



Roderick James Architects LLP

Design Statement

Proposed extension to and transformation of existing dwelling at

19 Gander Hill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1QU

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1. Introduction

Roderick James Architects (RJA) LLP have been appointed by the applicant, Mr Mogg, to design the complete transformation of 19 Gander Hill, a dwelling located a short north easterly walk from Haywards Heath train station. In addition, subtle enhancements to the parking area and landscaping immediately around the house are proposed, retaining much of the existing areas of lawn, as well as the mature trees and planting throughout the wider site.

As an architectural practice, RJA have a particular interest in designing well-crafted energy efficient and sustainable buildings, and specialise in timber frame architecture. We have been involved in the design of many successful traditional and contemporary dwellings all over the country, and are excited by the opportunities that this proposal affords.

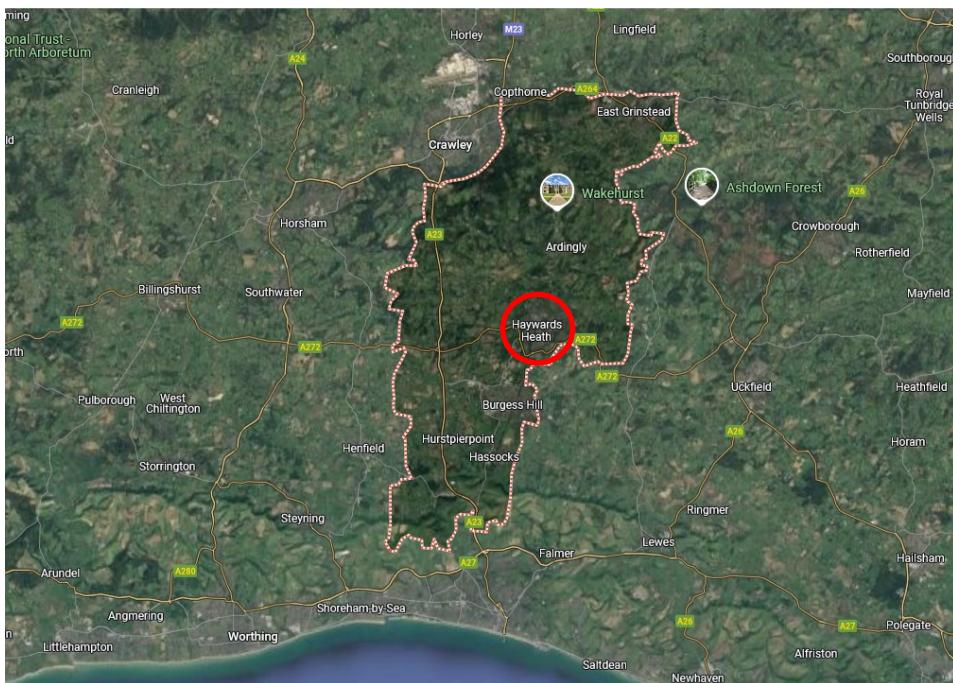
We have been working closely with Mr Mogg to create a high quality, energy efficient and environmentally sensitive family home, that is considerate of the local environment, in terms of the massing, scale and materials found within the area.

The proposal will be implemented in conjunction with subtle landscape enhancements, and a renewable energy strategy that comprises, amongst other technologies, photovoltaic panels (PV), air source heat pump (ASHP), and mechanical ventilation and heat recovery (MVHR).

The existing house and site is not within an AONB (now known as National Landscapes), is not within a conservation area and is not a listed building, but is within the Haywards Heath Area of Townscape Character. There are also no listed buildings immediately adjacent to the site.

