Approval application (ref. DC/25/0307) replicating the previous one was submitted and approved in April 2025.

Using the fallback position of the Prior Approval, the latest proposals submitted under this application are a further development of the design which aims to make better use of the site and reduce the impact on the neighbouring properties by repositioning the buildings within the curtilage and reducing the number of dwellings from two to one.

These proposals were submitted for Pre-Application advice (ref. PE/25/0063) and received positive feedback in terms of scale, siting and form.

2.3 Design Brief

Re-use of the existing agricultural building to form 2no. new dwellings as proposed by the existing consent imposes several significant constraints on the quality of the design, principally in terms of site layout, the building's orientation and its proximity to its boundaries. In addition the existing buildings themselves are larger than necessary with tall interior volumes at odds with too small and irregularly shaped rooms laid out in an unsatisfactory manner.

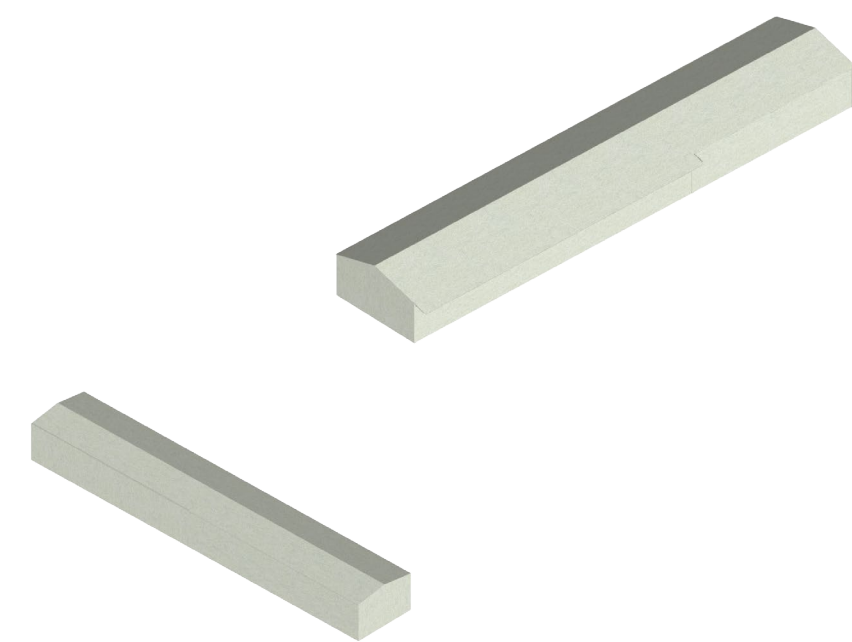
This new proposals aim to address these issues by looking afresh at the design and site layout and reducing the number of units to a single dwellinghouse.

The brief is to provide a highly sustainable and high quality design that makes the best use of the site whilst remaining sensitive to the neighbouring properties and broader context.

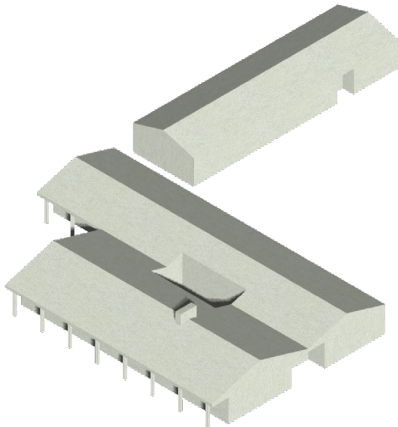
2.4 Use and Amount

The proposal is for a single storey, 4 bedroom dwelling with a detached guest annexe/home office. The more compact deeper plan proposed for the main house is a more efficient layout and, as the figures below demonstrate, is significantly smaller than the extant consent in terms of footprint, gross internal area, height and perhaps most importantly, in volume.

The maximum ridge height is 0.84m lower than the existing cowshed and the proposed GIA and Volume equates to reduction of 17.1% and 26% respectively from the current consent.



The Existing Barns and Approved Scheme.



The Proposed Scheme.

