

Design and Access Statement

For

Proposed Two 3-Bed Self-Build Houses.

at

Land North of
Gosmore End House,
Hitchin Road,
Gosmore,
Hertfordshire.
SG4 7QH

August 2025

Introduction

This Design & Access statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for a small residential development, consisting of two new 3-bed dwellings to be Self-Built and which, when complete, will be available to rent.

We will set out the design rationale for the proposals and also the planning context for the application including details of the existing access driveway utilising the hard standing/parking.

The small site is located at the western edge of the village with access off Hitchin Road, Gosmore, SG4 7QH.

The site is located within the "village envelope" of Gosmore in the recently adopted North Herts Council Local plan 2011 - 2031, as well as within the Gosmore Conservation Area.

The Proposals

Use, Amount and Mix

The proposal use is C3 residential.

A total of two new houses are proposed; each with three upstairs bedrooms.

Because of the configuration of the site, and with the need for all habitable rooms only to face East and West, this design was considered most suitable. There is a marked shortage of available property of this type for rent in the village.

Furthermore, when writing in support of application 18/03348/FP (erection of 3 new executive detached dwellings at Vine Cottage, Maydencroft Lane) the former occupier of Holly Tree Cottage, High Street, Gosmore had written:- ***"this proposed development is entirely sympathetic to the local area and will complement the village housing as it stands at the moment. There will be a negligible impact on Maydencroft Lane by way of traffic and "once built" the new properties will bring in additional trade for our vibrant local public house(s) as well as other local amenities. The footprint of the proposed development does not have any apparent negative impact environmentally, and bearing in mind recent developments in the immediate area which have been received positively, and indeed other small-scale developments due to start soon, this proposal can only be viewed as an ideal, discreet and appropriate development for the vicinity"***.

Layout

The layout for the scheme is as advised by the architect. The existing accesses off Hitchin Road are to be retained.

Impact on neighbour's amenity

The two new 3-bed houses are carefully arranged so as to ensure no overlooking or loss of privacy for the only adjoining properties.

As can be seen from the accompanying Heritage Statement, the only residential property which could be affected in any way by the development, is Birch Cottage. The design proposal therefore is for the East elevation to be positioned 18M away from Birch Cottage. A substantial hedge (planted much earlier in 1960's) remains between Birch Cottage and the proposed site. Birch Cottage itself is far enough away, and only the frosted bathroom window upstairs (facing West from Birch Cottage towards the site) is affected, and even then only very slightly.

The principal living room for Birch Cottage and the upstairs master bedroom both face away from the site, East. More recently, numbers 1-9 LetterBox Row have (all nine) have added second upstairs bedrooms; but all nine new bedrooms face south, again away from the application site.

The only other property affected is the new enormous new care home, by Barchester Healthcare. Given that Barchester Healthcare have also designed their new nursing home with a similar distance (18M) between their new first floor windows of the nursing home and the first floor windows of the neighbouring Gosmore End House. The new design has specifically ensured that with no windows in either North or South elevation, all habitable rooms only face directly West over adjoining countryside; and East to the rear, protected by the existing hedges. This to ensure no overlooking of any adjoining property; thus no harm to any privacy, nor any harm caused to any living conditions of any neighbours.

The two 3-bed dwellings will have shared access for pedestrians to the rear and enjoy their own private rear East facing gardens.

Scale, character and appearance

The two 3-bed dwellings are to be formed in a traditional pallet of materials combining York Handmade Multi Facing Bricks (Old Clamp Blend Mixture) with clay plain roof tiles; squint bricks, and quoins, with plinth bricks to provide interest, along with stone cill detailing.

Landscape and amenity space.

Simple landscaping is shown indicatively on the site plan. No trees are to be removed and on completion, further hedges will be added in between the two properties.

New trees and planting will also be provided around the perimeter in order to improve the green character. The new homes are provided with adequate gardens in modern terms with plenty of space for amenity plus garden storage within, & above the parking lofts. A net gain in terms of biodiversity will be achieved through soft landscaping.

Refuse storage is accommodated along the front and side of the two houses in discreet locations. Cycle storage is achieved within the outside sheds.

Sustainability

The definition of sustainability is set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF.

We set out below the three 'dimensions' to sustainable development and how this scheme addresses each one:

- **An economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure by creating jobs through the construction process, and new high quality homes once finished. Of particular value is the fact that these will initially be available for rent. The emerging Local Plan identifies Gosmore as a Category "A" village, suitable for development in the form of infilling spaces within the existing village.

