

Drws-y-Coed, Penycae Road, Ruabon, LL14 6RL
Proposed 1st floor roof terrace
Householder Application

Design statement
23rd December 2023



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1. Summary of roof terrace proposals

have recently bought the property and wish to make alterations to the existing two storey, flat roofed modern extension to the south as it is not in keeping with the vernacular character of the rest of the house.

Site analysis has also identified this first floor space as the prime location for a roof terrace, and so the proposals are therefore:

- To demolish the existing extension down to first floor level
- To create a roof terrace which would benefit from sun throughout the morning to the afternoon, and the beautiful views across the landscape to the southwest from it's elevated level above the boundary hedge.



Modern two storey flat roofed extension to the south is out of character.
Proposals to demolish down to first floor slab for new roof terrace.



Views from first floor across the landscape to the Southwest

2. Site and Planning context. Pre-Application advice

Site Context:

The property is a predominantly 2 storey detached house in mature grounds with outbuildings.

It's located in a rural area with farmland to the rear, and the Rocky Woods opposite.

The original part of the house is understood to be early 20th Century, with several later additions, including a two storey flat roofed extension to the South built relatively recently.

Planning Context

The house is neither in the Penrycae or Ruabon conservation areas, or the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB.

A search of the CADW records confirmed the house is not a Listed Building.

We understand there is no Article 4 direction affecting Permitted Development rights relating to the property.

Concurrent Lawful Development Certificate application reference: P/2023 /0762

An application was submitted on 23.10.23 for work we believe is considered Permitted Development:

Enlarging the garden room doors to 3 panel bifold doors.

Form a new window opening in the ground floor study

These proposals are shown throughout this document for completeness, and the decision is currently awaited.

Pre-Application advice enquiry, Reference: ENQ/2023 /0237:

A Pre-Application enquiry was submitted on 12.10.23 and the response was received dated 08.11.23.

Case Officer Ms Sharon Holman confirmed that "Having considered the scale and design of the proposed roof terrace, I confirm there is no in principle objection."

There were some issues raised with the indicative materials which are addressed in Section 6 below.

Form of application:

As the roof terrace would not be classed as Permitted Development we are therefore submitting a Householder application for the demolition of the existing first floor dressing room and the proposed new roof terrace.

3. Site analysis and design response

Analysis conclusion: First floor of extension is the ideal location for a roof terrace.
To West South West: Primary views and afternoon sun. Prevailing wind (screening required) Existing hedge forms wind break but obscures ground floor views
To South: Secondary views and morning sun
To road / Foundry House: screening for wind, noise and privacy



As existing (view North)

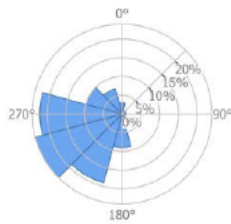


Primary view (WSW)

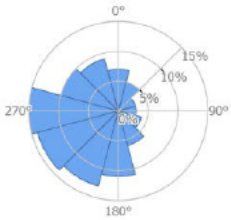


Secondary view (South)

