

# The Bungalow Henley Road Wargrave

Design & Access Statement



*View from opposite bank*

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# Introduction



The site comprises a house on the mainland with extensive river frontage and a private island, which are linked by a timber arched bridge. The island is heavily wooded and has a tennis court, two pavilions, a brick folly and a small lake. The site lies within the Green Belt, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is within the Wargrave Conservation Area. The majority of the mainland site is within the flood plain and the entire island is within this area of flood risk.

The existing dwelling known as “The Bungalow” is located between the River Thames and the A321 Henley Road, which produces significant traffic noise. In addition, the site is also bounded on the roadside by a row of mainly mature lime trees that range up to 23m in height. These roadside trees represent a significant feature in the street scene and approach to the Conservation Area. These trees benefit from Conservation Area protection, however the Local Planning Authority has recently given permission to remove one diseased roadside tree. In addition three further trees were also permitted to be removed from the Island following recent storm damage that highlighted their dangerous condition.

In November 2011 we were instructed to seek pre-application advice for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the mainland and 2 boathouses on the island. The Council provided detailed advice, a copy of which is included with the current planning application.



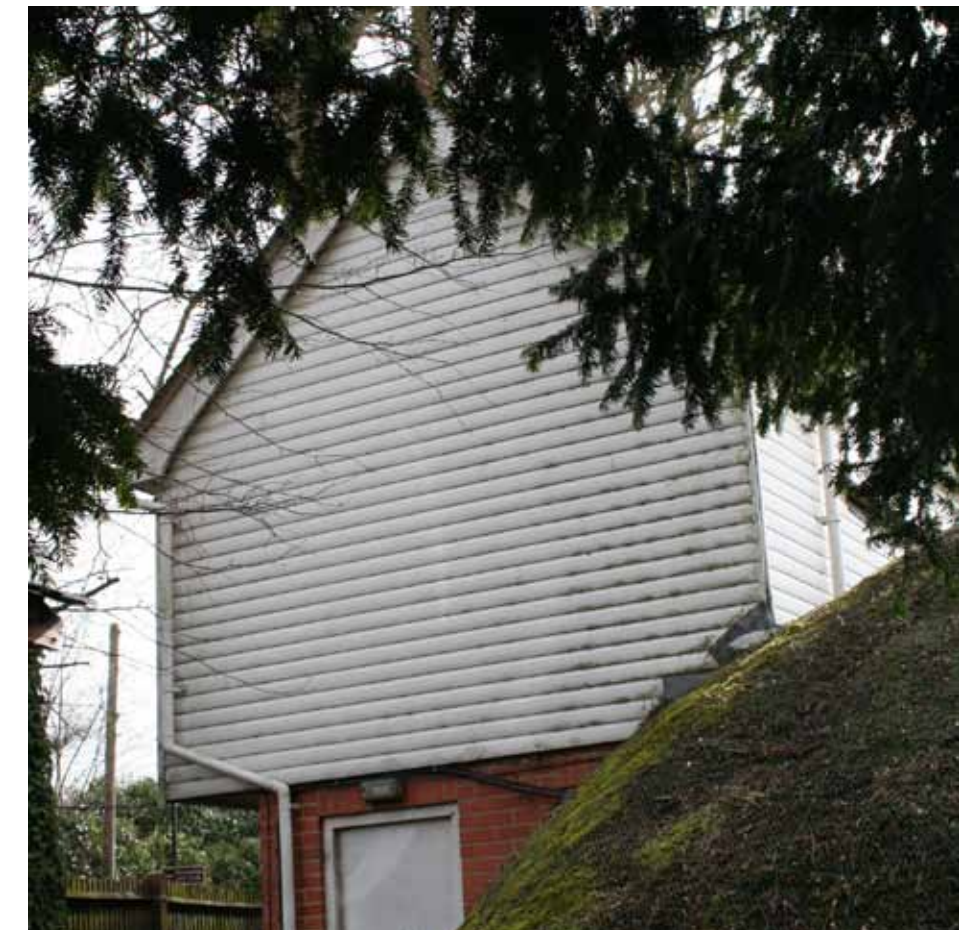
# Use



There is an existing dwelling on the site, part of which is an older single storey building under a thatch roof which can be dated to the mid eighteenth hundreds.

The main mass of the house is of later brick construction, with some painted timber boarding under a tiled roof. These extensions were carried out in 1968 and 1998.

“The Bungalow” is considered to be of little architectural merit, however its demolition will require Conservation Area Consent.





# Design Considerations

The site takes the form of an elongated triangle in a North-South orientation. When viewed from the road or the river the roadside trees remain the dominant feature of this site.

This tapering site is constrained by the “sandwich” effect of the river, the protected trees and the road. Any development potential is further limited by flood risk and the requirement of the Environment Agency that no new residential structure should be allowed within 8m of the river edge.

