section 2: concept development

2.1 Client Brief

The brief provided by the client was broken down into an in depth accommodation schedule.

The key elements of this have been summarised on this page.

The client also provided imagery and key elements of this which have informed the design are included on this page.

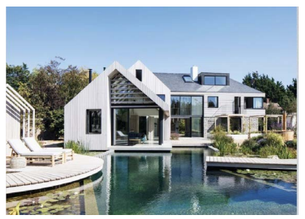
The applicants currently live in Chorlton and are looking to create a high quality family home to meet the needs of the coming decades in a highly sustainable manner.

Recognising the history of the site, the applicants see this as an opportunity for a new chapter in the sites story.









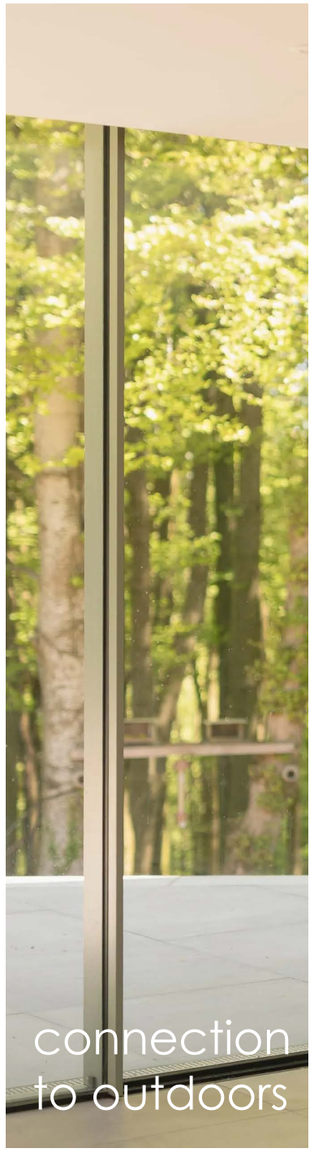


Client precedent imagery



family living

The brief called for a home that could adapt to the family's needs for many years to come, balancing generous social spaces with areas for privacy and retreat. The accommodation schedule reflects this through a flexible arrangement of five bedrooms and a variety of shared living spaces.



connection to outdoors

Creating a strong relationship between the house and its garden was a key aspiration. The clients sought seamless indoor-outdoor living, with the accommodation schedule including covered dining areas, outdoor seating, an outdoor kitchen and recreational garden spaces that can be enjoyed throughout the year.



light and space

The clients placed great importance on creating bright and uplifting internal environments. Their brief emphasised the use of natural light, double-height principal spaces and varied ceiling heights to create a sense of openness and distinct character throughout the home.



sustainable

A sustainable, future-proof home was central to the brief, with aspirations to achieve Passivhaus standards where possible. The accommodation schedule and wider design objectives sought to incorporate renewable technologies, including a GSHP, green roof, alongside a highly energy-efficient building fabric.



lifestyle and practicality

A key aspiration of the brief was to create a home that supports modern family life, balancing practicality with spaces for work, creativity and recreation. The accommodation schedule therefore includes dedicated areas for home working, music, fitness and hobbies, alongside generous storage and utility spaces to support the family's changing needs.

2.2. Initial Sketch design

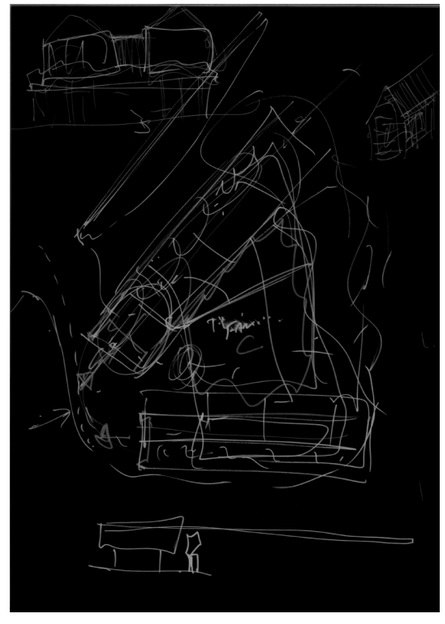
The initial concept was developed through an iterative process of site analysis, sketch exploration and precedent studies. Early investigations focused on understanding the opportunities and constraints presented by the distinctive corner plot, including orientation, key views, neighbouring relationships and the balance between public and private frontages.

These studies helped inform the arrangement of the accommodation and the creation of sheltered external spaces at the heart of the proposal.

