

DESIGN AND ACCESS + HERITAGE STATEMENT

Old School Terrace - Park Lane, Old Knebworth, Knebworth SG3 6PR

Prepared by SCOTT ASSOCIATES LLP



CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0 EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.0 PHOTOGRAPHS AS EXISTING

5.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

6.0 VISUAL IMPACT, SCALE AND MASSING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage, Design and Access Report is written in support of a full planning application for 5no. single storey, terraced residential dwelling houses at Old School Terrace, Park Lane. A full list of the proposals is contained within this report, and they are illustrated on the accompanying submission drawings.

The Knebworth Estate finds it difficult to employ locally from the village of Old Knebworth as the only

reasonable rental accommodation available for singles is the Old Knebworth Almshouses. The Almshouses is a popular early 19th Century single story building of five residential units built by and still owned by the Estate. To address this need, the Knebworth Estate is looking to make use of the disused Old School House playground plot (the Old School House ceased to be used as a school 25 years ago) to recreate a building in the same configuration as its existing Almshouses, but with external finishing to match the Old School House which the plot neighbours. Like the Almshouses the Terrace will offer pedestrian access onto Park Lane

with parking provision in an existing parking bay set back and not visible from the lane. The Estate will offer the Terrace for rental, with priority for its own local employees, and it is envisaged that the Terrace will join the Almshouses as a popular feature and amenity for Old Knebworth.

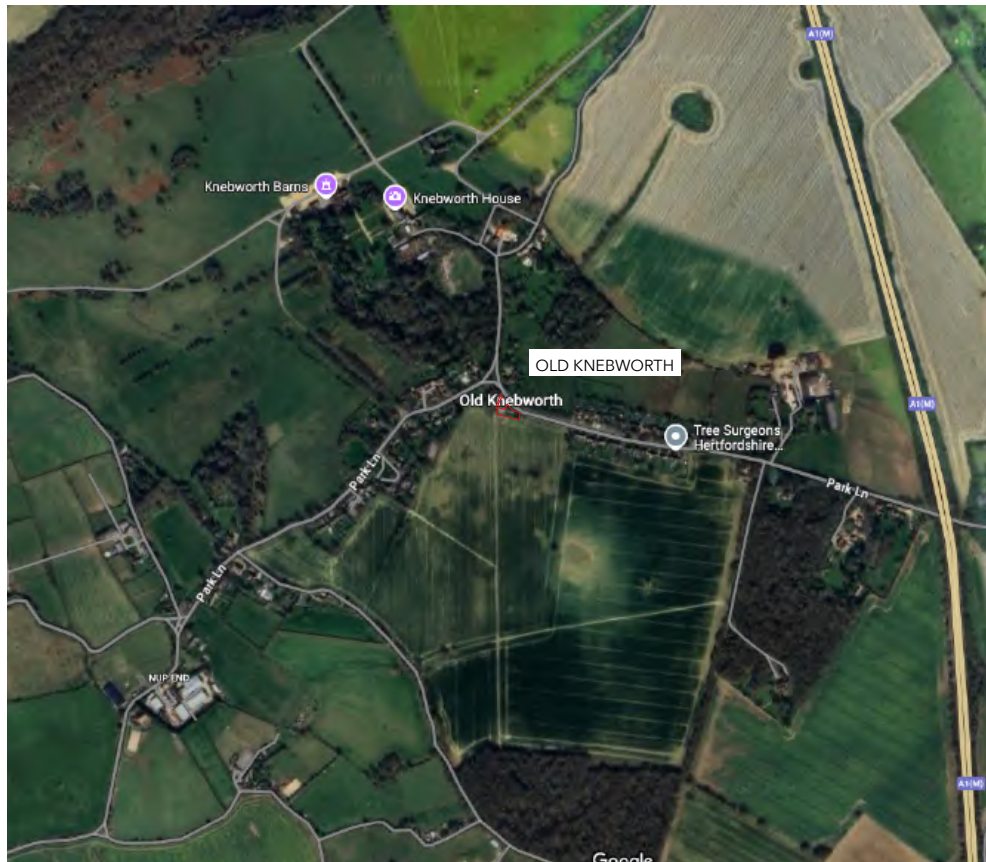


Figure 1. Location of site within village



Figure 2. Location of site on road.

