

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed conversion & extension of stable block
and new garage at Cedar Hall, Gresford

July 2021

RAISE
ARCHITECTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CEDAR HALL

This Design & Access statement should be read in conjunction with all other submitted documentation as follows:

- **Planning Drawings:** 525-PL-01 to 525-PL-12 (latest revisions) by Raise Architects
- **Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement:** 21/AIA/WXM/267 by Tree Solutions
- **Ecological Appraisal & Bat Activity Report:** 20-12 323.3R by Greenscape Environmental
- **Heritage Impact Assessment:** MHS 1753 by Richard K Morriss & Associates
- **Highway comment** by Highway Planning Solutions (HPS)

This statement is written in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application for the following proposals:

1. Conversion of the detached stable block to domestic accommodation.
2. Alterations to existing stable block.
3. Extension to existing stable block.
4. Formation of new driveway and garage

The statement comprises information about the existing site and surroundings, a justification of the development strategy as proposed, a full description of the design and proposed works and sustainability impacts.

1.1 Proposed Development

The proposals look to convert the redundant former Stables of Cedar Hall to domestic accommodation for residential use.

Cedar Hall - a former vicarage - and its stable block were built on a greenfield site in 1850. They were separately listed Grade II in 1996.

We believe the existing stable block lends itself to conversion and that this can be done in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic character and will ensure the long-term future of the building.

The design team is aware of the historic importance of the existing house and the adjacent stable block and have brought in expertise to advise on proposals through the design stage.

1.2 LOCATION

Cedar Hall is located to the north-west of Gresford, a village to the north of Wrexham. It is set in a rural environment, with open fields to the south and woodland to the north. The site is currently accessible from the A483 main road running along the north-east/north of the site.



*Aerial map
Source: Bing Maps*

1.3 SITE

The site is accessed from the A483 which runs along the northeast/north boundary.

Cedar Hall fronts the private driveway, with the stables located to the rear. The two buildings sit centrally within the site bounded by gardens to the north and south.

The stable block is comprised of two elements, the primarily two storey canted L-shape and the single storey extension on the southern gable.

The two parts of the stable block form the north-western and north-eastern sides of the stable yard, the other sides formed by two large brick walls.

The southern garden is bounded on one side by another large brick wall that is an extension of the western stable wing, that divides the northern and southern gardens.



*Aerial photo of site
Source: Bing Maps*

1.4 BUILDINGS

Cedar Hall

Cedar Hall is a two-storey grade II Listed former vicarage dating from the 1850s. It is faced with brick and stone coping, along with a slate roof and brick chimneys. The plan is a modified cross with a semi-octagonal bay and stone loggia, where the principal elevation is bordered by tall chimneys.

The most prominent feature showcased are the gables, which have stone coping and ball finials, paired with multipaned timber sash windows. The attached rear wall links the house to the stable block.



Cedar Hall (Left) and Stable block (Right)
Source: Richard K Morriss & Associates

1.4 BUILDINGS

Stable Block

The primarily two-storey stable block is a 19th Century grade II Listed building with a design that incorporates Tudor Gothic aesthetics and elements echoing the Cedar House.

The external walls are brick with stone coping, topped with a slate roof. It includes a non-functional brick chimney centred behind a gablet above the carriageway entrance. This central bay features large painted timber gates with ground floor windows on either side.

The stable block is currently an ancillary storage building to the house. Existing stable furniture such as four wooden stalls and cast-iron hay baskets remain on the ground floor. The building also includes a former ostler's room with a small fireplace.

While the stable block retains some of its original features, there is evidence of repair and restoration work over the years, where the carriage accommodation has been altered and stable floors repaired. The existing courtyard is a hard standing area comprising cobblestone which continues into the existing garage.

The upper floor features wooden trusses (both old and new timber) and modern skylights. The only access currently is via a timber staircase in the stable room. Due to the pitch, floor level and existing trusses, the head height is restricted in a number of places.



View of stable from existing courtyard



Rear of stable from Cedar Hall



Stable block cart way entrance



Gable end of west wing from garden

2.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

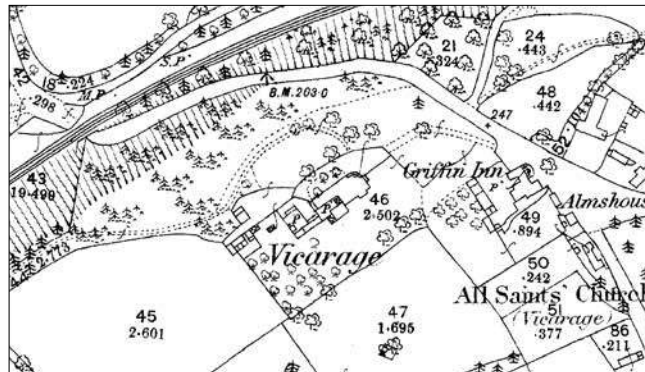
2.1 HISTORIC OS MAPS

The site features a rural plot of land bordered by wooded areas with a railway to the north.

As is evident from the historic OS maps, Cedar hall was once larger than its current form with one rear wing extending and adjoining the now separate stable block.

The mapping also indicates a narrow building extending along the southern courtyard wall that has since been demolished.

There are also a series of other permanent structures against the inner face of the north/south garden wall beyond the stable courtyard running along to the boundary of the property. A larger detached building is also evident within the northern garden.



3.0 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 EXISTING SITE PLAN

The existing stable block lies to the south west of Cedar Hall. Brick garden walls extend perpendicular from the two ends of the stable to form a courtyard. The courtyard was originally accessed via the carriageway and a number of arched openings within the garden wall, which have been subsequently bricked up.

