



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Rear extension and refurbishment of 10 Rushford Avenue, Levenshulme

August 2021

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FIGURE 1: existing vs proposed front and rear views



SITE AREA

0.760Ha (ownership)

SITE ADDRESS

10 Rushford Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2HG.

APPLICANT

Householders A. Thomas & A. Rault

AGENT

Ross Neal of *f(n)* ARCHITECTS Ltd.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document accompanies a full planning application for a rear extension and internal modification works to 10 Rushford Avenue. The proposed works are intended to make the house suitable for a new generation of inhabitants, sensitively modernising the existing accommodation and improving accessibility, while including a tranche of improvements intended to reduce it's carbon footprint in use.

The existing site consists of a single, detached 4 bed dwelling with a very deep front garden abounding to Rushford Avenue and a long rear garden abounding to the Park Grove access route. The site is at the Northern periphery to the Rushford Park Conservation Area, abounding to the West to one of several C20th Apartment blocks that undermine the building line of the estate. It is understood that 10 Rushford Avenue was built in the late Victorian era, with features that appear to date it to the 1890s. The existing building consists of a double-fronted house with two formal rooms downstairs and 4 bedrooms on the first floor. It is evident that the existing house has lost much of the detailing and characteristics shared by it's neighbours and the current rear elevation is poorly balanced and fails to make the most of the excellent gardens around the property.

The proposed works are designed to sensitively adapt and improve the existing house to allow it to meet the requirements of modern life, working from home and growing a family. An extension is proposed that will open the existing rear of the house onto the gardens, while careful insulated over-cladding works are designed to have minimal impact on the formal frontage facing Rushford Avenue while allowing the house to significantly reduce it's environmental footprint.



FIGURE 2: Rushford Avenue (top) and Park Grove (bottom) as viewed on Google Streetview.

2. LOCATION + ACCESS

The site is at the Northern periphery of Rushford Park and benefits from road access to front and rear. Park Grove to the rear provides service vehicle access to the property as well as it's immediate neighbours, but does not provide a through route and is thus very low-traffic. Rushford Avenue to the front of the property is one of several feeder roads for the broader estate but feels low speed and is not congested at street level owing to the moderate permeability of the estate, which backs onto the regional railway lines running between Manchester Piccadilly and Stockport.

Rushford Park benefits from excellent access to local services, public transport and amenities within a 500m radius of the site. Levenshulme's high street on Stockport Road can be accessed via a pedestrian link directly from Park Grove, providing easy access by foot to an excellent range of local shops, supermarkets, library, leisure centre as well as connectivity to central Manchester and beyond from Levenshulme Railway station and also from a broad range of bus routes. Slade Lane to the East of the site provides vehicular access to further amenities at Longsight and Central Manchester to the North and to the M60 in the South. Across Slade Lane to the West, further amenities are available at Longsight and Fallowfield including a broad range of educational facilities.

The site is opposite sports pitches at the Rushford Park Sports Complex, while Crowcroft Park, West Point Gardens are within 500m of the site. Greenbank Park Playing Fields, Cringle Park and Birchfields Park are also nearby within 1.5Km.

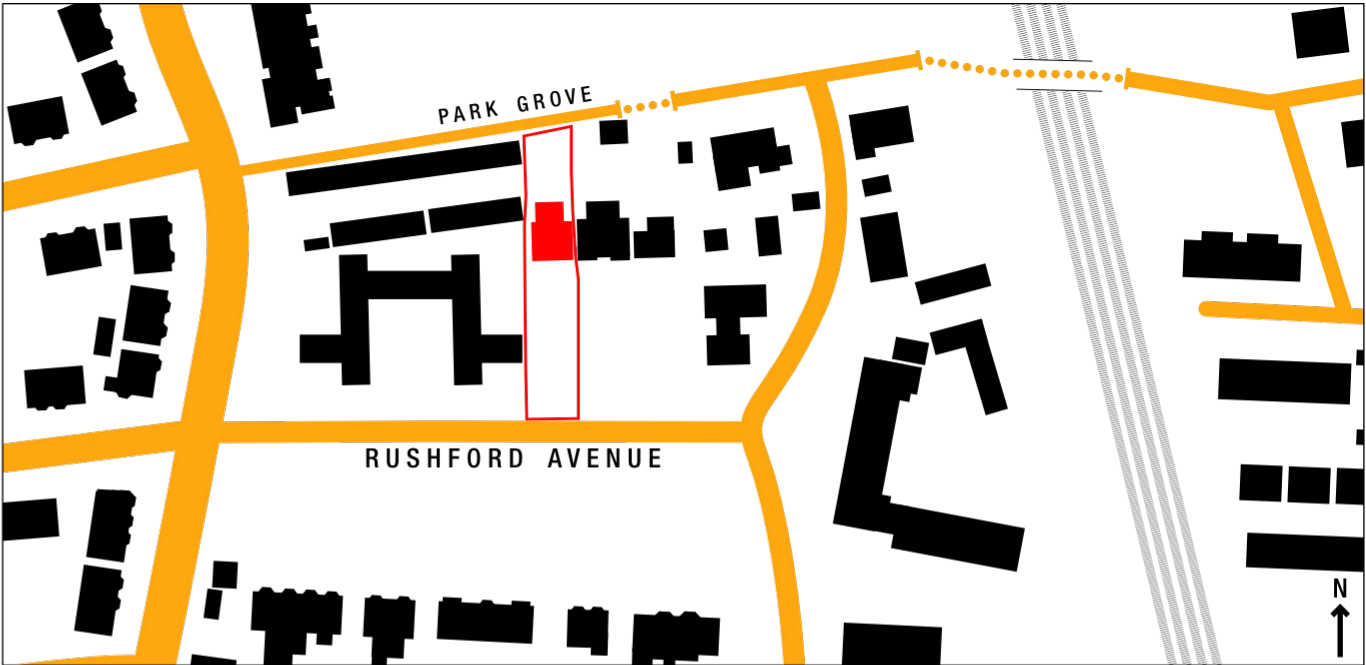


FIGURE 3: access plan: vehicles — pedestrians only . . .

