

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR THE DEMOLITION OF 2
EQUESTRIAN BUILDINGS AND
THE ERECTION OF 4 NEW
DETACHED DWELLINGS (USE
CLASS C3) TOGETHER WITH
ASSOCIATED CARPORTS,
ACCESS, PARKING AND
LANDSCAPING,**

AT

**GLEBE HOUSE STABLES
HINXWORTH ROAD
HINXWORTH
BALDOCK
HERTFORDSHIRE
SG7 5HB**



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Pre Application Advice Letter - 24/02898/PRE - Three dwellings following demolition of existing stables with associated parking and amenities. Glebe House Stables, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB
Appendix 2	224420-PL-00-100– Proposed Site Plan submitted under Pre-Application Ref: 24/02898/PRE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Sworders on behalf of Mr Anthony Smyth (hereafter referred to as the 'Applicant') in support of an application for full planning permission for the demolition of 2 equestrian buildings and associated structures (menage etc) and the erection of 4 new detached dwellings (use class C3) together with associated carports, access, parking and landscaping, at Glebe House Stables, Hinxworth Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB.



Photo 1 – Smaller Stable, West and Northern Elevations



Photo 2 – Larger Stable, South and Western elevations

- 1.2 The application site comprises a large stables building which also includes hay storage and an indoor training arena, a smaller stables building, the central yard, a ménage and surrounding paddocks. The site currently forms part of Title HD408150 and sits approximately 600 metres south southeast of the settlement boundary of Hinxworth, a category B village in the NHDC Local Plan. The site is situated to the rear of Glebe House and has been used for at least 30 years for stabling and equestrian use (Application Refs 86/00051/1 and 91/00307/1).

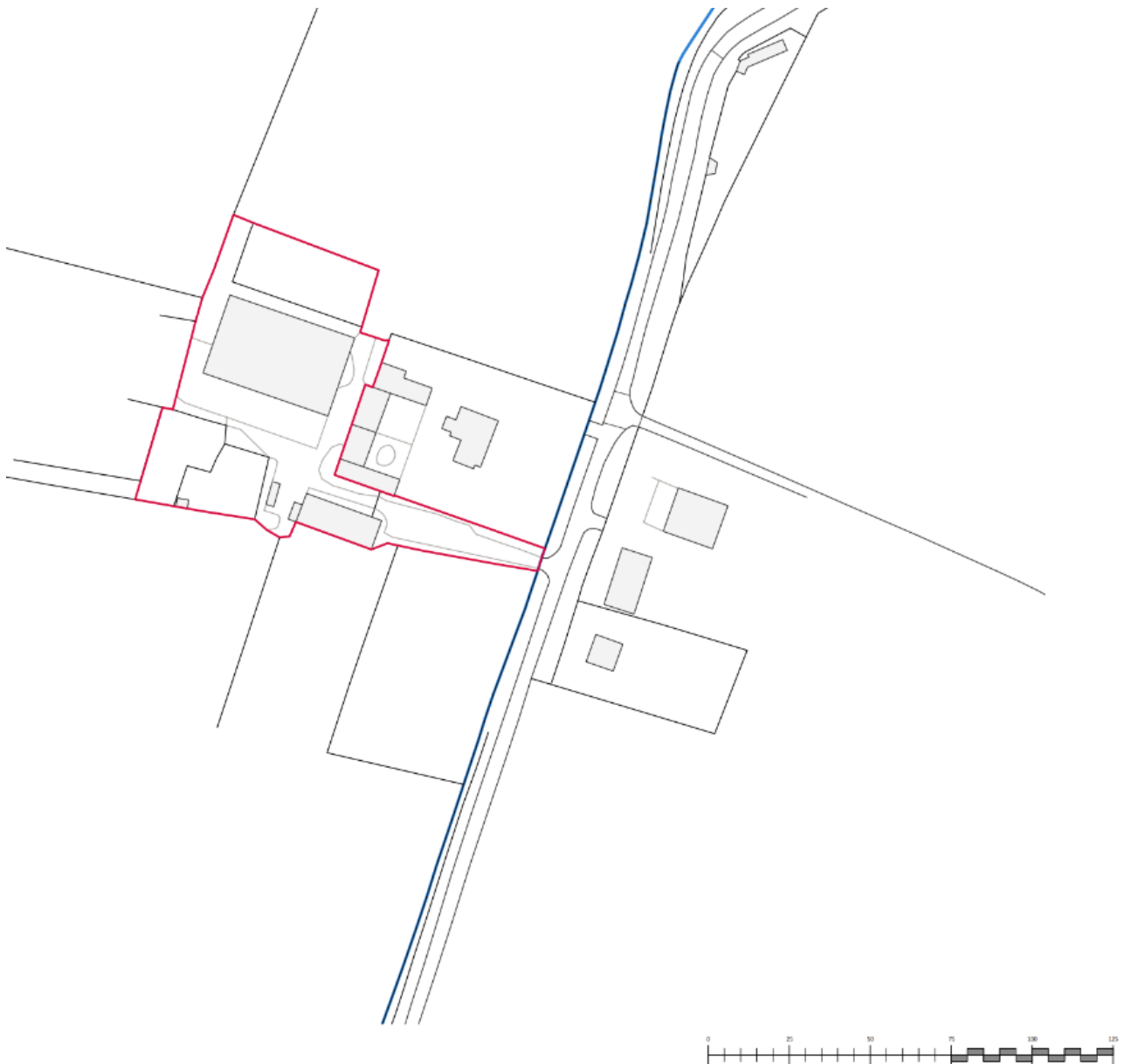


Figure 1 – Location Plan

- 1.3** This statement is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) by Ecology by Design, a Phase 1 Contamination Survey prepared by Herts and Essex Site Investigations, and a Transport Technical Note prepared by EAS. These third-party reports and statements have been prepared to ensure that this proposal is suitable regarding its ecological, environmental and transportation impacts, and as such is sustainable.



2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 The planning history for the site is set out in the below table:

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION	DATE
03/01206/1HH	Part two storey and part single storey rear extension - Glebe House New Inn Road Hinxworth Baldock SG7	Approved	11 September 2003
91/00307/1	Retention of use of agricultural land for stabling and grazing of horses and use of part of barn for indoor exercise area. - Glebe House New Inn Road Hinxworth SG7	Approved	25 April 1991
86/00051/1	Conversion and adaptation of part of existing stable block into residential use, to be occupied by agricultural students associated with Glebe Farm. - Glebe Farm Hinxworth SG7	Approved	20 March 1986
81/00265/1	Erection of two storey and single storey extension and bay window on side elevation. – at Glebe Farm Hinxworth SG7	Approved	20 March 1981



3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This application proposes the demolition of a large stables and hay store building, a smaller stables building, a ménage and surrounding paddocks, and the erection of 4 dwellings (1 with 3 bedrooms and 3 with 4 bedrooms), along with 2 detached carports and the provision of suitable parking and amenity space. One of the dwellings will be single storey. The other three dwellings will be one-and-a-half storeys.
- 3.2 The existing stables buildings to be demolished can be seen on the existing Site Location Plan (Ref: 224420-PL-00-001). Elevations of the larger barn can be found in plan ref: 224420-PL-EX-300. Elevations for the smaller barn can be found in plan ref: 224420-PL-EX-301.
- 3.3 The smaller stables building has a footprint of 244.8sqm and a volume of 758m³.
- 3.4 The smaller stables building will be replaced with a single storey dwelling-house, which for the purpose of this application shall be referred to as Plot 1.
- 3.5 The larger stables building has a footprint of 1070.9sqm and has a volume of 5212.5m³.
- 3.6 The larger stables building shall be replaced by three detached dwellings, referred to as Plots 2, 3 and 4.
- 3.7 The proposed layout of the site can be seen in Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-S-00-100 Rev A, 224420-PL-S-01-101 Rev A and 223320-PL-S-02-102 Rev A.
- 3.8 The proposed development will utilise the existing access off the public highway, widening it slightly to accommodate the movements of refuse collection vehicles and fire tenders. A transport note has been prepared on behalf of the applicant by EAS, and has informed the layout of the proposal, as well as demonstrating that the site may be safely accessed.
- 3.9 The proposed development will provide a 218.68% and 150.35% net gain in Habitat Units and Hedgerow Units, respectively. This will be achieved by planting areas of neutral grassland and small trees within common areas of the site, along with creating a habitat area in the southwest of the site, which will be planted with neutral grassland, small trees, and a small replacement area of mixed scrub in its northwest corner. For more details, please see the EcIA report prepared on behalf of the applicant by Ecology by Design.



3.10 In February 2025 pre-application advice was sought from North Hertfordshire Council, under Ref: 24/02898/PRE, regarding the proposed demolition of the existing stable buildings on site and the subsequent erection of one four bed dwelling and two five bed dwellings. This pre-application advice may be seen in Appendix 1 of this statement. The proposed site plan submitted with the request for pre-application advice may be seen in Appendix 2.

3.11 The key issues for consideration included:

- the principle of residential development in this location
- the design and appearance of the dwelling/dwellings
- impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
- impact on the amenity of the host dwelling
- amenity for future occupiers
- highways, access and car parking
- ecology and biodiversity

3.12 The pre-app advice went on to state that, due to the layout of the site, which was deemed to be overly suburban, the proposal would fail to meet the requirement of paragraph c) of Policy CGB4; that “The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s)”. Both the layout and design of the individual buildings proposed in the pre-app were deemed to be too suburban for a rural setting, and it was thus suggested that dwellings should preferably be located near to the footprint of existing buildings, and that the proposed materials and form should reflect the existing stables.

3.13 A preferable design was suggested under the section dealing with “Design and Appearance and Impact on Designated Heritage Assets.”, which stated that “In terms of design and appearance, based on CGB4, new dwellings should reflect the equestrian nature of the site. The cul-de-sac layout of the site appears overly residential, which conflicts with the rural character of the locality.”

3.14 The application for which this Planning Statement has been prepared has taken these comments, along with others made in the pre-application advice regarding the impact on highways, biodiversity, landscaping and parking provision, into account.



