

AGENDA

Meeting of the Commons Conservators

Thursday 10th December 2020 at 2.00pm

Via videoconferencing – contact Gemma Stapeley (gemma.stapeley@twcommons.org) for details.

1. DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTEREST
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. COMMONS WEBSITE AND BRAND PRESENTATION – Jason Vickers of Cordis (20-minute presentation and 10 minutes of questions)
4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 – attached
5. COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2020 – attached.
6. MATTERS ARISING
7. MEMBERSHIP – to formally note the Conservators appointed by the bodies specified to serve for the ensuing year:

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council – one-year term end 31 December 2021

Councillor Barbara Cobbold
Councillor Joy Podbury
Councillor James Scholes
Councillor Chris Woodward

Freehold Tenants – 3rd year of three-year term until 31 December 2021

Stephen Lacey
Ian Marshall
Chris McHugh
John Barber

Manor of Rusthall – 2nd year of three-year term until 31 December 2022

Paul Burnett
Ewen Cameron

8. WARDEN'S REPORT INCLUDING WORK SCHEDULE - attached
9. ASSISTANT CLERK'S REPORT - attached
10. FINANCIAL PROCESS & SIGNING AUTHORITIES
11. BUDGET REPORT AND PRECEPT 2020/2021 - attached
12. LITTER & GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT UPDATE – litter proposal document and proposed contract attached.
13. FREEHOLD TENANT AND FRIENDS PROJECTS
14. POLICIES

i) Health & Safety policy to be approved – revised policy attached

ii) Review of Open Spaces policy – Targetfollow would like to propose a financial charge with income to Targetfollow rather than a donation to the Friends. Current policy attached.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Request from Linden Park Cricket Club for a storage container for their new mower – attached.

ii) Pending planning application for 4 Onslow House, Castle Road.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – no applications to note.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 25th March 2021 at 2pm.

EXEMPT SESSION – including Warden recruitment.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS COMMONS CONSERVATORS

Minutes of a meeting held via video conference on Thursday 17th September 2020 at 10.30am

PRESENT:

Paul Burnett (joined from agenda item 8)
Ewen Cameron
Cllr Barbara Cobbold
Stephen Lacey
Ian Marshall (Chairman)
Antony Moore
Cllr Joy Podbury
Clare Sinha
Corin Thoday
Cllr Chris Woodward (joined from agenda item 8)

APOLOGIES/UNABLE TO ATTEND:

Chris McHugh
Cllr James Scholes
Clive Evans (Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common)

ATTENDING:

Giles Membrey (Director)
Philip Tew (Treasurer)
Steve Budden (Warden)
Gemma Stapeley (Assistant Clerk)
Liz Ellicott (Rusthall Parish Council)

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Chris McHugh and Clive Evans.

2. MEETING BY VIDEO CONFERENCE

The Conservators approved the holding of the meeting via video conference.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020 were considered and approved. A copy to be signed by the Chairman and returned to the Assistant Clerk.

4. MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of the Committee meetings held on 20th July and 8th September 2020 were considered and approved and would also be signed by the Chairman.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Linden Park Cricket Club

Following on from the Club's representation at the TWCC' meeting in June 2020, contact from the Club and follow up on the agreed actions has been limited. The Warden has heard via John Harvey that the Club plan to start fencing off the outfield as agreed, at the end of the season. The Warden must be involved in the plans for this.

Storm drainage

Kent County Council's Flood and Water Management team and West Kent Countryside Management Partnerships have now reported back on their project for natural flood management retention and infiltration measures on Tunbridge Wells Common. They concluded that the project would not be feasible due to poor water infiltration rates of the soils at a shallow depth. All Conservators received an email on 9th August 2020 confirming their conclusions. The final report has been requested from Louise Smith at KCC.

The KCC Highways team, led by Alex Brauning, have started their investigative work as part of the Major York's Road proposed surface water drainage improvements. To date this has included topographical and geological surveys and a review of the ecological and arboricultural constraints. Proposed outline design ideas should be ready for Conservator consultation by mid to late October 2020. Once all parties are agreed in principle then the next step would be development of a detailed design proposal.

Rusthall Bonfire

This event has been cancelled for 2020.

Footpath Management

The Commons have benefited from significant investment, by KCC, in footpath maintenance this year. The Warden was reminded to continue to liaise with the Public Rights of Way team, led by Jonathan Bibby to ensure further work is identified.

Ash trees on Still Green

The Warden and PB plan to meet on site to discuss ownership and management of the trees in question.

Actions

All actions from the June meeting were reviewed and closed.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

IT WAS AGREED that the meetings of the Commons Conservators be held at 2.00 pm on the following dates:

Thursday March 25th 2021.

Thursday June 24th 2021.

Thursday September 23rd 2021.

Thursday December 9th 2021.

7. MANAGEMENT REPORT

i. Directors's Report

The Director provided a full report ahead of the meeting.

The Director will continue to discuss his planning gain document with TWBC Planning department. It was agreed by the Committee that the linked projects would be updated annually each December. These projects are example projects that the planning officers can refer to when in discussions with a developer. Projects associated with cars and vehicles are not appropriate.

The Management team will be working on a grass-cutting paper for the Committee and for Conservator consultation at the December meeting.

The Director will continue to monitor any further planning applications for the Beacon. JP noted that often those individuals who object to the first application, don't object again if a second revised proposal is submitted. If a second proposal is submitted, the Facebook community and other local neighbours would be encouraged to consider commenting on the proposal.

A cycle route proposal connecting Langton Green with Tunbridge Wells town centre is due from TWBC. The Director will keep Conservators updated on this.

ii. Warden's Report

There has been an unusually high number of storms this summer, with high winds causing damage to the trees in full leaf. Consequently, spend on the tree budget is more significant at this time of year than usual. The Treasurer is aware of this and will be ensuring that the limited budget is managed.

The process of cutting and widening all paths and cutting long grass is well under way. Mick Dann who usually completes the small flail work has not been available, Honnington have instead been contracted to complete the work this year. Although they are slower, as they learn the area and requirements, it is a worthy investment for future years.

Completion of the outstanding work on the Second Marl Pit Pond is due to restart week commencing 28th September, kindly paid for by the Freehold Tenants and the Friends.

Ian Johnstone, of KHWP, has completed the vegetation survey of Bull's Hollow, required to satisfy the terms of the Sussex Lund funding for the new scrape. We await further instruction on when the project can commence.

Subject to available funds in the budget, it is hoped that the heather seeds can be harvested to extend the area of growth.

The Conservators congratulated the Warden on a gold award in the South and South East Britain in Bloom competition. Kasia Olszewska from TWBC has been thanked for development of the submitted portfolio.

The Warden reported that a person was injured while climbing on Happy Valley rocks. It was obviously a significant injury as five ambulances were at the scene. Unfortunately, no official details were reported to the Warden and as such he plans to make connections with representatives of the local emergency services to improve communication and to enable accident reporting to be more accurate.

The Warden conducted a site visit with Fiona Payne of the Highways, Transportation and Waste Team at KCC, to view the proposed zebra crossing on London Road, opposite the Thackeray's Restaurant. The Conservators have already approved this project, subject to the Warden's site visit. During the work, the team plan to remove a significant volume of soil to re-grade the bank on the Common side, by Belleville. The soil will be retained by the Warden for use across the Common, for example to fill holes under benches. The Warden was satisfied by the plans for the project.

iii. Treasurer's Report

The external audit of the accounts took the form of a desk top review this year. Although the external audit opinion has not yet been received, the Treasurer had been informed that there would be a qualification as he had omitted to sign the return, but he assured everyone that this would be of no consequence.

It remains the plan to meet the budget approved by the Conservators in December 2019.

Cash resources are some £105,000.

Update: the external audit report has now been received which raised no issues.

iv. Assistant Clerk's Report

The Facebook group continues to grow and now exceeds 900 members, it is seen as a valuable tool for two-way communication with the community. Litter, bins and litter picking are currently the most popular topics of discussion on the group and reflect emails into the office.

Over the Summer, Keep Britain Tidy launched a campaign called "Be kind to our local parks" in response to the significant increase in the number of people using outdoor spaces and associated littering. The increase is clearly reflected on the Commons. A double litter bin has been installed on the lower cricket pitch and by Wellington Rocks to help accommodate additional waste. The

Assistant Clerk is making local connections to help support litter picking and possible community picks.

The risk register has been updated with four changes as follows:

1. Reduced risk of the office accommodation being unavailable.
2. Increased risk of cost increases for litter contract.
3. Comments for risk of reduced public interest in and support for the Commons to include Facebook as evidence that this is not significant.
4. One new risk added, increased usage putting pressure on Commons' maintenance.

It was agreed that the Risk Register would be reviewed annually in December.

A full review of all policies has been completed, all documents now being up to date, excluding the health and safety policy which is covered in agenda item 10.

8. LITTER CONTRACT

The Assistant Clerk had provided all Conservators with a paper on the litter contract in advance of the meeting. The paper provided details of five options available from 1st April 2021 with associated advantages and disadvantages. Conservators were asked to direct the Assistant Clerk to a preferred option to enable more detailed work on that option to be progressed.

As background, the current contract was awarded to Oakbourne and commenced 1st April 2018 for three years with an option to extend for one/two years. Oakbourne have expressed interest in discussing an extension.

The arrangements can be broken down into three key components, emptying the 30 bins across both Commons, disposing of the black sacks of waste and litter picking. The majority of the costs are in the emptying of the bins.

Given the significant increase in volumes of waste in the litter bins the contractor can now no longer manage to litter pick at this current time. Hopefully this will be resolved as Autumn arrives and the number of users of the Commons reduces.

The current arrangement for disposal of the black sack waste involves Oakbourne transferring the waste to Bridgland (the grass cutting contractor) for disposal.

The option of larger bins in fewer locations to replace the 30 small bins was raised by the Treasurer and although these may detract from the visual appearance of the Commons it is still worth exploring all ideas to manage costs and increase value.

CT suggested discussing the contract with TWBC to see if they could add it into their existing contract with Urbaser.

IT WAS AGREED that the Assistant Clerk would progress plans for option 3, to discuss a contract extension with the incumbent contractor, to manage disposal of the black sack waste

by a third party (waste management company) and to include litter picking back into the contract. She would report on progress in the December meeting.

IT WAS AGREED that Community litter picks could be planned and start to work alongside the litter contract.

It was noted that Rusthall Village Association and Rusthall Parish Council have litter picking equipment that might be available to borrow.

ACTION: Assistant Clerk to discuss available options for the litter contract with TWBC

9. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee, with support from the Assistant Clerk, have been working on the selection of a website development company to create a new website for the Commons. The four companies chosen to tender were DunkInk, Redboat, Kayo and Cordis. The latter are owned by Targetfollow.

PB had declared his business interest in Cordis from the beginning of the project and it was decided that he could be part of the Committee working on the project, but that CW and CS would lead the discussions and decisions.

In view of their potential conflict Targetfollow did not participate in the discussion at the meeting about the website or the subsequent vote to approve the appointment of Cordis.

ACTION: The Committee will continue to update all relevant parties as the project progresses.

10. POLICIES

i. GDPR

The policy was approved by all Conservators.

ii. Health and Safety

The Management Team had reviewed the current health & safety policy and advised that it needed to be reviewed with significant changes required.

IT WAS AGREED that the health & safety policy would be reviewed fully and that a draft document would be presented in December for Conservator approval.

11. EVENTS AND SIGNAGE – ACTIVITIES ON THE COMMONS

i. Rusthall Community Arts in Happy Valley

The request was approved subject to the group following Government Covid guidance.

ii. Saxon Orienteering ‘Kent Night Cup’

The request was not approved. For the following reasons:

- ☐ Given that the event would happen in the dark there was concern about participant safety.
- ☐ The large number participants could frighten others using the Common.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Declaration of any business interests

At the suggestion of EC, future meetings will be started with a declaration of business interests.

Request for permission to complete Open Reach works

The request was approved, subject to the Warden attending a satisfactory site visit.

13. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- i. Beacon Hotel – Application formally withdrawn.
- ii. 33 Common View - Loft conversion including rear dormer and internal alterations; addition of two rooflights to front elevation; changes to fenestration; alterations to front porch. Comment made on behalf of the Conservators - The Commons Conservators have no comment to make on the application but would remind the applicant that the land in front of the driveway is part of Tunbridge Wells Common. The Conservators wish to make it clear that no building materials may be placed on the land and no construction or delivery vehicles may park there or overrun the grass at any time.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10th December 2020 at 2pm, via videoconferencing.

Agreed Actions

| Agenda Item | Detail | Responsibility |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| 3&4 | Chairman to sign the minutes of the previous meetings and send to the Assistant Clerk. | Chairman |
| 5 | Continue to provide suggestions on footpath maintenance to Jonathan Bibby. | Warden |
| 8 | Continue work on the litter contract project to progress plans for option 3. | Assistant Clerk |

| | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|
| 8 | Discuss available options for the litter contract with TWBC. | Assistant Clerk |
| 8 | Plan and progress community litter picks. | Assistant Clerk and Warden |
| 9 | Provide an update on the website development project as and when required. | Committee |
| 10 | Review of H&S policy, draft document to be prepared. | Management Team |
| 12 | Addition of a declaration of any business interest at the start of all future meetings. | Assistant Clerk to add to the agenda. |

Conservators Committee: Monday 30th November 2020

Present: Paul Burnett, Clare Sinha, Cllr Chris Woodward.

In attendance: Steve Budden and Gemma Stapeley.

Minutes of the meeting:

1. Treasurer replacement

It was noted that Philip Tew had handed in his notice on Friday 27th November with immediate effect.

The Committee recommended that Philip's replacement should be recruited through the standard process after the TWCC meeting on the 10th. As an interim measure the Committee recommends to Conservators that Stephen Lacey be approached to provide some basic financial support.

Action: GS to draft an email for TWBC Payroll notifying them of the three changes in staffing, PB to approve the draft.

Conservators to consider the recommendations of the Committee.

2. Grass cutting contract

The amenity grass cutting contract ends on 31st March 2021. Contractually we currently pay for 12 cuts per year with a set price for each additional cut required. We benefit from the knowledge of the Commons that Bridgland have, the same areas are cut each year. However it is clearly marked on the contract maps so not impossible for another contractor to learn in the future.

Due to the dry weather in recent years SB proposed that the number of cuts could be reduced. He proposed 6 cuts per year with a set price per cut.

SB had spoken with Bridgland and they were happy to roll over the existing contract, with the variation. There would be a need for two caveats to protect both parties as follows:

- ☐ The grass must not be allowed to grow too high, so a maximum grass height should be included in the specification.
- ☐ Bridgland must provide an agreed notice period to come and commence work.

SB would like to recommend to the Committee and in turn the Conservators that we roll over the existing contract with Bridgland for 12 months, with the number of cuts variation. He recommends that the contract goes to full tender after this time.