The existing roadside trees also have significant root protection zones that will need to be taken into consideration when the existing dwelling is demolished and a new dwelling constructed. This can be properly secured by a Planning Condition.

The original pre-application design responded to the row of existing roadside trees and the powerful vertical emphasis given by the tree trunks.

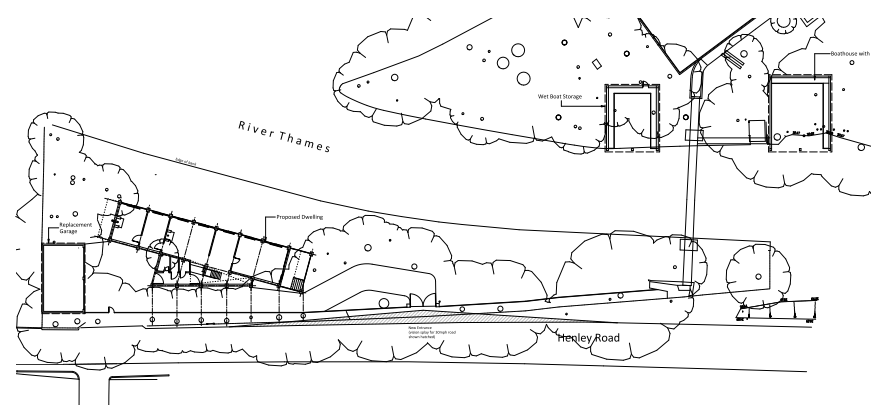


The use of brick columns and recessed infill panels ensured that the house sat comfortably with the grid of trees and accentuated the strong vertical emphasis that they gave to the site. (See illustrations below).

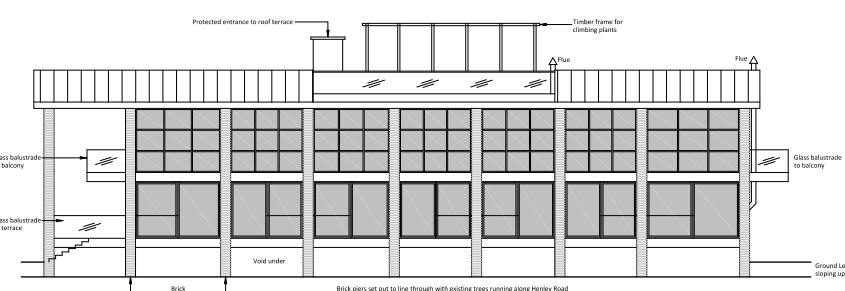
However, following receipt of the pre-application advice from the Council, it was clear that fundamental design changes were necessary in order to secure Officer support, namely:

- A significant reduction in the overall volume of the dwelling
- A reduction in height, mass and the extent of the two storey element
- The omission of any new buildings on the island

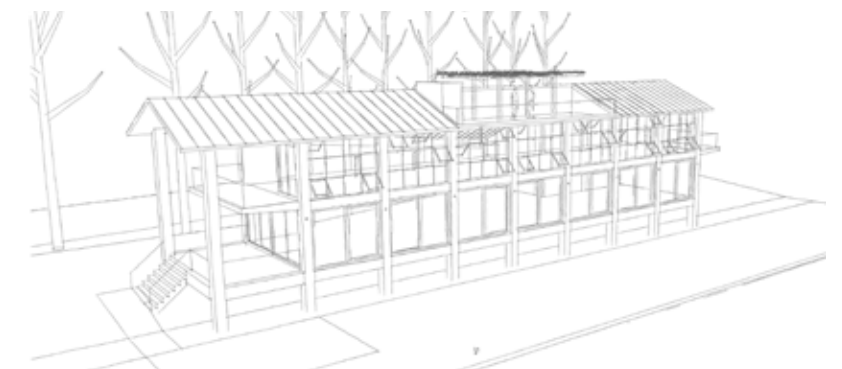
These requirements have all informed the design process and the evolution of the current proposal.



