

PLANNING, DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Gardeners store, Hexton Manor,
Hexton Hertfordshire SG5 3JH



December 2025





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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared by INTOUCH PLANNING LTD regarding an application for householder planning permission and listed building consent for, 'Conversion of gardeners store to security guard office, with internal and external alterations'. The building is referred to as the 'Gardeners store', within the walled garden of the curtilage of Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hertfordshire SG5 3JH.
- 1.2 The Statement provides an assessment of the planning policy framework relevant to the proposal, as well as other relevant material considerations and explains the design process and principles based on a contextual understanding of the site and the locality.

2. Site description

- 2.1 The wider site comprises a large detached main dwelling building of Hexton Manor itself, which is grade II listed, with various substantial outbuildings, separate cottages, lake, extensive gardens, walled garden and internal access roads, as part of the overall Hexton Manor Estate. The site building is the Gardeners store as a small outbuilding within the walled garden.
- 2.2 In regard to planning policy designations, the building is within the Green Belt. The building is considered a curtilage listed building to the main Hexton Manor. The site is within the Hexton Conservation Area and within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.3 The grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden. The following images show the location plan of the site, followed by photographs of the building.



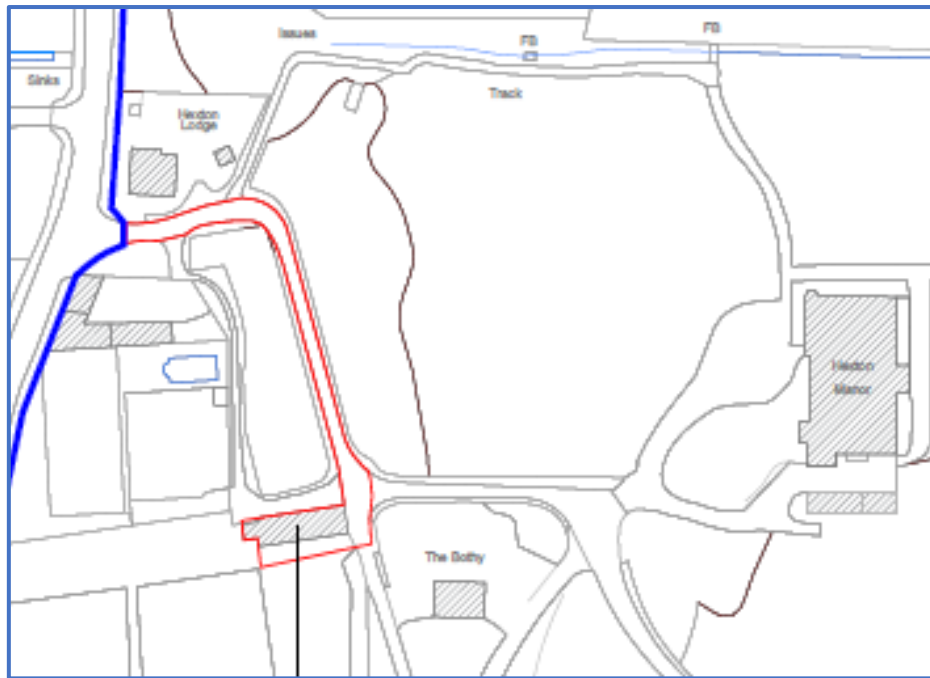


Figure 1 – Location of the application site and surroundings



Figure 2 – View of front elevation





Figure 3 – View of side elevation

3. Planning history

- 3.1 The recent planning history for the main Manor House of Hexton Manor is as follows.
- 3.2 24/00254/FPH - Demolition of existing front conservatory and rear colonnade. Alterations to fenestration and external render – Planning permission granted.
- 3.3 24/00255/LBC - Internal and external alterations following demolition of front conservatory and rear colonnade. Alterations to fenestration – Listed building consent granted.
- 3.4 There is no planning history for the gardener store building itself.



4. The proposal

- 4.1 The proposal consists of internal and external alterations to convert the current gardeners store building, to a security office, with part gardeners store retained.
- 4.2 The layout would provide for access lobby, security office, shower room, with machine store and other store retained for the walled garden maintenance.
- 4.3 The alterations include replacement of timber windows with matching timber windows. The widest window to front elevation would be enlarged in height to match the height of the other three existing windows, with the brickwork removed to suit. Replacement of ledged and braced timber doors to match existing is proposed, with replacement of the white vertical timber slatted doors, again to match existing.
- 4.4 The proposal consists of the following plans:
2025-37-101 - Existing and proposed plan and elevations
2025-37-102 - Location and site plans
- 4.5 The following images are extracts from the principal drawings for the development, of proposed site plan, proposed floor plan and the proposed front and side elevations.