3. Litter contract

At the 17th September TWCC meeting GS was asked by the Conservators to work further on the option to extend the current contract with Oakbourne for 12 months from 1st April, with disposal to be organised through a third party waste management company and litter picks to be done through the community volunteers.

GS has reworked the contract which was presented to the Committee and would go to the Conservators on the 10th December for approval.

GS proposed that extension negotiations with Oakbourne should aim to conclude with the following:

- ☐ Removal of the disposal costs (at a cost of approximately £3k per annum to Conservator budget).
- ☐ Removal of litter picking.
- ☐ No further increase from Oakbourne for the double bins recently installed.
- ☐ Fixing the 20/21 price for 21/22. If we can negotiate less, then this will obviously be very positive.

GS recommended to the Committee and in turn the Conservators that permission was given to start negotiations as proposed.

4. Website update

The Committee were very encouraged by the initial plans for the new website as presented by Cordis. Ian Marshall has been scheduled to be briefed on the presentation ahead of the 10th December, it was suggested that the Friends should be invited to join this Zoom meeting too.

CS reported that the Freehold Tenants and the Friends were both considering making donations towards the project.

Action: GS to invite Clive Evans and Chris Gurr to the presentation on the 7th December 2020.

5. H&S

Philip Tew had assisted with the reworking of the H&S policy, which would be presented to the Conservators for approval on the 10th.

GS updated the Committee on progress in restarting the accident and incident log, reviews of the office risk assessments and collation of contractor safety information.

Action: SB to complete the review of the risk assessments for the Commons. GS to contact all contractors to request their risk assessments, H&S policies, training records and licenses.

6. Update on King Charles the Martyr scratch nativity request

Since Conservator approval to allow the Church to utilise the Common land surrounding the Forum for their scratch nativity on the 24th December, their plans have been scrutinised extensively by TWBC events team. They are understandably raising concerns relating to Covid-19.

SB and GS attended a site visit and assisted with the walk through of plans. It was concluded that we supported their event but must leave the specifics of their plans with them, to be approved by TWBC and that the Conservators had no liability beyond receiving their adequate insurance documents and risk assessments.

Action: For all current requests, GS should ask for a reply acknowledging that all current covid-19 guidelines will be adhered to.

7. TWCC Meeting on the 10th December

It was noted that no precept, budget or financial report would be available.

Warden's report; December 2020

The annual clearance of our tracks paths and glades is almost complete now, only a few areas remain to be cut and cleared. It has been a rather more long winded affair than usual as our new contractors have had to learn the geography of the Commons but they have done very well. I am relieved that the weather has cooperated this year and it has been dry enough to get all areas cut. The greater range of equipment available from Honnington has enabled us to clear several areas that were previously inaccessible.

We have continued to have an unusual number of unexpected safety issues with trees throughout the period, with major branch failures on some large oaks adjacent to the Racecourse, as well as some large ash trees needing to be pollarded on Tunbridge Wells Common. Whether the branch failures have been exacerbated by the very dry weather is difficult to say but we have quite a number of mature trees, particularly on Tunbridge Wells Common, that will increasingly need remedial works if they are going to be safely retained. If we can find the money within our increasingly stretched budget, a programme of proactive works to create safe, veteran trees would be desirable.

Footfall on the Commons has remained high throughout the period, with litter volumes staying high. We have received very welcome assistance from a number of users of the Common, who have done great work in clearing litter from our paths but the bins have been overflowing on a number of occasions. Fir Tree Rd car park is experiencing very heavy traffic and the surface is deteriorating quite seriously, with a number of large pot holes developing. Remedial works will need to be carried out soon, patching these areas with tarmac. This is unfortunately not a cheap undertaking and if we have a severe Winter, the work may well have to be repeated in the Spring.

October saw a great deal of pond work undertaken. We have now finished the construction of the series of new ponds on the site of the original second Marlpit pond near Common View, that was delayed by severe weather in the Spring. We now have a series of three new ponds flowing from one to the next and we have enlarged the small pond at the top of the chain above the path coming down from the woodland. To the side of the ponds, we have constructed two reptile and amphibian hibernacula, utilising the scrub that was cleared from the site prior to the construction work and the spoil from the excavations. This work has been financed jointly by the Friends and the Freehold Tenants.

At Bulls Hollow, we have created another new aquatic habitat, funded with a grant from the Sussex Lund Organisation that was successfully obtained by the Friends. This time we have created a series of shallow, interlinked scrapes, with an adjacent area of boggy ground to greatly increase diversity at the site. Because of the sandy nature of the ground here, we had to use a heavy duty liner to enable the scrapes to hold water. This has been further protected with a thick, cut resistant fleece on either side of the liner, as well as a layer of soil on top.

Both this site and the Marlpits, will be sown with an appropriate wild flower and grass seed mix in early Spring.

We have recently been back in contact with the climbing group who installed the ringbolts at Bulls Hollow some years ago. They have kindly offered to organise a volunteer group of their members to clear scrub and bramble from the rock faces at Bulls Hollow which are beyond the capabilities of our volunteers. They also hope to be able to clear some of the similar areas at Happy Valley, which would be very welcome.

We have also recently been in discussion with the Community Payback team, who are offering help with maintenance tasks. As some Members may remember, we have used this source of labour in the past, with somewhat unsatisfactory outcomes. However supervision levels seem to have improved and we hope that this may be a successful partnership for both us and them. I am hoping that work parties will commence in early December and the initial task they have been given is the clearance of bramble and scrub in front of the Toad Rock. We will be monitoring the situation closely in the coming weeks.

Also in the area of the SSSI at Denny Bottom, the local group formed a couple of years ago will re-commence clearance of the rocks when lockdown is over and we have some more volunteers from the Upper St side who have started work clearing scrub and bramble from the rocks outside their homes. I have said that we will arrange removal of the cuttings as the need arises; this seems to me to be a cooperation that is definitely to be encouraged on this difficult and labour intensive site.

Now that most of the leaves are down from the trees, we will be commencing routine ditch clearance and path edging work and I am hoping that we will be able to have some volunteer activity, even if it is only with a maximum of six people at a time. I hope to be able to lead a group removing seedlings from our heather regeneration areas and Gemma is hoping to lead some litter clearances.

Tree work is now coming into our focus, with still quite a number of ash trees needing attention. I will be husbanding our resources to make sure we can react to any serious weather over the coming months but I hope that we will have funds to carry out at least some clearance of the many smaller ash trees affected by die back on the edges of Rusthall Rd.

Work Schedule January - March 2021

Oct - Dec 2020

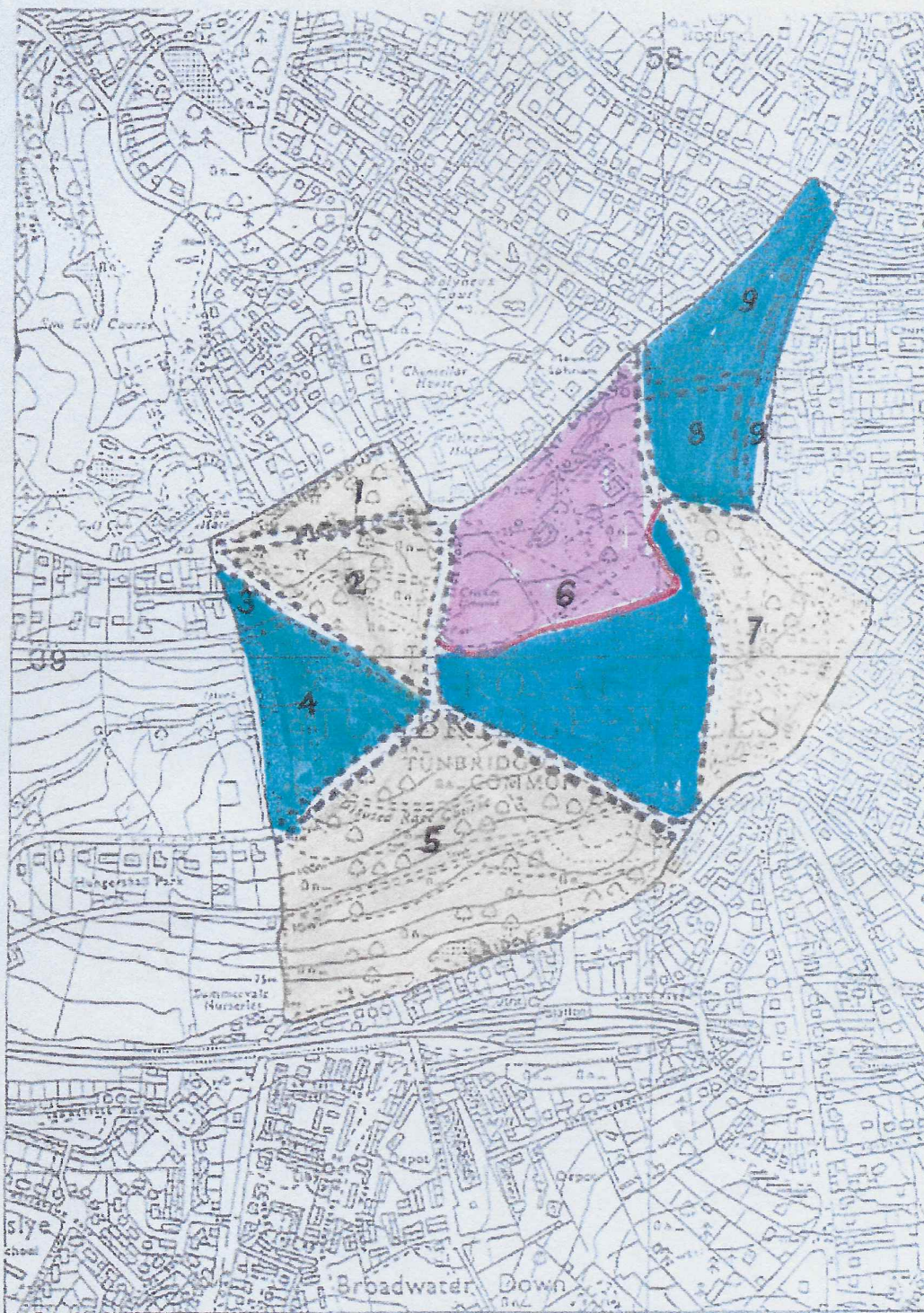
| Compartment | Management Plan Area | Requirements | Completed | Funding | Actual cost |
|-------------|----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------|-------------|
| Various | Paths | Commence cut and clear of all minor paths and tracks. | Done | Precept | £7,000 |
| R2 | Pond | Completion of second Marl Pit Pond. | Done | FHT and Friends | |
| T1 | Trees | Pollard large sweet chestnut outside Spa Hotel. | Ongoing | Precept | £720.00 |
| T6 | Trees | Pollard two dangerous lime trees adjacent to race course. | Ongoing | Precept | £500.00 |
| T5 | Trees | Pollard large dead ash adjacent to Cabbage Stalk Lane. | Done | Precept | £720.00 |
| R6 | Pond | Creation of scrapes and wetland at Bulls Hollow. | Done | Friends/Lund | |
| Various | Wild flowers | Seeding selected areas with yellow rattle. | Done | FHT | |
| Various | Grass | Large collector flail clearing long grass areas. | Done | Precept | £3,000.00 |
| All | Litter | Litter clearance as per contract. | Done | Precept | £6,375.00 |
| All | Grass | Amenity grass cutting as per contract. | Done | Precept | £2,933.34 |
| T6 | Litter | Deep clean of Wellington Rocks | Done | Precept | £500.00 |

Additional Work Oct - Dec 2020

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Jan - Mar 2021

| Compartment | Management Plan Area | Requirements | Completed | Funding | Actual cost |
|-------------|----------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| Various | Trees | Chipping brush across both Commons. | | Precept | £600.00 |
| R4 | Rocks | Full clearance of Happy Valley Rocks. | | Precept and Friends | £4,500.00 |
| All | Litter | Litter clearance as per contract. | | Precept | £6,375.00 |
| T5 | Trees | Planting hedge around Major York's car park. | | FHT | |
| R2 | Furniture | Install steps at Marl Pit Ponds. | | FHT | |
| R2 | Ponds | Seeding around new Marl Pit Ponds. | | FHT and Friends | |
| R6 | Trees | Removal of dead ash tree on Harmony Street. | | Precept | £350.00 |
| R6 | Trees | Remedial work on large damaged tree on Still Green. | | Precept | £150.00 |
| R5 | Trees | Removal on leaning tree over footpath WB19. | | Precept | £150.00 |
| T6 | Trees | Clear large fallen tree over track below cricket pitch. | | Precept | £350.00 |
| T4 | Trees | Pollard two large damaged oak trees on the racecourse. | | Precept | £525.00 |
| Various | Drainage | Clearance of drainage ditches. | | Precept | £1,200.00 |
| Various | Paths | Cutting back path edges. | | Precept | £900.00 |
| T2 | Paths | Repair of car park surface. | | Precept | £1,500.00 |



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Assistant Clerk's Report: December 2020

Facebook update

- ☐ The Facebook group continues to thrive and pleasingly there are now over 1,000 members.

| Date | Number of members (on 1 st of month) | Posts | Comments | Reactions |
|----------------|---|-------|----------|-----------|
| May 2020 | 374 | 101 | 395 | 2,371 |
| June 2020 | 647 | 104 | 428 | 2,128 |
| July 2020 | 743 | 71 | 324 | 1,491 |
| August 2020 | 836 | 49 | 236 | 882 |
| September 2020 | 896 | 65 | 194 | 1,168 |
| October 2020 | 943 | 80 | 303 | 1,386 |
| November 2020 | 980 | 96 | 261 | 2,069 |
| December 2020 | 1008 | | | |

The current top posts provide valuable insight into what matters to our community and cover the following topics:

1. Deer spotted on Rusthall Common.
2. Discarded fireworks.
3. Images of the view over Happy Valley.
4. Removal of litter bins at National Trust properties.
5. Images of sunrise.
6. Restaurant waste oil drums dumped on the Common.

Volunteers

The Assistant Clerk had an outdoor meet up with Leonie Barker, who manages Southborough SOS, a group aimed at coordinating volunteers to tackle litter and weeding within Southborough (which has now expanded to Tunbridge Wells, High Brooms and Tonbridge). A significant number of best practice ideas were gained from the meeting covering risk assessments, managing volunteers, communication, equipment etc. This information has been collated and was used to organise the first litter picking volunteer session, on 7th November, subsequently cancelled due to lockdown. However, a vast number of volunteers have continued to litter pick on their own or with another person and as such both Commons are in an improved state litter wise, with Rusthall in particular looking significantly better.

Thanks go to the Friends for providing funds for litter pickers, high visibility jackets and bin liners for our volunteers. We will be using these on Saturday 5th November when our volunteer session restart.

