



MBBM STUDIO ARCHITECTS

June 2026

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Revision 0

Presented To
North Herts Council



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D&A Statement
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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

To support Planning Application for the increase in Roof Ridge Height and Front Roof Extension to Facilitate Additional Office Accommodation at Second Floor Level, Alterations to Fenestration, Redesign of the Front Roof Profile, External Insulation and Silicone Render Finish to Side and Rear Elevations, and Replacement of Deteriorated Asbestos Roof Coverings with Insulated Composite Roof Panels

(08.06.2026)



1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application relating to the existing building at 44 Wilbury Way, Hitchin.

The proposal seeks to build upon the development principles established under planning permission reference 24/00376/FP, which accepted the principle of increasing the roof height and providing additional office accommodation at second floor level.

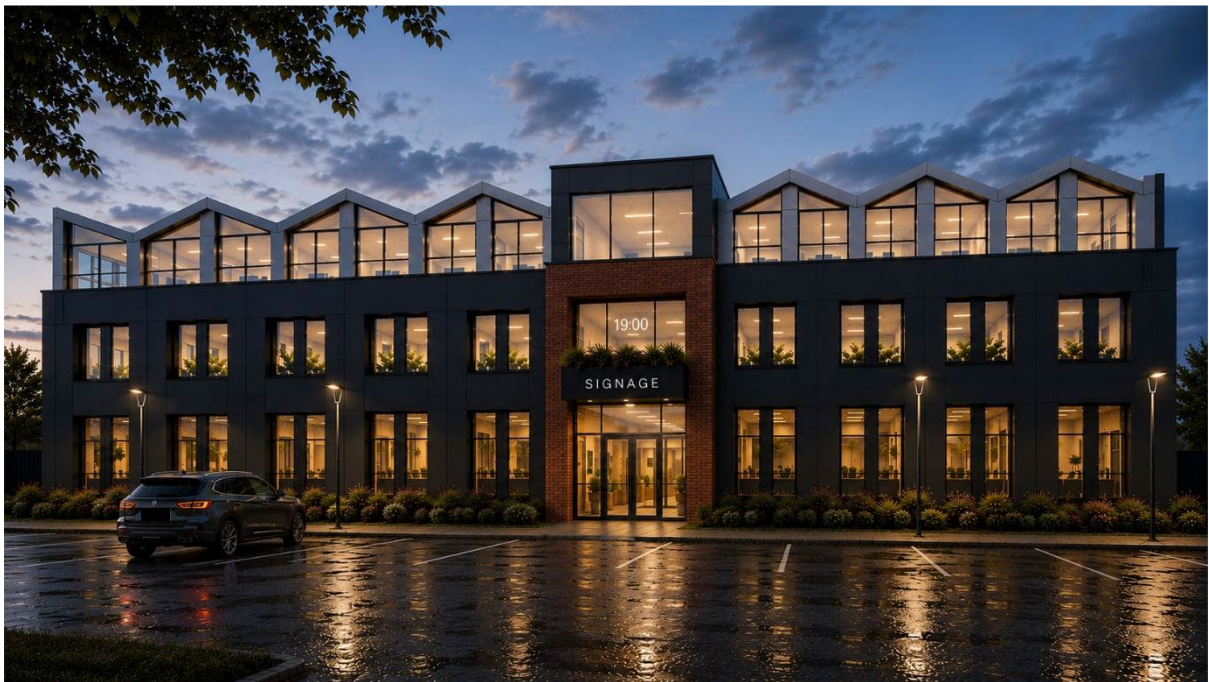
The proposal comprises:

Increase in roof ridge height and front roof extension to facilitate additional office accommodation at second floor level, alterations to fenestration, redesign of the front roof profile, external insulation and silicone render finish to side and rear elevations, and replacement of deteriorated asbestos roof coverings with insulated composite roof panels.