2.0 EXISTING BUILDING AND THE SITE

2.1 The Site

Old School Terrace is a partially vacant site on a predominately residential street in Old Knebworth, a village in Hertfordshire near the A1 motorway.

The site is the disused playground of the adjacent Old School House, which houses three residential apartments (1, 2, & 3). The site is connected to all essential utilities: sewage, water, electricity, gas, and broadband.

2.2 Heritage Context

The property is not listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. However, several nearby properties are listed. Additionally, the site is close to a designated Parks and Gardens Area.

2.3 Use, Importance of Existing Structures

The use of the land is residential. The site features hard standing, partly utilised for parking for the Old School House. The remainder of the area consists of grassland with mature trees and hedgerows.

2.4 Infill Policy

Knebworth is identified one of five villages where a greater amount of development has been allocated. It is excluded from the Green Belt with a settlement boundary shown on the policies map. General development will be permitted in this area. The rest of the parish is designated Green Belt. Old Knebworth is identified as a category B village within the greenbelt, where limited infilling will be allowed.

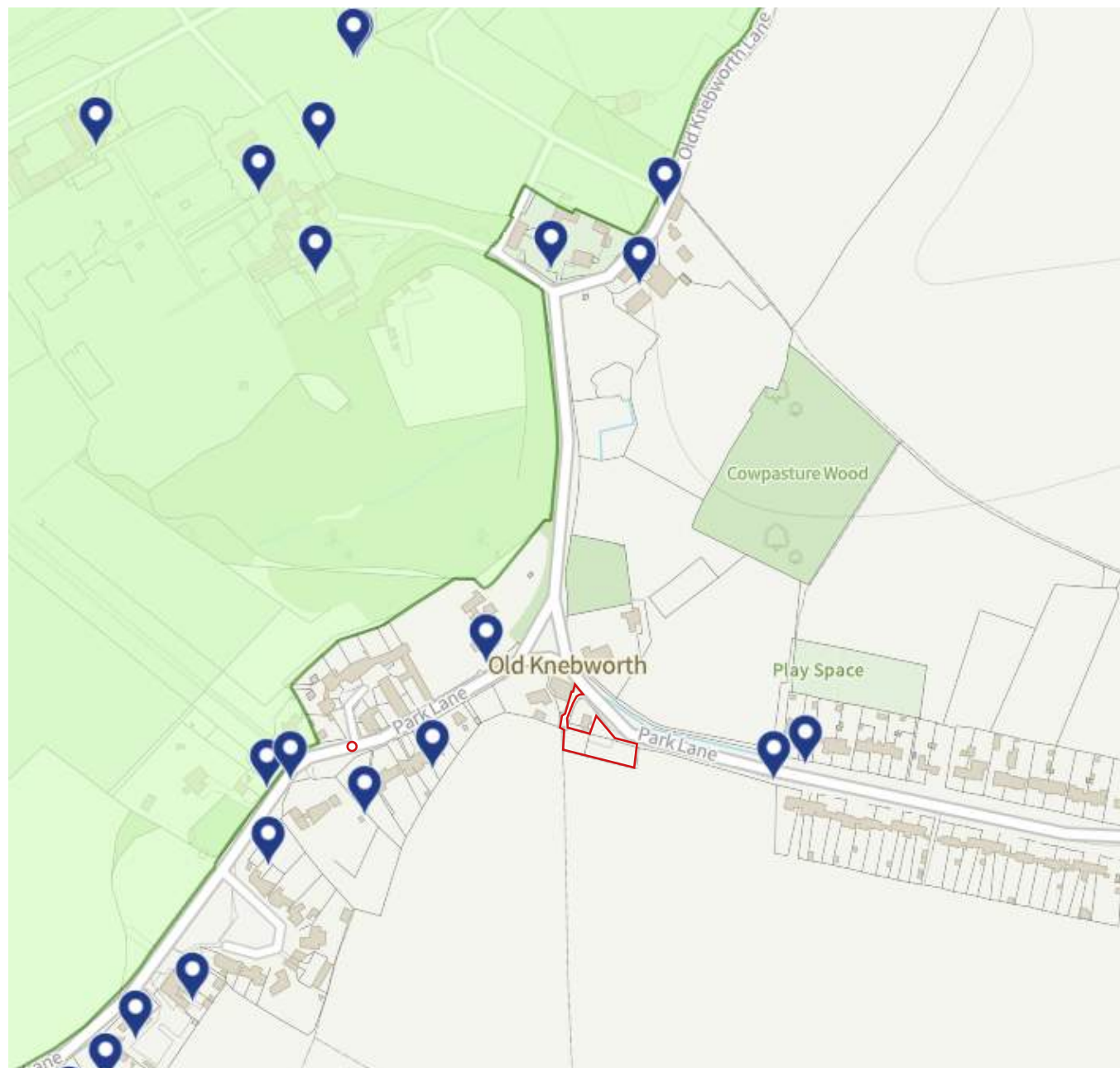


Figure 3. Listed buildings in relation to site © Historic England Website

2.5 Character of the Surrounding Area

The property is situated in the Old Knebworth Conservation Area, a predominantly residential neighbourhood characterised by red brick, knapped flint, white render, horizontal timber cladding, and red roof tiles.

Residential units are set back from the road, featuring private gardens, mature trees, and hedgerows. Timber fencing or hedgerows typically front the properties.

The proposal's design carefully responds the area's character and heritage, using materials that are sympathetic to the existing architecture. The proposals aim to improve the site's current state, addressing the poor condition of the hard standing, grassland, and fencing.

2.6 Flood Risk

The site has a very low risk of flooding from surface water, rivers, seas, groundwater, and reservoirs.