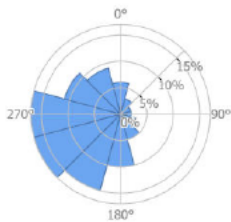
Wind Power Rose 3/3 next



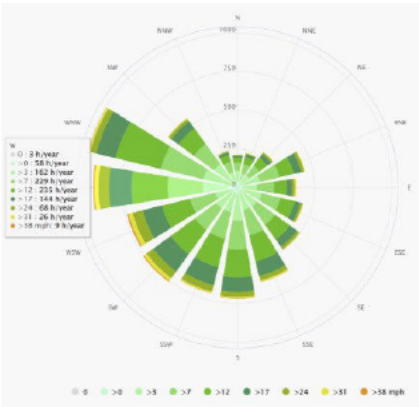
Wind Frequency Rose 1/3 next



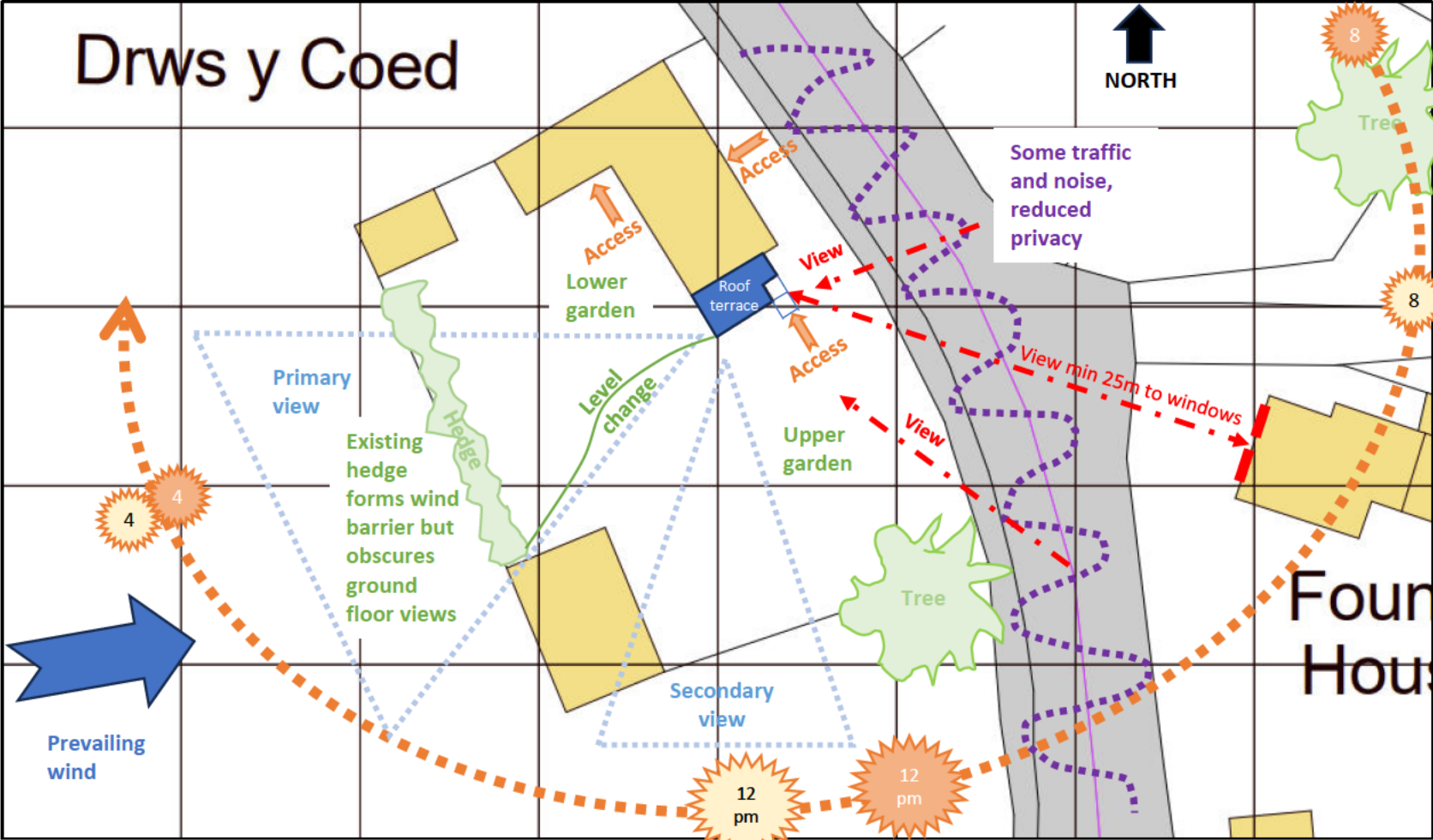
Wind Speed Rose 2/3 next



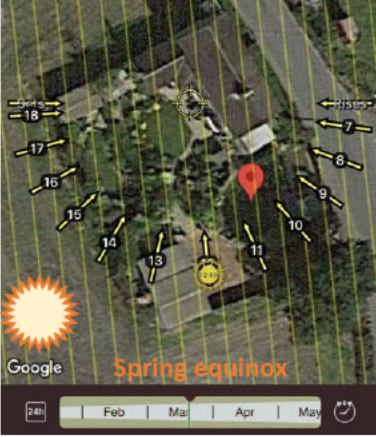
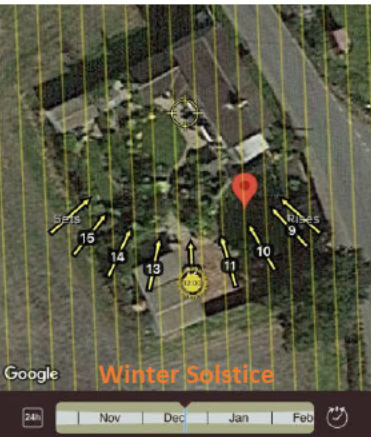
Global Wind Atlas data: Ruabon



Meteoblue data: Ruabon



Sun path analysis: Sun Seeker App



4. Existing house analysis and areas of proposed changes



Existing garden elevations. Modern 2 storey extension on right side



Existing southern extension: Study (Ground floor) and dressing room (1st floor)



Extension demolished down to first floor slab for new roof terrace.

- Rural character, house is set within established landscape and surrounded by mature trees
- Horizontal emphasis of main house and single storey garden room, extends into and sits well in the landscape.
- Modern flat roofed extension to the south, not in keeping with the original house character - Vertical emphasis, cubic form, with no sheltering roof or definition of the top, no overhang or shadow, and doesn't relate to the rear elevation.
- Extension windowsills in ground floor study and first floor dressing room are high and face south, away from the primary aspect
- The flat roof is higher than the main pitched roof eaves, with an awkward junction.
- The existing connection between the first floor and garden (at half storey height) could be a benefit but it's compromised, with a poor connection via a dressing room and with poor visual outlook.
- The existing hedge to the west forms an effective wind barrier but obscures ground floor landscape views
- **Conclusion: out of character extension is in the location identified (above) as prime roof terrace position**



Modern extension demolished down to first floor slab for new roof terrace. (Areas of change highlighted in orange)



5. Planning policy

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

The Pre-Application enquiry response advised that the following planning policies and supplementary planning guidance were applicable:

- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan Policies GDP1:
“Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.”
- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan Policies PS2:
“Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.”
- Local Planning Guidance Note 20 House Extensions
- Local Planning Guidance Note 21 Space around Dwellings

A detailed response setting out how the design responds to these policies follows below

6.1 Design response: **Floorspace and Layout**

Floorspace:

The proposal to form a roof terrace is not an extension, but a partial demolition and change to use as an external terrace.