Pre-application plan



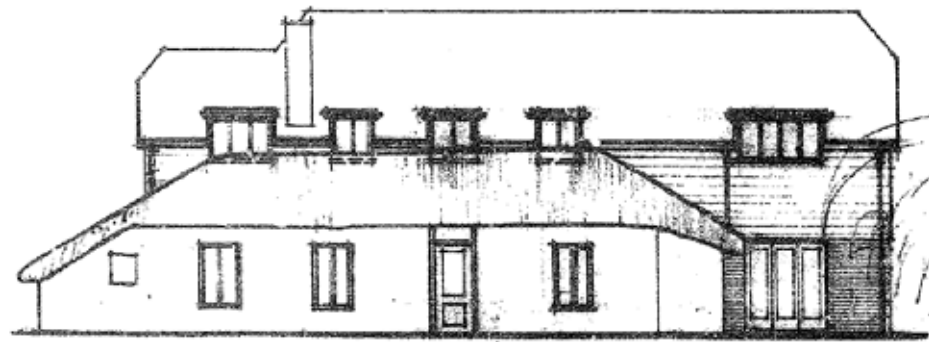
Pre-application riverside elevation



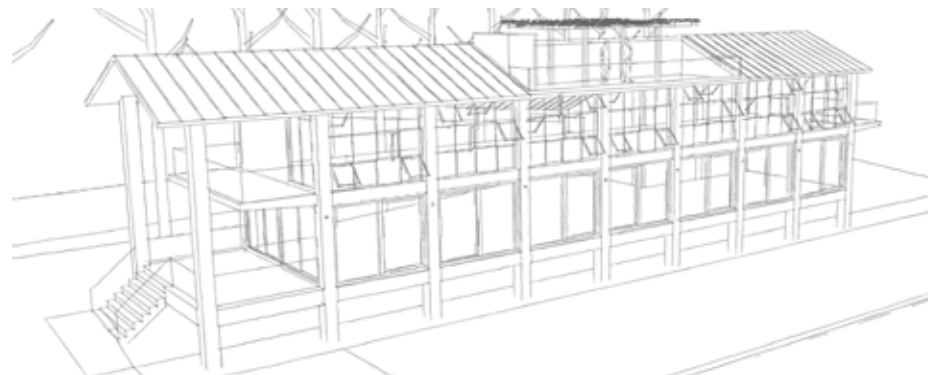
Pre-application three dimensional image

# Amount of Development

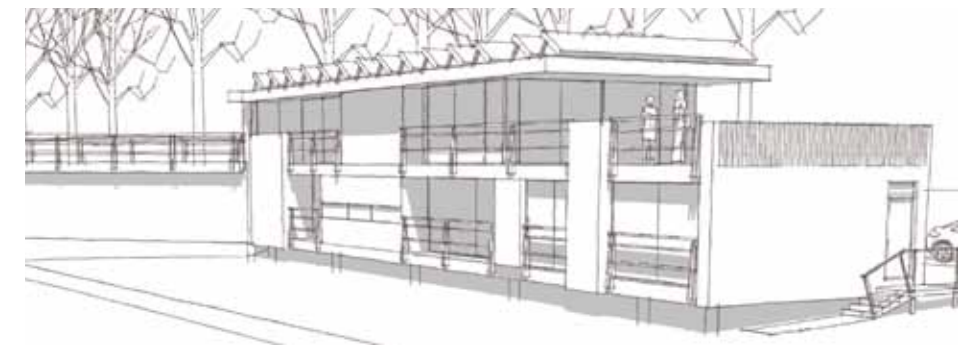
Having regard to adopted planning policy and the Green Belt designation, it is clear that the size of the existing and proposed dwelling is of fundamental importance.



*Existing dwelling - 1079m<sup>3</sup>, including the garage and garden building*

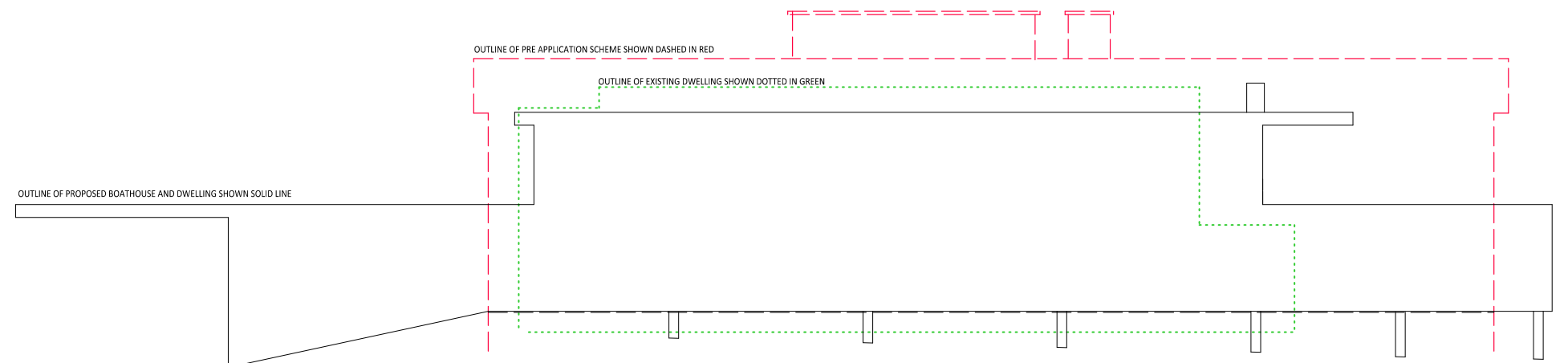


*Pre-application proposal – 1400m<sup>3</sup>, excluding the canopy, balconies and boathouses.*



*Current proposal – 1175m<sup>3</sup>, including the garage but excluding the boathouse.*

It is important to note that the volume of the current proposal is not materially larger than the existing built form that already exists on the site. Importantly, the proposal will maintain and improve the openness of this part of the Green Belt with only a modest increase in volume and a significant reduction in height. Furthermore, in accordance with the pre-application advice received from the Council the volume of the proposed dwelling has been significantly reduced.



