

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND AT PIRTON, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG5 3RA

Outline planning application - all matters reserved - 30 residential dwellings, associated landscaping and biodiversity net gain

Applicant	Vision Residences (TWO) LLP
Prepared by	PSK Rural Limited
Author	T. McArdle BSc. Hons MRICS
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Document Control

Item	Details
Site	Land adjoining the north side of Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RA
Proposal	Outline planning application for 30 residential dwellings with associated landscaping and BNG; all matters reserved
Primary drawing	Indicative Site Layout Plan - Proposed Residential Development, LAP SITE 001 Rev A
Planning authority	North Herts Council
Development plan	North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031
Site policy designation	Rural Area beyond the Green Belt; the site is not Green Belt
National policy date	National Planning Policy Framework, published 17 August 2026
Policy / evidence review date	September 2026

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1. Executive Summary

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by PSK Rural Limited in support of an outline planning application, with all matters reserved, for 30 residential dwellings and associated landscaping on land adjoining the northern side of Pirton. It consolidates the planning-policy case and provides the design and access narrative for the outline proposal, while summarising the principal findings of the submitted technical evidence, including the planning-stage Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, the draft Biodiversity Net Gain Section 106 Agreement and the Indicative Design Consideration boards.

The site lies wholly within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and is not Green Belt land. It is outside Pirton's defined settlement boundary. The statutory starting point is therefore the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, including Policies SP5 and CGB1, read with the made Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan. The mixed-tenure scheme does not fall wholly within the limited categories normally supported by CGB1 and there is an acknowledged development-plan conflict on the principle and location of market housing.

CURRENT HOUSING-SUPPLY POSITION - KEY MATERIAL CONSIDERATION

North Herts Council's November 2025 Five-Year Housing Land Supply Update identifies 3,629 deliverable dwellings against a five-year requirement of 6,976, a deficit of 3,347 dwellings and a published supply of 2.6 years against the adopted housing requirement. The 2025 Housing Delivery Test, published by MHCLG on 17 August 2026, is the current measurement for decision-making. The applicant relies on NPPF Policy S5(1)(j), which addresses evidenced unmet need outside settlements, including circumstances where the authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply, subject to the site being physically well-related to a settlement and the scale being capable of accommodation by infrastructure.

The application site directly adjoins Pirton and the proposal is limited to 30 dwellings. The technical evidence demonstrates an outline-stage development framework incorporating 40% affordable housing (12 homes), reuse of the permitted Holwell Road bell-mouth entrance, Flood Zone 1 development, an attenuation-led SuDS strategy, on-site statutory BNG above 10%, substantial new landscape habitats, retained trees, all-electric low-carbon design ambitions, a playground and walking routes, and operational and construction waste arrangements.

The expanded Design and Access section establishes a landscape-led village-edge concept. The Indicative Design Consideration does not prescribe a fixed architectural solution: instead, it identifies a family of related rural and farmstead forms, a predominantly low-rise scale, varied ridge heights, pitched roofs, locally responsive materials and integrated low-carbon technology. Access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping all remain reserved and will be refined through the reserved-matters process.

The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment identifies no Scheduled Monument within the red-line site, but concludes that meaningful potential for previously unknown remains should be assumed, with Moderate-High potential for Late Bronze Age/Iron Age, Roman and Late Saxon/medieval archaeology. It recommends a geophysical survey and targeted trial-trench evaluation, followed by preservation in situ or excavation/recording according to significance. The archaeological evidence is therefore capable of staged investigation and mitigation.

The draft BNG Section 106 Agreement provides a mechanism for long-term legal security of significant on-site habitat enhancement. The current outline-stage metric records an 16.83% gain in area habitat units and a 79.32% gain in hedgerow units. The submitted HMMP provides for at least 30 years of management and monitoring and includes a draft S106 in respect of monitoring contribution of £7,995, subject to Council confirmation and legal review.

The principal matters requiring continuing control are the detailed reserved matters, detailed drainage/infiltration investigations, final highway geometry and any speed evidence sought by the highway authority, and final landscape/lighting design. These matters

can be addressed through reserved matters, conditions and the Section 106 mechanisms, subject to consultee advice.



Figure 1. Indicative Site Layout Plan, drawing LAP SITE 001 Rev A. The layout is illustrative because all matters are reserved.

2. Introduction, Scope and Status

2.1 Purpose of the Statement

This Statement accompanies the outline application and provides a single planning, design and access narrative across the supporting documents. It identifies the policy status of the land, explains the current housing-supply position, assesses the principle of development, records the design response to Pirton and its rural edge, explains the access approach and summarises the principal technical evidence and planning obligations.

Because all matters are reserved, the submitted layout, house types, watercolour and design boards are illustrative. They demonstrate a credible development envelope, access strategy and design direction rather than fixing the detailed layout, access geometry, scale, appearance or landscaping. Those matters will be subject to subsequent reserved-matters applications and any further technical work required by conditions or consultees.

OUTLINE STATUS

The drawings and design imagery within this Statement are illustrative design guidance. They should be read as principles and parameters for future reserved matters, not as approved house types, elevations, floor areas, building heights, materials or fixed plot positions.

2.2 Documents submitted

- Indicative Site Layout Plan and Indicative Watercolour Layout Image;
- Affordable Housing Statement;
- Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey;

- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment;
- Energy and Sustainability Report;
- Existing and Proposed BNG Plans and Summary Biodiversity Net Gain Report;
- Draft Biodiversity Net Gain Section 106 Agreement;
- Existing Topographic Plan;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Highways Report, including visibility-splay information;
- Landscape Assessment;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Report;
- Waste Management Report; and
- Indicative Design Consideration.

2.3 Status of archaeology and BNG legal documents

The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment is expressly a planning-stage assessment.

The Biodiversity Net Gain Section 106 Agreement is marked draft for discussion and legal review. Square-bracketed fields and the monitoring contribution remain subject to confirmation. The summary in this Statement therefore records the proposed legal framework without presenting the draft as an executed or agreed deed.

3. Site, Surroundings and Development Proposal

3.1 Site and surroundings

The application site comprises approximately 3.42 hectares of predominantly arable land at the northern edge of Pirton. The village lies directly to the south, Holwell Road defines the eastern side and open agricultural land extends to the north and west. The site therefore occupies a transitional position between the established built edge and the wider agricultural landscape.

The site is outside the defined Pirton settlement boundary and lies in the Local Plan Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. It is not Green Belt land. The relevant countryside restraint is therefore Local Plan Policies SP5 and CGB1, together with landscape, design, environmental and neighbourhood-plan policies rather than Green Belt decision-making policy.