No new internal floorspace is created and the demolition of the first floor dressing room would reduce the internal floor area by 8.2m² and the 1m² external landing, to create an external terrace of 10m² area.

There is no increase in roof area or rainwater drainage as the terrace replaces the same area of the existing first floor flat roof.

Layout

The connection between the main house and the upper garden will be improved, with new direct access from the master bedroom to the terrace and garden, rather than as currently via a dressing room.

The proposed terrace external floor requires insulating to meet building regulations, plus the external finishes depths and so increases by around 320mm above the existing internal floor, with two steps up from the bedroom.

The existing garden access stairs will be replaced with new, to similarly reflect this increase in level of the proposed terrace floor.

The existing landing is replaced to suit the new level, becoming part of the terrace.

A partly glazed external door replaces the existing internal bedroom door, with the opening adapted and threshold raised to suit the new insulated terrace level.

6.2 Design response:

Scale and massing, Outlook, Sunlight and daylight.

Scale and massing:

The Pre-Application response confirmed there were no in principle objections to the scale and design of the terrace.

The existing southern extension is a plain, vertical, rectangular two storey volume with a flat roof, not in keeping with the horizontality and pitched roof character of the original house.

The proposed roof terrace will improve the current massing and form, incorporating tiled pitched roofs to the perimeter, of a similar form, pitch and level as the existing bays.

The height will be reduced to single storey, gradually stepping down from the main house into the garden, with a more sympathetic massing.

It will be partially enclosed for wind shelter, privacy and acoustic screening and fall protection.

The terrace floor will extend approx. 350mm further towards the road than the existing landing / porch so the screening avoids a clash with the bedroom window, currently partly obscured by the porch. This is still set back at least 1.1m from the front elevation.

The scale of the terrace proposals is appropriate to the host property.

The detail and articulation of the screens will provide texture and interest at the smaller scale.

Outlook:

The stunning views to the West and South West, are obscured at ground level and the lower garden by the boundary hedge, which is essential for wind protection. The proposed roof terrace at first floor will benefit from these higher-level views above the hedge, enhancing the outlook from Drws-y-Coed with a sheltered external space to sit and enjoy the visual connection to the wider landscape that it's currently lacking. The master bedroom will now have direct views out to the sunniest part of the garden.

The proposals will also improve the outlook from the neighbouring Foundry House, by reducing the unsympathetic massing of the first floor.

New views to the south will be available from the master bedroom window and glazed door.

Sunlight and daylight

There will be a small positive impact on sunlight and daylighting to the garden and master bedroom at Drws-y-Coed as the massing is reduced.

Any impact on neighboring Foundry House would be very negligible due to the distance but would again be positive.

Daylight and sunlight will be enhanced in the master bedroom with direct sun through morning to early afternoon from the new glazed door and the removal of the porch directly in front of the existing window.

Policy response:

The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy GDP1:

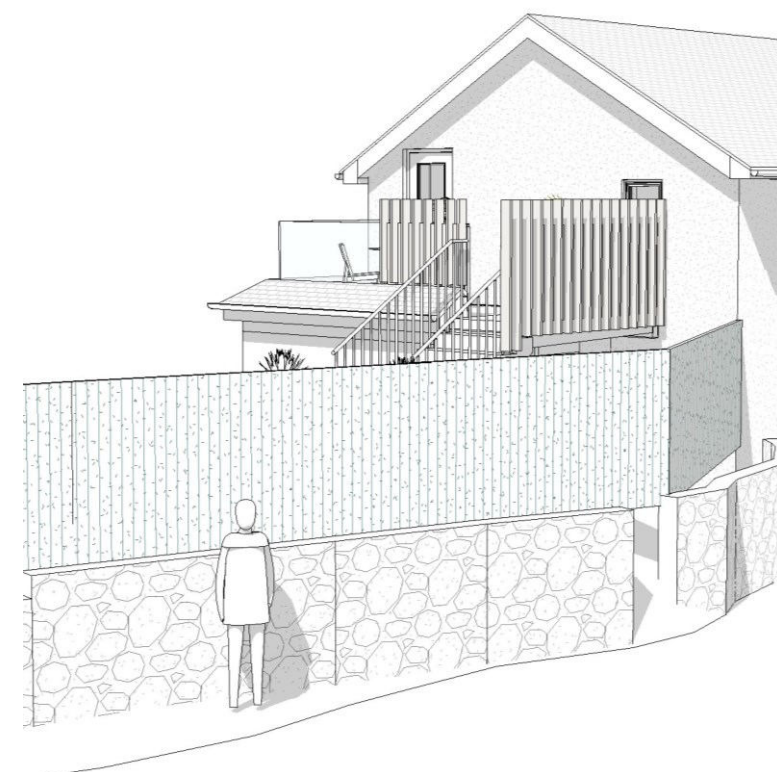
The development in its scale, design and layout, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

And in accordance with Policy PS2:

The proposals do not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.