Previous and Existing Consent
(DC/21/0699 & DC/25/0307)

Volume of House - 2105.0m³
Volume of Garage/Annexe - 865.2m³
Total Consented Volume - 2970.2m³

Gross Internal Floor Area of House - 405.0m²
Gross Internal Floor Area of Garage/Annexe- 205.7m²
Total Gross Internal Floor Area - 610.7m²

Proposed Scheme

Volume of House - 1653.0m³
Volume of garage/Annexe - 551.4m³
Total Proposed Volume - 2204.4m³

Gross Internal Floor Area of House - 374.9m²
Gross Internal Floor Area of Garage/Annexe- 131.3m²
Total Gross Internal Floor Area- 506.2m²

2.5 Orientation and Layout

In comparison to the consented scheme the main body of the house has been reorientated and repositioned to run across the width of the site, moving it away from the western boundary and offering a better aspect and outlook. Furthermore the revised site layout ensures minimal impact from public viewpoints, including those from neighbouring properties and a reduced impact on the setting of the neighbouring listed building.

The building has a clear ordered and generous layout. It has been designed so that principal living spaces enjoy the southerly aspect over the garden whereas the bedrooms are arranged within the northern half. The northern side extends as a longer volume opening up the southerly aspect to the west end of this block. Between the two blocks an internal courtyard will fill the centre of the plan with light and air.

To the north the annexe and garage wing frames the entrance yard and allows the access and driveway to be kept to the north of the house and clear of the principle garden compared to the compromised access and gardens of the existing consent.



