

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Oak-Framed Garage Building

Site: Near Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire

Prepared in support of a lawful development certificate application for permitted development.

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a lawful development certificate application for permitted development for the construction of a high-quality oak-framed garage building within the grounds of a private residential property near Letchworth Garden City.

The proposed building is designed as a traditional estate outbuilding, reflecting the types of ancillary structures historically associated with larger garden and manor-style properties. Such buildings typically accommodate garages, workshops and grounds maintenance equipment, and are characteristic of properties set within generous landscaped plots on the rural edge of settlements.

The proposal seeks to deliver:

- A high-quality traditional oak structure appropriate to the local context
- A building that supports sustainable energy infrastructure including solar generation and battery storage
- Secure storage for grounds and road maintenance equipment required to maintain the extensive estate grounds
- A design that minimises visual and residential impacts on neighbouring properties
- A building that is similar in size and location to one that was there historically.

The scheme has been carefully revised to respond to the concerns raised in relation to a previous proposal, such that the revised proposal is now actively supported by that neighbour as shown in the email in Appendix B. Please note that the neighbour Jean Croft is 96 years old, the original objection was written by her son Ashley Croft, and the email has come from him.

2. Site Context

The site lies within a large residential property set within exceptionally large (3.44 acres) landscaped grounds belonging to the host dwelling. Whilst located in the green belt, an exceptional requirement exists because of the estate management demands. The grounds associated to the host dwelling, include a second dwelling and also including the roadways used by the residents of Roxley Court, woodland and an orchard. Whilst located on the rural edge of Letchworth Garden City, it is outside of the Letchworth heritage area. The principal host dwelling has been unoccupied for a number of years. During this time, contractors have partially maintained the grounds, but much of it has been undermaintained during this period. The host

dwelling has been recently extensively and sensitively refurbished in order to restore it to a sustainable family home. But the renovated home suffers from a lack of vehicle space and secure storage to accommodate the necessary machinery and tools to maintain the extensive grounds properly. The surrounding area is characterised by:

- Detached dwellings within large plots
- Mature trees and boundary hedgerows
- Ancillary outbuildings and garages associated with larger residential properties and agriculture.
- Traditional materials including timber framing, red brick (matching the house) and slate roofing

The proposal sits within the established curtilage of the host dwelling and remains clearly ancillary to the main house.

3. Design Evolution

Following feedback received during the previous application process, the scheme has been substantially revised in consultation with the complainant such that there is now agreement.

Key design improvements include:

- Incorporation of a reduced ridge height
- Reduction in depth by 0.9metres.
- Reduction in perceived massing as a result of reduced height and depth and detailing of flush solar panels.
- Careful re-positioning within the plot to minimise visual impact whilst making most efficient use of the land adjacent the existing driveway
- Use of traditional natural materials consistent with the surrounding character buildings.

These changes ensure the building integrates more successfully with the site and addresses the concerns previously raised. The complainant has provided an email of support as a result.

4. Amount and Use

The building provides garage space and ancillary storage serving the main residential property.

The internal space accommodates:

- Vehicle storage
- Estate maintenance equipment
- Grounds and road maintenance machinery
- Battery energy storage equipment supporting renewable power generation

The scale of the building reflects the operational needs of maintaining the extensive grounds and access infrastructure associated with the property.

5. Sustainability

The proposal incorporates a number of sustainable design measures.

Solar Energy Generation

The roof will incorporate architectural flush-mounted solar panels integrated into the roof covering of the south elevation to minimise visual impact. This carefully designed architectural arrangement is both lower in profile, and more refined in style. Contrary to a perception of dominance, the flush edge-to-edge design creates a more cohesive look than a smaller array set into or on a slate roof with associated flashings would.

Battery Energy Storage

The garage will accommodate battery storage systems enabling the property to store renewable electricity generated on site and reduce reliance on grid electricity.

Battery Energy Storage and Safety

The proposed building will also accommodate battery energy storage equipment associated with the on-site renewable energy system. These systems are designed and installed in accordance with applicable UK electrical safety standards and manufacturer guidance including ventilation, thermal management and protective control systems.

Domestic battery storage systems incorporate multiple layers of safety protection including:

- battery management systems monitoring temperature and performance
- automatic electrical isolation and fault protection
- compliance with recognised electrical installation standards such as BS 7671.

The batteries will be installed by qualified professionals and contained entirely within the building as part of the property's renewable energy infrastructure.

6. Layout and Scale

The building has been carefully positioned within the site to minimize impact on key sight-lines from the neighboring property.