There is also additional evidence of former openings within the garden wall that runs from the west wing of the stable block that have also been covered up.

Another courtyard is located between the stable block and Cedar Hall.

A greenhouse is located to the east of the stable which is built into the large brick walls. This will provide the boundary for the proposed eastern boundary of the site and shall be incorporated into the design proposals.



Existing site layout plan

3.2 SITE ANALYSIS



Arrival

The stable block is currently accessed via a shared driveway with Cedar Hall that extends beyond the primary parking area to the original carriageway.

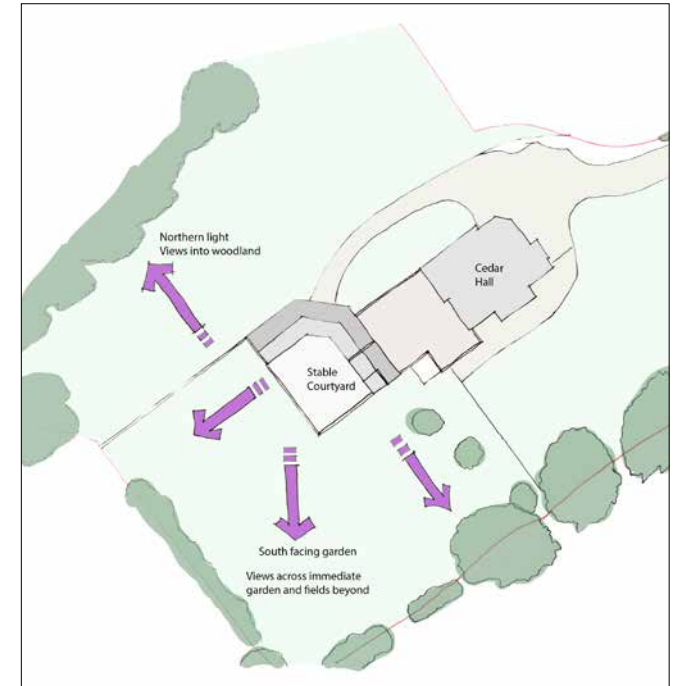
The stable is currently accessed via a number of doors directly off the courtyard, with numerous pedestrian routes through the garden walls to provide access to the gardens.



Solar orientation

The primary stable block elevations and courtyard are orientated south and as such receive sunlight through the day.

The western wing and western courtyard wall receive morning sun, with the bounding walls to the south garden receiving evening sun. Any proposals should look to maximise the use of the solar orientation.



Views

Outside of the courtyard, the primary views are towards the south through the tree lined boundary to the fields beyond.

The northern garden can also make use of northern light with views into the woodland.

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 THE BRIEF

The requirement of the proposals is to renovate, convert and extend the existing stable block to form a new dwelling that will subsequently become the primary dwelling for the applicants. The desire is to retain as much of the character and features of the original stable block whilst providing a sympathetic extension that will provide adequate amenities for modern living.

In addition to the conversion of the stable block, a new access drive will be required to provide a separate entrance for both Cedar Hall and the stable block.

Careful consideration in coordination with various consultants has lead to a proposal that we feel is suitable for its context and sympathetic to the nature of the original stable block.

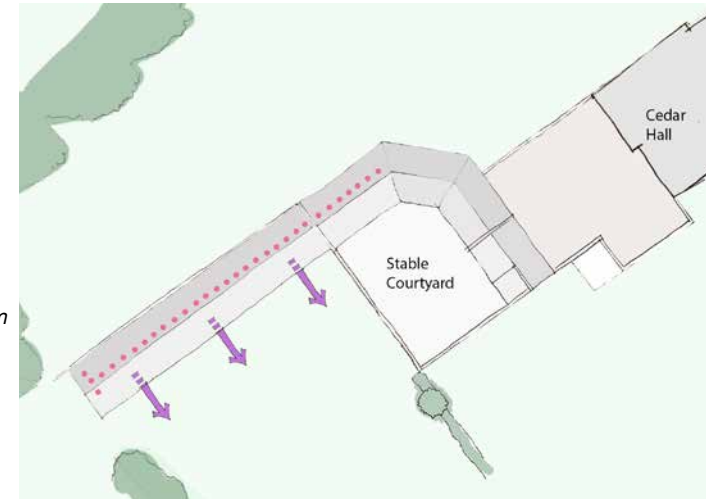
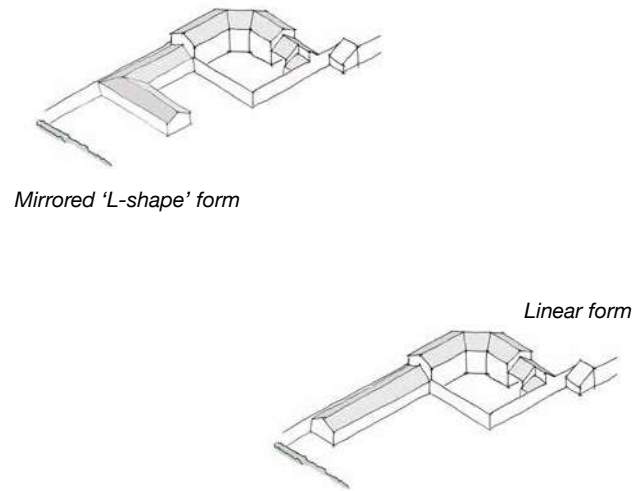
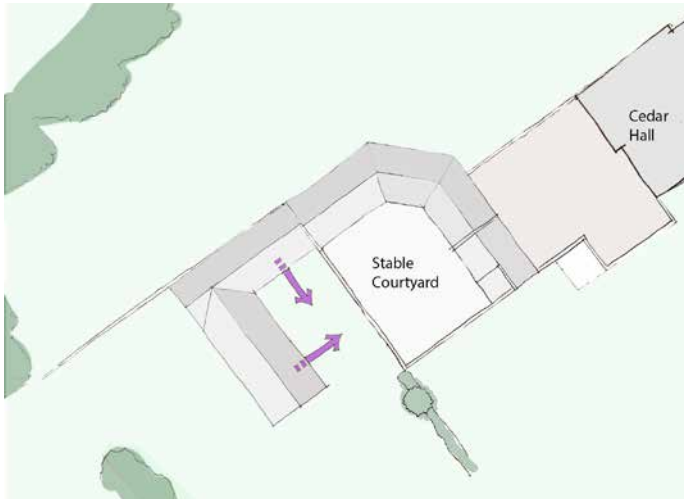
4.2 CONSULTATION

