

HIGHWOOD
Hitchwood Lane, Hitchin, SG4 7RY

DESIGN STATEMENT

Rev A



Prepared by Clague Architects
Dec 2024

Document Ref: 30757B_07_Design&Access

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PROJECT DATA

Project Address	Highwood, Hitchwood Lane, Hitchin, SG4 7RY
Building Description	Single storey agricultural building. Timber frame structure with brick plinth and external timber boarding, and felt roofing.
Use Class	Permission has been granted for the conversion of the existing shed to C3 residential use.
Site Area	A1 - Agricultural 5,219m ²
LPA	
County	Hertfordshire County Council
District	North Hertfordshire District Council
Parish	Straddles boundary of: Langley Preston
Listed	No
AONB	No
Greenbelt	Yes – North Hertfordshire greenbelt
Conservation Areaⁱ	No
TPO's	No
Flood Risk	Flood zone 1 – low probability of flooding
Ecological	No
Other	Area of Special Control of Advertisements

LOCAL POLICIES**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031**

ENV1	Sustainable Locations
ENV3	Protection of Open Spaces, Urban and Rural Landscapes
ENV4	Sustainable Construction, Renewable Energy Tech and Flooding
ENV5	Water Consumption, Biodiversity and Environmental Assets
ECON7	Sustainable transport
SOC1	Identified Needs for types and tenure of home
SP1	Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and Sustainability
T2	Parking
HS3	Housing mix
D1	Sustainable Design
D2	House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018-2031

QL3	Local Distinctiveness
HD1	Residential Development

HD3	Housing Types
HD4	Tenure of Housing
HD5	Sustainability and Energy Efficiency
HD6	Design
HD7	Gardens
EH1	Village Boundary, Rural Character and Setting
TC1	Safe and Sustainable Transport

DESIGN SPD – July 2011

Chap 6	Local Design Principles – Rural Area
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report considers the existing building and proposals of the proposal site at Highwood, and acts as supporting documentation for the planning application submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council.

1.2 The application site currently has A1 – Agriculture use and more specifically is an unused chicken shed. The proposals look to demolish the existing agricultural building and replace it with a new single storey dwelling of similar scale and height to the existing structure.

A recently approved Part Q application has already established the principal of residential use within the site. However, the existing footprint and orientation are not considered to be the best design for a future dwelling. This application seeks to amend the existing citing and design in order to improve the quality of the new dwelling for end-user enjoyment.

1.3 The site is located within a green belt location and so principles of rural development, sustainability and green-belt housing have been considered throughout the design.

1.4 During the Part Q application, Highways expressed concern about the site as a sustainable location. Whilst the application was approved, the applicant has sought independent highways advice to inform the new design. Highways Advice is provided as supporting documentation from the submitted scheme.

1.5 This report should be read alongside existing and proposed plans as prepared by Clague Architects, which have been prepared to inform the submitted Householder application.

2.0 RELEVANT POLICY

2.1 Environmental

The proposal site is located within a Green Belt location.

2.1.1 Green Belt

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (N.P.P.F) determines that LPA's should give substantial weight to harm to the Green Belt when considering planning applications. There are exceptions where development may be acceptable within a green-belt setting, including the replacement of existing buildings with new in a similar size and scale. The Local Plan looks to support rural development where it meets their policies on sustainable development whilst following guidance laid out in the Design SPD.

2.2 Sustainability

The N.P.P.F sets out a clear objective to achieve sustainable development through three key areas – economic, social and environmental – and where proposals are made, there should be presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.2.1 Economic

Ensuring the right types of development are carried out within the right area in order to support growth are core principles of sustainable development.

2.2.2 Social

Building strong, vibrant, healthy communities provide the social element of social design and are intended to reflect current and future needs.

2.2.3 Environmental

National and Local policy support the introduction of sustainable construction and renewable energy technology within new developments.