Alongside this, a series of architectural precedents were used to explore scale, materiality and atmosphere. The use of natural materials, including timber and stone, together with generous glazing and strong connections to the landscape, established a clear set of design principles that formed the foundation of the emerging concept.



Concept sketch in response to site analysis



Concept sketch











Initial Precedent images



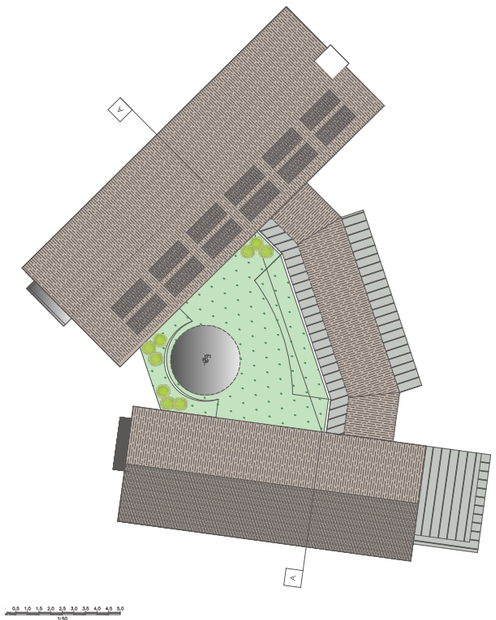
Proposed Aspect

2.3 Initial Concept design

In response to the client brief and local context, the initial design explored the composition of two simple domestic-scale forms that reflected the surrounding urban grain while responding positively to the prominent corner plot. The arrangement created a series of light-filled internal spaces focused around a private central garden, balancing open social areas with more secluded accommodation facing the surrounding streets.

The architectural language combined a robust stone base with lightweight upper forms clad in dark timber, creating a clear distinction between grounded and floating elements. Generous areas of glazing and glazed interstitial spaces strengthened the relationship between inside and outside, while deep reveals and projecting bays responded to key views and natural daylight.

Sustainability was embedded within the concept from the outset through a fabric-first approach, incorporating opportunities for renewable technologies, biodiverse landscaping and green roof elements. The strategy sought to create a contemporary family home that was both environmentally responsible and sensitive to its setting.



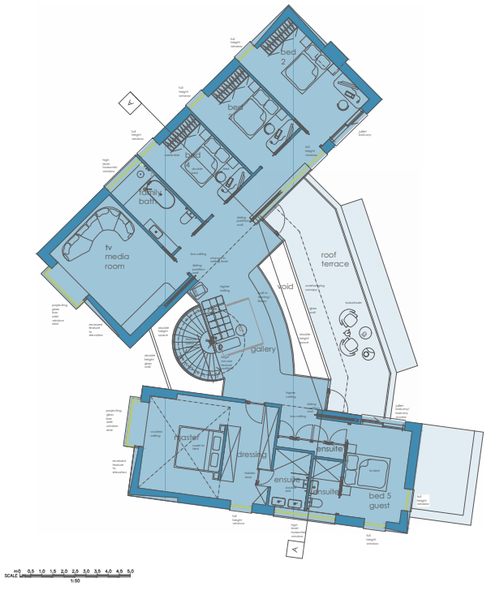
Initial Concept Roof Plan



Initial Concept Site Plan (NTS) showing sustainability strategy



Initial Concept Site Plan (Ground Floor Plan (NTS)



Initial Concept Site Plan (First Floor Plan (NTS)

2.4 Initial Concept modelling

The three-dimensional development of the initial concept enabled the key architectural principles to be tested and refined. The composition of two simple domestic-scale forms created a clear hierarchy across the site, while the separation of a solid, grounded base from the lighter upper volumes established a distinctive yet contextually appropriate character. The use of projecting glazed bays and deeply recessed openings was explored to create depth and articulation within the façades, responding to key views and maximising natural daylight.

The digital models and visualisations also allowed the relationship between materials and built form to be evaluated. The contrast between the robust stone base and the lightweight timber-clad upper elements helped reinforce the concept of floating volumes, while generous glazing and glazed interstitial spaces strengthened the visual and physical connection between the principal living spaces and the surrounding landscape.

The junction of High Lane, Manchester Road and Edge Lane is a prominent junction and this became a key focal point with the new design and junction of the two main accommodation forms.



Initial Concept models



Existing view of High Street/ Manchester Road junction



Initial concept view of High Street/ Manchester Road junc-

2.5 Pre-App

The proposed was prepared to explore the client brief and the opportunities available for the site. It aimed to prepare a considered response which was to put to the LPA in the form of a pre-application enquiry.



