

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Single-storey rear extension to provide additional kitchen accommodation

46 Ridge Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6

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Application: Householder planning permission and Listed Building Consent

Date: July 2026

1. Introduction

This Statement accompanies a combined application for householder planning permission and Listed Building Consent for a modest single-storey extension to the rear of 46 Ridge Road, Letchworth Garden City. The purpose of the works is to provide additional kitchen and garden-room accommodation for the dwelling, replacing an existing dilapidated single-storey lean-to.



The property is a Grade II listed dwelling, listed as part of the Birds Hill Estate group. This Statement therefore addresses the requirements of both a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement in a single document. It sets out the significance of the listed building, describes the proposed works, and assesses their impact on that significance, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the historic environment provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It should be read alongside the following drawings prepared by Pentangle Design Group:

- 3977/01A – Location Plan and Existing Site Plan
- 3977/02 – Existing Plans and Elevations
- 3977/04B – Proposed Plans and Elevations (Extension)

2. The Site and its Context

46 Ridge Road forms part of the Birds Hill Estate, a group of grouped terraces arranged around a cul-de-sac and village-green layout on the eastern side of Letchworth Garden City. The dwelling is a one-and-a-half storey house of roughcast rendered walls painted white, beneath a clay plain-tiled roof with multi-form brick stacks, in the Arts and Crafts idiom characteristic of the estate. Fenestration is generally by painted timber casements.



The application property occupies a plot with its principal frontage addressing Ridge Road to the south-west and a private rear garden to the north-east, accessed off a shared drive to the side. The proposed works are located wholly to the rear (north-east) of the dwelling, within the private garden and away from the principal frontage and the village-green composition that gives the group its architectural and historic interest.



The immediate rear elevation is currently occupied by a single-storey lean-to / former conservatory of painted brick and glazed timber construction. This structure is a later, non-original addition of no architectural or historic merit; it is in poor and deteriorating condition, as recorded in the existing photographs, and detracts from the appearance of the rear elevation.

3. Heritage Significance

Statutory designation

The building is listed at Grade II (group value) under the entry “Ridge Road, Birds Hill Estate, Nos 2 to 122 (even)”. The list description reads, in summary:

“1906 by B Parker and R Unwin. This pioneer estate was designed for the Garden City Tenants Limited, and comprises 13 grouped terraces forming a cul-de-sac and village green layout. One and a half storeys ... Included as the earliest estate layout of its type, and the prototype of all future council house developments in the country.”

Assessment of significance

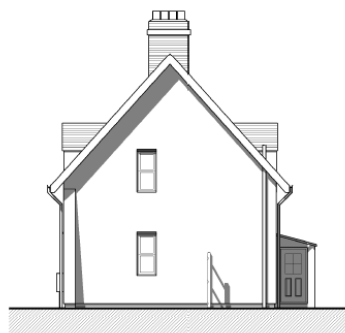
The special interest of the group derives principally from its place in the history of town planning and social housing. Designed in 1906 by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin for Garden City Tenants Limited, the estate is identified in the listing as the earliest layout of its type and the prototype for later council-house development nationally. The village-green layout was published by Parker and Unwin in “The Art of Building a House” and is of considerable historic and communal value.

The architectural interest lies in the group composition – the arrangement of grouped terraces around the green, the varied roofscape of large and small dormers and gables, the giant central gable across Nos 100 and 102, and the consistent palette of roughcast walls, tiled roofs, multi-form brick stacks, mullioned casements with tile labels, and recessed arched entrances. Significance is heavily concentrated in the principal (street and green-facing) elevations and the roofscape, which together read as a designed whole.

The private rear elevations, by contrast, contribute far less to the special interest of the group. They were always secondary, service elevations and, as here, have been subject to later ad-hoc alteration. The significance of the rear of No. 46 in particular is low, and is presently diminished rather than enhanced by the existing lean-to.



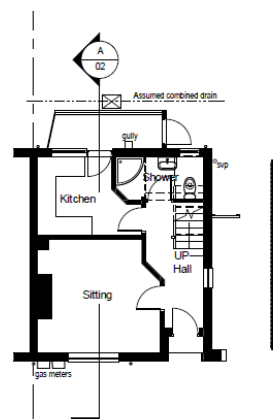
Existing SouthWest Elevation
1:100



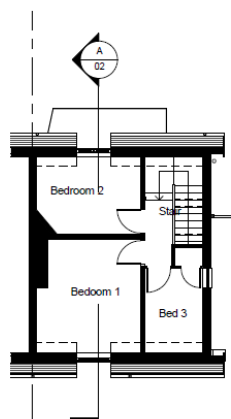
Existing SouthEast Elevation
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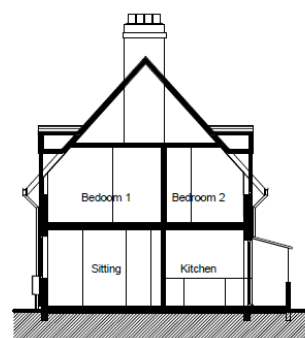
Existing NorthEast Elevation
1:100