*Outline of existing, pre-application and proposed dwelling*



# Layout

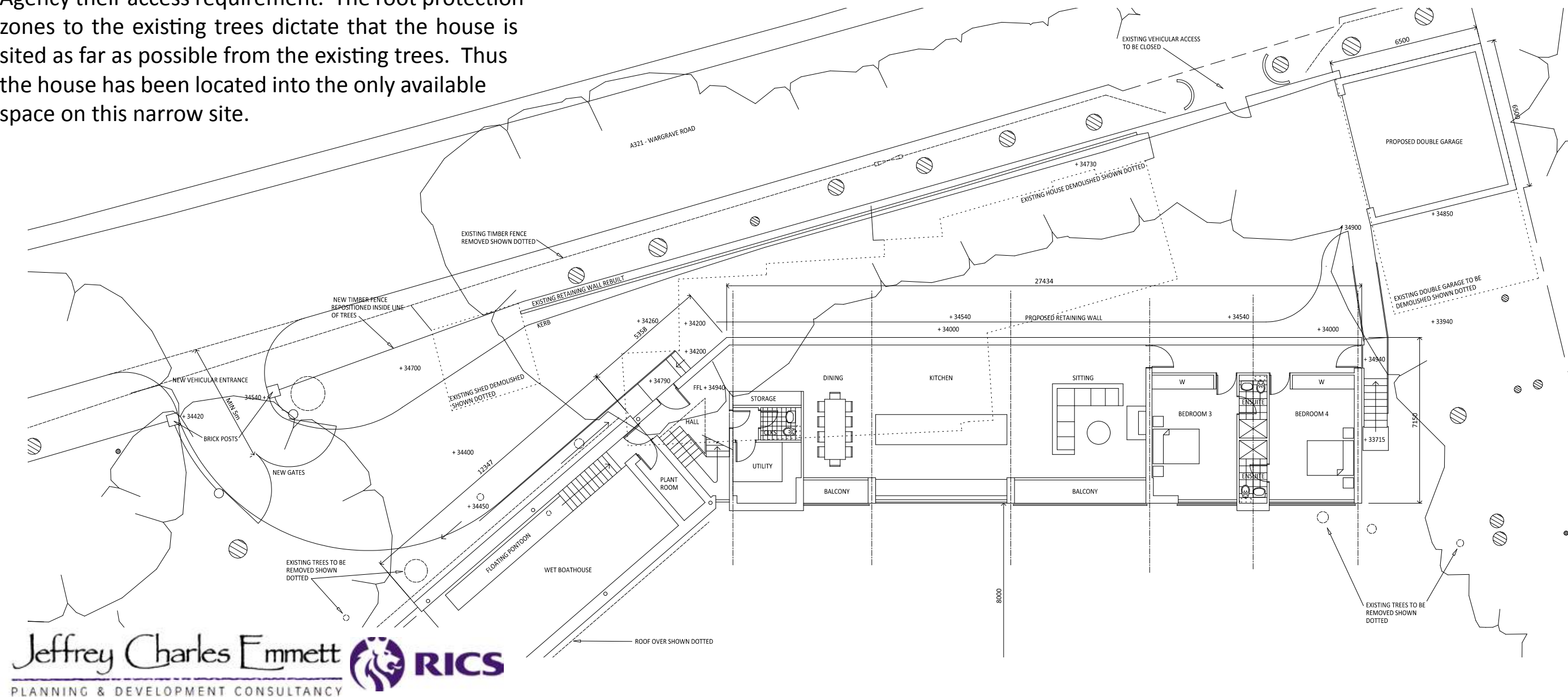
The shape of the site, the roadside trees, the road, the river and the requirements of the Environment Agency have all dictated the position of the replacement dwelling upon the site. In addition the overwhelming need to provide a safe means of vehicular access for future occupiers has determined the new access arrangements.

Other than the boathouse, the replacement dwelling is set back 8m from the riverbank giving the Environment Agency their access requirement. The root protection zones to the existing trees dictate that the house is sited as far as possible from the existing trees. Thus the house has been located into the only available space on this narrow site.

The vehicular access to the site has been moved northwards approximately midway along the site frontage. The existing access is not safe as the driver's vision of approaching traffic when exiting the site is obscured. The new access gives a fully compliant vision splay both ways for a 30 mph road without the need to remove any trees. The access will then run parallel to the Henley Road underneath the tree canopy.

