

ELM TREE

CAERLICKEN LANE, LANGSTONE

Design + Access Statement

Client: Jan Sniatecki & Agnieszka Sniatecka

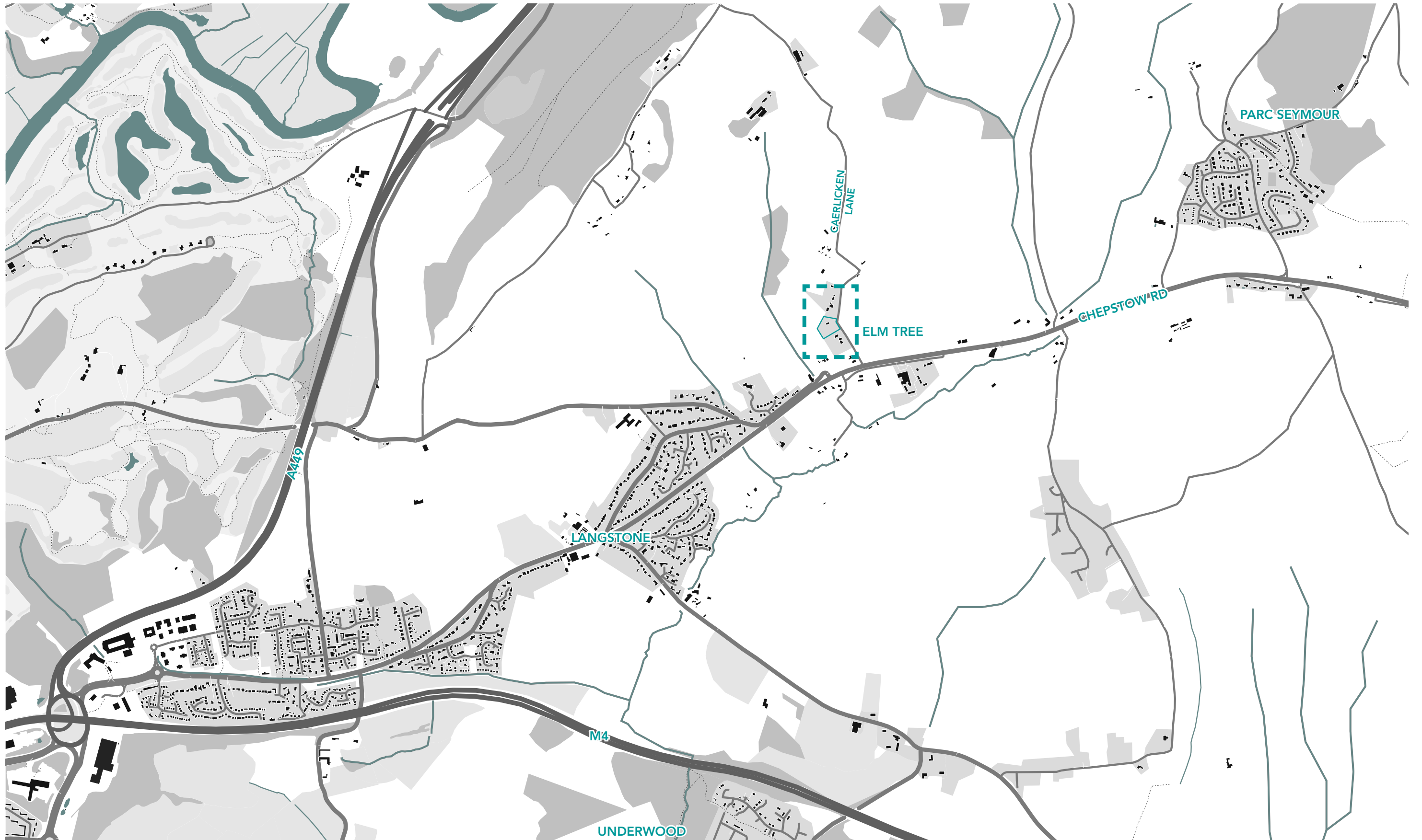
Author: DS

Reference & Rev: 2610 - DAS - D

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Site location



1 INFORMATION

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Replacement Dwelling

Elm Tree, Caerlicken Lane, Langstone, Newport, NP18 2JZ

Applicants: Jan Sniatecki & Agnieszka Sniatecka

Agent: Siemens Architecture

Pre-application reference: PS/25/0139

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies a full planning application for the demolition of the existing bungalow at Elm Tree, Caerlicken Lane, Langstone, and its replacement with a new two-storey family house.

It is an architectural statement. It sets out how the design came to take the form it has, what the site asked of it, and how the resulting building sits in its landscape. The planning policy case is made separately by TCPA (applicants' planning consultant); policy is touched on here only where it bears directly on a design decision.

The statement should be read alongside the following supporting documents:

- Bat Emergence Survey Report, NewWays Ecology Ltd, June 2026
- Topographical Survey, Precision Land Surveyors (Wales) Ltd, drawing PLS-187, surveyed 03.03.26
- Volume calculations, Siemens Architecture, revision A
- Drawings 2610-PL01A, PL02A, PL03A, PL04A, PL05A, PL06A, PL07A, PL08A, PL09A, PL10A, PL11A, PL12A



Existing bungalow - approach from above - north east corner



Existing bungalow - south west corner



Existing bungalow - approach from below - south elevation

1.2 THE SITE + EXISTING BUNGALOW

Elm Tree occupies a plot of approximately 1.03 acres on the eastern edge of Langstone, accessed from Caerlicken Lane. The site lies within open countryside and within the Wentwood Special Landscape Area.

The ground falls consistently from north to south across the plot — from around 73.5 m AOD at the northern boundary to around 63 m at the southern end, a fall of roughly ten metres. The boundaries are mature hedgerow and tree lines, and the interior of the plot carries a substantial population of mature specimen trees: sweet chestnut, oak, ash, wild cherry, silver birch, and an orchard group of apple and pear. The site has strong ecological connectivity to the wider landscape through these boundaries.

The existing dwelling is a rendered brick bungalow of 1950s construction with a clay tile roof, sited near the middle of the plot on its most elevated part. It has three bedrooms and a partial basement at its western end. The survey records it as being in moderate condition, with rot to the soffits, missing pointing, and water ingress at the chimney. The reality, however, is much worse. The bungalow is in very poor condition, structurally non-viable, and entirely prevents the achievement of Passivhaus energy standards. Internal walls exhibit numerous cracks and signs pointing directly at subsidence. The basement on the west side was clearly introduced to combat subsidence of a third of the house.



The existing site. The bungalow occupies the highest, most central part of a plot that falls ten metres from north to south.

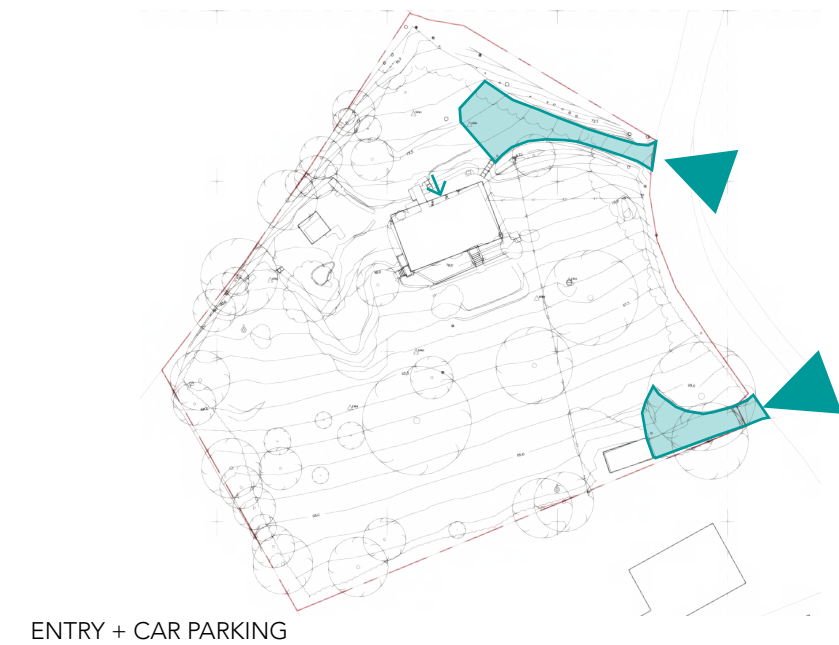
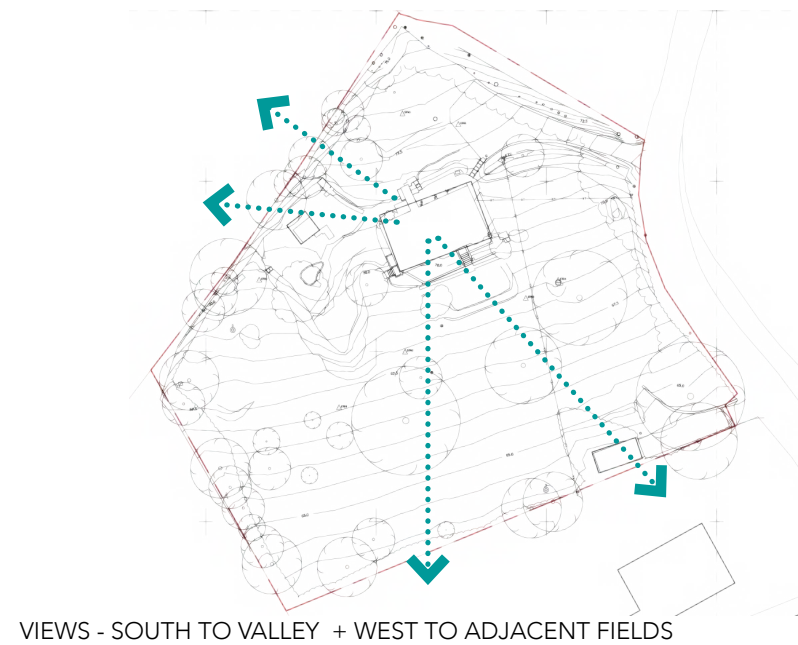
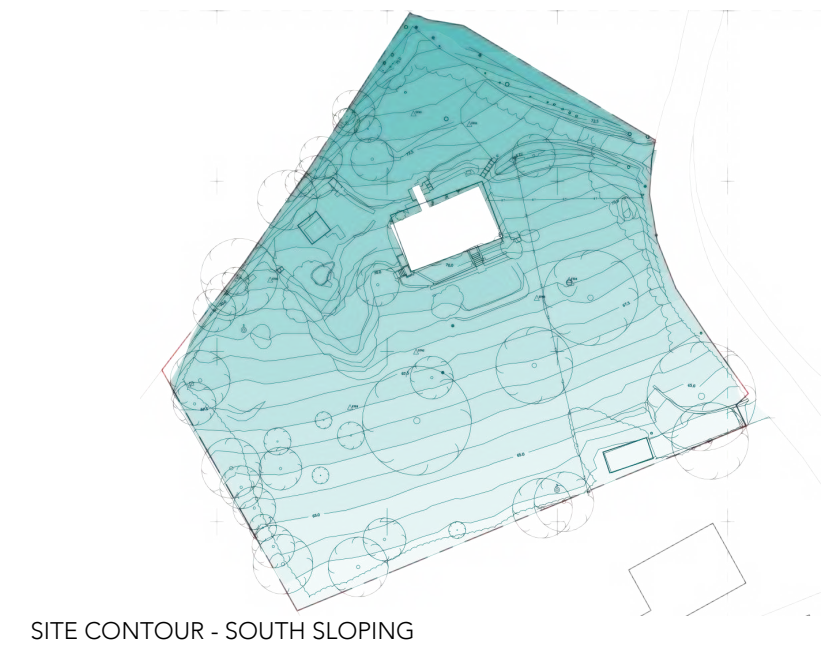
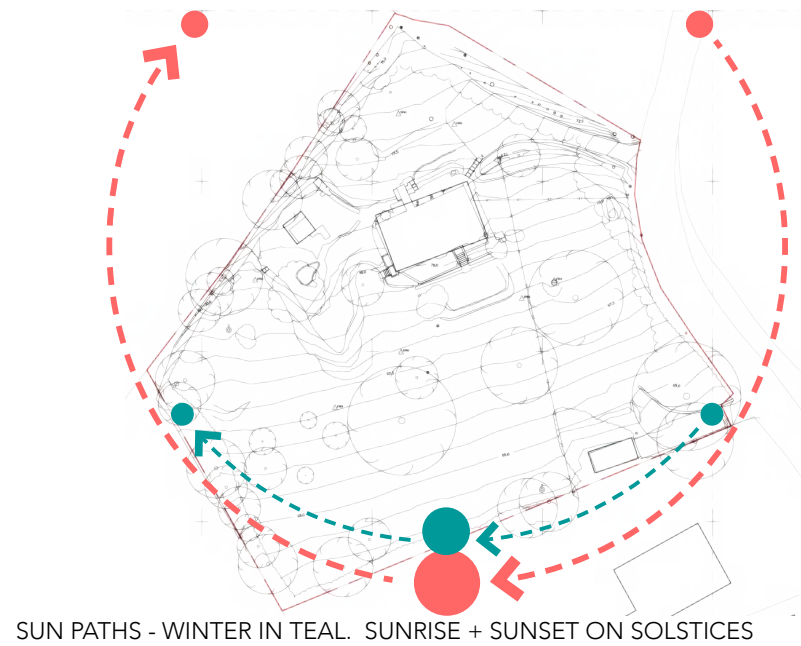
2 SITE

