ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS



Murrage Farm

Information Pack

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MURRAGE FARM

Murrage Farm is a new four-bedroom family home located in the Chiltern Hill's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Situated in a valley between the villages of Fingest and Turville, the site was formerly occupied by an undistinguished farmhouse and outbuildings that were in poor condition.

The building's simple form, with its pitched roofs, is derived from the local domestic architecture found in the adjacent villages. This connection is reinforced with a restrained palette of materials commonly found in the local vernacular, with knapped flint, hand-fired brick and clay tiles selected for the exterior of the house. While lending a natural tactility to the design, the chosen materials create a refined modern finish, harmoniously integrated into its surroundings.

This durable, high-quality material palette is continued internally, comprising stone and timber flooring and limewashed brickwork walls. Timber joinery elements and exposed steel beams provide a crisp, bold contrast to the otherwise muted palette. The sequence of spaces and composition of window openings frame views over the idyllic surrounding scenery, enhanced by wildflower meadows incorporated into the gardens and landscaping.

Sector:	Private Residential
Location:	Chilterns, UK
Client:	Private Client
Start:	April 2019
Completion:	November 2020
Contract type:	Shell & Core: Traditional Interior: Construction Management

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Private Client

Architect: Allford Hall Monaghan Morris

Project Manager: Client (Private)
Principal Designer: Client (Private)
Structural/Civil Engineer: Heyne Tillett Steel
Cost Consultant: Client (Private)
MEP Engineer: NC Designs

Main Contractor: PRM Construction Ltd

AREAS

Gross internal 325 sq.m

ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS TEAM MEMBERS

Simon Allford, Robert Romanis, Andrew Morrison, Hannah Pether, Sara Martins, Peter Shelton, Paul Bussey, Patrick Crocock, Craig Robertson, Julia Yao, Paul Monaghan, Peter Morris, Johnathan Hall



SITE LOCATION

Murrage Farm is situated in a valley between the villages of Fingest and Turville, in the Chiltern Hill's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site comprises a new four-bedroom family home arranged over two primary levels, served by plant equipment in the basement. The new building is positioned to sensitively integrate into the landscape, preserving uninterrupted views from key vantage points, while internally the composition of spaces maximises vistas to the idyllic surroundings.

The simple building form responds to the local domestic and agricultural architecture intrinsic to the adjacent villages. This is echoed through the restrained material palette employed, harmoniously integrated into its surroundings.

The external envelope is formed of a loadbearing brickwork inner skin and knapped flint outer skin, with deep inset window apertures celebrated through restrained woodfired brickwork details, and cills formed from hand-made clay tiles, mirroring those adorning the double-pitched roof.

This heavyweight form of construction was chosen for its long-lasting durability, with its robust form designed to weather the passage of time and fluctuations in environmental conditions. Furthermore, where possible key materials were locally sourced to reduce embodied carbon, with the wood-fired brickwork sourced from Chesham. While externally this project articulates a restrained version

of the traditional local vernacular, internally timber joinery elements and exposed steel beams provide a crisp, bold contrast to the otherwise muted palette of stone and timber flooring, limewashed brickwork walls and exposed concrete lintels.

The sequence of spaces and composition of window openings frame views over the idyllic surrounding scenery, enhanced by wildflower meadows incorporated into the gardens and landscaping.





Aerial view with site highlighted in red

EXISTING SITE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Existing Site

Bounded by country lanes to the south and west, and by agricultural land to the north and east, the exisiting site comprised an undistinguished 1930s farmhouse and 1950s outbuildings, that were in poor condition.

The main building was situated to the south west of the site, occupying a prominent position visible from the surrounding public roads and footpaths. The centre of the site was punctuated by an obtrusive timber pylon, interrupting otherwise delightful views to the surrounding Chiltern Hill's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Site Response

The new building is sensitively positioned to integrate into the landscape, preserving uninterrupted views from key vantage points, while the composition of spaces internally maximises vistas to the picturesque surroundings.

Deliberately positioned to the north of the site, the new building occupies a less visible location in comparison to the existing dwelling and outbuildings. Its position also works to create an exemplary Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) strategy, utilising the contours of the site to direct water to a seasonal wetland incorporated at the lowest point of the site. Furthermore, the existing unsightly electricity pole now occupies a less obtrusive position on the north boundary of the adjoining property.

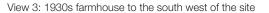


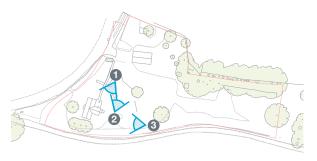
View 1: 1930s farmhouse to the south west of the site



View 2: 1950s outbuildings and timber pylon







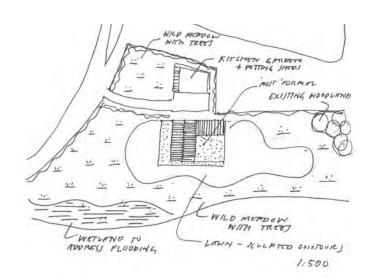
EVOLUTION OF THE BRIEF

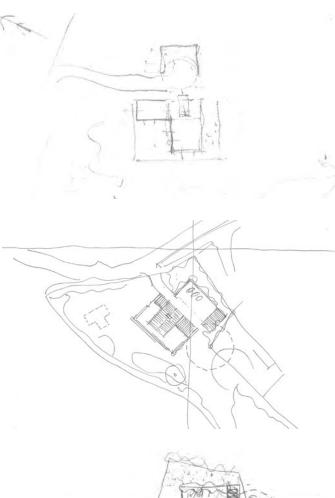
The initial brief for the project was to create a meticulously crafted, high quality family home, which sensitively integrated into an Outstanding Area of Natural Beauty.

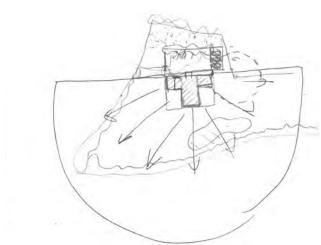
The brief evolved iteratively, through a close collaborative relationship with the client. This was refined throughout the design process through structured design team workshops and client reviews, as well as more informal catch-ups and building visits to completed projects by the Architect, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM), such as 81-83 Weston Street, to develop a material strategy.