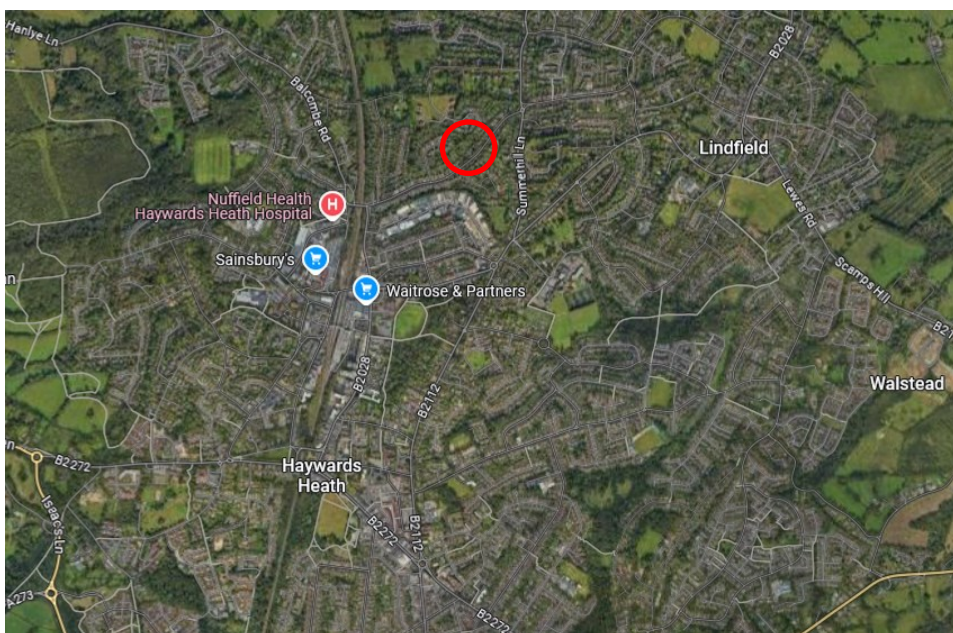
Mr Mogg wishes to obtain approval for a singular, cohesive design approach which creates a dwelling appropriate to its siting, whilst greatly improving the energy efficiency, standard of construction and condition of services throughout.

We feel our proposal represents a high quality and suitable transformation of the existing house at 19 Gander Hill and will represent a positive addition to the Area of Townscape Character and the wider town.



Above: approximate site location (circled red) within mid-Sussex district (dashed red) and the wider landscape (map courtesy of Google Maps).

Below: approximate site location within Haywards Heath circled red (map courtesy of Google Maps).



Location Plan, with site highlighted in red.

View into the site and of the existing house, from Gander Hill (image courtesy of Google Street View)



The front elevation, viewed from the parking area to the south-east. Note the 'taller' neighbouring houses.



The rear elevation, viewed from the raised north-west lawn. Note how far 'backwards' the neighbouring building projects.



2. The existing house and site

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Gander Hill boasts a number of large detached and semi-detached dwellings, all set back from the public highway and located within substantial domestic curtilages, with No. 19 being no different.

The site itself occupies an elevated position (approx. 3m) on the north western side of Gander Hill with 'public' views of and into the site generally restricted to glancing views up the access drive or through existing tree/bush screening situated along the site/direct neighbours boundaries (see top image).

At present, a two-storey, three bedroomed house, with an attached single storey, one car garage and dividing, covered, but open fronted carport, occupies the full width of the site.

The existing two-storey dwelling, with its gable ended low pitched pantile roof, is smaller, with less accommodation and aesthetically, is not representative of the quality, character and architectural appropriateness of the other properties found along Gander Hill, and it is understood that other than general maintenance, the existing house has remained largely untouched since it was originally constructed.

The existing house comprises a material palette of brick and tile hanging to the walls, interlocking pantiles to the pitched roofs and bitumen to the flat roof and double glazed white uPVC windows and doors, with the rainwater goods, fascia's, soffits and barge boards all being plastic, and although these materials are generally similar to those used on the neighbouring houses, the quality used at No. 19 is of no comparison.

The 2023 Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) confirms the existing house to be in band D, which is the average energy rating for a property in England, with the recommended steps suggested to better the rating, all being proposed within the application, along with further improvements being proposed to reduce the house's reliability on fossil fuels.

In the addition to the issues found within the house itself, the relationship and connection it has with the outside space is poor, with the front parking area/garden and carport requiring steps up and into the house, and even then, once inside the front door an internal step is required. The connection at the rear is worse again, with the house being set down from the garden by approximately 1m and separated from the garden by a 1m wide 'sunken' path.