2.1 SITE ANALYSIS

Six characteristics of the site were surveyed and analysed at the outset, and each of them drives a decision in the building.

- **Topography.** A consistent south-facing fall of approximately ten metres. This is the site's dominant characteristic and the scheme's primary generator.
- **Vegetation.** A mature perimeter belt of trees and hedgerow, and a substantial interior population of specimen trees with wide canopies. These form both a visual screen and an ecological network.
- **Orientation.** The slope faces south. Sun path analysis established the winter arc and the solstice sunrise and sunset positions, and confirmed that the ground floor could be given generous southern light without overheating if solar shading were provided at first-floor level.
- **Views.** Long views south towards the valley and the Bristol Channel; nearer views west across adjacent fields; and, most importantly for daily life, the enclosed garden immediately around the house, framed between the mature trees.
- **Acoustics.** Traffic noise from the A48 arrives from the south.
- **Access.** Two vehicle entrances from Caerlicken Lane, one serving the house and one serving a detached garage to the south-east.

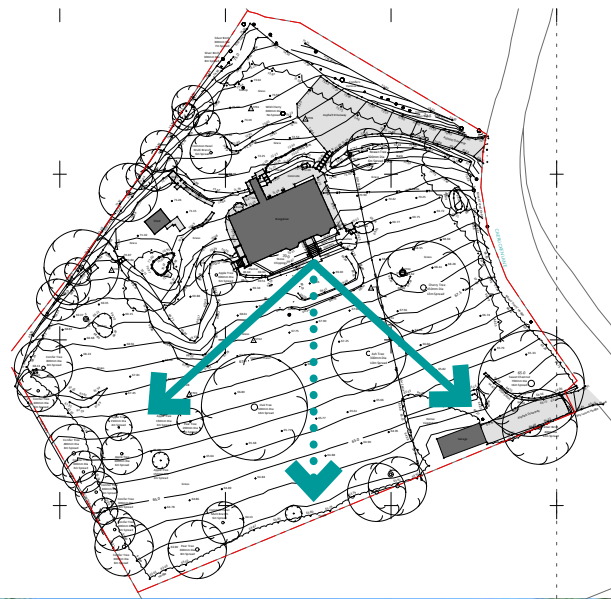
2.2 SITE ANALYSIS SKETCHES



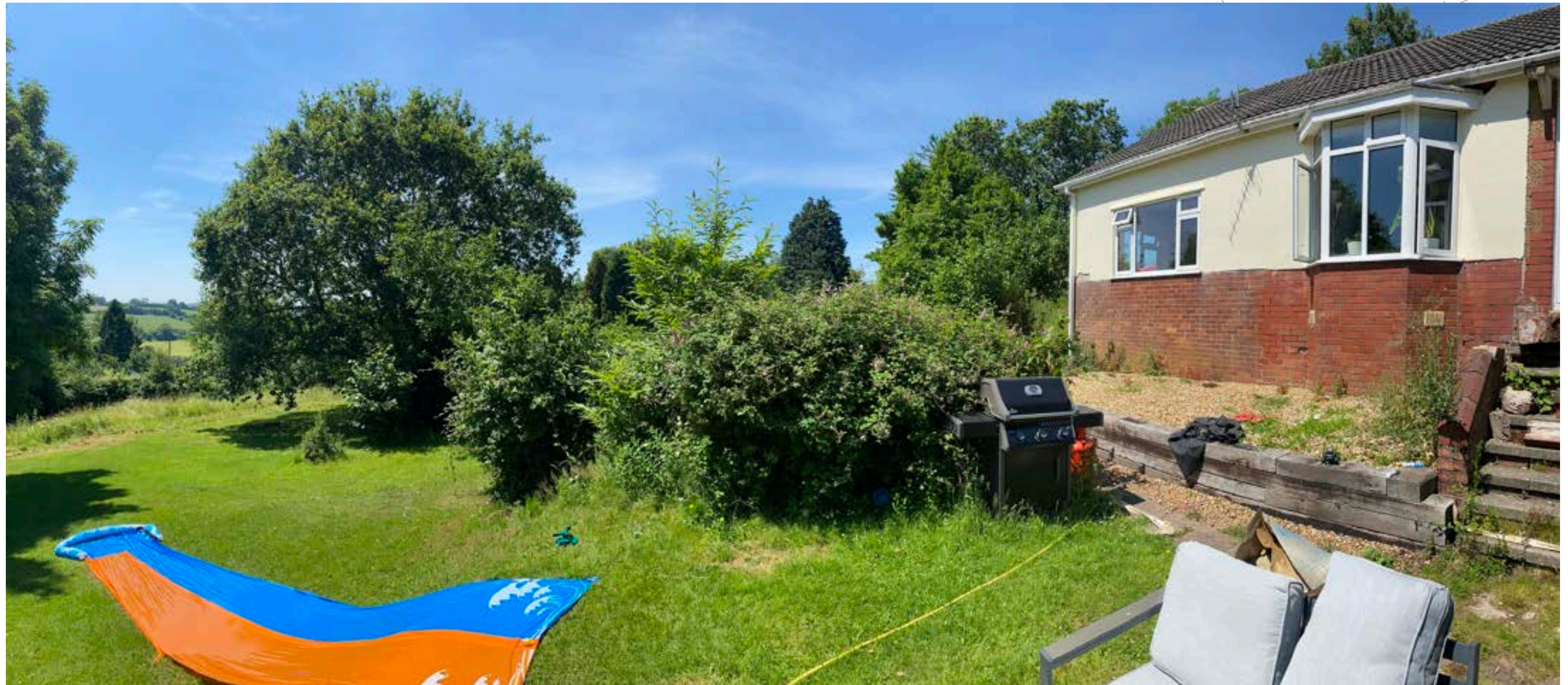
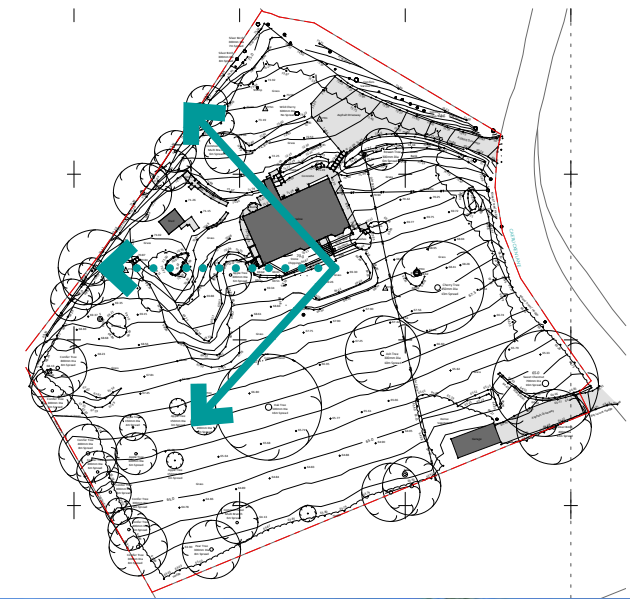
2.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



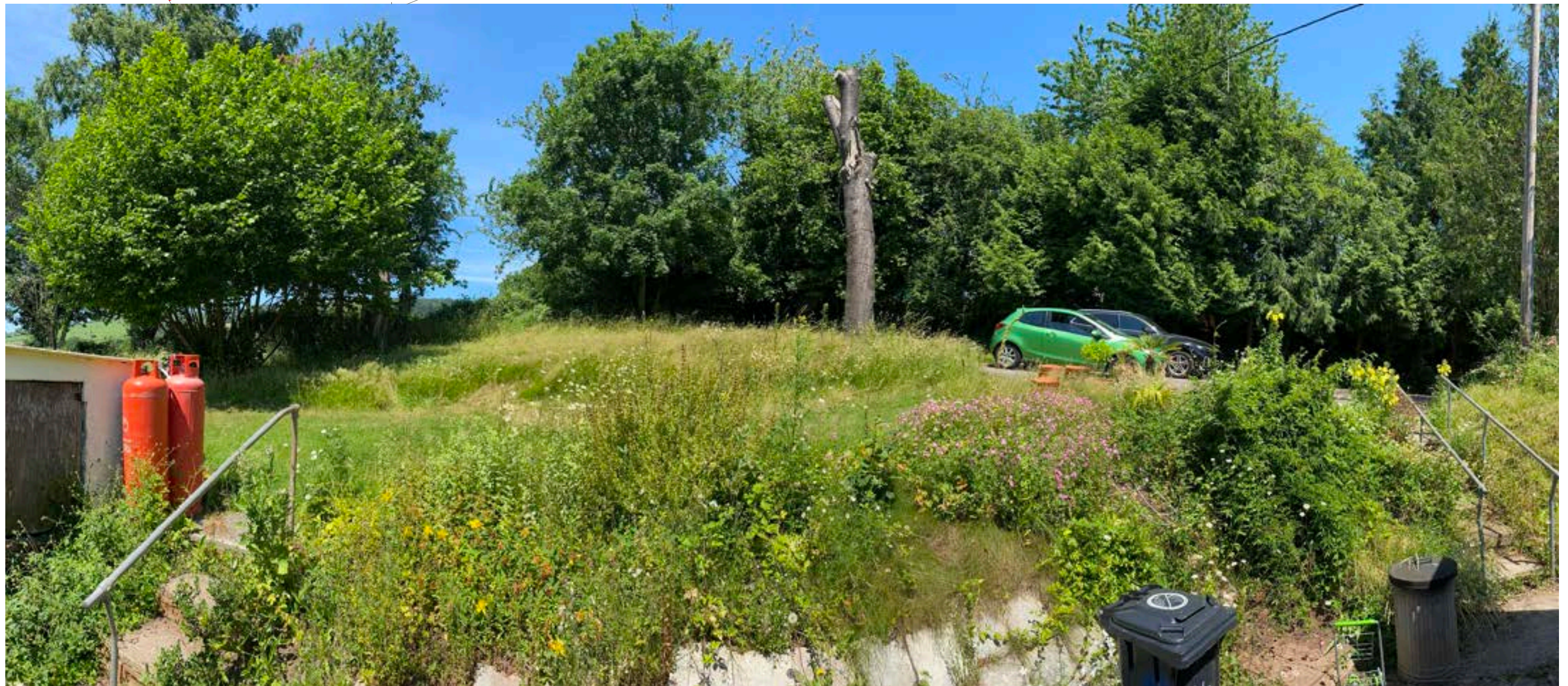
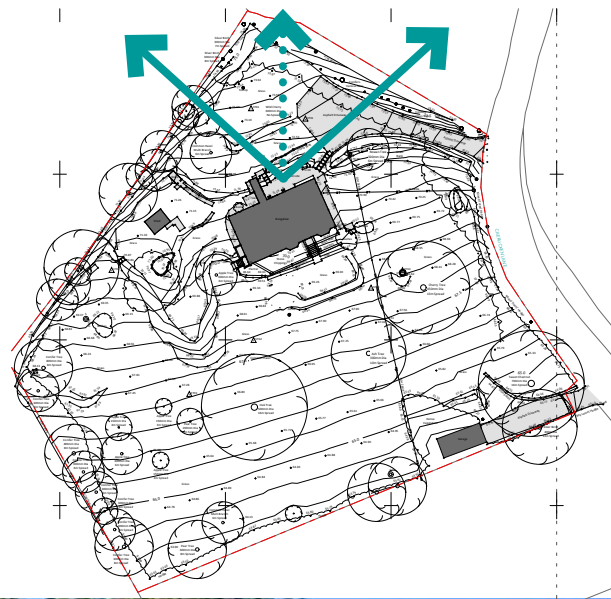
Panoramic photo - EAST