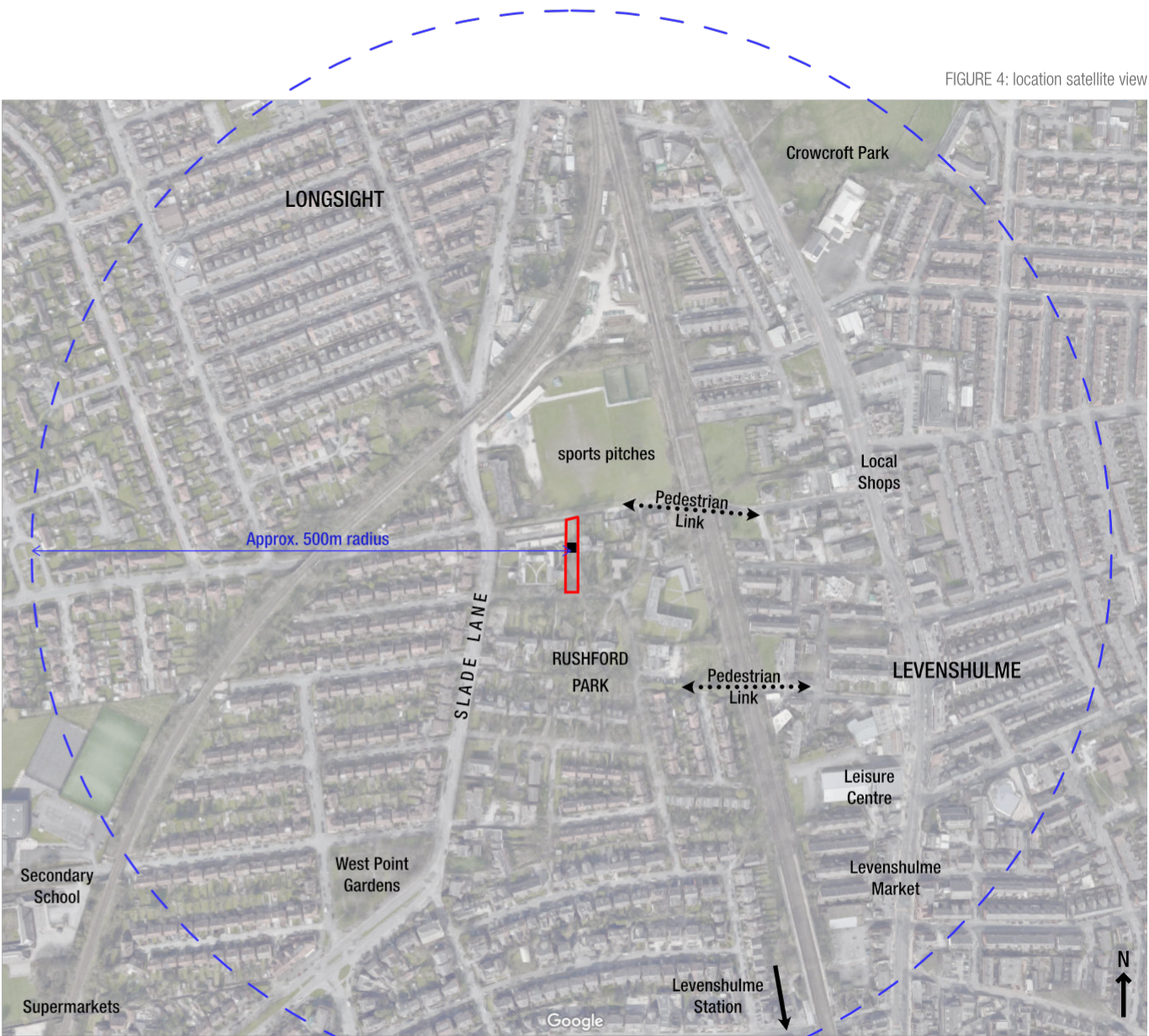


FIGURE 4: location satellite view

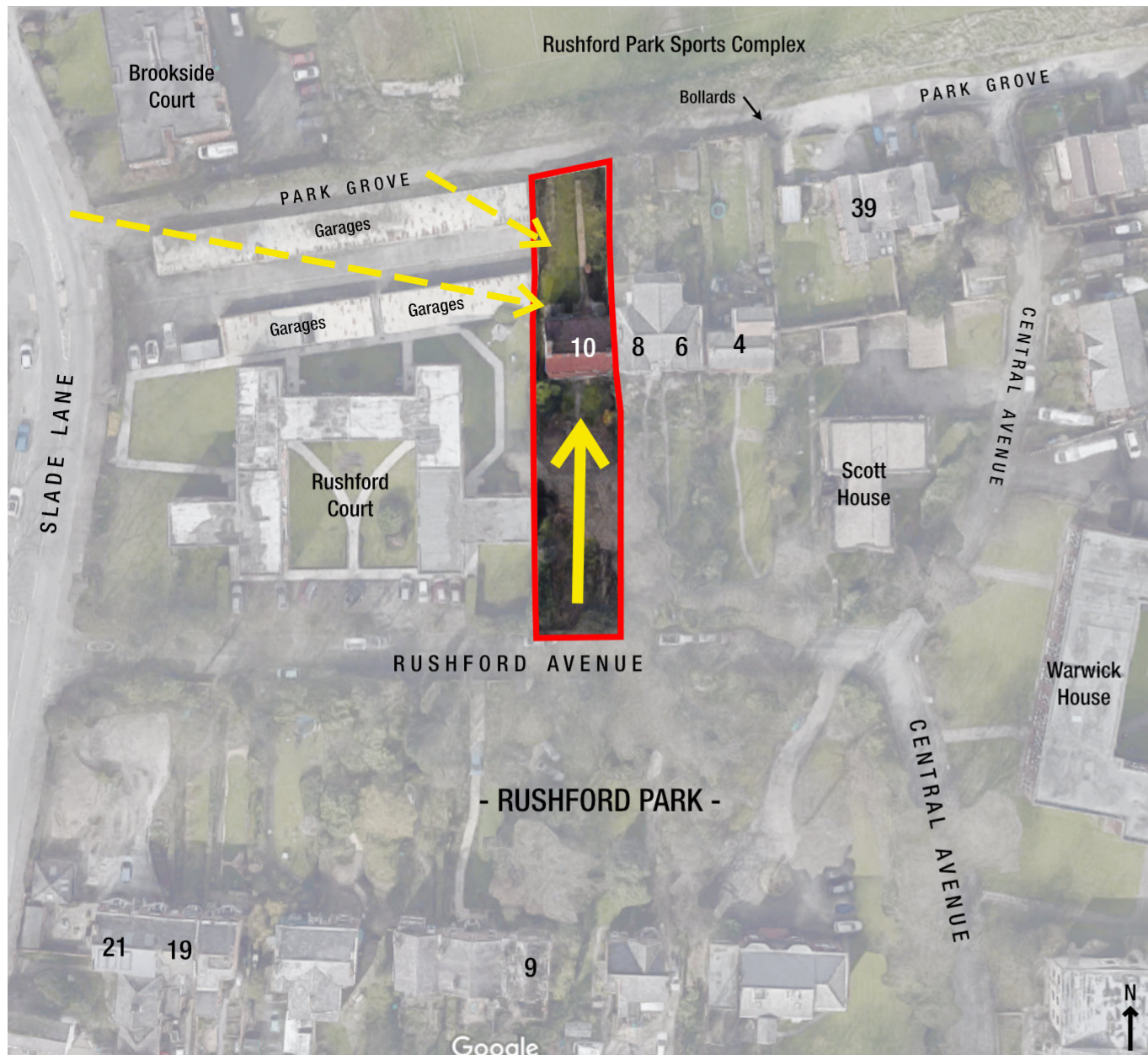
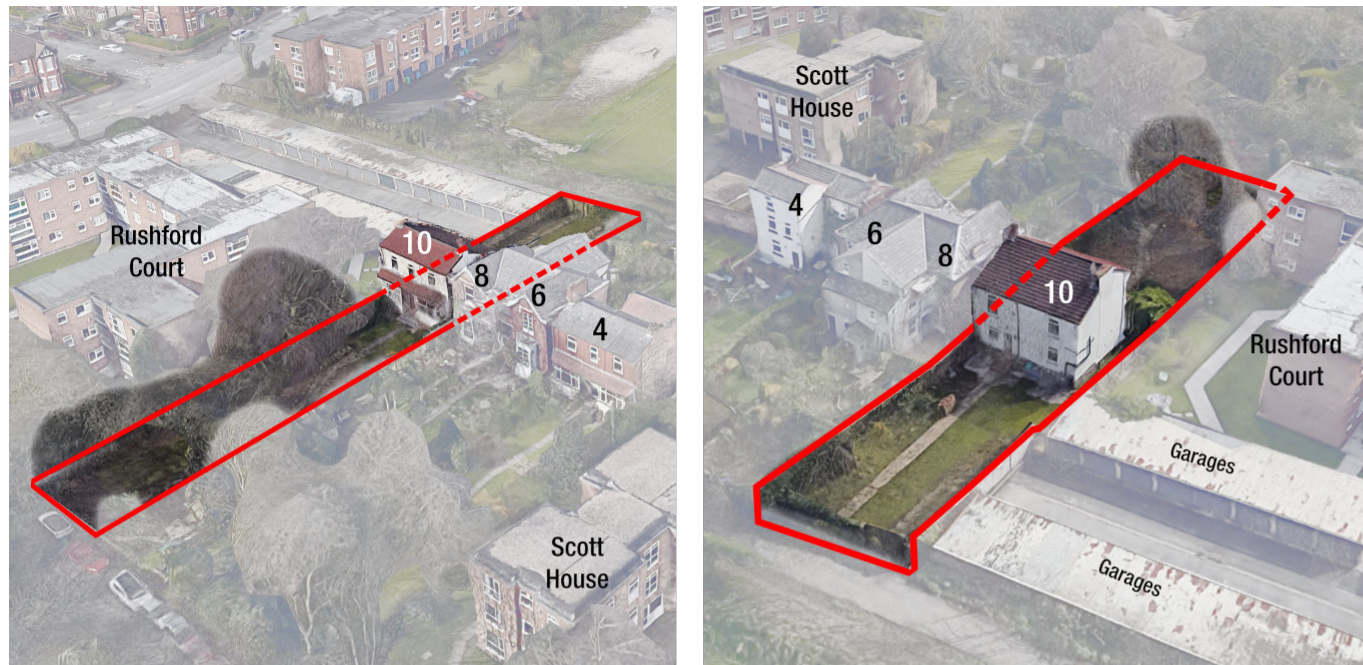


FIGURE 5: existing site satellite view and SE / NW aerial site views (top)