A number of discussions have taken place previously (2017 and 2018) with the Local Authority and Conservation Officer, Anna Irwin, that included a number of site visits to Cedar Hall. The principle of converting and extending the stable block were broadly accepted and resulted in an initial scheme being drawn up.

The proposals that form part of this application are similar to those discussed with the Local Authority for, with the extension orientation being adjusted to better suit the site and its usage.

4.3 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

EXTENSION MASSING



Extension Massing - Mirrored 'L-shape' form

Following initial consultation, the design of the single storey extend looked to mirror the 'L-shaped' form of the stable courtyard as above.

Whilst in plan this provides a symmetry, the addition of a further courtyard could be seen to detract from the original adjacent courtyard. Furthermore the form leads itself to inward facing windows that don't look to connect to the wider context of the site.

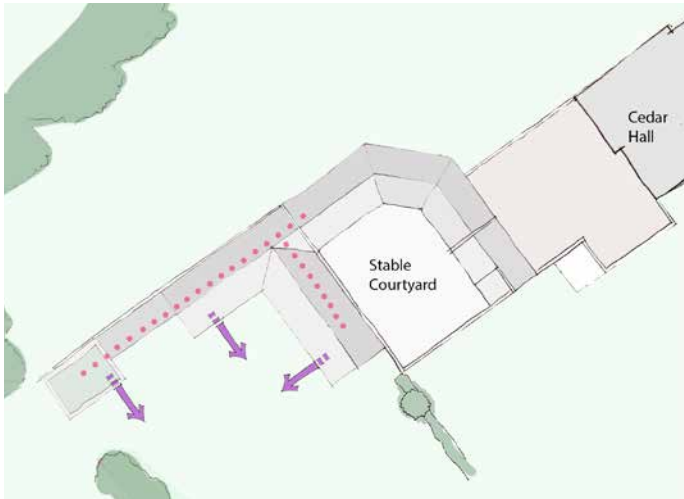
Extension Massing - Linear form

To maximise the connection to the southern garden the return of the 'L-shape' was removed and the extension set along the north/south garden wall.

Whilst this provided an improved activation and interaction of the southern garden, the additional circulation required restricted the amount of usable space within the plan.

4.3 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

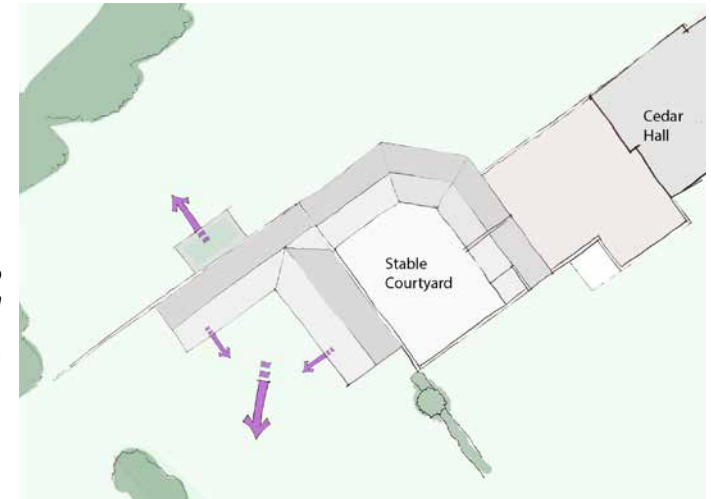
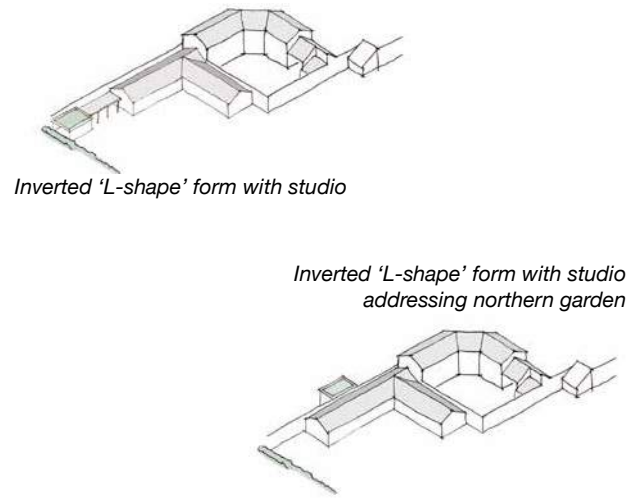
EXTENSION MASSING



Extension Massing - Inverted 'L-shaped; with detached studio

To minimise the additional circulation within the main dwelling a section of the extension was set against the south western garden wall. This provides the interaction with the southern garden whilst reducing the circulation from the existing stable to rooms set within the extension.

