



Client:

Baldock Operations Ltd

Deans Yard

Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock

Development proposal for demolition of existing buildings and for the erection of 9no. dwelling houses and associated development.

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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APPENDIX A - PRE APPLICATION ADVICE



1.0 Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Design & Access statement has been prepared by MS4 Architects LLP on behalf of Baldock Operations Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the applicant') to accompany a full suite of plans & specialist consultant reports, which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.2 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Pre-application planning advice was sought from North Herts Council (thereafter referred to as 'NHC') to redevelop the Deans Yard site into a residential housing development following demolition of the existing commercial buildings (ref: 25/00813/PRE).

Application Site: Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock, SG7 6BZ
Local Authority: North Herts Council
Grid Ref = TL25103354

The key points raised were:

1. Principle of redevelopment of previously developed garage land for housing is supported, in accordance with development plan housing designation.
2. Porch design should be more modest.
3. The proposed dwellings ridge height should be lower to better respect the neighbouring PH & no.53.
4. Plots 5 & 6 gardens are inadequate & the dwellings are too close the refuse collection area.
5. Street facing dwellings should align parallel with the highway.
6. Parking bays should consist of no more than 4-bays in a row with dividing landscaping strips.
7. Consider provision of a communal bicycle store.
8. The proposed building materials are appropriate in securing a positive relationship with the adjacent buildings and wider street scene.
9. The dwellings should be design to achieve or exceed the 'Nationally Described Space Standards'.
10. The neighbouring PH and industrial units would be unlikely to harm neighbouring amenity and would not be considered to be overbearing.
11. 18x car parking spaces & 3-7 additional visitor parking spaces should be accommodated within site.
12. No Biodiversity Nett Gain will be required.... the proposed landscaping to the front of the site and within the parking court would be a welcome addition and would respond positively to the street scene.

The high quality design proposals for this residential scheme have been further developed to address and accommodate **all** of the points above.



1.0 Introduction

1.3 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Development proposal for demolition of existing buildings and for the erection of 9no. dwelling houses and associated development.

1.4 THE APPLICATION

This is a detailed application and it is the applicants intention to provide sufficient information at planning stage to reduce the number of planning conditions.

The overall objective of the scheme is to deliver a high quality design that meets the local community housing needs and the Council's policy objectives to provide diverse housing opportunities while contributing positively to the local character.

The applicant is willing to enter into the necessary legal agreements & to make the financial contributions required to deliver these proposals.



2.0 Assessment

2.1 TOWN CONTEXT

Baldock is a Market Town in North Hertfordshire with a rich archaeological heritage from continuous occupation since prehistoric times.

The town lies approximately 33 miles north of London, and 14 miles north of Hertford.

Facilities within the town are mostly concentrated towards the town centre, and include both primary and secondary school provision, several pubs and eateries, a post office and a library, a Garden centre, a Vet, a medical centre, surgery and small hospital. There are also four Dentist practices within the town centre.

The Town has a large Supermarket with connected petrol station. The next closest Petrol stations are the BP garage in Letchworth to the west, and the Baldock services off the A1(M), 3km north of the town centre.

2.2 SITE LOCATION & SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The application site is located on the edge of a predominantly residential zone to the town of Baldock, on the corner of South Road and Clothall Road (A507), a major thoroughfare passing through the town.

The site currently accommodates:

- Vehicle maintenance & sales garage.

The site is physically bound by The Hen & Chickens pub to the South, R&D marine light industrial to the West & residential flats (no.53) to the East & the vacant Whitehorse Service Station to the North.

There are no established trees or hedges on the site of any significance.

The total application site area is 1859 m² (0.186ha)

The sites are within area of Clothall Common archaeological interest area.