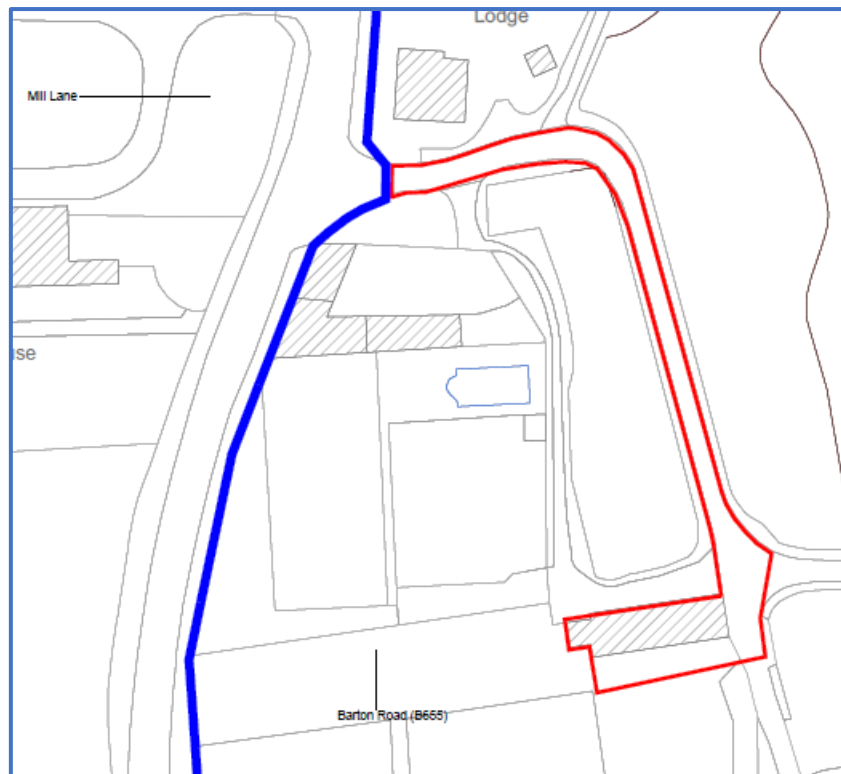


Figure 4 - Proposed site plan extract

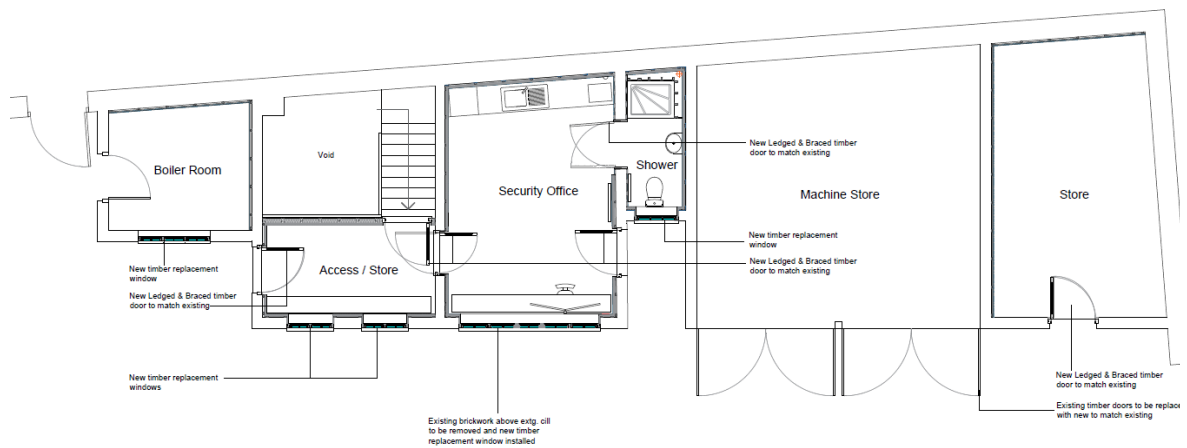


Figure 5 - Proposed floor plan





Figure 6 - Proposed front elevation



Figure 7 - Proposed side elevation

5. Relevant planning policy

5.1 The relevant planning policies at the local and national level, are as follows:

5.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

Policy SP5 - Countryside and Green Belt

Policy SP9 - Design and Sustainability

Policy D1- Sustainable Design

Policy D3 - Protecting Living Conditions

Policy HE1 - Designated heritage assets

Policy NE3 - Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design



5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2. Achieving sustainable development

Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

Section 13. Protecting Green Belt land

Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6. **Principle and Green Belt**

6.1 In regard to the actual principle of converting this existing building to an ancillary use, this is entirely acceptable, as an ancillary functioning building, serving the dwelling of Hexton Manor.