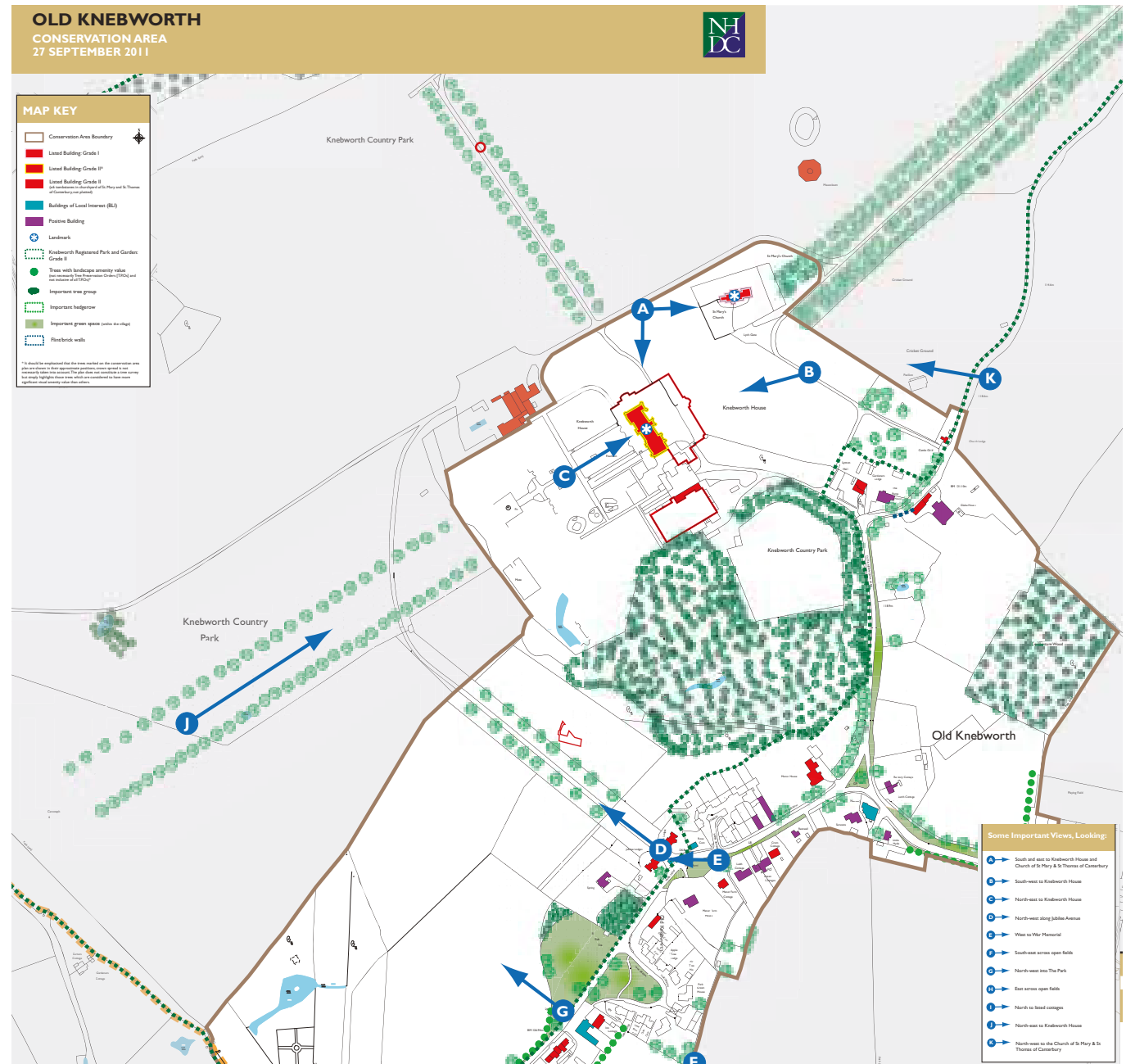


Figure 4. Conservation Area Map

2.7 PRoW

PRoW 13 runs adjacent to the site.

3.0 PLANNING

3.1 Planning History

No planning history.

3.2 Pre-application advice

Pre-application Advice for the proposals was not sought.