Panoramic photo - SOUTH



Panoramic photo - WEST



Panoramic photo - NORTH

3 DESIGN PROCESS

The design passed through three distinct propositions before arriving at the scheme now submitted. That progression is set out here in full, because the reasoning that connects the three is the reasoning that produced the proposed design.

3.1 1ST PROPOSAL — EXTENSION + FIRST FLOOR

The first approach sought to keep the existing bungalow and grow it: a two-storey rear extension together with a new first floor formed by raising the roof.

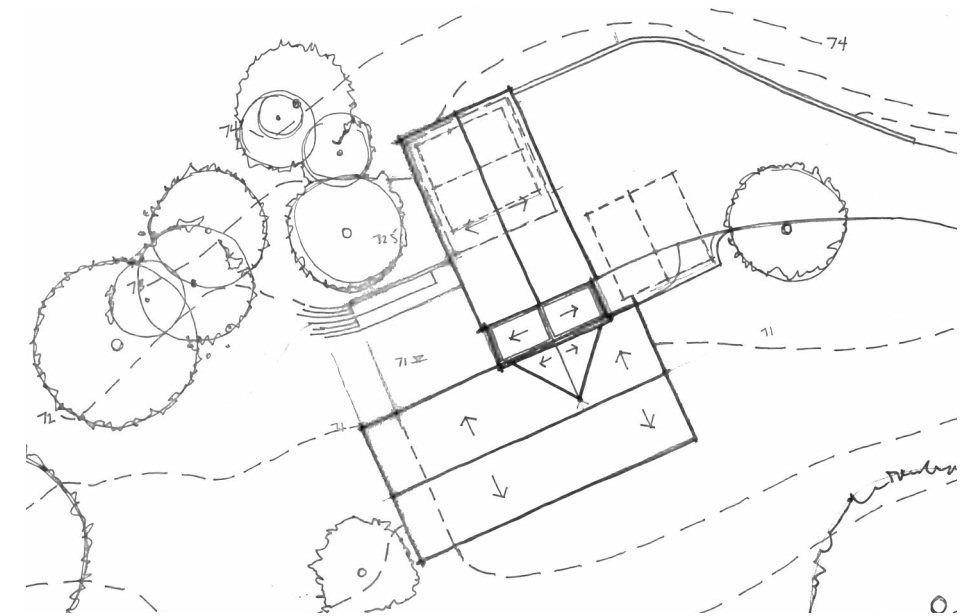
This scheme was the subject of pre-application enquiry PS/25/0139, and the Council's response of 16 January 2026 did not support it. The officer's criticisms were specific and, on reflection, correct. The rear extension read as an overly large and dominant addition rather than a subordinate one. It did not respond to the design of the host dwelling or to the local area. The roof forms were shallow and the material treatment unresolved. The proposal was found to be overscaled and of poor design, and the increase in footprint and height in a countryside location was held to be harmful to rural character.

The applicants accepted that assessment.

3.2 2ND PROPOSAL — RETAIN + ADD

The second approach took the criticism seriously and attempted to answer it through better architecture. The bungalow was retained and a new two-storey wing was added, anchored into the slope to the north-east. The existing western end was opened up with an inset balcony. Arrival was brought under an integrated canopy. The plan was organised around the site's orientation, and the material palette that survives into the current scheme — slate, render above stone, coursed grey-blue stone, cedar to recessed areas — was established here.

It was, by a considerable margin, a better building than the first proposition. But it failed on precisely the point that mattered. Because it kept the existing house, it kept the existing *position*, and so every square metre added was added to the highest and most exposed part of the plot. The new wing rose clearly above the retained bungalow ridge. The scheme improved in every respect except the one the Council had objected to.



Site plan excerpt



Perspective from North West corner



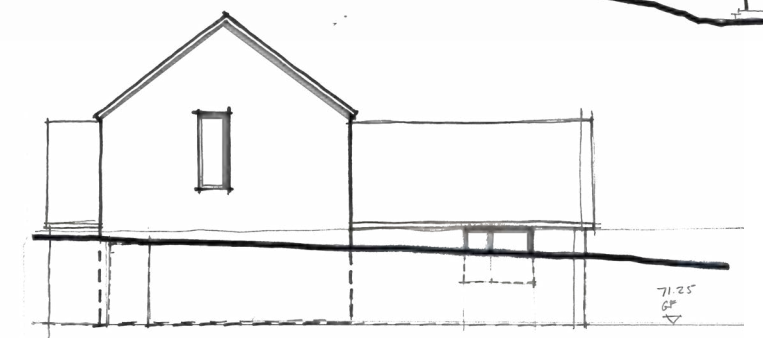
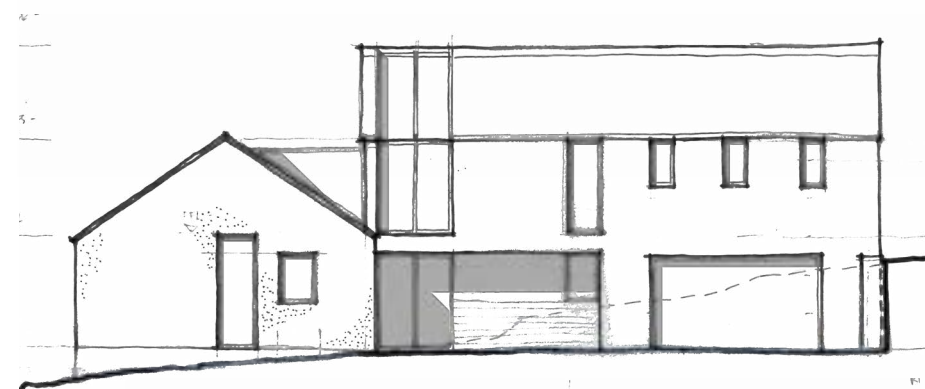
First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan



Perspective up toward North West corner



Elevations - top left EAST, bottom left SOUTH, top right WEST, bottom right NORTH

3.3 INSIGHT

The obstacle was not the building. It was where the building stood.

A bungalow occupying the elevated centre of a south-facing slope cannot be enlarged without becoming more prominent — that is a geometric fact, not a design failure. But a *replacement*, freed from the existing footprint and the existing floor level, can be placed anywhere on the site. It can be moved down the hill. And a house placed lower on a slope can be taller in itself while standing lower in the landscape.

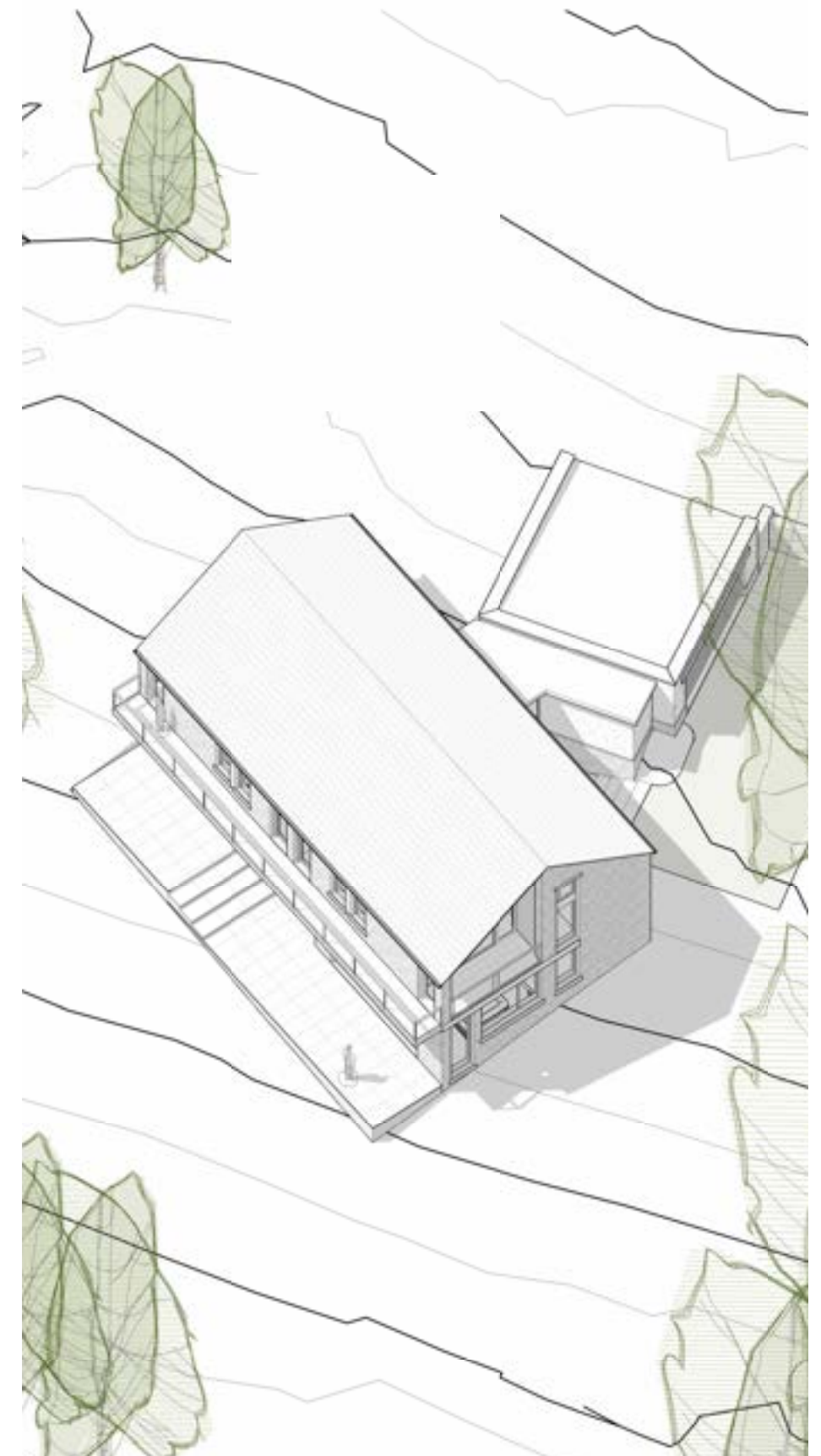
This is the decision from which everything else in the scheme follows.