There is renewed enthusiasm from our volunteers, all have been contacted to establish ongoing commitment and while several have decided to hang up their gloves many new volunteers have made contact via email or through Facebook and as such we have a healthy number.

The Warden and Assistant Clerk have been working with Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Payback to set up community payback (previously called community service) projects on the Commons. This has involved several site visits, identification of suitable projects, a safety walk and a thorough check of the implications with our insurance company. We are anticipating a start date of Tuesday 15th December. The group will target their efforts in the Toad Rock area, with litter picking and scrub clearance.

IT

The office now benefits from a new Office 365 subscription administered by the Assistant Clerk and the linked OneDrive has been imported over from the office computer in the Town Hall. Feedback on the use of OneDrive for meeting agendas and supporting documents would be welcome, in the hope that we now have an accessible system that works for Conservators.

Health & Safety (H&S)

In addition to the revised H&S policy provided to Conservators for approval, the H&S system has received an overhaul.

The accident and incident log and hazard log have been reintroduced, while a review of risk accidents has been started. All of our contractors are due to be contacted to request additional documents for our records, such as their H&S policies, risk assessments and training records, in addition to their insurance certificates which we already hold.

Website

The Assistant Clerk has continued to support the Committee with the project.

Requests to Conservators

Since the last meeting on 17th September the following requests have been put to the Conservators, their outcomes are listed:

| Date of request | Detail | Outcome |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 16/10/20 | Request from Alex Orrow to use a drone on TW Common for commercial photography and for images to be made available to the Conservators. | Permission declined, existing policy upheld. |
| 26/10/20 | Request from Rusthall Cubs to host a Christmas party (x2) on Rusthall Common. | Permission granted subject to no vehicles being taken onto the Common, no sound system and that litter is collected at the end. Post decision, the event is on hold pending Covid guidance. |
| 11/11/20 | Request from King Charles the Martyr Church to use the area around the Forum for their | Permission granted, on the understanding that there is a wet weather cancellation plan |

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| | scratch nativity on Christmas Eve. | <p>and that caution is exercised on potentially slippery ground.</p> <p>Post decision, TWBC have expressed concern with the Covid management plans for the event. The Church plan to follow the Government's Christmas plans for 23rd-27th December. The warden and Assistant Clerk are working with all parties on this.</p> |
| 23/11/20 | Request from Camilla Bellamacina Productions for a commercial photoshoot for Hunters boots on Wellington Rocks on Wednesday 2 nd December. | Permission granted with a donation of £175 to the Friends. |

Gemma Stapeley

COMMONS CONSERVATORS
MEETING 10 DECEMBER 2020
BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021/22

General Background and inflation

Due to the sudden absence of our Treasurer this report has been put together at short notice and with less than full knowledge of the detailed financial transactions that have taken place this year but is based on considerable help from the Warden, Clerk and fellow Conservators.

The Conservators are required to approve a budget for the coming financial year and to issue a precept to the Borough Council. The precept will form part of the special expenses charged to council taxpayers in the former Tunbridge Wells Borough and the Rusthall Parish Council areas.

RPI showed an annual increase of 1.1% in September 2020. CPI showed an annual increase of 0.7% in October 2020.

Basis of Financial Projections

Receipts from the Freehold Tenants and the Friends, and the related project expenditure, have been excluded from the projections as they are subject to agreement and change. They should also be self-funding and therefore have no net impact on the general reserves. Where a proposed funded project has an impact on a particular budget head this has been noted in the narrative.

S106 or other such funding does not always have discrete expenditure projects attached to it and there can be more of an overlap with general maintenance expenditure so these are included in the income and expenditure reported to the Conservators. Having said that there has been no such income or expenditure in the year to date, none is forecast for the remainder of the year and none is included in the budget. As a result any such income that is received will have a favourable or neutral impact of the financial projections.

The financial projections have been prepared in order to achieve a nil net income or expense. Cost estimates for this year and next are realistic targets to manage to for each of the years rather than mechanically applying percentage uplifts on what has gone before. It is recognised that some expenditure will be necessary to deal with events that are outside management control and a level of contingency has been provided in next year's budget to try to allow for these. This has not been possible for the current year forecast and so there is an increased risk here.

Forecast Net Expenditure for 2020/21

The forecast shows that we should be able to achieve a net nil income balance for 2020/21, even after allowing for the exceptional costs resulting from the recent management restructure. It will require good cost control as there is no contingency to allow for unexpected events.

Budget Expenditure for 2021/22

The budget also shows a net nil income balance for the year to March 2022. This carries more risk principally around the precept, recruitment and litter management as well as the vagaries of the weather. There is a contingency of £4,500 to allow for unexpected events.

Income

The main income for the Conservators is the **Precept which** has been agreed at a level of £165,850 for the current year and has now all been received. In recent years this income has been adjusted in accordance with the annual change in the Retail Price Index for the year to the previous September. As noted above the RPI for September 2020 was 1.1%. On this basis the Precept income for next year should be £167,674 and this is the amount that has been included in the budget for 2021/22.

In the past the Conservators have received additional income by way of a **grant from Natural England**. No cash has been received to date however we have received confirmation that we will receive an award of £1,102 this year which is less than the current year budget figure of £1,475. As we do not have any confirmation of future receipts after this the budget has not assumed any and so any successful application for a further award will represent an upside for the budget next year.

Interest rates have fallen considerably during the year and so interest income is only expected to be £75 for the current year against a budget of £350 and has been reduced further to £50 for next year's budget.

Expenditure

Administration

The **Salaries** and headcount in the expected forecast for 2020/21 and the budget for 2021/22 reflect the impact of the recent restructure approved by the Conservators. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk roles have been combined from December 2020. Following the recent resignation of the Treasurer it has been assumed that an internally managed (i.e. no external costs) recruitment process will result in a new Treasurer appointment in April 2021 at the same salary as the previous Treasurer was recruited. The current Warden will retire at the end of June 2021 and a new Warden will be in place by the beginning of June 2021 allowing a one month handover and consequent duplication of costs for that month. An annual salary uplift of 1.5% has been assumed and this will apply to the Warden from April 2021 and the Clerk from December 2021 on a pro rata basis. It has been assumed that the Clerk will join a pension

scheme with a 3% employer contribution from April 2021 and the new Warden will join a similar scheme after the completion of an initial 6 month probationary period.

Allowing for certain costs of enabling the restructure the forecast payroll cost for 2020/21 is expected to be £64,372 compared to the budget of £60,478.

Based on the above assumptions the payroll cost for 2021/22 is budgeted to be £54,916 compared to the current year budget of £60,478. The annualised run rate of salary costs at the end of 2021/22 is expected to further reduce to £50,000 largely reflecting the savings in the cost of the new Warden.

Current year **storage costs** have been paid and it has been assumed that we can provide the necessary **workwear** for the new warden from the balance of £400 left for the year. The £1,000 budget is considered adequate for next year.

The **insurance** premium estimate for the calendar year 2021 has been received and the forecast for this year has been left at the budget level of £2,650 with a 2% increase next year to £2,700.

The current year **audit** charge has not yet been received and so the forecast remains as budget for this year with a 2% increase to £1,050 budgeted for next year.

Other administrative costs to date include a £1,680 initial payment for the new web site. The Freehold Tenants and Friends have agreed to provide £4,000 toward this project which should cover the remainder of the costs. After allowing for £500 of professional fees and further sundry expenditure the forecast is expected to be £2,800 for the year with the web site accounting for the overspend against budget. This will not recur next year and so £1,200 budget should be sufficient for 2022/22.

Management Plan and Maintenance

Grass Cutting – There have been no costs on this contract to date but this is based on a fixed price of £11,735 for the year and so we expect the current year cost to be in line with budget. The structure of this contract has been changed for next year and we hope to be able to make some savings as a result and so the budget for next year has been reduced to £11,000.

Cleared Areas and Other Maintenance – Only £3,464 has been invoiced here so far but we are expecting an invoice of over £17,000 shortly. This should account for most of the expected expenditure and the Warden hopes to manage this cost for the remainder of the year and so keep this cost below budget at £24,000. A budget allowance of £25,000 has been made for next year.

Tree Maintenance – Although expenditure to date on tree maintenance has only been £5,165 on an annual budget of £13,546 we are only just entering the time of year when most of this budget is spent. This is an area that is under pressure, especially with the continuing effects of ash die back and the uncertainties of the weather and it is felt that more headroom is needed in the current year and so the

forecast has been increased to £15,000. It is hoped that for next year the cost of ash die back will reduce and so has been budgeted for £14,000 in 2021/22.

Drainage and Ditches - £650 of the current budget of £2,040 has been spent to date but now that leaf fall is largely complete the balance of the work can start and the forecast is just under budget at £2,000. This level should be sufficient for next year.

Paths – No major problem areas here and so with £1,325 spent to date it is expected that we can come in slightly under budget here at £3,500 and this should remain the budget for next year.

Litter Control – The Conservators are already aware that this is a significant cost risk area and proposals of how we deal with it are still under discussion. The current contract runs through to the end of this financial year and while the quality of service may be questionable the price is largely known. It will be necessary to replenish the stock of dog waste bags before the end of this year and with the new bins we have purchased and with a reasonable allowance for the cost of dealing with camps and fly tipping we are forecasting an expenditure of £30,940 for this year compared to the £29,225 budgeted.

For next year the assumption has been made that we retain Oakbourne for a 12 month roll over on the same financial terms. It is assumed that the work to prepare the sites for the new collection bins will be carried out in the current year and the Friends have offered to fund this and so this cost has been excluded from the projections. The cost of emptying these bins has yet to be confirmed but an annual allowance of £4,000 has been included in the budget.

In addition to the usual estimate for camps and fly tipping a further £2,500 contingency has been included in these costs as this is seen as a high risk area where we may need to spend more, particularly given the recent performance of Oakbourne. This brings the budget litter collection cost next year to £38,180 compared to the latest forecast of £30,940 for the current year.

The **Furniture** budget covers the maintenance of park benches. Most of the work for this year has already been carried out costing £2,415 and we expect to manage this expenditure to £3,000 for the full year, slightly under budget. A budget level of £3,200 is proposed for next year.

Barriers - As well as the cost of replacement posts that protect various access points to the Commons this cost centre also includes repairs necessary to Fir Tree car park. Both these areas have suffered from the increased use of the Commons this year and while expenditure to date is under £1,000 the car park does require urgent repairs, however we should be able to still come in under budget at £3,500 for this year. One of the Freehold Tenant projects for next year is to replace some of the perimeter bollards around the car park with a ditch and bund which will require much less maintenance. It may be possible to use this method of protection in other areas and so ease the pressure on this budget. With winter coming and if we get continued high usage in the car park further repairs may be necessary after the winter and so the budget has been set at £4,000.

Other Repairs – covers sundry repairs not dealt with under other budget heads. This has been £410 for the year to date and should be no more than £1,500 for the full year which should also be adequate for next year's budget.

Based on the above forecasts for 2020/21 there is no headroom to have any **contingency** if we are to achieve a nil net income result. Given that the current year has only a few months to run we should have greater visibility of our costs and the ability to control expenditure in line with the forecast, this will be a challenge however. A contingency of £4,500 has been provided in the budget for 2021/22 which is the same as last year. Given the uncertainties around next year a higher figure would be preferable but this could not be accommodated if we are to have a break even budget. It should be noted however that there is an additional £2,500 contingency within the litter budget for next year.

S. Lacey

December 2020

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

Summary Forecast for 2020/21 and Budget for 2021/22

| | Year to 30-Nov-20 | Year ending 31-Mar-21 | | | Year Ending 31-Mar-22 | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Actual | Forecast | Budget | Variance | Budget | Variance to Prior Yr. |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | | | | | |
| Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Precept | 165,850 | 165,850 | 165,850 | | 167,674 | 1,824 |
| Other contributions - general | - | | | | - | (1,102) |
| Natural England | - | 1,102 | 1,475 | (373) | - | |
| Planning agreement income | - | - | | | | |
| Interest | 48 | 75 | 350 | (275) | 50 | (25) |
| Other | - | | | | | |
| | 165,898 | 167,027 | 167,675 | (648) | 167,724 | 697 |
| Total income | 165,898 | 167,027 | 167,675 | (648) | 167,724 | 697 |
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Salaries and expenses | | | | | | |
| Salaries, NI, pension, parking and payroll | 29,760 | 64,372 | 60,478 | (3,894) | 54,916 | (9,456) |
| Uniform and storage | 600 | 1,000 | 1,111 | 111 | 1,000 | - |
| Insurances | 1,365 | 2,650 | 2,650 | - | 2,700 | 50 |
| Audit - internal and external | - | 1,030 | 1,030 | - | 1,050 | 20 |
| Other | 2,134 | 2,800 | 1,208 | (1,592) | 1,200 | (1,600) |
| | 33,859 | 71,852 | 66,477 | (5,376) | 60,866 | (10,986) |
| Maintenance of Commons etc. | | | | | | |
| Short grass - grasscutting contract | - | 11,735 | 11,735 | 0 | 11,000 | (735) |
| Grass and cleared areas | 3,464 | 24,000 | 26,010 | 2,010 | 25,000 | 1,000 |
| Trees including annual survey | 5,165 | 15,000 | 13,546 | (1,454) | 14,000 | (1,000) |
| Ditches, drainage | 650 | 2,000 | 2,040 | 40 | 2,000 | - |
| Paths, cold bath and spring | 1,325 | 3,500 | 3,723 | 223 | 3,500 | - |
| Litter control | 19,590 | 30,940 | 29,225 | (1,716) | 38,180 | 7,240 |
| Furniture | 2,415 | 3,000 | 3,570 | 570 | 3,200 | 200 |
| Barriers | 928 | 3,500 | 5,100 | 1,600 | 4,000 | 500 |
| Other | 410 | 1,500 | 1,749 | 249 | 1,500 | - |
| | 33,946 | 95,175 | 96,698 | 1,523 | 102,380 | 7,205 |
| Contingency | | | 4,500 | 4,500 | 4,500 | 4,500 |
| Total expenditure | 67,806 | 167,027 | 167,675 | 647 | 167,746 | 719 |
| Net income/(expense) | 98,093 | (0) | 0 | (1) | (22) | (21) |

Litter contract 2020/21 - Proposal

Points to note:

- ☐ Having acknowledged that under the current budget the Conservators could not pay the market rate for a litter contract, in September 2020 Conservators agreed to negotiating a 12 month extension with our existing contractor, Oakbourne from 1st April 2021.
- ☐ The quality of service provided by Oakbourne is not always of a high standard or consistent but changing this contract during the current period of change within the Conservators would not be practicable. We perceive this as a short term option until we can tender the service fully with the guidance of our new warden and with accurate data on volumes.