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted in 2012 (As Amended December 2024). At the core of the NPPF is the principle of sustainable development, which is defined in Paragraph 8 as development that meets, on balance, three objectives: economic, social and environmental.
- 4.2 Paragraph 11(d) sets out that a presumption should be made in favour of sustainable development where the local policies most relevant for determining the application are out-of-date, including situations where the Local Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing.
- 4.3 In the case of North Hertfordshire, its May 2024 Five-Year Housing Land Supply Update stated a deliverable housing supply of 3.9 years, with a deficit of 1,359 dwellings from 2024/25-2028/29. As such the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be made and the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development should be applied in this instance.
- 4.4 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to promote the development of a good mix of sites. One of the ways in which they are encouraged to do so is to “d) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions”. Windfall sites are defined in the NPPF as “Sites not specifically identified in the development plan”.
- 4.5 Local authorities are also encouraged, at part c), to “use tools such as area-wide design assessments, permission in principle and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward”. Although this application does not fall under any of these approaches, this policy nevertheless encourages local authorities to look favourably upon small and medium sites, such as the one subject to this application.
- 4.6 Paragraph 39 broadly encourages local authorities to “work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area”, and decision-makers, at all levels, to seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible, while paragraph 61 again encourages a variety of land to come forward and sets out the goal of meeting an area’s identified housing need.



- 4.7 Paragraph 89 sets out the national policy approach to development in rural areas outside of settlements and on previously developed land, stating that “Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances, it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example, by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.
- 4.8 Section 12 of the NPPF is also relevant as it seeks to achieve well-designed places, and includes a number of criteria for new developments, including buildings being visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history, and establishing a strong sense of place.
- 4.9 Regard should also be had to Paragraph 116, which states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”
- 4.10 Local planning policy is contained within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, 2011-2031 – Adopted 8 November 2022.
- 4.11 Policy SP1: ‘Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire’ mirrors the sustainability focus underlying the NPPF, and states that planning permission will be granted to proposals that, individually or cumulatively;

“i. deliver an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan;

ii. create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices;

iii. provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population;



iv. protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and

v. secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and

d) Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan."

4.12 Policy SP5: 'Countryside and Green Belt' identifies the site as lying within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, and states that North Herts *"Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies"*.

4.13 These detailed policies may be found within Policies CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt and CGB4: Existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. CGB4 states that *"Planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:*

[...]

c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s)".

4.14 Under paragraph 6.21, which is in support of Policy CGB4, it is stated that 'National policy provides clear guidance on proposals for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Green Belt which will be used, alongside the detailed design policies of this plan for relevant applications.' Paragraph 6.22 adds 'We consider that a broadly consistent approach is also justified in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt to ensure that similar proposals do not cause harm'.



4.15 Additional relevant policies within this plan include:

- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP6: Sustainable transport
- Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability
- Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters
- Policy T2: Parking
- Policy D1: Sustainable design
- Policy NE2: Landscape
- Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites
- Appendix 4: Car Parking Standards

4.16 The following adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) also form part of the Development Plan and have been taken into consideration:

- Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 23 September 2024
- Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 15 January 2015
- Vehicle parking at new developments SPD 10 November 2011



5.0 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT:

- 5.1 The proposal is for the development of housing in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, via the replacement of two existing rural buildings. As such the development is compliant with Policy CGB1, part d), in that it relates to an existing rural building. Whether this proposal is acceptable in principle, therefore, depends upon the degree to which it is considered to be sustainable development that also meets the requirements Policy CGB4. This approach to the consideration of the development is set out in the pre-application advice received under Ref: 24/02898/PRE.
- 5.2 This policy, relating to existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, states that:
- a) Planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:*
 - b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction;*
 - c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and*
 - d) Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.*
- 5.3 The purposes of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, while not explicitly defined, are broadly set out in paragraphs 4.64, 6.1 and 6.22 of the Local Plan. This designation appears to mostly be focused on encouraging development to be focused closer to key services and protecting high quality countryside.



- 5.4 The pre-application advice received for this site considered the scheme submitted under said pre-app to fall short of the requirements set out in Policy CGB4, part c), stating that the proposal would create an overly suburban layout and would not be sited near the footprint of the existing barn, so therefore would harm the openness of the site. The proposal subject to this application has taken these comments into consideration, adjusting the layout to more closely match a typical rural farmyard, and endeavouring to keep the proposed built form within the bounds of the existing built footprint wherever possible.
- 5.5 This proposal would replace two existing equestrian buildings, along with a large area of associated hardstanding and a menage, with a well landscaped development comprising x4 dwelling houses and 2 detached carports. As shall be elaborated in later sections, the layout of this proposal has been inspired by traditional farmyard layouts common in the area. The development would result in a 42.5% decrease in built footprint (41.3% when including Plinths) and a 33.35% decrease in built volume, has sought to keep the built development largely within the footprint of the existing buildings, and has taken care to make the two detached carports clearly visually subordinate to the dwelling-houses. This proposal thus would clearly result in a reduced impact to the countryside.
- 5.6 As set out later in this statement, the proposed buildings have also been designed to be in keeping with nearby properties and the rural character of the area. The proposal includes a large area set aside for Biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.7 The proposal is therefore in line with the provisions of policies CGB1 and CGB4, is appropriate development in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, and as such should be considered acceptable in principle, when examined against local policy.



- 5.8 Should the proposal not be considered acceptable when compared against local policy, it should also be noted that the site constitutes previously developed land. Under Paragraph 154 g) of the NPPF, development on such land, were it to be in the Green Belt, would be appropriate, provided that the development does not have a substantial impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Paragraph 6.22 of the local plan states that a broadly consistent approach to the redevelopment of buildings in the Green Belt is to be taken when considering such developments in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. It is proposed that, in this case, a consistent approach to the redevelopment of previously developed land should also be taken.
- 5.9 Additionally, regard should be had to Paragraph 11 d), part ii) of the NPPF. As has already been set out in paragraph 4.3 of this statement, North Herts has only a 3.9-year supply of land available for housing. Accordingly, the policies most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. In such circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole (the "tilted balance"). Therefore, this application should be assessed under this tilted balance, recognising the urgent need to boost housing supply and the strong presumption in favour of sustainable development embedded within national policy.

DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND SCALE

- 5.10 The proposed development consists of the construction of 4 houses (1 with 3 bedrooms and 3 with 4 bedrooms), 2 detached carports and the provision of suitable parking and amenity space.
- 5.11 This proposal shall result in an overall reduction in built form onsite. A comparison of the built form, existing and proposed, may be seen on the table below:



	Footprint		Volume
Existing			
Barn 1	244.8		758
Barn 2	1070.9		5212.5
Totals:	1315.7		5970.5
Proposed			
	Footprint	Inc. Plinth	Volume
Plot 1 (inc. Plinth)	215.2	220.4	812.45
Plot 2	128.7	131.9	821.73
Plot 2 Cart Lodge	44.8	44.8	198.32
Plot 3	172.2	176.6	1024.14
Plot 4	130.4	134.3	835.36
Plot 4 Cart Lodge	64.9	64.9	287.12
Totals	756.2	772.9	3979.12
% Change	-42.5%	-41.3%	-33.35%

5.12 The existing barns onsite have a cumulative footprint of 1,315.7sqm, and a cumulative volume of 5,970.5m³. The proposed demolition of the barns and their replacement with four houses and two cart lodges will result in a cumulative built footprint of 756.2 sqm (772.9sqm when including plinths) and a cumulative built volume of 3979.12m³. This represents a 42.5% decrease in footprint (41.3% decrease when including plinths) and a 33.35% decrease in volume. The existing barns' elevations may be seen in attached drawing refs: 224420-PL-EX-300 and 224420-PL-EX-301. Barn one is the larger barn on the existing site plan (ref: 224420-PL-00-001), whereas Barn 2 is the smaller barn on the south boundary of the site. The outlines of the existing footprints of the barns may be seen marked in red on the proposed site layout plan ref: 224420-PL-S-00-102.

5.13 The proposed layout of the site may be seen in Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-S-00-100 Rev A and 224420-PL-S-01-101 Rev A. The proposed site layout draws inspiration from traditional farmyard layouts and farm courtyards but keeps the proposed dwellings and carports broadly within the footprint and location of the existing barns (outlined in red on the layout plans). The layout therefore serves to reduce the impact of the proposal upon the surrounding landscape and countryside, when compared with the existing site, while maintaining the sites rural aesthetic.



Figure 2 – Proposed Site Layout Roof Plan – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-S-00-102

- 5.14 The layout above also serves to create several areas of shared green space on the site. These provide multiple benefits, including serving as communal focal points, encouraging social interaction, facilitating outdoor recreation, and enhancing biodiversity. The farmyard-style layout of the site also promotes passive surveillance and a strong sense of place, thereby fostering a safe and sociable environment for residents to enjoy.
- 5.15 The site is set back from the road and existing vegetation along the roadside will be left in place to ensure the site remains well screened in relation to the public highway.

Plot 1:

5.16 Plans and elevations for Plot 1 can be seen in Drawing Refs: 224420-PL-01-100, 224420-PL-01-200, 224420-PL-01-300 and 224420-PL-01-301.

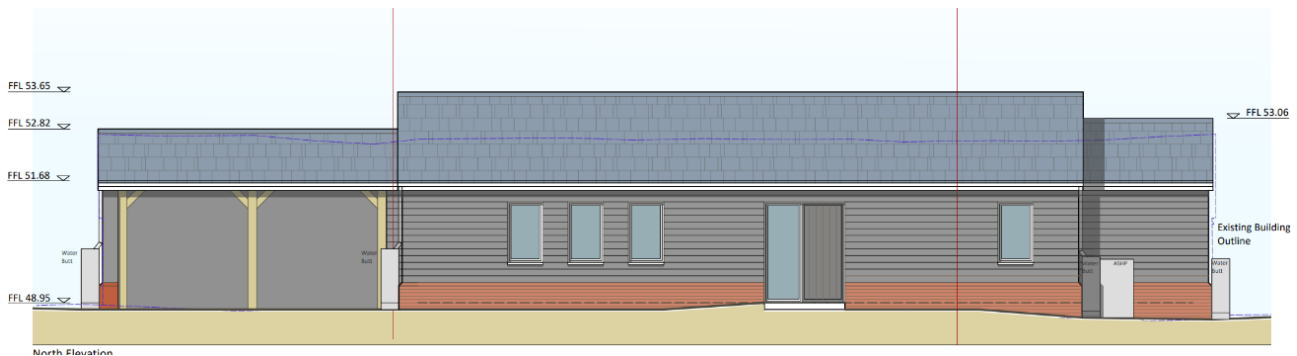


Figure 3 – Plot 1 Proposed Northern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-01-301

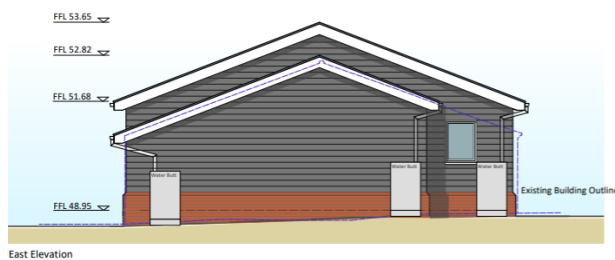


Figure 4 – Plot 1 Proposed Eastern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-01-301

5.17 Plot 1's dwelling-house shall appear 24.725m long when viewed from its northern and southern elevations and shall appear 9.65m wide when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The stepped nature of the design means that the dwelling-house shall have a total external footprint of 215m². The dwelling-house, not including the cart lodge, shall have a Gross Internal Floorspace of 146m².