We believe the existing building to be of no significant architectural merit, and suggest that our proposal to extend and transform the existing house is an exciting and appropriate proposal that will represent a positive, viable and successful addition to the context, setting and character of the local Area of Townscape and the wider town.

3. Neighbouring Houses of Gander Hill

The medium to large sized semi detached and detached neighbouring houses found along Gander Hill are understood to have been constructed at various times over the last century but are generally all similar in style to their roadside elevations, as indicated in these photographs.

All of the houses contain a materials palette of brick (some painted), render, tile hanging and timber cladding to the walls, and clay tile to the multi-pitched roofs, with metal to the flat roofs.

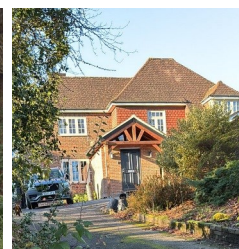
Windows and doors are varied in colour (some painted dark, some light and some left as timber) and in design, with some windows having mullion and transom divisions.

The houses are generally two storey, with single storey additions, and the roofs are a mixture of hips, half hips and gable ends and generally contain a forward facing 'projection' that contains the front door.

In addition to the similarities of appearance found to the roadside facades, when assessing aerial images of the locality, it is rare to find properties that have not been extended with most featuring substantial additions to the rear. No 19, the subject of this planning application is one of the very few that would appear to have not been extended at some point in the past.

These images demonstrate that although there are similarities and parallels in design, materiality and style of the houses, there is no overriding singular vernacular present.

The collection of photographs show the roadside elevations of a number of properties along Gander Hill (images are courtesy of the applicant and also Google Street View)



4. Planning Policies

In order to help inform the design development and the final proposed scheme, we have thoroughly appraised the relevant planning policies and advise that our design approach is based upon maintaining local distinctiveness whilst making a positive contribution to the architectural quality, diversity and character of the area through innovative design, and has been prepared with due regard to the Strategic Policies set out within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031, including:

Policy DP26: Character and Design

The proposed scheme will ensure the Districts enduring distinctiveness as well as maintaining and enhancing its distinct natural and historic character.

The well considered, high quality design and the use of good quality natural external materials, that will mellow with age, will ensure that the scheme fits within its context and enhances the character of the local area.

The development will be of an appropriate scale, density, layout, height and mass with a clear understanding and response to its setting and to the neighbouring houses.

It will provide continuity with the existing landscape and respect and work with the natural and historic environment.

The proposal is designed to ensure that there is no adverse impact or increase of overlooking to any of the neighbouring houses.

Policy DP28: Accessibility

The design ensures that the house can be easily adapted in the future and can be used as a 'lifetime home'.

Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

The timber frame rear extension is to include increased levels of insulation, with careful detailing ensuring a well sealed, airtight building.

A fabric first approach, combined with enhanced energy efficiency strategies and the inclusion of sustainable technologies will ensure that the proposed scheme is resilient to climate change.

The scheme proposes the removal of the existing boiler and replacing this with an air

source heat pump. A large photovoltaic array for generating electricity is proposed to the main roofscape whilst smart water butts will store collected rainwater around the building.

The scheme has also been prepared with due regard to the Policies set out within the Haywards Heath Town Council Neighbourhood Plan, Our Bright Future 2016, including:

Policy H9: Extension to Existing Dwellings...

The proposed scheme seeks to ensure that its design is of the highest quality and respects the scale, height and form of the existing building and the character of the street scene.

The design respects the spacing between buildings and the maintains the 'gaps' ensuring the character of the street scene is retained.

The materials to be utilised are compatible with those of the existing building and the surrounding neighbours.

The design ensures that privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents is safeguarded and respected.

Policy E9: ...protect and reinforce the local character

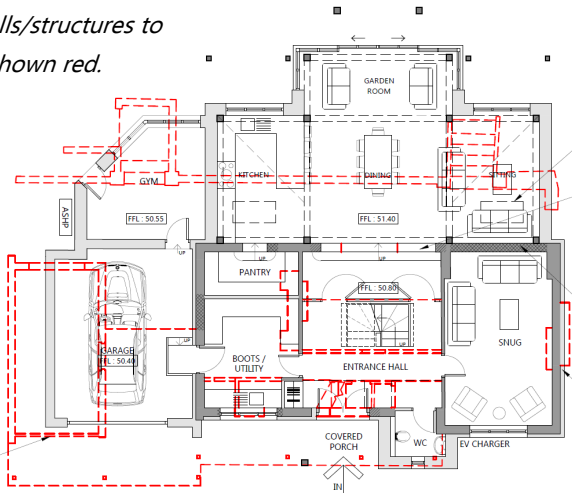
The proposed scheme gives regards to, and reinforces the locality by giving high regard to the areas enduring distinctiveness and character, whilst ensuring the well considered, high quality design respects the scale, design and materiality of the local context.