- **A social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of new housing required to meet the needs of both present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; but, due to the small scale of the development site, the range of dwellings can only be limited in size to 3-bed dwellings.

- **An environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, better use of natural resources, efficient use of land, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The two new 3-bed homes will be built to exceed current building regulations, which sets minimum standards for the thermal performance of the buildings, water use and other environmental factors.

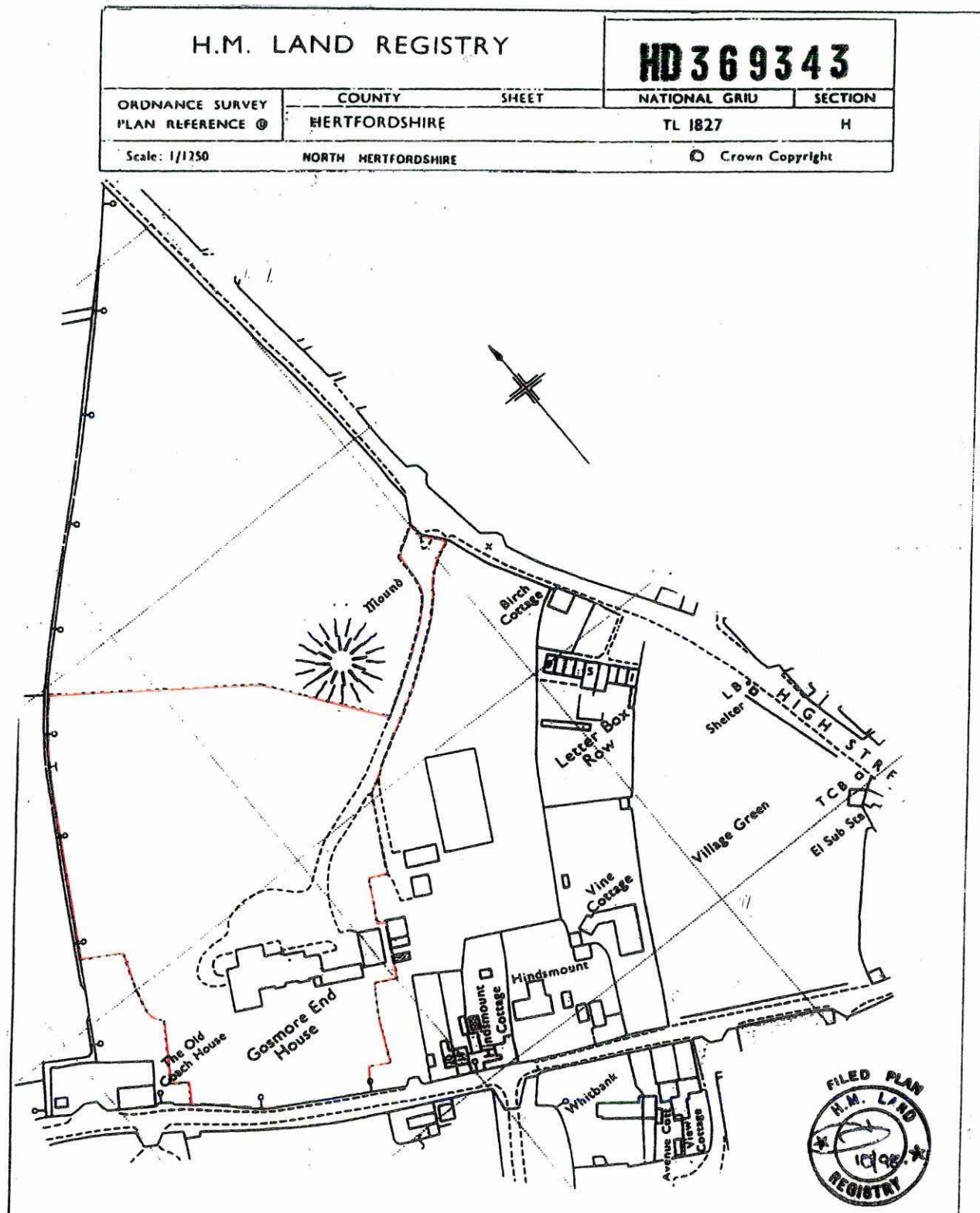
Vehicle Charging.

It is proposed to provide for charging points to each dwelling/garage to enable the charging of electric vehicles. These will be provided within each of the individual porch. Furthermore, within these open parking areas, electricity provision for charging of e-bikes etc will also be available.

Access and Highways.