6.2 in regard to Green Belt policy, the re-use of the existing building is an exception allowed for within the NPPF, provided that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and that it preserves Green Belt openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

6.3 The building is indeed of permanent and substantial construction and is proposed as the same ancillary use, from a garden store to a security office and garden store.

6.4 The development would also not conflict with any of the five purposes of Green Belts. There would be no sprawl of a built up area, it would not lead to the merging of towns, there would be no encroachment into the countryside, there is no historic town to be affected in its setting and lastly, the development would not prevent urban regeneration of land.

6.5 In view of the above, the proposal is considered to constitute appropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt, by way of conversion of an existing building. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Section 13 of the NPPF, together with Policy SP5 of the Local Plan.



7. Design and character

- 7.1 In regard to the design, only minor external alterations are proposed. These entail the increased height of the main front elevation window, in order to match the other three windows.
- 7.2 The materials of the alterations would all be to be renewed versions of the existing, for painted white timber windows, ledged and braced timber doors and vertical slatted timber doors to the garden machinery store. The scheme is therefore considered to be in accordance with the Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 In regard to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it is considered there would be no impact upon the AONB in this case, being of suitable design and no enlargement of the existing building, set well within the site of the overall Hexton Manor Estate. The proposal therefore accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy NE3 for the Chilterns AONB.
- 7.4 Overall, the proposal is completely sympathetic, with high quality materials to result in an attractive building and for this security function, with no harm upon the visual amenity of the area. As such, the design and appearance of the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the provisions of Policies D1, SP9 and NE3 of the Local Plan, the Design SPD and with Section 12 of the NPPF.

8. Impact upon neighbouring living conditions

- 8.1 The building is set well within the grounds of Hexton Manor and is set comfortably away from all other properties. The development would therefore have no detrimental impact on the living conditions of any nearby occupiers. The proposal complies with D3 of the Local Plan and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.



9. Heritage assets

- 9.1 In regard to heritage assets, the building is considered to be curtilage listed to the main listed building of Hexton Manor, as a grade II listed building. It is adjacent the listed Walled Garden of Hexton Manor. The building and Hexton Manor are also located within the Hexton Conservation Area. The grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden.
- 9.2 It is considered the minor works and enhanced appearance, would ensure the preservation of character of the host curtilage listed building. The main listed building of Hexton Manor would not be affected in its setting or special character by the proposals. Nor would the works harm the setting of the adjacent Walled Garden.
- 9.3 The character, appearance and overall setting of the Conservation Area would also be preserved by the proposal. The minor window alteration, with high quality design and materials, would have no harmful impact upon the Conservation Area.
- 9.4 In regard to all designated heritage assets of the building and overall site, the proposals are considered to have no harmful impact and would preserve the setting of the Conservation Area, the special character and setting of the listed buildings and features, together with the preservation of character of the host curtilage listed building. There would therefore be no harmful impact upon heritage assets and the scheme does not conflict with any provisions of the Local Plan, or Section 16 of the NPPF.

10. Access

- 10.1 In regard to access, there is no change to the existing access points into Hexton Manor and its grounds. In regard to parking provision, the security guard will use the ample parking provision of the Manor.



11. Conclusion

- 11.1 In conclusion of the proposed development, the scheme comprises minor alteration, enhancement and renewal of windows and doors to the current building, to facilitate its part conversion to a security office, with part retained gardeners store.
- 11.2 The proposal would have no harmful impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the rural setting of the area, with the re-use of the current building and no extension, being entirely an exception within Green Belt policy. Consequently, the proposal is in accordance with local and national planning policy for development in the Green Belt.
- 11.3 The highly sympathetic design, in combination with the use of matching materials, would represent high quality design and therefore is not considered to result in any harm upon the character and setting of the site, or the visual quality of the AONB.
- 11.4 The building itself as a heritage asset, together with nearby listed buildings and the conservation area, would not be affected in their setting or special character.
- 11.5 There are therefore no identified elements of harm from the proposal, with only benefits of enhancing this building and preserving the building through high quality conversion details. The proposal is therefore compliant with Policies of the North Herts Local Plan, supplementary guidance and with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable for the grant of planning permission and listed building consent accordingly.