Permission is sought for the 12 month extension to be negotiated with Oakbourne within the following terms:

- ☐ Disposal of black sacks to be into the 100 Litre wheeled bins and disposal will be the responsibility of a third party, this will no longer be the responsibility of Oakbourne. We estimate that this will be a cost to the Conservators of approximately £3k incl VAT (although this is based on Oakbourne data which is not highly accurate).
- ☐ Litter picking on a day to day basis to be removed, only to be completed prior to grass cutting.
- ☐ Litter picking to be carried out by community volunteers.
- ☐ Bin emptying will be as per the existing schedule, as the bins simply can't cope being stretched for longer periods and our community are vocal when the system fails.
- ☐ In the September Conservators' meeting, it was agreed that larger bins would affect the visual appeal of the Commons. Replacing existing bins would be an unnecessary cost.
- ☐ The 2017 Management Plan recommends increasing the number of litter bins (1.7). This is acknowledged, with two double bins replacing single bins being installed in the summer of 2020 and an additional single bin added to the Wellington Rocks area at the same time.
- ☐ We would like to propose financial penalties for contract failures (tbc with the Warden and Committee).
- ☐ Annual cost for 2020/21 is £25,502 which is invoiced monthly at £2,125. We would like to propose to Oakbourne that Conservators will continue to pay the current 2020/21 rate for the extension, despite disposal and litter picking being removed. We would however not pay any increase for the double bins recently installed on Wellington Rocks and the Lower Cricket Pitch.

Permission is also sought to select a third-party waste management company within the following terms:

- ☐ Pricing from three companies to be collected during January 2021, with selection of the best option during February 2021. Wheeled bin site to be arranged during February/March, anticipated at 2 x TW and 1 X Rusthall. The latter will likely require the cost of a concrete base at Conservator expense, which the Treasurer is aware of.
- ☐ Fixed price for 12 months from 1st April 2021.
- ☐ We will require one bin lift per week (all three bins at the same time) with an option to increase lift frequency if required.

- ☐ Full H&S documentation and insurances (liability and fleet) provided.
- ☐ Full duty of care waste transfer note and waste carriers license provided.

Litter Clearance Contract 2021 - 2022

Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Common

Definitions

“The Contractor” refers to the successful applicant to whom the contract is awarded.

“The Supervising Officer” refers to the Warden or such other person as designated by the Commons Conservators.

“Specifications” refers to the accompanying document (Appendix 1) which specifies the areas to be cleared and the schedule of clearances.

“Operatives” refers to any employee or representative of the Contractor engaged in the execution of the works.

The Contract

Scope

1. This contract will run for 12 months, commencing on 1 April 2021.
2. A quote is required per single additional bin. The Contractor must be prepared to empty each additional bin that is installed.
3. A quote is required per single additional dog bag dispenser. The Contractor must be prepared to replenish each additional dispenser that is installed.
4. The contractor will patrol both Commons and empty litter bins in accordance with the Specifications in Appendix 1. The summer schedule will run from April to October inclusive and the winter schedule will run from November to March inclusive.
5. Any variation from the Specifications will be subject to agreement with the Supervising Officer.
6. The Contractor will provide supervision for any Operatives and will be held responsible for the quality of their work.
7. The Contractor shall provide all suitable and appropriate tools, vehicles and implements necessary for the proper execution of the work at his expense and maintain them in a safe and efficient condition.
8. The agreed payment will cover all management and employment costs, fuel, vehicle costs, tools and rubbish bags.

9. Small scale fly tipping to be treated as all other litter clearance.
10. Large scale fly tipping to be photographed and discussed with the Supervising Officer. Where agreed, this is to be treated as a separate job and a work order issued. The Contractor to issue a separate invoice.

Enforcement

1. In the event of a failure to carry out the work to an acceptable standard, the Supervising Officer will issue a default notice outlining what is required to bring the work up to standard within seven days. In the event of the required work not being satisfactorily carried out within that period, the Supervising Officer shall appoint another contractor to carry out the work and the cost of this will be deducted from payment.
2. In the event of three default notices being issued the Conservators may give one month's notice to terminate the contract. In the event of termination by the Conservators, payment will be made for any work carried out during the notice period, subject to the provisions of this contract.
3. This contract may be terminated by either party but a minimum of three months' notice must be given. In the event of termination by either side payment will be made for any work carried out during the notice period, subject to the provisions of this contract. The default procedure will still apply.
4. In the event of any disputes about quality of work, the Supervising Officer's decision is final.

Safety

1. The Contractor shall comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act and any other enactment or regulation governing the health and safety of both operatives and the public.
2. Copies of the Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessment, staff training and Public Liability Insurance certificate are to be provided to the Supervising Officer. The Contractor must have public liability insurance with a minimum cover of £5 million.
3. Any claim for injury or damage caused during the execution of this contract will be the responsibility of the Contractor.

Payment

1. The Contractor will invoice the Conservators monthly in arrears for one twelfth of the annual sum and payment will be made within thirty days of receipt of invoices subject to any deductions made as a result of a default.

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATIONS FOR LITTER CLEARANCE

PART 1 – Specific requirements Schedule

All bins on both Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common to be emptied regularly as required. The following high use areas to be emptied as per the following schedule:

| | April – Oct Inclusive | Nov – March Inclusive |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wellington Rocks | 7 days per week | *5 days per week |
| Fir Tree Road Car Park | | |
| Upper Cricket Pitch and adjacent grassland | | |
| Fonthill and adjacent grassland between Stranges Avenue and The Forum | | |
| Lower Cricket Pitch | | |
| Brighton Lake and surrounds | 4 days per week | **3 days per week |
| Toad Rock area | | |

* to include Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.

** to include at least one weekend day.

PART 2 – General requirements

1. Contractor to empty litter bins on Commons 7 days per week from April to October inclusive and 5 days per week from November to March inclusive.
2. Black sacks to be deposited in the 1100 Litre wheeled bins for disposal by a third party. The Contractor is responsible for notifying the Warden if the wheeled bins are reaching capacity and will be unable to accommodate bags before the next collection.
3. Dog fouling to be removed from paths and formally cut areas.
4. Litter to be cleared from grass area prior to cutting. Grass cutting schedule to be provide by Warden.
5. Contractor to inform the Warden of any complaint received from members of the public and any hazard or problem noticed while patrolling the Commons, e.g. fallen or dangerous trees, damage to seats or bins, etc. Incident report forms to be supplied by Warden.
6. The Contractor should be flexible and be prepared to vary the work schedule according to changing circumstances, by discussion with the Warden

Proposed 2021 Friends and Freehold Tenants' projects on the Commons

Request for approval by the Conservators

Described below are the projects on the Commons to be funded by the Freehold Tenants and the Friends in 2021, subject to the Conservators' approval. The list has been drawn up in consultation with the Warden and all these projects have his support. Detailed specifications for each project will be agreed in advance between the Warden, contractor concerned and ourselves.

The Friends and the Freehold Tenants take financial responsibility for subsequent maintenance of clearance work that we fund. We will continue to work with the Warden to develop maintenance plans for cleared areas to avoid additional burden on the Conservators' budget and to strike the optimal balance between annual or biennial cuts, hand-work by volunteers and multi-year rotation allowing natural succession and scrub regeneration between periodic major clearances.

For reference we have attached a schedule showing how recent and proposed enhancement projects on the Commons contribute to the objectives of the Management Plan.

Proposed projects

1. Reedmace removal at the original Marlpit pond in Rusthall, which is becoming choked with vegetation. This is the pond with a Great Crested Newt population, so the Warden will ensure that the work follows expert conservation guidance to avoid any disruption.
2. Reedmace removal at Bracken Cottage pond next to the path between Nevill Park and Hungershall Park. This is another site where the regular pond survey has identified the need for remedial work this year.
3. Construction of a bund and ditch at the edge of Fir Tree Road car park. A number of the wooden posts marking the edge of the car park need replacement, which is very costly. The Warden has proposed adopting the approach taken on Ashdown Forest of building a bund and ditch to prevent vehicles moving from the car park onto the Common.
4. Holly clearance behind Fir Tree Road car park between the bat cave clearing and the path to the Spa Roundabout.
5. Holly clearance on a knoll between the paths going down from Wellington Rocks toward Castle Road and the Lower Cricket Pitch. This will reveal a group of oak trees which were a commemorative planting for George VI's coronation in 1937.
6. Two further days of cherry laurel clearance.
7. Remedial work on a very rutted stretch of track near Wellington Rocks.
8. Contributions to cover the great majority of the Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons website development project.

Management Plan - Improvement Projects on the Commons 2017-2021

| 2017 Management Plan recommendations | | Funding | Projects 2017 | Projects 2018 | Projects 2019 | Projects 2020 | Proposed Projects 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Regular monitoring and recording of key sites, features and habitats. * Draw up and maintain/update rolling plans, including register of highest priority amenity projects (paths, clearances near paths, seat locations etc) for s106 and other windfall funding * Increase reliance on (skilled) volunteers and look for more funding opportunities | n/a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor rocks, ponds, coralroot (Warden+FT) * Introduced tree survey -remedial work needed focusing on roadside(precept) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor rocks, ponds, coralroot (Warden+FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor rocks, ponds, coralroot (Warden+FT) * 2 KHWP days (see below) * Financial support for student project by Hadlow College (FT) * Tree popper handtools for volunteers (Friends) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor rocks, ponds, coralroot (Warden+FT) * Volunteer days - Friends, Apsley St group, 2 KHWP days * <i>Financial support for Hadlow student project (FT) CANCELLED - COVID</i> * <i>Sussex Lund application (see below)</i> * Species surveys and related walks and events (Friends and FT) <i>3 bird surveys, wildflower site survey, tree survey completed, others CANCELLED - COVID</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor rocks, ponds, coralroot (Warden+FT) * Volunteer Days - Friends, Apsley St Group, Community Payback groups * Species surveys and related walks and events (COVID permitting) Friends and FT) |
| Rocks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phased programme of rock management, removing grass, shrubs and small trees and maintaining sightlines. * Additional rock outcrop clearances | Precept/pr oject | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *TW6 Wellington Rocks spraying + Friends volunteer day Nov + mechanical tree removal (precept) * R6 Denny Bottom Friends volunteer day Feb * Cheesewring area in R4 Happy Valley (Friends and FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * R6 New Denny Bottom volunteers group - Apsley St Oct | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * R6 Toad Rock area Friends and volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * R4 Happy Valley Friends |
| Ponds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phased pond maintenance and clearance schedule. * Additional ponds - (prioritising Great Crested Newt potential), | Precept/pr oject | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * TW2 Desilted Fir Tree Pond (precept) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Friends volunteer day CSL Pond TW5 Oct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * TW5 Brighton Lake - clear reedmace (FT) * R2 Clearance around 2nd Marlpit Pond (FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * R6 Bulls Hollow (Friends and Sussex Lund) TW2 Fir Tree Pond extension (FT) * R2 Marlpits extension (FT and Friends) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * R2 - reedmace from Marlpit 1 (Friends & FT) * TW4 - reedmace from Bracken Cottage Pond (Friends & FT) |
| Heathland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Focus heathland management in a small number of key heathland/healthy grassland areas, prioritising TW6 relict heath and TW7 Marshall Plan. These will receive labour-intensive treatment. | Precept/pr oject | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 2 KHWP volunteer days TW6 near Victoria Grove Oct/Nov, * Friends volunteer day TW7 Marshall Plan Nov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * KHWP volunteer day TW6 near Victoria Grove Nov * Friends volunteer day TW7 Marshall Plan Nov | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * TW6 2 KHWP days in Feb and Nov 2019 scrub clearance near Victoria Grove (FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Financial support for Hadlow student project (FT) CANCELLED - COVID</i> <i>TW6 KHWP day</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>volunteer days to be confirmed</i> |
| Grass meadows, clearings, glades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Second (early spring) cut in some grassland areas to reduce fertility. * Vary the cut of grassland and wood pasture areas and leave random unmown patches to promote biodiversity. * Wildflower meadows (KHWP to advise) | Precept | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Experiment cutting in rotation * Trial new technology - flailbot etc * Monitor results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Experiment cutting in rotation * Trial new technology - flailbot etc * Monitor results | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellow Rattle sown on favourable wildflower sites (FT and precept) Continue experimental cutting in rotation, trialling flailbot etc (Warden) | |
| Woodland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Focus woodland edge management on south-facing woodland edges, rides and glades: scallop edges, rotational coppicing * Phased programme to remove cherry laurel and rhododendron * Selective thinning and pollarding in areas of dense shade * Cut into secondary woodland to increase acid grassland and broaden glades around key paths (for security and views) | Precept/pr oject | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * TW5 Scalloped racecourse edges (s106) * Friends volunteers Happy Valley R4 Jan * Laurel removal St Pauls, Happy Valley R4, scrape, prepare and seed (FT) * Extend clearing TW6 Castle Road (FT) * Clear holly/scrub TW2 near batcave to let more light in (FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue laurel and scrub removal Happy Valley R4, scrape, prepare and seed (FT) * TW6 Major Yorks roadside holly (precept) * Clear holly scrub S of Fir Tree Pond to let light in TW2 (FT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *TW6 Holly below Victoria Grove (FT) * R4 Holly patch at Happy Valley (FT) * TW4 Holly scrub - Racecourse (FT) * TW5 Holly scrub S of Hungershall Park (FT) * R2 Cherry laurel removal Langton Road/Rusthall Elms (volunteer) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 days Cherry Laurel, Rusthall and TW (FT) TW2 holly scrub clearance between FTR car park and bat cave clearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 days Cherry Laurel, Rusthall and TW (FT) TW2 holly scrub clearance between FTR car park and bat cave clearing |
| Trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Bespoke treatment to preserve specimen trees, depending on species. * Clearing holly, sycamore and scrub around selected specimen trees. | Precept/pr oject | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary oaks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Clear around boundary oaks TW4 and holm oak TW5 (FT) * Clear around small-leaved lime on Bishops Down (precept) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Planting of new specimen trees (FT) c/f to 2021</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear holly around George VI commemorative planting of oaks near Wellington Rocks TW6 |
| Other habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional reptile refugia/hibernacula. | Project | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R2 wildlife refuge area near Marlpit ponds (FT/Friends) TW2 wildlife refuge area near Fir Tree Pond (FT) | |

Management Plan - Improvement Projects on the Commons 2017-2021

| 2017 Management Plan recommendations | | Funding | Projects 2017 | Projects 2018 | Projects 2019 | Projects 2020 | Proposed Projects 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Amenity - paths and drainage | *Create and improve tracks and non-KCC paths * Multi-year rotational programme of ditch clearance. | Precept/KC C/project | * FTR pond flight of steps TW2 (FT) * TW5 path surface near Swan car park to Terrace Walk (FT) * Extend Marlpit Common View path R2 (FT) * Widen, scrape path to Spa TW2 (FT) *Widen Valley footpath R5 and steps (FT) | * TW6 Racecourse drainage channel (precept) * TW5 +6 Racecourse surfaced paths near Major Yorks Road (FT) | * Review KCC paths and map problems (Warden - ongoing) * TW7 Resurface Strange's Walk (KCC) | *Pth resurfacing - R5 Tarry Path, TW4/TW5 path from Nevill Park to the Eridge Road Garden Centre (KCC) | * TW6 Track near Wellington Rocks * TW2 Bund and ditch behind FTR car park |
| Amenity grassland | * Bring forward the summer cut of some popular grassland areas which are not of high floristic value to July (before summer holidays). * Ensure cut width is sufficient near paths, increase the width specifications for key paths. | Precept | | | | | |
| Amenity - landscape | Open up views/plant screening for visual reasons (not specifically highlighted in plan but consistent and recommended by TWBC) | Project | * Hedge by Fairground car park TW5 (FT) | | * R6 Reduce tall hollies above Apsley St (precept and Friends) * | * R6 Continue to reduce tall hollies above Apsley St a (precept/Friends) *Additional hedging by Fairground car park TW5 (FT) | |
| Amenity - seats and bins | Additional seats, litter bins | Donation/s106 | * 1 additional seat (donation) * 6 refurbished (Friends) | * 2 additional seats (donation) * 15 renovated (s106) | * TW6 seat (FT) * TW4 seat (FT) | Litter picking kit for volunteers (Friends) | |
| Amenity - access | Information provision/signs etc | Project/s106 | * 10 information panels (Friends/donations) | | | | * New website (precept, Friends and FT) |

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

Health and Safety Policy Statement

Introduction

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators (TWCC) accept that they have a responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable and as required by law, to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees, contractors, volunteers and other persons who may be affected by its acts or omissions. The Conservators are committed to maintaining high standards of health, safety and environmental protection in all its operations.