Importantly, the proposal does not involve any increase in the building footprint, extension beyond the footprint of the existing building, or development of any undeveloped parts of the site.

The proposed roof extension and building improvement works are wholly contained within the footprint of the existing building and are focused upon improving the appearance, functionality, sustainability and longevity of the premises whilst retaining its established employment use.

D&A Statement
44 Wilbury Way, Hitchin, SG4 0AP



2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a large existing building situated within the Wilbury Way Employment Area in Hitchin. The site was most recently occupied for office and light industrial uses and occupies a prominent position within an established employment area characterised by a variety of employment uses and buildings of differing ages, scales and appearance.

The building currently comprises office accommodation to the front and employment floorspace to the rear.

The site benefits from established vehicular access, parking provision and servicing arrangements and remains well suited to continued employment use.

The surrounding area is characterised by a broad range of employment buildings and commercial premises reflecting the established employment function of Wilbury Way.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Planning permission was granted under application reference:

24/00376/FP

For:

Increase roof ridge height and front roof extension to facilitate additional office space at second floor level and alterations to fenestration.

In granting permission, North Hertfordshire District Council concluded that:

- The principle of development was acceptable.
- Additional office accommodation was appropriate.

- The increase in roof height was acceptable.
- The proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
- The proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring amenity.
- The proposal would not result in unacceptable highway impacts.
- The proposal complied with sustainability objectives.

The current proposal therefore builds directly upon a development concept that has already been accepted in principle by the Local Planning Authority.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

The proposal has been prepared having regard to:

- Chapter 6 – Building a Strong Competitive Economy.
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport.
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places.
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change.

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

Relevant policies include:

- SP1 – Sustainable Development.
- SP3 – Employment.

- SP6 – Sustainable Transport.
 - SP9 – Sustainable Design.
 - ETC1 – Appropriate Uses in Employment Areas.
 - D1 – Sustainable Design.
 - D3 – Protecting Living Conditions.
 - T2 – Parking.
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5. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The principle of development has already been substantially established through the previous planning permission.

Policy SP3 seeks to support sustainable economic growth and safeguard employment areas throughout the District. Policy ETC1 supports employment-generating uses including office accommodation within established employment locations.

The proposal retains the established employment function of the site and provides additional office accommodation through a second floor extension over the existing front offices.

As with the previously approved application, the proposed roof extension and building improvement works retain employment floorspace within an established employment area and support the continued economic use of the building.

The proposal is therefore fully aligned with both local and national planning policy objectives.

6. DESIGN BRIEF

The design brief sought to achieve three principal objectives:

- Provide additional office accommodation through a second floor extension over the existing front offices.
- Improve the appearance of the existing building.
- Improve the environmental performance and long-term sustainability of the premises.

The proposal has therefore been developed as a roof extension and building improvement scheme rather than a substantial expansion of the site.

Particular emphasis has been placed upon creating a contemporary and cohesive architectural composition whilst retaining the building's established employment function.

The proposal also provides an opportunity to replace deteriorated asbestos roof coverings, improve insulation standards and modernise the external appearance of the building.

7. EVOLUTION OF THE APPROVED SCHEME

The previously approved scheme established the principle of increasing the roof height and creating additional office accommodation.

Whilst acceptable in planning terms, the approved proposal largely retained the appearance and architectural language of the existing building and represented a relatively restrained intervention.

The current proposal adopts a more considered architectural approach whilst remaining consistent with the development principles already accepted by the Council.

The proposed roof extension and building improvement works seek not only to provide additional office accommodation but also to improve the overall appearance of the building and enhance its environmental performance.

The proposal therefore delivers benefits extending beyond the provision of additional floorspace and provides a positive contribution to the appearance of the wider employment area.

8. SCALE, MASSING AND HEIGHT

The proposal includes an increase in roof ridge height of approximately 2.25 metres to facilitate the proposed second floor extension over the front offices.