3.2 Proposed development

The outline proposal is for 30 residential dwellings with associated internal streets, parking, landscaping, a playground, pedestrian routes and biodiversity habitat creation and enhancement. The illustrative layout shows residential development set within substantial grass and mixed-scrub margins, a principal internal street from the existing Holwell Road access, a turning head, pedestrian connectivity towards Pirton and continued agricultural access at the northern boundary.

The amount of development is fixed at 30 dwellings for the purpose of the application, but the detailed mix, house types, siting, scale, appearance and landscaping remain reserved. The design approach is intended to create a coherent rural-edge extension

informed by Pirton's varied building character and farmstead forms rather than by repetition of a standard suburban house type.

3.3 Outline-stage parameters

Matter	Outline-stage parameter
Housing	30 dwellings; final detailed mix at reserved matters.
Affordable housing	12 homes (40%) on site, secured by Section 106.
Access	Existing Holwell Road bell-mouth reused; visibility approximately 2.4 m x 204 m north / 235 m south.
Landscape	Broad northern and western green buffers; native hedgerow, mixed scrub, grassland and tree planting to be refined.
Open space	On-site playground and walking routes within the green infrastructure network.
BNG	Current statutory metric: +16.83% area habitat units and +79.32% hedgerow units; no off-site units in the current design.
Drainage	Attenuation-led strategy sized on nil-infiltration assumptions, with infiltration/reuse to be tested at detailed stage.
Energy	All-electric, fabric-first strategy with ASHPs, PV, low-temperature heating and water-efficiency measures.
Archaeology	Staged evaluation: Recommends geophysical survey and targeted trenching, followed by preservation or recording according to significance.

4. Development Plan and National Policy Framework

4.1 Statutory decision-making framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan includes the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031. The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 is a material consideration and contains national decision-making policies relevant to this application.

4.2 National Planning Policy Framework - August 2026

The most material national decision-making policies include S3-S6 on sustainable development and the principle of development inside and outside settlements; housing policies on supply, mix and affordable housing; DP3 on well-designed places; TR3, TR4 and TR6 on sustainable location, access and transport impacts; CC2 and CC3 on climate mitigation and adaptation; flood-risk and SuDS policies; N2, N3, N4 and N6 on the natural environment; and the historic-environment policies including HE5 on proportionate heritage assessment.

NPPF S5(1)(J)

Outside settlements, S5(1)(j) includes development addressing an evidenced unmet need, including housing where the authority

cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites. The policy additionally requires the development to be physically well-related to an existing settlement and of a scale that can be accommodated taking account of existing or proposed infrastructure.

4.3 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

The Local Plan was adopted on 8 November 2022. The policies most directly engaged include SP1, SP2, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10, SP11, SP12 and SP13; CGB1; T1 and T2; HS2 and HS3; D1 and D3; NE2, NE4, NE6, NE7, NE8, NE9, NE10 and NE12; and HE1/HE4 where heritage or archaeology is engaged.

Policy SP5 establishes a general approach of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt. Policy CGB1 identifies the limited forms of development normally supported in those areas. A mixed market and affordable scheme of 30 dwellings does not as a whole fall within those categories, and that conflict is acknowledged rather than obscured.

4.4 Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

The Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan was made on 27 April 2018. Policy PNP1 addresses housing and the village development boundary and includes a maximum of 30 houses on any one development site. Other material policies include PNP2 (Design and Character), PNP4 (Hedgerows, Trees and Verges), PNP5 (Wildlife), PNP6 (Local Green Spaces), PNP7 (Key Views and Vistas), PNP8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage), PNP11 (safety of pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and motorists), PNP12 (connectivity) and PNP13 (car parking).

The proposed development is at the PNP1 numerical cap of 30 dwellings but lies outside the defined village development boundary. It therefore responds to the neighbourhood plan's site-scale limitation while conflicting with its locational element.

4.5 Supplementary planning documents and other guidance

- North Herts Sustainability SPD - adopted 23 September 2024;
- North Herts Design Code SPD - adopted 16 June 2026;
- North Herts Developer Contributions SPD - adopted 16 June 2026;
- Hertfordshire County Council Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide; and
- current Environment Agency, Defra National SuDS Standards and Hertfordshire LLFA guidance.

5. Principle of Development and Housing Supply

5.1 Development-plan position

The site lies outside Pirton's settlement boundary. A mixed market and affordable housing scheme of 30 dwellings does not, as a whole, fall within the normal CGB1 categories. In development-plan terms the proposal therefore conflicts with the strategic restraint in SP5, the detailed countryside restraint in CGB1 and the locational element of PNP1. The affordable-housing component responds to the local-need limb of CGB1, but the development as a whole is not advanced as a rural exception site.

That policy conflict is important, but it is not the end of the decision-making exercise. Current national decision-making policy post-dates the Local Plan and specifically explains how proposals outside settlements should be assessed where there is evidenced

unmet need, including a five-year housing land supply shortfall.

5.2 Latest published five-year housing land supply

North Herts Council's November 2025 Five-Year Housing Land Supply Update has a base date of 31 March 2025. Against the adopted housing requirement, it identifies a five-year requirement of 6,976 dwellings and a deliverable supply of 3,629 dwellings, giving a deficit of 3,347 dwellings and a published supply of 2.6 years. The Council document also presents an alternative standard-method comparison of 3.3 years. On either published approach, five years of deliverable supply is not demonstrated.

North Herts published measure	Council figure
Five-year requirement - adopted plan approach	6,976 dwellings
Deliverable supply	3,629 dwellings
Deficit	3,347 dwellings
Years of supply - adopted plan approach	2.6 years
Alternative standard-method comparison	3.3 years

5.3 Housing Delivery Test and current policy route

The 2025 Housing Delivery Test was published by MHCLG on 17 August 2026 and is the up-to-date measurement for decision-making. The original planning evidence records North Hertfordshire at 75%. The applicant's reliance on S5(1)(j) is, in any event, based on the separate and independently sufficient circumstance that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land.

5.4 Application of NPPF S5(1)(j)

The site directly abuts the northern edge of Pirton and is not an isolated parcel remote from the village. The illustrative plan and watercolour show a development edge physically and visually associated with Pirton, with direct road access from Holwell Road and pedestrian connectivity towards the settlement. The scheme is limited to 30 dwellings, and the highway, drainage, flood-risk, landscape, ecology, waste and open-space evidence is proportionate to that scale.

The applicant therefore relies on S5(1)(j) as a material consideration supporting assessment of housing in this location notwithstanding the acknowledged SP5/CGB1/PPN1 conflict. The planning judgment remains a balance of the development-plan position, the current national decision-making policies, and the proposal's benefits and adverse effects.