A garden studio at the end of the garden wall in the location of a former outbuilding and linked via a covered walkway. Whilst this reduced the massing of the extension along the garden wall, it again increased the circulation necessary to get to the studio space.



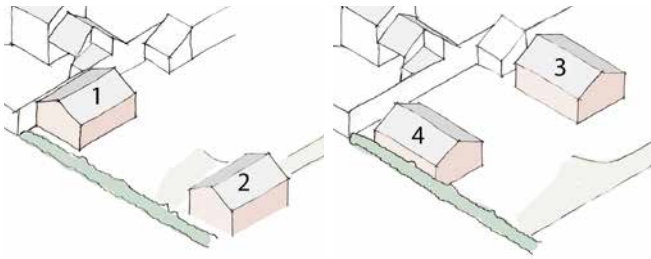
Extension Massing - Inverted L-shaped

Maintaining the Inverted 'L-shape' that provides a better relationship with the garden and minimising the overall circulation.

Relocating the proposed studio to the northern side of the garden wall, which is access via a former opening that is to be reinstated. This reduces the overall massing from the southern garden and utilises a northern aspect for a studio space that activates the northern garden.

4.3 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

GARAGE / ARRIVAL



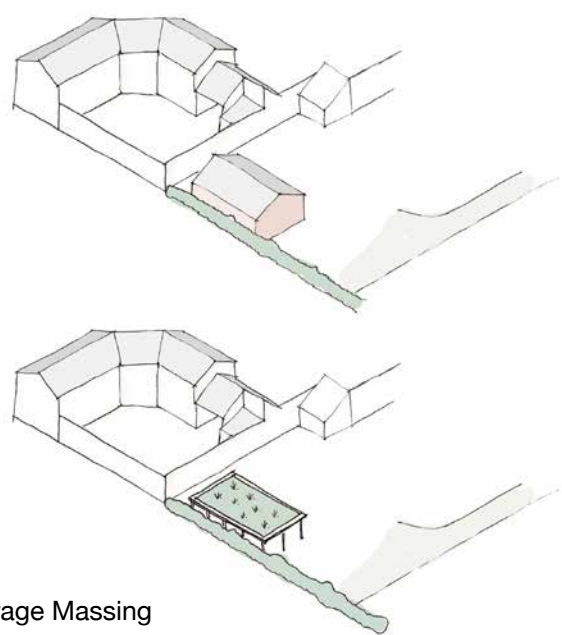
Garage orientation

The location of the garage was studied to determine its optimal location in terms of its usability and its impact on the existing stable block.

Locating the garage perpendicular to the courtyard wall (1) was deemed to negatively impact on the existing wall and the stable block, whilst locating it on the south eastern boundary (2) created a visual 'barrier' on the proposed approach drive.

Locating adjacent to the greenhouse (3) would provide a natural boundary to the arrival area, but could be seen to be too close to Cedar Hall.

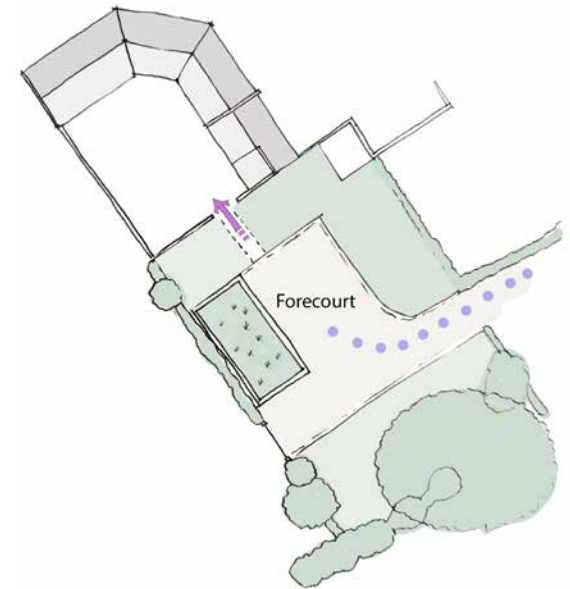
The garage was determined to be best site adjacent to the courtyard (4) to allow for easy access from the proposed driveway whilst maintaining a suitable separation from the existing buildings.



Garage Massing

The initial design looked to provide a traditional double pitched roof with brick construction to mirror the stable block and garden walls. However, the material and pitched roof made the scale of the garage feel too big for its setting.

An alternative lightweight structure with a green sedum roof looked to provide a more sympathetic design that minimised any impact on the existing building whilst still providing a suitable entrance point for the new dwelling.



Forecourt

The addition of a forecourt, bounded on three sides by hedgerows/trees and the original garden wall to the north looks to provide a sense of arrival to the stable.

Uncovering an original arched opening to the courtyard wall will frame the entrance into the stable courtyard from the proposed forecourt.

We feel the proposals look to provide a sequence of spaces from entrance to the stable that sympathetically celebrate the arrival to the proposed dwelling.