Each aspect of the design was rigorously reviewed to ensure the meticulous attention to detail carried through from macro to micro scales. This informed the proposal's sensitive positioning on site and refined interpretation of local agricultural and domestic building forms, the careful sequencing of spaces in plan and section to maximise views to the scenic surroundings and respond to client requirements, and the carefully conceived material junctions and joinery details throughout.

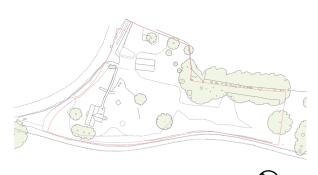
The refinement of the design was aided through numerous site visits to review progress, in addition to the construction of a sample panel on site as a means of benchmarking and agreeing key material junctions, construction details, and workmanship for the project.











EVOLUTION OF THE BRIEF

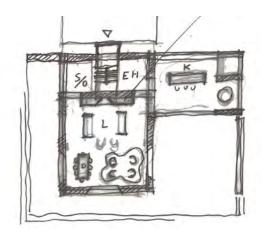
Building Layout

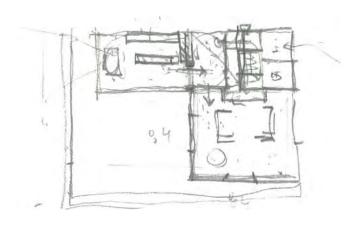
The building form was initially conceived as a central volume comprising primary entrance and living spaces at ground level, with bedrooms and en-suites located above. Two wings elongate the main facade at ground level, with a snug to the west, nestled between the site entrance and primary living space, and the kitchen space extending to the landscape to the east. Both wings are seamlessly integrated with the main volume through both internal and external openings - curating vistas to the adjacent rooms and the surrounding countryside.

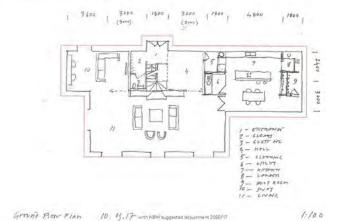
This form and internal arrangement arose through an iterative design process, in which numerous options were reviewed with the client to ensure a solution that optimised:

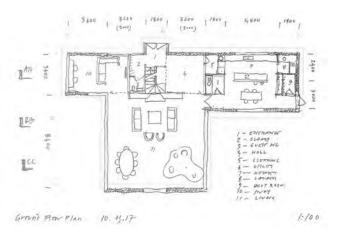
- Views to the surrounding landscape.
- Access to daylight.
- Spatial relationships.
- Massing in relationship to key vantage points.

The sequence of plans (right) illustrate the evolution of the ground floor arrangement throughout the early feasibility stages of the project. In all plans, the main volume comprises the primary living space, anchored by a central hearth. The accommodation within the wings was subject to numerous iterations to review the most suitable position for the kitchen, snug and boot room in relation to visual and physical connections to the surrounding landscape.









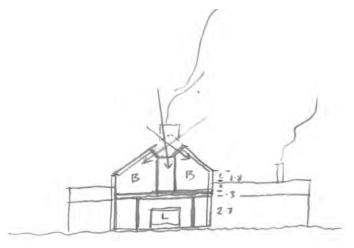
EVOLUTION OF THE BRIEF

Massing and Material Expression

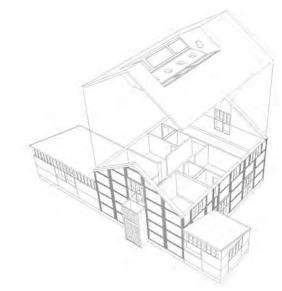
The massing of the new building evolved through a collaborative process of refinement, with the overall volume informed by key client and site considerations, including:

- Spatial quality and sequence of the interior spaces.
- Views to the surrounding landscape.
- Light quality and orientation.
- Planning considerations and views from key vantage points.

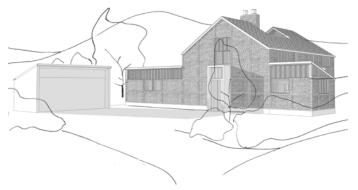
The double pitched roof is characteristic of the local architecture, while creating the opportunity to incorporate rooflights 'hidden' within the central valley, creating light and airy spaces at first floor. The two wings adjoining the central volume aid in breaking down the overall massing, intergating the house into its surroundings while creating a variety of spatial qualities at ground floor.



Early concept sketch section



Early massing model



Early massing and facade strategy



Early massing and facade strategy

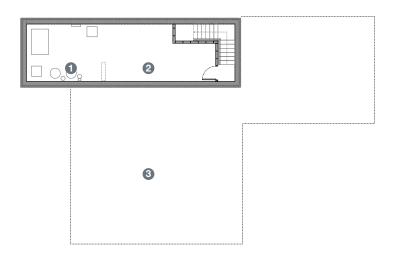


PLANNING STUDIES



FLOOR PLANS





- 1 Plant Space
- 2 Storage etc.
- 3 Building Extents (Above)
- 4 Garage Extents (Above)

