

8 Markham Avenue

Design and Access Statement

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Client:

Private

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06/03/2026

Address:

8 Markham Avenue
Whitburn
South Tyneside
SR6 7DE



Building
Design
Northern

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project information

The Design Brief

This project involves the demolition of the existing dwelling at 8 Markham Avenue to make way for a thoughtfully designed new two-storey home. The replacement property has been carefully conceived to respond to its coastal setting, maximising views of the sea and the wider Sunderland coastline through considered orientation, glazing, and layout.

The proposed design embraces contemporary design and modern standards of living, creating bright, open and adaptable internal spaces tailored to our client's lifestyle. By combining high-quality materials, energy-efficient construction, and a sensitive approach to its surroundings, the new dwelling will enhance both the site and its coastal context while delivering a comfortable and sustainable long-term home.

The Design Team

Architect	Fitz Architects Ltd
Ecologist	Arbtech Ecology
Ground Investigation	Tellus Geoconsult

2.0 Site Context

2.1 Location



Google Earth image of surrounding context

2.2 Opportunities & constraints

Opportunities

- Maximise views
- Sustainable materials
- Natural daylighting
- Rainwater management
- Coastal vistas
- Connection to nature
- Sound and wind integration

Constraints

- Risk of overheating
- Coastal weather

Response

The design will maximise key views by orientating primary spaces toward the most significant outlooks and incorporating carefully positioned glazing to frame coastal vistas while maintaining visual connections throughout the interior.

Sustainable, low-embodied-carbon materials suited to the coastal environment will be specified to ensure durability and long-term performance. Natural daylighting will also be enhanced through considered window placement and open internal planning, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and improving occupant wellbeing.

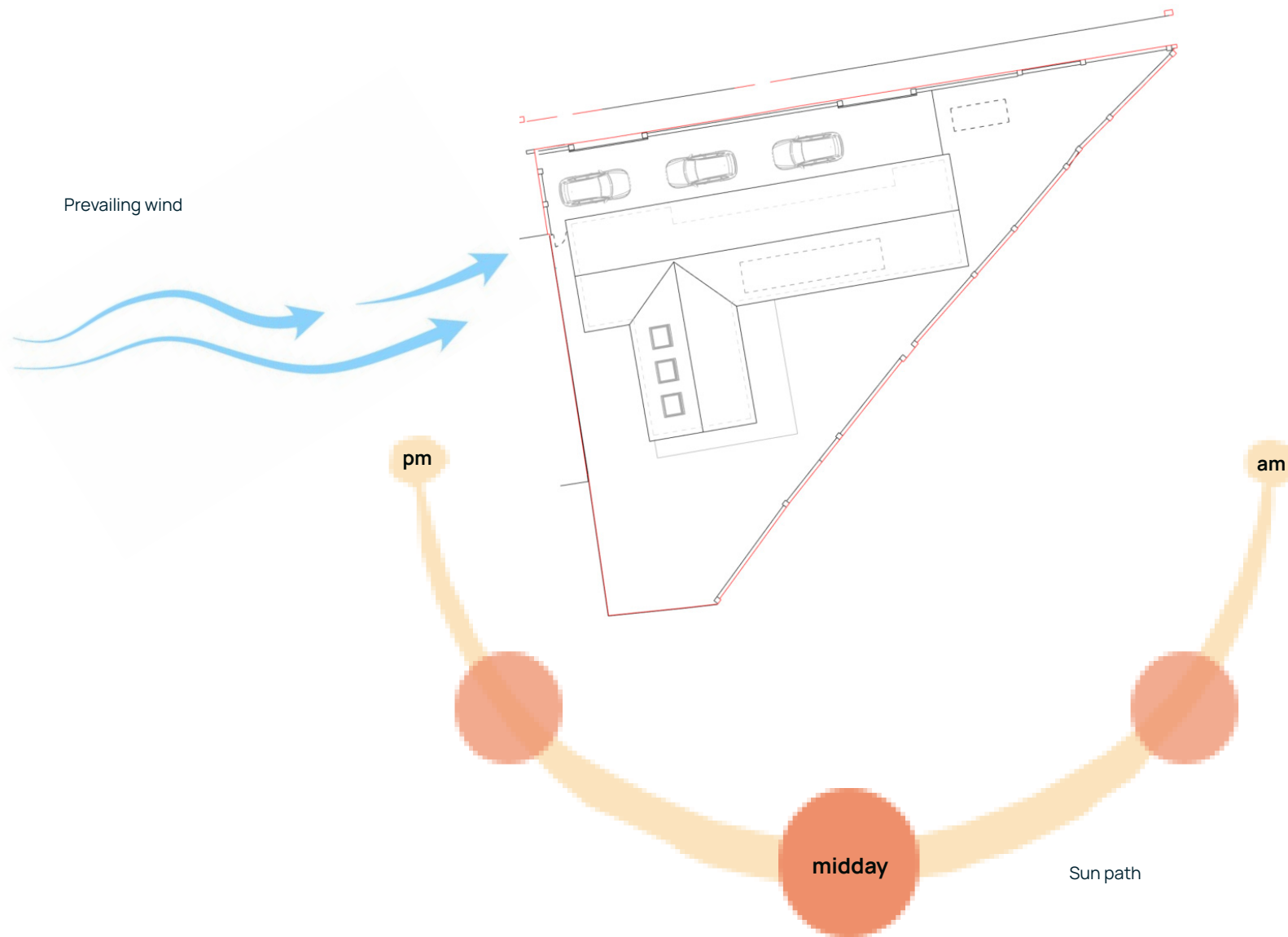
Rainwater will be managed through integrated sustainable drainage strategies, including permeable surfaces and potential rainwater harvesting, supporting both environmental performance and landscape irrigation.