3.4 3RD PROPSAL — REPLACEMENT

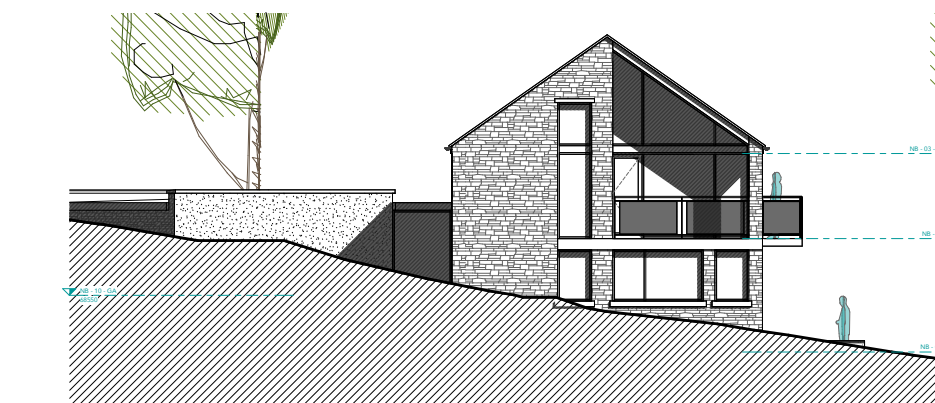
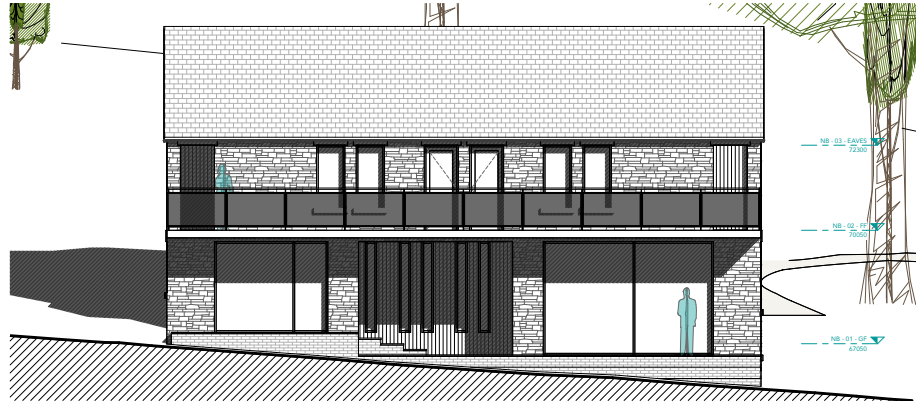
Having lived in the existing bungalow through a school holiday, and therefore having a better idea of how they would like to inhabit the natural setting with their children the clients were prepared to entertain the idea of a new house.

The next iteration therefore concentrated on siting a new house such that it would still benefit from the views to the south, but turn slightly away from Caerlicken lane to increase the sense of privacy within the site. The position was also conceived to ‘play’ amongst the trees, and slide down the slope to mitigate against the impact of having a second storey. The main elevation was kept closely aligned to south in order to passively (naturally) harness and control solar energy.

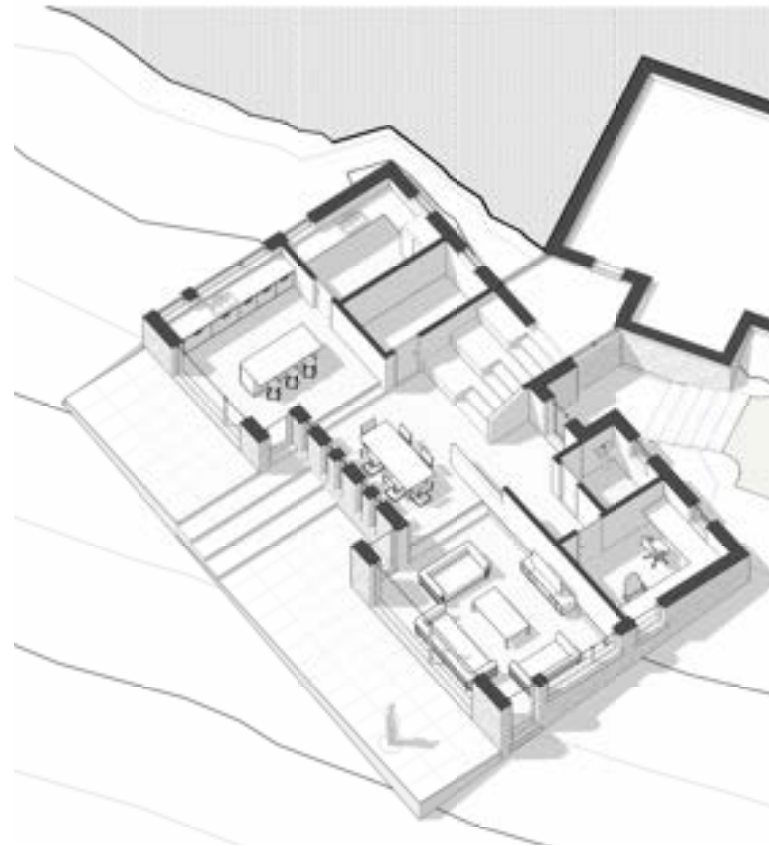
The main entry was on the north elevation adjacent the proposed garage. This would have required significant excavation and lessened the anchoring of the in the slope. Furthermore it would have meant losing one of the mature trees.



Proposed axonometric



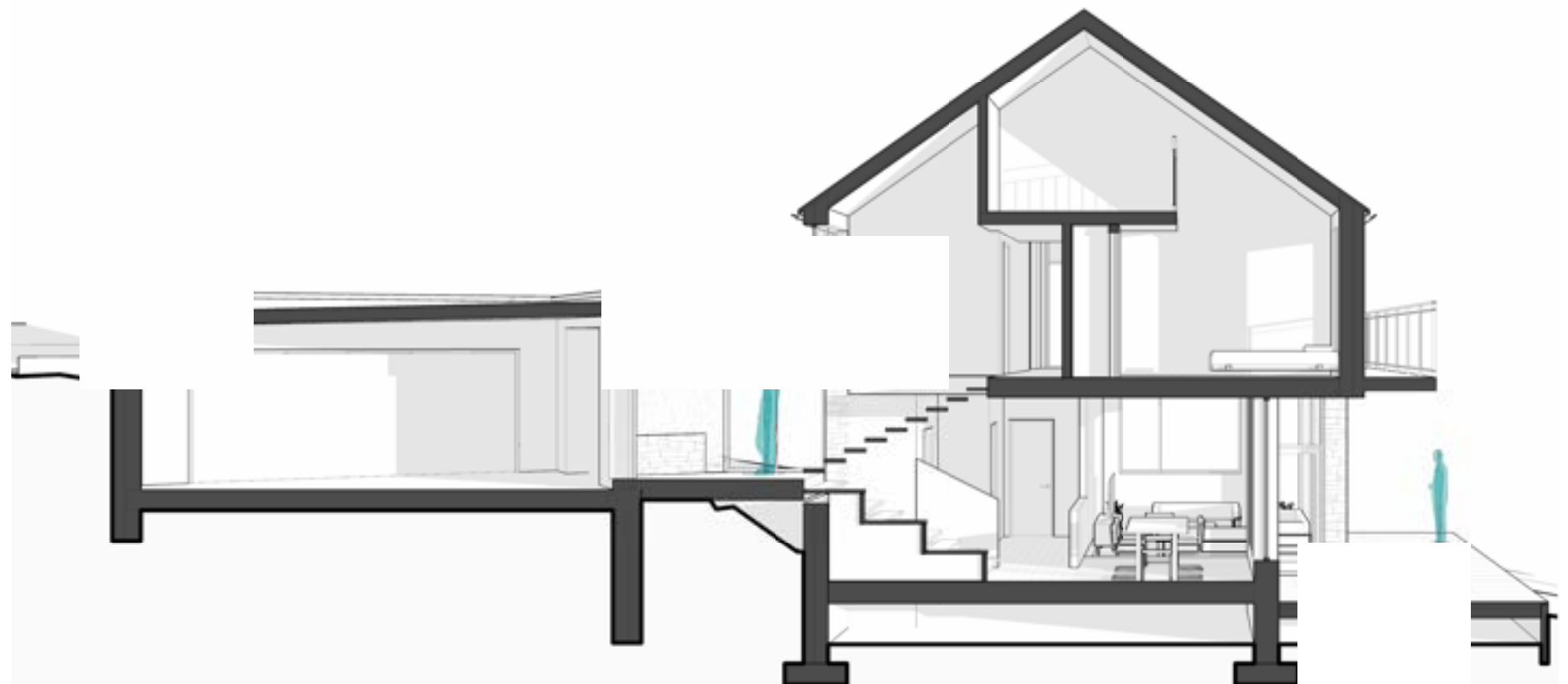
Proposed elevations. from top: south, east, north, west



Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed first floor plan

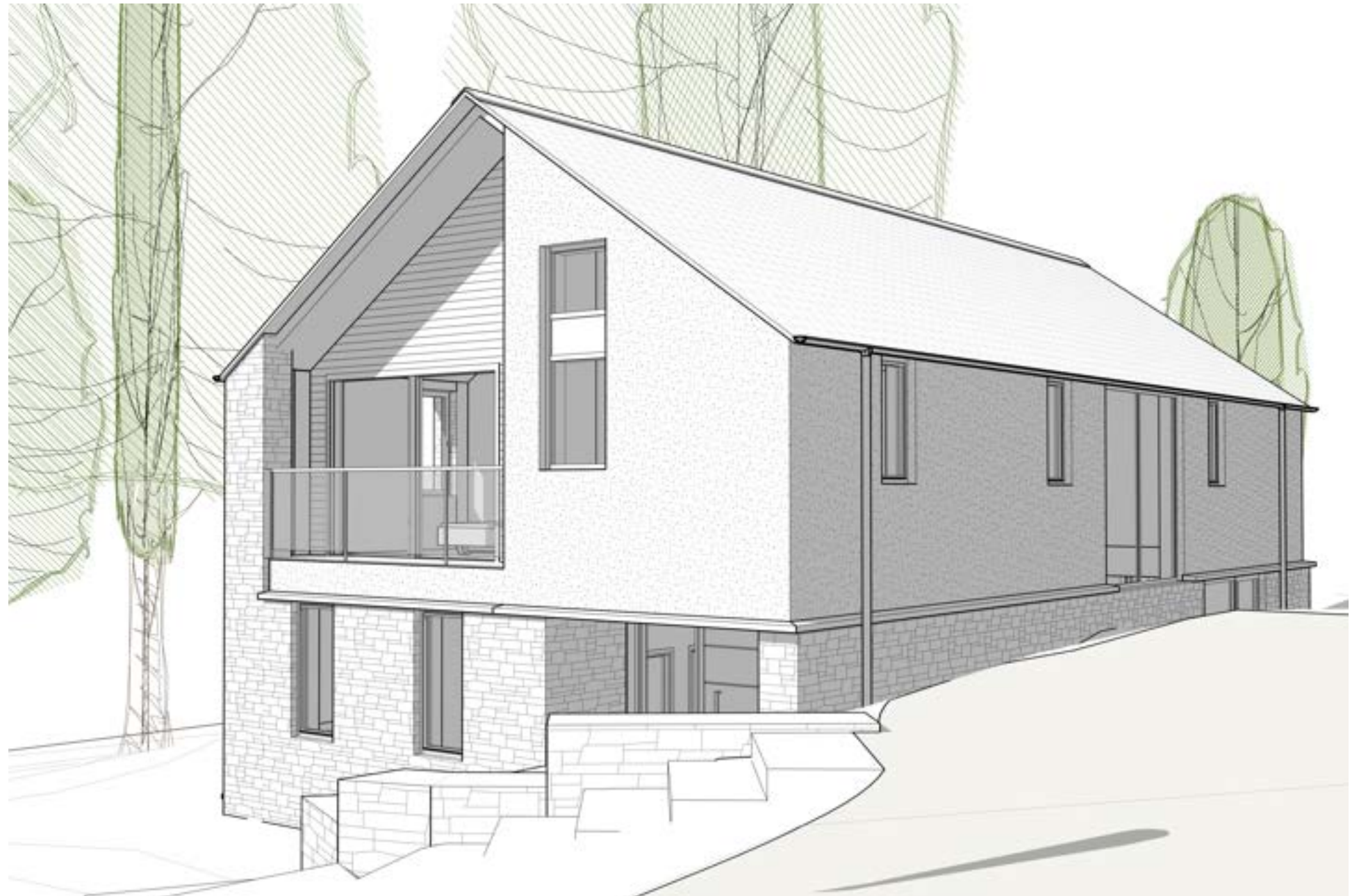


Proposed section

4.1 FINAL DESIGN

There was plenty to retain from the last iteration to the current design, including the overall internal layouts hence the external shape of the proposed house.