5.18 Plot 1 shall be single storey, with the eaves, when measured from the level of the ground at the front door (which also constitutes the floor level of the house), 2.73m high and the ridge heights ranging from 3.87m to 4.7m high.

5.19 Windows shall be framed in white aluminium. The base of the walls shall be clad in red brick, rising from ground level to 90cm above the internal floor level. Above this level until the walls meet the roof the walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.

5.20 The internal layout can be seen in Drawing No. 224420-PL-01-100. As can be seen, the dwelling shall contain 3 bedrooms, 2 of which have en-suite bathrooms, a shower room, a combined Kitchen/Dining Area and Living Area, a Home Office, Entrance Hall and Utility Room. The eastern portion of the building will form a carport sufficient for 2 vehicles. The carport shall also be fitted with an EV charging point. The carport is open to the north, with the opening subdivided by timber beams. Plot 1 shall have a Gross Internal Area of 146sqm.

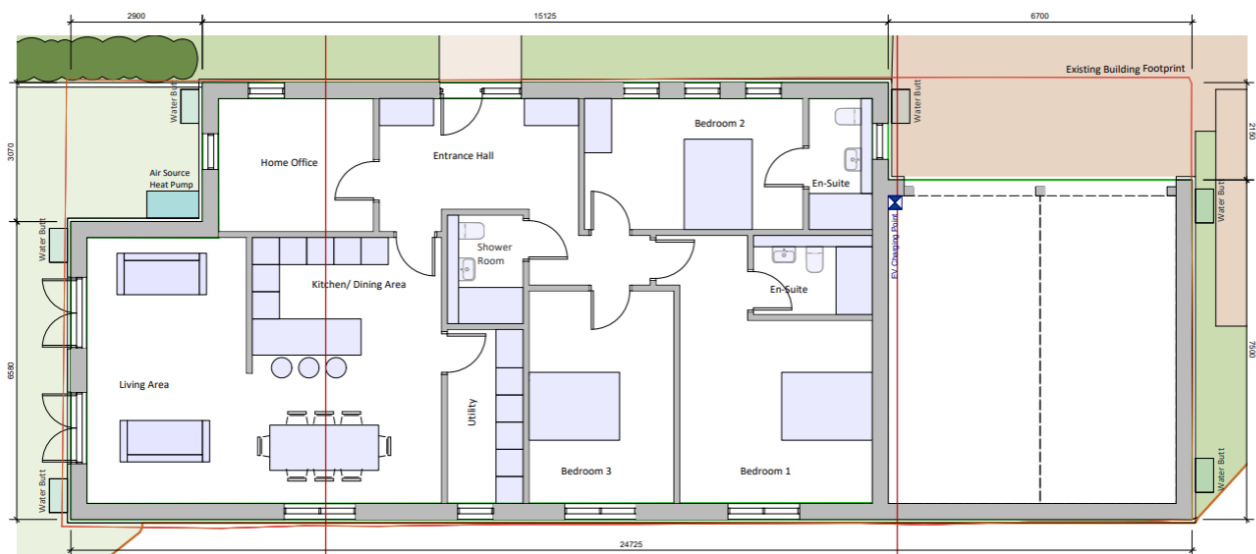


Figure 5 – Plot 1 Floor Plan – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-01-100

5.21 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building.

5.22 To the west of the dwelling, a small area of garden shall be provided.

5.23 The design, height and scale of the proposed Plot 1 are therefore in keeping with the rural location and have been designed to respect the form and scale of the smaller of the two existing stable buildings. The footprint of the proposed Plot 1 dwelling-house would be 215m², in comparison to the existing 244.8m² of the smaller stable. As can be seen on the Proposed Site Layout plans (Refs: 224420-PL-S-00-100 Rev A, 224420-PL-S-00-101 Rev A, and 224420-PL-S-00-102 Rev A), Plot 1 is sited broadly within the footprint of the smaller stable (indicated on the plans by a red outline). Plot 1 will consequently not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building and should, therefore, be considered as complying with Policy CGB4 and other relevant policies.

Plot 2:

5.24 Plans and elevations for Plot 2 can be seen in Drawing Refs: 224420-PL-02-100, 224420-PL-02-101, 224420-PL-02-300, 224420-PL-02-301 and 224420-PL-02-302.

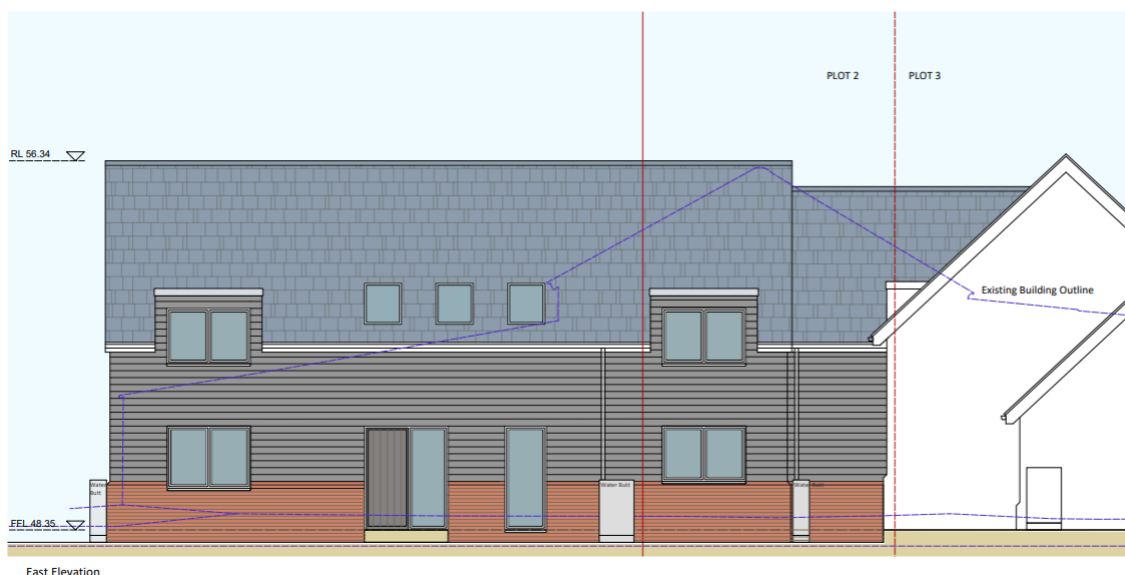


Figure 6 – Plot 2 Eastern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-02-300

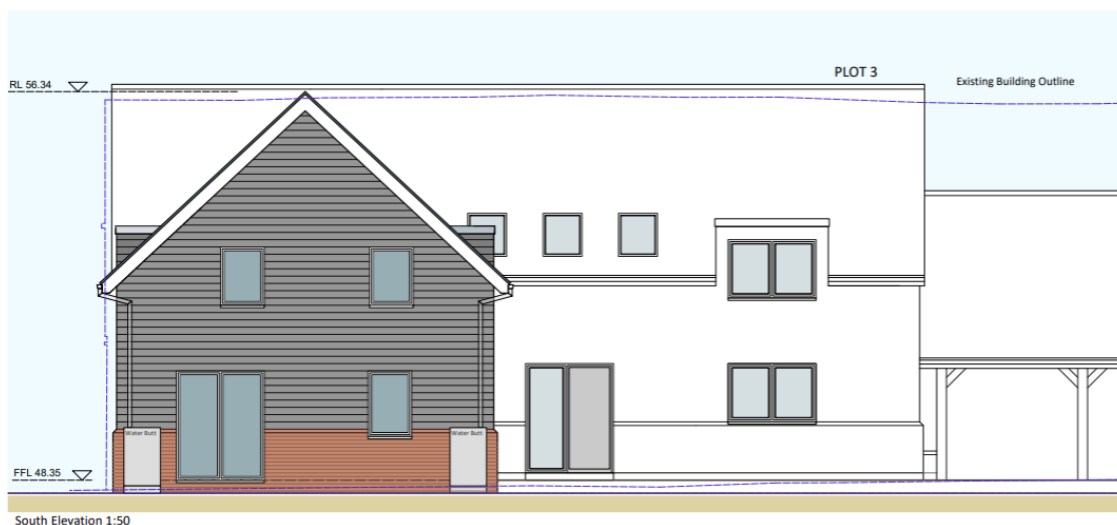


Figure 7 – Plot 2 Southern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-02-302

- 5.25 Plot 2's dwelling-house shall appear 7.75m wide when viewed from its southern elevations and shall appear 16.975m long when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The stepped nature of the design means that the dwelling-house shall have a total external footprint of 128.7m². The dwelling-house shall have a Gross Internal Floor Space of 225.8m² and shall be semi detached, joining to Plot 3 to the north.
- 5.26 Plot 2 shall be one-and-a-half storeys, with the eaves, when measured from the level of the ground at the front door (which also constitutes the floor level of the house), 4.08m high and the ridge heights ranging from 7.42m to 7.99m high.
- 5.27 Windows shall be framed in white aluminium. The base of the walls shall be clad in red brick, rising from ground level to 1.07 above the internal floor level. Above this level until the walls meet the roof the walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.
- 5.28 The internal layout can be seen in Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-02-10 and 224420-PL-02-101. As can be seen, the ground floor of the dwelling shall contain an Entrance Hall, Kitchen/Dining Room, Utility Room, WC, Living Room and Home Office/Snug. The first floor of the dwelling shall contain 4 bedrooms, 2 of which contain en-suite bathrooms, and one common bathroom. Plot 2 shall have a Gross Internal Area of 225.8sqm.