Basement Plan



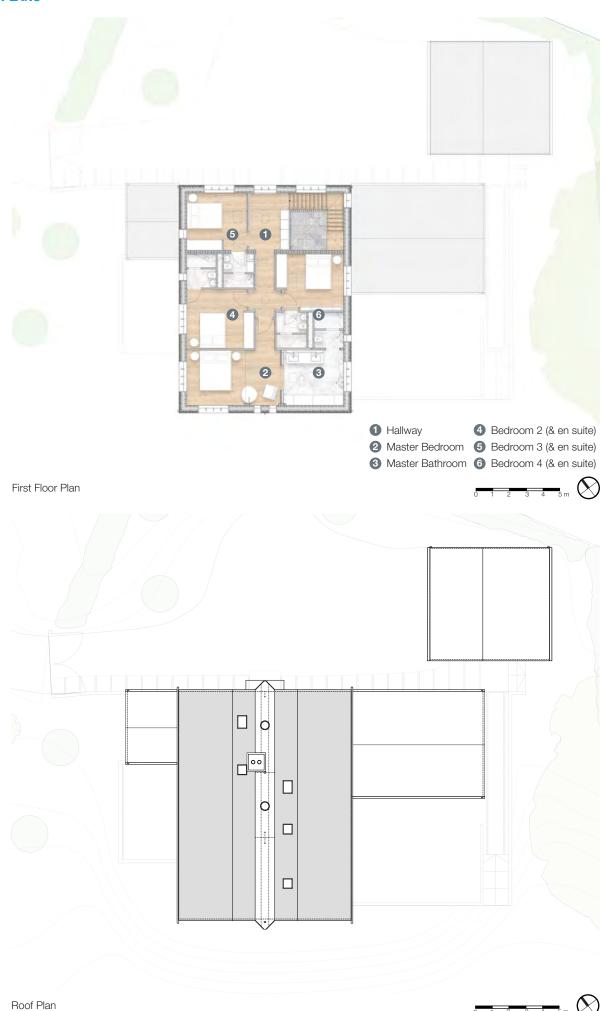
- 1 Hallway
- 4 Living Space 7 Larder
- 2 Cloakroom
- 6 Utility Room
- 8 Boot Room

- 3 Snug
- 6 Kitchen
- 9 Garage





FLOOR PLANS



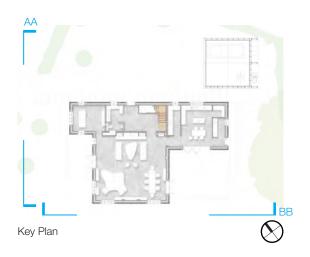
ELEVATIONS



Site Section A from North West



Site Section B from South West



ELEVATIONS



Site Section C from South East

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Site Section D from North East



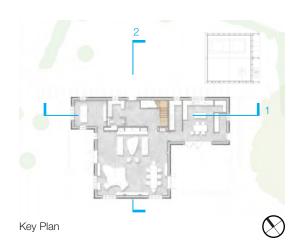
Key Plan



SECTIONS

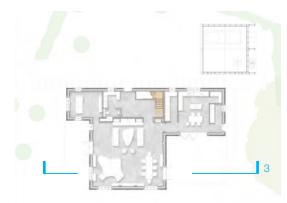






SECTIONS









MATERIAL STRATEGY

External Material Strategy

The design of Murrage Farm is strongly influenced by the domestic and agricultural architecture of the adjacent villages. Rigorous development of the external material palette and details were undertaken throughout the design process, aided by visits to flint and brick manufacturers.

In keeping with the surrounding architecture, the external envelope is formed of a knapped flint outer skin, with deep inset window apertures celebrated through restrained wood-fired brickwork details, and cills formed from clay tiles, mirroring those of the double-pitched roof.

The balance between knapped flintwork and brick was the subject of iterative design studies, regular informal reviews with the client, and discussions with the Local Planning Authority. This ensured an outcome that balanced cohesion with the surrounding architecture, and a minimalist, elegant design desired by the client.

At the forefront of all discussions and studies was the idea of celebrating the material quality and meticulously crafted junctions and details.

Internal Material Strategy

A collaborative approach between the client and design team informed the internal material strategy. This was refined through visits to completed projects by the architect, AHMM, such as 81-83 Weston Street, celebrating the refined finish of exposed concrete soffits and walls, paired with warm timber panelling.

This material strategy extended to the design of joinery elements, with attention given to the meticulous crafting of material junctions and details. The desired aesthetic was achieved through close collaboration between the client, architect and joinery firm.



Variation in hue of wood-fired brickwork





Raw interior finishes (concrete & timber) 81-83 Weston Street. AHMM





















Precedents for external material strategy: Local domestic architecture

EXRERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY: FACADE REFINEMENTS

The facade strategy was subject to ongoing, collaborative design reviews between the client and architect, allowing this to evolve as the project progressed to respond to the clients developing brief.

Early facade designs initially submitted for planning favoured a more traditional interplay of brickwork detailing and flintwork, mirroring that of the surrounding vernacular.

As the project progressed, this was gradually pared back to a simpler, crisper expression in which brickwork became a more secondary, complimentary material to the knapped flintwork. This was utilised to set crisp horizontal datums, express corner junctions, and celebrate the depth of window and door openings.

A customised approach was taken for each of the elevations. The facades facing towards the road and driveway have a more regimented, formal expression, where horizontal bands of brick span between openings, providing a continuous datum connecting window cills.

The facades facing towards the landscape have a more informal expression, showcasing a largely unbroken expanse of knapped flint, with brickwork details celebrating window reveals, corner junctions, and where the flint meets the ground and roof.

This evolving refinement of the material expression lends a quiet boldness to the facade - acknowledging the architectural style intrinsic to the Chilterns, while subtly playing with the proportions and extents one would typically expect.



Planning elevations April 2018



Elevation studies October 2018



Minor Material Amendment: Revised planning elevations Dec 2018



Elevation studies June 2019



Non-Material Amendment: Revised planning elevations July 2019

MATERIAL STRATEGY: FACADE SAMPLE PANEL

The creation of a sample panel on site provided an invaluable tool in refining both the external and internal material palettes and details, and enabled the enabled the making of informed design and workmanship decisions concerning details, materials and finishes. This comprised the most important areas such as the corner treatment, window reveal, and brick and flint coursing options, and was reviewed collaboratively with the site manager and main contractor.

The sample panel formed a benchmark for works by the subcontractors, which provided a useful tool to the planning office for agreeing aesthetics and discharging planning conditions regarding the quality of flintwork and proposed detailing.