The entry to the house has been changed to address the site entry from Caerlicken lane, and prevent excavation along the north elevation.



Perspective view from drive

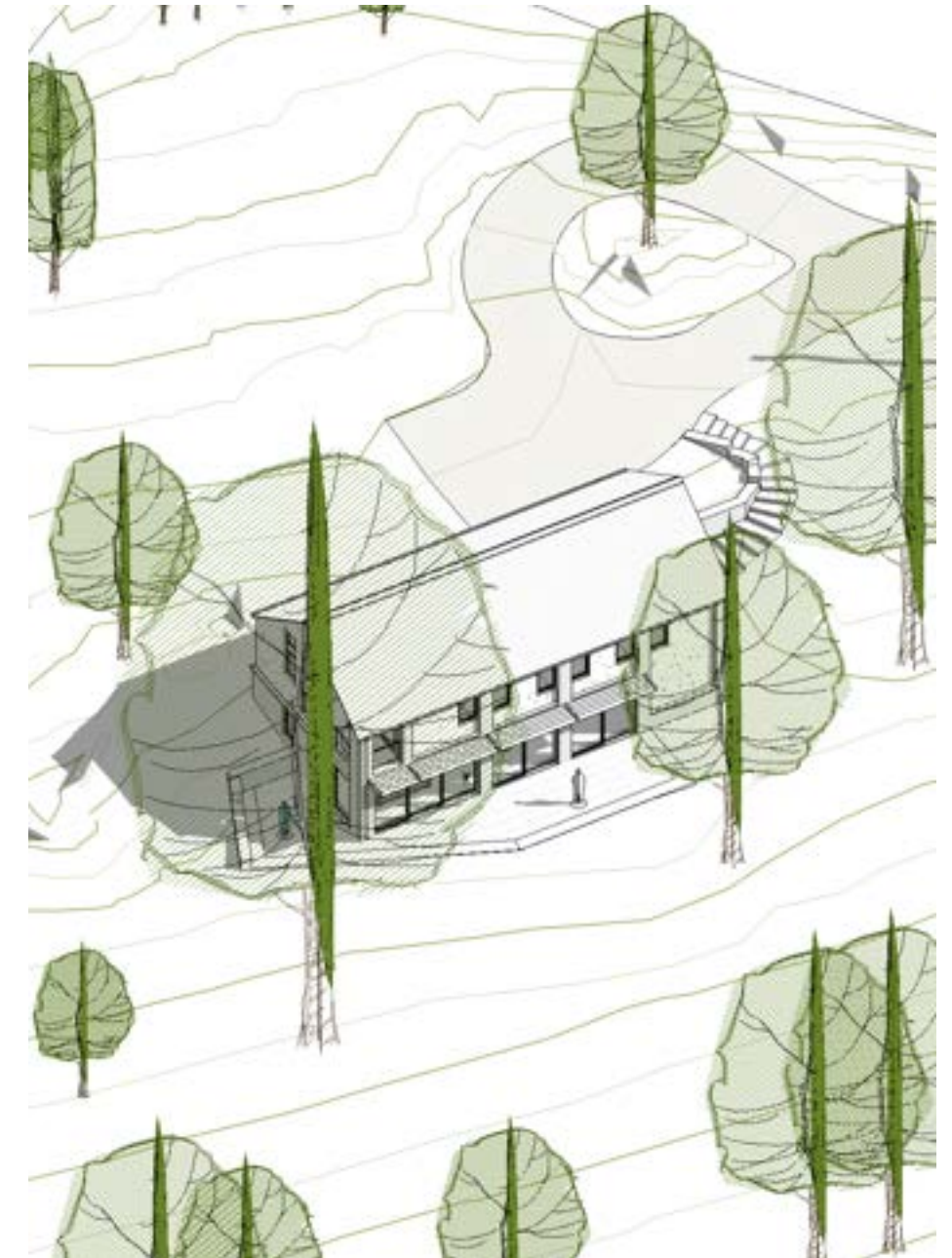
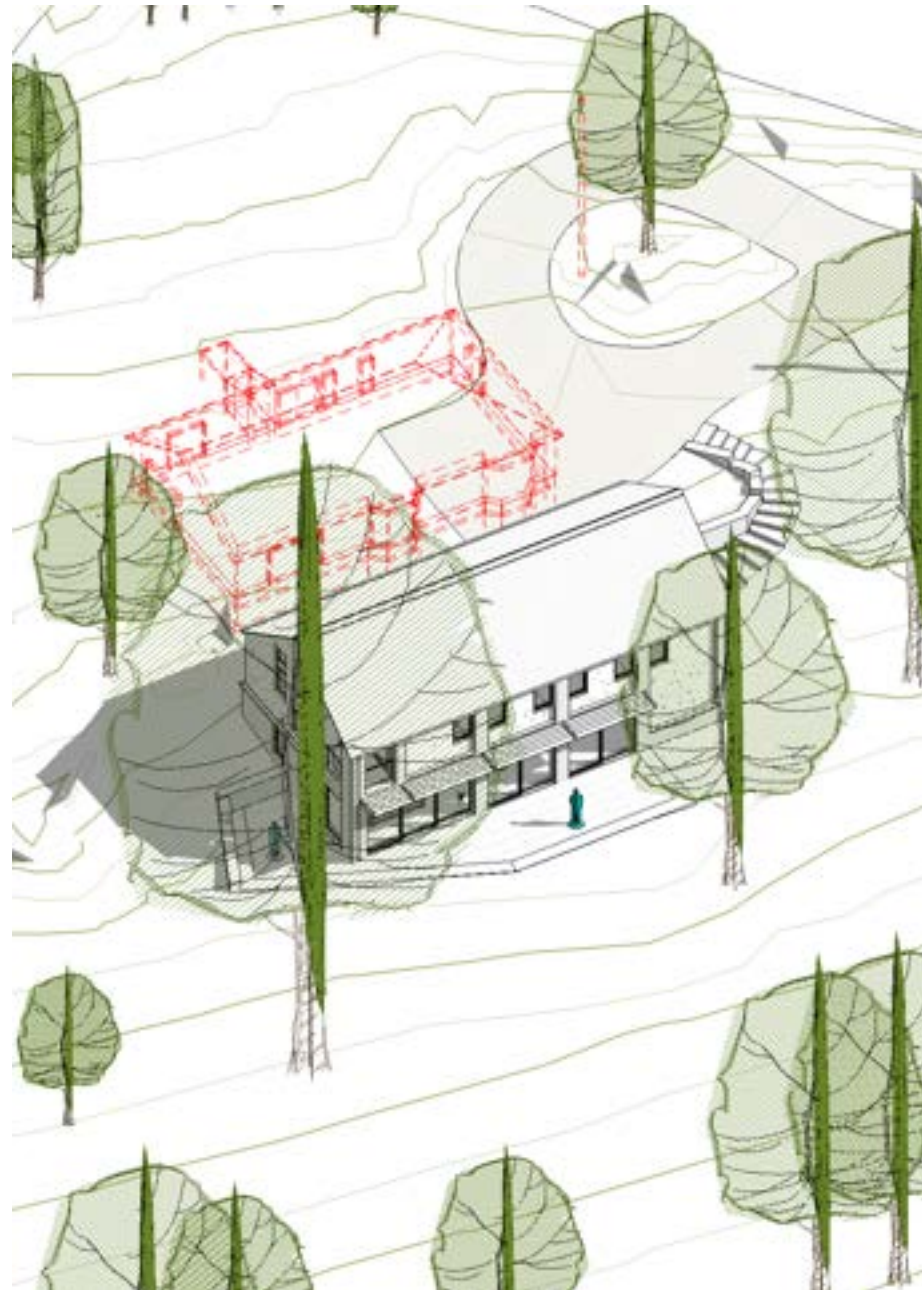
4.1 DOWN THE SLOPE

The current design places the proposed house four metres south of the existing bungalow's position and turned to run parallel with it. Three considerations fixed that position and that orientation.

The first is the trees. Sliding the house down and across the slope in this alignment allows it to thread between the mature specimens without disturbing any of them. No tree is removed. The footprint, the patio, the drive and the steps are all held clear of the root protection areas of the retained trees — including the sweet chestnut, oak and ash, whose stem diameters of 700 mm, 500 mm and 500 mm generate the largest protection radii on the site.

The second is orientation. The alignment turns the principal elevation slightly off due south. This is deliberate: it moderates peak summer solar gain while retaining the long southern outlook, and it opens the building to the south-west evening light.

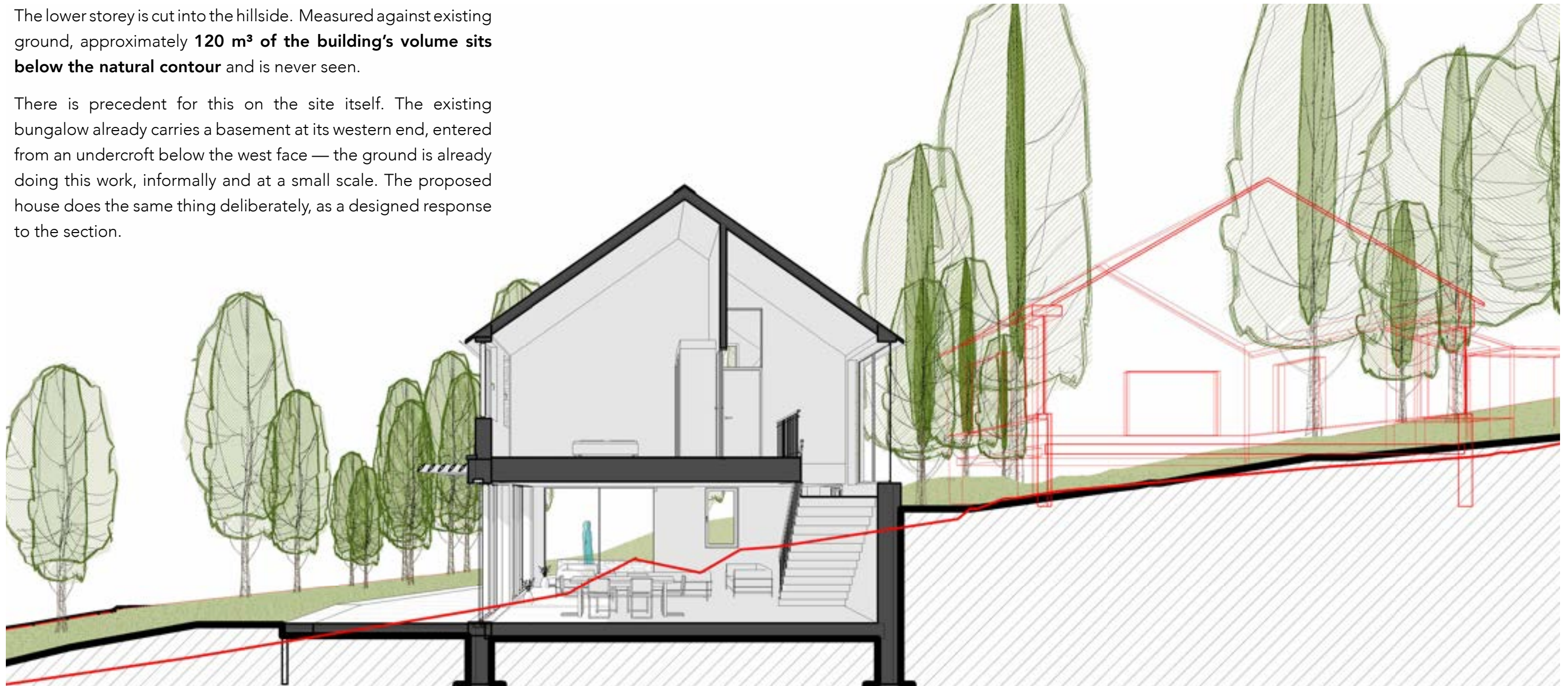
The third is what the family will actually look at. The ground floor holds the shared daytime rooms, and from them the outlook is not the distant valley but the immediate garden, enclosed between the mature trees, where the applicants' children play. The house is oriented to hold that space in view.