3.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 Local Character

The site is located to the south east of Preston which is characterised by its rural location, and forms part of an agricultural settlement. The area is characterised by open spaces, separated by trees and hedgerows, with irregular placement of buildings in the area. There is no dominant architectural style which characterises buildings within the local context, although common features include;

- Large detached properties set within open landscape
- One and two storey cottages in red brick with steep red clay tiles roofs.
- Agricultural outbuildings of varied materiality – brick, timber cladding and corrugated panelling feature



Example of architectural styles found within the local context

3.2 The Site

The site is located to the east of Hitchwood Lane and is accessed via an existing gated entrance that serves the wider estate of Minsden Farm. The application site is bounded to the north by a public footpath which leads directly into Preston and is screened by an established bank of trees. The boundaries to the east, south and west are shared with land under the applicants ownership and provide an open, rural setting for the site.



3.3 Existing Building

The application site includes a single storey timber frame agricultural building which is sited over 60m from the nearest structure. Whilst formerly used as a chicken shed, the building is now underused and has only been used as overflow storage for some time.

Existing barn – approved for C3 use.



Setting – field to left of barn is a buffer between the application site and the tree lined highway



3.4 Ecology

Given the location and design of the existing structure, a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and additional Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys (BERS) were commissioned by the applicant prior to this submission, and shall be made available as supplementary documents of the submission.

As an overview, the surveys concluded the following;

PRA – The rural setting indicates a prime location for bats but due to previous damage, the existing building may not be suitable as a roost and the structure is assessed to have **low value** for roosting bats.

Recommendation – one BERS survey required during active bat season.

BERS – one BERS survey carried out with 2 surveyors. **No evidence of bats** recorded and habitat categorised as low value. No further surveys required.

4.0 BUILDING HISTORY

- 4.1 The existing site and building form part of an agricultural holding which has been used solely for agricultural use throughout its history.
- 4.2 Planning History
The following planning history has been identified from a search of the North Hertfordshire planning portal, and is listed from most current to oldest;

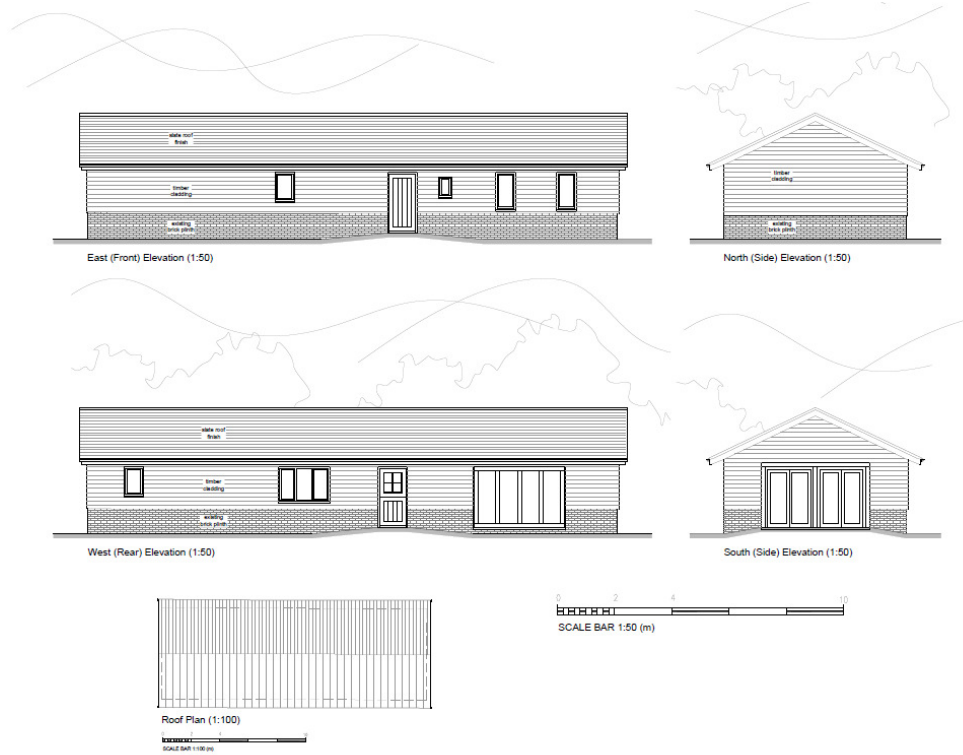
Planning Reference	Description	Decision
23/01910/PNQ	Conversion of existing agricultural barn to provide one 1-bed residential unit with all associated building works	Decision: Prior Approval granted Date decided: 27/11/24