June 2019: External facade of sample panel



June 2019: Internal facade of sample panel



June 2019: Sample panel on site

EXTERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY: FACADE SAMPLE PANEL

Knapped Flintwork

Locally sourced knapped flint was selected as the primary facade material, with each piece meticulously arranged to ensure tight close-bonded lime mortar joints. Although the buildings design takes its cues from the surrounding vernacular, the facades utilise wood-fired brickwork detailing in a more restrained manner, complementing the variation in texture and hue of the flintwork.

Brick Coursing

A tailored approach was taken to brick coursing for each elevation, according to its orientation and context. The facades facing the road and driveway have a more formal expression, where horizontal bands of brick span between openings, providing a continuous datum. Those facing the landscape are more informal, showcasing a largely unbroken expanse of knapped flint, with brickwork details celebrating window reveals, corner junctions, and where the flint meets the ground and roof.

Window Reveals

Window openings are set out by brick modules, with the bricks returning at their reveals internally and externally. This accentuates the depth and robustness of the walls while celebrating the honest form of construction.

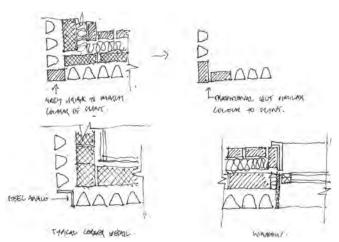
Numerous options for the brickwork detailing were distilled down to the most spare, refined proposal of single brick modules alternating between single and half brick widths.

Clay Tile Cill Detail

Initially steels angles were considered for the window cills, however later evolved to incorporate the same red clay tiles adorning the roof. This complements the wood-fired brickwork, while lending a rustic sharpness to the detailing.

Corner Detail

Various options for the corner junctions were tested, such as steel angles, and grey brickwork to match the flintwork. Red brick quoins were selected to reflect the local vernacular, however the extent of these were pared back to simple modules of three bricks in height alternating between a single brick width and 1.5 brick width.



Early hand sketches of corner details



Brickwork coursing options



Clay tile cill detail



Brickwork quoin corner options

INTERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY: FACADE SAMPLE PANEL

Limewashed Brickwork

Internally, pale textured brickwork with lime mortar was chosen, which was then limewashed to create more subtle variation in hue so the wall is read as a cohesive element, with reduced emphasis on the individual brick modules.

Exposed Concrete Lintel & Cill Detail

The sample panel was utilised to test a variety of window lintel and cill details ranging from exposed brickwork, clay tiles and concrete beams.

To continue the raw tactility of the restrained material palette, concrete cills and lintels are sandblasted and left exposed, creating a sharper and more minimalist aesthetic than that of the external skin.

Window Openings

Timber window frames were used internally to bring further warmth to the interiors. The depth and thickness of the frames were carefully chosen to lend weight to these elements while ensuring views to the scenery beyond were maximised. Initially, timber linings were proposed to the window surrounds, however this was later revised in favour of expressing the junctions between structural concrete lintels and cills and the surrounding brickwork.

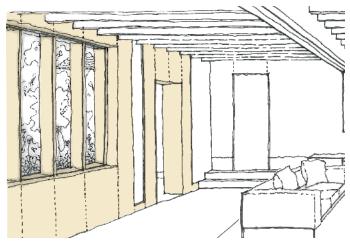
Internal window reveals mirror the approach taken externally, with the bricks returning at their reveals by one brick width from the internal facade line. This accentuates the depth of the opening and robustness of the wall construction.



Concrete lintel option



Window opening detail



Early sketch of proposed timber joinery to window and door openings



Different window cill detail options (brickwork and clay tile)

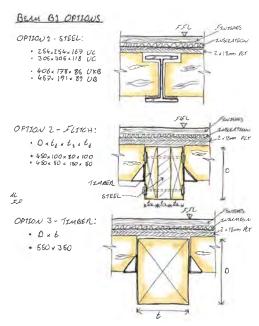
INTERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY

A collaborative approach between the client and design team informed the internal material strategy. This was refined through visits to completed projects such as 81-83 Weston Street, by the architect, AHMM, highlighting how structural materials (concrete, brickwork etc.), can be used as internal finishes to lend an honesty and tactility to the design.

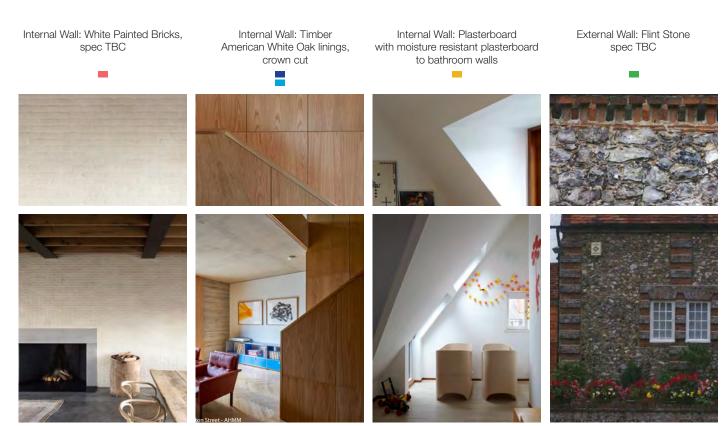
Internal finishes were carefully considered in relation to the structural strategy, as the primary steelwork running through the key spaces provide a sharp, bold counterpoint to the otherwise muted material palette.