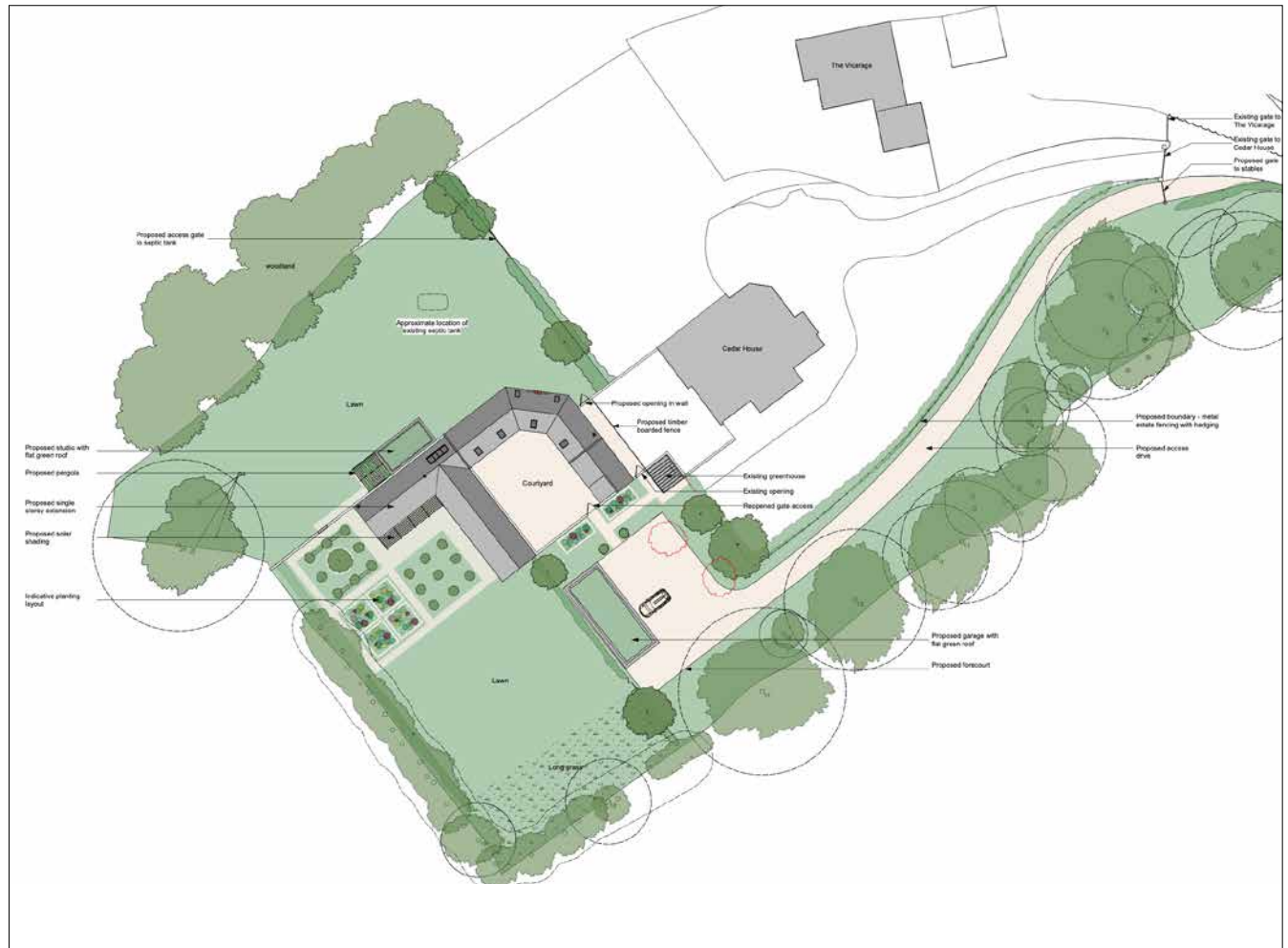
5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.1 OVERVIEW

The existing stable block will be renovated and converted into domestic accommodation over the two storeys. Existing openings will be retained with new windows and doors provided that compliment the heritage of the building.

The proposed single storey extension shall be situated along the brick garden walls that frame the northern edge of the southern garden. The extension shall be orientated with a L-shaping form echoing the existing stable block, and clad in materials that compliment and contrast the original stable block.

Thought and consideration has gone into the layout and quality of the design which looks to enhance the character of the original building and its setting.



Proposed Site Layout Plan

5.2 PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT OF STABLE BLOCK

The proposed works to the stable block include the following:

External

- Generally glazing shall be maintained within existing openings. A number of existing external timber doors shall be retained and fixed back to the façades to echo the building's former use.
- A number of openings will require infill panels below to suit the proposed opening. This shall be undertaken in a sympathetic manner and shall use existing bricks removed from reopened archways on site.
- New doors and windows shall be aluminium frames. This looks to provide a sympathetic alternative to timber windows with reduced maintenance.
- Two new circular windows shall be installed within the gables of the stable block.
- New glazed screens with an entrance door from the courtyard shall infill the existing cart-way arches. This will allow the two halves of the stable block to be connected internally.
- A new section of roof over the proposed studio shall be reformed to provide sufficient head height and shall be clad in standing seam lead, in keeping with a building of this nature.
- A new flue shall be installed to accommodate the fireplace in the lounge.