Policy E10: Development proposals in an Area of Townscape Character...

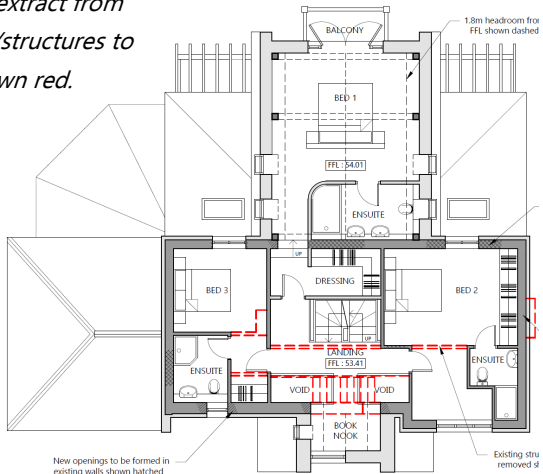
The proposed scheme retains the existing trees and frontage hedgerows/walls, whilst reinforcing the character of the street scene within the design proposal of the scheme.

We consider the proposal to be policy compliant and fully supported by the intent of the Mid Sussex Local Plan and Haywards Heath Town Council Neighbourhood Plan policies and we consider our design to be an exciting and appropriate proposal that will represent a positive, viable and successful addition to the context and character of the local Area of Townscape and the wider town.

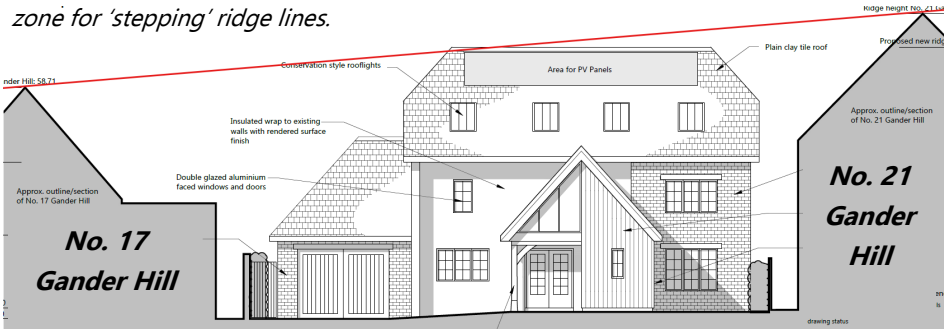
Ground Floor Plan (extract from PL02) with walls/structures to be removed shown red.



First Floor Plan (extract from PL03) with walls/structures to be removed shown red.



South East 'street' elevation (extract from PL05) with red line denoting the suggested zone for 'stepping' ridge lines.



5. Design Statement

In order to transform No. 19 Gander Hill into a family home suitable for modern living, it is in need of extensive extensions and alterations so that the inherent problems with the current building and the problems with the existing layout, due to the age of the property, can be addressed.

The original building does provide scope to work with, and significantly enhance, the existing structure on a number of levels, with minimal impact to the existing interior fabric, whilst elevating the architectural value of the building, greatly improving its appropriateness to the location, and significantly extending its functional life.