6. Housing, Affordable Housing and Mix

6.1 Housing contribution

The proposal would deliver 30 additional homes. In the context of the published five-year supply shortfall, the delivery of additional housing is a material planning benefit. Local Plan SP8 and HS3 seek an appropriate supply and mix of homes. Due to all matters being reserved, the final market and affordable mix can respond to the most up-to-date evidence at reserved-matters and Section 106 stages.

6.2 Affordable housing

The Affordable Housing Statement commits to 40% on-site affordable housing in accordance with Local Plan Policy HS2: 12 of the 30 dwellings. No viability case is advanced to reduce that contribution. The indicative tenure starting point is eight rented affordable homes and four other affordable homes, with final products, sizes and detailed distribution to be agreed with North Herts Council.

Housing tenure	Number	Share
Market housing	18	60%
Affordable housing	12	40%
Total	30	100%

6.3 Neighbourhood-plan housing considerations

Policy PNP1 is relevant both because the site lies outside the village development boundary and because it sets a maximum of 30 dwellings on an individual development site. The application is intentionally limited to 30 dwellings. The final size and tenure mix can be shaped to respond to the neighbourhood plan's emphasis on meeting local and wider needs, including smaller homes and affordable housing.

7. Design and Access Statement

7.1 Purpose and design status

This section converts the earlier planning-only design narrative into a proportionate Design and Access Statement for an outline application with all matters reserved. Its role is to explain the design thinking, the relationship with Pirton, the development parameters that the illustrative plan is testing and the principles that should carry forward to future reserved matters. It does not fix the architecture or detailed layout.

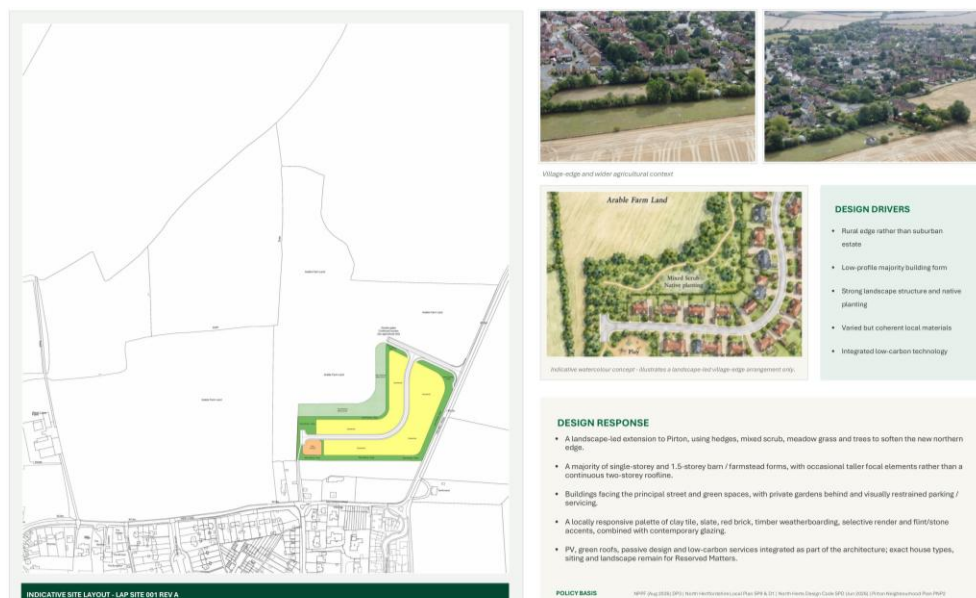


Figure 2. Indicative Design Consideration - Design Board 01: Site & Design Response (illustrative guidance).

7.2 Design vision and drivers

The design concept is a landscape-led extension to the northern edge of Pirton rather than a self-contained suburban estate. The principal design drivers are a low-profile majority building form, a strong landscape structure with native planting, a varied but

coherent palette of locally responsive materials and integrated low-carbon technology.

The illustrative layout seeks to establish a simple, legible internal street framed by houses and green spaces, with parking and servicing visually restrained and with gardens generally arranged behind the principal building line. Mixed scrub, meadow grass, hedges and trees are used to create a planted rural edge and to mediate the transition to open countryside.

7.3 Understanding Pirton's character

The photographic character study demonstrates that Pirton is not defined by a single architectural style. Its recurring qualities are the rural village grain, simple pitched roofs and gables, varied ridge heights, clay tile and slate, brick/render/stone, timber and agricultural cues, and strong planted or hedged boundaries.

The design response should therefore be based on a family of related buildings with common principles rather than uniform repetition.





Figure 3. Design Board 02: Pirton Built Character - photographic analysis and recurring cues to carry forward.

7.4 Amount and use

The proposed use is residential development for 30 dwellings together with the infrastructure and green spaces needed to support them. The Indicative site layout plan The illustrative framework includes the principal access street, parking, private gardens, a play area, pedestrian connections and substantial habitat and landscape areas. The quantum has been deliberately held to the 30-dwelling maximum identified for an individual site in PNP1.

Description	Quantum	Comments
Residential Area	1.687 Ha.	17.78 dph Low Density
Indicative Gardens and Integrated Open Space/Amenity provision within the Residential Area	0.861 ha.	Average of 287 sq.m. of garden per dwelling
Indicative Residential Footprint	3,000 sq.m.	Mix of 1, 2,3 and 4 Bedroom Dwellings
Indicative Open Access Landscaped Areas, Equipped Play Area/Outdoor Sports and Amenity Green Space adjoining the Residential Area	1.1424 ha.	Average of 380.8 sq.m. per dwelling unit

7.5 Layout and urban grain

The indicative layout uses a clear main street with buildings generally addressing that street and associated green spaces, avoiding extensive backland or inward-looking development. A turning head provides a defined western termination. The northern and western margins are reserved for a wider landscape transition so that the built form is contained by green infrastructure rather than extending to every site boundary.

At reserved-matters stage, detailed plot positions should respond to landscape structure, solar orientation, drainage corridors, BNG compartments, archaeological findings, highway geometry and the final dwelling mix. The layout should retain a legible hierarchy of public fronts and private backs and should avoid visually dominant parking or long unbroken built frontages.

7.6 Scale

The indicative designs of the dwellings favour a predominantly single-storey and one-and-a-half-storey built form, with selective taller focal elements where they help create hierarchy and respond to Pirton's varied roofscape. The intention is expressly to avoid a continuous two-storey suburban roofline at the countryside edge. Final heights and massing remain reserved and should be tested against key views, levels and landscape containment.

7.7 Appearance and material palette

The proposed architectural language is contemporary rural rather than pastiche. Simple gables and pitched roofs can be expressed in red clay tiles and slate, with walls using red brick, horizontal timber weatherboarding, selective render and flint or fieldstone accents. Lower links or ancillary elements may incorporate planted or sedum roofs.

Deep reveals and vertically proportioned windows are appropriate to public elevations, while larger garden-facing glazing and selected glazed gables may be used to capture daylight and views.