A strong connection to nature will be fostered through operable glazing, sheltered outdoor areas, and material choices that complement the surrounding landscape, while controlled ventilation strategies will allow the integration of natural sound and sea breezes without compromising comfort.

Potential constraints such as overheating will be mitigated through careful design measures including shading and natural ventilation to regulate indoor temperatures.

The challenges of coastal weather, including wind, salt spray, and driving rain, will be addressed through robust detailing, considered material specification, and carefully considered building form to ensure resilience, comfort, and longevity.

2.3 Site analysis



3.0 History

3.1 Local history

Whitburn Village is located in the county of Tyne & Wear in the North-East of England, just north of the City of Sunderland and south of South Shields. It lies near the North Sea and is known for its cliff-top coastline and seaside character, offering long views across Whitburn Sands and along the Durham Coast.

In the 16th century, Spanish galleons fleeing the Armada wrecked on Whitburn Rocks and locals salvaged materials from the wrecks, including a church bell that was placed in Whitburn Parish Church. Over the centuries, Whitburn evolved from a small farming and fishing settlement into a more developed community, especially from the mid-19th century onwards with the establishment of Whitburn Colliery, which became a major employer in the area and contributed to local growth.

History of the Cliff Tops and Coastline

The coastal geography near Whitburn is shaped by magnesian limestone cliffs. The cliff tops offer wide coastal vistas, with long views south across Whitburn Sands towards Sunderland, and northwards toward the Northumberland coast.

These cliff tops are now largely natural open spaces with footpaths and coastal trails linking local parks and beaches, but they bear evidence of historical industrial use. Whitburn Colliery once stood very close to the cliff edge where its railway lines, spoil heaps and mining structures dominated the coastline before closure in 1968.

