

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PEASE HOUSE
HITCHIN

opstead

October 2025
133-OP-PL-DAS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Metric + Maker by Opstead.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings which accompany this application for planning permission submitted to North Herts Council:

- 133-OP-PL-
- SP-A-001 - Site Location

SP-A-002 - Existing Site Plan

SP-A-003 - Proposed Site Plan

EP-A-001 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

EP-A-002 - Existing First Floor Plan

EP-A-003 - Existing Second Floor Plan

EP-A-004 - Existing Third Floor Plan

EP-A-005 - Existing Roof Plan

EE-A-001 - Existing Elevations

EE-A-002 - Existing Elevations

PP-A-001 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

PP-A-002 - Proposed First Floor Plan

PP-A-003 - Proposed Second Floor Plan

PP-A-004 - Proposed Third Floor Plan

PP-A-005 - Proposed Roof Plan

PE-A-001 - Proposed Elevations

PE-A-002 - Proposed Elevations

The proposal seeks Prior Approval under Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use from office (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3).



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CHAPTER 1.0 SITE APPRAISAL

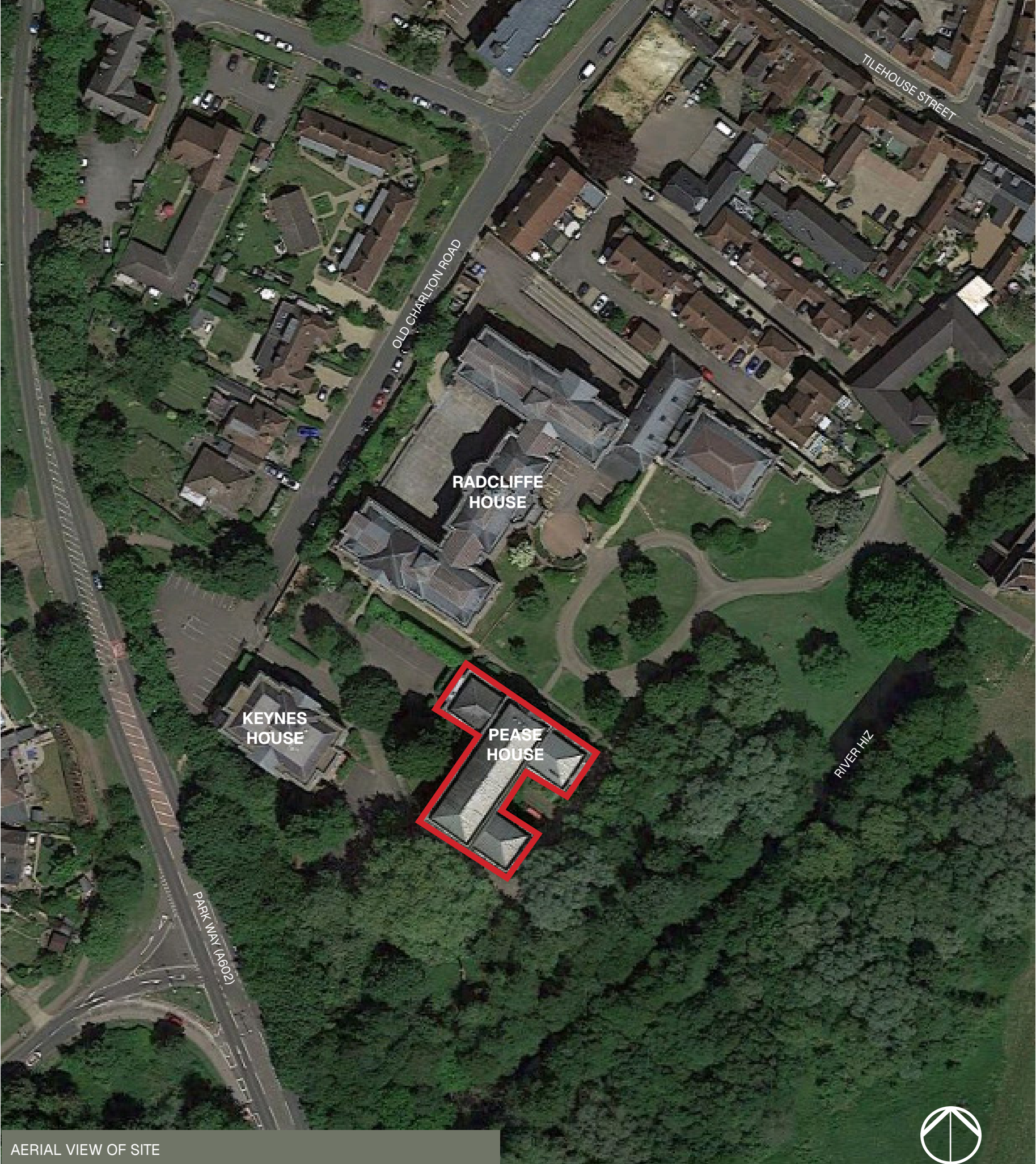
1.1 LOCATION + CONTEXT

The property (bound red on the adjacent plans) is located within Hitchin, to the south of the town centre. Pease House is one of three office buildings set within The Priory estate, that were constructed through the 1980's and 90's. Radcliffe House and Keynes House are located adjacent to the property and all share similar architectural features. The cluster of buildings benefit access from both Old Charlton Road and Tilehouse Street.