Although this increase is greater than that approved under the previous application, it remains modest within the context of the surrounding employment area and neighbouring employment buildings.

Importantly, the proposal does not increase the footprint of the building and does not introduce extensions at ground floor or first floor level.

The proposed second floor accommodation is located entirely above the existing office accommodation and remains contained within the footprint of the existing building.

The proposal therefore represents a vertical enhancement of the existing building rather than an expansion of the site.

9. STREETSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE

A street elevation comparison has been prepared demonstrating the relationship between the proposed development and neighbouring employment buildings.

The comparison confirms that the proposed building remains proportionate within the wider streetscape and sits comfortably alongside surrounding development.

The revised roof profile introduces visual interest and architectural articulation whilst avoiding the appearance of a singular dominant roof mass.

The proposal remains appropriate to its employment area context and contributes positively to the visual character of Wilbury Way.



10. DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework emphasise the importance of good design and the creation of visually attractive development. These principles are reflected in Local Plan Policies SP9 and D1.

The existing building has evolved over time and currently presents a relatively dated appearance which makes a limited contribution to the visual quality of the employment area.

The proposed roof extension and building improvement works provide an opportunity to modernise the building whilst retaining its established employment function.

The redesign of the front roof profile creates a more coherent architectural composition and helps integrate the proposed second floor extension with the existing building.

The proposal introduces a stronger architectural identity, improved proportions and a more contemporary appearance whilst remaining entirely appropriate to its commercial surroundings.

The development therefore not only accommodates additional office accommodation but also delivers a significant enhancement to the appearance of the site.

11. MATERIALS

The proposed material palette has been carefully selected to provide a durable, contemporary and sustainable finish.

Front Elevation

The proposed second floor extension over the front offices is finished in light grey aluminium cladding.

The front elevation also incorporates:

- Aluminium framed glazing systems.

- Contemporary entrance treatment.
- High quality architectural detailing.

The use of aluminium cladding provides a modern appearance whilst offering durability, low maintenance requirements and excellent weather resistance.

The cladding system is installed over insulation, contributing to improved thermal performance.

Side and Rear Elevations

The side and rear elevations incorporate:

- External insulation.
- Light grey silicone render finish.
- Replacement insulated composite roof panels.

The proposed external insulation significantly improves the energy efficiency of the building whilst creating a clean and consistent appearance.

The selected render finish complements the aluminium cladding used on the principal elevation and establishes a coherent material palette throughout the development.

FRONT ELEVATION MATERIALS SCHEDULE

A considered palette of durable, high-quality materials enhances the architectural form and ensures longevity, sustainability and low maintenance.



MATERIALS SCHEDULE

	01 ALUMINIUM ROOF & TRIM Light grey powder coated aluminium. Durable, lightweight and corrosion resistant.
	02 GLAZING & FRAMES High performance double glazed units in dark grey aluminium frames.
	03 METAL CLADDING PANELS Dark grey aluminium composite panels with concealed fixings for a smooth, monolithic appearance.
	04 BRICK FEATURE BAY Red/Brown facing brick. Provides texture, depth and a timeless, high quality appearance.
	05 SIGNAGE CANOPY Dark grey aluminium canopy with integrated planters, adds detail and softness to the entrance.
	06 DOORS & WINDOW FRAMES Dark grey aluminium for consistency and durability across the facade.
SIDE AND REAR ELEVATIONS MATERIALS SCHEDULE Refer to Sheet 02	

KEY BENEFITS

- DURABILITY**
Robust, high quality materials ensure long term performance and low maintenance.
- SUSTAINABILITY**
Carefully selected materials enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
- AESTHETICS**
A balanced palette of textures and tones creates a timeless, professional appearance.
- COMFORT**
High performance glazing and insulation provide excellent thermal and acoustic comfort.

SIDE & REAR ELEVATION MATERIALS SCHEDULE

A considered palette of durable, high-quality materials enhances the architectural form and ensures longevity, sustainability and low maintenance.