Approved Part Q scheme:

The approved scheme looks to make use of the existing agricultural barn, and converts it for use as a C3 residential dwelling. Whilst this is effective design, it is considered that a more appropriate design could be considered within the same footprint and volume of the existing scheme, and which have a more appropriate relationship with the surrounding outdoor environment.



Approved ground floor plan – Part Q Prior Approval



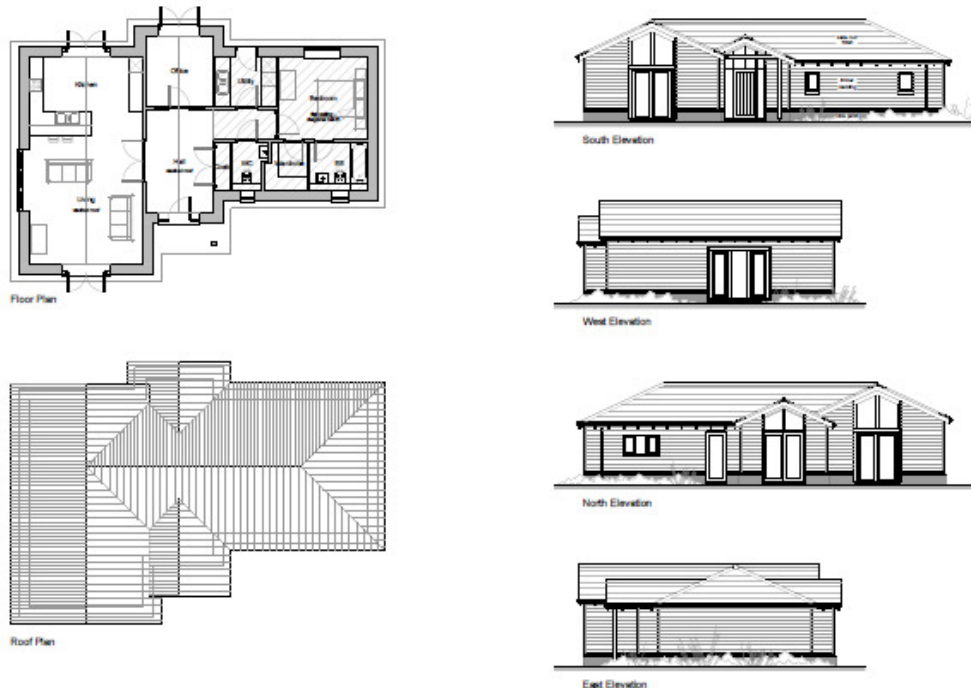
Approved Elevations – Part Q Prior Approval

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Having established the principle for C3 use on the site through Prior Approval (ref: 23/01910/PNQ), the client has looked to establish whether a more efficient design suited to C3 use could be developed on the site.
- 5.2 The submitted proposals have looked to work within the equivalent floor area and volume of the existing barn which was approved for a residential change of use.

This approach ensures the preservation of the Greenbelt in that there is no further built volume beyond what is already found on the site – openness is retained. However the change of the footprint looks to enhance the sustainability of the location for residential use but developing a more effective residential design.

