



WARNER

Design and Access Statement:

Three Houses Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire, SG4 8TB

The application site is situated at Church Wood, Three Houses Lane, which is most closely linked to the settlement of Codicote. Three Houses Lane is a road that services the nearby residential properties, agricultural premises and equine/commercial facilities. The application site comprises an area of approximately 5.51 hectares.



Figure 1: Site location in the context of the wider locality (indicative not for scaling).



Figure 2: Aerial image of the application site.

The site hosts three existing barns, which have been extended from their original form, and two lean-to structures have been erected, which are now being used under Use Class B8 for storage and distribution purposes. The site will also include setback gates at the access point off Three Houses Lane to ensure site security.



Figure 3: The existing site access (to be retained) from Three Houses Lane.



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Office 2, 13 Bodmin Place,
Milton Keynes, MK10 7DP
www.warnerplanning.co.uk

The site is located North of the village of Codicote by approximately three miles and Northwest of Welwyn town by approximately 4 miles. The site is surrounded by woodland within its immediate locality, with the nearest neighbouring properties being located approximately a mile to the East and West.

The application site is accessed off Three Houses Lane via a private drive, which will be electronically gated. The site is bounded by fencing and dense hedgerows and vegetation. The fencing was recently installed to help tackle the issue of trespassing on-site. The site has private parking by providing a hard-surfaced area on site.

Whilst the dominant use along Three Houses Lane is residential properties, the wider area of Codicote hosts a mixed use of residential and commercial premises accommodating local businesses.

Proposed Development

The proposal consists of the following:

- ✿ The conversion of the existing built form to use class B8 for storage and distribution
- ✿ The extension of two barns
- ✿ The erection of a temporary building for welfare purposes
- ✿ The installation of windows on barn 1
- ✿ The surfacing of an existing access track around the site
- ✿ The creation of hard standing areas to facilitate parking and outside storage provision
- ✿ The erection of a substation on site
- ✿ Reduction in Large vehicles accessing the site and using Three Houses Lane.
- ✿ Sustainable fabrication of the built works on site
- ✿ Associated parking spaces
- ✿ Existing access will continue to be utilised by the proposed scheme.
- ✿ Ecological preservation and enhancement measures

The works on site have taken precedent from other properties within the immediate locality and reflect a common design style of agricultural barns within Codicote.

The built form on site has been constructed in compliment to Local Plan Policy SP9, and it is our opinion that the new development is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