7. Response to Previous Objections

Loss of Daylight

A BRE daylight study in appendix A demonstrates that even at the originally designed ridge height at 4.5m that there is no material impact on light to the neighboring property on the previously applied height, and the currently proposed height of 3.8m is a further significant improvement, as approved by the original objector.

Height and Dominance

The revised roof dimensions reduces height and scale and softens the building's appearance.

Boundary Hedge

The design ensures appropriate separation and reduces overshadowing, supporting the continued health of the hedge.

Site Levels

The roof reduces the building height when viewed from neighbouring land and addresses the objection previously raised.

8. Appearance

The architectural design is intentionally traditional in character. Materials will include:

- Green oak structural frame
- Slate roofing consistent with the main house and neighbour properties
- Traditional timber detailing
- Brick dwarf wall in matching brick to the main house

Such buildings are commonly associated with country house settings and rural estates. The image below shows a similar building manufactured by the proposed contractor.



The below image illustrates a photo of the proposed location, where a rendering of the proposed design has been superimposed onto the photo. This illustrates well the effect of the flush solar panel design as well as the reduced scale and massing.



The termination detail of the bottom of the roof may need to be adjusted slightly subject to final detailing of the solar panels and solid oak roof structure.

9. Access

The proposal utilises the existing access arrangements within the property. No changes to the highway network are required. The building is nestled between the hedge and the existing drive, with a minimized diversion of the route of the drive in order to maximise efficiency of land use.

10. Daylight and Overshadowing

The reduced height of roof ensures that there is no overshadowing effect.

Given the separation distance and landscaping, the proposal will not result in a material loss of daylight to neighbouring properties, as demonstrated in the BRE daylight analysis in Appendix A. Please note that the BRE Daylight assessment is based on the original design of 4.5m, and the new design of 3.8m is a significant improvement on this even though 4.5m passed the test by a significant margin.

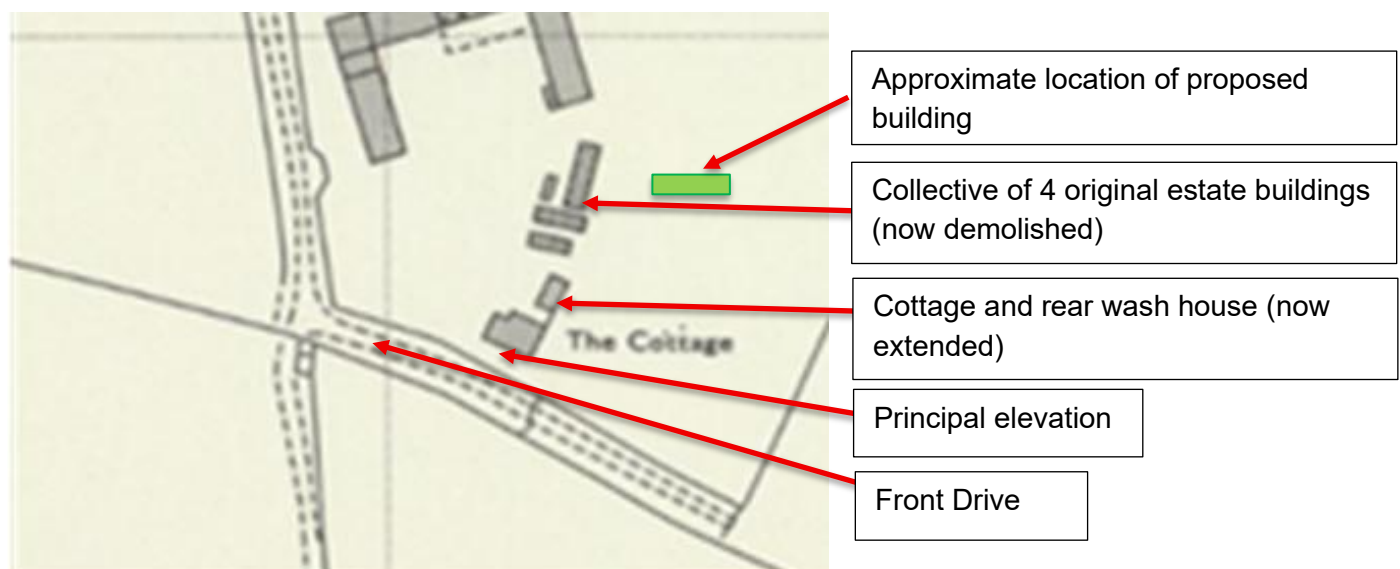
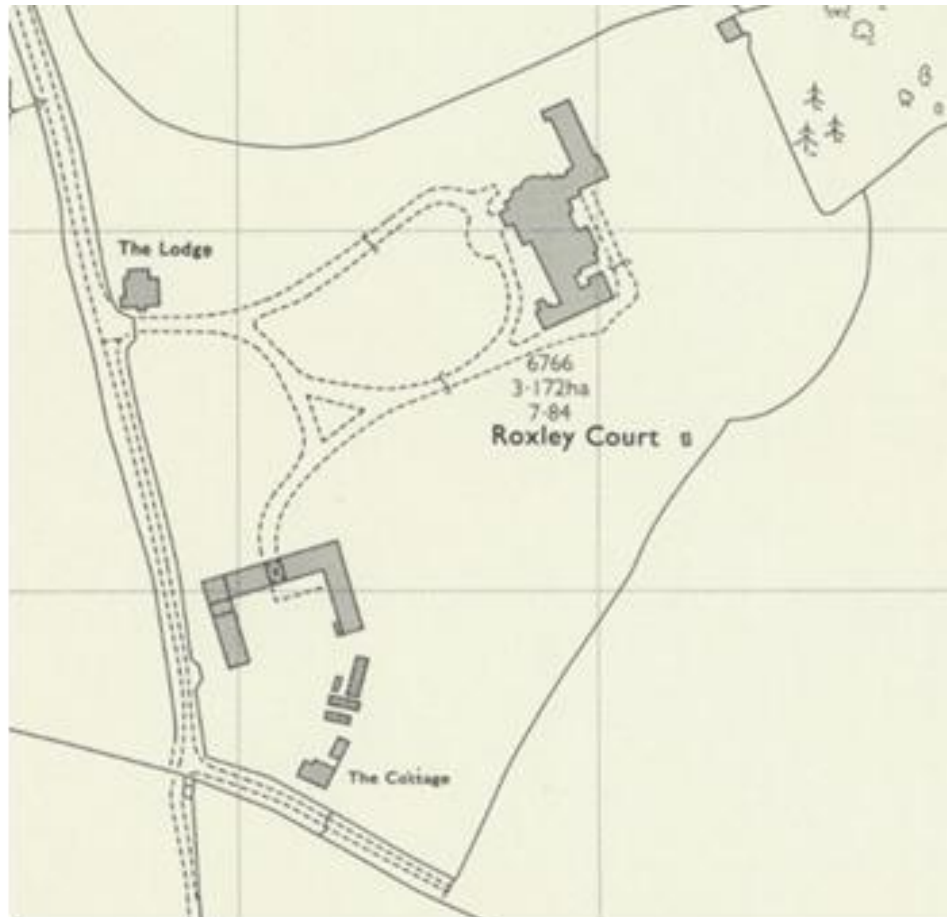
11. Garden City Design Context