Aerial view referenced courtesy of Google Maps

2.0 Assessment

2.3 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS





2.0 Assessment

2.3 EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS

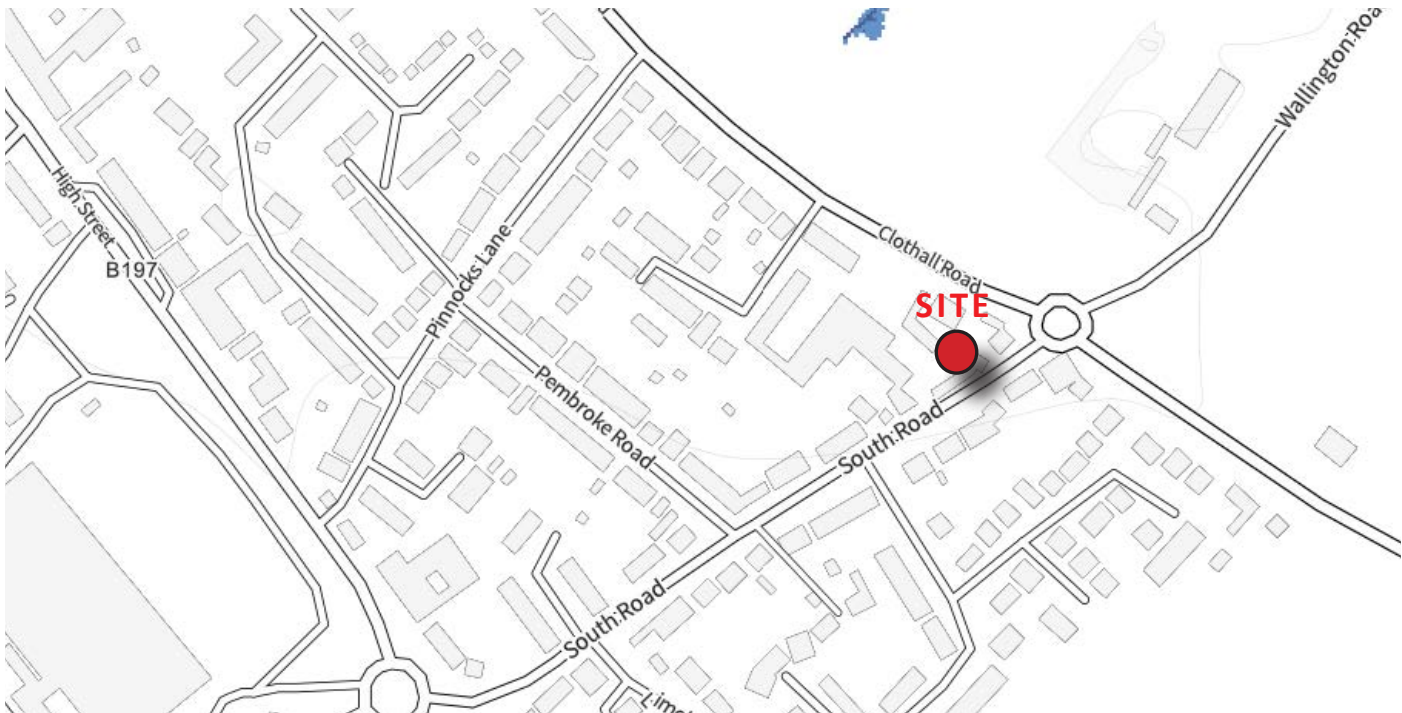




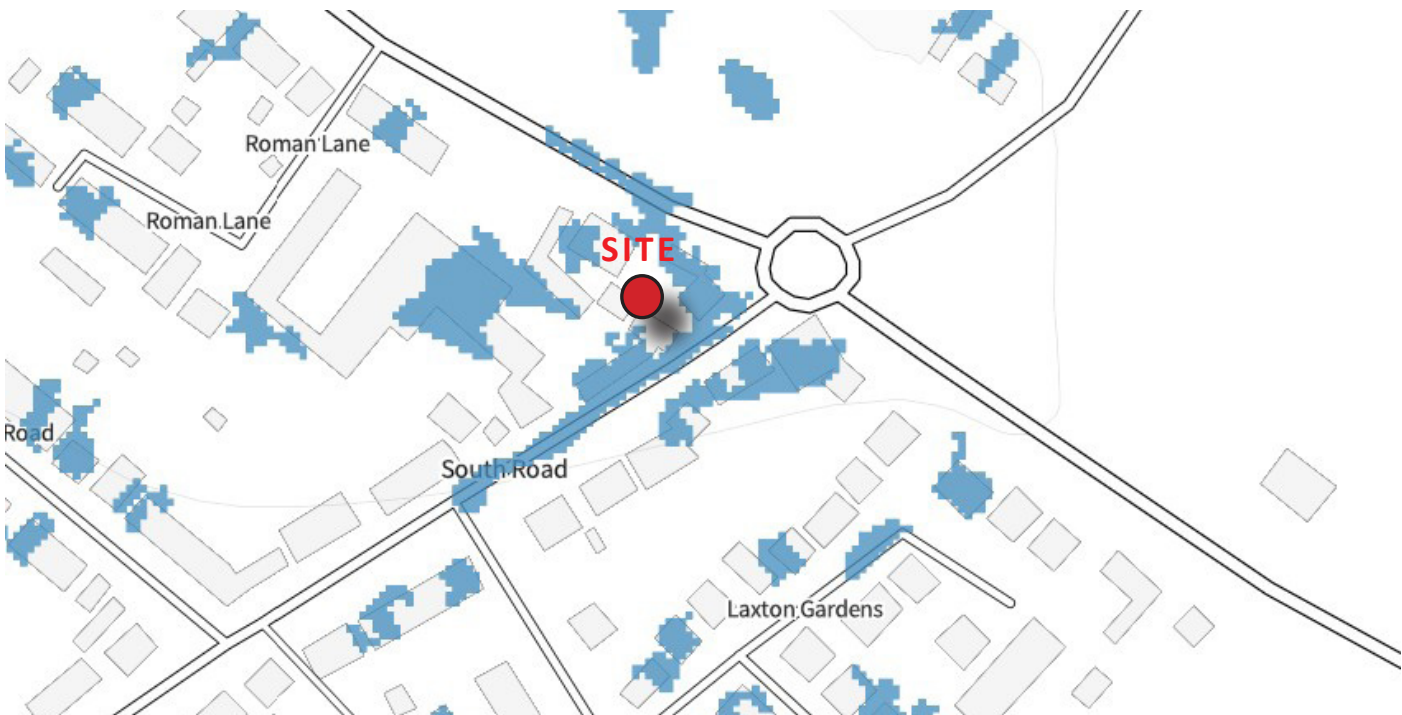
2.0 Assessment

2.4 FLOOD RISK - VERY LOW RISK

The site is not located within a Flood Zone 1category area which means there is a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea.



The site is prone to surface water flood risk with localised ponding.



Mapping data has been referenced fro the Government flood map for planning service

3.0 Character Analysis

3.1 WHITEHORSE SERVICE STATION

Location: North adjacent to site
Building type: (including Detached/Semi/Terraced/Commercial Units): Detached Light Industrial
No. Storeys: 1
Buildings materials: Brick, Metal Cladding
Parking: Off Street



3.0 Character Analysis

3.2 R&D MARINE

Location: West adjacent to site
Building type: Detached Light Industrial & Sub-Station
No. Storeys: 2
Buildings materials: Brick
Parking: Off Street



3.0 Character Analysis

3.3 CLOTHALL CORNER

Location: North East from the Site along South Road
Developed/ age of buildings: 2010
Building type: (including Semi/Terraced/ Houses & Flats): 8 Semi-detached houses & 6 Flats
No. Storeys: 3
Buildings materials: Brick, Render
Style: Modern
Gardens: Minimal
Parking: Off Street



3.0 Character Analysis

3.4 SOUTH ROAD & CLOTHALL ROAD

Location: East & North from the Site

Developed/ age of buildings: Varied

Building type: (including Semi/Terraced/ Houses & Flats)

