

**OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT TO THE SOUTH OF COWARDS LANE, CODICOTE,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

Heritage Statement



For

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OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE SOUTH OF COWARDS LANE, CODICOTE

Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cowards Lane is an old, long established winding country lane that runs along the southern edge of Codicote village. Dwellings comprise detached individually designed houses. They vary in age from those constructed in the early 1950's, a number developed in the 1970's and 1990's and with a housing allocation currently being built out for 83 dwelling at the east end of the Cowards Lane. The site is at the western end of Cowards Lane, immediately behind Marlin and Field House and is currently fenced open paddock outside the settlement boundary and within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 This outline application is seeking residential development with means of access for consideration and all other matters reserved for subsequent approval; demolition of all existing structures; associated landscaping, drainage, car parking; infrastructure and all ancillary and enabling works. The site area covers 3.41 acres and the number of proposed residential units is 30, with 50% affordable.
- 1.3 Fiona Webb of FWA Heritage & Design has been commissioned to make an assessment of the extent and importance of the setting of the heritage assets in the locality and the contribution to their significance, to consider the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Fiona Webb visited the site in April 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.
- 1.4 This report will present:
- A brief background to the proposed development site using historic mapping
 - A description of the heritage assets which potentially could be impacted by the proposed development
 - Policy and guidance background
 - An assessment of the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets by the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets following Historic England guidance on assessing the importance of setting in The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition, December 2017)
 - Consideration of the character and appearance of the conservation area, and any impact on the designated heritage asset
 - Conclusions
- 1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with Orion's Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, that also accompanies this planning application.

2.0 BACKGROUND & HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Codicote is located at the southernmost tip of the district of North Hertfordshire.
- 2.2 The settlement of Codicote, dates to the mid thirteenth century and almost certainly came into being due to the king granting to the lord of the manor the right to hold a market in the parish. There would have been permanent buildings around the market place, and it is likely that these were laid out in the usual format for a market settlement - dwellings built close to the road with long narrow strips to the rear, housing a yard, outbuildings and often a small pasture. Codicote appears in the Domesday Book as a relatively large settlement within land owned by St Albans Abbey. According to the Domesday Book there were two corn mills and about 100 inhabitants in 1086. St Giles Church was built in about 1110. By the late 1200's there were several permanent shops and at least one tavern. There is one large building of the 16th century opposite the village green (the former George and Dragon PH), suggesting that this was functionally the centre of the settlement at least by that time. The village continued to expand north and south, creating the High Street; this was an important highway linking Hatfield, Welwyn and Hitchin. In the 18th century it became a turnpike road and was much upgraded. For short periods there would have been a tollhouse and weighing house in or near the parish. The development through the 18th and into the 19th centuries to the north and south of the High Street, effectively turned a nucleated settlement into a linear one.
- 2.3 As the population migrated to the larger towns during the Industrial Revolution, the growth of the village slowed. A development of council houses was built after the First World War at the north end of the High Street in the 'White City', now known as Tower Road; a few private bungalows were built at the end of St Albans Road.
- 2.4 After the Second World War and through the 1960's and 70's growth accelerated with the creation of the areas around Hill Road and Meadow Way; The Elms, The Chestnuts and Bury Lane; Valley Road and The Birches. Since then, the designation of the Green Belt around the village had meant that the boundary had remained essentially unchanged and further development had been limited to infilling. The adoption of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, in November 2022, allocating four housing development sites in the Green Belt.
- 2.5 The First Edition OS Map published in 1884 shows the site as agricultural but with the public footpath route already shown cutting diagonally across the land. Cowards Lane is also well established in its current form but has no development along its entire route but has allotment gardens at its eastern end and land owned by Labor in Vain Charity on the site of the current recreation ground. Field patterns along Cowards Lane are shown as well treed with deciduous trees. Development is already well established along High Street and St Albans Road, with the central green and market place fully enclosed by built form.



Figure 1 - First Edition OS Map 1884

- 2.6 The next available map of 1924 largely continues this established pattern of development, but with development extending further south along High Street. The allotments gardens are no longer on Cowards lane and have moved to the east side of High Street. The recreation ground is now located on the north boundary of Cowards. Two houses are now shown as built on Cowards Lane.