Out of character modern first floor extension to be demolished



High level view of proposals, above boundary fence

6.3 Design response:

Separation and Privacy

The Pre-Application enquiry response ENQ/2023 /0237 raised no concerns with the principle of the terrace in respect of privacy or overlooking. The relevant planning policies, LPG 20 and 21 are responded to as follows:

The owners of Drws-y-Coed are sensitive to any privacy concerns of neighbours, as well as wishing to protect their own privacy on the roof terrace from passing vehicles and pedestrians on Penrycae Road. These issues have been carefully considered and sightlines analyzed in 3D CAD.

We believe the proposals would cause no significant loss of amenity with regards to privacy and overlooking, as the following requirements of Local Planning Guidance Notes 20 “House Extensions” are met as follows:

“Your extension should not result in a significant loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties.

Where two habitable rooms face one another such that direct overlooking is likely to occur, the windows shall be a minimum of 22 metres apart.”

Similarly, LPG 21 “Space around Dwellings” requires:

“Where two habitable rooms face each other such that direct overlooking is physically possible, the windows should be 22 metres apart... In the case of a kitchen window, these standards may be relaxed provided suitable screening is in place.

The proposals meet these standards as:

The neighbour, Foundry House opposite, has only two windows facing Penrycae Road, both at ground floor, and they are over 25m away (see plan below.)

We understand one is a kitchen (non-habitable room) and the other a living room. Both are fairly modest sized windows which minimizes the potential for overlooking.

There is existing overlooking already established towards Foundry House from numerous locations - the 1st floor porch door, stair and landing access route, and from windows to the first floor bedroom, porch and dressing room.

Given the distance between the properties this does not currently result in any unacceptable loss of privacy and we believe the roof terrace proposal will not have any significant effect on this.

LPG 21 “Space around Dwellings” also states that

“These standards apply on flat ground.”

Foundry House external ground level was surveyed at +154.79 AOD, relative to internal ground floor of Drws-y-Coed of +154.81.

The ground floor of both properties are at an almost identical level, therefore there’s no sloping ground requiring any increase in the separation distance.

Drws-y-Coed’s fence on the Penrycae Road boundary already creates a significant screen between the two properties. Due to the changes in garden level, the fence sits on top of the boundary retaining wall, with the top of fence level at +157.59.

This is almost 3m above both properties’ ground floor level, and so relatively higher than between typical properties, which already creates a greater than normal degree of privacy between neighbours.

Although the properties are more than the required 22m apart we are proposing screening on the two rear sides towards the road and Foundry House.

Solid screening would be to 1100mm above terrace floor level, with partially open screening above this up to seated eye level, around 1400mm above terrace floor.

We believe this goes beyond planning policy requirements to satisfy any privacy concerns. The attractive views from the terrace are in the opposite direction to the neighbour, across the fields to the south and west, and the terrace has been designed to orientate towards this.

We understand there are no other local planning policies that specifically refer to roof terraces in rural areas.

6.3 Separation & Privacy: to both Drws-y-coed and Foundry House



Drws-y-Coed viewed from road, dressing room visible



Existing overlooking from dressing room, bedroom and stair

Existing views already established towards neighbouring Foundry House from windows to bedroom, porch and dressing room, 1st floor door, stair and landing access route

25.1m surveyed distance between closest windows and corner of proposed roof terrace. Foundry House windows are fairly small, which minimizes any potential for overlooking, and understood to be a kitchen and lounge.

Roof terrace to be orientated away from road and neighbour, towards the picturesque views in the opposite directions.

The terrace screening towards the road and neighbour enhances privacy to both properties



Foundry House – viewed from garden



Foundry House – Viewed from road



Foundry House – Viewed from 1st floor dressing room window



Drws-y-Coed viewed from Penycae Road – Existing dressing room and bedroom windows, and garden access have views towards Foundry House

6.4 Design response:

Appearance and Materials: Pre-Application

Pre-Application enquiry REF: ENQ/2023 /0237, of 08.11.23

Proposed materials would generally be in keeping with, or complementary to, the existing character of the house and the area, including clay roof tiles, white fascia boards, black guttering, and grey render.

The response to the Pre-Application enquiry REF: ENQ/2023 /0237 dated 08.11.23 noted some concerns with the indicatively proposed oak timber screens, extract opposite.

The Pre app concept drawings diagrammatically showed the lower screen as a flat monolithic element (opposite) which we agree at this early design stage appeared heavy and blank, and the warm tones of the suggested oak would not be especially complementary to the grey render.

We subsequently had further conversations and emails with case officer Ms. Sharon Holman, and our understanding is as follows:

The original comment relating to smoked/obscure glazing for a lighter weight material was an alternative suggestion for the rear of the terrace and not for the frameless structural glass balustrading facing the views to the southwest, which will be clear.