E07 Proposed north-east sectional elevation



E02 Proposed north-east elevation

Proposed Elevations - Stable Block

5.2 PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT OF STABLE BLOCK

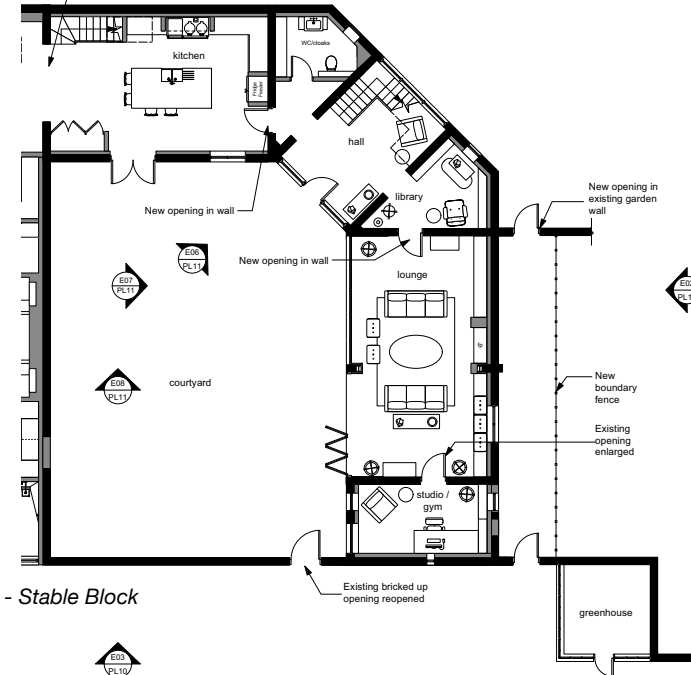
Internal

- A new staircase will be located within the former cartway. A first floor 'bridge' will connect the two sides of the stable block at first floor.
- The existing timber floor over the 'garage' shall be carefully removed and reinstated at a lower level to provide a consistent floor level to the first floor.
- Two new door openings shall be formed within the internal walls (from the kitchen and lounge) to allow access between the two ends of the stable block.
- The end wall to the current garage shall be removed on ground floor to provide a single larger space for the lounge to front the courtyard.
- A new opening shall be formed to the west wall of the proposed kitchen to allow for a connection between the stable block and the extension.
- The existing timber truss to the first floor shall be retained and shall form a 'feature' partition between the proposed studio and bedroom 3.
- A number of the existing wooden stalls and cast-iron hay baskets shall be retained and reused within the proposals.

The combination of the materials and retained openings within the elevations look to provide a sympathetic approach that retains the character of the original stable block whilst allowing a successful conversion into a domestic dwelling.



Selection of images portraying the design intent of the proposals



Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Stable Block

5.3 PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION

The extension is designed to be sympathetic to the original buildings on site. By locating it on the outside of the courtyard walls, it provides a visual separation and maintains the integrity of the stable block. The exterior shall be faced with vertical timber cladding to complement the brick, with the eaves/verge detailed in a simple and contemporary manner that looks to maintain a subservient form.

The dual pitched roof shall be clad in natural slate to echo the stable block, with powder coated aluminium rainwater goods. Modern aluminium frame windows and doors shall providing a high quality finish to the extension, that will provide a visual connection to the proposed windows in the stable block.

The glazing shall maximise the southerly aspects of the plot with an outdoor terrace area that fronts the garden. A lightweight timber canopy shall be constructed over the bifolding doors to the living room to reduce the solar gain and provide visual interest to the elevations. The wing to the living/dining has an extended roof plane to the gable end to provide a semi-enclosed terrace area.

The extension shall comprise a living and dining room to one wing, with a master suite and utility/boot room to the other. It shall be accessed via a new opening in the existing stable block. A woodburning stove shall be installed to the living room and outdoor terrace area that will require a flue to vent through the roof.



Selection of images portraying the design intent of the proposals

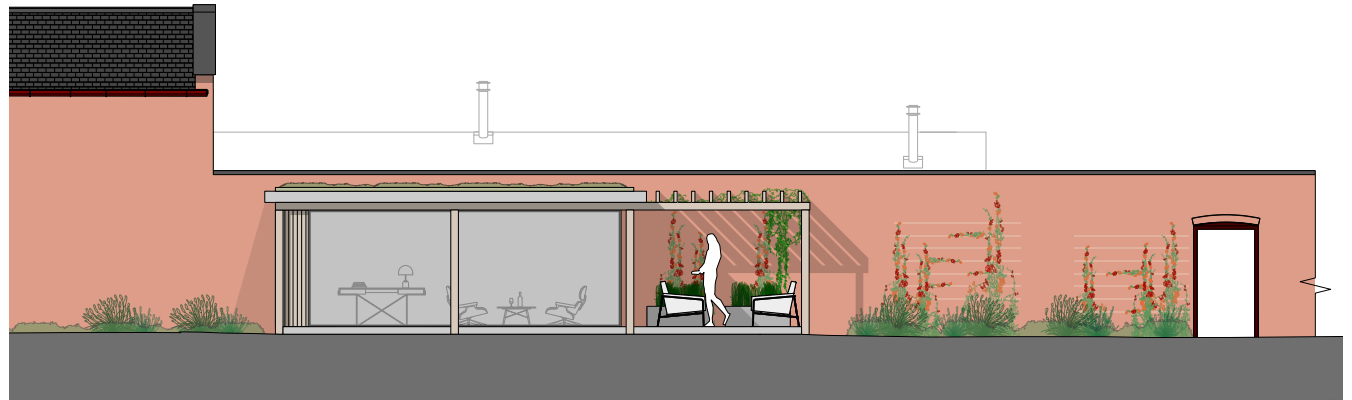


Proposed extension elevation

5.3 PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION

Studio

Another original opening within the garden wall which has previously been bricked up shall be reopened to provide access from the dining room to a new studio on the north side of the garden wall. The studio shall be of a simple form, with timber cladding to match the extension and a large expanse of glazing that looks to maximise the northerly garden aspect and views into the woodland whilst minimising it's massing against the original brick wall and stable block. The studio roof shall be a flat green sedum roof.