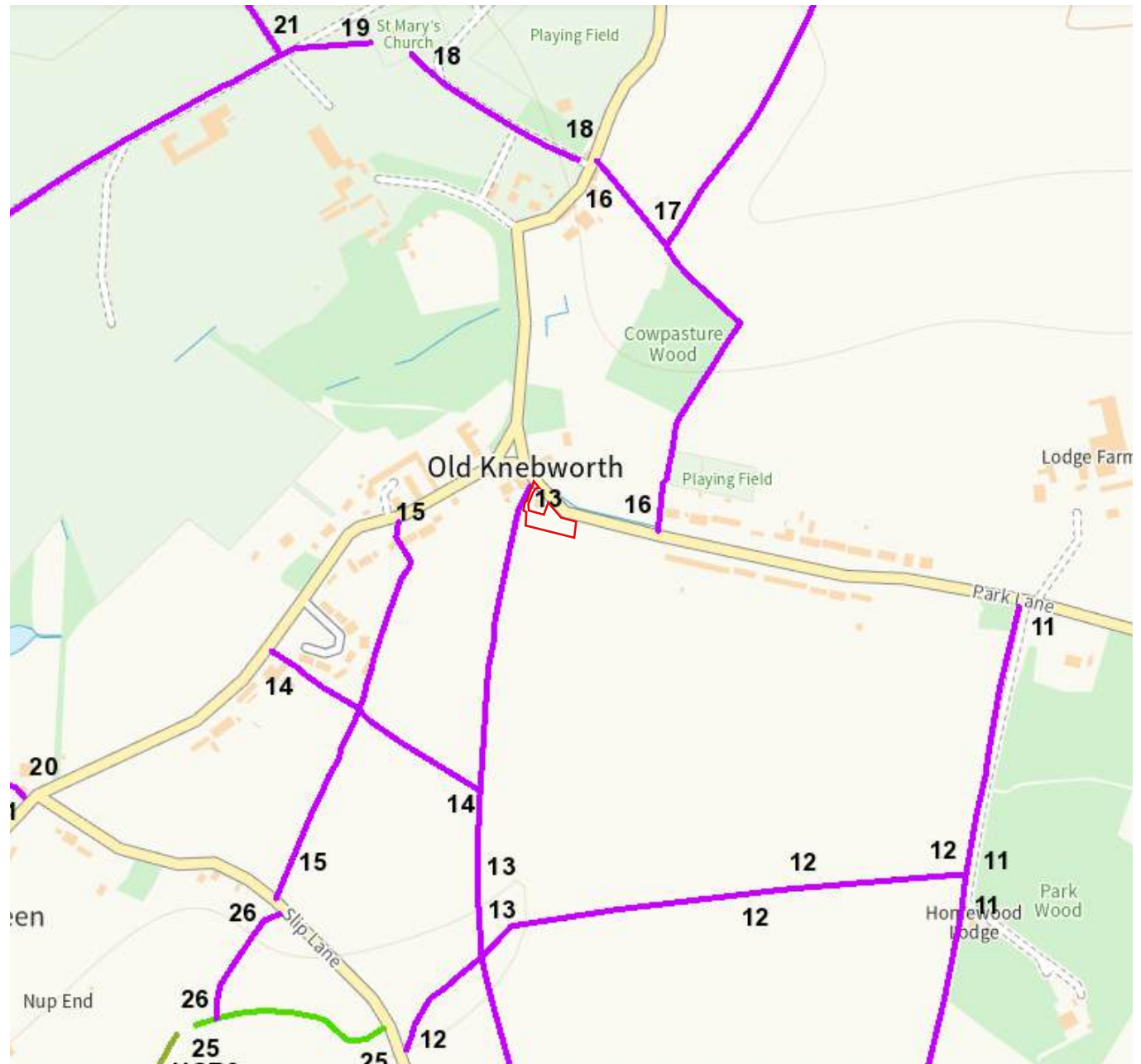


Figure 5. PRoW Map

4.0 PHOTOGRAPHS AS EXISTING



Photo 1 - View looking east to west from north side of Park Lane



Photo 2 - View looking west to east from access road south of Park Lane



Photo 3 - View looking east to west across hard standing and existing park on site



Photo 4 - View looking north to south on access road to hard standing and agricultural fields/PrOW beyond.



Photo 5 - View looking south to north across Park Lane

5.0 THE PROPOSALS

5no. single storey terraced residential dwelling houses with associated landscaping, boundary fencing and bike storage. Car parking is provided for both this site and the adjacent existing Old School House.

5.1 Design and Justification for the works

The proposals are intended to enhance the existing site, improve its functionality to allow it to achieve its optimal use as a residential plot of land without any detrimental impact on the conservation setting.

- There proposals sit back from the road, behind mature hedgerows
- The proposals will not compromise the amenity of adjoining properties.
- The proposals add to the variation of the houses in a sympathetic way, using matching materials.
- All surface water will discharge to a soakaway on site. All foul water will discharge via new connection to existing mains sewer or sewage treatment plant.
- The majority of the mature hedgerow to Park Lane boundary will be retained. Loss of trees/hedgerow will be mitigated by new trees and hedgerow planted to the south of the site.

5.2 Parking

The parking provision (Existing Old School House - 6 no., New units - 5no. spaces (1no. per unit), Visitor/unallocated - 2no. space (0.25 per unit). Total = 13) complies with the North Herts, Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD - Residential Parking Standards - Pg 17; The Department For Transport, Manual For Streets - Dimensions for Car Parking Spaces and Maneuvering Areas - Pg 111; Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards - Pg 5 and Department For Transport, Manual For Streets - Carriage Way Width - Pg 80.

6.0 VISUAL IMPACT, SCALE AND MASSING

6.1 Amount

Demolition is limited to the removal of the existing redundant hard standing on the site.

6.2 Layout

5no. single storey, terraced units and associated fencing, bikes storage and car parking are proposed.

6.3 Scale

The proposals are for a single storey building with pitched roof. Dimensions can be found on the drawings.

6.4 Appearance

The proposed units will be finished in knapped flint, white render and slate effect mineral fibre tiles. With solar panels to the southern roof pitch.