No. Storeys: 2-3

Buildings materials: Brick, Render

Style: Traditional & Modern

Gardens: Minimal

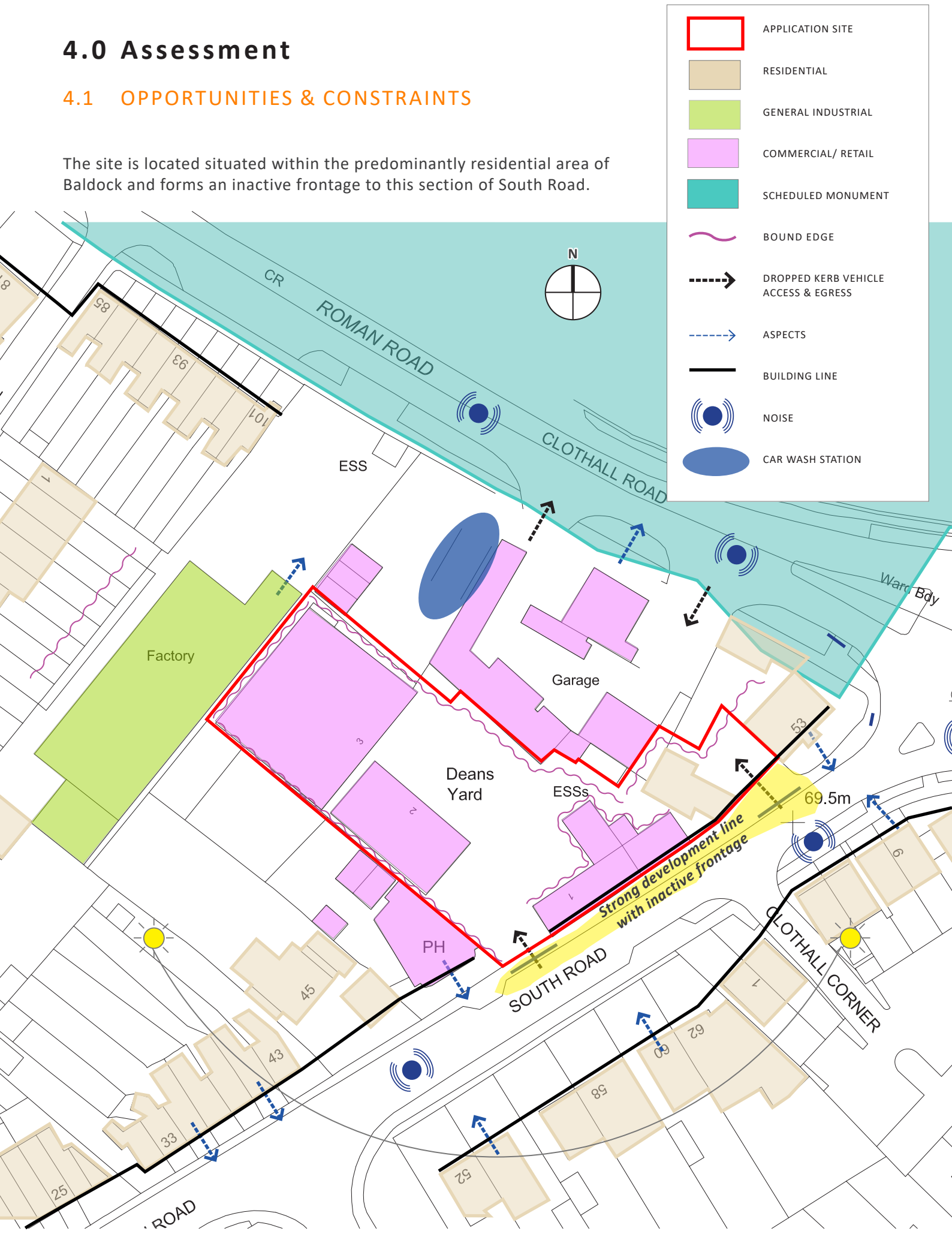
Parking: On & Off Street



4.0 Assessment

4.1 OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The site is located situated within the predominantly residential area of Baldock and forms an inactive frontage to this section of South Road.





4.0 Deans Yard Redevelopment

4.2 OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Constraints:

- The site is bound by neighbouring properties to the North West, 'R&D Marine', 'Whitehorse Service Station' to the North, the Public House to the South West and South Road to the East.
- The garage site is limited with car parking and larger vehicle movement creating environmental impacts of noise, pollution & congestion within this residential area.
- The site and local area fall within the Clothall Common archaeological designation.