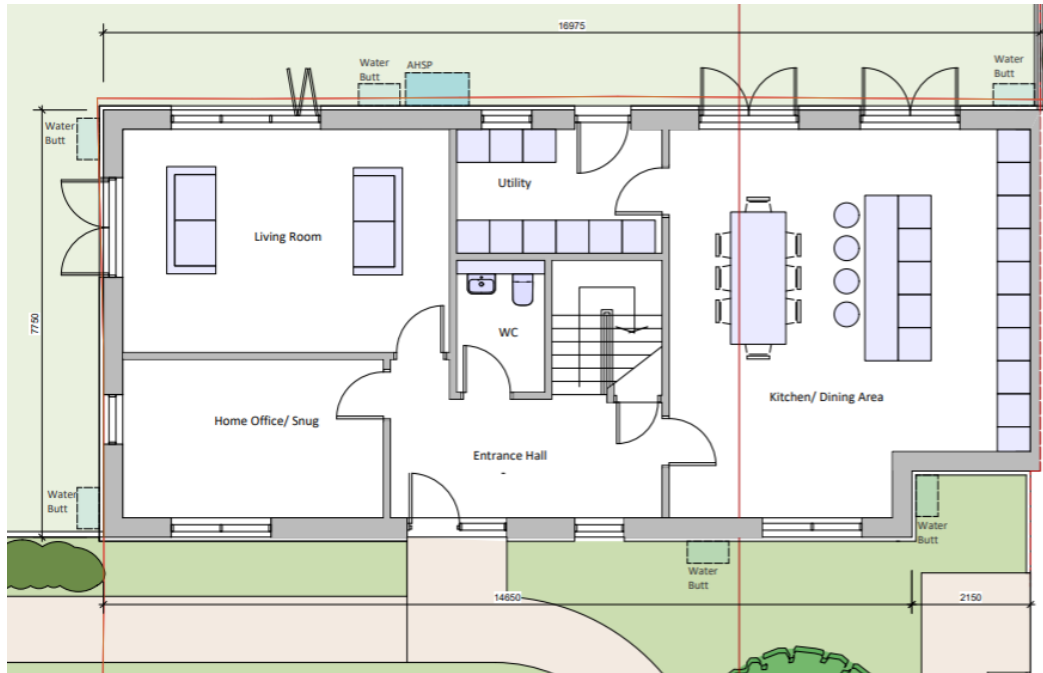


Figure 8 – Plot 2 Floor Plan – Ground Floor - for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-02-100

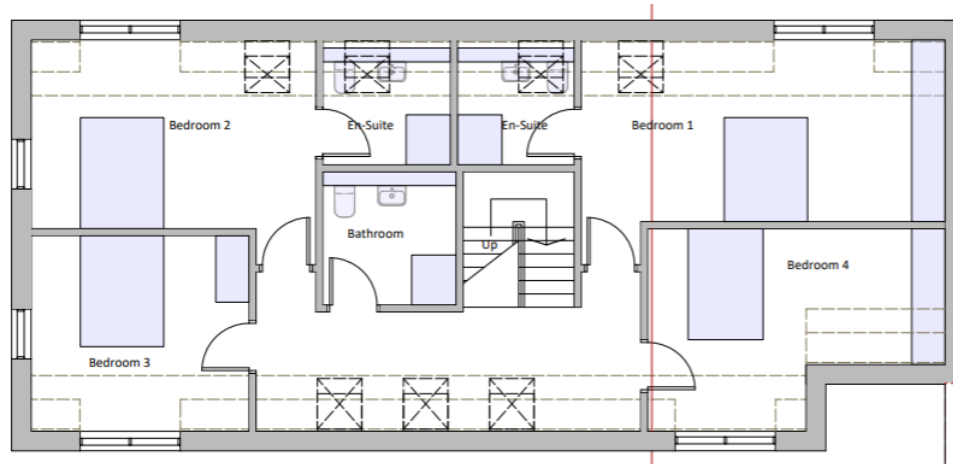


Figure 9 – Plot 2 Floor Plan – First Floor- for scaled version please see ref: 24420-PL-02-101

- 5.29 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. Natural lighting for the first floor shall be accommodated through a mix of ordinary windows, hip to gable dormer windows and skylights. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building.
- 5.30 To the south and west of the dwelling, an area of garden shall be provided.

Plot 3:

- 5.31 Plans and elevations for Plot 3 can be seen in Drawing Refs: 224420-PL-03-100, 224420-PL-03-101, 224420-PL-03-300, 224420-PL-03-301 and 224420-PL-03-302.



Figure 10 – Plot 3 Southern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-03-300

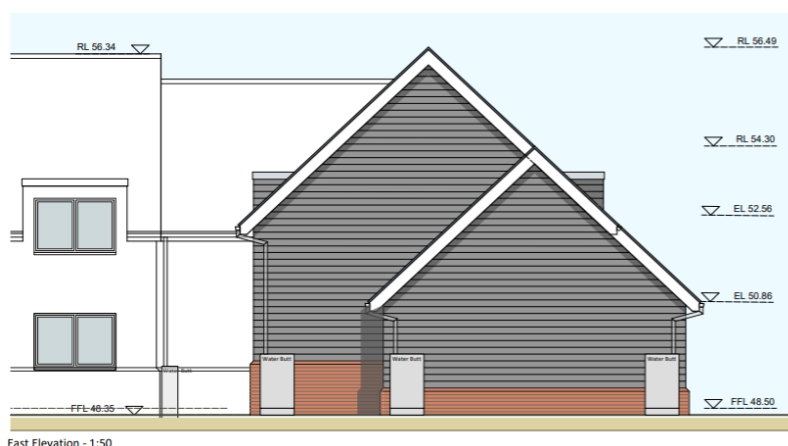


Figure 11 – Plot 3 Eastern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-03-302



- 5.32 Plot 3's dwelling-house shall appear 23.2m long when viewed from its northern elevations and shall appear 9.575m wide when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The layout of the building shall be divided into the main dwelling-house with a two-vehicle carport attached to its east, set back northwards. The stepped nature of the design means that the dwelling-house shall have a total external footprint of 172.2m². The dwelling-house, not including the cart lodge, shall have a Gross Internal Floorspace of 222.6m². It shall be semi-detached, joining to Plot 2 to the south.
- 5.33 Plot 3 shall be one-and-a-half storeys, with the eaves of the dwelling-house, when measured from the level of the ground at the front door (which also constitutes the floor level of the house), 4.06m high, eaves of the carport 2.36m high, and the ridge heights ranging from 7.99m (dwelling-house) to 5.8m (carport) high.
- 5.34 Windows shall be framed in white aluminium. The base of the walls shall be clad in red brick, rising from ground level to 1.225m above the internal floor level on the dwelling-house, and up to 0.6m high on the attached cart lodge. Above this level until the walls meet the roof the walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.
- 5.35 The internal layout can be seen in Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-03-100 and 224420-PL-03-101. As can be seen, the ground floor of the dwelling shall contain an Entrance Hall, Kitchen/Dining Room, Utility Room, WC, Living Room and Home Office/Snug. The first floor of the dwelling shall contain 4 bedrooms, 2 of which contain en-suite bathrooms, and one common bathroom. Plot 3 shall have a Gross Internal Area of 222.6sqm.

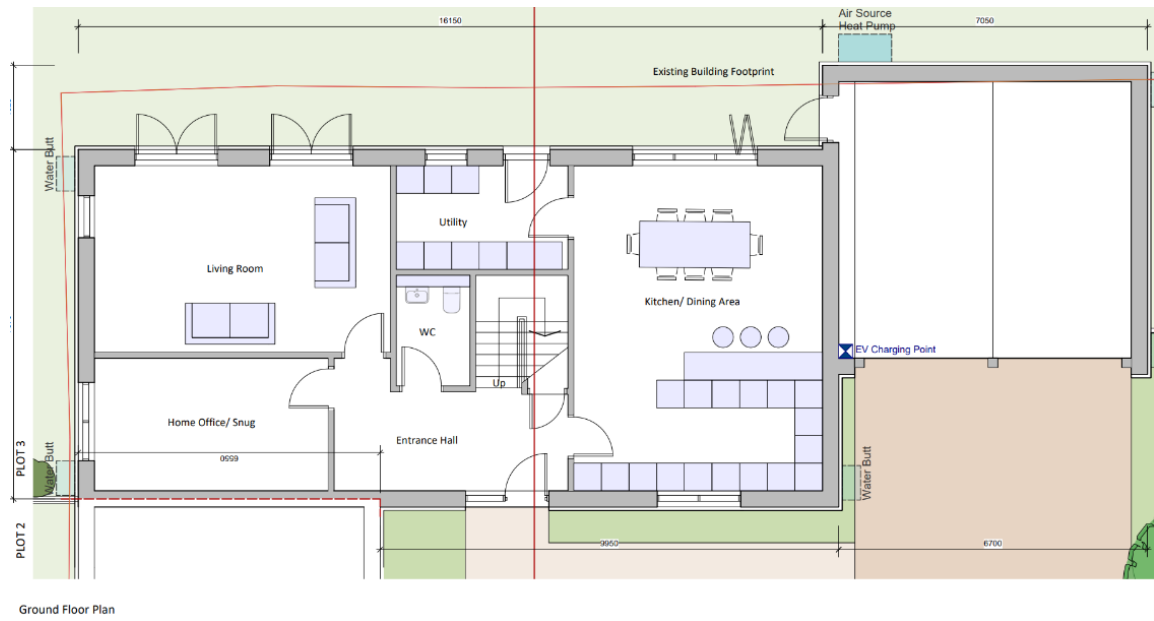


Figure 12 – Plot 3 Floor Plan – Ground Floor – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-03-100

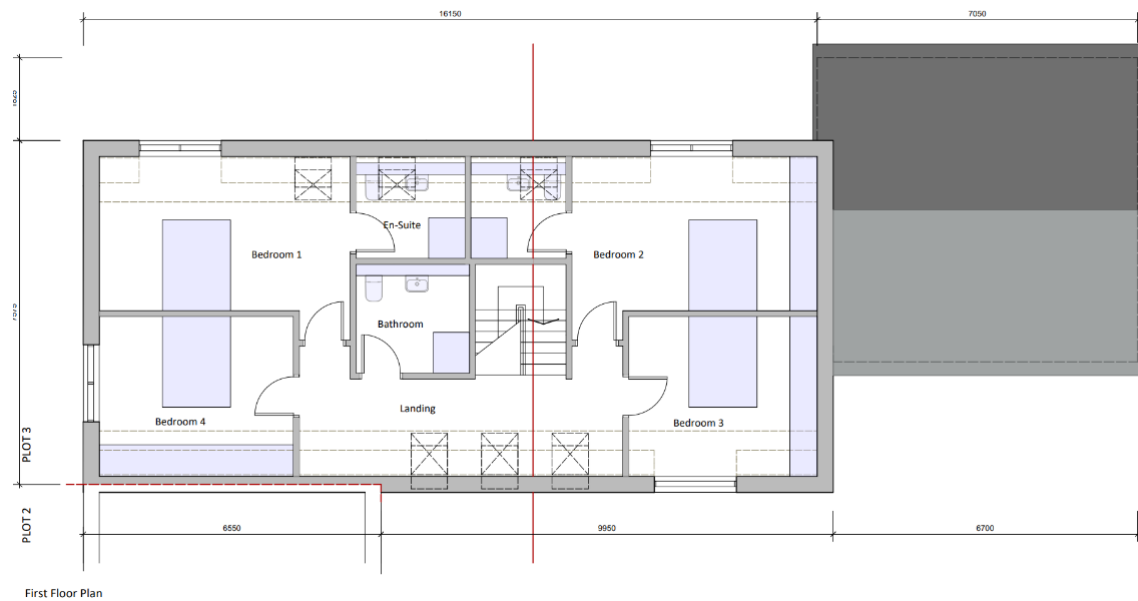


Figure 13 – Plot 3 Floor Plan – First Floor – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-03-101

5.36 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. Natural lighting for the first floor shall be accommodated through a mix of ordinary windows, hip to gable dormer windows and skylights. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building. On the northern side of the carport, an Air Source Heat Pump shall be fitted. The carport shall also be fitted with an EV charging point. The carport is open to the north, with the opening subdivided by timber beams.