Precedent material palette: Weston Street, AHMM

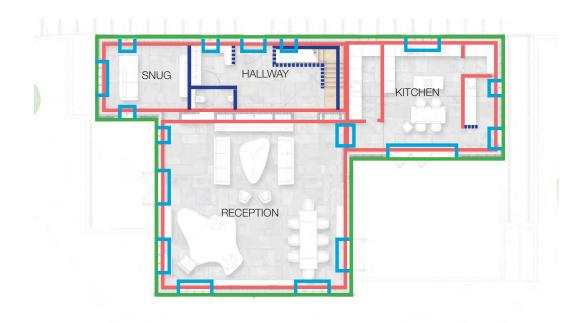


Exposed primary structure options, HTS



Early wall finishes material palette strategy

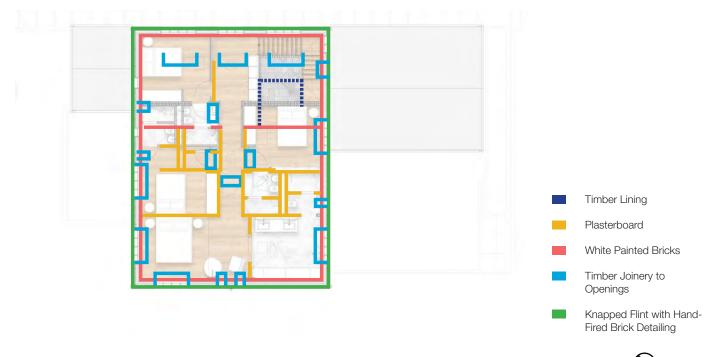
INTERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY: WALL FINISHES

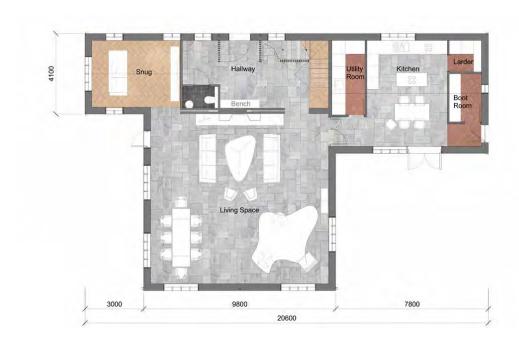


Ground Floor Plan: Wall Finishes







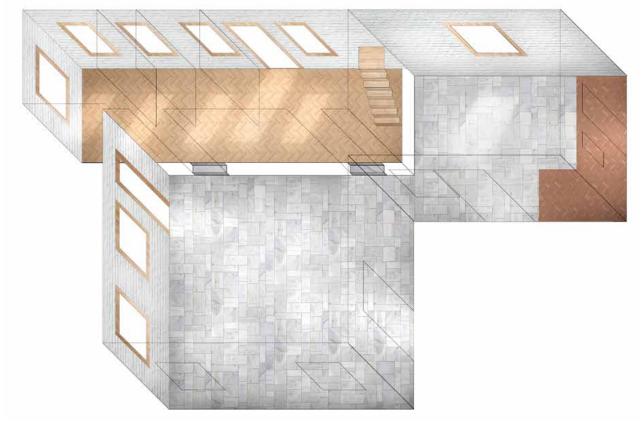


Ground Floor Plan: Wall Finishes





INTERNAL MATERIAL STRATEGY: EARLY CONCEPT DIAGRAM



Axonometric Concept Diagram: Wall & Floor Finishes



Reference: Weston Street Interior



Proposed Interior Finish: White painted brickwork and feature timber window frames

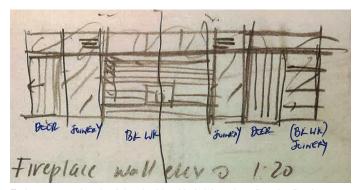
KEY SPACE AND FEATURES

Living Space

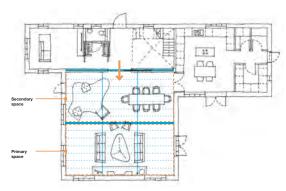
The generous triple aspect living space at ground floor is zoned into formal and informal zones, accommodating a variety of social, dining and reading spaces. The space is anchored by the 'Hearth' - a wood burner integrated into a double-leaf masonry wall, with a concrete plinth to act as an informal seating space.

The space is conencted directly from the entrance hallway, through to the kitchen to the east and the snug to the west. Envisioned as a single impressive volume, it is bounded by limewashed brickwork walls and openings - both in the form of connections to other rooms, and openings to the stunning scenery beyond.

The structural steelwork and timber joists are a celebrated feature within the space, and the overall structural strategy was subject to iterative design work with the structural engineers to ensure clear heights were maximised and junction details carefully considered.



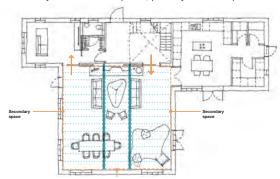
Early concept sketch of the double-skin brickwork wall to the fireplace



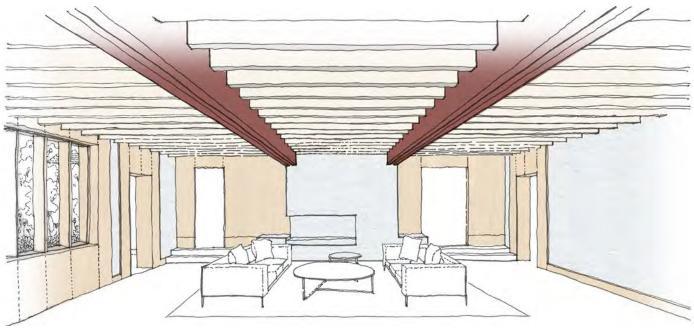
Sketch layout: Axial arrangement, primary structural parallel



Sketch layout: Central fireplace, primary structure parallel



Sketch layout: Central fireplace, primary structure perpendicular.



Early concept sketch of the living space, highlighting the prominence of the exposed structure within the space

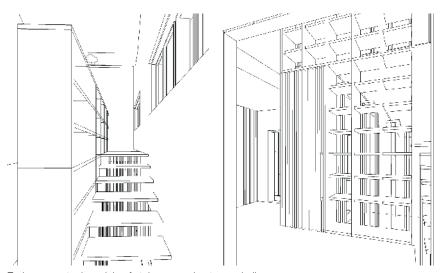
KEY SPACES AND FEATURES

Staircase

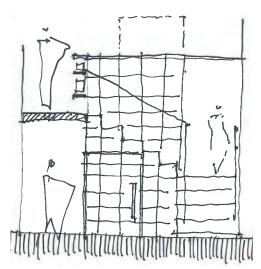
The staircase is a key element within the double-height entrance space. Conceived as a piece of meticulously crafted timber and metal joinery, this provides a crisp, bold contrast to the otherwise muted material palette.