Initial Concept Visualisation- Front view (hedge reduced for visualisation purposes)



Initial Concept Visualisation- Rear Aerial View

2.6 Pre-Application Enquiry Initial Response

Interpretation of LPA comments:

The LPA comments appear more open to the principle of demolition:

LPA use the phrase “less than substantial harm”. There is a fair degree of “steer” towards what the LPA wish to see.

Indications that are resolvable:

A-B Central location on the plot similar to existing
C. Facing the corner
D. More reflective materially of the church opposite
E. Tall chimneys
F. Brick
G. Vertical windows
H. Overhanging elements
I. Stone elements
J. Slate roof
K. Avoid a pastiche brick box of a replacement.

The elements that may be more difficult to achieve,

L. Building edges closer to the road/ counter this by reducing height, mass etc
M. Increased perceived massing
N. Public benefit: bring a prominent dilapidated corner back into the public realm.
O. Bracketed gables: trying to avoid copying features of the existing building and rather making a more contemporary nod to them.

Thank you for your emails dated 8th and 16th January.

As per our previous advice to your client Mrs Edge (advice dated 2/1), it is to be noted that we would not support the demolition of no.2 Manchester Road.

Based on the evidence presented as part of the structural report and the building’s location within and contribution to the character and appearance of Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area, the demolition as proposed cannot be supported.

The building has historic, architectural and townscape interest in its own right, constructed around 1880 as Oban House, and located on an eminent corner in the conservation area, prominent in local views onto the site.

Whilst the structural report notes serious structural issues with the existing building, it does not condemn the building. Instead, it concludes that a suitable system of stabilisation is required, yet to be determined following further investigations. It also notes that the likely cause of most structural issues is ground subsidence, which no longer appears to be active. It does conclude that the issues can be remediated, and thus a wholescale demolition is not considered to be justified in planning terms, considering the building’s heritage interest and contribution to the conservation area.

Great weight must be given to the significance of the conservation area, and solutions to retain this important contributor to its special interest should be pursued as an alternative to demolition.

The presented scheme for pre-app advice cannot be supported in principle by the LPA due to the heritage impacts- demolition of the existing dwellinghouse, loss of the protected trees, and a scheme which would be out of character with the development in the surrounding area, which would adversely change the urban grain. This would be contrary to Policy EN3 of the Core Strategy, Policy JP-P2 Strategy, Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone and saved UDP Policy 18, as well as the guidance within Section 16 of the NPPF. To provide further clarity on our position, the scheme is being considered by colleagues in Conservation and I will come back to you with their comments in due course.

It was great to meet you and the client on site last week.

As discussed, please see our comments in respect of the pre-app submission received 7 January 2025, and site visit 29 January 2025:

The conservation area is characterised by red brick Victorian detached and semi-detached dwellings which are set back from the street behind mature landscape gardens and boundary walls. State pitched roofs and bracketed gables are prevalent with vertically proportioned windows and some stone decoration in the form of lintels and cills.

Number 2 Manchester Road is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation area and is visually prominent in the street scene albeit partially concealed by overgrown hedgerow to frontage. The dwelling displays architectural features typical of the conservation area, including decorative bracketed eaves, bay feature window and gable which provide focal interest on the corner. Tall chimney stacks on two elevations puncture the skyline and contribute to its architectural interest. It is sited centrally on the plot facing towards the corner junction with St Clements Road, High Lane and Manchester Road.

Demolition of building.
The building displayed serious structural defects when inspected on site which are evidenced in the supporting structural report. The floors have significant tilts and there was cracking evident internally and externally on all floors and elevations. The structural report refers to historic foundation movement and subsidence which may be contributing to the poor stability and integrity of the property. Additional information with respect to likely cause of subsidence and works to rectify will be required to justify the loss of the existing dwelling. We accept that the property has severe structural defects that may be difficult and costly to resolve but would need to see that all options for retention and part retention have been explored and the reasons why they have been discounted.

Loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area would represent harm to significance and requires convincing justification as set out in the NPPF (Paragraph 213). Given the size of the conservation area the harm would amount to less than substantial harm to heritage significance in this case the conservation area that would need to be offset by public benefits (paragraph 215 NPPF). Paragraph 219 also requires new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal significance. Any replacement dwelling would thereby have to be of exceptional design that enhances the area in order to provide public benefit.

Proposed new dwelling.
The comprehensive assessment and rationale for the design of the new dwelling has been take into consideration in our assessment. It proposes a modern two storey building timber clad, with two splayed wings and connecting glazed entrance.