5.37 A large garden shall be provided to the north of the dwelling

Plot 4:

5.38 Plans, sections and elevations for Plot 4 can be seen in Drawing Refs: 224420-PL-04-100, 224420-PL-04-101, 224420-PL-04-200, 224420-PL-04-300 and 224420-PL-04-301.



Figure 14 – Plot 4 Southern Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-04-300

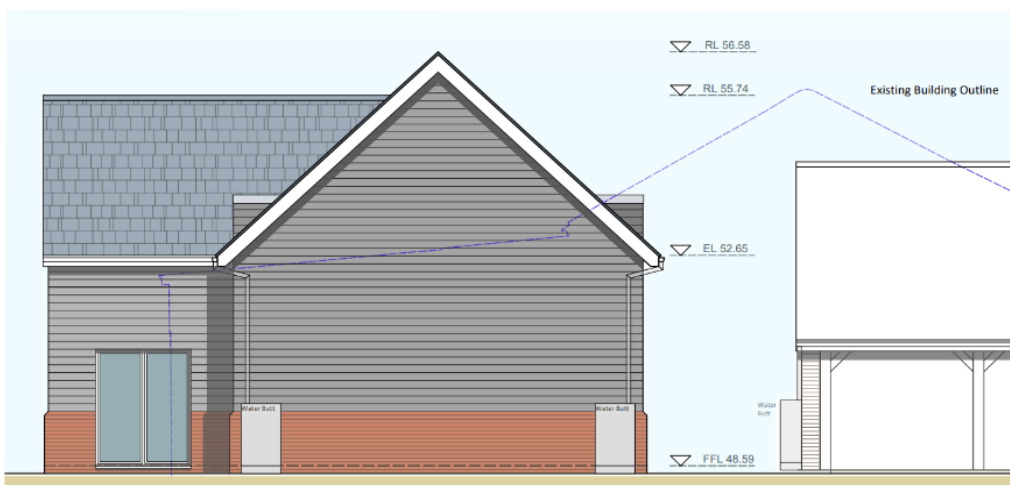


Figure 15 – Plot 4 Western Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 224420-PL-04-300

- 5.39 Plot 4's dwelling-house shall appear 14.15m long when viewed from its northern and southern elevations and shall appear 11.25m wide when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The building shall be L-shaped, with a total external footprint of 130.4m². The dwelling-house shall have a Gross Internal Floorspace of 223.8m².
- 5.40 Plot 4 shall be one-and-a-half storeys, with the eaves of the dwelling-house, when measured from the level of the ground at the front door (which also constitutes the floor level of the house), 4.06m high, and a ridge height of 7.99m (dwelling-house).
- 5.41 Windows shall be constructed of framed in white aluminium. The base of the walls shall be clad in red brick, rising from ground level to 1.225m above the internal floor level. Above this level until the walls meet the roof the walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.
- 5.42 The internal layout can be seen in Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-03-100 and 224420-PL-03-101. As can be seen, the ground floor of the dwelling shall contain an Entrance Hall, Kitchen/Dining Room, Utility Room, WC, Living Room and Home Office. The first floor of the dwelling shall contain 4 bedrooms, 2 of which contain en-suite bathrooms, and one common bathroom. Plot 4 shall have a Gross Internal Area of 223.8sqm.

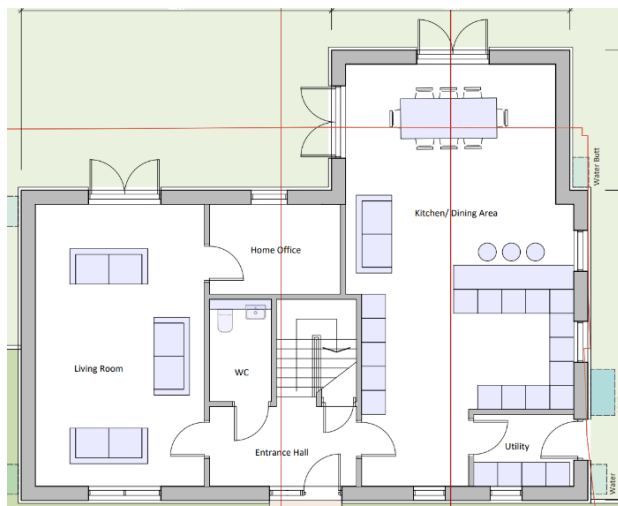


Figure 16 – Plot 4 Floor Plan – Ground Floor – for scaled version please see plan ref: 224420-PL-04-100

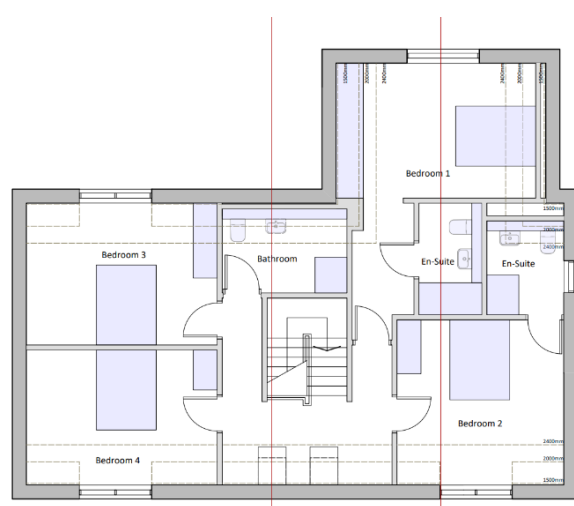


Figure 17 – Plot 4 Floor Plan – Ground Floor – for scaled version please see plan ref: 224420-PL-04-101



- 5.43 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. Natural lighting for the first floor shall be accommodated through a mix of ordinary windows, hip to gable dormer windows and skylights. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building. On the eastern side of the dwelling-house an Air Source Heat Pump shall be fitted. The carport is open to the north, with the opening subdivided by timber beams.
- 5.44 To the north and west of the dwelling an area of garden shall be provided.
- 5.45 In summary, the design, height and scale of Plots 2, 3 and 4 are in keeping with the rural location. The cumulative volume of Plots 2, 3 and 4, along with the carports for Plot 2 and 4 (see described below) totals 2,954.3m³, in comparison to the existing larger barn's 5212.5m³.
- 5.46 The dwelling-houses have been designed to respect the form and scale of the larger of the two existing stable buildings. As can be seen on the Proposed Site Layout plans (Refs: 224420-PL-S-00-100 Rev A, 224420-PL-S-00-101 Rev A, and 224420-PL-S-00-102 Rev A), Plots 2, 3 and 4 fit broadly within the footprint of the larger stable (indicated on the plans by a red outline). Plots 2, 3 and 4 will consequently not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building and therefore should be considered as complying with Policy CGB4.
- 5.47 The buildings have also been designed with the prevailing agrarian style, character and appearance of buildings, both within the locality and the Rural Area, in mind. An example of this local character of building can be seen below.
- 5.48 Directly to the east of the development sit two dwelling-houses at Place Farm, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB, approved under decision ref: 23/01232/FP. These houses, as seen below, have also been designed to suit the rural character of the area, with their form, scale and materials of construction inspired by the barns that previously stood in their place.



Figure 18: Image, taken from Google Maps Street View, of two houses across Hinxworth Road from the site subject to this application

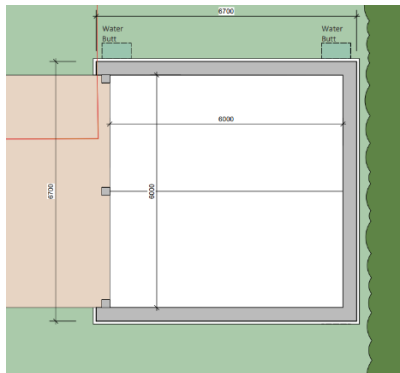
- 5.49 The choice of materials for this application (horizontal timber weatherboarding) reflects the external material treatment of rural buildings, while the variation in roof heights and the stepped placement of the carport to Unit 3 serves both to break up the massing of built form onsite and to demonstrate that the carports are subservient to the dwelling-houses.
- 5.50 Dwelling-houses in the locality tend to be 1 and a half storeys high or lower. The dwelling-houses for this proposal have therefore been designed accordingly, with the added benefit that the more limited height serves to minimise their massing. Grey Slate roofing has been chosen due to the widespread use of the material, both in the locality and in rural areas more widely.

Carports

5.51 As mentioned above, Plots 2 and 4 are each to be provided with a fully detached carport, located on the east side of the site. The plans and elevations of these carports may be seen In Drawing Nos. 224420-PL-02-110 and 224420-PL-04-110.

5.52 Each carport shall be fitted with an EV charging point.

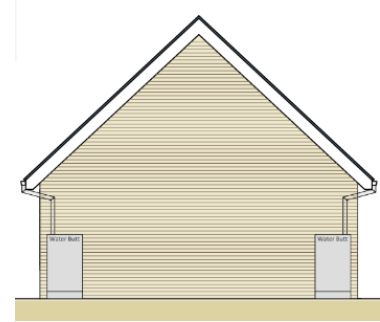
5.53 The carport for Plot 2 shall appear 6.7m long when viewed from its northern and southern elevations and shall appear 6.7m wide when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The building shall be square, with a total external footprint of 44.8sqm, a Gross Internal Area of 36sqm, providing sufficient parking space for two cars.