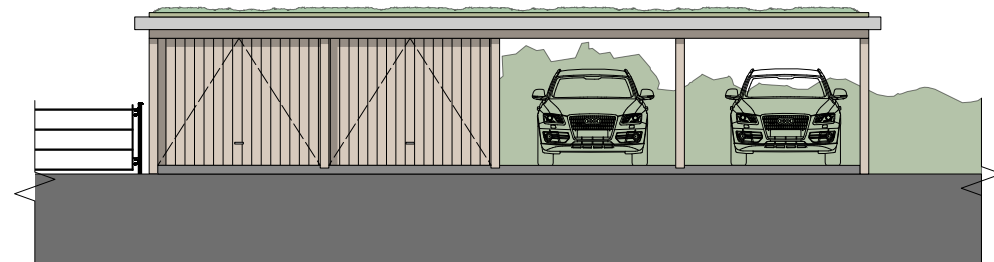


Proposed studio elevation

5.4 PROPOSED GARAGE

The proposed garage comprises a lightweight timber structure and flat green sedum roof akin to the studio, which looks to minimise its height and massing. The garage shall be partially enclosed and clad in vertical timber boarding to match the extension, and shall also be used as a garden store.

The design looks to provide sufficient storage and parking, whilst minimising its impact on the stable block, by utilising natural materials and a green roof for it to sit more naturally on the site.



Proposed garage elevation

6.0 ACCESS

6.1 ACCESS OVERVIEW

6.1 Summary

To facilitate the development, a new access gate is proposed adjacent to the existing site entrance. An estate style fence line and planting will form the new boundary between the stable driveway and garden to Cedar House.

Thought and consideration has gone into the layout and quality of the design which looks to enhance the character of the original building and its setting.

The existing driveway to Cedar House will be retained. A new driveway along the southern edge of the site shall provide access to the converted stable block. The new drive will be located on the southern edge of the site and dictated by the Root Protection areas of the trees on the southern boundary. The driveway will culminate in an arrival forecourt on the southern side of the stable block.

The Forecourt looks to create an 'arrival' area before entering the courtyard and stables. An original opening within the garden wall has previously been bricked up. The intention is to reopen this to provide access into the courtyard from the forecourt. The paving and planting to the forecourt would be developed to frame the reopened archway into the courtyard, providing a subtle but distinct entrance towards the stable building.



Proposed site plan extract

6.2 SITE ENTRANCE

Highways

Following initial discussions with the LPA to convert the stable to residential (as discussed in section 4.2), which received a generally supportive response, there was a concern raised by the highway authority. The concerns were limited to the increased use of an existing access by the additional property where the available visibility for exiting vehicles fell short of recommended standards. Subsequently a traffic survey was undertaken in 2018 to determine the visibility requirements.

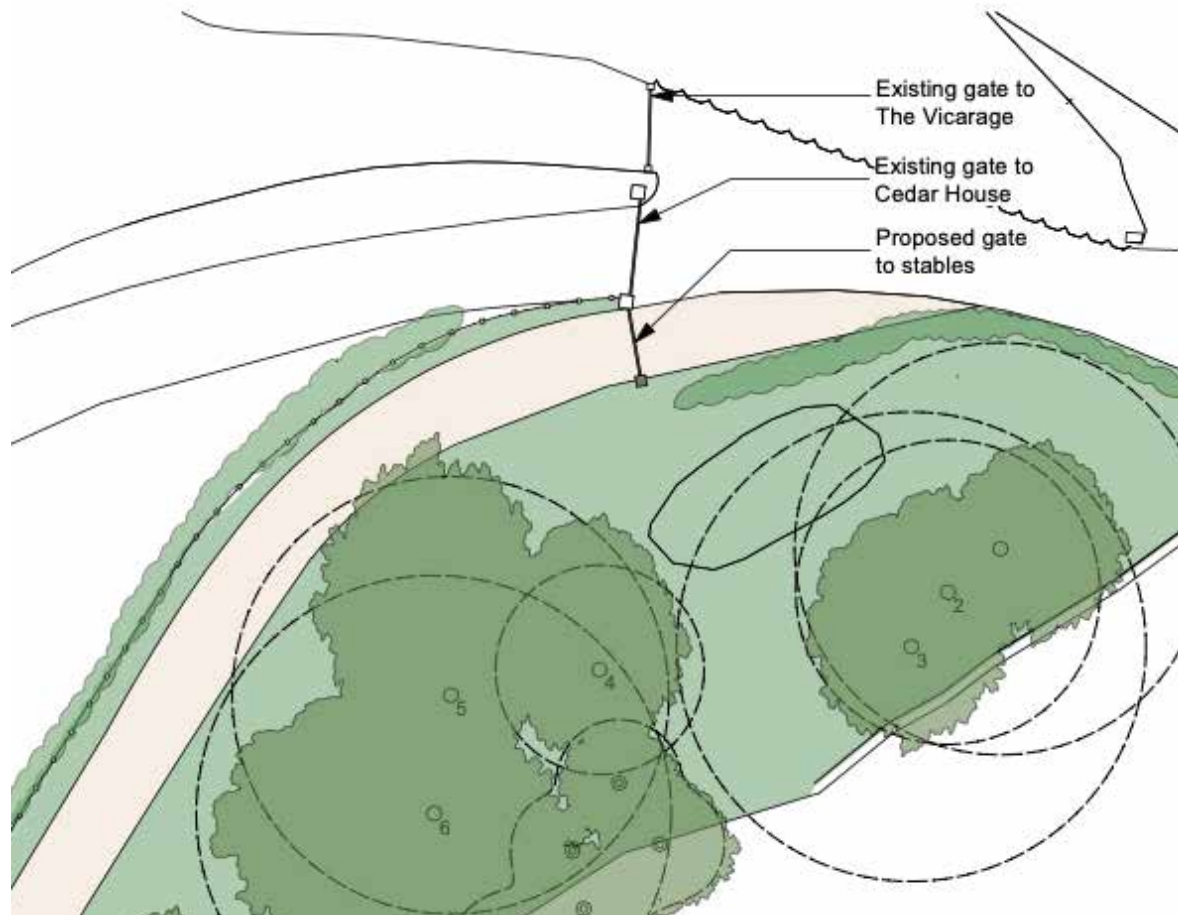
This resulted in the height of the boundary wall and hedgerows being amended to improve the visibility and reduce the level of obstruction.