An iterative design process was undertaken to refine the modules, proportions and construction details of the stair with consideration given to how these elements would align with the exposed brickwork of the internal walls and compliment other joinery elements within the scheme.

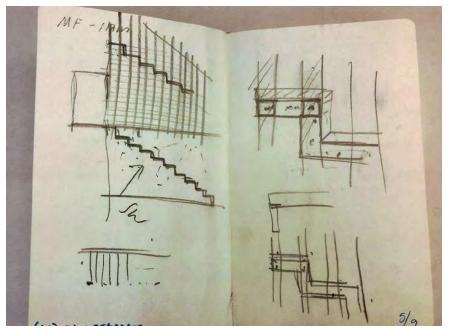
As with other aspects of the interior fit-out, the design of the staircase and balustrade was the result of a close collaborative process between the architect, client and joinery firm.



Early conceptual models of staircase and entrance hallway



Early concept sketch of staircase

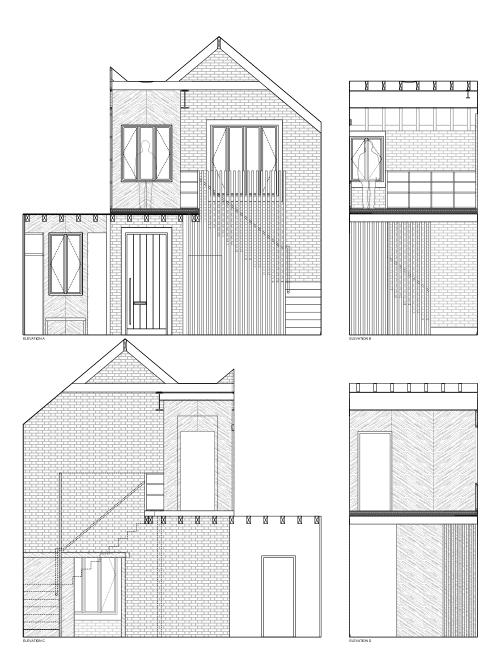


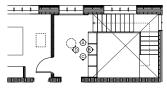
Concept sketches of staircase modules and details



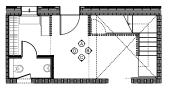
Fabricated staircase

INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: ENTRANCE HALLWAY



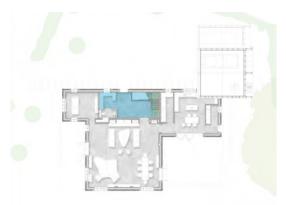


Entrance Hallway: First Floor



Entrance Hallway: Ground Floor

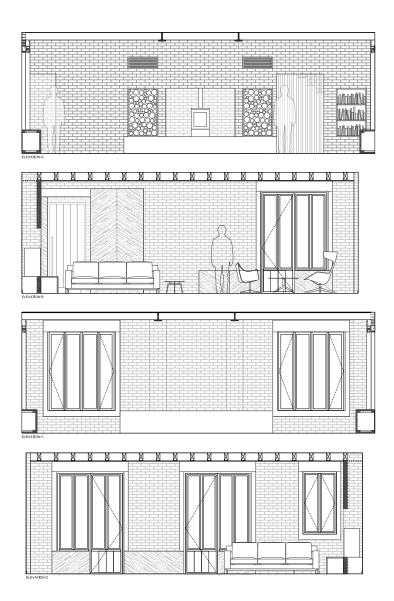


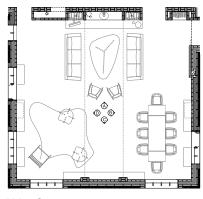


Key Plan



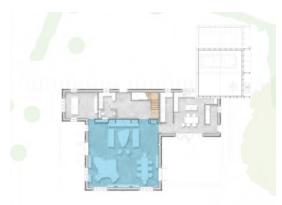
INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: LIVING SPACE





Living Space

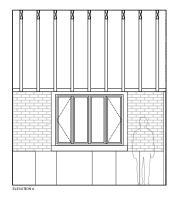


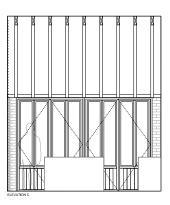


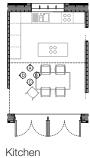
Key Plan

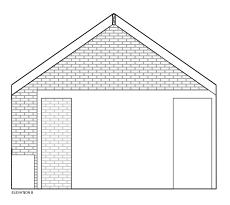


INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: KITCHEN



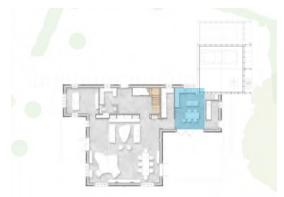








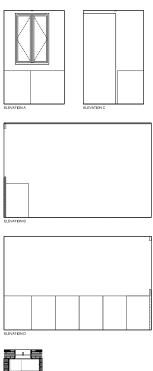




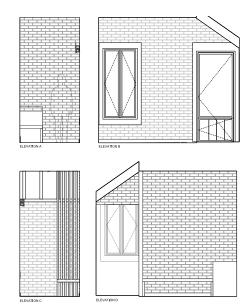
Key Plan

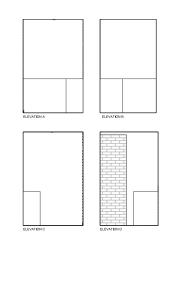


INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: UTILITY ROOM, BOOT ROOM AND LARDER