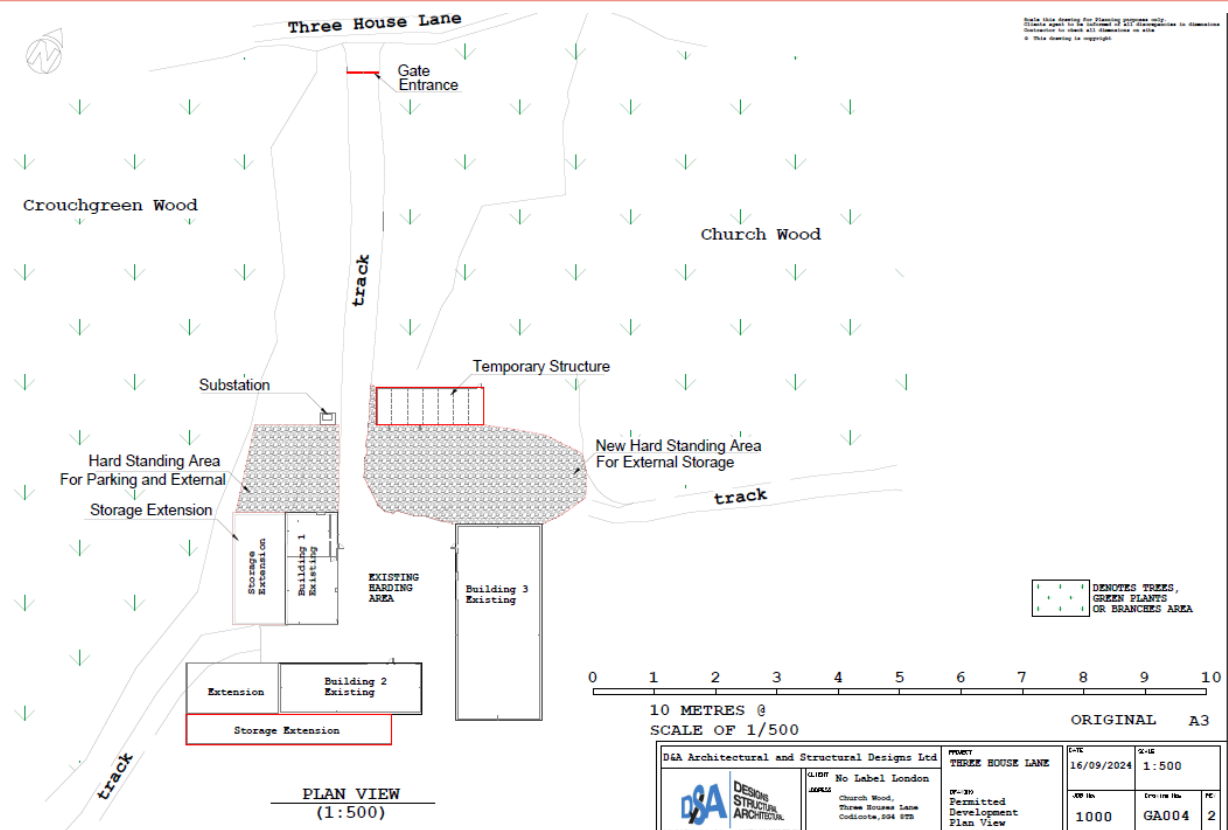


Figure 4: Existing and Proposed Site Plan

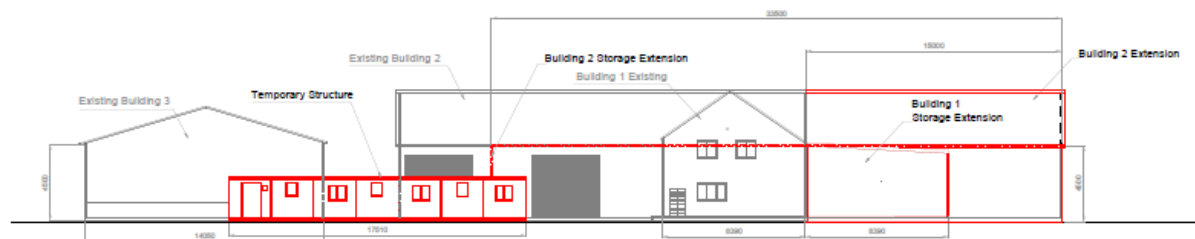


Figure 5: Front Elevation of the site (South viewpoint looking from Three Houses Lane)

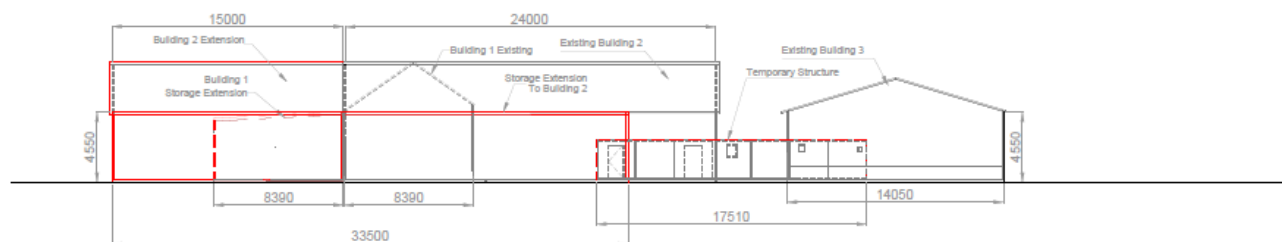


Figure 6: Rear Elevation of the site (North)

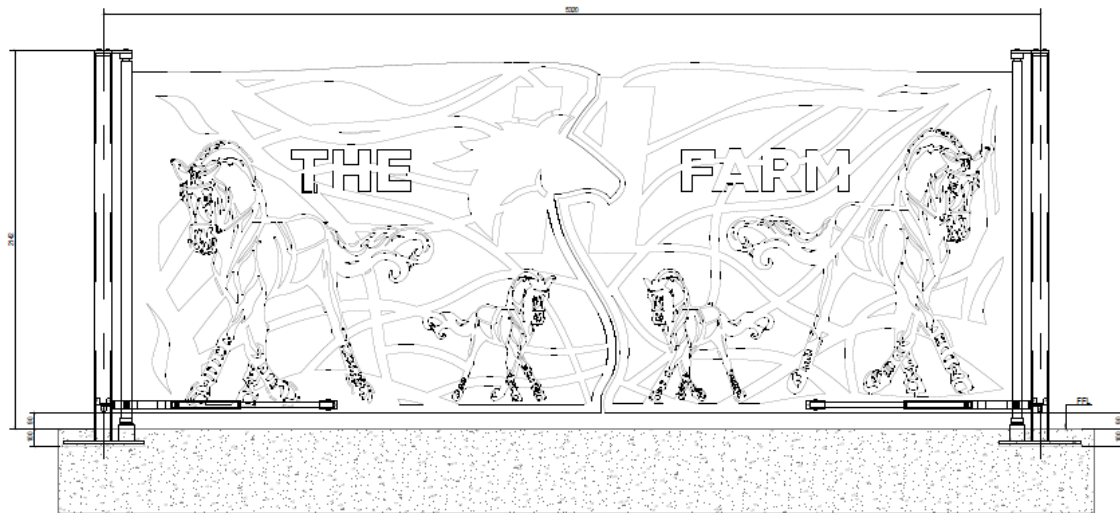


Figure 7: Front Elevation of the Entrance Gates (South viewpoint looking from Three Houses Lane)