The site is bound to the west by the A602, with a dense landscaped buffer between. To the north of the site is Old Charlton Road, with residential settlement beyond. The east and south of the property is the grounds of The Priory, benefitting from mature landscaping, grasslands and the River Hiz.



SITE LOCATION



AERIAL VIEW OF SITE

1.2 EXISTING BUILDING

Pease House was constructed in the late 1990's, and forms the collection of three buildings that share similar detailing. Part 2 and 3 building, it is constructed with a red brick facade, with stone detailing and brick features, with a stone entrance portico. Mansard roofs, formed with steel and timber structure, terminate the top of the building that are close to a full storey in height. Windows are white U-PVC sash, with stone cills.

The primary entrance and frontage overlook the grounds of The Priory, and Radcliffe House. Owing to the office use, floor to ceiling heights are generous and benefit from good levels of daylight internally.



1.3 CONSERVATION + HERITAGE

The application site is situated within the Hitchin Conservation Area, as identified on Map 1, Fig 1.3.1.

Whilst the existing building is not listed, there are a number of heritage assets nearby. Listed buildings 1 and 2 Tilehouse Street, the Coach House, the Garden Bridge, the Stables and The Priory, are all statutory listed. The Priory, a significant heritage asset Grade I listed in 1951, would have been a key consideration when Radcliffe House, Keynes House and Pease House developments acquired planning permission and subsequently constructed.

Whilst The Priory and its setting are considered to make a significant contribution to the Character Area 7 of the Conservation Area Appraisal, the modern office buildings are not referenced as making any form of contribution nor are they present in any of the identified important views in the Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement, July 2011.

1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL

The application site is situated within a designated Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of possible flooding.



FIGURE 1.3.1 - HITCHIN CONSERVATION AREA MAP

CHAPTER 2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

2.1 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal seeks Prior Approval under Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use from office (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3).

It is proposed to convert the existing office floorspace into 27no. dwellings, and will comply with the relevant technical standards, as explained further below. The building does not exceed the fire risk conditions set out under Class MA, and as such do not need to be assessed as part of this application.

The following matters are relevant to this application and have therefore been considered below and are set out in supporting documents:

- Transport impacts of the development;
- Contamination risks;
- Flooding risks;
- Impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development;
- The provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.

The impact of the proposed change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area are addressed within this document and an accompanying Conservation Area Statement prepared by Stantec.

The proposals seek to provide dwellings broken down as the following housing mix:

1 bedroom - 13no.

2 bedroom - 14no.

2.2 DESIGN STANDARDS

The internal layouts of the proposed dwellings have been designed to meet or exceed the relevant national design and technical standards, ensuring that the conversion delivers a high quality, functional and accessible residential environment.

Nationally Described Space Standards (DCLG, 2015)