Modern Setting

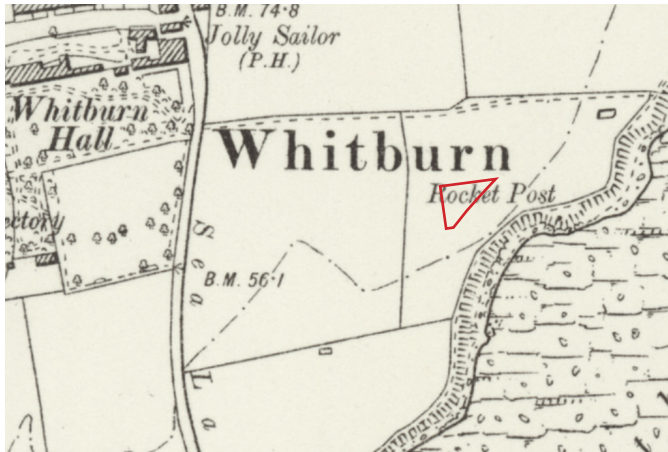
Today, the cliff tops and coastal areas around Whitburn are valued for recreational walking, wildlife and scenery, and are often incorporated into local coastal paths and open-space routes. Ongoing natural processes like coastal erosion continue to shape the cliffs, prompting occasional path diversions and conservation efforts.

The village itself retains a distinctive historic core with its parish church and older buildings, while the surrounding area combines residential neighbourhoods with nearby beaches, open spaces and nature reserves, making it a place where historic roots and coastal landscape meet.