The site lies within the wider setting of Letchworth Garden City whose character is defined by generous plots, landscaping and buildings set within garden and agricultural environments.

The proposed building respects these principles through its use of natural materials, traditional design and integration with the surrounding landscape

12. Landscape and Boundary Considerations

Existing boundary vegetation will be retained. The reduced height roof and 2metre separation from the boundary ensures the continued healthy growth of the hedge. The below map from 1972 shows that there were previously some significant structures to the rear of the cottage.



The photograph below shows the principal elevation of the house, where you can see the original front door canopy.



13. Planning Balance

The proposal delivers several positive planning outcomes including high-quality design, protection of neighbour amenity, sustainability benefits and support for estate management functions.

The development therefore represents sustainable development consistent with the objectives of the local plan.

15. Planning Statement

The proposal has been designed in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan policies relating to sustainable design and residential amenity.

The building uses traditional materials appropriate to the character of the area while incorporating renewable energy infrastructure.

The building is a similar size and location to one that was there previously.

The development safeguards neighbouring amenity and represents a proportionate and sustainable form of development within the residential curtilage.

The development fits within the permitted development limits by virtue of its 3.8m height with a dual pitched roof which is below the 4metres permitted height, and the building is not less than 2metres from the boundary at its closest point.

The building is incidental to the existing dwelling by virtue of being to the rear of the principal elevation of the dwelling and being of a domestic purpose that supports the viability of the dwelling as a family home.

16. Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The proposal should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The development represents sustainable development as it:

- makes use of existing residential land
- incorporates renewable energy generation and storage
- respects local character through high-quality design
- responds to an exceptional need for estate maintenance capabilities
- protects neighbouring amenity

Lawful development certificate is therefore respectfully requested.

17. Conclusion

The proposed oak-framed garage building represents a carefully considered design that responds directly to previous concerns and planning policy requirements.

The development:

- respects the character of the surrounding area
- minimises impact on neighbouring properties
- incorporates sustainable energy infrastructure
- provides essential storage supporting the management of the estate grounds

Lawful development certificate is therefore respectfully requested.