



The house replaces a large suburban style two-storey house in a rural site within the New Forest National Park. The design marries the client’s desire to live in close contact with nature with the idea of making the house invisible from the public realm to deal with restrictive local planning policy directives on ‘traditional form and detail’.

This has resulted in a long, low pavilion that ‘touches the earth lightly’. Within the north-south orientated box-like form, the house provides three bedrooms that open up to the east and morning light, and a large open-plan living-dining-kitchen area, together with a master bedroom suite and study, that opens up to the west with views into a pine copse.

A one hectare site on a rural road between the towns of Brockenhurst and Lymington within the New Forest National Park, part woodland to the west and adjoining a mock-Tudorbethan house to its east and with open forest and a SSI woodland to its north.

The brief began with the idea of occupying the house for short breaks, a holiday home that is easy to use and with a desire to live in contact with nature. This resulted in the idea of a simple, linear, single-storey form that ‘touches the earth lightly’. The timber structure is slightly lifted off the ground to float across the site in a north-south orientation. Within this simple form, a switchback plan provides bedrooms that face east to the rising sun at one end and living spaces that face west to the other, with entrance and service rooms between the two. A transverse wall segregates a gravelled arrival court and cars from the garden and living spaces beyond.

Large openings to the living area and bedrooms are deeply recessed to avoid summer solar gains, while allowing gains and good daylight quality in winter. A master bedroom suite occupies the northern end of the house beyond a large brick chimney that pins the house to the earth.

The floor, walls and roof of the house are formed in cross-laminated prefabricated timber panels, externally insulated and clad in open sweet chestnut strips. Dark Danish linear bricks that have a similar proportion to the house itself form the chimney and plinth.

The objective was to make a modern architecture that echoes the character of a ‘rural vernacular’ to make a positive yet discrete impact on the site – both environmentally and visually.

PROJECT DETAILS

Client:	Charles + Fiona Watson
Status:	Completed 2010
Contract value:	£640,000.00

Structural Engineer:	Ramboll UK
Quantity Surveyor:	APS Associates