The indicative designs show how one, two, three and four-bedroom dwellings could be interpreted as compact barns, low L-shaped courtyard forms, long barns and farmstead/tithe-barn compositions.

These are illustrative typologies only. Their value is in demonstrating a coherent family of forms and materials while preserving flexibility over exact floor areas, elevations, heights and siting.

1 Bedroom Indicative Design



2 Bedroom Indicative Design



3 Bedroom Indicative Design



4 Bedroom Indicative Design



Figure 4. Design Board 03: Proposed Architectural Language & Material Palette.

7.8 Landscaping and green infrastructure

Landscape is a primary design component rather than residual space. Native hedges, mixed scrub, meadow and species-rich grassland, scattered trees, permeable surfaces and restrained boundary treatments are intended to structure the development, screen and soften the countryside edge and provide biodiversity habitat. The illustrative open-space network also supports walking, play and informal recreation.

At detailed stage, the landscape design has coordinated the BNG strategy, SuDS features, retained and new hedgerows, tree protection, lighting, archaeology and inclusive pedestrian routes. The greatest structural planting will remain concentrated on the northern and western edges where the transition to open countryside is most sensitive.

7.9 Access and movement

Vehicular access is proposed through reuse of the permitted Holwell Road bell-mouth entrance. The Highways Report records visibility of approximately 204 m to the north and 235 m to the south from a 2.4 m X-distance. The main internal street and turning area shown on the illustrative plan demonstrate a workable access framework for residents, refuse vehicles and emergency services, subject to detailed tracking, geometry and highway approval at reserved matters.

Pedestrian movement is embedded in the scheme through internal routes and a connection towards Pirton, complementing the on-site walking network within the landscape areas. Final footway widths, crossings, cycle parking, EV charging, traffic-calming, surfacing and connections will be refined through detailed design and consultation with Hertfordshire County Council.

7.10 Inclusive access

The future reserved-matters scheme will provide step-free, legible routes from parking and the public realm to dwelling entrances and principal communal spaces, with gradients, crossfalls, surface treatments and thresholds coordinated with drainage and levels. Accessible parking and dwelling standards will be addressed through the final housing mix, Building Regulations and any applicable planning policy requirements. The outline topographic information indicates no in-principle barrier to delivering an inclusive route network, but detailed levels remain reserved.

7.11 Sustainability integrated with design

The appearance and layout will integrate the project's fabric-first, all-electric strategy rather than add sustainability measures as later visual appendages. Roof pitches and orientations will be coordinated with photovoltaic arrays; air-source heat pumps and associated equipment should be located with acoustic and visual considerations in mind; passive solar gain and overheating risk should inform glazing; and water efficiency, rainwater harvesting and permeable landscape surfaces should be designed into the detailed scheme.

7.12 Reserved-matters design principles

Principle	Reserved-matters expectation
Landscape-led edge	Retain the broad northern/western green structure and use native planting to mediate the transition to open countryside.
Rural village grain	Use a family of related forms with varied ridge heights and avoid a repetitive estate composition.
Low-profile massing	Predominantly single-storey / 1.5-storey forms with selective taller focal elements rather than a continuous two-storey edge.
Material coherence	Use clay tile, slate, brick, timber and selective render/flint/stone in a restrained locally responsive palette.
Legible movement	Maintain a simple street hierarchy, pedestrian connectivity and clear public fronts/private backs.
Parking restraint	Integrate parking and servicing so vehicles do not dominate the street or landscape edge.
Low-carbon integration	Coordinate PV, passive design, green roofs where appropriate and low-carbon services with roofscape and elevations.
Technical coordination	Refine layout around SuDS, BNG, ecology, archaeology, tree protection and final highway requirements.

8. Landscape and Village Character

8.1 Landscape and visual approach

The principal landscape sensitivity is the transition from Pirton with the open countryside beyond, including the north-eastern approach on Holwell Road and Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Key View 4. The site is not within the Chilterns National Landscape, although the wider setting of that protected landscape remains a relevant contextual consideration.

The strategy therefore concentrates the broadest landscape buffers on the northern and western edges and reinforces them with native hedgerows, mixed scrub, scattered trees and grassland.

Residential development would create a permanent local change from arable land to a built village edge; the design objective is to contain and soften that change through a defined, planted and managed edge rather than to suggest that the development would be invisible.



Figure 5. Indicative watercolour illustrating the proposed planted village edge and relationship with Pirton.

9. Technical Evidence and Environmental Matters

9.1 Highways, access and connectivity

The Highways Report considers reuse of the Holwell Road bell-mouth entrance, visibility, collision history and the broad internal street arrangement. It records a 2.4 m X-distance with approximately 204 m visibility to the north and 235 m to the south. The access is close to the transition into the 40 mph village environment. No site-specific speed survey has yet been undertaken, and that evidence can be provided if requested by the highway authority.

The illustrative spine street and turning head are capable in principle of serving residents, refuse collection and emergency access, subject to detailed vehicle tracking and highway approval. Pedestrian connectivity forms part of the design framework and will be refined at reserved matters.

9.2 Flood risk

The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 and outside the mapped surface-water flood-risk extents reviewed for the application. No mapped surface-water flow path crosses the development area.

The principal flood-risk issue is therefore the increase in runoff associated with new impermeable surfaces rather than an existing mapped fluvial or surface-water hazard within the site.

9.3 Surface-water drainage and SuDS

The SuDS Report adopts a conservative attenuation-led strategy that does not rely on infiltration at outline stage. The drainage design has been sized using nil-infiltration assumptions, with detailed BRE 365 or other appropriate infiltration testing and groundwater monitoring to be undertaken. This preserves flexibility to incorporate infiltration, rainwater harvesting or other measures if site testing demonstrates they are appropriate while ensuring that the outline strategy remains viable without them.

9.4 Ecology

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal describes an arable/cereal-dominated site with modified grassland and native hedgerow elements and recommends further breeding-bird and bat-related survey/controls together with construction environmental protection. These requirements can be carried forward into reserved matters, conditions and the final ecological management package.

9.5 Biodiversity Net Gain

The submitted statutory metric records an Onsite baseline of 6.75 area habitat units and 0.42 hedgerow units and an indicative post-intervention position of 7.88 area habitat units and 0.76 hedgerow units. This equates to a total 16.83% gain in area habitat units Onsite and a 79.32% gain in On-site hedgerow units, with trading rules satisfied and no current reliance on off-site biodiversity units or statutory credits.

The current habitat framework retains the existing native hedgerow, creates approximately 100 m of new native hedgerow, approximately 0.505 ha of mixed scrub, moderate-condition modified grassland and vegetated gardens. The metric will be re-run when the reserved-matters layout and final habitat design are fixed.