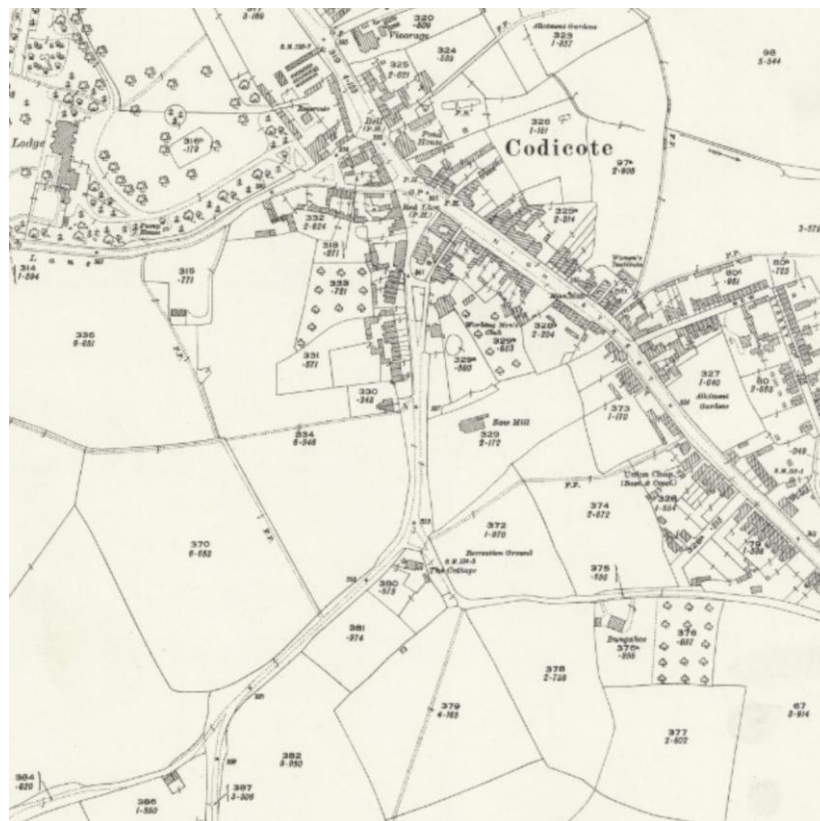


Figure 2 – OS Map 1924

- 2.7 The pattern of development in the local area changes little across the next few decades and by the time of the publication of the OS map in 1960, little change can be seen apart from the expansion of development along St Albans Road. Still little development is shown along Cowards Lane.



Figure 3 - OS Map 1960

- 2.8 By the time of the publication of the OS map in 1972, development can be seen at the west end of Cowards Lane. Marlin and Field House are shown at the entrance to the site, with development along The Riddy to the right fully built out along its relatively narrow private cul-de-sac.



Figure 4 - OS Map 1972

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- 3.1 This description of the settings of the listed buildings will present a series of captioned photographs, the location of the photographs being marked on maps in Figure 5.

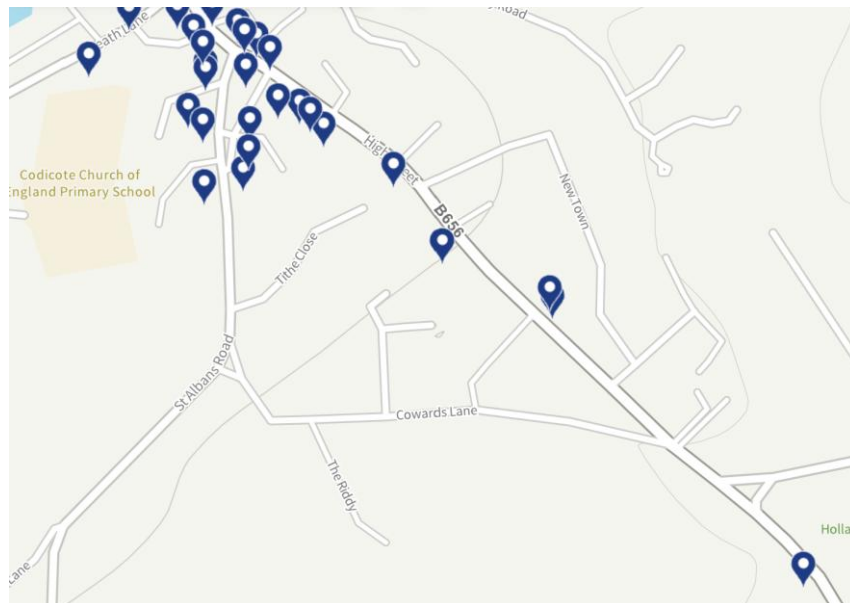


Figure 5 – Location of listed buildings. The majority are on High Street and St Albans Road



Figure 6 – Rosebank, 144 High Street

- 3.2 The front elevation of Rosebank faces the High Street. The property is listed Grade II and is located c.230m north east from the boundary of the site. The property was listed on 21 March 1984 for group value. The house is two storey, 17th century timber frame internally, with an 18th century red brick casing and 19th century timber casement windows. The roof has plain clay tiles with end chimney stacks. The property has a parallel rear extension.