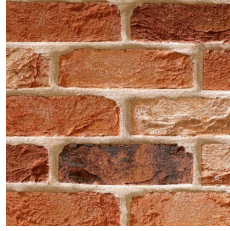
Proposed plans and elevations are found below;



Whilst adopting ideas of agricultural buildings, the amended scheme incorporates a more domestic approach to the final design. Large glazed gable ends provide well-lit internal spaces for end-users whilst also providing improved connections to the outdoor space.

- 5.3 Materiality of the proposed scheme has been considered with respect to the original barn and the materiality of the agricultural context. The main building form is made up timber cladding on a brick plinth, in line with the existing structure, whilst the roof is upgraded from felt to a new slate finish for a higher quality design.

Wall Finish 1:



Material: Brick
Blend : Red multi blend
Bond: Stretcher
(sample to be made available on site)

Jointing / Pointing : Mortar joints to be a maximum of 10mm with a straight joint set 2mm back from the arises of the bricks. Face to have a soft brushed finish to raise the aggregate texture.

Wall Finish 2:



Material: Timber cladding
Product: Vastern Timber Brimstone Ash

Roof:



Material: Slate tiles

Feature Windows



Material: Oak Frame

Fenestration Frames:

Finish: Black aluminium

Rainwater Goods:

Material: Black uPVC

Fascias & Soffits:

Finish: Black

Exposed posts and beams:

Finish: Black

5.4 Sustainability

In line with national and local policy, the proposals have considered approach to sustainability from varied positions.

Economic - The local area supports a mix of building tenure, and the proposals look to contribute to this variety with the proposal for a one-bedroom bungalow. The applicant is looking to take residence in the new dwelling proving the commercial need for housing of this type in the local area.

Social - The site is well connected to the wider rural community, enjoying direct access to a public footpath to Preston along the northern boundary and provides opportunity to be part of the established rural community.

Environmental - The proposals look to adopt sustainable construction techniques and materials selection where possible. An EV charger is proposed on site to support long-term sustainable vehicle use and minimising water consumption shall be a consideration of detailed M&E design proposals.

5.5 Access

Whilst the part Q application for residential design has been approved, there were some comments from Highways with regards to the sustainability of the site in terms of location. To mitigate this, the client commissioned independent Transport Advice from EAS to ensure that the amended design was taking in to consideration best practice for all proposals.

In response to this advice (provided as supplementary documentation) the proposals have been provided with 3no. parking spaces and a covering and secure cycle space.

In terms of access to the building, the proposals are for a bungalow with all provisions located on ground floor. The site is level, with firm landscaping providing along the route to the building and level thresholds providing ease of access for access and egress. In compliance with Part M, a WC with outward opening door is located on the ground floor and the floor plans have been design with clear and easy horizontal movement for all end-users.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1** The principal for residential use on site was established with the Prior approval for Part Q application on the site. Where queries have been raised during consultation for the application, additional advice has been sought to ensure any new proposals improve the already approved condition of site.
 - 6.2** Given the poor quality of the existing barn and results of the PRA and BERS surveys, removal of the existing barn would not have impact on any bat roosting sites. Furthermore, a proposed bat box on the new building would enhance existing opportunity for bat roosting within the site.
 - 6.3** Whilst working within the constraints of floor area and volume of the existing barn, the applicants have looked to improve the resulting building with a new design which would provide a better quality dwelling for end-users without compromising the qualities of the greenbelt context.
The new building is almost 10m³ smaller than the original barn, whilst matching the overall G.E.A. whilst also having a similar siting to the existing barn.
 - 6.4** Proposals have taken into consideration the existing context, its locale within the Metropolitan Green belt alongside the objectives of national planning policy which look to ensure proposals have a sustainable objective. This has manifested through choice of materiality, implementation of green technologies and approach to construction methodology.
 - 6.5** The proposals look to improve the sustainability of the site, whilst providing high quality housing in a district which is looking to meet its local housing need. It is considered that the proposals would make a positive contribution to the site as a whole and should be considered for approval by the local planning authority.
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