The driveway will terminate at the proposed double garage, which will replace a much larger structure. Adequate turning will exist in front of the garage to enable cars to turn and leave the site in a forward direction.

No development is proposed on the island.

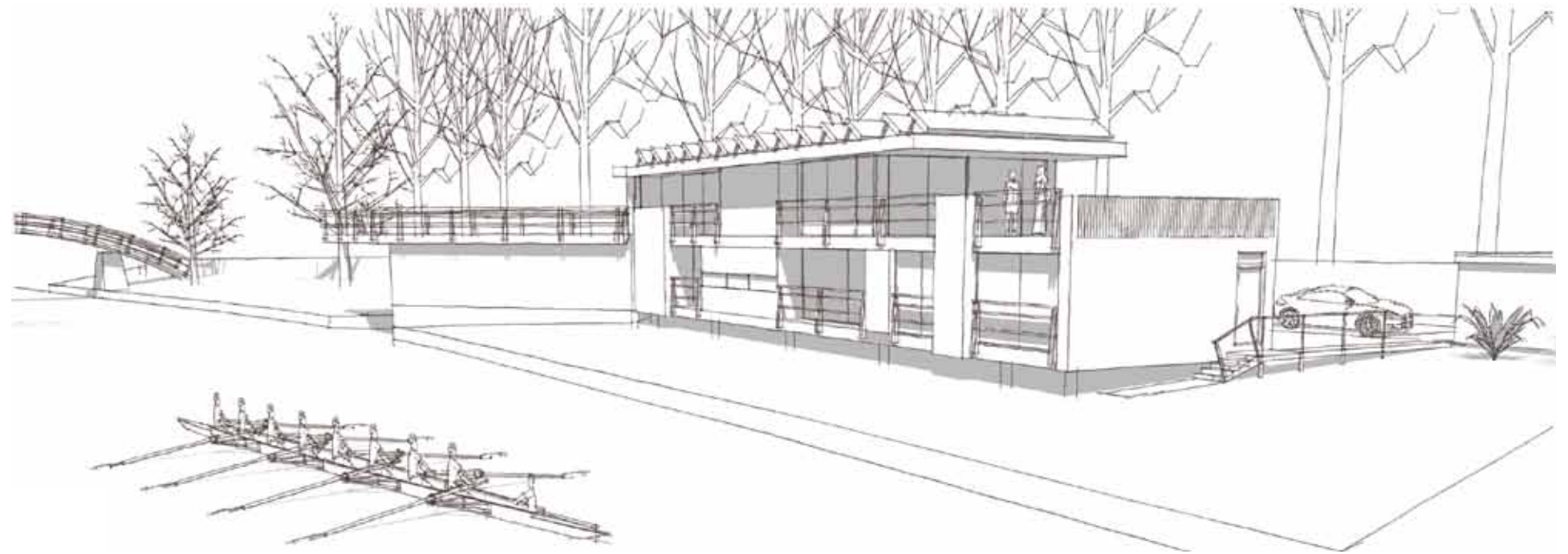


# Scale

The scale of the proposed building is in keeping with its surroundings and residential neighbours.

Unlike the pre-application proposal, it is no longer almost entirely two-storey. It is shorter in length and only partially two storey, giving a significant reduction in first floor massing thus improving the views from both the river and road. This will create a built volume that is comparable with the existing dwelling, but with significant improvement in the quality of design.

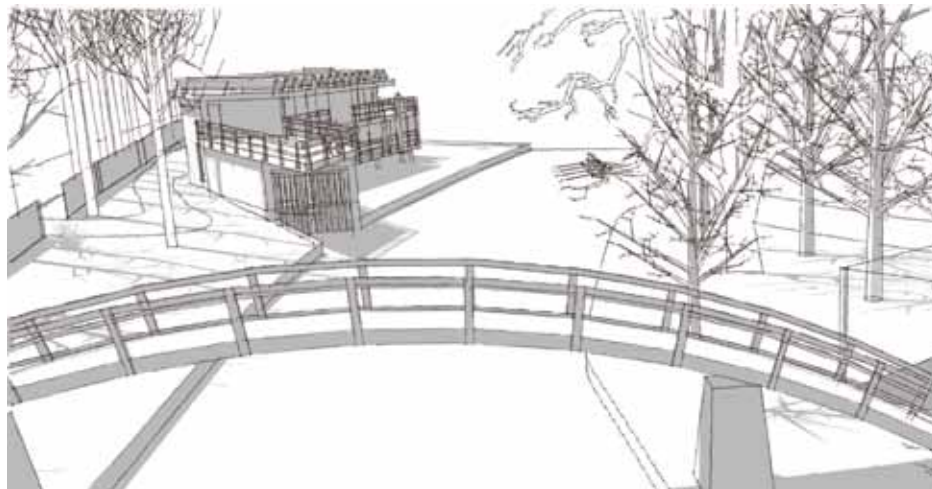
The roof height of the proposed dwelling has been reduced by 1.6m following pre-application discussions with the Officers of the Council. This shorter and lower roof line, when combined with the existing trees, boundary treatment and siting, will lessen the impact in views from Henley Road and ensure that the scale of the building appears in keeping with its surroundings.