In an email exchange on 13.11.23 we advised that:

- We were not comfortable with the idea of the opaque glazing at the rear of the terrace and would like to consider alternatives.
- We felt that with the clear and opaque glass enclosing the terrace there would then be quite a large area of hard, reflective surfaces, which would be different to the character of the existing house.
- We were looking for quality natural, tactile materials as they will be viewed close up when sitting on the terrace, and so that they blend in well with the surrounding landscape.
- We thought that the timber fins related well to the landscape and the prominent timber boundary fence, which would be in the foreground of any view of the terrace from the road.

At this point we considered lightweight rendered panels as an alternative to form the solid enclosure up to 1100mm high to the rear of the terrace, with oak fins to screen above this, as set out in the materials clarification 3D that was emailed, opposite.

Ms Holman responded on 13.11.23:

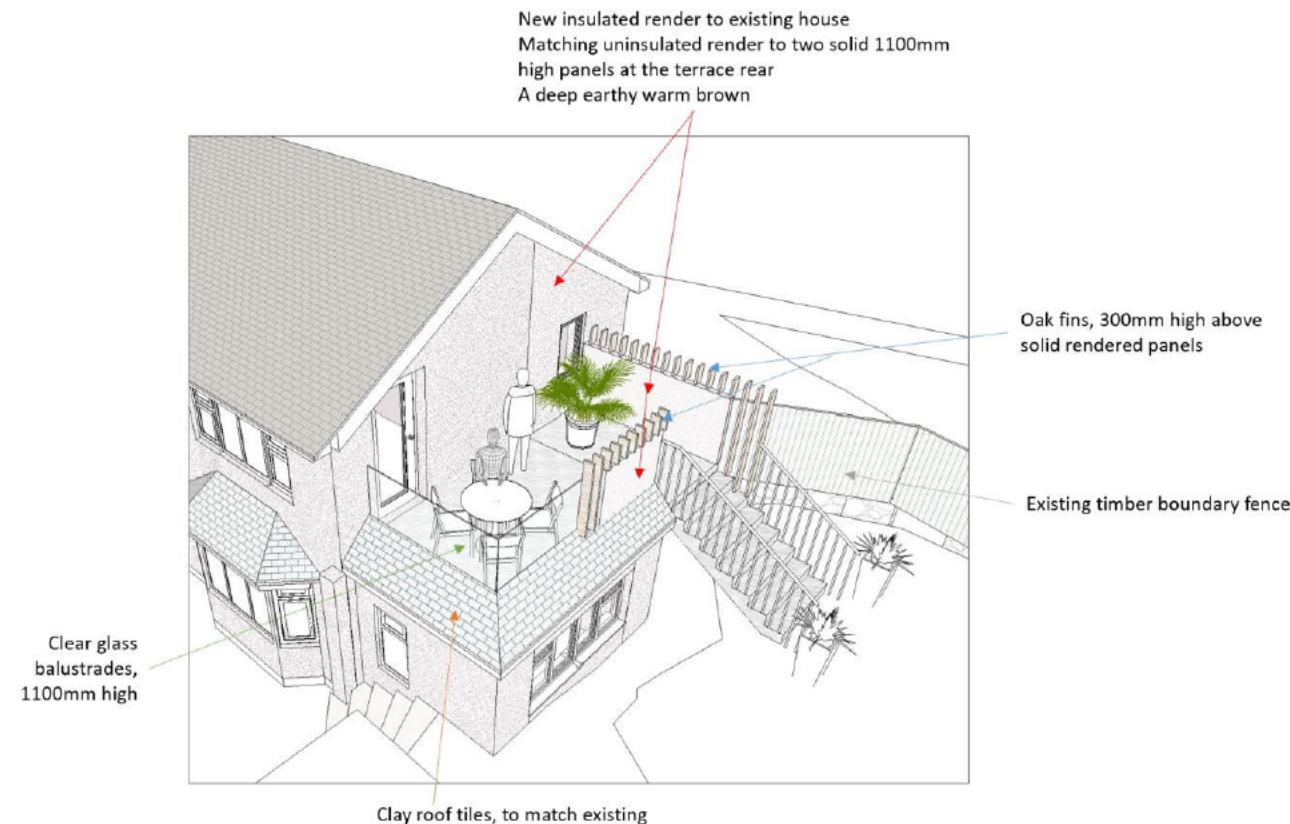
“Thanks for providing further explanation and detail. I agree with you and I would be happy to support this proposal.”

We have since developed the design in more detail, as the following pages.

Case Officer Opinion

Having considered the scale and design of the proposed roof terrace, I confirm there is no in principle objection.

I do however have some concerns in relation to the proposed materials of construction, particularly in relation to the use of any timber screening. The timber material would not be inkeeping with the dwelling, at first floor level, and I recommend the use of smoked/obscure glazing for a lighter weight material, which better accords with the existing materials on the dwelling.



Pre-Application response – agreed materials for indicative concept design

6.5 Design response:

Appearance and Materials: Design development

The “look and feel” design intent for the terrace character is for an organic, transitional space from the house to the garden, using high quality, natural materials with character and variation. We are proposing materials that will relate well to both the property and the surrounding woodland landscape, with texture and tactile qualities appropriate for viewing close up and touching.