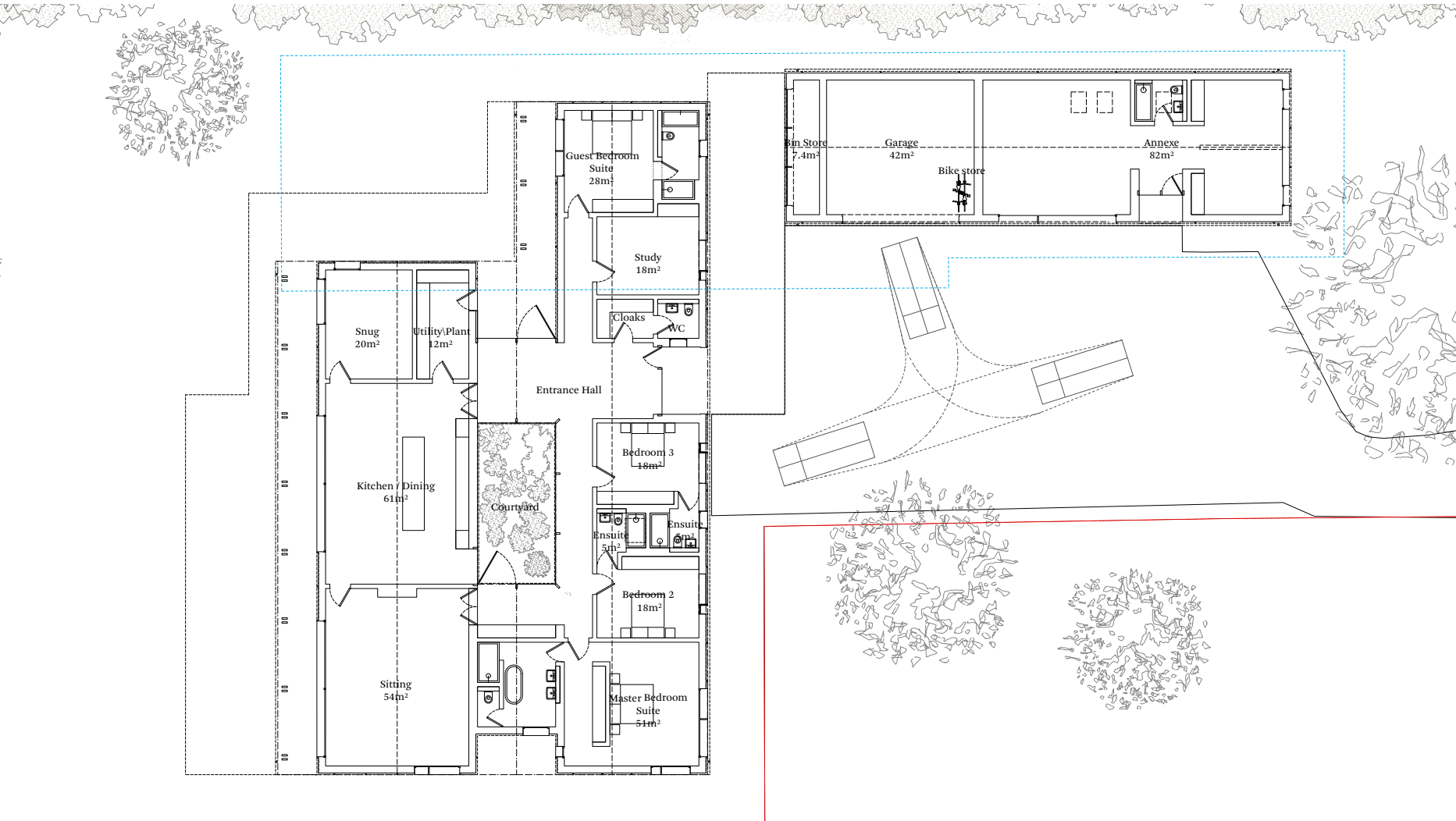
The site plan showing the sunpath

2.6 Scale, Massing and Form

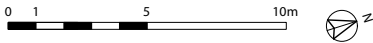
Our ambition has been to design a high quality and sustainable contemporary house with an appearance and form carefully tuned to its site and that enhances its wider setting. They reflect an agricultural aesthetic but with a refinement to the detailing and selection of materials.

The architectural language and massing echoes the simple extruded forms of the existing buildings without hips or extraneous details. The proposed buildings have a matching roof pitch and eaves datum. Only the depth of each plan changes which generates subtle differences in ridge height between the volumes.

The proposed buildings have been repositioned so their bulk is located more centrally on the site. The greater distance and lesser size of the elevations from the boundary, combined with the lower height of the roofs greatly reduces the impact of the massing in comparison to the existing barns.



Floor Plan



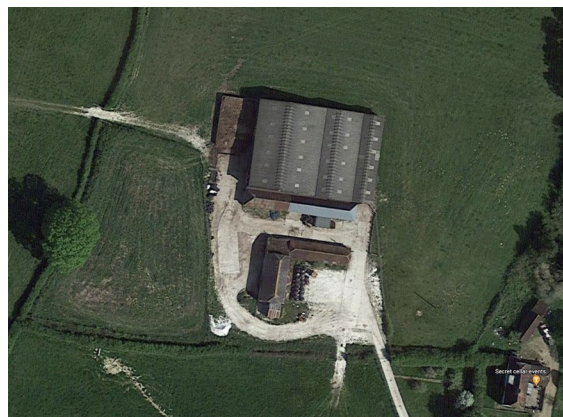


View from the north of the site

2.7 Form Precedents. Barns in the Landscape

The design, massing and exact positioning of the proposed scheme on the site have all been carefully considered to have minimal impact on neighbours and when viewed from the surrounding landscape.

The form also reflects a typical double barn configuration with two double pitch roofs joined on their long elevations. The precedent images below show local examples of similar agricultural or equestrian buildings with deep plans and double, or multiple pitch abutting roof sections. These buildings often have staggered plans and irregular forms which is also reflected in the design of the main house.