Opportunities:

- Optimise use of previously developed land (brownfield) by replacing underutilised garage premises with high-quality residential accommodation.
- Enhance the character of Deans Yard through sensitive architecture and materials that better relate to the surrounding residential context.
- Improve the visual quality of the site by removing outdated, low-quality garage structures and replacing them with well-designed homes and landscape treatments.
- As a key access corridor into Baldock, the current inactive frontage is closed off and incongruous to the wider South Road residential street scene.
- Create a coherent street scene where the current fragmented industrial frontage is replaced with consistent building lines, rhythms, and massing.
- Support local heritage and context by adopting a scale and form respectful of Baldock's traditional grain, without mimicking historic styles. A renewed site will reinvigorate the street scene and positively contribute to the local character and sympathetically compliant the corner Building of Local Interest (no.53).
- Make use of the existing dropped kerbs and vehicle & pedestrian access points.
- The site has been significantly developed with excavations made for drainage routes, electrical services etc, which could benefit redevelopment.
- Deliver much-needed housing, contributing positively to the district's housing supply and supporting local growth objectives. The site is in a sustainable location, 15min walk to Baldock town centre.
- Provide energy-efficient new homes meeting current building regulations, with opportunities for low-carbon technologies such as air-source heat pumps or solar PV (subject to design integration).
- Reduce traffic and noise impacts associated with historic garage/industrial activity, improving amenity for nearby residents.
- Introduce high-quality landscaping, including planting, boundary treatments, and private gardens, improving local biodiversity and townscape quality. The site is concrete/ tarmac hard standing which has no benefit to bio-diversity.
- Improve safety and security by replacing inactive industrial yards with natural surveillance, well-lit pedestrian routes, and a residential presence.

5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.1 PRE-APPLICATION PROPOSALS

The scheme design initially developed through the 'Area Character Analysis' of the local built-environment.

A pre-application inquiry was submitted to North Herts Council in March 2025 and we received a proactive response from Henry Thomas 14th July 2025 (ref: 25/00813/PRE). Refer to Section 1.2 for the key points.

The residential development scheme has been refined following pre-application feedback to enhance key design aspects.

1. Porch entrance porches were redesigned to a more modest aesthetic.
2. The proposed dwellings ridge heights were lowered to closer align with the neighbouring no.53.
3. The South Road street facing dwellings were re-align parallel with the highway.
4. Plots 5 & 6 gardens were subsequently enlarged and the refuse collection area repositioned from the flank house elevation into the communal court yard.
5. The parking bays were redesigned to ensure no more than 4-bays in a row with dividing landscaping strips.
6. A communal bicycle store has been incorporated within the communal parking courtyard to encourage bicycle use.
7. 18x car parking spaces & 3-7 additional visitor parking spaces should be accommodated within site.
8. Plots 5-8 have been combined into a terrace rather than 2-semi detached properties.



Pre-application submitted proposed site plan

5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.2 PLANNING APPLICATION PROPOSALS



Planning application submitted revised proposed site plan



Planning application submitted proposed South Road street scene



5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.2 MID-PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATES

A valid query was raised by Henry Thomas (NHC Planning Officer) highlighting the electrical cable route (highlighted below) which clips Plot 8. The proposal is to re-route this cable in accordance with the Utility Undertakers requirements.





5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.3 HIGHWAYS, PARKING & PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The proposals comply with North Herts Council's parking standards, as summarised in DWT's Transport Statement.

The site access will use the existing dropped-kerb entry and exit points and provides a shared surface for both vehicles and pedestrian crossing. The existing 1.8 m-wide public foot-way along South Road runs north to south, and there are no additional access points to the site.

5.4 REFUSE STRATEGY

Each dwelling will have private waste and recycling bins stored within enclosures adjacent to the property.

Residents will be required to present their bins to the communal temporary holding area, located within 30 m of the bin enclosures, at the edge of the communal car park. This temporary store is situated approximately 17 m from South Road.

5.5 FIRE STRATEGY

Fire appliances can access the central car parking area via the existing site entrance, with vehicle turning demonstrated in DWT's Transport Statement.

A maximum hose length of 45 m from the appliance can reach any point within the property.

The electric vehicle charging bays have been deliberately positioned away from buildings and adjoining structures to reduce the risk of fire spread.

5.6 DRAINAGE

The proposal involves connecting the new drainage pipework to the existing Clothall Road public sewer, as shown on the Civil Engineer's design plans.

Surface water drainage will be managed using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) with attenuation tanks designed for infiltration. Further site investigations, including ground condition assessments and infiltration testing, will determine the feasibility and capacity of soak-away drainage.

5.7 SCALE & MASSING

The proposed new dwellings have been carefully designed to respect the scale and massing of the existing South Road, Baldock street-scape.