9.6 Arboriculture

The Arboricultural Report identifies no tree stems within the application red line and records three retained trees outside the site: T1 ash, T2 field maple and T3 walnut.

Where the proposed pedestrian route interacts with the T3 root protection area, the strategy is for a no-dig approach with root-protection membrane and construction at or above existing ground level. Final detailed design should retain appropriate protection throughout construction.

9.7 Archaeology and historic environment

The planning-stage Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment confirms that Pirton has a rich archaeological landscape extending from later prehistory through the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. Nationally important assets in the wider village include the Toot Hill motte-and-bailey and shrunken medieval village, the Anglo-Saxon settlement and probable prehistoric ring ditches west of Pirton, and the Rectory Farm moated site. None of the identified Scheduled Monuments lies within the red-line application site.

Recent fieldwork in Pirton is material to the archaeological potential of the site. Investigations behind Elm Tree Farm revealed Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age remains including cremations, a post-built circular structure, pits containing pottery and animal bone and a boundary ditch, while other evidence records Roman, Saxon and medieval activity around the village. Long-term cultivation may have truncated upper deposits but does not preclude survival of deeper cut features.

Period	Assessed potential / relevance
Palaeolithic / Mesolithic	Low-Moderate
Neolithic / Early Bronze Age	Moderate
Late Bronze Age / Iron Age	Moderate-High
Roman	Moderate-High

Period	Assessed potential / relevance
Early / Middle Saxon	Moderate
Late Saxon / Medieval	Moderate-High
Post-medieval	Moderate
Modern	Low

The principal potential construction effects arise from topsoil stripping, foundations, roads and services, drainage and attenuation works, and other ground disturbance. The DBA recommends a proportionate staged strategy: first, magnetometer survey across accessible parts of the site; second, a Written Scheme of Investigation and targeted trial-trench evaluation agreed with Hertfordshire County Council; and finally, preservation in situ where proportionate and feasible or controlled excavation, recording, analysis, publication and archive deposition where loss is justified. Residual watching-brief requirements can be agreed with the County Archaeologist.

The substantial landscape and open-space components of the illustrative plan provide flexibility to modify detailed layout, foundation design or open-space treatment if significant remains are identified. The DBA therefore does not identify archaeology as an in-principle bar to residential development, but it does require the evidence base to be strengthened through on site physical investigations.



Figure 6. Site location and indicative development framework reproduced from the planning-stage Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.

9.8 Energy and sustainability

The Energy and Sustainability Report promotes an all-electric, fabric-first scheme using high levels of insulation, air-source heat pumps, low-temperature heating, roof-mounted photovoltaic generation, smart controls, water-efficiency measures, rainwater harvesting and responsible material sourcing. The stated objective is a development capable of approaching net-zero operational energy balance, subject to detailed energy modelling, orientation, roof design and Building Regulations at reserved matters.

9.9 Waste management

The Waste Management Report addresses both construction-phase resource management and the operational storage, segregation and collection of household waste. It provides for plot-level bin storage, timber shelters, kerbside presentation and an internal street arrangement capable in principle of refuse collection, with detailed collection points and vehicle tracking to be fixed at reserved matters in consultation with the waste authority.

9.10 Community involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement records that no applicant-led pre-application community consultation or direct consultee engagement took place before submission. The planning application process therefore provides the first structured public engagement stage. Material representations can be reviewed and, where appropriate, reflected in the outline determination, reserved matters and condition-discharge process.

9.11 Topography and site levels

The Existing Topographic Plan provides the base information for detailed layout, drainage, access and landscape design. Final finished levels, drainage falls, retaining requirements and accessible gradients remain reserved matters.

They will be coordinated to minimise unnecessary earthworks, protect landscape structure and ensure inclusive movement.

10. Infrastructure, Community and Planning Obligations

10.1 Infrastructure capacity and S5 scale test

NPPF S5(1)(j) requires outside-settlement development to be of a scale capable of accommodation having regard to existing or proposed infrastructure. At 30 dwellings, the proposal is comparatively modest, and the highway, drainage, waste, open-space, ecological, landscape and design evidence establishes a credible servicing and mitigation framework. Statutory consultees will determine whether any additional off-site measures are required.

10.2 Section 106 heads of terms

The Section 106 package should secure only obligations that meet the statutory and national tests. On the current evidence, the principal heads of terms are expected to include the following matters, subject to Council and County Council consultation:

- 40% affordable housing - 12 dwellings - including tenure, mix, nomination and long-term affordability provisions;
- any necessary open-space, play, sports or community-infrastructure contributions identified through consultation and the Developer Contributions SPD;
- long-term management and maintenance arrangements for communal landscape, open space and relevant SuDS where these are not adopted or otherwise secured;
- any highway, sustainable-transport or public-rights-of-way obligations that cannot appropriately be secured by condition; and
- biodiversity obligations required in addition to the statutory biodiversity-gain condition, including legal security for significant on-site creation and enhancements and long-term management and monitoring.

10.3 Draft Biodiversity Net Gain Section 106 Agreement

A separate draft Section 106 Agreement has been prepared specifically for Biodiversity Net Gain. It is a discussion and legal-review draft and contains [TBC] fields that must be completed before execution. It uses the outline-stage BNG plans and metric as reference documents while recognising that the final Biodiversity Gain Plan, Final Metric and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will govern detailed delivery following permission.

Draft BNG obligation	Current proposed mechanism
Minimum gain	Final Metric to demonstrate not less than 110% of pre-development biodiversity value for each applicable unit type, subject to trading rules.
Pre-commencement controls	Approval of Biodiversity Gain Plan, Final Metric and HMMP; payment of monitoring contribution.
Significant on-site habitats	Creation, establishment, protection and management of habitat compartments shown in the approved BNG documents.
Existing hedgerow	Retain and protect the existing native hedgerow relied upon in the Reference Metric except for any approved, metric-accounted alteration.
Monitoring period	At least 30 years from the BNG Completion Date, or longer if required by law/approved documents.
Monitoring and remediation	Condition assessments, photographic evidence and reports, with remedial proposals and corrective works where habitat is under-performing.
Monitoring contribution	Draft sum of £7,995, subject to confirmation by North Herts Council before execution.
Reserved-matters flexibility	Reasonable refinement permitted, but material change must be tested through the Final Metric and continue to satisfy minimum gain and trading rules.

10.4 Outline-stage BNG habitat framework

Habitat	Indicative extent	Target condition	Outline treatment / metric role
Existing native hedgerow H1	105.5 m	Moderate	Retained; 0.422 baseline/retained hedgerow units.
New native hedgerow NH1	100 m	Moderate	Create; 0.3347 hedgerow units.
Mixed scrub NMS1	0.505 ha	Moderate	Create; medium distinctiveness/high strategic significance; 3.888 habitat units.
Modified grassland NMG1	0.714 ha	Moderate	Create/replace; 2.477 habitat units.
Vegetated gardens NVG1	0.787 ha	N/A	Create within residential plots; 1.519 habitat units.