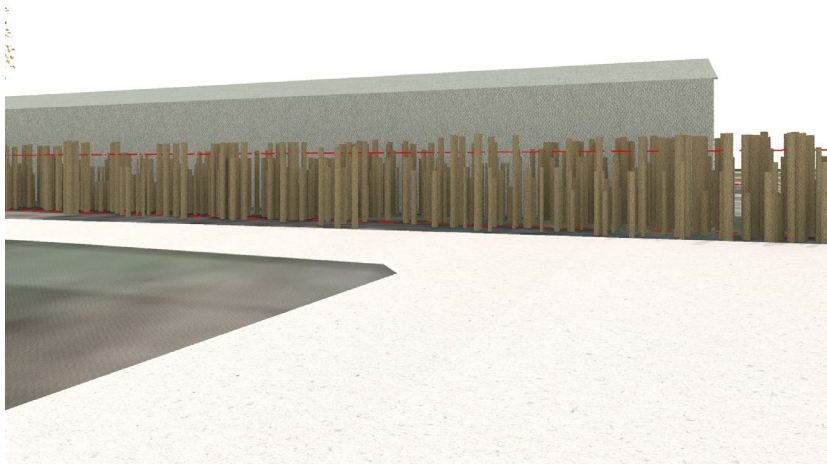
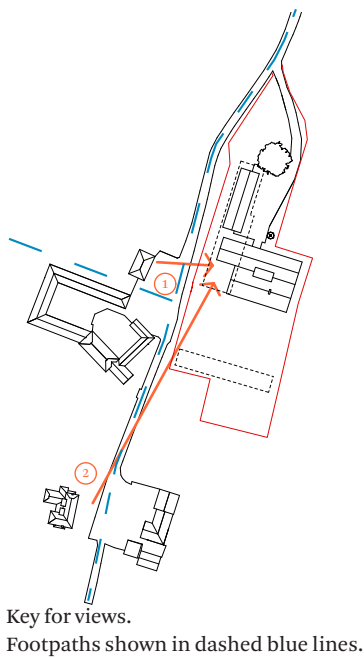
Aerial views of barns in the surrounding landscape.
All photographs are at the same scale.

2.8 Visibility and Landscape Impact

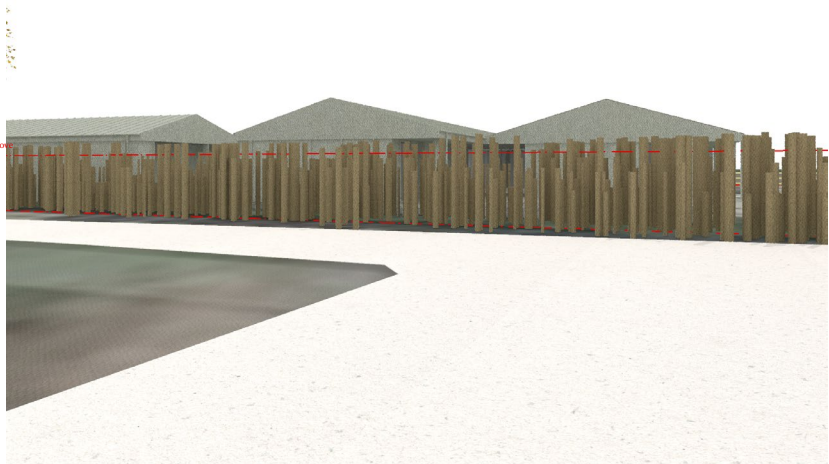
The site of Moatfield Farm Barns is accessed from the north from Moatfield Lane. It is largely screened from the lane by a single mature tree which stands near the gated entrance to the site. From just south of the gates a dense hedge following the entire rest of the western boundary, as well as parts of the southern site boundary. This is made up of native species and small hedgerow trees which when cut is no lower than 2.4m tall and often significantly taller with new growth.

The only public vantage points of the site are from the footpath that follows Moatfield Lane and the one that joins this from Dragons Lane through the farmstead to the west. From both these routes the existing hedging provides considerable screening and as the adjacent massing studies show the new proposals are less visible than the existing because of their height and position on the site.

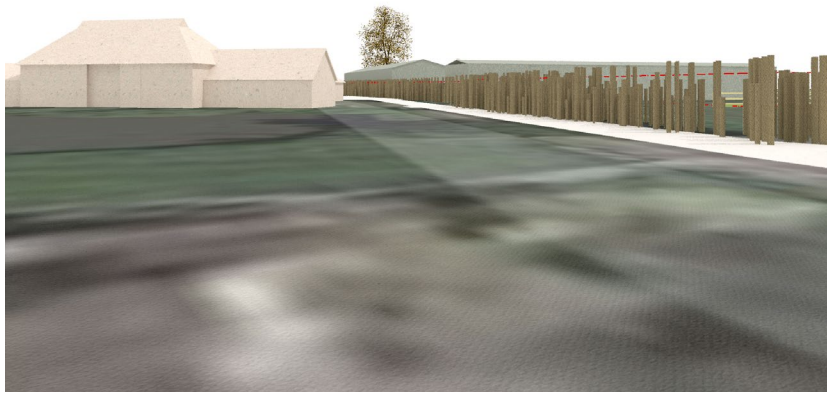
The land immediately to the east is in the same ownership as the site and the nearest public route is the bridleway following Buckhatch Lane that is set within the woods and has no views over the site.