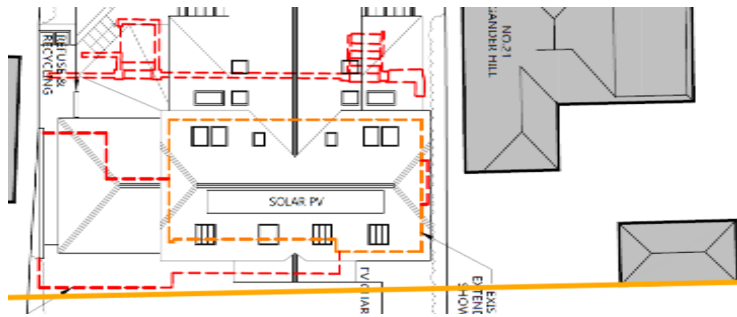
This application seeks to transform and modernise the existing property; applying a single, cohesive design which reinforces the 'main' two storey house as the primary building form, with single storey extension elements which are subservient to the host dwelling in height, volume and fenestration.

The clients desire is to work with the existing building to create a new five bedroomed house, complete with suitably and adequately sized living spaces that relate to the large, elevated rear garden, all whilst improving the external appearance and beautifying the house and in line with the aspirations of the local planning policies, it is the intent of the applicant to work with the existing structure; greatly improving the energy efficiency of the building and elevating its thermal performance.

The existing house, whilst reminiscent of the local vernacular in terms of materiality and appearance, feels second rate in its quality of design and character. Reasons for this are the quality of the materials and the attention to detail, including the proportion of the building, the low pitch of the existing roofs, the existing roof sitting directly onto the head of the first floor windows, stepped eaves and no brick lintels. The proposed design endeavours to provide the accommodation required by the client whilst simultaneously rectifying these detailing issues.

To this end, it is proposed to replace the existing gable ended low-pitched roof of the house with a new half hipped steeper pitched roof, which is more reminiscent of the neighbouring buildings. The steepening of the pitch and raising of the roof enables two new ensuite bedrooms to included as 'rooms-in-the-roof'.

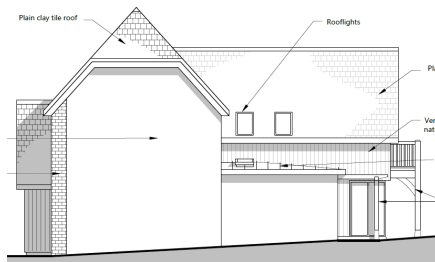
The image opposite demonstrates how, even with the raising of the roof, No. 19 still retains its subservience to the neighbour at No. 21 (the taller house on the right), and we would suggest that the scale and massing of the proposed building is actually more appropriate to the character of the local streetscape as the buildings step down Gander Hill.



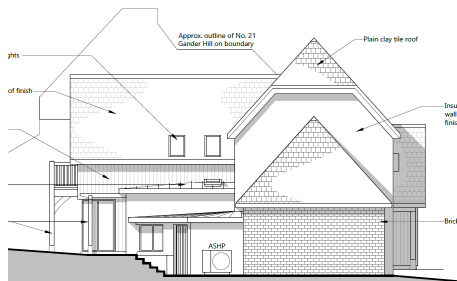
Site Plan (extract from PL01) with orange line denoting the neighbouring build line.



North West elevation (extract from PL06)

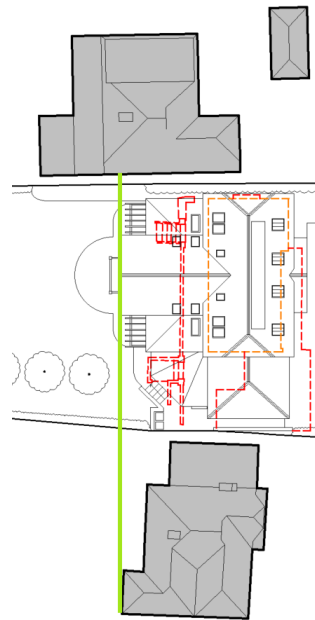


North East elevation (extract from PL05)



South West elevation (extract from PL06)

On the NE and SW elevations, note the lack of sideward facing first floor windows and the removal of the SW facing existing first floor window.



Site Plan (extract from PL01) with green line denoting the neighbours rear built line.

Creating a new entry projection and connecting the garage to the house, similar to being found elsewhere on Gander Hill, are considered key components in harmonising and simplifying the front elevation to provide the character and appeal that is considered appropriate of the location.

The proposed entry extension is designed with a proportion appropriate to the two-storey house and does not project any further forward than the existing garage that is to be removed and also does not sit as far forward as the wall of the existing garage of the neighbouring house, as demonstrated with the orange line on the image opposite.