# Appearance

The available site for development is constrained fairly obviously by the sandwich effects of the river, the trees and the road. This is further exaggerated by the Environment Agency requirement that no residential structure will be allowed within 8m of the river edge. The existing roadside trees also have significant root protection zones that will need to be accommodated when the existing house is demolished and a new dwelling constructed. This requirement also further compresses the available space for any replacement dwelling on this site.

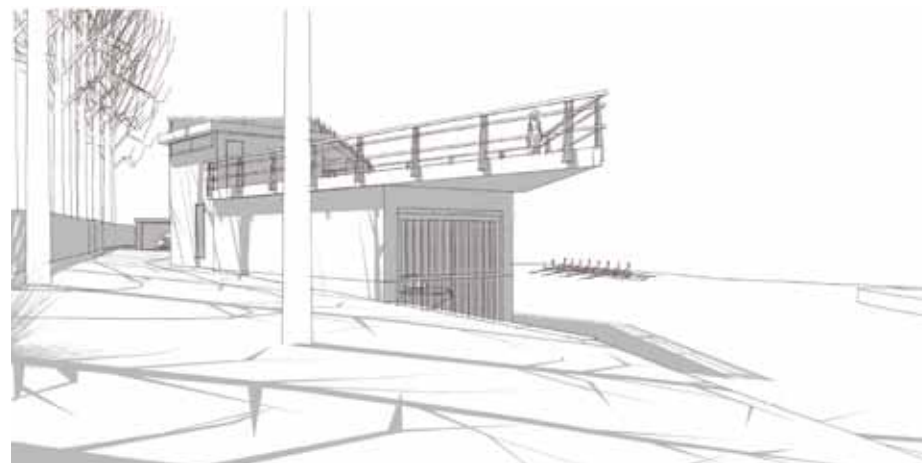


*Long narrow site, sandwiched between the road and the river*

The constraints on the available site area for development have informed the plan layout of a simple linear form of generally open plan arrangement at ground floor level. To reduce the first floor component, two of the four bedrooms have been arranged on the ground floor. This gives flexible guest or family accommodation.

The access is at the knuckle between the boathouse and dwelling. The access is into a double height space that allows views of the river on entry. The stairs wrap around the walls allowing access into the ground floor accommodation and also the boathouse, terrace and first floor.

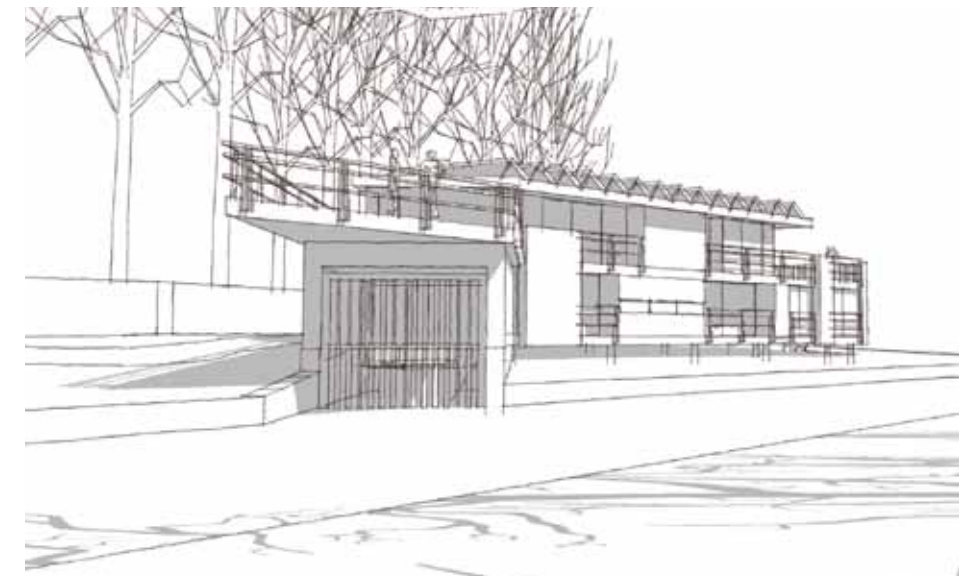
The terrace over the boathouse allows extended views up and down the river and is intended to be a green roof. The dramatic cantilevered roof visually follows the line of the river, while the boathouse entrance is orthogonal to the building.