11. Policy Compliance Matrix

The following matrix summarises the policies most material to the outline application. It distinguishes the acknowledged locational conflict from the areas in which the technical evidence demonstrates compliance or a credible route to compliance through reserved matters, conditions or the Section 106 package.

Policy / guidance	Key relevance	Application response
NPPF S3-S5	Principle and sustainable development inside/outside settlements.	Site is outside settlement. Applicant relies on S5(1)(j) through lack of 5YHLS; site adjoins Pirton and 30-dwelling scale is tested by technical evidence.

Policy / guidance	Key relevance	Application response
NPPF housing policies	Housing supply, mix and affordable housing.	30 homes; 40% affordable; final mix capable of responding to current needs evidence.
NPPF DP3	Context-led, high-quality design and green infrastructure.	Design Boards and landscape framework establish rural-edge design principles; all detailed design matters reserved.
NPPF TR3/TR4/TR6	Sustainable location, access, streets and transport effects.	Existing bell-mouth reused; visibility demonstrated; internal street/turning shown; detailed geometry and tracking reserved.
NPPF CC2/CC3	Climate mitigation and resilience.	All-electric fabric-first strategy, PV, ASHPs, water efficiency and climate-resilient design commitments.
NPPF flood/SuDS policies	Flood risk and surface-water management.	Flood Zone 1; no mapped site surface-water extent; conservative attenuation-led SuDS demonstrated.
NPPF N2/N3/N4/N6	Natural environment, trees, protected landscapes and biodiversity.	Retain trees/hedgerow; BNG >10%; native landscape buffers and habitat creation; Chilterns setting considered.
NPPF HE policies	Historic environment and archaeology.	Planning-stage DBA identifies meaningful potential but no Scheduled Monument on site; formalgeophysics/trenching and proportionate mitigation proposed.
NHLP SP1	Sustainable development.	Housing need, affordable housing, design, BNG, drainage, low-carbon measures and green infrastructure support sustainability objectives.
NHLP SP2	Settlement hierarchy.	Site is outside defined Pirton settlement; locational conflict acknowledged and assessed against current national policy.
NHLP SP5 / CGB1	Rural Area beyond Green Belt restraint.	Mixed-tenure scheme does not wholly fall within CGB1 categories; conflict in principle acknowledged.
NHLP SP6 / T1 / T2	Sustainable transport, network safety and parking.	Highways evidence supports access in principle; final parking/cycle/EV/street design reserved.
NHLP SP7	Infrastructure and developer contributions.	Necessary obligations to be secured through proportionate S106 and conditions.
NHLP SP8 / HS2 / HS3	Housing, affordable housing and mix.	30 homes; 12 affordable (40%); final detailed mix to respond to current evidence.
NHLP SP9 / D1 / D3	Design, placemaking and waste.	Landscape-led rural/farmstead design direction, integrated waste and sustainability principles; detailed design reserved.
NHLP SP10-SP12 / NE policies	Healthy communities, green infrastructure and natural environment.	Play, walking routes, landscape buffers, BNG habitats, tree retention and SuDS integrated.
NHLP SP13 / HE1 / HE4	Historic environment and archaeology.	Proportionate DBA completed at planning stage; staged field evaluation and preservation/recording strategy proposed.
PNP1	Meeting housing needs, 30-home site cap and settlement boundary.	Proposal is exactly 30 homes and provides 40% affordable housing but lies outside the development boundary.
PNP2	Design and character.	Pirton character study and rural/farmstead design principles guide future reserved matters.
PNP4 / PNP5	Trees, hedgerows, verges and wildlife.	Existing hedge and off-site trees protected; substantial new native habitats and BNG framework proposed.
PNP6 / PNP7	Local green spaces, key views and vistas.	No identified Local Green Space loss; landscape strategy addresses Holwell Road approach and Key View 4.

Policy / guidance	Key relevance	Application response
PNP8	Heritage assets and archaeological heritage.	DBA identifies archaeological potential and a formal geophysical/trial-trenching route before detailed ground disturbance.
PNP11 / PNP12 / PNP13	Highway safety, connectivity and parking.	Existing access, pedestrian connection and internal network shown; final parking/cycle details reserved.

12. Applicant's Planning Balance

The statutory development-plan position is mixed. The proposal conflicts with SP5/CGB1 and the locational element of PNP1 because the site is outside the settlement boundary and the development is not confined to one of the normal Rural Area beyond Green Belt categories. Those conflicts must be given appropriate weight. The proposal would also result in the permanent loss of arable land and a localised change to the northern rural edge of Pirton.

Against those adverse considerations, the applicant identifies the delivery of 30 additional homes in an authority area with a published housing land supply materially below five years; 12 on-site affordable homes with no viability reduction; a site directly contiguous with the village; a 30-dwelling quantum matching the PNP1 maximum for an individual site; on-site BNG above the statutory minimum; new green infrastructure and public open-space elements; a low-carbon all-electric design strategy; reuse of an existing highway access; and a conservative drainage strategy that does not depend on unverified infiltration.

The updated design and access evidence strengthens the outline case by demonstrating how the development can be structured as a planted rural edge with a legible street, low-profile and varied building forms, a locally responsive materials palette, integrated sustainability and pedestrian connectivity. The design remains deliberately flexible so that archaeology, drainage, landscape, biodiversity, highway and community-feedback matters can shape the reserved-matters scheme.

The archaeological evidence does not identify a Scheduled Monument within the site, but it does identify meaningful archaeological potential. That sensitivity is addressed through a staged programme of formal HHER review, geophysical survey, trial trenching and preservation or recording according to significance. The availability of substantial landscape/open-space land within the framework gives scope for avoidance or local layout adjustment if warranted by findings.

The BNG legal framework also goes beyond a simple outline-stage metric by proposing long-term security for significant on-site habitat enhancement, a 30-year management and monitoring period, remedial mechanisms and Council monitoring. The draft remains subject to legal review and Council agreement, but it demonstrates a credible mechanism for delivery.

The final decision-maker will need to assess the development plan as a whole and apply the current national decision-making policies. This Statement records the applicant's case that the current housing-supply circumstances, NPPF S5(1)(j), affordable housing, BNG, design quality, sustainability and infrastructure package are material considerations to be weighed alongside the acknowledged policy conflicts and environmental effects.

13. Conclusion

The application is for a clearly defined quantum of 30 dwellings on land directly adjoining the northern edge of Pirton, with all detailed matters reserved. The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and is not Green Belt. The proposal therefore engages Local Plan SP5/CGB1 and PNP1 and has an acknowledged locational conflict with those development-plan policies.