*Figure 19 – Plot 2 Car Port
– Floor Plan – for scaled version
please see ref: 24420-PL-02-110*



*Figure 20 – Plot 2 Car Port –
Western Elevation – for scaled
version please see ref:
24420-PL-02-110*



*Figure 21 – Plot 2 Car Port –
Northern Elevation – for scaled
version please see ref:
24420-PL-02-110*

5.54 It shall be 2.515m high at the eaves and 5.957m high at the ridge. It shall be a single storey.

5.55 The walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.

5.56 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building. The carport is open to the west, with the opening subdivided by timber beams.

5.57 The carport for Plot 4 shall appear 6.7m long when viewed from its northern and southern elevations and shall appear 9.7m wide when viewed from its eastern and western elevations. The building shall be rectangular, with a total external footprint of 64.9sqm, and a Gross Internal Area of 54sqm, providing sufficient parking space for three cars.

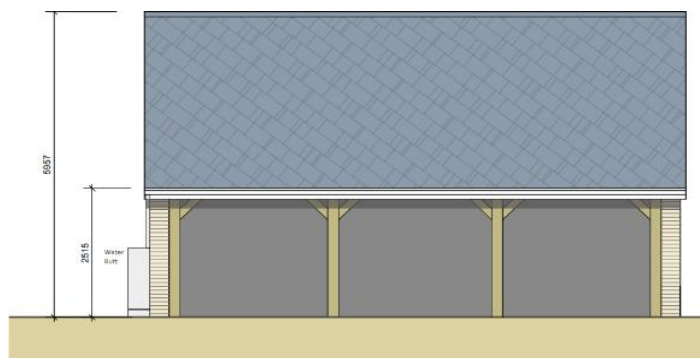


Figure 22 – Plot 4 Car Port – Western Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 24420-PL-04-110

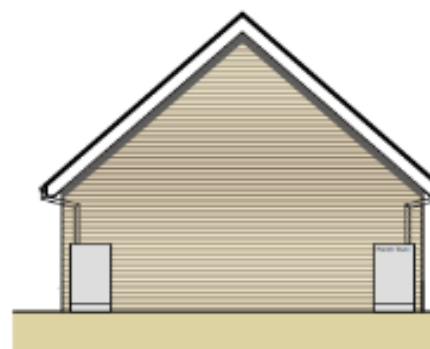


Figure 23 – Plot 4 Car Port – Western Elevation – for scaled version please see ref: 24420-PL-04-110

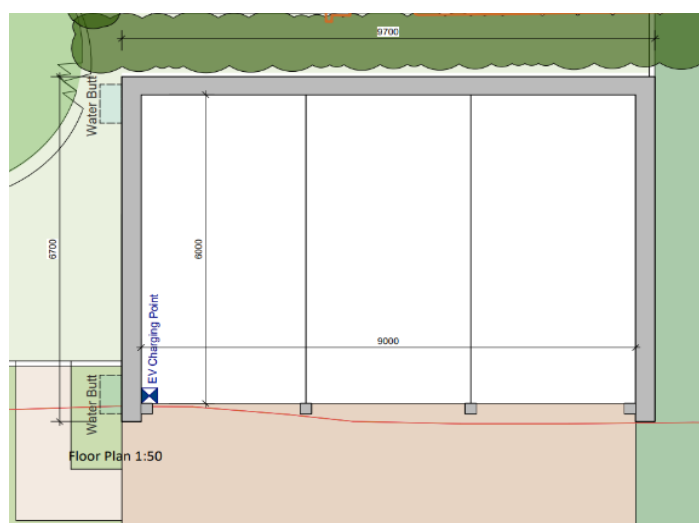


Figure 24 – Plot 4 Car Port – Floor Plan – for scaled version please see ref: 24420-PL-04-110

- 5.58 It shall be 2.515m high at the eaves and 5.957m high at the ridge. It shall be a single storey.
- 5.59 The walls shall be clad in weatherproof horizontal timber cladding. The barge board on the gables shall be painted white.
- 5.60 The roof shall be dual pitched and finished in Grey Slate to match nearby buildings. The guttering shall be constructed of white plastic, shall be painted to match the walls and shall drain into Water Butts around the building. The carport is open to the west, with the opening subdivided by timber beams.



5.61 The carports have been designed to ensure that their appearance, positioning and scale is in keeping both with the existing equestrian character of the site, and the intended agrarian farm-yard character of the proposed scheme. The weatherproof timber board exteriors and grey slating on the rooves will ensure that their appearance relates clearly to the dwelling-houses, and the lower ridge height should ensure that the carports appear subservient to the dwelling-house, while also breaking up the massing onsite.

LANDSCAPING

5.62 As set out above, the site has been laid out in a manner inspired by traditional farmyard layouts. The replacement of the two barns will result in a substantial reduction and breaking up of built form onsite, thus reducing the impact of the site upon the wider landscape. The design, layout and landscaping of the site have taken the Hinxworth Lowlands Landscape Character Assessment into account and therefore has sought to reduce the impact of the site upon the surrounding landscape (characterised as low lying, gently undulating landform, with large arable fields, smaller parcels of grazing land adjacent to settlements, and interspersed with frequent shelter belts). The Landscape Character has two distinctive features, neither of which the proposed development will impact: the A1M running along the western boundary of the area, and pylons crossing the area (West of Hinxworth).

5.63 The design and layout of the proposed development, as set out above, seeks to replicate traditional farmyards found in the area. The materials chosen are of high quality and seek to preserve the traditional agricultural appearance of the built form on site. The soft landscaping set out below, meanwhile, should contribute to screening the site and breaking up its visual impact still further.

5.64 Native hedgerow shall be preserved, planted and enhanced alongside the boundary between the site and Glebe House to its east. While there already exists a wall between the two plots, the hedgerow shall serve to better screen the site and soften the boundary between the two.



- 5.65 Native hedgerow/Ornamental hedgerow shall also be planted along the boundaries of the gardens of the houses, and grass shall be planted in the gardens and verges of the houses as set out in the site plans.
- 5.66 In addition, in the centre of the site and to the south of the cart lodge for Plot 2 two areas of mixed native grass and trees shall be planted, to provide amenity green space. A mixture of trees shall be planted, and additional trees shall be planted around the site to provide shading and green space.
- 5.67 To the south of Plot 2 and west of Plot 1 a Wildlife Area shall be set aside and fenced off, for the purpose of meeting the site's Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Details of this Wildlife area are set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Ecology by Design, August 2025 (submitted alongside this Statement).
- 5.68 It is intended that post and rail fencing should be constructed around the perimeter of the site, in areas where there no boundary currently exists.
- 5.69 The entrance to the site and main turning head will be surfaced in fixed bound material to provide a stable surface for refuse collection vehicles and fire tenders to access the site.
- 5.70 Further details of landscaping may be agreed by suitable conditions should the officer deem necessary.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 5.71 The nearest dwelling is the host dwelling at Glebe House, located to the east. At its closest point, the new dwelling will be at a distance of approximately 28m, and at an obscure angle to ensure that the position of windows, and arrangement of parking areas would not cause any harm to the amenity area of this property. In addition, mature vegetation shall be retained on the eastern boundary of the site, screening it from view, and preventing any overlooking or loss of light between properties. Additional planting is also proposed to provide further mitigation.
- 5.72 The proposal will not cause any harm by way of noise disturbance, and any noise associated with construction would be temporary.



- 5.73 The scheme will comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards, with adequate room sizes, and windows serving all habitable rooms.
- 5.74 Private external amenity space will be provided for the dwelling in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Design Guide SPD. Each house will be provided with ample garden space, with a mixture of fences and hedge and tree planting on the boundaries to provide a screening boundary to the properties. The precise arrangements for the outdoor amenity space may be seen in the attached drawings.
- 5.75 A bin storage area is also set out within the plans in accordance with local requirements.

ACCESS

- 5.76 The site is located approximately 600 metres south southeast of the settlement boundary of Hinxworth, a category B village in the NHDC Local Plan.
- 5.77 The site will be accessible via an improved access from Hinxworth Road.
- 5.78 A transport note has been prepared on behalf of the applicant by EAS, demonstrating that the site can be accessed safely from Hinxworth Road. This note is attached separately to this statement.
- 5.79 This note has informed the layout of the proposal, to ensure that the site may be safely accessed by cars, bin lorries and fire tenders.
- 5.80 When considering highway impacts, Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan requires proof that:
- a) Development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network;*
 - b) Mechanisms to secure any necessary sustainable transport measures and/or improvements to the existing highway network are secured in accordance with Policy SP7;*
 - c) Suitable Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and/or Travel Plans along with supporting documents are provided where required;*



- 5.81 Policy SP7 requires developers to provide, finance and/or contribute towards provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 5.82 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF (December 2023) meanwhile, merely states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.” Paragraph 109 is also relevant, where it states that “opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas”.
- 5.83 To ensure that the proposal meets the policy requirements set out above, a Transport Technical Note (TTN) was prepared by EAS in July 2025.
- 5.84 The site is already in use as commercial stables. There are up to 22 stables available, though the yard is not currently full to capacity. At the time of writing, there are roughly 15 horses on site. As such, significant flows of traffic already move to and from the site. The removal of the stables and the erection of housing will, therefore, result in a decrease in overall traffic levels in the area, as set out in the submitted TTN.
- 5.85 The access is in a safe location, with no traffic incidents in the past 5 years. The road is subject to national speed limits, but the ATC survey carried out as part of the preparation of the Transport Technical Note demonstrated that prevailing 85th percentile speeds are 46.9mph going north and 34mph going south.
- 5.86 Use of this access by 4 dwellings will have minimal impact on the highway network and existing traffic flows, when compared to its existing equestrian use. There would certainly be no severe impact on the highway network and so the proposal therefore complies with the NPPF.
- 5.87 The proposal would provide ample off-road parking in accordance with Appendix 4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.
- 5.88 Further, each dwelling will be served with an EV charging point, as well as bicycle space, to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and mitigate potential increases in traffic-related air or noise pollution. The specific location of each dwelling-house’s EV charging point may be seen in plan refs: 224420-PL-01-100, 224420-PL-03-100, 224420-PL-04-110, 224420-PL-02-110 and 224420-PL-S-00-100.



5.89 As such, in terms of access, the proposed development is both safe and sustainable, would overall reduce traffic volumes in the area, and meets the relevant requirements of local and national planning policy.

BIODIVERSITY

5.90 The application site is currently brownfield in nature, consisting of equestrian buildings and large areas of hardstanding. As such it starts from a low baseline of Biodiversity and habitats. This proposal, informed by the EcIA that is summarised below, will introduce a great deal of green landscaping in place of this hardstanding and shall substantially improve biodiversity.