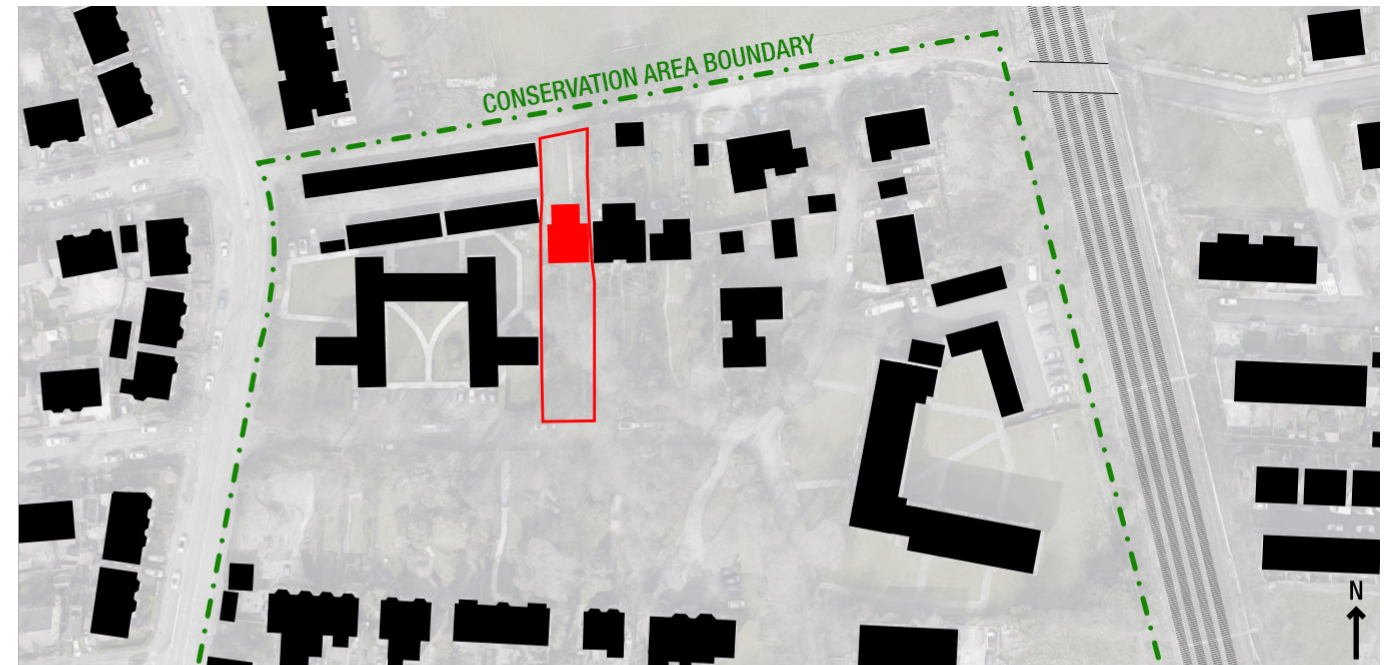


FIGURE 6: figure ground showing extents of conservation area

3. CONTEXT + HISTORY

Please note, this summary is elaborated upon within the heritage statement accompanying this application.

10 Rushford Avenue reads in plan as the first of 4 dwellings, numbers 10,8,6 & 4, that appear to be contemporary and are grouped such that they are reflected in plan at the centre-line to the semi-detached houses 8 & 6. It should be noted that this effect is not evident at street level due to the abundance of foliage and high fence lines to the front gardens. The application site abounds to modern apartments at Rushford Court to the West and their adjoining communal garages accessed from Park Grove to the rear. While development at the front has been controlled, the rear elevations of houses throughout the estate are host to a variety of extensions and alterations.

Upon inspection of the neighbours, it is clear that the existing building at number 10 has been significantly altered in appearance and has lost much of the significant architectural detailing evident in its sister buildings. From discussion with former residents, it is understood that the dwelling was renovated by a landlord in the 1970's whereby; an existing outrigger at the rear was reduced from 3-2 storeys; the outrigger made square across the back; the roof finished with concrete interlocking pantiles throughout; the windows reduced and replaced with modern frames; the bay windows rebuilt; and the existing brick detailing removed / finished by a layer of painted cement render all around. The rear elevation is poorly proportioned and lacks the detailing and refinement even of the neighbouring apartments at Rushford Court.

4. VIEWS

Characteristically of Rushford Park, owing to the depth of the front gardens, the house is largely obscured from public view. This is true from Rushford Avenue and even from adjoining plots. Distant views to the West elevation at the rear are possible across the neighbouring garages and Rushford Court overlooks to the front portion of the West elevation.

It is considered that the primary aspect of the application site within context of the broader conservation area is from Rushford Avenue, this being the original formal frontage for the houses and forming a primary access route from Slade Lane for this part of the estate (looping via Central Avenue to Park Avenue in the South). Being a single-track access road serving only the house and it's immediate neighbours, Park Grove is considered ancillary to the primary heritage value of the property. Park Grove is lined with trees which provides some degree of screening from most public vantage points, dependent on seasonal leaf cover.



FIGURE 7: existing + proposed site plans

5. EXISTING HOUSE

Please note, this summary is elaborated upon within the heritage statement accompanying this application.

The existing house is designed as a villa, being double-fronted with prominent symmetrical bays adjoining a large front door and plain square transom light over, with proportions reflected in general placement of windows and reveal detailing above. The house is built on a semi-basement, such that the ground floor is raised up by 4 / 5 steps at front and back respectively. The original ground floor front rooms boast 3m ceilings, while the rear rooms are more modest at 2.7m and 2.4m. The entrance hall runs straight to the main staircase that straddles the basement access stairs, while on the first floor, 2 double and 2 single bedrooms reflect the proportions of the lower rooms. The thickening in the wall structures and the original half landing delineates the location of the original 3 storey rear outrigger, most evident now in the rear elevation, which is left incongruously blank and lacking proportion or rhythm compared to the much grander front elevation.