The removal of the existing garage and carport and replacing this with a new attached garage, provides benefit to the neighbour at No. 17, as the buildings are moved further away from the site boundary. The relationship of building along the boundary with No. 21, generally remains unchanged.

To the rear, we are proposing a new part single, part $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey extension that will relate to the [existing] raised rear garden. The central, $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey element is to contain the master bedroom at first floor level, which will be partially set within the new roof, whilst at ground level, located under the $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey element and also occupying single storey 'wings' is to be a new open-plan kitchen/living/dining area.

The rear extension is designed to be subservient to the main house in terms of scale, form, massing and materiality and as demonstrated by the green line on the site plan opposite, the proposed rear extension is to extend no further into the rear garden than the existing house at No. 17 and vastly shorter than the existing house at No. 21.

The use of a 'heavy' green oak structural frame will be used externally to create the covered front door, rear balcony and pergolas. This green oak frame will weather naturally and mellow to a silvery-grey colour.

Employing simple, robust details in combination with a traditional palette of natural materials is considered appropriate for the exterior of the building and will ensure that the proposed building will mellow with age, harmonising with the environment in which it sits.

We consider our scheme to be an exciting and appropriate proposal that is sympathetic to the character and setting of the site, and suggest that this transformed house will represent a viable and successful modern, sustainable addition to the context as well as a positive addition to the street scene and the character and charm of the local area.

6. Sustainability, Construction and Renewable Energy

There is an ever increasing environmental need to substantially reduce the energy use and carbon footprint of residential development. We have put significant design development and thought into how to achieve this, using a combination of innovative strategies. This combined with a carefully considered aesthetic helps to give a unique and appropriate quality to the proposal.

The proposed scheme for No. 19 Gander Hill will represent sustainable development through the following measures:

- The retention, refurbishment and improvement to an existing property rather than the demolition of an historic property and construction of a new building.
- The use of traditional natural building materials, including green oak timber frame, natural timber weatherboarding, plain clay tiles and bricks.
- The use of simple, vernacular forms that are in-keeping with the surrounding area and the removal of unattractive features such as the low-pitched roof and the flat bitumen roof.
- The inclusion of an ASHP and solar PV, in order to remove the properties reliance on fossil fuels.
- Greatly improved thermal performance as below:

The proposed scheme for No. 19 Gander Hill will improve thermal performance of the current property through the following measures:

- Inclusion of external insulation to existing low/uninsulated walls to meet/exceed current Building Regulations.
- Construction of new insulated pitched roof over the existing 2-storey house to meet/exceed current Building Regulations.
- Existing house to be rewired and replumbed with new, more efficient electrical, lighting, heating and hot water systems to meet current Building Regulations.

In addition to these measures, the following principles underly our extension and refurbishment proposal:

Fabric First:

This approach involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building service systems. This can help reduce capital and operational costs, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. A 'fabric first' method can also reduce the need for maintenance during the building's life.

By ensuring that the external envelope of the buildings is as efficient as possible and the insulation levels detailed for the buildings exceed current building standards, the building will have a much lower energy requirement for heating.

Volume=Energy:

The surface to volume (S/V) ratio is an important factor determining heat loss and building performance efficiency. The greater the surface area, the greater the heat loss through it. Hence, small S/V ratios lead to reduced heat loss, improved thermal performance and reduced running costs. Ways of reducing the S/V ratio include creating simpler roof forms and working within uncomplicated plan arrangements.

Perimeter structure:

The construction method proposed for the extension predominantly utilises a structural timber frame built off a simple substructure. Therefore keeping construction costs and use of high-carbon materials to a minimum.

Modern Methods of Construction:

The term 'Modern Methods of Construction' (MMC) embraces a number of approaches involving off-site manufacture or assembly.

The systems included within the definition of MMC have varied over the years, but we consider the following types of MMC may be suited to this scheme:

- Sub-assemblies and components: They include the structural timber frame, wall, roof and floor cassettes, laminated timber beams or engineered I-beams, where necessary.
- Panelised systems: Panels with timber, structurally insulated panels (SIPS) or cross-laminated timber (CLT).