5.91 The site is not close to any sites or features of national or local nature conservation interest. However, Local Plan Policy NE4 Biodiversity and Geological Sites requires development proposals to demonstrate that there would be no harm to protected species, designations or features, and that biodiversity would be enhanced, within the site. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was therefore undertaken by Ecology by Design in May 2025. This PEA concluded that the proposed development of the site had potential to impact Bats and Nesting Birds.

5.92 The PEA recommended a Bat Emergence survey be undertaken, alongside Biodiversity Net Gain assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA). This EcIA is submitted alongside this statement as part of this application.

5.93 The Ecological Impact Assessment includes the results of a Dusk emergence survey, undertaken 30th July 2025, which found no Bat roosts on site, and with a low number of Bats foraging or commuting around the site.

5.94 Recommendations for the preservation of species and habitats, both during and following construction, are set out in the EcIA, and include the proposal containing 1 integrated Bird Box and 1 integrated Bat Box, per new residential building, any fences or walls including hedgehog friendly gravel boards with holes 13 cm x 13 cm in the base to prevent habitat fragmentation. These measures may be secured by condition, should the planning officer wish.



- 5.95 Recommendations for the management of the site during construction are set out in subsection 5.3 of the EclA (Pg 21-23). Recommendations for the management of the site, so that species are retained and safeguarded, shall be followed where possible, and may be secured by condition, should the planning officer require.
- 5.96 In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements, the site is considered previously developed land, being mostly covered by buildings and hardstanding. As such, in its present form the site has very little biodiversity and the corresponding baseline for required Biodiversity Net Gain is relatively low.
- 5.97 This proposal meets and significantly exceeds the statutory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain by planting areas of neutral grassland, small trees and a small replacement area of mixed scrub within common areas of the site, resulting in a habitat unit gain of +218.68% and a hedgerow unit gain of +150.35% (according to the EclA, the Statutory Condition Assessment and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric submitted alongside this Planning Statement). Such planting that takes place shall comprise a mixture of native and formal landscaping species that simultaneously provide resources to local wildlife and remain appropriate to amenity or residential settings. Additionally, large areas covered by hardstanding or buildings will be uncovered and converted into green space.
- 5.98 The layout of the Biodiversity Net Gain enhancements may be seen in the Proposed Layout Plan (Appendix 2) within the EclA report. The long-term management of these enhancements will be undertaken by a third-party management company and may be secured by condition.
- 5.99 The above surveys and measures, including those recommended by the EclA report, are considered sufficient to ensure that this proposal complies with the provisions set out in Policy NE4; Biodiversity and Geological Sites, and with Paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF.
- 5.100 In addition, the very substantial uplift in Biodiversity that would result from this proposal would constitute a significant public benefit, and as such should carry significant weight in favour of the proposed development.



CONTAMINATION

5.101 In support of this application and on behalf of the applicant, Herts and Essex Site Investigations conducted a Phase 1 Contamination Assessment in order to ascertain the potential for contamination on the site.

5.102 Potential sources of contamination were found on the site. Consequently, should this proposal be granted consent, the council may wish to attach conditions requiring further invasive soil sampling, testing and completion of an environmental report in accordance with BS 10175:2011+A2:2017. Further information may be found in the Desktop Study Report, submitted separately with this application.

SUSTAINABILITY

5.103 This proposal has been designed in accordance with the North Herts Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 23 September 2024, wherever possible.

5.104 Accordingly, the layout of this proposal retains existing vegetation wherever possible and enhances and replaces it where this is not. Tree planting has been incorporated around the site, which should serve to provide seasonal shading during the summer, as well as cooling via evapotranspiration. The layout of the site, with the area of tree planting in the centre surrounded by built form, should create a courtyard effect, enhancing passive cooling during summer months.

5.105 The layout of the dwellinghouses has also been chosen with an eye to maximising natural energy and cooling; each dwellinghouse has an entrance hall at its primary entrance, which can be closed off from the remainder of the house and thereby improving air tightness. However, to ensure that night purge ventilation is possible during summer months windows have been positioned and shall be fitted to enable effective cross-ventilation.

5.106 The design of each dwellinghouse has sought to minimise the form-factor ratio wherever possible, with each dwellinghouse kept to a simple shape. The shared wall between Plots 2 and 3 should help reduce each dwelling's external envelope, thereby enhancing the energy efficiency of both buildings.



5.107 The dwelling-houses and carports are proposed to be constructed from high quality materials, with windows and glazed doors to be installed with U-values in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document L, Conservation of fuel and power, Volume 1: Dwellings, 2021 edition incorporating 2023 amendments, and with reflective coatings to reduce passive heat gain and glare during summer months. Insulation shall be installed in line with the standards set out in the above document, and Thermal Bridging shall be minimised wherever possible.

5.108 Energy efficient lighting shall be installed within each dwelling. An air-source heat pump shall be fitted to each dwelling for heating, and water butts shall be fitted to the guttering for rainwater harvesting, thereby reducing reliance on mains water for non-potable purposes.

5.109 In addition to the above energy and water efficiency measures outlined above, the proposal has sought to facilitate social interaction and to foster a healthy community. Each plot is accompanied by generous garden space, while the common planted areas around site should provide space for social activities. The farmyard layout of the proposal serves to create a compact, social and secure community, enhancing passive surveillance and improving safety.

5.110 The above design and layout considerations are considered to be sufficient to ensure that impacts upon the environment are minimised, the proposed development shall be sustainable, and that the proposal is thus in line with the requirements of Policy D1.

FLOOD RISK

5.111 The Environment Agency mapping shows that the site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at no risk of fluvial flooding. The mapping also shows that the site is also at no risk of surface water flooding. Accordingly, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. The below Figures are taken from the online UK Government Flood Map for Planning Service online map, found at [Map – Flood map for planning – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/maps/flood-map-for-planning).

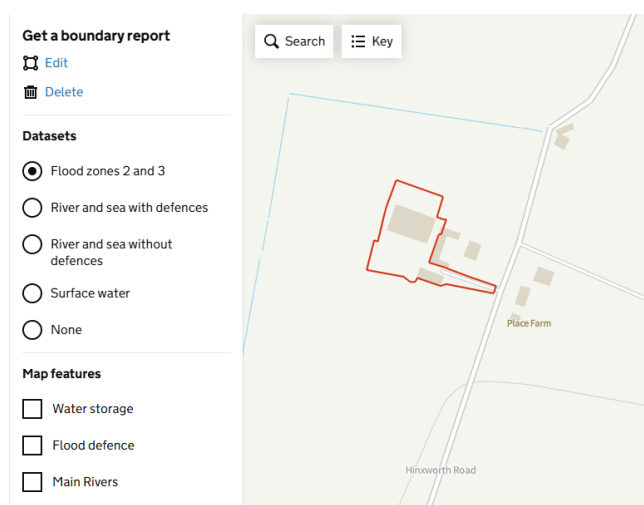


Figure 25 – Online Flood Mapping showing that site is not in Flood Zone 2 or 3, so is there in Zone 1

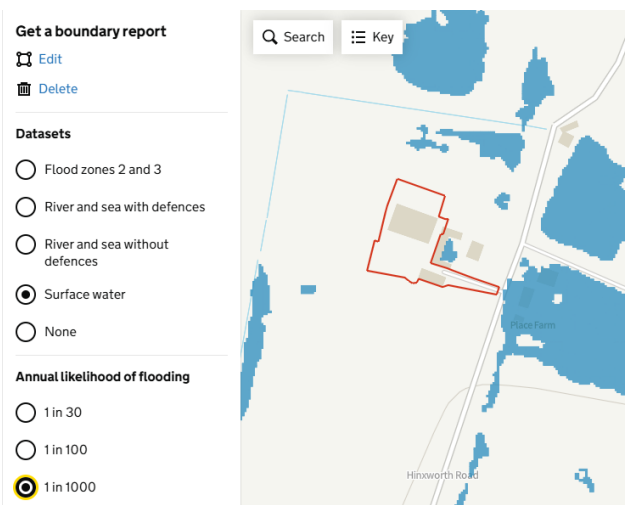


Figure 26 – Online Surface Flood Mapping showing site is not at risk of 1 in 1000-year surface flood

5.112 Additionally, it should be noted that the site is already previously developed land; almost the entire site is already covered in either buildings or hardstanding. Even with this, there is clearly minimal risk of flooding on this site. As set out above, the proposed scheme would replace a large area of this hardstanding with green and landscaped areas which will be permeable; the increased area of permeable land is therefore likely to be of benefit, via helping reduce flood risk outside of the site.

5.113 The application site, therefore, clearly has a low probability of flooding, both in terms of flood zones and surface water. The proposed scheme will represent a substantial reduction to the areas of impermeable surface in the area. As such, the proposed dwellings will not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding and may help reduce flooding elsewhere via reduced runoff from the site, in comparison to existing. This proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Policy NE7.



6.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In summary, this proposal comprises a sustainable, attractive and high-quality development, involving the demolition of two equestrian buildings and the erection of 4 new detached dwellings (use class c3) together with associated carports, access, parking and landscaping, at Glebe House Stables, Hinxworth Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB.
- 6.2 It is a material consideration that the site is already previously developed land and in use as commercial stables. As such, the removal of the stables and their replacement with 4 dwelling-houses will reduce the cumulative volume and footprint of the built form onsite by 33.35% and 42.5% (or 41.3% when including proposed plinths) respectively and shall not result in unacceptable highways impacts (actually reducing traffic movements to and from the site). The site will remain well-screened, with no impact on existing trees. No harm will arise in relation to ecology, trees, highways, design, or neighbour impact.
- 6.3 The scheme will offer a number of benefits, including the delivery of 4 market dwellings that may contribute towards the Council's housing needs. The proposal will also offer economic benefits through the construction phase. The proposal offers several environmental benefits, including energy-efficient dwellings, along with additional planting sufficient to result in a biodiversity gain of 218.68% habitat units and 150.35% hedgerow units. Moreover, the replacement of the stables by 4 dwelling-houses is anticipated to have the effect of decreasing traffic volumes in the area.
- 6.4 Regarding NPPF Para 11(d)(i), no conflict has been identified in relation to policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance.
- 6.5 Turning to Para 11(d)(ii), no adverse impacts have been identified, certainly none that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.
- 6.6 Officers are therefore respectfully requested to support this application, subject to conditions as deemed reasonable and necessary.