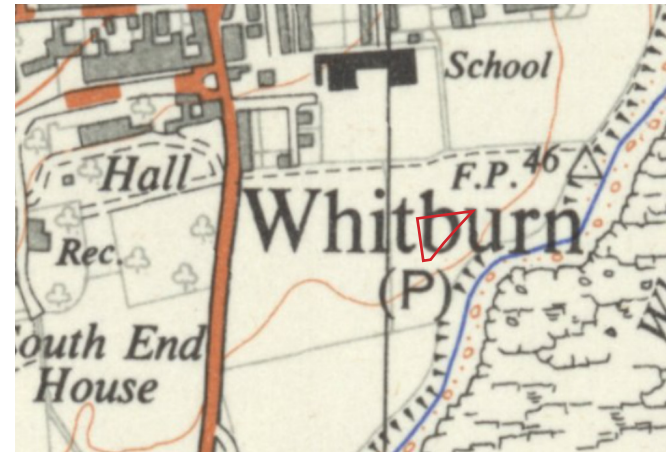


Map of Whitburn from 1830s - 1880s

3.2 Historical maps



Early 1900s



1937 - 1940



1944 - 1960



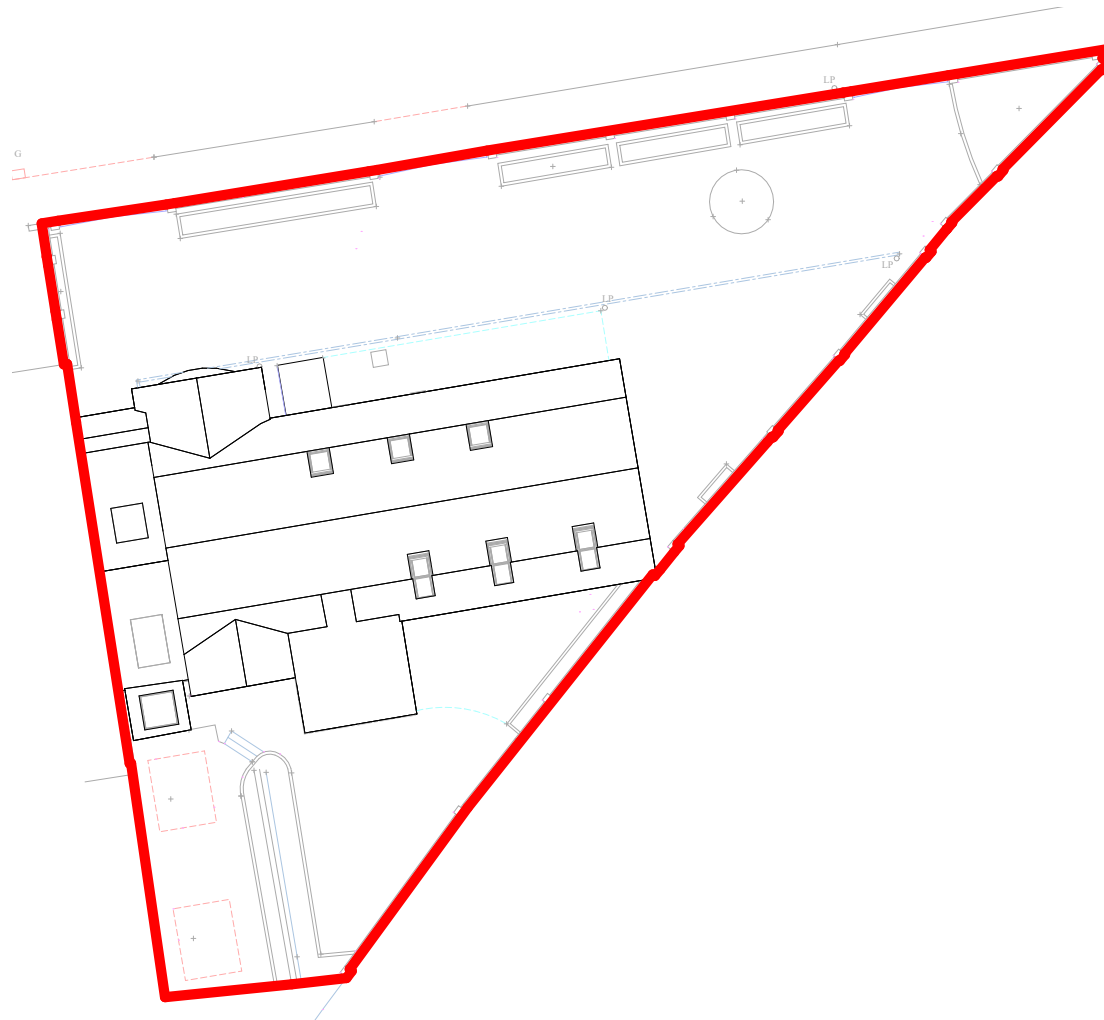
1951 - 1975

4.0 Existing Information

4.1 Location plan



4.2 Existing site plan



4.3 Existing property analysis

From a design standpoint, the existing property does not make full use of the proposed site's exceptional coastal views.

This is part of the reason that we are proposing the demolition of the current dwelling and its replacement with a purpose-designed contemporary home that better accommodates our client's needs. This approach enables a design that responds more effectively to the site's characteristics, rather than simply extending or adding to the existing building. This would most likely result in a more unsightly dwelling where later additions and add-ons would be clearly visible.

The proposal includes removing the existing house and raised structures to create the opportunity for a new home with improved sustainability, contemporary architectural qualities, and a layout that maximises the views and outlook from the site.

The photographs to the left illustrate the existing property, which is now dated and no longer well suited to modern living standards, particularly in terms of its internal layout, functionality, and its ability to meet our client's current and future requirements. The arrangement of spaces and overall design reflect an earlier style of development and do not take full advantage of contemporary expectations for light, openness, energy efficiency, and connection to the surrounding environment.

This site occupies a prime and highly desirable location within South Tyneside, offering exceptional views and a unique setting. In response to these qualities, we have worked closely with our client to develop a proposal that recognises and celebrates the opportunities the site presents. The design seeks to deliver a high-quality contemporary home that is carefully tailored to its context, maximises the outlook across the surrounding landscape, and provides a layout that better supports modern living.