Existing Ground Floor Plan
1:100



Existing First Floor Plan
1:100



Existing Section A-A
1:100

4. The Proposal

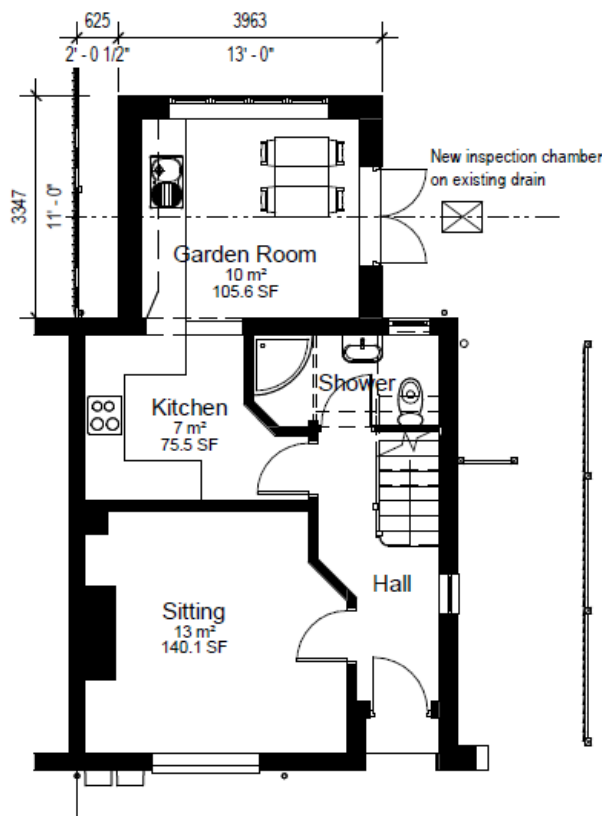
The proposal comprises the demolition of the existing single-storey rear lean-to and its replacement with a modest single-storey flat-roofed extension providing an enlarged kitchen and an adjoining garden room. In outline the works are:

- Removal of the existing dilapidated lean-to / conservatory to the rear elevation;
- Construction of a single-storey rear extension projecting approximately 3.35 m from the existing rear wall, containing a garden room (approx. 10 m²) and an enlarged kitchen (approx. 7 m²);
- A flat roof incorporating a roof light to bring daylight into the plan;
- New painted timber double-glazed French doors and casement windows opening onto the garden;
- A new inspection chamber on the existing drain run to serve the reconfigured layout.

5. Design

Use and amount

The use of the building is unchanged: it remains a single dwelling house. The extension provides a modest increase in floor area to give practical, modern kitchen and garden-room accommodation, addressing the cramped and poorly-arranged existing layout. No additional bedrooms or intensification of use is proposed.



Layout and scale

The extension is confined to the rear of the dwelling, within the private garden, and is single storey. Its scale is deliberately subordinate to the host building: it sits well below eaves level and reads clearly as a secondary, ancillary addition. The flat roof keeps the overall height low and avoids competing with the pitched roofscape and dormers that characterise the group. The footprint broadly occupies the position of the lean-to it replaces, extending modestly into the garden.

Appearance and materials

The extension has been designed to sit quietly against the host building and to be legible as a contemporary but sympathetic addition. Walls will be finished in roughcast render painted white to match the existing dwelling. Windows and doors will be painted timber, double glazed, in a flush casement idiom consistent with the host building's joinery.



Proposed SouthEast Elevation



Proposed NorthEast Elevation

The low, plain form and matching render allow the addition to defer to the main building, while the simple detailing and roof light express it honestly as a modern intervention rather than a pastiche of the original fabric.



Illustrative perspective View

Landscaping

The works are contained within the existing developed footprint and immediately adjoining garden. There is no loss of significant landscaping, boundary treatment or trees. The existing garden setting is retained.

6. Access

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the property is unchanged. The dwelling continues to be reached from Ridge Road via the existing shared side drive, and the existing gate arrangement is retained

Internally, the reconfigured ground floor provides level, more generous circulation between the hall, kitchen and garden room, and improved level access out to the rear garden through the new French doors. The proposals therefore maintain and modestly improve accessibility within the constraints of an existing listed dwelling.

7. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The National Planning Policy Framework requires the significance of a designated heritage asset, and the impact of a proposal upon it, to be identified and assessed, with great weight given to the asset's conservation. The relevant considerations here are as follows.

Effect on significance

The special interest of the listed group is concentrated in the principal frontages, the roofscape and the village-green composition. The proposal affects none of these. The works are located wholly on the private rear elevation, are single storey and subordinate in scale, and are not visible from Ridge Road, the green, or the wider public realm. The principal elevation, roofscape, chimneys, dormers and historic fenestration are entirely unaffected.

The existing lean-to being removed is a later, non-original addition of no heritage value which currently detracts from the rear elevation. Its removal, and its replacement with a simple, well-detailed extension in matching materials, represents a modest enhancement of the rear of the building.

Level of harm and justification

It is considered that the proposal would result in **no harm** to the significance of the listed building. Any such impact is limited to a secondary, previously-altered rear elevation and is outweighed by the public and private benefits of the scheme: the removal of an unsympathetic later structure, the repair and improvement of the rear elevation, and the provision of accommodation that supports the continued beneficial use and upkeep of a listed dwelling.

The design has followed the approach set out in the NPPF and in Historic England guidance of keeping intervention to the private rear, using a subordinate single-storey form, matching the established material palette, and ensuring the addition is reversible in principle and legible as a later phase. The proposal accordingly sustains and, in the removal of the existing lean-to, modestly enhances the significance of the heritage asset.

8. Other Consents – Scheme of Management

The property lies within the Letchworth Garden City estate and is subject to the Scheme of Management administered by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. A separate application for approval under the Scheme of Management has been made to the Foundation.

9. Conclusion

The proposal is a modest, single-storey rear extension providing much-needed kitchen and garden-room accommodation to a Grade II listed dwelling. It is confined to the private rear elevation, is subordinate in scale, and uses a material palette that matches the host building. It replaces an existing dilapidated and unsympathetic lean-to of no heritage value.

The works preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed group – the principal frontages, roofscape and village-green composition are wholly unaffected – and, through the removal of the existing lean-to, deliver a modest enhancement to the rear of the building. The proposal is considered to accord with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan, and Listed Building Consent and householder planning permission are respectfully requested.

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