The proposal is designed to match the existing building and vernacular architecture of Old Knebworth. The existing context is complemented by the proposals.

6.5 Historical Setting

The setting within the area of Old Knebworth does not alter.

6.6 Use

The use will remain residential.

6.7 Access

The new dwellings will be have level access and are single storey.

6.8 Historic Impact Assessment

The historic impact within the area of Old Knebworth does not alter.

6.10 Boundary Treatments

The site boundary where indicated on the block plan will have stock timber and wire fencing and hedgerow. Plots will be divided where indicated by black stained hit and miss fencing with horizontal cladding.

6.11 Hard Landscaping

The proposed gravel footpaths to be comprised of 4-20mm Graded Driveway Gravel, natural colour.

<https://www.mickgeorge.co.uk/product/aggregates/bulk-bags/4-20mm-graded-driveway-gravel>

6.9 Soft Landscaping

Existing Hedgerows and Grassland:

The proposals retain the majority of the existing mature hedgerow to the northern boundary, with gardens laid to grass at the rear. Loss of trees will be mitigated by new trees and hedgerow planted to the rear of the proposed building.

Proposed Hedgerows:

Native hedgerows will be incorporated within the development acting as a buffer to the adjacent agricultural land and between plots. Ornamental non-native species will not be dominant within the hedgerow.

Suitable native species such as the below will be included:

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Holly (*Ilex europaeus*)
- Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
- Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*)
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaea*).

Where possible, no cutting will take place during peak bird nesting season, which runs from March to September inclusively. If it is necessary to cut the hedgerows during this period a suitable qualified person will check for nesting birds immediately prior to works being undertaken. Trimming hedges on a two or three year rotation, targeting different sections each year, will make sure there are always flowers for pollinators in spring and berries for birds in autumn. Hedges cut every three years can produce two and a half times as many blossoms as those cut annually. Rotational cutting can also save time and money that would be invested in annual cutting.

Proposed Neutral Grassland:

The existing site will be sown with species to achieve a minimum of ten suitable grass and forb indicator species characteristic of other neutral grassland such as Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Ox Eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and Crested Dogs Tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*.

This will be managed where species indicative of suboptimal condition (such as Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare* and Nettle *Urtica dioica*) make up less than five percent of the total area. A suitable seed mix such as EM2 Standard General-Purpose Meadow Mixture will be used. The following information has been taken from <https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures/standard-general-purpose-meadow-mixture/>.

Ground Preparation:

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface.

Sowing:

Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed, but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

First Year Management:

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost. Early August is a good time. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Proposed Trees:

New trees will comprise of suitable native species such as the following:

- Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- Silver Birch
- Wild Cherry

6.12 Bike Storage (NTS)

A lockable, covered and secure shiplap cycle store will be provided for 10 cycles (2 per unit).

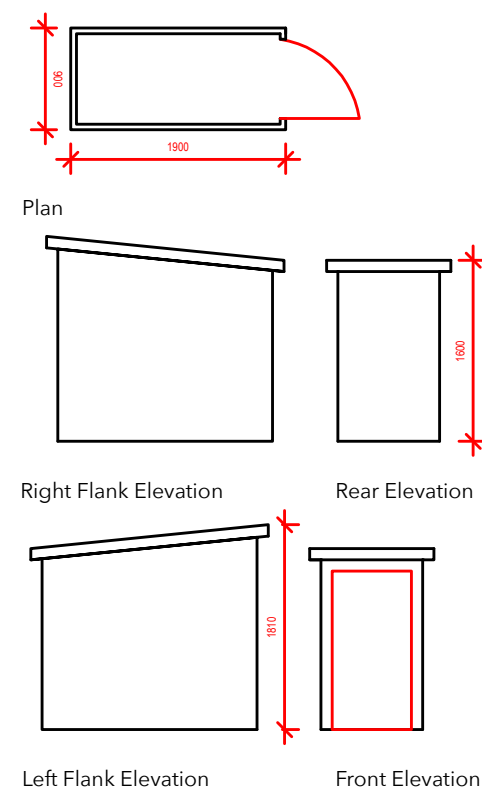


Figure 6. Bike Store