The site all with Gosmore End House, is held under H M Land Registry Title Number:- **HD 223325.**

Out of this entire Gosmore End House curtilage, part was transferred on 21 December 1990 with new Title Number:- **HD369343**, having been sold with Gosmore End Nursing Home to Combined Nursing and Care PLC.



This is a print of the view of the title plan obtained through Land Registry Direct showing the state of the title plan on 30 NOV 2004 at 17:06:05. It may not be to the scale shown on the title plan.
This title is dealt with by the Stevenage District Land Registry.

Subsequent owners, (i) Rose Court Nursing Ltd; (ii) Healthcare, Holdings Ltd, followed by (iii) Fourseasons Healthcare Ltd (now in administration); Gosmore End Nursing Home was ultimately acquired by Barchester Propco Hellens Limited, only a few years ago - as advised by Eversheds LLP.

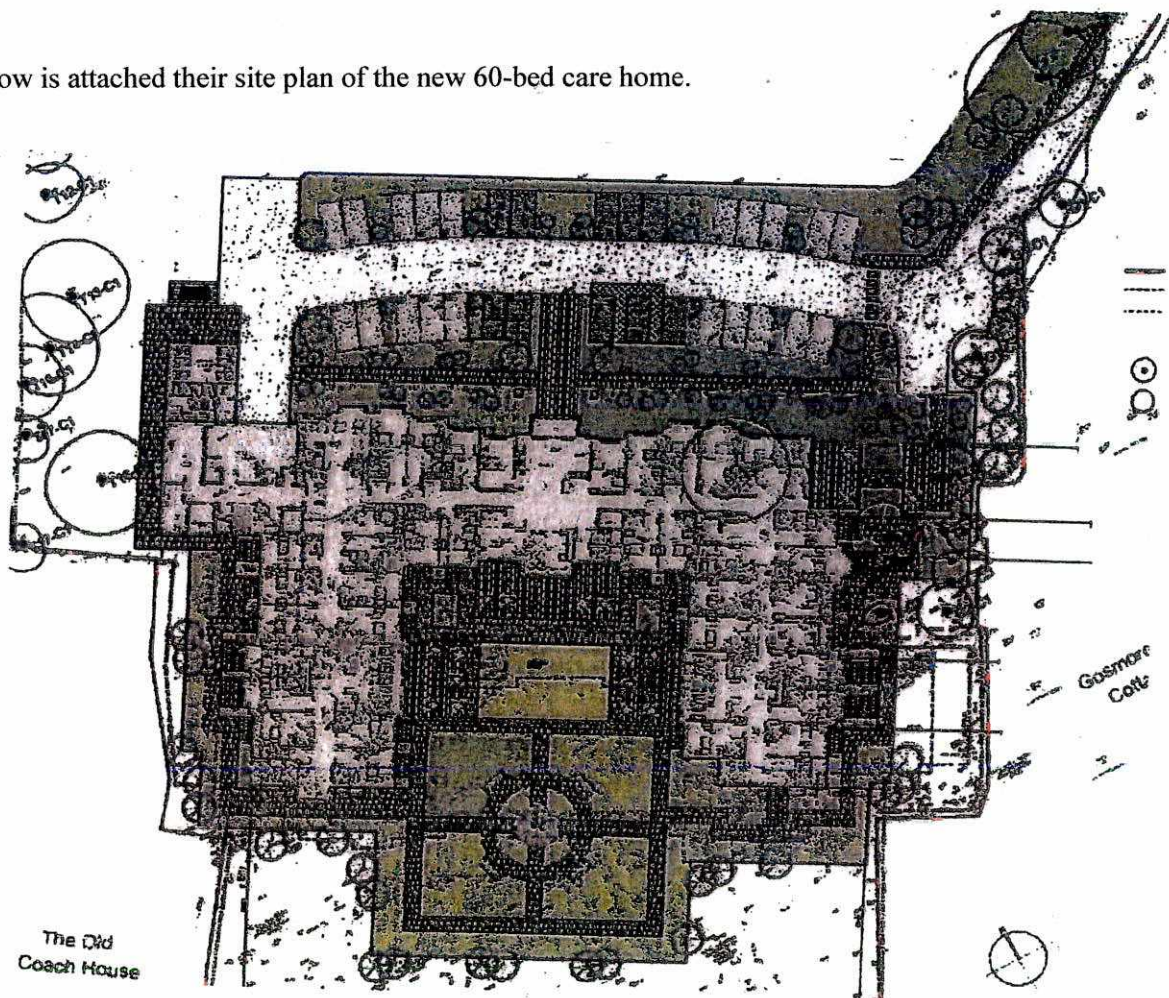
Whilst the original 1990 transfer had included the ownership of most of the access driveway, but subject to retained contractual rights as follows:

AND RESERVING to the Transferor and its successors in title the owners and occupiers of the land [Gosmore End House] in the above title [HD223325] retained by the Transferor ("the retained land") for the benefit of the retained land a right of way at all times and for all purposes on foot or with cars and light vans not exceeding Ten Hundredweight or with site vehicles and service vehicles to pass and re-pass over and along the driveway shown coloured purple on plan A for access to and egress from the retained land

Note* These rights are limited only to retained land as at 21 December 1990, but can never be for any additional access to any other land, which would amount to intensification.