Having developed the design further and in some technical detail, the proposals are now as follows:

Following the Pre-Application response, we were initially considering rendered screen panels with timber fins above.

However, on further consideration, we had some concerns that the screens should be more lightweight than a rendered wall. Particularly as, when viewed from the road, the eastern screen sits on the edge of the cantilevered lightweight deck above a void, and we wished to avoid this having a “top heavy” appearance (as image below.)

When developing the technical detail, all glass balustrade and screen fixings need locating into the rear of the parapet, so they can be weatherproofed. Fixings into the top of a rendered parapet would be technically very difficult to waterproof and we have adapted the design accordingly.

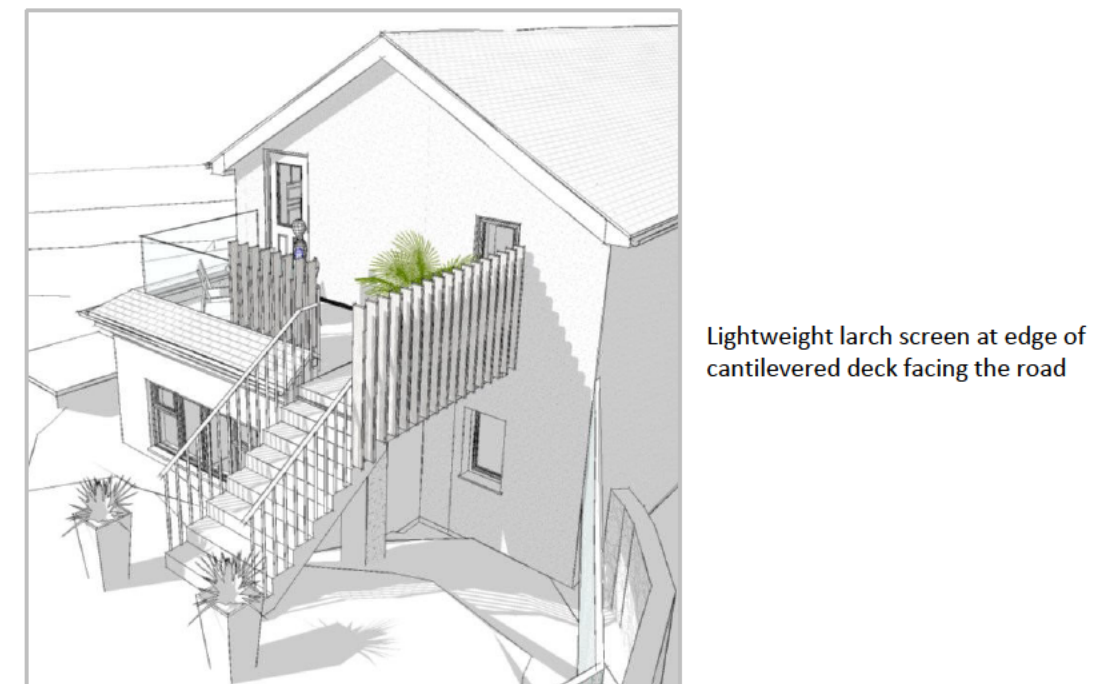
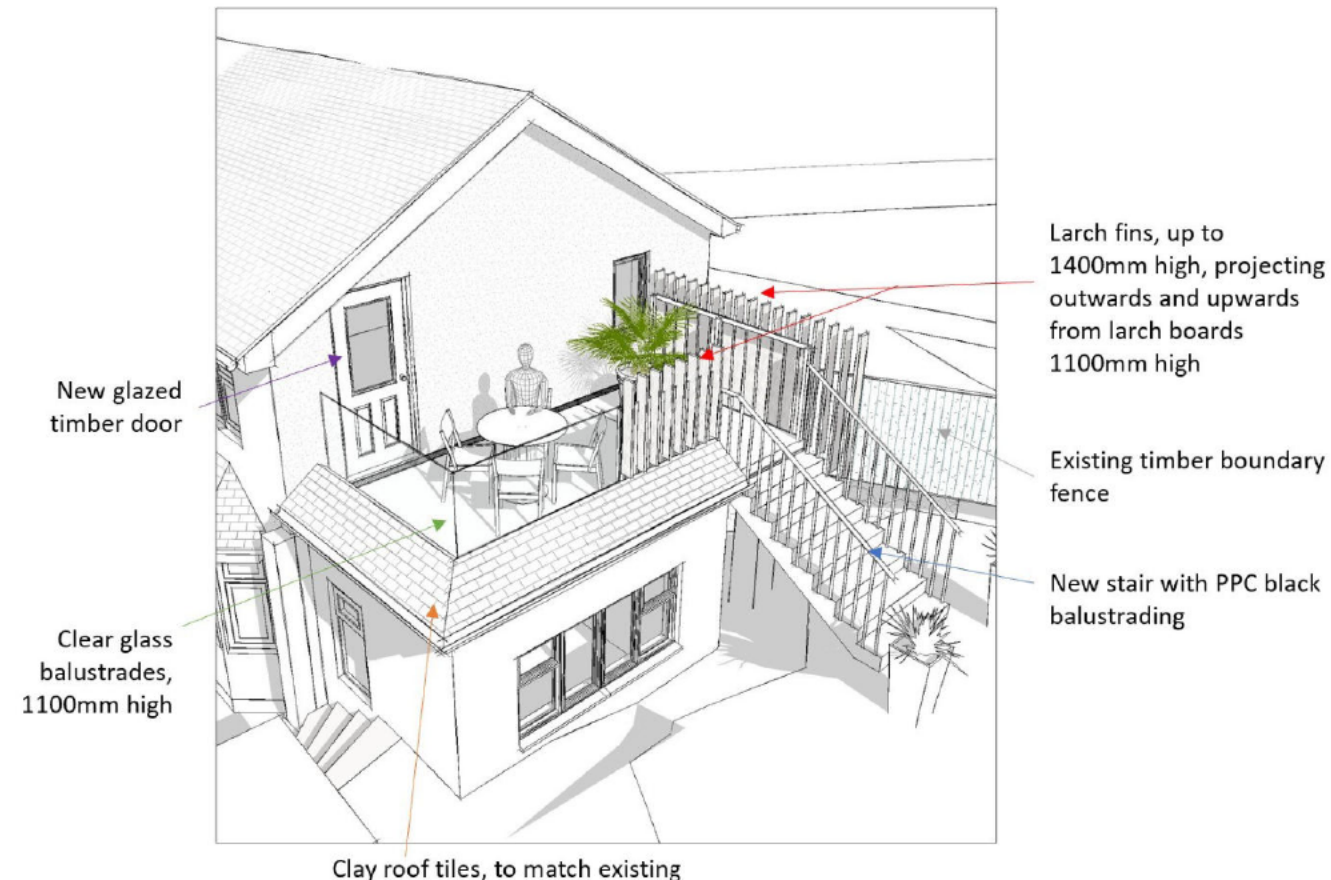
We’ve therefore developed a new lighter weight articulated screen proposal, as the indicative images opposite and on following pages.