4.4 Aerial views



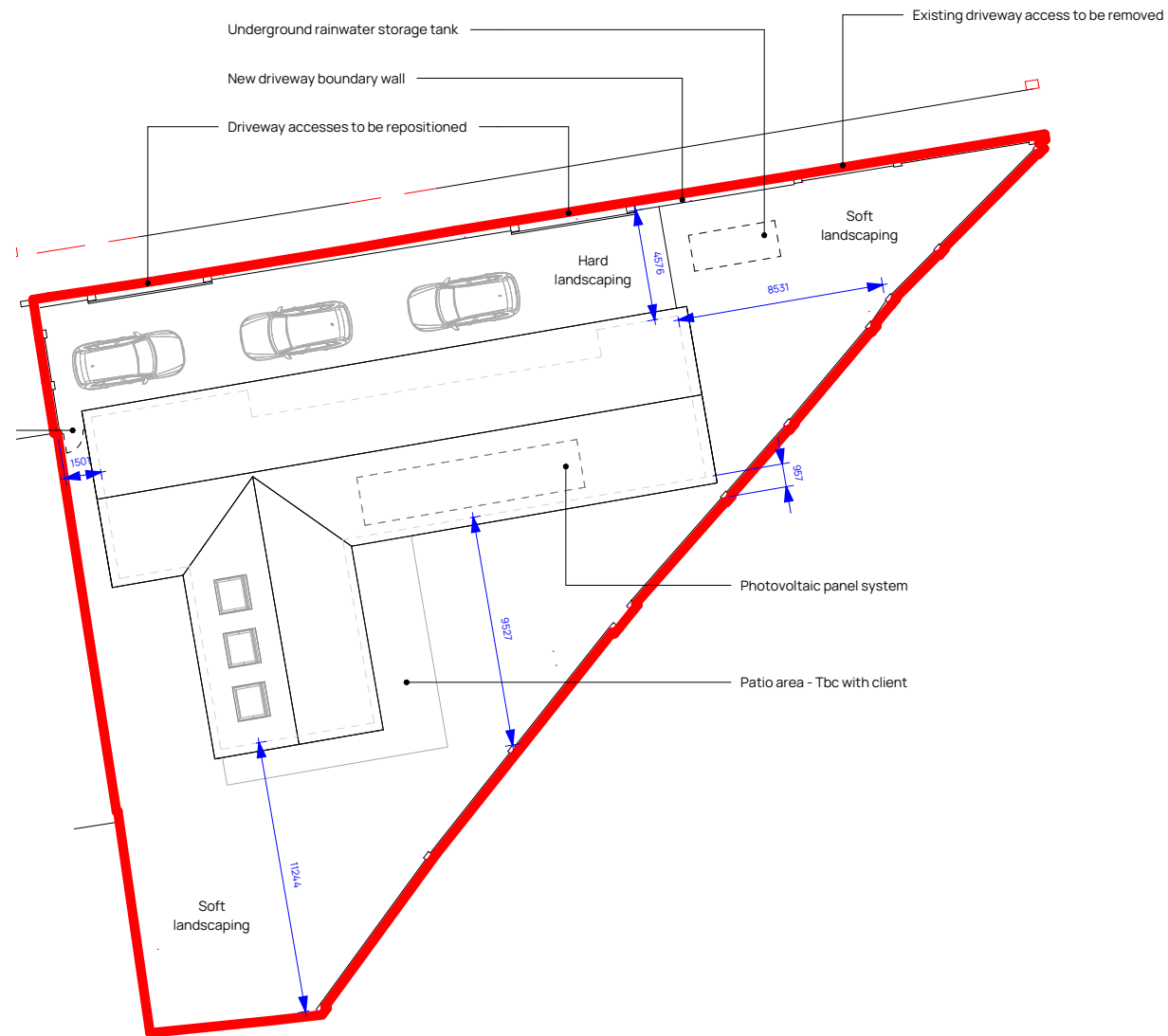
Aerial view looking south over the Sunderland coastline