It is our view that the proposed splayed footprint to create two gabled buildings linked with circular glazed feature would not resonate with the historic character of the conservation area. It would result in the building edges coming closer to the road frontages and increasing the perceived massing of the new dwelling. The plot has a verdant character and set back from the road frontages with the building centrally positioned on the plot, this is an important feature of the conservation area and should be retained. The proposed splayed design would also create an awkward and weaker central feature which would fail to adequately celebrate the corner.

The proposed dwelling will be clad in timber which is not consistent with the materiality of the conservation area where the predominant façade material in the conservation area is red brick. While timber joinery is prevalent in the area it is a subordinate material to the main brick facades of most dwellings.

The proposed overhang over the ground floor is also not a feature of the area, and while this may be concealed by the front hedge it will be glimpsed from certain viewpoints and surrounding dwellings and will appear incongruous.

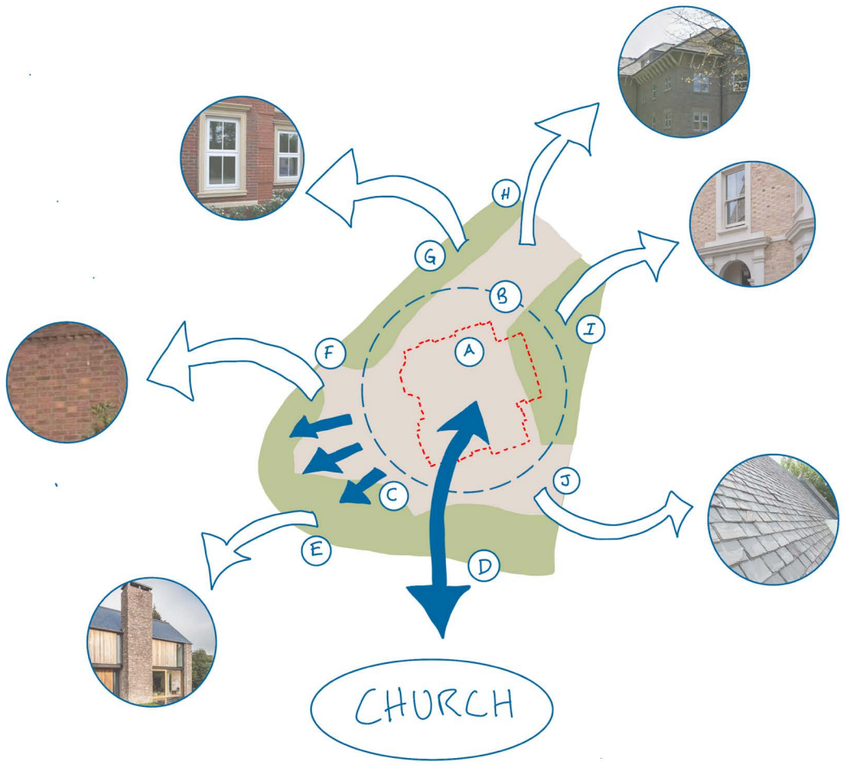
The proposed design would in our view be more suited to a rural location and is not consistent with the Wilbraham Road /Edge Lane Conservation area. We are supportive of a contemporary design but should adopt a simpler footprint centrally positioned on the plot that focuses on creating a distinctive corner dwelling. Consideration should be given to how the new building will be viewed from the road junction and provide a less cluttered building form. The external facades should be predominantly in red brick not timber but can use accents of modern materials and vertically proportioned glazing.

Impact on setting of listed Church of St Clement.
On the opposite corner to the property is the Church of St Clement which is grade II listed. Dates from 1861, made from coursed squared sandstone and fish scale slates to the roof. It is set back from the corner partially concealed by a line of mature trees. The historic setting contributes to the appreciation of the listed asset and any replacement building will have some visual impact on the wider setting with the building sitting in the foreground from views along High Lane.

The impact of the new dwelling on heritage significance is considered to be relatively small but in the winter months views to the asset would be more obvious and are a material consideration. The materiality, and design of the new dwelling would appear at odds in the setting of the listed church, and thereby result in some visual harm. The harm would be at the lower end and could be mitigated with an alternative design and materiality.

Position
Subject to appropriate justification for the loss of the dwelling based on its poor structural condition and options to rectify, which should demonstrate that would result in significant or total loss of historic fabric then a replacement dwelling could be considered. As it would amount to less than substantial harm to heritage significance (the conservation area in this case) it would require to be offset by public benefits. The proposed new dwelling would have to be of an exceptional design that enhanced the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. The proposed design is not considered to meet this test and will require radical redesign and materiality.

I trust this information will be of assistance. As mentioned previously, pre-app advice is free of charge and we are happy to look at a revised scheme prior to any formal submission.



Interpretation of pre-app response diagram