FIGURE 8: existing ground floor (bottom) + first floor (top) plans



FIGURE 9: proposed front elevation

(opposite) FIGURE 10: proposed rear elevation (top) and views (below)

6. PROPOSED REORDERING

While the existing house has lost much of the detail constituting it's unique heritage value, it is proposed to protect the fundamental aspects of the existing house - particularly the formal proportions and arrangement of the front elevation and remaining historic elements of the building - while giving it a new high quality finish that allows it to sit more confidently in context with it's neighbours. Extensive works are planned at the rear to reorder and modernise the standard of living without imposing on the conservation area.

The main significant impact on the front elevation arises out of the proposal to over-clad the external finish with a coloured insulated render finish. Owing to the already considerable loss of detail in this existing element, it is considered preferable to introduce this element externally rather than disrupting some of the original finishes internally, where original finishes, architraves and mouldings remain in place. In order to protect the existing proportions of the elevation, it is proposed to provide uniform negative reveals to the first floor front windows. In order to ensure the integrity of the insulation, it is proposed to retain and relocate the existing bay window frames outward. New timber corner window posts will be designed to resolve the larger overall dimensions. It is proposed to retain the existing eaves line rather than extending and lowering it. The depth of external insulation will controlled to ensure that the insulation does not appear overly prominent below the existing rainwater goods, which will be capped where needed by minimal metallic copings to be positioned below the eaves to blend into the existing eaves detail as cleanly as possible.

At the rear it is proposed to construct an outrigger to equivalent depth and proportions to the neighbours at 8 & 6 Rushford Avenue. Owing to the reduced eaves at the rear, the proposed extension will appear at a lower level than it's existing counterpart, such that proposed first floor accommodation will be within the roof space. This lower level, coupled with an offset in the rear elevation helps maintain an equivalent distance from the boundary to the neighbour to minimise overshadowing in this area of the North elevation as far as is reasonable. It is understood that 2No. neighbouring windows facing across the elevation are non-habitable, however it is proposed not to provide any windows other than high level skylights in this elevation to entirely mitigate the possibility of overlooking.

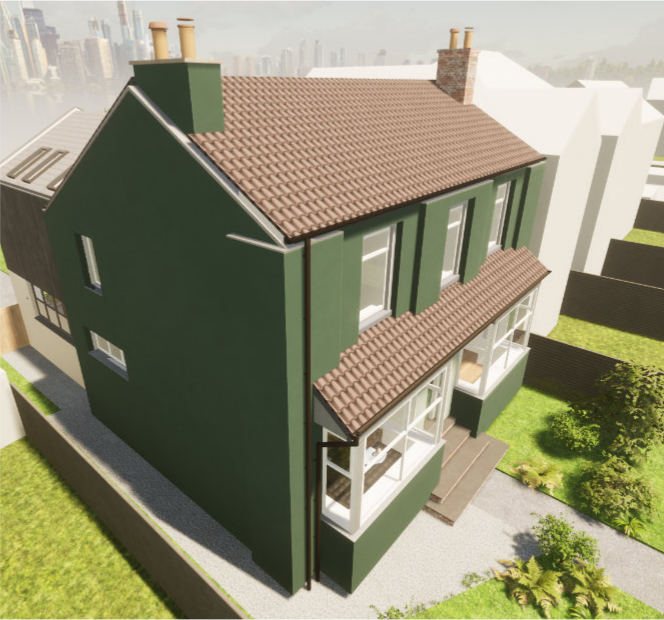




FIGURE 11: proposed internal views

7. PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION

Internally, the existing formal rooms are retained, with the reception room opened up to form a large through-lounge with the current dining room, leading to a new open plan kitchen & dining room overlooking the rear garden. It is proposed to position a high level window in the rear section of the lounge to improve daylighting into this space. The existing kitchen will be adapted to provide a utility and a much needed entrance storey WC and wet room, intended to accommodate a visiting semi-ambulant family member. The former lounge becomes a homeworking studio / office which also provides an occasional bed space in the entrance storey with level access to the downstairs wet room.

The proposed kitchen & dining room is open plan, but can be enclosed from the lounge by a large feature sliding door. It features a large west-facing window, to be obscure in the lower panes to diffuse views across the ugly neighbouring garages, while providing an abundance of evening light and views of the sky from the dining table. The dining area features a bi-folding door at a raised level, with steps and integrated bench seating overlooking the garden. It is proposed to mitigate the strong change in level between the ground floor and the rear garden, by setting the kitchen / dining room at an intermediate level, and providing space for a future ramp to the side access route such that a semi-ambulant person may make better use of the accommodation throughout the ground floor of the house. The external side access route is semi-enclosed with the canopy concealed by raked brick wall connecting to the end of an existing brick wall on the boundary. This will be provided with an external screen gate to match the detailing of the other windows and proposed doors.

Upstairs, a large master bedroom and en-suite is accommodated within the raked eaves of the dual pitch roof. The bedroom is accessed directly from the existing landing at the head of the stairs at the lower level rear of the existing house, with minimal disruption to internal spaces. The bedroom benefits from skylights facing both East and West, as well as a single picture window in the rear gable facing North and providing views across the rear garden, Park Grove and beyond to the adjacent sports fields. The offset in the outrigger allows the existing bedroom 3 to retain its rear-facing window, however the it will be necessary to block the existing bathroom window. It is proposed to provide a small obscure glazed window in the gable elevation to mitigate this loss.