Aerial view looking north-west towards Whitburn village centre

5.0 Proposed Information

5.1 Proposed site plan



5.2 Proposed ground floor

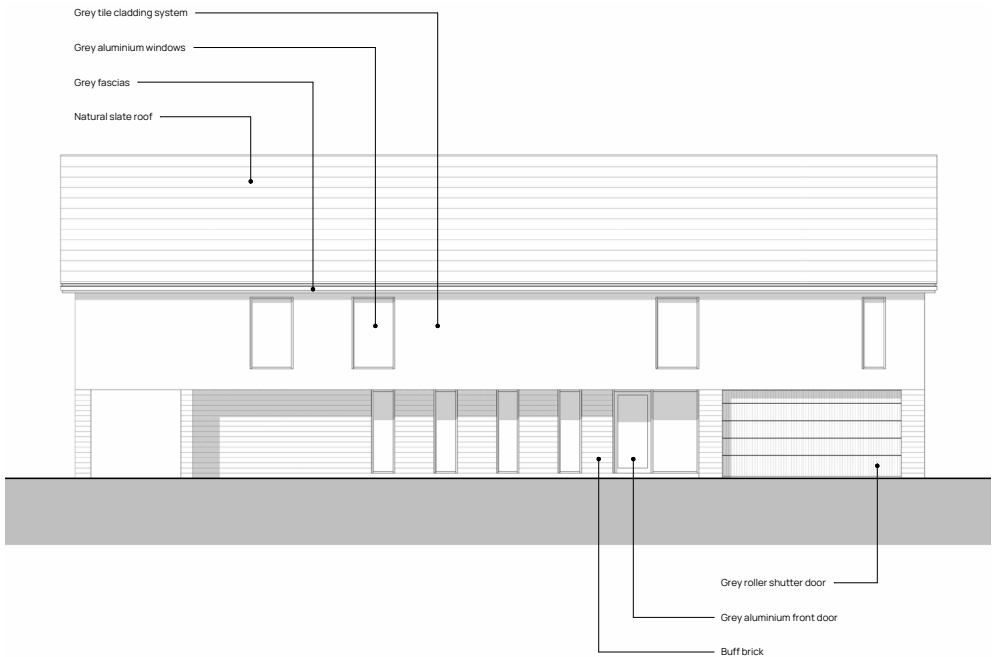


5.3 Proposed first floor



5.4 Proposed elevations

North elevation

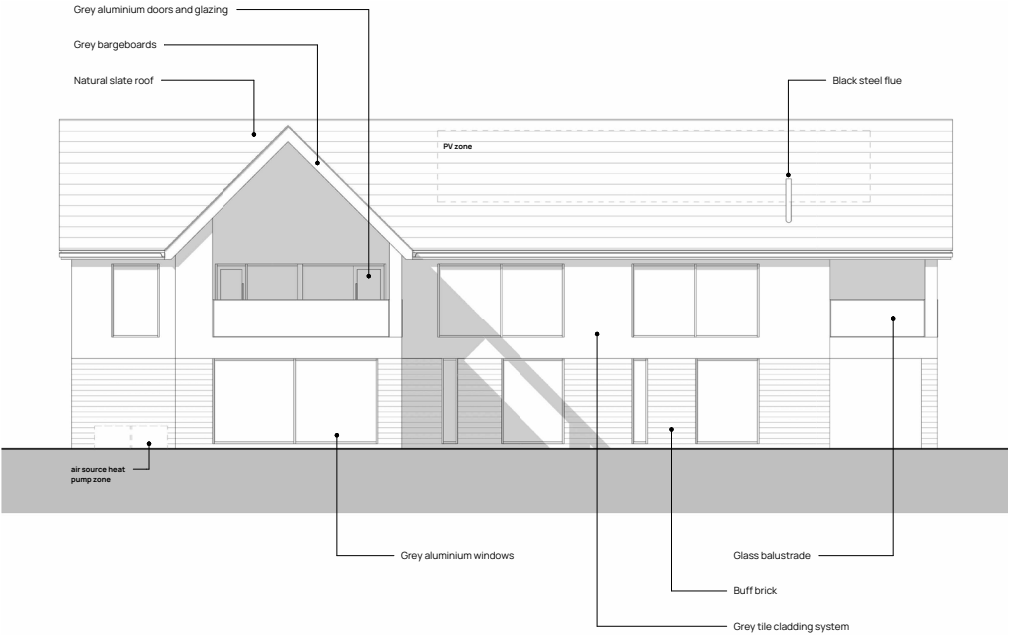


East elevation

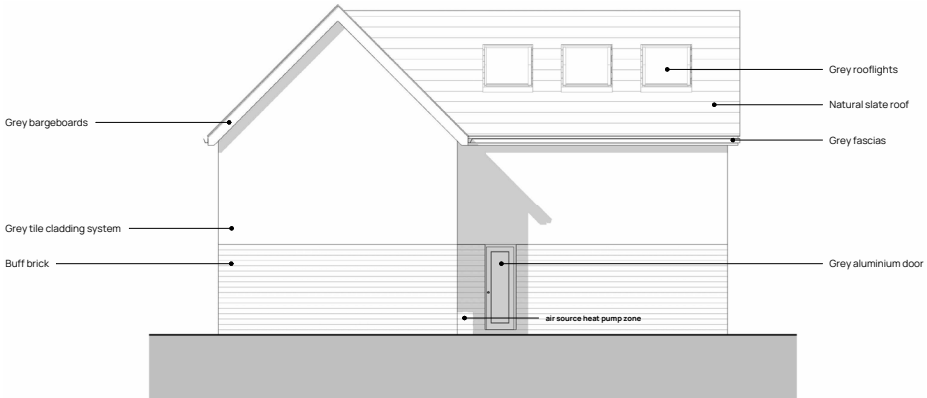


5.5 Proposed elevations

South elevation



West elevation



6.0 Sustainability

6.1 Sustainability measures

The home will be designed with a strong focus on sustainability and energy performance, incorporating innovative, environmentally responsible construction methods, including the below:

Sustainability

- Reduced energy use and lower CO₂ emissions
- Aim for high SAP rating
- Exceptional insulation and airtightness
- Optimised passive solar gain supported by thermal mass
- Maximised natural daylight throughout the house
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR)
- Low-energy lighting solutions
- Zoned time and temperature heating controls
- High rated energy-efficient appliances
- Efficiently planned services to minimise pipework lengths

Materials

- Preference for durable, sustainable materials
- Measures to minimise waste and increase recycling
- Locally sourced materials wherever possible

Water & Surface Water

- Incorporation of water appliances to reduce overall consumption
- Rainwater harvesting system
- All external hard surfaces designed to be permeable

Waste

- Space for recycling storage and collection
- Adequate space for on-site composting

Sustainable Transport

- Secure storage provided for bicycles
- Bus stops located within close proximity of the site

Pollution

- Primary heating supplied by an air/ground-source heat pump
- Log-burning stove included as a secondary heat source
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery to maintain air quality, manage humidity, enhance comfort, and reduce energy use

Ecology

- Measures integrated to enhance biodiversity across site

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion summary

In conclusion, the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a new, purpose-designed home presents a clear opportunity to significantly improve the way in which the site is utilised. The current property is dated in both its appearance and internal layout, and it does not adequately respond to modern living requirements or make the most of the site's exceptional panoramic views.

By replacing the existing building, the proposal allows for the creation of a contemporary dwelling that is thoughtfully designed around the site's unique characteristics. The new home will provide a more efficient and functional layout for modern living, while also incorporating improved sustainability measures and modern architectural qualities.

Overall, the proposal represents a positive and sensitive redevelopment of a prime site, delivering a high-quality home that maximises the outlook and setting while responding appropriately to the opportunities the location provides.



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