The application also includes the addition of windows to barn 1 on the first floor to provide light into the ancillary office area. These windows were installed prior to the applicant's ownership. However, these are included in the application for good practice. The windows are modest in size and style, located in a sympathetic location, and do not affect any neighbouring amenity. The windows also face the access track, helping on-site security.

Figure 8 demonstrates the installation of Windows prior to the site being purchased by the current owner, as the windows are evident from the original Rightmove listing.

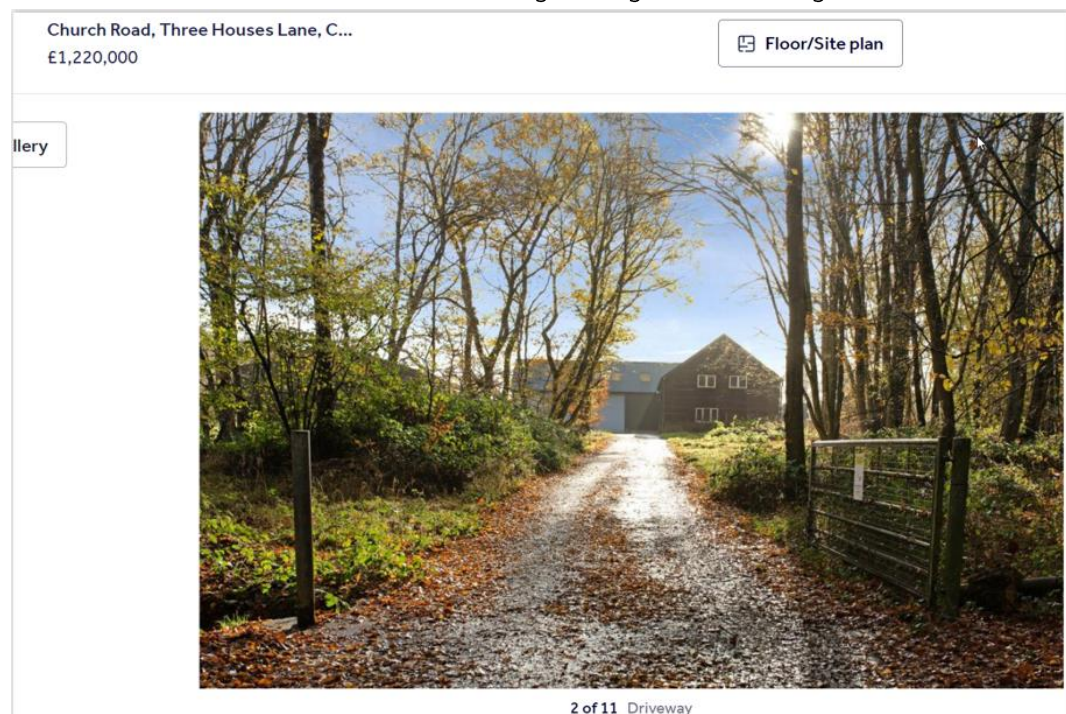


Figure 8: The original Rightmove listing for the site, which displays the Windows on site already installed.

The application also includes the erection of a temporary building; this temporary building is required for a short period to provide welfare facilities for staff whilst the site is set up and made operational. The welfare facilities will be removed in the future, and onsite improvement works have been placed on hold while the planning application is advanced.

Design

The application comprises the list below elements:

- ✿ The erection of entrance gates
- ✿ The erection of two lean too structures
- ✿ The extensions to the existing barns
- ✿ The installation of windows to barn 1
- ✿ The erection of a temporary building

The extensions and lean-to structures have been erected to match the host barns on site. The additions have been designed to be sympathetic and complementary to the wider site and form modest and in-keeping additions on site.

The surrounding equestrian, commercial, and agricultural structures on surrounding properties are similar in style to those located on the application site. As set out in the figure below, the Barn is in keeping with the surrounding locality.



Figure 9: Aerial image of the application site showing Barn design.



Figure 10: Aerial image of surrounding agricultural barns showing barn design precedent.



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Figure 11: Aerial image of surrounding agricultural barns showing barn design precedent.