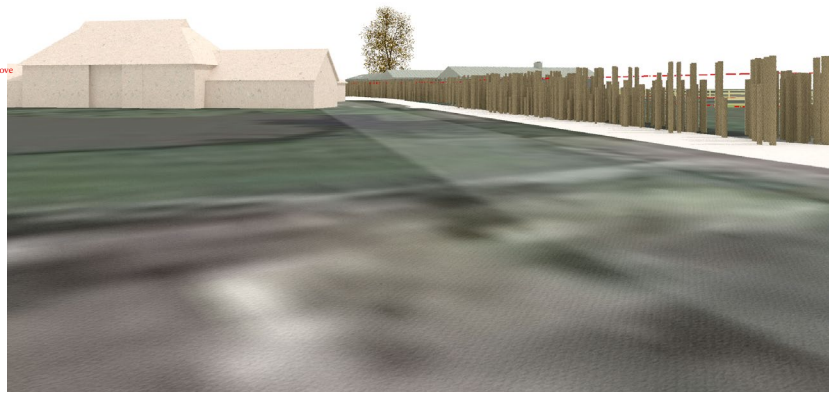
View 1. Existing/Approved scheme



View 1. Proposed Scheme



View 2. Existing/Approved Scheme

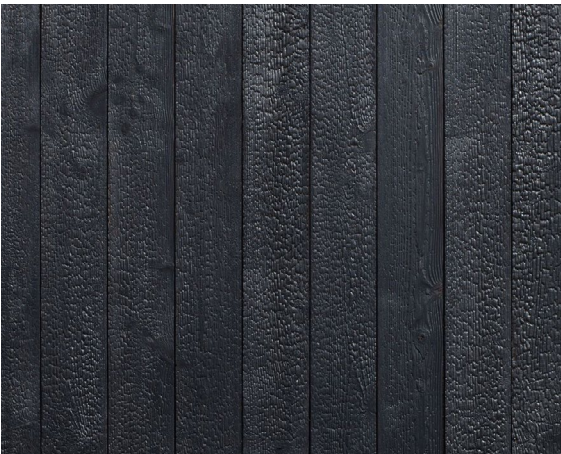


View 2. Proposed Scheme

2.9 Appearance and Material Schedule

The form of the house has been developed to have an agricultural language in keeping with the site's former use and to retain an appropriate aesthetic in the setting of the site. Although the site is relatively private, an important aspiration of the brief was to design a building that is familiar within and makes a positive contribution to the landscape so a contemporary agricultural language has been developed.