FIGURE 12: proposed ground floor (bottom) + first floor (top) plans

8. ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

As a detached Victorian house, the existing structure of 10 Rushford Avenue uses a considerable amount of energy to keep heated and to maintain an adequate living environment. Compared with other housing typologies, detached structures are at a further disadvantage owing to the very large surface area of the external envelope for heat losses. The uninsulated external walls are not suited to the task of retaining the heat. The inhabitants report that heating is essential through much of the year in order to prevent condensation and to maintain a comfortable internal temperature.

It is proposed to retain as much of the existing fabric as possible, with modifications to significantly improve it's energy performance. With the earlier loss of architectural detail in the rendered external elevation and with the internal decorations generally intact, it is considered that an external insulated-render system would the most appropriate first step to improving the overall fabric energy performance of the building. It is also proposed to extensively insulate the lofts and basement ceiling and to ensure continuity of the insulation envelope where possible. Existing windows will be retained, these being generally of satisfactory quality, they will be retrofitted with weather seals and further works will be undertaken to improve air tightness generally. It is intended to provide a heat recovery ventilation solution (MVHR) to maintain air quality year round. Photovoltaic panels have not been considered owing to the conservation constraints for the primary South-facing elevation, and also because of the extensive tree cover in the front garden. The new living accommodation will also be designed to a very high standard, far surpassing Part L1B, intended to minimise energy bills in use as far as is feasible given the constraints.