The report concluded that improvements to junctions visibility had been delivered and there is no indication that the proposed change of use will have a detrimental impact on the safe operation of the highway.

Site entrance

The proposals look to separate the private driveway from Cedar Hall and the stable block. A new gated access will be situated adjacent to the existing Cedar Hall and neighbouring The Vicarage entrance.

The new driveway has been situated in agreement with an Arboriculturalist to mitigate any potential impact on the trees that line the boundary of the site. Further information can be seen in the Arboriculturalist impact assessment which forms part of this application.



Proposed site plan extract - Site entrance

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

7.1 Environmental Sustainability

The aim is to bring the existing stable building as close as possible to current Building Regulation standards regarding thermal performance without causing harm to its historic fabric or significance.

It is proposed that the thermal performance of the proposed extension will exceed the thermal standards set out by the building regulations.

Where possible, materials will be sustainable and locally sourced. All timber will be obtained from well-managed forests and plantations. Wherever possible, construction site waste will be recycled and all waste will be removed in a manner approved by the Waste Regulation Authority.

7.2 Landscape and biodiversity

Landscaping will be developed to be simple and sympathetic to the location. Boundary treatments will comprise fencing and indigenous hedge planting. All existing trees will be retained and safeguarded, with the exception of two, which shall be removed: a eucalyptus and laburnum tree which are deemed to be of a low quality and in a poor condition respectively (refer to Arboriculturalists report).

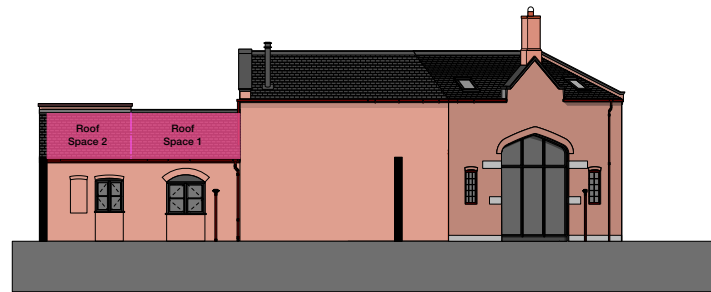
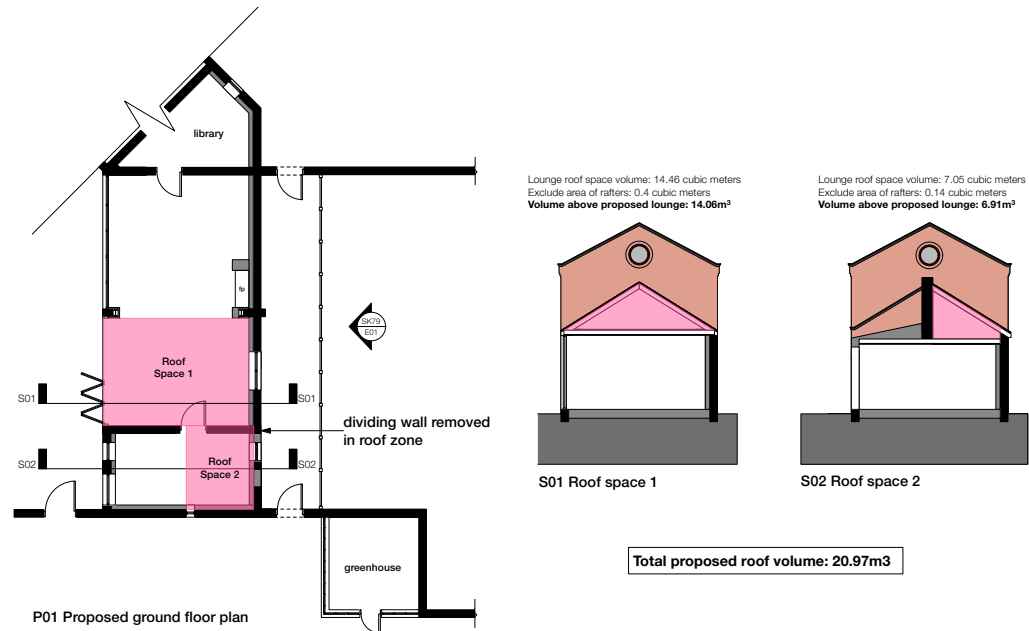
Additional native trees will be planted as part of the indicative landscaping plan. There are also plans for the client to plant numerous native flowers, looking to improve the biodiversity and quality of the site.

7.3 Ecology - Bats

Roosting bats have been discovered within the existing stable block, after a number of Ecological surveys were undertaken.

The design and incorporation of mitigation strategies has been carefully considered and coordinated with an Ecologist as part of the design process.

Refer to Ecological Appraisal & Bat activity report by Greenscape Environmental which forms part of the application for further information.



E01 Proposed elevation

Proposed bat loft

8.0 SUMMARY

Overall, the proposals comprise an integrated development that looks to retain and enhance the existing stable block whilst providing additional accommodation required for the successful residential conversion that is sympathetic and complimentary to the Listed buildings.

When read together with the submitted drawings and various appraisals/impact assessments, it is considered that this Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposal brought forward is well considered and appropriate for the context.

Raise Architects

July 2021