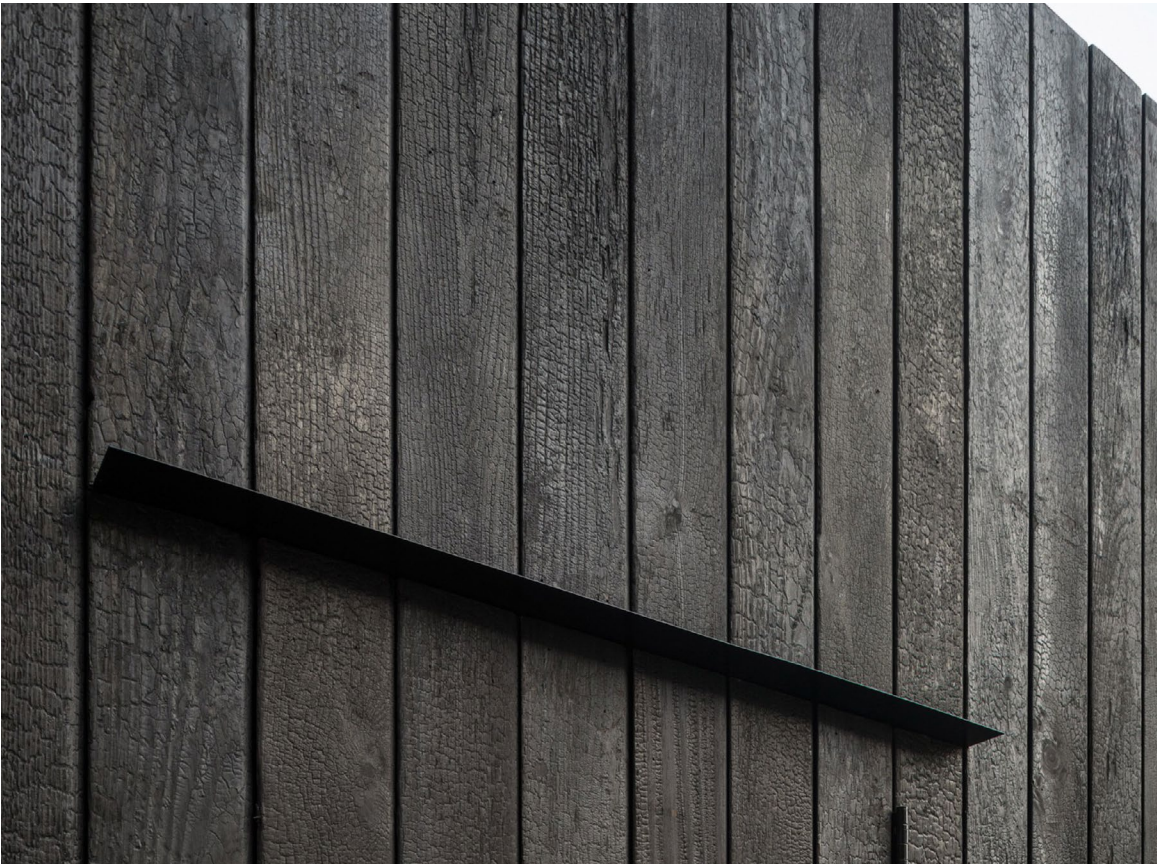
A simple palette of dark materials have be selected to give the buildings a calm, unfussy and subdued character in keeping with the vernacular. These are natural materials with subtle tonal variations and differing grain, which will weather well as they age. The walls are proposed to be clad in a charred timber board of different sizes above and below the eaves datum. For the roof a pre-oxidised copper with crisp standing seam detailing and matching rainwater goods.



Charred timber external wall cladding



Oxidised copper for standing seam roof and rainwater goods



Charred timber external wall cladding with discreet door details



Wall cladding and overhanging eaves in fully oxidised copper cladding



View of the proposed scheme from the south.

2.10 Accessibility Statement

As with the extant consent the existing access to and from King’s Lane will be retained along Moatfield Lane. The private road is of a good standard and serves the existing requirements of the site.

Level access is provided at the entrance to both the main house and annexe and within their interiors.

2.11 Refuse and Recycling Strategy

Refuse and recycling bins will be stored in a concealed sheltered enclosure at the southern end of the garage block, adjacent to the principal entrance to the house and easily accessible from the kitchen and utility room. The enclosed bin storage space has an internal area of 7.4m².

Garden waste will be composted on site.

2.12 Sustainability

In addition to meeting the current Building Regulations we propose to use the following measures to enhance the sustainability, further reduce the carbon footprint of the house and make a full contribution to the mitigation of climate change:

- High quality, self-finished, durable long life materials which where possible are sourced locally.
- Excellent insulating properties of the building fabric
- Efficient services and lighting to reduce energy usage in the longer term.
- Adaptable layout to provide a long-term loose-fit building that allows for changing future patterns of use.
- Passive energy strategy with careful consideration of solar orientation for shading and glazing to maximise natural daylighting and solar gain.
- High efficiency, low emissive solar glass triple glazing.
- Modern construction techniques to improve air tightness and minimise thermal bridging.
- Efficient heating and ventilation control systems including a mechanical heat recovery ventilation system and air source heat pump.
- Car charging points will be provided within the garage.

The colonnades that run along the full length of all south facing elevations are designed to provide shading in summer to minimise solar gain whilst letting low winter sun penetrate into the depth of the building when most needed. These deep overhangs also provide weather protection fom the prevailing south westerly winds and help reduce light pollution.

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