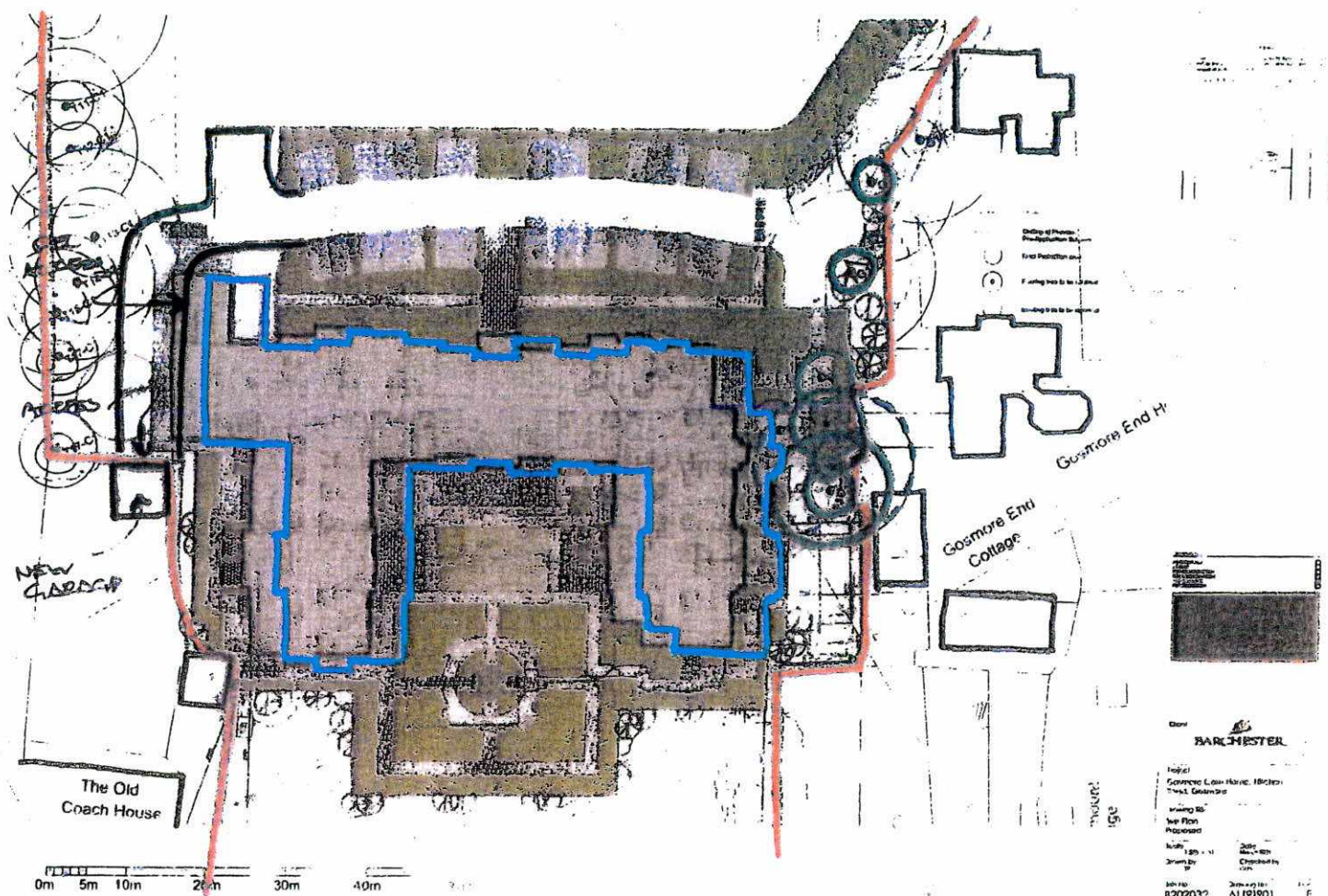
During 2021, Barchester Healthcare informed the owners of Gosmore End House, they were intending to apply for planning permission to demolish Gosmore End Nursing Home and build a brand new 60-bedroom care home, - (Iris Court) in its place.