4.2 ANCHOR IN THE SLOPE

The lower storey is cut into the hillside. Measured against existing ground, approximately **120 m³ of the building's volume sits below the natural contour** and is never seen.

There is precedent for this on the site itself. The existing bungalow already carries a basement at its western end, entered from an undercroft below the west face — the ground is already doing this work, informally and at a small scale. The proposed house does the same thing deliberately, as a designed response to the section.



Proposed site section

4.3 SCALE

The Council's pre-application response objected to "a significant increase in building footprint and height." The figures are set out plainly below.

Height. The ridge falls. At 76.282 m AOD it stands 142 mm below the existing ridge of 76.424 m AOD. This is the dimension that governs how the development is perceived in the landscape, and it moves in the right direction.

Footprint. The existing bungalow covers approximately 113.0 m². The proposed house covers approximately 141.2 m². The existing garden shed and detached garage are retained unaltered. Built ground coverage across the site therefore rises from approximately 141.4 m² to approximately 169.7 m² — an increase of some 28.3 m².

The context for that increase is the building fabric. The proposed walls carry insulation to Passivhaus standards and are correspondingly deep: approximately 26 m² of the ground floor footprint is wall rather than usable room. The additional ground coverage is very largely the thickness of a high-performance envelope, not additional accommodation.

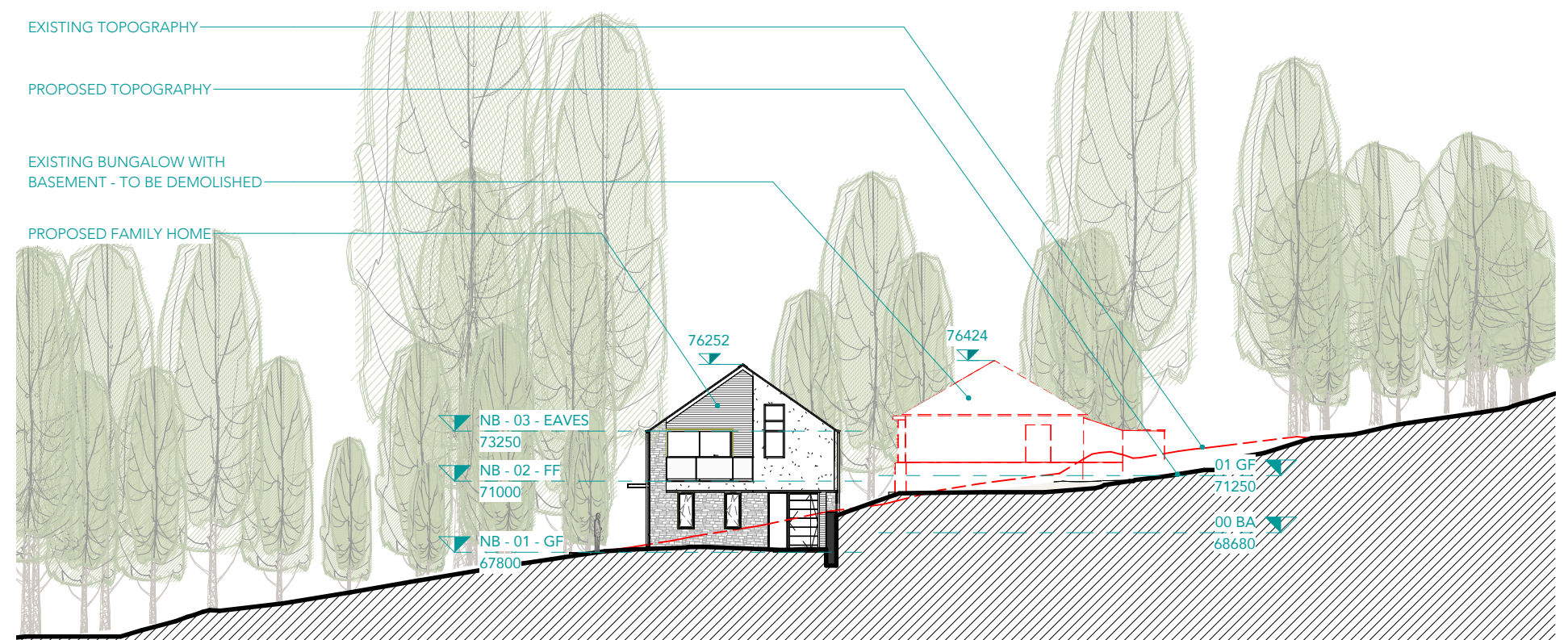
Sealed ground area moves the other way. The southern vehicle entrance and its asphalt drive are removed and returned to planting, and the remaining drive is laid in a permeable surface.

****Volume.**** Measured house-to-house, the increase is

approximately 65%. Measured across the site as a whole, it is approximately 55%. Measured across the site with the slope-embedded portion discounted — that is, comparing what will be seen against what is seen now — it is approximately 37%.

The application does not disguise these figures. The building is larger than the one it replaces. The case advanced here is not that it is small, but that it is ****less prominent****: it stands lower in the landscape, it is screened by the mature tree belt that is retained in full, roughly 120 m³ of it is never seen at

all, and it is built in the materials of its place. Policy H13 sets a 30% volume threshold for extensions in the countryside, and the Council's own pre-application response confirms that where it can be demonstrated that an increase above that figure will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, such development may be considered acceptable. It is that demonstration — impact rather than arithmetic — that this statement makes.





Proposed site plan. The house threads between the retained mature trees; demolished structures and the southern entrance return to planting.

5. LANDSCAPE

The scheme is landscape-led, and the landscape gains from it.

All existing trees are retained. The rowan standing on its mound to the north of the existing house — 300 mm stem, 6 m spread — is kept and the new drive is formed as a loop around it, making the tree the pivot of the arrival sequence rather than an obstacle to it. The wild cherry to the east, at 450 mm and 13 m spread, is likewise retained, as is the full perimeter belt.

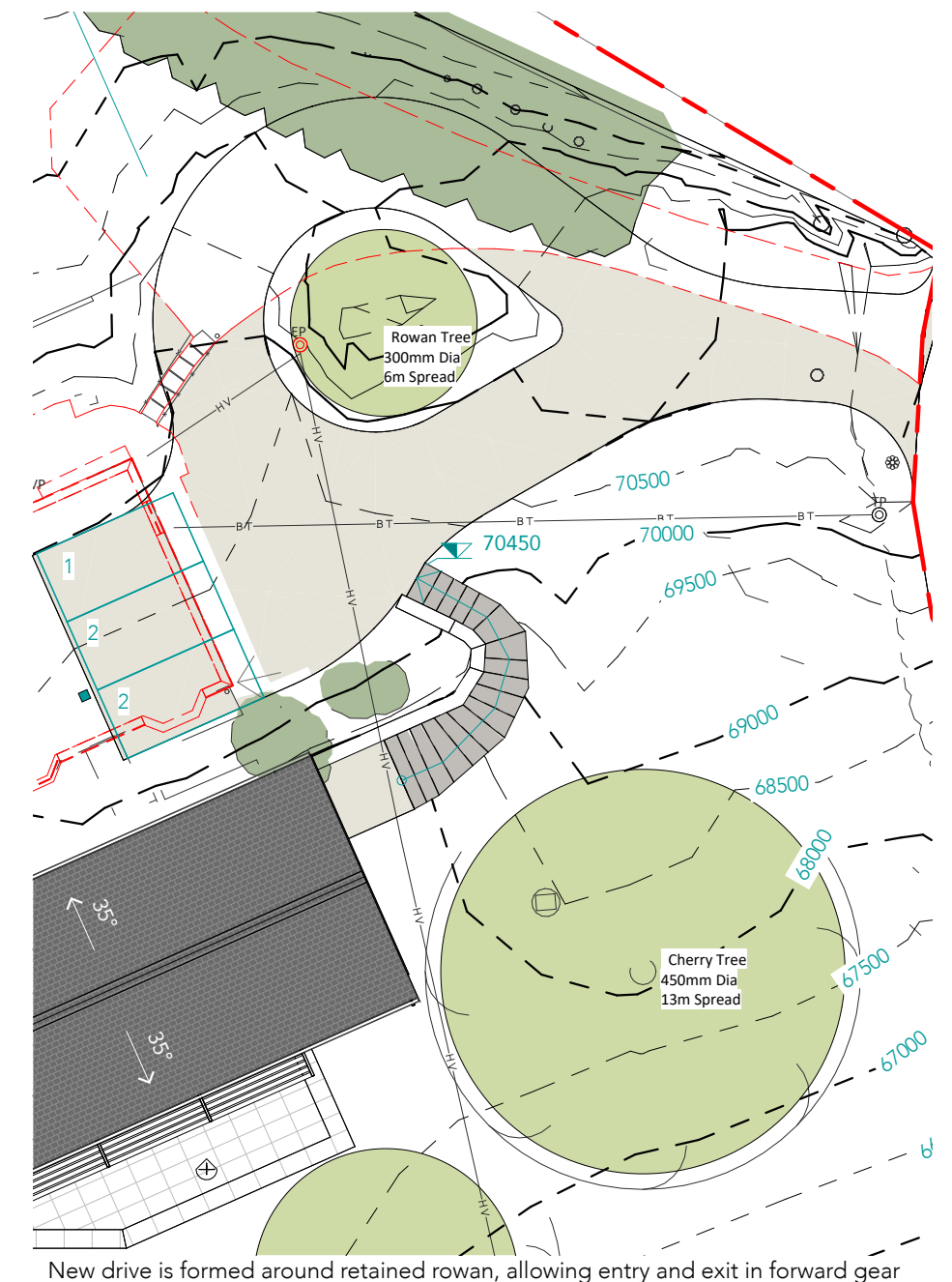
The bungalow footprint is returned to planting. The existing garden shed and the detached garage to the south-east are retained in their present form and position, the garage serving as cycle and equipment storage. No new building is proposed beyond the replacement dwelling itself.

Two vehicle entrances become one. The southern entrance and the asphalt drive that served the garage are removed and returned to planting. The northern entrance is retained and modestly widened, and the new drive — permeable-surfaced, looping around the retained rowan — allows a vehicle to enter and leave the site in forward gear. Three parking spaces and an electric vehicle charging point are provided.