*Cantilevered roof forming terrace above boat house*

The appearance of the building is designed to provide a rich tapestry of materials, colours, light and shade. Different balconies are provided to all spaces to allow different experiences of the outside space. Generous areas of riverside glazing are balanced with brickwork to give shade in the summer and necessary feeling of privacy and solidity where required.

The roof overhangs and recessed ground floor balconies provide shading from summer sun while allowing the exceptional views to be best experienced. The vertical glazed window to the entry hall gives the visual 'disconnect' between the boathouse and house. The first floor ensuites are fully glazed with carefully angled timber louvres so that views can be taken from inside to outside but not from outside to inside.



*Roof overhangs and recessed balconies provide shading in the summer*

The boathouse is angled to the river to allow sufficient length in the narrow available site. It is intended that the base plinth is constructed in stone filled gabions with unfinished timber boarding above. This façade treatment separates the use of the boathouse from the house itself.



# Appearance cont./...

The other elevations are intended to be clad in an unfinished vertical timber rainscreen. This will weather naturally and fits well visually with the trees that line the road. The only penetrations in this façade are high level glazing to light the first floor corridor and the doors. The openings are kept to a minimum to provide maximum acoustic screening from road noise.

Extending every other timber cladding board up provides the guarding to the bedroom terrace at first floor. From the road this will give a 'solid and light' appearance, the concept for which again comes from the powerful grid of trees along the roadside.

The articulated river side façade is intended to give a changing appearance during the day as the sun path changes the depth and intensity of the shadows cast on the building.

At night time the river elevation would have subtle architectural lighting to pick out elements of the façade. The lighting from within together with the articulated façade would provide a visually interesting view from the river. The night time view from the road would be very understated with minimal amenity lighting and

only light coming from the minimal openings on that elevation.

The roof is covered in solar thermal and PV panels arranged to make best use of the sun position. While this level of environmental installation is currently unusual, we firmly believe that all new dwellings now need to be able to reduce their carbon footprint to the maximum. Together with high levels of insulation, green roofs, daylighting and internal environmental installations this house will be a leading example of the best environmental design.



# Landscaping



Fundamentally it is the roadside trees that dominate the appearance of this site and it is their retention that will lie at the very heart of any future landscaping proposals. In addition, the relocation of the fenceline to behind this tree line will enhance the street scene.

Importantly the proposed dwelling will be located further away from the roadside trees, which are far too close to the existing dwelling. Indeed, without this there could soon be a case for their complete removal based upon the grounds that the roots are affecting the fabric of the existing dwelling.



We recognise that any successful proposal will need to be accompanied by an appropriate landscaping scheme and that this could be secured by a planning condition.

It is important that landscaping and planting is not used to block views of the river and island, but is successfully used to provide an appropriate setting to the new dwelling and reinforce the boundary with the neighbouring property to the south.

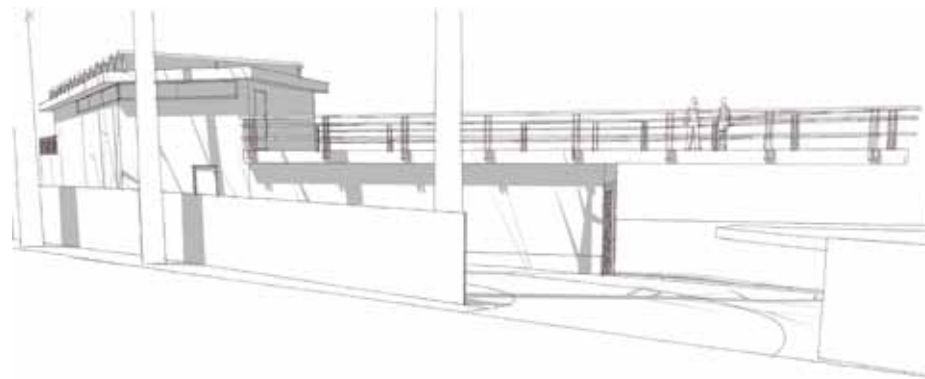


# Access, Safety & Crime



The existing vehicular access is via an entrance at the Southern end of the site that offers little or no vision to nearside approaching traffic when exiting the site. Indeed, it is dangerous to exit the site unsupervised. In addition there is no footpath link in either direction.

It is proposed to form a new vehicular access approximately midway along the site frontage providing good vision. The position of the access will not require the removal of any trees and takes advantage of the gap formed by the recent authorised removal of a diseased tree. The existing access is to be permanently closed, with the exception of a small pedestrian gate.



*View into site from proposed vehicular access*

Full provision will be made for disabled access and will be dealt with under Building Regulations.

The relocation of the vehicular access and subsequent improvements to highway safety for both future occupiers and the users of the Public Highway are of major benefit to both occupier and community safety.

It is not considered that the replacement dwelling will, in itself, increase the risk of crime.