Utility Room







Boot Room



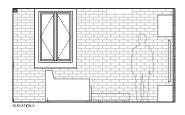
Key Plan

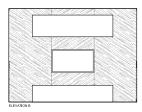


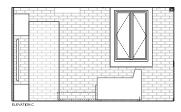


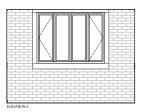
Boot Room

INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: SNUG AND ENTRANCE WC

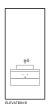






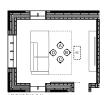












Snug



Entrance WC

Key Plan

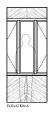


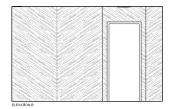


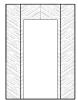
Snug

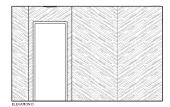


INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: CORRIDOR











Corridor



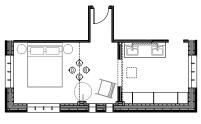


Key Plan



INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: MASTER BEDROOM





Master Bedroom





INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: MASTER BEDROOM





Master Bathroom



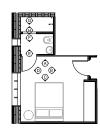




Key Plan

INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: BEDROOM TWO





Bedroom 2



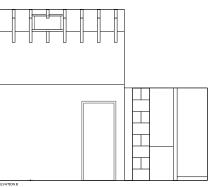


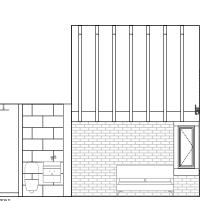
Key Plan



INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: BEDROOM THREE (GUEST)









Bedroom 3 (Guest Bedroom)

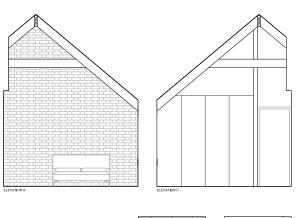


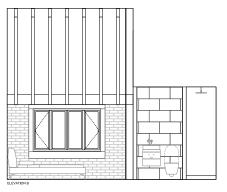


Key Plan



INTERNAL ELEVATIONS: BEDROOM FOUR

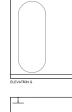


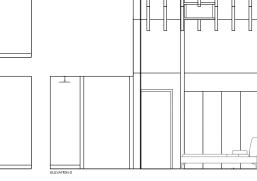


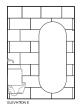


Bedroom 4











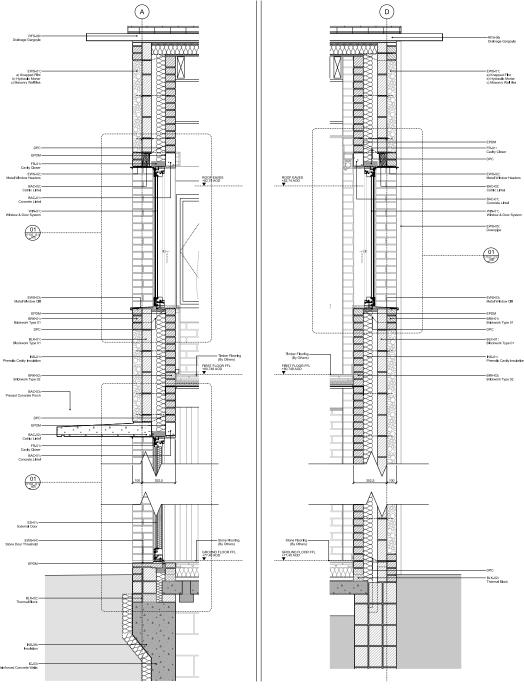






EXTERNAL WALLS

The external envelope is formed of a loadbearing brickwork inner skin and knapped flint outer skin, with deep inset window apertures emphasised through restrained wood-fired brickwork details, and cills formed from clay tiles, mirroring those of the double-pitched roof.



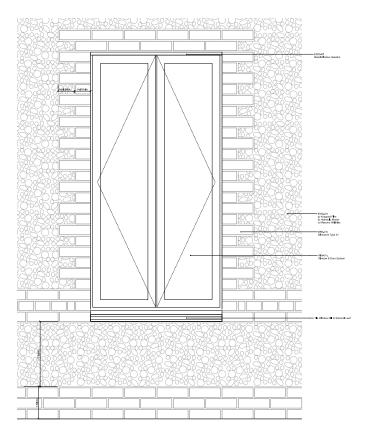




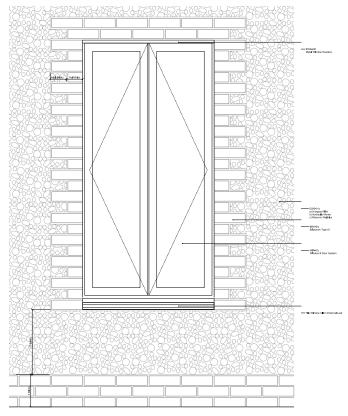
Key Section



WINDOW (EXTERNAL DETAIL)



Typical Window Detail: Formal Expression - facades addressing the driveway & roads