Figure 7 – 151 – 157 High Street

- 3.3 The properties 151 – 157 High Street are a terrace of cottages on the north east side of High Street. The properties are listed Grade II and are located c.270m east from the boundary of the site. The properties were listed on 21 March 1984 and are set back from the street behind small narrow front gardens. The left side is 17th century and includes a gabled cross wing in timber frame and plaster. The right side is probably later c.18th century, when the whole range was cased in chequered red brick. The terrace has a plain tile roof, slightly higher on left with red brick ridge chimney stack and the first floor windows have eyebrow heads.



Figure 8 – 161 – 165 High Street

- 3.4 The properties 151 – 157 High Street are a terrace of cottages on the north east side of High Street. The properties are listed Grade II and are located c.270m east from the boundary of the site. The properties were listed on 21 March 1984 and are set back from the street behind small narrow front gardens. The houses are a pair of late 17th century/early 18th century with exposed timber frame and plaster infill under a plain tiled roof with eaves line raised higher in 18th century and a red brick chimney stack.



Figure 9 – 126 and Fern Cottage

- 3.5 The properties No.126 and Fern Cottage are located on the south west side of High Street. The properties are listed Grade II and located c.250m north-east from the boundary of the site. The properties were listed on 21 March 1984. The houses are a pair of timber framed cottages recased in the mid-18th century in chequered red brick under a plain tiled roof with a large chimney of the front slope. The windows are 8/8 pane sashes, except for 19th century shop window to left ground floor. The front doors are in a shared frame under segmental arch.



Figure 10 – 26 – 34 St Albans Road

- 3.6 The terrace of 4 houses, were formerly 5 houses. The properties are listed Grade II and located c.220m north from the boundary of the site. The properties were listed on 21 March 1984. They are mid 18th century of chequered red brick under a plain tiled roof and brick-coped parapeted gable ends with internal chimney stacks. They are two storeys with attics.



Figure 11 – Tithe Farmhouse

- 3.7 House is formerly farmhouse. The property is listed Grade II and located c.220m north from the boundary of the site. The property was listed on 15 March 1974. The property is mid 18th century in chequered red brick under a plain tiled roof. It is two storeys with attics with brick-coped gable-end parapets with internal chimney stacks.



Figure 12 – Milepost by road outside of Holland's Farm

- 3.8 The Milepost is listed Grade II and is located c.450m to the east of the boundary of the site. The structure was listed on 21 March 1984. The milepost is mid 19th century in origin and is white-painted cast iron with raised black lettering. The plan form of the post is triangular, with 2 faces inscribed 'HITCHIN 8 LONDON 26'. The milepost has a semicircular head inscribed 'Codicote Parish'.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66– a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted November 2022 which concerns Designated Heritage Assets.
- 4.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states that: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 4.4 Paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 208 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (Annexe 2 Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:
- ‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’*
- 4.6 The Historic England Guidance The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition, December 2017) states that: *‘Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance’* (p.4)
- 4.7 The HE guidance sets out a staged approach to the assessment of understanding the significance of setting:

1 Identification of heritage assets and the extent of their settings

2 Assess whether, how and what degree the settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets

3 Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful on the significance

4 Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

5 Record the process

- 4.8 The guidance also states that views which particularly contribute to the significance of heritage assets, includes those where the relationship between the asset and other historic assets or places or designed views. This emphasizes that the significance of a heritage asset isn't just about the asset itself, but also about its relationship with its surroundings, including other historic places.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SETTING TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDINGS

- 5.1 This assessment will follow the approach as set out in the Historic England guidance The Setting of Heritage Assets to identify the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on their significance.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets

- 5.2 The heritage assets to be considered in relation to the proposed development within their settings are:
- Rosebank, 144 High Street (Grade II)
 - 151 – 157 High Street (Grade II)
 - 161 – 165 High Street (Grade II)
 - 126 and Fern Cottage (Grade II)
 - 26 – 34 St Albans Road (Grade II)
 - Tithe Farmhouse (Grade II)
 - Milepost by road outside of Holland's Farm (Grade II)

Step 2: Assessment of contribution of setting to the significance of the heritage assets

Rosebank, 144 High Street

- 5.3 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of Rosebank is its relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.