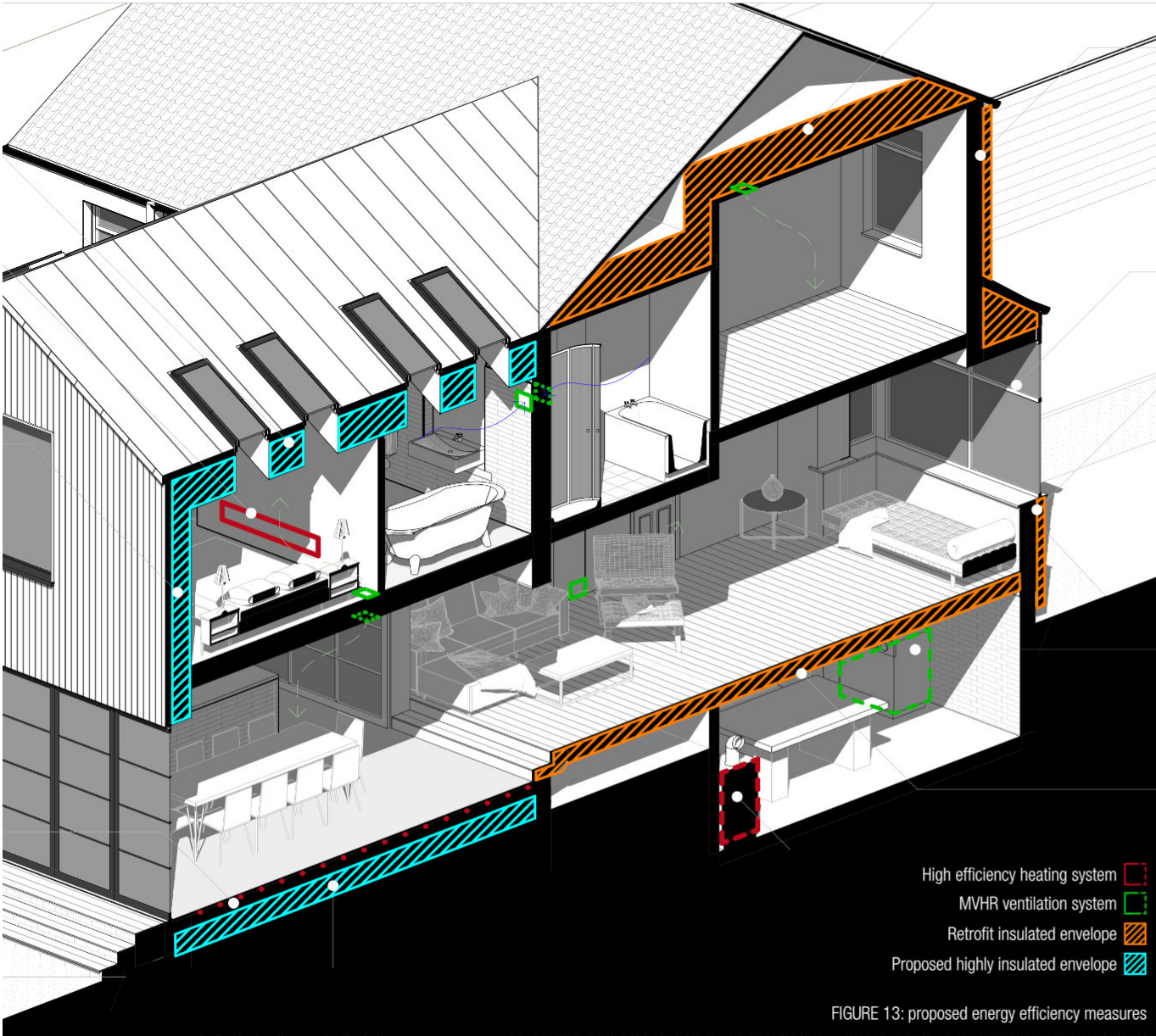


FIGURE 13: proposed energy efficiency measures

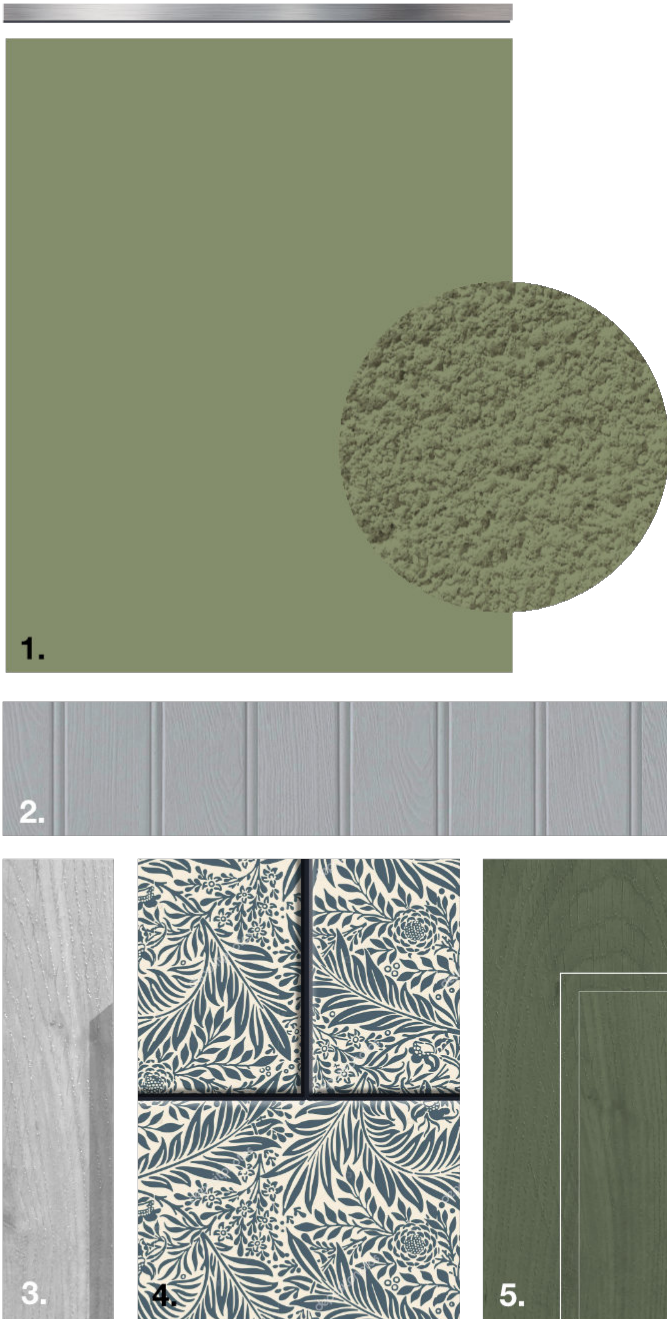


FIGURE 14: proposed front material palette

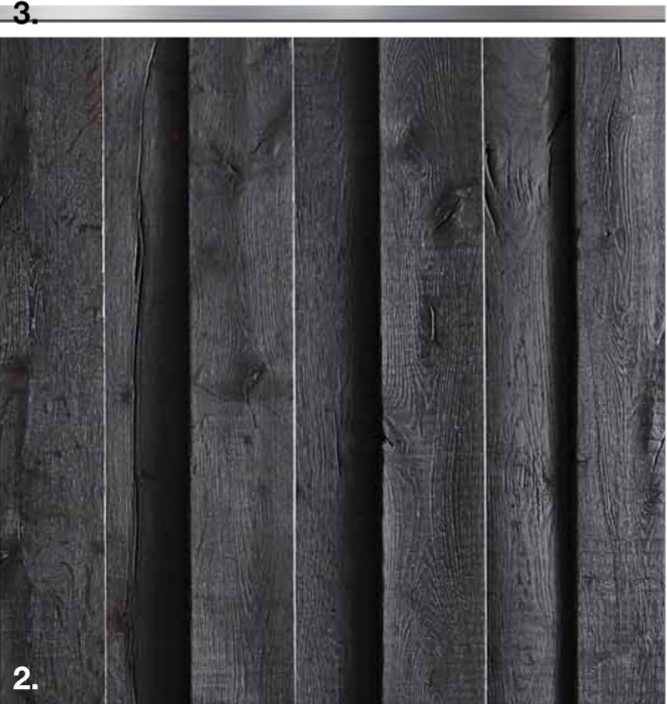