This will enable the scheme to benefit from the following efficiencies:

- Off-site 'factory' made and controlled quality;
- Reduced deliveries to site;
- 'Major' deliveries minimised and concentrated to a limited period of time, and;
- A reduction in on-site activities, therefore reducing construction time and impact on the access road and landscape.

Given the scope of work and the tolerances one needs to allow in integrating new structure with an existing building form, it is not practical for the entire structure to be pre-fabricated off-site. However, the structural 'frame' of the extension, along with the primary structural elements in the roof, are elements which could be pre-fabricated.

Materials:

With timber at the heart of our work and also one of the most sustainable building materials, we propose to utilise this throughout the development in the structure and finish, in lieu of more carbon-intensive materials derived from mining Earth's resources. In addition to its sustainable credentials, natural timber creates the quality, structure, delight and visual effect that a bespoke and beautiful design demands.

Taking a 'fabric first' approach and using timber frame construction is a proven means of ensuring sustainability and low carbon compliance is at the very heart of the development; in the materials used, construction stages and for the remainder of its lifecycle.

Sustainable construction:

The incorporation of both the 'fabric first' and MMC strategies will enable us to focus the design towards using more sustainable materials such as timber, whilst minimising as far as possible the use of less sustainable materials such as concrete.

Glazing areas are not excessive, and proposed to provide natural daylight to the majority of interior spaces and whilst reducing the requirement for artificial lighting during daylight hours.

Visual appropriateness:

The design deliberately promotes a simple, legible and appropriately scaled building form, in keeping with the proportions of the site, ensuring that it sits comfortably within its immediate context and the wider landscape. The uncomplicated and simple volumes and material palette reflect this visual intention, whilst also keeping the detailing simple and robust.

Quality materials and workmanship:

The quality of materiality is a key aspect for the scheme, which will include good quality, natural external materials.

In addition, high quality alu-faced door and window joinery is proposed.

The incorporation and combination of these materials will help to give the proposed scheme the required quality and durability. The windows and doors being proposed are robust and low maintenance, and will be appropriate to the location and setting.

The window and door fenestration will be slightly set back into the wall thickness, with an overhanging roof line which affords shade at the height of summer, whilst helping to reduce light spillage. Finishing touches such as rainwater goods will be metal such as powder-coated metal Lindab 'Rainline' products.

The materials proposed have formed part of the palette of our work for many years and have been successfully employed on numerous projects within sensitive areas around the country.

Using the off-site construction methods where possible enables the main fabric and components to be built to high quality standards ensuring robust workmanship and greater air-tightness.

The proposed scheme, for the reasons detailed within this report, will represent a high quality, sustainable and viable proposal that respects the local built form and is both exciting and appropriate, and will enhance the character of the local Townscape Area and the wider environment.

7. Neighbourly Development

Throughout the design development of the scheme, retaining and enhancing the privacy of No. 19 and the privacy of the neighbouring houses at No's. 17 and 21 has been of paramount importance.

The design removes the only existing first floor side facing window., and replaces this with a forward facing window, therefore increasing the privacy with the neighbour at No. 17.

At ground floor, the proposed new side facing windows will be below the existing boundary fences and planting, therefore privacy will not be affected by their inclusion within the scheme.

The proposed rooflights to the master bedroom roof are proposed to allow natural light in and not views out and are situated over 4m from the boundary with No. 21 and over 6m from the boundary with No. 17 and we would suggest that their inclusion within the scheme will not adversely affect privacy.

In addition to the consideration of neighbour privacy, the proposed scheme has also been designed with careful consideration given to its impact on rights to light that the neighbours receive.