Sealed ground area therefore falls, even as the house is rebuilt: impermeable asphalt is removed and returned to planting, and what remains is laid in a permeable surface.

This directly responds to a difficulty the Council identified. The Highways Officer sought improved visibility at the access; the

case officer noted in response that achieving it through hedgerow removal would increase the visibility of the property from the lane and would be unlikely to find support. The scheme resolves that tension by **reducing** the number of openings onto Caerlicken Lane from two to one, and by improving manoeuvring within the site rather than by cutting back the boundary. **Hedgerow is gained, not lost.**



6. PLANS

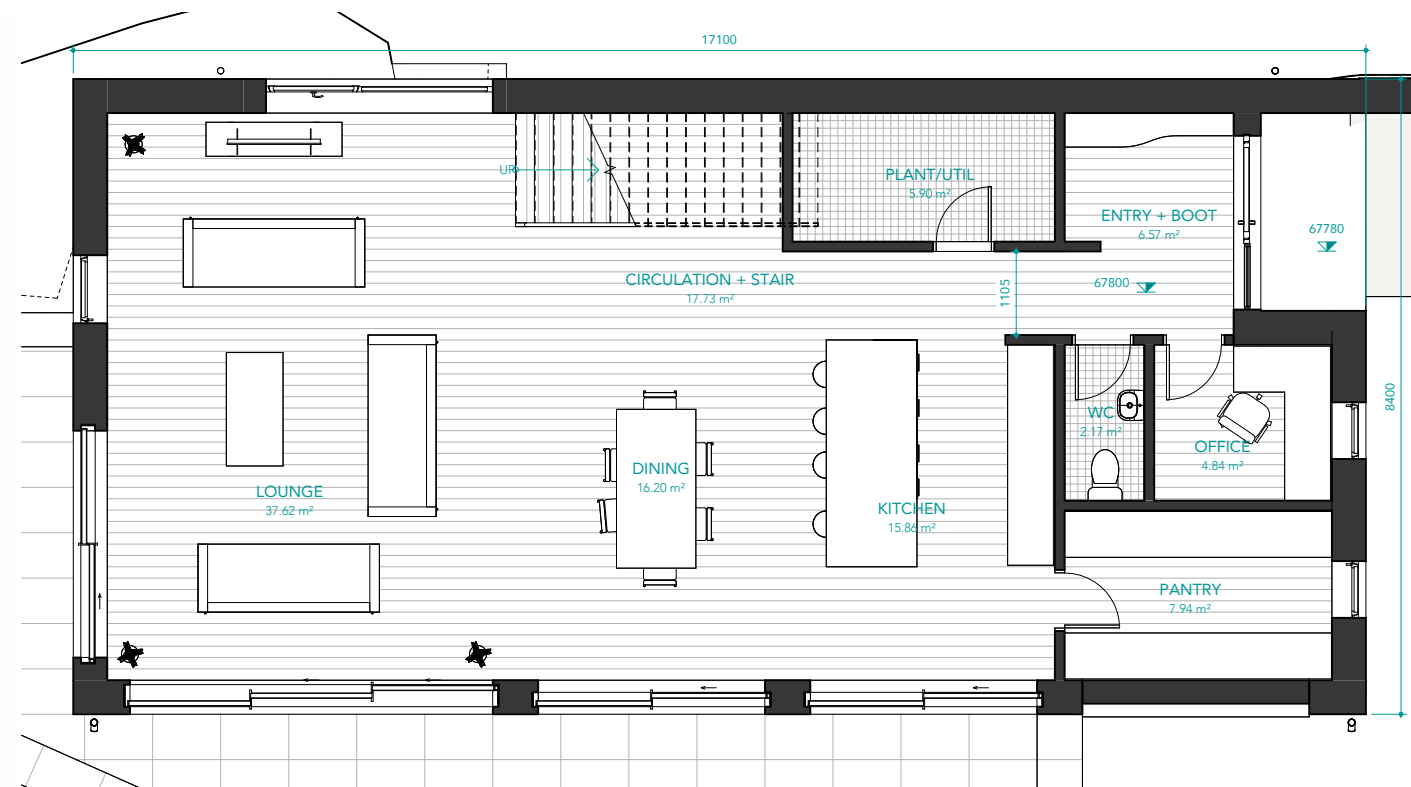
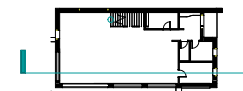
The house is arranged over two floors, providing 213.34 m² of internal area — 114.83 m² at ground floor and 98.50 m² at first floor — in four bedrooms.

Arrival and ground floor

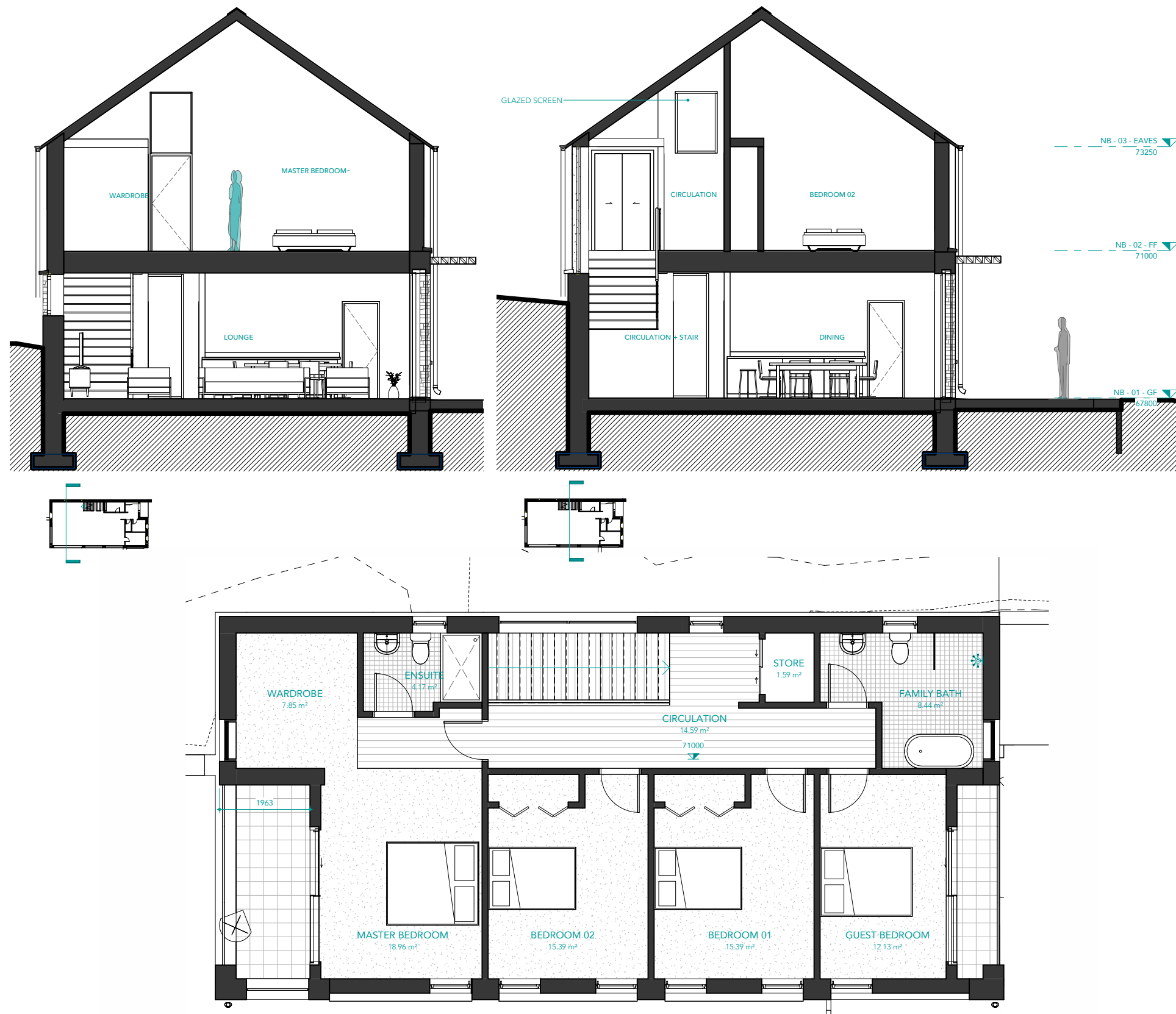
Arrival is from the north, on the higher ground, and descends. Steps set into the slope lead down from the drive to an entrance on the north side of the east gable, held under an inset canopy approximately a metre deep. The entry is a compressed, sheltered space.

From it, the ground floor opens. A circulation spine with the stair runs along the northern side of the plan, serving the boot room and entry, the plant and utility space, a study, WC and pantry. To the south of that spine, the shared rooms run the length of the building: kitchen, dining and lounge in sequence, opening through full-height glazing onto the terrace and the garden beyond. The lounge, at 37.62 m², sits at the western end where the outlook opens.

The move from a low, enclosed, north-facing entrance into a tall, bright, south-facing room is the central experience the plan offers.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN



First floor

Four bedrooms occupy the first floor, all facing south: the master bedroom at the west end with its wardrobe and ensuite, two double bedrooms of equal size, and a guest bedroom at the east. The circulation runs along the north side, serving the family bathroom, utility and store. Inset balconies are recessed into the east and west gables.