# Sustainability

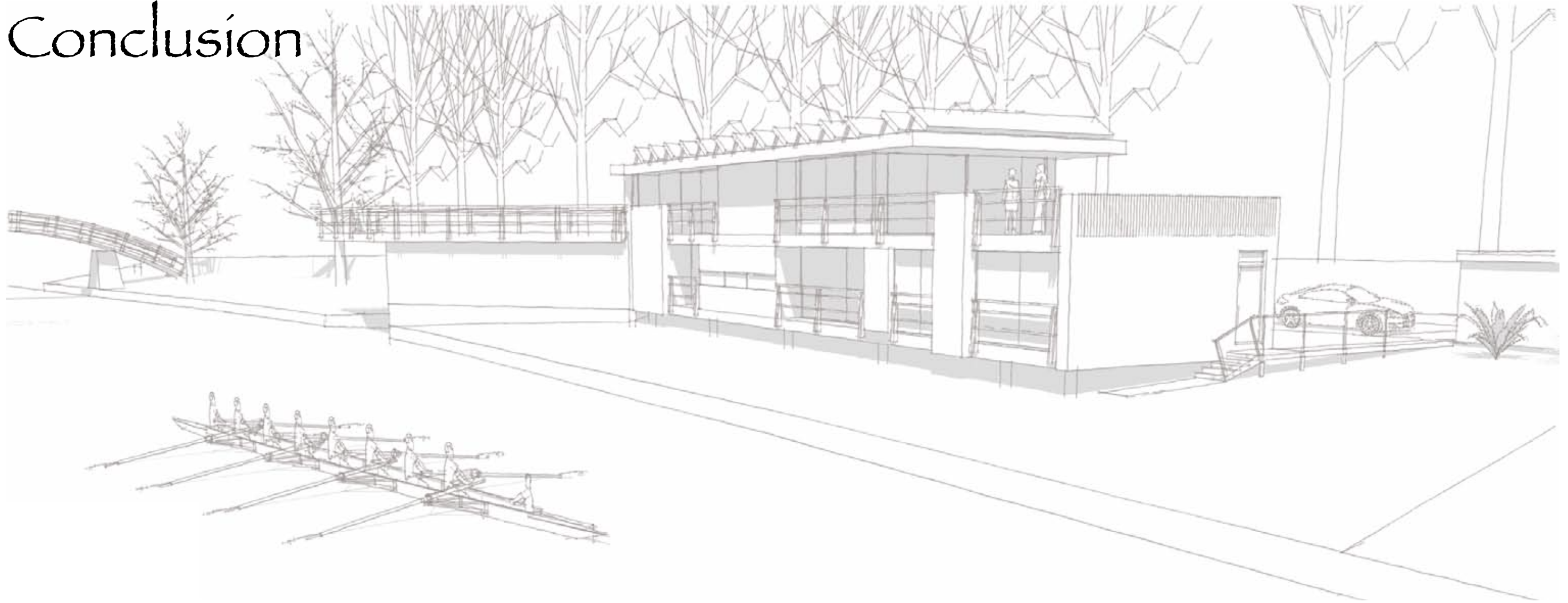
It is envisaged that the proposed dwelling will be far more sustainable than the existing dwelling as it will incorporate the following features:

- High quality, highly insulated building shell that has low air permeability;
- Reduction of emissions through the careful selection of building materials;
- Materials with a lower environmental impact over their life-cycle;
- Good day-lighting, thereby improving quality of life and reducing the need for energy to light the home;
- Low energy light fittings;
- Passive solar design;
- Green roofs;
- Solar thermal hot water panels;
- Photovoltaic panels (PV);
- Rainwater harvesting, rainwater storage and the reduction in the consumption of potable water in the home through the use of water efficient fittings, appliances and water recycling systems, e.g. accessible water butts, dual flush WC's;
- High efficiency condensing boiler;
- Internal and external storage for non recyclable and recyclable household waste;
- Safer and more efficient vehicular movements.





# Conclusion



To conclude, we consider that our client's revised proposal to provide an improved, modernised and safer living environment that responds positively to the riverside setting, roadside trees and Conservation Area is justified and in step with adopted Green Belt policy.

In summary the proposal will:

- ✍ Maintain and improve the openness of this part of the Green Belt with only a modest increase in volume;

- ✍ Respond positively to the riverside setting and Conservation Area through a well conceived and groundbreaking contemporary design solution;

- ✍ Protect the appearance of the Island as no new buildings are proposed;

- ✍ Raise no ecological issues as the riverbank is steel piled at the location of the proposed Boathouse;

- ✍ Improve the setting and the future of the roadside trees and the general approach to Wargrave;

- ✍ Improve highway safety for the occupiers and users of the public highway;

- ✍ Address flood risk for current and future occupiers;

- ✍ Embrace sustainable design principles.



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