Objectives

- ☐ to comply, as a minimum, with relevant statutory requirements, the Common Law duty of care and safety policies;
- ☐ to prevent injuries and ill-health to employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the public;
- ☐ to ensure everyone understands and carries out their responsibilities for the safety of themselves, their colleagues and members of the public.

Requirements

- ☐ Risk assessments for members of staff to identify hazards, both in the office and on the Common.
- ☐ Training for members of staff where a requirement is identified.
- ☐ The Warden to patrol the Commons regularly and record any potential hazards and how they are dealt with.
- ☐ Accident and incident logs to be maintained.
- ☐ Accident and incident forms to be issued to all contractors.
- ☐ A copy of the contractor's health and safety policy must be reviewed and retained by the Conservators when a contract is awarded.
- ☐ For ad hoc work, only competent and reputable contractors to be employed who can demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety requirements and co-operate with the Warden. They should be able to demonstrate and prove that they have received all relevant training.
- ☐ Any vehicles used on Conservators business must have insurance for business use and the driver shall have a valid driving licence.

Limitation of responsibility

Members of the public have a duty of care to themselves on Common land. Unless TWCC set out to create a risk, or is reckless about whether a risk is created, TWCC is not liable for any injury caused by:

- ☐ any natural feature of the landscape including any tree, shrub, plant, river or stream
- ☐ any ditch or pond, whether natural or not
- ☐ people passing over, under or through a wall, fence or gate, except if they're making proper use of a gate or stile

The interpretation of the legislation on liability to the public is a matter for the courts to decide.

as referenced in this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities#your-liability-to-the-public>

Responsibilities

The Conservators are ultimately responsible for managing their health and safety responsibilities on the Commons and of employees and in the office.

The Warden has day to day responsibility for managing TWCC's health and safety responsibilities on the Commons and the Assistant Clerk has day to day responsibility for managing TWCC's health and safety responsibilities in the office. These responsibilities include ensuring that risk assessments have been undertaken and documented, that accident and incident logs are maintained, reviewing and retaining contractors health and safety policies prior to new contractors being engaged and annually thereafter and reviewing at least annually contractors' vehicle insurance and driving licenses.

Training

As TWCC's health and safety responsibilities are limited, formal employee training is not considered necessary. Staff training will be reviewed annually as part of the risk register review.

Insurance

It is the policy of TWCC to take out insurance for employers liability, public liability and personal accident.

Last reviewed: November 2020
Date of next review: November 2021

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

Open Spaces Policy

Purpose of the Commons.

The Commons are maintained and preserved by the Conservators according to the provisions of the County of Kent Act 1981 for the enjoyment of townspeople and visitors. Commercial companies are not, in principle to be excluded, so long as they are not trading on the Commons or behaving in a way that the public might find unacceptable. Organised events on the Commons are not in principle to be excluded but will require permission from the Conservators in advance.

Suitability

Each event must be judged individually on its merits, but as a guide the types of event that would be deemed **suitable** for further consideration would be:

- ☐ Traditional events including the fair.
- ☐ Charitable events.
- ☐ Sporting events.
- ☐ Community events with an emphasis on children.
- ☐ Free and inclusive, open to all.
- ☐ Filming and still photography.

Events would normally be considered **unsuitable** if they:

- ☐ Have the potential to cause considerable damage to the Commons.
- ☐ Are commercial events to generate profit.
- ☐ Need to enclose part of the Common.
- ☐ Require excessive involvement from the Warden or office.
- ☐ Are excessively disruptive for the local community.
- ☐ Create unreasonable noise and disturbance for residents.
- ☐ Need excessive sound amplification.
- ☐ Require crowd control.
- ☐ Are expected to continue beyond 22.00hrs.
- ☐ Have been refused permission by the Trustees of the Manor of Rusthall.

Applications

Requests for permission to hold events or to use the Commons for a specific activity should be emailed to info@twcommons.org or addressed to the Commons Conservators, Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RS.

Requests will need to adhere to the following:

1. They must be made in a timely manner. The Conservators meet four times per year and can only make a decision at these meetings, please allow enough time for this process. The office has permission to decide on small scale activities

such as photography and filming, in this case please provide at least two weeks for your request to be processed.

2. Evidence of Public Liability Insurance must be included.
3. A risk assessment for the event or activity will need to have been completed.
4. Inclusion of full details of the plans including purpose, dates, times, types of equipment involved, numbers of people etc.
5. Please ensure that no vehicles are taken on to the Common unless explicit permission has been given.
6. Measures to manage litter and to avoid damage to the Commons must be detailed.

Charges

In some instances, it may be necessary for the Commons Conservators to charge the organisers a nominal fee to cover costs. As appropriate this will be included in the terms of the permission.

Licensing.

Events which need an entertainment or alcohol licence are not, in principle, unacceptable if they meet the terms of the licence as well as the criteria of the Conservators. The Conservators can begin negotiations and, if appropriate, give agreement in principle, but they reserve the right to require a licence to be obtained before permission is granted. Their final decision would take into account any representations made to the Licensing Committee

Local authority Open Spaces Policy.

The Conservators are not bound by the Open Spaces Policy of other bodies, notably Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, although they can take such policies into consideration.

Explanation of decisions.

Conservators should give reasons for their decisions if they are judged to be contentious or of interest to the public. These will be recorded in the Conservator's meeting minutes and published on the website. If considered appropriate, the local press should be explicitly informed.

Donations

All donations for the use of the Commons would be gratefully received by the Commons Conservators for their ongoing management.

If you wanted to continue to show support for the Commons please consider joining the Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons:

<http://www.friendsofthecommons.co.uk/>

Date of last review: March 2020

Date of next review: March 2023

27 queens road
tunbridge wells • kent • TN4 9LZ
01892 544316

25 November 2020

Dear Gemma,
prior to the meeting of the Commons' Conservators on December 10th could I ask you to back up our request to place a 20ft shipping container between our pavilion and nets by distributing the enclosed plan to the members of the committee.

As you can see from the drawing the container would be a tight fit, being as it is between the side of the building and the nets enclosure, but this could be an ideal position as it makes access to the ground and pitch very straight-forward. The container could be painted a dark green to blend in with the net enclosure or a dark brown to blend in with the pavilion, I would be grateful if you could advise us as to your preference should our request be successful.

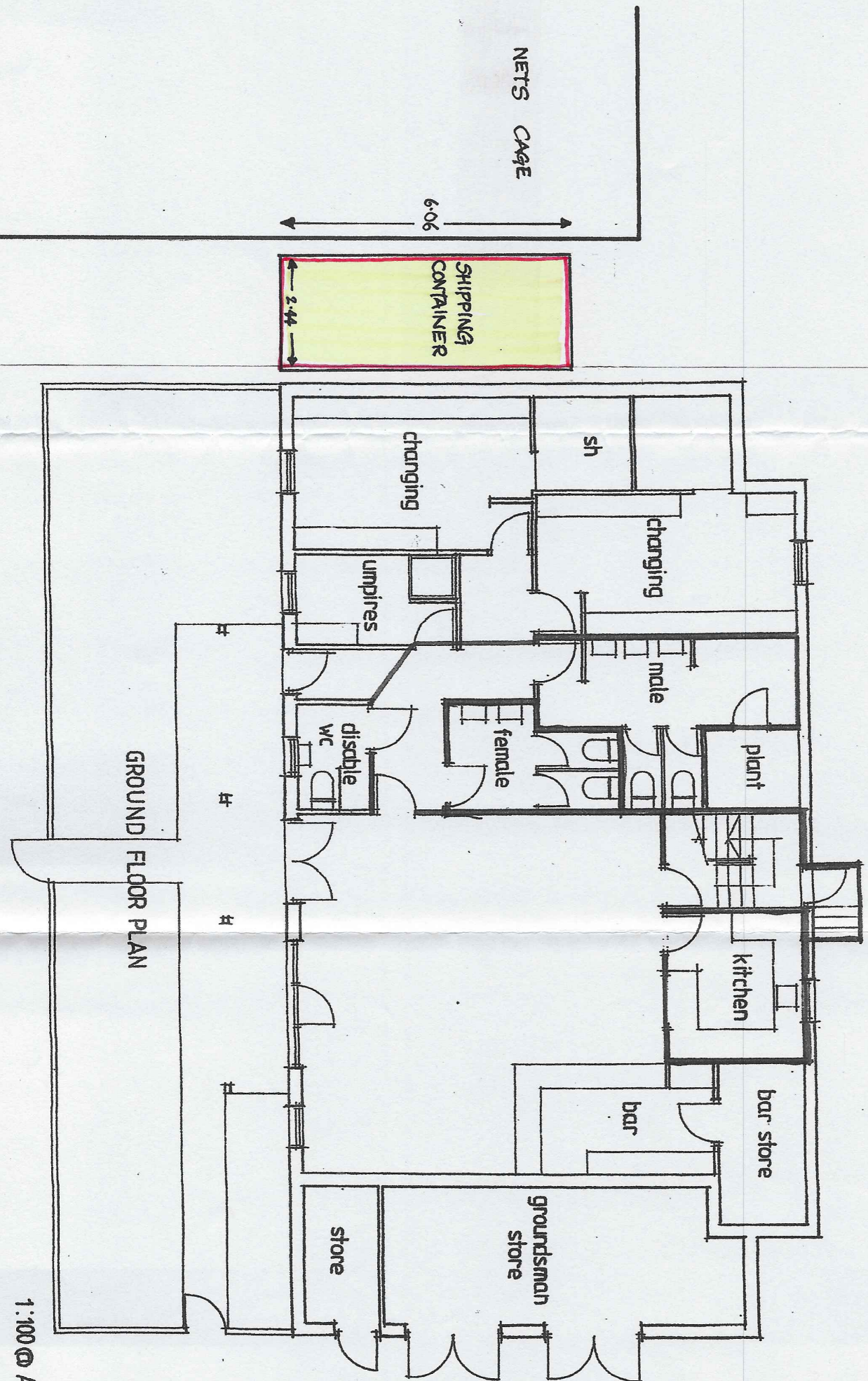
To reiterate, the reason for this request is that Linden Park Cricket Club wishes to maintain and improve the standard of the pitches and outfield and to that end we would want to purchase a new mower which requires bigger storage. The container would provide us with the additional storage necessary for the new equipment.

I hope the meeting goes well and that our submission is successful and I would ask you to let me know as soon as is realistically practicable.

Many thanks for your help with this.
Yours sincerely

Mike Taylor

LINDEN PARK CRICKET CLUB PAVILION site of proposed container / shed.

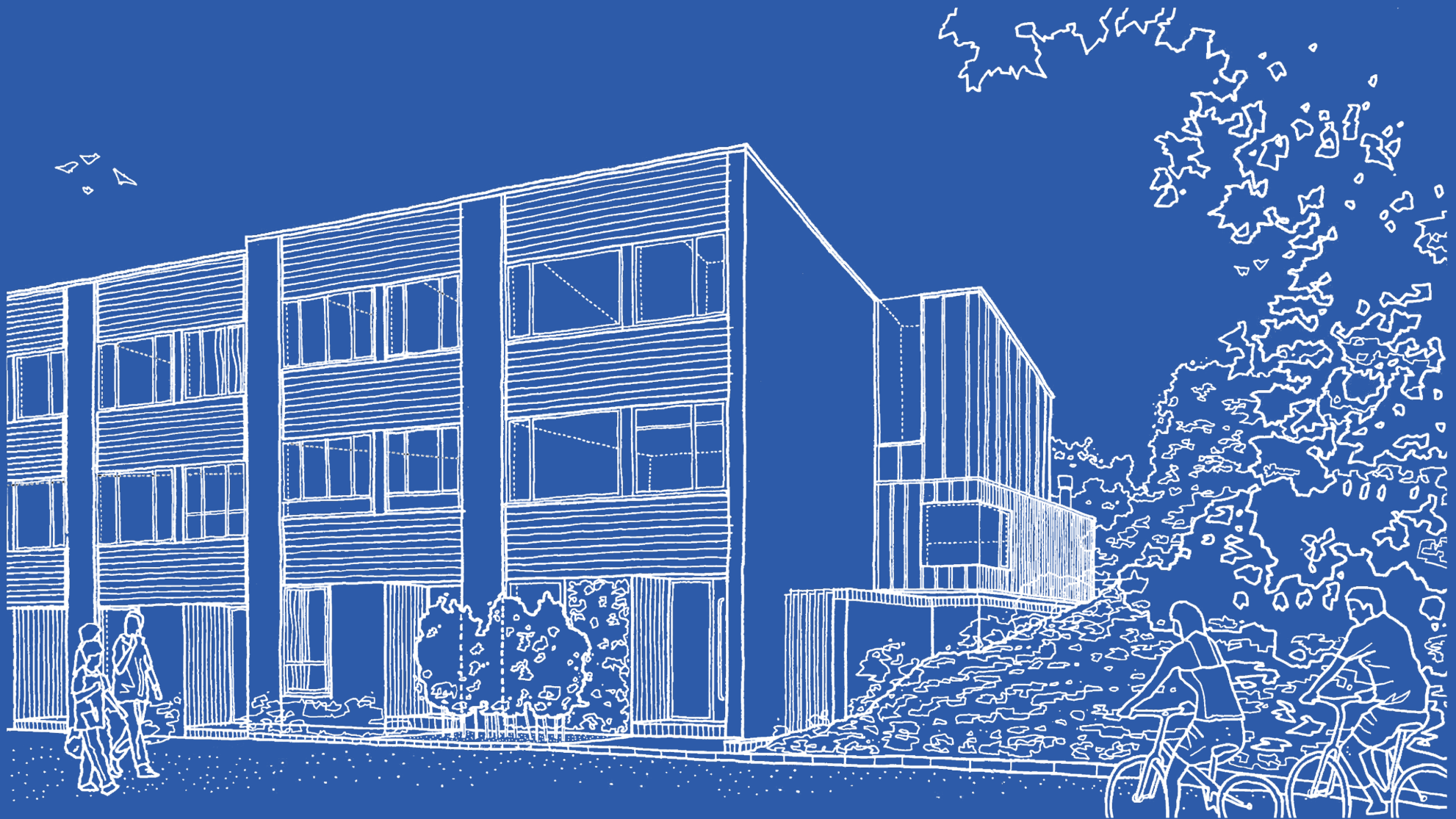


4 Onslow House - The Common Design & Access Statement

December 2020

DRAFT





Sketch - View from Castle Road

Design & Access Statement

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1.0 Context

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Site Context
- 1.3 Planning Policies & Guidance

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- 3.8 Sustainability

1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application to extend No. 4 Onslow House, Castle Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8BY. Proposals comprise the rear and side extension of the end-of-terrace house.