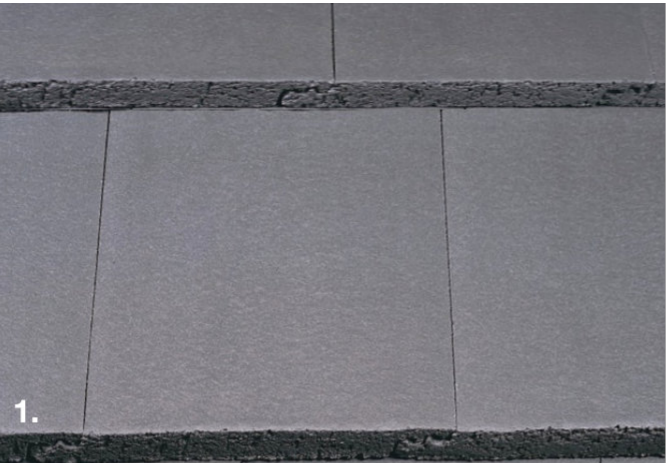
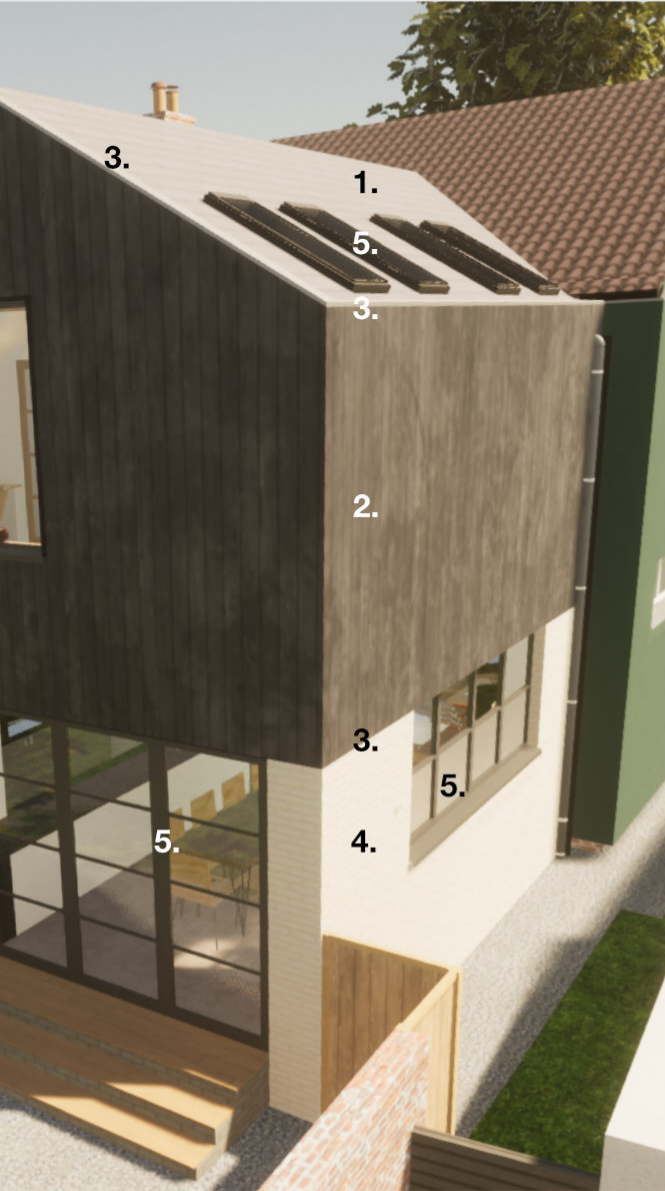
1. INSULATED RENDER SYSTEM (self cleaning)
2. TONGUE AND GROOVE BOARD DETAIL
3. BAY WINDOW POSTS
4. FEATURE TILE ENTRANCE REVEAL
5. PAINT COLOUR TO EXISTING FRONT DOOR