*Image taken 19/12/2024.
Note shadow cast by house
at No. 17 Gander Hill
(approx. 21m away).*

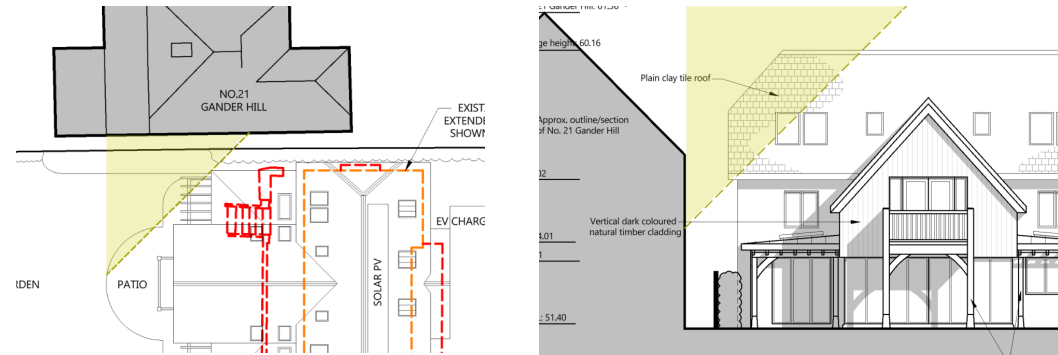
The neighbours at No. 21 have two windows facing No. 19 that have required consideration - see image left.

Both windows have opaque glazing, and whilst the lower window is generally concealed behind the boundary fence, the upper window (understood to be into the stairway) is fully visible and therefore, any impact our scheme could have on this window has been taken into account during the design development.

The element of rear extension closest to the boundary with No. 21 is single storey, with the roof below the sill of the window and therefore will have no adverse impact on the light this window receives.

With regards to the 1½ storey element, we have prepared the following drawings to demonstrate that the proposal

will not result in any adverse impact on the rights to light that the neighbour receives:



The above extracts from the site plan (left: PL01) and the rear elevation (right: PL06) show a shaded area denoting a 45-degree angle from the centre of the sill of the upper window to No. 21 and confirm that the proposed two storey rear extension does not fall within this 45-degree line, either on plan or elevation, and therefore complies with the '45 degree rule' and, according to the rule, it will not cause adverse impact on the light reaching this window of No. 21.

Whilst the above demonstrates that there is no adverse impact, it is also noted that the window in question, is not to a habitable space, therefore the rights would not apply.

The house at No. 17 has no windows that would give influence to the proposal.

Through carefully considered design and detailing, the proposal will ensure to conserve and enhance the privacy and rights afforded to the adjoining neighbours.

8. Ecology

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A Bat and Breeding Bird Survey was undertaken by JG Ecological Surveys Ltd and the report is submitted as part of the application material. No bats were found and the building was confirmed as not supporting a bat roost and offering negligible potential to do. For further details please refer to the submitted report.

9. Arboriculture

No trees are to be removed and no root protection zones are to be affected by the proposal and therefore no arboricultural report has been undertaken.

10. Flood Risk, Foul Sewerage and Surface Water

The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is at the lowest risk of flooding. The Environment Agency's Flood Map for planning confirms the flood zone.

Foul sewerage will be handled by the existing mains sewer connection provided to the original house.

Surface water will be dealt with as existing.

11. Heritage

The site is outside of any Conservation Area and the existing house is not a listed building. There are no listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets affected by the proposals.

[Roderick James Architects LLP](#) has become the leading architectural practice specialising in sustainable timber frame buildings and extensions located in sensitive landscape settings. We work closely with clients to develop environmentally appropriate, beautiful solutions for their projects.

The practice designs warm, friendly, textural buildings utilising natural building materials. We draw from the traditions of the past to create sustainable designs using contemporary materials in innovative ways. Seeking simple, cost-effective solutions that combine quality with local craftsmanship, we encourage everyone working on our projects to be committed to working as a team in an efficient, but enjoyable way.

We have been committed to designing sustainable buildings for over forty years, since Roderick James' involvement as a founding Director of The Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth. The practice acknowledges that urgent and fundamental change is needed to mitigate the extent to which global warming causes irreversible change to the earth and all who live on it. As one of the signatories of [Architects Declare](#) and the [RIBA 2030 challenge](#), we are committed to addressing the climate breakdown by taking action to reduce our carbon emissions both in the workplace and in the design and construction of our buildings.

In 2022, the practice launched [RJA Zero](#): our commitment to work towards becoming a net zero carbon business by 2030. We also now benefit from having our own certified Passivhaus designer within the practice as part of our commitment to energy efficiency and taking action on climate change.