North Herts Council's latest published five-year supply position is 2.6 years against the adopted housing requirement. The NPPF published on 17 August 2026 includes S5(1)(j), which addresses housing outside settlements where an authority cannot

demonstrate five years of deliverable supply, subject to physical relationship to an existing settlement and infrastructure capacity. The site directly adjoins Pirton and the submitted technical evidence is proportionate to a 30-dwelling scheme.

The Planning, Design and Access Statement demonstrates a coherent outline-stage framework: 40% affordable housing; reuse of an existing access; low flood risk; robust attenuation-led drainage; on-site BNG above the statutory minimum with a draft long-term Section 106 mechanism; tree and hedgerow retention; substantial landscape buffers; an integrated low-carbon strategy; workable waste/servicing; and a rural-edge design approach grounded in Pirton's varied character.

The archaeology evidence identifies meaningful potential for buried remains but no Scheduled Monument within the site and provides a proportionate staged route for formal HHER review, geophysical survey, trial trenching and mitigation.

The principal remaining coordination points are therefore the formal archaeology work, confirmation of ecology/BNG survey coverage across the full red line, detailed drainage investigations, any additional highway speed evidence sought, final landscape/lighting design, re-running the BNG metric against the fixed reserved-matters layout and legal finalisation of the Section 106 agreements. Subject to those matters and consultee-led refinement, the Statement provides the planning, design and access framework against which the outline proposal can be assessed.

Appendix A - Technical Document Schedule

Document	Date / reference	Principal role
Indicative Site Layout Plan	LAP SITE 001 Rev A	Illustrative development framework; all matters reserved.
Indicative Watercolour Layout	September 2026	Illustrative visualisation of the village-edge framework.
Affordable Housing Statement	September 2026	12 affordable homes / 40%; affordable-housing S106 framework.
Arboricultural Report & Tree Survey	September 2026	No trees in red line; three off-site retained trees; no-dig approach at T3.
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment	September 2026, Version 1.0	Planning-stage archaeological baseline; formal HHER evaluation.
Energy & Sustainability Report	September 2026	All-electric fabric-first / PV / ASHP / water / net-zero operational ambition.
Existing / Proposed BNG Plans	August 2026	Baseline and indicative habitat creation/enhancement.
Summary Biodiversity Net Gain Report	September 2026	16.83% area habitat gain; 79.32% hedgerow gain.
Draft BNG Section 106 Agreement	September 2026 - draft for legal review	30-year legal security/monitoring framework for significant on-site BNG.
Existing Topographic Plan	LAP TOPO 001 Rev A	Existing levels and site context.
Flood Risk Assessment	September 2026	Flood Zone 1; no mapped site surface-water extent.
Highways Report	September 2026	Existing access, visibility, collision review and internal-street feasibility.
Landscape Assessment	September 2026	Landscape-led northern edge; Holwell Road / Key View 4 sensitivity.
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Roost Assessment	September 2026	Ecological baseline and further bird/bat survey recommendations.
Statement of Community Involvement	September 2026	Application-stage engagement and feedback protocol.
SuDS Report	September 2026, Rev C	Nil-infiltration worst-case attenuation strategy; detail to follow.
Waste Management Report	September 2026	Construction and operational waste framework.
Indicative Design Consideration	September 2026	Site/design response, Pirton character, material palette and indicative dwelling typologies.

Appendix B - Evidence and Policy Sources

Policy and housing-supply sources checked for this update on 16 September 2026 include:

- National Planning Policy Framework, published 17 August 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>
- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/north-herts-local-plan-2011-2031>
- North Herts Monitoring Reports and Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement - November 2025: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/monitoring-reports>
- Housing Delivery Test: 2025 measurement - published 17 August 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2025-measurement>
- Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/pirton-neighbourhood-plan>
- North Herts Sustainability SPD: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sustainability-supplementary-planning-document>
- North Herts Design Code SPD (adopted 16 June 2026): <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/north-herts-design-code>
- North Herts Developer Contributions SPD (adopted 16 June 2026): <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/developer-contributions-supplementary-planning-document>

Appendix C - Indicative Design Consideration Image Plates

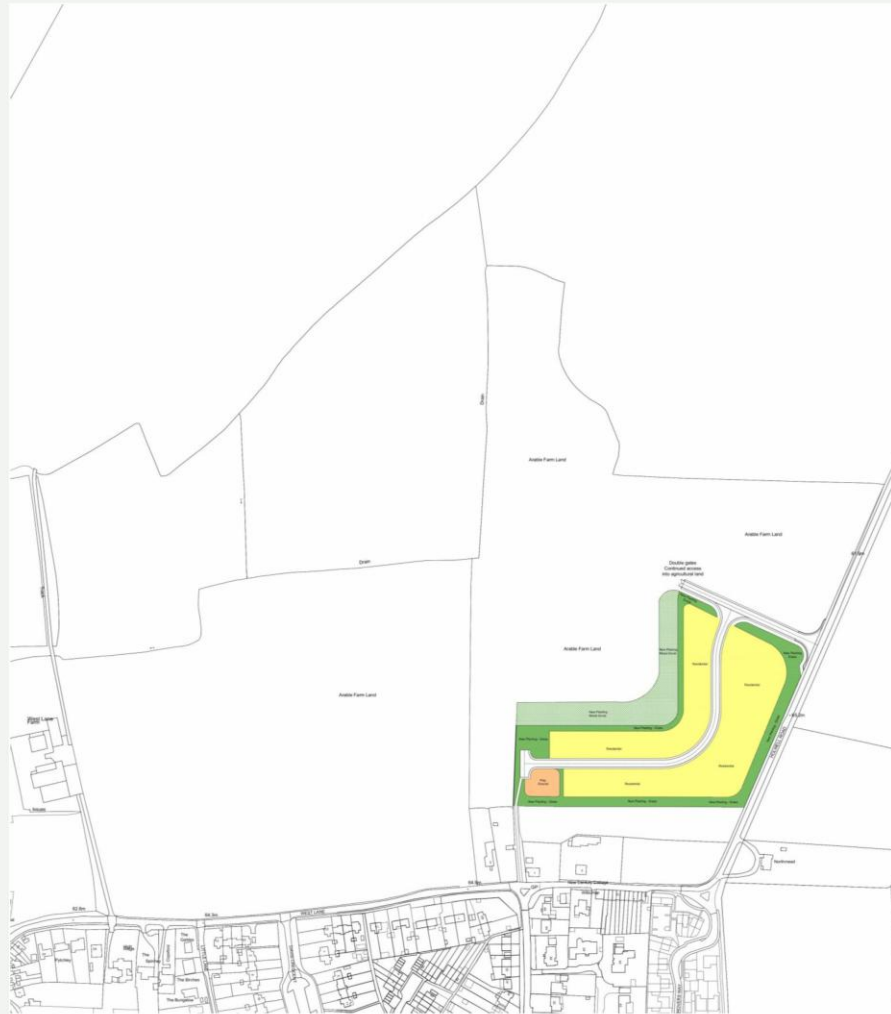
The following design boards and artist impressions are reproduced as illustrative design guidance. They form part of the outline-stage design narrative but do not fix the detailed layout, house types, floor areas, heights, elevations, materials or landscaping, all of which remain reserved.