We appreciate the Pre-Application advice noted some concerns over the proposed use of oak and our revised proposal of larch is explained on the following pages.

The screens comprise timber fins projecting horizontally out from the lower 1100mm high boards as well as extending up to 1400mm to provide the seated eye level screening. The solid lower section provides wind protection, enclosure and privacy.

Whilst the screen will be a substantial timber structure, as required to withstand the necessary guarding and wind loads, this approach creates a lighter weight appearance to render, more appropriate to being suspended in the cantilevered deck location. The screen’s structural design will be further refined to incorporate the engineering considerations in the next design stage.

The garden elevation is also simplified as the three elements of glass, render and fins previously shown on this short elevation appeared overly complex. This has been rationalized so the timber boarding top aligns with the glass balustrade at 1100mm high and the projecting fins extend to 1400mm for screening above this.



6.5 Design response:

Appearance and Materials: Design development

We acknowledge that the Pre-Application advice raised some concerns over the proposed use of oak, however we believe that an alternative species such as larch, which would weather to a silvery grey, would be appropriate and complement the existing grey render very well.

When the house is considered in its context, we believe that the larch fins and boards relate well to the surrounding gardens and woodland landscape.

Timber is an existing material at the property, notably the extensive timber boundary fence, which would be prominent in the foreground of any view of the terrace from the road.

The articulated timber screen also relates to the expressed timber structure in the eaves of the house, where the exposed timber rafters project below the soffit boards, photo below, similar to the proposed fins.

The house name “Drws-y-Coed” also references the surrounding woods. We believe that using timber would therefore be wholly in keeping with both the character of the area and the existing materials of the house. It would also have the benefit of being a sustainable low / neutral carbon material.

The character of the wood will add detail and organic texture.

The projection of the fins, extending both outwards and upwards, will create a movement of shadows across the screens and the terrace as the sun tracks around, enlivening the elevations and the space.

The precedent images in Section 6.6.illustrates this.



Existing house eaves detail: timber structure projecting from the boards



Lightweight silvery grey timber fins, cast shadows and create movement across the elevations and terrace

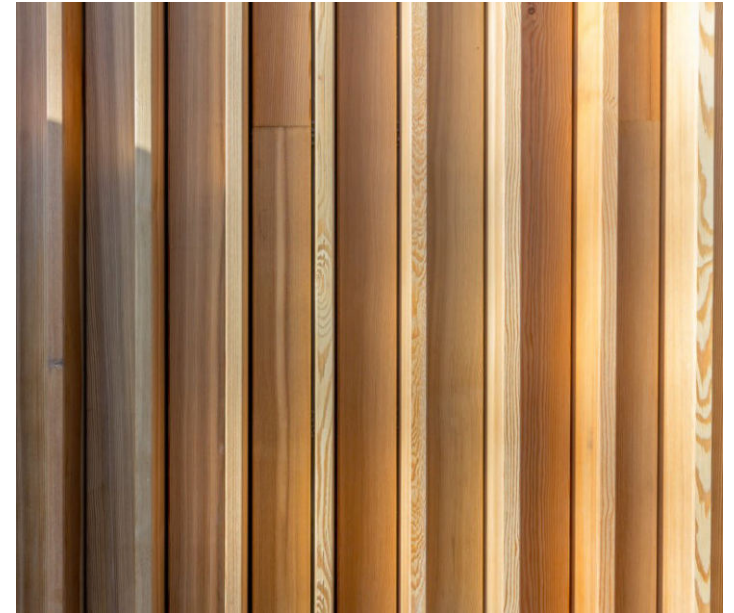
6.6 Design response:
Appearance and materials: larch fins and boards precedent