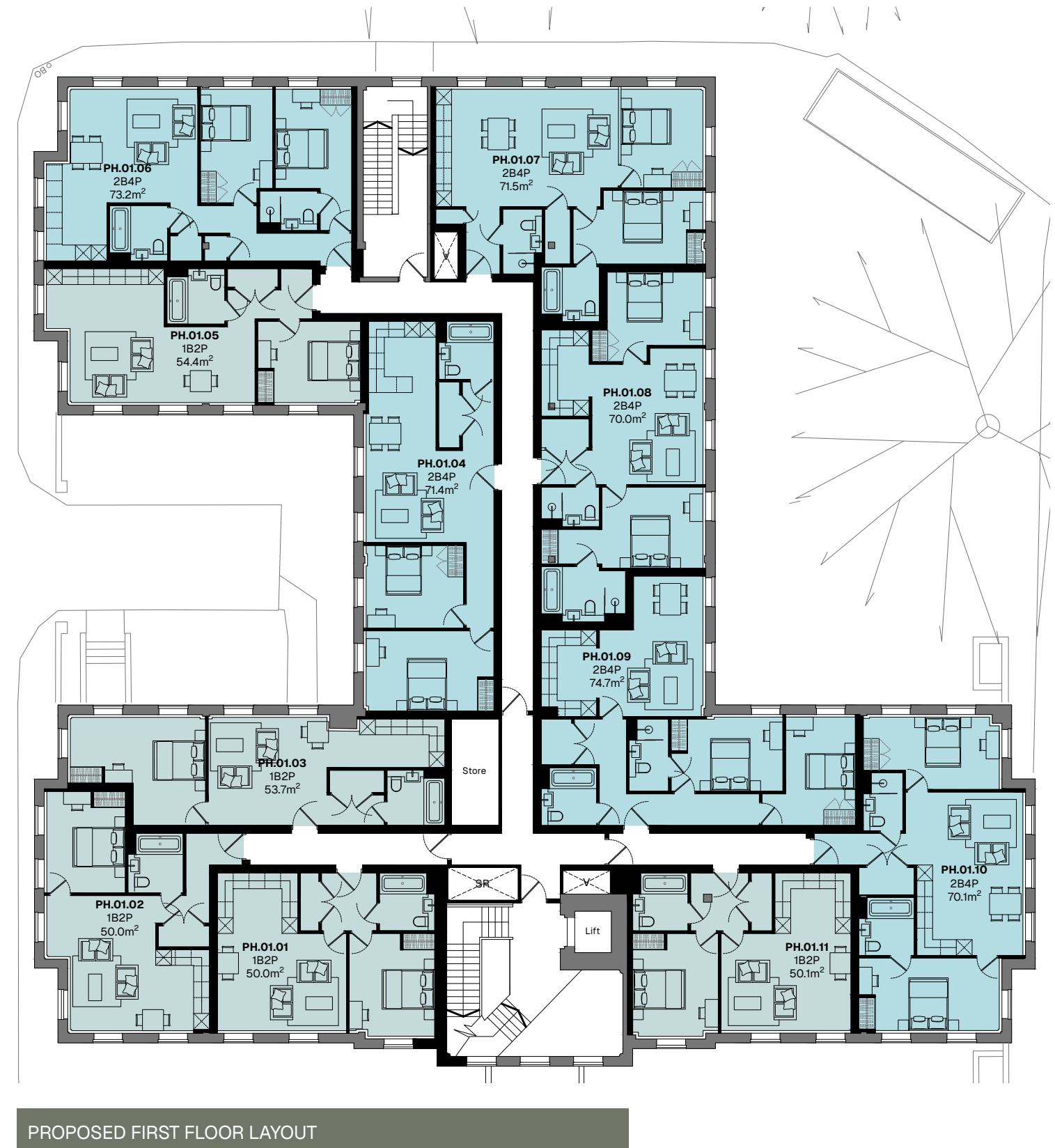
Each dwelling has been designed to comply with or exceed the minimum gross internal floor area and room size requirements set out in the DCLG's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2015).

In developing the internal layouts, careful consideration has been given to:

- Overall dwelling size, ensuring all units meet the minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) for their respective occupancy levels;
- Bedroom sizes, which meet or exceed minimum floor area and width standards;
- Internal storage provision, consistent with the requirements of Table 1 of the Nationally Described Space Standards; and
- Functional room layouts, designed to ensure comfortable and practical living arrangements

Wherever possible, individual apartments have been designed to provide dual aspect accommodation, optimise natural light and ventilation, and maintain privacy and acoustic separation between units.

With respect to floor to ceiling heights, the NDSS require 2.3m for at least 75% of the gross floor area. Owing to the existing heights, the proposals will exceed this requirement for 100% of the gross floor area.



2.2 DESIGN STANDARDS (Continued)

Building Regulations – Approved Document M (2015, amended 2016)

All dwellings have been designed to achieve compliance with the accessibility requirements of Approved Document M (2015, as amended 2016) of the Building Regulations, particularly Category M4(1): Visitable Dwellings, which applies to all new residential units created through conversion.

- This includes:
- Step-free access from the principal entrance to all dwellings;
 - Sufficient circulation space within hallways and principal rooms to ensure manoeuvrability;
 - Accessible bathroom layouts compliant with minimum turning and transfer dimensions; and
 - Potential for adaptability, allowing future modification to meet the changing needs of occupants.

Refer to the accommodation schedule provided in Section 2.7 which confirms dwelling, room and storages sizes all meet or exceed the minimum requirements.

2.3 ACCESS

The existing site access arrangements for both vehicles and pedestrians will remain unchanged as part of the proposed conversion

Vehicles

Vehicular access to the site is currently taken from Old Charlton Road and Tilehouse Street, serving an existing on-site parking area used by office staff and visitors. The proposal does not involve any alteration to the existing access points or road layouts.