- 5.4 In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

151 – 157 High Street

- 5.5 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of 151 – 157 High Street is its relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.

- 5.6 In this case the significance of the buildings lies largely with their historic fabric and architecture - their form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

161 – 165 High Street

- 5.7 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of 161 – 165 High Street is its relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.

- 5.8 In this case the significance of the buildings lies largely with their historic fabric and architecture - their form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

126 and Fern Cottage

- 5.9 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of the 126 and Fern Cottage is their relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.

- 5.10 In this case the significance of the buildings lies largely with their historic fabric and architecture - their form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

26 – 34 St Albans Road

- 5.11 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of the 26 – 34 St Albans Road is their relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.

- 5.12 In this case the significance of the buildings lies largely with their historic fabric and architecture - their form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Tithe Farmhouse

- 5.13 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of Tithe Farmhouse is its relationship to neighbouring historic properties which enclose the High Street and which create the linear form of the street scene.
- 5.14 In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Milepost by road outside of Holland's Farm

- 5.15 The main aspect of the importance of the setting of the Milepost is as a travel guide, its setting is the extensive road network and the region it serves, offering information on travel distance to towns along its routes.
- 5.16 In this case the significance of the Milepost lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and which has a significant aesthetic and architectural interest.

Step 3: Assess impact of the proposed development on significance

- 5.17 It is proposed to construct 30 residential units, with 50% affordable, on land immediately behind the properties Marlin and Field House on the southern side of Cowards Lane. The proposed indicative site layout is shown on the following page.
- 5.18 Taking the NPPF definition of setting as set out in 4.4, above, it follows that the test for whether a development within the setting of a heritage asset will affect significance must be based on the impact on the ability to:
- Experience the heritage asset or
 - To appreciate or understand its significance.

Further potential aspects of potential impact on setting include:

- Whether the proposed development would be harmful aesthetically when seen in combination with or adjacent to a heritage asset
 - Impact on tranquillity, appearance though light pollution or the experience of a heritage asset through the introduction of smells or noise.
- 5.19 The proposed residential development will be located within the area of the site which is fenced, open paddock land which is already screened by existing landscape buffers on the southern boundary and largely to the western boundary. This landscaping is already dense and mature on the southern boundary of the site and is an established



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R1	Preliminary Issue	25.04.25	MB
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Figure 13 – Proposed Indicative Site Layout

feature. As such, the proposed development would largely not be visible from the south.

5.20 In addition all of the listed buildings are located some distance from the development site and have existing buildings and landscape between the site and the designated heritage assets. There will be no direct views of the development from any of the listed buildings or their settings.

5.21 As such, the proposed development will not result in harm to the significance of any of the listed buildings as there will be no impact on the experience of the listed buildings, or on the ability to understand or appreciate their significance.

Step 4: How to maximise enhancement or avoid or minimise harm

5.22 This assessment of the importance of setting and the potential impact of the proposed development has found no harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the five listed buildings. Therefore, there is no requirement to maximise enhancement or mitigate harm.

Step 5: Record the process

5.23 This report presents a record of the process of the assessment of the importance of the setting of the listed buildings and its contribution to their significance, together with the assessment of the potential impact of the proposals.

6.0 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

6.1 The development site is c.230m to the south of the nearest conservation boundary which terminates just after Tithe Farmhouse on St Albans Road. Given the distance involved and intervening landscaping and existing buildings on St Albans Road, Tithe Close and Cowards Lane, the site will be concealed and makes no contribution to the character of the conservation area through its presence.

6.2 As such the proposed housing will not be visible and so there will be no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed development will not result in harm to the significance of any of the listed buildings as there will be no impact on the experience of the listed buildings, or on the ability to understand or appreciate their significance.

- 7.2 Also the site makes no contribution to the character of the conservation area through its presence, and the proposed housing will not be visible so there will be no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.3 Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the statutory duty in Sections 66 or 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, adopted November 2022. I therefore conclude that as there will be no harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, the application should be allowed.