MATERIALS SCHEDULE

	01 ALUMINIUM ROOF & TRIM Light grey powder coated aluminium. Durable, lightweight and corrosion resistant.
	02 GLAZING & FRAMES High performance double glazed units in dark grey aluminium frames.
	03 METAL CLADDING PANELS Dark grey aluminium composite panels with concealed fixings for a smooth, monolithic appearance.
	04 EXTERNAL RENDER Light grey silicone render provides a smooth, durable and weather resistant finish.
	05 DOORS & WINDOW FRAMES Dark grey aluminium for consistency and durability across the facade.
SIDE & REAR ELEVATION MATERIALS SCHEDULE Refer to Sheet 1 for Front Elevation.	

KEY BENEFITS

- DURABILITY**
Robust, high quality materials ensure long term performance and low maintenance.
- SUSTAINABILITY**
Carefully selected materials enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
- AESTHETICS**
A balanced palette of textures and tones creates a timeless, professional appearance.
- COMFORT**
High performance glazing and insulation provide excellent thermal and acoustic comfort.

12. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The proposal delivers substantial environmental improvements compared with the existing building.

These include:

- Replacement of deteriorated asbestos roof coverings.
- Installation of insulated composite roof panels.
- External insulation to side and rear elevations.
- Improved thermal performance.
- Reduced heat loss.
- Improved occupant comfort.
- Enhanced longevity of the building.

The proposal therefore strongly supports the objectives of Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

In comparison with the previously approved scheme, the current proposal delivers significantly greater sustainability benefits through a comprehensive upgrade of the building envelope.

13. IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

Policy D3 seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable harm to living conditions.

The site remains within an established employment area and is surrounded predominantly by employment uses.

The proposal does not introduce a new use and does not materially alter the established operation of the site.

The proposed roof extension and building improvement works will not give rise to unacceptable impacts relating to:

- Privacy.
- Overlooking.
- Noise.
- Disturbance.
- Loss of daylight.

The proposal therefore remains fully compliant with Policy D3.

14. HIGHWAYS AND PARKING

The proposal does not alter existing access arrangements, servicing arrangements or parking provision.

The site continues to benefit from established parking facilities and sustainable transport connections.

The proposal therefore raises no highways concerns and remains consistent with the conclusions reached under the previous planning permission.

15. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The proposal will:

- Retain employment floorspace.
- Provide additional office accommodation.
- Support future business growth.
- Encourage continued investment within the Wilbury Way Employment Area.
- Improve the attractiveness and marketability of the premises.
- Extend the useful lifespan of the existing building.

The development therefore directly supports the objectives of Policy SP3 and Chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal relates to an existing employment building and does not involve the creation of residential accommodation or any other use requiring a Fire Statement under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

The proposed works will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations, including Approved Document B (Fire Safety), and all necessary fire safety measures will be addressed through the Building Regulations process.

The proposal does not adversely affect fire appliance access, means of escape or emergency access arrangements.

17. CONCLUSION

The proposed roof extension and building improvement works represent a carefully considered enhancement of an existing building within an established employment area.

The development:

- Builds upon a previously approved planning permission.
- Retains the established employment use.
- Provides additional office accommodation through a second floor extension over the existing front offices.
- Does not increase the building footprint.
- Replaces deteriorated asbestos roof coverings.
- Improves the appearance of the building.
- Significantly enhances thermal performance.
- Supports local economic growth.
- Preserves neighbouring amenity.
- Maintains acceptable parking and access arrangements.

Importantly, whilst the Council previously accepted a more restrained approach to the roof extension, the current proposal demonstrates how the same development

objectives can be achieved through a more coherent architectural response and significantly enhanced environmental performance.

The proposal modernises the existing building through carefully considered roof alterations, façade improvements and sustainability upgrades whilst remaining entirely appropriate to its employment area context.

The proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and planning permission is respectfully requested.