Below is attached their site plan of the new 60-bed care home.



As is shown, following Barchester's initial design proposal to build the replacement care home right over the main access driveway but with only a new shortened shared driveway to the North; subsequent negotiations had resulted in the improved care home being repositioned, approximately 5M further East, nearer to my Gosmore End House which Barchester's Architects (TDC Architect Design) had redesigned before submitting planning application, reference **21/01734/FP** , utilising the shared driveway.

(See also the final approved site plan below on NHC's website).



As the vehicular access is existing and will remain unaltered, the adequate existing visibility does not raise any concerns.

Parking.

A total of six parking spaces are provided on site, four spaces individually within the new garage bays. There is plenty of additional space for cycle parking, and other storage for each new dwelling is available. Spaces in front of each double garage bay are available for visitors.

Cycles

Cycles will be stored in the undercover garages bays, which are sized with plenty of space so that a car and other storage can be accommodated.

Refuse and recycling.

It is proposed that refuse and recycling bins will be stored on the paths outside most of the time. These will then be collected from the roadside, adjacent to the front entrance along Hitchin Road in front of the existing brick planters, for various bins to be left out on collection day. This is located at the kerbside.

Fire and Security.

With Barchester Healthcare having already constructed an additional turning space all along the West side of the new care home, there is sufficient access width in excess of Herts Fire and Rescue Service requirements.

The Design also benefits from informal surveillance with front doors overlooking the main pedestrian access, and with windows overlooking the rear gardens. Furthermore, because the shared access driveway with Iris Court Care Home is staffed 24/7 and will have permanent illumination, it is therefore considered there is more than sufficient distance off Hitchin Road, Gosmore, SG4 7QH as to make it extremely safe, not least because of the frequent movements of staff and visitors.

Furthermore, there are existing gate piers beyond the access off Hitchin Road which can be locked for additional security, if required.

Deliveries.

The turning head provided in front of the existing garages provides plenty of space for a standard delivery vehicle to turn around.

Pedestrian access for the two dwellings will be designed in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations. The new dwellings have been designed to provide clear identification of entrances.

Whilst it is noted that Hitchin Road does not yet have a dedicated footpath, it does have streetlights and is limited to 30MPH all the way into Hitchin. Whilst within the Gosmore village itself there are no dedicated footpaths, as identified in the Conservation Area Character Statement, nevertheless, thankfully, when approving 8 new houses at Glyfada, Hitchin Road, Gosmore, under reference 19/03033/FP, the Area Planning Officer at North Hertfordshire District Council secured some initial funding towards a new scheme to provide a footpath linking Gosmore village directly with Hitchin. This new single footpath Scheme is currently being worked on by Mr Gary Henning at Hertfordshire County Council Highways; further Section 106 contributions will be sought from other new developments in the Parish for this very worthwhile improvement.

Consequently, even though, as identified in the Conservation Area Character Statement, there are no footpaths within the village at present, as Hitchin Road, Gosmore is getting much busier, pedestrian safety when walking North from the village towards Hitchin, will be enormously improved as a result of the future provision of a new footpath.

Transport.

The village location, close by to the historic market town of Hitchin means that future residence will continue to be able to choose between walking, private car or cycling. In addition, there are bus stops close by in the centre of the village adjacent to the village green and the Bird in Hand Public House with the 88 Service providing services to Luton and Hitchin throughout the day.

Conclusions.

The proposal to create two new 3-bed homes, to be Self-Built and initially available for rent will contribute towards the housing need of the village and the wider District as well as enhancing the immediate site.

The site is located within development envelope in the adopted Local Plan, and only presents as a very uncharacteristic part on the edge of the Conservation Area, much more easily recognised as a suitable and sustainable location for new housing.

The two new houses are sympathetic in scale, density and appearance to the nearby properties, the enormous new care home, and the wider village and Conservation Area, and have been very carefully designed to both minimise the impact on existing neighbours and to ensure there is no overlooking from any habitable rooms.

The site in its current state adds nothing to enhance the Conservation Area, which at present is dwarfed by the enormous new care home, next door.

Very high quality materials are proposed, and the attractive design with high-quality construction methods will ensure fantastic future living standards for future occupants. Furthermore, these attractive new homes, in a highly sustainable village location, will help to break up the appearance of the enormous new nursing home next door, when viewed from the surrounding highway.

RCM/MAM/ 1st August 2025.