The document should be read in conjunction with the following drawings also submitted as part of this application:

- 195_P_001: Location plan
- 195_P_010: Existing plans
- 195_P_020: Existing front elevation
- 195_P_021: Existing side and rear elevation
- 195_P_100: Proposed site plan
- 195_P_101: Proposed ground floor plan
- 195_P_102: Proposed first and second floor plan
- 195_P_103: Proposed third and fourth floor plan
- 195_P_200: Proposed street elevation
- 195_P_201: Proposed front elevation
- 195_P_202: Proposed side elevation
- 195_P_203: Proposed rear elevation

Key

-  Site boundary
-  Metropolitan green belt (MGB1)
-  Limits of built development (LBD1)
-  Site with nature conservation interest/ local nature reserve (EN15)



Aerial photograph - Local area

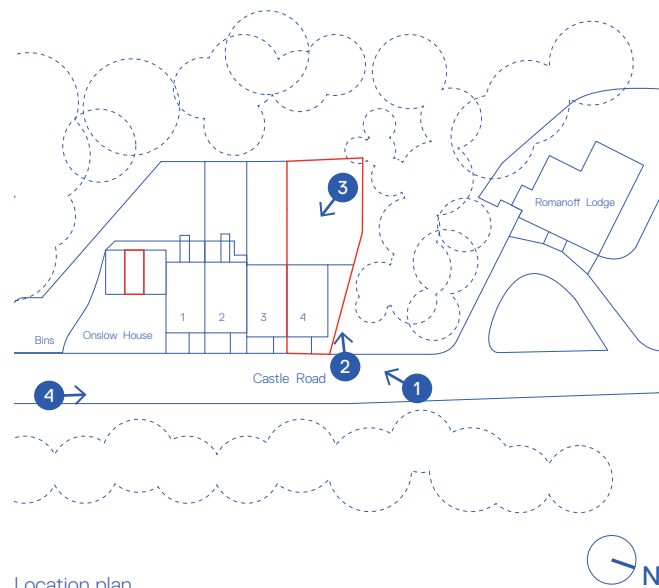
Design & Access Statement

Context

1.0

1.2 Site Context

The site is occupied by a 1960s end-of-terrace town-house with external space to the front, rear and side. Completing the terraced row are three other properties, with shared parking and garages to the south of the site. The buildings are of brick construction with wall-hung concrete tiling, large uPVC windows and monopitch roofs. Much of the external space immediate to the house is covered with concrete hard-standing. The rear gardens slope up to the rear of the site and are enclosed by the woodland of the Common.



Location plan



1 View from Castle Rd looking south



2 Side plot



3 View from rear garden



4 View from Castle Rd looking north

1.3 Planning Polices and Guidance

The site lies outside the Settlement Boundary defined in the Local Plan. It sits within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB), the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and a Site with Nature Conservation Interest/Local Nature Reserve (EN15). The opposite planning policies and guidance have been considered when developing proposals for the application site.

Green belt

The site is located in the greenbelt, Paragraph 89 of the NPPF is relevant in respect of previously developed sites: “A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt”. Amongst the exceptions to this are:

- The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

Local Planning Policy

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Development Plan Documents are made up of the Core Strategy (2010), Site Allocations Plan and the Saved Policies of the Local Plan (2009). The site is unallocated in the Site Allocations DPD and is identified as Green Belt and lies within Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area within the adopted Proposals Map.

Core strategy

- Core Policy 5 (Sustainable Design and Construction) states that the Council will seek to encourage sustainable design and construction principles and be of high-quality design.
- Core Policy 9 (Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells) states that development must conserve and enhance the landscape and heritage of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

1.3 Planning Policies and Guidance (Continued)

Specific Local Plan Policies

- Policy MGB1 (MGB) states that it shall be preserved and no development which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it will be permitted. The policy goes on to state that the re-use of a building may be permitted in the MGB provided any proposal is in accordance with Policies H13 and ED5.
- Policy LBD1 (Outside the Limits to Built Development) states that development will only be permitted where it would be in accordance with all relevant policies contained in this local plan and the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 rural settlement and countryside policies.
- Policy EN1 (Development Control Criteria) states that new development should be compatible with neighbouring uses and should not cause significant harm to the amenities or character of the area in terms. It states that the design of the proposal should respect the site context and take account of efficient use of energy.
- Policy EN5 (Development within Conservation Area) explains that proposals will only be permitted where the siting of development would be similar to adjoining building frontage lines and the layout and arrangement of buildings would follow the pattern of existing development.
- Policy EN25 (Development Control Criteria for all Development Proposals Affecting the Rural Landscape) states that new proposals will be required to have minimal impact on the landscape character of the locality and that new buildings should be well screened by existing vegetation.
- POLICY H11 (Extensions to dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development) states that extensions to an existing dwelling will be permitted provided it is modest and in scale with the original dwelling and would not dominate it visually or result in a poorly-proportioned building or detract from its character or setting.

2.1 Pre-application Advice

Preliminary design proposals were submitted for pre-application advice with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in 2017 (reference 17/01060/PAMEET). A meeting was held on the application site with Planning Officer Avril McNamara, who also sought feedback from the Conservation Officer.

Preliminary Design

The preliminary proposals presented sought to extend the existing house at the rear and to the side of the plot, increasing the size of the existing house by 41 sq m. The extension formed an enlargement of the existing kitchen/dining space at first floor, and a new bathroom at ground and third floor. The extension to the rear of the property was single storey, whilst the side extension was two storey at the rear, stepping down to single storey at the front.

The side extensions were set back from the front of the existing house and set lower in height than the front elevation to maintain subservience to the principal elevation facing Castle Road.

The external walls were predominantly clad in dark grey zinc, with metal framed windows and an engineering brick 'plinth' forming a retaining wall to the adjacent grassed verge. Following the meeting, other lighter colours were explored for the cladding, including a bronze colour.

To enhance the landscape setting of the house and improve outlook, green roofs were incorporated on the single storey extension.



Sketch view - Preliminary design



Front elevation - Preliminary design

2.1 Pre-application Advice (Continued)

Design Advice

The feedback received from the planning authority has influenced the current proposals submitted for approval, including the following;

- The property lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area. The local authority (LPA) firstly give consideration as to whether the proposal is acceptable in principle in this location. Policy H11 allows for extensions to dwellings when the extension would be modest in scale with the original dwelling and would not dominate it visually or result in a poorly proportioned building or detract from its character or setting.
- In this respect, the proposal is designed to create interest at this end of the row of terraced houses, but it has achieved this by incorporating some of the design elements of the original house.
- With regards to scale, the extension is set back from the highway and remains subservient to the main dwelling.
- Policy H11 considers the increase in volume to the property. The volume of the existing house is 374 m³ and the proposed increase is 130m³, resulting in a 35% increase in volume. This volume increase would be regarded as modest and therefore is consistent with the Local Plan policy. Therefore, it is likely that the proposal will be viewed as acceptable in principle in this green belt location.
- With regard to Conservation Area issues, Council's Conservation Officer was broadly supportive of the proposals but advised that the detail and materials will be critical, particularly regarding the side extension, as this will be visible from Castle Road.
- The Conservation Officer commented that the colour of the existing houses is quite sombre and so would like to see if the use of lighter materials would enhance the house. He also said that careful attention will need to be given to the brick front elevation to ensure that this is not too harsh.
- With regard to the proposals' impact on residential amenity, the main consideration will be the rear single storey extension and how this impacts on 3 Onslow House. The plans show the extension being built on the boundary line. Consideration should be given to setting the extension away from the boundary, even by 30cms or so.
- Also ensure that the height and depth of the rear extension does not appear overbearing when viewed from the neighbour's garden and rear living room.
- The proposal include planting on the roof of this element would help to soften the appearance and ensure that the view from the neighbouring properties is still 'green'.

2.2 Design Response

Since pre-application discussions, the design proposals have been developed cognisant of the feedback received. The broad principles of the scheme are the same - the side extension remains 2 storeys, with a single storey rear and front extension. The following updates have been incorporated:

Scale/Amount

- The massing has been developed in response to the changing requirements of the residents, more detailed survey information and rationalising the overall form.
- The front single storey element has been pushed back further by approx. 1m from the front line of the existing buildings, with the footprint reduced. Previously the space was used as ground floor bathroom, where it now provides an external bin and bicycle store.
- The side extension width of the two storey volume has been reduced by 300mm.
- The rear extension has been increased in depth by 600mm and offset from the No.3 boundary by 375mm to minimise amenity impact.
- The GIA has been reduced by 6 m² while the volume has increased by 11 m³.
- Please refer to the table opposite for a detailed comparison of key dimensions.

| Key measurement | Preliminary design (2017) | Current design (2020) |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Front off-set from existing building | 760 | 1745 |
| 2 storey front off-set from existing building | 4960 | 4725 |
| Proposed side width | 2300 | 2000 |
| Proposed rear width | 7690 | 6975 |
| Boundary offset to No.3 | 0 | 375 |
| Proposed rear depth | 3000 | 3600 |
| GIA (m ²) | 41 | 35 |
| Volume (m ³) | 130 | 141 |

Comparison table - Key measurements

Materials / Appearance

- Following advice from the Conservation Officer to consider using lighter materials as a counter-point to the more sombre colours of the existing buildings, multiple colours were explored for the upper zinc cladding. The proposed colour is now light grey.
- The plinth element is still blue engineering brick, however the front extension has been slimmed down and set-back to reduce visual impact.
- A steel fin door provides access to a bin/bike store, offering greater articulation to the brick plinth.
- Frameless corner windows have been incorporated to the front facade to provide further visual interest from Castle Road. As well as maximising light within the house, they also allow views through the building towards the sky and landscape, helping to blend the building into its surroundings.
- A stainless steel flue has been incorporated at the rear, offset as far as possible from neighbouring buildings and opening windows.

3.1 Amount

The proposals seek to extend the existing house to the rear and side, increasing the gross internal area from 115.1 m² to 150.1 m², representing a total increase of 35 m². In addition, an external store of 7 m² is proposed at the front of the site.

Proposals seek to increase the existing volume of the dwelling from 374 m³ to 515 m³, resulting in a total increase of 141 m³. In accordance to Policy H11, the scheme meets the 'modest' criteria as the proposed volume would represent 37.7% of the existing volume, and is below the specified threshold;

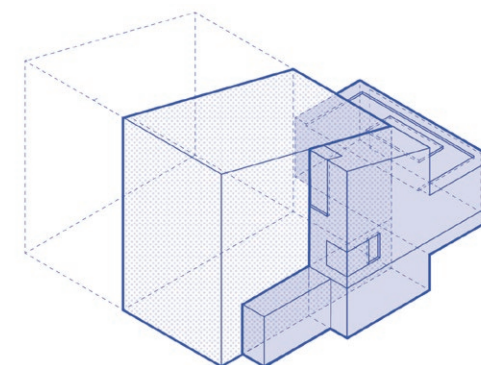
"the Local Planning Authority would normally judge an application as modest if it would result in an increase of approximately 50% in the volume of the dwelling or 150 cubic metres (gross), whichever is the greater, subject to a maximum of 250 cubic metres (gross)"

3.2 Use

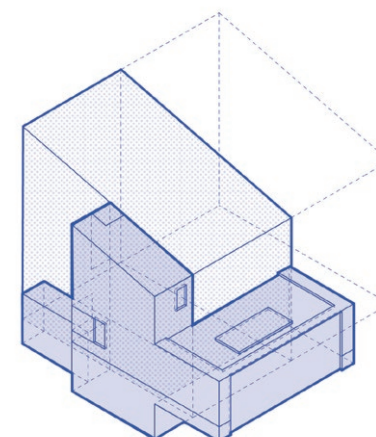
The proposals form an enlargement of the existing property to increase the kitchen/dining space at first floor and provide a new bathroom at third floor. An external store for bins and bicycles is proposed towards the front of the site.

Area Schedule

| Gross internal area (m ²) | Existing | Proposed |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Lower ground floor | 18.1 | - |
| Ground floor | 20.2 | - |
| First floor | 18.1 | 28.6 |
| Second floor | 22.5 | 6.4 |
| Third floor | 18.1 | - |
| Fourth floor | 18.1 | - |
| Total | 115.1 | 35 |



Isometric diagrams (front) - Volume



Isometric diagrams (rear) - Volume

3.3 Layout

The extension seeks to enlarge the existing kitchen/ dining space to the rear and side, creating a new open plan living space that overlooks the garden. On either side of the space, there is a integrated storage, with an Eco wood burning stove to the northern wall. Sliding glass doors open up the space onto a new garden terrace, while a frameless corner window provides daylight to the dining area. A rooflight over the new living space provides further daylight and reduces the sense of enclosure created by the sloping site and surrounding woodland.

The side extension on the second floor provides a family bathroom adjacent to the upper floor bedrooms. Windows on both sides provide dual aspect daylighting, with an opaque inner balustrade providing additional privacy from the street.

At ground floor, the bin and bike store is located adjacent to the entrance, providing useful storage at the front of the house. It will ensure refuse and recycling bins can be concealed from the road.