DESIGN BOARD 01

SITE & DESIGN RESPONSE

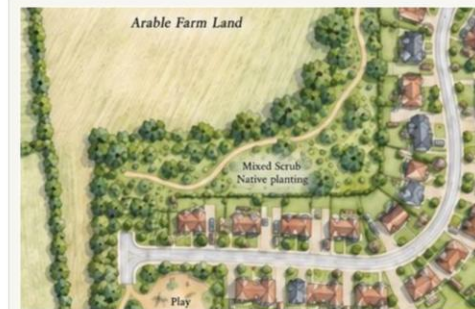
Outline Planning Application | 30 Residential Dwellings | Land north of Pirton



INDICATIVE SITE LAYOUT - LAP SITE 001 REV A



Village-edge and wider agricultural context



Indicative watercolour concept - illustrates a landscape-led village-edge arrangement only.

DESIGN DRIVERS

- Rural edge rather than suburban estate
- Low-profile majority building form
- Strong landscape structure and native planting
- Varied but coherent local materials
- Integrated low-carbon technology

DESIGN RESPONSE

- A landscape-led extension to Pirton, using hedges, mixed scrub, meadow grass and trees to soften the new northern edge.
- A majority of single-storey and 1.5-storey barn / farmstead forms, with occasional taller focal elements rather than a continuous two-storey roofline.
- Buildings facing the principal street and green spaces, with private gardens behind and visually restrained parking / servicing.
- A locally responsive palette of clay tile, slate, red brick, timber weatherboarding, selective render and flint/stone accents, combined with contemporary glazing.
- PV, green roofs, passive design and low-carbon services integrated as part of the architecture; exact house types, siting and landscape remain for Reserved Matters.

POLICY BASIS

NPPF (Aug 2026) DP3 | North Hertfordshire Local Plan SP9 & D1 | North Herts Design Code SPD (Jun 2026) | Pirton Neighbourhood Plan PNP2



DESIGN BOARD 02

PIRTON BUILT CHARACTER

Existing village photographs | diversity of age, scale, form and material

The photographic survey shows that Pirton is not defined by one architectural style. The consistent lesson is a rural village grain: simple pitched roofs, varied ridge heights, a broad natural-material palette and strong planted boundaries.



RECURRING CUES TO CARRY FORWARD

Pitched roofs + gables

Clay tile + slate

Brick / render / stone

Varied ridge heights

Hedged frontages

Timber / agricultural cues

No single house style



DESIGN BOARD 03

PROPOSED ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE & MATERIAL PALETTE

Reference imagery | contemporary rural / barnstead character

REFERENCE IMAGERY - BUILDING FORM & DETAIL



Client-provided reference imagery - illustrative design precedent only.

DESIGN PALETTE

-  Dwarf red brick / feature brick
-  Horizontal timber weatherboarding
-  Slate / dark roof planes
-  Red clay plain tiles / pantiles
-  Selective flint / fieldstone
-  Sedum / planted roof elements

- FORM** Predominantly single-storey barn and courtyard forms; occasional 1.5 / 2-storey focal element to create hierarchy without a continuous suburban roofline.
- ROOFS** Simple pitched gables with red clay tile and/or slate. Green roofs limited to lower links and ancillary elements. Roof geometry coordinated with PV.
- OPENINGS** Deep reveals and vertical window proportions to public elevations; larger garden-facing glazing and selected glazed gables to capture views and daylight.
- LANDSCAPE** Native hedges, meadow verges, post-and-rail fencing, orchards / small trees, permeable gravel and restrained hard landscaping.

Contemporary rural, not pastiche: local forms and materials interpreted with restrained modern detailing.



DESIGN BOARD 04

INDICATIVE HOUSE TYPES | 1 & 2 BEDROOM HOMES

Artist impressions | illustrative only - exact house types reserved

1 BEDROOM - COMPACT SINGLE-STOREY BARN



- Linear low-profile form with a clearly expressed gable.
- Dwarf red-brick plinth and horizontal timber weatherboarding.
- Clay-tile pitched roof with integrated / flush-mounted PV.
- Vaulted living space with garden-facing glazed gable; optional green-roof ancillary element.

2 BEDROOM - L-SHAPED LOW BARN / COURTYARD HOME



- Single-storey L-shaped plan framing a private garden or small courtyard.
- Slate / clay roof mix with a small green-roofed connector.
- Brick and timber walls with a sheltered timber entrance porch.
- Generous rear glazing balanced by more restrained public-facing openings.

Illustrative artist impressions only: these images do not establish approved floor areas, heights, elevations, materials or house types at outline stage.



Illustrative Artist Impression - Compact Single-Storey Barn - illustrative only; all detailed matters reserved.



Illustrative Artist Impression - L-Shaped Low Barn / Courtyard Home - illustrative only; all detailed matters reserved.



DESIGN BOARD 05

INDICATIVE HOUSE TYPES | 3 & 4 BEDROOM HOMES

Artist impressions | illustrative only - exact house types reserved

3 BEDROOM - LONG BARN WITH VAULTED / MEZZANINE POTENTIAL



- Predominantly single-storey / 1.5-storey barn with a strong linear roof form.
- Red clay tile, timber weatherboarding and brick base / chimney elements.
- Selected glazed gable to a vaulted living space, with optional internal mezzanine.
- PV integrated into the principal roof plane; landscape-facing openings maximise daylight and views.

4 BEDROOM - FARMSTEAD / TITHE-BARN COMPOSITION



- Majority low-rise composition with a selective two-storey brick / flint farmhouse or tithe-barn focal element.
- Varied ridge heights create a village / farmstead silhouette rather than a uniform estate edge.
- Mixed clay-tile and slate roofscape with a modest green-roof link.
- Timber, brick, flint / stone and glazing form a coherent but deliberately varied material family.

The intention is a family of related rural buildings, not repetition of one standard house type. Detailed mix, architecture and levels remain Reserved Matters.



Illustrative Artist Impression - Long Barn Character - illustrative only; all detailed matters reserved.



Illustrative Artist Impression - Farmstead / Tithe-Barn Composition - illustrative only; all detailed matters reserved.