9. PROPOSED FRONT MATERIALITY + DETAIL

It is proposed to introduce some changes to the primary elevation to improve the appearance of the existing building in relation to it's neighbours. The painted cement render finish will be replaced by an insulated render system with a muted dark green finish to replace the existing stained cream-coloured Tyrolean finish. In order to maintain the proportions of the facade it is proposed to introduce uniform negative reveals at first floor windows on the front elevation, allowing the stone cills to be retained. It is proposed to introduce a lighter colour within the negative reveals to express this detail, to match elsewhere. The front door reveal and detailing will be retained and made good, with the existing front door painted a colour of the client's preference. Existing timber-framed windows will be retained and made good throughout. The bay windows will be relocated outwards and fitted with painted timber corner post details, which will unify with the proposed small areas of replacement weatherboard and soffit cladding, being tongue and groove boards painted grey. At the front entrance it is proposed to provide a feature glazed tile pattern at the reveal to provide a more robust, attractive and contextually appropriate finish. A reclaimed or locally-produced tile (eg. Royal Lancastrian Pottery) will be sought out and will be selected to subtly evoke the Victorian origins of the house.

FIGURE 15: proposed rear material palette

- 1. MINIMAL GREY INTERLOCKING CONCRETE TILE
- 2. ‘SHOU SUGI BAN’ BURNT TIMBER CLADDING
- 3. GALVANISED STEEL TRIM + COPINGS
- 4. WHITE PAINTED BRICK
- 5. DARK GREY PPC ALUMINIUM WINDOW FRAME



10. PROPOSED REAR MATERIALITY + DETAIL

It is considered reasonable to advocate a departure from the existing materiality on the rear elevation as this area does not appear in context with the heritage assets of the Rushford Park conservation area. The proposed solution is a balance of the client's preference for natural materials and for creating strong visual contrast. It is intended that the proposed materials provide a durable and extremely high quality look, with the benefit that their finishes provides a degree of material flexibility to control cost which is particularly important in the current uncertain climate of the construction industry. It is proposed to finish the lower elevation in white-painted brick. This will be capped by a boarded upper floor using burnt ‘Shou Sugi Ban’ timber cladding, charred to a consistent dark finish and oiled to express the grain. A vertical overlap board pattern will accentuate the grain of the wood and creates interesting depth and shadow textures at different times of day. This form of timber treatment allows for a degree of flexibility in the choice of timber and avoids the need to use chemical preservatives, while forming a long-lasting, fire-resistant finish that requires minimal ongoing maintenance. The cladding will be finished with minimal galvanised steel copings and trims and aligned stainless steel fixtures. Integrated gutters and flush verge parapet detailing at the rear gable will minimise visual clutter and maintain sharp, minimal lines around the roof.

Windows and doors within the proposed outrigger are designed with a consistent, horizontal rectangular frame pattern in dark grey to aid with the contrast to the existing building. The modular style is reminiscent of classic, early-modern ‘Crittall’ steel window frames and helps tie together and unify the appearance of openings with disparate proportions, that are themselves designed to selectively take advantage of surrounding views while masking undesirable outlooks to neighbouring properties.



FIGURE 16: proposed lounge