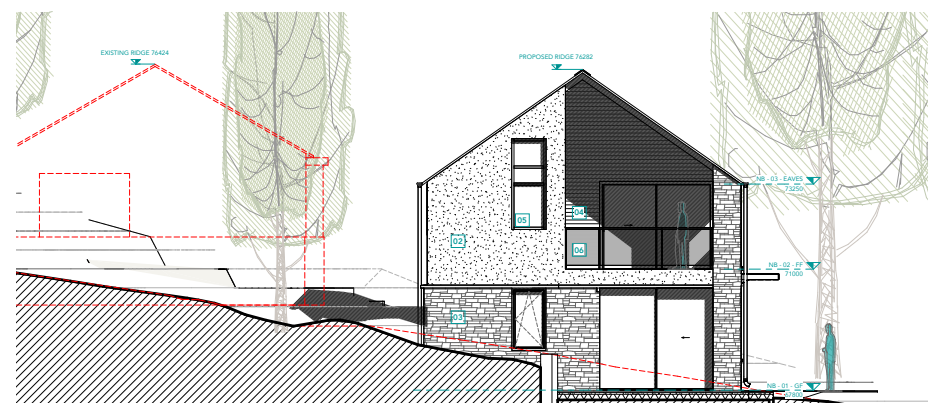
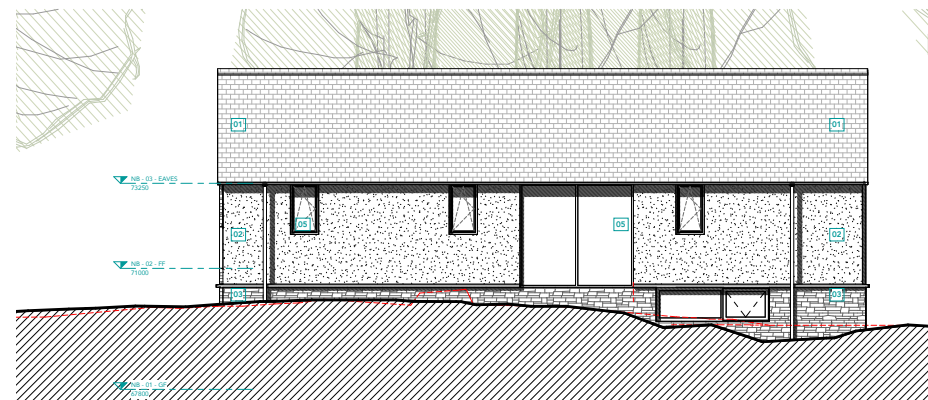
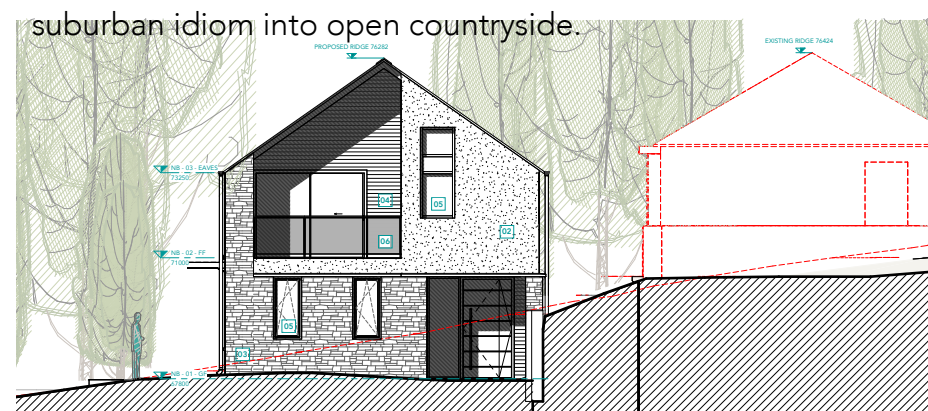
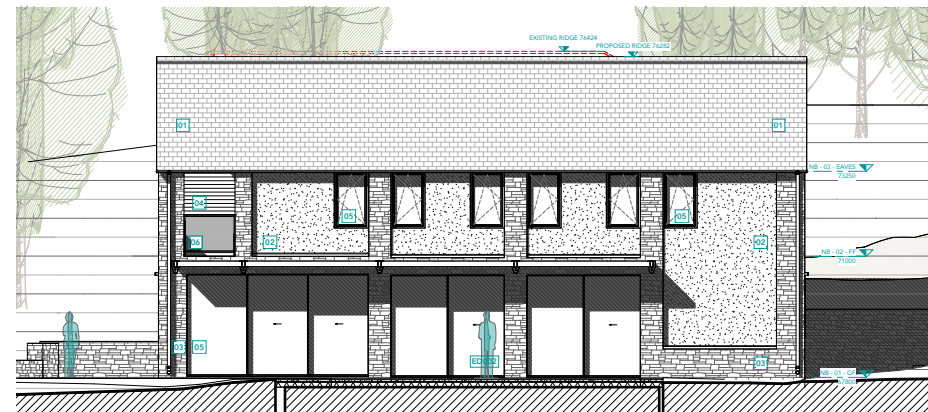
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

7. ELEVATIONS + MATERIALS

The elevational language follows the section. The building is grounded in stone and lightened as it rises.

- **Welsh blue pennant sandstone**, rough coursed with raked mortar to read as dry-stacked, this forms the base of the building and anchors it into the hill. Retaining structures, lower storey, and buttresses.
- **White render** forms the lighter field above. On the south elevation the stone continues vertically as buttresses on the structural grid, so the two materials interlock rather than simply stacking — the stone is not a plinth under a rendered box; it is the structure showing through.
- **Western red cedar** lines the inset balconies to the east and west gables and the entrance recess, so that every void in the building reads as warm timber against the stone and render.
- **Slate** roofs the building at a 35° pitch.
- Window and door frames are **ppc aluminium in anthracite** (RAL 7016). Balcony guarding is stainless steel tension wires in some configuration to be confirmed. This will be more visually recessive than glass.
- A **solar shade at first-floor level** runs along the southern elevation, moderating summer gain to the glazing below while allowing lower winter sun to penetrate.

This palette — stone, render, and slate, with subtle timber accents — is both natural and traditional. It was developed during the initial design studies and carried forward unchanged, not a late gesture towards landscape policy. The result is a building that blends traditional shape, proportion, and materials with contemporary, sustainable building techniques and detailing. It speaks in the materials of the place rather than importing a



Material: RENDER

Colour: WHITE

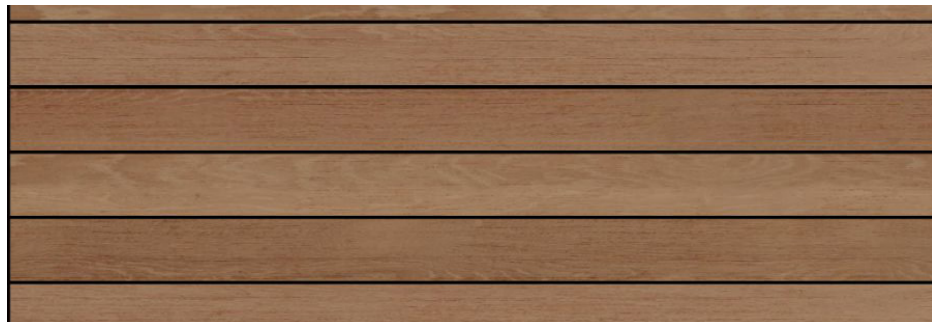
Location: FIRST FLOOR



Material: STONE

Colour: WELSH BLUE PENNANT

Location: BASE + SOUTH ELEVATION BUTRESSES



Material: WESTERN RED CEDAR
 Colour: NATURAL REDDISH BROWN
 Location: INSET WALLS @ ENTRY + BALCONIES



Material: SLATE
 Colour: DARK GREY
 Location: ROOF



Material: GALVANISED STEEL
 Colour: SILVER
 Location: RAINWATER GOODS



Material: SLATE/SANDSTONE
 Colour: GREY
 Location: LEDGE BETWEEN STONE + RENDER ABOVE



Material: ALUMINIUM
 Colour: ANTHRACITE (RAL7016)
 Location: WINDOW + DOORS



Material: EXTERNAL ALUMINIUM BLINDS
 Colour: RAL7016 - ANTHRACITE GREY
 Location: ALL WINDOWS



Proposed east and south elevations. The existing bungalow outline is shown in red for comparison.



Proposed north and west elevations.

8. ECOLOGY + LIGHTING

A bat emergence survey was commissioned by the applicants and carried out by NewWays Ecology Ltd, comprising a preliminary roost assessment in March 2026 followed by two activity surveys in May and June 2026.

The building was assessed as having moderate potential to support crevice-roosting bats, with negligible suitability for maternity or hibernation roosts. **No emergences were recorded on either survey visit.** The report concludes that the site is not a bat roost, that the proposed demolition will have negligible impact on bats at site and local level, and that **no protected species mitigation licence will be required from Natural Resources Wales.**

The surveys did record foraging and commuting activity around the site: common and soprano pipistrelle throughout, a single noctule pass, and — significantly for the design — *a lesser horseshoe commuting along the western boundary.*

The western boundary

This finding coincides with the one design point the Council raised on amenity grounds. The pre-application response identified the west elevation as especially sensitive, because light spill from it would fall onto a field hedgerow. The lesser horseshoe is a light-averse species that commutes along exactly such linear features.

The scheme treats the western hedgerow as a *dark corridor* to

be protected by design:

- No external lighting is proposed to the west elevation or the western part of the site.
- The dark corridor along the western hedge line is maintained as an unlit commuting route.
- External venetian blinds will be fitted permanently to the windows
- Internal lighting is mitigated by orientation of the building, and the recessed balcony where the return wall obfuscates any potential light spill from the bedroom. Any potential light spill from the lounge is limited to the ground level and southern corner.
- The retained tree belt on the western boundary is maintained in full, intercepting the sightline between the building and the hedgerow.

No external lighting is proposed.

Enhancement

The following measures are proposed to secure a net benefit to biodiversity:

- An external bat box fixed to a mature tree within the site along the western boundary, positioned at least 2.5 m above ground on a south, east or south-east aspect.
- Most of the footprint of the demolished bungalow returned to planting.
- New and gapped-up native boundary hedgerow and tree planting, using locally native species, in accordance with the

Landscape Officer's recommendation.

- A permeable-surfaced drive in place of impermeable asphalt.

9. SUSTAINABILITY

The building is designed to Passivhaus levels of insulation. The wall build-ups are correspondingly deep — approximately 29 m² of the ground floor footprint is fabric rather than floor area — and a meaningful proportion of the increase in footprint over the existing house is therefore bought thermal performance rather than additional accommodation.

The fabric-first approach is supported by orientation and shading: principal glazing to the south, solar shading at first-floor level, and the thermal mass of the slope-embedded lower storey.

Additionally the proposed build will feature Air Source Heat Pump + Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR), hence the internal plant space and thicker floor and wall build-ups.

The building replaces a 1950s dwelling of poor condition, uninsulated by current standards, with rot to the soffits and water ingress at the chimney.

10. DRAINAGE

Foul. The site benefits from a mains connection, to which the replacement dwelling will connect. No private treatment system is required, hence no discharge of treated effluent to ground or watercourse arising from this development.

Surface water. The construction area exceeds 100 m², and the surface water drainage system will accordingly be designed to the Welsh Government's statutory standards for sustainable drainage and submitted for approval to Newport City Council acting as SuDS Approving Body, in advance of construction.

The scheme's starting position is favourable. Impermeable ground cover on the site is reduced: the southern entrance and the asphalt drive that served the garage are removed and returned to planting, and the retained drive is laid in a permeable surface. Runoff from the site is therefore lower after development than before it, before any attenuation measures are counted.

Surface water will be managed on site, with attenuation and infiltration provided in the garden ground to the south and east of the house, subject to infiltration testing to confirm the permeability of the underlying ground. The rate and volume of discharge leaving the site will be no greater than at present.

Ground and land drainage. The lower storey is cut into the hillside, requiring land drainage behind the retaining structure. Groundwater intercepted by the cut will be collected and directed into the surface water strategy, so that the excavation does not concentrate flows onto the ground falling away to the south.

11. ACCESS

Vehicular access is from Caerlicken Lane at the retained northern entrance, modestly widened. The southern entrance is removed and returned to planting. The permeable-surfaced drive loops around the retained rowan and allows vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear — a material improvement in highway safety on a narrow lane with limited visibility, achieved without hedgerow removal.

Three parking spaces and an electric vehicle charging point are provided. Cycle and equipment storage is accommodated within the retained garage.

Pedestrian access from the drive to the entrance is by steps set into the slope, arriving under the inset canopy. The ground floor is level throughout.



11. CONCLUSION

The Council's pre-application response concluded that the earlier proposal was of excessive scale and poor design, and that its footprint and height would harm the rural character of the area. The applicants accepted that finding and started again.

The scheme now submitted answers each element of it:

- The **ridge falls**, by 142 mm, despite the change from one storey to two.
- Roughly **120 m³ of the building is embedded in the slope** and never seen.
- **No trees are lost.** The building is threaded between them, and the retained rowan becomes the centre of the arrival sequence.
- **A vehicle entrance onto the lane is closed**, and safe access is achieved by improving manoeuvring within the site rather than by removing hedgerow.
- **Sealed ground area falls.** Asphalt is removed and returned to planting; what remains is permeable.
- **Ecology is resolved:** no roosts, no licence required, and a designed dark corridor protecting the lesser horseshoe route on the western boundary.
- The **material palette** is the palette of Wentwood, developed through the design process rather than applied to it.

Scale increases, in footprint and in volume. That is the honest position, and it is stated plainly rather than concealed. But the increase is in a building that stands lower than the one it replaces, is largely screened by a mature tree belt retained in full, buries a

substantial part of itself in the hillside, and is built to a standard of design and material quality appropriate to the Special Landscape Area. A significant proportion of the additional footprint is the depth of a Passivhaus-standard envelope.

The pre-application response noted that where it can be demonstrated that an increase in scale will not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, such development may be acceptable. This design was shaped from the outset to meet that test.



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