3.4 Access

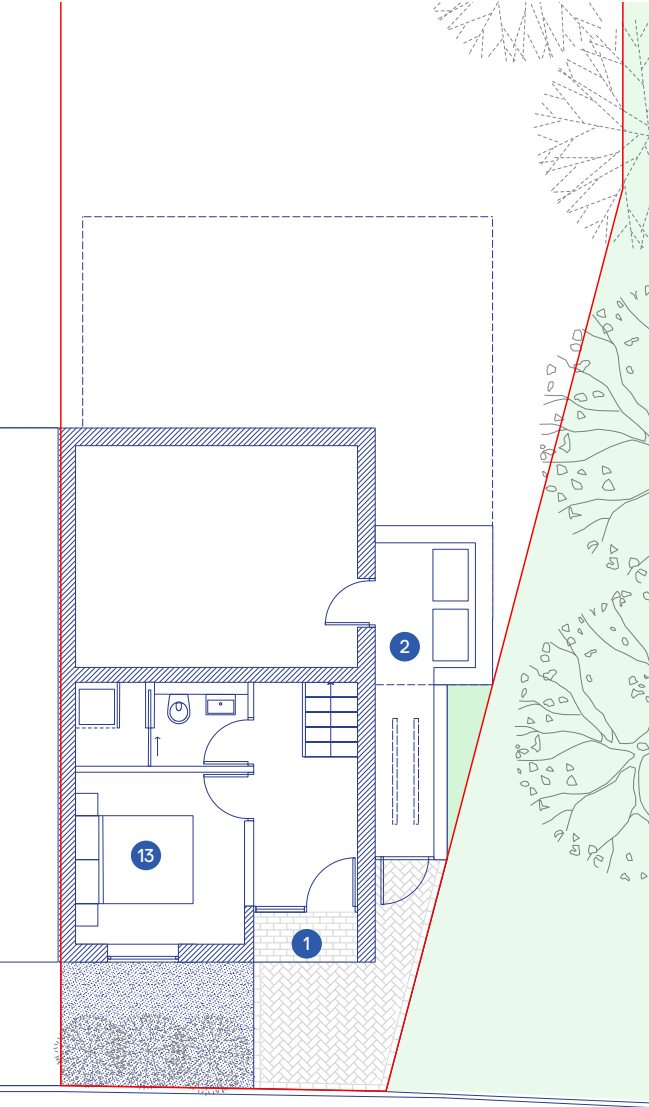
The main access to the existing house fronting the Castle Road is retained. An entry gate to the side encloses an external store to conceal bins and bicycles. There is a right of way along the rear boundary to all gardens to allow general access to the rear of the site for the purposes of maintenance and building work.

Key

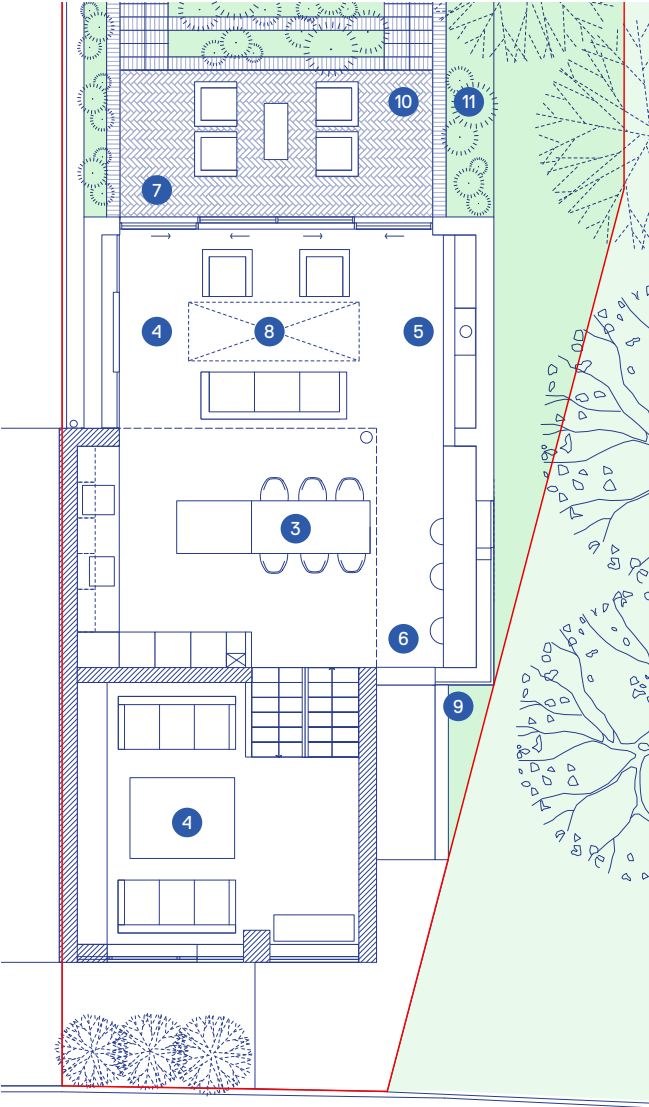
- 1 Entrance
- 2 Bin / bicycle store
- 3 Kitchen / dining
- 4 Living
- 5 Eco wood burning stove and flue
- 6 Window seating
- 7 Sliding glass doors
- 8 Rooflight
- 9 Frameless corner window
- 10 Terrace
- 11 Planters
- 12 Bathroom
- 13 Bedroom
- 14 Green roof

Key

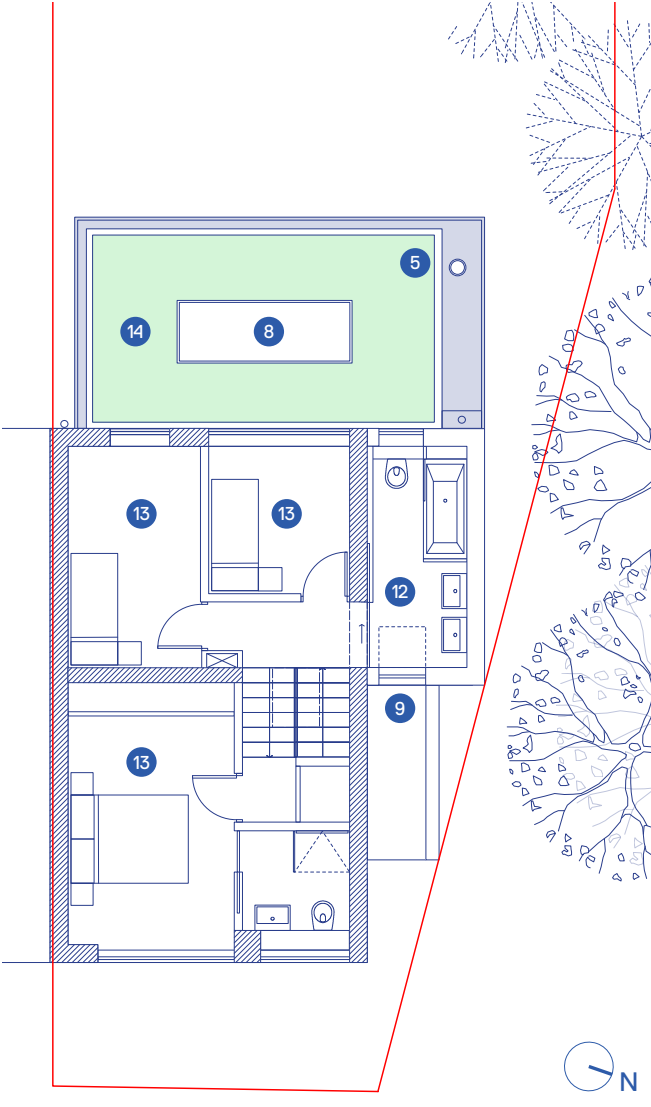
-  Site boundary
-  Existing
-  Proposed



Proposed plan - Ground floor



Proposed plan - First floor



Proposed plan - Second floor

3.5 Scale

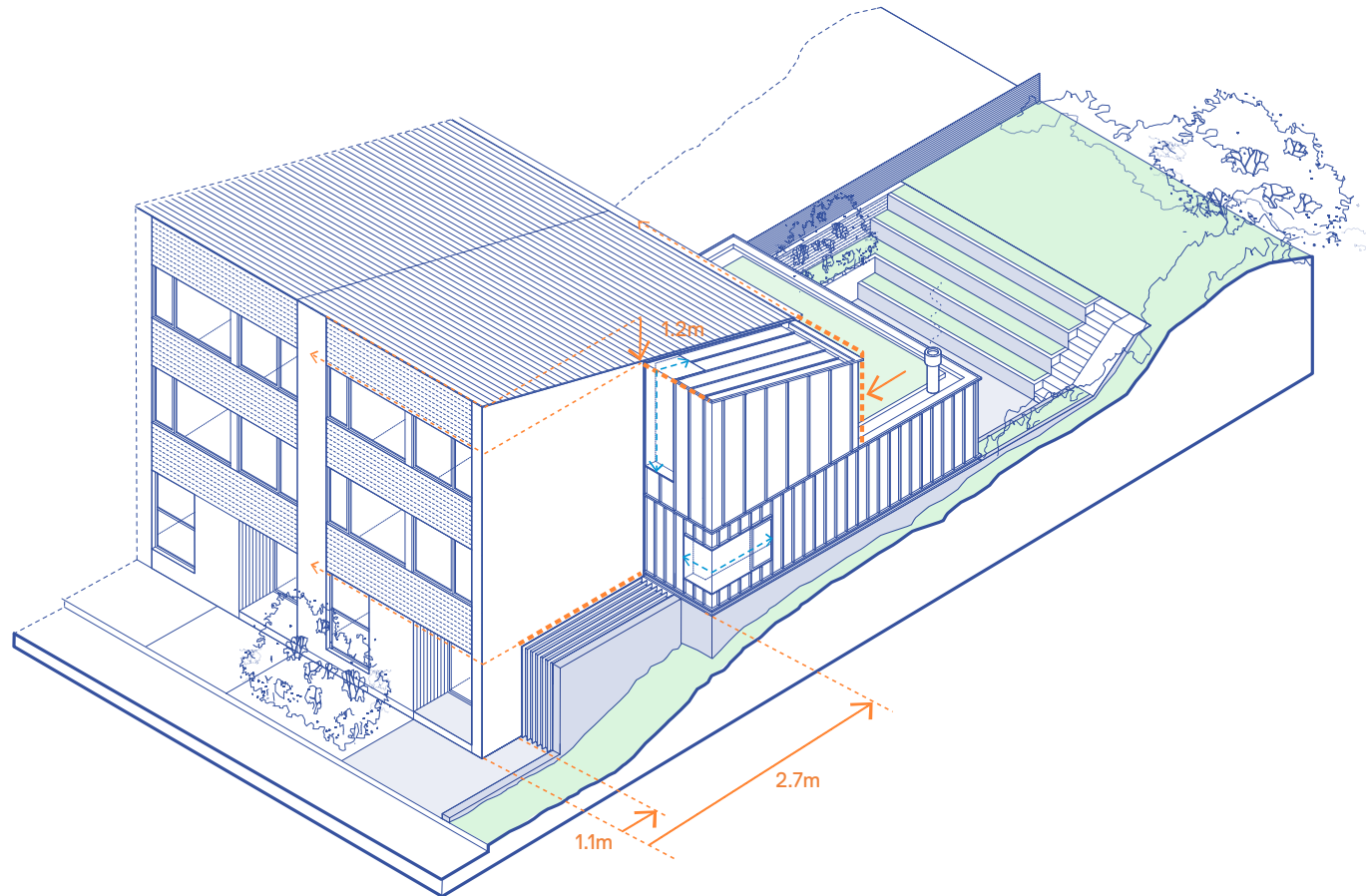
Front

The massing has been stepped back and reduced in height towards the street to ensure the extension is subservient to the existing terrace row. The side extension acts as a bespoke 'bookend' to the original terrace, creating visual interest to what is otherwise a blank brick wall and side passage.

At the front of the site, a 2.3m high external store is set back by 1.1m from the existing buildings. The height picks up the alignment of the concrete tiling to the existing buildings.

Behind the external store is a two storey side extension, which aligns with the rear wall of the existing building. From the front elevation of the existing houses, this volume is set back by 2.7m and is 1.2m lower, again aligning with the concrete tiling to the existing buildings.

Frameless corner windows break up the massing of the building from the street and blend it into its context, providing views through to the sky and surrounding landscape.



Proposed isometric diagram - Front

3.5 Scale (continued)

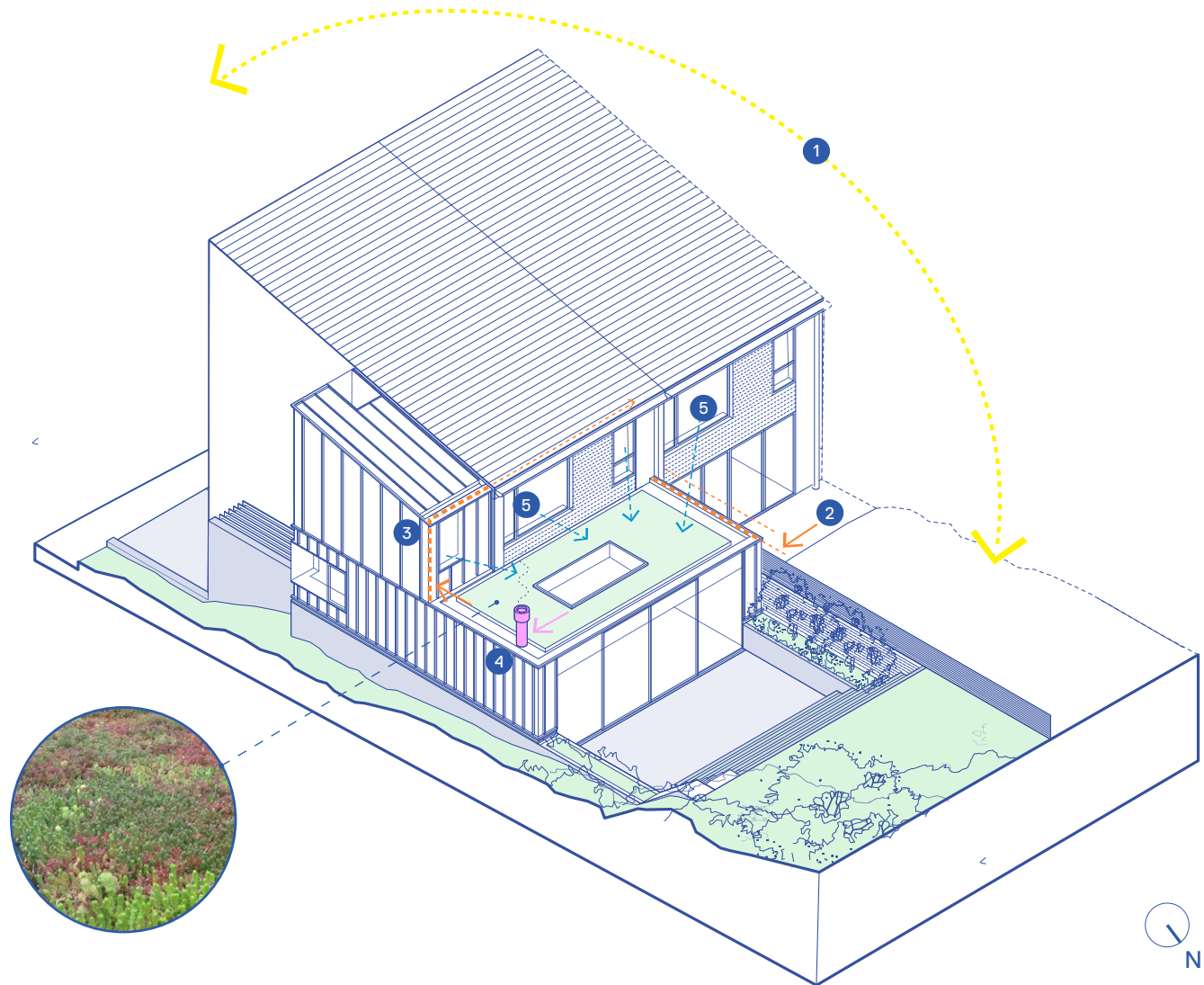
Rear

Rather than following the awkward shape of the splayed site boundary, the side walls remain parallel to the existing gable wall. The adjacent grassed slope is extended to meet the side extension, partially screening the lower portion of the building from view.