APPENDIX 1

Pre Application Advice Letter – 24/02898/PRE – Three dwellings following demolition of existing stables
with associated parking and amenities. Glebe House Stables, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Baldock,
Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB

Sworders

Our Ref : 24/02898/PRE

3 The Gatehouse
Hadham Hall
Little Hadham
Ware
Hertfordshire
SG11 2EB

Contact : Henry Thomas
Direct Line : 01462 474138
Email : henry.thomas@north-herts.gov.uk
Date : 7th February 2025

FAO: Tom Allington

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Pre Application Advice : Three dwellings following demolition of existing stables with associated parking and amenities.
Glebe House Stables, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5HB**

I refer to your request for pre-application advice regarding the aforementioned site; I am writing to you following an assessment of the supporting documents submitted and a site visit.

I would emphasise that this document does not constitute a formal determination and is without prejudice to any subsequent planning application.

The following assessment is based upon the following submitted details:

- Application form
- Cover letter
- Site Location Plan
- Proposed Site Layout

For your information the relevant government guidance and policies from the development plan are as follows:

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (Adopted)

Policy CGB1 Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

Policy CGB4: Existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy SP7 Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions

Policy SP8 Housing

Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability

Policy T1 Assessment of Transport Matters

Policy T2 Parking

Policy D1 Sustainable Design

Policy D3 Protecting living conditions
Policy NE4 Biodiversity and geological sites

National Planning Policy Framework (generally and specifically).

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 8 - Promoting healthy communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 – Making effective use of land
Section 12 – Requiring good design

Vehicle Parking at New Developments SPD - November 2011

Design SPD - July 2011

Planning History

86/00051/1 - Conversion and adaptation of part of existing stable block into residential use, to be occupied by agricultural students associated with Glebe Farm.

91/00307/1 - Retention of use of agricultural land for stabling and grazing of horses and use of part of barn for indoor exercise area.

Site and Surroundings

The site is an equestrian yard on the west side of New Inn Road. The yard is served by an existing access onto New Inn Road. The Yard consists of two barn buildings. The site is located within Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

The Proposal

Pre-application advice is sought for the erection of three detached dwellings following the demolition of the existing stable buildings. This will consist of one four bed dwelling and two five bed dwellings.

Key Issues

The key issues for consideration include:

- the principle of residential development in this location
- the design and appearance of the dwelling/dwellings
- impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
- impact on the amenity of the host dwelling
- amenity for future occupiers
- highways, access and car parking
- ecology and biodiversity
- other

Principle of Development

The Local Plan Policy SP2 sets out the hierarchy for new residential development within the District, with the main housing being to allocated sites and then with general development allowed within the category A villages, in-filling within category B villages and development for limited affordable housing and facilities for local community needs meeting the requirements of policy CGB2 in category C settlements. This site is located within a rural context which falls outside of the category A, B and C settlements and is an area protected by the designation of Policy CGB1, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt where there is a presumption against new development.

The criteria of Policy CGB1 states:

In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development:

- a) Is infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village;*
- b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location;*
- c) Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- d) Relates to an existing rural building;*
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or*
- f) Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area.*

Pre-application advice is sought for the demolition of two equestrian buildings and for three detached dwellings to be built within the vicinity. Policy CGB1 d) is then supported by policy CGB4 which provides further guidance for existing buildings within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. Which states that:

- a) Planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:*
- b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction;*
- c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and*
- d) Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.*

This proposal is therefore considered against paragraph c) of CGB4. The purpose of this clause is to protect the existing rural character and minimise the urbanisation of these sites. Whilst the proposal seeks a floorspace trade-off between the existing equestrian buildings and the proposed dwellings, in my view this would not be supported by the above policy. The proposal seeks to erect three detached dwellings around a green which would create an overly suburban layout. The proposed dwellings would not be sited near the footprint of the existing barn and therefore would harm the openness of the site by virtue of erecting buildings where there were none originally.

In addition to the layout, I would suggest that Policy CGB4 should be interpreted to include design as well. The design of the three detached dwellings would also appear overly

suburban which would not reflect the existing character of the rural area of barn dwellings. As such, it is my view that the proposed materials and form should reflect the existing stables.

In my view, this proposal does not comply with paragraph c) of Policy CGB4 and therefore by virtue, does not comply with Policy CGB1. As such, the principle of rural housing development would not be supported in this design and layout. It would be my advice therefore to revise the layout to better reflect the positions of the existing buildings. Ideally, replacement dwellings should be sited within the footprint of the existing buildings. In addition to this, I would also suggest that any replacement dwellings should not be more visually dominant than the existing buildings, as such replacement of the southern stable block should be limited to a bungalow style dwelling.

I therefore consider that residential housing would not be supported in this location unless the proposal consists of the conversion and reuse of an existing building. There is no fall-back position under Class Q for equestrian buildings.

Design and Appearance and Impact on Designated Heritage Assets.

Local Plan policies SP1 and SP9 require that proposals must respect and improve their surrounding and that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context. This is further reflected in Policy D1 which outlines criteria for sustainable design. It states that planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context, enhance public realm and retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting and meets or exceeds nationally described space standards.

In terms of design and appearance, based on CGB4 new dwellings should reflect the equestrian nature of the site. The cul-de-sac layout of the site appears overly residential which conflicts with the rural character of the locality.

No indicative elevation plans have been submitted.

Standard of Amenity for Future Occupiers

Any future submission would need to meet the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. Any future submission would need to ensure that the standards are addressed and met.

The layout of the site would provide adequate amenity space for each dwelling. The proposed scheme would have a suitable balance between hardstanding and green space. The provision of garages for each dwelling would be a positive addition. However, to reduce the harm to the openness of the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, I would suggest that any garages are either integrated into the dwelling, or located close to the dwelling.

In terms of providing amenity for the occupants, the proposed layout of this scheme would be considered acceptable and would provide sufficient private garden space as well as parking spaces and cycle storage.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

Local Plan policy D3 Protecting Living Conditions states that:

“Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Where.....the living conditions of an existing development would be affected by a proposed use, the Council will consider whether there are mitigation measures that can be taken to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.”

The proposed dwelling would be set back sufficiently from the host or any neighbouring dwellings. Any side windows on the northern most plot could provide some overlooking of neighbouring amenity. However, given that this is aimed towards the applicants own land, any side windows would probably be acceptable subject to detailed design and a site visit assessment if a submission was made.

Highways, Access and Parking

Local Plan Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters states that planning permission will be granted provided that:

“a) Development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network”.

Policy T2 states that planning permission will be granted provided that:

“a) Parking for residential development is provided in accordance with the minimum standards set out in Appendix 4 of this Plan”.

Hertfordshire County Council Highways Authority have not been consulted on this application however, they would be consulted on any formal planning application as a statutory consultee. They would assess the impact of the proposals on the local road network and assess the acceptability of any access. The Highway Authority do offer pre-application services which may be of benefit. However, given that the proposal seeks to reuse the existing access from New Inn Road, the access is considered acceptable in principle subject to achieving the required visibility splays set out by the Highways Authority.

Given that the site is currently in use as an equestrian yard, it is likely that the three proposed dwellings would not result in an unacceptable increase in trip generations in the area. Demonstration of sufficient parking provision would need to be addressed and justified if a formal planning application was made.

Parking standards set out in the Local Plan require 4- and 5-bedroom dwelling to provide a minimum of 2 vehicle parking spaces with 1 secure cycle parking per dwelling. The proposed layout provides a double garage with additional space in front of the garage to accommodate vehicle parking and cycle storage.

Visitor/unallocated parking should also be provided of between 0.25 and 0.75 spaces per dwelling (rounded up to nearest whole number) and 1 secure and covered cycle space. It is therefore expected that the proposed scheme can accommodate between 1 and 3 additional visitor vehicle parking spaces. However, given the double garages and large driveways, some justification for the underproviding could be given. Any future submissions are expected to comply with the parking requirements set out under Policy T2.

Biodiversity

Local Plan Policy NE4 states that planning permission will only be granted for development proposals that appropriately protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and that all development should deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity amongst other factors. Any future planning application would need to address the biodiversity loss of the garden area of no 41 and provide a net gain for biodiversity.

The development will be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, as such a 10% uplift in biodiversity units will be required. Any future application will need to be accompanied by a Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation which will determine the biodiversity baseline value of the site and therefore the number of units the development will be required to deliver.

In addition to BNG, features that benefit species such as bats, birds and insects should be considered as part of the built design to provide enhancements and support wildlife.

The comments received from North Herts Council's Ecologist will be sent in addition to this pre-application response. Any future submissions made will require an ecological appraisal.

Other Issues

If a planning application is submitted, it is recommended that a landscaping plan be submitted alongside the application including positioning of car parking spaces, cycle parking provision, boundary treatment and planting. It is encouraged that any development takes into account methods of improving the biodiversity and sustainability of the site. This could include inclusion of solar panels, EV charging points and appropriate landscaping.

Bin stores should be ideally sited to the rear of a dwelling or out of public view from the street scene. Where this is not possible, bin stores should be sited close to the dwelling.

Cover Letter Questions

1. *Please confirm that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable in this location.*

Covered under Principle of Development heading.

2. *Please provide your views and feedback with regard to the proposed design, layout and scale of this development.*

Covered under Design heading.

3. *Can you confirm what surveys/supporting information you would like to see at the application stage?*

Covered under the conclusion heading.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the principle of replacement dwellings would not be supported under Policy CGB4 in the current layout. The proposed scheme would result in unacceptable harm to the character and openness of the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

Although it would not be supported in its current form, any subsequent planning application should be supported by a robust and comprehensive Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, sunlight assessment, Landscaping Plan/Details, and an Energy

Statement. Consultation with the Highway Authority is encouraged to ensure the proposed access is acceptable in highways terms.

NHC Ecologist Comment:

Given the proposal will involve the demolition of existing buildings on site any future planning application should be supported by an ecological appraisal. It is acknowledged that the applicant intends to do this, but they are advised that should the appraisal indicate any potential protected species interest on site it may be necessary to undertake further surveys to determine the level of use. **The results of these surveys and details of proposed mitigation would need to accompany an application.**

The development will be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, as such a 10% uplift in biodiversity units will be required. Any future application will need to be accompanied by a Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation which will determine the biodiversity baseline value of the site and therefore the number of units the development will be required to deliver.

In addition to BNG, features that benefit species such as bats, birds and insects should be considered as part of the built design to provide enhancements and support wildlife.

Kind regards

Henry Thomas
Planning Officer

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APPENDIX 2

224420-PL-00-100– Proposed Site Plan submitted under Pre-Application Ref: 24/02898/PRE