Fins projecting outwards and extending upwards from boarded backing panels.
Larch in early stage of weathering

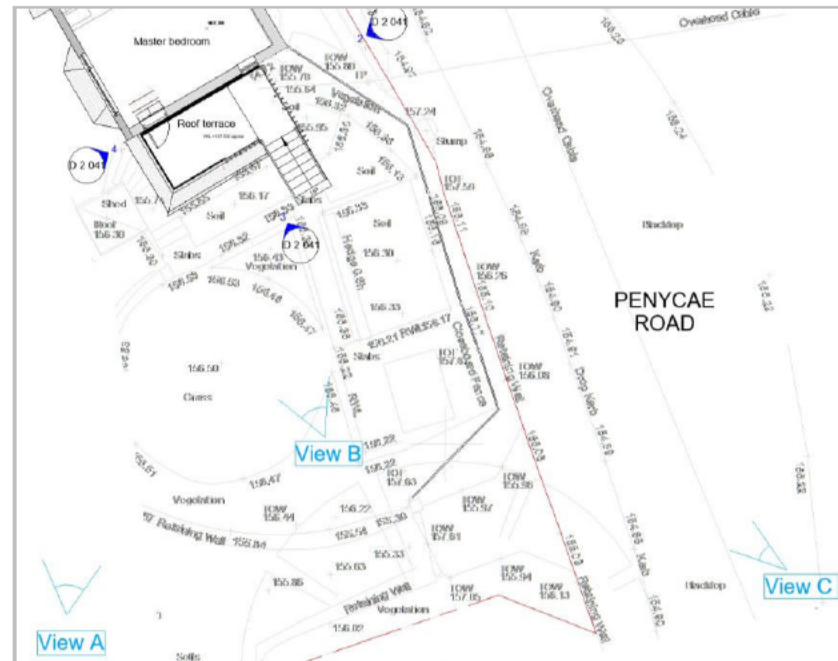


Silvery grey weathered larch: texture and detail, with fins projecting out from the boards



Play of light and shadow across articulated fins and boards

7. Roof terrace proposal – illustrative images



Key Plan to perspective views
(Generated from 3D Revit model based on professional survey data.)

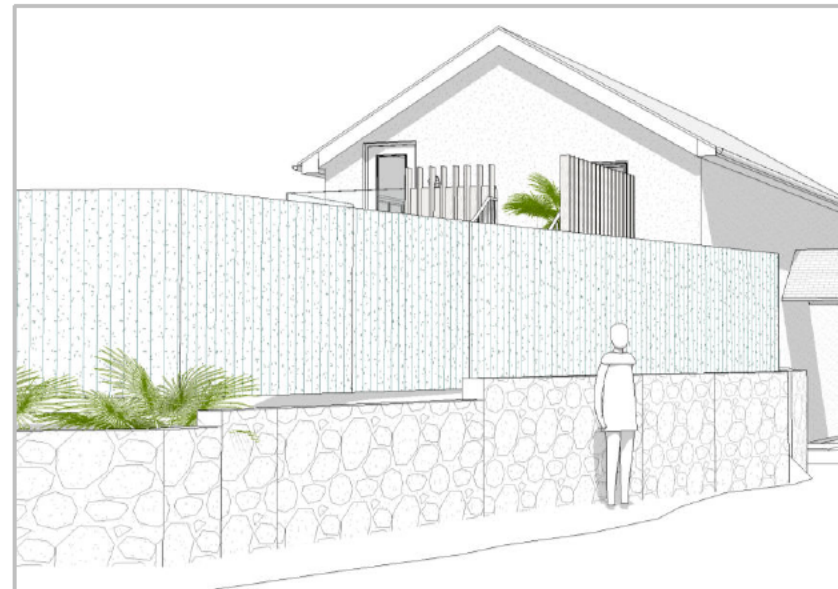
View A photo and render: See front cover



View B
From upper garden, screening towards road and views out across the landscape to southwest



Google Streetview, from elevated camera



View C:
Eyelevel from Penrycae Road
Timber boundary fence prominent in foreground of terrace screening.

8. Conclusion

We believe that the proposals would be in accordance with all relevant planning policies as set out above.

It would enhance the neighbour's outlook by removing the out of character, two storey modern extension and would have no significant effect on their privacy.

The massing and aesthetics of the property would be greatly improved, thermal upgrades to the deck would increase the energy efficiency, and it would create a new type of amenity space where the enhanced connection to the beautiful surrounding landscape can be fully appreciated.

We would therefore respectfully request your consideration of approval of these proposals.