From the rear line of the existing building, the extension reduces to one storey and extends the width of the existing house and side extension. As the site is located to the north of No.3 Onslow House, proposals will not have an adverse impact on their levels of daylight and sunlight. To minimise construction and amenity impact, the rear extension is offset by 375mm from the boundary line with No.3 Onslow House. To improve outlook from the existing and neighbouring properties, the rear extension incorporates a green roof.

Key

- 1 Sun path
- 2 Offset from No.3
- 3 Alignment with existing building
- 4 Flue positioned away from windows
- 5 Green views



Proposed isometric diagram - Front

3.6 Appearance

Overview

The extension seeks to enhance the appearance of the existing terrace row through a modern, refined design that nestles into the surrounding landscape. The extension is composed of a zinc clad volume that sits lightly above a blue brick plinth, acting as a counterpoint to the sombre colours of the existing buildings.

Zinc cladding

The self-finished zinc cladding will both reflect and contrast with the surrounding woodland. The natural patination of the zinc will create subtle variation in finish and colour, sitting well within the natural foliage of the Common.

The zinc cladding continues from the walls onto the upper roof and incorporates a recessed drainage channel, creating a simplified appearance. The vertical standing seam zinc cladding is split into two horizontal bands, which reference both the terrace row fenestration and height of the rear extension. The spacing of the vertical modules increase with the height of the building, which has the effect of reducing shadow and making the building appear lighter towards the top.

Glazing

The front elevation is broken up by two large flush glazed windows which wrap around the corners of the building. Frameless corner glazing enable views through towards the sky and surrounding landscape, blending the building into its context and maximising outward landscape views.

At the rear, slim-framed sliding glass doors look out to the garden and the Common beyond, dissolving the boundary between inside and outside. Daylight and views of the sky from the new living space are further maximised by a large rooflight, which also reduces the sense of enclosure created by the surrounding topography and woodland.

In summer, the overheating risk from the glazing is reduced by the existing tree foliage, whereas in the winter, when the leaves drop, the lower sun will warm the house passively.

Brick plinth

The blue engineering brick 'plinth' gives the building a grounded base. Engineering brick is non-porous so is particularly suitable for retaining wall conditions. Much of the walls will be screened from the road by the steeply sloping grassed verge it retains and the surrounding planting. The bricks are vertically stack bonded to relate the orientation of the zinc cladding above. The material of the plinth matches

the existing blue quarry tile paving at the front of the site, integrating the extension with the surrounding hard landscaping.

A full height metal fin door facing the street breaks up the volume of the brick plinth facing the street. To ensure the door reads as part of the 'plinth', the fins have a dark grey PPC finish and are spaced match the brickwork setting out.

Garden

The landscape proposals terrace the garden to create a seating area, planted beds and stepped access onto the upper lawn. Planters will be constructed using the blue engineering brick, integrating it with the materiality of the plinth. The sliding glass doors allow the living space to be entirely opened up to the garden, enhancing existing connections to the garden and creating the sense of an 'outside room'. To reinforce this, the stone floor finish continues from the living room into the terrace area externally.





3.6 Appearance (Continued)

Key

- 1 Standing seam zinc cladding. Light grey
- 2 Structural glazing with frameless corner
- 3 Blue engineering brick with dark grey mortar. Stack bonded
- 4 Steel fin door. PPC finish, dark grey
- 5 Planting - Native heather and grass species

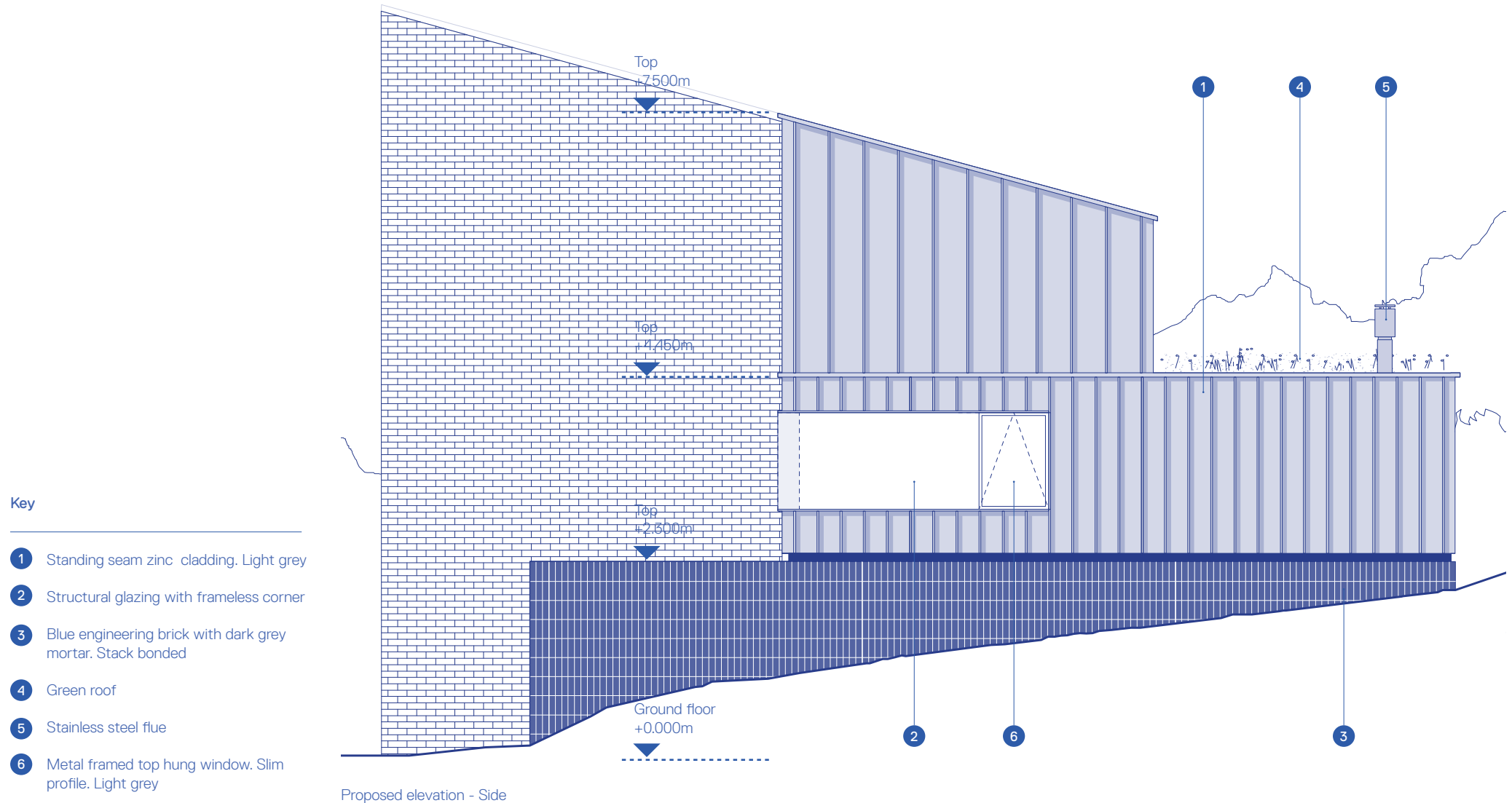


Proposed elevation - Front detail

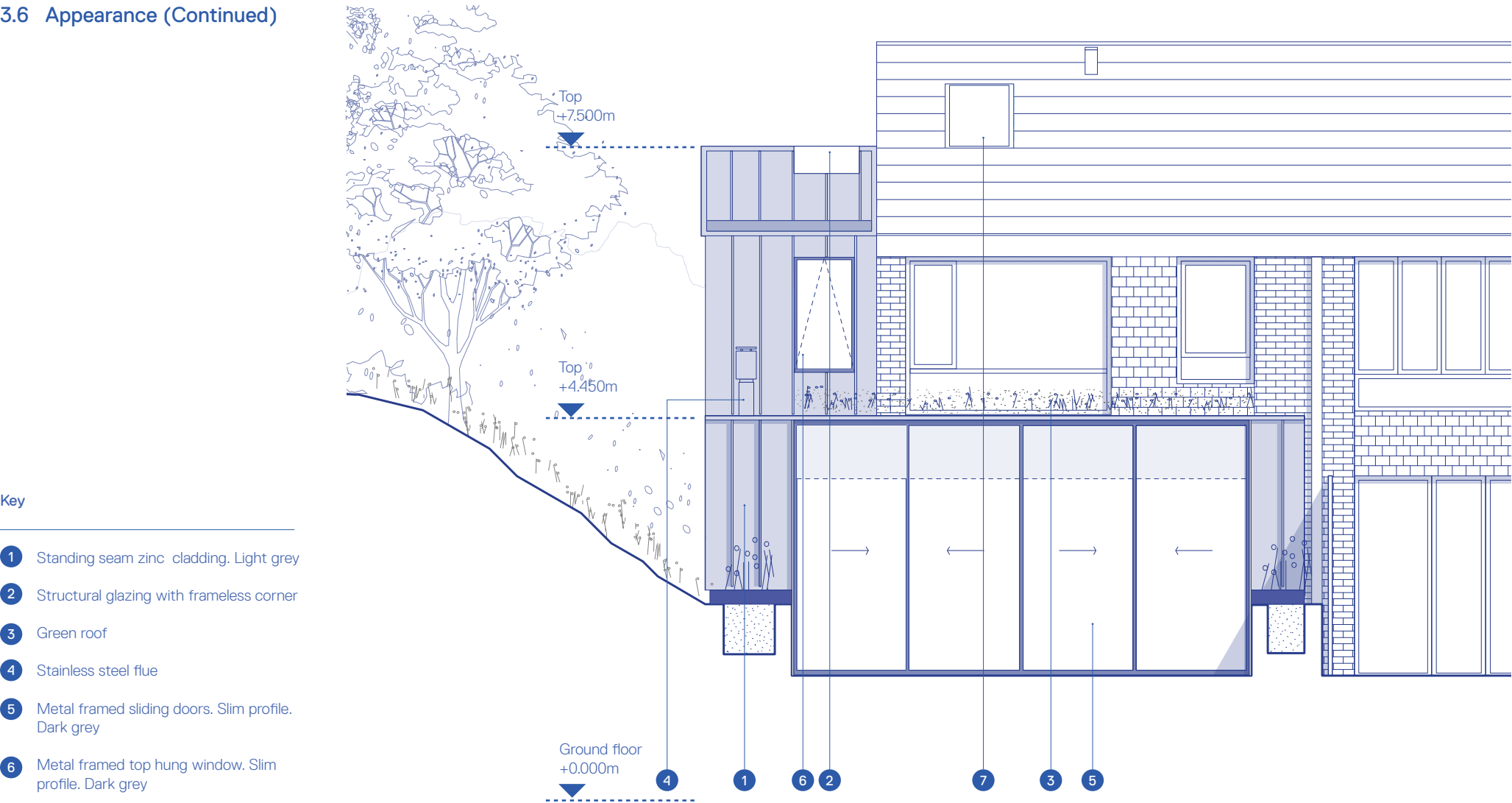


Proposed elevation - Street frontage

3.6 Appearance (Continued)



3.6 Appearance (Continued)



Proposed elevation - Rear

3.6 Appearance (Continued)

Material Precedents

The proposals use a simple and high quality material palette, comprising self-finished, robust and low maintenance materials throughout.



Key

- 1. Light grey zinc cladding - AD++ House, London
- 2. Light grey zinc cladding - Complex House, Nagoya, Japan
- 3/4. Dark engineering brick - Breakespeare Road, London

3.7 Landscape

The surrounding Common consists of a mosaic of habitats, in which surviving areas of heath and grassland coexist with tracts of dense woodland.

Proposed planting aims to preserve this diversity by planting native species rich in biodiversity. In areas such as the open grassland to the north-east of Castle Road, surviving patches of heather are being encouraged to spread. To reinforce the landscape character of the Common, native heather and grassland species will be planted along the northern site boundary and green roof of the rear extension.

Key

1 - green roof - The Muse, London

2 - Photograph - Native grass and heather in the Common

3.8 Sustainability

Proposals have been designed to create a modern, environmentally sustainable family home, using the following design principles;

- Use of durable, self-finished sustainable materials where possible, such as recycled zinc and sustainably sourced timber.
- Maximise passive daylighting whilst reducing overheating in the summer.
- Using a green roof system, providing multiple environmental benefits including;
 - Creating habitats for local wildlife and enhancing local biodiversity.
 - Providing high thermal mass to retain heat in the winter and keep the building cool in the summer.
 - Reducing air pollution by absorbing CO2.
 - Reducing water run-off and flooding as part of a sustainable urban drainage system.
- Detailed to provide high thermal insulation and air tightness, reducing energy consumption required for heating.
- Use of native species of perennials, grass and heather within the soft landscaping of the garden and the green roof, enhancing local biodiversity.
- Incorporating an 'Eco' wood burning stove will generate heating through renewable energy.
- Encouraging on-site food growth through vegetation and herb gardens.
- Provision of bicycle storage to promote active travel.