Typical Window Detail: Informal Expression - facades addressing the landscape



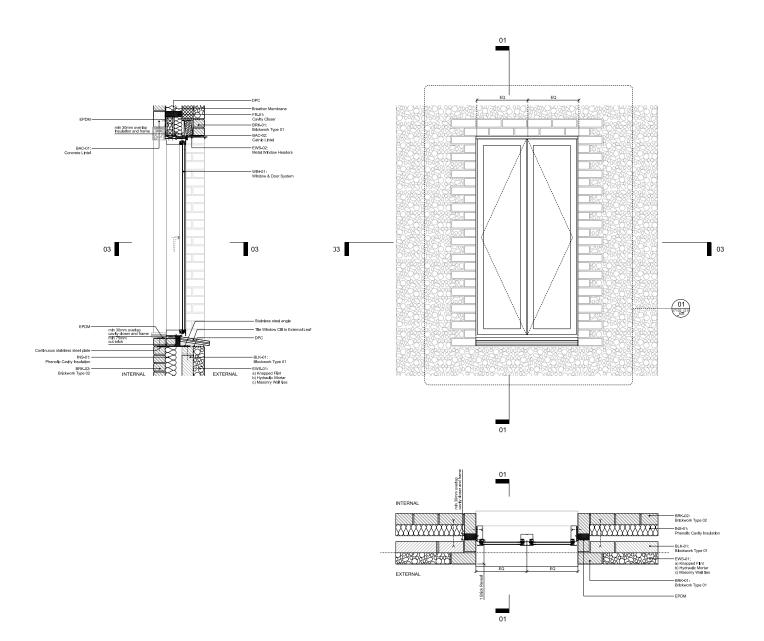
Key Elevation



Key Elevation



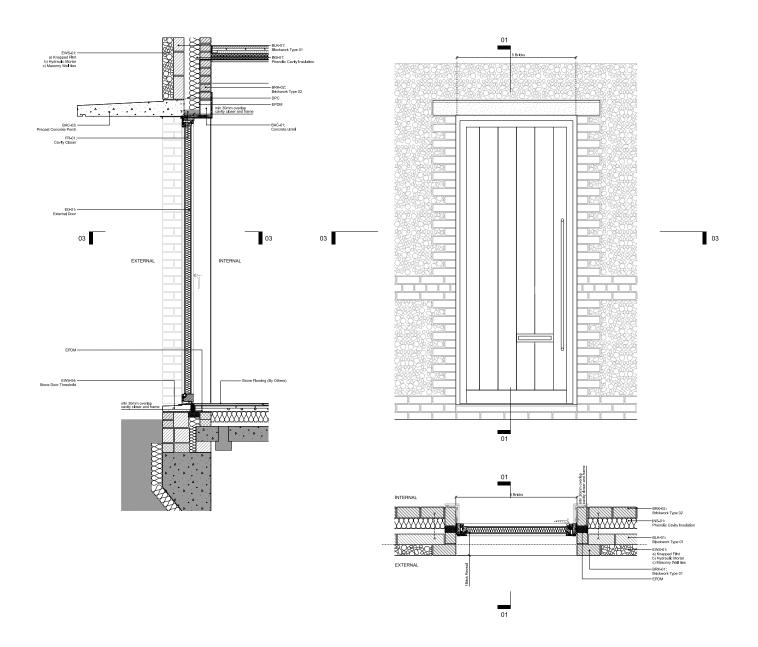
WINDOW (INTERNAL DETAIL)





Key Section





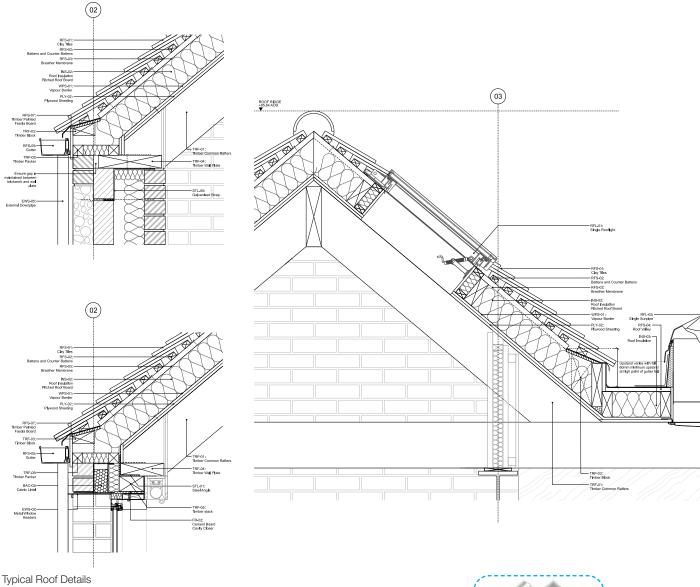


Key Elevation





Roof Detail: Double Pitch Roof with Valley

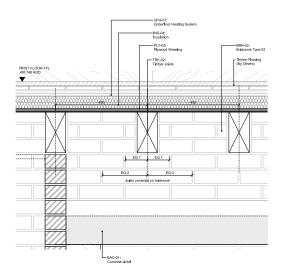


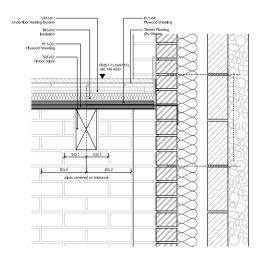


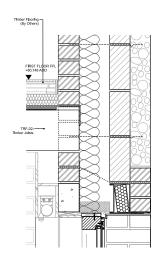
Key Section

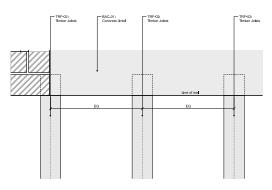


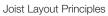
CEILINGS

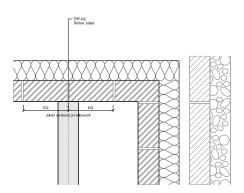


















LANDSCAPING

The landscaping strategy for Murrage Farm blends retention of the existing high quality trees and planting on site, with areas of new hard and soft landscaping. Hard landscaping areas provide spaces for outdoor dining and seating with exceptional views to the landscape beyond, while the gravel driveway has a permeable sub-base for drainage, with any runoff directed to a seasonal wetland to the south east of the site.

Deliberately positioned to the north of the site, Murrage Farm preserves uninterrupted views from key vantage points, while maximising vistas to the picturesque surroundings.

The building form comprises an asymmetrical t-shape, with each elbow defining an area of hard landscaping. The two wings comprise the snug to the west, nestled between the site entrance and primary living space, and the kitchen space extending to the landscape to the east. Given its orientation, the living room benefits from triple aspect vistas, enjoying sunlight from morning until evening.



1. Hard landscaping to kitchen



2. Wildflower meadow and perimeter planting



LANDSCAPING

Existing Planting

The edges of the site comprise indigenous hedgerows, with high quality trees retained.

Wildflower Meadow

Wildflower meadows are incorporated into the landscaping design to aid biodiversity, with the variety of flora and fauna creating a rich habitat.

Hard Landscaping

Areas of hard landscaping are located to the south of the two wings at ground floor, accessible from the kitchen and living space. These provide informal seating and dining spaces, with the kitchen opening on to this space via a bifold door.

SUDS

The project comprises an exemplary Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs) strategy, with the gravel driveway comprising a permeable sub-base, and the incorporation of a seasonal wetland at the lowest point of the site.



South facade facing the garden and surrounding landscape



Hard landscaping accessed from the kitchen and living space



Wildflower meadow integrated into the garden design