The height, width, and overall bulk of the buildings are consistent with neighbouring properties, ensuring a harmonious visual relationship. Roof forms, eaves, and ridge heights have been aligned with surrounding development, while setbacks and spacing between dwellings reflect the established pattern along the street.

Materials and facade treatments are also chosen to complement the local character, ensuring the proposals integrate sensitively into the existing street scene without appearing overbearing or out of context.



5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.8 SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed dwellings within the Deans Yard site represent a sustainable form of development, transforming a site currently in light industrial use into much-needed residential accommodation.

By redeveloping previously developed land within the settlement boundary, the scheme makes efficient use of land, helps meet local housing needs, and reduces pressure on greenfield sites.

The design incorporates energy-efficient construction, high-performance insulation, and provision for low-carbon technologies such as electric vehicle charging points.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will manage surface water on-site, mitigating flood risk and supporting biodiversity. The development is also well connected to local services, public transport, and walking and cycling routes, promoting low-carbon travel and reducing reliance on private vehicles, ensuring a sustainable and responsible contribution to the local community.



5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.9 MATERIALS & APPERANCE

There are four proposed house types which offer a pallet of brick, render & roof tiles which are found within the local context. These materials have been carefully considered and composed to give visual variety, as found within the South Road street scene.



Front Elevation
1 : 50

House Type 1



Front Elevation
1 : 50

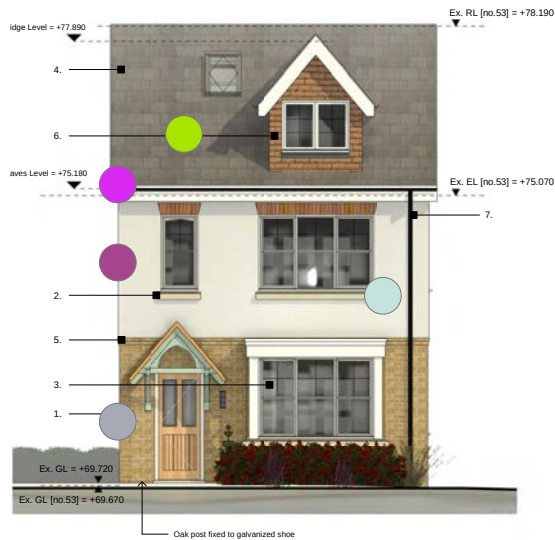
House Type 2

	<i>Buff brick</i>		<i>Interlock concrete roof tiles - brown</i>
	<i>Red multi-stock brick</i>		<i>Slate roof tiles - grey</i>
	<i>Render - off white</i>		<i>PVCu windows - white</i>
	<i>Recon-stone - buff</i>		<i>PVCu circular rainwater goods - black</i>
	<i>Vertical tile hanging - red</i>		



5.0 Deans Yard Development

5.9 MATERIALS & APPERANCE



House Type 3



House Type 4



6.0 Proposal Summary

The proposed 9-unit residential development at Deans Yard represents an opportunity to positively enhance this part of Baldock, providing a sensitively designed scheme that responds to both its immediate context and the wider character of the town.

Early engagement with North Hertfordshire Council has informed the proposals, ensuring that the development delivers high-quality homes that align with local policy objectives, support community needs, and contribute meaningfully to the evolving built environment of the area.

The scheme reinstates and strengthens the street frontage along Deans Yard, creating a coherent and attractive built edge that integrates comfortably with the surrounding residential properties. The proposed architecture adopts a traditional interpretation of local design cues, using a carefully selected palette of materials that reflect the area's existing character while providing a fresh and modern appearance.

The scale and massing have been thoughtfully considered to ensure an appropriate relationship with neighbouring buildings. The layout maximises opportunities for natural light, privacy, and outlook, while maintaining a human scale consistent with the surrounding residential context.

Soft landscaping is introduced throughout the site, enhancing biodiversity, softening the built form, and improving the overall visual quality of the development. Boundary treatments and planting also contribute to a welcoming and attractive setting for future residents.

The scheme has been designed to be fully accessible, with level approaches, inclusive circulation routes, and appropriately designed parking provision to accommodate all users, including disabled residents and visitors.

Overall, the development represents a high-quality residential proposal that will deliver a positive architectural contribution to Deans Yard and provide a well-considered, attractive place to live—supporting the ongoing improvement and vibrancy of this part of Baldock.