The built-in form has been constructed in accordance with Local Plan Policy SP9, and we believe that the new development is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

The additions on-site further align with the aims of chapter 12 of the NPPF and Policy KBBE4 of the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan, which required development to be well-designed and respect local character.

Scale and Mass

The proposal has been designed to make efficient use of space on site whilst respecting the wider context of the site. The built form is considered to be of an appropriate scale to that which is established in the vicinity and to previous historical development on the site, including the most recent approval on the site. The built form reflects other buildings within the wider area. The new built form is subservient in form and scale to the host buildings.

Landscaping

The site has a series of hard and soft landscaping features. We acknowledge the improvements and alterations to the surface of the access track into the site from Three Houses Lane and associated hard standing area for associated uses such as parking and storage. The site has the provision for soft landscaping features such as the planting of trees, bushes and retention of grass and woodland on site. The site has been managed appropriately to ensure the existing landscaping on site is of a high quality and well maintained. The applicant intends to plant additional trees around the site.

Appearance and Materials

The proposed built form is traditional in form and comprises barn material palettes of the existing agricultural in the vicinity and the host building. This ensures the proposal complements the main buildings on site and neighbouring agricultural barns.

Access and movement

The site is accessed via an existing private drive from Three Houses Lane. The Transport Assessment submitted in support of this submission concludes that *"The proposals are not expected to cause a perceptible negative impact to the safe and efficient functioning of the local highway."*

The proposed use on site as Use Class B8 proposes a less intense use of the site and associates a lower provision of large and heavy goods vehicles using the site and surrounding road network than what would have occurred under the former agricultural use. As set out within the Transport Statement, details of vehicle movements on site have been presented, creating a minimal trip generation that ultimately decreases trips generated for agricultural use on site.

Within the approval of a new barn at Three Houses Farm, nearby (21/00399/FP), the Council stated agricultural vehicle traffic levels would be expected to be reasonable and acceptable.

The proposal will have a maximum of five large vehicles per day, which are likely to be fixed-wheel lorries rather than HGVs. There are no restrictions on the road, which is used for deliveries, bin lorries and large agricultural vehicles already.

The surrounding agricultural, equestrian and commercial uses provide precedent for the use of larger vehicles along Three Houses Lane.

The proposal presents the opportunity to improve the highway network and create a passing bay along the lane.

Policy T1 and T2 of the North Herts Local Plan set out the Highways and Parking requirements for new development and it is of our opinion that this proposal compliments these policies.

Use

The proposed use of the site is for the continuation of use on site as B8 (storage and distribution).

Sustainability

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the purpose of sustainable development and the three pillars of sustainability.

This proposal complements each aspect of sustainability as set out below:

Economic – The retrospective proposal complements the economic objective of sustainable development by allowing for agricultural diversification to continue to contribute to the rural economy. The development brings in greater trading to the area and will subsequently result in greater tax contributions by means of business rates. The proposal will contribute to a strong, responsive and competitive economy.

Social – The proposal aligns with the social objectives of the NPPF and creates a small-scale employment opportunity that will allow for job creation within the locality. The proposal will provide additional access to services within the area and provide a well-designed, beautiful and safe space.

Environmental – The modest additions on site and change of use have protected and enhanced the natural environments around the site. The proposal has made effective use of brownfield land, and sustainable construction methods have provided improved sustainable technologies and fabrication on site.

The application site is located within a sustainable location and is well connected to nearby services and facilities, as set out earlier in this statement.

Retrospective extensions on site have been fabricated using sustainable construction methods and materials.

The additions and change of use on site align to both the National Framework and Local Policies SP1 and SP9 of the North Herts Local Plan.

Conclusion

The application proposes a high-quality lead approach for development necessary to ensure the vitality of the previously developed site and the continuation of a prospering rural business, which is required to diversify in the current economic climate. The application is complementary to Local and National Policies, which outline guidance towards supporting the development of this nature, which supports the economy and provides employment opportunities.

It is considered that there are compelling grounds to support the proposed development, including:

- ✿ The reuse of existing built form within the Green Belt
- ✿ A complimentary design approach in keeping with the existing built form on site and surrounding agricultural and commercial sites
- ✿ Effective use of previously developed land, avoiding erosion into the Green Belt and countryside.
- ✿ The limited development which results in retention of the openness of the Green Belt
- ✿ Continued relationship with the setting and appearance of Three Houses Lane
- ✿ A development that adheres to and complements local and national policy
- ✿ The retention and re-use of the existing access point to the site
- ✿ The retention of the existing built form and it is in keeping with the local character

The applicant is committed to working with the Council and is happy to meet the Council to discuss the application and consider any amendments where appropriate.