Under the proposed residential use, the same access point and circulation arrangements will be retained, ensuring that the building’s established relationship with the highway network is preserved. As the building will be converted from office (Class E) use to residential (Class C3), it is anticipated that overall vehicle movements to and from the site will decrease.

- Office use typically generates a higher frequency of weekday peak-hour trips associated with staff commuting, servicing, and visitors.
- Residential use, by contrast, results in lower peak-period intensity and a more even distribution of movements throughout the day and week.

Accordingly, the proposed development is expected to result in a net reduction in traffic generation and have no adverse impact on the local highway network or junction capacity - Refer to the accompanying Transport Statement, by i-Transport, for further detail.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian access to the building will continue to be taken from the existing principal entrance on Tilehouse Street, which will remain unchanged. The existing building has a primary entrance lobby, and additionally has a rear access / exit. The proposal does not introduce any new access points.

The site is in a highly sustainable location, within short walking distance of Hitchin town centre, public transport links, and local amenities. The unchanged pedestrian access arrangements therefore remain safe, direct, and convenient for future residents.

2.4 IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS

The proposed change of use and building conversion involves changes to the building that are exclusively internal.

No external changes are required, and resultingly there would be no detrimental impact to the character of the building, the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area, nor will it impact on the characteristics of the open parkland spaces and the setting with nearby heritage assets.

It is therefore considered that the proposals will not cause any harm or impact on heritage assets and Conservation Area.

Refer to the accompanying Conservation Area Statement prepared by Stantec, for further detail.

2.5 PARKING

Cars

Car parking is provided in accordance with the Councils *Vehicle Parking at New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2011)*.

The application site benefits from existing car parks within The Priory estate. The existing office use has allocated parking and the new residential use will continue to enjoy this benefit. The proposed site layout plan (133-OP-PL-SP-A-003) identifies where the residential parking spaces will be located.

Car parking has been provided on the following breakdown:

Requirement:	Provided
1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling	13 spaces
2 space per 2 bedroom dwelling	28 spaces
0.25 per dwelling for visitors	7 spaces
Total	48 spaces.

Cycles

Cycle storage provision is provided in accordance with the Councils *Vehicle Parking at New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2011)*.

Cycle parking has been provided on the following breakdown:

Requirement:	Provided
1 space per dwelling for residents	27 spaces
1 space per dwelling for visitors	27 spaces
Total	54 spaces.

Residents cycle storage is provided with double tier racks located within the building, which ensures that is is secure, covered and well lit.

Visitors cycle storage is provided both within the building, and also externally within an existing cycle shelter with sheffield stands, Fig. 2.5.1

Refer to the accompanying Transport Statement, by i-Transport, for further detail.



FIGURE 2.5.1 - EXISTING CYCLE SHELTER

2.6 SERVICING

The proposed conversion will retain the existing servicing arrangements established for the building’s current use as offices. No alterations to the site access, servicing routes, or external layout are proposed.

Servicing and Deliveries

Servicing, deliveries and refuse collection will continue to be undertaken from the existing access on Old Charlton Road, whilst Tilehouse Street additionally provides access for servciing - both of which currently accommodates service vehicles associated with the office use.

The proposal does not introduce any new vehicular access points, nor does it alter the building’s frontage or surrounding highway arrangement. It is antcipated that the frequency and scale of servicing activities will decrease compared to the previous office use, as residential occupation typically generates fewer and smaller deliveries (e.g., domestic parcel and grocery deliveries).

Access for emergency and service vehicles will remain unimpeded and fully compliant with Building Regulations Part B (Fire Safety) and local highway standards.

As a result, the proposed servicing arrangements are identical to the existing situation, with no material impact on highway safety or the operation of either Old Charlton Road or Tilehouse Street.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

Refuse and recycling storage will be provided within the site boundary and is unchanged compared to the existing arrangements. Designated storage areas existing within the grounds of the development, and these will continue to be used.

The existing storage areas, Fig 2.6.1 and 2.6.2, are easiliy accessible for residents, are located discreetly away from public views.

On collection days, the bins will be transferred by the management company to an existing holding area to the rear of Radcliffe House, located conveniently for kerbside collection from Old Charlton Road.

The design of the refuse area will comply with North Hertfordshire Council’s waste management guidance, providing sufficient capacity for both general and recyclable waste.

Refer to the accompanying Transport Statement, by i-Transport, for further detail.



FIGURE 2.6.1 - REFUSE STORAGE AREA 1



FIGURE 2.6.2 - REFUSE STORAGE AREA 2

2.7 ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE



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Project: Pease House, The Priory, Hitchin
Project No: 133
Issue Date: 20/10/2025

Accommodation Schedule

[illegible]

* Minimum area for a double bedroom.

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